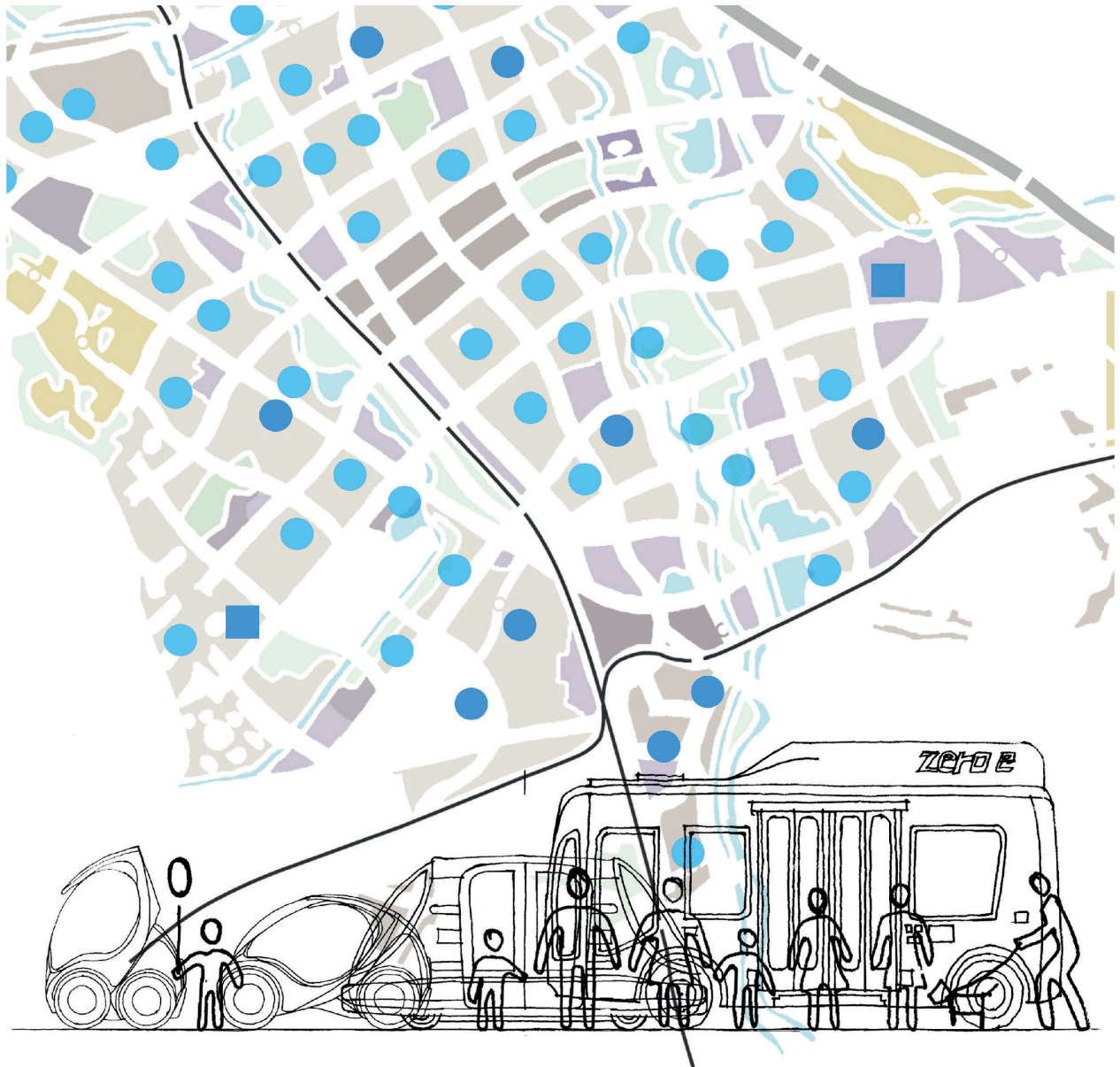


Going Places

Engagement Event

11 January 2018



MKC Draft Mobility Strategy - 2018 to 2036 - Summary of presentation event



MK Gallery

Going Places Engagement Event

This well-attended afternoon symposium was arranged by Fred Roche Foundation (FRF) in conjunction with MK Business Leaders Partnership, and was chaired by Ruby Parmar of Price Waterhouse Cooper.

