

# **Comments on Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework**

from Milton Keynes Green Party

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## **General**

We welcome many of the proposals in the Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework.

We need more modal shift from cars to public transport, cycling and walking to reduce congestion, parking problems and CO2 emissions. The provision for the sustainable modes needs to be increased.

## **Cycling/walking**

The Redway network should penetrate into and across Bletchley. Central Bletchley and the rail station should be accessible by safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes from all directions.

Signposting for pedestrians and cyclists varies from poor to non-existent. Signing must be improved to make getting around more convenient for pedestrians and cyclists.

New Redways needed:

Newton Leys – Station (see below)

Lakes Estate - Queensway (see below)

Buckingham Rd - Queensway

Alongside or parallel to:

Queensway

Buckingham Rd

Sherwood Drive/Whalley Drive

Signalised Redway crossing for Princes Way either at junction with Saxon St or junction with Albert St or somewhere between them.

New Redway bridge over WCML, sidings and Flyover line to link Sherwood Drive (opp Challenge House) to Third Ave, Denbigh West. This would decrease severance caused by railway line. It would provide convenient access to the station from industry on Denbigh West and from Stadium:mk. It

would provide convenient access to Bletchley Park, MK College, South-Central Institute of Technology and the station from Denbigh West, Stadium:mk and housing areas such as Beanhill and Netherfield. It would provide access to Denbigh industry, ASDA and MK1 from housing in West Bletchley and new developments in Sherwood Drive and Buckingham Road Quarter.

Water Eaton Rd. The single carriageway bridge under the WCML should have some priority for cyclists. At each approach to the bridge at the traffic lights there should be an Advanced Stop Line area for cyclists and short cycle lanes to enable cyclists to reach those ASL areas.

3.3.10 This includes the reconfiguration of Saxon Street and a new pedestrian friendly street that 'opens up' Queensway by reconnecting it with Buckingham Road. This will also facilitate improved and safer pedestrian movement, to the western side of the railway,

This new street should also have a Redway for cyclists. There should be a continuous Redway from Bottledump roundabout in the west to Fenny Stratford in the east.

#### Newton Leys – Station

Existing new Redway alongside Jersey Dr to Channel Islands rdbt  
New link across open space to access road that comes under WCML Br 150  
Upgrade path from Serpentine Ct to Br 150 to Redway standard to provide link from Lakes to station (this is under construction)  
Use existing access road to Blue Lagoon CP, then leisure route to track that come under WCML Br 151  
Upgrade footpath from Br 151 to Water Eaton Rd, past Newfoundland Lake, to either Leisure route or Redway standard.

Later, once works on Bletchley viaduct completed:  
Redway northwards parallel to but higher than Water Eaton Rd crossing route of original Oxford-Bletchley rail line, passing under flyover and descending to join footpath on west side of Water Eaton Rd near Wellington Place.

Also new Redway bridge over Water Eaton Rd using existing abutments from original Oxford-Bletchley rail line bridge.  
New Redway parallel to WCML but 10-20m west of tracks on NR land, under flyover, over Buckingham Rd using west side of existing bridge Br 153, round south and west edges of Signal Box CP to join existing path to station entrance near top of steps. The west side of existing bridge over Buckingham Rd is about 10m wide and is just used for herringbone parking for NR vehicles. Taking a 3m strip for the Redway would still allow parallel parking for NR vehicles. New Redway would need to be fenced off from rail tracks.

There should also be ramps down from the new Redway at Br 153 down to the bus stops on both sides of Buckingham Rd. This provides a direct step-free and traffic-free route between the station entrance and the bus stops on Buckingham Rd, about 250m in length. These ramps should be built even if not all of the Redway from Newton Leys is built.

The Redway route via Eight Bells local park proposed in the UDF is too indirect.

#### Lakes Estate – Queensway

Start at existing Redway underpass beneath Drayton Rd  
Upgrade footpath to Hunter Drive, then either, use Hunter Drive which is not a through road for vehicles, or use Cornelia Close and Celina Close and the path the links them. Then across Water Eaton Rd to Willow Way, Westfield Rd, Cambridge St, North St to reach Redway alongside Saxon St. All to be signed as a cycle route and have cycle lanes where that is possible.

