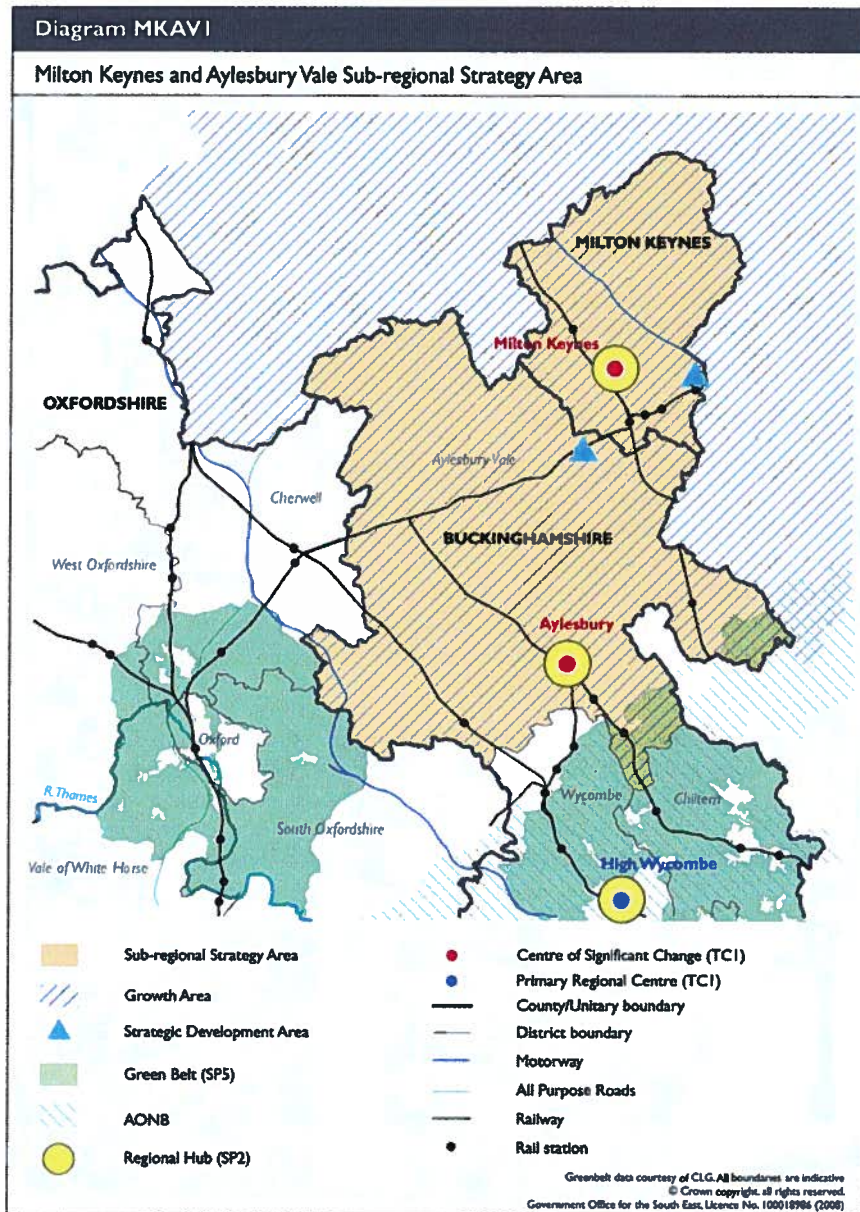


23 Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale



23.1

RPG9 recognised Milton Keynes and adjoining parts of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire as having considerable growth potential and recommended an interregional study to consider this. The subsequent study informed the sub-regional strategy for Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM), published in March 2005 as a partial revision to the Regional Spatial Strategies for the East of England, East Midlands and South East England. That strategy comprised a Part A Statement, which provides overarching objectives and strategic policies for the MKSM area as a whole, and three separate Part B Statements with more specific guidance in relation to the individual areas covered by the three separate Regional Spatial Strategies. The Part B statement for the Milton Keynes Unitary Authority and Aylesbury Vale district area (MKAV), for 2001-2021, has been superseded by the strategy set out in this sub-regional chapter for 2006-2026. However, the Part A Statement continues to apply in so far as it has been taken forward by the policies in this chapter, the Core Regional Policies and the Implementation Plan.

