





# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018

## Foreword



There's more than one reason why we believe Central Bedfordshire is a great place to live and work.

Attractive market towns and beautiful villages surrounded by stunning countryside, all boosted by a prime location, great transport links and a high performing economy are some of the yardsticks we use as measurement.

All these attributes mean we have high growth pressures and this in turn puts into sharp focus the delivery of new homes and jobs. We need more of both.

We particularly need more homes; homes for renters, first-time buyers, for young people, for older people, and homes for families. We need to plan positively and carefully for this and our Local Plan does just that.

We've created our Local Plan with your input from thousands of residents who engaged with us through our various consultation and engagement events and that has provided useful insights into what is needed where you live.

You will remember that we originally consulted on our draft Local Plan in the summer, which proposed a range of homes and a range of locations to deliver this – more than we thought we might need.

So, we've been reflecting on all of your feedback and we've done some more evidence work and analysis to create our Local Plan. This is what we will now be taking forward.

We are now planning for up to 20,000 homes and 24,000 jobs over the next 20 years, which is a smaller number than we'd originally proposed.

The growth will be delivered in four strategic locations, as well as some small to medium growth in existing towns and villages where services can support it.

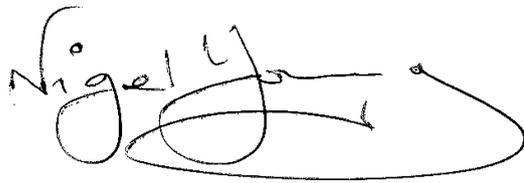


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Our plan has always been about more than planning just for homes and jobs. It's about creating communities. This means planning for new and improved roads and transport infrastructure; and new community facilities and services, such as schools, nurseries, shops, sport and leisure facilities.

And it's important to remember that the Local Plan will serve us for 20 years, so development won't happen overnight. It's a long-term vision to ensure that it happens in a way that brings maximum benefit to the area and the people who live here.

Above all else, it's a plan that is deliverable, sustainable and will ensure Central Bedfordshire continues to be a great place to live and work.



**Cllr Nigel Young,**  
**Executive Member for Regeneration and Business**



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# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Introduction

Local Plan 2015-2035

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 What is the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan?

- 1.1.1 The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan is the key strategic planning document for Central Bedfordshire and will guide and support the delivery of new infrastructure, homes and jobs. It sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the area, what is going to happen, where, and how this will be achieved and delivered over the next 20 years.
- 1.1.2 Local Planning has a crucial role to play in delivering the Council's vision of enhancing and maintaining Central Bedfordshire as 'a great place to live and work'. It is important to note that all policies within the local plan will apply to all development where appropriate.
- 1.1.3 This Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan sets out the Council's strategy for meeting the area's needs until 2035.
- 1.1.4 This final version of the plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State later in spring 2018 for it to be examined by an independent Planning Inspector. The plan will be submitted together with the representations which are received on it during the Proposed Submission consultation and the evidence which has been prepared to support its policies and proposals.
- 1.1.5 The main sections are as follows:
- Chapter 1 explains the process, how this plan fits within the planning system and where and how to comment, the role of the independent examination and what happens next;
  - Chapter 2 gives background about Central Bedfordshire and the main issues that the Plan needs to consider;
  - Chapter 3 describes the process so far – comments and views submitted on the draft Plan and through community engagement
  - Chapter 4 provides a short summary of our overall vision and strategic objectives;
  - Chapter 5 sets out how we propose growth should be distributed across Central Bedfordshire;
  - Chapter 6 provides a general overview of the proposed large scale growth locations;
  - Chapter 7 is concerned with implementation and delivery and how the overall plan targets are calculated;
  - The chapters that follow are then themed by topic area.

### 1.2 National and Sub-Regional Context

- 1.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and for Local Plans this means that opportunities to meet the development needs of an area for new homes, jobs and infrastructure must be positively planned for at a local level.



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- 1.2.2 The government also requires that every local authority area has an up-to-date, sufficiently ambitious plan in place so that growth is truly plan-led. This is in everyone's interests, as it means that growth can be effectively managed and strategies for delivering it are developed with the benefit of input from the local community.
- 1.2.3 Local authorities are also required to work constructively with their neighbours and other bodies under Duty to Co-operate, to ensure that cross-boundary issues like East West Rail (EWR), housing need and jobs are not planned for in isolation.
- 1.2.4 In addition, the Government's most recent Housing White Papers (February 2017 and September 2017) urge local authorities to make more land available for homes in the right places by maximising the contribution from brownfield land, releasing more small and medium sized sites, and making it easier to build new settlements.
- 1.2.5 The Industrial Strategy White Paper (December 2017) also sets out the Government's vision to enhance Britain's industrial competitiveness through investment in research and development, digital infrastructure, transport shift and a focus on key sectors like the automotive industry. With an existing cluster around Nissan in Cranfield and the Millbrook Proving Ground, and with huge opportunities for research and development at the new business parks planned in the Marston Vale and south of Biggleswade, the Plan has responded positively to this direction of travel.
- 1.2.6 Central Bedfordshire is already one of the most highly connected areas but due to its unique location in the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor<sup>1</sup>, there are a number of key opportunities that this plan is positioned to take full advantage of; including the proposed East West Rail Link (EWR), the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Arc and associated high tech employment led growth.
- 1.2.7 In order to exploit the wider opportunities in the Corridor highlighted in the National Infrastructure Commission Report, the Council is actively leading and driving forward a co-ordinated approach to enhanced growth within the central area of the Corridor and is leading on the identification of a high-level, joint, spatial strategy for the delivery of comprehensive economic-led growth across the corridor through the local planning process.
- 1.2.8 In order to recognise the levels of growth envisaged, it is likely that a step-change in delivery mechanisms will be required. Central Bedfordshire Council is therefore also actively exploring alternative delivery mechanisms including:
- offsite manufacturing and other modern methods of construction;
  - support for small and medium-sized housebuilders, as well as the larger firms; and
  - self and custom-build development through provision of serviced plots.

<sup>1</sup> National Infrastructure Commission Report, November 2017



### 1.3 Developing the Spatial Strategy

1.3.1 In response to these opportunities, an extensive new evidence base has been commissioned the results of which, together with public consultation and engagement such as the Shaping Central Bedfordshire consultation and Community Planning work has led to the development of a robust and balanced strategy. The strategy identified is considered to be the most appropriate for Central Bedfordshire given the complexity of the area and the variety of issues and factors that need to be taken in to consideration. It is fully expected that the strategy identified will deliver significant growth with clear economic, environmental and social benefits over the next 20 years as well as laying the foundations for future sustainable growth to be considered in strategic growth locations to be considered in a Partial Plan Review.

### 1.4 Calculating Housing Need and the Plan Target

1.4.1 The Government published a new standardised methodology for calculating housing need in September 2017 which meant a significant 60% increase in the number of homes that would be required to be delivered per annum (1600 homes – 2553 homes) to meet just our own housing need. The Council consider that while the OAN is likely to rise over time further work is needed on factors specific to Central Bedfordshire before a new approach can be supported and is looking to commission additional studies for the relevant Housing Market Area, together with neighbouring authorities.

1.4.2 This approach leads to a Plan target of 39,350 homes to deliver up to 2035. This includes 23,528 homes that are already planned for or built and a proportion of 'unmet housing need' from Luton. More detail on this approach can be found in Section 6 and the numbers are set out in Table 6.1.

### 1.5 Partial Plan Review

1.5.1 While the potential of Central Bedfordshire to play a core role in relation to the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc is acknowledged in the recent National Infrastructure Commission reports, and the Government's response in the Autumn Budget 2017: the timing, service and route selection for new strategic road and rail infrastructure, needs further development and definition. Related issues such as potential for capacity upgrades of the A1 have still to be resolved. These decisions, for example on new east-west rail stations, will have a major impact on the scale of development and growth potential at strategic sites.

1.5.2 The Council is therefore putting in hand a further assessment of the Identified Areas for Future Growth to run alongside emerging decisions on strategic infrastructure routes, timing and services, together with provision of wider infrastructure and delivery support. This assessment will inform a Partial Review of this Plan which will contribute to the ongoing work in the Central Corridor Area. The Partial Review is proposed to start within six months of adoption of this Plan and complete as soon as decisions on routeing and financial commitment to strategic infrastructure are in place.



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## 1.6 Plan Process



### 1.7 Requirements of Plan making

1.7.1 This draft Plan has been prepared under the legislative provision of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and appropriate regulations including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The draft Plan has taken into account national planning policy, currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG], 2012), Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2015) and the web based published Planning Practice Guidance.

#### Evidence base

1.7.2 The Council's policies must be backed up by credible, robust and proportionate evidence that supports the approach taken and justifies what is proposed. The evidence base for this Plan is extensive and is available on the Council's website at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan) It is the Council's job to balance all of the evidence and find the most suitable way forward. This evidence base includes research on housing, employment, retail, Green Belt and flooding as well as the views of local people, businesses, landowners, developers and public agencies involved in the area.

#### Duty to co-operate

1.7.3 In accordance with the 'Duty to Co-operate' set out in the Localism Act 2011 the draft Plan has been produced through close partnership working with the neighbouring authorities and relevant bodies under the Act to ensure that sub-regional and cross boundary planning issues have been taken into account. This work under the 'Duty to Cooperate' replaces the role of regional planning.

1.7.4 In order to ensure the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) is fully discharged, the Council has held regular DtC meetings with all neighbouring authorities and other DtC Bodies and will continue to do so throughout the plan-making process. So as to focus discussions on the relevant cross-boundary issues, in partnership with each neighbouring authority, Central Bedfordshire has initiated the production of 'Strategic Frameworks'. These documents set out the commitment from Central Bedfordshire to actively engage with our neighbours throughout the local plan process and identify specific cross-boundary issues that need to be discussed. These also form the foundation for the Statements of Common Ground that will be produced in advance of the submission of this Plan.

1.7.5 As referenced earlier in this section, this strategic cross boundary working is not confined to our immediate nine neighbouring authorities but extends right across the wider corridor area as a result of the identification of the Oxford-Cambridge arc as a key area for growth.

### 1.8 Which Documents Will This Local Plan Replace?

1.8.1 This Local Plan once adopted replaces the North Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (2009) and the majority of the remaining policies within the South Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004), the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (2005) and the remaining saved policies of the Bedfordshire and Luton Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2005) so far as they affect Central Bedfordshire. Those



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residual site allocations in the north Site Allocations Document (2011) that are not already built out will remain in addition to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Strategic Sites and Policies (2014) which will sit alongside this new Local Plan once adopted forming the Development Plan for Central Bedfordshire.

### 1.9 Where to view Local Plan documents

1.9.1 The Local Plan documents are available for inspection at the following addresses:

- Council's website: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan)
- Council Offices
  - Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, SG17 5TQ
  - Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LF

### 1.10 About this consultation

We are now undertaking a final consultation before we submit the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who will, in turn, appoint an independent Planning Inspector who will examine the Plan. This is the Local Plan that the Council considers is ready for examination and this is your opportunity to comment on the Plan's "soundness", legal compliance and compliance with the Duty to Cooperate before it is submitted to an independent Inspector to be examined.

#### Legal Compliance

1.10.1 The Inspector will first check that the Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and compliance with the Duty to Cooperate before considering the tests of soundness. There are five areas to consider when looking at whether or not the Plan is legally compliant. These are:

- Is the Plan consistent with the Council's production timetable known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS)?
- How has the community been involved in the process and has the Council met its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)?
- Does the Plan comply with the relevant regulations? (Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)
- Was a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report produced and how it has been carried out?
- Has the Council complied with the Duty to Cooperate?

#### Soundness

1.10.2 There are four areas to consider when looking at whether or not the Plan is sound. To be sound the Plan should be:



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- Positively Prepared - the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- Justified - the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective - the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- Consistent with national policy - the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

### 1.11 How to make comments

1.11.1 This pre-submission draft version of the Plan is a consultation document and all responses received will be forwarded to the Planning Inspector at submission of the Plan. We welcome your comments which can be made online at the following link:

[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan)

1.11.2 Alternatively comments can be submitted by post for the attention of the Local Plans Team to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ.

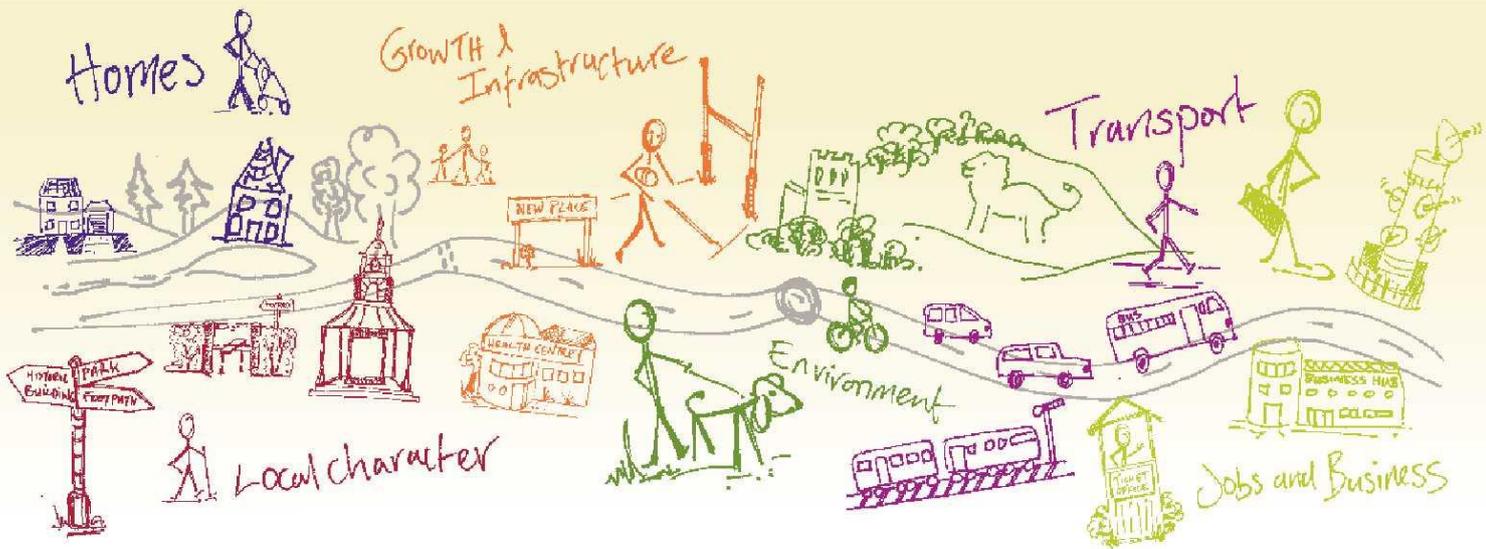
1.11.3 The consultation runs for six weeks from Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 10am to Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 at 5pm.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Key Themes

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



## **2 Key Themes: A Snapshot of Central Bedfordshire – Challenges and Opportunities**

### **2.1 Overview**

- 2.1.1 Covering 716 square kilometres, Central Bedfordshire currently has a population of approximately 278,900<sup>2</sup> and is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest Unitary Authority in England by area and the 15<sup>th</sup> largest by population. Central Bedfordshire is one of the least densely populated Unitary Council areas and is classified as predominantly rural with just over half the population living in the rural area. Approximately 63% of the population are within the working age group, being between 16 and 65 years of age, although 81% of the population are considered to be economically active (aged 16-74).
- 2.1.2 The Luton and Central Bedfordshire SHMA (May 2017) identifies population growth of 19.5% over the plan period to 2035 for Central Bedfordshire compared to a 13.4% increase identified for England over the same period.
- 2.1.3 In line with national trends, Central Bedfordshire is also projected to have a rise in older age groups over the period (age ranges 70+), but also is projected to have rises in the 55-69 age range. It is also likely that the delivery of new starter homes and family homes together with skilled jobs will also attract younger people and families which may have a significant effect on the age profile in Central Bedfordshire. This will put additional pressure on public services, but this will be addressed as part of the wider consideration in delivering sustainable growth.
- 2.1.4 Central Bedfordshire residents are generally healthy and the life expectancy for both men and women is longer than it is in England as a whole. However, residents of Central Bedfordshire do experience inequalities in health outcomes. Whilst overall levels of deprivation within Central Bedfordshire are low, there are three areas that are within the 10-20% most deprived area in England and a further 6 within the 20-40% most deprived areas. The majority of these wards are within the southern area of Central Bedfordshire, which is more densely populated, and urban in character.

### **2.2 Connectivity and achieving Sustainable Growth and Communities**

- 2.2.1 Central Bedfordshire is one of the most accessible areas in the East of England and is particularly well connected on all of the main north-south routes, namely the M1, A1, A5, and A6. It is well served by existing rail stations on the East and West Coast and Midland Main rail lines and East West Rail will also deliver further connectivity with a committed upgrade to Ridgmont station and the potential new station north of Sandy. This excellent access brings potential for business and

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2016 Mid Year Estimate.



housing growth but also pressure on infrastructure and a high outflow of residents for employment and services.

- 2.2.2 Travel patterns within Central Bedfordshire are less sustainable with a high reliance on car commuting, together with increasing pressure on interchanges and the rural road network. Connectivity east to west will improve with the duelling of the A421 in the northern part of Central Bedfordshire, and will continue with the opening of the A5-M1 link road in the south. However, further strategic east west connections are required to deliver significantly enhanced growth levels over and above that planned for in this Local Plan.
- 2.2.3 **The key challenge this Plan addresses is** driving more sustainable growth by improving and extending the range of economic opportunities and services available locally and securing additional infrastructure, including enhancing digital connectivity, to unlock the area's full potential and to achieve more sustainable travel.

### 2.3 Cross boundary and neighbouring growth pressures and the role of the Green Belt

- 2.3.1 Major urban areas adjoin Central Bedfordshire with growth pressures that are intensifying. Central Bedfordshire is part of four Housing Market Areas (HMA) and adjoins nine local authorities. Within the HMAs, urban areas are often constrained by tightly drawn boundaries and therefore due to housing pressures, may have to look beyond their administrative area to accommodate growth. Less expensive housing costs and the availability of employment space in the area is also attractive to those looking to move from areas further south. Accommodating growth pressures in the form of unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities, close to where the need arises, could be achieved in the south of the area by removing the most sustainable locations for development from the Green Belt, but overall the Green Belt continues to serve its purposes very well, safeguarding the identity of Central Bedfordshire by maintaining the openness of the countryside, preventing coalescence of our towns, and protecting the dispersed settlement pattern.
- 2.3.2 The Council will seek opportunities to maximise the use of suitable and available, previously developed or 'brownfield' land before looking to sites within the Green Belt or green field sites elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire to accommodate future growth requirements. An Urban Capacity Study for Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Luton identified opportunities to increase the capacity of current sites within the conurbation, which could contribute towards the unmet housing need within the Luton Housing Market Area. However much of the available and suitable previously developed land in the area is either now built out or already committed for redevelopment.
- 2.3.3 **The key challenge this Plan addresses is** to establish where these unmet housing needs can be accommodated sustainably, whilst also meeting our own objectively assessed housing need. Removal of sites from the Green Belt to meet unmet needs will be balanced against the requirement to maintain our local character and prevent coalescence of settlements.



### 2.4 Market Towns and Villages - local economy and services

- 2.4.1 Central Bedfordshire is primarily a place of market towns and a number of villages whose history and character are integral to its identity and attractiveness. The two largest towns, Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable are located in the south of Central Bedfordshire whilst the north of Central Bedfordshire contains a series of smaller towns including Biggleswade, Sandy and Flitwick. Whilst some settlements have become successful growing service centres with a good range of local employment, others find it increasingly difficult to maintain their services and economic strength in the face of competition from the large urban centres on our boundaries.
- 2.4.2 **The key challenge this Plan addresses** is to manage growth so that as far as practicable it can avoid damaging the role and special value of Central Bedfordshire's market towns and villages, for example through policies on coalescence, whilst at the same time directing growth to the larger towns and locations where it can make a real difference in improving local services and employment opportunities; for example the A1 corridor towns where there are regeneration opportunities which would improve economic offer and enhance the town centres.

### 2.5 New community scale growth

- 2.5.1 Given the small scale of existing urban development across most of Central Bedfordshire, there is a limit to how much new growth can be accommodated either as infill, re-use of redundant sites, or in village or urban extensions. In many of these locations services and infrastructure are unsuitable (or could not easily be upgraded) beyond moderate scale additions. This Plan has identified Allocations and a number of Identified Locations where large scale new communities can be delivered. These new settlements have capacity for a minimum of 1500 homes and can provide a mix of housing types and tenures as well as a range of new services and facilities. These new communities provide the opportunity to secure new physical, social and community infrastructure and higher standards of design and sustainable development though it is recognised that these need upfront funding and have longer build out trajectories, often stretching beyond this plan period.
- 2.5.2 **The key challenge this Plan addresses** is the identification of sustainable locations in Central Bedfordshire where large scale, new communities have the best prospects of success based on viability, deliverability, access to services and improved economic potential and where planned, development enabling, strategic infrastructure can be delivered to support growth and unlock future potential.

### 2.6 Environment, Heritage Assets and Sustainability

- 2.6.1 Much of Central Bedfordshire is of high landscape and biodiversity value. Key assets include the Greensand Ridge recently designated as a Nature Improvement Area, parts of the Chilterns AONB which is a national priority area for landscape conservation and the Forest of Marston Vale. The authority area also contains a number of water bodies as a result of former clay workings which

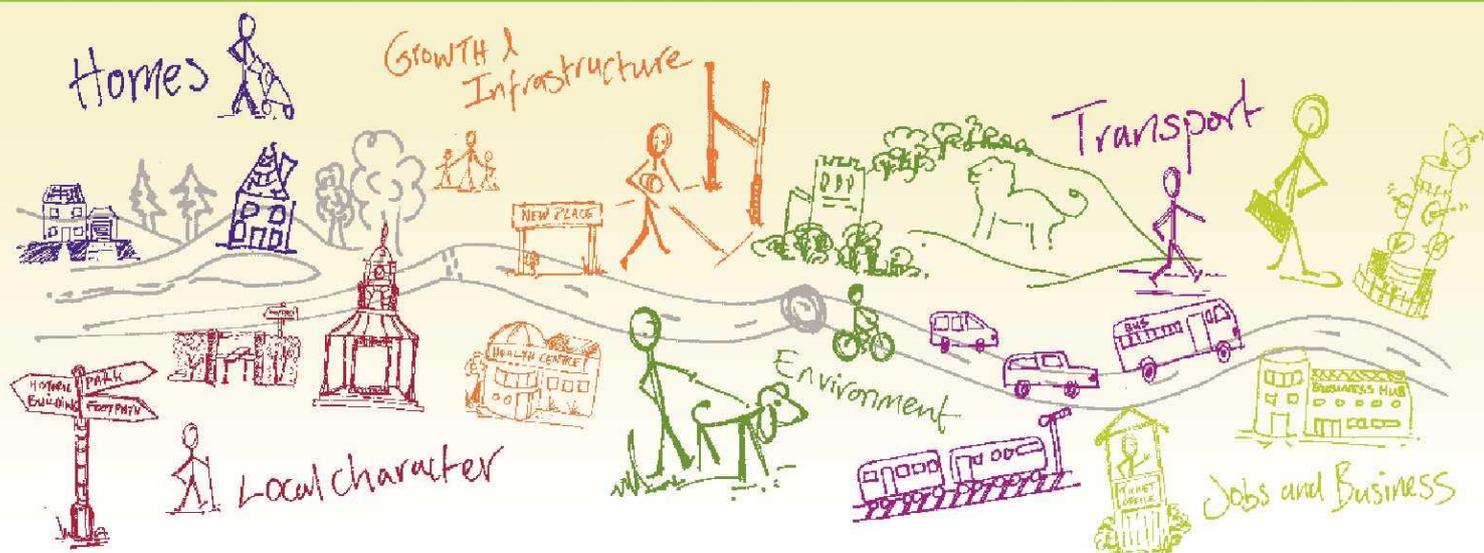


offer significant potential for recreation and tourism and can be connected as part of the proposed Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway. There are also approximately 11,000 recorded buildings, sites and records of historic interest. However, maintaining and enhancing these assets has become more difficult in the light of development, activity pressures and reduced funding.

- 2.6.2 **The key challenge this Plan addresses** is to find ways in which new development can be used to strengthen and enhance these assets, as well as creating new green infrastructure.



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Consultation

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



### 3 Consultation: Engagement

#### 3.1 Council Priorities

3.1.1 The Plan is consistent with the priorities set out in the Council's Five Year Plan 2015.

3.1.2 This Five Year Plan highlights our vision and priorities and sets out the following six key priorities for the area.

- enhancing Central Bedfordshire
- great resident services
- improving education and skills
- protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing
- creating stronger communities
- a more efficient and responsive council

3.1.3 Whilst the plan aims to achieve all the priorities outlined above, the main priority that the Plan aligns to is **Enhancing Central Bedfordshire**.

This aims to improve Central Bedfordshire as a place to live, by enhancing prosperity with more and better jobs; to improve infrastructure, and to provide the quantity and type of housing needed by our residents while maintaining and enhancing the character of the area. Development will be facilitated by great infrastructure, such as super-fast broadband, Wi-Fi and transport. Our Market Towns and villages will thrive and prosper, with improved town centres and facilities<sup>3</sup>.

3.1.4 It is considered that the 6 growth themes set out in the graphic (Figure 1) in this section are appropriate foundations for the Local Plan to contribute to achieving the vision and priorities of both the Plan and the Council as a whole.

#### 3.2 Community Plans and Growth Themes

3.2.1 Community planning is a new approach, unique to Central Bedfordshire Council, which goes above and beyond the legal consultation requirements of the Local Plan which the Council undertook at regulation 18 from 4<sup>th</sup> July -29<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Our engagement vision is to have a proactive, ongoing dialogue with the local community about local needs and opportunities.

3.2.2 Additional growth which is going to be necessary in many parts of Central Bedfordshire brings with it pressures on infrastructure and services. Accordingly, building up a local picture of existing issues that people face is critical to understanding where new development can be accommodated and what measures need to be put in place to alleviate those pressures.

<sup>3</sup> Central Bedfordshire Five Year Plan, 2015



- 3.2.3 In order to capture this information at a local level (larger than parish, smaller than the whole of Central Bedfordshire) 15 community areas have been mapped, based on a number of factors:
- Natural catchment or ward areas, connections and associations amongst communities e.g. for shopping, schools, work.
  - Access to services and facilities e.g. shops, post office, leisure services.
  - Town and rural hinterlands.
  - Shared characteristics, similar issues and opportunities.
- 3.2.4 Grouping the areas like this has helped local residents to engage because they were able to see the direct relevance to where they live and help us consider all of the local issues and opportunities.
- 3.2.5 The first stage (November 2016 to March 2017) involved holding an event in each of the 15 Community Areas. Following these events, 15 Community Plans which collate all the information gathered at an event have been prepared and published as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- 3.2.6 Using these as the foundation, the next stage of Community Planning will seek to engage directly with communities about the implementation of the allocations proposed for their area in this Plan. This may help to inform the spending of developer contributions as part of any future planning applications for the sites.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035

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Figure 1: Six Key Themes

### The 6 Growth Themes

#### Local character



**What we have we love. Our history, countryside and communities. We need to build, with care to enhance what we have.**

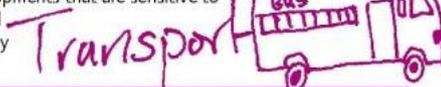
How do we look after what you value about where you live? We need to balance development with protecting our villages, market towns and beautiful countryside. We want to use local character to inform development to ensure that we achieve the best we can.

#### Environment

**Our environment is important. It influences how & what we create. We need quality development.**



How do we balance the need for growth with protecting our environment? By having quality developments that are sensitive to the environment, to climate change and to ensure growth is dealt with responsibly for the next generation.



**How do we get around? With more of us on our cycleways, roads, rail. How do we improve & maintain our transport links?**

We need to plan growth that has good connections, not only to jobs and facilities, but also to recreation services and the countryside. We need to look at improving our existing transport networks and make the most of opportunities for new links.

#### Jobs and Business

**Where will everyone work? Supporting local businesses to grow & attracting new business. We need to create jobs for all.**

How do we support the economy of your community and proposed growth in your area? We need to invest and attract business. Regenerating areas can help to attract new investment to improve job prospects.



#### Growth & Infrastructure

**Where to place homes & services. Supporting market towns, villages & new settlements. We need to plan places to grow communities.**

Where can this growth go and how do we get the best opportunities for you and your community? We need to consider not only the locations for growth, but also what other facilities, services and infrastructure these areas will need for the next generation.



#### Homes

**Homes for every stage of life. A house is not a home until it's lived in. We all need a home we're proud of.**

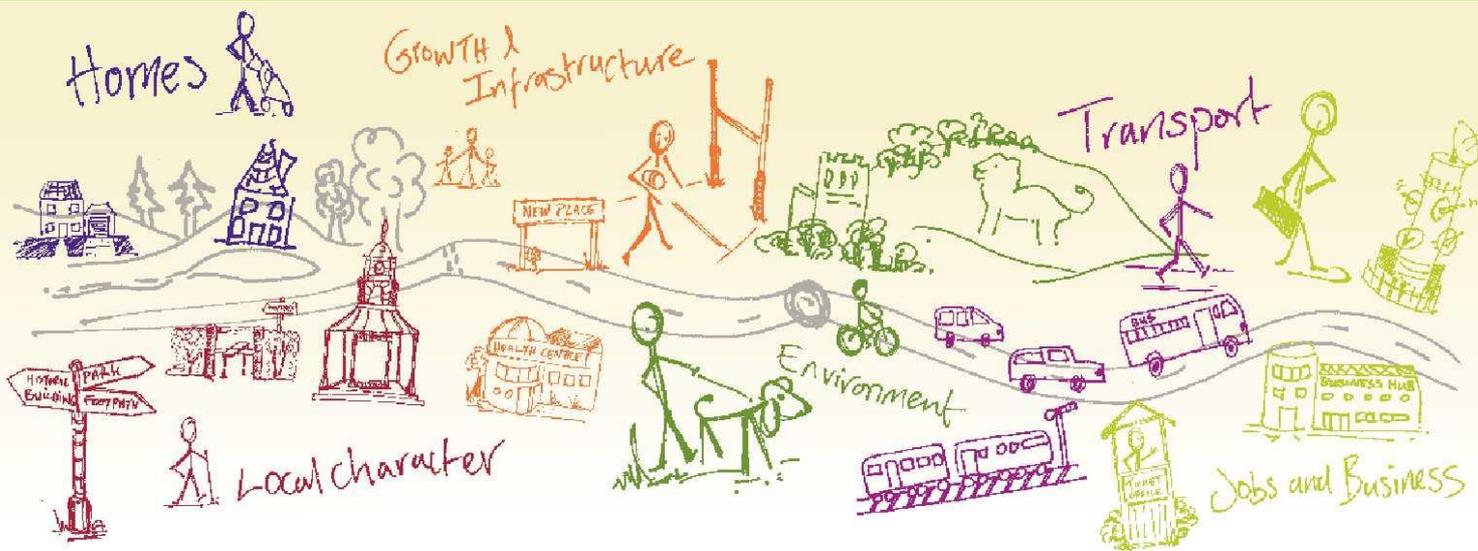
What type of housing does your community need? Looking at the local population, from young to old, we need to ensure that the area can accommodate changes in lifestyle, affluence or choice. Quality homes for all, for now and tomorrow.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Vision & Objectives

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



## **4 Vision and Objectives**

### **4.1 The Vision - Where we want to be in 2035**

4.1.1 This chapter examines the Vision for Central Bedfordshire and provides further explanation of how the area will look in 2035, if the challenges and opportunities identified are successfully addressed. It goes on to identify a series of Strategic Objectives to deliver the Vision, which form the basis of the policies in this document.

#### **A Vision for 2035**

Central Bedfordshire has taken full advantage of its exceptional strategic position as the central hub of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc and its existing strategic north-south routes to deliver new high tech employment supported by sustainable new homes in a number of new village clusters in the Marston Vale and on the A1 corridor and town extensions to Luton and Arlesey which are well integrated into an enhanced high quality landscape. The heritage and distinctiveness of the existing market towns and villages has been preserved and enhanced by moderate growth ensuring a high quality environment for all residents. The new businesses and population are served by excellent community, transport and communications infrastructure and multi-service hubs have been delivered to support strong communities.

### **4.2 The Strategic Objectives – How we will get there**

4.2.1 The following Strategic Objectives provide the stepping stones between the Vision set out above, and the Local Plan for Central Bedfordshire, and form the basis of the plan policies.



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Theme	Strategic Objectives	Local Plan Policies
<b>Growth &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<p><b>SO1</b> Ensuring sustainable growth and associated infrastructure including the continued regeneration of town and neighbourhood centres to deliver the annual target for new homes and the provision of integrated health and care hubs.</p> <p><b>SO2</b> Delivering enough homes and jobs to meet our needs. Promote and demand good urban design practices throughout all types and scale of development across Central Bedfordshire.</p>	SP1, SP2, SP5, SP7, R1, R2, R3, T1, EE12, HQ1, HQ2, HQ5, HQ9, HQ11.
<b>Local Character</b>	<p><b>SO3</b> Conserve and enhance the area's heritage and settings by ensuring new development, including changes to the public realm, are of high quality design, appropriate to the significance of the heritage asset, and seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage.</p> <p><b>SO4</b> Create high quality neighbourhoods that have regard for local character and use sustainability principles which are sensitive and responsive to the significance of the local environment, are distinctive, safe, functional and accessible and which reinforce the identity of the area's townscapes, landscape and public places.</p>	SP3, SP4, SP5, EE4, EE5, EE6, EE7, EE8, EE9, HQ1, HQ7, HQ8, HQ9, HE1, HE2, HE3, DC1, DC2, DC3, DC5.
<b>Jobs &amp; Business</b>	<p><b>SO5</b> Provide a minimum of 24,000 new jobs by 2035, accommodating new economic growth along strategic and sustainable transportation routes, new mixed use developments and existing established sites.</p> <p><b>SO6</b> Recognise the contribution of land for employment uses to meet the needs of different sectors of the economy and manage the release of surplus employment land for other uses where appropriate.</p> <p><b>SO7</b> Link deprived areas with employment benefits arising from the development of major sites and existing key locations.</p>	SP1, EMP1, EMP2, EMP3, EMP4, EMP5.
<b>Homes</b>	<p><b>SO8</b> Address housing needs in Central Bedfordshire using appropriate affordable housing targets and policies to encourage quality and choice.</p>	SP1, SP8, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, DC3.



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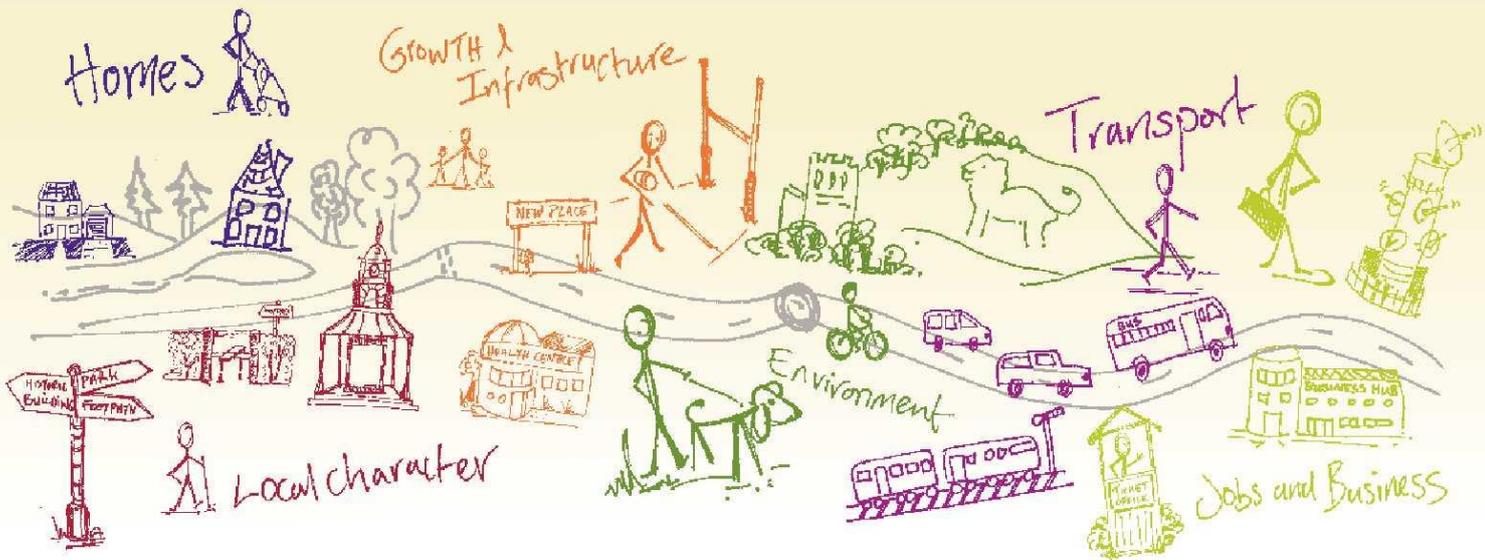
Theme	Strategic Objectives	Local Plan Policies
<b>Transport</b>	<p><b>SO9</b> Reduce the reliance on the use of the car by improving facilities at bus and train stations, delivering transport interchanges and by promoting safe and sustainable forms of transport, such as improved walking and cycling routes.</p> <p><b>SO10</b> Ensure a reliable network of east/west and north/south public transport routes to improve access to local services and facilities, especially for those without a car, through well planned routes and integrated public transport. Encouraging the shift from road to rail freight to reduce demands on the highway network.</p>	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, EE11, HQ1, HQ2.
<b>Environment</b>	<p><b>SO11</b> Promote healthier and more active lifestyles by improving the quality of, and accessibility to, the area's open spaces, as areas for sports, recreation, visual interest, biodiversity, education, health and well being.</p> <p><b>SO12</b> Encourage the development of wildlife corridors and networks and provide new open spaces in line with the requirements identified in Central Bedfordshire's Leisure Strategy</p> <p><b>SO13</b> Support the necessary changes to adapt to climate change by minimising emissions of carbon and local air quality pollutants, protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Improving and protecting air and water quality, reducing flood risk and adverse impacts from noise including the safeguarding of quiet areas and reducing the impacts of contaminated land.</p>	SP3, EE1, EE2, EE3, EE4, EE5, EE6, EE7, EE8, EE9, EE10, EE11, EE12, T6, CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, CC5, CC6, CC7, CC8, HQ1, HQ10, DC1, DC2, DC4, DC5.



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# Shaping where you live 2035



## The Spatial Strategy

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



## **5 The Spatial Strategy**

### **5.1 Spatial Context**

- 5.1.1 Central Bedfordshire is powerfully affected by its relationship with surrounding major centres; particularly London, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Luton; and also by its strategic position at the centre of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc which will receive significant additional investment in strategic infrastructure. This presents major potential for improved connectivity and growth within Central Bedfordshire, for continued strategic joint working with neighbouring authorities to help realise enhanced growth opportunities identified within the NIC Report, and to help meet housing need in constrained neighbouring areas such as Luton.
- 5.1.2 Alongside this wider context, however much of Central Bedfordshire is characterised by small scale communities where infrastructure and services are limited and whose rural or semi rural setting is often of high environmental value. The goal of this strategy is to grow existing communities within a sustainability driven approach so that they benefit through improved services, facilities and employment opportunities, leading to reduced travelling and outflows. Growth will be delivered without over development which threatens the character of our existing communities.
- 5.1.3 The overall challenge, which this strategy addresses, is to embrace the opportunities for sustainable economic led growth while safeguarding and enhancing the environmental, heritage and community features that make the area a great place to live and work.
- 5.1.4 Central Bedfordshire will deliver a minimum of 24,000 new jobs over the plan period by growing existing key employment locations and sectors and by taking full advantage of our transport infrastructure opportunities. Within this figure, around 6000 jobs will be delivered to meet 'footloose' strategic warehousing (B8 uses) on three major strategic employment sites.
- 5.1.5 To meet our statutory requirements and to serve the interests of our communities, the local plan proposes delivery of a 39,350 new homes. However the plan additionally provides for further consideration of strategic growth and proposes a Partial Review to further assess potential in the East West and A1/East Coast Main Line corridors as new infrastructure is committed. This will consider the potential for delivering a greater number of homes and the timescale in which they could be delivered (either in years 10-15 of this Plan period or in the next Plan period) depending on strategic infrastructure routing and timing, wider delivery support and sustainability and market factors. Further details of the proposed Partial Review are set out at section 5.5.

### **5.2 Key Spatial Objectives**

- To grow existing communities across Central Bedfordshire, proportionate to their scale and environmental context, so that they are more sustainable through improved services, facilities and employment opportunities, leading to reduced travelling and outflows. In smaller settlements this will continue use



of the Council's Settlement Envelope policy which has been successful in directing development onto previously developed or vacant land.

- To create additional environmental enhancement for example by extending the Forest of Marston Vale and enabling a section of the Milton Keynes to Bedford waterway.
- To help meet the major housing need of Luton, which is highly constrained by its boundary, as well as that from the south of Central Bedfordshire. This is principally through urban extension from the Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis conurbation boundary and also using opportunities to increase the capacity of sites identified within the conurbation by increasing their density, as identified in a recent urban capacity study.
- To develop additional growth opportunities around existing and committed transport hubs, through urban intensification, and on previously developed land – Central Bedfordshire's good access to strategic transport routes creates potential for higher density and more sustainable growth around existing key hubs. Undeveloped brownfield sites are limited but the Council is committed to maximising the use of available land within settlements (as with the Market Towns Regeneration Fund) and realising new brownfield opportunities like former airfields as at RAF Henlow).
- To develop current strategic growth opportunities with a good potential for more sustainable development to a level which can be supported by existing and committed strategic infrastructure together with developer and public funding. This would include for example Marston Vale and East of Arlesey.
- To identify further opportunities for Strategic Growth in a Partial Plan Review to link with further work on the Cambridge-Milton Keynes- Oxford Arc, East-West Rail, the Expressway, the expansion of Luton Airport and A1 upgrades through Central Bedfordshire as set out below and the area marked on the Key Diagram. This would include further assessment of strategic growth locations at Tempsford, the Aspley Triangle, West of Luton and for additional growth to the East of Biggleswade.

### 5.3 A Balanced Strategy

5.3.1 This strategy aims to balance wider delivery and sustainability considerations within this overall approach:

- The delivery of small and medium scale growth alongside the strategic locations will ensure the continuous delivery of homes in the short to medium term and enable the Council to maintain a rolling 5 year housing land supply
- A balance between more moderate development around existing towns and villages and large new settlements, recognising that an entirely new community takes longer to deliver and needs entirely new services
- Green Belt continues to be a constraint in the south of the area but there is a strong case for alterations to green belt boundaries immediately adjoining Luton so that a good proportion of unmet housing need from Luton and Dunstable can be met close to where it arises;



- A balance between growth in the north and south of the area supported by evidence in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). In addition to alleviating the cumulative impact of development on the north by distributing the growth more evenly, the SA also supports growth in the south by virtue of the clear positive effects on social sustainability as a result of regenerating areas with higher levels of social deprivation

### 5.4 Spatial Strategy Approach

#### Spatial Strategy Approach

This Plan seeks to:

- Build on our existing and emerging economic strengths in key sectors and deliver a minimum of **24,000 new jobs**.
- Deliver around **39,350 new homes**<sup>4</sup> through new villages, moderate extensions to existing towns and villages in line with the provision of new infrastructure and to meet identified housing need close to **key transport corridors** (East-west, A1/East Coast Mainline and M1/Thameslink). This includes 23,528 homes that are already planned for or built.
- Balance the delivery of significant sustainable infrastructure and growth with the **enhancement and protection** of existing communities, landscape, heritage and countryside and actively **prevent the coalescence** of settlements across the area through the identification of Important Countryside Gaps.
- Maximise potential opportunities for the **intensification and redevelopment** e.g. RAF Henlow and the regeneration of urban areas (Biggleswade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Flitwick, Leighton Linlade & Sandy) through town centre frameworks or masterplans.
- Identify and deliver spatial options and strategic opportunities that could provide for **longer term economic and housing growth across the corridor including through a Partial Plan Review**. This growth will **support, and must be supported by, new strategic infrastructure** particularly the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway, A1 improvements and new rail stations/transport interchanges along the East West Rail route.
- Ensure that growth is designed and delivered in ways which benefit existing neighbouring communities, for example through improved transport facilities or regeneration of local commercial facilities;
- **Deliver housing need** identified for the **Luton HMA** and some unmet need from Luton **close to where it arises** where there is capacity to do so sustainably. This will be through a strategic extension close to Luton's urban edge and moderate extensions to existing villages and towns with good connectivity and access to services. This will mean **releasing some Green Belt land** where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.



### 5.5 Partial Plan Review

5.5.1 Central Bedfordshire will play a core role in relation to the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc and in particular on the intersection of the corridor with the key national north-south rail and road networks. As is indicated in the recent National Infrastructure Commission reports, and the Government's response in Budget 2017, the area is acknowledged to be of great economic importance nationally and is likely to experience major ongoing pressures for growth. While Government has made commitments to new strategic road and rail infrastructure, the timing, service and route selection for those investments still needs further development and definition while related issues such as potential for capacity upgrades of the A1 have still to be resolved. These decisions, for example on new east-west rail stations, will have a major impact on the location, scale of development and wider potential of strategic growth sites in Central Bedfordshire.

5.5.2 The Council has already undertaken a number of studies to help prepare for possible future growth which would realise some of the potential outlined by the National Infrastructure Commission. This Plan includes firm commitment to some strategic locations where there is a strong existing infrastructure base, such as Marston Vale, to a level of growth which can be supported by that together with firmly committed or achievable additional infrastructure. However in other cases, such as the East West Rail new line to Cambridge, further decisions on routing, timing and commitment, as well as wider investment and delivery support are required before firm allocations can be made.

5.5.3 The Council is therefore putting in hand a further assessment of the Identified Areas for Future Growth (see section 7.09) to look at the potential of strategic sites on the East West Rail/Expressway and the A1/East Coast Main Line Corridor routes in line with emerging decisions on this strategic infrastructure. This will enable further growth potential to be looked at in line with decisions to be taken on routes, timing and services, together with provision of wider infrastructure and delivery support. This assessment will inform a Partial Review of this Plan and will contribute to the ongoing work in the Central Corridor Area. The Partial Review will look at an improved evidence base on issues where work is ongoing and in particular at capacity for and deliverability of further growth on the strategic sites. It will consider whether there is delivery potential for years 15-20 (2030-2035) for the current Plan period or whether this would fall in the next Plan period, given long lead times for these large sites. It will look at 3 scenarios for growth:

- **Base scenario** – The strategic site allocations proposed in this plan as set out in Section 7, based on current and firmly committed strategic infrastructure and delivery support;
- **Medium growth** – Growth potential if some but not all strategic infrastructure is delivered, for example if provision of East West Rail Bedford to Cambridge is delayed to 2030 or later or if no major upgrade to the A1 is committed;
- **High growth** - Growth potential if strategic infrastructure delivered by 2025-30, improved viability and with a high level of local and developer funded



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infrastructure. For example firm commitment to a new station at Sandy to interchange with East-West Rail, Bedford to Cambridge would fit with this scenario.

- 5.5.4 The Partial Review is proposed to start within six months of adoption of this Plan and complete as soon as decisions on routeing and financial commitment to strategic infrastructure are in place.



## **6 The Proposed Locations for Growth**

### **6.1 Overview**

In developing the Local Plan, the Council has consulted through a series of initiatives as set out in Chapter 3 and the outcomes of these have influenced both the initial Draft Plan and this Pre-submission Plan. To reflect the very different capacities and constraints for growth potential these consultations have drawn on the characterisation of Central Bedfordshire into component areas according to their main spatial, settlement, environmental and infrastructure features:

- The South Area – close to Luton and extending west to Leighton Linlade and north to Flitwick
- The A1 Corridor – Arlesey, Biggleswade, Sandy and north to Tempsford
- The East-West axis – from the M1 through Marston Valley to Wixams
- The Central Area – small towns and villages, from Ampthill to Moggerhanger

The following sections set out broadly the potential for growth proposed in this Plan for each of these areas.