Upgrade footpath from WCML Br 151 to Hunter Drive to Redway standard to provide link from Newton Leys to town centre

### **Public transport**

#### **Buses**

There is a demand for cross-Bletchley bus services. Most services terminate at the Bus Station requiring passengers to change to get across Bletchley. Some of the services along Buckingham Rd should be extended beyond Bletchley Bus station to serve Tesco and Fenny Stratford as well.

There should be good access by bus to both the Hospital and the Stadium (and associated retail) from all parts of Bletchley. This is more important now that Sainsburys has closed.

There should be bus services to community facilities such as surgeries, health centres, leisure centres, schools and colleges.

More bus services should go via the rail station on Sherwood Dr until the eastern entrance to the station is built.

Fenny Stratford is poorly served, particularly the Watling St area. It needs better bus services to Bletchley and to CMK and more convenient stops.

There should be a regular service between CMK and Bletchley via Watling St,

Whaddon Way, Whalley Dr, Sherwood Dr, Buckingham Rd.

There should be a bus lane on Buckingham Rd eastbound for most of section between Shenley Rd and Sherwood Drive.

More frequent evening bus services. The day time frequency should be maintained until at least 8.00pm. Many shops now stay open well beyond 5.30pm and more people work flexible hours in offices. Public Transport should accommodate these lifestyle changes.

4.3.1 Working with local operators to re-route a bus service (such as the route 50 or 6) to use Sherwood Drive, addressing a gap in the network coverage and providing additional service to Bletchley Station.

Route 50 only runs 3 times per day and route 6 needs to continue to run via Saxon St to serve Stadium:mk, MK1. So neither of these suggestions is feasible. We suggest re-instating a variant of the former route 7. This ran from Bletchley to CMK and Wolverton via Church Green Rd and Rickley Lane and then to CMK via Furzton. Last year it was truncated to just the CMK and Wolverton section. The southern end could be re-instated, but running on grid roads rather than through estates, and in Bletchley it could divert via Sherwood Dr and Whalley Dr instead of Church Green Rd in order to serve Bletchley Station.

4.3.1 Extending a bus service (such as the F70/F77) to terminate at Bletchley Railway Station.

This is not feasible because F70/F77 go on to CMK, they do not terminate at Bletchley.

4.3.1 Improving access between Fenny Stratford & Central Bletchley (such as redirecting route 100 via Central Bletchley and/or routes F70/77 via Fenny Stratford).

We agree that there is a need for better links between Fenny Stratford, particularly the Watling St/Aylesbury St part, and Central Bletchley. However neither of the above suggestions is feasible because they would leave other areas without a bus service. We would suggest that a service that enters Bletchley from the west, either 4 or 7 proposed above, after calling at Bletchley Bus Station continues in a loop that includes Watling St, Aylesbury St and Water Eaton Rd.

4.5.3 This includes a new north facing bus station on the western side of Saxon Street (assumes

relocation of Cemex Access) between the new Eastern Entrance and Princes Way. This would include a signalised right turn for buses travelling southbound to enter the station which integrates with a pedestrian signalised crossing of Saxon Street.

This signalised right turn for buses travelling southbound to enter the station is not shown in the illustrative masterplan. We are not sure that the highway geometry could even accommodate this. Especially if MRT uses longer articulated vehicles. It may therefore be necessary to retain Brunel roundabout or a new roundabout near the southern end of the bus station.

It may be better to retain a redesigned bus station on the east side of Saxon St. Two large groups of people will be using the bus station. These will be shoppers and workers from the town centre. They will be on the east side of Saxon St. The other group will be rail users. Even with the Eastern entrance to the rail station they will be on the west side of Saxon St. So one of those groups will need to cross Saxon St to access the bus station. It is not clear what criteria are being used to decide which group has to cross the road. Is it the size of the group? Or is it the demographics?

