

Community Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy

2020



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Foreword by Councillor Long

This strategy provides a clear vision of how we will work with residents and other stakeholders to achieve our community led regeneration and estate renewal ambitions for Milton Keynes and build strong communities across the borough.

We remain committed to regeneration, but want to move to a greater focus on jobs, skills and life chances built around estate renewal, strengthening the work already being delivered. We want to ensure that proposals are financed from a range of sources and that communities define their own needs and priorities.

Over the past two years, as we have moved forward with plans for the Lakes Estate and Fullers Slade, it has become fairly obvious that the current process is too slow and that the word *regeneration* has become mired in negativity around demolition no matter what the Council says. It is very clear that we need to approach regeneration differently. We need to draw a line under one era, and start a new one that is free from the fear of wholesale demolition.

Regeneration should be about building stronger communities – it should be about renewal. We need to stop the focus on demolition of specific estates and start talking about a renewal of MK, jobs and improved health and life chances. We will improve estates and we will build new homes, in addition to spending £165m on improving our housing stock across all of Milton Keynes between now and 2023/24. But the clear and overwhelming message from residents is that regeneration is about more than bricks and mortar. We want to invest in people, their communities and the place in which they live.

Working with Local People

The community led regeneration and estate renewal strategy is a unique opportunity for residents to work with the council, its partners and urban design specialists to plan high quality homes, enhanced neighbourhoods and create vibrant communities. The previous strategy focussed on seven priority areas; however, there are areas and pockets of deprivation in other parts of Milton Keynes that would not be addressed by investing in these seven areas alone. That is why this strategy is fully inclusive and provides an opportunity for local people across the whole of Milton Keynes to improve their area or neighbourhood.

We are committed to a programme which is shaped and informed by people who live locally, local councillors, and other stakeholders like business owners, parish and town councils and service providers.

We recognise that an ambitious plan to renew and improve estates has the potential to cause disruption to residents' lives. This strategy therefore gives a clear commitment that we will only embark on major schemes after full consultation, and rigorous assessment and clarity of the benefits of a scheme.

Our vision, priorities and commitments

The Council's Community Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy aims to involve local people in improving their estates and building healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods.

We will achieve this by bringing together local residents and community leaders, such as parish councils, and other stakeholders to identify where we can invest in or change existing buildings, build new council homes and improve local facilities, assets and opportunities for the people who live there.

We will work with partners to promote health and wellbeing so that everyone has the same opportunities to live a long and healthy life.

This document sets out our strategic priorities for community led regeneration and estate renewal under four key themes:

- **Housing:** increase the supply and quality of council homes¹ to meet housing need and tackle the housing crisis
- **Communities:** improve the quality of the local environment with better green and open spaces and housing that promotes low energy consumption and environmental sustainability, supported by improved infrastructure and community facilities
- **Health and wellbeing:** promote a high quality of life for people of all ages and backgrounds, in safe, cohesive and healthy neighbourhoods
- **Better jobs:** enable people to maximise economic opportunity in Milton Keynes through targeted support for training, employment and enterprise

In delivering this strategy we will:

- Be open and honest
- Use language that is easy to understand
- Put people at the heart of the process and work collaboratively from decision making to delivery
- Strive to find solutions that are affordable and achievable
- Use accurate, up to date evidence to inform decisions
- Ensure strong governance and clear accountability
- Work with communities to identify and measure the social value of our work
- Contribute to the Council's commitment to be the world's greenest and most sustainable city
- Only embark on major schemes after full consultation, and rigorous assessment and clarity of the benefits of a scheme

¹ All references to council homes are properties held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Priorities

Housing: increase the supply and quality of council homes to meet housing need and tackle the housing crisis

We will seek to achieve this by working with local communities to develop plans which:

- Prioritise council investment in existing council homes and work with council tenants to agree a new Milton Keynes Homes Standard for all council housing
- Identify and develop options appraisals for existing council homes where further investment would not be economically viable
- Increase the number of council homes in the city overall
- Build market homes for sale, where appropriate, to provide cross subsidy for further investment in council housing
- Provide homes which meet the size requirements of those in housing need, taking into account the importance of storage space, floor layouts, space standards, accessibility and support independent living
- Fully consider and minimise any negative impact of building additional homes such as demand on car parking, estate facilities and local public services
- Consider and minimise the impact on home owners, landlords and private tenants

Communities: improve the quality of the local environment with better green and open spaces and housing that promotes low energy consumption and environmental sustainability, supported by better infrastructure and community facilities.

