

## **Flitwick Town Centre Consultation Report**

### **1. Purpose of consultation**

Central Bedfordshire Council is investing £4million in regenerating town centres as part of the Market Town Regeneration Fund. Within this project, Flitwick Town Council has been allocated £1.8million to improve some specific areas of the town.

Central Bedfordshire Council and Flitwick Town Council have been working together to look at a number of initiatives that could improve Flitwick town centre. Both are committed to improving the overall experience of visiting Flitwick town centre so that local people and visitors want to shop and spend more time there, both during the day and evening. The proposed projects could provide much more of a focal point for the town centre; improvements to the station area; and more shopping choices. Members of the public were invited to have their say on some of the ideas being explored as part of this project.

### **2. The proposals**

The consultation sought feedback on a variety of ideas, most notably around proposals for a Transport Interchange next to the train station and an accompanying retail opportunity. Early concepts provided also included a new multi-storey car park and members of the public were asked to feedback on their preferred choices for this new space in the town centre. Members of the public were also asked to suggest ways to improve the High Street for users, both aesthetically and practically. Another area of exploration was looking at alternative uses for Flitwick library beyond the traditional services in a bid to encourage more people into the library.

### **3. The Consultation Process**

The consultation document was made available both as an online survey and a paper questionnaire and was launched on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017 and concluded on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

The consultation was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign which directly targeted local residents in and around Flitwick.

Activities included:

- A news release was issued to all local newspaper groups at the start of the consultation. Bedford Times & Citizen and Bedford Today both published articles w/c (17<sup>th</sup> August 2017).
- A promotional video was created and published online with the portfolio holder talking about the scheme. The video has been viewed over 1,200 times on YouTube.

- Regular updates were posted on CBC social media channels;
  - Twitter:
    - Number of tweets: 12
    - Total engagements (comments, likes, retweets): 314
    - Total impressions (people that saw the tweets): 16,451
  - Facebook
    - People reached: 34,453
    - Reactions, comments and shares: 1,747
    - Video views: 7,300
- Email bulletins were issued encouraging people signed up for news updates in the local area to take part in the consultation.
- Updates were published in various council newsletters (Staff Central, Members' Information Bulletin) to promote the consultation and to encourage those in a position of influence such as councillors to promote it further.
- Four drop-in sessions were held at various stages of the consultation with residents invited to come and ask questions and learn more about the proposals:
  - The Rufus Centre – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July
  - The Rufus Centre – Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August
  - Flitwick Library – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September
  - Flitwick Library – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September

Paper copies of the questionnaires were made available through Flitwick Library/Leisure Centre and The Rufus Centre.

The Flitwick town centre consultation webpages had a total of 5686 page views in between 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017, demonstrating a high level of interest and reach of the campaign. The top method used to find information was via Facebook with just under 3,000 hits coming from Facebook. Others included; 768 hits from google searches, 382 from Gov Delivery bulletins and 306 hits from Twitter.

Flitwick Town Council also contributed to the communications campaign by promoting the consultation through their own social media channels. Their campaign resulted in an additional 348 click-throughs to the consultation pages hosted on the Central Bedfordshire website.

In addition, their social media pages provided:

- People reached: 5120
- Reactions, comments, shares: 81
- Engagement: 988

## 4. Feedback on the proposals

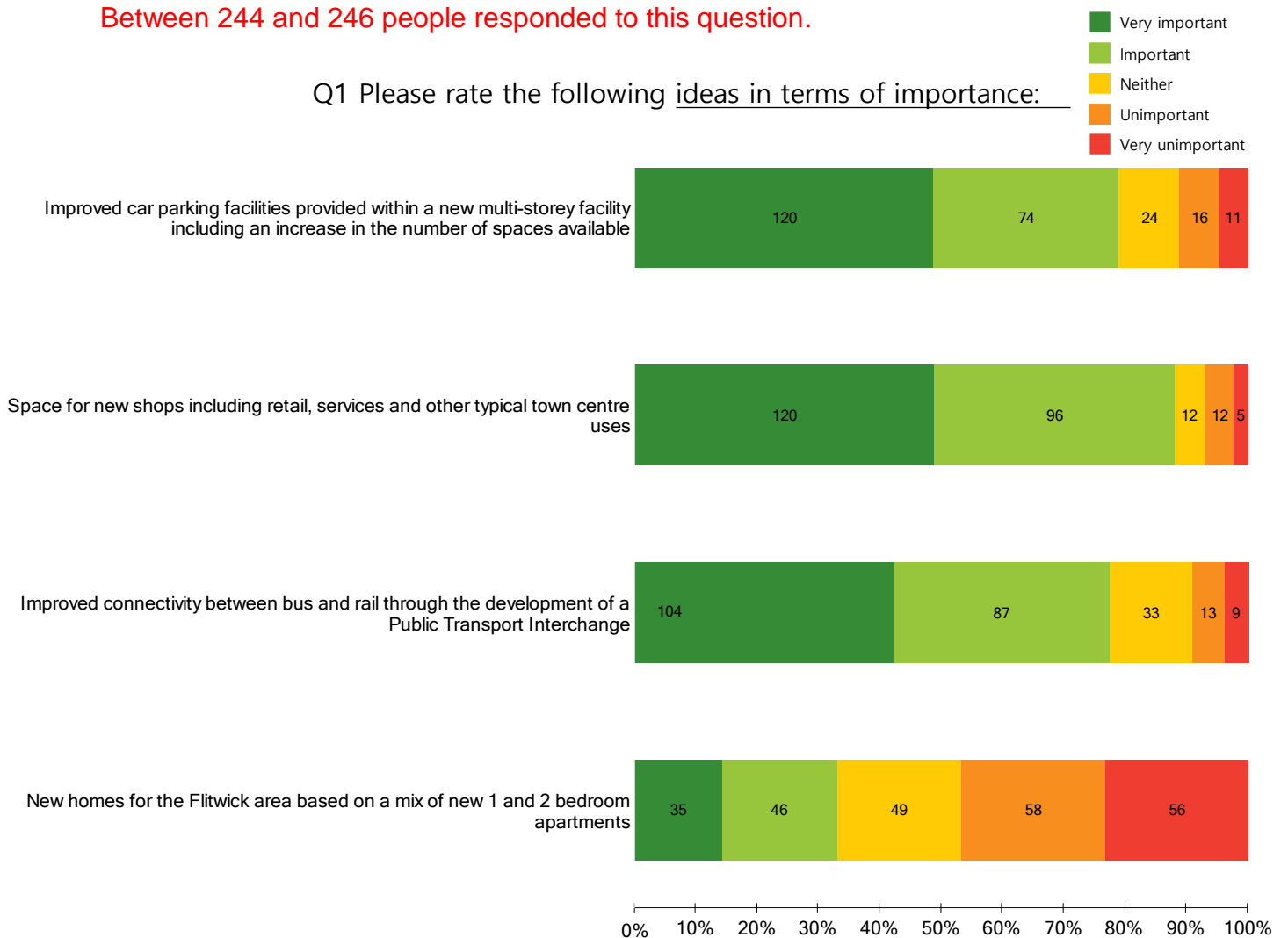
In total 247 residents participated in the consultation by completing the survey. Of the 246 that gave an answer; 78% (192) said they were Flitwick residents. Another 11.4% (28) said they were visitors of Flitwick, with an additional 5.7% (14) as commuters. These groups were key stakeholders and it was important to engage with all of them throughout the consultation.

