



Agenda Item	To approve a proposal to develop a digital heritage trail for Bletchley town centre (running from Bletchley Station to Fenny Stratford)		
Council/Committee	Full Council		
Meeting Date	24/01/2023	Report Writer	John Fairclough
Purpose of report	To approve a proposal to develop a digital heritage trail for Bletchley town centre (running from Bletchley Station to Fenny Stratford)		
Strategic Priorities	Proud of our past and our future Closer to our community		
Budget Codes and Costs	No budget available at this stage		
Environmental Implications	Duty to consider biodiversity		
Community Safety Implications	Duty to consider impact on community safety		
Equality/Inclusion Implications	Public sector duty of equality		
Supporting Documentation (if any)	No additional documentation please note connections to Town Deal Public Realm Improvement Project and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council Delivery Plan 2022-2023		

Background

In its 2022-23 Delivery Plan the town council included aspirations to “gather information on the history of the town, its people, businesses and places” and to “ensure that the town’s heritage is recorded and made accessible to all”. In part it was hoped that this would be done via the new council website but also through other projects within the town although no specific budget was made available.

Detailed Considerations/Information



The clerk and SSM have been undertaking preliminary work with MK Council, MK Living Archive and other partners (including Friends of Bletchley Station) on a potential project to develop a digital town trail to run from Bletchley Station down Queensway to Fenny Stratford Station and, potentially to extend to the Canalside at Fenny.

The initial vision is for a digital trail and app which would allow walkers to access QR codes as they walk round the area and access visual images of heritage buildings and history of the town. This would be supplemented by some physical interpretation boards which would also provide information about the area's history.

Examples of existing trails can be accessed using the link below:

<http://www.mktrails.org/mk-trails-app.html>

The process of developing the trail would be a collaborative one, bringing together partners and volunteers from the community and potentially developing interest in future heritage projects. Living Archive hold a wealth of photographic material about Bletchley and Fenny which could be used. It is hoped the trail would be an asset to the town which encourages walking and interest in local history but the process of creating the trail would be a large part of its value, bringing residents together to celebrate their 'place' and learn new skills.

In addition to work with the Heritage Officer at MK Council preliminary conversations have taken place with officers at Milton Keynes Council regarding the Town Deal and the likelihood of permission being obtained for location of the physical interpretation boards in the town centre. Response to this project has been positive from all parties.

Financial Implications

At this stage the total budget is anticipated at c£10,000 and our objective is to secure Heritage Lottery Funding for this project by commissioning Living Archive to undertake the preliminary work. MK Living Archive have experience of managing similar projects and submitting successful HLA applications.

Their fees are £175 per day

£1000 has also been secured through the economic development team at Milton Keynes City Council.

Officer Recommendation That full council approves this project and delegates the task to the community committee.