- 23.2 Key challenges facing this sub-region are how to:
- i. continue to assimilate high levels of new growth
 - ii. improve connectivity between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes as well as between Aylesbury and the more buoyant economies in adjoining sub-regions
 - iii. strengthen the economic and employment role of Aylesbury town, attract knowledge-based industries and reduce its dependence on out-commuting
 - iv. improve skills levels and educational attainments
 - v. deliver the requirements for physical, social and environmental infrastructure needed to support existing and future economic and housing growth
 - vi. ensure development is planned with regard to protecting strategic environmental assets and seeking opportunities for their enhancement.
- 23.3 Although specific policies relating to MKAV are set out below it is important to take account of the Core Regional Policies in this Plan, including those which are referred to in this chapter.

Strategic Framework for the Sub-Region

- 23.4 The strategic framework for the sub-region takes as its starting point the strategy set out in the Part A Statement of the MKSM strategy, and in particular the spatial vision for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury as reflected in Policies MKAV2 and MKAV3 below. In taking this vision forward, smart economic growth needs to be promoted, as provided for by Policies RE4: Human Resource Development and RE5: Smart Growth, exploiting the opportunities presented by MKAV being part of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. Policy RE2: Supporting Nationally and Regionally Important Sectors and Clusters is also particularly relevant.
- 23.5 The Oxford to Cambridge Arc links this sub-region with the Central Oxfordshire sub-region in this Plan and with the Bedford growth area and Cambridge sub-region in the East of England RSS. In taking advantage of this arc of economic potential, the two local authorities in the sub-region intend to build on their strengths and foster closer interrelationships with each other and the wider Arc. The opportunities include:
- i. at the centre of this Arc, Milton Keynes, the largest of the two main centres in the MKSM sub-region, has a modern growing economy and is developing a city-region role extending into neighbouring regions. It could become a location for knowledge-based businesses and a networking hub, especially if orbital and east-west communications can be improved
 - ii. improved connectivity between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes along with other towns and cities along the Oxford to Cambridge Arc might help strengthen the economic role of Aylesbury town provided it did not result in increased out-commuting
 - iii. improved networking into the Oxford and Cambridge business communities helping to secure an increase in high-technology activity in Aylesbury, as being taken forward by the Aylesbury Vale Economic Development Strategy
 - iv. in addition, MKAV sub-region sits at the outer end of the M1 corridor growth area identified in the London Plan. This may present opportunities for reverse commuting away from London.
- 23.6 In realising these opportunities, educational attainment and skills levels at Milton Keynes and Aylesbury need to be improved in order to support economic growth, enable local people to participate fully in it and help bring the long-term unemployed back into the labour market. Policy RE4: Human Resource Development provides the framework for this. Although educational attainment is high in Aylesbury, the less skilled sections of the working population will benefit from improved access to higher education in Aylesbury to enhance their skills. Milton Keynes is home to the Open University and has close proximity to Cranfield and Buckingham Universities, while the 'Unis4MK' collaboration between higher education providers in the area provides co-ordinated and targeted high-quality higher education provision to meet local needs. By taking advantage of these

and other opportunities for skills development, Milton Keynes can make better use of its labour supply and provide an attractive skills base for incoming firms and business start-ups.

