



# **Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal: Year in Review 2024**

**20 December 2024**



**Funded by  
UK Government**

# Introduction from John Cove, Chair of the Town Deal Board.

**Welcome to this review that highlights the progress made during 2024 with the work overseen by the Town Deal Board.**

The Town Deal programme is a real opportunity to promote the overall regeneration of Central Bletchley and positively transform our town centre into a space that is thriving, vibrant and instils pride in our local community. This change is possible through £22.7 million of funding from the Towns Fund, as well as more than £9 million of funding from our partners including, East-West Rail, Bletchley Park Trust, and Milton Keynes College.

It has been a fantastic year for the programme. During the months we have engaged with stakeholders and, importantly, the local community to create conceptual plans that are ambitious, appropriate, and designed with the future of Bletchley in mind. This level of consultation has given us lots of useful feedback which is now being used to create our detailed plans.

Over the next 12 months, you will see positive changes in Bletchley. We will be coming back to the community with our final designs, and we are looking to begin construction in Autumn 2025!

In the meantime, the Board joins me in thanking you all for your support and we look forward to collaborating with you throughout 2025.



Photo: Whistlejacket

**John Cove, Chair of Town Deal Board**

# What is the Town Deal programme?

The Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal is a £22.7 million investment programme designed to capitalise on Central Bletchley's position in the East-West rail network and promote the overall regeneration of the area. The programme consists of seven projects, shown in the Town Investment Plan, which focuses on addressing the following themes: regeneration, planning and land-use; connectivity; and skills and enterprise.

Project	Description
Revolving Development Fund	This fund will help with the acquisition and re-use of key strategic sites around the area. The fund has enabled the team to buy the vacant Sainsbury's site next to the Brunel Centre.
Transport Hub	This will provide enhanced connectivity to and from the town centre and explore the future opportunities for upgrading Bletchley train station capitalising on the East-West Rail route.
Public Realm Improvement (PRI)	This project will provide improved public realm along the main commercial streets, Queensway, and Aylesbury Street.
Redway Improvements	This will provide new or improved redway links between the Lakes Estate, Newton Leys, and the Blue Lagoon Nature Reserve to Bletchley town centre.
Technology Park Bletchley	Tech Park is about providing the delivery of hardware and equipment to support digital skills development for the town, helping to upskill residents and students.
Transformation at Bletchley Park	This project will help renovate facilities at Bletchley Park to provide a new dedicated learning facility, with accessible classrooms and a high specification learning facility.
Active Marketing of Vacant Sites	We are proactively working with local businesses to promote Bletchley and support the development and growth of the local economy.

# Programme update

The Town Deal team has had a very busy and productive year!

At the start of the year, we closed two projects (Innovation Hub and Fibre Connectivity) and reallocated approximately £3.5 million to support several projects within the programme. This has enabled us to reallocate over £2 million and get a much-needed boost to our improvements work on Queensway.

During the following months we started to draft our conceptual designs. These proposals included earlier feedback and our objectives as outlined in our project business cases. From August 3 to 22 September, we held a comprehensive public consultation seeking feedback on our Public Realm Improvement works (Aylesbury Street and Queensway) and improvement works on Saxon Street. The consultation gave the city council valuable feedback to consider and helped influence the designs which we look forward to sharing with you in the new year.

The Town Deal Board and stakeholders continue to provide guidance and scrutiny of all proposals to ensure that they represent the needs of the community and meet all the objectives while providing excellent value for money.

In September, we hired a new Community Engagement Officer who has already hit the ground running. They have spent their time meeting with stakeholders to understand their concerns and ensure that the community's voice is heard and considered as we develop our proposals. They will be holding a series of pop-up events in 2025 where you can talk through the proposals and stay informed. Meanwhile, you can keep up to date on the Town Deal programme and latest news by visiting,

<https://groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk/>

So, while you unwind, let us rewind and take you through what's been happening on each of the seven projects throughout 2024.

## The Revolving Development Fund

**The Revolving Development Fund aims to help and accelerate the redevelopment and regeneration of key target areas in Central Bletchley. This fund has already enabled Milton Keynes City Council to buy the Brunel Centre and Sainsbury's site and prepare the site for an exciting and transformational development that will provide new retail spaces, community facilities, and housing.**

Following consultation at the end of 2023, the Brunel Centre redevelopment brief was approved in March 2024. This document sets out the parameters and provides guidance to any future development that happens on this site.



The demolition of the Sainsbury's site began in summer and was completed in November 2024. This work was undertaken with minimal disruption to the community and has enabled the car park to remain operational.

The team understands that the businesses in the Brunel Centre are integral to the local community. We are therefore working to relocate businesses where possible while the redevelopment takes place.

