

New | Arrival Towns | Cities

Lab 1 | Milton Keynes



The present report is a documentation of the insights related to New Towns and migration from the two-day New Town Lab in Milton Keynes and it should be read within that context. The lab was the first of five events as part of the International New Town Institute's two-year project "New Towns Arrival Cities". European New Towns, built by the welfare state to accommodate growing urban populations, all share a social democratic background and planned nature; today, they all face similar challenges as they struggle to adapt to rapidly growing and diversifying populations.

The New Towns Arrival Cities project, funded by the European Union as part of its Europe for Citizens Programme, is a platform for knowledge exchange between six European New Towns on the topic of accommodating migration. It consists of five two-day "New Town Lab" events in five partner cities: Milton Keynes, UK (November 22-23, 2017), Sabaudia, Italy (May 16-17, 2018), Grand Paris Sud, France (October 2018), Vällingby, Sweden (December 13-14, 2018) and Nissewaard, The Netherlands (February 2019).

The five chapters of the report reflect the main topics addressed in each of the project's five New Towns that will hold a lab, with the aim of establishing a structure that would make the results of the five labs relevant to the other partner cities and easily comparable. Instead of offering definitive conclusions, the report presents the main challenges, insights, observations and questions that came out of the presentations and discussions, with the intention of providing a base for further investigation.

New Towns Arrival Cities project website: <http://www.newtowninstitute.org/spip.php?rubrique149>

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Milton Keynes

an introduction

Milton Keynes is a New Town built from the 1970s initially to relieve housing pressure in London. Originally home to a largely homogenous population of skilled workers from the capital city, it has recently undergone a prominent ethnic shift: the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) population has doubled between 2001 and 2011, reaching 26%. The city is also growing rapidly and is projected to reach 400,000 inhabitants by 2031. However, like many new towns, Milton Keynes is facing an identity problem. Despite strong grassroots cultural organizations, it suffers from a perceived lack of culture. *How can the city's thriving cultural scene be reflected in its image? And how can its growing cultural diversity be expressed in its identity and main programme?*

City origins

Milton Keynes was one of the last New Towns built in the UK under the post-war 1946 New Towns Act and is unique because of its scale (89 km²) and strong urban vision. Located equidistant from London, Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge, its position has given it a geographic and economic advantage, contributing to its strong economy.

The 1970s Masterplan: a City in a Forest

Milton Keynes's original 1970 Masterplan envisaged a city of 250,000 people, an urban utopia of equality and a city of leisure and culture. The early days of the Development Corporation saw huge investment in infrastructure and the development of a unique 'Framework' of grid roads, separate pedestrian and cycling 'Redways', and corridors of linear parks and waterways in which the housing, employment and other buildings and land uses were dispersed. The city's low density and respect for existing historic towns and villages, plus its generous green space (some 26% of all land use) has given it a feel of a rural city, often called a 'City of Trees' or a 'City in a Forest'.

Rapid Growth

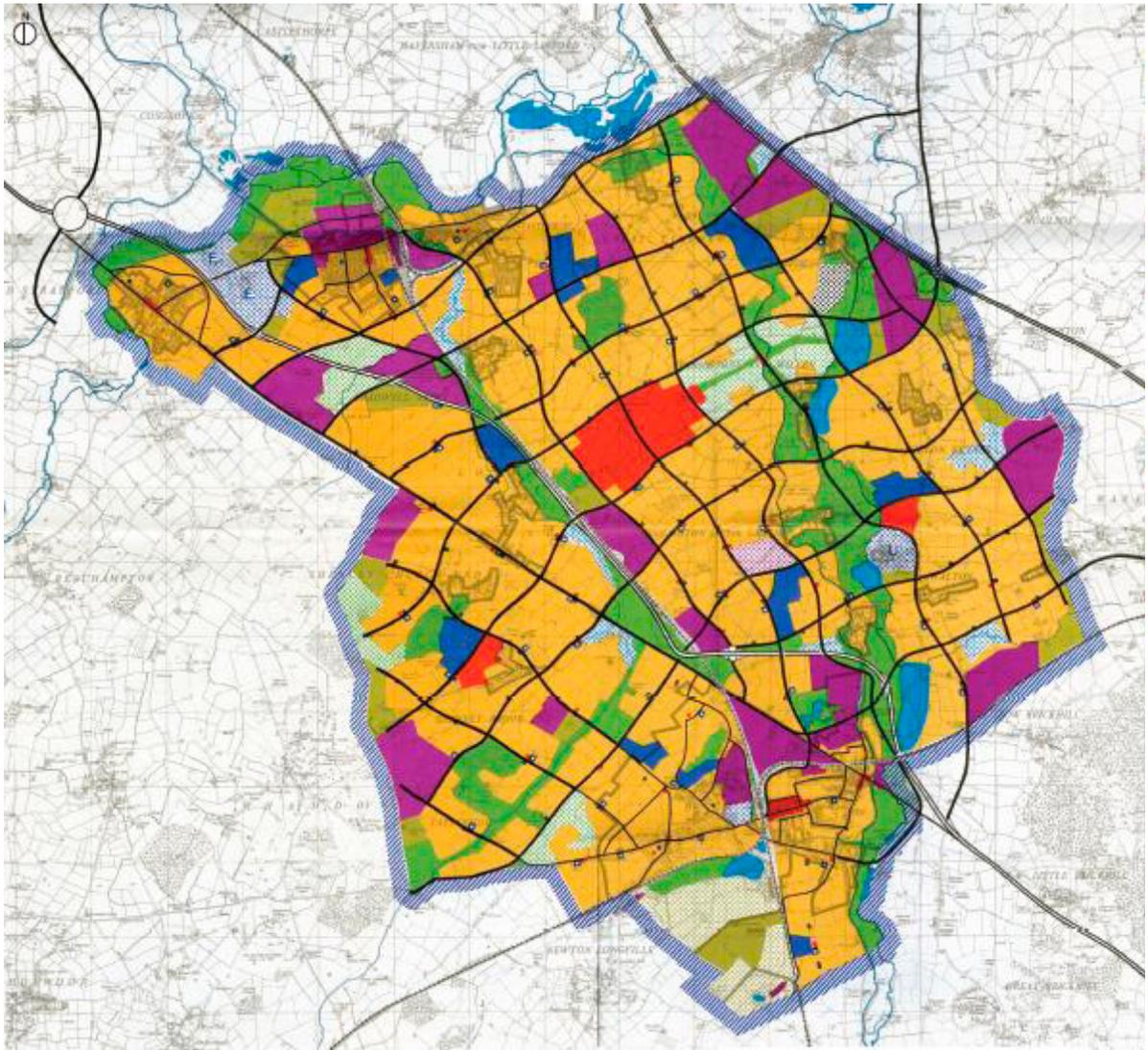
Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Milton Keynes continued to follow the Masterplan with very few changes, but with commercial developers replacing the Development Corporation as major housebuilder. Then, in 2005, a new Growth Agenda for the city was announced and a change in housing density on the flanks of the city was promoted to meet the new target of a city of 350,000. Ten years later, a new Local Plan (Plan:MK) is currently in consultation to anticipate even more growth, maybe even to 500,000 people. Many of the residents are rightly concerned about what that means for the city's uniquely designed framework, which they have come to call their home. In response, a MK2050 Futures Commission was set up, and its 2016 report made several recommendations to the city about future development.

