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Comments on Draft CMK Transport and Parking Strategy Consultation Paper

2.2 Santander is not a 'Recent high profile recent business locating in CMK [sic]'. Abbey National located in CMK in the mid-1980s and later merged with Santander in November 2004 and re-branding of the bank followed soon afterwards.

3.2 [Table 3.1] Action points 23 and 24 of the Council's Powered Two Wheeler Strategy, published in February 2003, says that monitoring of PTWs should be included in the Council's annual monitoring report and that available data from the census, traffic counts and travel surveys should include PTWs. This table would suggest that this hasn't been done. Why?

3.5 Says that 'The opportunities for encouraging non-car journey to work [and other trips into CMK] will be greater for trips from within Milton Keynes than for trips from further afield'. Whilst broadly accurate if PTWs had been included in the report perhaps they would offer an alternative to the car for these longer journeys.

3.14 'There are seven cycle parking locations within Central Milton Keynes'. Depending on what constitutes a 'cycle parking location' I would suggest that this is a significant under-representation of the facilities currently available. There are Sheffield type cycle stands adjacent to most Porte Cocheres along Silbury, Midsummer and Avebury Boulevards.

3.19 'the only Redway link through the centre is north-south along Saxon Gate' – even the map shows the redway link alongside Grafton Gate and the other running in Campbell Park to the east of Marlborough Street: both in what people usually consider to be part of CMK.

3.23 This paragraph highlights an issue with pedestrians and cyclists sharing underpasses and this may well be a concern to some – but pedestrians have to contend with cyclists using all the footpaths in CMK – which could well also be used, in the near future, by the new driverless pods!

Figure 3.3 This map is out of date: Midsummer Place has been rebranded as intu Milton Keynes, The Quadrant [Network Rail HQ] and The Pinnacle – two major office developments aren't shown; area around Leisure Plaza has a new layout and new supermarket following redevelopment last year.

3.32 The issue of speed humps along Midsummer Boulevard is highlighted – these were first put in place many years ago to deter ‘joy riding’ outside The Point. The building of Midsummer Place that effectively cut the boulevard in two – and the focus of youth activity away from the soon to be redeveloped Point renders these unnecessary. That said they do serve a purpose in that they provide wide at grade crossing points for wheelchair and mobility aide users and people with young children in pushchairs/prams. They also can lead to confusion over priorities as cars give way to pedestrians in the parking areas but priorities are reversed on the boulevard itself!

3.37 It would be interesting to see the distribution of these ‘25,000 parking spaces’ Are some of these parking areas in Campbell Park because if they are these are not relevant to the discussion about the needs of people coming to CMK to work, shop or for leisure purposes.

3.47 Highlights the ‘complexity of offer’ and indeed many people still get ticketed because they park in one ownership but put money in a meter belonging to a different ownership. There are [I think] four owners of on-street public parking: Milton Keynes Council, Milton Keynes Development Partnership, Xscape and thecentre:mk. While the first two have matching policies the other two differ slightly in that Xscape has a different parking tariff - but the same rules for the parking of Blue Badge holders and PTWs] - and thecentre:mk adopted the same parking tariff as MKC and MKDP [though this may have changed with the most recent increase] – but different regulations for Blue Badge holders and PTWs. This review and the adoption of a new strategy should look to deal with these issues.

3.48 A ‘Future Challenge’ that hasn’t been considered relates to the changing age structure of the population of Milton Keynes. Over the next few years there will be significant growth in the older population of Milton Keynes: Population growth in the 65-79 years and the over 80 years groups is forecast to grow by 78.3% and 96.3% respectively by 2026 [Milton Keynes Council website].

While not all older people drive and not all older people who do drive will want to come into CMK it will be necessary to take this significant population increase into account when, for example, designing the Public Transport Interchange and talking about the need, in future, for people to have to accept they may not be able to park as close to their final destination as they might want to.

4.13 Talks of an increase in the future of the proportion of ‘commuting from outside the borough....where car is often the only viable option’. Has **any** consideration been given to PTWs to address this issue?