### a. Improving the train station

#### I. Use of space at proposed site

Between 244 and 246 people responded to this question.

Q1 Please rate the following ideas in terms of importance:



Over 75% of respondents indicated that it was important to improve car parking facilities, include space for new retail & service opportunities and to improve connectivity between bus and rail through a new Public Transport interchange. However, just under half of respondents (47%) indicated that adding new homes to the station area was unimportant. In addition to this, there was an unusually high number (20%) that said adding new homes was neither important nor unimportant. This number is far greater than the 'Neither' categories for the other three points, indicating apathy or hesitation towards this proposal.

## Comments on the proposal:

### Q1a Do you have any other comments or suggestions with regards to the use of the site?

Analysis of repeat themes		No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Infrastructure concerns about new homes	24	9.7	21.1
	Broader retail choice	23	9.3	20.2
	No new homes	16	6.5	14.0
	Parking for commuters and shoppers	14	5.7	12.3
	More choice for food & drink places	13	5.3	11.4
	Retail outlet to rival Tesco	8	3.2	7.0
	Traffic flow needs to be addressed	8	3.2	7.0
	Do not like the artist impressions	8	3.2	7.0
	Concerns about train and bus services	8	3.2	7.0
	Design should be in keeping with market town feel	7	2.8	6.1
	Should be affordable housing	6	2.4	5.3
	Upmarket shops	4	1.6	3.5
	Step free access	4	1.6	3.5
	Multi-storey entrance should not be on Steppingley Rd.	4	1.6	3.5
	Independent retailers	3	1.2	2.6
	Over 55's accommodation	3	1.2	2.6
	Parking for Flitwick residents only	2	0.8	1.8
	Park & Ride option preferred	2	0.8	1.8
	Other/ unclassified	10	4.0	8.8
	Total no. of respondents	114	46.2	100.0
Missing		133	53.8	
Total		247	100.0	

114 respondents provided additional comments regarding the first question. An analysis of the comments reaffirms the findings of the first question:

- Infrastructure concerns about new homes (24 respondents)
- Broader retail choice (23 respondents)
- No new homes (16 responses)
- Parking for commuters and shoppers (14 respondents)
- More choice of food & drink (13 respondents)

'Infrastructure concerns' was the most reoccurring theme and this could help to explain the negative feedback for the new homes proposal.

*"New homes means more strain on an already stretched infrastructure. If you build new homes you have to build/provide another or larger doctor practice, dentist practice etc. It's already very difficult to get appointments at medical facilities in the town so to add more people will just make this situation worse. It's not fair on the existing residents or the practice staff at either facility."*

*"Flitwick needs more infrastructure, amenities and facilities before any more houses are built. Local community services. Not just commuter beds."*