### **6.2 South Area**

- 6.2.1 This plan identifies a requirement to accommodate ‘unmet need’ as Luton is a highly constrained urban area. Some of this need is being met by North Hertfordshire District Council; however through Duty to Co-operate discussions; the Council has committed to providing for 7350 homes within Central Bedfordshire and within the Luton Housing Market Area (HMA).
- 6.2.2 As the Luton HMA is largely comprised of Green Belt land, this has necessitated proposals that require some release of land within the Green Belt as ‘exceptional circumstances’<sup>5</sup> can be demonstrated. Small villages ‘washed over’ by Green Belt generally have limited capacity to grow, but there is potential for medium scale growth along the major transport corridors following the M1, A5 and the railway (Midland Main Line), or large scale growth for sites in close proximity to Luton that could be linked to the Luton-Dunstable Busway and/or the strategic transportation network. The lack of new sites within the urban areas of Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis mean that significant further growth on greenfield land is required.
- 6.2.3 Consultation told us that growth in the south was supported because of the proximity to key services in the urban centres of Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Luton.

<sup>5</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Paragraph 83



- 6.2.4 Significant pieces of new infrastructure in the south, including the A5-M1 link road, the Woodside Link, the Luton/Dunstable Busway and new Junction 11a, will also help to support this level of growth.
- 6.2.5 This area is characterised by the Green Belt, the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area (NIA), all of which have valued habitats and landscapes which are existing environmental assets. However, major sites to the north of Houghton Regis and to the East and South of Leighton Buzzard are already under development or have planning permission.
- 6.2.6 The new homes proposed are in the form of a strategic site that is closely related to Luton's northern urban edge, or in the form of highly sustainable extensions of a more moderate scale to large towns and villages that are inset into the Green Belt. Both deliver growth to meet housing need where it is arising, and have a good level of services and connectivity.
- 6.2.7 The proposed allocations in this area are:
- North of Luton – around 4000 homes
  - Extensions to Barton le Clay, Chalton, Eaton Bray, Flitwick, Harlington, Hockliffe, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linlade, Luton (Caddington parish) Toddington and Westoning.
  - M1 Junction 11a (around 40 hectares for employment)
- 6.2.8 Land West of Luton is an Identified Location for future development and will be considered in the Partial Plan Review. This land has a potential capacity for around 2,000 homes, but does not contribute to the Plan target of 39,350 homes.

### 6.3 A1 Corridor Area

- 6.3.1 While there is great future potential for large scale growth in this area as a result of service improvements on the East Coast Mainline shown by the allocation of a new village East of Biggleswade and an extension to Arlesey, it is recognised that to take forward further significant growth in this area, there has to be greater clarity on the routing of both the Expressway and the Central Section of East West Rail. This will enable an informed approach to the siting and planning of new settlement scale strategic sites and will be addressed in the Partial Plan Review set out in section 5.5.
- 6.3.2 The Government has however demonstrated clear support for the timing and funding of the east-west connectivity proposals in the Autumn Budget (November 2017) which has led to the Identified Location at Tempsford which can capitalise on its exceptional location for a new strategic rail interchange on the new East West Rail line and the existing East Coast Mainline. This potential, dependent on route and station decisions, will also be addressed in the Partial Plan Review.
- 6.3.3 Investment from the developments themselves and from other funding sources to increase the capacity of the stretch of the A1 through Central Bedfordshire will be



absolutely critical in moving forward with multiple significant strategic scale growth proposals in this eastern area. Wider growth of up to three additional new villages East of Biggleswade is also therefore identified in addition to Tempsford in this Plan as an Identified Location for Future Growth, recognising that there is potential scope in the longer term for greater levels of growth if the infrastructure required to deliver this is secured, to be addressed in the Partial Plan Review.

- 6.3.4 The Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area (NIA) and Ivel Valley and their valued habitats are existing environmental assets in this area. There are also opportunities for new environmental projects, including a new Country Park for Arlesey and Stotfold, a long distance 'Great North Cycleway', and access and open space networks around Biggleswade, Sandy, and the Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield areas.
- 6.3.5 The proposed allocations in this area are:
- East of Biggleswade (around 1500 homes)
  - East of Arlesey (around 2000 homes)
  - Extensions to Arlesey, Biggleswade, Dunton, Everton, Langford, Potton and Sutton.
  - A1 Corridor – Biggleswade South (around 60 hectares for employment)
- 6.3.6 Land at North, South and East of Tempsford is safeguarded for future development, to be assessed further in the Partial Plan Review. The Review will consider the potential capacity for 10,000+ homes, but does not contribute to the Plan target of 39,350 homes.
- 6.3.7 Land East of Biggleswade, east of the allocated village, south of Sutton and west of Dunton is an Identified Location for future development. Subject to the Partial Plan Review, this land has a potential capacity of up to 5000 homes, but does not contribute to the plan target of 39,350 homes.

## 6.4 East-West Area

- 6.4.1 This area of Central Bedfordshire is an important economic area with advanced research and development at Cranfield Technology Park and Millbrook Proving Ground and close links with Milton Keynes. The area is well connected with the upgraded A421, and the M1 and the planned Western Section upgrade of East West Rail between Oxford and Bedford.
- 6.4.2 Much of the landscape has been restored and the Forest of Marston Vale is an important asset. Extending the Forest of Marston Vale and the delivery of the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway are critical to the delivery of growth with a strong design and environmental focus in this area.
- 6.4.3 A series of linked villages with appropriate landscape buffering to protect the existing communities of Marston Moretaine, Lidlington and Brogborough from coalescence and new facilities to benefit existing residents are therefore proposed in this Plan as an allocation.



- 6.4.4 The future opportunities in this area for consideration in the Partial Plan Review are related to the proposed future strategic infrastructure investment committed for East-West Rail and the Expressway. This strategy supports the proposed East-West rail route and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and in turn the National Infrastructure Commission's central finding that the Oxford-Cambridge area which runs through Central Bedfordshire provides a 'once in a generation opportunity' to be the UK's Silicon Valley, delivering growth in science, technology and innovation<sup>6</sup>.
- 6.4.5 When delivered, these will strongly support the development potential of further large scale growth in the Marston Vale.
- 6.4.6 There is also some potential north of the railway line in an area known as the Aspley Guise Triangle for mixed use development in the form of new villages. However as development can not come forward until the route of the Expressway has been finalised which is estimated to be post 2021, it has been identified as a safeguarding Location for consideration in the Partial Plan Review rather than an allocation to ensure that the route is not sterilised.
- 6.4.7 Consultation and evidence told us that villages around Woburn including Aspley Guise must be protected due to their unique character, heritage assets and natural environment so any future development here would however need to be appropriately buffered to avoid coalescence and harm to the character of the existing settlements.
- 6.4.8 The Allocations proposed in this area are:
- Marston Vale New Villages (around 5000 homes) plus a business park
  - Extensions to Aspley Guise, Cranfield, Wixams and Marston Moretaine.
  - M1 Junction 13 (around 40 hectares for employment)
- 6.4.9 Land at Aspley Guise (North of the Railway Line) is safeguarded for future development for consideration in the Partial Plan Review. This land has a potential capacity for around 3,000 homes, but does not contribute to the Plan target of 39,350 homes.

## 6.5 Central Area

- 6.5.1 The settlement pattern and constrained infrastructure limit the options for strategic scale growth in this area. As such a number of small and medium allocations are proposed around settlements that have good access to services and facilities.
- 6.5.2 This area has had a large number of recent permissions as a result of speculative development. This has led to piecemeal development which does not allow for a holistic approach to the delivery of new services and infrastructure.
- 6.5.3 The Sustainability Appraisal and the transport modelling evidence tells us that there is limited scope for residential growth in this area due to limited capacity on

<sup>6</sup> National Infrastructure Commission Report, November 2017



the network, particularly along the A507 as result of incremental growth of existing settlements.

6.5.4 However the mixed use development at RAF Henlow exploits this unique existing asset and its strategic location at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc meaning that it has potential to enhance, unlock and create new economic growth within the global tech sectors which will maximise returns for the UK economy.

6.5.5 The allocations proposed in this area are:

- RAF Henlow (mixed use specialist employment)
- Extensions to Campton, Clifton, Haynes, Henlow, Lower Stondon, Maulden, Meppershall, Moggerhanger, Northill, Shefford, Shillington and Upper Gravenhurst.

## 6.6 Growth Strategy

6.6.1 The allocations for employment, housing, and mixed use development are set out in Policy SP1 overleaf. The allocations have been selected with regard to their overall sustainability based on the evidence presented in the Growth Options Studies for the Luton HMA and the North of Central Bedfordshire, technical site assessment work, the Sustainability Appraisal, transport modelling and other technical evidence studies.

6.6.2 The plan target is to deliver 39,350 homes; a modest contingency on the 'supply' of sites has been applied to provide a failsafe if sites fail to come forward as scheduled in our delivery plan (see table 6.2). This will ensure delivery throughout the plan period to 2035 and in particular will ensure that the Council can maintain a rolling five year housing supply.

6.6.3 It is also clear that the full identified net capacity of allocated sites is set out in Policy SP1. For most strategic sites, based on reasonable assumptions in relation to delivery rates, the full quantum of the allocation will not be delivered during the plan period. The expected delivery rates and the residual to be delivered outside of the plan period is shown in the delivery rates table in section 7. Therefore in many cases, only a proportion of the overall capacity figure will count towards the plan target for new homes.



### **Policy SP1: Growth Strategy**

39,350 homes, and a minimum of 24,000 new jobs will be delivered in Central Bedfordshire over the period 2015 to 2035. This number includes around 23,528 homes which are already planned for or built. In order to accommodate the growth required up to 2035 in a sustainable and controlled manner, growth will be distributed throughout Central Bedfordshire, including on land currently designated as Green Belt. Green Belt boundaries will be redrawn for a small number of sites where a strong case can be made that they meet the exceptional criteria tests for removal and allocation for housing.

New homes and jobs will be delivered via a combination of strategic and small – medium scale allocations throughout Central Bedfordshire. Strategic allocations will be made at the following locations:

- North of Luton (Town Extension) – 4,000 homes and 20ha employment land.
- M1 Junction 11a – Strategic Employment Area – 45ha
- Marston Valley (New Villages) – 5,000 homes and 40ha employment land.
- M1 Junction 13 – Strategic Employment Area – 35ha
- East of Arlesey (Town Extension) – 2,000 homes
- RAF Henlow (Mixed Use Specialist Employment) - 130 hectares.
- East of Biggleswade (New Village) – 1,500 homes
- A1 Corridor – Biggleswade South - Strategic Employment Area – 60ha

Development will also be brought forward through Neighbourhood Plans, and through **medium and small scale extensions** to villages and towns throughout Central Bedfordshire.

Planning applications for piecemeal development that prejudices the delivery of allocations set out in this policy will be refused.

## **6.7 Small & Medium Sites**

6.7.1 In addition to the Strategic Sites identified above, the Plan also allocates 52 small and medium sites for residential development. Ranging in size from 12 up to 650 dwellings, and spread throughout Central Bedfordshire, these can be brought forward for development more quickly than larger sites, and so aid delivery. These smaller sites will also provide better choice in the market, opportunities for SME builders, and enable our settlements to grow in ways that are sustainable, and respect and enhance the character and identity of our settlements and countryside.

## **6.8 Neighbourhood Planning**

6.8.1 Neighbourhood Planning is a new way of allowing neighbourhoods to have a say in the statutory land use planning of their own areas. The Council is supportive of



Neighbourhood Plans and support will be given to those communities who choose to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

- 6.8.2 Neighbourhood Planning must arise from the community, with individuals and groups working in partnership with local businesses, developers and landowners in the area, to deliver sustainable development to meet the community's needs for the future.
- 6.8.3 There are two 'tools' for neighbourhood planning that may be produced;
- Neighbourhood Plans which may allocate land outside of Green Belt for development and/or include policies against which planning applications are judged;
  - Neighbourhood Development Orders which can grant planning permission for a specific type of development.

### Neighbourhood Plan Areas Outside of Green Belt

- 6.8.4 When proposing allocations, a robust assessment of all alternative sites available will be required to show that the most sustainable locations have been selected. The status of allocations made through the neighbourhood planning process is in effect, the same as if made by the Council through a site allocations development plan document because Neighbourhood Plans become part of the formal development plan for Central Bedfordshire, upon adoption.

### Neighbourhood Plan Areas in Green Belt

- 6.8.5 Neighbourhood Plans cannot however allocate land for development in the Green Belt as changes to the Green Belt can only be made through a review of the Local Plan. Instead they can include aspirations for the future, which may include a recommendation that the Green Belt boundary is altered to allow for a specific development in a future Local Plan Review. This Plan has taken into account aspirations from Neighbourhood Planning Groups in Green Belt settlements when determining draft allocations.

### Delivering Homes through Neighbourhood Plans

- 6.8.6 In view of the fact that the progress of Neighbourhood Plans is outside of the control and jurisdiction of the Council, no specific target for the delivery of new homes has been attributed to Neighbourhood Plans. Therefore any new homes delivered through neighbourhood plans in addition to the small and medium sites proposed as draft allocations, will effectively be treated as 'windfall'.

## 6.9 Housing Target

**Table 6.1: Derivation of Local Plan Housing Target**

a) Objectively Assessed Housing Need for Central Bedfordshire	32,000
b) Unmet Need from Luton	7,350
Total houses to be delivered over period 2015 – 35 including committed sites.	<b>39,350</b>



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6.9.1 The Plan target is to deliver 39,350 homes over the period 2015-2035. This figure is comprised of Central Bedfordshire’s objectively assessed housing need over this period (32,000 homes) with the addition of Luton’s residual unmet housing need (7350 homes).

**Table 6.2 Existing dwellings commitments at 31.09.17**

Type of commitment	Number of dwellings expected during the plan period
Net Completions April 2015 – Oct 17	4,335
Existing allocations	7,742
Strategic sites (with planning permission)	6,780
Large windfall (with planning permission)	4,023
Small windfall (with planning permission)	648
<b>total</b>	<b>23,528</b>

6.9.2 The table above sets out the amount of housing which is already allocated by a previous development plan or benefits from planning permission. These are called dwelling commitments and they are expected to deliver 23,528 dwellings during the 2015-2035 plan period. A breakdown of all these commitments can be found in the Housing Trajectory (October 2017).

6.9.3 In addition to the above commitments, evidence set out in the Windfall Topic Paper demonstrates that there is sufficient compelling evidence to justify the addition of a moderate annual windfall allowance from years 6-15 of the plan period in line with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assesment NPPG. This allowance for windfall is robust and achievable and takes account of other identified housing delivery.



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### 6.10 Summary of Growth in Central Bedfordshire 2015-2035

6.10.1 The remaining homes will be provided through allocations made in this Plan, with a moderate amount of 'windfall' included in addition to provide a contingency on the plan target.

**Table 6.3: New Housing Growth**

Proposed Housing Supply	Number of Dwellings Expected in Plan Period
Small and Medium Allocations	5,505
Strategic Allocations	9,900
Windfall Allowance (post 5 years)	2,590
Windfall allowance (five year supply period only)	307
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,302</b>

**Table 6.4: New Strategic Employment Allocations**

Existing Permissions and Allocations	Area (ha)
RAF Henlow specialist employment	130
B8 Strategic Allocation – M1 Junction 11a	45
B8 Strategic Allocation – M1 Junction 13	35
B8 Strategic Allocation – A1 Junction 11	60
Marston Valley	40
North of Luton	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>



## 6.11 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.11.1 In March 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF requires that Local Plans are prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Local Plans must, therefore, be consistent with the principles and policies of the Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

### **Policy SP2: National Planning Policy Framework - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

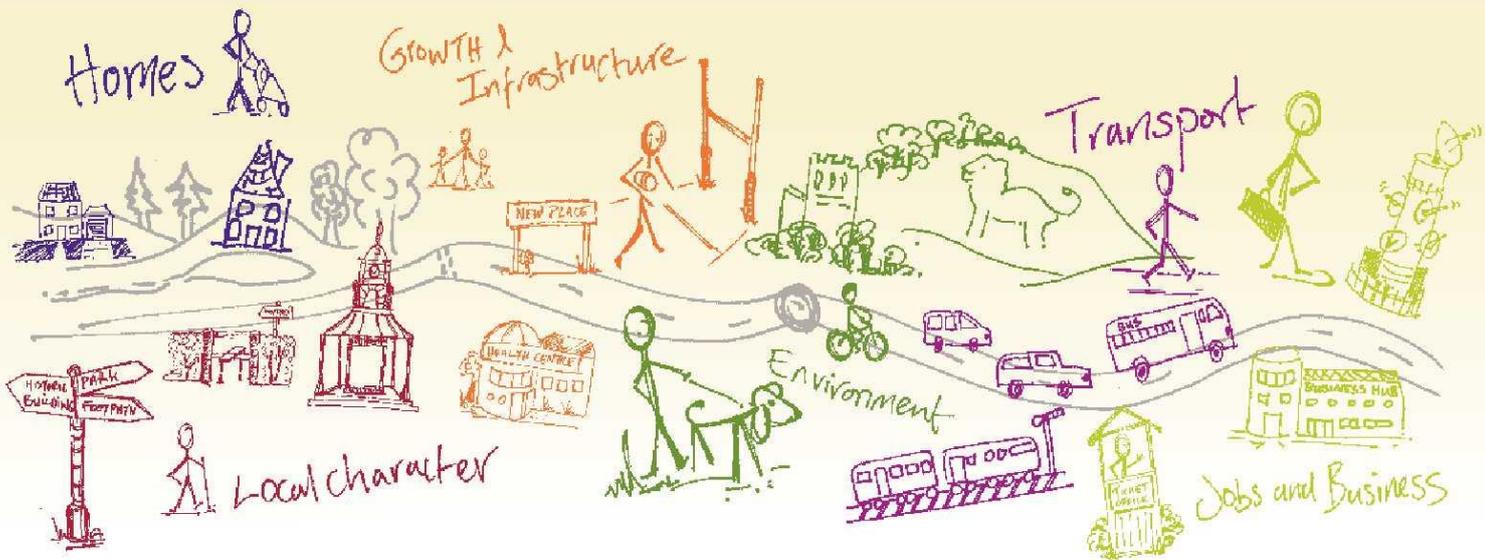
Where relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise; taking into account whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Implementation

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



## 7 Implementation

### 7.1 Delivery Rates

7.1.1 The delivery rates of existing housing commitments have already been determined and are set out within the housing trajectory in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). It is important that new allocations identified by this Local Plan contribute to delivering a continuous supply of housing throughout the plan period. It is therefore appropriate for the Council to use reasonable assumptions to determine the likely delivery of particular development sites taking into consideration competing sites, likely commencement, and any enabling works that need to be undertaken in advance of development.

7.1.2 This is particularly important for those key strategic sites which are critical to the delivery of this strategy. An indication of expected delivery rates is therefore set out below to ensure that this is managed effectively. The impact of phasing for strategic scale sites to allow for the delivery of enabling infrastructure often means that strategic sites deliver only a proportion of their total capacity within the plan period.

**Table 7.1: Anticipated Delivery Rates of Strategic Sites**

Year	Dwelling numbers by Strategic Allocation			
	North of Luton	Marston Vale	East of Arlesey	East of Biggleswade
21/22		50		
22/23	50	100		
23/24	100	250	50	50
24/25	150	300	100	150
25/26	200	300	100	150
26/27	200	300	150	150
27/28	300	300	150	150
28/29	300	300	150	150
29/30	300	300	150	150
30/31	300	300	150	150
31/32	300	300	150	150
32/33	300	300	150	150
33/34	300	300	150	100
34/35	300	300	150	
<b>POST</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>



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### 7.2 Housing Supply

- 7.2.1 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) demonstrates that there are sufficient sites to ensure that the Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed need of 32,000 dwellings and 24,000 new jobs over the 2015-2035 plan period. This represents an average need of 1,600 dwellings and 1,200 jobs per year.
- 7.2.2 Local Planning Authorities are also required to 'identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their requirements'. If this cannot be demonstrated a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is applied. It is therefore been vital that this Local Plan has allocated sufficient deliverable and developable land at range of scales and locations in order to ensure that a five year supply is maintained.
- 7.2.3 In order to demonstrate a five year supply of housing, significant and demonstrable site specific evidence must be produced. This council regularly contacts housebuilders to determine when their sites will be delivered and this information is added to the Housing Trajectory on a quarterly basis.
- 7.2.4 In addition to meeting Central Bedfordshire's housing need, the plan target also includes provision for 7350 homes to meet Luton's identified 'unmet need' as outlined in paragraph 6.2.1.

### 7.3 Monitoring

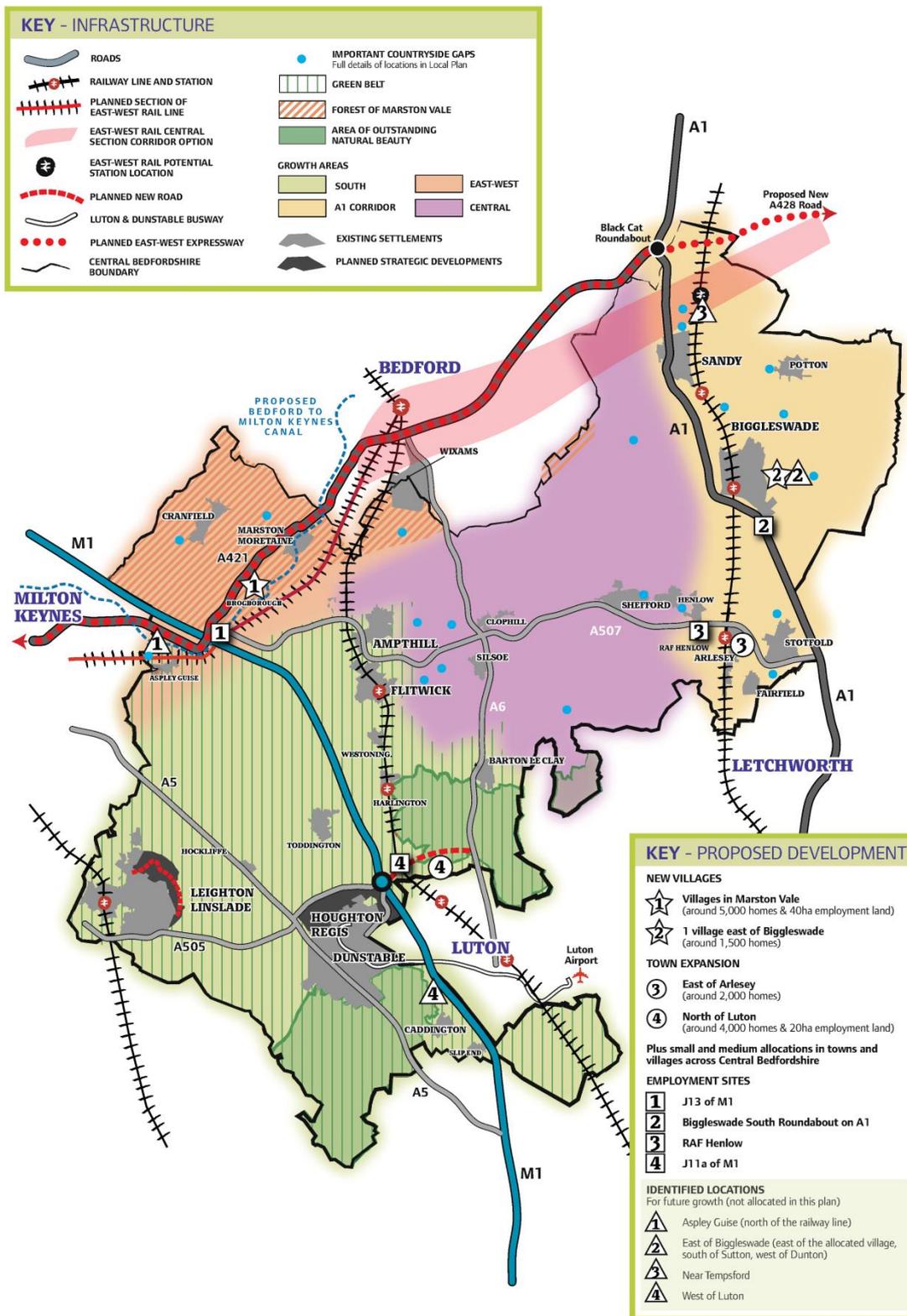
- 7.3.1 Annual housing completions and the supply of housing land will be rigorously monitored on at least an annual basis to determine if delivery requirements are being met and whether the five year supply of housing land is being maintained. The Housing Trajectory and statements on the five year housing land supply will be published within the annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) and on the Council's website.
- 7.3.2 In order to assess the application and effectiveness of all the policies in the Local Plan the Council a monitoring framework has been produced to support this Plan (Appendix 3). This lists all the policies and sets out how they will be monitored. The results of this monitoring will be published each year in the AMR. This will provide valuable evidence of any policy areas where the Council may need to take action.



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### 7.4 The Key Diagram



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### 7.5 Strategic Allocations: General requirements

- 7.5.1 Evidence has shown that the development of large scale new communities (of more than 1500 homes) which are well located for employment and services and have the potential to be well served by sustainable transport will be the most sustainable option for growth alongside development at different scales in proximity to existing settlements. Allocations for growth are set out in Policy SP1.
- 7.5.2 In order to inform the identification of the most appropriate and sustainable locations for growth within Central Bedfordshire, proposals for the delivery of these locations will be expected to demonstrate conformity with the strategic objectives, wider development principles and policies as set out within this plan. They should also meet the following generic requirements for strategic sites to ensure that good placemaking principles are embedded into new strategic developments as set out below. This is in addition to the site specific allocation policies that follow.
- 7.5.3 It is expected that promoters of allocated strategic sites will sign up to a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Council.

### **Policy SP3: Generic Requirements for Strategic Sites**

Development proposals brought forward at the identified strategic allocations should be accompanied by comprehensive Development Brief for the whole site. Proposals should be based on the following requirements and objectives:

- Creation of distinctive, well integrated new communities which respect their local context, enhance the standards of sustainable design in the locality and relate well to neighbouring settlements;
- Preparation of a comprehensive masterplan for the whole site which includes an indicative layout and phasing plan. The masterplan should reflect the location of the site, incorporate the highest standards of design and make effective use of the site through application of appropriate densities, layout and form;
- Meeting the housing needs of all sectors of the community including families, the young and older people and to match house types to the local employment base in order to reduce the need for out commuting;
- Provision of a local centre for the new community, with a range of facilities to meet local needs including small-scale employment uses, pre-school facilities, and primary education, including provision for health and social care in the locality. Integrated Health and Care Hubs should be located in close proximity to schools and elderly persons accommodation and provided early in the development programme;
- Provision of a Sustainable Transport Strategy, fully integrated into the overall masterplan and demonstrating improved linkages to existing transport nodes e.g. mainline rail stations by sustainable means and how



the development will reduce the need to travel by car. Measures to mitigate the traffic impacts of the proposed development on the strategic and local road networks together with footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, and green corridors should be included;

- Promoters should undertake a full Transport Assessment to ensure that the package of mitigation measures are incorporated into the scheme, including pedestrian and cycle links, a public transport strategy and any offsite contributions as deemed necessary;
- A Green Infrastructure Strategy which sets out measures to protect and enhance any environmentally sensitive areas within and around the site, avoid harmful impacts and mitigate the local and wider impacts of the development, including phasing of these measures and their long term management, and to maximise the opportunities presented by undevelopable land;
- Where appropriate, the development should provide a fully integrated Sustainable Drainage System to mitigate against any potential flood risk, apply a flood risk sequential approach to development across the site;
- Detailed viability information including an infrastructure phasing and delivery plan.

## 7.6 What are Integrated Health and Care Hubs?

- Integrated Health and Care Hubs will support the local ambition for access to modern, high quality and locality based health and care services. These Hubs will be aligned to key Spokes in our rural communities. Central Bedfordshire population distribution and its relation to secondary care providers makes it imperative that the importance of the Integrated Health and Care Hubs approach is sustained. Services need to be more accessible to people, especially in predominantly rural areas, and should meet the requirements for delivering health and care services to an expanding and ageing population.
- More services will be accessible to people where they live, whilst also enhancing community based and out of hospital services. These Hubs are important in helping to meet the complex needs of an ageing and growing population, in a predominantly rural area without its own district general hospital.
- The integrated Health and Care Hubs will be the main centres for providing proactive and preventative care, out of hospital services and care packages for people who are vulnerable or have complex care needs. These Hubs will help to reshape the primary model which delivers primary care at scale, addressing the issue of capacity in general practice and ensuring equitable and timely access to care.
- A locality based integrated health and care hub approach improves



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cooperation and joined up working which improves the access and quality of care provision. It also leads to a reduction of inappropriate hospital admissions and importantly supports the vision for integrated primary and community services at scale as set out in the General Practice Forward View.

- As a minimum, these Health and Care Hubs are expected to serve as a base for the multi-disciplinary teams (adults and children's) being established as part of the community services redesign programme, including general medical services where possible. The co-location of health and care teams in fit for purpose facilities is central to managing demand and ensuring the future sustainability of local health and care systems.
- Each Integrated Health and Care Hub will provide local access to a range of general medical and nursing, therapy, specialist and social care services with supporting information and advice systems. The Health and Care Hubs may also develop a range of additional or enhanced services in line with the needs of the local community. Enhanced services might include
  - Extended GP services on a 7 day basis
  - Enhanced services delivered by and across practices, e.g. minor injury and minor illness services, clinics to support patients with long-term conditions
  - Face-to-face out of hours consultations
  - Community pharmacy
  - Rehabilitation and re-enablement facilities
  - Outreach services from local acute hospitals and specialist services, e.g. outpatient appointments and other specialist consultations
  - Less complex diagnostics
  - Public Health and prevention services, e.g. smoking cessation, NHS Health Checks, lifestyle hubs



### 7.7 Site Specific Allocation Policies

#### Policy SA1: North of Luton

Land to the north of Luton as identified on the Proposal Maps, is allocated for a mixed-use development consisting of up to 4000 dwellings and a minimum of 20 hectares of employment land for B1, B2 and B8 uses.

Development in the Strategic Land Allocation will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and the principles set out below. These principles will be defined in more detail through the preparation of a Development Brief which will include a phasing plan. Planning permission will only be granted for development following the Council's adoption of this Development Brief. Design codes will also be required for each phase, to be prepared by the developer and approved by the Council.

In order to ensure the development will be supported by the local and strategic infrastructure needed to ensure sustainable development, in the context of pooling restrictions and multiple landownerships, the Council will refuse any piecemeal planning permission that would undermine the Council's ability to deliver the required infrastructure.

The principles of the development are:

1. The development will form a well designed sustainable urban extension to Luton that will provide a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable and vibrant community, including:
  - a. in the region of 4000 homes with an appropriate balance and mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, which shall include subject to viability, a policy compliant mix of affordable housing, starter homes, self/custom build plots and a mix of homes to meet all identified needs for older people;
  - b. a minimum of 20 hectares of employment land, focused primarily to the west of the allocation site and centred around the new M1 Junction 11a to maximise access to the M1 and create an employment hub that compliments the new employment uses at North Houghton Regis;
  - c. provide the serviced land necessary to deliver a health and social care hub within the site to serve the health and social care needs of the proposed development and the needs of the catchment area of that facility and a commensurate financial contribution towards the delivery of that facility;
  - d. provision of new community facilities in accordance with Policy HQ2 including a mix of retail and at least one drinking establishment to serve the existing and new communities everyday needs;
  - e. provision of new educational facilities, comprising day nurseries, early years, primary, secondary and sixth form facilities to meet the identified needs of the development or equivalent facilities to meet the educational and childcare needs arising from the development; and



- f. provision of leisure facilities, including:
  - i. indoor sport and leisure facilities, in accordance with Policy HQ3; and
  - ii. outdoor sport, leisure and open space, in accordance with Policies EE12, including pavilions and allotments.
2. It is critical that development of this site is supported by a comprehensive scheme of highway improvements to mitigate the impacts of the development including an appropriately designed a routed new road to link the A6-M1 Junction 11a, the development shall provide the land and commensurate financial contributions towards its delivery.
3. The development will be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure and community facilities including the delivery of the Link road, which shall be delivered as soon as viably possible. The phasing of the road will commence from the west, with the first phase a dual carriageway between M1 Junction 11a and Sundon Park Road to facilitate access to the first phase of development and Sundon RFI employment allocation;
4. The development will provide other supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, including providing for efficient public transport routes through the development that link with key destinations including Leagrave Train Station and Luton town centre;
5. The development shall Integrate and connect to existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside and neighbouring settlements. The development shall include a cycleway connection to route 6 of the national cycleway network and will be required to provide new crossings on the A6 and crossings over the new link road to improve and maintain connections; it is essential that the development contributes towards the delivery of and is served by an appropriately designed and routed new link road between the A6 and M1 Junction 11a;
6. The development shall provide dedicated and safe pedestrian and cycle links from the new and existing neighbourhoods to local centres, employment opportunities, schools, shops and community facilities; both within the allocation and the wider Luton conurbation;
7. The development shall maximise opportunities to create Green Infrastructure corridors through the site linking with existing Green Infrastructure assets, including a link between Bramingham Park and George Wood; and a link between Bramingham Wood and Sundon Wood, beneath the current alignment of the pylon lines. The development shall also provide a green corridor along key routes including the setting of the Theedway and appropriately designed Green Infrastructure to mitigate visual impacts upon the setting of the AONB and the significance of heritage assets;
8. The development shall provide appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement of key features of biodiversity, to ensure a net gain for biodiversity including but not limited to;
  - a. Sundon Wood CWS, Bramingham Wood CWS, Sunshine Riding Stables CWS, Sundon Quarry SSSI and CWS, Galley and Warden



Hills SSSI and CWS, Sundon Country Park CWS and Barton Hills National Nature Reserve SSSI; and

- b. Identified protected species and priority habitats;
9. The development shall ensure that the design and construction of the development as a whole including the A6 to M1 junction 11a link road has no undue impact on the AONB, heritage assets and biodiversity and provides for the mitigation and enhancements where feasible. With the exception of the link road any major built development within the AONB shall require exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated and shall only be permitted where it can be demonstrated it is in the public interest;
10. The development will ensure that any impact on non designated heritage assets with archaeological interest is mitigated in order to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets affected by the development. The mitigation will include making the results of all archaeological investigations publically available for the benefit for this and future generations.
11. The development will be designed to mitigate any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets within the site boundary and the setting of all designated heritage assets which lie within the site's vicinity. The development will not result in the destruction of any designated heritage assets or their settings and shall deliver mitigation measures that preserve all designated heritage assets and their settings for future generations. This is required in order to ensure that the public benefits of the development outweigh the degree of harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets affected by the development.
12. Subject to the findings of the site specific flood risk assessment the development shall deliver strategic measures to reduce flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods (SUDS) to attenuate and discharge surface water run-off at reduced rates, and at least at a rate no greater than if the site were undeveloped and to reduce existing downstream risk. This may include consideration of "off-site" solutions. The development and strategic measures will be designed to ensure there no detrimental impact on groundwater flooding downstream and shall seek to intercept and store surface water flows on site. Regard shall be had to the phased delivery of flood mitigation and SUDS in accordance with the phasing of the development to ensure adequate measures to reduce flood risk (from all sources) are provided throughout the lifetime of the development. The detailed designs of sustainable drainage systems maximise biodiversity enhancement, mitigation of visual landscape impacts, maintenance and safety, when considering their location and relationship to neighbouring uses. Safe access and egress shall be provided taking account of the flood risk at the site.
13. The development shall be connected to the mains sewerage network and any application for planning permission shall detail any infrastructure upgrades where required and any necessary phasing arrangements;
14. The development shall provide appropriate landscaping measures to create a sense of place, provide a net gain for biodiversity and shall mitigate the



potential impact of development on the wider landscape including the AONB. To mitigate harm to the AONB the development shall provide significant landscape enhancements on and beyond the northern allocation boundary and shall create a long term defensible Green Belt boundary as informed by detailed assessments. Noise attenuation fencing to mitigate noise impacts from the new link road will be resisted.

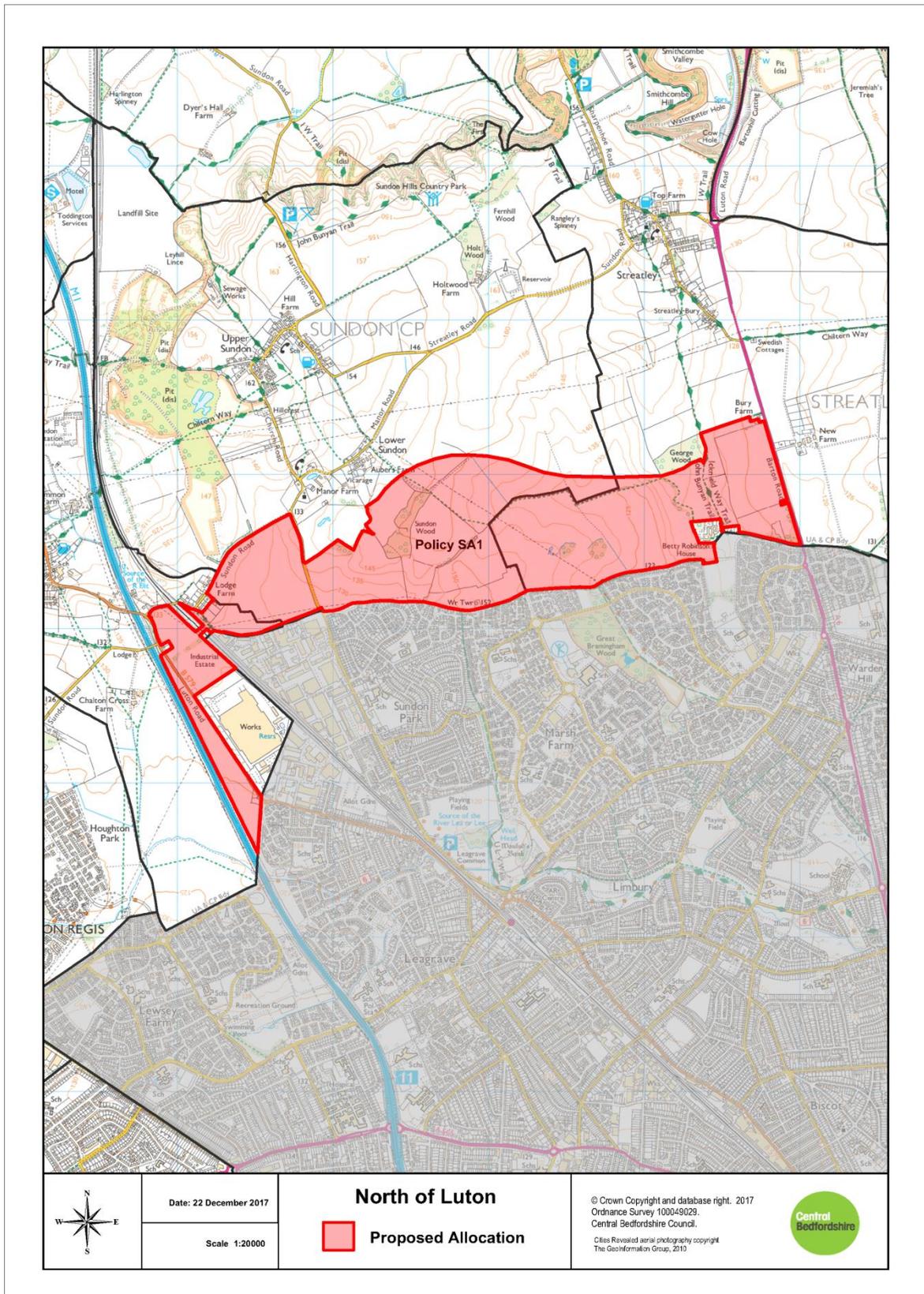
15. Incorporate measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use and include renewable energy technologies.

The revised Green Belt boundary follows the extent of the allocation boundary.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035 Pre-submission January 2018

## SA1: North of Luton



**Policy SE1: M1 Junction 11a – Sundon Rail Freight Interchange (RFI)**

The Sundon RFI as identified on the Proposal Map, will:

- provide an intermodal rail facility on approximately 5 hectares of the site;
- provide for approximately 40 hectares of new employment land accommodating B8 warehousing and distribution uses;
- be connected by an appropriate new strategic road link between Sundon Park Road and M1 Junction 11a;
- enhance and manage Sundon Chalk Pits CWS and Sundon Chalk Quarry SSSI to improve their ecological value and contribute to the GI network;
- preserve and enhance heritage assets within and around the site; and
- provide opportunities for sustainable transport links to be determined through a Transport Assessment.

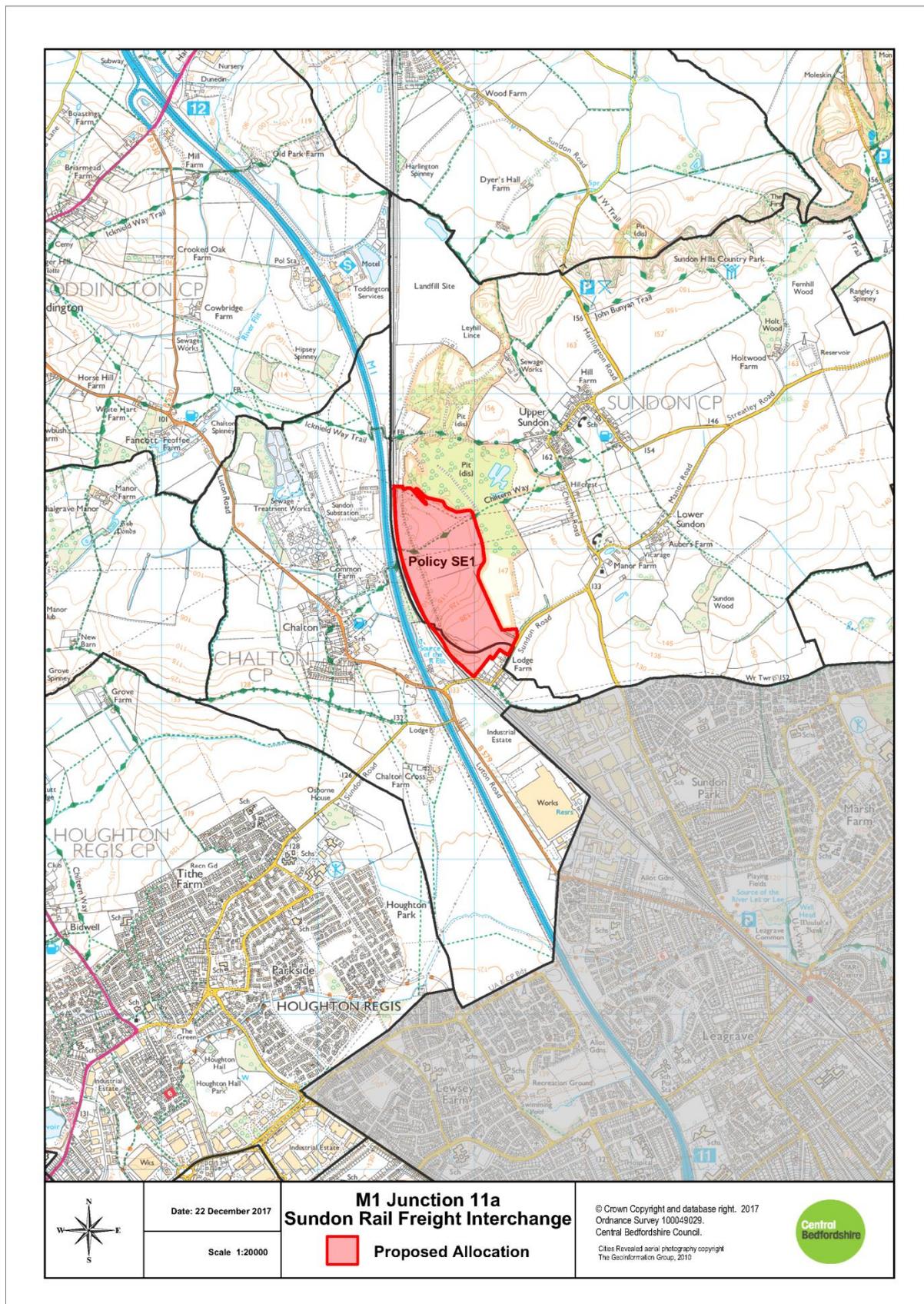
Development will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and following the successful preparation of a Master plan. The on-site rail infrastructure and operational intermodal terminal should be constructed during the first phase of development.

The Green Belt boundary follows the extent of the RFI and employment allocation. The CWS and SSSI will remain in the Green Belt.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018

## SE1: M1 Junction 11a Sundon Rail Freight Interchange



### Policy SA2: Marston Vale New Villages

The land for Marston Vale New Villages, as identified in the Proposal Maps, is allocated for a mixed-use development comprising of up to 5,000 dwellings and a minimum of 40 hectares of employment land. The employment land is intended for B1, B2 and B8 uses, specifically for employment relating to research and development, office, distribution, services and tourism.

Development in the Strategic Land Allocation will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and the principles set out below. These principles will be defined in more detail through the preparation of a Development Brief which will include a phasing plan. Planning permission will only be granted for development following the Council's adoption of this Development Brief. Design codes will also be required for each phase, to be prepared by the developer and approved by the Council.

In order to ensure the development will be supported by the local and strategic infrastructure needed to ensure sustainable development, in the context of pooling restrictions and multiple landownerships, the Council will refuse any piecemeal planning permission that would undermine the Council's ability to deliver such infrastructure.

