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foreword

The regeneration of Central Bletchley is important to the people of the town, to the prosperity and growth of Milton Keynes and also plays a part in the growing economy of the South East Region.

Bletchley Development Board, Milton Keynes Council, English Partnerships and the South East of England Regional Development Agency (SEEDA) are working together to deliver regeneration and jointly commissioned the preparation of the Regeneration Framework.

This Regeneration Framework sets out a series of projects that will transform Central Bletchley over the coming years. The Framework is an important document which provides the context for delivery. It offers clarity and certainty to existing owners and businesses, and provides a clear context for future investment and development. Furthermore, it demonstrates commitment of the Partners to the current and future citizens of Bletchley that regeneration of the town centre is to be delivered.

As regeneration partners, our organisations are now committed to bring forward the projects in the Framework in partnership with the private sector and key local stakeholders. We will commission further feasibility work on the major projects and work with other agencies to secure their commitment and funding to regeneration.

However, regeneration will only be successfully delivered with the support and commitment of the people and businesses of Bletchley. This is why the draft framework is now being put forward for public consultation with a commitment from the Regeneration Partners to keep residents and businesses involved throughout its delivery.



1. introduction

The regeneration of Bletchley in the early 21st Century is an exciting stage in the evolution of the town. Bletchley has a new role as the second centre of Milton Keynes' and plans for its regeneration seek to confirm this position with a range of services, activities and functions which are complementary with other towns and centres in the new city.

This is a very different future for Bletchley. Past phases of growth and development (the railways in the mid-nineteenth century and as an expanded town in the mid-twentieth century) focussed on Bletchley as the primary settlement. Now, the issues are far more complex in the context of the development of Milton Keynes over the past three decades, and the prospect of future growth for the next generation, at least.

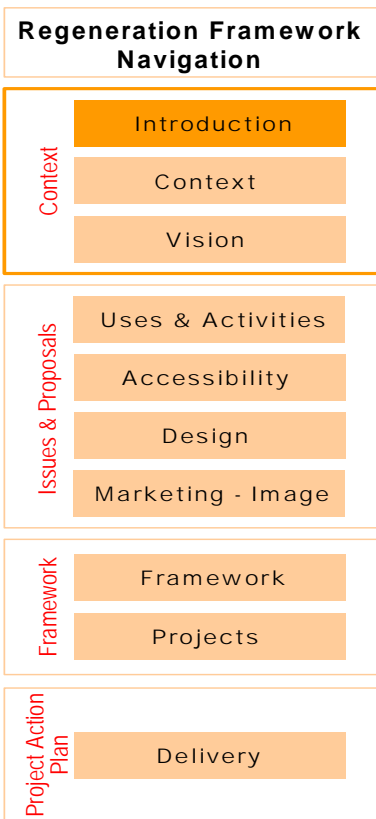
The prospects for Bletchley town centre are very encouraging. Sub-regional growth is expected to bring significant new development to the south and west of the town. A new football and events stadium together with proposals for a new high quality public transport system are emerging.

The current quality of the town centre, its retailing and leisure facilities, range of restaurants and bars and central living offer, are all below the standard expected of a thriving centre. Yet, with a focus on a comprehensive programme for change and joint working between all public and private sector regeneration partners, Bletchley is set well to benefit; bringing about transformation of the town as a distinctive place to live, work and visit for shopping, leisure activities and spend an evening out.

Bletchley must seek to embrace change. The re-discovery of Bletchley Park could bring new visitors and businesses to the town. With careful planning now and continuing investment in the central Bletchley offer, the new stadium, although outside the centre, has the potential to draw spending in to the centre on football and events days.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

In planning for the dynamic transformation of Central Bletchley, it is important to understand the context of the need for fundamental change. The second half of the twentieth century saw both growth and decline for the town. In the years following arrival of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century to the years following the Second World War, Bletchley grew from a North Buckinghamshire village to the commercial centre for the 'new city' of Milton Keynes. However, this growth faltered and reverted as the retail expansion of Central Milton Keynes and creation of this new 'central place' from the late '70s, shifted the commercial focus away from Bletchley. In the following years the failure of Bletchley to sustain this social and economic growth resulted in an outdated urban centre, with a negative image and



unsatisfactory urban structure, with the town unable to attract significant investment.