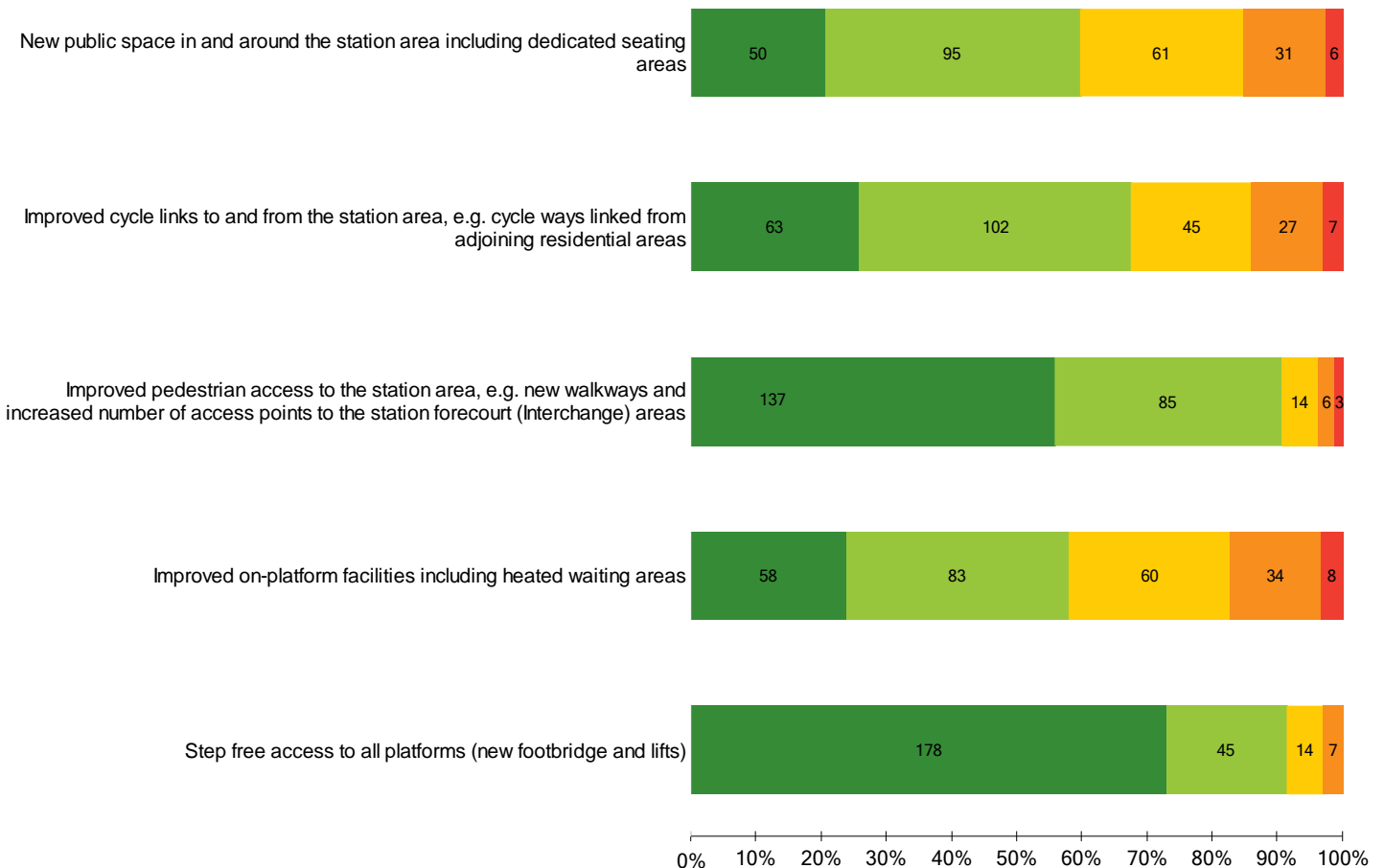
## Summary

There was broad support for the ideas put forward in the consultation regarding the use of the new site. Retail and new services were extremely popular, and new amenities such as the Public Transport Interchange and additional car parking were well supported. The proposal to add additional homes on the new site was met with less enthusiasm with the main concern being a lack of suitable infrastructure in place, other concerns were around whether the housing would be affordable for local people and not just for commuters.

## II. Station Facilities

Between 243 and 245 people responded to this question.

Q2 Please rate the following ideas in terms of importance:



There was overwhelming support for improved pedestrian access and step free access at the train station with over 90% of respondents saying these were important if not very important. There was also significant support (68%) for improved cycle links to and from the station. Additionally, over 50% of respondents supported proposals for a new public space in and around the station and improved on-platform facilities. It should be noted on the later two proposals that 25% of respondents

selected 'Neither' meaning there was a smaller proportion who thought they were unimportant, suggesting that the majority were not against the proposals but would rather prioritise other options.

### Comments on the proposal:

#### Q2a Do you have any other comments or suggestions with regards to the station facilities?

Analysis of repeat themes		No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Step free access to station	54	21.9	52.9
	Station access from High Street/ Station Rd	13	5.3	12.7
	Improved station facilities	11	4.5	10.8
	Dedicated seating could attract unwanted groups	8	3.2	7.8
	Access via the bridge is dangerous for pedestrians	8	3.2	7.8
	Retain Station access from the bridge	6	2.4	5.9
	Additional foot bridge	6	2.4	5.9
	Cycle paths	5	2.0	4.9
	Additional exits from station	4	1.6	3.9
	Enclosed shelters	3	1.2	2.9
	Concerns about train and bus services	3	1.2	2.9
	Improved road access to station area	2	0.8	2.0
	Other/ unclassified	9	3.6	8.8
	Total no. of respondents	102	41.3	100.0
Missing	145	58.7		
Total	247	100.0		

102 respondents provided additional comments. An analysis of the comments reaffirms the strong support for step free access to the station:

- Step free access to station (54 respondents)
- Station access from High Street/ Station Road (13 respondents)
- Improved station facilities (11 responses)
- Access via the bridge is dangerous for pedestrians (8 respondents)
- Dedicated seating could attract unwanted groups (8 respondents)

*“I think public spaces could become a magnet for local youths to hang around if not done correctly and the money could be better used on providing them with facilities so they are not bored. Improved access to the platforms would be appreciated especially for those with pushchairs and wheelchairs and I think an entrance should be introduced at the station road side of the bridge as currently many commuters risk life and limb crossing over the bridge.”*

*“Step free access is a given in this day and age. Also needed for people going to the airports and centre parcs.”*