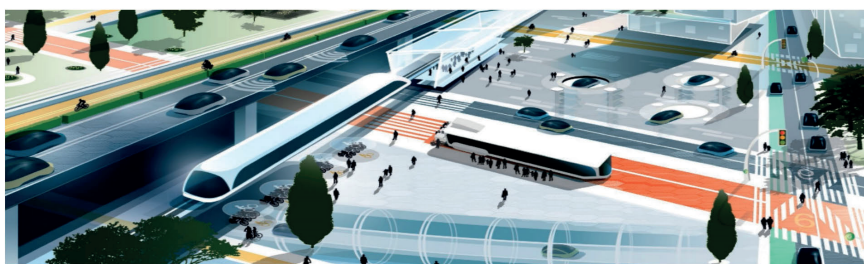
Its aim (following a previous meeting arranged by FRF in December 2017 and with Business Leaders on 12th September 2017) was to explore issues arising from the draft consultation Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy 2018-2036, prepared by Milton Keynes Council (MKC).

After introductions, the meeting was addressed by **Steve Hayes**, Head of Transport Services, MKC, who gave an overview of the draft mobility strategy. The objective was to support growth and provide mobility for all through the provision of an effective network. Investment in infrastructure, maximising travel choices, the growth in autonomous vehicles, and support for active mobility would all play a part in three delivery phases over the coming years.

