

Beautiful Bletchley – Creating a Visitor Experience

Councillor Allan Rankine (20 October 2021 Full Council)

1. The regeneration of Central Bletchley is the largest strategic opportunity for Milton Keynes and is supported by Councillors from all parties and our MPs.
2. This Council has committed to the regeneration of Central Bletchley and a critical part of that regeneration will be the creation of an attractive gateway experience around the railway station that leaves a positive impression on visitors and commuters and increases pride in our community.
3. That this Council notes:
 - (a) the development of East West Rail and the re-establishment of Bletchley Station as a major transport interchange presents a once in a lifetime opportunity for the people of Bletchley and Milton Keynes;
 - (b) the development of Central Bletchley will be shaped via the Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document, a Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Investment Plan and a new Transport and Parking Strategy;
 - (c) that Bletchley is already a significant destination for visitors to Bletchley Park, MK Stadium, Marshall Arena, MK1, Windmill Hill Golf Club, MK College; and
 - (d) that East West Rail investment at the Station, further investment at Bletchley Park, the College and Queensway plus new connections to an improved Blue Lagoon/country park will see visitor numbers increase dramatically.
4. That this Council agrees:
 - (a) that the current visitor experience around Bletchley Station is not attractive and leaves a very poor impression of Bletchley;
 - (b) that the derelict land around the old cricket pavilion and the metal security fencing stands in a prominent and important gateway location that currently leaves a very bad impression on travellers coming off the train at Bletchley Station or via Buckingham Road/Sherwood Drive;
 - (c) there is no attractive green space or plaza around the station area for visitors to relax and linger;
 - (d) that the association of Bletchley with Alan Turing is a strong cultural asset and yet Milton Keynes has no suitable memorial to celebrate the life of this national hero and that such a feature would strengthen Milton Keynes bid to become a city;
 - (e) on the importance of visitor spending to sustain a strong local economy, jobs and high-quality public infrastructure that will benefit all of Bletchley; and
 - (f) that maximising the opportunity of East West Rail and the successful regeneration of Bletchley will in part be dependent on creating an attractive investment environment for business and a positive experience for visitors.

5. That this Council calls on the Cabinet, Officers and Towns Fund Board to consider as part of our regeneration plans:

(a) the acquisition of the old cricket pavilion site for the benefit of the people of Bletchley, Students and visitors;

(b) the potential to convert the cricket pavilion site into an attractive memorial garden dedicated to Alan Turing, the commissioning of a Turing statue and the reclamation/reconstruction of the fire damaged pavilion building into a café and visitor centre serving residents, visitors and students and assisting with directions to all of our existing and future attractions; and

(c) a large plaza area to the west of the station, incorporating a redesigned, pedestrian friendly section of Sherwood Drive to enable a safe crossing for visitors and students to the Turing Pavilion, the College and Bletchley Park.