- 23.7 The intention is to seek an approximate 1:1 ratio between new jobs and dwellings proposed for the two growth areas within the sub-region in order to secure no net change in overall net out-commuting in line with the objectives of the MKSM strategy. It is not a development control tool to constrain development. Housing provision and job targets are covered in Policies MKAV1, MKAV2 and MKAV3 below. The new jobs figures in Policies MKAV2 and MKAV3 are significantly above the employment growth trend and are a reference point for monitoring. They are subject to review and are not intended to constrain economic development.

Housing Distribution By District 2006 - 2026

POLICY MKAV1: HOUSING DISTRIBUTION BY DISTRICT 2006-2026

Within Milton Keynes Unitary Authority, provision will be made for 41,360 dwellings between 2006 and 2026 from the following sources:

- i. **34,160 dwellings in and around the Milton Keynes urban area including sites identified in the adopted local plan and additional sites to be found through strategic housing land availability assessments**
- ii. **4,800 dwellings as part of a development of 10,400 dwellings to the south-east of Milton Keynes (leaving a balance of 5,600 dwellings to be found in Bedfordshire subject to assessment through the East of England RSS review)**
- iii. **2,400 dwellings in the rural area/rest of Milton Keynes.**

Within Aylesbury Vale District, provision will be made for at least 26,890 dwellings between 2006 and 2026 from the following sources:

- i. **5,390 dwellings as an urban extension to the south-west of Milton Keynes**
- ii. **16,800 dwellings in and around the Aylesbury urban area, including urban extensions**
- iii. **4,700 dwellings in the rural area/rest of Aylesbury Vale.**

- 23.8 The levels and distribution of housing provision in Policy MKAV1 will help deliver the spatial vision for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale set out in Policies MKAV2 and MKAV3 below. The policy clarifies the housing provision split between the local authority areas in advance of Policy MKV2 which relates to the larger growth area rather than the smaller administrative area of Milton Keynes.
- 23.9 Of the 34,160 dwellings provided for in this policy from within and around the Milton Keynes urban area, it is anticipated that some 23,750 will be provided within expansion areas and other greenfield sites identified in the adopted local plan with the remaining 10,410 expected to come from within the urban area. In addition, under this policy, the remaining areas of Milton Keynes outside the city will continue to meet local needs and provide for 2,400 dwellings.
- 23.10 In the longer term it is possible that some future growth of Milton Keynes may need to be accommodated east of the M1 motorway, but no allowance is made at this stage in housing figures for Milton Keynes pending future review of the South East Plan and the local development plan. Further testing of this (including a detailed SFRA) and other alternatives for additional strategic development areas and urban extensions should be undertaken with stakeholders to inform a future review of the RSS and local development plan. Also, in the longer term it is possible that some of the growth of Leighton-Linslade or associated facilities may need to be accommodated in Aylesbury Vale District but no allowance is made at this stage in the housing figures for Aylesbury Vale pending future review of the South East Plan.

The Spatial Framework for Milton Keynes Growth Area

23

The South East Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East

POLICY MKAV2: SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR MILTON KEYNES GROWTH AREA

Within the South East Region, Milton Keynes will accommodate an additional 44,350 dwellings over the period 2006-2026, at an average rate of 2,218 dwellings per annum, of which 30% should be affordable. The figure:

- i. includes 5,390 dwellings to be located in Aylesbury Vale District
- ii. excludes 5,600 dwellings to be located in Mid Bedfordshire subject to a review of the East of England RSS
- iii. excludes housing in Milton Keynes District outside the Milton Keynes growth area.

New development will be delivered through a combination of urban intensification, locations established through the Milton Keynes Local Plan, and two strategic development areas (SDAs) as new sustainable urban extensions, integrated with the provision of new and enhanced public transport systems and interchanges. One SDA will be to the south-east of Milton Keynes and the second to the south-west of Milton Keynes.

The distribution of development should be informed by strategic flood risk assessments and water cycle studies. The results of these studies will need to be reflected in local development frameworks and future reviews of the RSS.