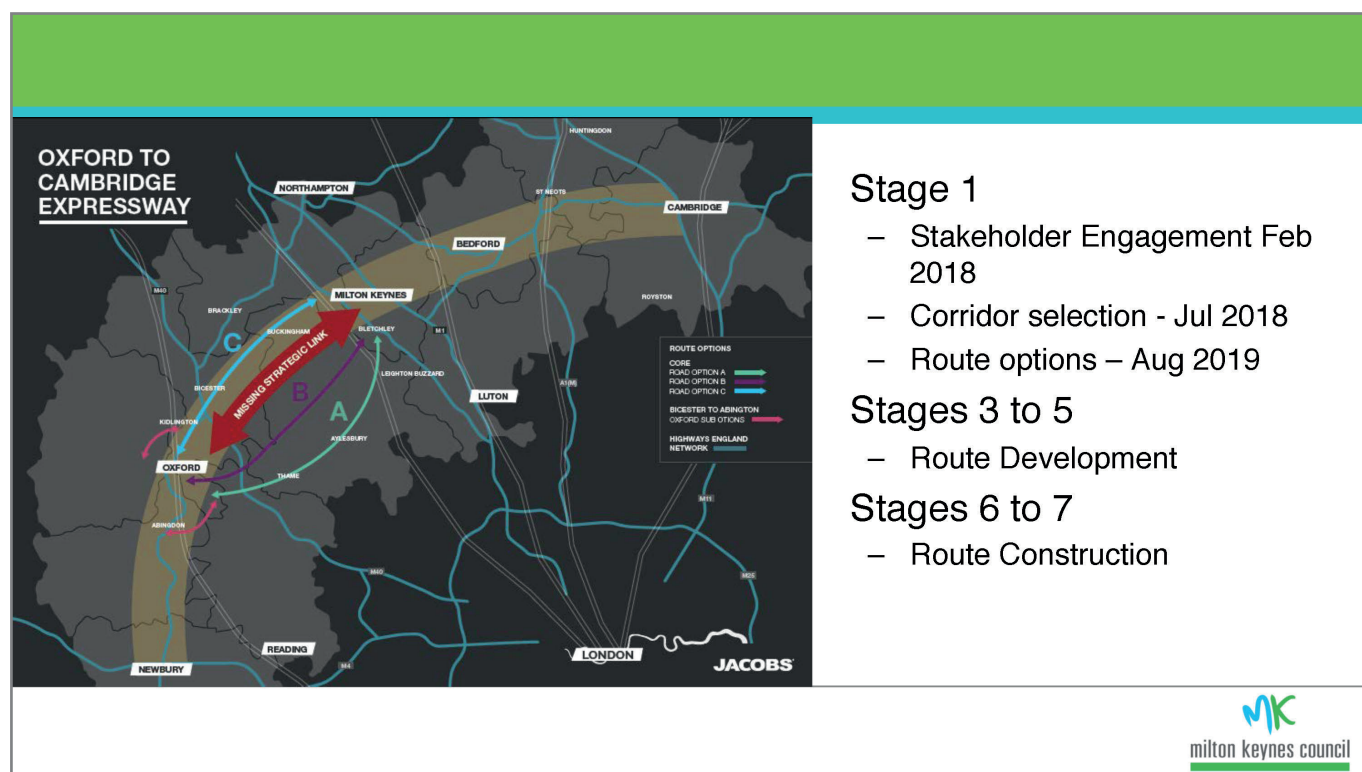
Objectives and Outcomes

Provide an effective network

- *Intelligent traffic management that adapts to changing conditions*
- *A proactive approach to asset management*
- *A network that is available, well maintained and safe for all users*



Duncan Sharkey, Corporate Director Place, MKC, then spoke about the regional context, including the new east-west rail and expressway links. He emphasised the importance of protecting journey times within MK, despite growing traffic congestion associated with inward commuting to MK and Central MK, and the future added pressures of increased housing in Plan:MK. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and future technologies would help, while increasing density would assist in improving public transport and reducing car dependency.

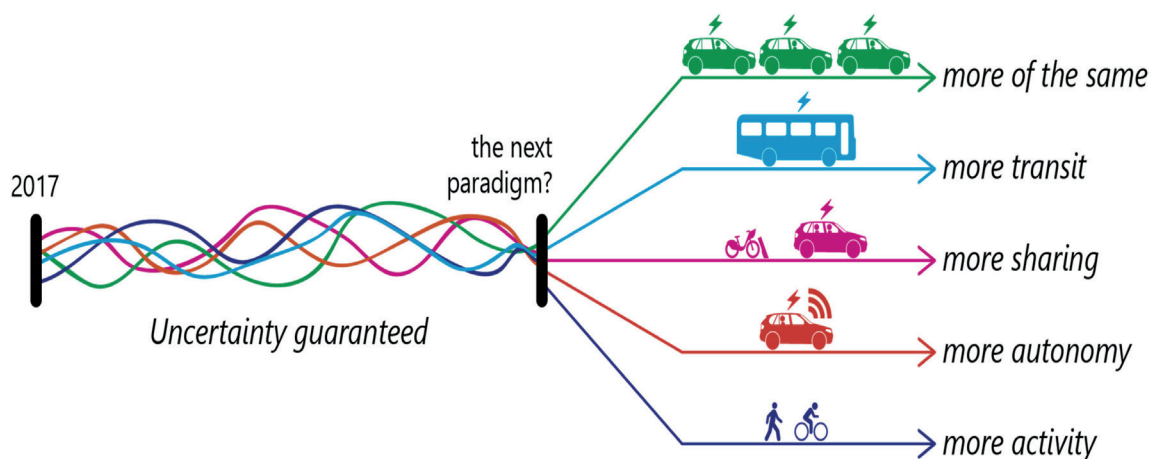


Duncan Sharkey. New infrastructure. East West Rail and the Expressway

MKC's third speaker was **Geoff Snelson**, Director of Strategy and Futures, who painted a picture of a successful MK in 2050 with a population of 400,000 or more. Quite reasonably he said that future mobility is full of uncertainty, but there will have to be less car dependency. Smart, shared, sustainable mobility will be presented as a service on demand, and data management will be important. Intensification of development will help improve public transport links. MK should be turning science fiction into science fact.

