

WEST BLETCHLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2026

SUBMISSION VERSION
FEBRUARY 2018



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Foreword

This is our Neighbourhood Plan for West Bletchley. It is a formal Development Plan, and will help us shape and guide development for the next 10 years across our area. It will help us to ensure we have sustainable and well planned development that enhances our community and it will also help us to resist poor developments that would diminish our quality of life.

This is the final stage in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. We prepared a Draft Plan in February 2017 and consulted on that Plan from 10th March 2017 to 21st April 2017. This Submission Version of the Plan takes account of the comments we received and hopefully now fully addresses all of the key issues and provides a clear Vision, Strategy and Policies to guide our area over the next 10 years or so.

This is the version of the Neighbourhood Plan that we will submit for independent review by an Examiner. The Examiner can choose to hold a public hearing into the Plan, which will allow further consideration of the Plan, should that be necessary. It is for the Examiner to decide if the Plan meets the tests required of it. Should it meet those tests, then we will hold a local referendum to ensure the community supports the Plan before we formally adopt the Plan and put it into effect. This process will be undertaken over the next 12-months and we will post regular updates on our website, the details for which are provided below.

Chair

West Bletchley Parish Council

West Bletchley Council Offices
221 Whaddon Way
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK3 7DZ

Email: admin@westbletchleycouncil.gov.uk

Web: www.westbletchleycouncil.gov.uk

PART 1

BACKGROUND



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is Our Plan

This is the Neighbourhood Plan for West Bletchley Parish in Milton Keynes.

The Plan has been prepared by West Bletchley Parish Council on behalf of the community of West Bletchley. The Plan sets out our vision, strategy and policies to direct and shape development within our parish over the next 10 years. The Plan is a statutory document – it carries weight in decisions on planning applications and informs us, Milton Keynes Borough Council, other stakeholders and local people on the planning priorities in our area.

The scale of change provided for in the Neighbourhood Plan is relatively modest compared with other areas of the Borough. West Bletchley is a relatively stable, mature and settled community. There are specific places where we consider change can and should take place and we provide a framework to ensure that change is for the benefit of the local community as well as Milton Keynes as a whole, now and in the future.

The Plan has been prepared over the last four years and has involved a wide range of stakeholders and many local residents and businesses. We have held workshops to consider the scope and focus of the Plan, to discuss the issues, and to consider the drafts of the Plan before it was finalised. We are grateful to those who have contributed to the Plan, and we hope it addresses properly the issues of most concern to our community. A list of the key evidence base is presented in Appendix 1.

1.2 Structure of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is presented in four main parts:

- Part 1 - provides the Background to the Plan, including this introduction, a description of our community and consideration of some of the issues and opportunities we face;
- Part 2 - is Our Vision, Strategy and Objectives;
- Part 3 - provides Policies to help realise our Vision, and covering our key objectives; and
- Part 4 - provides the Delivery and Monitoring Framework.

There are five appendices supporting the Plan, which are available in a separate document:

- Appendix 1 – lists the Evidence Base underpinning the plan;
- Appendix 2 – provides the Basic Conditions Statement;
- Appendix 3 – provides our Consultation Statement
- Appendix 4 - provides our Sustainability Statement; and
- Appendix 5 - Local Green Space Sites

1.3 Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood plans are a new form of planning. They allow local people to determine for themselves how their area should be developed. The powers to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan are given by the Localism Act 2011.

There are certain requirements that the Plan needs to follow. One of these is that the Neighbourhood Plan must be in line with higher level planning policy, which at a national level is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and at a local level is the Milton Keynes Local Plan (2005) and the Milton Keynes Core Strategy (2013).

The Borough Council is preparing an update of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy called 'Plan : MK', which will cover the period to 2031 (which will also replace the Local Plan (2005)). If Plan : MK changes the policies affecting West Bletchley then this Neighbourhood Plan if adopted will need to be reviewed to keep it up to date.

The Milton Keynes Core Strategy provides general policies that apply to West Bletchley as they do to the whole of the Borough area, but there are no specific policies or allocations in the Core Strategy affecting West Bletchley. The Localism Act allows the Neighbourhood Plan to provide for our own specific policies and proposals in addition to the Core Strategy should we wish to.

The Plan must also be in line with European Regulations on Strategic Environmental Assessment and habitat regulations. We have determined with Milton Keynes Council that the Plan would not give rise to significant environmental effects and therefore it does not require a Sustainability Appraisal. Nevertheless, we have identified how our plan will contribute to sustainable development, and we summarise this in Appendix 4 available separately.

1.4 What the Plan Does

The Plan provides our policies for the future of West Bletchley to 2026. It sets out how we aim to ensure sustainable development across the neighbourhood area as a whole.

Specifically, it identifies how we propose to:

- accommodate **new housing**, including affordable homes;
- include the redevelopment of some **garage courts** for other uses;
- encourage new investment in our **local centres**;
- retain and develop new sites for **employment**; including potential to regenerate the sites adjacent to Bletchley railway station;
- retain and enhance key **open spaces**; including regenerating Rickley Park;
- help conserve and develop the heritage of **Bletchley Park**;
- maintain our **community infrastructure**;
- ensure **safe and accessible streets**; and
- ensure **high quality sustainable design**.