The Regeneration Partners

The Central Bletchley Regeneration Framework provides the basis to bring about the catalytic change that Bletchley needs to successfully fulfil its role as the second centre within Milton Keynes. The Framework builds upon the impetus created by the 1999 Vision Study; setting a framework and action plan by which the key stakeholders responsible for delivering change can direct their energies. Driving this change is the partnership of:

- the **Bletchley Development Board**;
- **Milton Keynes Council**;
- **English Partnerships**; and
- the **South East of England Development Agency** (SEEDA).

Crucially this partnership, in uniting the communities and private sector with local, regional and national agencies will provide the right blend of local knowledge, regeneration best practice principles and financial support to ensure the regeneration is both long term and sustainable. These 'Regeneration Partners' are essential in supporting the projects outlined in this document.

Currently, Bletchley fails to attract the level of spend, footfall and investment expected of a second centre in a city of around 210,000 people. A lack of investment is leading to a poorer environment and quality of retail and employment space; fewer people are using the centre, which in turn is leading to a lack of expenditure and investment. This 'cycle of decline' is compounded by a relatively deprived local population, and the apparent complexities of redevelopment, by comparison with alternative development opportunities in the city centre and elsewhere in Milton Keynes.

The Regeneration Framework provides the platform to remodel the town centre to offer modern retailing space and state-of-the-art public services and facilities, all set within a quality urban environment. Radical improvements to public transport provision will be underpinned by proposals for a distinctive new entrance and re-focusing of the station to create a transport interchange, offering a new eastern aspect into the heart of the town. The wider Bletchley Park area will provide a setting for innovation and knowledge based employment, and will offer elements of residential development to broaden the offer. A rebuilt leisure centre will improve the recreation and sporting offer for the town and for much of southern Milton Keynes as it continues to grow. The new station will increase the potential and sense of arrival for visitors from afar.

The pre-conditions are set. It is now down to Bletchley and the regeneration partners to deliver.

THE AIMS OF THE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

The primary aim of the Regeneration Framework is to secure the implementation of the 1999 Bletchley Regeneration Study objectives. In doing this the Framework aims to:

- Provide a cohesive and robust framework for investment for private and public sector bodies;

- Clear and inter-related projects set within a regeneration plan to bring about comprehensive change; and
- A delivery plan including phasing and programme priorities together with funding strategy.

THE REGENERATION TEAM

The Steering Group of key stakeholders (Bletchley Development Board, Milton Keynes Council, English Partnerships and SEEDA) commissioned a project team in November 2002 tasked with updating the 1999 Bletchley Regeneration Study and securing the implementation of the study's objectives.

The project has been led by EDAW supported by a multi-disciplinary team:

- **EDAW** – project management, masterplanning, urban design and public realm;
- **Donaldsons** – property, funding and delivery advice;
- **Alan Baxter and Associates** – transportation, accessibility and engineering; and
- **Kevin Murray Associates** – consultation and stakeholder engagement.

THE PROJECT AREA

Central Bletchley is located in the south of the new city, some 3 km from Central Milton Keynes, the main commercial centre.

Although no specific project area was set, the study area covers the central part of Bletchley, stretching from Bletchley Park in the west to Leon Recreation Ground in the east. The area is bounded on the northern side by Marston Vale rail line and with the residential areas of Bletchley to the south. The project area incorporates key functions including:

- **The main shopping area** – including Queensway, the outdoor market, the Brunel Centre and Sainsbury store, the Agora, the new Wilkinsons store and the Co-op department store;
- **Stephenson House** – an eight storey commercial building with the potential for conversion into residential apartments;
- **Bletchley Park** – including the Mansion with its WWII buildings providing museum and heritage attractions, with associated innovation and knowledge uses and potential for sympathetic development in areas outside the core of the Park;
- **Railway Station** – including station building and car parking serving the West Coast Main Line and the Marston Vale (Bletchley – Bedford) line;
- **Leisure Complex** – leisure centre with outdoor pitches and landscaped ponds together with community and performance space;
- **MK College** – new college building with campus-style residential development; and
- **Civic and Administrative Uses** – including police station, fire station and library.