The next steps are to begin the marketing and advertisement of the site so that we can appoint an ambitious development partner and bring forward a development that meets the future needs of Bletchley. Once a delivery partner has been appointed, we look forward to them engaging with the community on the exciting opportunities this redevelopment will provide.



Photo: John Cooper

Former Sainsbury's site

## Transport Hub

**The Transport Hub scheme will positively improve Saxon Street by creating a better-connected gateway into the town, which balances the needs of all users. This will be achieved by improving and new pedestrian crossings, reconfiguring the road to make it safer, providing an improved bus station with better access, adding new planting, making improvements to the public realm, and protecting land for a potential eastern entrance.**

Throughout 2024, the project team conducted technical surveys of the site to understand what is possible and to help inform the conceptual plans. This included vehicle modelling to understand the impact that any changes may have on traffic flow and congestion.

During the summer consultation, we showed a conceptual plan that proposed the relocation of the bus station and the replacement of the Brunel Roundabout with a signalised junction. Following mixed feedback on these proposals, the team decided to revisit the designs and investigate if a better balance can be created that promotes pedestrian safety and movement, yet minimises the impact on cars.

The team looks forward to sharing the new designs with you in Spring 2025. We aim to begin construction at the end of the 2025.

## Public Realm Improvements



Photos: Whistlejacket

Queensway, Bletchley.



**This project aims to inject new life into Queensway and Aylesbury Street by positively transforming the public realm and creating usable space which caters to the community.**

The planned improvements include new pedestrian crossings, measures to prevent illegal parking, new parking spaces, planting, street furniture and extended space for both businesses and the community to use.

At the start of the year, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (HCLG) approved the reallocation of more than £2 million from the proposed Innovation Hub project to the Public Realm Improvement works for Queensway. This added funding means that we can deliver more much-needed improvements to the high street, such as new pedestrian crossing points and improvements to paving, street furniture and planting.

Throughout 2024 we carried out several surveys, including utilities surveys, vehicle modelling, and topographical work to better understand what can be delivered.

With this information we created conceptual plans that incorporate the earlier feedback and meets the objectives of the approved business case.

In summer 2024 we presented our current thinking at a series of public consultations, and used the online platform, Commonplace. We obtained valuable feedback on our conceptual plans. Overall, the plans were well received and supported. The team is using the feedback to further inform the detailed design work – which is currently underway.



**Summer public consultations. Top left: Brunel Centre. Bottom right: MK College.**



We look forward to coming back to you in 2025 and showing you the final proposals. Construction in both Queensway and Aylesbury Street is expected to start in winter 2025/26 and the team are working on plans to minimise disruption to businesses and keep our commercial streets open and thriving.

## **Redways**

**Our redways project has provided new and improved links between the Lakes Estate, Newton Leys, Blue Lagoon Nature Reserve and Bletchley Town Centre. The project included four sections, with Section 4 supported by the Town Deal and Sections 1-3 delivered via other funding sources.**

We're delighted that all four sections of the redways project have now been delivered. Landscaping and snagging work continues to take place while the new and improved redways links are now open. It's great to see the community using the new routes and we





Photo: John Cooper

**Mayor Bradburn opens a new section of the redway.**

will continue to work on promoting this space so that everyone can benefit from visiting the Blue Lagoon Nature Reserve.

On Friday 26 July, we held an official opening event. This gave us the opportunity to promote the new route and join up with the Blue Light Safety event which was also being held at the Blue Lagoon. The mayor, a keen cyclist and active promoter of sustainable travel for a greener, cleaner city, was invited to cut the ribbon on the day.

## **Tech Park at MK College**

**The new Tech Park at the South Central Institute of Technology (SCIoT) in Bletchley is a newly designed teaching facility, with a new equipment investment, aimed at supporting the drive to improve digital skills in Bletchley.**

The teaching space is now in full swing and hosts a wide range of activities, training sessions and holidays camps. It is equipped with high-tech equipment including VR headsets and Sphero Balls, Mini robots, iPad, computer tablets and laptops.

As part of Milton Keynes College Group, the SCIoT offers courses from basic digital programmes up to more sophisticated certificates in areas like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR). The Tech Park project, funded by a grant from the Town Deal Fund, is very much a part of the regeneration of Bletchley.





Photos: MK College

**Tech-centric curriculum attracts students with ambitions in innovation.**





Throughout 2024 the Tech Park continued to buy equipment and create a curriculum that provides students with skillsets catered towards innovation, computing, and AI.

The project also supports the local community, with initiatives such as, 'Tea & Tech' to help teach digital skill to all ages, and to support the needs of local people who are trying to conduct everyday activities such as online banking and accessing online health services.