Improving the Cultural Programme

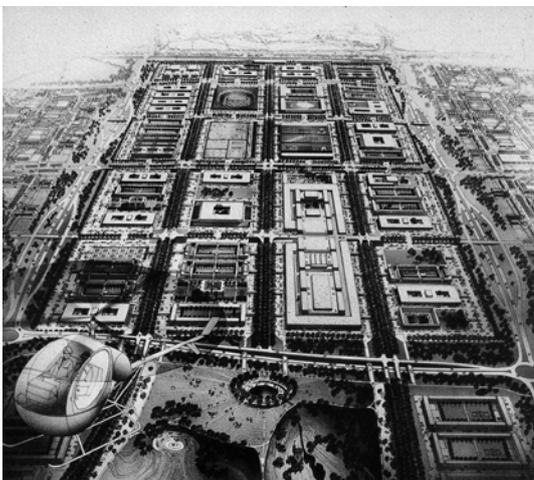
The Growth Agenda and MK2050 Futures Commission has highlighted that, if the Milton Keynes is to transform itself into a respected European and International city, it needs a step-change in culture. Milton Keynes does not have a coherent annual citywide programme, and it lacks depth and breadth. Moreover, young and emerging talent have no (affordable) venues in what is a highly commercialised city centre. As well, the cultural make-up does not reflect the rapid demographic diversity that Milton Keynes is experiencing (up from 9% BME – Black and Minority Ethnic – in 2011 to 26% in 2016).

Questions for the New Town Lab

- *How have new incoming migrants and communities contributed to shaping Milton Keynes's culture?*
- *How can Milton Keynes's cultural diversity be positively reflected in the city's policies, urbanism, and identity?*
- *How can migration, identity and culture help Milton Keynes to develop into The Creative and Cultural City?*



The 1970 plan for Milton Keynes. Basic planning principles: a grid pattern of main roads serving dispersed land uses, a city centre, system of linear parks, overlapping catchments, activity centres, pedestrian and cycle routes. 22,000 acres for a population of 250,000.



1974 vision for Milton Keynes's city centre, with 2017 aerial photo of the same area. Images source: presentation by Will Cousins during the lab. 1974 vision drawn by Helmut Jacoby for MKDC.

1. Art, Heritage and Culture

events provide a platform for dialogue and expression

Challenges

The influx of migrant populations to originally homogeneous New Towns such as Milton Keynes has brought a cultural diversity that can contribute to growth and richness, but at the same time can cause social problems if not dealt with properly. Migrants need to be known and understood to be recognized and valued. Communication is often a challenge in this respect because of a lack of confidence and sense of identity among migrant communities, and because of a lack of knowledge about other cultures. In Milton Keynes, art, heritage and culture are being used as platforms for inter-cultural dialogue, with the aim of building mutual understanding and acceptance.

Insights and observations

How can the dominant shopping culture make more room for the people`s culture?

One obstacle to giving more room for ethnic communities to showcase their cultures is the dominance of Milton Keynes's shopping culture. The Town Centre (shopping mall) is one of the city's key assets. It is a well-known regional public destination, its modernist architecture has a heritage status, and it helps to drive the economy. However, the Council wants to move beyond this dominant shopping culture to bring more attention to the city's other cultural assets such as its art, heritage, architecture, landscape and, most importantly, the culture of the people themselves. During the last five years, the Council has been marketing large-scale city events to highlight these cultural aspects.



Milton Keynes's architectural heritage. From left to right: Ashton House with porte cochère (1978-9, Central MK); MK Council Offices (1977-9, Central MK); former royal train shed (1889, Wolverton); Church of St. Peter and St. Paul (early 14th C, Olney). Images from Simon Peart.

How can cultural events act as a platform for communities to develop their identity and to connect with each other?

One of the earliest and perhaps most well-known community art project in Milton Keynes is the concrete cows, which aimed to bring new communities together in the early 70s. More recently, the Citizen Ship project brought a bus shelter-like structure to five different sites in Milton Keynes, where people could connect and develop slogans for their city. Produced by Free art collective and architecture office Modern Architecture, the installation reflected the social imaginary of the city and broke down barriers to public participation and engagement by bringing art from the gallery to public spaces. Art in the Park, an annual event organized by the Milton Keynes Islamic Arts Heritage and Culture organization (MKIAHC), displays the traditional food, art, music and clothing of numerous ethnic groups: Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, Hindus, and others. MKIAHC founder Anouar Kassim, MBE explains that people's interest in artwork and food creates a common ground for dialogue, allows communities to show their identity, and strengthens their sense of belonging in Milton Keynes. Communities connect through shared values such as family and education, and experiences of arriving in a new city. Since the event began nine years ago, he says, Muslim communities – particularly children and women with headscarves – are much more accepted. Similarly, the annual Africa Diaspora Day, organized by Global Outreach Foundation (GOF:MK) offers a platform for African migrants to display their traditional cultures. The event particularly helps to strengthen the identity and confidence of young African migrants who struggle with low self esteem because of the media's negative portrayal of the poverty in their countries. From the Council's perspective, there need to be spaces that can accommodate such large events. It ran into problems when the International Festival had to be moved outside of the city centre because of public realm street furniture such as the car parking bollards and electric metre chargers were in the way.

Who organizes cultural initiatives?

Since its beginnings, Milton Keynes has had a strong grassroots arts and culture scene built up by volunteer groups. Today, since the Milton Keynes Council culture department is only three people, it relies heavily on these external "delivery organizations". They include MKIAHC (which grew organically as an umbrella organization for various ethnic groups), GOF:MK, and the Arts and Heritage Alliance (which includes more than 40 organizations). This "fragmented" cultural policy could be advantageous, as a shift needs to take place from the "top-down" approach of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation to a more "bottom-up" model of cultural production. If these initiatives are supported by the Council and by a policy of accommodation, providing neutral places for community initiatives, these groups can also become more visible. It is a viable alternative to large-scale cultural events organized by the Council. From the French perspective, however, supporting religious organizations as "delivery organizations" can pose a problem for the separation of government and religion, and overlooks conflicting values such as the equality between men and women. From Anouar Kassim's (MKIAHC) experience, however, arts and heritage are a platform for voicing these kinds of issues.



Eid Festival 2013 in Campbell Park, organized by the MKIAHC. Photo by Karen Kodish

2. Public Space

a place where communities can meet and become visible

Challenges

Public spaces are valuable as places that can accommodate the activities of local groups, and as meeting places for everyday communication and socialization. Paradoxically, the increasing population density of Milton Keynes's grid square neighbourhoods has corresponded with a decline of these communal facilities as local authority budgets reduce rapidly, a situation that is only made more severe with the general privatization and commercialization of public space. But, with the population increase and more newcomers to the city, there is a growing need to retain meeting places. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods such as Fishermead, Netherfield and Conniburrow, troubled youth who already experience cultural isolation are found roaming the streets for a lack of anywhere else to go. *Why are public spaces disappearing, and what can be done about it?*

Insights and observations

Increasing density generally supports the functioning of public facilities. Why is that not the case in Milton Keynes?

