

# 8. overview of the framework

## CENTRAL BLETCHLEY TRANSFORMATION

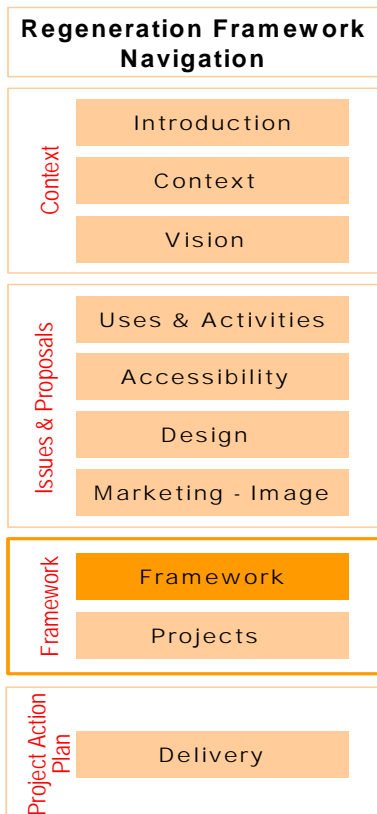
At the heart of the Regeneration Framework for Bletchley is a series of development projects. The development projects aim to improve what Central Bletchley can offer to the people of the town and the wider region, creating a focus of activity that can act as a catalyst in achieving the overall regeneration and growth of the town. To ensure that Central Bletchley successfully fulfils its role as the second centre of Milton Keynes, the Framework through the delivery of these projects must:

- Transform the retail experience and provide a platform for new occupiers to enter Bletchley;
- Create an 'evening economy' with bars and restaurants together with a substantial leisure offer;
- Create a modern mixed-use centre with quality town centre residential areas;
- Strengthen the cultural offer focusing on access and learning;
- Re-introduce a civic presence in the centre;
- Improve access to and from the centre for bus, rail, cycle and pedestrians, as well as improving access between the various areas within and adjoining Bletchley;
- Attract quality knowledge and innovation focussed employment at Bletchley Park and around the railway station;
- Maximise the potential of Bletchley Park as a premier tourist and business destination, and
- Ensure that the people of Bletchley benefit most from the dramatic transformation.

All the key components that make-up a thriving urban centre must be addressed. Each will make an important contribution and when considered as a whole will deliver long lasting progressive change, ensuring Bletchley is able to meet the challenges of the twenty first century.

The driving force behind the proposed projects is to guide and inform the physical and social aspects that bring about a high quality and integrated second centre that will be a carefully considered whole and not just a set of individual areas or uses. The projects have been developed to provide a focus for the physical restructuring of the urban fabric from Bletchley Park to Fenny Stratford.

The projects will ensure that Central Bletchley is able to offer the range and quality of services and facilities expected from a second centre to Milton Keynes. The uses will be focused in 'clusters', allowing critical mass to be achieved. As implementation will be phased, the clusters of complementary



uses will begin to evolve from the predominantly innovation and knowledge uses at Bletchley Park and the station area, to retail uses at the western end of Queensway to cultural and civic uses along Queensway. The clustering of activities will help legibility, creating a better experience for users.

The illustration below, Figure 4.1, shows the broad areas in the town centre and the evolution of quarters of complementary uses, with the inter-related elements of public realm infrastructure.