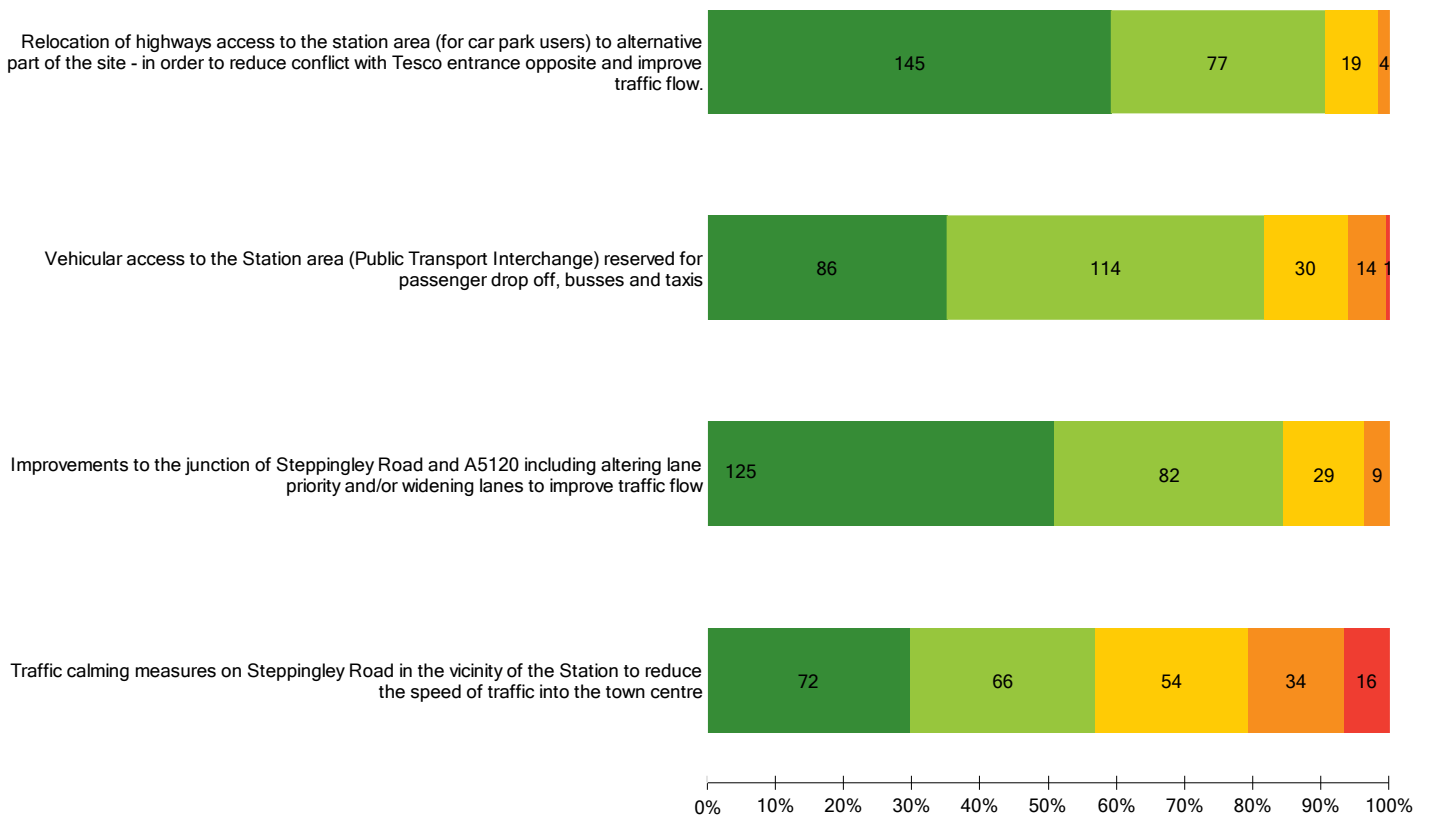
## Summary

Once again comments have reinforced the general support for the ideas and suggestions in Question 2 and in particular; step-free access to the station. One other theme to be noted from the comments is the obvious concern for current pedestrian access to the station. Several themes have highlighted concerns with safety in and around the railway bridge which has been identified as a busy bottleneck road with high footfall at peak times. Suggested solutions include having station access from the High Street and/or Station Road, a footbridge across the rail line and to have multiple exits from the station. All of these suggestions have been made upon the back of current dissatisfaction with the current layout of the station entry points and careful consideration would need to be given before any changes are made.

### III. Highways – traffic flow and access

Between 242 and 245 people responded to this question

Q3 Please rate the following ideas in terms of importance:



The most popular idea in this question was to relocate access to the station in an attempt to reduce traffic conflict with Tesco opposite and improve traffic flow (91%). Similarly, the other idea to improve traffic flow around the station was to make improvements to the junction of Steppingley Road and the A5120, also considered important by 85% of respondents. This indicates that respondents are keen to see changes on the roads around the train station and see traffic flow currently a critical



problem for the area. Another well supported idea was to restrict vehicular access to the station for drop-off and public transport only (82%). Traffic calming measures were seen as the least important of all the options (57%) but was still supported by the majority.

**Comments on the proposal:**

**Q3a Do you have any other comments or suggestions with regards to the traffic flow and access to the site?**

Analysis of repeat themes		No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Improve traffic flow around station area/ Tesco	31	12.6	29.5
	No more traffic calming measures	19	7.7	18.1
	Make Town centre more pedestrian friendly	14	5.7	13.3
	Proposals could increase congestion in area	8	3.2	7.6
	More traffic calming measures	6	2.4	5.7
	Prevent buses stopping directly on the High Street	5	2.0	4.8
	Area around station is a bottle neck	5	2.0	4.8
	Cycle lanes	4	1.6	3.8
	Crossing the bridge is dangerous	4	1.6	3.8
	Parking bays for community transport	4	1.6	3.8
	Bigger taxi rank would improve traffic flow	3	1.2	2.9
	Improve mini roundabout on Station Rd	3	1.2	2.9
	New bridge	3	1.2	2.9
	Parking restrictions in surrounding roads	3	1.2	2.9
	Concerns over current limited bus timetable	2	0.8	1.9
	Ban HGVs	2	0.8	1.9
	No right turn into Tesco from Steppingley Rd	2	0.8	1.9
	Make Steppingley Rd one-way	2	0.8	1.9
	Rival retail store to Tesco	2	0.8	1.9
	Prevent people from crossing the bridge	2	0.8	1.9
Other/ unclassified	8	3.2	7.6	
Total no. of respondents	105	42.5	100.0	
Missing		142	57.5	
Total		247	100.0	

105 respondents provided additional comments. An analysis of the comments supports the findings above regarding improvements to the traffic flow around the station area:

- Improve traffic flow around station area/ Tesco (31 respondents)
- No more traffic calming measures (19 respondents)
- Make town centre more pedestrian friendly (14 respondents)
- Proposals could increase congestion in the area (8 respondents)

*“Any improvement to making the flow of traffic around the Tesco/Steppingley Road/Dunstable Road area is greatly needed. As I have stated before, I feel that the town is getting too small for the number of people wanting to live here for access to the station, supermarket, etc. so something has to change to make traffic flow better and would be welcomed.”*



*“I am strongly against any traffic calming measures as these add additional distraction to drivers in an already high intensity situation, they also disrupt smooth traffic flow. I have never see so many drivers go through red pedestrian lights as I have at the crossings near the railway bridge in Flitwick, almost running over me and my children on multiple occasions. This area needs simplification not added complexity. Improving traffic flow is important as the area regularly gets clogged up - a proper look at what traffic is going where, including dealing with the Tesco entrance where traffic can back up would be a big help...”*

## **Summary**

Traffic flow has been highlighted as a major problem for the station area and this is supported by the results and additional comments made by respondents. Several other themes were connected to traffic flow, with suggestions such as banning HGVs, no right-turn into Tesco and converting Steppingley Road into a one-way. There were also concerns around safety because of the traffic flow and a desire to see the area become more pedestrian friendly via improved traffic flow or creating new pedestrian routes such as footbridges. One other significant concern was whether these proposed ideas would actually increase congestion in the area with larger buses coming into the station and all the other traffic associated with the potential retail and services offer.