Sustainable urban extensions should be carefully programmed so as to complement and not undermine the contribution of development and regeneration within the urban area. Both urban intensification and sustainable urban extensions will be planned in such a way as to maintain, extend and enhance green infrastructure, and to ensure that issues of impact on landscape character and coalescence of settlements are addressed.

The levels of development proposed will be monitored against an increase in employment of 44,350 jobs in the period 2006 to 2026. Key locations for employment-related development will be Central Milton Keynes, Bletchley, Wolverton and Newport Pagnell and some locations within new urban extensions at focal points on the public transport system. At present there is sufficient planned employment land supply in Milton Keynes to meet forecast demand to 2016. Both quantitative and qualitative aspects of supply and demand for employment land will be kept under review, to ensure provision of a range of types and sizes of premises to meet the needs of the economy, and that any land no longer required for employment purposes is considered for other use.

Local transport infrastructure and water services infrastructure will require early development and continued enhancement and upgrades to facilitate the delivery of sustainable growth throughout the period 2006-2026 and beyond. Key elements are:

- i. core bus network upgrade across the whole of Milton Keynes
- ii. high quality public transport serving East-West and North-South Corridors
- iii. park and ride accompanied by appropriate traffic management measures
- iv. measures to resolve east-west traffic problems across the southern half of Milton Keynes
- v. water services infrastructure to be planned in accordance with a strategic approach to ensure timely, phased delivery of sustainable solutions that minimise disturbance to existing communities.

New and upgraded strategic transport links will be vital in underpinning the growth of Milton Keynes, including enhanced east-west public transport and possible new parkway stations.

Measures are needed to address traffic problems on the existing A421, to improve access to the M1 and to make space available for enhanced public transport.

- 23.11 Consistent with the spatial vision for Milton Keynes in the Part A Statement of the MKSM strategy, Policy MKV2 will enable Milton Keynes to embrace its growth potential to mature as a major regional centre, particularly through the substantial development of its central area, supported by a significantly enhanced public transport system to facilitate and support growth in major development areas.
- 23.12 The policy provides for some 44,350 dwellings to be added to the urban area between 2006 and 2026, consistent with the overall aspiration for 68,600 additional homes between 2001 and 2031 set out in the MKSM strategy. In addition to the 34,160 dwellings to be found from within and around the Milton Keynes urban area, two urban extensions will be provided as strategic development areas (SDAs) with comprehensive master-planning including provision of employment land, retail, leisure, education and other facilities required to create sustainable communities. These extensions cross administrative boundaries and joint working between authorities and/or local delivery vehicles will facilitate delivery. The two areas, as provided by Policies MKV1 and MKV2, are:
- i. 4,800 dwellings within the authority's area as part of a SDA area to the south-east of Milton Keynes. A further 5,600 dwellings may be found in the Mid Bedfordshire part of this SDA subject to a review of the East of England RSS, and
 - ii. 5,390 dwellings as a SDA to the south-west of Milton Keynes within Aylesbury Vale district.
- 23.13 In order to accommodate the additional jobs, in the longer term it is assumed that additional employment land will need to be provided as part of the proposed sustainable urban extensions.
- 23.14 The transport improvements set out in the policy are essential for enhancing accessibility for all and achieving more sustainable travel patterns within the urban area.
- 23.15 Milton Keynes urban area benefits from a well-managed strategic open space resource which new development needs to complement. In accordance with Strategic Policy 3 of the MKSM Part A Statement and Policy S5: Cultural and Sporting Activity in this Plan, the provision of formal recreation and sporting facilities will also need further enhancement as the population and workforce increases.
- 23.16 Policies H1: Regional Housing Provision 2006-2026, H3: Affordable Housing Provision, RE3: Employment Land Provision and RE6: Competitiveness and Addressing Structural Economic Weakness are also relevant.