Density is said to be necessary to support public facilities. That has been the case in Gellerup, for instance. While public facilities closed soon after the city's construction in the 1970s for lack of demand and changing preferences, future densification will bring many new services. In Milton Keynes, there has been an opposite dynamic, with facilities closing as density increases. The success of the Town Centre is one of the causes – pulling activity from the surrounding neighbourhoods – as are England's developer culture and cuts to public funds. Urban design also plays a role; it is not just about building higher density but having a variety of building types with strong connections with the surrounding public space.



The Netherfield Local Centre, where most shops have closed.

Can the private shopping mall function as a public space?

Originally, Milton Keynes's Town Centre was planned as a bright and open public meeting place, but has since become a private shopping mall that closes in the evening. Although certain shopping centres offer cultural experiences beyond buying things, inviting people to linger, it remains questionable whether such heavily programmed commercial places can function as public space. In terms of accommodation, the shopping centre's commercial rates make it unaffordable for independent and ethnic shops, pushing them out to the food centre (where pedestrian traffic is low) or the outdoor market.



The Milton Keynes Market, with the modernist Town Centre behind. Photo by Chris Guy - gidsey.com

Who will fund the construction of public space and facilities?

Milton Keynes has developed a partnership approach in the form of "Planning Obligations" to funding public projects. Under national planning regulations, the Council can ask a developer to contribute towards providing infrastructure. In the expansions areas, developers pay a "tariff" contribution to infrastructure at a standard rate. The Tariff is designed to generate £310m from the development of 15,000 dwellings, which is then spent on roads, schools, open spaces, libraries and other public facilities. Public art is also privately funded, for instance the Black Horse statue outside Lloyds Court, which was commissioned by the Development Corporation and financed by Lloyds Bank. The 1400-seat MK Theatre, on the other hand, was constructed with national Lottery funding. There are also commercial leisure developments such as Xscape, with cinemas, indoor skiing and skydiving, and shopping. Neighbourhood Parish Councils, the most local level of government, can provide another means of funding public facilities. By raising dedicated taxes, they can help their communities to plan and fund public projects (see more about Parish Councils in Chapter 5).

What is the impact of mass communication and technology on the need for public spaces?

With the rise of mass communication, participation and gathering on the basis of shared interests has been decreasing in Milton Keynes. As Mark Clapson pointed out, part of the decline is likely because much of our interaction no longer happens in local places but across far distances; interest groups can be local, national or global. Although part of the city's original grid-based urban design was a seamless "non-place" public realm through which one can move freely, associative activity was more successful when it was sponsored by the Development Corporation.

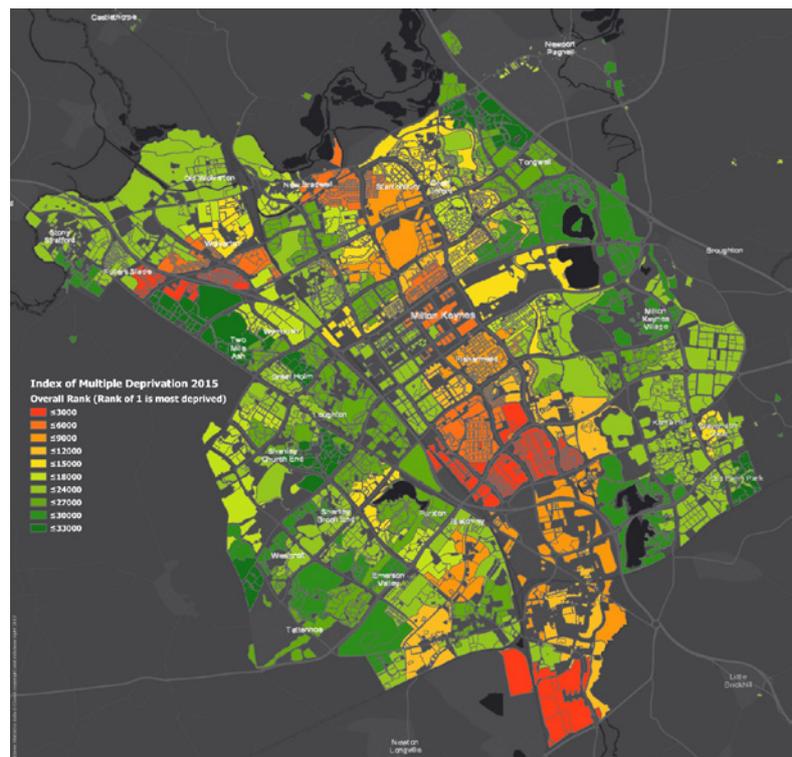
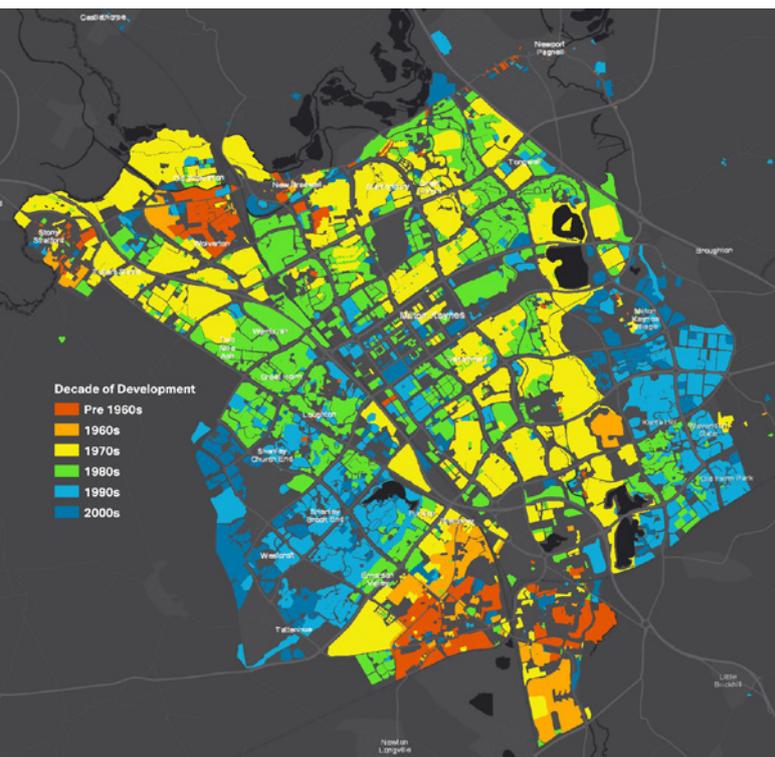
3. Adapting the welfare state model changing demands for housing and transportation

Challenges

How can the positive qualities of Milton Keynes's original urban plan be kept while adapting to social change and densification? The goal of the Development Corporation's vision was to build a green city with easy mobility and freedom of choice, qualities that are still central to its future success. It was envisioned to be what Milton Keynes planner Derek Walker called a "circuit board city" (after Melvin Webber) with a "non-place urban realm". Seamless transportation would encourage social mixing and integration. This vision was implemented in the form of a uniform grid with roundabouts, a planning approach that also provided a clear and systematic way of converting a field into a town.