Table 4.2 ‘Modal shift [trips to/from CMK, not within]’ – again, because of the brief, no consideration has been give to the possible role of PTWs.

4.21 Again the opportunity for promoting the use of PTWs: that take up less road space, less parking space, do not produce the same level of wear & tear on the highway surface and produce fewer emissions has been omitted.

4.33/4.34 Highlights the development of an 'east-west cycle expressway along Avebury Boulevard' and says that in addition to providing access to various services and facilities in CMK it would 'provide an express cycle route to the northern side of Campbell Park, which is identified for potential residential development in the 2012 MK Alliance Plan'. What about a similar route along Silbury Boulevard – that as well as providing improved access to services and facilities south of Midsummer Boulevard would provide express cycle route to the existing homes to the south of Campbell Park?

4.50 It is unlikely that bus stops on Midsummer Boulevard - east of Secklow Gate would 'service the library and theatre'. Should this be the 'gallery and theatre'?

4.59 At the meetings to discuss the development of Midsummer Boulevard East and what facilities should be incorporated into the Public Transport Interchange – there was strong support for a 'Community Hub' to be located here: somewhere where older, disabled and other people could meet and also access information & advice and other services.

4.62 – 4.65 Ease of pedestrian access from the Public Transport Interchange to the main facilities is a **critical** consideration for older people and people with impaired mobility. Even relatively short additional distance – particularly if not relatively flat and/or weather protected - can be a significant impediment [e.g. the recent relocation of the main Post Office from the centre:mk to the edge of the Theatre District].

4.66 This paragraph makes mention of the need to 'consider re-location options for taxis' but alongside this area [and close to the current outdoor market] is a significant area of designated disabled parking that would also be affected.

4.78 The idea of the driverless pods is understood but why the need for a 'driverless bus'?

4.79 The pilot scheme for driverless pods is welcomed but it has its limitations. The vehicles to be tested in Milton Keynes are small and will require people using them to be relatively agile. This means that many people who might benefit from this new transport option – older people, the disabled and others with mobility restrictions [even parents/carers with young children and buggies] will be excluded from using them. Some pedestrians might also be anxious about sharing the pavement with such vehicles. At the time of the launch there were other styles of vehicles being demonstrated. The vehicles being tested in Greenwich were larger, offered greater flexibility and potentially were more accessible to people with mobility restrictions. However, because of their size, thought would have to be given now as to how their use might be integrated safely into the developing infrastructure in CMK.



<http://www.digitalgreenwich.com/first-trials-of-driverless-vehicles-get-underway-in-royal-borough-of-greenwich>

4.80 This paragraph alludes to this concern on the part of the consultants.

Figure 4.5 Where do buses go when they get to Marlborough Gate? With the increased use of intelligent traffic light controls on roundabouts [and a growing acceptance that these can improve traffic flows at peak times] could there be merit in considering reopening the links between Marlborough Gate and Portway and Childs Way?

4.101 'It is anticipated that vehicles would carry two people operate at up to 12mph and operate on pavements.....the trips would be paid for and hailed using a mobile app'. Comments about the usefulness of the vehicles for a significant and growing section of the community has already been made – as has potential conflict with already crowded pavements being used by pedestrians and cyclists. This section also makes it clear that anyone not technically literate or able to afford a smart phone would also be excluded from using this experimental form of transport. This system needs to be made inclusive and so other ways of accessing and paying for the service need to be considered.

Figure 4.6 Shuttle bus route – why not cross at Saxon Gate and extend to Marlborough Gate - to give improved access to the eastern end of the shopping building, Theatre, Theatre District and Xscape? If people are going to be encouraged to park further away from their end destination in future [see 4.107] this may well create additional demand for such a service and improve its chances of being viable in the long run.

4.120 Any network of parking occupancy sensors needs to be able to highlight designated disabled parking as well as general parking availability.