Spatial Framework for Aylesbury Growth Area

POLICY MKAV3: SPATIAL FRAMEWORK FOR AYLESBURY GROWTH AREA

An expanded Aylesbury Town will accommodate a total of 16,800 new dwellings over the period 2006-2026 at an average rate of 840 dwellings per annum. Other parts of Aylesbury Vale District should provide for a further 4,700 new dwellings over the same period, at an average rate of 235 dwellings per annum to meet the local needs of its settlements and rural areas. Additional growth related to a sustainable urban extension to the south-west of Milton Keynes is identified in Policy MKAV1.

Development at Aylesbury should be delivered through maximising the use and re-use of land within the urban area and through the development of new sustainable urban extensions integrated with the provision of new and enhanced public transport systems and interchanges.

The distribution of development should be informed by strategic flood risk assessments. The results of these studies will need to be reflected in local development frameworks and future reviews of the RSS.

Sustainable urban extensions to the north of the town at Berryfields and Weedon Hill have already been identified through the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan. While every effort should be made to maximise the use of urban land, further extensions will also be identified.

A strategic long-term framework should be provided for the development of the town focusing on:

- i. Identifying land for new housing as above**
- ii. Identifying and ensuring the availability of appropriate strategic high quality employment sites**
- iii. Identifying and implementing measures to achieve an urban renaissance of the town centre, strengthening its traditional role and heritage as a county town**
- iv. providing for a sustainable transport system for the expanded town, including strategic bus corridors with bus priority measures and good links to the strategic rail network**
- v. the levels of development proposed will be monitored against an increase in employment of 21,500 jobs in Aylesbury Vale district in the period to 2006-2026, the majority of which should be focused on the urban area of Aylesbury.**

In and around Aylesbury, there is a strong amenity need for informal recreational facilities of a much larger scale than has been provided in the past. An allowance for this should be made in the master-planning and design processes.

- 23.17** Consistent with the spatial vision for Aylesbury in the Part A Statement of the MKSM strategy, Policy MKV3 will enable Aylesbury to grow through strengthening and extending its traditional role as a county and market town, including urban renaissance of the centre, that will allow it to meet the demands of a larger population. In parallel, Aylesbury will be able to provide high added value employment opportunities to complement its growing population.
- 23.18** The policy provides for 16,800 dwellings (the majority of growth) to be focused on Aylesbury with the rural areas taking a further 4,700 dwellings to meet local needs. A further 5,390 dwellings are to be provided to the south-west of Milton Keynes as part of the major expansion of the city as provided for in Policies MKAV1 and MKAV2. Although no policy target for has been fixed for the area, the expectation is that an average proportion of 35% affordable housing will be sought in line with the regional target in Policy H3.
- 23.19** The policy requires further sustainable urban extensions around Aylesbury town. In accordance with Strategic Policy 3 of the MKSM Part A Statement and the Core Regional Policies in this Plan, the emphasis will be on locations able to provide enhanced public transport corridors and nodes and opportunities sought to promote urban intensification of existing residential areas and redevelopment of redundant employment land. In line with national policy, a rigorous assessment of proposals to release employment land for other uses needs to be undertaken, particularly on sites close to Aylesbury town centre.
- 23.20** The Economic Development Strategy for Aylesbury Vale recognises that quality office space is needed in Aylesbury town to attract high value businesses in the business and financial services sector. Some additional employment land, for example in association with the future urban extensions, may be needed to achieve this and also attract firms within the ICT and R&D sectors.
- 23.21** In accordance with Strategic Policy 3 of the MKSM Part A Statement and Policy S5: Cultural and Sporting Activity in this Plan, the provision of formal recreation and sporting facilities will also need further enhancement as the population and workforce increases. In implementing Strategic Policy 3 and Policy CC8: Green Infrastructure, the local planning authority will ensure that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure that strategic green infrastructure is managed to accommodate increased visitor pressure arising from growth. In rural areas, development needs to support the vitality of the district's small

market towns and villages and respect their inherent character and distinctiveness in accordance with Policy SP3: Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance and Policies BE4: The Role of Small Rural Towns and BE5: Village Management.