It is proposed that buses no longer use Queensway. Currently it is only used by F70/F77 northbound. Southbound is via Duncombe St. If northbound F70/F77 is to go via Princes Way, as is proposed, then services in both directions should go via Princes Way, Findlay Way, Brooklands Ave, Water Eaton Rd, to ensure that Water Eaton Rd retains a bus service.

## **Rail**

We support the EWRL proposal for rail services to link Oxford/Aylesbury with MK Central/Bedford/Cambridge via Bletchley. We support increased capacity at MKC station and extending Bedford – Bletchley service to MKC.

We support an eastern entrance to Bletchley rail station from Saxon St to provide convenient access to town centre and bus station.

There should be safe short traffic-free routes for pedestrians from the station entrance to the bus stops on both sides of Buckingham Rd (see Cycling/walking).

New High level Platforms 7,8 should be reversible

In the short to medium term trains should be able to operate between MK Central and Bedford/Cambridge by reversing in any of platforms 5, 7 or 8 at Bletchley in either direction. Platform 5 already has this capability but is also used for other purposes, including being the only southern access to the

carriage sidings and the Bletchley Relief 2 line. Consequently it may not always be available.

The new high level platforms 7 and 8 should also be reversible to enable more EWR trains to call at Bletchley, eg Cambridge – MK Central, and increase operating flexibility. In the longer term a North to East chord may be required at Bletchley to allow trains to operate between MK Central and Bedford/Cambridge.

The EWR project includes a service between Aylesbury and MK Central via Bletchley. At the last minute the government dropped the funding for this service. However it is still part of the project and should be acknowledged as such, even if there is currently no guaranteed funding.

It is regrettable that electrification of EWR has been dropped on the instruction of DfT. Network Rail has recently recommended, in its Decarbonisation Strategy, that EWR should be electrified. We agree.

## **Roads and cars**

Grid road speed limits should be reduced from 60/70 mph to 50 mph to improve road safety, improve bus reliability and reduce pollution and CO2 emissions.

Most estates and residential areas should have 20 mph speed limits to improve safety.

Instead of providing more car parking in residential areas, ie accepting high car ownership, the council should be tackling car dependency. The council should advocate measures such as car clubs, travel planning and better public transport to reduce the amount of car parking required.

Some housing developments, near to shops and good bus and rail services, should be car-free, with not owning a car being a condition of residence. Only very limited parking should be provided, only for car club vehicles and visitors.

## **Queensway**

We welcome proposals for reduced traffic on Queensway, making it one way, and including a Redway.

## **Tavistock St/Saxon St link**

Create short new road through part of scrap yard site to link Tavistock St/North St junction to Saxon St. Left in/left out at Saxon St. North St and Eastern end of Tavistock St can then have lorry weight limit to stop HGVs passing through residential areas.

Princes Way/Albert St junction

Princes Way/Albert St jn should be signalized to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross Princes Way safely and traffic to turn in and out of Albert St safely.

### **Opportunity Areas**

Co-housing, housing cooperatives and Community Land Trusts should be encouraged.

There should be at least 30% affordable housing. The social rent proportion should be more than 5%, we would suggest at least 10%. There is huge unmet demand for social rent housing already. So any new developments should make a contribution to meeting this existing unmet demand from existing residents as well as meeting the demand for newcomers.

All Houses in the development should be zero carbon. Most should have solar panels fitted. Ground source and air source heat pumps should be considered. Passivhaus standards should be insisted upon, where possible, and encouraged elsewhere. Housing should be orientated to be south facing to optimise solar gain, as was done with Pennylands several decades ago.

Industrial and commercial buildings should be designed to high thermal efficiency standards and assessed against BREEAM or equivalent standards.

Community energy schemes should be implemented in the development.

### **Green spaces**

All mature trees should be retained. More trees should be planted as part of the developments. Most existing hedges should be retained and joined together to act as wildlife corridors.

There should be a requirement to plant lots of street trees. These provide shading and cooling in housing areas, increasing comfort and reducing energy consumption.

AF 31.1.22