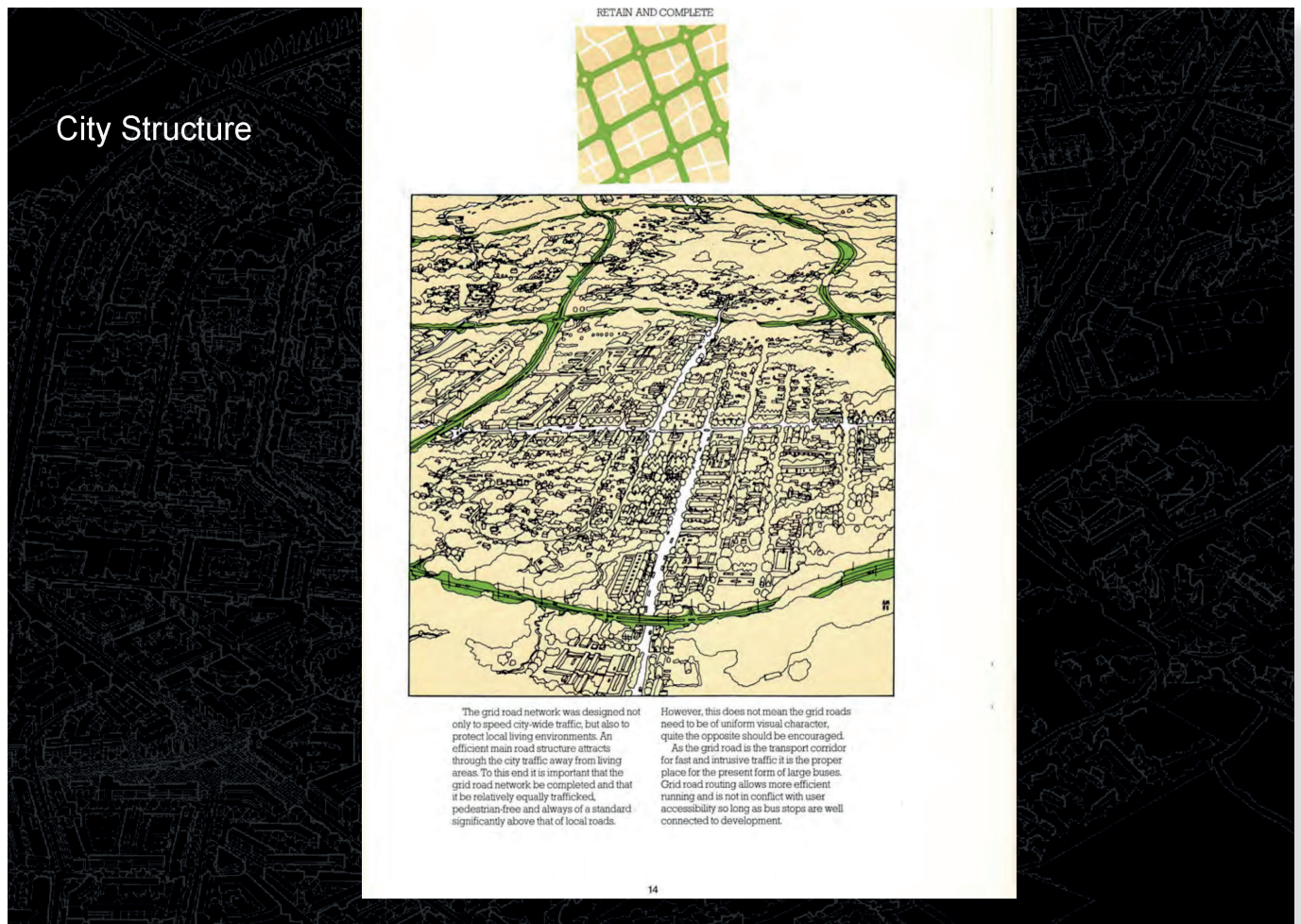
The three MKC speakers were followed by a break for tea and an opportunity for informal discussion of the issues that had been raised. One was left with the impression of a challenging and at times confusing plethora of ideas which seemingly lacked firm policies and strategies to help bring about the objectives in the short, medium or long term. Given that the Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy 2018-2036 is presently a draft consultation document it will doubtless address these concerns.