## b. Market Town Improvements

### I. High Street / Station Road enhancement

**Q4 We are looking to improve the area outside of Barclays Bank and adjacent areas in Kings Road and Station Road. For example, this could be by upgrading the paving and lighting. Do you have any comments or suggestions to improve this space?**

Analysis of repeat themes		No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Remove cobbled area	37	15.0	22.3
	More greenery	30	12.1	18.1
	More seating	30	12.1	18.1
	Space for 'pop up' events	22	8.9	13.3
	Improve pavements	20	8.1	12.0
	Make area more attractive	19	7.7	11.4
	More parking bays	18	7.3	10.8
	Improvements unnecessary	17	6.9	10.2
	More pedestrian crossings	17	6.9	10.2
	Better lighting	11	4.5	6.6
	Address traffic flow in Kings Road/ Station Road area	6	2.4	3.6
	Keep War memorial	5	2.0	3.0
	Remove parking bays	4	1.6	2.4
	Makes roads around Barclays Bank one-way	4	1.6	2.4
	More eat & drink options	4	1.6	2.4
	More retail units	3	1.2	1.8
	Convert Barclays area to small car park	2	0.8	1.2
	Area outside Barclays Bank currently wasted	2	0.8	1.2
	Other/ unclassified	10	4.0	6.0
	Total no. of respondents	166	67.2	100.0
Missing		81	32.8	
Total		247	100.0	

166 respondents provided comments. An analysis of the comments shows support for the examples provided in the consultation:

- Remove cobbled area (37 respondents)
- More greenery (30 respondents)
- More seating (30 respondents)
- Space for 'pop up' events (22 respondents)
- Improve pavements (20 respondents)

*“Remove the 'pebble' cobbles, a nightmare for buggies/wheelchairs, anyone with accessibility issues.”*

*“Resurface area (remove cobbles), remove tree's and create a local square with benches so that this can be used for pop up services (similar to St Paul's Square, Bedford) and can be used for a town Xmas tree and lights turn on.”*

*“Ensure we have level paving. At present paving slopes towards the road. Paving very slippery in icy conditions. Could a pedestrian crossing be installed in Kings Road far side of Bank from junction?”*

## Summary

Responses indicate strong support for the examples put forward in the consultation document such as upgrading the paving, with other suggestions such as providing more seating and adding more greenery also proving popular. Another frequent theme was the need to use the space in front of the Bank for communal purposes; pop-up businesses, food stalls, band stands etc. There was concern that investing money into repaving the area would not be justified if the space was not used on a more frequent basis. Other frequent suggestions included providing more off-street parking around the bank and some questioning the need to change the area, with some preferring funds go toward more critical improvements such as step-free access at the station rather than cosmetic changes.

**Q5 Along the High Street we are aiming to improve accessibility for pedestrians and people with disabilities by removing barriers and de-cluttering the area. Do you have any other suggestions on how we could improve accessibility along the High Street for pedestrians and people with disabilities?**

	Analysis of repeat themes	No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Improve pavements	50	20.2	38.8
	More pedestrian crossings	28	8.9	17.1
	Prevent cars parking on the pavement	21	8.5	16.3
	Improved disability access	13	5.2	10.1
	Footbridge across the railway	9	3.6	7.0
	Prevent buses from waiting on the High Street	6	2.4	4.7
	Remove railings	5	2.0	3.9
	Additional/ short stay car parking	5	2.0	3.9
	Barriers are important for safety	5	2.0	3.9
	Good idea	4	1.6	3.1
	Declutter High Street	4	1.6	3.1
	Move bus stops away from High Street	4	1.6	3.1
	No HGV access	3	1.2	2.3
	Disabled parking bays	2	0.8	1.6
	Introduce a café culture to High Street	2	0.8	1.6
	Traffic calming measures	2	0.8	1.6
	Other/ unclassified	17	6.9	13.2
	Total no. of respondents	129	52.0	100.0
Missing		119	48.0	
Total		248	100.0	

129 respondents provided comments. An analysis of the comments highlights a desire to see improved access to the High Street:

- Improved pavements (50 respondents)

- More pedestrian crossings (22 respondents)
- Prevent cars parking on the pavement (21 respondents)
- Improved disability access (13 respondents)

*“Stop cars parking outside the shops. Widen and level the pavement.”*

*“All aspects on the High Street should be user friendly for people with prams, pushchairs, wheelchairs and for people with disabilities. This should include shops being easily accessible. There is also an aspect where the footpath is not wide enough for a pram, let alone a wheelchair.”*

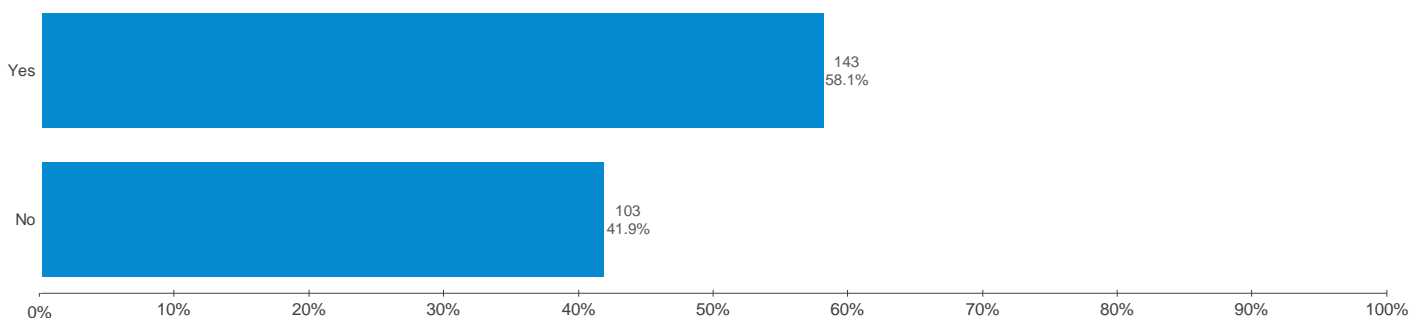
*“Uneven paving, too many different surfaces and random bollards could all be attended to. Cars parking on the pavement areas don't help either.”*

## Summary

Disabled-friendly access has been a key highlight in this question with many themes related to disabled and pedestrian access to the High Street. De-cluttering and renewing the pavements have been a popular suggestion with many comments unsatisfied with the current state. More pedestrian crossings have also been seen as beneficial whilst it has also been highlighted that cars parking on the High Street and the pavement have become obstacles for pedestrians. With this in mind there were also comments asking for additional parking on the High Street in the form of disabled bays and short-term parking.