In March, MK College held an official opening event for the Tech Park at which students from Lord Grey Academy made full use of the newly bought high-tech equipment. This project helps to ensure that Bletchley continues to have a seat at the table of tech.

## Bletchley Park

The Town Deal project at Bletchley Park, once the communications hub of wartime Bletchley Park, consisted of refurbishing and repurposing Block E to create two new resources.



Fellowship Auditorium, above.

Photo: Chris Henley



The newly titled 'Block E Learning Centre' now includes eight learning spaces for pupils from primary school to higher education students, as well as the Fellowship Auditorium – an ultramodern, 250-seat presentation and event space. While Block E was opened in 2023, 2024 has been a massive year for the Bletchley Park Trust. In the new facilities, the Trust held more than 50

ticketed events, welcomed nearly 50,000 learners through its doors and invited six local schools to take part in workshops. It has also hosted several events for community groups and organisations, including MK Islamic Arts and Culture, MK Arts and Heritage Alliance, MK Business Community and, building on the Global AI summit held there in 2023, an AI Safety summit.

Bletchley Park continues to be at the heart of Bletchley's heritage and identity, and we look forward to working closely with the Trust to continue the promotion of the historical site and increase visitor numbers to Bletchley.



Radley Room, event space above.

Photo: Chris Henley

## Active Marketing of Vacant Sites (AMOVs)


**AMOVs is a revenue funded project to deliver initiatives to support, develop and grow the local economy by attracting more investment in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.**

Throughout 2024, we hosted a monthly evening event, bringing together local business to network and receive presentations on pertinent issues in Bletchley. These have included the Town Deal proposals and the Bletchley Pathfinder project.

In September 2024, the AMOVs team launched a new business narrative for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. This narrative provides a strong and compelling story about why Bletchley and Fenny Stratford is an attractive area for businesses to locate to and invest in. The business narrative is free to use, enabling local businesses and organisations to effectively promote Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.







**New Grant Scheme for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford businesses – Apply Now**

Startup Grant – up to £2,500  
Existing Business Grant – up to £5,000

The grant scheme is now live and you have until **30 November 2024** to apply.

For more information, visit:  
[www.groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk/home/grant-scheme](http://www.groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk/home/grant-scheme)

Scan the QR for more details on how to apply.

Milton Keynes City Council  
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Photos: Whistlejacket

**Town Deal reaches out to support local businesses.**

In October 2024, the project launched a grant scheme for business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. The scheme will provide successful applicants with up to £5,000 to businesses finance commitments such as training, new equipment, branding, marketing, and building maintenance. The outcome of the applications for the grant will be decided in January 2025. The project team continue support business growth in 2025 and are currently designing and creating new initiatives for 2025.



**Regular business networking event run by the Town Deal team.**

Photo: John Cooper

# What's Happening in 2025?

**2025 is going to be a massive year for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.**

During the first half of the year, we will be collaborating with stakeholders to review and refine the detailed designs for Queensway, Aylesbury Street and Saxon Street. In the second half of the year construction will begin. We will keep you and the community informed about what, when, where, and how the work will be taking place through social media, drop-in sessions, meetings, and our website [www.groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk](http://www.groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk). You can also email [info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk](mailto:info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk)

Here are some of the activities we will be working on in the new year. We've included important wider regeneration projects outside the Town Deal that are also taking place in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford:

- Public engagement event to share with the community the detailed design work plans for the regeneration of Central Bletchley.
- Construction starting on Queensway, Aylesbury Street and Saxon Street.
- Creation of a Bletchley and Fenny Stratford 2050 guide, outlining future aspirations and visions for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. Public engagement activities will be held at Bletchley Library on Tuesday 14 January 10am – 4.30pm; and Saturday 18 January, 10am – 12.30pm, supported with online engagement.
- Monthly business networking events throughout 2025, for local Bletchley and Fenny Stratford entrepreneurs and businesses. The first event in the new year will be held on Tuesday 21 January at DaVinci Café on Queensway, 5.30pm – 6.30pm.
- Monthly residents' drop-in sessions throughout 2025 for local people who would like to discuss aspects of the Town Deal. The 2025 sessions kick off at the Frank Moran Centre on Monday 20 January, and Sycamore House on 27 January, 2 - 4pm.
- Delivery of business grants to successful applicants.
- Marketing of the Brunel Centre to identify a suitable developer.
- Community engagement for a public art project.
- Continued redevelopment of the Lakes Estate. The construction of 183 new homes is due to be completed by Summer 2026. Construction of the remaining 406 homes will be completed later.
- Establishment of a park run at the Blue Lagoon.



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