Whilst concentrating on this central project area, the Regeneration Framework has also considered its influence over the neighbouring communities and the need to provide linkages with these and Milton Keynes more widely.

1.4 THE PROJECT PROCESS

The process of developing the Regeneration Framework has been an intensive one, encompassing a wide range of activities aimed at:

- understanding the current national, sub-regional and local perspectives and positions;
- appreciating the trends and forces at work both locally and in the global economy;
- identifying the needs and aspirations for the future; and
- setting the direction and mechanisms for getting there.

Key elements of the process have included:

- technical research of local, regional and national material on a wide range of subjects including sustainable urban growth, design and built form, future transport systems and new approaches to providing civic amenities and facilities;
- local area analysis of the built form, urban design, public realm, transport, landscape and property;
- consultation with local stakeholders through the Collaborative Design Workshop process, to draw out ideas and aspirations and achieve consensus; and
- regard to other processes and projects including the Communities Plan Bid, the Milton Keynes Local Plan Review, the Stadium MK proposals and particularly the potential impact of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth study proposals.

Each of these elements has been considered in the context of the need to reinforce the local and city-wide role of Bletchley: assisting in defining it as an interesting and distinctive place to live, work, shop and visit.

Consultation and Involvement

The stakeholder involvement process has played a key role in setting the direction and responding to specific projects and proposals throughout the preparation of the Regeneration Framework. The consultation outputs have reinforced the spirit of various community, political and landowning stakeholders in Bletchley and generated a wide range of imaginative ideas, many of which have been incorporated within the Regeneration Framework. The consultation process included:

- An initial 'Delivering the Vision' Workshop held on Friday 17th January 2003 to consider initial thoughts on delivery and implementation priorities;
- A Collaborative Design Workshop held on 25th and 26th March to establish, examine and test the projects and proposals that will regenerate Bletchley; and
- A Collaborative Design Workshop 'Follow-on' event on 5th June to consider the refined projects and proposals identified at the previous Collaborative Design Workshop.



Delivering the Vision Workshop: stakeholders considered delivery and implementation priorities



Collaborative Design Workshop:
Stakeholders examined and tested
a series of projects and proposals

The primary retention of the Stakeholder agreement process is to ensure that the Regeneration Framework and recommendations for delivery are ‘transparent’ and clearly seen by the various stakeholders involved in the future of Bletchley to be for the benefit of the town.

The process is also intended to reinforce the need for action and delivery of the project included in the plan: recognising the role of the Regeneration Partners working together and the importance of continuing engagement with the wider community and private sector interests in delivering change in Bletchley.

With this level of assessment and involvement from across the town it is believed that the Regeneration Framework sets the basis for taking forward a shared vision for the future of Bletchley. It is this widespread ‘ownership’ that gives the Framework its greatest chance of successful and sustainable implementation.

1.5 PROJECT OUTPUTS

The outputs of the Regeneration Framework for Central Bletchley comprise:

- The **Regeneration Plan and Projects** – a large scale plan illustrating each of the inter-related projects that comprise of the Regeneration Framework.
- This document that details the projects and next steps to delivery of the **Regeneration Framework**.
- A **Framework Delivery** report which at this time remains confidential to the regeneration partners. The only reason for its confidentiality is the level of site-specific strategy and commercially sensitive information it contains. If this information becomes prematurely public then the success of individual projects and regeneration as a whole could be prejudiced.

The project does, however, suggest that as part of the on-going delivery of the Regeneration Framework, that there is an annual public up-date on progress and a five yearly review of the projects and proposals to ensure that they remain relevant and focussed on bringing about substantive change in Bletchley.

The delivery proposals also recommend the establishment of a dedicated delivery team of regeneration professionals to focus on the bringing forward the complex process of implementing new development and change, on the ground.