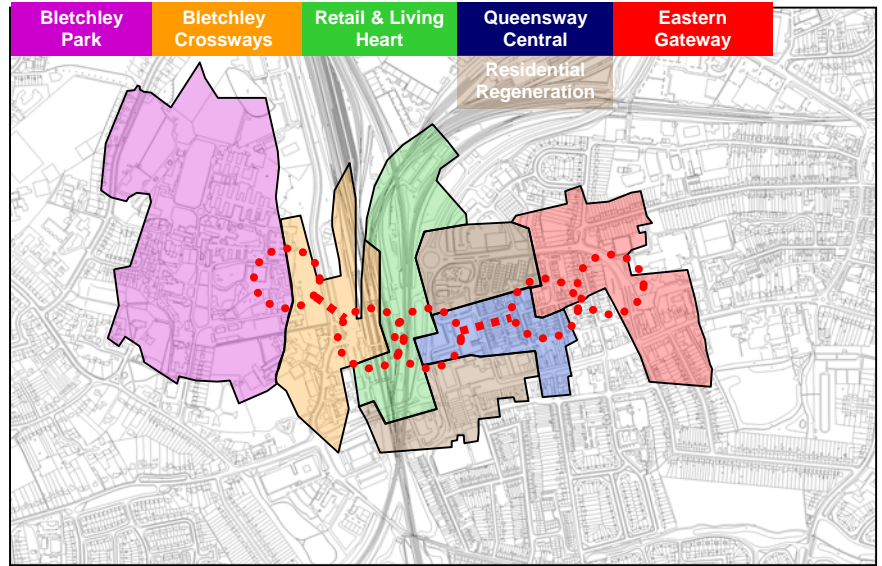


Figure 4.1 Project Areas and Quarters

Within these areas, the comprehensive series of development projects are introduced below and summarised in the Regeneration Project Plan (Figure 4.2).

#### Eastern Gateway

The Eastern Gateway is the entrance to Central Bletchley from Fenny Stratford and Watling Street and the A5. Here, together with improvements to the quality of the streets and landscaping there is a focus on recreation, leisure and creating a new mixed-use living quarter in the town centre.

1. Healthy Living and Recreation Focus – a new leisure centre fronting onto Queensway with associated community, health and commercial (retail, bar/café) uses. The centre provides a key use on to the new Elizabeth Square.
2. Elizabeth Square – transformation of the old market site at the eastern end of Queensway to create a lively new square with areas for children’s play and outdoor performance space. The square will create a new focus in the centre and be the setting for the new leisure centre and bars and cafés – with activity spilling out during the day and evening.
3. Town Centre Living – a high quality mixed residential development on the existing leisure centre site, offering a mix of units and tenures – attracting a new community close to town centre facilities.

4. Leon Park – landscape improvements to the current recreation ground to create a central park for Bletchley including improved physical and visual links with Queensway.

5. Milton Keynes Council Office Facilities - potential development of offices for 1,000 to 1,200 Milton Keynes Council office based staff bringing new activity and potential 'spend' to Central Bletchley. Among other sites in the town centre, this facility could be accommodated on the existing Knowles Schools sites following a rationalisation of the education provision here to meet future needs.

#### *Queensway Central*

In the heart of the town centre the quality of Queensway and its buildings will be improved, and a new civic and learning building introduced.

6. Queensway : Commercial Core Regeneration – a comprehensive programme of public realm improvements will transform the streetscape, together with refurbishment and renovation of shop units along Queensway with promotion of first floor living. Key buildings such as the Agora will be prioritised for action – with building owners and occupiers working alongside Regeneration Partners to improve the contribution these facilities make to the Central Bletchley 'offer'.

The streetscape works will also turn Queensway into a multi-purpose street – using its broad tree-lined structure to properly accommodate the market and short term parking for shoppers but also offer the potential to close the street to traffic for festivals and other street events.

7. The Forum – new multi-purpose civic and community building along Queensway providing state of the art access to public services and also incorporating a learning resource centre and exhibition space – together with meeting facilities and a home for the Town council and other locally based community groups.

8. Live Work – development of residential-based live work and residential units on Westfield Road library and surgery site following their relocation in the leisure and learning facilities.

9. Residential Regeneration – to the north and south of Queensway are existing town centre residential communities. Here, the conflicts of living in a town centre need to be managed well. A programme of street improvements and residents' parking priority will need to be introduced.

10. Princes Way – Princes Way will be realigned to make better use of surrounding land and to accommodate the new leisure centres. New homes will front the street along its length to improve surveillance and safety on this town centre street.

#### *Retail and Living Heart*

The area of the Brunel Centre and Co-operative Department Store is the heart of the shopping area in Bletchley. To meet future town-centre retailing needs redevelopment and reconfiguration of this area will be prioritised –

including new residential accommodation and improvements to the public realm.