The principles of the development are:

1. The development will form a series of up to four new villages separated and screened from neighbouring settlements by appropriate green and blue infrastructure. The villages will provide a mix of uses necessary to achieve sustainable and vibrant network of communities. Development will include:
  - a. Approximately 5,000 homes across a series of up to four new villages with an appropriate balance and mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs. This mix shall include, subject to viability, a policy compliant mix of affordable housing, starter homes, self/custom build plots and a mix of homes to meet all identified needs for older people;
  - b. A minimum of 40 hectares of employment land, to satisfy identified needs for Research and Development, office, distribution, services and tourism. This employment should be well-integrated with the villages, both in terms of design and pedestrian and cycle access.
  - c. provide a suitable parcel of serviced land and commensurate financial contributions towards the delivery of a primary healthcare facility to be delivered on site and the provision of a commensurate financial contribution towards the delivery of a health and social care facility to serve the healthcare needs of the development.
  - d. Provision of new community facilities in accordance with Policy HQ2, including a mix of retail, a community library space and at least one drinking establishment to serve the existing and new communities everyday needs;



- e. Provision of new educational facilities, comprising day nursery facilities, early years, lower, middle, upper and sixth form facilities to meet the identified needs of the development or equivalent facilities to meet the educational and childcare needs arising from the development; and
- f. provision of leisure facilities, including:
  - i. indoor sport and leisure facilities, in accordance with Policy HQ3; and
  - ii. outdoor sport, leisure and open space, in accordance with Policies EE12, including pavilions and allotments.
2. The development shall provide dedicated and safe pedestrian and cycle links between the new and existing villages, local centres, employment opportunities, schools, shops, public transport nodes and community facilities within the wider Marston Vale.
3. The development shall maximise opportunities to create Green Infrastructure corridors. The allocation is expected to deliver a multi-functional Green Corridor through the entire length of the site to form the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park. The development will deliver a water-filled and navigable link connecting Brogborough and Stewartby Lakes and shall deliver a cycleway from Stewartby Lake to Ridgmont Railway Station following the route of the Green Corridor.
4. The development shall provide appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including but not limited to, identified protected species and priority habitats. Existing ecological features should be well buffered and connected with additional habitat creation and linkages. Open water habitats in derelict brick pits provide valuable habitats for GCN, potential detrimental impacts on wet habitats must be avoided through careful zoning of uses.
5. The development shall provide appropriate landscaping measures to create a sense of place, provide a net gain for biodiversity and shall mitigate the potential impact of development on the wider landscape. The site is within the Forest of Marston Vale, and therefore any development must provide a total of 30% tree cover.
6. The development will ensure that any impact on non designated heritage assets with archaeological interest is mitigated in order to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets affected by the development. The mitigation will include making the results of all archaeological investigations publically available for the benefit for this and future generations;
7. The development will be designed to mitigate any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site. The development will not result in the destruction of any designated heritage assets or their settings and shall deliver mitigation measures that preserve all designated heritage assets and their settings for future generations. This is required in order to ensure that the public benefits of the



development outweigh the degree of harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets affected by the development;

8. The development shall be designed to ensure that uses and developments within the site that are vulnerable to flood risk are located outside of areas of flood zones 2 and 3 and areas at high risk of surface water flooding. Flood capacity shall be retained on site.
9. The development will, through the creation of the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park, provide a link for moving water between Brogborough and Stewartby Lakes, to increase the strategic flood storage capacity across the Marston Vale.
10. Subject to the findings of the site specific flood risk assessment the development shall deliver strategic measures to reduce flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods (SUDS) to attenuate and discharge surface water run-off at reduced levels where possible, and at least at a rate no greater than if the site were undeveloped and to reduce existing downstream risk. Regard shall be had to the phased delivery of flood mitigation and SUDS in accordance with the phasing of the development to ensure adequate measures to mitigate flood risk (from all sources) are provided throughout the lifetime of the development. The detailed designs of sustainable drainage systems should maximise biodiversity enhancement, mitigation of visual landscape impacts, flood risk reduction, maintenance and safety, when considering their location and relationship to neighbouring sites and uses. SuDS will be designed as part of the green infrastructure network, enhancing existing watercourses and drainage features, and integrating them with the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park. Safe access and egress shall be provided taking account of the flood risk at the site.
11. The development shall integrate and connect to existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside and neighbouring settlements, including a cycleway between Stewartby Lake and Ridgmont Railway Station which shall include appropriately designed crossings over the waterway.
12. The development will provide supporting transport infrastructure to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, including commensurate financial contributions towards a deliverable scheme for improvements at J13 of the M1 and the Marsh Leys roundabout, to mitigate the impacts of development. The development shall deliver viable and efficient public transport routes through the development that link with key destinations including East West Rail at Ridgmont Train Station and employment areas.
13. The development shall provide commensurate contributions towards enhancing the infrastructure at Ridgmont Railway Station, including Public Transport interchange facilities and car parking;
14. Foul drainage from the development will be connected to the public sewerage network. The development shall demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in water recycling centre (sewage treatment works) and the foul sewerage network to serve the proposed development and that it



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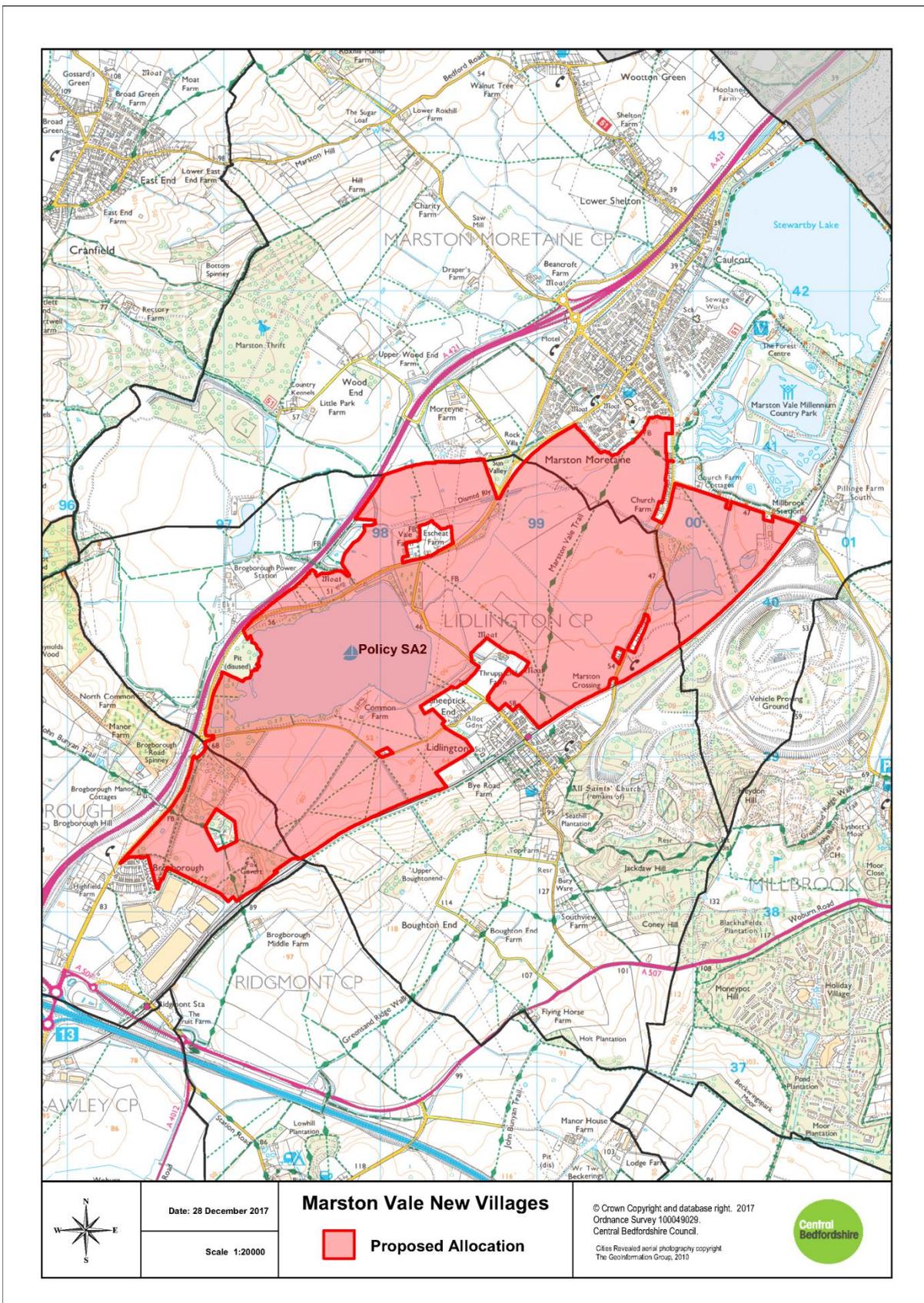
will not have an adverse impact on surface or ground water in terms of quality and quantity. Any application for planning permission shall detail any infrastructure upgrades where required and any necessary phasing arrangements as agreed by the relevant Water and Sewerage Company;

15. Incorporate measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use and include renewable energy technologies.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035 Pre-submission January 2018

## SA2: Marston Vale New Villages



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



**Policy SE2: M1 Junction 13 – Marston Gate Expansion**

The Marston Gate Expansion, as identified on the Proposal Map, will:

- provide up to 35 hectares of new employment land and 8ha of screening and landscaping;
- deliver a mix of uses including B8 warehousing and distribution with associated B1 uses, A3 food and drink uses and a lorry park;
- facilitate necessary mitigation and improvements to the A507 and M1, including M1 Junction 13, to ensure the site is well connected to the strategic transport network; and
- provide opportunities for sustainable transport links to be determined through a Transport Assessment.

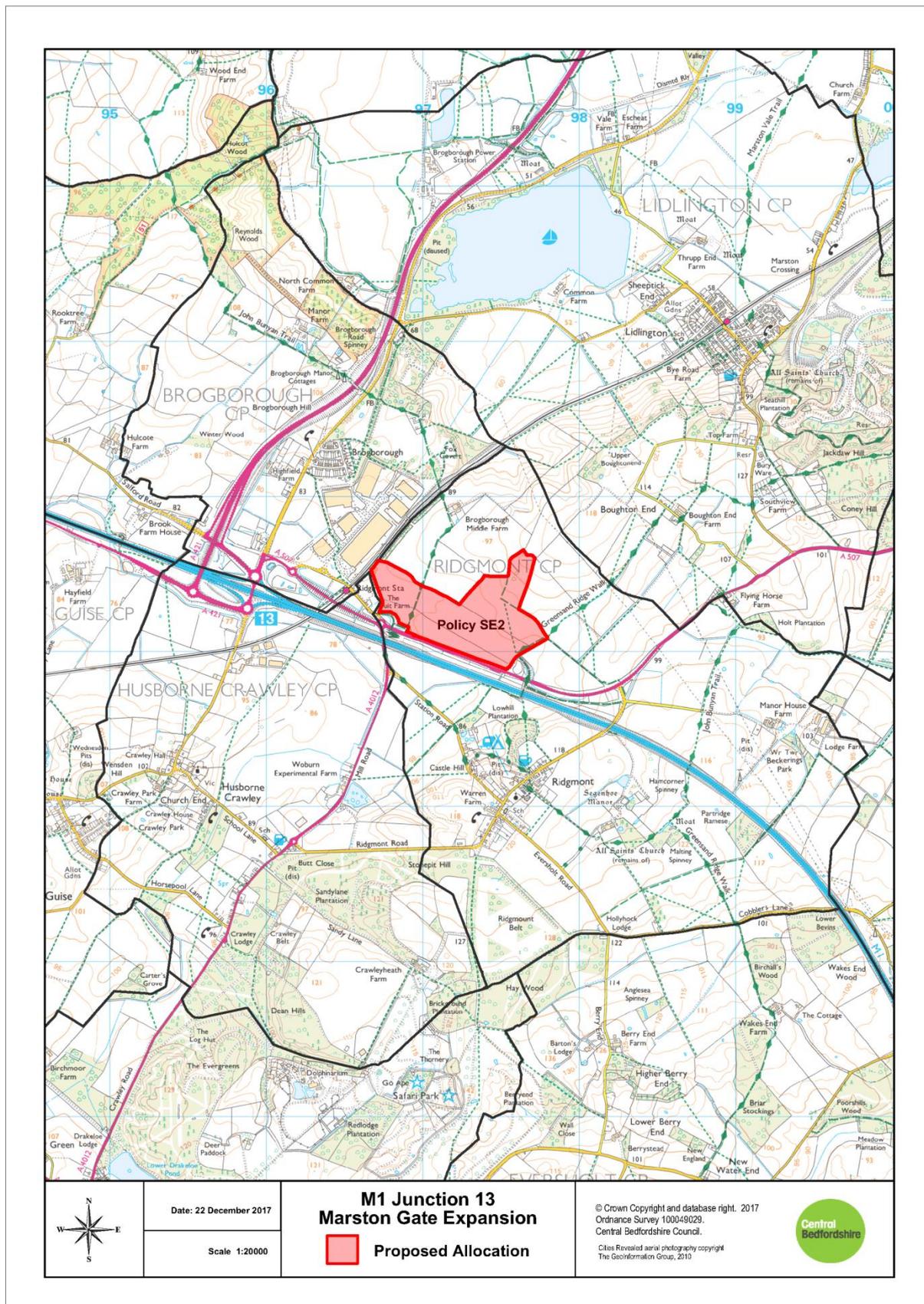
Development will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and following the successful preparation of a Masterplan which provides and exemplar design response to this unique gateway location.

Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the proposals take full account of the potential arising from improvements to Ridgmont rail station to maximise sustainability and sustainable transport options.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035 Pre-submission January 2018

## SE2: M1 Junction 13 Marston Gate Expansion



### Policy SA3: East of Arlesey

Land to the east of Arlesey as identified on the Proposal Maps, is allocated for a housing-led development consisting of up to 2000 dwellings and a country park.

Development in the Strategic Land Allocation will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and the principles set out below. These principles will be defined in more detail through the preparation of a Development Brief which will include a phasing plan. Planning permission will only be granted for development following the Council's adoption of this Development Brief. Design codes will also be required for each phase, to be prepared by the developer and approved by the Council.

In order to ensure the development will be supported by the local and strategic infrastructure needed to ensure sustainable development, in the context of pooling restrictions and multiple landownerships, the Council will refuse any piecemeal planning permission that would undermine the Council's ability to deliver such infrastructure.

The principles of the development are:

1. The development will form a well designed sustainable urban extension to Arlesey that will provide a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable and vibrant community, including:
  - a. in the region of 2000 homes with an appropriate balance and mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, which shall include subject to viability, a policy compliant mix of affordable housing, starter homes, self/custom build plots and a mix of homes to meet all identified needs for older people;
  - b. a country park on the eastern edge of the development to retain an appropriate separation between Arlesey and Fairfield Park and to provide a net gain in green infrastructure and biodiversity;
  - c. provide the serviced land necessary to deliver a health care facility within the site to serve the health needs of the proposed development and the needs of the catchment area of that facility and a commensurate financial contribution towards the delivery of that facility;
  - d. provision of new community facilities in accordance with Policy HQ2 including community centres, a mix of retail and at least one drinking establishment to serve the existing and new communities everyday needs;
  - e. Educational facilities, comprising day nurseries, early years, new school(s) for primary aged children to meet the identified needs of the development (or equivalent facilities to meet the educational and childcare needs arising from the development) and financial contributions towards the provision, improvement, enlargement or enhancement of schools for secondary aged children and sixth form facilities off site to meet the identified needs of the development (or equivalent contributions towards projects to meet the educational needs arising from the development); and



- f. provision of leisure facilities, including:
  - i. indoor sport and leisure facilities, in accordance with Policy HQ3; and
  - ii. outdoor sport, leisure and open space, in accordance with Policies EE12, including pavilions and allotments.
2. The development shall provide dedicated and safe pedestrian and cycle links from the new and existing neighbourhoods to local centres, country park, Arlesey train station, employment opportunities, schools, shops and community facilities; both within the allocation and the wider Arlesey and Fairfield area.
3. The development shall maximise opportunities to create Green Infrastructure corridors and meet the aims and objectives of the Etonbury Green Wheel. This will be achieved through linking the proposed country park on the western edge with existing Green Infrastructure assets in Arlesey and Fairfield Park, including a link with Etonbury Woods; and improving the ecological and biodiversity gains at Blue and Green Lagoon.
4. The development shall provide appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including but not limited to;
  1. Blue Lagoon and Green Lagoon; and
  2. Identified protected species and priority habitats.
5. The development will ensure that any impact on non designated heritage assets with archaeological interest is mitigated in order to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets affected by the development. The mitigation will include making the results of all archaeological investigations publically available for the benefit for this and future generations;
6. The development will be designed to mitigate any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site. This is required in order to ensure that the public benefits of the development outweigh the any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets affected by the development;
7. The development shall be designed to preserve all designated heritage assets within the site and shall seek to mitigate the degree of harm to the significance of all designated heritage assets and shall deliver where necessary, relevant and reasonable measures to preserve those assets and their settings for future generations, to ensure the public benefits of development would outweigh the degree of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.
8. The development shall consider the risk of flooding from ordinary watercourses and surface water and shall avoid vulnerable development in these areas accordingly. Subject to the findings of the site specific flood risk assessment the development shall deliver strategic measures to reduce flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods (SUDS) to attenuate and discharge surface water run-off at reduced rates, and at least at a rate no greater than if the site were undeveloped and to reduce existing downstream risk. This will include consideration of “off-site” solutions on the Pix Brook and River Hiz. The flood risk assessment will consider where surface water from the development will be discharged, in relation to existing flood risks and flood



history on the Pix Brook and River Hiz. Regard shall be had to the phased delivery of flood mitigation and SUDS in accordance with the phasing of the development to ensure adequate measures to reduce flood risk (from all sources) are provided throughout the lifetime of the development. The detailed designs of sustainable drainage systems should maximise biodiversity enhancement, mitigation of visual landscape impacts, maintenance and safety, when considering their location and relationship to neighbouring uses. Safe access and egress shall be provided taking account of the flood risk at the site.

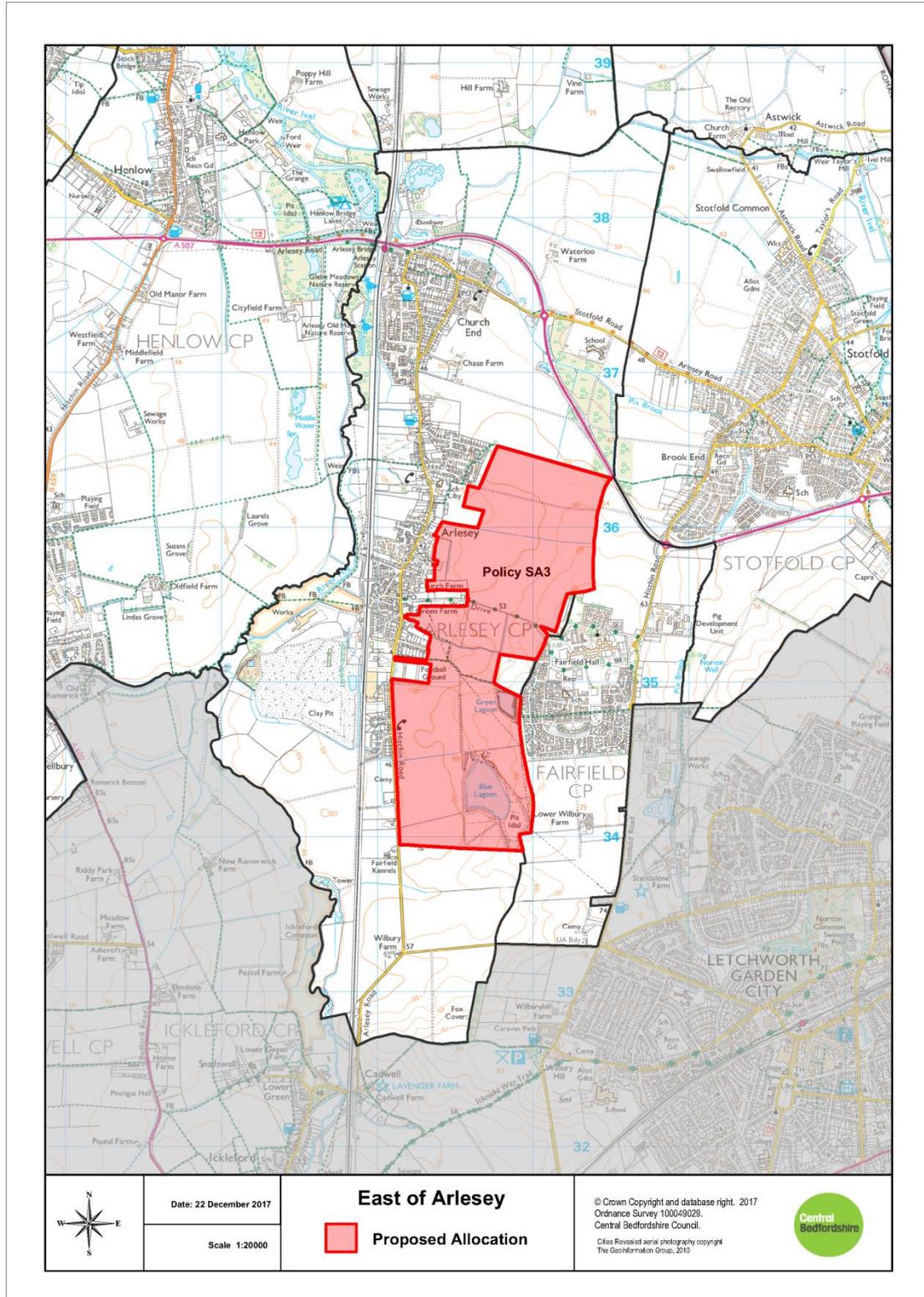
9. The development shall integrate and connect to existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside and neighbouring settlements. Existing rights of way within the site will be upgraded and new routes will be created to Arlesey Train Station in the north, in addition to improving rights of way between the development site and the emerging Arlesey Cross development.
10. It is essential that the development provides an appropriately designed Relief Road to connect the area from the south of Hitchin Road to the A507/High Street Link road in the north being proposed as part of Arlesey Cross. This will allow for access directly onto the A507 relieving congestion along the High Street in Arlesey.
11. It is essential that the development integrates and connects to the existing road network in Arlesey to allow for permeability and legibility between the new development and Arlesey.
12. The development will be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure and community facilities including the delivery of the Relief road, which shall be delivered as soon as viably possible.
13. The development will provide other supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, including providing for efficient public transport routes through the development that link with key destinations including Arlesey Train Station.
14. Foul drainage from the development will be connected to the public sewerage network. The development shall demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in water recycling centre (sewage treatment works) and the foul sewerage network to serve the proposed development and that it will not have an adverse impact on surface or ground water in terms of quality and quantity. And any application for planning permission shall detail any infrastructure upgrades where required and any necessary phasing arrangements as agreed by the relevant Water and Sewerage Company.
15. The development shall provide appropriate landscaping measures to create a sense of place, provide a net gain for biodiversity and shall mitigate the potential impact of development on a predominately agricultural landscape. To mitigate harm a country park will be located on the eastern edge of the development to prevent coalescence and to create a defensible boundary between Arlesey and Fairfield Park.
16. Incorporate measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use and include renewable energy technologies.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035

## Pre-submission January 2018

### SA3: East of Arlesey



**Policy SA4: East of Biggleswade**

Land to the East of Baden Powell Way as identified on the Proposal Maps, is allocated for a mixed-use development consisting of up to 1500 dwellings and associated uses.

Development in the Strategic Land Allocation will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and the principles set out below. These principles will be defined in more detail through the preparation of a Development Brief which will include a phasing plan. Planning permission will only be granted for development following the Council's adoption of this Development Brief. Design codes will also be required for each phase, to be prepared by the developer and approved by the Council.

In order to ensure the development will be supported by the local and strategic infrastructure needed to ensure sustainable development, in the context of pooling restrictions and multiple landownerships, the Council will refuse any piecemeal planning permission that would undermine the Council's ability to deliver such infrastructure.

The principles of the development are:

1. The development will form a well designed sustainable village that will be visibly and physically separate from Biggleswade and will provide a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable and vibrant community, including:
  - a. in the region of 1500 homes with an appropriate balance and mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, which shall include subject to viability, a policy compliant mix of affordable housing, starter homes, self/custom build plots and a mix of homes to meet all identified needs for older people;
  - b. provide a commensurate financial contribution towards the delivery of a health and social care hub to serve the health and social care needs of the development.
  - c. provision of new community facilities in accordance with Policy HQ2 including a mix of retail and at least one drinking establishment to serve the existing and new communities everyday needs;
  - d. educational facilities, comprising day nurseries, early years, new school(s) for primary aged children to meet the identified needs of the development (or equivalent facilities to meet the educational and childcare needs arising from the development) and financial contributions towards the provision, improvement, enlargement or enhancement of schools for secondary aged children and sixth form facilities off site to meet the identified needs of the development (or equivalent contributions towards projects to meet the educational needs arising from the development and
  - e. provision of leisure facilities, including:
    - i. indoor sport and leisure facilities, in accordance with Policy HQ3; and
    - ii. outdoor sport, leisure and open space, in accordance with Policies EE12, including pavilions and allotments.



2. The development will provide dedicated and safe pedestrian and cycle links from the new and existing neighbourhoods to local centres, employment opportunities, schools, shops and community facilities; both within the allocation and the wider area.
3. The development will maximise opportunities to create multi functional Green Infrastructure, including:
  - a. a parkland corridor to the west of the site to achieve the objectives of the Biggleswade Green Wheel and the provision of public open space as an extension to the Biggleswade Common. This Green Corridor will be of a scale commensurate to the Biggleswade Common with substantial wet woodland planting, rough grassland and scrub, complimentary to Biggleswade Common whilst providing significant mitigation to the inter-visibility between the built development within the allocation site and Biggleswade;
  - b. landscaping and habitat linkages following the northern boundary of the site allocation, extending from the boundary of the site adjoining Biggleswade Common and towards Dunton Fen as well as substantial soft landscaping to be provided along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site to mitigate visual impacts on the landscape and the setting of heritage assets;
4. The development will provide appropriate mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including but not limited to, Identified protected species and priority habitats;
5. The development will ensure that the design and construction of the development as a whole has no undue impact on the landscape and biodiversity and provides for the mitigation and enhancements where feasible;
6. The development will ensure that any impact on non designated heritage assets with archaeological interest is mitigated. The mitigation will include making the results of all archaeological investigations publically available in order to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets affected by the development for benefit for this and future generations;
7. The development will be designed to mitigate the degree of harm to the significance of all designated heritage assets and shall deliver where necessary, relevant and reasonable measures to preserve those assets and their settings for future generations, to ensure the public benefits of development would outweigh the degree of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets;
8. The development will be designed to ensure that uses and developments within the site that are vulnerable to flood risk are located beyond areas of flood zones 2 and 3. Safe access and egress shall be provided taking into account flood risk at the site;
9. Subject to the findings of a site specific flood risk assessment the development shall deliver strategic measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods (SUDS) to attenuate and discharge surface water run-off at least at a rate no greater than if the site were undeveloped and to reduce existing downstream risk. Regard shall be had to



the phased delivery of flood mitigation and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) in accordance with the phasing of the development to ensure adequate measures to mitigate flood risk (from all sources) are provided throughout the lifetime of the development. The detailed designs of sustainable drainage systems of maximise biodiversity enhancement, mitigation of visual landscape impacts, maintenance and safety, when considering their location and relationship to neighbouring uses;

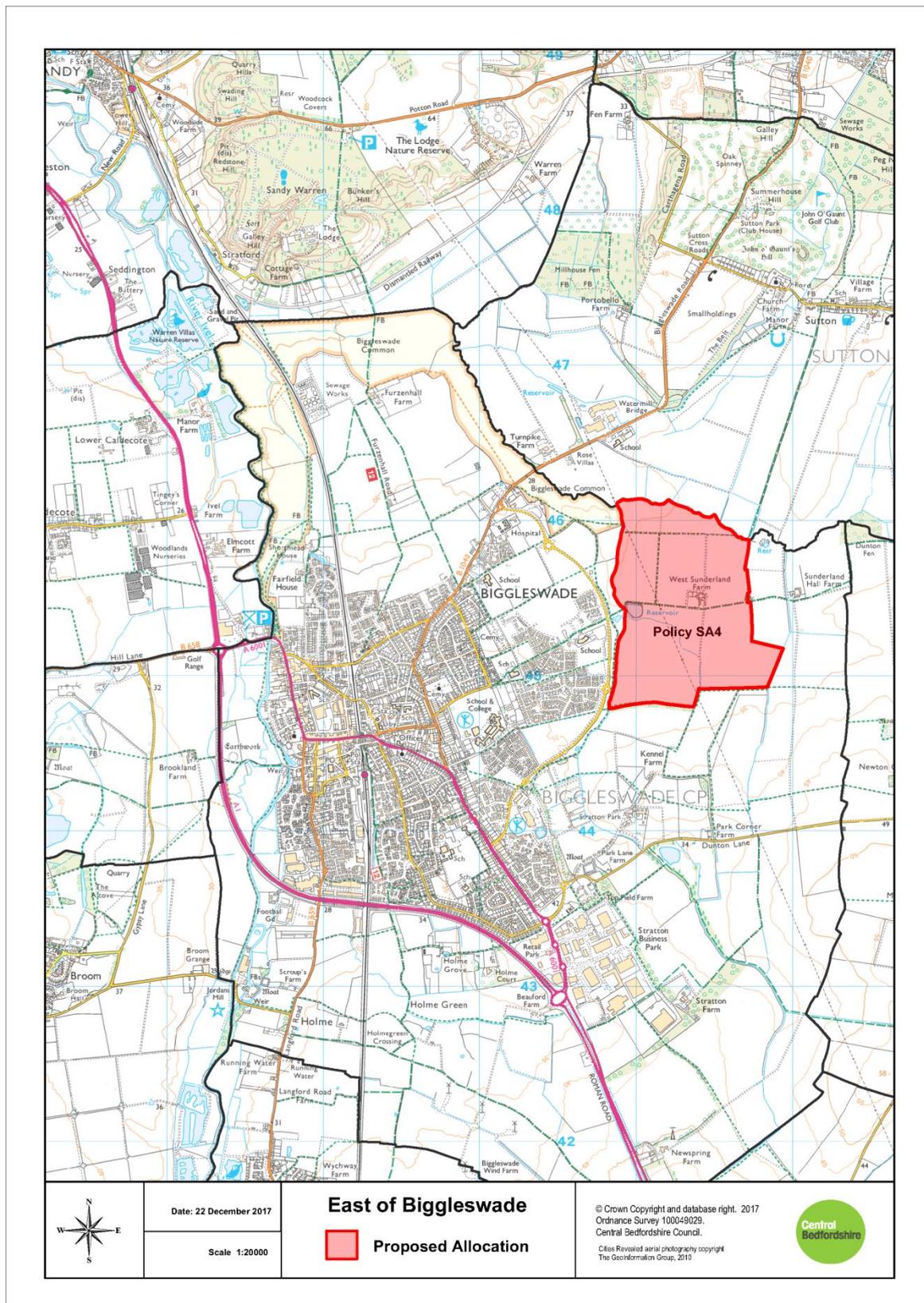
10. The development will Integrate and connect to existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside and neighbouring settlements. The development shall include pedestrian and cycleway connections to Biggleswade town centre including any highway crossings;
11. The development will be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure and community facilities including the delivery of a comprehensive scheme of highway improvement works required to mitigate impacts on road and/or junction capacities;
12. The development will provide other supporting transport infrastructure, including proposals to mitigate the impact of traffic associated with the development, including providing for efficient public transport routes and contribution towards public transport services through the development that link with key destinations including Biggleswade Train Station and Biggleswade town centre;
13. Foul drainage from the development will be connected to the public sewerage network. The development shall demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in water recycling centre (sewage treatment works) and the foul sewerage network to serve the proposed development and that it will not have an adverse impact on surface or ground water in terms of quality and quantity. Any application for planning permission shall detail any infrastructure upgrades where required and any necessary phasing arrangements as agreed by the relevant Water and Sewerage Company;
14. The development will provide appropriate landscaping measures to create a sense of place, provide a net gain for biodiversity and shall mitigate the potential impact of development on the wider landscape.
15. Incorporate measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use and include renewable energy technologies.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035

## Pre-submission January 2018

### SA4: East of Biggleswade



**Policy SE3: A1 Corridor – Holme Farm, Biggleswade**

Holme Farm as identified on the Proposal Map, will:

- provide for up to 60 hectares of new employment land comprising:
- 8ha for a petrol filling station and service uses; and
- up to 52ha of B2 and B8 floorspace including strategic warehousing;
- deliver necessary improvements to the A1 and A1 round about providing appropriate access to the site;
- provide appropriate landscaping and contribute to the GI network, specifically in relation to the Biggleswade Green Wheel; and
- provide opportunities for sustainable transport links to be determined through a Transport Assessment.

Development will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and following the successful preparation of a Master plan which provides an exemplar design response to this unique gateway location.

Development of the site should not prejudice the operation of the neighbouring wind farm.

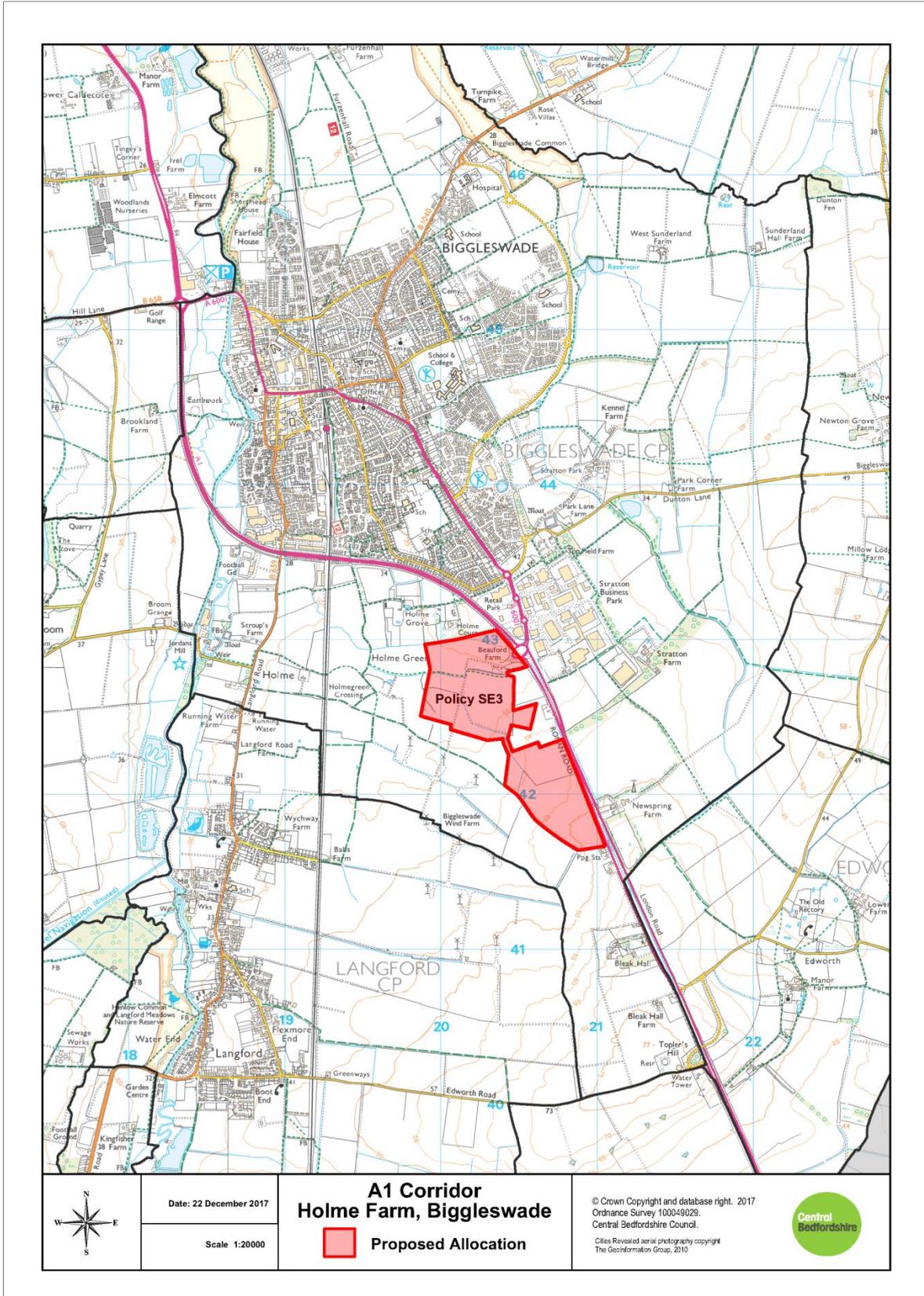
Mature woodland located within the site will be protected from development and enhanced by appropriate, sensitive landscaping.

An intrusive field evaluation and appropriate mitigation strategy for multi-period archaeological remains will be provided before commencement of development in line with guidance contained within the NPPF.



# Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2035 Pre-submission January 2018

## SE3: A1 Corridor Holme Farm, Biggleswade



**Policy SE4: Former RAF Base, Henlow**

The former RAF Base at Henlow site as identified on the Proposal Map, will deliver a mixed use redevelopment that will:

- provide for up to 130 hectares of developable land comprising:
  - up to 85 hectares of specialist high-technology, science, research and development uses to the north of the A659 Hitchin Road; and
  - a mixed use visitor-economy and residential scheme of up to 45 hectares to the south of the A659 Hitchin Road.
- deliver necessary improvements to the road network maintaining suitable access to the site; and
- provide opportunities for sustainable transport links to be determined through a Transport Assessment.

Due to the nature of neighbouring land uses, all development proposals for this site must have regard to the prevention of major accidents and limiting their consequences, including the increase of vehicular movements on the A600. Development must be designed to maintain appropriate distances between hazardous establishments and populations for the long term to reduce risk.

Development will be permitted in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan and following the successful preparation of a Masterplan which provides an exemplar design response to this unique location.

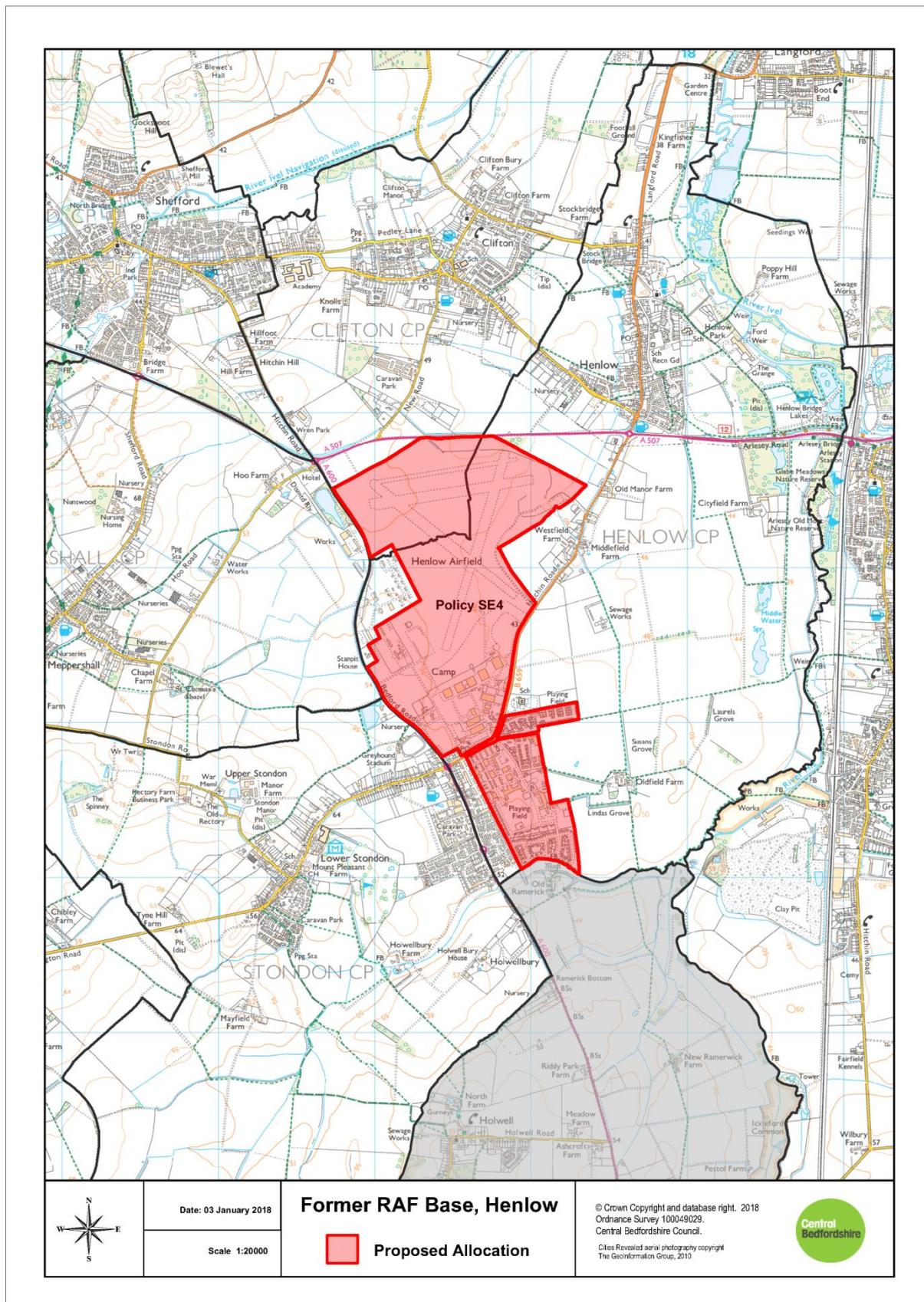
The quantum of homes to be delivered within the residential element to the south of the A659 Hitchin Road and the redevelopment of existing properties (approximately 500 dwellings in total) will be determined through master planning. These dwellings would be considered as windfall and are therefore excluded from the plan housing target.

Development proposals must ensure the protection of all listed buildings, their setting and important views within the site and take full account of the Safeguarded Zone and transport restrictions associated with established neighbouring uses.



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## SE4: Former RAF Base, Henlow



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018

## 7.8 Small and Medium Allocations

### **Policy HA1: Small and Medium Allocations**

Sites identified on the proposals maps at Appendix 6 and listed in the table below are allocated for residential development.

In addition to the general policy requirements of this Local Plan, development of these sites must take full account of the site specific issues which are identified and set out on a site by site basis where relevant.

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx Density	Approx Capacity	Site Area (HA)	Additional Policy Requirements (where applicable)
HAS01	Land adjoining Lewis Lane	A1 Corridor	Arlesey	30	67	2.81	
HAS02	Land rear of 214-216 High Street	A1 Corridor	Arlesey	30	20	0.61	
HAS03	Land off Meadow View	East - West	Aspley Guise	30	37	1.59	Noise mitigation required for railway
HAS04	Land at Luton Road	South	Barton le Clay	40	168	7.02	
HAS05	Land East of Barton le Clay	South	Barton le Clay	30	498	27.80	Development Brief required (see HQ9)
HAS06	Land North of Biggleswade	A1 Corridor	Biggleswade	40	401	16.71	Will need to implement landscape buffering and GI enhancements north of the site, to protect landscape and setting of Biggleswade Common and create a softer edge to the development. Development Brief required (see HQ9)
HAS07	Caddington Park	South	Caddington	50	66	1.66	
HAS08	Land on the South East of Greenway	Central	Campton & Chicksands	30	66	0.47	Will need to provide landscaping along eastern boundary of the site, appropriate screening is needed to protect from elevated views on the site
HAS09	Chapel Farm	South	Chalton	30	54	3.18	



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Allocation Ref	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx Density	Approx Capacity	Site Area (HA)	Additional Policy Requirements (where applicable)
HAS10	New Road	Central	Clifton	40	54	2.25	Would need to safeguard existing boundary enclosure and trees with new planting and landscaping
HAS11	East End Farm	East - West	Cranfield	30	48	2.67	Site design to incorporate buffering and enhance existing woodland particularly to the eastern edge and along the existing rights of way
HAS12	Land West of Lodge Road	East - West	Cranfield	From Planning App.	15	0.59	Existing Tree Preservation Orders should be protected
HAS13	Land North of Greenfield Way	A1 Corridor	Dunton	30	37	2.07	Site design to incorporate landscape buffering and green infrastructure on western boundary
HAS14	Land off Eaton Park	South	Eaton Bray	30	49	2.69	
HAS15	Green Lane	A1 Corridor	Everton	30	23	0.96	Site design to ensure that existing boundary features to be conserved
HAS16	Land at Manor Farm	A1 Corridor	Everton	30	19	0.81	
HAS17	Steppingley Road	South	Flitwick	40	216	9.00	Site design to incorporate landscape buffering to Flitwick Wood and the views towards Steppingley. Woodland planting required to strengthen the field boundary to the south-west. Mitigation required due to archaeology from Roman period
HAS18	Site adjacent to Flitwick Garden Allotments, off Steppingley Road	South	Flitwick	40	35	1.08	Explore opportunities for access through adjoining committed developments to achieve better quality design
HAS19	Land at Upper Gravenhurst	Central	Gravenhurst	30	39	1.62	



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Allocation Ref	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx Density	Approx Capacity	Site Area (HA)	Additional Policy Requirements (where applicable)
HAS20	Land West of Midland Mainline Railway	South	Harlington	40	435	18.14	Landscape buffering will be required to protect open views. Noise mitigation required for railway. Development Brief required (see HQ9)
HAS21	Land West of Sundon Road	South	Harlington	40	154	6.39	Design must be complimentary to the AONB to the south and noise mitigation will be required for the railway. Existing hedgerows to be retained
HAS22	Land South of Northwood End Road	Central	Haynes	30	29	1.21	Landscape mitigation required to the south and west and boundary hedgerows to the south to be strengthened. Must conserve the setting of Hill Farm and Greensand Ridge path
HAS23	Land adjacent to Derwent Lower School	Central	Henlow	30	101	5.59	Noise mitigation will be required for the road. Landscape buffering required to the wider rural landscape
HAS24	Land to the South West of the A5	South	Hockliffe	30	77	4.25	Noise mitigation will be required for nearby road. Landscaping will need to consider the setting of nearby listed buildings
HAS25	Land at Leighton Road	South	Hockliffe	30	23	0.99	Landscaping will need to screen and have regard to the nearby scheduled monument to the north
HAS26	A5 Watling Street	South	Hockliffe	30	41	1.74	Landscaping will need to be sensitive to nearby listed buildings and the setting of the Scheduled Monument
HAS27	Wixams Southern Extension	East - West	Houghton Conquest	From Planning App.	650	68.00	Development Brief required (see HQ9)
HAS28	Bidwell Gospel Hall (Dell Mount)	South	Houghton Regis	40	25	0.78	
HAS29	Land East of Houghton Regis	South	Houghton Regis	40	355	14.80	Development Brief required (see HQ9)



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Allocation Ref	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx Density	Approx Capacity	Site Area (HA)	Additional Policy Requirements (where applicable)
HAS30	Thistle Hill Field	A1 Corridor	Langford	30	70	3.94	
HAS31	Bridge Field	A1 Corridor	Langford	30	67	3.70	Design will need to ensure that the Right of Way to the west of site is enhanced. Landscaping and noise mitigation will be required for the railway edge
HAS32	Northern Chamberlains Barn	South	Leighton Linslade	40	175	16.00	
HAS33	Land North of Soulbury Road	South	Leighton Linslade	40	55	1.73	
HAS34	The Chiltern-Hunt Land	South	Leighton Linslade	40	138	5.74	
HAS35	Wood End Lane	East - West	Marston Moretaine	30	63	3.51	
HAS36	Land North of Clophill Road	Central	Maulden	30	45	0.74	Protection and enhancement of Maulden Wood required, including buffering
HAS37	Land between 129A & 131 Clophill Road	Central	Maulden	From Planning App.	21	0.70	Protection and enhancement of Maulden Wood required, including buffering
HAS38	Land fronting Silsoe Road	Central	Maulden	30	39	2.37	
HAS39	Land at 32 Shefford Road (Bandland Nursery)	Central	Meppershall	30	55	3.04	
HAS40	Land adj to Park Road /Bedford Road (A603)	Central	Moggerhanger	30	30	1.45	
HAS41	Land at Thorncote Road (Close Field)	Central	Northill	30	21	0.86	
HAS42	The Pound, Upper Caldecote	Central	Northill	30	33	1.74	



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Allocation Ref	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx Density	Approx Capacity	Site Area (HA)	Additional Policy Requirements (where applicable)
HAS43	One Acre Field, Sandy Road	A1 Corridor	Potton	30	12	0.44	
HAS44	Line Field	Central	Shefford	30	72	9.20	
HAS45	Land South and East of High Road	Central	Shillington	30	42	2.33	Landscape buffering required on the southern boundary
HAS46	Land rear of Station Road (Lower Stondon Northern Expansion)	Central	Stondon	30	244	11.65	Landscape buffering required along the northern edge. Due to the nature of neighbouring land uses, all development proposals for this site must have regard to the prevention of major accidents and limiting their consequences, including the increase of vehicular movements on the A600.
HAS47	Land off The Pastures, Lower Stondon	Central	Stondon	30	33	1.37	Due to the nature of neighbouring land uses, all development proposals for this site must have regard to the prevention of major accidents and limiting their consequences, including the increase of vehicular movements on the A600.
HAS48	Land South of High Street	A1 Corridor	Sutton	30	37	2.04	Design will need to ensure that mature trees and hedges on site are preserved
HAS49	Land East of Leighton Road	South	Toddington	40	92	3.85	Design expected to include landscape buffering and green infrastructure to the south-western boundary
HAS50	Alma Farm	South	Toddington	40	159	6.61	Design should seek opportunities for Green Infrastructure along western boundary



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Allocation Ref	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx Density	Approx Capacity	Site Area (HA)	Additional Policy Requirements (where applicable)
HAS51	Land off Flitwick Road	South	Westoning	30	135	7.51	Noise mitigation required for the railway and appropriate landscaping required to north of the site to protect views to Flitwick
HAS52	West View Farm	South	Westoning	30	85	4.74	Noise mitigation required for the railway



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### 7.9 Identified Locations for Future Growth

- 7.9.1 Identified land for Future Growth for the purposes of this Local Plan comprises areas which may be required to serve development needs in the longer term beyond the plan period or potentially at an earlier point in time if the wider context changes. These areas have a basic technical capacity but no housing numbers have been attributed to them and therefore they do not contribute to the Plan target of 39,350 as a 'Broad Location' would<sup>7</sup>. These should also not be confused with the definition applied to areas of Green Belt land as in this instance it must be demonstrated that the land is genuinely capable of development when needed.
- 7.9.2 Essentially there is currently insufficient technical evidence and/or supporting infrastructure to support allocation, but there is significant potential based on their location and Central Bedfordshire's position right at the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor.
- 7.9.3 The identified land are as respond to proposals for future strategic infrastructure delivery; namely the realignment of the A1 or significant improvements through Central Bedfordshire, East West Rail, the Expressway and the expansion of Luton Airport. In each case these are either expected to enable development or in other cases they may mean that development is not feasible in a location due to the sterilisation of the land by the route of the infrastructure. All locations however based on initial technical assessment have potential for future development.
- 7.9.4 This land is not allocated for development at the present time, but subject to further assessment could fulfil its purpose of meeting possible longer-term development needs. Development which would prejudice later comprehensive development will be discouraged, though temporary developments which may assist in ensuring that the land is properly looked after may be acceptable. In addition valuable landscape and wildlife features and existing access for recreation should be protected and enhanced as appropriate.
- 7.9.5 It is expected that planning permission for the permanent development of identified land will only be granted following the partial Local Plan Review as referenced in section 5.
- 7.9.6 The Identified Areas for Future Development are as follows and are shown on the maps at Appendix 7:
- Land West of Luton
  - North, South and East of Tempsford (east of the A1)
  - Land East of Biggleswade (east of the allocated new village, south of Sutton and west of Dunton)
  - Aspley Guise (North of the Railway Line)

<sup>7</sup> Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment National Planning Practice Guidance



### 7.10 Development of a Strategic Commitment

#### Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation

- 7.10.1 Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation is a major urban extension on the northern side of Houghton Regis between the A5 and the M1 junction 11a. The Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation (SA), which sits between the M1 and the A5, will be delivered across two sites although forming a whole. Site 1 comprises the eastern side of the strategic allocation extending from the M1 to the A5120, whilst Site 2 is located to the east of the A5 to the A5120. The A5-M1 strategic link road provides the northern boundary for both sites.
- 7.10.2 A figure of around 7,000 new homes could be accommodated; approximately 4,600-5,600 on site 1 and approximately 1,500-1,850 on site 2. Similarly around 40 hectares of employment is planned for, 32ha of which is on site 1 and 8ha is on site 2.
- 7.10.3 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 Central Bedfordshire Council Granted Outline Planning Permission for Site 1. This was comprised of: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations.
- 7.10.4 On the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 Central Bedfordshire Council Granted a Hybrid Planning Permission for Site 2 with details relating to the main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage and also comprises outline permission for: up to 1,850 dwellings (Use Class C3); 2FE Primary School (D1); employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 and B8); local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5); and community/leisure uses (D1 and D2); layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms; natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks.
- 7.10.5 The above developments are supported by the recently completed new A5-M1 strategic link road and the Woodside link road. Sufficient land has been identified for removal from the Green Belt in order to accommodate the full development potential of the SA; the new Green Belt boundary is aligned with the new A5-M1 link road.
- 7.10.6 The delivery of the SA over two sites will allow a more detailed approach to phasing to be undertaken. The two sites will be fully integrated with each other as well as with the urban area of Houghton Regis so as to provide truly sustainable development. The timely delivery of supporting infrastructure within the strategic



allocation will complement and enhance existing services and facilities as well as assisting in the regeneration of the existing urban area.