However, because the plan was designed for the private car – the grid was too dispersed for mass public transportation – mobility has become an obstacle to social integration. Those who cannot drive, such as the elderly, or those who are too young or cannot afford a car, cannot easily move from place to place; there is no tram, and buses stop running after 21:00. Bus reliability is also compromised by congested routes at peak times and poor-quality information, and a bus ride from Fullers Slade to Bletchley is 1h10 by bus and only 15 minutes by car. Cheap parking and the ease of multi-destination journeys by car also contribute to the unpopularity of public transport. Culture plays a role in mobility, as well. Many new migrants are not familiar with the grid system or are uncomfortable with roundabouts and rely on taxis.

Besides transportation, poverty and living conditions in certain grid square neighbourhoods are a growing problem. Currently, says David Gleeson (Your:MK), eleven of Milton Keynes's estates are categorized among the top 15% most deprived nationally. Seven of these estates together have around 6,500 properties and over 20,000 people. The number of homeless households has risen by 128% since 2013, and approximately 800 families are housed in temporary accommodation. Housing is becoming unaffordable, and many who were born and raised in Milton Keynes cannot afford to buy a house. Prices are about 10x the average salary and viable mortgages are at 4x the average salary. Reported crime has also increased by 14% since 2016. Moreover, individual units as well as common areas in deprived estates are poorly maintained.



Milton Keynes's oldest neighbourhoods are generally the ones that are the most deprived. Images source: David Lock Associates

Insights and observations

How can public transportation and overall mobility be improved?

Milton Keynes's grid is by nature dispersed to distribute land use, and poses a challenge to retrofitting with mass rapid transit. It will require prioritising one transit corridor over another, explains Council urban planner Will Cousins, changing the original uniformity of the grid. Following the example of Aarhus and Gellerup, where a future tram line will connect Gellerup with Aarhus's city centre, implementing a tram system could be a viable option. Although public transport is lacking in Milton Keynes, the city does have a continuous system of pedestrian and bicycle "Redways". Separated from roads with level changes and broad underpasses, they were designed to protect pedestrians from vehicular traffic. While certain areas feel unsafe because of over-greening and cyclists are sometimes too separate from the general activity of the street, the Redways are generally perceived as safe. The Council has recently invested £300,000 for the promotion of cycling culture to "animate" the Redways. Dutch cycling culture is exemplary in this regard. In Nissewaard, for instance, migrants are encouraged to use bikes with cycling lessons given by Dutch college students, a strategy that could prove useful in other New Towns as well.

What are the social and physical factors of neighbourhood deprivation, and what are the implications for regeneration?

Neighbourhood deprivation is closely linked with transient communities and lacking social support structures, which is in turn affected by tenancy and housing affordability. Originally, all housing on deprived estates such as Fishermead and Netherfield was built by the Development Corporation for social rent. Through Right to Buy, about half of the stock is now privately owned, a significant part of which is privately rented. Private landlords, short rental contracts and multi-tenant occupation have led to transient populations and poor living conditions. The common areas are also poorly maintained because of a lack of ownership. In contrast, communities are more stable in neighbourhoods that are better off. In Wolverton, as Roger Kitchen (founder of Living Archive) points out, the housing stock may be of poor quality, but people love living there, and feel that they belong. The same is true of Fullers Slade, which has been slated for demolition. People are happy in areas, says David Gleeson, because they know the people around them, and because there is a local support network of family members, doctors, schools, and work opportunities. For a successful regeneration, then, tenure and social structures could be said to be much more important than architecture. "Put a deprived and poor person in a shiny new house," says Gleeson, "and they'll still be deprived and poor." On the other hand, architectural heritage is not unimportant, especially in a city such as Milton Keynes that prides itself on being "different by design", with heritage-listed modernist architecture to boast. Much of this architectural heritage lies in the city's oldest and most deprived areas such as Netherfield. *Regeneration therefore needs to address both social and physical aspects: How can the effects of neoliberal policies such as "Right to Buy" on people's sense of ownership of individual and common spaces be addressed? How can communities be kept intact when they might have to be temporarily housed somewhere else? How can housing be physically renewed without losing its unique architectural qualities? How can social structures be safeguarded?*



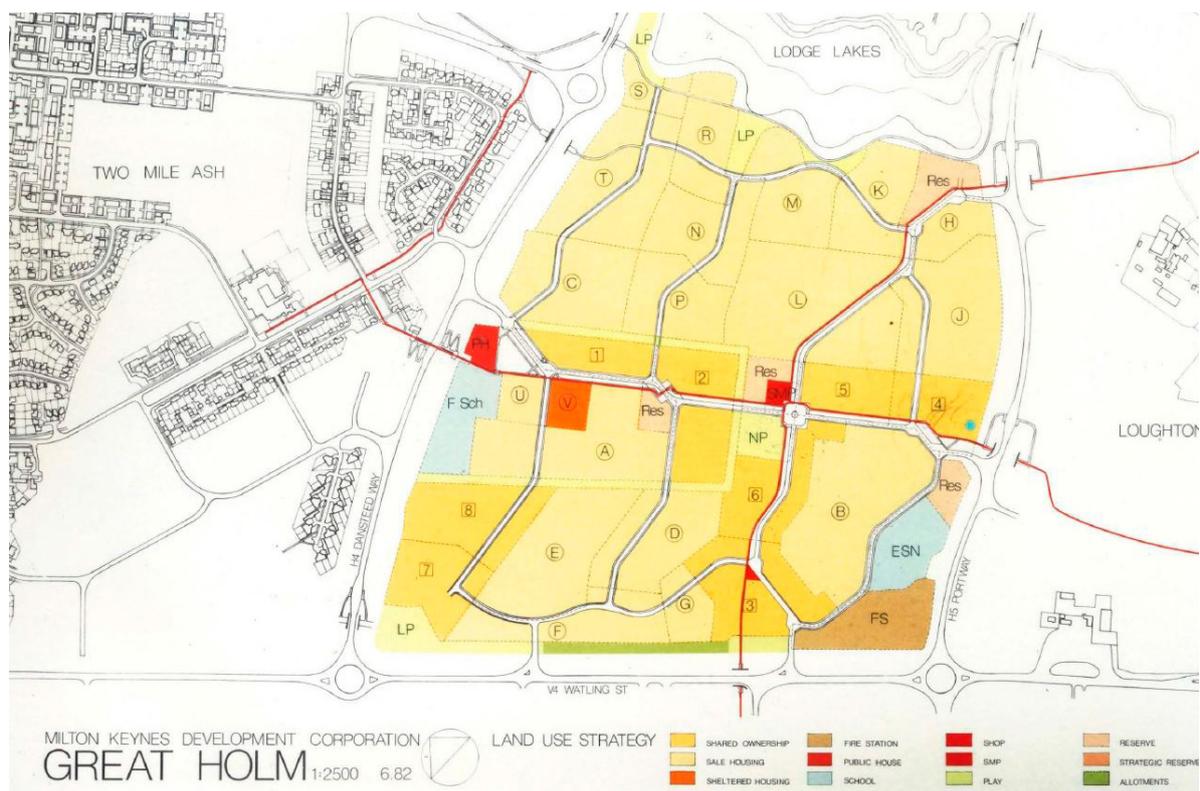
Netherfield's original modernist social housing, listed in the Heritage Register. Photo by Tim Skelton.

How can neighbourhoods be better planned to build stable and diverse communities?