## II. Enhanced Library Service

Q6 Do you currently use the library?



The majority of respondents (58%) said they did use the library.



**Do you currently use the library?  
Q6a If not, please explain why:**

Analysis of repeat themes		No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Internet has replaced the core library service	26	10.5	31.0
	No need to visit	20	8.1	23.8
	Not open at suitable times	11	4.5	13.1
	Not enough time to visit	10	4.0	11.9
	Services are not targeted at me	9	3.6	10.7
	Not my local library	8	3.2	9.5
	Unaware there was a library	2	0.8	2.4
	Other/ unclassified	6	2.4	7.1
	Total no. of respondents	84	34.0	100.0
Missing	163	66.0		
Total	247	100.0		

84 respondents provided comments. Analysis of the comments shows a trend towards more internet based services:

- Internet has replaced the core library service (26 respondents)
- No need to visit (20 respondents)
- Not open at suitable times (11 respondents)
- Not enough time to visit (10 respondents)

*“Expansion of the internet as a one stop shop. Lack of awareness of relevance as to what facilities it can offer in the new digital world.”*

*“Access material online. At work during most opening hours.”*

**Summary**

Comments indicate some respondents have replaced the current library offer with other more convenient services online. This combined with a lack of time evidences why some people may not use the library as much anymore. It also supports Flitwick Town Council’s objective to diversify the offer at the library in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council.

**Q7 Evening and weekend activities could include comedy and piano nights and a language café. Are there any other activities you would like to see at Flitwick Library?**

Analysis of repeat themes		No. of responses	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Activities for children	18	7.3	15.7
	Suggested ideas are great	16	6.5	13.9
	Arts & crafts sessions	15	6.1	13.0
	Theatre & literature events	12	4.9	10.4
	Book groups	10	4.0	8.7
	Educational classes	9	3.6	7.8
	Author / lecture events	9	3.6	7.8
	Activities for older children	8	3.2	7.0
	IT classes	7	2.8	6.1
	Not a suitable venue for activities	5	2.0	4.3
	Comedy nights	5	2.0	4.3
	Life skills i.e. scam awareness, first aid	5	2.0	4.3
	Live music	5	2.0	4.3
	Activities for disabled people	3	1.2	2.6
	Coffee shop	3	1.2	2.6
	CBC contact point	2	0.8	1.7
	Other/ unclassified*	19	7.7	16.5
Total no. of respondents	115	46.6	100.0	
Missing		132	53.4	
Total		247	100.0	

115 respondents provided comments. Analysis of the comments provides a wide variety of suggestions and ideas for the library:

- Activities for children (18 respondents)
- Suggested ideas are great (16 respondents)
- Arts & crafts sessions (15 respondents)
- Theatre & literature events (12 respondents)
- Book groups (10 respondents)

*“Activities for all ages, from children through to elderly. Use outdoor area for community garden. Provide varied computer/IT classes/learning, especially for elderly. Maybe simple drop in session on a regular basis. Activities: Arts/Craft/Music/Singing/Dance/Poetry/Discussions/Local history/Basic cooking.”*

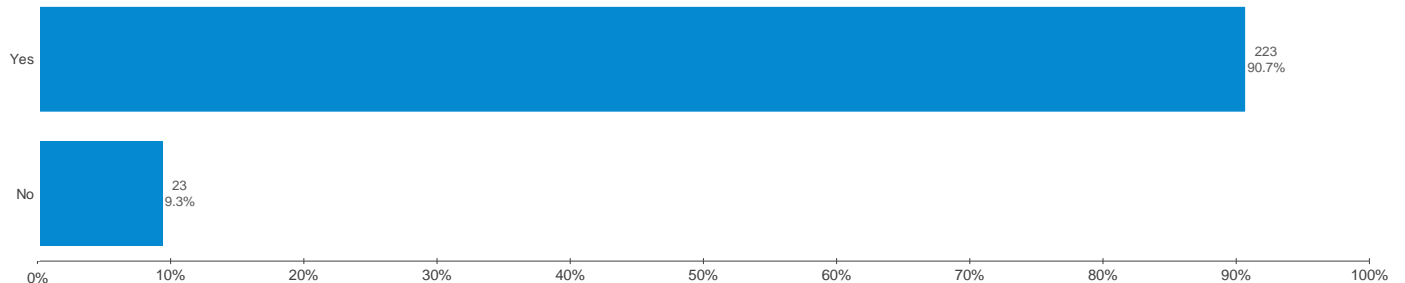
## Summary

Recommended activities span all genres and age groups, showing a clear desire and appetite for other community activities to be hosted within the library. Forms of entertainment were the most popular choice but educational and vocational skills were also well supported.

\*It must be noted that out of the 19 ‘Other/ unclassified’ responses, 10 of them responded No or None either meaning they had no other ideas or there is potentially slight resistance to the library being used outside of traditional purposes.

### III. Discover Flitwick Website

Q8 The Town Council has been trialling a new Discover Flitwick website which is about to be launched. This website will give information of all kinds about Flitwick. Would you use this facility?



A majority of 91% said they would use the website, with only 9% saying they wouldn't.

**If not, please explain why:**

I am from Ampt Hill. Perhaps town-centric pages could be created and grouped under the Central Bedfordshire Council's website? (i.e. could there be Discover Flitwick, Discover Ampt Hill, Discover Sandy etc.)?