- 7.10.7 A Framework Plan has been prepared for the SA encompassing both Sites 1 and 2. The purpose of the Framework Plan is to provide a broad structure of the essential supporting elements of the proposed Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation. This includes an identification of areas for residential development, employment land and associated infrastructure. The specific location of infrastructure and land uses will be developed through the production of site and area masterplans, alongside planning applications.



**Policy SA5: Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation**

All masterplans and planning applications within this site allocation area, shall conform to the broad principles outlined within the Council's adopted Framework Plan for North Houghton Regis or the latest adopted amendment to that Framework Plan.

**Site 1** comprises the area between the A5120 and the M1. Masterplans and planning applications will deliver a strategic allocation that:

- provides a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable community. These will include:
  - approximately 5,150 homes;
  - up to 30% affordable homes, subject to viability testing;
  - 32 hectares of new employment land in a combination of B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes;
  - commercial facilities, including local centres;
  - retail units, a foodstore; and a public house;
  - provision for educational facilities;
  - retirement accommodation;
  - community and health centre; and
  - open space and green infrastructure.
- provides opportunities to assist in the regeneration of Houghton Regis through the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure that complements and supports existing facilities;
- provides the opportunity for long term integration with Site 2 to facilitate the delivery of the wider strategic allocation for this area;
- provides for efficient public transport routes that link with Houghton Regis town centre and the guided busway as well as dedicated and safe pedestrian and cycle links from the new and existing neighbourhoods to local centres, employment opportunities and social and community infrastructure;
- provides a green infrastructure network that links, preserves and enhances biodiversity, landscape, heritage, access and open space features within the existing urban area, the strategic allocation and the wider countryside;
- designed to mitigate any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site. This is required in order to ensure that the public benefits of the development outweigh the any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets affected by the development;
- designed to preserve all designated heritage assets within the site and shall seek to mitigate the degree of harm to the significance of all designated



heritage assets and shall deliver where necessary, relevant and reasonable measures to preserve those assets and their settings for future generations, to ensure the public benefits of development would outweigh the degree of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.

- seeks to reduce flood risk along the Houghton Brook and further downstream in Luton by engaging with the EA to explore practical opportunities that manage flood risk and minimise surface water runoff; and
- incorporates measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use, mitigates for loss of carbon in soils and includes renewable energy technologies.

**Site 2** comprises the area from the A5 to the A5120, and extends northwards to the proposed A5-M1 Link Road. The masterplan will deliver a strategic allocation that:

- provides a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable community. These uses will include
  - approximately 1,500-1,850 homes;
  - up to 30% affordable homes, subject to viability testing, to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire and Luton residents;
  - 8 hectares of new employment land in a combination of B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes within the plan period;
  - commercial facilities including a local centre;
  - provision for education facilities including sports and playing fields;
  - retirement accommodation;
  - community and health centres; and
  - open space and green infrastructure.
- provides opportunities to assist in the regeneration of Houghton Regis, through the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure that complement and supports existing facilities;
- integrates with Site 1 to facilitate the delivery of the wider strategic allocation for this area;
- provides for efficient public transport routes that link with Houghton Regis town centre and the guided busway as well as dedicated and safe pedestrian and cycle links from the new and existing neighbourhoods to local centres, employment opportunities and community facilities;
- designed to mitigate any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site. This is required in order to ensure that the public benefits of the development outweigh the any harm caused to the significance of all designated heritage assets affected by the development;
- designed to preserve all designated heritage assets within the site and shall seek to mitigate the degree of harm to the significance of all designated heritage assets and shall deliver where necessary, relevant



and reasonable measures to preserve those assets and their settings for future generations, to ensure the public benefits of development would outweigh the degree of harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.

- incorporates measures for the management of multimodal access both within, to and from the site including the mechanisms for their future development and funding through the development of travel plans;
- provides a green infrastructure network that links, protects and enhances the existing urban area, the strategic allocation and the wider countryside.; in addition contributions will be required to mitigate the impact of development on Houghton Regis Marl Lakes SSSI and Chalk Pit CWS and ensure its long term protection and an access strategy that includes the Houghton Regis Marl Lakes SSSI and Chalk Pit CWS. This access strategy and the GI network will be informed by a detailed ecological assessment which will determine any potential impacts as a result of increased access to the site; in addition contributions will be required to mitigate identified impacts of development on the whole site and ensure its long term protection;
- seeks to reduce flood risk along the Ouzel Brook by engaging with the Environment Agency to explore practical opportunities that manage flood risk and minimise surface water runoff; and
- incorporates measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use and includes renewable energy technologies.

Masterplans and planning applications will confirm the timing and phasing of the development, taking account of the capacity of both the current and proposed infrastructure.

The Green Belt boundary follows the alignment of the A5-M1 Link Road.

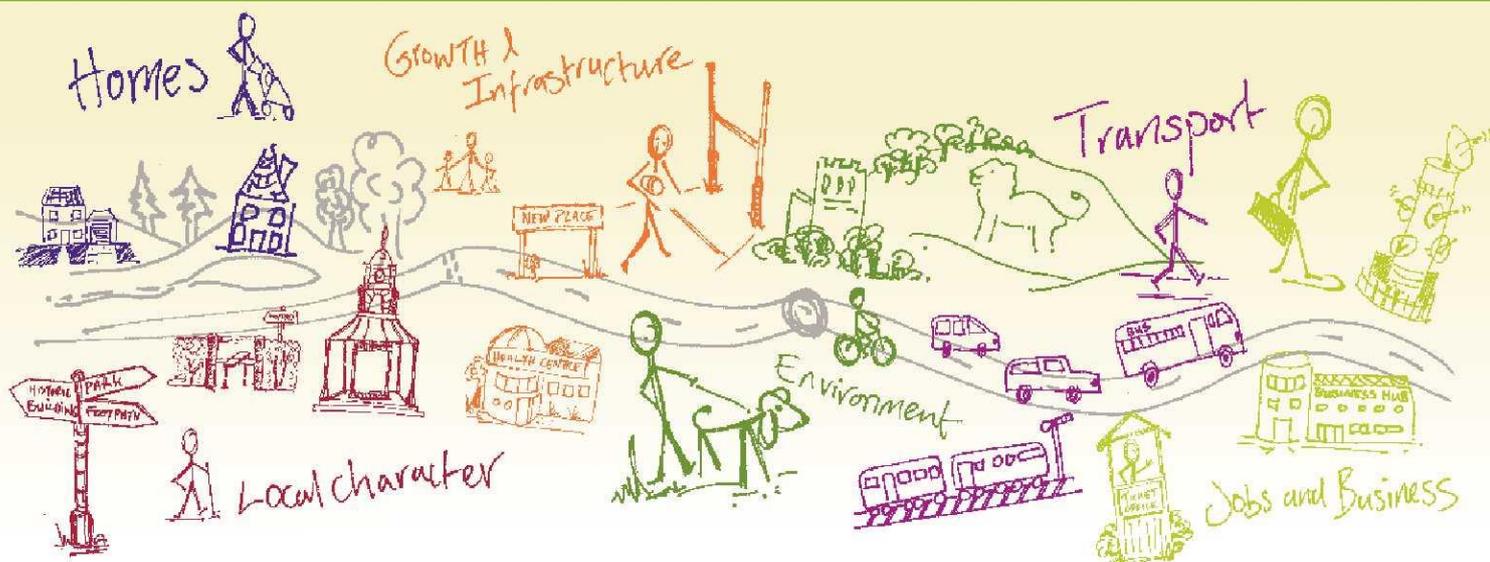
Any planning applications for new residential or employment developments on any other land within the Houghton Regis Framework Plan Area shall be considered on a case by case basis and will be required to be accompanied by a comprehensive master plan which demonstrates an integrated approach to development within the wider context of the site, and shall only be approved planning permission if they are considered to be on balance sustainable as a whole. Other relevant policies within the Local Plan will apply.



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# Shaping where you live 2035



## Green Belt, Coalescence & Settlements

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



## **8 Green Belt, Coalescence and Settlements**

### **8.1 Introduction to Green Belt**

- 8.1.1 Formally adopted in 1980, the Central Bedfordshire Green Belt extends across much of the south and covers approximately 40% of the total Plan area. It continues to serve its purposes very well, safeguarding the identity of Central Bedfordshire by maintaining the openness of the countryside, preventing the coalescence of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard, Ampthill and Flitwick, and protecting the dispersed settlement pattern characteristic of the area. The Council is committed to ensuring that the Green Belt continues to perform well into the future, continuing to prevent the towns from coalescing and retaining its key characteristics of openness and permanence.



### **8.2 Green Belt and Sustainable Development – Exceptional Circumstances for small scale release of Green Belt Land**

- 8.2.1 Nonetheless, Green Belt must be considered in the context of the wider objectives of the Local Plan and the pursuit of sustainable development. The overall purpose of this Local Plan is to meet Central Bedfordshire’s objectively assessed development needs sustainably.
- 8.2.2 The evidence underlying the Local Plan highlights the clear need for a substantial growth in housing within the Plan area. As discussed elsewhere in this Plan the Council has also made an allowance for unmet need arising from the Luton Borough Council administrative area. In assessing spatial options to meet these development needs the Council has been guided by the principle of creating ‘sustainable patterns of development’ as set out in NPPF paragraph 84, and has considered a range of alternatives which do not impinge upon Green Belt. This has included consideration of whether development could be met in full beyond



the Green Belt; within existing urban areas; and on brownfield sites or underused public sector land etc.

- 8.2.3 However, evidence produced in support of this Plan, notably the Growth Options Studies, Urban Capacity Study, the Sustainability Appraisal, the Site Assessment Technical Document and brownfield register, suggests that whilst some development can take place beyond the Green Belt and within the existing urban areas, the total amount of land available is well below that needed to meet the requirements of the Plan.
- 8.2.4 Evidence produced in support of this Plan demonstrates that locating all growth beyond the Green Belt would have serious consequences for the sustainability of settlements both within and outside the Green Belt. For example overdevelopment in the north of Central Bedfordshire threatens the character and identity of existing communities, and risks putting excessive pressure on existing services and facilities, and harming habitats and landscape which surround them. In addition large areas of north Central Bedfordshire lack transport infrastructure and there is limited east/west connectivity and sustainable transport. Conversely our Green Belt settlements have seen very limited development in the past due to the presence of Green Belt, and it is considered that some growth is needed here in order to maintain their sustainability and ensure continued provision of services and facilities.
- 8.2.5 This Plan commits to delivering Luton's current identified 'unmet need' within Central Bedfordshire as close to the Luton conurbation as possible. Luton cannot accommodate all of its own housing need within its administrative area because its boundaries are tightly drawn and so there are limited opportunities for outward expansion. Urban capacity evidence has demonstrated that they have explored opportunities for growth within the built up area too. Consultation and evidence prepared to inform this Local Plan told us that growth in the south was supported because of the proximity to key services in the urban centres of Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Luton. Evidence also supports a more modest Green Belt release around Large Villages that are inset in the Green Belt, have a good level of local services and where sites are available that did not impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 8.2.6 Whilst we have considered ways in which we can maximise the sustainable development sites beyond the Green Belt, including through site layout and optimising densities, nevertheless, given the scale of growth it will be necessary for some limited release of land from the Green Belt in order to ensure the delivery of balanced sustainable growth across Central Bedfordshire as a whole. These are the 'exceptional circumstances' which the Council believe justify the limited release of some Green Belt land.

### 8.3 Green Belt release

- 8.3.1 In order to accommodate the growth required up to 2035 in a sustainable and controlled manner, proposed allocations in Green Belt have been identified as listed in Policy SP1 and policy HA1. These are comprised of the North of Luton strategic allocation (c. 4,000 homes, and 20ha employment land) and a number of



small and medium allocations to our inset Green Belt towns and villages (Policy HA1).

- 8.3.2 These villages are well-placed to make a contribution to meeting wider housing need and, in many cases; development could help to improve the sustainability of the villages. Green Belt release has been guided by the principle of creating 'sustainable patterns of development' as per NPPF paragraph 84. This means that we have sought to identify the most sustainable locations for development, having regard to the overall integrity and performance of the wider Green Belt<sup>8</sup>.
- 8.3.3 Green Belt boundaries will be redrawn around these allocated sites, and other committed sites; Land North of Houghton Regis and Land East of Leighton Buzzard, and that land formally released from Green Belt. The Council is confident that these new boundaries will be capable of enduring beyond the Plan period.

### 8.4 Improvements to Green Belt land

- 8.4.1 In addition to its role in preventing coalescence and urban sprawl etc., Green Belt land can also have a positive role to play in terms of environmental quality and access. It may, for example, provide access to open countryside and opportunities for quiet recreation and sport. Green Belt can also help retain valued landscapes and protect biodiversity and it provides many possibilities to protect and improve green infrastructure, especially in urban fringe locations. The Council is committed to improving the environmental quality and accessibility of its Green Belt, and will favourably consider development proposals that will actively improve the character and quality of our Green Belt.

### 8.5 Development in the Green Belt

- 8.5.1 Where Green Belt is retained, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development<sup>9</sup> is harmful to the Green Belt by definition and should not be granted consent except in very special circumstances. Within the Green Belt (including those settlements washed over by Green Belt) the need to protect the character and openness of the landscape is a primary consideration and any development will be expected to maintain the character of the Green Belt and not undermine the reasons for including land within it. High standards of design and careful siting will therefore be essential for any development proposals. Planning permission for inappropriate development will only be granted where demonstrable, very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm can be demonstrated.

<sup>8</sup> Informed by the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Green Belt Stage 1 and 2 Study (November 2016); and Central Bedfordshire Stage 3 Green Belt Study (December 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Exceptions to the presumption are set out in NPPF paragraph 89 which includes the redevelopment of brownfield land.



8.5.2 Planning permission for inappropriate development will only be granted where demonstrable, very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt can be demonstrated as part of the application.

### 8.6 Development within Green Belt Settlements

8.6.1 Green Belt settlements fall into two categories:

- 'inset'; and
- 'washed over'

8.6.2 'Inset' Green Belt settlements are excluded from the Green Belt and are defined by a settlement envelope. This means that within these settlements normal planning policy applies. The remaining settlements are 'washed over' by the Green Belt designation meaning that only the replacement of buildings and limited infill development will be allowed.



8.6.3 Infill development can generally be defined as small-scale development for up to two dwellings in a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage, utilising a plot in a manner which should continue to complement the surrounding pattern and grain of development. There should be no adverse impact on the setting of the site, the character of the area, and surrounding properties and uses. High quality design principles will be applied and further detail is given in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

8.6.4 Infill development of more than 2 dwellings will be acceptable only in circumstances where the developer can clearly demonstrate that such a development would be wholly in accordance with the surrounding character, pattern and grain of development, having regard to plot size, frontage length and dwelling size; and that the development would have an acceptable impact on the open character of the site and its immediate surroundings and the village within which the site is located.

### 8.7 Affordable housing in the Green Belt

8.7.1 Within the Green Belt, as elsewhere in the area, there is a shortage of affordable housing. This can have a disproportionate effect on rural communities as many young people and families cannot afford to stay because decent homes are either too expensive or simply unavailable. This, in turn, can lead to a fall-off in demand for local services such as schools and public transport and the disappearance of local jobs, shops and public houses. Ultimately, some places risk becoming dormitory settlements with very little sense of community life. The supply of affordable housing is therefore seen as important, not just in order to provide homes for those in greatest need, but to help keep balanced communities. There



is a need for affordable housing in the Green Belt settlements and the Council will consider favourably the provision of affordable housing on rural exception sites in the Green Belt.

### **Policy SP4: Development in the Green Belt**

The Green Belt is shown on the policy maps and generally covers the southern and western parts of Central Bedfordshire, outside the main settlements.

The Council will work proactively with developers, and landowners to enhance the beneficial uses of the Green Belt.

Within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with government guidance contained in the NPPF and NPPG.

Replacement of buildings will be permitted provided that the building is in the same use, is on the same / similar footprint to the original building, not materially larger, and does not have a greater impact on the openness and rural character of the Green Belt than the existing development.

Within this Plan's washed-over Green Belt settlements applicants will be expected to pay particular attention to the quality and design of development proposed, to ensure that development respects and is sympathetic to the character and openness of the settlement and its surroundings.

The redevelopment of brownfield sites within the Green Belt will be acceptable as long as the redevelopment would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes for including land within the Green Belt than the existing development.

## **8.8 Coalescence**

8.8.1 The Council seeks to preserve the separate identities of neighbouring settlements or communities. The Council will resist development that would compromise the open character of the countryside between settlements, especially where the gaps between them are already relatively limited. It is acknowledged that in some cases, whilst neighbouring communities may still have separate characters or identities, the built-up areas of those settlements are already linked as in the case of Clifton and Shefford. The Council will resist new development that would result in further growth in these areas that would harm the separate character or identity of the communities.

8.8.2 In addition to the general control of coalescence, there is a need for more specific protection in locations that are or will be experiencing the strongest pressures for development. These pressures will be evident in around certain of the strategic growth locations identified in this plan, particularly potential new settlement proposals on the A1 corridor and in the Marston Vale.



### 8.9 Important Countryside Gaps

- 8.9.1 A number of relatively sensitive and narrow gaps of undeveloped countryside outside of Green Belt, where there is a risk of coalescence as a result of development pressure have been identified (see Appendix 5 for locations). It is considered essential that the open nature of countryside in these gaps is maintained in order to retain the character of these settlements and prevent the potential loss of their individual identity.
- 8.9.2 Whilst other policies in this Local Plan seek to prevent inappropriate development in the countryside generally and in Green Belt, it is considered that in some instances, incremental built development, which may otherwise be appropriate to a rural area, would cause the separate identity of settlements to be eroded or lost entirely. Four categories of Important Countryside Gap have therefore been determined. These are:
- Land where development has the potential to cause coalescence between existing settlements;
  - Land where development has the potential to cause the coalescence of 'ends' within a settlement;
  - Land where development has the potential to cause coalescence between existing settlements and the Identified Locations for Future Growth (see section 7.9);
  - Land where development has the potential to cause coalescence as a result of strategic cross boundary proposals.
- 8.9.3 Important Countryside Gaps have not been identified in relation to the Strategic Allocations because the potential for coalescence will be mitigated through the Masterplanning process.
- 8.9.4 Within the areas defined as 'Important Countryside Gaps' or where there is a risk of coalescence, the Council will apply the following policy.

#### **Policy SP5: Preventing Coalescence and Important Countryside Gaps**

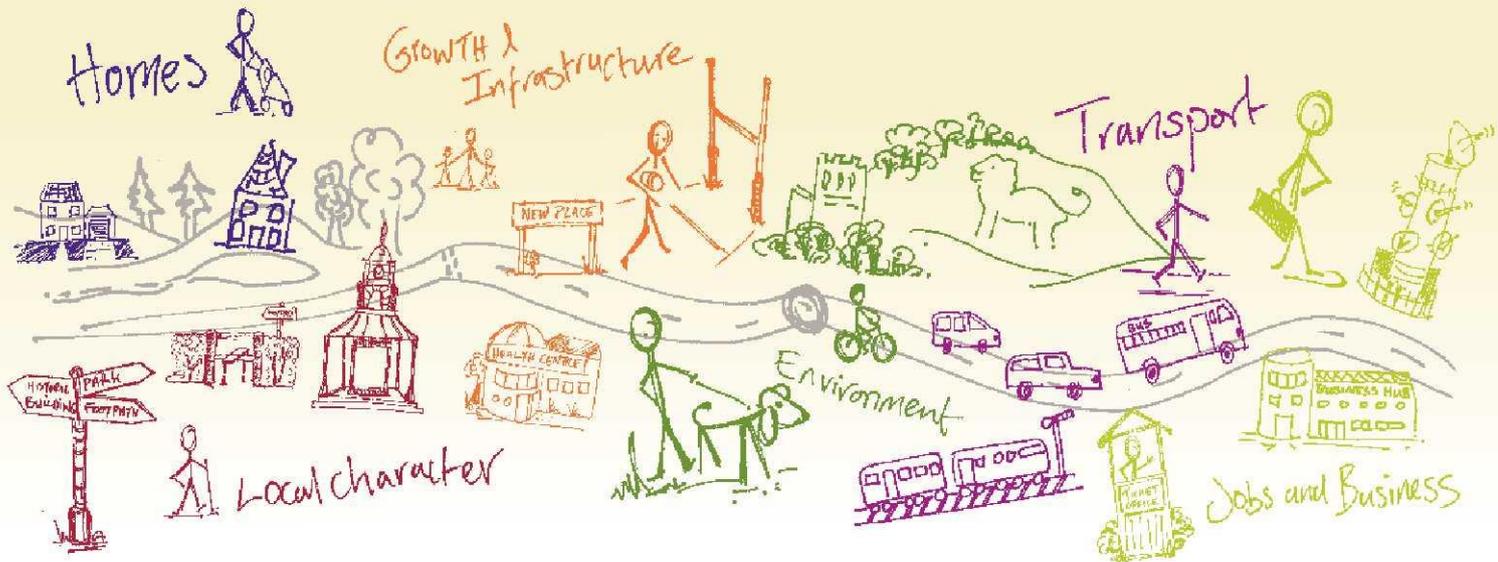
New development in the countryside must avoid reducing open land that contributes to the form and character of existing settlements.

In considering applications for development the Council will have regard to maintaining the individual identity of towns and villages and will resist any extensions to built-up areas that might lead to coalescence between settlements.

Within the areas defined as Important Countryside Gaps permission will be refused for unallocated development that would promote the visual or physical coalescence of nearby settlements.



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Settlement Envelopes & Hierarchy

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



### 9 Settlement Envelopes and Settlement Hierarchy

#### 9.1 Settlement Hierarchy

- 9.1.1 To help inform where new development should take place, it is helpful to set out a hierarchy of settlements. The hierarchy takes account of local sustainability credentials such as access to a variety of services and facilities (including schools, shops and public transport links) and is based on existing provision.
- 9.1.2 The hierarchy, set out on the following page helps to provide a framework for considering the levels of new development to be directed through the Development Management process. It will also help to set the context for decisions on individual planning applications, and should be read in conjunction with Policy SP7: Development within Settlement Envelopes.
- 9.1.3 There are four tiers included in the Settlement Hierarchy - Major Service Centres, Minor Service Centres, Large Villages, and Small Villages. The requirements for these tiers are set out in Policy SP7. A number of settlements within the hierarchy lie within the South Bedfordshire Green Belt. Settlements that are categorised within the hierarchy as being Major and Minor Service Centres or Large Villages have all been inset from the Green Belt where appropriate. The exceptions to this are Woburn and Aspley Guise which are washed over by the Green Belt and have defined infill only boundaries. A number of settlements that are categorised as being Small Villages have infill boundaries wherein some very limited development maybe acceptable.



**Settlement Hierarchy**

**Major Service Centres**

Major service centres provide a focus for employment, shopping and community facilities for the local community and surrounding rural communities.

- |             |                   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Ampthill*   | Houghton Regis*   |
| Biggleswade | Leighton Linlade* |
| Dunstable*  | Sandy             |
| Flitwick*   | Wixams            |

**Minor Service Centres**

Minor service centres are larger settlements with a good level of services, possibly including a school, doctor's surgery, a basic retail offer and frequent public transport links.

- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Arlesey         | Potton      |
| Barton le Clay* | Shefford    |
| Cranfield       | Stotfold    |
| Harlington*     | Toddington* |

**Large Villages**

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Aspley Guise (GB)                          | Langford          |
| Blunham                                    | Lower Stondon     |
| Caddington* (GB)                           | Marston Moretaine |
| Clifton                                    | Maulden           |
| Clophill (including Hall End Maulden)      | Shillington       |
| Eaton Bray* (GB)                           | Silsoe            |
| Fairfield                                  | Slip End* (GB)    |
|  | Totternhoe (GB)   |
| Haynes (main village)Heath and Reach* (GB) | Upper Caldecote   |
|  | Westoning* (GB)   |
| Henlow                                     | Woburn (GB)       |
| Hockliffe* (GB)                            |                   |
| Houghton Conquest Kensworth (GB)           |                   |



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### Small Villages

Aspley Heath (GB)	Old Warden
Billington (GB)	Pulloxhill
Brogborough	Ridgmont (GB)
Broom	Salford
Campton	Southill
Chalton (nr.Toddington) (GB)	Stanbridge (GB)
Dunton	Stanford
East Hyde (GB)	Steppingley (GB)
Eggington (GB)	Streatley (GB)
Eversholt (GB)	Studham (GB)
Everton	Sutton
Flitton, Greenfield and Wardhedges	Tebworth (GB)
Husborne Crawley (GB)	Tempsford (Church End)
Ickwell	Tilsworth (GB)
Lidlington	Upper Gravenhurst
Meppershall	Upper Sundon (GB)
Millbrook	Whipsnade (GB)
Milton Bryan (GB)	Wingfield (GB)
Moggerhanger	Wrestlingworth
Northill	

Settlements not identified within the hierarchy are, due to their small size and rural character, considered to be part of the countryside.

- Settlements followed by (GB) are settlements which are washed over by the Green Belt
- \* Settlements that are inset from the Green Belt

## 9.2 Settlement Envelopes

9.2.1 To define the boundaries between settlements and surrounding countryside, where appropriate the Council will define Settlement Envelopes. Settlement Envelopes provide a distinction between the settlements and the open countryside, and in so doing enable the clear, unambiguous and consistent application of policies in the management of development within and outside



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035**

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settlements. It also encourages the efficient use of land within our towns and villages, including the re-use of previously developed land.

- 9.2.2 It is not the purpose of Settlement Envelopes to identify land for development, this will be achieved via the allocation of sites in this Local Plan, nor are they an attempt to define the extent of a particular town or village community. Thus the Envelopes are unrelated to the administrative boundaries of town and parish, which serve this particular function.
- 9.2.3 To inform this work the Council is currently undertaking a review of its existing Settlement Envelopes to ensure that they reflect current uses on the ground. They were last updated for the Core Strategy and it is therefore recognised that a large number of changes will need to be made. The updated Settlement Envelopes will be illustrated on the Proposals Map that will accompany the pre-submission version of the Plan.
- 9.2.4 In some instances, where there is ambiguity in defining that boundary, the Envelope will be used to reflect the character of the predominant land use, using the most appropriate and clear physical features on the ground. That land use must be settlement related, for example residential development, domestic gardens, playing fields and community facilities; and not related to agriculture or considered to be part of the countryside.
- 9.2.5 There is a relationship between the settlement hierarchy and the application of Settlement Envelope policy, with the scale of development deemed appropriate being commensurate to the scale of settlement. Within small villages development will be limited to infill development, small-scale employment uses, and community facilities. Infill development can generally be defined as small-scale development for up to two dwellings in a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage, utilising a plot in a manner which should continue to complement the surrounding pattern and grain of development. There should be no adverse impact on the setting of the site, the character of the area, and surrounding properties and uses. High quality design principles will be applied and further detail is given in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.
- 9.2.6 Infill development of more than 2 dwellings will rarely be acceptable and only in circumstances where the developer can clearly demonstrate that such a development would be wholly in accordance with the surrounding character, pattern and grain of development, having regard to plot size, frontage length and dwelling size; and that the development would have an acceptable impact on the open character of the site and its immediate surroundings and the village within which the site is located.
- 9.2.7 This plan accommodates the needs of communities to grow and thrive through the allocation of appropriate and sustainable sites outside of the Settlement Envelopes. The Council will provide positive support to the development of these sites and other appropriate development in the countryside which seeks to improve the vitality of rural villages and improve the rural economy. Where development is proposed, the Council will seek to encourage careful consideration of the landscape character, the protection of important features in the landscape design and the existing accessibility and compatibility.



### **Policy SP7: Development within Settlement Envelopes**

Settlement Envelopes provide a distinction between settlements and the countryside.

Within the Settlement Envelopes of both Major and Minor Service Centres, the Council will support housing, employment and other settlement related development proportionate to the scale of the settlement, taking account of its role as a local service centre.

Within Settlement Envelopes of Large Villages, small-scale housing and employment uses, together with new retail, service, and community facilities to serve the village and its catchment will be supported.

Within Settlement Envelopes of Small Villages, development will be limited to infill development, small-scale employment uses, and community facilities.

Where an identified need exists for further community facilities (such as education, health, sports and recreation uses or mixed community.) and there is no land is available within the settlement, a site adjacent to the settlement may be granted planning permission. Such development should make the best use of available land and lead to more sustainable communities.

Outside Settlement Envelopes the Council will work to maintain and enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and only particular types of new development will be permitted. This includes the development of those sites allocated by this and previous development plans and residential development within exception schemes or dwellings for the essential needs of those employed in agriculture or forestry. Proposals which re-use existing buildings or replace an existing dwelling will be acceptable provided they conform to the specific criteria in this plan.

Proposals for employment, tourism, leisure and community uses will also be considered favourably subject to their conformity with the relevant policies in this plan.

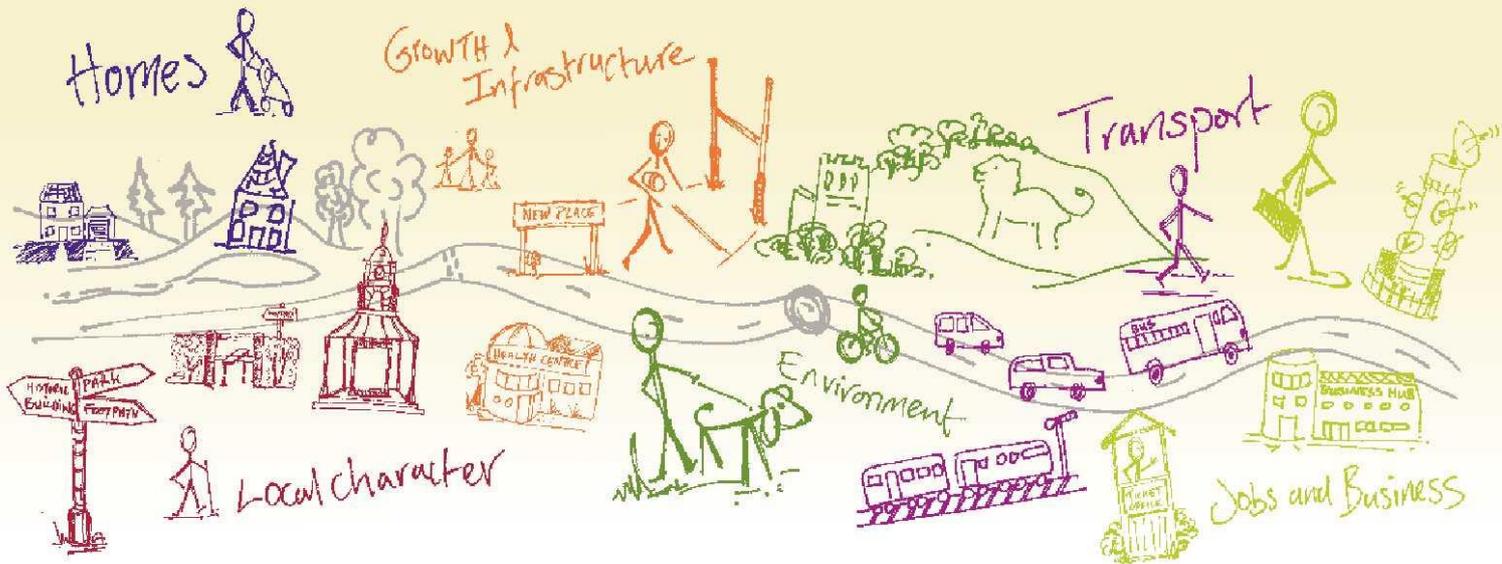
Limited extensions to gardens beyond Settlement Envelopes may be permitted provided that they do not harm the character of the area.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Planning for Gypsies & Travellers

Local Plan 2015-2035

## 10 Planning for Gypsies and Travellers

10.1.1 National Planning policy<sup>10</sup> requires all Local Planning Authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers (G&T) alongside the settled population, and develop a strategy that addresses any unmet need that is identified.

### 10.2 The planning definition of Gypsy and Traveller

10.2.1 For the purposes of planning, the definition of gypsies and travellers was changed in the revised 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). The key change to the definition was the removal of the term *persons....who have ceased to travel permanently* meaning that those who have stopped travelling no longer fall under the planning definition of a Traveller in terms of assessing the needs for accommodation.

10.2.2 The definition of travelling has been considered through case law and it is the understanding of the Central Bedfordshire study that the implication of these rulings in terms of applying the new definition is that it will only include those who travel (or have ceased to travel temporarily) for work purposes and in doing so stay away from their usual place of residence. As a result of the change in the definition, the need within Central Bedfordshire has reduced by 43% since the previous assessment was undertaken in 2014.

10.2.3 At the time of writing the PPTS is still relatively recent, has not been tested through the local plan process and only a small number of relevant appeal decisions have been issued by the Planning Inspectorate as to how the new definition should be applied. Whilst the latter support the view that households need to be able to demonstrate that they travel for work purposes to meet the new definition and stay away from their usual place of residence when doing so, once the new definition has been tested, there is the possibility that it could change, or further guidance issued as to how the new definition is implemented. The need identified for Central Bedfordshire is therefore potentially subject to change.

### 10.3 Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs

10.3.1 Local Plans are required to set pitch<sup>11</sup> targets for Gypsy and Travellers and plot<sup>12</sup> targets for Travelling Showpeople which addresses the likely accommodation needs in the area, based on local evidence. The Plan is required to:

- Identify a five year supply of specific deliverable sites and other, developable sites to accommodate growth for years 6-10 and where possible 11-15;

<sup>10</sup> The Housing and Planning Act, 2016; Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), 2015; National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012; and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See glossary

<sup>12</sup> See glossary



- Ensure the number of pitches and plots reflect the size and location of a site, and the size of the surrounding population; and
- Protect local amenity and the environment.

10.3.2 Accordingly the Council commissioned consultants ORS to prepare a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) which forecasts Central Bedfordshire's G&T accommodation needs for the Plan period 2015 to 2035. The GTAA has identified the number of pitches needed to 2035 and outlined important observations on the specific needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community in Central Bedfordshire, which have been considered in preparing this Local Plan.

10.3.3 The GTAA identifies that 71 pitches will be required up to 2035 to meet identified needs. 14 of these pitches need to be delivered by 2021 in order to ensure Central Bedfordshire has an up to date 5 year supply.

10.3.4 With regard to Travelling Showpeople, it has been identified that there is a need for 31 additional plots across Central Bedfordshire to 2035. 16 of these plots need to be delivered by 2021 in order to ensure Central Bedfordshire has an up to date 5 year supply.



**Policy SP8: Gypsy and Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Pitch Requirement**

**Gypsy and Travellers**

The Council will facilitate the development of up to 71 pitches to meet the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation need in Central Bedfordshire over the period 2015 - 2035.

Applications will be determined against Policy H8: Assessing planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites, and other relevant policies in this Plan.

**Travelling Showpeople**

With regards Travelling Showpeople, the Council will facilitate the development of up to 31 plots in Central Bedfordshire over the period 2015 - 2035.

Applications will be determined against Policy H9: Assessing planning applications for Travelling Showpeople sites, and other relevant policies in this Plan.





# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Housing

Local Plan 2015-2035

# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# 11 Housing

## 11.1 Housing Mix

11.1.1 An appropriate and inclusive housing mix contributes to well-designed places that produce strong community cohesion and cater for a diverse range of household needs. This emphasises the importance of achieving a suitable housing mix as part of this Local Plan.

11.1.2 The main evidence base underpinning a good mix of housing will predominantly be based on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2017. The SHMA explores the housing types, sizes, mix and tenure types needed in Central Bedfordshire, and forecasts the housing requirements for the period up to 2035. It takes into consideration population forecasts, births, deaths and migration to indicate the household need, and will highlight growth in particular groups such as the elderly and first time buyers and self builders. This information will form the basis of ensuring that an appropriate mix and volume of housing is achieved.

11.1.3 Other evidence considered will include:

- Local Housing Market analysis
- Use of housing needs assessment
- Population projections
- Housing Market Gap Analysis
- Regard for the under-supply and loss of bungalows
- Current housing market conditions
- Existing housing mix in the locality
- Self and Custom Build register data

11.1.4 Within the mix of housing, we need to ensure that development provides good quality housing; a variety of homes including, flats, bungalows, and family housing for all parts of the community. It is also important to ensure that homes are built to a good standard with particular attention given to well insulated and ventilated homes with adequate room, space and light.

11.1.5 Before the Council can begin constructing a suitable housing mix, we must have regard for the amount of homes required to meet the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for both market and affordable housing within the area. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) sets out the evidence base which supports the OAN. This assessment of need within the SHMA states that 32,000 dwellings are required in the new plan period 2015-2035, this amounts to 1,684



dwelling per annum. Finally the SHMA has emphasised that 30% of housing on all development sites should be affordable housing.

- 11.1.6 Affordable housing can be delivered in many forms, including affordable rented accommodation and shared ownership.
- 11.1.7 Aside from affordable housing, other alternatives are available to help individuals access homeownership such as Right to Buy or the Help to Buy; Equity Loan scheme which has been extremely popular in the last few years within Central Bedfordshire.

### Housing requirements

- 11.1.8 The information from the SHMA supports a requirement for smaller homes for people to downsize into. This is particularly relevant as the implications of the Spare Room Subsidy means that many working age families have to downsize. There is still a need for family sized homes, for growing families, as demographic information from the SHMA identifies that as children grow they need their own room and space.
- 11.1.9 There is a need similarly for younger households, particularly first time buyers who find it difficult to access the housing market at open market values. Smaller properties at the entry-level end of the market are needed to meet this specific demand. Housing options for younger people will include purchasing an affordable unit such as starter homes or a shared ownership property at first. Smaller units are also required for older people to downsize into – freeing up larger family homes.
- 11.1.10 An appropriate housing mix will need to have regard for people with specific care needs, e.g. learning disabilities and other vulnerable groups, such as gypsies and travellers (i.e. those that do not meet the PPTS definition) care leavers and homeless families. Properties need to be well designed, in good locations and easily adapted to suit individual's care needs.

### Empty Homes

- 11.1.11 Central Bedfordshire has approximately 1,200 empty homes which is only a small proportion of the housing stock, and is around 1.5% of the total number of houses. However some of these properties have been empty for many years, and through effective stock management, these empty homes could potentially provide much needed housing for several families.
- 11.1.12 The Council intends to continue to take a pro-active approach to bringing empty properties back into use in order to maximise housing delivery, which can be viewed in the Housing Strategy 2016-21.



### **Policy H1: Housing Mix**

All developments for new dwellings must include a mix of housing types and sizes in order to meet the needs of all sections of the community, to encourage sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Proposals should be accompanied by evidence which demonstrates the development meets these needs through the use of up to date evidence.

Housing should be delivered in various forms of tenure types, e.g. shared ownership, outright purchase, leasehold possibilities, affordable/private rented and other form of intermediate tenures.

## **11.2 Housing Standards Review**

11.2.1 The Council will adhere to the most up to date Government Legislation and new planning guidance to determine the appropriate housing standards to be applied within Central Bedfordshire. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that local planning authorities should plan to create safe, accessible environments and promote inclusion and community cohesion. This includes buildings and their surrounding spaces. Local planning authorities should take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and it should plan to meet this need.

### **Space standards**

11.2.2 Where a local planning authority wishes to apply an internal space standard, they should only do so by reference to the Nationally Described Space Standard within their Local Plan. The Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) is the published guidance recommended from the Government's Housing Standards review. Central Bedfordshire Council will endorse the use of the Nationally Described Space standards, as prescribed by Central Government.

11.2.3 The Housing Standards Review stated that all new properties should be built to Category 1 standards as Part M of Building Regulations. Whilst this is a good basic standard of building and offers good design, it does not promote flexible or adaptable design.

11.2.4 Local planning authorities have the option to set additional technical requirements exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations in respect of access. Local planning authorities will need to gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area, and justify setting appropriate policies in their Local Plans.

### **Disabilities**

11.2.5 The Council spent £2.132m on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in 2015/16. This was primarily for level access shower/wet room adaptations but also other minor adaptations. It is inevitably more costly to retrospectively fit adaptations into



existing properties rather design them into new build properties; hence the £2.1m spend on DFG on existing housing stock. The expenditure on DFG's would have been avoided if there was a good supply of flexible and adaptable homes within new delivery. As such, the Council has built an evidence base of DFG expenditure and also with the backlog of need through the preceding years can demonstrate a requirement for category 2 homes in future. Planning conditions may be used to secure Category 2 M4 (2) dwellings on all applications.

- 11.2.6 Information from the Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) states that currently 13,159 people between the age of 16-64 years have a moderate physical disability and a further 3,930 people have a severe physical disability, This is set to increase to 14,518 people with a moderate disability and 4,433 people with a severe physical disability by 2030.
- 11.2.7 Category 3 M4 (3) is fully wheelchair accessible homes that specifically caters to the needs of occupants who have severe, physical mobility issues. These incorporate more extensive design requirements. The Council will analyse the need for both wheelchair accessible and wheelchair adaptable homes, bearing in mind the projected 4,433 people that will have a severe physical disability by 2030.
- 11.2.8 This analysis of need will form the basis for individual site negotiations as a direct response to need. In requiring wheelchair accessible homes from all future development; the Council will be targeted, strategic and opportunistic about how it negotiates for wheelchair accessible homes.
- 11.2.9 The emphasis will be on an evidence-led approach which uses internal knowledge of applicants on the housing register that have a physical disability to target delivery on future new build development.

### Learning Disabilities

- 11.2.10 People with learning disabilities have the same aspirations as any other person's requirements for appropriate, accessible housing. Many people with learning disabilities do live at home until carers (parents) are deceased or the carers are no longer able to care for them. Some people come through the adult care system sooner for many different reasons and will often require help with basic life skills.
- 11.2.11 Central Bedfordshire is forecasting a rise in its learning disability population. The increase includes those people with severe learning disabilities and those presenting with challenging behaviour.
- 11.2.12 In 2017 the total population predicated to have a learning disability between the age of 18 – 64 is 4,134 and this is expected to increase by 539 people in 2035 a 11.5% increase. Older people from 65 years with a moderate to severe learning disability is predicted to increase from 143 people in 2017 up to 220 in 2035 a 35% increase.
- 11.2.13 People with a learning disability should have choice about where they live and who they live with. There is growing evidence to support that inappropriate housing arrangements increase the likelihood of people presenting with behaviours described as challenging, which can lead to placement breakdown



and an avoidable admission into hospital. There is an expected 10% increase in the number of people with challenging behaviour from 2017 – 2035.

- 11.2.14 An increase in the housing options for people with learning disabilities and/or autism will enable people to access the right home and support at the right time and increase people's ability to live as independently as possible. Housing options should be based on individual need and be an integral component of person centred care and support. Everyone should either be offered their own tenancy in settled accommodation or to own their own home.
- 11.2.15 Supported living is becoming the preferred model of accommodation, care and support and it is where an individual's support and housing needs are built around them rather than fitter an individual into a service. It is enabling people to live life with the same choices, rights and responsibilities as other citizens. Models of supported living vary; people may have their own property within a wider development for other people who need support with some schemes offering communal living space as well. The environment could also offer a blend of services that can safely manage risks for more complex individuals living in a community setting. Accommodation for people with a learning disability and/or autism should feel well integrated within the local community, with good access to transport links, local amenities and services. As there is a limited supply of settled accommodation options available. The council will encourage developers to come forward and bring innovative ideas in accommodating individuals with learning disabilities. All possibilities will be considered.



### **Policy H2: Housing Standards**

Internal space standards will be applied in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards.

In requiring adaptable and accessible homes from all future developments; The Council will:

- Require all new build housing to deliver at least 35% Category 2 Requirement MA (2) adaptable homes (or any new or revised regulations that revoke or modify the Building Regulations); and
- Require all new build housing to deliver at least 5% Category 3, Requirement M4 (3) wheelchair accessible homes (or any new or revised regulations that revoke or modify the Building Regulations).

### **11.3 Supporting an Ageing Population**

11.3.1 The demographics of Central Bedfordshire is no different from the current demographics of England, whereby there is an increase growth of people over 65+ and a further noticeable growth of the 85+. This rise becomes even more significant in the 85+ age range where the population of people is set to rise by over two- and-a-half times from 5,400 in 2015 to 13,700 by 2035. Besides the growth of the older population, residents of Central Bedfordshire have a longer life expectancy than the national average, ranging from 84 years for women and 81 years for men. (The UK Quality of Life Index – rates Central Bedfordshire 13th best place to live in the UK 2015). With later life come increasing ill health and disability and the prevalence of health problems and frailty increases sharply in later old age. This can lead to complex and challenging care needs, and therefore requiring specialist care.

11.3.2 Central Bedfordshire is a relatively affluent area where the majority of older residents (76.9%) own their home. Of the remainder 17.0% rent from a social landlord, 3.6% privately rent and 2.5% live rent free. Research shows that older people prefer to retain the same tenure arrangement if they move. (ORS - Assessment of the Housing Needs of Older People in Central Bedfordshire March 2017)

11.3.3 As there is a lack of suitable accommodation options for older people in Central Bedfordshire Council, and the Council would like to work with the market to deliver the following:

- Mainstream homes designed for older people.
- Housing-with-care and housing-with support schemes to meet local needs.
- Care homes that meet modern standards and customer expectations, providing an attractive living environment as well as high quality care.

11.3.4 There is only 2% of housing that is aimed at older people and there is a need for appropriate housing for older people, and as the population grows older, there is a



further demand for care and support needs. This is supported by evidence provided in the ORS report, whereby mainly older people are now relying on having support and care needs provided from external companies.