- 23.22 Policies H1: Regional Housing Provision 2006-2026, H3: Affordable Housing Provision, RE3: Employment Land Provision and RE6: Competitiveness and Addressing Structural Economic Weakness are also particularly relevant.

Effective Delivery

POLICY MKAV4: EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

Delivery of the sub-regional strategy will be secured through:

- i. **the Inter-Regional Board**
- ii. **the two Local Delivery Vehicles (LDVs) to help drive the sustainable growth of the sub-region and a possible extension of powers of Milton Keynes Partnership or establishment of new delivery arrangements to cover the sustainable urban extensions south-west and south-east of Milton Keynes**
- iii. **preparation and updating of Business Plans by each LDV**
- iv. **early preparation of priority local development documents (LDDs) to guide development in areas of change in accordance with local development schemes.**

Progress in achieving resources for the sub-region and in implementing the sub-regional framework will be monitored regularly and reported as part of the annual monitoring reports (AMRs) prepared for this region and also for the wider MKSM area.

The scale of growth envisaged in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury must be harnessed to deliver an enhanced quality of life following the principles of sustainable development. This will necessitate the programmed provision of high quality community, economic, environmental and social infrastructure and services.

- 23.23 In addition to the institutional arrangement required by Policy MKV4, joint LDDs may be considered if they will bring forward sustainable cross-boundary development and support infrastructure in a timely way that supports the programming in Policy MKAV2.
- 23.24 Policy CC7: Infrastructure and Implementation sets out the general approach to implementation. A separate Regional Implementation Plan will be produced and updated by the regional planning body and will prioritise further strategic infrastructure requirements for the sub-region. Local requirements for infrastructure will be set out in LDDs and justified in accordance with national policy.
- 23.25 The transport schemes already committed for delivery to develop this sub-region are contained in Chapter 8, Appendix A: Strategic Transport Infrastructure Priorities. Key themes that should be addressed include:
- i. a high quality east-west public transport offer, including bus and coach networks
 - ii. rail improvements and additional capacity to support growth in passenger demand
 - iii. other public transport and demand management schemes including integrated inter-modal hubs
 - iv. M1 capacity and management improvements
 - v. local roads and bypasses, to relieve pressure on town centres and improve access to regional hubs
 - vi. higher and further education facilities including new university
 - vii. upgrades at Cotton Mill and Aylesbury Waste Water Treatment Works to support planned development (including any requirements to meet water quality standards in the River Thames)
 - viii. major development and other urban extensions will require significant upgrades in electricity supply for both Milton Keynes and Aylesbury from 2011.

- 23.26 The Milton Keynes 'tariff' is proving an effective way to secure funding for the strategic infrastructure projects associated with development. This approach will be rolled forward with partners in future evidence-based LDDs and operated by development control authorities on the basis of development plan policy.
- 23.27 The approximate 1:1 ratio between new jobs and dwellings will assist monitoring both at the district level through AMRs and as part of the wider MKSM strategy:
- i. future cross-boundary urban extensions to Milton Keynes should be treated as part of Milton Keynes City for the purposes of this monitoring
 - ii. a period of about 5 years is necessary for the reliable interpretation of this monitoring. This takes account of time-lags in employment data and of employment delivery that (unlike housing) is not in regularly sized units
 - iii. monitoring this ratio will not be used as a development control tool to limit housing growth in any way, including release of any additional opportunities that may come forward. Instead, any revision to baseline housing figures will be made through a future review of the South East Plan, taking account of the need for a step-change in housing delivery, the relationship between jobs and homes, changing commuting patterns and any skills shortages within the wider MKSM area.
- 23.28 These and other monitoring indicators will inform reviews of this sub-regional strategy (see also Chapter 26 on implementation, monitoring and review).