

# Delegated Decisions report



22 March 2022

## ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT CENTRAL BLETCHLEY URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK - SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	<b>No</b>
Council Plan reference	<b>Commitment 19</b>
Wards affected	<b>All Wards but particularly Bletchley Park, Bletchley East and Bletchley West</b>

### Executive Summary

Milton Keynes Council [MKC] is seeking to promote redevelopment and renewal within Central Bletchley by capitalising on the generational opportunities that will flow from delivery of the East-West Rail project.

East-West Rail will place Bletchley at the intersection of strategic east-west and north-south rail routes linking key centres of economic activity. Consequently, Bletchley will have unique rail connectivity at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, which, as recognised by the National Infrastructure Commission, has the potential to transform this area of England into a hub of knowledge-intensive industry that can compete on the world stage.

The Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document (the SPD) will be a formal planning document that directly links to Policy SD16 of Plan:MK and provides urban design principles and guidance to inform the holistic renewal and redevelopment of the area covered by the Central Bletchley Prospectus (2019).

The purpose of the SPD is to provide a framework for the sustainable renewal of Central Bletchley, which builds on enhanced strategic transport connectivity. The SPD will also inform potential developers of the land use planning, urban design and transport opportunities and constraints within Central Bletchley. It will provide guidance, including a series of design principles for a variety of opportunity areas, which should be addressed in the preparation and submission of planning applications for proposed development.

This report outlines the formal consultation process, those who responded to the consultation and provides a summary of the key comments received and our proposed response. It then seeks approval for adoption of the Draft SPD, as amended, in the light of consultation responses received.

## 1. Decisions to be Made

- 1.1 That the representations received from a six-week period of public consultation on the Draft Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), attached at **Annex A** to the report, be noted.
- 1.2 That the Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD, as amended following consultation, attached at **Annex B** to the report, be adopted.
- 1.3 That the extant Central Bletchley Regeneration Strategy Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004), be revoked.
- 1.4 That authority be delegated to the Director - Planning and Placemaking to make any necessary typographical corrections or consequential amendments to the Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD.

## 2. Why is the Decision Needed?

### **Background**

- 2.1 With a view to capturing the wider benefits of investment in new strategic rail infrastructure, the Council Plan 2016-20 committed to develop a Prospectus for Bletchley, by February 2020.
- 2.2 The Prospectus was approved for publication in December 2019 as a promotional tool designed to highlight and generate interest in significant renewal opportunities. It is not a formal planning document and does not aim to create planning policy; neither is it a masterplan.

- 2.3 As part of the Delegated Decision in December 2019 to approve the Central Bletchley Prospectus, a commitment was made to production of a subsequent Supplementary Planning Document to cover the Central Bletchley Prospectus Area. That delegated decision also confirmed that Bletchley would be the focus of Milton Keynes' Towns Fund bid, and officers were requested to progress proposals to meet the key deadlines in the Towns Deal Prospectus.
- 2.4 MK Council Plan 2016-22 Priority 19, states that the Council Supports the regeneration of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford by advancing an Urban Design Framework (SPD) and working with the Town Deal Board on the delivery of the £22.7m Town Investment Plan.
- 2.5 Some of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal projects will be delivered on sites within the Central Bletchley area. It follows that, if adopted, the new SPD will provide part of the planning framework for the development and delivery of several Town Deal projects. Consequently, these projects, and the associated sites, have been reflected in the draft SPD.
- 2.6 The SPD will be a formal planning document that directly links to Policy SD16 of Plan:MK and provides urban design principles and guidance to inform holistic renewal and redevelopment within the Central Bletchley Prospectus Area.
- 2.7 The purpose of the SPD is to enable inclusive long-term renewal within Central Bletchley. Subject to approval, the SPD will also provide important context, during the current Local Plan period to 2031, to inform the delivery of several Town Deal Projects. It is also expected that the SPD will provide guidance to potential developers and investors on the land use planning, urban design, and transport opportunities within Central Bletchley. This guidance will include a series of design principles for the area which should be addressed in planning applications for proposed development.
- 2.8 A transport and parking study has been undertaken to provide an evidence base to inform the SPD. This study was the subject of a separate stakeholder engagement process.
- 2.9 Current planning guidance for this area includes the Central Bletchley Regeneration Strategy Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), adopted in 2004. That SPG is now dated and does not adequately respond to an infrastructure and renewal context which has changed over recent years (e.g. the enhanced transport connectivity enabled by East West Rail delivery). Moreover, the planning policy underpinning that SPG has since fallen away. For those reasons, if a decision is taken to approve the new SPD, a consequential decision will arise concerning the revocation of the extant Central Bletchley Regeneration Strategy SPG.