1.5 The Approval Process

This is the Submission Version of the Plan, and represents the final version of the Plan. We will now submit the Plan for independent examination by an Examiner, who will assess the 'soundness' of the Plan, that is, does it meet the various requirements set by Government and is it in accordance with existing adopted policy frameworks, and also is it a Plan that can achieve what it sets out to do.

The Examiner may choose to hold a 'hearing' to consider views and any remaining objections to the Plan. Following the hearing and the receipt of the Examiner's report, (which may include modifications as necessary to make the Plan sound), the Plan must then be the subject of a local referendum, and with a positive outcome, the Parish Council can then formally adopt the Plan and put it into effect. As part of the Development Plan, Milton Keynes Council are also required to take it into account in their decision making. This final stage in the process could take up to 12 months, so we are aiming to have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place during 2018.



2.0 West Bletchley Today

2.1 Overview

Our starting point is to understand our area; how it came into being, how it relates to the wider town, the people who live and work here, and the issues it faces now and how issues might change or arise over the plan period, as well as identifying the opportunities available to local people to enhance the quality of the parish.

2.2 Setting

West Bletchley is the second largest parish in Milton Keynes in terms of population, with 22,213 people, and nearly 9,000 households at the time of the Census in 2011. In terms of area, at about 620 hectares, we are the sixth largest urban parish. Our population density at nearly 36 people per hectare (gross) makes us the highest in Milton Keynes.

The parish is located in the south west edge of Milton Keynes and our neighbours are the separate parish of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford to the east and beyond the mainline railway, Tattenhoe to the north of the H8 Standing Way, the new estate at Newton Leys built on the former brickfields to the south, and the rural parishes Great Horwood and Great Brickhill, with Newton Longville to the west that are outside Milton Keynes in Aylesbury Vale District. Most of the parish is housing but there are important employment areas in the eastern part near to the mainline railway station, and we are the home of Bletchley Park, the centre of the Code Breakers in World War II and now a museum and visitor attraction.

We have reviewed the character and qualities of our area in the West Bletchley Character Assessment (November 2017), which provides a more detailed description of our area, including its historical evolution, and an assessment of the character of the area as a whole, and of individual areas and neighbourhoods. The Assessment also makes suggestions as to how the character can be improved. The Character Assessment provides a fuller description of the area for those who may be interested in gaining a more detailed appreciation of the area.

Our location in the wider context of Milton Keynes is shown in [Figure 1: Location in MK](#), and some of the main features are illustrated in [Figure 2: Features of West Bletchley](#).

2.3 Some History

Although now part of Britain's largest new town of Milton Keynes, Bletchley has always been an independent town. Its name originated from Anglo Saxon Blecca's Lea (meadow or clearing) and some buildings are known to date back to the 13th century.

It was originally a twin centred village with settlements around the parish church of St Mary's and also in the area known latterly as Far Bletchley. The area continued to develop under Norman rule alongside the nearby settlement of Water Eaton. Although connected throughout several centuries by land ownership and the church, the two settlements did not come together until the 20th century, when they joined with Fenny Stratford.

With the arrival of the London and North Western Railway in 1845 and its subsequent junction with the Varsity Line between Oxford and Cambridge, Bletchley grew rapidly as it serviced the new junction and Bletchley railway station was, for many years, an important node on the railway. It remains one of 4 stations servicing Milton Keynes.

The station was clearly an important deciding factor in the siting of the Government Code and Cypher School (now GCHQ) at Bletchley Park. The work of the Codebreakers is now well documented in the history of World War 2 and Bletchley Park has established itself as a successful heritage site with a national and international profile. It is the main visitor attraction within the borough of Milton Keynes receiving over 250,000 visitors annually.

The ongoing development of Bletchley was further boosted by considerable housing development during the 1950s and 1960s to accommodate the post war dispersal of population from London by the London County Council. The town had hardly settled from this impact when the designation of Milton Keynes as a "third generation" new town was determined, with a target population of 250,000.

While the new town of Milton Keynes was being developed, Bletchley was the main commercial centre and commensurate development followed with a new shopping centre in the Queensway and large scale office blocks being built in Sherwood Drive and on Buckingham Road. With these additional developments being centred around the railway station, it benefitted from further modernisation.

An additional impact of the new town was the building of new housing estates around the periphery of Bletchley, considerably increasing both its physical size and population. Windmill Hill Golf course was designed by Sir Henry Cotton, built and opened to the public in 1972. It remains in the ownership of Milton Keynes Council, although managed on a day to day basis by an external contractor.

Bletchley's "boom" ended when the new Central Milton Keynes shopping centre was built and commercial Bletchley has declined as a retail destination in recent years.

In 2001, parish councils were formed for all areas within the Borough of Milton Keynes. Bletchley was considered too large to be served by a single parish council and was split into two – West Bletchley Council and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council.

Housing development has continued, within West Bletchley, over more recent years predominantly on land which was previously part of Bletchley Park.

Major commercial development has occurred in recent years, just outside the boundary of West Bletchley, as part of the Stadiummk complex, and has included flagship stores for ASDA and IKEA, as well as more standard retail units, a gymnasium and a cinema and restaurant complex.