MK Futures Project Four: Smart, Shared, Sustainable Mobility



Other invited specialists then spoke, starting with **David Lock**, Strategic Planning Adviser and Founder, David Lock Associates. After confirming that the Chancellor has accepted the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) recommendations for the Oxford-MK-Cambridge arc, he showed the competition-winning proposal by 5th Studio with two new towns of 500,000, one at Sandy and the other nearer Oxford, to put MK's future in its regional context. Oxford and Cambridge each have a polycentric structure,

while MK's city structure provides a pattern of generous movement corridors. Although at present these mainly accommodate inward and outward commuting by car, they are adaptable to any transport mode. The Mobility Strategy is 3 steps along a 5 step journey; the gaps need filling in to make MK the city we want it to be.

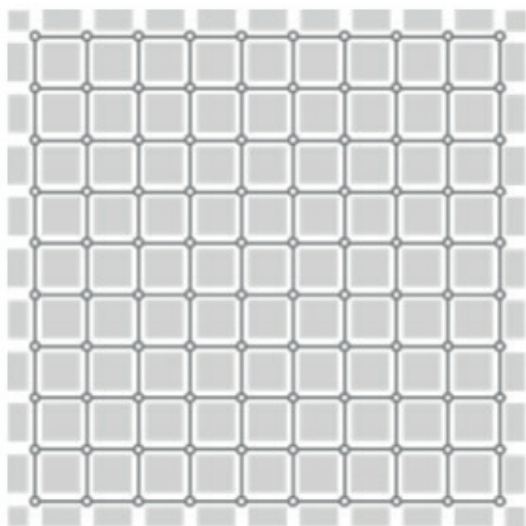


David Lock. City Structures

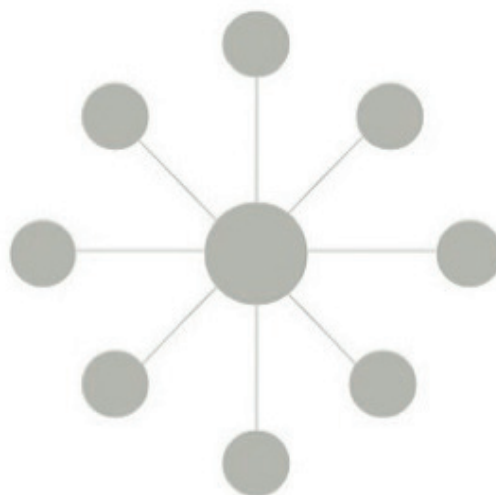
Rebecca Kurth, Chair, CMK Town Council, followed, and pointed out that the Local Transport Plan 3, despite excellent progress in some areas, had performed badly in terms of modal shift. She contrasted 'Radialville' (most traditional towns) with MK, which is 'Squaresville.' Why do most bus routes go via CMK, when they should serve a multiplicity of origins and destinations? The transport system should suit the town's plan, and not pretend it is different. Market forces will not deliver the right transport system; a new transport authority with greater powers is needed. Further reading:

- 'The Way to Squaresville: Dispersed Cities and the Network Effect' from *Transport for Suburbia: Beyond the Automobile Age* (2010) by Paul Mees
- 'The Network Effect is not Limited to Squaresville' from *HiTrans Best Practice Guide 2: Planning the Network* (2005) by Gustav Nielson
- 'The Joy of Grids' from *Human Transit* (2012) by Jarrett Walker

Urban Form & Structure



Squaresville



Radialville

Peter Winkelman, Chair, MK Dons. Public transport has not worked well in MK. The Mobility Strategy presents an opportunity to develop a scalable transport system which works on a grid, and to export it around the world.