## **Formal Consultation**

- 2.10 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulations 12 and 13 set out the requirements for formal consultation prior to the adoption of an SPD.
- 2.11 The LPA must prepare SPDs in accordance with their statement of community involvement (section 19(3), Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 2.12 Formal consultation on the draft SPD was undertaken for a 6-week period from Monday 20 December to Monday 31 January 2022. The draft document was made available on our website and printed versions of the SPD were deposited at Bletchley Library as well as the Central Library in CMK. We used our social media channels and direct e-mail alert service to further advertise and promote the consultation. All stakeholders previously engaged in informal consultation undertaken as part of the preparation of the draft SPD, as well as those listed on the Local Planning Authority's data base of SPD consultees and statutory consultees were all notified of this consultation and sent a link to the draft SPD.
- 2.13 Briefings were held with Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council (11 January 2022) and West Bletchley Council (17 January 2022) while an engagement session with the Council's Youth Cabinet was held on 15 January. We also offered on-line drop in Q&A Sessions one of which was taken up (20 January 2022). The Consultation was also reported to the Town Deal Board at its January meeting.
- 2.14 The community engagement that has taken place, its outcomes and how those have influenced the content of the final version of the SPD are set out in the Consultation Statement, attached at **Annex C** to the report.
- 2.15 It is, therefore, considered that the SPD is prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, which can be viewed at **Annex D** to the report.

## **Consultation Responses and Key Amendments Proposed**

- 2.16 During the formal consultation period we received a total of 244 individual comments from 44 stakeholders. **Annex B** outlines all representations received, our responses and resulting proposed amendments to the SPD.
- 2.17 In summary, stakeholders were broadly supportive of the content of the SPD, most notably the Vision and the six placemaking themes as well as the principles and proposals contained within the five Opportunity Areas. Responses reflected a broad level of support for the proposed physical changes to Queensway and Saxon Street.
- 2.18 In summary, the main comments received requesting changes to the SPD and our proposed responses are as follows:

- (a) Improvements to cycling and pedestrian infrastructure within wider Bletchley.

Response:

No change proposed as the proposed interventions are outside of the geographic boundary of the SPD. **Annex A** does, however, note that some of these improvements are addressed through the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (refer p.41, paragraph 4.2.2).

- (b) Concern about the inclusion of arbitrarily defined proposed building heights without an objective assessment.

Response:

We propose to remove the reference to actual building heights and rather include wording that says taller buildings will be supported in line with the outlined density stated within Policy SD16 and being subject to a proper site context analysis as well as being subject to Policies D3 and D5 in Plan:MK.

- (c) Remove proposals for new public multi-storey car parks as this is contradictory to other aspirations of the SPD, notably the promotion of active travel as well the carbon reduction and 'greenest city' agenda and a general comment on the impact current parking standards have on viability.

Response:

No change proposed because surface level car parks are proposed to be developed so some public parking is still required. The SPD furthermore recommend that parking standards are revisited and indeed this is happening for some sections of the 2016 Parking Standards SPD including Private Sector Rental accommodation (which will likely comprise a significant amount of the new housing in Bletchley). It should also be noted that the overall thrust of the SPD is to reduce the impact of the car on the public realm and hence the proposals for Queensway and Saxon Street.

- (d) The deliverability of an eastern entrance and the associated relocation of the Cemex access, which is not yet certain.

Response:

No change proposed. While deliverability of an eastern entrance and associated relocation of the Cemex access is not yet certain all relevant stakeholders recognise the wider renewal benefits it can deliver and are therefore committed to proactively discussing how it can be delivered.

It has been agreed for example that further technical work will be undertaken to assist with deliverability. Section 6 (Implementation and Delivery) already highlights the importance of this engagement to assist with delivery. The SPD has, however, been amended to provide more flexibility about where a future bus station on the western side of Saxon Street might be located.

- (e) The suitability of downgrading Saxon Street to a 2-lane street, given the importance of Saxon Street as a strategic movement route and the prospect of future development such as Salden Chase.