Most of the information I need is already available on the web

Information on the internet is not reliable these days. Need a focal point in the community such as a library "electronic" notice board

I do it live in Flitwick

What is there to discover the drug users late night at the skate park,, rowdy youths outside Tesco to name a few highlights

Live in flitwick already and find out most things on Facebook

The town council already do a reasonable job promoting activities within the town through their website, flitwick papers and community boards. The money would be better spent in other ways.

I've lived here for 38 years and know most of the info about Flitwick.

I have no difficulty obtaining information.

Most people who use Flitwick will already know what's available unless it includes upcoming events but I can't think of many that happen regularly

I doubt it. Nothing ever changes in Flitwick.

Anything that happens at Flitwick is minor and not worth mentioning.

No internet access.

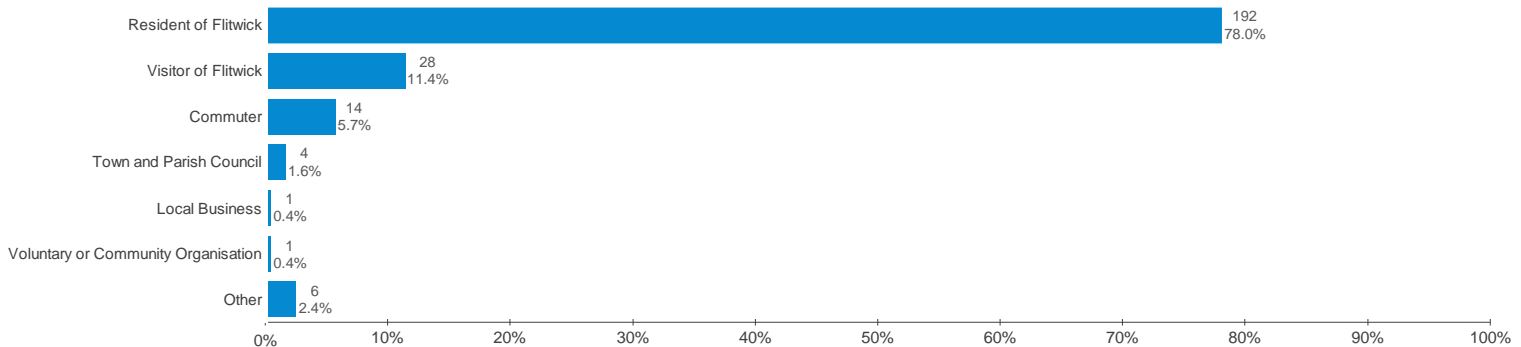
I rarely use my computer (only every few weeks). Only if I can't find information in book form.

Will pass comment when I see the website.

Of the 23 who responded 'No', 15 provided additional comments (above). Full thematic analysis has not been conducted due to the low response number. Comments suggest the website is unnecessary because promotion is either not needed for some, or the Town Council promotes the town sufficiently already. However, this point must be looked at with the findings that 91% of respondents said they would use the website in future.

### c. Profile of respondents

Q9 Are you responding as:



- 78% of respondents indicated that they were Flitwick residents 11.4% of respondents were visitors of Flitwick and another 5.7% were commuters. This is a good indication that the consultation reached key stakeholder groups.

**Please specify which Town and Parish Council:**

Flitwick Council

FTC Councillor but opinion my own.

Flitwick

Flitwick

**Please specify the name of your organisation:**

Bedford Commuters Association

Flitwick Motorcycles

**If other, please state:**

I work here 6 days a week, and speak to local people a lot.

Central Beds resident who shops in Flitwick and uses the station. Also involved with Flittabus.

Resident and commuter

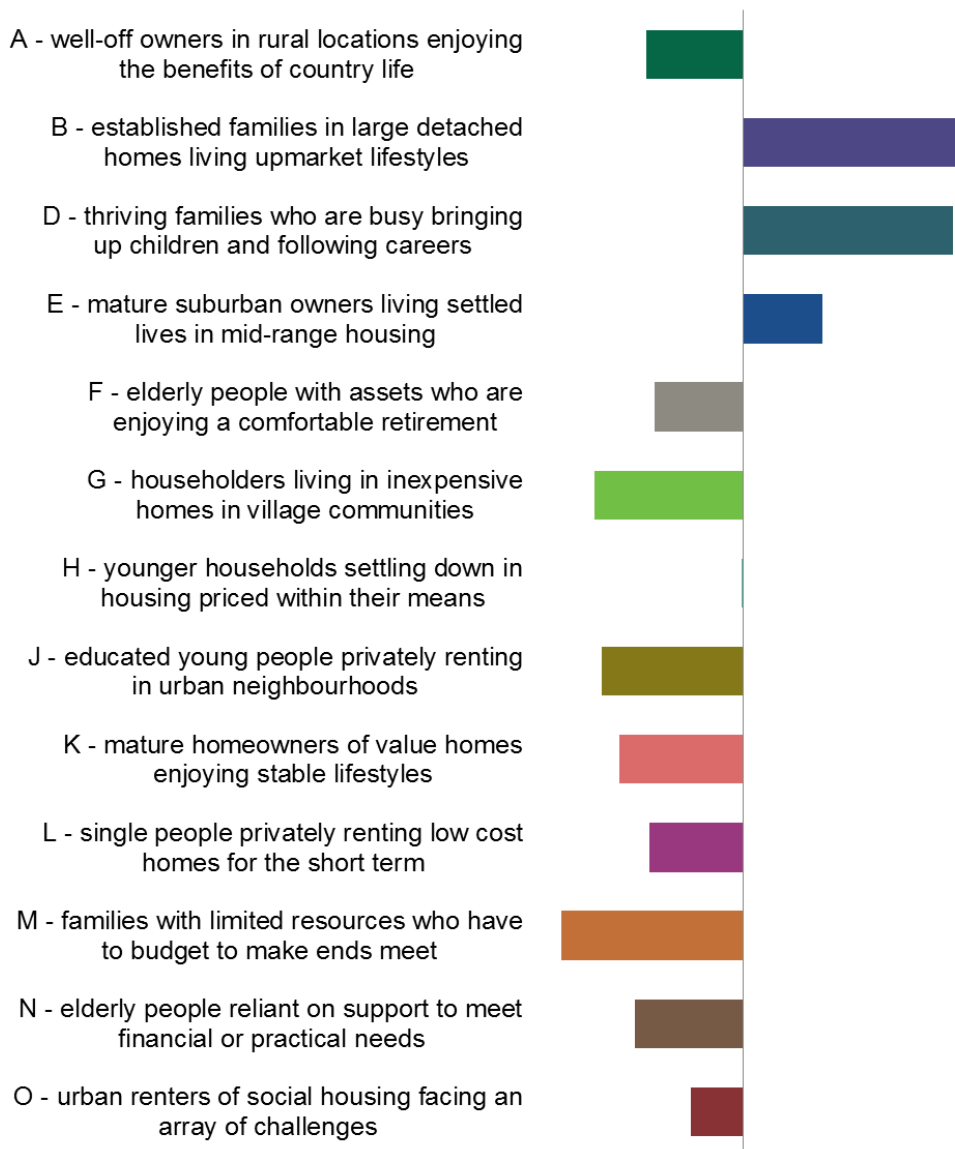
Frequent shopper and visitor who lives locally