We will seek to achieve this by working with local communities to develop plans which:

- Use architecture and urban design which is sympathetic to the neighbourhood streetscape, blending the buildings on estate land with those in the wider area.
- Enhance access to and provision of high quality outside space, whether it be communal gardens or courtyards, communal terraces or roof gardens, individual allotments or balconies, and features to enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- Address a lack of sufficient and stimulating designed play and leisure spaces for children and young people
- Deliver community spaces accessible for the whole community, where the needs of everyone are taken into consideration from the outset
- Reduce our carbon footprint – homes and neighbourhoods will be designed to reduce carbon consumption, air and noise pollution levels, prevent energy and water wastage, and facilities which encourage domestic recycling

- Promote sustainable transport and accessibility to the neighbourhood by supporting improvements to local public transport, and the creation of attractive and safe pedestrian and cycling access routes and cycle storage
- Build on local assets to improve the ties between people living in the same neighbourhoods, which is the key to building stronger, resilient communities

Health and wellbeing: promote a high quality of life for people of all ages and backgrounds, in safe, cohesive and healthy neighbourhoods

We will seek to achieve this by working with local communities to develop plans which:

- Promote health and wellbeing – we will work in partnership with the community, third sector organisations, public health and health colleagues to clearly develop renewal plans which will improve people’s health
- Promote greater pedestrian and cycle accessibility into and out of the area, linking the neighbourhood with nearby shops, green spaces and facilities.
- Address security features for communal areas and entrances, as well as nuisance behaviour or perceptions of safety arising from the layout of open spaces
- Review the delivery of public services within the area to improve access and relevance for the community. This might involve co-locating services together to make it easier for people to access the advice and help they need in one location
- Create community facilities including open spaces which can be used by the whole neighbourhood, not just people living on an individual estate

Better jobs: enable people to maximise economic opportunity in Milton Keynes through targeted support for training, employment and enterprise

We will seek to achieve this by working with local communities to develop plans which:

- Support access to work for the most vulnerable members of the community
- Increase the overall attractiveness of areas to businesses, such as improving the public realm, retail and commercial space within neighbourhoods to revitalise the local economy
- Encourage local enterprise and the creation of jobs within the area, including arrangements for local labour placements to be provided on renewal schemes
- Ensure homes are truly affordable to help economically active households who contribute to the Milton Keynes economy to live locally

Delivery

This Strategy sets out an ambitious set of priorities which can only be achieved through the collective commitment of the Council and its key partners and stakeholders. We are committed to a community led regeneration and estate renewal programme which is genuinely shaped and informed by local people; those who live and work in Milton Keynes, local councillors, business owners, and service providers.

We are wholly committed to partnership working and will develop a range of methods through which we can work towards a common purpose and achieve our shared aims and values. We recognise that parish and town councils, and local residents association are eager to support the delivery of this strategy so we will use those existing forums to develop and shape community led investment plans for local areas based on local need.

We recognise that an ambitious plan to renew and improve homes and estates has the potential to cause disruption to residents' lives. This strategy therefore gives a clear commitment that we will only embark on major schemes after full consultation, and rigorous assessment and clarity of the benefits of a scheme.

It is important that progress against this strategy is monitored robustly and transparently, and that barriers to delivery are challenged at the most appropriate level.

We will therefore:

- Monitor and review progress against the strategic priorities annually.
- Monitor and review progress against local delivery plans quarterly.
- Report progress against the strategic priorities and the delivery plans to Cabinet annually and publish details of our progress on the Councils website.