- 11.3.5 Providing suitable accommodation for older people is a key requirement because it provides an attractive option to encourage older people to downsize and free-up larger properties which are more suitable for families; therefore making an efficient use of current housing stock.
- 11.3.6 In the last ten years there has been significant research undertaken into the needs and aspirations of older people<sup>13</sup>. Emerging from them is the concept of 'downsizing' - the phenomenon of older people moving from their existing homes to smaller properties that better suit their needs thus releasing larger homes back into the pool of available housing. The need for smaller units is essential due to the particular growth of the over 65 population in Central Bedfordshire. There needs to be a mix of 1 and particularly 2 beds to cater for the older population, in the form of bungalows, mobility homes standards, possibly flatted maisonettes and other mainstream housing. As well as various house types, a good housing mix will also incorporate various housing tenure options such as outright purchased properties, shared ownership and other available options.
- 11.3.7 There is a particular need to retain bungalows for older people, as this is one of the preferred accommodation types for people who are aging yet want to retain a high level of independence. However, there has been a noticeable loss of these units due to existing bungalows being converted into two storey family homes. This places an additional requirement on future new supply to compensate for the backlog of chronic under-delivery and loss of existing bungalows.
- 11.3.8 Central Bedfordshire wants more bungalows and level access homes, such as ground floor apartments and apartments with appropriate lifts to cater for people with mobility issues. However, in the last few years a number of bungalows have been demolished and replaced with two storey family homes; therefore losing ideal homes for older people with specific needs. The authority area has seen over 19 bungalows lost in the last 3 years (2013-16 financial years) but the broader housing development market has not looked at replacing them. The ORS report also states that the need for bungalows is greatly the preferred type of accommodation for older people however; this is causing issues with affordability. The result is that during the period to 2035 period there will be a demonstrable need for at least 9050 of new dwellings to be suitable for older people wishing or needing to downsize. This represents 23% of the planned housing growth during that period.
- 11.3.9 There is demand and many people do wish to downsize to these types of properties, but older people feel that the affordability of such a unit is too costly, and therefore do not move.

<sup>13</sup> Future of an Ageing Population; HAPPI 1, HAPPI 2 & HAPPI 3; Designing with Downsizers



- 11.3.10 Sites within existing settlements (especially those close to town centres) can be ideal for specialist housing schemes and this option should be explored before alternative uses are permitted. Downsizers have a strong preference to retain their tenure type when downsizing. In Central Bedfordshire 80% of people over 65 are owner-occupiers and this should be reflected in the tenure mix of schemes. Intermediate tenancies (shared ownership) are considered to be a downsizer option for owner-occupiers who may lack the means to access similar accommodation on the open market.
- 11.3.11 Therefore to support our ageing population, suitable and appropriate accommodation for older persons should be part of the overall inclusive housing mix. We would want to see developers provide housing for older people as part of their development schemes, in the form of bungalows and low level maisonettes.



### **Policy H3: Housing for Older People**

All new residential development will be required to respond to the challenges relating to older people as set out in this chapter. Specifically all applications will identify opportunities:

- To consider the strategic aims of the Council, it is ensuring that mainstream housing, extra-care homes and nursing care homes are provided throughout the Council area.
- To provide accommodation in suitable and sustainable locations, based on the latest evidence base, these are especially town centres, near transport links, services, and leisure and health facilities.
- To provide accommodation in various forms of tenure types, e.g. shared ownership, outright purchase, leasehold possibilities, affordable/private rented and other form of intermediate tenures.
- To ensure that properties are built to a good quality standard and meet the needs of older people as they progress through their life changes.
- To ensure that supported housing schemes provide the necessary care and support packages required.
- The Council will require the development of bungalows, level access accommodation or low density flats to be provided for older people on development of 100 dwellings or more.
- On larger sites of 200 units or more, the provision of an extra care facility should be investigated taking into consideration site viability and need. Where an extra care facility is not provided applicants must present evidence to support its exclusion from their proposals.

## **11.4 Affordable Housing**

- 11.4.1 The NPPF sets out the government's clear intention to provide good quality affordable housing for all. This forms part of a wider agenda to create sustainable, mixed and integrated communities.
- 11.4.2 The case for affordable housing is well documented both nationally and particularly within Central Bedfordshire. For example, Land Registry information highlights how the average house price within Central Bedfordshire has risen over the years rising to £270,546 as at April 2016. When this is coupled with the fact that the average household earnings have not risen in line with house prices, this gives a stark depiction of just how serious the problem is. Further evidence will be contained in the Housing topic paper.
- 11.4.3 Based on the results of the SHMA, this Local Plan requires that 30% of all units from qualifying sites will be for affordable housing. As part of the affordable housing requirement the SHMA outlines the Council's tenure requirements. Qualifying sites will be expected to provide 73% affordable rent and 27% intermediate tenure. This policy, together with the rural exceptions policy, should help to meet the affordable housing needs within Central Bedfordshire.



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### Viability Testing Framework (LP)

- 11.4.4 The viability of each site will continue to be considered on a case by case basis and will be discussed with the applicant. The emphasis of these discussions will be to enable a viable degree of affordable housing on site.
- 11.4.5 The applicant will be expected to provide comprehensive supporting information to enable the Council to make an informed decision on the financial viability of the proposed development scheme. This information will include, as a minimum, a detailed cost plan and specification together with properly analysed evidence justifying proposed sales values and a detailed valuation of existing use value. The information will be assessed by the Council advised by an independent assessor as and when required, and the applicant will be expected to pay the cost of this assessment.
- 11.4.6 If a scheme is approved on the basis of a robustly evidenced affordable housing offer which is below policy requirements, the section 106 agreement will include provision for a re-appraisal of viability. The purpose of this viability review will be to seek a future uplift in affordable housing provision.
- 11.4.7 Applicants should expect that a restriction on occupation of an appropriate number of market units to reflect the policy shortfall will be required to secure any further contribution from the assessment process. The applicant will be required to submit detailed evidence to the Council on an open book basis of the actual costs expended and values generated by the scheme and, where viability has improved, the applicant will be expected to make further affordable housing provision up to the maximum policy shortfall. This further affordable provision will be sought in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan.
- 11.4.8 In order to secure delivery and provide mixed new communities, the Council has a preference for affordable housing delivery on-site. However, there may be specific circumstances relating to appropriateness of location, where a commuted sum towards off-site provision may be considered in lieu of part of the 30% requirement to complement the on-site affordable housing provision. The formal mechanisms required to secure off site contributions will be detailed in standard clauses in the Council's section 106 agreement.
- 11.4.9 Commuted sums are calculated on the basis of 50% of the open market value for each unit in question. If the policy compliant commuted sum can not be achieved a viability will determine the sum.



### **Policy H4: Affordable Housing**

All qualifying sites of 11 or more units or sites of 10 or less units which have a combined gross internal floor space in excess of 1,000 square metres subject to NPPG future revisions and future relevant case law will provide 30% affordable housing. This proportion may change in accordance to the most up to date version of the SHMA, in which event the new revised proportions should be applied. The affordable housing from qualifying sites should be provided on-site.

The affordable homes should meet the following requirements:

- Provide 73% affordable rent and 27% intermediate tenure or regard to the most up-to-date SHMA
- Affordable units dispersed throughout the site and integrated with the market housing to promote community cohesion & tenure blindness. Clusters of no more than 10 affordable units for houses and no more than 15 affordable units for flats or on a case by case basis for larger sites
- Affordable units to meet all nationally described space standards
- Where policy compliant affordable housing cannot be achieved, viability will determine affordable housing provision on a case by case basis
- Quality and design of the affordable homes must be of an equally high standard to that of the private units on site.

## **11.5 Rural Exception Sites**

- 11.5.1 Central Bedfordshire contains a number of small settlements which are rural in character. Typically, because of their attractive rural location and character, house prices in these villages are relatively high in comparison to the more urban areas. This often makes it difficult for some households to purchase or privately rent properties within the villages.
- 11.5.2 Historically there has been a shortfall in the delivery of affordable housing within these rural areas, partly due to the limited opportunity for in-fill developments within these villages. Rural exception sites – sites outside of the Settlement Envelope used for affordable housing have been the most efficient way of providing affordable housing for rural communities to date. With the implications of the NPPG restricting affordable contributions on sites of 10 or less dwellings, rural exception sites are becoming more critical for the delivery of affordable housing in the rural communities of Central Bedfordshire.
- 11.5.3 In addition, there is also a need for additional affordable housing provision around the larger settlements. While development opportunities are greater here, so is the level of affordable housing need. The policy below therefore enables exception sites to be brought forward around the larger settlements.
- 11.5.4 Whilst neighbourhood planning could potentially bring forward a degree of affordable housing, the continued delivery of exception sites will form a key part of affordable housing delivery. To help increase the delivery from exception sites, a



limited number of open market dwellings can be provided if a rural exception scheme is not viable as 100% affordable.. The Council will allow for up to 20% market housing on exception schemes if viability issues are demonstrated.

- 11.5.5 A careful balance must be struck in terms of having regard for a settlement's character and settlement boundaries whilst being mindful of the need to meet an identified local housing need from that settlement. The use of sites which relate well to the settlement boundary go some way to achieving this balance.
- 11.5.6 The underlying purpose of an exception site is to meet the identified housing needs of local people. It is designed to accommodate households local to the settlement in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Lettings Policy. It is envisaged that the supply of exception sites will provide a means for people who would ordinarily not be able to afford to live within that settlement to remain within their local community.
- 11.5.7 A pre-requisite of any household being eligible for these properties will be that they have a demonstrable housing need and a strong local connection to the Parish in question. The housing need will be evidenced by the household being registered with the Council, Registered Provider or alternative affordable housing provider.
- 11.5.8 A local housing needs' survey will be conducted within the settlement to evidence the level of demand for affordable housing. It will identify the number of affordable homes, the tenure and size of the property needed. The identified needs and requirements will form the evidence base upon which the Council, landowners, Registered Providers, house builders and the Town or Parish Council will work-up plans for the exception site.
- 11.5.9 The sites in rural areas will usually be limited to 10 dwellings in order to preserve the character of the settlement. However, if a housing needs' survey supports a demand for more than 10 dwellings and it can be demonstrated that a larger development will not have an adverse effect on the character of the settlement, larger sites may be considered.
- 11.5.10 The exception site will be subject to a Section 106 agreement which will set out that the affordable properties must remain as affordable housing in perpetuity. A householder for a shared ownership property will be able to buy additional equity shares of their property. This will be restricted to a maximum of 80% equity share of the property meaning the property is not completely owned outright by the householder and remains as affordable in perpetuity.
- 11.5.11 Any re-sale of shared ownership properties will go to a household in housing need as directed by the Council's Local Lettings Policy in regard to the procedure for shared ownership. The Section 106 agreement will also ensure the appropriate phasing of the affordable and open market dwellings.
- 11.5.12 The overall aim of the policy overleaf is to provide high quality affordable homes for local people in housing need.



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New build affordable housing



### **Policy H5: Rural Exception Sites**

Proposals for the development of Rural Exception Sites outside of the Green Belt will be considered acceptable where they meet the following criteria:

- Designed to meet identified affordable housing needs. The local needs will be identified and evidenced based through a housing needs survey.
- Provide affordable homes that will remain as affordable in perpetuity via a Section 106 legal agreement or Unilateral Undertaking
- Provide only a limited number of market dwellings expressly for the sole purpose of making the scheme financially viable. This will be subject to site specific viability testing and be limited to up to 20% of the total dwellings.
- Allocated in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Lettings Policy
- Small scale development – usually be limited to 10 dwellings in order to preserve the character of the settlement. However, if a housing needs' survey supports, a demand for more than 10 dwellings and it can be demonstrated that a larger development will not have an adverse effect on the character of the settlement, larger sites may be considered.
- A mix of tenures to be made available to meet the identified need from the housing needs survey
- In the case of shared ownership, stair-casing or purchasing additional equity shares will be restricted to 80% of the properties open market value. This will ensure the property remains as affordable in perpetuity.
- The site is situated outside the existing settlement boundary but relates well to the existing pattern of development of the settlement and is in-keeping with surrounding character.

Proposals for the development of Rural Exception Sites in the Green Belt must demonstrate very special circumstances and conform to the first eight criteria above. The site must also relate well to an existing settlement and be in keeping with the surrounding character.

## **11.6 Starter Homes**

- 11.6.1 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 sets out the Government's agenda to support homeownership, particularly through the delivery of Starter Homes.
- 11.6.2 A starter home is a new build property which is offered at a minimum of 20% below market value. The discounted price should be no more than £250,000 outside London and £450,000 in London.
- 11.6.3 Starter Homes are specifically aimed at the first-time buyer market and will be offered to people who are under 40 years old at the time of purchase and have not previously owned a home. The Starter Home property cannot be sold or re-let for a period of 8 years after initial sale; after which, the property can be sold on the open market at full value.
- 11.6.4 The appropriate balance between compliance with the Housing & Planning Act and also the strength of local evidence must be struck. Previous chapters



adequately explain the overwhelming demand for affordable rented properties (as demonstrated by the SHMA 2015). Central Bedfordshire Council is of the opinion that appropriate weight should be given to this factual evidence when determining planning applications in support of a suitable local housing mix.

- 11.6.5 The Housing and Planning Act requires that local planning authorities may only grant planning permission if applicants enter into a planning obligation to provide a certain number of Starter Homes.
- 11.6.6 Starter homes are now considered to be an Affordable Housing tenure under the revised NPPF and the Government expects local planning authorities to deliver a proportion of Starter Homes as part of affordable housing delivery through S106 agreements. This will be confirmed following the consultation within the Housing White paper.
- 11.6.7 The provisions within the Housing & Planning Act and subsequent discussions with DCLG confirm that the starter homes will apply to each individual qualifying site so Central Bedfordshire Council must have regard for the duty.
- 11.6.8 Para 5 (2) of the Housing and Planning Act states that Local planning authorities can dispense with the planning condition relating to starter homes where:
- (a) An application is made for planning permission in respect of a rural Exception site, and
  - (b) The application falls to be determined wholly or partly on the basis of policy contained in a development plan for the provision of housing on rural exception sites.
- 11.6.9 Therefore the Starter Homes planning condition does not apply to rural exception sites or land allocated for the provision of rural exception sites.
- 11.6.10 Para (4) of the Housing and Planning Act states:
- “The starter homes requirement” means a requirement, specified in the regulations, relating to the provision of starter homes in England
- 11.6.11 We await the publication of the aforementioned regulations to specify the actual Starter Home requirement. However, the Housing White Paper has made its intention clear to specify a minimum 10% requirement which will encompass various homeownership options as well as Starter Homes. Until the consultation on the Housing White paper is concluded, and secondary legislation is enacted, The Council will work on this assumption.
- 11.6.12 This local plan policy seeks to provide interim guidance on the Starter Homes requirement in the absence of secondary legislation.



### **Policy H6: Starter Homes**

All qualifying planning applications must have regard for Starter Homes delivery; except in respect of planning applications for rural exception sites or land allocated for rural exception sites.

Starter Homes will be delivered on qualifying sites in accordance with the Housing & Planning Act or the most up-to-date, published secondary legislation or Government Guidance.

The current intention communicated in the Housing White Paper is that Starter Homes will form part of the minimum 10% requirement for a range of home ownership products. Until the consultation on the Housing White paper is concluded, The Council will work on this assumption.

The Affordable Housing policy (policy H4) states that 27% of all qualifying sites will comprise intermediate tenures, these are predominantly home ownership products, and therefore starter homes will be incorporated within this 27%.

In the absence of detailed guidance, Central Bedfordshire Council will exercise local discretion in meeting the Starter Homes requirement. This includes the following:

- Local variation on the suitability on Starter Homes on a case-by-case basis. This will include demonstrable evidence on local Housing Need, Affordability and accessibility of Starter Homes as part of the wider housing mix.
- Consideration of a commuted sum payment to be used by the authority for providing Starter Homes. The proceeds of which are to be spent in any location within its boundary that the authority deems suitable.

## **11.7 Self and Custom Build Housing**

11.7.1 The Self-build & Custom Housebuilding Act (2015) (as amended) places a duty on local authorities to:

- keep a register of people and groups interested in acquiring serviced plots to build their own homes,
- have a regard to their register as a material consideration in planning decisions, and;
- to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the Council's area within statutory time limits

11.7.2 Self and custom build housing is housing built or commissioned by individuals or groups of individuals for their own occupation. A serviced plot is defined by the Act as a plot of land that has access to a public highway and has connections for electricity, water and waste water, or can be provided with those things in specified circumstances or a specified period. This definition may be amended by future legislation and guidance from the Government.



- 11.7.3 The Council operates its own Self & Custom Build Register (the register) which determines the local level of demand for serviced plots. To fulfil this demand, the Council will look to support applications for the delivery of serviced plots on suitable sites.
- 11.7.4 This policy sets out requirements for the delivery of serviced plots to support self and custom house building and does not set requirements for the building of dwellings by individuals on plots other than serviced plots.

### Serviced Plots Delivery

- 11.7.5 The Council recognises that there is a growing interest from people to influence the design and specification and even to build their own home. The Council also recognises the potential of self and custom housebuilding to increase delivery of new build homes in the local area.
- 11.7.6 The national Ipsos Mori survey in 2015 showed that 53% of the adult population in the UK would like to build their own home at some stage of their lives and 14% were researching or planning building it in the next 12 months.
- 11.7.7 For the period 2011 to 2016, only around 40 new houses a year build as single house on single plots of land in Central Bedfordshire. The data from the Council's own register indicates that the demand is much higher, with 150 people registered in the first year of its operation alone. The National Custom and Self Build Association cite finding a suitable plot of land as the biggest barrier to self and custom housebuilding.
- 11.7.8 To address the issue of a shortage of land the Council will work with local partners, such as local agents and landowners, to grant suitable planning permissions in order to provide enough serviced plots to meet the local demand (as demonstrated by the register) and help self and custom builders realise their ambitions of building their own home. The Council will support delivery of serviced plots on sites suitable for residential development within settlement envelopes. Delivery of serviced plots outside settlement envelopes will only be supported where it enables delivery of affordable housing on rural exception sites (please see Rural Exception Sites Policy).
- 11.7.9 Sites allocated in the Local Plan will be expected to deliver up to 20% of the planned dwellings as serviced plots for self and custom builders. The number of plots to be delivered on each site will be determined on a case by case basis at the time of application, reflecting the demand demonstrated on the register at that time.

### Legal agreement

- 11.7.10 To ensure the delivery of serviced plots to self and custom builders the Council will require developers to enter into section 106 agreement that will cover issues including timescales and phasing of plots delivery, appropriate marketing of plots to self and custom builders and length of time after which unsold plots will be returned to the developer.
- 11.7.11 All serviced plots will be required to have, or have been provided, within a specified period access to a public highway and connection to electricity, water



and waste water as minimum required by the legislation, and gas where the gas network present in the area and connection is viable.

### Meeting housing needs

- 11.7.12 While the Council is supportive of proposals for self and custom build projects, it is important that these applications do not compromise the ability of the Council to meet housing needs. Therefore all applications for delivery of serviced plots must comply with all housing and other policies as set out in this Plan.

### **Policy H7: Self and Custom Build Housing**

The Council will support applications for delivery of serviced plots in suitable locations where they help meet the demand as demonstrated by the Council's Self & Custom Build Register.

- The Council will require sites of 10 or more dwellings (excluding schemes for 100% flats or conversions) to provide serviced plots to meet demand evidenced by the Register. Up to 20% of the dwelling capacity of these qualifying sites will be required to be delivered as serviced plots. Applications that deliver a higher proportion will be considered favourably.
- The Council will consider favourably applications for the delivery of serviced plots on sites of less than 10 dwellings.
- The Council will require developers to enter into section 106 agreement that will cover issues including timescales and phasing of serviced plots delivery, appropriate marketing of these plots to self and custom builders and length of time after which unsold plots will be returned to the developer.
- The Council will require all serviced plots to have or provide within a specified period (agreed in s106 agreement) access to a public highway, connections for electricity, water and waste water, and gas where present in the area.
- Developments meeting the Council's threshold for affordable housing will be expected to deliver either on site affordable housing or payment of commuted sums for off site delivery in line with the Council's adopted policy.
- Delivery of serviced plots on rural exception sites will be allowed in strict accordance with Policy H5 as part of the limited number of market dwellings permitted to enable the delivery of affordable houses.

## **11.8 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

- 11.8.1 The pitch and plot requirements for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are set out in Strategic Policy SP7 at the head of this Plan. This



establishes the need for those Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople which accord with the planning definition, as defined in Annex 1 of the revised 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). However, the Council is also mindful of its duties under the Equality Act. In particular there may be travellers who no longer travel, and therefore no longer fall under the planning definition, but for whom the Council may still need to provide culturally suitable housing under the requirements of the Equality Act. Therefore the following policies applies to all Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.

- 11.8.2 New sites should be planned sensitively to take account of the needs of both the travelling and settled communities. Specific considerations include:
- The promotion of peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
  - The wider benefits of easier access to Health Services;
  - Access to local schools to enable Gypsy and Traveller children to attend school regularly;
  - A settled base that reduces the need for long distance travelling, and the possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampments;
  - Consideration of the effect of local environmental quality, such as noise or air quality, on the health and well being of any Gypsy and Travellers or others as a result of the development;
  - Access to local shops; and
  - Access to local employment opportunities.
- 11.8.3 In order to benefit from access to facilities and services such as health and education, first preference should be given to sites that are located closer to existing settlements. However, traditionally some Gypsy and Traveller families prefer to live in the countryside, on privately owned and managed sites. Such locations will be considered where they are constraint free, or where any constraints could be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 11.8.4 Applications will be considered on their merits in the context of site size and location, and the characteristics of the surrounding area. Planning permissions might restrict the size of sites and where appropriate recommend a “cap” on the number of people allowed to live on the site on a permanent basis or the number of caravans being stationed on a site.



**Policy H8: Assessing planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites**

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers, including extensions to existing sites will be subject to the following considerations in addition to other relevant policies within this Plan:

- The scale of the site and the number of pitches would not dominate<sup>14</sup> the nearest settled community and would not place undue pressure on local infrastructure;
- Site design demonstrates that the pitches are of a sufficient size to accommodate trailers/caravans, parking, and storage and amenity space for the needs of the occupants.
- Adequate schools, shops, healthcare and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance; and
- Suitable arrangements can be made for drainage, sanitation and access to utilities.
- Proposals for mixed residential and business uses should have regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants and neighbouring residents.
- 

**11.9 Planning for Travelling Showpeople Sites**

11.9.1 Travelling Showpeople's needs are distinct to the needs of the wider Gypsy and Traveller community:

- They do not share the same cultures or traditions as Gypsies and Travellers.
- Travelling Showpeople sites combine residential, storage and maintenance uses, and require secure permanent bases for the storage of their equipment.
- Applications for Travelling Showpeople sites will be assessed against the criteria in Policy H8, and the specific criteria in Policy H9 below.

<sup>14</sup> See para 14, Policy C of the revised 2015 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).



**Policy H9: Assessing planning applications for Travelling Showpeople sites**

Sites for Travelling Showpeople, including extensions to existing sites will be subject to the following considerations in addition to other relevant policies within this Plan:

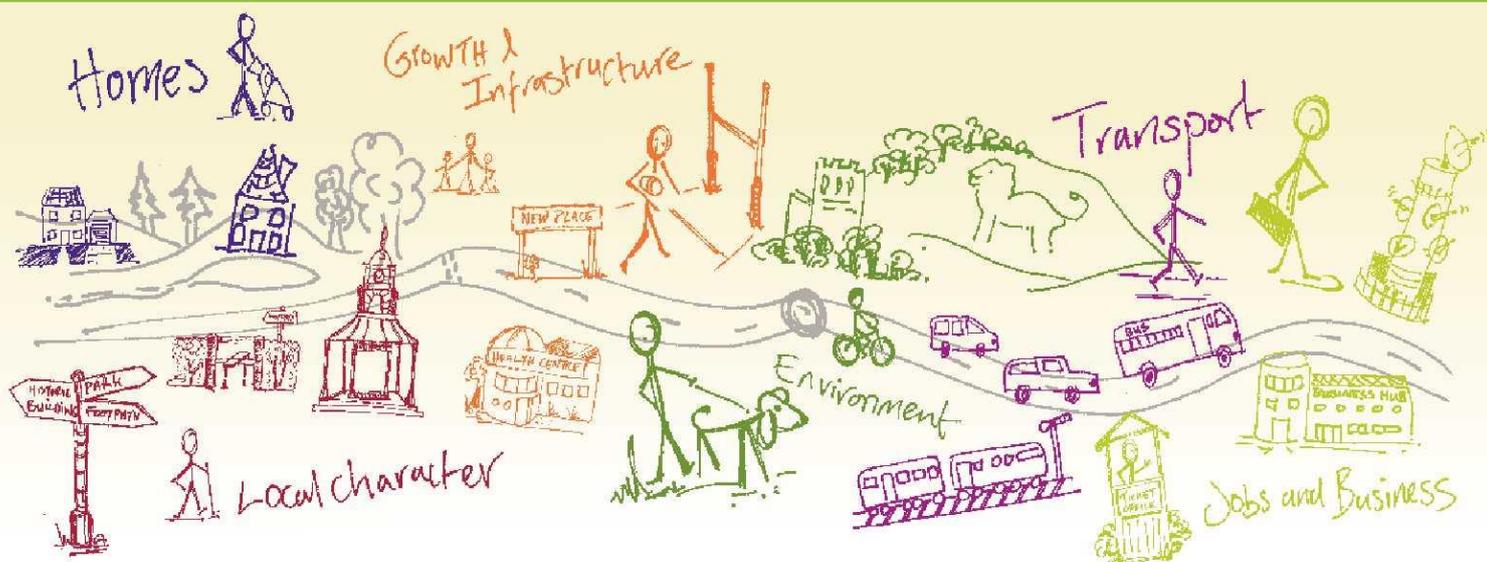
- The criteria in Policy H8 are satisfactorily met;
- Sufficient space is provided to accommodate the storage and maintenance of equipment; and
- Satisfactory and safe vehicular access to and from the public highway is provided both to allow manoeuvrability of living accommodation and equipment to the site and plot, and to ensure the safety of other road users with the use of traffic calming measures where appropriate
- Proposals for mixed residential and business uses should have regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants and neighbouring residents.



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# Shaping where you live 2035



## Employment & Economy Local Plan 2015-2035

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## **12 Employment and Economy**

### **12.1 Overview**

- 12.1.1 Central Bedfordshire has a strong, high performing economy with record levels of employment growth which has been consistently delivered. Moving forward, it is expected that we will continue this strong economic performance reflecting national economic conditions and Central Bedfordshire's key role within the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc.
- 12.1.2 Central Bedfordshire Economic Insight (CBEI) identifies that there are a significant number of active enterprises (over 11,500) within Central Bedfordshire and that in 2014 our five year survival rate for new businesses was higher than national, regional and SEMLEP rates. We have a dynamic and diverse economy with key sector strengths in High Performance Technology, Research and Development; Transport and Logistics; the Visitor Economy and Agriculture and Food. Our strategic location and excellent transport links as well as our high quality natural and historic environment support a growing economy.
- 12.1.3 The area is home to world leading companies such as Rockwell Collins, Lockheed Martin, Nissan Technical Centre Europe, Amazon, Whitbread, Superdrug and The Jordan and Ryvita Company. The largest employer in the area is Central Bedfordshire Council, when taking into account all education/school based employment. Other large employers in the area include Cranfield University and airport, Millbrook Proving Ground, Woburn Enterprises, Kier and the RSPB. There are also a number of smaller and micro-businesses within our key sectors and across Central Bedfordshire which also make a significant contribution to the local economy.
- 12.1.4 Tourism is an important, rapidly growing sector and job creator within Central Bedfordshire and attractions such as the Woburn Estate, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, Center Parcs, Wrest Park and the Shuttleworth Collection contribute significantly to the local economy.
- 12.1.5 The Council is fully supportive of the movement towards a low carbon economy and there are a number of businesses that have a vested interest or operate within the green economy. In our area the Green Economy is diverse, and the Council will continue to support the creation of opportunities for the development of new technologies, industries, transportation and services and will seek to support business growth in the low carbon economy.
- 12.1.6 Central Bedfordshire benefits significantly from good transportation access. The M1 and the A1 corridors run north to south through Central Bedfordshire, which provide businesses with direct access to London and the strategic road network whilst the A5, A6, A507 and the A421 create a robust internal transportation network providing local residents with access to employment opportunities across the whole area. Accessibility has been improved due to the opening of the A5-M1 link road, and will be further enhanced following the delivery of other major road infrastructure projects including the A421 improvements, M1-A6 link road, upgrade and improvements to the A1 corridor. The Oxford to Cambridge



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Expressway and the central section of East West Rail as outlined within the November 2017 NIC Report, will further enhance connectivity within and across Central Bedfordshire and open up further opportunities for economic growth.

- 12.1.7 In order for Central Bedfordshire to achieve its economic potential, the Council is taking a positive enabling approach to creating the right conditions for our existing businesses to flourish and to attract new inward investment that supports and enhances the existing employment offer within Central Bedfordshire. The overall aim being to create a place of national and international significance where people choose to live, work and visit, and where companies choose to invest.
- 12.1.8 The Council has identified a number of priority sectors which experience high growth across Central Bedfordshire. These are:
- High Performance Technologies, Research & Development (R&D)
  - Agri-Food
  - Visitor Economy
  - Transport and Logistics
- 12.1.9 In addition to these high growth sectors, the Council is also supporting the sectors of health and social care and construction, which are identified nationally as critical in terms of employment opportunities but are experiencing challenges..
- 12.1.10 The Council will be supportive of growth proposals within these sectors and will monitor and review progress throughout the plan period through the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 12.1.11 The Central Bedfordshire Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA) and Employment Land Review (ELR) (May 2016) identifies that, based on past trends; a minimum of 23,900 jobs might be expected within the area up to 2031. This is based upon the Experian economic forecast which estimates future trends based upon past information. However, there are a range of economic forecasts that could be considered, and the forecasts produced can be volatile. There are a number of local “real-world” factors that also need to be considered that suggests a higher jobs target is achievable than that suggested through economic modelling. These factors include our historic annual delivery of 2,180 jobs per annum (2010-2015) and our aspiration to realise fully the area’s economic potential.
- 12.1.12 As the FEMA for Central Bedfordshire is complex and overlaps with neighbouring authorities, we also need to consider any unmet economic needs arising from neighbouring authorities, and in line with the NPPF and the Duty to Cooperate, the Council has sought to ensure that economic growth within Central Bedfordshire is complementary to that in neighbouring areas. To this end, Central Bedfordshire has committed to helping meet the unmet economic needs arising from Stevenage.



- 12.1.13 Paragraph 160 of the NPPF also highlights the benefits of councils working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) particularly in relation to prioritising infrastructure investment, for example, through the Local Growth Fund. The South East Midlands Local Economic Partnership (SEMLEP) Strategic Economic Plan (2017) sets out the intention to ensure that the South East Midlands economy not only continues to thrive, but contributes even more to the success of UK plc.
- 12.1.14 Whilst the ELR identifies a minimum of 23,900 net new jobs up to 2035, wider economic conditions and historical performance indicates jobs growth could exceed this target. The Council will therefore support growth within our key sectors, ensuring that local and national business needs are catered for. This will be achieved through a series of enabling and positive policies, reflective of market demand balanced against sustainability. The ambition to deliver sustainable growth is essential, and without this minimal level of job creation the longer term economic future of the area could be significantly hindered.
- 12.1.15 Our approach to greater economic growth across Central Bedfordshire is further supported by the National Infrastructure Commission final report (November 2017) which re-emphasised that new east-west transport links present a once in a generation opportunity to secure the area's future success, and that to succeed in the global economy, the UK must build on its strengths. The arc connecting Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford, which crosses through the north of Central Bedfordshire, could be Britain's Silicon Valley – a globally recognised centre for science, technology and innovation. Central Bedfordshire Council is therefore actively engaged and working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and partners to secure future, economic-led growth across Central Bedfordshire and the wider strategic corridor in order to achieve the Governments ambitious growth proposals.

## 12.2 Portfolio of Employment Land

- 12.2.1 In order to ensure the delivery of sustainable development, jobs should be provided where market demand has been identified, with a specific consideration of meeting local business needs, supporting a diverse range of employment opportunities for Central Bedfordshire residents. Employment generating uses will therefore be delivered through the extensive portfolio of employment land across Central Bedfordshire, which consists of :

- existing permitted land;
- allocated employment land (as identified on the Policies Map);
- key employment sites (as identified on the Policies Map);
- established (non-key) sites in employment use;
- existing Significant Facilities as identified in Policy EMP6;
- allocations to meet national strategic warehousing and distribution needs; and
- mixed use allocations.



- 12.2.2 This approach will deliver sustainable patterns of development and will be attractive and responsive to market demand over the plan period, as well as seeking to balance labour supply and demand.
- 12.2.3 If market demand for B-uses exceeds supply, the Council will consider the potential benefits in terms of job creation and local need of bringing forward the delivery of further employment land. Additional locations for the delivery of employment generating uses will be considered where it is appropriate to do so.

### 12.3 B-Uses and Non B-Uses

- 12.3.1 Employment uses are classified as either B or non B-uses as set out within the Use Classes Order. When allocating land for the delivery of employment generating uses, local plans typically identify sufficient land to accommodate the B-Use element which includes offices, industrial and warehousing/distribution. Non B-Uses, such as retail, leisure and public services are much more subject to market demand and tend to grow in line with population growth. However, the Council recognises that B and non-B employment generating uses can also be complementary and that there may be opportunities to consider their co-location where appropriate.
- 12.3.2 Within Central Bedfordshire it is anticipated that a minimum of 11,200 (47%) new jobs will be from B-Uses and approximately 12,700 (53%) will be delivered through non B-Uses.

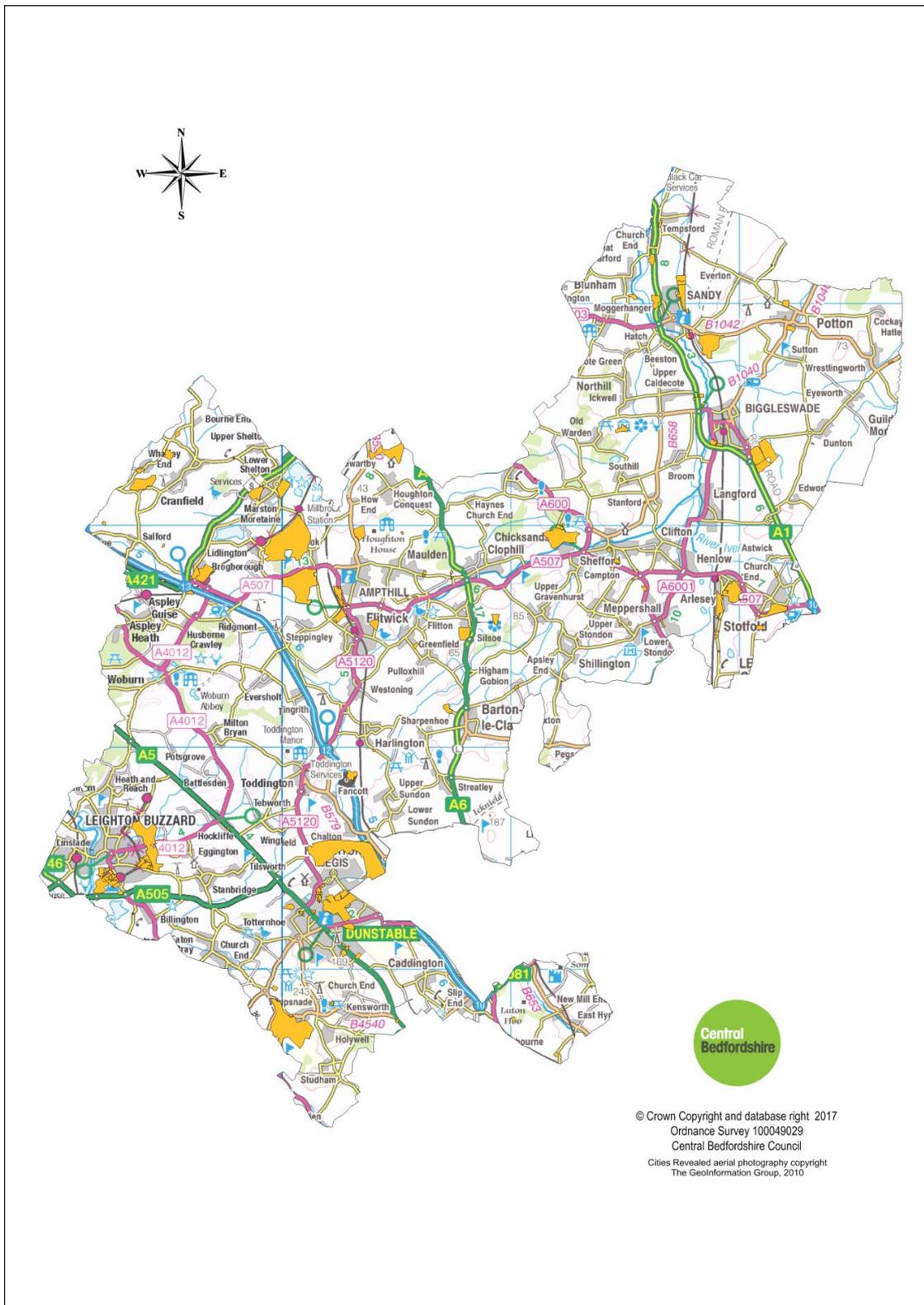
### 12.4 Supply of Sites

- 12.4.1 Central Bedfordshire has a broad range and quality of existing employment sites and premises supporting business in a wide range of activities. These sites in both urban and rural locations perform a crucial role in maintaining a steady level of employment land stock and contributing significantly to the local economy. The map overleaf identifies the broad distribution of existing and established employment sites across Central Bedfordshire.
- 12.4.2 In order to continue to support the growth of the local economy, enable the growth of key employment sectors and create the right conditions for future investment, the employment land stock needs to be maintained and responsive to market demand. Availability and choice in the range and size of land and premises across Central Bedfordshire will be required to enable new business start-ups, to meet local demand for existing businesses to grow, and to encourage new inward investment from national and international businesses.
- 12.4.3 The 2016 Functional Economic Market Assessment and Employment Land Review (ELR) Study identifies that in quantitative terms there is sufficient existing supply of land in Central Bedfordshire to satisfy demand, but that there is a short term need to provide both sites and premises to meet local business growth. Furthermore, due to Central Bedfordshire's strategic location and excellent transport connections, there is also a strong case for contributing to meet national demand for warehousing logistics sector operations at major strategic transport locations, specifically along the M1 corridor.



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**Figure 2 - Distribution of Existing Key Employment Sites and allocations (including mixed-use)**



- 12.4.4 Central Bedfordshire already has a number of existing and established employment areas which will continue to contribute to the local economy and job creation. However, in order to maintain a sustainable approach to the delivery of employment land and premises, be responsive to local market conditions and ensure a continued range of choice and quality employment sites across Central Bedfordshire, there is a need to provide additional and alternative land to accommodate employment generating uses. In line with guidance set out within the NPPF, it is also important that the local plan is responsive to market demand. To meet objectives of the plan, new employment land allocations will be delivered as part of mixed-use developments as well as stand alone employment sites, meeting both local and national need.
- 12.4.5 The 2016 ELR identifies that in the short term, Central Bedfordshire is undersupplied, and that whilst the pipeline of employment land is large, supply of market ready sites is limited. Furthermore, the current identified oversupply, does not consider qualitative deficiency in the supply.

### 12.5 Strategic Warehousing and Logistics<sup>15</sup>

- 12.5.1 Growth in the logistics and distribution sector (recognised as one of the key growth sectors by the Council) and an increased focus on larger strategic warehousing facilities now means that locations with good accessibility to the motorway network, airports and freight hubs, including rail, have become a key focus for operators and developers. Market analysis undertaken as part of the 2016 ELR shows that demand for space is likely to originate from outside Central Bedfordshire and the FEMA, and as strategic warehousing is highly footloose, it is attracted to the area due to the key strategic connectivity, particularly the M1 corridor. The provision of land for strategic uses within Central Bedfordshire is therefore likely to attract national footloose demand.
- 12.5.2 The ELR also identifies that should the strategic warehouse sector be constrained within Central Bedfordshire, by only providing sufficient land to meet the job forecast, the evidence suggests that logistics will continue to displace local demand on other sites. Strategic logistics demand will still be attracted to the Central Bedfordshire portfolio and local demand will remain unsatisfied.
- 12.5.3 For market reasons there are strong grounds to provide specific strategic B8 land within Central Bedfordshire. By making provision for strategic distribution and warehousing alongside mixed use allocations and existing employment sites, it will have the effect of enabling Central Bedfordshire to be responsive to market demands whilst also retaining existing sites for local industrial employment uses. Set within the context of the wider Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc, and proposals set out within the Industrial Strategy White Paper (November 2017) this

<sup>15</sup> For the purposes of this Local Plan, 'strategic employment' is considered to be that which is significantly large in scale and which is advantageously located adjacent, or in very close proximity to, the strategic transportation network including road and rail.



approach also enables Central Bedfordshire to be pro-active in ensuring strong foundations for future growth aspirations.

- 12.5.4 In order to allow for market friction, choice and the natural turn-over of premises (churn), as well as for windfall losses, the 2016 ELR identifies that within Central Bedfordshire, a surplus pipeline of 20% of the built stock should be maintained throughout the Plan period.
- 12.5.5 Further additional new-build allocations will be considered favourably to maximise the economic impact of key infrastructure proposals including East West Rail and A1 Corridor improvements if the proposed allocations are built and occupied and there is an identified market demand.

### 12.6 Employment Sites and Uses

12.6.1 Overall Central Bedfordshire has a broad employment offer. In order to maintain and expand this diversity, support existing business growth and to attract inward investment of both large and small businesses, the Council has adopted a flexible approach to employment provision.



12.6.2 So as to maintain a diverse portfolio of employment sites for B1 to B8 uses, in relation to the above identified portfolio of land, permission will generally be granted for B Class uses. Through the portfolio of employment sites, the Council will seek to ensure a mix of tenure, type and size of premises to support business and jobs growth, including the provision of freehold sites offered to occupiers addressing the findings of the ELR. The Council will also seek to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to enable the sites to come forward to attract appropriate interest from developers and occupiers. This may include, but is not limited to, servicing, provision of access, marketing and other such steps as required in order to bring forward or accelerate development.

12.6.3 Whilst the Council would not wish to see substantial amounts of employment land lost to other uses, it is recognised that non B-uses can make a significant contribution to the local economy and job creation, and that some non B-uses can complement and enhance B-uses. Consideration will be given to non B-use employment generating proposals on allocated and key employment land against a series of criteria which seek to ascertain that such proposals are suitable for the proposed location and will not detrimentally impact upon the delivery of B-uses or the quantity of land available to deliver B-uses. Although the clear economic benefits of residential development are recognised, it does not qualify as an employment generating use for the purposes of Policy EMP2.

12.6.4 In instances where allocated or key employment land is no longer suitable for employment generating uses, detailed evidence should be provided to demonstrate that the site has been effectively marketed for these uses and that no suitable interest has subsequently materialised. For existing and non-key



employment sites, evidence will be sought to ensure that redevelopment for B or non-B employment uses is not viable. In these cases the loss of employment land to a non-employment generating use may therefore be the only reasonable option.

- 12.6.5 Central Bedfordshire has a number of town centres which play a vital role in contributing to the local economy. In order to support the role and function of the town centres, the Council would not generally wish to see inappropriate retail uses located on key employment sites or on land allocated for employment generating activities. However, the Council acknowledges that some retail uses such as 'bulky goods' provision may be more suited to out of centre locations and will need to be assessed on a site by site basis to ensure that any such provision will not detrimentally impact upon the town centres. Chapter 13 provides greater detail in relation to the appropriate location of retail uses within Central Bedfordshire and specifically the town centres.
- 12.6.6 In line with the Council's growth and enabling aspirations, the Council will seek to consider emerging opportunities and mechanisms to stimulate and support sustainable development, where it can be evidenced that such activities are necessary and would bring forward jobs growth that would not otherwise have happened. The types of activity the Council will consider include, Local Development Orders (LDO), masterplans, planning and development briefs and innovative financing mechanisms to bring forward development.
- 12.6.7 LDO have already been progressed for the Woodside Industrial Estate, Dunstable and for the Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade (as part of the food enterprise zone) and others will be put forward as appropriate. Their purpose is to make it easier for businesses to grow and expand by relaxing some planning restrictions so that specified works can be undertaken without the need to apply for planning permission. The overall aim is to help businesses to save time and money; thus placing them in a better position to respond quickly to opportunities and contribute towards the economic health of the area.



### **Policy EMP1: Employment Sites and Uses**

Across the portfolio of employment land within Central Bedfordshire, planning permission will be granted for appropriate B1, B2 and B8 uses. In order to provide flexibility, choice and the delivery of a range of employment uses, changes of use for other non-B employment generating uses will be supported where all of the following criteria are met:

- The application provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there is no need for the premises to remain as a B1, B2 or B8 use;
- the proposal would not unacceptably reduce the supply, variety or quality of available industrial and commercial land and property within the surrounding area;
- the proposal would contribute towards meeting the overall employment needs of the district, or widening the range of employment opportunities;
- the proposal would be suitable in relation to the location and neighbouring land uses;
- the location is appropriately accessible and the proposal would not result in unacceptable levels of traffic generation.

For the purposes of bullet point 1, evidence of ongoing proactive marketing for a minimum of 6 months must be provided.

Opportunities to strengthen existing clusters through the delivery of complementary employment generating uses will be encouraged.

To support the role and function of the town centres, A1 retail uses will not be considered appropriate on employment sites, except as an ancillary operation. Exceptions will be considered on a site by site basis for specialist retailing less suited to a town centre location and will be subject to the separate retail policies set out in this Plan.



**Policy EMP2: Change of Use to Non-Employment**  
**Generating Uses**

Sites identified within Appendix 4 will be considered favourably for alternative, non-employment generating uses.

Other than where permitted development allows, proposals for non-employment generating uses on identified employment land will only be considered where suitable and detailed evidence is submitted demonstrating that the following criteria can be met:

In relation to non-key sites:

- the site is not currently actively used for employment generating uses;
- there is no reasonable or viable prospect of the site delivering an employment generating use;
- a change of use will not detrimentally impact upon the deliverability of B1, B2 and B8 uses within the locality; and
- the proposed use would not detrimentally impact upon existing surrounding land uses.

In relation to allocated employment land and key sites, in addition to the above:

- the site has been comprehensively marketed for at least 6 months for the current employment generating uses as well as for alternative employment generating uses and has been promoted through the Council's Inward Investment Portal;
- there is a local need for the proposed intended use; and
- there are no strong economic reasons why the proposed intended use would be inappropriate.

All proposals for non-employment generating uses should be in accordance with other relevant policies set out within the plan.

**12.7 Employment proposals within and adjacent to Settlement Envelopes**

12.7.1 Central Bedfordshire has a diverse portfolio of employment land which offers a variety in size, type and location of land and premises. Whilst the Council has sought to ensure the range of employment land within Central Bedfordshire is significantly comprehensive to meet the needs of current and future employers, there may be instances where the portfolio of existing sites does not meet the needs of a specific proposed employment use.

12.7.2 In order to promote Central Bedfordshire as a great location for business and to ensure a variety of employment generating uses, the Council will, exceptionally consider proposals for employment uses within or adjacent to Settlement Envelopes to meet identified local need or to support growth in the Council's key employment sectors, where it is evidenced that there are no suitable alternative sites.



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### Expansion of Existing Businesses

- 12.7.3 The Council values existing businesses within Central Bedfordshire and supports proposals for expansion which will contribute positively to the local economy and provide new jobs within the area. The portfolio of employment sites within Central Bedfordshire provides a variety of options for existing businesses to relocate to in order to expand.
- 12.7.4 In some instances, existing businesses may wish to expand either within their existing curtilage or onto land adjacent to their current site rather than relocate to a new location. In some instances, this may necessitate expansion within or adjacent to settlement envelopes in to the countryside. In order to secure the retention and growth of existing businesses, the Council has adopted a flexible approach to business expansion within Central Bedfordshire.
- 12.7.5 Policy EMP4 applies only to sites that are outside of the Green Belt.