A **question and answer session**, with comments, followed. These notes are based on the minutes taken by AECOM.

Comment: The grid system was developed with space for other transport modes such as trams. Do not weaken it by building commercial and domestic structures in this space – it reduces the potential of MK.

Q1: Nothing in the MS about a better bus based system – why not? Can we take back control of bus routes and not have to interchange in CMK?

A1: In spite of bus investment in the West Midlands, patronage there has continue to decline. The MS contains a hook to develop, in the short run, a network of premium high frequency routes. There is a need for MKC to join up better with bus operators to ensure better alignment between investment and services. A Combined Authority can have the powers to franchise bus services, but these powers are not currently available to unitary authorities like MK. MK can make use of voluntary partnerships to deliver improvements such as smart cards. It is always going to be challenging to deliver increased bus patronage when driving remains easy and parking is cheap. Changing behaviours takes time.

Comment: It is not like this. Profitable bus routes need to subsidise less profitable bus routes and deliver frequent and reliable routes. Behaviours are changed because of the attractiveness of the offer. MK should get the powers that enable a planning authority that can join up the city through an effective public transport system.

Q2: Providing mobility for all is more important than supporting growth. The impact of congestion on buses is not referenced in the Mobility Strategy, neither is how congestion will be addressed. Cars are mainly single occupancy in the peaks.

A2: MK needs to aim high, develop alliances and deliver a transport authority.

Q3: What is the impact of disrupters and how does MKC deal with them? Where will funding come from?

A3: Regulation does not keep up with the pace of technological change. MKC needs to work with companies to develop and deliver products that are right for the city and not just for the individual. Travel and transport is big business and it will attract investment. Whatever the outcomes, they must address the city's objectives.

Motor manufactures are looking at MaaS. A common porthole needs to be developed for people to be able to access these services.

Comment: There need to be more Park and Ride opportunities in MK. MK has to change or be changed. How long before MK needs a congestion charge or CMK has to be closed to traffic in the peak because it is so gridlocked? Then we would be forced to use public transport. Mobility leads to growth.

Q4: The grid system segregates mobility. Can MaaS flourish in a grid based city?

A4: Segregation is a positive and MaaS can thrive in MK. The existing infrastructure in the city facilitates use of different modes.

Comment: MK has convoluted bus stop locations. Friendlier customer service is needed from bus drivers. Why does the X service exist – does it even work? Why does it not stop at key locations in the city?

Comment: There needs to be a focus on MK's uniqueness and the Mobility Strategy needs to understand how mobility scenarios can be related to the city's unique structure. Analysis of the spatial framework of MK is needed as is the relationship between local, cross city, regional trips and how they interlink.

Comment: Pods travel at 15mph – how do they fit into the fabric of the city?

Q5: There is a disconnect between long term thinking and current activity / delivery in the city. For example, building on the space we have available to us will prevent the long term ambition for the city to be realised.

A5: There is a degree of uniformity in the long term. Some aspects of delivery now do need to be refined so they fit with the long term agenda.

It is a binary choice – is transport a utility (paid for through general taxation) or a service (paid for by the user)? The best cities in the world are those where transport is a public good paid for through taxation. We should make MK the first full MaaS city in the world delivered by many commercial operators, and let the market decide what works.

Comment: Regulation is not catching up with technology fast enough. It is not an overnight process. But MK has lots of potential..



Electric Bus



Self-driving vehicles. Source: Transport Systems Catapult, UK.

Contact

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