Old Bletchley relief at the station



Figure 1: Location in Milton Keynes

Figure 2: Features of Our Area





Major Parks

- ① Rickley Park
- ② Chepstow Park
- ③ The Leys
- ④ Barleyhurst Park
- ⑤ Tattenhoe Lane Park

Medical Facilities

- ① Parkside Medical Centre
- ② Bletchley Community Hospital
- ③ Whaddon Medical Centre

Local Centres

- ① Whaddon Way
- ② Melrose Avenue
- ③ Buckingham Road
- ④ St. Marys Avenue
- ⑤ Chepstow Community Centre

Schools

- ① Lord Grey School
- ② Barleyhurst Park School
- ③ Abbeys Primary School
- ④ Romans Field School
- ⑤ Chestnuts Combined School
- ⑥ St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School
- ⑦ White Spire School
- ⑧ Rickley Park Primary School
- ⑨ Cold Harbour Church of England Primary School
- ⑩ Milton Keynes Preparatory School
- ⑪ Holne Chase Primary School
- ⑫ Cambian Bletchley Park School

2.4 Population Profile

The table shows some of the characteristics of the population of the parish area from the 2011 Census.

Compared with **Milton Keynes Borough area as a whole:**

Our **population:**

- is generally older, with a higher proportion of people aged 65 or over who live alone;
- but has a lower proportion of people under 20; and
- is less ethnically mixed.

In terms of **housing and travel:**

- we have a higher proportion of home owners;
- we have a higher proportion who rent from the council than private landlords; and
- car ownership is lower.

In terms of **health:**

- we have a higher number of people who report their day to day activities are limited by poor health; and
- we have a higher number of unpaid carers.

In terms of **education:**

- there are a higher proportion of people with 5 or more GCSEs (A*-C grades) and more with 1-4;
- we have more people completing apprenticeships; but
- there are fewer people with A-levels and a lot less with degrees;

In terms of **employment:**

- we have fewer employed people and full time students;
- we have a higher number of retired people; and
- more of our residents work in wholesale and retail trades, manufacturing construction, transport and storage, public admin, defence and social security, water supply, sewerage and waste management ; but
- far fewer who work in Information and Communication and Finance and Insurance activities;
- more residents work in intermediate occupations, for small employers and are own account workers; and
- we have lower levels of supervisory and technical occupations; and
- fewer residents are managers and senior officials, and in professional occupations.

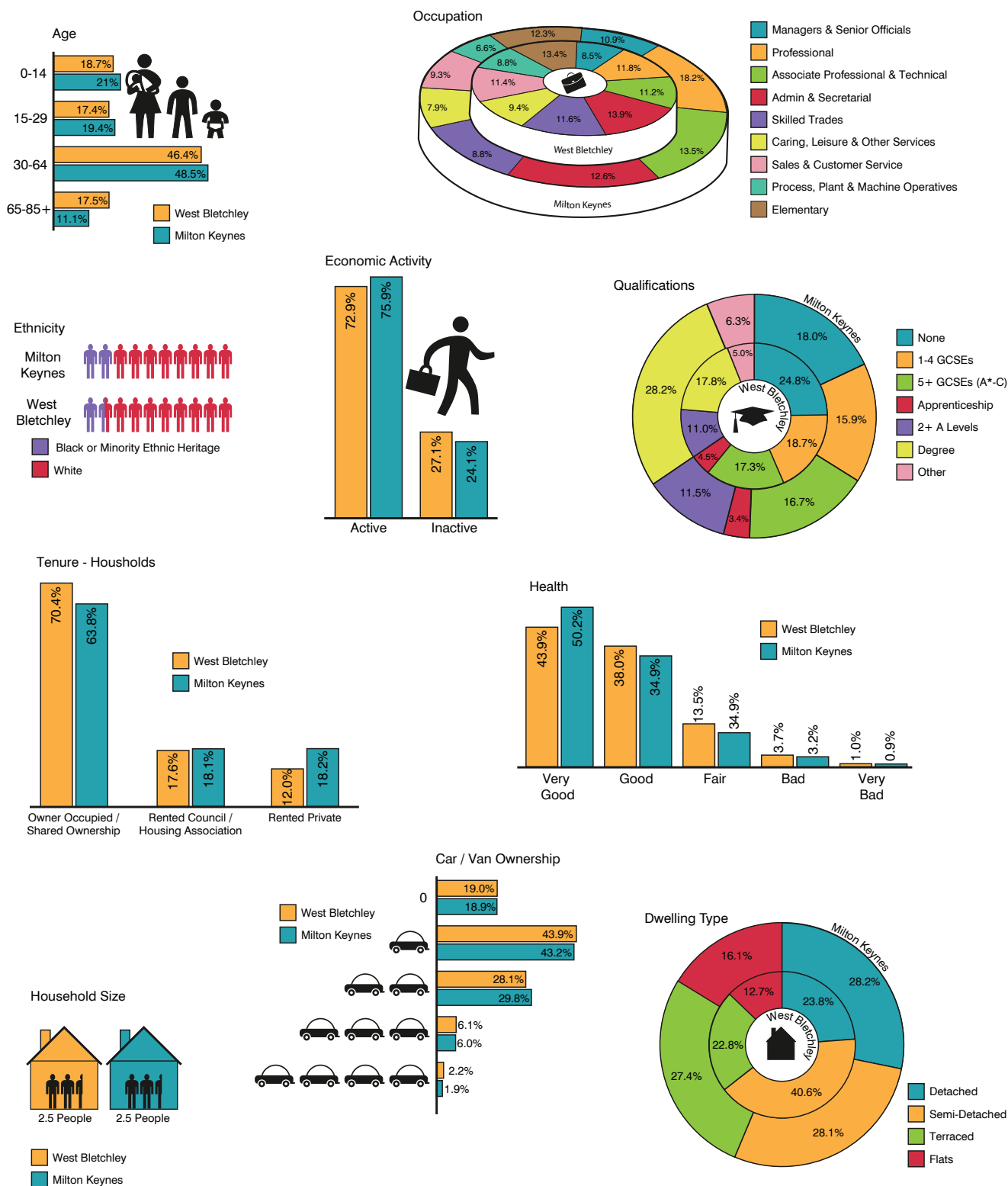


Figure 3: Our Community - Pictogram Population Profile

All information derived from the 2011 census.