### Policy EMP3: Employment proposals within or adjacent to Settlement Envelopes

Development for employment generating uses will be supported where they are within or adjacent to the Settlement Envelopes where;

- the site is not in the Green Belt;
- there are no comparable existing or allocated sites, or comparable existing buildings within the locality that are available, suitable, achievable or viable;
- for proposals to extend existing businesses onto adjoining land, evidence is provided that intensification within the existing site is not possible or practical;
- evidence is provided of the significant economic benefits that would flow from the proposal taking account of the environmental and social aspects;
- The scale of the development proposed is appropriate to its location.

In all cases the criteria set out in Policy EMP1 will also be relevant considerations and proposals should be in accordance with other relevant policies set out within the plan.



### 12.8 Education and Skills

- 12.8.1 Central Bedfordshire is home to a number of high quality schools and leading higher and further education institutions, including Cranfield University, Central Bedfordshire College and Shuttleworth College (part of Bedford College). We recognise that for Central Bedfordshire to fulfil its economic potential, the importance of skills cannot be over-stated. Skills are critical to all employees and employers in all sectors: public, private and the voluntary and community sectors, a key issue highlighted as one of the five foundations which are essential attributes of every successful economy within the Industrial Strategy White Paper (November 2017).
- 12.8.2 The Council will seek to support the continued delivery of high quality learning and education within Central Bedfordshire, and will seek to support the development of learning and higher education facilities. We will also seek to work collaboratively with key skills providers outside of Central Bedfordshire, including Bedford College, North Herts College and Milton Keynes College to ensure the needs of our current and future residents and communities are met.
- 12.8.3 The Council works closely with employers to ensure that local provision is demand-led, meeting the future skills needs of employers to ensure a local skilled workforce that is fit for purpose. This approach is also in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire All Age Skills Strategy (2016-2020) to deliver a flexible and mobile workforce that meets the needs of employers, is able to respond rapidly to economic shifts and will enable Central Bedfordshire to achieve its full economic potential.
- 12.8.4 The importance of training and apprenticeships is fundamental to the future success of the local economy as is getting people into work and providing them with useable skills. The Council actively encourages the provision of school engagement, careers advice and fairs, training, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities at all levels on development sites throughout Central Bedfordshire, and will seek to work with developers, education institutions and others to ensure this aspiration is realised.
- 12.8.5 We would also seek to work with developers to ensure that not only are skills and employment opportunities created during construction, but also that these newly acquired skills and opportunities are carried forward and utilised elsewhere within the industry.
- 12.8.6 The Council will continue to support its residents to prosper, helping all to realise their potential and ensuring that our more vulnerable residents are supported on their pathway into employment.

### 12.9 Rural and Visitor Economy

- 12.9.1 The 2011 Census has identified that 38.8% of all people employed in Central Bedfordshire are employed in rural areas. This compares to 17.5% nationally, showing the importance of the rural economy to Central Bedfordshire. In view of this, the Council supports in principle the diversification of agricultural and other



land based rural businesses and the development of any related new or converted buildings, providing that they are appropriately designed.

- 12.9.2 Central Bedfordshire's attractive natural and historic environment is identified as one of the best aspects of the area by local businesses in the Central Bedfordshire Business Survey 2017.
- 12.9.3 The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment contributes to the creation of distinct high quality places which can result in wider economic benefits through encouraging tourism, helping to create successful places for business to locate and attracting inward investment.
- 12.9.4 The visitor economy has 730 businesses in Central Bedfordshire, employing just over 10,200 people in 2015. Tourist attractions range from major facilities such as Centre Parcs, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo and Woburn Safari Park to a raft of historic towns and villages, country houses, outdoor attractions and activities for people of all ages such as the Greensands Ridge. There are also a number of high quality hotels and restaurants across Central Bedfordshire which cater to the needs of those visiting the area for both business and pleasure.
- 12.9.5 The Council recognises that the visitor economy is a key growth sector and positive policies will help to ensure this opportunity can be taken further, although considerations such as the impact on landscape and the rural road network will continue to be taken into account.



- 12.9.6 The need to increase hotel provision, self-catering accommodation, conferencing facilities, the provision of low-cost accommodation and increasing the range and choice of food and drink establishments is supported in order to support the growth of this key sector. The Council is willing to be flexible where these can support local services and provide opportunities for rural diversification.
- 12.9.7 The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings can make a significant contribution to the local economy. Proposals for employment generating uses and tourism activities will therefore need to be mindful of the benefits that existing buildings can deliver.



### **Policy EMP4: Rural and Visitor Economy**

The contribution of the rural area and tourism to the wider economy will be supported and proposals for employment generating uses within the rural area and those related to the visitor economy will be considered in relation to:

- the suitability and impact of the proposal in relation to the location and neighbouring land uses;
- evidenced viability of the proposed use;
- an increase in the number of jobs that can be delivered; and
- the impact upon traffic generation, suitable accessibility and sustainable forms of transport.

The Council will seek to promote the rural area and visitor economy across the whole of Central Bedfordshire by supporting the principle of proposals for tourist and leisure developments, particularly those which will also provide opportunities for rural diversification and which are well located to support local services, businesses and other tourist and leisure attractions.

Proposals located within the Green Belt will only be considered where exceptional circumstances are identified and where the need for the proposal outweighs any demonstrable harm to the Green Belt.

Proposals for static holiday and touring caravan parks and holiday chalet developments will be considered against the need to protect historic environments, valuable landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites as well as the potential impact on local residents.

The Council will seek to retain existing public houses and shops in order to encourage diverse employment opportunities, provide tourist accommodation and in recognition of the contribution such uses make, particularly to the rural economy.

## **12.10 Significant Facilities in the Countryside and Green Belt**

12.10.1 Central Bedfordshire is notable for the presence of a number of significant employment facilities in the countryside and Green Belt. These sites have the potential to provide additional jobs, which would help to meet the employment objectives and aspirations of the Plan. These facilities have been identified as Cranfield University and Technology Park, Shuttleworth College, Millbrook Proving Ground, RSPB, DISC Chicksands, ZSL Whipsnade, Woburn Safari Park, Center Parcs, Toddington Motorway Services Area, Faldo Road Industrial Estate in Barton-le-Clay, Kier at Tempsford and Lockheed Martin, Ampthill.



- 12.10.2 It is clear that these major sites can make a significant contribution to the local economy and that a number of these also have the potential to attract high technology orientated businesses, creating specialist markets and a cluster effect.
- 12.10.3 The NPPF is clear about the need to secure economic growth. It recognises that the challenges presented by a low carbon future can still be met while also delivering this core objective. In order to proactively plan for businesses in within the key growth sectors emerging sectors like the green economy, the Council supports the development of innovation, research and development industries, particularly around the existing cluster of high technology centres of excellence of Cranfield University (including the area formerly known as Cranfield Technology Park), Cranfield Airfield and Millbrook Proving Ground.



- 12.10.4 In the future, major new sites may emerge in Central Bedfordshire which should also be included within the remit of this policy.

### **Policy EMP5: Significant facilities in the Countryside and Green Belt**

Planning permission will be granted for expansion, infilling or redevelopment of, significant facilities provided that the expansion, infilling or redevelopment is within the boundaries of the existing use, relates to that use and enhances the contribution to the local or national economy.

Significant expansion of existing facilities into the open countryside will be subject to the production of a management plan, development brief or masterplan prior to any application which will ultimately need to be endorsed by the Council.

All proposals for significant development at these facilities will be assessed on an individual basis and in accordance with other relevant policies within the plan, including, but not limited to:



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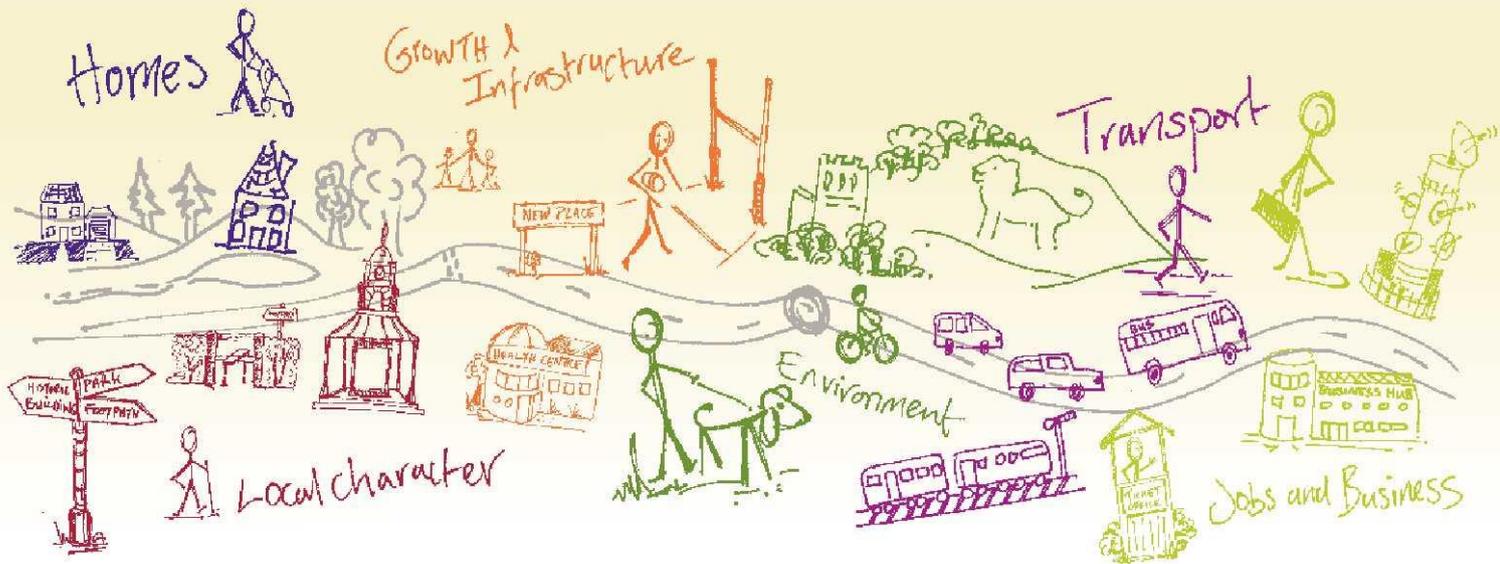
- impact on the open countryside and any heritage assets;
- provision of sustainable transport;
- justification;
- scale, layout and design – which must be appropriate to the establishment and its setting.

Planning applications that are considered acceptable against these criteria and all other relevant plan policies, will be considered favourably. Further major facilities that may be developed with a similar level of importance in terms of employment or research will be considered under this policy.

Where a management plan, development brief or masterplan for a facility identified above has already been produced and endorsed by the Council, this should be a material consideration for future planning decisions.



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Retail & Town Centres

Local Plan 2015-2035

### 13 Retail and Town Centres

#### 13.1 Retail Hierarchy

- 13.1.1 Town Centres play an important role in supporting the local economy as they provide a wide range of services, facilities and employment and act as a focal point for surrounding communities. Competitive town centres should provide customer choice; with a range of main town centre uses including retail development, office accommodation, arts, cultural and tourism development and leisure and entertainment uses.
- 13.1.2 While it is recognised that towns in Central Bedfordshire suffer from a leakage of expenditure to larger centres like Milton Keynes, Luton and Bedford that are easily accessible to Central Bedfordshire residents; the towns still play an important function for local communities. In the main the town centres are characterised by high occupancy rates and attractive shop fronts. The role of the retail hierarchy set out in Table 13.1 overleaf is to support the growth of new retail development in appropriate locations and at appropriate scales in order to further consolidate the existing centres.
- 13.1.3 The planned housing growth in Central Bedfordshire will lead to an increased population over the next twenty years with a large proportion of additional expenditure expected to come from the new population. In order to cater for the growing population and having regard to the recent and expected trends in the retail and leisure sectors, it is considered that an appropriate strategy for Central Bedfordshire would be to first improve its retail offer by focussing on improving the vitality and viability of the existing town centres in the short and medium term and then increasing the comparison retail need in Central Bedfordshire at the end of the Plan period in line with the projected increases in population as identified in Table 13.2. This could be achieved by making the existing floorspace in the town centres work hard to attract visitors through the intensification of uses in the town centres and implementing the objectives of the town centre masterplans and frameworks.
- 13.1.4 Given the planned housing growth and resulting increase in population as well as the documented changes in the convenience goods sector, such as the change in store formats to smaller stores; Central Bedfordshire will plan for increasing the convenience retail need. Planning for an increase in convenience retail need will allow for the town centres, service centres and large villages to provide for the existing and future local need and ensure these settlements are more sustainable by reducing the need for residents to travel to the large adjoining centres.
- 13.1.5 Retail and leisure uses should also be working together to support the vitality and viability of the town centres through generating local employment opportunities and creating more attractive, diverse and healthy places catering for a range of specialist and brand retail that encourages footfall to these centres. There has been an increase in the leisure offers within the town centres, with a shift in some of the town centres towards more A3 uses (restaurant and cafes). This is considered positive as these uses increase dwell times in the town centres thus



improving the vitality and viability of them. As such, it is considered that it is appropriate to plan for an increase in food and drink uses within the designated town centres and villages.

**Table 13.1: Retail Hierarchy**

Type of Centre	Location	Principal Function
Principal Centres	Town Dunstable Leighton Buzzard Biggleswade	Provides a range of shops including many national multiple retailers and independent shops. Provides an extensive range of services, facilities and leisure uses and is home to a large number of businesses
Secondary Centres	Town Amphill Flitwick Houghton Regis Sandy Wixams	Provides a range of shops including some national multiple retailers and many independent shops. Provides a range of services, facilities and leisure uses and is home to a number of businesses
Minor Centres	Service See Policy SP7	Provides a number of local shops and a small to medium sized supermarket
Large Villages	See Policy SP8	Provides a small number of local shops serving a small catchment

**Table 13.2 : Quantitative Need to 2035**

	2016	2021	2026	2031	2035
Comparison goods (sqm net)	0	0	0	3,127	11,927
Convenience goods (sqm net)	9,638	10,300	11,940	13,618	15,129
Food and drink uses (sqm net)	0	1,991	4,148	6,488	8,480

- 13.1.6 When planning for the retail provision in the planned urban extensions, proposed strategic allocations and large settlements, it is considered that retail provision should be of a scale to meet local convenience needs in order to complement existing centres.
- 13.1.7 With the exception of the new settlement of Wixams, each of the Major Service Centres (principal and secondary town centres) within the settlement hierarchy have designated town centre boundaries. An appropriate town centre boundary will be identified for Wixams in the future. The purpose of the boundaries is to maximise the vibrancy of town centres by ensuring that a high concentration of main town centre uses; particularly retail and leisure uses; are focused within the



designated area. The town centre boundaries can be viewed on the Policies Maps.

### 13.2 The Sequential Approach and Town Centre Vitality

- 13.2.1 The approach of requiring new main town centre uses to be delivered in town centre locations first will be adhered to. Where this is not feasible, sites on the edge of town centres should then be considered, followed by out of centre locations. When considering out of centre sites, preference will be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.
- 13.2.2 It is recognised that certain types of retailing, whilst beneficial to the local economy, may not be appropriate within town centres; particularly 'bulky goods' retailing. In order to meet the needs of shoppers and ensure a varied retail offer within Central Bedfordshire, proposals for such uses will be considered on a case by case basis. They must also be supported by evidence that demonstrates that the sequential approach has been followed to ensure that new uses complement rather than adversely affect existing centres.
- 13.2.3 In order to maintain the vitality of town centres, A1 use classes should be retained where possible. Where there are proposals for changes of use to other A use classes, the potential impact on the town centre as a whole will be considered, including the issue of whether approval of the scheme would result in an over concentration of the proposed use.
- 13.2.4 To further support this 'town centre first' approach, the NPPF gives local authorities the option to set their own floorspace thresholds for impact assessments for out of town centre retail, leisure and office proposals; the default threshold being 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. Although Central Bedfordshire does have existing food stores with a gross floorspace of more than 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>, these tend to be edge or out of centre stores. In the town centres, convenience store to medium size supermarket provision together with a wide range of small independent outlets is the usual profile. In view of this, new or extended food stores in edge of centre, or out of centre locations, could have a significant impact on town centre provision especially given the scale of the rural centres. It is therefore considered that any proposals over 500m<sup>2</sup> gross, outside of town centre boundaries, should be subject to an impact assessment.



### **Policy R1: Ensuring Town Centre Vitality**

The Council will support and encourage the retail and service provision in the Town Centres, service centres and large villages. The scale of development should relate to the Retail Hierarchy.

Within the identified town centre boundaries of the principal and secondary town centres, development proposals for main town centre uses such as retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, and community uses will be supported.

Proposals for change of use, or re-development of properties, away from these uses will be supported providing that they meet all of the following criteria:

- The proposed use would be appropriate within a town centre setting;
- There is not an existing over-concentration of such uses within the town centre boundary;
- The proposed use would positively enhance the vitality of the town centre by extending the range of facilities offered and/or stimulating activity outside normal shopping hours; and
- The proposed use would maintain an appropriate window display to avoid the creation of a 'dead' frontage.

Above ground floor level, proposals for residential (C3) and general office space (B1a) will be encouraged.

### **Outside designated town centres**

The Sequential Test will be applied to proposals for main town centre uses that are not within a designated town centre boundary.

Retail Impact Assessments will be required for all retail, office and leisure proposals over 500sqm gross external floorspace that are outside a designated town centre boundary. Schemes that are found to have negative impact on the vitality of town centres will not be supported.

Proposals for retailing in out-of-centre locations will be considered, in conjunction with Policy EMP2.



### 13.3 Neighbourhood and Rural Retail and Services

13.3.1 The Council recognises the vital role that shops and public houses play in supporting local neighbourhoods and rural communities; particularly those that are relatively isolated from town centre facilities and services. Proposals for new retail services within minor service centres and villages are therefore encouraged where appropriate; while existing services should be maintained where they remain viable.

13.3.2 Many outlying neighbourhoods and much of the rural community are poorly served by public transport, therefore if existing rural facilities within walking distance are lost; it could contribute to social exclusion, particularly for the elderly and those without a car. It is certainly the case that many local public houses and shops have been saved by strict planning policy in the past so it is increasingly vital to maintain this strong policy stance in the face of current economic pressures.



13.3.3 Retail premises such as farm shops, which are located outside of rural settlements, can also play an important role in supporting the rural economy and providing a sustainable source of locally produced food.



**Policy R2: Retail for minor service centres, villages and the rural economy**

In order to support vibrant, sustainable and diverse neighbourhoods and the rural economy, proposals for retail uses within existing minor service centres and villages will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- The proposal is of a suitable scale to the service centre or village;
- The site is an appropriate location;
- The proposal would not result in unsustainable levels of traffic generation.

Proposals for the change of use or re-development of shops or public houses in existing minor service centres or villages which would result in the loss of such facilities, will not be permitted unless:

- There are other facilities performing the same function within easy walking distance of the community; and
- The applicant provides sufficient and demonstrable evidence that there is no realistic prospect of the use continuing, even if permission is refused.

Where the above tests are met, the site/building must firstly be considered for alternative community infrastructure uses. Only where these are demonstrated to be unviable or unsuitable will other uses be acceptable.

Proposals for the change of use or re-development of retail premises such as local farm shops, shops at garage sites and public houses which are located outside of settlement boundaries will also be considered against the above criteria.

**13.4 Town Centre Development**

13.4.1 Although many residents in Central Bedfordshire use the larger centres adjoining the area, the town centres in Central Bedfordshire still play a vital role in supporting the local surrounding communities by providing a range of services and facilities. It is therefore important that policies and initiatives are designed to support the town centres to withstand the ongoing economic challenges.

13.4.2 Town Centre identity plays a significant role in defining its sense of place and creating a destination that is unique to its offer in Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding region. Recognising that the town centres cannot compete with larger adjoining town centres, such as Milton Keynes, Luton and Bedford,, it is important that they provide retail, lifestyle and cultural experiences that create distinct destinations.

13.4.3 As well as the adopted (and emerging) masterplans and development briefs for the town centres to guide appropriate development, there are Strategic Delivery Frameworks (SDFs) for Central Bedfordshire's large market towns: Dunstable, Leighton-Linslade, Ampthill and Flitwick and Biggleswade. These SDFs provide a guide to the vision, growth and development in these towns. Central Bedfordshire



plays a proactive role in enabling suitable development that benefits sustainable growth.

- 13.4.4 Central Bedfordshire Council will continue to support and create initiatives that increase our town centres vitality and viability. The Market Town Regeneration Fund (MTRF) is one example of this approach. The MTRF has been developed to enhance market towns across Central Bedfordshire, supporting economic and cultural activities within town centres with the aim of making them more vibrant and better places to visit, live and do business in.

### Dunstable Town Centre

- 13.4.5 Dunstable is an historic town located on the now de-trunked A5 which runs through the town and connects it to the M1 at J9 to the south and Milton Keynes to the north. The town as a whole has a relatively high percentage of convenience floorspace (27% compared to the national average of 18%), largely due to the presence of four supermarkets. However, the comparison offer is fairly low and consists of a range of middle to low market offer businesses. Whilst the “traditional” High Street is comparably well occupied, the number of vacant units in the town is marginally higher than the national average.

- 13.4.6 Significant repositioning and redevelopment is required to revitalise and reinvigorate Dunstable town centre to meet the needs of today’s shoppers. There are plans for regenerating Dunstable Town Centre, increasing pedestrian access across the town and enabling new town centre development that benefits the local economy, including new leisure, employment and educational facilities. There is potential to refurbish the ‘Quadrant Shopping Centre’ and changes have been made to the configuration, which has seen an increase in occupancy. Any redevelopment will need to have regard to the heritage assets found within the town centre, notably Priory Church, a scheduled monument. These contribute to the character and history of Dunstable town centre.

- 13.4.7 In order to provide additional competitive and appropriate retail space in the town, it is recognised that attention might need to shift beyond the town centre to other nearby locations, such as the Grove Theatre. Another location is the already well-established White Lion Retail Park which has both larger footprint stores accommodating big box retail, and also offers restaurants and leisure uses. The recent opening of the Luton-Dunstable Busway with stops adjacent to the White Lion Retail Park also supports this change of focus and, by encouraging sustainable travel from the wider conurbation, will free up the local transport network thus reducing traffic congestion in the town centre. The completion of the A5-M1 Link Road and Woodside Connection will also alleviate traffic pressures in this location by diverting traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles, away from the town centre and will encourage shopping in the traditional High Street shops.

### Leighton Buzzard Town Centre

- 13.4.8 Leighton Buzzard is an attractive market town which grew significantly during the 1970s. The Town Council has a document entitled ‘The Big Plan’ outlining the community’s aspirations for the town. Central Bedfordshire Council is working



closely with the Town Council to deliver many of the proposals, including new sports and community facilities and traffic management schemes.

- 13.4.9 The town has a good comparison retail offer, largely focused around the High Street, Market Square and Waterborne Walk. The percentage of convenience floorspace in the town centre (24%) is above the national average (18%), while vacancy rates are significantly below the national average. The town centre is characterised by a good choice of independent shops alongside some national chains. Leighton Buzzard has a growing specialist economy and this will be encouraged and supported by Central Bedfordshire.
- 13.4.10 Development Briefs were adopted by the Council in 2012 as Interim Technical Guidance for Development Management purposes which will guide and attract development on two key sites: Land South of High Street and Bridge Meadow. Land South of High Street will create an extension to the High Street with proposed new mixed use development,, which will have the capacity to accommodate high quality complimentary uses and enhance Leighton Buzzard's sense of place. The Development Brief for Land South of High Street will be updated and will act as supplementary planning guidance to the Local Plan. Bridge Meadows is a proposed waterside development that could offer a new mixed-use quarter that will strengthen the links between the combined towns of Linslade and Leighton Buzzard.

### Houghton Regis Town Centre

- 13.4.11 Houghton Regis town centre contains a significant higher proportion of convenience retail units than the national average (22% compared to 9%). The majority of the retail offer is at Bedford Square, although a new supermarket has recently opened on the High Street. The physical environment of the town centre has recently undergone substantial public realm improvements along the complete length of the High Street. The public transport network has also recently undergone improvements with the opening of the Luton-Dunstable Busway and the A5-M1 Link Road and the Woodside Connection should further improve the general environment, local public transport and congestion throughout the town centre.
- 13.4.12 An adopted Masterplan outlines how the town centre could be improved and how it could contribute to meeting the needs of a significantly increased local population. It is important that regard is had to Houghton Regis town centre when considering the master planning of the nearby urban extensions, particularly the location and scale of new local centres.

### Biggleswade Town Centre

- 13.4.13 Biggleswade town centre has an attractive market town feel. There are a number of historic buildings in the town centre giving it character and contributing positively to the townscape. The town centre is well served by supermarkets and convenience stores. While the comparison retail offer is below average, there is still a good range of premises. Vacancy rates in Biggleswade are on par with the national average of 18%.



13.4.14 The provisions of the adopted town centre Masterplan has the potential to increase the retail offer of the town, whilst improving transport infrastructure and the public realm. A particular focus in improving the town centre offer will be initiatives designed to enhance the historical Market Square and heart of the town.

### Flitwick Town Centre

13.4.15 Flitwick is characterised by a disjointed town centre and a lack of public space and amenities which impacts on the attractiveness of the town centre. These issues are largely caused by the location of the main rail line going through Flitwick dividing the town centre into two distinct and poorly connected areas.

13.4.16 The proportion of convenience units in the centre is comparable to the national average, although there are only three units including a supermarket. The comparison offer in the town centre is extremely limited with no national retailers. There is a current need for additional and improved retail floorspace in Flitwick that has not been met to date due to the lack of appropriate sites and units capable of supporting the reconfiguration of the town centre. The redevelopment of the station area will help facilitate this reconfiguration.

13.4.17 The adopted Planning Framework and Indicative Masterplan for the town centre aims to guide the provision of a new focus for retailing and a significantly enhanced physical environment. A new transport interchange combining all forms of public transport will be provided at this end at Flitwick railway station which will also provide additional facilities for cyclists as well as improved public spaces and facilities for station and town centre uses. Further new and improved retail floorspace will be provided within the station area as part of a redevelopment of this area and adjacent land thereby providing space for the expansion of both convenience and comparison retailers in line with local needs. This facility will form part of a larger mixed use development which will seek to create a clearer focal point and heart for the town centre in line with the principals of the town centre masterplan.



## **Policy R3: Town Centre Development**

### **Dunstable Town Centre**

Dunstable town centre is the preferred location for new retail development and other forms of development, such as leisure and entertainment, offices, arts, culture and tourism and should be in accordance with the Strategic Delivery Framework and emerging Regeneration and Master Plans.

Proposals should reflect the scale and characteristics of Dunstable Town Centre protect and enhance the town's heritage assets and should be subject to a Traffic Impact Assessment, where appropriate.

Consideration should also be given to the retail hierarchy and the sequential approach as outlined in Policy R1.

### **Other Town Centres**

In addition to Policy R1 development proposals should be in accordance with the principle and objectives of the relevant and up to date town centre masterplans and development briefs.

Development proposals elsewhere in town centres should complement and not prejudice development proposed by town centre masterplans and development briefs. The Council will seek to secure financial contributions to mitigate any significant adverse impacts on existing town centres or planned investment.

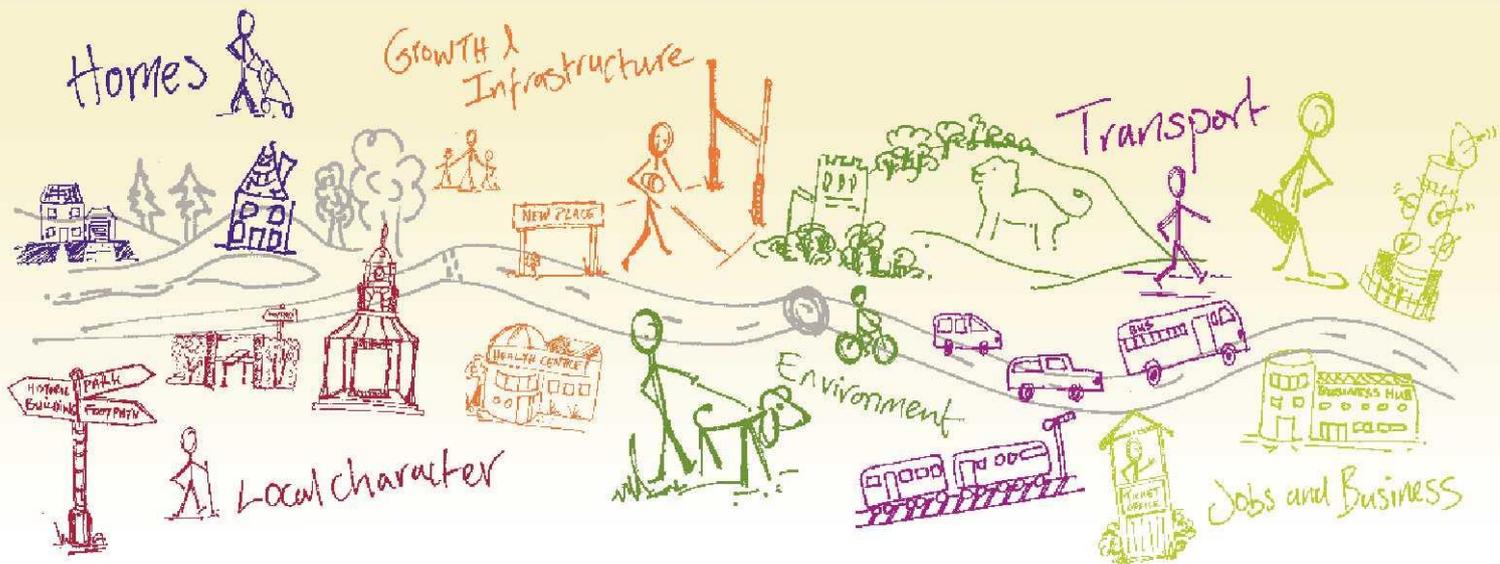
Where town centres do not have adopted or endorsed masterplans or development briefs, the Council will seek to support sustainable development in town centres and retain existing retail uses in line with Policy R1.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Transport Local Plan 2015-2035

## 14 Transport

### 14.1 Overview of the Transport Network

- 14.1.1 Central Bedfordshire is well served by strategic north-south road links, notably the M1, A1, A6 and A5, and east-west links in the form of the A421, A505 and A507, which provide connections between the A1 in the east and the M1 in the west.
- 14.1.2 There have been significant improvements to east-west highway connectivity in Central Bedfordshire with the opening of the A5-M1 link road and the Woodside Link road (A5505).
- 14.1.3 The major rail links are north-south orientated with the Midland Mainline, East Coast Mainline and West Coast Mainlines all running through Central Bedfordshire. There are 11 rail stations with 6 providing key connections to London. All mainline stations are seeing steady growth in passenger numbers and this growth is projected to continue during the plan period.
- 14.1.4 The only east-west route in place is the Marston Vale branch line, which connects Bedford to Bletchley, and provides a link through to Milton Keynes. There are plans to upgrade this as part of the western branch of East-West Rail, with a stopping service at Ridgmont which will have direct services to Oxford.
- 14.1.5 Bus services operate between the main urban areas within Central Bedfordshire and to key service centres in neighbouring areas such as Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes and the Hertfordshire towns of Hitchin and Stevenage.
- 14.1.6 The Luton-Dunstable Busway is a bus priority corridor between Luton and Dunstable town centres which also provides access to London Luton Airport and Houghton Regis town centre via a high frequency, high quality 6 mile link<sup>16</sup>.
- 14.1.7 In terms of cycling, Central Bedfordshire is connected to the National Cycle Network (NCN) via Routes 6, 12 and 51 which provide strategic cycle friendly links to the surrounding region and rest of the country<sup>17</sup>.
- 14.1.8 All of the authority's main towns have cycle networks in place. Route coverage is generally good albeit further investment is required at a local level to ensure that cycling becomes a more attractive choice for local journeys.



<sup>16</sup> [www.cbtravelchoices.co.uk](http://www.cbtravelchoices.co.uk)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/national-cycle-network>



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035**

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### 14.2 Local Transport Plan

- 14.2.1 The Local Transport Plan, or LTP as it is often known, is the formal policy document for transport which also sets out the Council's long term framework for investment in transport across Central Bedfordshire.
- 14.2.2 The LTP currently covers the period up to 2026 and there is a statutory requirement on the authority to produce and maintain the Plan. It considers the needs of all forms of transport particularly walking, cycling, buses, rail and car use.
- 14.2.3 The LTP establishes a strategic approach through which to deal with key transport issues, a series of objectives, and broad areas of intervention through which schemes will be identified and improvements made to the transport network.
- 14.2.4 The Council's Cycle Strategy forms part of the LTP, which addresses issues relevant to cyclists, detailing a hierarchy of routes, drawing out the wider linkages with other policy areas to demonstrate the importance of encouraging more cycling and details the framework of interventions through which efforts to increase the number of people cycling will be focused

### 14.3 Overview of Transport Issues

- 14.3.1 A number of the issues associated with transport provision and travel choice are often long standing and complex, with many inter-related factors, often controlled by the transport operators and agencies such as Highways England. There have been improvements to transport in Central Bedfordshire particularly on the delivery of new road schemes and work on rail interchanges.
- 14.3.2 The main transport concerns affecting Central Bedfordshire however, can be categorised into three broad areas relating to:

#### Capacity:

- Increasing demand to travel associated with a growing population, new development and an up turn in the economy,
- Localised congestion, especially in the larger towns such as Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard,
- Junction capacity issues on the local and strategic road network, and
- Parking pressures in town centres, around schools / rail stations and at other key trip generators.

#### Connectivity

- The lack of self containment of many Central Bedfordshire communities resulting in residents travelling long distances to meet their needs,
- The limited access to sustainable transport provision particularly in rural areas, which results in reliance on the car for many journeys.
- Social exclusion and isolation for those without their own private transport or ability to fund more costly options, and
- Poor connectivity in terms of both services and infrastructure, and the ability to interchange between different modes of travel.

#### Communities



- Inappropriate routing of traffic, including HGVs, through some urban areas and villages which cause severance, poor air quality and safety concerns,
- Road safety, both in terms of actual accidents and perceived safety of vulnerable road users, and
- Dominance of the car in residential areas as a consequence of the poor provision and management of parking,
- A natural discouragement of cycling and walking due to lack of appropriate routes.

More general issues are also apparent associated with:

- Public perceptions and overcoming ingrained transport behaviour, and
- High proportion of cross boundary movements (partly due to high commuting levels) including within the Luton-Dunstable conurbation over which the authority only has partial influence.

14.3.3 These issues all impact upon the ability of the transport network and services across Central Bedfordshire to contribute towards the wider aims and objectives of the authority and facilitate the growth envisaged within this Plan.

14.3.4 In view of this, all development sites will need to be designed to reduce the need for travel and to secure modal shifts towards more sustainable forms of transport while ensuring a well functioning and efficient network in terms such as connectivity and the provision and management of parking.

### 14.4 Sustainable Approach to Mitigate Impacts on the Network

14.4.1 New development needs to consider a range of measures, interventions and infrastructure improvements to demonstrate that the proposed development minimises the impact on the local transport network. Sustainable transport measures should be fully considered.

14.4.2 The Council will seek to:

- Reduce the need to travel by car.
- Embed and promote sustainable transport within new developments.
- Increase connectivity and accessibility particularly through sustainable travel.
- Make the best use of existing infrastructure and services.
- Provide additional capacity where required.

14.4.3 Developers will be expected to ensure that new schemes fully mitigate any adverse impact on the transport network..



### 14.5 The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Transport Model

14.5.1 The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Transport Model 2017 (CBLTM) is a key transport planning tool to inform current and future transport patterns and demand across Central Bedfordshire. It can test the impact of development on



the transport network and determine what, if any, mitigation would be required to accommodate that level of development. It will also be used in the validation and bidding process for funding future transport schemes.

- 14.5.2 Development will be required to evidence whether there is sufficient capacity in the transport network to accommodate the increase in demand to travel. The CBLTM will form the basis to any assessment of transport capacity requirements. Further bespoke capacity assessments may also be required to test specific local impacts of development.

### 14.6 Sustainable Transport Provision

- 14.6.1 The sustainability of new development hinges upon the ability of sites to be accessible by a choice of means of transport to existing services such as: employment provision, education, retail, healthcare, and leisure facilities.
- 14.6.2 Accessibility issues are particularly important for those without access to a car. At a local level this should include encouraging walking for trips under two miles, and increasing opportunity to cycle for services within a five mile radius.
- 14.6.3 To achieve this, dominance of the car should be reduced, as supported by both the Manual for Streets and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide while not impeding access for emergency vehicles and public transport. Opportunities to reduce traffic speeds and introduce level surface street designs for example may help to encourage more walking and cycling and create safer streets.
- 14.6.4 Completed developments should be within a 400 metre threshold of a bus stop or 800 metres of a railway station with at least a half-hourly peak hour service provision in order to ensure public transport use is a realistic alternative to the car. This is supported by the Local Transport Plan which seeks to encourage development along public transport corridors
- 14.6.5 At a more strategic level, due to the lack of self-containment of many settlements in Central Bedfordshire, developments will be required to facilitate links to public transport provision so that residents can access facilities further afield by means other than a car.

### 14.7 Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

- 14.7.1 Where a new development is likely to have significant transport implications (see relevant Department of Transport guidance and the Local Transport Plan for thresholds), a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan should be prepared and submitted with a planning application for the development.
- 14.7.2 Transport Assessments should include (with additional information as required):
- the planning context of the development proposal;
  - appropriate study parameters (i.e. area, scope and duration of study);
  - assessment of public transport capacity, walking/ cycling capacity and road network capacity;
  - road trip generation and trip distribution methodologies and/ or assumptions about the development proposal;



- measures to promote sustainable travel using in the form of an accompanying Travel Plan;
- safety implications of development; and
- mitigation measures (where applicable) – including scope and implementation strategy.

### 14.7.3 Travel Plans should include (with additional information as required):

- accurate benchmark travel data including trip generation databases such as TRICS and/ or the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Transport Model where appropriate;
- Information concerning the nature of the proposed development and the forecast level of trips by all modes of transport likely to be associated with the development;
- relevant information about existing travel habits in the surrounding area based on Census and other relevant evidence;
- an action plan detailing how sustainable travel will be promoted to residents and/or employees;
- information on the connectivity to the nearest transport interchange;
- information on the provision of infrastructure to support low emissions vehicles;
- a robust monitoring regime;
- targets to reduce travel to and from the site by single occupancy car; and
- promotion of public transport services such as mapping, cycle training, incentives and journey planning.

### 14.7.4 Further guidance on Travel Plan requirements is set out in the Guidance on Travel Plans and Transport Assessment available on the Council's website.

#### **Policy T1: Mitigation of Transport Impacts on the Network**

Travel Plans, Travel Plan Statements and Transport Assessments will be required for any development which meets or exceeds the Gross Floor Area thresholds set out in the Council's Guidance on Travel Plans and Transport Assessment.

It should be demonstrated how the proposal will seek to reduce the need to travel and secure a modal shift towards sustainable forms of transport. This should be through an approach which first considers the ability to cater for walking and cycling, provide suitable public transport services, and make better use of existing highway capacity before considering the provision of additional roads.



Evidence must be provided in Transport Assessments to demonstrate:

- The principles established to give priority to pedestrians and other vulnerable road users in new developments, together with links to local service provision<sup>18</sup>.
- Comprehensive and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to schools, local employment and service provision.
- Connectivity with existing walking and cycling networks

Suitable bus or rail service provision within 400 metres (bus) or 800 metres (rail) safe walking distance offering at least a half-hourly peak hour service to a variety of service centres and interchanges.

Where a Travel Plan is in place, the developer and/or user will provide an annual update on their action plan, reporting progress against agreed aims and targets for a minimum of 5 years post occupation.

The Council will also require, as appropriate, financial contributions towards sustainable travel infrastructure and/ or promotional activity where connectivity to existing infrastructure is not suitable.

## 14.8 Highway Safety and Design

14.8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning decisions to take account of whether safe and suitable access to a development site can be achieved for all people.

14.8.2 Developments should be located and designed, to create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflict between general traffic and; emergency service vehicles, public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. Suitable and safe highway measures must be provided to mitigate the impact of development and enhance the use of the local road network for all users.

### Policy T2: Highway Safety & Design

Proposals for new development must not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and patterns of movement and must provide appropriate access in accordance with Council standards.

Development will be permitted where:

- The proposal is or will be well integrated with the existing transport network within and beyond the development itself; avoiding severance of communities as a result of measures to accommodate increased levels of traffic on the network;

<sup>18</sup> See the principles established in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and other Council guidance.



- The proposal does not impede the free flow of traffic on the existing network or create hazards to that traffic and other road users;
- The proposal retains or enhances existing footpaths and cycleway links;
- The proposal promotes walking and cycling permeability and ensure that linkages and publicly-accessible through routes are created to successfully integrate the development into wider networks;
- The development provides safe and convenient access in accordance with appropriate standards, that promote accessibility for all users and all modes of transport and includes designs, where appropriate, that incorporate low speeds;
- The proposal must avoid locations where the cumulative impacts of congestion is likely to remain severe following mitigation;
- The proposal must make adequate provision for loading and unloading, circulation, servicing and vehicle turning; and
- The proposal fully funds where appropriate, or contributes towards the costs of any measures required to cost effectively mitigate the impacts arising from the development.

## 14.9 Parking

- 14.9.1 The provision of car parking associated with new developments for housing and all commercial uses should adhere to the guidelines established by the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and the Parking Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Plan.
- 14.9.2 The location, availability, cost and enforcement of parking provision can have a significant impact on the travel choices people make, the safety of the network, and even the look and feel of the urban environment.
- 14.9.3 Innovative approaches to parking such as the provision of electric charging points, dedicated priority spaces for car sharers and secure, covered cycle shelters all help imbed sustainable transport options within new development.
- 14.9.4 With respect to freight, the provision of rest and parking facilities is important to maximise highway safety, preserve local amenity, reduce opportunities for crime and address the general needs of HGV driver working conditions. Such facilities should provide adequate rest areas for drivers and allow for the safe parking of large vehicles whilst minimising impacts on other road users.

### **Policy T3: Parking**

Developers of new residential developments must have regard to the car parking standards set out in the Central Bedfordshire Council's Design Guide and Parking Strategy.

Parking for commercial and other trip generating developments must be provided with regard to with the standards set out in the Central Bedfordshire Council's Car Parking Strategy.



Provision for cycle parking must have regard to the standards in the Central Bedfordshire's guidance for cycle parking in new developments,

Provision of lorry parking facilities for all new industrial and commercial units, including quarries and waste management facilities must be made on site.

Suitable proposals for lorry rest facilities will be supported where they meet the identified commercial demand.

### 14.10 Development and Public Transport Interchanges

14.10.1 The importance of public transport connectivity in forming an essential element to new development will help further support the viability of public transport services in Central Bedfordshire, together with the vitality of our market towns.

#### **Policy T4: Public Transport Interchanges**

Developments within close proximity to bus and rail interchanges should provide enhanced access in order to encourage more public transport use, cycling and walking, support the viability of services and enhance the vitality of the town centres in which they are located.

All major developments should promote connectivity to the transport interchange through Transport Assessments and Travel Plans. Typical measures may include current timetables, maps, equipment providing real time passenger information

Contributions to improve interchange infrastructure and to promote links to the end user will be sought.

Development will not be permitted should it compromise the ability of the authority to fully utilise and expand interchanges as required.

### 14.11 Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV)

14.11.1 The use of electric vehicles is an important measure in reducing CO2 emissions and improving local air quality and therefore the provision of necessary infrastructure which promotes the use of such vehicles is essential. Reducing CO2 emissions and our impact on climate change is a priority for Central Bedfordshire particularly in the urban areas of Ampthill, Sandy and Dunstable which are identified as Air Quality Monitoring Areas (AQMAs).

14.11.2 Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV) and associated charging infrastructure is an area where technology, standards and best



practice are rapidly evolving therefore it is important that new development seeks to encourage continued growth and respond to such change.

14.11.3 The increased uptake of ULEV will entail the provision of one or a combination of the following in new development:

- On-site charging points for residential dwellings with dedicated off street parking (an external charging point on a driveway or a wall mounted internal charging point in a garage). On site charging points in allocated EV parking spaces;
- On site passive provision of suitable electrical cabling for home owners to provide their own charging points more easily at later date;
- a financial contribution towards developing wider local ULEV infrastructure (for example, nearby but off-site in a more suitable/strategic location)

14.11.4 In the absence of prescribed standards, requirements will be based on case by case negotiation between planning authority and the developer. For commercial, retail and industrial developments the requirements for points may be set as a proportion of total parking spaces provided, ensuring adequate charging infrastructure and cabling for each marked bay.



### Policy T5: Ultra Low Emission Vehicles

The following new developments will be required to provide charging points to support the provision of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles:

- Residential developments
- Supermarkets or retail areas
- Employment sites
- University sites
- Other large scale trip generating uses

The provision of charging points will be negotiated on a case by case basis until standards are set out in the Local Transport Plan which will then be applied to all qualifying developments

## 14.12 Freight

14.12.1 The routing of traffic and particularly the movement of freight is a key issue in the creation of safe and attractive communities. The volume of freight transported through an area is often a useful measure of prosperity of a local economy and it is vital that local authorities cater for this demand. However such movements can have considerable impacts, especially where vehicles move from the strategic network onto local roads.

14.12.2 There are a number of freight generators in Central Bedfordshire. These include:

- Large industrial parks located close to M1 Junctions 9 through to 13 and along the A421 linking Bedford to the M1.
- Industrial parks and warehousing facilities in Ampthill, Flitwick, Sandy, Biggleswade, Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard.
- The transportation of aggregates and waste by road from local quarries and waste management facilities throughout Central Bedfordshire.
- The Local Transport Plan seeks to enable the efficient and reliable transportation of freight, and encourage the movement of freight by sustainable modes whilst minimising the negative impact of freight trips on local communities.

14.12.3 A Central Bedfordshire Designated Road Freight Network (DRFN), has been identified to provide links between key freight generators and attractors within the area whilst minimising impacts on local communities. It is comprised of primary routes which run through the authority providing access to major destinations of regional and national significance; and secondary routes which link identified freight generators and destinations to the primary route network and restrict lorries to roads where a minimum of environmental and infrastructure damage will occur.

14.12.4 It is intended that freight vehicles travel only on these roads, avoiding town centres as feasible, unless servicing local communities or destinations not on the designated network. The DRFN is supported by a series of signed weight, height



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and width restrictions zones across Central Bedfordshire that limit freight movements. The Council's LTP includes more information on this.

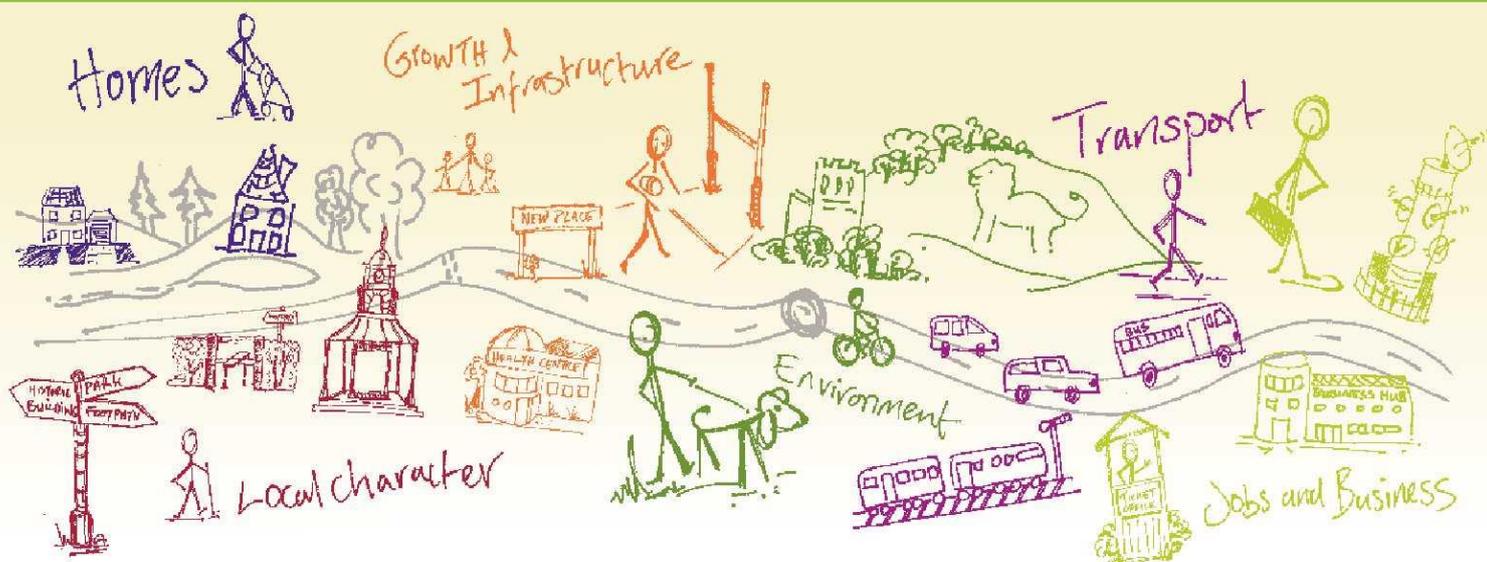
### **Policy T6: Management of Freight**

Where a development will result in the movement of freight as part of its operations, Central Bedfordshire Council will:

- Require evidence that realistic alternatives to the movement of freight by road based haulage are not possible or practical.
- Ensure that developments forecast to generate significant freight movements are located where they deliver the greatest benefit for, businesses, and the least negative impact on the environment and local communities for example within industrial areas close to the Designated Road Freight Network.
- Ensure that sufficient land is provided for anticipated freight facilities associated with new developments including construction traffic.
- Ensure that proposals likely to generate freight sufficiently mitigate any forecast impacts on local communities and the environment through traffic management measures and developer contributions.