Building healthy neighbourhoods has much to do with mixed housing typologies, wealth categories, tenancy and ownership. This mixed approach was tested in the Great Holm area, with the aim of building long-term resilience and diversity. Facilities include a pub next to a school, a community home, an elderly home, and a handicap home. The residential development is a mix of self-build plots, shared ownership housing, for-sale, low-income housing, bungalows, and blocks of high-density plots.

Who plans and funds neighbourhood regeneration?

Because of the complexity of the social issues to address, and given the Council's limited capacity, neighbourhood regeneration requires the cooperation of multiple government organizations and of the residents themselves. The Conniburrow estate, for instance, received a £1 million from the National Lottery in 2015 to develop their own community regeneration programme during a 10-year period. In the Newport Pagnell district, the residents worked with the local Parish Council to develop a neighbourhood plan with recreation facilities, a school, and the development of roughly 1,000 dwellings to finance the facilities. It was voted on and approved by a public referendum. Local Parishes can also play a role in financing community projects by implementing a special tax. They are also given a small budget from higher levels of government to spend as they would like.



The Great Holm mixed-use plan. Image source: presentation by Will Cousins during the lab. Plan drawn by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation.

4. Building a positive narrative

understanding cultural differences

Challenges

Milton Keynes has experienced a rapid diversification of its population, as Mark Clapson's statistics show: the black and minority ethnic groups have doubled from 13.2% in 2001 to 26.1% in 2011, and the number of residents born outside of the UK has also doubled in the same period from 9.9% to 18.5%. At the same time, there has been an increase of race hate (up 23%) and religiously-motivated crimes (up 83%).

These changes have not come without cultural challenges. Islamic women who ask for a separate swimming pool for religious reasons are told to use the general pool. African customs of showing respect with lowered eyes is often interpreted by English police as a sign of guilt. Young African refugees, with parents who work long hours, are often left with no one to speak to and roam the parks late at night. They are sometimes bullied at school, and suffer from low self-esteem because of the negative media portrayal of the poverty in their countries. These problems are not unique to Milton Keynes, being felt even more severely in places such as Grand Paris Sud, where tens of thousands of migrants have come. In the context of mass unemployment and the attacks in Paris, the finger is often pointed at migrant communities.

While Milton Keynes is becoming increasingly diverse, however, the brochure picture of the city still portrays the ideal of suburban living with a townhouse, garden, car, and a white nuclear family. People buy into these perspectives, only to find out that they do not reflect reality. There is a need for a new narrative, which should be developed with the communities who live there and who want to have an influence on their city. A key challenge is that New Towns are built with a very strong vision, and the people who first choose to move there cling to that vision, becoming defensive of it. However, a city built for the society of the 60s cannot answer to today's needs.

Insights and observations

How can cultural misunderstandings be addressed?

In Milton Keynes, the Council relies heavily on its "delivery organizations" such as AHA-MK members, GOF:MK and MKIAHC to carry out community work. For instance, GOF:MK organizes a monthly Breakfast Club where migrants and locals can voice their concerns about cultural differences that might otherwise be offensive. With one-on-one conversations, guest speakers, Q&A sessions, and support from police and various other professionals, questions are dealt with such as why people cover their heads, or why people from certain backgrounds are stopped and searched. Another initiative of GOF:MK is a football club for youth and for adults, which is a way of teaching anger management skills, teamwork, listening, respect and time keeping. MKIAHC's Art in the Park is also a way of creating common ground around artwork and food. While such events are effective platforms for dialogue, though, finding ways to reconcile different values on topics such as gender equality could remain problematic.

What kind of new narrative could reflect the reality of Milton Keynes?

Migrant communities as well as youth could be more involved in envisioning the future of the city, thereby recognizing the importance of their contribution. One Indian resident emphasized the need for more recognition for the cultural diversity in Milton Keynes; some newcomers are unaware of the market, he says, because it is not promoted enough. Learning about other cultures can in fact be an enriching experience, and can show that we have more in common than we might think. Creating involvement opportunities for Milton Keynes's youth might also help to keep them from going abroad for career and education prospects, or might welcome them to return to start a family.

5. Government-citizen relations

building trust is key to establishing a dialogue

Challenges

The Development Corporation, which has been described as a “benevolent dictator”, implemented its vision in a top-down city planning process. Since that time, the population has grown from roughly 60,000 to over 250,000, and the Council’s resources have diminished, requiring a more “bottom-up” democratic approach. *Who sets the strategy, and how can citizens’ voices be heard and implemented in future plans?* Engaging with communities to see what their needs are can be a challenging process, due in large part to a lack of trust. Especially in deprived communities, there is often a lack of confidence, cynicism, and a feeling of being let down. Moreover, growing social inequality and the municipality’s position of power can widen that gap.

Insights and observations

How can a democratic planning process be implemented?

One way of giving citizens more influence on the city’s future plans is to widen the legislative register. Lowering the minimum voting age from 18 to 16 would allow young people to be more involved, which might encourage them to stay. Voter apathy also needs to be addressed. In some estates, where residents do attend local meetings and express their opinions, they lose the will to vote, partly because of what they believe politicians will or will not do. While voting should be encouraged as a way of participation in shaping the city, though, it can present a dilemma, because residents are taking decisions for people who will live in those areas in the next five, ten or fifteen years.

How can the trust of residents be gained, so that their voices can be heard?

Establishing trust between the Council and the citizens is key for allowing community members to participate in the planning process. David Gleeson (Your:MK) explains that developing a regeneration programme requires engaging with communities to see what their needs are and to build a relationship with them. Some people feel uncomfortable at public meetings, for instance because they cannot read or write, and are better approached individually at home. In general, significant time and capacity is needed to develop these relationships. Having “neutral” people in the community is also helpful, as they are more approachable than Council members and prevent residents from feeling threatened. For instance, GOF:MK’s African Forum programme bridges the gap between the Police and the African community by having a core group of elders work with the Police. This group then becomes the first point of contact for young people who face problems with the police, and they will in turn reach out to the parents.

What role can Parish Councils / local governmental organizations play in participatory community development?

Milton Keynes is unique for being completely “parished”; every neighbourhood or estate has its local government organization called a “Town or Parish Council”, which is a tool that can be used for local engagement. However, Town and Parish Councils are seldom representative of their communities - in terms of gender, ethnicity and age – often because those who have time to sit on councils are retired. A few are well connected to their communities, but many are not. In addition to the Town and Parish Councils, then, the City must also rely on informal interest groups. *How can Town and Parish Councils better engage their communities?* One Parish Councillor pointed to the “participatory visioning” model used in Portland, Oregon as a grassroots-level approach to involving people in bringing out the values that they consider important.

Conclusion

The challenge of accommodating migrant communities in Milton Keynes and allowing them to become an integral and positive part of the city's culture and identity touches upon numerous factors, many of which have to do with building strong relationships between the residents and the Council, and between the various cultural groups themselves. To do so, there needs to be trust, acceptance and recognition of other cultures, an understanding among ethnic groups of their own cultural identities, and confidence among residents to express their opinions. *For all these aspects, communication is key; but how, where, and by whom?*

Art, Heritage and Culture is used as a communication platform in Milton Keynes. The ethnic art, music and food in events such as Art in the Park and African Diaspora Day draw people of different cultures together, providing an opportunity for dialogue. Such events are organized by local cultural organizations such as the Milton Keynes Islamic Arts Heritage and Culture organization and Global Outreach.