2.5 Local Shopping

There is no central focus for shopping and other uses, and our neighbourhoods are served by five small local centres. The largest is on Whaddon Way at its junction with Warwick Road at the geographical centre of the parish. In addition to local shops and a post office, this site is the location for a social club, community centre and children's activity centre, with the parish council's offices also situated close by. The second largest centre is situated in Melrose Avenue in close proximity to the parish Community Resource Centre and two local social clubs. The other 3 centres are situated south of the Buckingham Road.

More modern nearby Local Centres at Furzton and Emerson Valley help serve the north of our area and have local convenience shops and meeting places. There are various other individual convenience shops throughout the parish.

Bletchley town centre is beyond the eastern edge of the parish and provides a larger supermarket (Sainsburys) and a range of local and national shops. The modern district centre at Westcroft is also only a grid square away to the north west of our area and has a large supermarket (Morrisons) and several other major stores.

MK1, developed alongside the Milton Keynes Stadium is also a major shopping and leisure destination not far from our area and ASDA - MK's largest superstore, is alongside.

2.6 Health

We have a community hospital on Whalley Drive near Lord Grey School, and two large medical centres - Whaddon Medical Centre and Parkside Medical Centre, serving the parish and areas beyond.



Chepstow Local Centre



Whaddon Medical Centre

2.7 Schools and Learning

We have seven primary schools, one secondary school, one preparatory school and three schools for children with special needs. The schools serve their neighbourhoods and each is well attended and are generally smaller than most primary schools across the rest of Milton Keynes. The secondary school is the Lord Grey School in the east of the area and neighbouring secondary schools also serve our area including Leon School and Sports College, Shenley Brook End School and St. Paul's Catholic School. Milton Keynes College's Bletchley Campus is adjacent to Bletchley Park and provides a range of post-16 vocational courses.

2.8 Community Facilities and Places of Worship

There are Community Centres at Porchester Close and Chepstow Drive and a Community Resource Centre located in Melrose Avenue. We also have a Youth Centre, Activity Centre and five social clubs. Places of Worship include St Mary's Church, All Saints Church, Whaddon Way Church, St Andrews Baptist Church, Freeman Memorial Methodist Church and a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.



Chestnuts Primary School



Church of St. Mary

2.9 Open Spaces and Parks

We have several parks and open spaces spread widely throughout the area. Chepstow Park has achieved Green Flag status, and we have a number of other parks and open spaces ranging in size up to eight hectares and offering a wide range of amenities including woodlands, flower meadows and exercise equipment. Within our area are sports grounds, a golf course, outdoor bowls green as well as four allotment sites and many play areas for all ages. On 1st June 2014 West Bletchley Council took on responsibility from Milton Keynes Council for the landscape maintenance of the parks and open spaces within the Parish.

2.10 Heritage

There is one Conservation Area and 31 statutorily listed buildings within the parish. Buckinghamshire County Council designated the Bletchley Conservation Area in February 1992. The Conservation Area includes Old Bletchley and Bletchley Park including the house and large parts of the wartime code-breaking site.

Most of the listed buildings are within Bletchley Park, although there are also groups at Church Green, Church Walk and along the Buckingham Road.



Chepstow Local Park



Bletchley Park

2.11 Employment Areas

All of the employment areas are concentrated on the east of our area. There are modern offices on Buckingham Road and Water Eaton Road, on Sherwood Drive and at Denbigh Hall at the junction of the A421 and Watling Street. There is also a Fire Service HQ and Police Station alongside the railway station. The local centres also provide many jobs. There are also established large employment areas north of our area at Snelshall and to the east at Denbigh and Bletchley Town Centre and MK1 are close by.

2.12 Getting Around

The layout of our area is traditional; there are no grid roads, most crossings are 'at grade' and there are only short lengths of Redway and underpasses on the northern and eastern edges where we connect with adjacent areas. Our streets are largely conventional routes carrying all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Many homes built in the 1960s and 1970s also had lower parking provision, and parking to the rear of the houses in parking courts.

Two busy routes cross the area; the B4034 Buckingham Road from Saxon Street to A421 Standing Way; and, crossing the Parish diagonally, Whaddon Way. Both routes carry considerable amounts of traffic through what is a predominantly residential area. There are regular bus services throughout the area with buses to Central Milton Keynes and Bletchley Town Centre, where there is a bus station.

Bletchley Station is a main line West Coast station, and has services to London Euston, Manchester and Northampton. The first leg of the reinstated East-West passenger line from Oxford to Bedford also proposes new platforms linked to Bletchley Station and will considerably enhance the wider regional and national accessibility of Bletchley.



Offices on Buckingham Road



Buckingham Road



3.0 Key Issues & Opportunities

3.1 Overview

There are several issues that arise from our appraisal and have figured prominently in our consultations during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. These are outlined below. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges are summarised in Figure 4.