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Environmental Enhancement

Local Plan 2015-2035

## **15 Environmental Enhancement**

### **15.1 Overview**

- 15.1.1 Central Bedfordshire's environment is key to its identity and widely valued by our residents, visitors and businesses. The varied and contrasting landscape, ecology, heritage and settlement pattern contributes to the much valued character and nature of the area.
- 15.1.2 We also depend on the ecosystem services, which are services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. These include:
- The provision of food and fuel:
  - Cultural services that provide benefit to people through recreation and appreciation of nature.
  - Regulation of the climate, purification of air and water, flood protection.
  - Supporting services, underpinning the provision of the above ecosystems services, such as soil formation, and nutrient and water cycling.
- 15.1.3 This section sets out the planning policies that will be applied to ensure that development in Central Bedfordshire protects and enhances our environment, and supports the ecosystem services that it provides. Section 20.5 of this plan addresses how agricultural land will be protected through the Local Plan.
- 15.1.4 This section is underpinned by the Council's Environmental Framework, which summarises a range of local studies, assessments, strategies and guidance, and forms part of the technical evidence base for the Local Plan and is the supporting document for these policies. It covers natural environment enhancement and protection and the challenge of both mitigating the impact of climate change and adapting to the inevitable impacts. It provides an overview of national policy requirements, including those for Local Plans set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the accompanying guidance (NPPG). It also details and summarises the key elements of the environmental evidence base for Central Bedfordshire, as well as providing sign-posting to these more detailed documents.
- 15.1.5 The Environmental Framework was the subject of a public consultation in Spring 2016, the responses to which have helped shape the policies included in this section/chapter.
- 15.1.6 In addition, the Council has produced a Design Guide, which sets out the key principles and standards to ensure all new development is of the highest quality.
- 15.1.7 Chapter Two of the Guide shows how to embed green infrastructure, climate change, sustainability and the broader environmental principles covered in this chapter/section of the Local Plan into the design and development process in order to deliver well designed development. In addition to the policies set out in this chapter/section, developers should refer to the Design Guide for more detailed, practical advice on how these policy requirements can be included to improve the design quality of proposed developments.



### 15.2 Green Infrastructure

- 15.2.1 Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers, watercourses and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and urban areas. Individually, these elements are GI assets, and the roles that these assets play are GI functions. 'Green infrastructure' covers biodiversity, landscape, the historic environment, access and accessible green space.
- 15.2.2 When well planned and provided for, GI is multifunctional, and has many wide ranging benefits. These include supporting mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change (extreme weather, flooding, drought and heatwaves), improving health and well being, facilitating stronger and more cohesive communities, supporting economic growth and investment, regenerating land and softening the impact of development, creating a sense of place, improving access to heritage and nature, and enhancing biodiversity and natural habitats.
- 15.2.3 The planned GI network is set out in the GI Plans that cover Central Bedfordshire on a number of scales. GI plans are based on the spatial analysis of existing assets for protection, and identification of opportunities to buffer, extend and create new resources across Central Bedfordshire, and linking across administrative boundaries.
- 15.2.4 With regards to Central Bedfordshire, GI plans exist on a number of scales. These include (ranging from large scale to smaller scale):
- The strategic level Green Infrastructure Plan, covering the whole of Bedfordshire,
  - District level green infrastructure plans, which cover Central Bedfordshire through the former district authority areas of Mid Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire, as well as Luton.
  - Parish and community green infrastructure plans for many parishes and town in Central Bedfordshire.
- 15.2.5 The approach to these plans is similar, but the difference is in the level of detail, and the level of community involvement which increases to the smaller scale plans, and the strategic overview, which decreases for the smaller scale plans.
- 15.2.6 There are also plans for Green Wheels and Greenways, showing opportunities for using existing and new paths to create off road, multi-user accessible corridors, encircling one or more communities, linking areas of wildlife, heritage and landscape value.
- 15.2.7 The Environmental Framework provides an overview of these green infrastructure plans and links to further information. The Council's Design Guide also includes information on how to link with, integrate and improve green infrastructure within developments.
- 15.2.8 A wide range of tools for analysing green infrastructure (as well as ecosystem services and natural capital) have been developed. These can be used by



developers to assess the impact of development proposals on green infrastructure. More information can be found on the Ecosystem Knowledge Network website in the 'Tool Assessor' section.<sup>19</sup>

### **Policy EE1 : Green Infrastructure**

All major development must demonstrate a net gain in green infrastructure; linking, enhancing and extending existing green infrastructure assets, and creating new ones. The Council will be supportive of applications that have regard for green infrastructure plans, identifying existing green infrastructure assets, and opportunities for enhancing the green infrastructure network.

High quality, multifunctional green infrastructure will be integrated within developments, incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems and enhancing biodiversity, landscape character, the rights of way network and design quality, and making provision for the ongoing and effective management of this green infrastructure.

Existing green infrastructure of strategic importance, as identified in the Bedfordshire, and Mid and South Bedfordshire GI plans will be protected from development.

Development proposals should also take account of Green Wheel and Greenway plans and Parish Green Infrastructure Plans, and consider how identified assets can be protected and enhanced, and for aspirations to be delivered by development.

Development that adversely affects identified strategic green infrastructure assets, or adversely affects the future implementation of identified strategic green infrastructure projects will not be permitted. Any unavoidable loss of green infrastructure should be adequately mitigated.

<sup>19</sup> <https://ecosystemsknowledge.net/resources/guidance-and-tools/tools/tool-assessor>



### 15.3 Enhancing biodiversity

15.3.1 The Council's existing biodiversity and geodiversity assets provide the building blocks for the natural environment. These features are integral parts of the high quality environment and surroundings that makes the area a desirable place to live and for businesses to operate.



15.3.2 National planning policy places great importance to the protection and enhancement of these features. One of its objectives is to strive for net gains in biodiversity and increased connectivity of ecological networks. This is further defined in Natural Environment White Paper, 'Making Space for Nature', which describes ecological networks, basing them on five components which are to be implemented at a landscape scale whilst working with existing land uses and economic activities.

15.3.3 This is summarised in more detail, along with information about national biodiversity policy and the local evidence base in the Environmental Framework.

15.3.4 Development proposals should be designed around existing components of the ecological network. These include:

- Sites of strategic or local importance for nature conservation, including the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area (see section 16.9);
- Habitats of principal importance, as included in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (section 41).
- Rivers and other water courses, drains and all other water bodies, such as wetlands and ponds;
- Individual trees, woodland and orchards;
- Green/open space, including commons, parks and gardens, allotments, cemeteries, village greens, and any sites designated as Local Green Spaces;
- Wildlife corridors, including hedgerows, ditches, disused railways, verges and identified networks of routes for pollinators(known as 'B-lines');
- Post industrial land such as disused quarries and former landfill sites

15.3.5 Development should be designed to integrate these features into the development site, and extend the network through improving, buffering and extending these features, and including new features such as:

- Green features within the built environment, including street trees, green roofs and gardens;
- Choice of landscaping design and species composition can enhance ecological networks, delivering net gains for biodiversity.
- Integrated bat and bird boxes and hedgehog holes in fences;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)



- 15.3.6 Developers should refer to the Design Guide in preparing development proposals as this includes information on how to link with, integrate and improve biodiversity within developments.

### **Policy EE2: Enhancing biodiversity**

Development proposals should provide a net gain in biodiversity through enhancement and creation of ecological networks by:

- Incorporating and enhancing existing and creating new biodiversity features within their design; and
- Maximising opportunities to enhance and create links between ecological networks and habitats of principal importance. Links should be created both on-site and, where possible, with nearby features.
- Biodiversity within a development needs to be managed, monitored and maintained.

Development proposals within, or in close proximity to, an ecological corridor should enhance the functionality and connectivity of the corridor.

Development that would impact on the strategic ecological network causing fragmentation or otherwise prejudice its effectiveness will not be permitted.

## **15.4 Nature conservation – Designated Sites and Protected Species**

- 15.4.1 Biodiversity and geodiversity assets are divided into statutory and non-statutory sites. Statutory sites are designated by Natural England and include, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves. Non-statutory sites include County Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites.
- 15.4.2 The Council's Nature Conservation Strategy considers protected species and habitats across Central Bedfordshire. It seeks to ensure their appropriate management and explores opportunities for enhancing the wildlife resource of our area. Information about the Nature Conservation Strategy, as well as designated sites and protected species in Central Bedfordshire is set out in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.4.3 Planning applications may need to include details about biodiversity and geological conservation. The Council's Biodiversity Checklist shows what information needs to be provided with an application.
- 15.4.4 Developers must check for the presence of protected species on development sites and seek professional advice to ensure that their proposals safeguard any protected species identified. Where the presence of protected species on development sites is likely, professional advice must be sought to ensure that proposals safeguard any protected species identified.



- 15.4.5 Other rare or endangered species should be taken into consideration with any development proposals. These include those species identified as of Principal Importance in the NERC Act.
- 15.4.6 Site and species specific ecological surveys are an important part of assessing a planning proposal. This information must therefore be provided when the planning application is submitted and, in accordance with British Standard BS42020 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development, cannot be provided later in the process through a planning condition or other mechanism.

### **Policy EE3: Nature conservation**

Important habitats and sites of geological and geomorphological interest will be protected, maintained and enhanced.

Up to date, comprehensive ecological surveys undertaken in accordance with industry guidelines and standards will be required to support and inform development proposals that would affect sites for nature conservation, protected species, or species of habitats of principal importance demonstrating development will deliver a net gain.

The Council will ensure that:

- Development which will adversely affect SSSIs and NNRs would not be considered sustainable development and will be refused.
- Development would not be permitted that would adversely affect:
  - County Wildlife Sites,
  - Local Nature Reserves,
  - Local Geological or Geomorphological Sites,
  - Protected species, or;
  - Species and habitats of principal importance.

The assessment of adverse impacts will apply to potentially damaging development proposals that may affect the designated area. It will include the consideration of adverse cumulative effects with other existing or proposed development. Adverse impacts, such as disturbance through increased recreational pressure can result from new development and require mitigation to prevent detrimental impacts to the ecological resource.

## **15.5 Woodlands, trees and hedgerows**

- 15.5.1 Woodlands, trees and hedgerows are key features within rural and urban environments. They provide a range of ecosystem services, including flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, provision of low carbon fuel and timber, as well as contributing to landscape character and amenity, and the rural economy. and helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. They provide landmarks or



'stepping stones' between otherwise isolated habitats as well as being vital wildlife corridors and habitats in their own right. Central Bedfordshire has a relatively low level of woodland and tree cover. This limited resource is under threat from disease, development and climate change.

- 15.5.2 Central Bedfordshire has a number of important tree collections, historic parklands and trees planted to commemorate events which contribute to present day character, as well as the Forest of Marston Vale, one of the 12 nationally designated community forests, covered by specific policies in section 16.10. Individual trees make a significant contribution within settlements and the countryside; the challenge is to ensure new trees planted as part of new development are chosen appropriately and managed to ensure longevity and value.
- 15.5.3 The Council will develop a Tree Strategy to review the existing resource and identify threats and opportunities for enhancing and extending this.

### Existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows, and their protection

- 15.5.4 Ancient woodland, and aged and veteran trees are irreplaceable resources that are protected from development in the NPPF. Construction close to, though not directly involving destruction of an ancient or semi ancient woodland, trees and hedgerows, can nevertheless still be damaging. A minimum buffer of 15 metres should be maintained between the development boundary and the woodland edge.
- 15.5.5 Some trees are protected through tree preservation orders (TPOs), and trees in conservation areas are also protected by law. However, these only cover only a tiny proportion of the valuable trees in Central Bedfordshire. This does not mean that other trees are not locally valued or significant.

- 15.5.6 The Council will use TPOs to protect threatened trees that make a valuable contribution to public amenity. We will also work proactively with developers to ensure that protected trees are safeguarded from development, managed in accordance with good arboricultural practice, with full regard to public amenity, ecological and historical interests.



- 15.5.7 The incorporation of existing hedgerows and individual trees, and their integration within the layout of new developments will be expected. This can bring benefits with regard to the immediate enhancement and contribution to the design and sense of place. Developers need to design the layout of sites at the earliest stage to allow sufficient space for these retained features to thrive; incorporating them into the public realm, and protecting them from root damage and changes to soil structure.



- 15.5.8 Rural hedgerows important for their historic and biodiversity value receive protection through the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. If removal is proposed as part of a planning application then the impact on local heritage will be taken into account. The retention of hedgerows within development will maintain ecological and landscape connection, although it is essential that sufficient space is allowed for its future growth for maintenance.
- 15.5.9 Where development may have an impact upon ancient woodland or veteran trees, applicants should refer to Natural England and the Forestry Commission's Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees and its associated Assessment Guide will be used where relevant.

### Designing trees into new developments

- 15.5.10 In addition to the benefits detailed above, trees and hedgerows within developments have a vital role to play in helping to offset the potential effects of climate change, through shading, carbon storage, and reduction of pollutants, interception and storage of water. They can also help integrate development and connect with the existing landscape framework and support ecological connectivity. Opportunities should be taken to plant new large, long lived species of trees, which may be of exotic origin, to help build a diverse tree stock more able to withstand disease and climate change.
- 15.5.11 Trees in the urban environment also make a significant contribution to character of townscapes and setting of built form by engendering a sense of interest and quality of place. Avenue tree planting, feature trees at key points, groups and stands of beautiful trees in public open spaces, including car parks, can create remarkable and memorable spaces providing interest through the seasons. Trees and understorey shrubs in parks, neighbourhood copses, along boundaries and within private gardens create a green spatial structure within, and through, built development offering urban habitats for biodiversity and linking quiet tranquil green spaces benefitting health and wellbeing for all.
- 15.5.12 Urban planting schemes should include a native species especially along boundaries, and include native and ornamental flowering mixes to support wildlife, including pollinators. Care should be taken to avoid the use of species which may lead to the spread of non-native plants into the countryside.
- 15.5.13 Buildings and other structures should be sited to allow adequate space for a tree's natural development, with due consideration given to its predicted height and canopy spread. A Canopy Clearance Zone is used to quantify a suitable area around the tree. The Canopy Clearance Zone should be defined as an area surrounding the tree that enables a satisfactory relationship to exist between the property and the tree, and as such is equal to two-thirds of the tree's expected mature height, with all structures avoiding any encroachment into this area. All trees also require a Root Protection Area (as set out in BS 5837 : 2012) which is the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume needed to maintain the tree's vitality and anchorage, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is a priority.



- 15.5.14 To assist developers, the Council has developed a Design Guide, which includes information on design considerations for trees that should be reflected in development proposals. The use of professional landscape architects to design and specify schemes is recommended.
- 15.5.15 The maintenance of new trees is critical for their long term success and all planting schemes need to be managed to ensure that they realise their design objective. Formative pruning, particularly of street trees, is an important aspect of achieving the high quality tree planting schemes expected within Central Bedfordshire.



**Policy EE4: Trees, woodlands and hedgerows**

Protection of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows:

- Development that would adversely affect ancient woodland, and aged and veteran trees will not be permitted.
- Woodlands, including semi- natural woodlands, planted ancient woodland sites, orchards, hedgerows, and specimen trees found outside woodlands will be protected and buffered from development.
- Existing hedgerows and trees should be incorporated to enhance developments.. The development should be designed to integrate them within the public realm, and within a suitable landscape setting to ensure longevity. Hedgerows and treed boundaries should be reinforced, safeguarded within green corridors and extended where possible to create linkage.
- Any removal of trees or hedgerows to accommodate development must be justified, and should be replaced within the development site with appropriate planting of suitable species of equivalent scale and character, and providing equivalent canopy cover and habitat connectivity.
- The Council will seek to safeguard protected trees from loss or detrimental major surgery. Any protected tree that is unavoidably removed must be replaced by a tree or trees suitable for the location.

Developers will be expected to include new planting in developments, and the Council expects that:

- New developments are designed to include significant tree features, as part of residential areas, commercial and employment sites, streets and car parks.
- The layout of developments (including residential areas, roads, parking areas, and open spaces) is designed to provide sufficient space to enable these trees to thrive, including adequate root protection areas and canopy clearance zones.
- Landscaping schemes will take account of local landscape character, and should consider climate change, ease of maintenance and ecological enhancement. They should include the use of ornamental species where appropriate. Care must be taken to avoid the introduction of Invasive Non Native Species into planting schemes.
- New tree planting is designed within a green corridor of appropriate scale, as part of the site's public realm, transport network and green infrastructure, to improve ecological connectivity, enhance local character and create a sense of place, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Any development that forms a rural edge will include an effective landscape edge consisting of native tree and hedgerow planting consistent with the local landscape character.



### 15.6 Landscape character and value

15.6.1 The landscapes of Central Bedfordshire are highly valued by the people who live and work within them or use them for recreation. The Council recognises the value of the landscape as a resource for local economies, for the ecosystem services that are provided by the land, including the biodiversity, historic and cultural heritage, and the recreational opportunities they provide..

#### Landscape Character

15.6.2 Central Bedfordshire has a varied and distinctive landscape which has been described and classified in the Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

15.6.3 The LCA process is an accepted and recognised method for understanding how the landscape evolved, how it may change in the future and how that change may be managed. LCA describes and classifies the recognisable and consistent pattern of features that makes one landscape different from another rather than better or worse. This approach considers that all landscapes are valuable and seeks to protect their essential character.



15.6.4 The purpose of the LCA is to help ensure change and development is of the highest quality and does not undermine whatever defines and is valued about a place. It also advises on ways of improving character.

15.6.5 The Central Bedfordshire LCA is the primary evidence base for planning purposes. Further information about Landscape Character in Central Bedfordshire is set out in the Environmental Framework.

15.6.6 The Council will protect landscapes against unsympathetic development and work to ensure new development is of a high quality that respects landscape character, including tranquillity. The LCA is critical in this process and particular note should be taken of the key sensitivities and the related development guidelines. Development proposals will be expected to include plans for landscape improvements in accordance with the findings of the LCA, and identify and respond to landscape character at the site level.

15.6.7 This will apply to all landscapes, but particularly those accommodating major developments, the existing urban fringe, the built edge of other settlements and those along prominent transport corridors. Depending on the nature and/or scale of the proposals, improvements may be required on or adjacent to the development site or to contribute towards wider, strategic landscape enhancement in the affected areas.



- 15.6.8 The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide has been produced to enable high quality 'place making', a critical element in achieving sustainable development. It sets out advice to allow developers to come up with good design solutions which respond positively to their surroundings including landscapes. The Design Guide should be used in conjunction with the LCAs in order to produce the best development for a specific location. This should include how the proposals will address the landscape and how it will provide landscape (and biodiversity) improvements, for example by protecting views or softening an inappropriate hard urban edge.

### Valued Landscapes

- 15.6.9 Whilst all landscapes are important, some will have particular value where they exhibit the specific attributes and characteristic landscape features of a specific landscape character area, meaning it is considered representative of the landscape type or has characteristics which create a strong sense of place. These landscapes will typically contain features of biodiversity or geological value, and / or be of historic or cultural interest. The Council will consider landscapes that exhibit these features below as valued landscapes, and will protect them from adverse impacts. Value is increased if the landscape;
- is particularly intact in terms of its character and the condition of individual landscape attributes and features;
  - is particularly valued for recreational use;
  - is a known viewpoint or forms part of a recognised vista/ local view;
  - is relatively rare or limited in its extent, in terms of including rare attributes or landscape features;
  - has perceptual qualities/significance such as tranquillity, remoteness or natural condition;
  - contains characteristic buildings and other built features;
  - shows a characteristic pattern of planting structures (e.g. woodlands and hedgerows) that contribute to the character of the wider landscape;
  - has historical or cultural associations.
- 15.6.10 Central Bedfordshire Council will explore working in partnership to identify landscapes of local value.



### **Policy EE5: Landscape Character and Value**

In order to safeguard intrinsic character, scenic beauty and perceptual qualities of the landscape such as tranquillity, all development proposals will need to have regard to the key characteristics and sensitivities of the site and its setting, as set out in the Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment.

All major development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they incorporate landscape enhancement, in accordance with the guidelines in the LCA, the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and other relevant documents for specific areas e.g. the Chilterns AONB, Forest of Marston Vale or the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. Landscape and visual appraisal will be expected to support planning applications, to include the assessment of local landscape character and views.

Development will respect, retain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape, through (for example)

- Reflecting local character and distinctiveness in terms of the scale and pattern of the surrounding landscape and existing settlement form.
- Integrating on site mitigation sympathetic to local character in scale with the landscape setting as well as the scale of the development.

The Council recognises the importance of valued landscapes. Proposals that have an unacceptable adverse impact on valued landscapes will be refused.

## **15.7 Tranquillity**

- 15.7.1 Tranquillity is associated with audible and visual peace and is a significant asset in urban and rural areas. Tranquillity is not necessarily limited to remote areas, and can be comparative to location, character of space and surrounds. It can be found in many areas, from large scale tracts of open landscapes to small urban parks, garden oases and informal urban open spaces with a hint of wildness.
- 15.7.2 Tranquillity can be significantly impacted on by intrusive movements, sights and sounds including those from transport, power lines and lighting. It is a quality that is hard to re-instate once lost. Undeveloped horizons are becoming increasingly scarce as are natural soundscapes and dark skies at night.
- 15.7.3 Tranquillity can support health and well being and be a key contributor to quality of life. Therefore ensuring tranquil spaces are available and accessible is vital. Tranquillity is also an important component in the enjoyment of other features, including biodiversity, landscapes, and heritage assets.
- 15.7.4 The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.
- 15.7.5 Developments should consider how they would affect tranquillity, using existing tools such as Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Health Impact



Assessment and ecological surveys to assess visual, noise and biodiversity impacts (e.g. on bats and invertebrates) respectively.

- 15.7.6 The Environmental Framework summarises the local evidence base relating to tranquillity, including mapped information. Developers should use this local information to assess the impacts of their development on tranquillity, and to demonstrate how tranquil areas have been designed into their developments, for example through layout, screening, materials and habitat or open space creation. Further guidance will be produced in due course.

### **Policy EE6: Tranquillity**

The Council will:

- Ensure that areas of high tranquillity at both strategic and community scales are protected, and that development that harms their recreational and amenity value is not permitted.
- Require planning applications for both major residential and commercial developments to demonstrate how they have assessed the potential impact of their proposals on areas of high tranquillity, including visual intrusion, impact on biodiversity, lighting and noise. Such applications will be required to demonstrate how negative impacts have been avoided and any harmful impacts are adequately mitigated.
- Require planning applications for new residential development of 100 dwellings or more to provide new or enhanced areas of tranquillity as part of proposals.
- Seek opportunities to enhance tranquillity of landscapes and townscapes, including removal of, or appropriate mitigation of, visually intrusive features, sources of disruptive noise and lighting.

## **15.8 Chilterns AONB**

- 15.8.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are the highest national landscape designation and are therefore subject to very robust protection. The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 115 states that “great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB, which with National Parks, have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.” Further material about national policy and local information is set out in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.8.2 The Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1965 to protect and conserve scenic beauty and to encourage the understanding and enjoyment of the area’s special qualities.
- 15.8.3 The Chilterns Conservation Board has produced a management plan for the AONB which provides a framework within which local authorities, government and the Board itself operate. A Chilterns Building Design Guide has also been published and the Council expects any development proposals to take this fully



into account. The Council will continue to support the management plan and provide protection against inappropriate development. This may, depending on the nature and scale of the proposals, include development outside of the AONB boundary which might threaten its unique qualities, for instance by harming views to and from the AONB and/or adding to noise and light pollution.

15.8.4 Development proposals in the Chilterns or their setting should demonstrate how they have considered;

- the Chilterns AONB's special qualities which include the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower-rich down land, broadleaved woodlands (especially beech), commons, tranquil valleys, the network of ancient routes, villages with their brick and flint houses, chalk streams and a rich historic environment of hillforts and chalk figures;
- the scope for enhancing and restoring those parts of the landscape which are degraded or subject to existing intrusive developments, utilities or infrastructure;
- locally distinctive patterns and species composition of natural features such as chalk down land, trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, rivers and chalk streams;
- the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings, including the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the edge of settlements;
- visually sensitive skylines, geological and topographical features;
- landscapes of cultural, historic and heritage value;
- important views and visual amenity, including key views from the steep north-west facing chalk escarpment overlooking the low clay vale, and foreground views back to the AONB; and
- tranquillity and remoteness and the need to avoid intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.



### **Policy EE7: The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally designated landscape and as such permission for major developments will be refused unless exceptional circumstances prevail as defined by national planning policy.

Planning permission for any proposal within the AONB, or affecting the setting or appreciation of the AONB, will be restricted to proposals that:

- conserve and enhance the Chiltern AONB's special qualities, distinctive character, tranquillity and remoteness in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation;
- are appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or are desirable for its understanding and enjoyment;
- meet the aims of the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan, making practical and financial contributions towards management plan delivery as appropriate;
- comply with the Chilterns Building Design Guide and technical notes by being of high quality design which respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns, its traditional built character and reinforces the sense of place and local character;
- avoid adverse impacts from individual proposals (including their cumulative effects), unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.

Developments in the Chilterns AONB and its setting should respond to the landscape character (having considered all the relevant landscape character assessments) and be informed by landscape and visual impact assessment to understand the impacts of the proposed development on landscape character, and what options for mitigating negative impacts are possible.

## **15.9 Greensand Ridge NIA**

- 15.9.1 The Government introduced Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) in its Natural Environment White Paper. These are large areas where there are opportunities to focus efforts and deliver significant improvements for wildlife and people.
- 15.9.2 Within Central Bedfordshire there is currently one NIA covering the Greensand Ridge. The Greensand Ridge is a narrow, elongated, elevated area which runs in a north-east/south-west direction covering a significant part of Central Bedfordshire. It covers just over 27,300ha and forms Natural England's National Character Area 90. More information about the Greensand Ridge, and the Nature Improvement Area designation is provided in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.9.3 The Council acknowledges that this Greensand Ridge NIA meets the required DEFRA criteria for locally designated Nature Improvement Areas, and recognises it as a Nature Improvement Area.



15.9.4 It is not the intention to restrict development in the NIA by specifying types of development that may be appropriate, but rather to look for opportunities to enhance nature conservation through development. Growth and development in the NIA should make a lasting contribution to its valuable environment, supporting and benefiting the natural environment.

15.9.5 The Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area is designated because of the opportunity it provides to support a better, stronger and more robust natural environment at a landscape scale. There is the opportunity to make significant improvements to the existing ecological network in terms of enlarging and enhancing existing wildlife assets and increasing ecological connectivity between them.



15.9.6 The Greensand Ridge NIA contains a range of characteristic habitats, including;

- Heathland and acid grassland
- Wood pasture and parkland, including veteran trees
- Woodland, including wet woodland
- Neutral grassland
- Wetlands

### Policy EE8 : Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area

Development within the NIA should:

- Demonstrate how a net gain in biodiversity will be delivered, specifically identifying how gains in the quality and connectivity of ecological networks within and linking to the development will be delivered.
- Enhance wildlife networks and increase ecological connectivity through buffering, extending and linking characteristic habitats (as listed above) both within and adjacent to developments.
- Demonstrate how provision is made for species recovery and resilience.
- Respect the topography and landscape of the NIA and be designed in such a way that it minimises visual impacts and protects local amenity.
- Provide opportunities for people to access and experience the NIA in a way that is sympathetic and sustainable towards existing habitats.

## 15.10 The Forest of Marston Vale

15.10.1 The Forest of Marston Vale is one of 12 nationally designated community forests created in the 1990s. It covers some 61 square miles and extends into Bedford Borough in the north and to the M1 in the south. It is a strategic and regionally important environmentally led regeneration initiative providing social, economic



and environmental benefits. The aim of the Forest of Marston Vale is to achieve 30% tree coverage in the Marston Vale.

- 15.10.2 The purpose of community forests is to lead in the regeneration of once degraded industrial landscapes, which, in the case of the Forest of Marston Vale means addressing the effects of the brick making industry. The creation of the Forest is guided by the Forest Plan which sets out aims and objectives as well as principles and proposals to 2031. More information about the Forest of Marston Vale can be found in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.10.3 The Council remains committed to the Forest of Marston Vale and the approved Forest Plan. As set out in the NPPF, the Forest Plan will be a material consideration when evaluating planning applications. The Council therefore expects development proposals to demonstrate how they contribute to the delivery of the Forest Plan. This will ensure that development contributes to the environmentally led regeneration of the Forest of Marston Vale area by ensuring that development delivers a net gain in environmental quality, creates the 'forested' sense of place and character set out in the Forest Plan, and brings economic, social and environmental benefits to the area.
- 15.10.4 In line with the overall target of increasing tree cover to 30%, the Council expects that a range of opportunities for tree and woodland planting throughout development sites within the Forest area are explored through the design process. Development proposals should refer to more detailed guidance available from the Council on development and woodland creation in the Forest of Marston Vale.
- 15.10.5 New design guidance for development within the Forest of Marston Vale will be produced jointly with Bedford Borough Council, forming a common Supplementary Planning Document, used by both Councils to inform development within the Forest area. This will incorporate and draw on the existing guidance on development and woodland creation in the Forest of Marston Vale.

### **Policy EE9: Forest of Marston Vale**

Central Bedfordshire Council will continue to support the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale to deliver the environmentally led regeneration of the area. Developments for new buildings within the Forest of Marston Vale will need to;

- demonstrate how they will deliver 30% tree cover across their development site. This can be achieved by a combination of retaining and protecting existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows within development sites, and the planting of new trees, woodlands and hedgerows within development sites.
- Contribute to the environmentally led regeneration of the Forest of Marston Vale, in line with the aims of the Forest Plan.
- Demonstrate how their proposals are consistent with design guidance for development within the Forest of Marston Vale.



### 15.11 The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park

- 15.11.1 The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park is a strategic project to link the main UK waterway network with the Fens waterways of East Anglia. This will be done through linking Bedford to Milton Keynes with a new waterway that is set within a multifunctional parkland corridor. It will provide an attractive location for businesses and a potential setting for housing growth, as well as a major tourism destination, an attractive green space destination, an ecologically rich corridor and a space for recreation and healthy living. More detail about the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park is set out in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.11.2 The Council is part of a consortium of eight organisations that have agreed to work together with the aim of delivering the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park.
- 15.11.3 A guidance note (A Brief Guide to Space, Design and Other Technical Issues in providing for the Bedford Milton Keynes Waterway) should be referred to by developers, with development proposals demonstrating how the design of the Waterway Park to the standards and requirements referenced has been incorporated into the development proposals.

#### **Policy EE10: The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park**

Development on the route of the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park will be expected to deliver the section of the Waterway Park within the development boundary, incorporating a Waterway channel and 'towpath' for non-motorised users within a multifunctional green corridor.

Development should be designed to relate positively to the Waterway Park, and should be designed to complement adjacent areas and sites along the route of the Waterway Park.

Development that would adversely affect the implementation of the Waterway Park, or that does not provide accommodation for the Waterway and associated infrastructure will not be permitted.

### 15.12 River and waterway network

- 15.12.1 Central Bedfordshire includes sections of the river and canal network. The Grand Union Canal and River Ouzel run through the west of Central Bedfordshire, and the River Ivel through the east of the area. These natural and built waterways contribute to economic, environmental and social wellbeing. These different waterways have different characteristics, and provide a range of functions.
- 15.12.2 Each waterside location needs to be considered individually, with no single design approach being appropriate in all locations. However, development and regeneration schemes close to the waterways need to be designed to enhance the waterside area.



**Policy EE11: The River and Waterway Network**

Development near to the river and waterway network should:

- Support the protection, conservation and enhancement of the waterways' heritage, built environment, landscape character and biodiversity.
- Promote the waterway and towpath / riverside paths as part of the green infrastructure and open space network, and encouraging their use as a tourism destination and for leisure, recreation and healthy outdoor activity.
- Promote the use of the waterway and towpath / riverside paths for sustainable transport and recreational routes for walking and cycling.
- Promote the waterway as a catalyst for urban regeneration and in support of waterway related enterprise

**15.13 Public Rights of Way**

- 15.13.1 The public Rights of Way network offers people access to enjoy Central Bedfordshire's countryside and heritage and in the process improve their health and quality of life. It also forms an intrinsic part of our overall transport network, providing valuable and safe access on foot and increasingly by cycle, to the wider countryside, places of employment, schools, shops and other local services and amenities. More information about the access network, and the Council's plans for its improvement can be found in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.13.2 The Rights of Way network provides a key alternative to car use on journeys of less than five miles. The Council will ensure that Rights of Way are protected, enhanced and promoted.
- 15.13.3 The Outdoor Access Improvement Plan details the routes for improvement and will provide the specific standards for how public rights of way affected by development are to be retained and enhanced. In addition, the Local Transport Plan, Leisure Strategy, Green Infrastructure Plans and other emerging policies, strategies and plans also provide information about access needs.
- 15.13.4 There will be a need for improvements to the rights of way network affected by development proposals in order to encourage more walking and cycling and horse riding through improved accessibility, surfacing and connectivity. Where the scale and location of development will require connections and/or lead to increased use by new and existing residents the Council will secure appropriate contributions from the applicants. Particular consideration will be given to achieving off-site local pedestrian, bridleway and cycleway routes which connect development sites with open spaces, leisure/community uses and strategic access routes, make links within the wider rights of way network, or create circular or extended routes.



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- 15.13.5 At the earliest opportunity and as part of their planned development, applicants are required to record the route of any public rights of way affected by proposed development, and draw up then submit a Rights of Way Scheme for their improvement, accommodation or diversion in accordance with the Council's Rights of Way Standards and Guidance for Development. This Rights of Way scheme should detail what is proposed for existing routes, including whether the paths are to be incorporated into the design or diverted, landscape proposals for the paths, and details regarding new routes and connections to the Rights of Way and access network. It must include details regarding how any Rights of Way are to be dealt with during construction.
- 15.13.6 Details about standards and guidance for development are set out in the Council's 'Public Rights of Way: Standards and Guidance for Development' document, which provides detailed information on Rights of Way and the development process, what is expected from Rights of Way schemes, and design guidance. In addition to this guidance on Rights of Way on the Council's website, developers should refer to, in conjunction with the Design Guide, which provides information on design considerations for access routes that should be reflected in development proposals.



### **Policy EE12 : Public Rights of Way**

Developments should protect, enhance and promote the public rights of way network.

Development proposals that affect any public right of way are considered to be any development proposal that includes a right of way within the site, or any major development proposal adjacent to an existing right of way. Such development proposals will need to submit a rights of way scheme that demonstrates how the development will protect, enhance and promote the public rights of way network, with improvements where necessary to help restore and re-connect it, in line with the Council's 'Public Rights of Way – Standards and Guidance for Development' guidance.

Where developments would increase the pressure on the rights of way network, contributions may be sought through planning obligations for measures to protect and enhance the rights of way network including the delivery of additional routes and improvements to existing public paths both on-site and off-site.

## **15.14 Outdoor Recreation**

- 15.14.1 The NPPF identifies how the planning system can support the creation of healthy, inclusive communities by the provision of social, recreational and cultural facilities such as shared spaces, community facilities and sports venues. It highlights the needs for local authorities to undertake robust needs assessments to support policy for the provision and protection of leisure, sporting and recreational facilities. It also highlights that existing open space, sports and recreational land and buildings, including playing fields, should not be built on, unless clear criteria are met.
- 15.14.2 Local authorities have a critical role in the delivery of sport, recreation and physical activity facilities and opportunities, and in ensuring more people from every background regularly take part in sport and physical activity. Central Bedfordshire Council will support the health of its residents by enabling them to be physically active through the provision of a range of leisure and sports facilities and green open spaces. A key part of this role is in protecting existing open spaces, and ensuring that new developments provide appropriate levels of open space for recreation and sport and the supporting facilities.
- 15.14.3 To ensure the appropriate delivery of leisure, sport and recreation facilities Central Bedfordshire Council worked with partner organisations to produce the three facility chapters which comprise the Leisure Strategy. The Strategy encompasses the provision of indoor and outdoor sport, recreation and open space facilities to support and promote physical activity, increase wellbeing and tackle the causes of ill health.
- 15.14.4 To ensure that the Leisure Strategy plans appropriately for future leisure needs it will be updated to take account of the scale and spatial distribution of growth currently being planned. In addition, with regard to indoor sports provision, the



impact and future needs arising from the Council's significant recent investment in its leisure centres will also be assessed.

- 15.14.5 The Council recognises that sport and physical activities should be available to all, but that each person has different needs which may be addressed in different ways. The Leisure Strategy therefore incorporates a range of formal and informal sporting and open space facilities which aim to provide appropriate facilities and opportunities for the widest number of our residents
- 15.14.6 The Leisure Strategy supports national policy through the assessment and delivery of facilities which provide equality of provision, increase people's wellbeing and create a fitter and healthier population and enhance the local environment. Chapter 2: the Recreational Open Space Strategy defines local standards for the provision of various types of open spaces, Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy sets a space standard and facility requirements for outdoor sports pitches, courts and greens and Chapter 1: the Leisure Facilities Strategy covers indoor sports facilities such as leisure centres. More detail about the Leisure Strategy is provided in the Environmental Framework.
- 15.14.7 To support the delivery of the Leisure Strategy at the local level, the Leisure Strategy GIS layer (database of maps) maps all recreation and open space sites, and a parish schedule for each settlement lists existing leisure sites and identifies local facility needs. Chapter 3 is additionally supported by the Outdoor Sport Priority Project List which details the current projects identified to address specific sporting needs.

### Recreational Open Space

- 15.14.8 The NPPF addresses the importance that access to open space has for the health and wellbeing of the local population. It advises local authorities to set local standards for the provision of open space and recreational facilities based on a robust assessment of existing provision and future requirements.

- 15.14.9 A range of high quality green spaces from doorstep to destination sites are crucial in providing a varied setting for informal sport or casual physical activity. Such spaces provide opportunities for physical activity for those unlikely to participate in formal sport, they enhance the appearance of the local area, provide play opportunities for children and young people, and deliver ecological benefits particularly in an urban environment. The multiple benefits that can be derived from open spaces are being increasingly recognised. 'Being outdoors' itself is said to be more beneficial than playing a sport or doing an activity; as it is the environment which is delivers physical and mental benefits.



- 15.14.10 Central Bedfordshire has a diverse range of open spaces which include formal parks, urban green corridors, informal green spaces, wildlife sites and links to the countryside, as well as local greenspaces and children's play areas. The sites are owned and managed by a range of organisations, including Central Bedfordshire Council, Town and Parish Councils, environmental charities and private landowners. These green spaces form an essential part of the quality and character of Central Bedfordshire, and the Council will support their protection and enhancement to ensure that the area remains an attractive place to live.
- 15.14.11 The Council aims to ensure that open spaces are available within a short walking distance from peoples' homes and form 'stepping stones' on routes to key destinations such as schools and community facilities. Attractive open spaces complement new development. The Council will support the provision of new spaces at a variety of scales and characters from formal parks and squares, village 'community' greens, sports and recreation open spaces, to tranquil natural areas hosting habitats and wildlife, or offering adventure and play, to small, characterful spaces providing breathing spaces within higher density urban settings.
- 15.14.12 Providing a range of spaces and activity opportunities, both formal and informal which are accessible to all increases interest and participation in recreation, be it active or passive. Accommodating a range of activities within an open space encourages varieties of people to visit and share spaces providing vital community cohesion and enjoyment.
- 15.14.13 The Leisure Strategy Chapter 2: Recreational Open Space Strategy assesses the nine typologies of open space most commonly found in Central Bedfordshire and details the provision requirements to deliver both local and strategic open spaces. The space standards are summarised below, and details can be found in the Recreational Open Space Strategy and individual parish schedules.
- 15.14.14 The Chapter 2 typology of open spaces includes Countryside Recreation Sites and Informal Recreation Sites, which are also important for biodiversity. Indeed for many sites, such as nature reserves, ecological benefits are the primary purpose of the site, with recreation a potential added benefit. The Leisure Strategy therefore considers at the level of recreational benefit in relation to the ecological sensitivity of the site, enabling the standards below to set out sufficient provision of open spaces, including natural areas, for people to use and enjoy, without putting undue pressure on open space sites with sensitive environmental interests.



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Type of Open Space	Quantity
Countryside Recreation Sites	3.19 ha per 1000 population
Urban Parks	0.22 ha per 1000 pop. Major Service Centres only 0.39ha per 1000 pop. (Minor towns where/if required)
Large Formal Recreation Areas	1.20 ha per 1000 population
Informal Recreation Areas	2.6 ha per 1000 population
Small Amenity Spaces	0.55 ha per 1000 population
Children's Play Spaces	0.11ha per 1000 (activity area only). Plus buffer zone of 10-20m from nearest dwelling.
Provision for Young People	0.05ha per 1000 (activity area only). Plus buffer zone of 20-30m from nearest dwelling.
Allotments	0.37 ha per 1000 population (15 plots)
Cemeteries and Churchyards	2.03 burial plots per 1000 population

15.14.16 To assist developers, the Council has developed a Design Guide, which includes information on how open spaces should be designed as part of development proposals. Developers should refer to this as they work up and submit their proposals.

### Playing Pitches (Outdoor Sport)

15.14.17 The detailed facilities assessment of current and future needs for outdoor playing pitches, courts and greens contained in Chapter 3: the Playing Pitch Strategy supports the provision of accessible and locally appropriate sporting facilities and opportunities which also help tackle physical inactivity as one of the primary causes of ill health.

15.14.18 The Council will support the delivery of new, and the enhancement of existing outdoor sporting facilities to provide a varied range of sporting facilities and opportunities for its growing population. The Council will assess the needs generated by a development for each sport using the data in Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy.

15.14.19 For major developments, the provision of sports facilities may be sought on the development site in line with local or strategic sporting needs. Where facilities are provided on-site, they must be designed and constructed in accordance with Sport England and National Governing Bodies for Sport (NGB) design guidance.



- 15.14.20 New sports facilities are to be sited in accessible locations to encourage use but away from residential properties to minimise disturbance to residents. New pitches are to be supported by changing/pavilion facilities, car parking and other ancillary facilities in accordance with the respective NGB requirements and local circumstances.
- 15.14.21 Where football facilities are required, the Council will seek the delivery of multi-pitch sites which facilitate progression through the age groups from children to adult, and are sited in locations which are accessible and minimise disturbance to residents. All facilities are to be supported by changing facilities and parking.
- 15.14.22 Where possible all new sports facilities will be sited in locations which allow the facility to expand as the club grows and/or to accommodate additional demand from further housing growth.
- 15.14.23 For smaller developments where on-site sports facilities are not appropriate, the Council will seek planning obligations toward sporting projects identified in the Outdoor Sport Priority Project List. The List has been developed in conjunction with Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport and local clubs and is based on the facility needs identified in the Strategy.
- 15.14.24 Contributions sought for sports projects will be calculated using the Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator which utilises the data from Chapter 3 of the Leisure Strategy: the Playing Pitch Strategy to derive a locally based calculation. Sport England has developed the calculator to provide a sound method of calculating planning obligations, and this will be used by the Council to identify the level of contribution required from new development.



**Policy EE13: Outdoor sport, leisure and open space**

Central Bedfordshire Council will protect open spaces and outdoor sports facilities from development. Redevelopment of these sites for other purposes will only be appropriate in exceptional situations, in line with NPPF requirements.

Where they are lost to development, equal or better replacement provision within a reasonable proximity of the original facility must be delivered by the developer, or a contribution provided to the council to re-provide the facility.

On new residential developments, the Council will;

- require the provision of open spaces and outdoor sports facilities in accordance with the Leisure Strategy standards and facility requirements.
- require developments to provide open spaces and outdoor sports facilities on site unless this is demonstrably inappropriate or impossible.
- Where the provision of open spaces and outdoor sports facilities is not on the development site, the developer will be required to contribute through planning obligations to projects for the provision, enhancement and / or extension of existing facilities in accordance with the Leisure Strategy requirements.

Outdoor sports facilities which are to be delivered by the developer must be designed and constructed in accordance with Sport England facility guidance, together with the facility guidance of the relevant National Governing Body for Sport (NGB).

Open spaces and outdoor sports facilities must provide a management scheme which details the future ownership, management and maintenance of the site. Where the asset is to be adopted by the local authority or town/parish council commuted sums will be paid for maintenance of the facility.

On-site open space facilities and outdoor sports facilities must be designed in at an early stage to be an integral part of the development.

On-site open spaces must be designed to complement proposals for green infrastructure, landscaping, heritage, ecological enhancement, and climate change adaptation. Potential recreational damage to Habitats of Principal importance and ecologically sensitive sites should be avoided through good design.

**15.15 Local Green Space**

15.15.1 The NPPF introduced the designation of 'Local Green Space'. These are areas where development is ruled out, apart from in very special circumstances. This designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open spaces, and should only be applied where;

the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;



- the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife, and
- the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

15.15.2 The Council supports the principle of designating Local Green Spaces through Neighbourhood Plans.

### 15.16 Restoration of Minerals and Waste sites

15.16.1 The Council is fully committed to achieving higher standards of restoration of mineral extraction and landfill sites and changing public attitudes are also demanding these improving standards. Industry recognises the need for high quality restoration and safe and responsible management of minerals and waste management sites. Standards of restoration have generally improved in recent years although there remains scope for further improvement.

15.16.2 One way of minimising development impact is to ensure that land taken for mineral and waste uses is restored at the earliest opportunity and that it is left in a safe state capable of sustaining an acceptable after-use. 'Amenity' is the general term for being able to enjoy the countryside, for example through recreation (e.g. angling, walking, water sports etc.) and nature conservation. On larger sites restoration will be required to be progressive in nature and to take place within a reasonable timescale, so that only a portion of the whole site is disturbed by mineral extraction or waste disposal operations at any one time.

15.16.3 Applicants will normally be required to submit an aftercare scheme for a period of five years following restoration to ensure that the restoration scheme is maintained until it becomes naturally self-sustaining. In certain cases it may be appropriate to agree a shorter or longer period, depending on the nature of the restoration scheme.

15.16.4 In a country with such a high proportion of good quality agricultural land – 34% of the agricultural land is classified as Grade 1 or 2 and 42% is Grade 3 (a and b) – the loss of such land to mineral extraction has been a major planning issue. The best and most versatile land (BMV) is classed as grades 1, 2, and 3a). In the past it was national policy to retain agricultural land in full production and to ensure that a minimum was lost to development. At a time of surpluses in agricultural production the need now is to foster diversification of the rural economy and to balance this against the continuing need to protect the countryside for its own sake without the special priority hitherto afforded to agriculture production. The Council will therefore have regard to the balance of environmental impacts and local economic benefits in determination of planning applications on BMV agricultural land, but will only grant permission where any loss of BMV land is clearly justified.