4.125 Agree – but we also need co-operation and data sharing within Milton Keynes while there are four [I think] operators of ground level parking there are a number of additional players if one includes multi-storey car parks – including intu Milton Keynes and the operator of the car park north of Central Milton Keynes station, behind The Quadrant [Network Rail HQ] and the car park behind The Point.

4.135 Is the figure of 900 places to the eastern end of the shopping building net or gross?

Figure 4.9 Why decking alongside Saxon Gate South and not multi-storey car parks accessed from Childs Way as proposed in the 2001 EDAW plan? Given the way the ground slopes, wouldn't decking to the south of CMK be less visually intrusive than decking along North Row? Would the suggestion of a multi-storey car park adjacent to the Bus Station [The Buszy] adversely affect the setting of a listed building?

4.149 This paragraph is just plain wrong and needs to be re-written more accurately. Parking charges have recently increased in CMK. Standard rate parking is rarely available – so casual users have to pay the higher cost of Premium Parking. Peterborough City Council might charge £1.20 per hour but Queensgate Shopping Centre is £2.00 for 2 hours and £2.00 all day on Sunday; Westgate parking is £2.50 for 2 hours, £3 for 3 hours and the cost reduces per hour if you stay longer [this information was gathered searching on-line for less than five minutes].

4.153 The suggestion that reducing parking standards will make people switch to other forms of transport is fanciful thinking. Areas of MK where housing density was higher and parking standards reduced [such as Broughton and Kingsmead] simply have resulted in a parking and transport nightmare with bus companies refusing to run services through the estates as they can't guarantee access and bins not being collected when refuse trucks could not get through without driving on to people's gardens. This needs to be thought about very carefully before implementing.

4.154 – 4.162 It is a shame that the Council and its consultants have ignored the 2003 Milton Keynes Powered Two Wheeler Strategy. It is likely since its publication that there has been little increase in the use of PTWs within Milton Keynes [though there is some evidence of a greater number of PTWs at Central Milton Keynes being used by commuters]. The reason for this is most likely because few if any of the 24 Action points in the report have been acted upon and reference to the strategy. The Strategy was almost ignored in the writing of LTP3 and has been completely disregarded in this study – even though the opening paragraphs of that strategy state:

INTRODUCTION

'Powered two wheelers (PTWs i.e. motorcycles, scooters, mopeds and cyclemotors - see annex one for full classification) can play an important role in the development of a fully sustainable integrated transport system. PTWs offer an affordable and flexible

form of personal transport for journeys which are difficult to undertake by other sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Although powered two wheelers are not totally 'green' they offer significant environmental advantages over the private car.

Both the Transport White Paper: 'A New Deal for Transport: Better For Everyone' (DETR, 1998) and the 'Guidance On Full Local Transport Plans' (DETRa , 2000) have acknowledged the role of PTWs. The government has also established an advisory group for motorcycling with the aim of "providing expert advice to inform the development of future policy". However, unlike cycling, there is no national strategy for PTWs. 2.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POWERED TWO WHEELERS

We recognise that PTWs are a separate class of road user with their own particular perspectives and needs. PTWs are an alternative to the private car for trips where the availability of public transport is limited and walking or cycling impractical. PTWs offer similar flexibility to the car but are generally cheaper to buy, tax and insure and have lower operating costs. Within urban areas they can move freely and are able to park in small spaces. They are an affordable way to increase mobility and widen access to employment and local services.

The Government continues to recognise the role that PTWs can play in transport and economic development terms – supporting the Wheels 2 Work initiative and, earlier this year, announcing similar subsidies already afforded to electric cars be made available to new electric motorcycles.

<http://www.wheels2workassociation.org/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-revs-up-motorcycle-market>

Annex B – Public Transport Interchange Options

As mentioned in previous comments the design of this must pay due regard to people with impaired mobility, people with young children etc therefore proposal for options – such as B and D with 'informal; crossings' to access stops should be considered very carefully. Also proper consideration needs to be given to changing levels, weather protected pedestrian routes, seating/waiting areas etc