3.2 Needs of an Ageing Population

Like the rest of Milton Keynes and the United Kingdom as a whole, older people are an increasing proportion of the overall population, and a high proportion of people over 65 are living alone. This gives rise to particular needs. Many existing homes are unsuited to older people's needs and may be too big and expensive to adapt. An older population has greater demands for accessible healthcare, is less mobile and relies more on public transport and older people place a greater reliance on local shops and other facilities.

We want to ensure that where homes are provided they also meet the needs of older people. Where opportunities arise for new housing, these should take account of the needs of local people first. Homes specifically designed for older people should be adaptable and accessible. There may also be opportunities for elderly persons housing that may also have health care provided alongside, and sites close to local facilities and on local bus routes will be encouraged to provide homes for elderly people.

3.3 Poorer Local Centres, Facilities and Services

Our two larger local centres at Melrose Avenue and Whaddon Way offer a range of local shops. Occupation of both centres has varied considerably in recent years. Vacancies have at times been high and some of the units have lower order uses that do not provide mainstream shops or services to local people. Both centres have poorer parking arrangements with limited capacity, and a shabby public realm. It is important that local shopping is viable and continues to meet the need for shops and facilities that local people want and need. The centres also include housing above the shops, so improvement and redevelopment can be more complex and impact those who live there. Opportunities elsewhere for new retail development are limited.

We would like to see new investment in the Melrose Avenue and Whaddon Way centres to bring them up to a modern standard and to cater for attractive modern shops and businesses that people want and need. Milton Keynes Council owns both these main centres.

3.4 Training, Jobs and Employment Provision

Unemployment levels within the community are higher than the average for Milton Keynes. The skills of local people are also generally lower, and there are fewer higher qualified, higher occupational groups than Milton Keynes as a whole. Educational attainment is also lower. Whilst the number of people with 5 GCSEs or more is higher than the Milton Keynes average, educational attainment is lower at A level and Degree level. This is partly a reflection of the housing opportunities available locally, but the availability of good local jobs, good schools and training provision are also factors.

We want to ensure there are jobs available within our area and halt the loss of employment sites, which makes our area potentially less sustainable. We want to ensure that local people are able to access local jobs and training opportunities when they arise, especially when new investment is made in the area.



Melrose Local Centre

3.5 Declining and Derelict Garage Courts

Many of our garage courts are in a poor condition. Poor original design and a lack of maintenance has made them unattractive for many householders. That in turn leads to less use and eventually dereliction and abandonment. Many garages are also not suitable for cars and are used for general storage. Of a total of 39 garage courts there are 21 sites still in use but 3 sites have already been re-designated, 4 sites are out of use and a further 11 sites are underused. This means nearly half (46%) of all the garage sites are in poor condition and action to address the situation is needed.

Milton Keynes Council owns and is responsible for the maintenance of the parking courts. They have brought forward redevelopment proposals for sites in Berwick Drive, Kenilworth Drive and Whaddon Way. Several other courts may offer opportunities for redevelopment for housing or other uses. We have asked MK Council to undertake an assessment of all the garage sites so that their future can be planned comprehensively and local people can be properly informed about what is proposed. It is important that as sites are brought forward the impacts are properly assessed and if parking is displaced, those affected have alternative opportunities to park close to where they live and that new developments also provide sufficient parking spaces.



Garage court at Buckfast Avenue

3.6 Conserving and Developing Bletchley Park

Bletchley Park housed British codebreaking operations during World War Two. It was where the Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS - the forerunner of GCHQ) worked to decrypt enemy signals that played a major role in the Allied victory.

But for many years the significance of the site wasn't fully appreciated and buildings were threatened and sites sold off for other development. Many of the main buildings are listed and the site is within a Conservation Area.

The Bletchley Park Trust works to conserve the site and interpret its heritage for visitors – which numbers over 250,000 annually. A recent £8 million investment has enabled the first phase of restoration of the site and has secured the most fragile wartime buildings and developed new facilities for visitors.

The Trust has a ten-year master plan to develop the site with an investment strategy to attract over £20 million by 2025. This project aims to restore and open important buildings on the site for the first time, drive a range of activities for the local community and attract a younger and more diverse audience to Bletchley Park, with the aim to attract up to 350,000 visitors per annum by 2023.

The challenge is to continue and build on the park's successes and ensure it can continue to grow and develop, and that the impacts of development remain acceptable. We want to ensure where there is potential for wider benefits these are secured and infrastructure improvements are brought forward that can support the plans, such as at the railway station, that can contribute to the accessibility and attractiveness of the area.

3.7 Enhancing the Station Area

The railway station is a mainline stop for London Midland trains with services to Birmingham, Bedford, Northampton and London Euston. The station and the accessibility train services bring are important factors influencing investment in the local economy and in making Bletchley an attractive place to live.

Regeneration Strategies for Bletchley town centre in 2006 and 2010 both identified the station as a key catalyst to securing new investment in the town centre. However, essential station improvements never happened and consequently little related investment resulted.

Importantly, there is a new catalyst for change. East-West rail services will be re-instated on a stretch of the old 'Varsity Line' between Oxford and (initially) Bedford through Bletchley and eventually on to Cambridge, within a few years. New station platforms are to be constructed on the eastern side of the station. Bletchley will therefore be at the centre of an axis between two of Britain's most successful and famous universities and fastest growing economies. This provides a renewed impetus to respond to the improved accessibility to both improve the existing station and station forecourt / square, and bring sites alongside the station forward for new development that responds to the superb enhanced accessibility of our area.