Further discussion:

- *If community cultural groups act as “delivery organizations” for cultural events on behalf of the Council, what problems does it pose for the separation between religion and state?*
- *To what extent can art and culture events address cultural misunderstandings such as the question of gender equality?*

Public Spaces and facilities provide settings for meeting and dialogue between cultural groups. These include community and youth centres, public parks and squares. With increasing density, the attractiveness of the commercial centre, growing developer culture and cuts to public funding, Milton Keynes's public facilities have been disappearing. Strategies for building new facilities include a partnership approach with developers in the form of Planning Obligations, and some neighbourhoods are taking the initiative to develop their own neighbourhood plans.

Further discussion:

- *To what extent can heavily programmed commercial spaces such as shopping malls fulfil the function of public space?*
- *How can increasing density be implemented in a way that best supports public facilities?*

Although the Milton Keynes Development Corporation's original plan for the city envisioned seamless mobility that would make it easy to meet anyone anywhere in a circuit board-like “nonplace” public domain, this 1960s **welfare state model needs to be adapted** for the 21st century. Car-based transportation limits the mobility of the young, elderly and anyone who cannot afford a car, and housing that used to be subsidized has been privatized, with unaffordable prices and private rentals contributing to forming transient communities and a lack of a sense of ownership of common areas. With fewer stable relations in certain communities and reduced mobility, some areas suffer from isolation, poverty and general deprivation. Adapting the urban model includes regeneration both on a social and architectural level, building developments with mixed wealth groups, tenancy and housing typologies, implementing mass rapid transport systems that are more accessible to all age and ethnic groups, and improving the “Redways” network of pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Further discussion:

- *How can the original urban plan be adapted in a way that keeps the positive qualities of the original – the city's flexible urban grid, modernist housing, green spaces, etc?*
- *How can communities and social structures be safeguarded during regeneration?*
- *How can the effects of neoliberal policies such as “Right to Buy” on people's sense of ownership of individual and common spaces be addressed?*

Building acceptance and understanding of the city's migrant communities also has to do with establishing a **new narrative** for Milton Keynes that reflects its culturally diverse reality. While the current “brochure picture” of the city still portrays the original image of suburban living and a white

nuclear family, more attention could be given to the market and to cultural events. If it is to reflect the reality of its multicultural population, it should be developed in collaboration with local communities.

Further discussion:

- *How is the city's narrative manifested, and how does it compare with reality?*

For residents to participate in forming the future narrative and plans for the city, however, they need to express their opinions and the values that are important to them. Strong **government-citizen relations** are needed for the Council to take residents' voices into account. However, there is often a lack of trust and confidence, especially in the deprived neighbourhoods (where communication is most important). Making voting as accessible as possible, communicating with residents through "neutral" community workers, and engaged and representative local government organizations are among the approaches that could allow the Council to engage with the citizens.

Further discussion:

- *How can voting allow current residents to be as involved in city planning as possible, without impeding the implementation of regeneration plans for future residents?*
- *How can trust be built between deprived communities and the city Council?*
- *What role can local government organizations such as Parish Councils play in developing city plans?*

Appendix 1

New Town Lab Programme

November 22 - Tour Day

(Open to participants of EU Partner Cities)

10.30 City Centre Walking Tour

(Departure from Holiday Inn, Central Milton Keynes)

Tim Skelton (MK Forum) will lead a Public Art walking tour of the city centre highlighting the key pieces of public art and their importance to Milton Keynes. He will talk about the importance of these pieces in building a sense of place and identity within new communities from the city's early days to the more 'corporate' pieces added to the city centre in the 1980s and 1990s. Milton Keynes's more than 230 public art pieces have been recently recognized as a collection in its own right, enabling it to be regarded as one of the key 'framework' attributes that gives Milton Keynes its character, and placing greater emphasis on how works should be commissioned in the future.



1 **The Space Between**
Ellis O'Connell, 1992



2 **3B Series No 2**
Bernard Schottlander, 1966-68



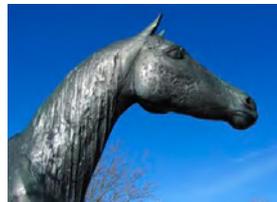
3 **October**
Wendy Taylor, 1980



4 **The Whisper**
André Wallace, 1984



4 **Fiction, Non-Fiction and Reference**
Fionnuala Boyd and Les Evans, 1984



5 **Black Horse**
Dame Elisabeth Frink, 1978



6 **Circle of Light**
Liliane Lijn, 1980



7 **MK Rose**
Gordon Young, 2011



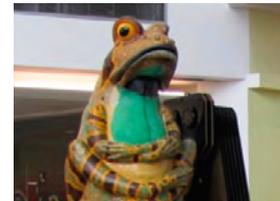
8 **Light Pyramid**
Liliane Lijn, 2012



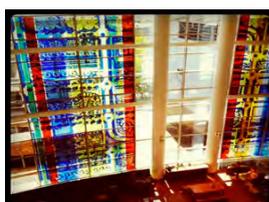
9 **Dangerous Liaisons**
Philip Jackson, 1995



10 **Sitting on History**
Bill Woodrow, 1996



11 **Time Machine**
Kit Williams, 2002



11 **Midsummer Art Glass**
Anne Smyth, 2000



12 **Essence**
Wendy Taylor, 1982

12.00 Welcome and Orientation

(Location: Saxon Court)

Shane Downer (MK Council) and Noel James (MK City Discovery Centre) welcome the EU E4C partners to Milton Keynes to go through our programme.

12.30 Interaction 1: Community Language Service

(Location: Saxon Court)

Anne-Marie Brown from the MK Community Language Service will discuss how interpreters and translators are used in Milton Keynes and the diversity of the communities they serve. Today, over 60 languages are represented to meet the needs of the different influxes of people from across the globe who come to make Milton Keynes their home.

13.30 Interaction 2: Milton Keynes Islamic Arts, Heritage and Culture (MKIAHC)

(Location: Milton Keynes College, Leadenhall Campus)

During Lunch, Anouar Kassim (MKIAHC) discusses the group's ongoing initiatives in bringing together a range of different ethnic community groups in positive dialogue and activity against a current backdrop of anti-immigration attitudes locally and nationally. Successful initiatives include the work with the police, schools and colleges, and the annual major city-centre 'Art in the Park' event which attracts almost 10,000 people annually.

14.15 Loop 2: Netherfield Tour

(Departure from the Netherfield Local Centre)

Simon Jackson (local architect) will lead us on a short walking tour of Netherfield, highlighting its original design, the diverse communities that live there and the issues and challenges facing it today. He will describe its physical decline and the arrival of poorer residents, the rise of absentee landlords and the resulting lack of motivation. Simon will also discuss the proposed regeneration process.

15.00 Interaction 3: Netherfield Exhibition

(Location: Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre at Bradwell Abbey)

Darren Umney (PhD candidate in Design) presents his academic arts project, 'Every House of Langland Road', which is displayed as a major exhibition at the MK Gallery. The project proposes design concepts for Netherfield, a culturally diverse New Town area faced with poverty and health issues which is the subject of regeneration plans. Introduction by Noel James.