**11. Central Retail and Living Quarter** – remodelling of existing retail area, with a variety of retail units to meet modern requirements both north and south of Queensway, with good quality car parking behind. A substantial new frontage onto Queensway would be created by incorporating Chandos Place and reinstating the visual and physical connection along Queensway into any redevelopment or reconfiguration of the Brunel Centre area. To the north there are opportunities to reconfigure and expand the existing Co-operative Department Store and improve the quality of pedestrian links and public realm. Residential development would be included at some upper floor areas, together with an appropriate conversion of Stephenson House incorporating active uses at ground floor level.

**12. Northern Gateway** – landmark gateway development on northern approach into town centre, providing opportunities for retail and residential redevelopment of the Dukes Drive area in the longer term.

#### *Bletchley Crossways*

The area of Saxon Street and the railway creates the greatest impact of severance in the town centre. In future, this area will become the focus of public transport interchange and Saxon Street become a tree-lined boulevard

**13. Crossways Interchange** – creation of eastern pedestrian access to the railway station, with development of transport interchange and mixed commercial and residential units on fronting a re-aligned Saxon Street boulevard and new station square. Buses (and any new public transport system for Milton Keynes) will stop outside the station entrance with direct access to the retail heart of Bletchley.

The project would also realign and downgrade Saxon Street to create new junction with Buckingham Road and to allow for eastern station access and development on both sides of this new town centre street.

The crossways project would eventually open up a new concourse under the railway lines to link east and west Central Bletchley as part of a comprehensive upgrade of the station.

**14. Buckingham Road Bridge** – High level footpaths, together with the introduction of public art and lighting will transform the environment under the Buckingham Road Bridge. With the reopened Queensway and active development either side of the bridge the route will no longer feel isolated or unwelcoming for pedestrians.

**15. Western Gateway** – following relocation of the fire and police stations to locations which meet future operational needs, the sites will be redeveloped to provide residential and commercial premises, with quality public square framing the western station entrance.

**16. Station Commercial** – with any comprehensive upgrade of the railway station, the existing car park should come forward for a commercially-based mixed-use scheme with the car parking facilities relocating to the existing aggregates site to the east of the main line. The aggregates yard would need to be relocated to a new site outside a town centre where its visual and traffic impact is less acutely felt.

### *Bletchley Park Area*

To the west of the railway, Central Bletchley has a very different character. Whilst still an important element of the central offer, the focus is on education, learning and knowledge – together with taking advantage of the rich heritage assets of Bletchley Park itself. Each of the Bletchley Park area projects should be set in the context of a cohesive Masterplan for the whole area, informed by the outcome of work by English Heritage.

**17. Bletchley Park Core** – development of museum, heritage and related uses through reuse and refurbishment of existing buildings, with SEEDA-sponsored Enterprise Hub and mixed commercial development creating a new Park community.

**18. Bletchley Park Knowledge and Innovation** – longer term development of office and research space, building on presence of Enterprise Hub and good access to the railway station particularly to the east and south east of the Park Core.

**19. Milton Keynes College** – fully meeting the educational needs of the college as its remit grows to offer further and higher education in Milton Keynes.

**20. Park Living** – creation of a Park residential community to provide life and activity to the area to the north and south of the Park Core.

**21. Bletchley Park Avenue** – a new through route will be created from Granby Roundabout on Bletcham Way, crossing the railway and down Sherwood Drive to Buckingham Road. 'Bletchley Park Avenue' will remain predominantly a green parkway route but will provide an element of the strategic highway network in Milton Keynes. Careful design of the Bletchley Link bridge over the railway, the junction with Sherwood Drive into West Bletchley, a new entrance into Bletchley Park, pedestrian priority in the vicinity of the college and a western entrance to the station will slow traffic and ensure this is not considered a through route.

These projects come together a comprehensive plan for regeneration in Central Bletchley underpinned by key urban design and movement principles which are explored further in subsequent sections of this report. Figure 4.2 draws them together to demonstrate the scale and nature of change proposed for the town centre and the inter-relationship between each component.