3.8 Increasing Traffic and Accessibility

The main routes through our area carry a considerable amount of traffic (for example 400 vehicles during the peak period on Whaddon Way between 4pm and 7pm) and have been traffic-calmed with narrowings and speed humps to improve safety. Cyclists and pedestrians also use the routes so making them safe is critical. Increases in traffic within the area affect the accessibility to local facilities, slow down public transport and bring additional noise and air pollution, reducing the overall quality of our environment.

Major growth is being promoted to the west and south-east that may affect us in West Bletchley. Much of this isn't in Milton Keynes but the neighbouring authority of Aylesbury Vale District, although it is contiguous with the MK urban area so to all intents and purposes, is part of the city. It isn't yet clear if this development will go ahead or not; that depends on Aylesbury Vale District Council or even the Secretary of State. However, from our perspective, it is important that new developments within and alongside our area do not lead to unacceptable increases in traffic through our area and deterioration in the local environment.



Bletchley Railway Station

3.9 Poorer Quality Open Spaces and Parks

West Bletchley has several major parks and many other open space areas. Not all of the open spaces are well used and some have been poorly maintained in the past. Some of the larger parks have had little investment and provide only basic level amenities. The parish has an open spaces strategy which provides an assessment of open space and sports facilities set against recommended standards of provision in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance. Local people value good quality open spaces and we wish to ensure open spaces network is improved and well looked after.

We want our parks and open spaces to meet the needs of local people and provide attractive, safe and high quality environments for the whole community.

3.10 Deteriorating Public Realm

Large parts of West Bletchley were developed in the early post war period and have seen little re-investment in the public realm of streets, street furniture, signage and small open spaces since that time. The Character Assessment identifies that in some areas the quality and maintenance of the public realm is poor and needs a thorough renewal/ re-fresh to enhance the character. The loss of street trees and the progressive negative effects of gardens being paved over to create parking also diminishes the street character and specific attention is needed to halt the loss of greenery in general from the street environment, a feature which remains one of the main characteristics of the area.



Rickley Park

Figure 4: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable, settled, mature population • Established area, strong individual neighbourhoods • Good quality housing with larger, generous gardens, a good place for families • People generally happy/content • Well located on edge of city but also access to mainline railway station • Bletchley Park, which has a national and international profile • Popular schools, Milton Keynes College • Some successful local businesses 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorer quality of local shops and facilities, limited range • Lack of an identifiable centre and focus for the area, provision is spread • Poorer quality open spaces • Lack of employment opportunities • Poor appearance and legibility of Station environment and gateway to Bletchley Park • Deteriorating public realm
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernised parks • Bletchley Park visitors and heritage significance/national profile • Station access and new East West rail connectivity • New employment opportunities on redevelopment sites • Infill housing opportunities to meet local needs 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population, few opportunities to stay in area for care • Pressure on facilities and social care • Decline of local facilities including shopping and community facilities • Traffic impacts, quality of street environments • Weak employment base, dated commercial premises needing re-investment • Opportunities pass us by – no ‘local dimension’ or benefits • Obsolescence – garage courts, shopping areas

Figure 4: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges

PART 2 VISION, STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES



4.0 Vision & Strategy

4.1 Vision

The Neighbourhood Plan is guided by an overall vision for West Bletchley that can be expressed in the following statement:

Our Vision of West Bletchley is a thriving, successful, stable, balanced and attractive place that continues to meet the needs of the local community with a full range of opportunities for housing, local shopping, employment, education and training, play and recreation.

We are a community that respects and protects its important historic places and other areas with distinct character and local amenities, ensuring they can contribute to the cultural life and appeal of the area.

We will be well connected with surrounding areas and communities, with safe, pleasant streets, an attractive railway station, good quality public transport services, walking and cycle routes.

We will benefit from new development that meets the needs of our community first as it evolves and changes along with those of the wider district, and where that development is appropriate and contributes to the quality of life of the West Bletchley community.

4.2 Strategy

Our strategy is to encourage more homes and jobs, geared to local needs, helping our area adapt to change and to capitalise on our strengths and the unique opportunities, including Bletchley Park and the rail accessibility nationally and regionally, and we want to safeguard our existing employment areas. We want to ensure that our neighbourhoods remain attractive places to live and are well served by accessible and modern shopping, parks and other community facilities, and remain pleasant places to live and bring up a family.

Most of the investment in new facilities will be from the private sector, although we will seek to use our own resources where we can to facilitate and support change, such as our role in looking after the parks in our parish, and to lever in further investment in support of our Plan from our partners and other stakeholders. We have addressed the structures and financial implications of the Plan and set out our Delivery and Monitoring Framework in Section 15 and Table 1.

Our Plan sets out overall policies to guide and shape development and ensure it is of a high quality with specific policies for the key 'Opportunity Areas' where major change is expected within the parish.

Figure 5: Our Strategy, illustrates our area-wide strategy and the focus of our policies.