16.00 Interaction 4: Festive Road

(Location: Festive Road CIC at Kiln Farm)

Jessica Rost (Director of Festive Road) talks about the work of Festive Road in carnival and festival fringe arts, how they engage with diverse groups across MK and help new and existing peoples form an identity and sense of place and belonging. The presentation is followed by a tour of their Kiln Farm HQ (original factory unit).

16.45 Loop 3: MK Museum Tour

Bill Griffiths (Director of a 'MK Museum Victorian Christmas') leads a tour through the MK Museum. The museum is set in a Victorian Model Farm dating from 1847 and part of the development of nearby Wolverton, the world's first planned railway town. Atmospherically lit by lamp and candlelight, the tour will include the special rooms, collections and stories, ending at the Granary Tea Room.

17.30 Interaction 5: Creation of the MK Museum

(Location: MK Museum)

Bill Griffiths talks about the creation of MK Museum from volunteer heritage community roots in 1973 and its evolution over 40 years into the new City Museum to open in 2019.

18.00 Christmas Buffet Meal, with discussion and feedback

(Location: MK Museum)

November 23 - Seminar Day

(Open for the public)

(Location: Holiday Inn Central, 500, Saxon Gate, Milton Keynes)

09.00 Introduction: Welcome to Milton Keynes – Culture, Migration and Identity

Francesca Skelton (Chair of the MK Arts and Heritage Alliance, Moderator for the day) and Liz Grifford (Cabinet Member for Place) give an introductory presentation.

Part one: Beginnings

09.15 ‘Europe for Citizens Project Overview’

Presented by Michelle Provoost (Director of the International New Town Institute)

09.25 ‘Towards 2050 - Milton Keynes: The Cultured and Creative City’

Presented by Shane Downer (MK Heritage Officer)

09.35 Keynote Presentation: ‘Does a more diverse new city mean a more unsettled city? Milton Keynes since 2000’

Presented by Professor Mark Clapson (University of Westminster)

10.05 Panel Discussion

Participants: Michelle Provoost, Shane Downer, Mark Clapson, Liz Grifford

10.45 Break

Part Two: The Makings of Milton Keynes

11.15 ‘A City Designed for Migration?’

Presented by Will Cousins (Chair of MK Gallery)

11.35 ‘Personal Stories: Creating the Cultural Ambassadors of the future’

Presented by the students of the MK Academy. Introduction by Deborah Gockelen (Director of Business and Enterprise)

11.55 ‘Reaching newcomers, migrants & refugees through Culture’

Presented by Mike Kasibo (Chair and Founder of the Global Outreach Foundation)

12.15 Panel Discussion

Participants: Will Cousins, Deborah Gockelen and MK Academy students, Mike Kasibo, Rosaline Stafford (Director of Global Outreach Foundation Milton Keynes - GOF:MK)

13.00 Lunch

Part Three: Placemaking and City Identity

14.00 ‘Different by Design: Milton Keynes the European Capital of Culture 2023? The role of Identity and Diversity in the draft 2023 Programme’

Presented by Fiona Boundy (Public Art Officer, Milton Keynes Council)

14.20 ‘Plan: MK – building culture and identity into the next Local Plan’

Presented by Mike Moore (Senior Planning, Milton Keynes Council)

14.40 ‘The significance of Milton Keynes’s Design Unique Selling Point – The New Town Heritage Register’

Presented by Simon Peart (Conservation and Archaeology Manager, Milton Keynes Council)

15.00 'When New Towns are no longer new, Migration, Identity and Regeneration of the original New Town area'

Presented by David Gleeson (Managing Director of Your:MK)

15.20 Break

15.40 Panel Discussion

Participants: Fiona Boundy, Mike Moore, Simon Peart, David Gleeson, Roger Kitchen (Founder of Living Archive), Anouar Kassim (Founder of MK Islamic Arts Heritage and Culture / Community Connects UK)

16.20 Summary and concluding discussion

18.15 Dinner for participants of EU Partner Cities

(Location: Brown's Restaurant)

Including entertainment from Festive Road

Appendix 2

speaker biographies



Michelle Provoost

Director of the International New Town Institute

Dr. Michelle Provoost is an architectural historian specialised in urban planning history, postwar architecture and contemporary urban development. She co-founded the office of Crimson Architectural Historians in 1994, and has been the Director of the International New Town Institute (INTI) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, since 2008. Under her direction, INTI has grown into an internationally known center for education and research relating to New Towns.

Dr. Provoost is the head editor of the INTI publications. She teaches at various universities in the Netherlands and abroad and continues to be in great demand as a public speaker. She lectures regularly throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States, and has been involved in many municipal, national and private committees and juries.



Shane Downer

Heritage Officer, Milton Keynes Council

Shane Downer has been Milton-Keynes' Heritage Officer since 2003, coordinating the strategic heritage programme in Milton Keynes. Through these Strategic Plans he works with colleagues and local, regional and national public, private and third sector partners to implement major heritage provision change for a current resident population of 260,000 and over 200,000 heritage visitors a year to the six major heritage venues.

As Milton Keynes is set to almost double in population over the next thirty years, Shane coordinates the major building projects around new heritage, archive and museum provision including a new city Museum for 2019 a new City Archive and city centre cultural showcase for 2021, and refurbishment of other heritage sites. 2017 has been 'MK's' 50th anniversary and he is part of a team planning cultural step-change and a bid for Milton Keynes to be the UK's European Capital of Culture in 2023.



Mark Clapson

Professor at University of Westminster

Mark Clapson is Professor of Social and Urban History at the University of Westminster. He has written A Social History of Milton Keynes: Middle England/Edge City (2004) and co-authored, with Mervyn Dobbin and Peter Waterman, The Best Laid Plans: Milton Keynes since 1967 (1998)



Will Cousins

DipARCH DipUD RIBA, Design Director, Chair of MK Gallery

Will is a qualified Architect and Urban Designer with considerable experience of working in both the private and public sector on large scale strategic projects. He has been a Director at David Lock Associates since 1991 and has been personally responsible for the management and leadership of several of the Company's major commissions.

Before joining DLA, Will worked for London Docklands Development Corporation leading the Urban Design work of the Wapping and Limehouse Area Team, managing and delivering waterside regeneration and infrastructure projects during a time of intense development activity. Prior to that he worked on the implementation of the Master Plan for Milton Keynes Development Corporation and was responsible for the preparation of several master plans for new neighbourhoods, including proposals for the innovative Energy Park.

In addition to his position at DLA, Will is a Director of DLA Architects Practice Ltd; he is also a Founding Director of David Lock Associates (Australia Pty) with offices in Melbourne and Sydney, and regularly contributes to the Australian Practice's master planning work. Outside of the office, Will is Chair of Milton Keynes Gallery.



MK Academy Cultural Ambassadors, with Deborah Gockelen (Director of Business and Enterprise, Milton Keynes Academy)

The MKA Cultural Ambassadors are a group of students representing Years 8 upwards who came together in June 2017 to explore cultural opportunities in Milton Keynes, to research attitudes to their city and to promote their ideas about what makes MK so special.

The students have conducted research in the school and the local community, have 'Taken Over' Milton Keynes Museum, attended performances of 'Home Sweet Home' and 'Our Town' and taken part in a workshop to provide a cultural map of Milton Keynes reflecting their views now and how they wish to see MK in the future. They wish to share their research and their vision for MK's development with you on the 23rd November!