- 58% of respondents were female and 42% male.
- Although the majority of respondents (93%) did not have a disability, 7% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled.
- The respondent profile was similar to the average for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, with 95% of respondents identifying as White British, 1% Asian/Asian British, and 4% identifying as either mixed ethnicity or 'Other ethnic group'.
- The majority of respondents were aged between 30-44 years (36%) and 45-59 (21%). 65+ were also well represented (24%). In smaller numbers, view of the following age groups were also represented in the consultation - under 16, 20-29, 60-64.



Further analysis of the postcodes has allowed us to profile residents. The analysis below uses Experian Mosaic data. This is a segmentation tool that looks at a wide range of data for every household in the country and then groups similar households together, including information on their preferences. This helps us to understand more about the characteristics of the respondents to the survey. It is only possible to use where we have the full, accurate postcode within Central Bedfordshire. 82% of consultation respondents gave a postcode that was valid to use in this analysis.

### Compared to CBC residents



This data allows us to identify groups that may have been over or under represented in the consultation. Bars to the left indicate which groups have been under-represented and bars to the right represent groups which have been over-represented. The data shows that lower income groups have not been as active in taking part in the consultation in comparison with more affluent groups.

## 5. Other feedback

Other feedback was also received via email from some residents.

One former cycling campaigner raised concerns about a lack of dedicated cycle routes in Flitwick especially with the high volume of traffic in the town, a new footbridge across the railway was recommended in order to connect both sides of the town. The resident suggested this would also prove safer for cyclists as they would not need to navigate the busy roundabouts either side of the current bridge.

Another resident raised concerns with accessibility at the station, citing that they care for their disabled grandchild and because of this it has become impossible for the family to travel from Flitwick Station.

An emailed response was also received on behalf of English Regional Transport Association (ERTA). The response included a recommendation to improve crossing the road on the bridge to enable safer pedestrian access to the station. There was support for ideas such as the multi-storey car park, the new entry and exit road configuration and improved station facilities. Another suggestion was to re-establish Ampthill train station for Ampthill commuters which it has been suggested would prevent some commuter traffic from entering Flitwick town centre in future.

A final submission was received from Bedford Area Bus Users' Society (see appendix A).

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this consultation have emphasised the strong support among residents for the regeneration schemes currently being undertaken in Flitwick. Plans to revamp the station area have been welcomed and deemed necessary by many as Flitwick expands. High Street improvements have been welcomed with a general sense that the area needs a refresh.

Ideas put forward regarding the station site were broadly supported. The prospect of new retail and service outlets were very popular given the limited selection there is currently for a town of Flitwick's size. Equally there was a belief that a new Public Transport Interchange and additional parking was a necessity as the town continues to grow. New homes proved to be less well supported, but primarily the concern was the strain it would place on currently over-stretched infrastructure. This concern would need to be addressed and mitigated against as the scheme moves forward.

Access to the station proved to be an important factor for residents and commuters alike. Step-free access to platforms was an overwhelmingly popular request. As were alternative access points to the station with several suggestions being put forward such as; direct access from Station Road, footbridges across the railway. Driver access to the station proved just as provocative, with many comments pleased to see this issue was being looked at and the consultation further evidences the current unhappiness with the situation.

The principles of the market town improvements were all well received. Improvements to the pavements were most popular along the High Street and around Barclays bank. There was an expectation that any resurfacing around the bank would be capitalised on with pop-up market stands and community events, rather than being left as a blank space. Residents were eager to see the area revitalised with simple additions such as additional greenery and seating. Other ideas keen to see implementation were to make the High Street more disabled-friendly by preventing cars from parking on the pavements and providing more pedestrian crossings making navigation along the High Street easier. The proposals for the library were also welcomed with plenty of additional suggestions for events further highlighting the support for this proposal.

## Appendix A

## Bedford Area Bus Users' Society



## Flitwick Town Centre Consultation

BABUS supports the proposals for the regeneration of the area around Flitwick Railway Station, particularly the intention to provide an improved bus/ rail interchange. With the population of the town set to increase as a result of ongoing and future development, we feel it is important to encourage rail users to travel to and from the railway station by other means than private cars, in order to reduce congestion and thereby improve the environment for local residents. We accept that many people do not readily consider using buses since they find using their cars convenient and flexible. Hence bus/rail interchange needs to be as easy as possible, with bus times convenient for those travelling by train and a waiting area protected from bad weather and where people feel safe waiting when it is dark.

Increasing traffic congestion may cause car owners to consider using buses. However, congestion will delay bus services, and so it is important that the access point for traffic to the railway station does not become a bottleneck. This proved a problem at the bus interchange at Milton Keynes Central Station - admittedly a busier station than Flitwick. We understand that bus operators would wish to retain the existing bus stops outside and opposite Flitwick Post Office, in addition to the new bus/ rail interchange, rather than the new stops being a replacement for those at the Post Office.

The proposed scheme would seem to have many benefits for commuters and occasional rail users as well as local residents in general and local businesses.

**Submitted by Miss Frances Horwood, BABUS Secretary, on behalf of Bedford Area Bus Users' Society.**