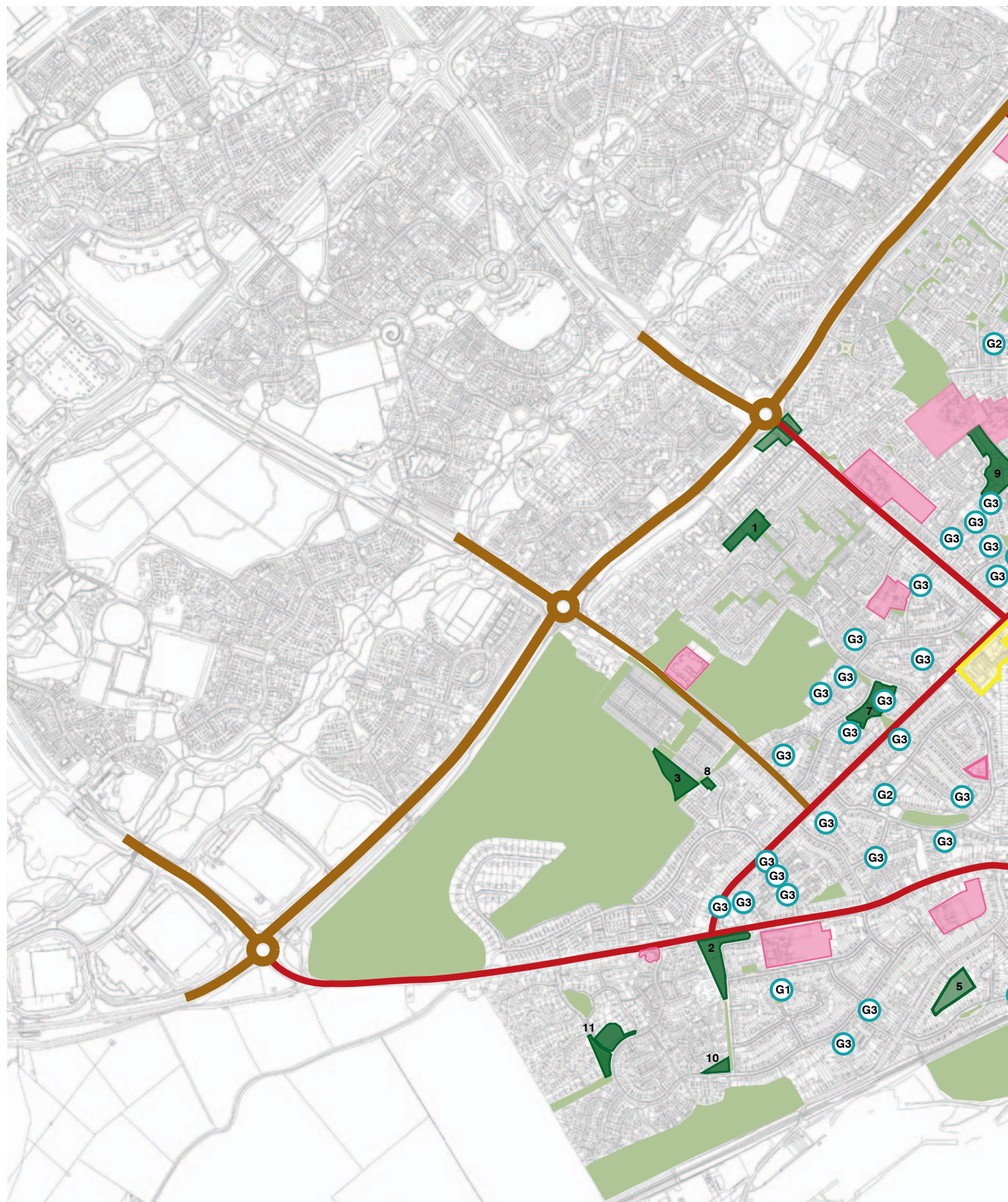
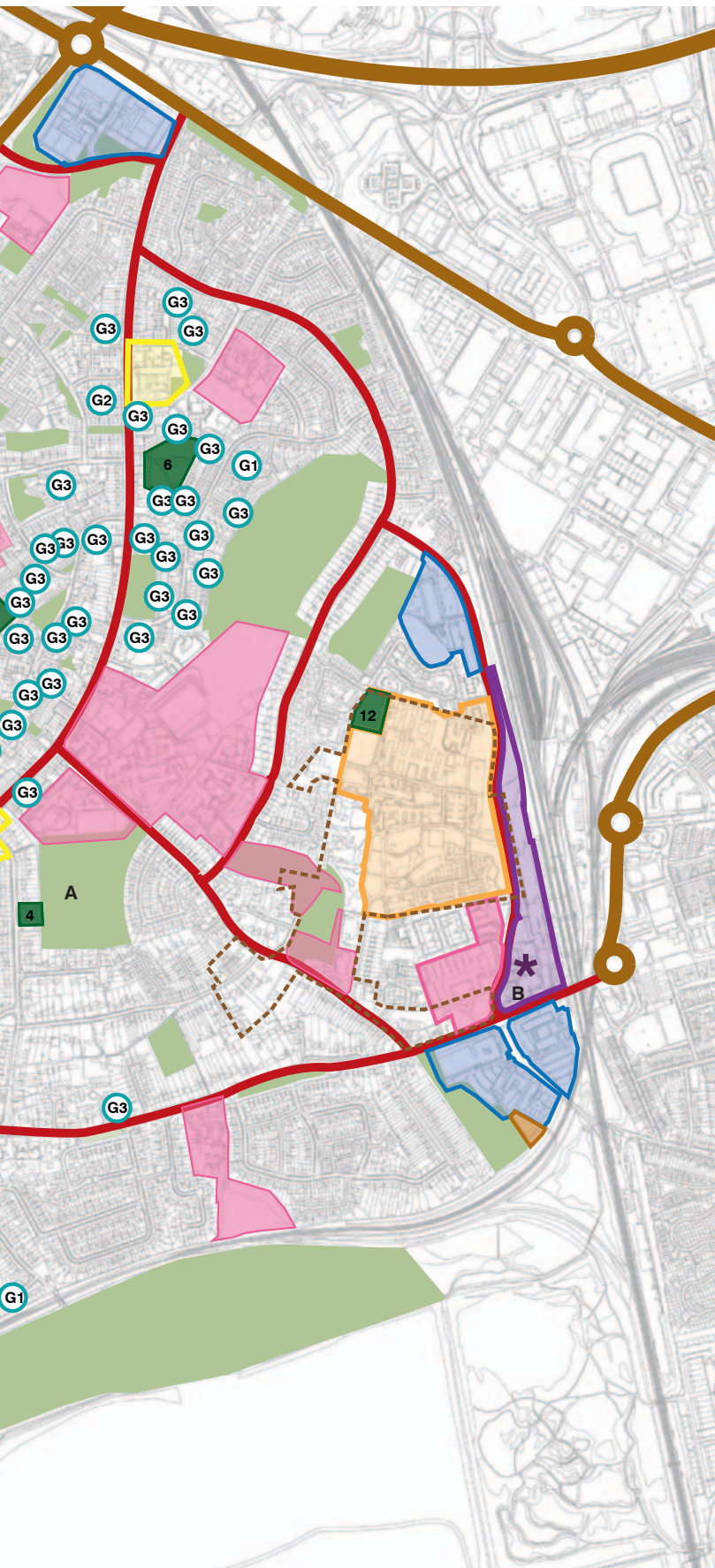