Response:

No change proposed. Traffic modelling of a downgraded Saxon Street has been undertaken to include future growth scenarios such as that proposed at Salden Chase. Results show that downgrading this section of highway is possible without causing queues, although mitigation measures should be explored alongside traffic demand management. The downgrading of Saxon Street will help to strike a more equitable and appropriate balance between the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists at this town centre location. Furthermore, the creation of a pedestrian friendly street aligns with the aim of creating a more walkable Central Bletchley that capitalises on the accessibility and connectivity afforded by East West Rail and its proposed key node status on the future MRT network for Milton Keynes. A downgraded Saxon Street is also critical to create an appropriate interface with an eastern entrance. Finally, a downgraded Saxon Street will also add value to adjacent development sites which will help enable an eastern train station entrance.

- (f) Culture could be embedded more into the SPD, particularly in so far as it helps deliver Placemaking Theme 6: “Creating a Place Identity for Central Bletchley”.

Response:

This will be addressed, for example, in the Implementation and Delivery section where it will be proposed that culture and public art is woven into the delivery of plans and that partners such as the Living Archive, who have significant experience of working in Bletchley, are engaged in the delivery of projects.

- (g) More reference to green infrastructure delivery especially given Policy SD16 includes reference to Policy NE4 (Green Infrastructure).

Response:

The SPD will address this aspect within the Placemaking themes and Sustainability Section of Section 6 of the SPD.

- 2.19 It should be noted that, in addition to changes made following formal consultation, some further changes to the SPD have resulted following receipt of the final version of the supporting Transport and Parking Study (i.e. after the completion of formal SPD consultation). These are identified in orange within the tracked version of the SPD.
- 2.20 Furthermore, because of the Town Deal Transport Hub project business case, a change has been made which allows for the notion of introducing a signalled controlled junction at Princes Roundabout to be explored. This would enable the provision of safe pedestrian crossings on Saxon Street and Princes Way. Also, this will provide greater flexibility regarding alternative options for the Cemex access road.

### 3. Implications of the Decision

Financial	No	Human rights, equalities, diversity	No
Legal	Yes	Policies or Council Plan	Yes
Communication	Yes	Procurement	No
Energy Efficiency	No	Workforce	No

#### (a) Financial Implications

Production of the draft SPD has been funded by existing budget provision. There are no direct financial implications with adopting the SPD, however, an adopted SPD will provide the necessary planning guidance for the delivery of several Town Deal projects within the SPD area. The SPD will, therefore, help to underpin Town Deal business cases and so unlock significant Towns Fund investment.

#### (b) Legal Implications

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the statutory requirements for the consultation and adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents. Under section 19(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council must prepare SPDs in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (which sets out the Council's policy for consulting and engaging with individuals, communities, and other stakeholders).

If adopted, in line with statutory requirements, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. We would also be required to make the SPD and an adoption statement available for a period of at least three months in electronic and hard copy form.

Once revoked, the Central Bletchley Regeneration Strategy will no longer have effect.

(c) Policies or Council Plan

The SPD delivers to Council Plan Commitment 19 and Policy SD16 of Plan:MK.

(d) Communication

Once adopted, the SPD and an adoption statement need to be made available on our website and at Civic and other places deemed appropriate in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

(e) Other Implications

An adopted SPD will form part of the planning context for the delivery of several, significant, Town Deal projects and the production of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan. The development plan for the SPD area already includes the 'made' West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan.

## 4. Alternatives

4.1 A 'Do Nothing' option is to not adopt the Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD. This is not considered appropriate as it would not be compliant with Council Plan Commitment 19 or provide the guidance to support Policy SD16. Neither would this option provide the appropriate planning context for the delivery of several Town Deal projects within the Central Bletchley Prospectus Area.

4.2 The 'Recommended Option' is to adopt the SPD in order that the guidance is in place to ensure new development in the Central Bletchley Prospectus Area comes forward in a co-ordinated manner, and to revoke the extant Central Bletchley Regeneration Strategy SPG.

## 5. Timetable for Implementation

5.1 If the Delegated Decision to approve the Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD is made, the SPD will be adopted on 22 March 2022, subject to the expiration of the call-in period.

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## List of Annexes

Annex A	Summary of Representations received on the draft Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document and proposed response
Annex B	Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document 2022 (track changed version)



Annex C Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD Consultation Statement, February 2022

Annex D MKC Statement of Community Involvement

## List of Background Papers

Plan:MK:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/plan-mk>

Central Bletchley Prospectus:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/growing-mk/central-bletchley-prospectus>

Central Bletchley Regeneration Strategy SPG:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-apply-pay-view/central-bletchley-regeneration-strategy>

Central Bletchley Transport Study 2022 Final Report:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/draft-central-bletchley-urban-design-framework-supplementary-planning-document>