Mike Kasibo

Chair and Founder of the Global Outreach Foundation Milton Keynes - GOF:MK

Mike Kasibo is the founder and Chair of Global Outreach Foundation MK. Mike is also the co-founder of African Diaspora Day Event and the initiator of Build In First Concept. Mike is currently undertaking his MSc in Global Cooperation and Security from Birmingham University. Mike has a BSc (Hons) Social work and Applied social studies from the University of Bedfordshire. He also has a diploma in Business Communication and a certificate in Community Organising. With over eight years' experience in Social care, police and Community organising, Mike has contributed to the programmes geared towards the integration of refugee and migrant communities in East and West Midlands, through activities, events and skills development such as power analysis mapping, Leadership Training, Connecting, Speaking Out, Building Power and Mentoring. (Activities and events includes; African Diaspora Day Event, Black History Month, African Forum, Youth clubs, Show Racism Red Card and Breakfast Club)



Fiona Boundy

Public Art Officer, Milton Keynes Council

Fiona Boundy is a freelance curator and creative producer who for the last eight years has specialised in the development and delivery of large-scale public realm commissions.

Past projects include delivery of Artlands North Kent, an award-winning public realm programme, which formed part of Parklands - Farrells green infrastructure scheme for the Thames Gateway; curation and delivery of a two-year programme of artists and makers residencies in the Olympic Park for the London Legacy Development Corporation; the delivery of Greenland Street, Liverpool – a temporary art space which delivered a three-year programme of major new commissions in the lead up to Liverpool Capital of Culture and led on the development of a strategic plan for the Baltic Triangle, Liverpool's new creative quarter, and a series of six public realm commissions in Athens, as part of the launch of a major new cultural hub.

Fiona works as part of the Economy and Culture team at MKC, working on the development of a number of public art commissions, alongside strategic cultural futures projects including Milton Keynes bid to become European Capital of Culture and the new future cultural model for the city.



Mike Moore

Senior Planning, Milton Keynes Council

Michael Moore is a Chartered Town Planner in the Planning Department of Milton Keynes Council. He has worked on several plans for the development of Milton Keynes over the years and is currently working on a new Local Plan (Plan:MK) for the development of Milton Keynes up to 2031. Michael's work in producing planning policies and related planning obligations guidance has been used by the Council to secure major financial contributions for the infrastructure and facilities made necessary by new development. While at the Council, Michael has worked on regeneration initiatives and prepared and managed external funding bids, including an EU funded project for the development of an Arts and Craft centre within the city. Michael is a graduate of the University of East Anglia and his work on planning obligations and the MK Tariff was the subject of his Master's degree thesis. He is a former director of the East of England Tourist Board.



Simon Peart

Conservation and Archaeology Manager, Milton Keynes Council

Simon has been Milton Keynes Council's Conservation & Archaeology Manager since 2006. Simon is responsible for advising the Council, Stakeholders, commercial organisations and the wider public on the rich and varied heritage of Milton Keynes, which ranges from historic market towns through Victorian railway works, the WWII code breaking at Bletchley Park to its unique, late C20 new town. This advice is given at both a strategic level, helping to encourage sustainable growth, and at a detailed level on specific development proposals affecting heritage assets.

Simon is the project manager of Milton Keynes' New Town Heritage Register, a 'local list' focused specifically on the Development Corporation period of the new town. The register seeks to recognise the unique character and heritage value of Milton Keynes, increasing awareness and appreciation, ensuring that it informs important decisions about its future and, where appropriate, that it is preserved for the enjoyment and education of future generations.



David Gleeson
Managing Director of Your:MK

With more than 25 years' experience, David has worked on complex and high profile housing development and regeneration schemes across London and the South East. He has delivered innovative and community centred programmes in Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Camden, Westminster and Surrey. David, as Managing Director of Your: MK, is responsible for directing the company to achieve its objectives. He currently lives in Bedfordshire with his family.



Roger Kitchen
Founder of Living Archive

Roger joined the Development Corporation's Social Development Dept. in 1971 as a community worker on the first new housing estates. In 1975 he came 'inside' the Social Development Dept., specialising in Education and Youth Liaison helping in the establishment of Inter-Action, the Youth Information Service and the Urban Studies Centre (now the City Discovery Centre). In 1978 he became the co-Director and later Director of Inter-Action Milton Keynes. In 1992 he left to become General Manager of Living Archive Milton Keynes, an organisation he'd co-founded with Roy Nevitt in 1984.



Cllr. Liz Gifford
Cabinet Member for Place, Milton Keynes Council

Cllr Liz Gifford is one of the two Labour councillors in Stony Stratford Ward which includes the areas of Stony Stratford, Fullers Slade, Galley Hill, Calverton and Crownhill. She is the Cabinet Member responsible for Place, and her Portfolio includes Strategic Planning, Economic Development, Business Growth, Transport, Culture, Skills, Parish Partnerships, Libraries, Leisure Centres and Community Assets and Events.



Anouar Kassim
Founder of MK Islamic Arts Heritage and Culture / Community Connects UK

Anouar is founder and chair of the Milton Keynes Islamic Arts, Heritage and Culture group and has been instrumental in bringing diverse groups and communities together across all nations and faiths to raise the profile and importance of culture to creating social inclusion, acceptance and an identity of belonging to the city. Key successes include the work with the Police, Schools and Colleges and the annual major city centre 'Art in the Park' event which attracts almost 10,000 people annually.



Francesca Skelton
Chair, MK Arts and Heritage Alliance

Francesca moved to Milton Keynes in 1977 and spent the first 14 years commuting to London, first working on the commercial side of The Guardian newspaper, later moving over to IPC magazines where she worked on the launch of a new women's magazine OPTIONS. She later became publisher of Ideal Home magazine. On the birth of her second child she decided to work locally and she moved from the private sector to work in the voluntary sector, where she managed Relate MK for ten years. The community of Milton Keynes became her focus and she later became a trustee of the Milton Keynes Community Foundation, where she also served a three year term as

Chair. She joined the Board of Governors at MK College and served as Chair for six years from 2007- 2013.

She is a Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire and was High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire 2015/16. In 2016 she took on the role of Chair of the Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes, which has 39 members. AHA-MK champions the rich heritage and creative future of Milton Keynes and 2017 is an important year for arts and heritage as Milton Keynes submits its bid to be chosen as European Capital of Culture 2023. Thriving culture is the key to successful cities as investment in arts and heritage has a significant impact on the economy, skills, education, recruitment and retention, tourism, integration, mental and physical health and our overall wellbeing.



Noël James

Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre

Noël James is the current Director and CEO of the Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre. She comes from a research background, and has over 25 years' experience working in the heritage sector. She has a particular interest in the built environment and has recently left post as Director of the Historic Towns Forum, an umbrella organisation specialising in urban planning in historic towns. Noël gained her Doctorate in Medieval Law from the University of York in 1999, and has published widely on Medieval Law, Landscape History, Social History and Historical Geography. In the past she has held posts at the Prince's Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Policy and Public Affairs Directorate at a Regional Development Agency, and at the Living Archive. She is an Academician of the Academy of Urbanism, a recent Trustee for the Battlefields Trust, and has been an expert panel member on the Revive & Thrive Challenge. She is also a mentor for the British Legion, mentoring returners to the built environment.

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