Figure 5: Our Strategy



Key

Policies

Building New Homes

Garage Courts

Policies GC1-GC5



Garage Blocks Already Developed



Garage Blocks Identified for Development



Other Garage Blocks



Policy BNH2 - Wellington Place

Protecting and Renewing Our Parks, Gardens and Public Spaces

Policies PR1-PR5



Parks



Local Green Space

1. Tweed Drive / Mersey Way
2. St. Clements Drive
3. Rear of Hunstanton Way
4. Shenley Road
5. Whiteley Crescent
6. Buckfast Avenue
7. Avon Grove
8. Gleneagles
9. Forfar Drive
10. St. Clements / Chepstow Drive
11. Wincanton Hill
12. Flowers Walk



Bletchley Park: Conserving and Developing the Heritage

Policies BP1-BP3



Retaining and Creating New Employment

Policies E1-E4



Station Quarter

Policies BS1-BS4



Renewing Our Local Shopping Centres

Policies LSC1-LSC4



Protecting and Developing Community Infrastructure

Policies C1-C2



Ensuring our Streets are Safe and Accessible

Policies SSA1-SSA3

Opportunity Areas



Garage Courts

A

Rickley Park

B

Bletchley Station Quarter

Note: The Strategy Plan identifies the specific spatial application of our strategy, there are also policies that apply across the whole area that are not shown on the plan or listed, and for those the text should be referred to.



5.0 Our Eight Key Objectives

5.1 Overview

Our Plan aims to address the key issues facing our parish over the next 10-15 years. Some of the issues are evident now and others will emerge over the plan period, so our aim is to create a framework that allows us to anticipate and deal with those issues of most significance to the people of West Bletchley. Some of the issues affect us all and are national issues such as an ageing population, and some are local such as the quality of our local centres.

These are our objectives; they are not in order of priority and all are important and many are inter-related.

1. **Building New Homes** – we want to provide for a range of new homes that reflects the needs of our community, and particularly to encourage new homes with facilities that meet the needs of our ageing population;
2. **Renewing our Parks, Gardens and Public Spaces** - we want to reinvest in upgrading our parks and open spaces, creating attractive and sustainable places to enjoy – we propose upgrading key parks and open spaces to extend their use by the local community in accordance with our open spaces strategy and proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy.
3. **Conserving and Developing the Heritage of Bletchley Park** – we will support the continued conservation and heritage development of Bletchley Park and its setting and seek to ensure that benefits arise for local people and that necessary improvements are made to local infrastructure to support the development as a major attraction;
4. **Creating New Employment** – we want to encourage new jobs within our area, and exploit the tremendous opportunities for new investment and regeneration. The focus for investment will be Bletchley Station and the opportunities East West Rail will bring, and in addition we want to protect existing viable employment sites and buildings, encourage new business space including space suitable for small innovative and creative companies.
5. **Reviving our Local Shopping Centres** – we want our local centres to be strong locations for shopping and other commercial facilities and we will support appropriate new investment to upgrade them;
6. **Protecting and Developing Community Infrastructure** – we will protect the important social infrastructure that serves our community, including meeting places, health facilities, education and places of worship. -
7. **Ensuring our Streets are Safe and Accessible** – we want to ensure our streets remain safe and attractive and ensure significant developments are located where they are accessible and are on bus routes.
8. **Promoting High Quality and Sustainable Design** - we want developments of a scale, form and appearance that adds to the character of the area. We will protect the special environments including listed buildings and the conservation area and other features that add to local character. We will look for design briefs to be prepared and agreed with us for all the major developments and regeneration sites to ensure the best outcomes. We will support the right development in the right place, and apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.