15.16.5 Once land is lost to certain development it can be difficult to return it to agriculture. The best and most versatile land is seen as a national resource to be protected from irreversible loss and the current agricultural surpluses are not accepted as an



argument against restoring the best and most versatile land to its original quality. The NPPF (paras 112 and 143) indicates that where there is a choice between sites or different classifications, development should be diverted towards land of the lowest possible classification except where other sustainability considerations suggest otherwise. These might include biodiversity, landscape and amenity value, heritage interest or accessibility to infrastructure, local economic diversity, and the protection of natural resources.

- 15.16.6 Certain forms of mineral and waste developments may attract large number of birds either unintentionally for example with respect to non-hazardous landfill sites or intentionally when sites are restored to a nature conservation use. Proposals for sites which might have an impact on aviation safety will need to be rigorously assessed.
- 15.16.7 The NPPF (paras 120, 121 and 143) make it clear that all development should take account of ground conditions and land instability in order to ensure that sites are suitable for its new use and that any uses do not have any unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or human health.
- 15.16.8 Finally, the operation of a mineral facility or waste facility may require the construction or erection of associated temporary and permanent buildings, plant and equipment (e.g. the storage of minerals and waste, minerals and waste processing/treatment equipment, construction of a haul road etc.). Permission will normally be granted for such operations where the developer can demonstrate the benefit of the development. When the ancillary development is no longer required or temporary planning permission expires, the site must be restored to its former use or to an improved scheme approved by the Council. Environmental control facilities required in connection with landfill sites such as boreholes for landfill gas and groundwater monitoring and landfill gas utilisation plant will be required beyond the period of landfill operations.



**Policy EE14: Applications for Minerals and Waste Development**

The Council will require all proposals for non-permanent minerals or waste development to include the high quality restoration of the site within a reasonable timescale. Opportunities for habitat creation should be considered and, where practical and desirable, provided in all restoration proposals. The MPA / WPA will support after uses which accord with the policies of the development plan.

All proposals for minerals and waste development will, where relevant:

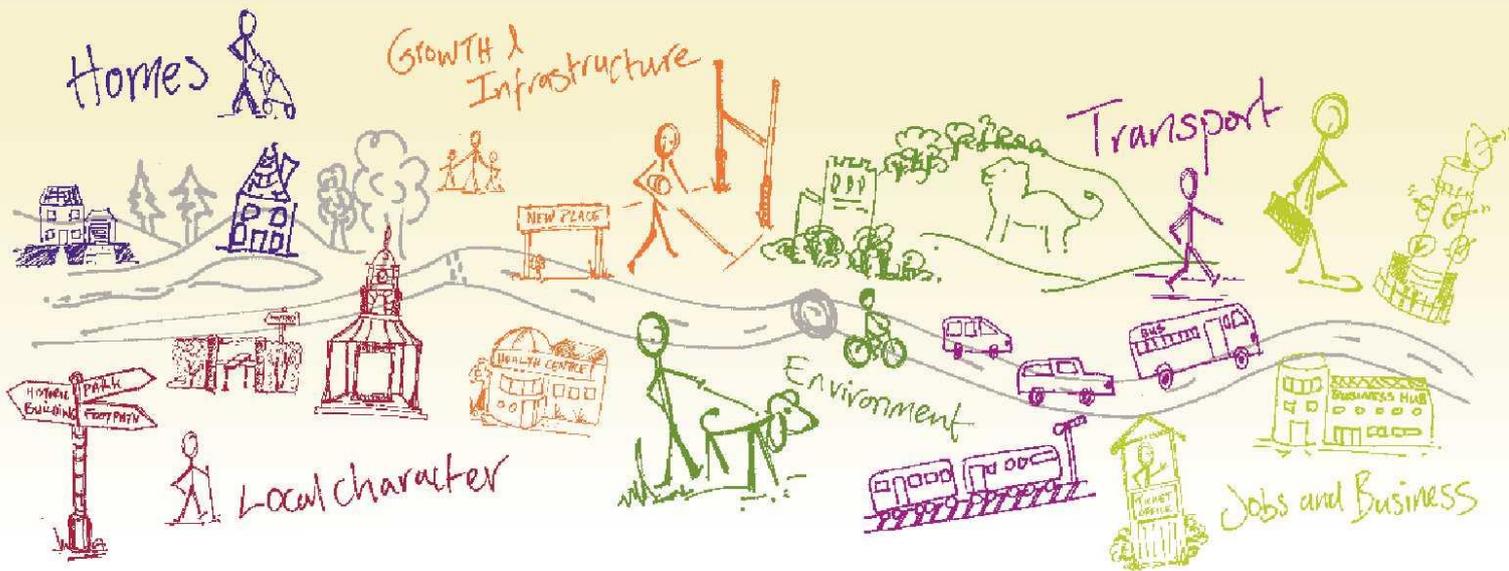
- Include the high quality progressive reclamation and aftercare of the site;
- Be limited to the duration of the main operation;
- Be carried out in a manner which will preserve the long term agricultural quality of the land at the same or higher Agricultural Land Classification Grade as that preceding the development; or
- Where it can be shown that no known suitable alternative site of lesser agricultural value is available, and that the loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land is reduced as far as practicable and is clearly outweighed by other planning benefits of the proposal;
- Include an assessment of ground stability conditions before and after completion of all site activities and demonstrate that there will not be any unacceptable adverse impacts;
- Include an assessment of the impact on aviation safety and demonstrate that there will not be an unacceptable adverse impact.



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# Shaping where you live 2035



## Climate Change & Sustainability

Local Plan 2015-2035

## 16 Climate Change and Sustainability

### 16.1 Overview

- 16.1.1 This section sets out the planning policies that will be applied to ensure that development in Central Bedfordshire is delivered in a way that contributes to the mitigation of climate change and embeds adaptation to the impacts of climate change in order to limit negative impacts.
- 16.1.2 The NPPF stresses that responding to challenges of climate changes is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, placing an emphasis on Local Planning Authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with provisions and objectives of the Climate Change Act (2008).
- 16.1.3 As with the Environmental Enhancement Section, this section/chapter is underpinned by the Council's Environmental Framework. This document summarises a range of local studies, assessments, strategies and guidance, and forms part of the technical evidence base for the Local Plan and is the supporting document for these policies.

### 16.2 Planning for Climate Change

#### Climate change mitigation: Cutting the carbon footprint of new development

- 16.2.1 The Climate Change Act (2008) establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
- 16.2.2 The Government's expectation set through the NPPF is that each local authority contributes to meeting this target through setting local requirements for the sustainability of buildings that are consistent with the Government's zero carbon policy, adopt nationally described standards, and promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources.
- 16.2.3 The Council recognises the benefits of using the energy hierarchy in reducing energy demand and a fabric first approach, along with use of passive solar design is recommended before deciding on appropriate renewable and low carbon technologies.
- 16.2.4 As such, the Council will require all major developments to submit a Sustainability Statement that clearly demonstrates the steps that will be taken to minimise the lifetime carbon emissions resulting from the development. This could focus cutting carbon emission by reducing energy demand through taking a 'fabric first' approach to building or the implementation of building or development based renewable and low carbon technologies. The aim will ultimately be to reduce the impact of the proposed development by at least 10%. This will be measured through energy consumption, with the baseline for this calculation being the energy demand of a scheme compliant with Part L of the Building Regulations that are applicable at the time of the application.
- 16.2.5



- 16.2.6 The Sustainability Statement will also set the strategy to address widely recognised issue of buildings not performing as designed (identified by Zero Carbon Hub as the performance gap), by confirming the proposed measures to ensure that new buildings achieve the energy performance intended at the design stage.
- 16.2.7 Climate change adaptation: Water efficiency; flood resilience, subsidence and overheating
- 16.2.8 Climate change projections show that we will experience hotter drier summers, milder winters, and the associated extreme weather impacts of drought and flooding.
- 16.2.9 In 2017 the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment highlighted the need to take early action to mitigate the risks to the environment, the economy and to health, and to ensure that the UK can adapt to the changing climate.
- 16.2.10 The Central Bedfordshire Local Climate change Risk Assessment (LCCRA) identifies flooding, overheating, water resources shortages, subsidence and impacts on the natural environment as risks that need to be planned for and managed. These correspond with the 2017 National Climate Change Risk Assessment as priority areas for actions.
- 16.2.11 Adaptation to climate change is a dynamic and flexible process, with decisions that are made in the near term needing to have regard of the long lifespan of buildings and infrastructure. This includes exploiting opportunities to adapt existing built areas, for example through maximising green infrastructure or by increasing the amount of urban greenery to help absorb floodwater and make buildings and open spaces more comfortable in hot weather. Projected climate changes and their impacts should be taken into account and all developments should be designed to the current best estimate of future impacts, or where demonstrated as not practicable, development design should allow retrofit of adaptation measures, for example fitting of brise soleil to prevent overheating.

### Making development resilient to the impacts of increased rainfall and drought

- 16.2.12 The design of new developments should reflect the increasing likelihood of periods of either drought or flooding, and consequently value water as a resource that can be stored in times of plenty for re-use in times of deficit. All new developments will therefore be expected to address the issue of water scarcity.
- 16.2.13 Consequently, all new development will be expected to achieve the higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set by the Part G of the Building Regulations. All commercial development will be expected to demonstrate how water usage will be reduced and the equivalent of the BREEAM 'very good' standard for water efficiency achieved. Developments that will achieve high water efficiency standards going beyond the Building Regulations requirements and those that will include water harvesting and recycling will be looked at favourably. Measures that further promote water efficiency and aim at achieving water neutrality, such as grey water recycling and water butts, will be considered favourably.



- 16.2.14 Site scale adaptation measures, such as Sustainable Drainage systems are dealt with in Policy CC1, however on the individual building level, new developments are required to use simple rainwater harvesting (for example through provision of water butts, for external use wherever practicable).
- 16.2.15 Flood risk at a site level is dealt with in Policy CC3, but it is important that where appropriate, buildings are designed to be resistant or resilient to flooding and the impacts of flooding both now and in the future.

### Mitigating overheating and the urban heat island

- 16.2.16 Built up areas with minimal open green space may exacerbate the risks associated with the urban heat island effect, where heat absorbed by heavy man-made structures radiates at night increasing local temperatures. This risk can be minimised by increasing green space, use of solar reflective materials and coatings as well as designing ventilation paths through which hot air can be replaced with cooler air from nearby green open spaces. Providing more natural drainage systems to enhance water surfaces in urban areas also has a greater cooling effect, whereas temperatures are higher in densely developed areas with little green space around them.
- 16.2.17 The orientation of a building together with a proportion and positioning of glazing areas determine the level of transmitted solar gain. This is particularly important where solar gain cannot be absorbed (for example by thermal mass) or extracted (through purge of mechanical ventilation) internal temperatures will increase.
- 16.2.18 If managed properly, solar gain can be beneficial in reducing energy demand for heating, but equally it needs to be controlled to avoid build up of unwanted heat leading to overheating. This can be controlled through careful orientation of the building and integration of effective solar control measures, such as brise soleil, external shutters, solar control glazing into a building and tree planting into landscape design.

### Managing risks through good design

- 16.2.19 The Sustainability Statement, to be submitted with applications for all major developments, will also demonstrate how the above climate change risks will be addressed through design, and will set out the strategy to minimise and manage these risks through the lifetime of the development.
- 16.2.20 Good design can improve the quality of places and ensure they are adapted to a changing climate. Integrating green space and water within developments can provide many benefits for climate change adaptation including flood storage, localised climate cooling and habitat creation. Developers should make use of the Council's Design Guide, which includes information on how to consider resource efficiency and climate change adaptation in the design of developments.

### Supporting the use of sustainability standards for development

- 16.2.21 There are a number of well recognised standards for built environment for both residential and non-residential developments, such as BREEAM, PassivHaus and the Home Quality Mark. The PassivHaus standard concentrates on energy efficiency, thermal comfort and indoor air quality while home Quality Mark and



BREEAM covers much wider range of issues that affect sustainability of the development.

- 16.2.22 The Council will look favourably at proposals that use these standards to demonstrate their sustainability and achieve higher standards than those prescribed by the Building Regulations demonstrated by certification of relevant scheme.
- 16.2.23 All major developments will be required to submit a post construction verification report to confirm that the development has been delivered to the approved specification. The report should provide validation documents covering all aspects of the policy and provide as delivered evidence of compliance, for example as built energy calculations, BREEAM or PassivHaus certification, photographic evidence of implemented landscape or green infrastructure specification.



**Policy CC1 : Climate Change and Sustainability**

In order to ensure the delivery of high quality sustainable development, where appropriate, proposals must demonstrate how they support the mitigation of, and adaptation to, the impacts of climate change.

The Council requires that any new development is designed to increase its own resilience and the resilience of the surrounding area within the site to climate change. This will be demonstrated through the submission and preparation of an adaptation strategy which will detail the measures that will be taken in order to minimise the developments vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. This will include:

- Minimising the risk of overheating through good design and site layout, and making use of green roofs and walls, shading, landscaping and planting as appropriate.
- Where there is the potential for flood risk the sequential approach will be taken, with mitigation measures and integration of building level flood resistance and resilience measures provided as appropriate, allowing for climate change.

New development will be required to incorporate measures that minimise and mitigate its impacts on the environment and climate change by:

- Reducing carbon dioxide emissions
- Maximising energy efficiency and conservation through orientation, layout and design of buildings, landscaping and planting,
- Making use of natural lighting and beneficial solar gain,
- Taking advantage of opportunities to use renewable and low carbon energy sources,
- Minimising water usage and is delivered to the higher water efficiency standard (110 litres per person per day) for residential development and the BREEAM 'very good' standards for water efficiency for commercial development, and demonstrates a water sensitive approach to the design in all developments.
- Incorporating measures that further promote water efficiency and aim at achieving water neutrality, such as grey water recycling or water butts will be considered favourably.

All major developments must provide a Sustainability Statement. This will demonstrate:

- How the above requirements relating to all new developments will be met.
- That the development will provide for a minimum of 10% of its energy demand, using the energy demand for a scheme compliant with Part L of the Building Regulations applicable at the time of application as the baseline) to either be reduced through a fabric first approach, deployment



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of energy efficient technology, offset from site or building located renewable and low carbon energy sources, or by whatever means are appropriate.

- How the performance gap between built and designed energy use will be negated.
- Incorporate an adaption strategy that considers, how good site design and layout, hard and soft landscaping (trees, vegetation, green walls and roofs) and amenity space will support adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and are also designed to achieve visual, acoustic, wildlife and other environmental benefits.

The Council will support developments that can demonstrate high quality sustainability standards going beyond the Building Regulations requirements and achieve certification to voluntary standards such as PassivHaus, BREEAM Excellent, or the Home Quality Mark.

### 16.3 Large scale Renewable and Sustainable Energy Development

- 16.3.1 The Council recognises the importance of increasing the amount of energy generated from renewable and low carbon technologies, as well as supporting the evolving sustainable energy infrastructure that collectively will ensure that the UK has a secure energy supply, reduces greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change, and stimulates investment in new jobs and businesses.
- 16.3.2 The Council is taking a positive and technology neutral approach to planning for renewable and low carbon energy generation and sustainable energy infrastructure, with the basic premise being that the most appropriate technology is deployed in the most appropriate location. The Renewables Capacity Study for Central Bedfordshire (March 2014) shows that a range of technologies may be suitable for this area and are effectively placed to deliver maximum local benefits, whilst at the same time contributing to the national need to increase low carbon energy generation. These include, but are not limited to, district heating schemes, photovoltaic energy, wind, locally sourced biomass and utilisation of landfill gas.
- 16.3.3 The Council also recognises that the energy market is rapidly evolving and it is expected that new technologies and infrastructure will emerge throughout the lifetime of this policy. For example, since the Renewable Capacity Study was completed there have been significant advances in Battery Storage and smart metering.
- 16.3.4 Because of the importance of the transition to a decentralised renewable and low carbon energy system for the UK, the Council will be positive in its support for applications that relate to energy technologies and infrastructure as long as they are compliant with national energy policy, have no unacceptable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated and will benefit local communities. In particular, community energy projects and those that have community backing are encouraged and will be supported by the Council.
- 16.3.5 The strategic allocation of sites set out in this plan presents significant opportunities for the provision of such infrastructure due to the potential for a



concentration of significant demand in a single location, along with the fact that they can be integrated into the development at the initial design stage. It is recognised that applications are likely to include a portfolio of technologies that complement each other, for example generation technologies, storage and distribution infrastructure, and be co-located on one site with both residential and non-residential uses.

- 16.3.6 The Written Ministerial Statement (June 2015) states that the Local Plan should identify 'areas as suitable' for wind energy development. What constitutes a 'suitable area' (as opposed to a defined site) is based on a range of factors, including landscape character and ability to accommodate wind development, proximity to existing and future urban areas and infrastructure, grid capacity, radar and sensitive locations (such as historic buildings and sites and ecologically sensitive areas). How this is interpreted in Central Bedfordshire is set out in the Council's existing technical guidance notes for renewable energy, which has greater scope to take into account the latest information.
- 16.3.7 In addition to this, the role of positive community engagement is key. It is a fundamental requirement that developers engage with affected communities and stakeholders at the earliest opportunity, listen to their concerns and are able to demonstrate how these issues will be addressed. Guidance on community engagement is also detailed in the Council's technical guidance for wind.



### **Policy CC2: Sustainable energy development**

The Council recognises the environmental, social and economic benefits of renewable or low-carbon energy and sustainable energy infrastructure.

The Council will positively support energy developments which:

- Are located in the suitable areas where negative impacts can be most effectively mitigated through design, scale and siting of the project;
- Are located and designed so as to have no unacceptable adverse impacts on heritage assets, sensitive landscapes and townscapes, noise, pollution and harm to visual amenity;
- Can demonstrate engagement with affected stakeholders, including communities, in order to understand and address issues for objection;
- Can provide environmental benefits and is supported by local communities.

#### Wind energy development

In case of wind farm developments, the Council will support the principle of those that can demonstrate that they:

- Are located in areas identified as suitable for wind development by the Council's Wind Farm Development Technical Guidance;
- Demonstrate that following consultation, the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

#### Solar farm developments

In case of ground mounted solar PV farms, the Council will support the principle of those developments that can demonstrate that they:

- Avoid locations with best and most versatile land or can demonstrate the most compelling evidence to justify the location.,.
- Are delivered in accordance with the Council's Solar Farm Development Technical Guidance

## **16.4 Flood Risk Management**

- 16.4.1 Central Bedfordshire has been subject to flooding from several sources of flood risk, with the principal risk from fluvial sources, primarily located along the River Ivel corridor in the east, River Flit and River Hit in the centre and Clipstone Brook through Leighton Buzzard in the west.



- 16.4.2 The area has experienced a number of historic surface water and drainage related flood events caused by factors such as insufficient storm and combined drainage capacity to poor surface water management. The SFRA and the Environment Agency's updated Flood Map for Surface Water (uFMfSW) mapping shows a number of prominent overland flow routes, following topographical flow paths of existing watercourses or dry valleys and local road infrastructure with some isolated ponding located in low-lying areas.
- 16.4.3 Incidents of historic groundwater flooding in Central Bedfordshire are thought to mostly be caused by the underlying geology of chalk and Lower Greensand, which allows water to pass to and from groundwater aquifers.
- 16.4.4 The likelihood and impact of flooding is expected to increase in the future due to the impacts of climate change and all new development must take this into account. This can be done through using the appropriate allowances for peak river flows and rainfall intensities when determining risk to the site and the design of flood mitigation and drainage. Likewise, new development will need to ensure people and property will remain safe from flooding for its lifetime. Proposed flood mitigation and drainage infrastructure must be designed to handle intense or extreme storm events as well as residual risks associated with exceedance or system failure, taking into account climate change projections.
- 16.4.5 To minimise the risk created to people and property from new development the NPPF instructs Local Planning Authorities to direct development towards areas at the lowest risk of flooding, develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources, and take opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.
- 16.4.6 The suitability of development will be assessed by applying the Sequential Test. If, having passed the sequential test, development is proposed in areas at risk of flooding (from all sources) then developers will be required to complete an Exception Test, and demonstrate that suitable compensatory storage and mitigation can be provided, and that the development will result in an overall reduction of flood risk on site and elsewhere. Proposals for development in areas at high risk of flooding from all sources will be refused if other suitable sites are reasonably available in areas at lower risk.
- 16.4.7 A sequential approach to the layout of development should be taken at the site level and all development proposals must take account of existing and future flood risk (from all sources). They must demonstrate that the development will be appropriately flood resilient and resistant, safe for all of its users for the lifetime of the development, and that it will not increase flood risk overall. Developers will be expected to enhance green infrastructure and reduce flood risk by making space for water, avoiding, or (where unavoidable) compensating for any loss of flood storage or flow routes, and demonstrating sustainable drainage.
- 16.4.8 To minimise the risk from surface water runoff all new development are expected to minimise areas of hardstanding and maximise the use of porous or permeable surface for infiltration, treatment and storage; for example by using permeable paving. Sustainable drainage (SuDS) should be used on all new development as detailed through Policy CC5.



- 16.4.9 Development should take account of, and be consistent with the Council's SFRA (or more up to date equivalent if applicable), the Catchment Flood Management Plan, and further material on national policy and local information on flood risk. This may include information from the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, Local Authority, or other local knowledge. This information should be used to inform the masterplanning of major development sites, and any sites where a site specific assessment of flood risk is required.
- 16.4.10 In addition to the criteria set out in the NPPF, the Council will require a site specific assessment of flood risk for new development within 20m of any watercourse (including those not shown on the Environment Agency Flood Maps), the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), or within an area where are significant surface water issues. This should include an assessment of the existing drainage system, and all flood risks affecting the site.
- 16.4.11 The Local Planning Authority (LPA), Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) should be consulted to confirm the level of assessment required and to provide any information on any known local issues.
- 16.4.12 In areas identified at high risk by the SFRA, the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2014) or the Climate Change Adaptation Evidence Base Report (2012) the Council may specify requirements for mitigation measures such as controlling surface water run off to below the pre-developed rate.
- 16.4.13 Development with the potential to impede or displace floodwaters will be required to demonstrate the proposal will not increase flood risk on or off the site. Flood compensation may be required by the council to manage flood levels and should be provided using volume for volume earthworks. The use of voids, stilts or undercroft parking as mitigation for a loss in floodplain storage should be avoided and are not considered acceptable methods of compensation. Land that is required for current and future flood management shall be safeguarded from development.
- 16.4.14 The information provided in the SFRA should also be used as a basis for investigating potential strategic flood risk solutions, for example flood plain restoration, construction of new upstream storage schemes, and cross-boundary working.
- 16.4.15 Any protection and flood risk management measures that are required must be implemented and maintained. Where new defences are required, the residual risks should be identified and mitigated for, and the development should demonstrate significant flood risk betterment to offsite areas.
- 16.4.16 Where a development benefits from an existing or proposed flood defence scheme, the development should contribute towards the capital and/or maintenance of these defences over its lifetime.
- 16.4.17 Any proposed development located within an area protected by flood defences should identify the condition of these defences. Where they are in a 'fair' or 'poor' condition, or where the level of protection is not to the required standard, the flood defences should be improved to an agreed standard.



- 16.4.18 Where developments are proposed in areas with historic or ongoing flood risk issues, opportunities should be taken to reduce the existing risk of flooding. This may include reconnection of rivers to the floodplain, betterment of existing discharge rates and volumes, removal of redundant in channel structures, and integrating or retrofitting surface water measures to replace and/or augment an existing drainage system in a developed catchment.
- 16.4.19 In line with the sequential approach, flood risk on site should be reduced first by careful design to avoid the building being flooded (flood avoidance), then only if the sequential approach is not possible, constructing the building in such a way to prevent floodwater entering and damaging a building (flood resistance), then accepting that water may enter the building but designing it carefully to minimise damage and allow quick re-occupancy (flood resilience), and finally designing buildings to enable them to be quickly repaired or replaced after flood damage (flood repairable).
- 16.4.20 At the individual property level, measures to avoid site level flood risk, and improve resistance and resilience of buildings to flood risk will be required if buildings are situated in any flood risk area, in addition to safe access and egress during flooding events. This may include setting of floor levels at an appropriate level for the type and location of the development, and the potential restriction on ground floor bedrooms, in addition to resistance and resilience measures. New buildings should be designed and constructed in a way to prevent floodwater entering the building and damaging its fabric. Where water may enter the building it must be constructed in such a way as to ensure the impact is limited with no permanent damage, the structural integrity maintained, and drying, cleaning, replacement and repair is facilitated.



### **Policy CC3: Flood Risk Management**

Development will be supported where:

- It is located in areas at lowest risk of flooding (from all sources) and the Sequential and Exception Tests (where required) demonstrate that the site is appropriate for development and its intended use.
- A sequential approach to site layout is applied, directing the most vulnerable uses to the areas at lowest risk from all sources of flooding.
- It will be safe for the lifetime of the development, will not increase flood risk elsewhere or result in a loss of floodplain storage capacity or impede flowpaths, and reduces the overall flood risk within and beyond the site boundary where possible. Land that is required for current and future flood management will be safeguarded from development.
- A site-specific assessment of flood risk has been undertaken following the criteria within this policy and the NPPF, which sets out appropriate flood risk management measures.
- Climate change implications are taken into account and occupants of the site will be safe during all flood events (including those which exceed the agreed design standard) or from residual risks or failure of the drainage system.
- Development must consider the impacts of the layout and land use on offsite flood risk. Measures should be identified and implemented, including passive measures to improve flood risk offsite.
- Surface water runoff is managed to pre-development rates and volumes, giving priority to the use of SuDS, and discharge locations have capacity to receive all foul and surface water flows from the development.
- The area of impermeable surface is minimised and porous and/or permeable surfaces are used wherever reasonably practicable.
- Mitigation measures maximise water efficiency and contribute to a net gain in water quality, biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure.
- Building level flood avoidance, resilience and resistance measures are designed into the development where appropriate.

Where necessary, planning permission will be conditional upon flood protection and/or runoff control measures being operative before other site works.

Development that increases the risk of flooding on or off the development site, or would compromise the performance of flood defences will not be permitted.

Central Bedfordshire Council will safeguard land required for current and future flood management.



### 16.5 Development close to watercourses

- 16.5.1 Development adjacent to, or which encompasses any kind of watercourse will be considered “close to a watercourse” and should provide opportunities to improve or enhance the water environment. This could be through river restoration, backwater creation, de-silting, de-culverting, in-channel habitat enhancement and appropriate removal of structures. These watercourses will include the main river network, which fall under the Environment Agency’s remit, Internal Drainage Board network, as well as other watercourses. These watercourses will be subject to Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board and Central Bedfordshire Council Land Drainage byelaws, as well as the planning policies set out below. When designed properly, such measures can have benefits such as reducing the costs of maintaining hard engineering structures, reducing flood risk, improving water quality and increasing biodiversity. Social benefits may also be gained by enhancing green space and access to watercourses.
- 16.5.2 Building adjacent to the banks of a watercourse has the potential to cause problems to the structural integrity of the banks and the building itself and can make future maintenance of the watercourse more difficult. Development (including gardens) must therefore be set back from the watercourse and an undeveloped buffer strip of no less than 9m should be provided between the top of the bank and any proposed development.
- 16.5.3 Historically, many natural watercourses have been altered in some way, for example artificially straightened or culverted. The act of culverting a watercourse tends to have mainly negative effects for flood risk management, access, maintenance and on the amenity and biodiversity value of the watercourses. The Council therefore expects existing watercourses to remain open wherever possible for both flood defence and environmental purposes, and existing culverts removed. This includes ensuring that existing natural drainage features will be retained wherever possible. In exceptional cases where culverting is unavoidable, the length involved should be restricted to a minimum, with the hydraulic and environmental design assessed, and appropriate mitigating enhancements to the surrounding environment included. It must also be demonstrated that other options have been thoroughly explored before culverting will be considered.
- 16.5.4 Inappropriate planting can lead to the erosion of banks and beds of a watercourse, increase maintenance costs, reduce ecological potential and may even lead to the spread of invasive alien species which are detrimental to the wider ecology of the area.
- 16.5.5 New development is required to ensure that any landscaping and planting will:
- Enhance of the drainage characteristics of a scheme;
  - Stabilise areas that may be vulnerable to erosion;
  - Enhance the visual appearance of the development; and
  - Enhance the ecological potential of the local environment, including optimum levels of light / shade for the watercourse.



- 16.5.6 Through the above measures, development close to a watercourse should contribute to the achievement of good status and help avoid deterioration of water quality in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). The Directive is considered in Policy CC6.

### **Policy CC4: Development close to watercourses**

Development should maximise opportunities for watercourse restoration and enhancement as part of the development. New development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it will:

- Conserve, and where possible, enhance the ecological and flood storage value of the water environment.
- Incorporate and retain existing open watercourses and, where possible, open up existing culverts and create new watercourses within their site design.
- Provide a minimum 9m wide undeveloped buffer strip for access, maintenance and natural flood storage.
- Mimic features of natural river morphology and hydrology where alterations to the bank of an ordinary watercourse are proposed or which create a new watercourse as part of a sustainable drainage scheme. Where it is not practicable to do so compensatory measures will be provided.
- Maximise opportunities to refurbish and/or renew existing assets (e.g. bridges, culverts and river walls) to ensure their lifetime is commensurate with the lifetime of the development (an assessment of the condition of the assets will be required).
- Not involve any building on top of a culverted watercourse.

Development which would compromise access to watercourses, or compromise the performance of flood defence or navigation facilities will not be permitted.

## **16.6 Sustainable Drainage and Surface Water Management**

- 16.6.1 The Council expects that all developments will use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and all development is required to provide a drainage strategy. Approaches to manage surface water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution) biodiversity (wildlife and plants) and amenity are collectively referred to as SuDS. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate the proposed standards of operation, construction, structural integrity and ongoing maintenance of the proposed surface water drainage system.
- 16.6.2 SuDS should be designed to slow, reduce and treat surface water flow by natural means. Where appropriate, every effort should be made to link SuDS into wider initiatives to enhance green infrastructure, improve water quality, benefit wildlife and/or contribute to the provision of the ecosystem service. SuDS should enhance



water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive (WFD), 'end-of-pipe solutions' where runoff is directly discharged into a wetland or pond should be avoided, and source controls should be incorporated to improve water quality.

16.6.3 The Council's adopted local requirements for the use of SuDS are:

- Plan in SuDs from the start
- Replicate natural drainage
- Water re-use first
- Enhance biodiversity
- Focus on multi-functional uses
- Minimise carbon and waste in SuDS
- Design for easy access and maintenance
- Linked design through every scale
- Place making through SuDS design
- Surface conveyance over pipes



16.6.4 The Council's adopted local requirements for SuDS are set out in full in the Supplementary Planning Document 'Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Drainage guidance: May 2015'. This provides technical guidance including how the Council will assess development proposals; the information required to accompany planning applications; the local requirements for SuDS; and guidance for how SuDS can be designed for the local environmental character.

16.6.5 The level of detail that must be provided at each stage of the planning process is also set out. This enables informed assessment of development proposals, in order to ensure appropriate and specific flood mitigation and sustainable drainage measures are in place. Information and links to the SPD can be found in the Environmental Framework, along with further information on national policy and standards.

16.6.6 In addition to the above, the design of surface water drainage must also comply with the '*Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems*' (March 2015, Ref: PB14308); Planning Policy Guidance paragraph 80, Building Regulations Approved Document H, the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and other recognised best practice, including the CIRIA SuDS Manual and BRE 365, or as updated. Developers should also have regard to local evidence studies, such as the Marston Vale Surface Water Plan and other location specific studies.

16.6.7 The design of surface water drainage must reflect site-specific circumstances such as topography, underlying geology and ground conditions, as these will inform the appropriate use of SuDS. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) gives an indication of the constraints across Central Bedfordshire and is intended to be used at a preliminary planning stage. Detailed site investigations will therefore need to be carried out to assess the suitability of a site for different types of SuDS and their detailed design. Where site investigations indicate that



infiltration SuDS are suitable, these must be designed to mimic natural infiltration as much as possible.

- 16.6.8 Infiltration SuDS will not be appropriate in areas where surface water may be subject to contamination or where assessment demonstrates that risks to groundwater are unacceptable. Some developments such as mineral extraction or landfill may be required to undertake a Groundwater Risk Assessment.
- 16.6.9 Discharge methods for surface water runoff should comply with Planning Practice Guidance paragraph 80 and Building Regulations Approved Document H and should ease pressure of the development downstream by reducing the impact of surface runoff entering a receiving waterbody or drainage network. Brownfield sites are expected to mimic greenfield runoff rates as far as possible, and at a minimum provide a betterment of at least 30% of the existing discharge.
- 16.6.10 To ensure SuDS continue to function as designed for the lifetime of the development which they serve, new development proposals should include a 'management and maintenance plan'. This should set out arrangements for adoption (if applicable), maintenance activities, access to and responsibilities for public and private components of the system.



### **Policy CC5: Sustainable Drainage**

The Council expects all development to use SuDS as normal practice, giving priority to naturalistic solutions incorporated into the soft landscape of the development.

All development that results in increase in hard standing area or impacts on surface water flow paths must therefore:

- Demonstrate that the surface water drainage is compliant with local requirements and design guidance set out in the Council's Sustainable Drainage SPD, National Standards and industry best practice.
- Design SuDS to deliver multiple environmental benefits, including flood risk and water quality management, biodiversity and landscape enhancement, and improve amenity, access and open space.
- Demonstrate that the discharge of surface water obeys the following priority order:
  - firstly, to ground via infiltration;
  - then to a water body at a rate no greater than greenfield runoff;
  - then to a surface water sewer at a rate no greater than greenfield runoff for greenfield sites, or at a rate to be agreed (as close to greenfield as possible, but a minimum betterment of 30% of the existing discharge) for previously developed land.
  - Discharge to a foul water or combined sewer is unacceptable, unless in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that there are no feasible alternatives and that it will not result in increased flood risk on or off site.
- Demonstrate that surface water runoff is managed as close to its source as possible and flow and quality of the runoff is managed in stages.
- Demonstrate that the run-off from all hard surfaces shall receive an appropriate level of treatment to minimise the risk of pollution.
- Show that suitable testing has been carried out to demonstrate whether infiltration is possible and that ground water would not be polluted. This may include undertaking a Groundwater Risk Assessment.
- Identify ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the entirety of surface water drainage system and include a 'management and maintenance plan', which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

In exceptional circumstances, where a sustainable drainage system cannot be provided, it must be demonstrated that it is not possible to incorporate sustainable drainage systems, and an acceptable means of surface water disposal is provided at source which does not increase the risk of flooding or give rise to environmental problems and improves on the current situation with a reduction in peak and total discharge.



### 16.7 Water supply and sewerage infrastructure

- 16.7.1 The Council will seek to ensure that there is adequate water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity to serve all new developments. The provision of new waste water treatment facilities is covered by policies in the Adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 16.7.2 The Council's preferred approach for foul drainage disposal is that new development will connect to the public sewerage system at the nearest point where capacity exists, this may require off-site infrastructure. Other options (e.g. private sewage treatments, septic tanks, cesspits or other more sustainable forms of sewage treatment) should only be considered if it can be clearly demonstrated by the developer that disposal to the public foul sewer is not feasible, taking into account cost and/or practicability.
- 16.7.3 Developers will be required to demonstrate the capacity in the sewerage system, on and off the site, and whether this is adequate to serve the development. A full assessment of the existing network against the scale of the development and its potential phasing should be provided to ascertain whether connection of the proposed development would lead to overloading of existing infrastructure and the need for the provision of any additional process plant and works capacity etc. Where there is a capacity problem and no improvements are programmed by the Water and Sewerage Company, the Council will require the developer to identify and fund appropriate improvements which must be completed prior to occupation of the development. The relevant water and sewerage companies must be consulted.
- 16.7.4 Drainage on the site must maintain separation of foul and surface flows. An existing connection to a sewer does will not automatically set a precedent and it must be demonstrated why infiltration and/or a connection to a watercourse cannot be utilised, in these instances removal of surface water currently draining to a combined sewerage system or is misconnected to the foul sewerage system is expected.



**Policy CC6: Water supply and sewerage infrastructure**

Planning permission will only be granted for developments where it can be demonstrated that:

- adequate water resources are available, or can be provided, and will be safeguarded from the potential impacts of development,
- foul flows produced by the development will be drained separately from surface water run off to an agreed point of connection to a public foul sewer or, for non mains drainage proposals, where there would be no detrimental impact on the environment, and
- foul sewers and sewage treatment facilities (of adequate design and capacity) are available to meet the demand created by new development or, where they are not available, can be provided in time to serve the development to ensure that the environment and the amenity of local residents are not adversely affected

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance, when there is a capacity constraint and improvements in off-site infrastructure are not programmed, planning permission will only be granted where the appropriate infrastructure improvements to the satisfaction of the relevant water and sewerage undertaker will be completed prior to occupation of the development.

Development which would overload available facilities and create or exacerbate problems of flooding or pollution will not be permitted.

**16.8 Water quality and the Water Framework Directive**

16.8.1 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Groundwater Directive recognises that development near water bodies can affect their quality and ecology. It establishes a legal framework for the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. This includes lakes, streams, rivers, groundwater and dependent ecosystems. The Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) for the Anglian and Thames Districts (including the Ouse catchment and Lea catchment) are the lead policy documents that cover WFD matters in Central Bedfordshire, and place further constraints on new development in terms of its influence on the quality status of receiving water bodies.

16.8.2 Many of the watercourses in Central Bedfordshire already meet the 'good' overall WFD status including the Clipstone Brook, the River Ivel (upstream of Henlow) and the Ickwell Brook. However, the majority only meet 'moderate' overall status or less. It is important that developments aim to take positive measures to conform to the WFD, which can be impacted as a result of development, for example in terms of 'deterioration' in ecological status or potential. More information on water quality in Central Bedfordshire is provided by the Environmental Framework.



- 16.8.3 Development in close proximity or which discharges to a waterbody must carry out a WFD assessment demonstrating that it will not lead to deterioration in the overall status of the waterbody, or prevent future attainment of good status. Where there are no apparent watercourses nearby, consideration should still be given to WFD objectives given that all water eventually makes its way into the river system.
- 16.8.4 Development should deliver opportunities to enhance the quality of the water environment, for example by:
- Integrating SuDS and green infrastructure into new development;
  - Managing and where possible reducing the risk of water pollution
  - Reducing the effects of flooding and drought on water bodies, and the prioritisation of naturalistic flood defence over the provision of hard flood defences.
  - Making modification to watercourses to restore 'natural' systems, including de-culverting, restoring or re-profiling rivers and naturalising river banks.
  - Adopting water efficiency measures;
  - Restoration of contaminated land.
  - Opportunities identified by Catchment Partnerships and flood risk management authorities should inform development proposals.
- 16.8.5 Early consideration of the water environment will enable water quality aims and outcomes to be secured through the planning process. By integrating SuDS into new developments and redevelopments, and through using these in sequence, it is possible to minimise pollutants which may be generated by a development. This in turn will help conform to the water quality objectives of the Water Framework Directive, as well as reducing flood risk. The design of SuDS is considered in Policy CC5.



### **Policy CC7: Water Quality**

Any development that would have a direct impact on any watercourse (e.g. re-alignment of a river or work to bridges) should demonstrate consideration of the impact of their development on water quality.

All new development must demonstrate:

- That it has no adverse impact on the quality of waterbodies and groundwater, or will prevent future attainment of good status.
- That development contributes positively to the water environment and its ecology and does not adversely affect surface and ground water quality;
- How they have contributed to the protection and enhancement of waterbodies identified by the Anglian and Thames River Basin Management Plan objectives, covering the Ouse and Lea catchments.

For any water body that is already in the lowest status class (including poor groundwater quantitative status) under the WFD, the Council will expect development to deliver enhancements where rivers and lakes are not achieving good ecological status or potential. Development that would result in deterioration shall not be permitted. A Groundwater Risk Assessment will be needed to support a planning application where activities could directly or indirectly pollute groundwater.

## **16.9 Safeguarding the Environment and Development from Pollution and Land Instability**

- 16.9.1 An important aspect of providing sustainable development is maintaining a healthy environment and protecting public health, wellbeing and amenity, through the control of pollution. Pollution can cause adverse health risks, damage the environment and interfere with amenity. It can also adversely affect neighbouring land uses, cause long term contamination and hinder regeneration.
- 16.9.2 Some development has the potential to harm the environment and impact public health in a variety of ways, including the emission of pollutants to the air (including odour), water courses and soils (including land contamination), and the generation of noise, vibration, light, litter and pests. The Council will consider the possible polluting effects of a development proposal on aspects such as amenity and surrounding land uses and other receptors such as the effect on biodiversity and the water environment..
- 16.9.3 In addition to pollution, the NPPF makes it clear that all development should take account of ground conditions, including suspected or confirmed land contamination, and land instability in order to ensure that sites are suitable for its new use and that any uses do not have any unacceptable adverse impacts on human health, property and infrastructure, the natural and historic environment.
- 16.9.4 The Council will seek to maintain sustainable and healthy environments through the careful consideration of development proposals which are likely to cause or be exposed to potential sources of pollution, or, cause or be affected by land



instability. Applicants will be required to submit an assessment of the extend of pollution and, or land instability that identifies possible risks and demonstrates that the conditions can be suitably mitigated for the proposed end use, as set out in the current national guidance, the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide or any site specific Development Briefs or Masterplans.

### **Policy CC8: Pollution and Land Instability**

All proposals for new development must demonstrate compliance with the current national guidance as well as the Council's adopted standards and supplementary planning guidance in terms of pollution and land instability. Pollution includes matters in relation to noise, waste management, vibration, odour, surface and ground waters, light, contaminated land and airborne pollution.

Development proposals which are likely to cause pollution or land instability, or are likely to be exposed to potential unacceptable levels of pollution or land instability will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- measures can be implemented to minimise impacts to an acceptable level which protects health, natural and historic environment, water quality, property, infrastructure and amenity; and
- conditions can be suitably mitigated for the proposed end use and cause no adverse effects;

Where necessary the Council will use planning conditions and/or legal agreements to help limit the impact of pollution.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035** Pre-submission January 2018



# Shaping where you live 2035



## High Quality Places

Local Plan 2015-2035

## **17 High Quality Places**

### **17.1 Design and Local Character**

17.1.1 Central Bedfordshire is a diverse area characterised by distinctive landscapes, important heritage and wildlife assets, and a variety of settlements of specific character. It is therefore important that new developments are designed to respect this diversity and enhance the unique characteristics of the area.

17.1.2 Good design creates distinctive, functional and sustainable places for residents to live, work and enjoy. The Council has adopted its own technical guidance document on design, the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide, to ensure that new developments at all scales are of the highest design quality and enhance the area. All new development is expected to comply with this guidance and all relevant policies contained within this Plan. Where appropriate, conditions will be attached to planning permissions to ensure that design considerations are addressed when the development is implemented.

17.1.3 The following general principles must be adhered to in designing new schemes:

#### **Responding to local context**

17.1.4 All development proposals will be expected to achieve a high standard of design and should be underpinned by a thorough analysis of the site and its surrounding area. The Council greatly values the distinctive areas of natural and historic character across Central Bedfordshire, and new developments should be well integrated and positively related to their surroundings.



17.1.5 There must be no harm to local amenity and local character should be protected and where possible, enhanced. On larger strategic sites variety across the scheme will be fundamental to creating a place with its own character, and this should be achieved by varying layouts, street types and landscaping for example.

#### **Movement and legibility**

17.1.6 In designing new developments emphasis should be placed on creating a hierarchical network of well connected streets which meet the needs to all street users, and prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport over private motor vehicles. The layout of the street network, supported by the positioning of key buildings, should also be used to enable people to navigate through new developments easily using safe and attractive routes.



- 17.1.7 All new developments will be expected to comply with the Council's parking standards as set out in this Local Plan.

### Sustainable design

- 17.1.8 All new developments should optimise the potential for sustainable design. They should be located and designed to maximise the opportunity to travel by sustainable modes and should ensure appropriate consideration is given to orientation, landscaping, SUDS, energy, water use, and potential for pollution. The sorting and segregating of waste materials by occupiers is essential to the success of recycling and reuse schemes, and new developments should provide adequate and convenient storage space for the appropriate in-house storage of recyclables.
- 17.1.9 The Council feels strongly that the needs of all residents are accommodated within the built environment. This is expected to be done as part of an integrated design process from the outset, rather than as an add-on at a later stage.

### Materials and detailing

- 17.1.10 A coordinated approach should be taken to the use of materials and the design and siting of street furniture, boundary treatments, lighting, signage and public art, all of which contribute towards place making. Trees and other planting appropriate to the scale of development and space available should be incorporated in order to soften the streetscape and reduce the visual impact of car parking. It is important that the choice of landscaping and materials used within the public realm are durable and functional in order to accommodate both everyday and infrequent uses, such as the movement of vehicles and people or gritting. Consideration must also be given to the cost, practicalities and responsibilities for the maintenance of landscaping and materials in the long term.

### Community safety

- 17.1.11 The design of new developments is expected to address community safety concerns, for example by providing clear boundaries between public and private space and ensuring that the fronts of buildings and their principal entrances face onto the street or public space to increase pedestrian activity. Buildings and layouts should also be designed to maximise opportunities for natural surveillance and provide good quality lighting and sensible landscaping.

### Inclusive design

- 17.1.12 It is important that all new development is designed to be inclusive with the needs of all users considered from the outset. **Special consideration should be given to the needs of people with disabilities.**

### Density

- 17.1.13 Careful consideration needs to be given to the density of new schemes to ensure that they make the best and most efficient use of land available. The key to creating high quality places is not simply about achieving a certain density; it is about designing schemes that take into account the character of surrounding areas and the opportunities and constraints present in a particular locations. The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide provides examples of where different densities



might be appropriate in Central Bedfordshire, but all schemes will be considered on a case by case basis and will be required to meet the design principles identified within this Local Plan and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

- 17.1.14 The Council will generally support higher densities within urban locations and along existing and potential new public transport corridors, in order to secure the provision of commercially viable services and support retail, employment and community facilities. Changes in density across a larger scheme or in urban settings can often be appropriate and add variety in character, providing that they are well designed. For edge of urban sites and those within or adjoining smaller towns and villages within the rural area, the density of the scheme will be expected to reflect the existing character of the surrounding area, and appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments will be required to provide an appropriate edge and protect open countryside.

### **Policy HQ1: High Quality Development**

The Council will ensure that all developments are of the highest possible quality and respond positively to their context. All development proposals, including extensions and change of use, must ensure that:

- Proposals take account of opportunities to enhance or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area and create a sense of place;
- Size, scale, massing, orientation, materials and appearance relate well to the existing local surroundings and reinforce local distinctiveness, both built and natural;
- Careful consideration is given to the density of all new housing proposals to ensure that they make the most efficient use of the land available, whilst reflecting the existing character of the surrounding area and making provision for appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments;
- Proposals are well connected to surrounding areas, providing safe, attractive and convenient routes that encourage travel by sustainable modes and meet the needs of all street users;
- The distinction between public and private space is clear, with distinct boundaries;
- Proposals are complimentary to the existing natural environment, taking account of the landscape setting, landscape character, Rights of Way, biodiversity, and Green Infrastructure. High quality hard and soft landscaping appropriate to the scale of development proposed should be used to integrate the proposal into the environment;
- Inclusive design is considered from the outset;
- Layouts are designed to maximise surveillance and increase pedestrian activity within the public realm to reduce opportunities for crime;
- There is not an unacceptable adverse impact upon nearby existing or permitted uses, including impacts on amenity, privacy, noise or air quality;
- Resources are used efficiently and energy and water efficiency is maximised;
- Any lighting associated with the development does not have a detrimental



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impact on the surrounding area; and

- Development supports the sustainable management of waste through the appropriate layout and design of buildings, external spaces and roads in accordance with the Design Guide for Central Bedfordshire and Waste Strategic Policy WSP5 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (January 2014).

All new development will be expected to comply with the requirements of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (and subsequent revisions).

### 17.2 Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

- 17.2.1 The development industry will be funding a substantial proportion of infrastructure associated with new development. This will occur either through the usual agreements made in the course of individual planning applications (known as s106 Planning Agreements) or the emerging Community Infrastructure Levy, a tariff based charge.
- 17.2.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy will allow the Council to raise funds to support development and the money will assist the funding of a wide range of infrastructure projects needed as a result of development. The infrastructure to be funded by CIL will be defined for the charging schedule and the Infrastructure Schedule will form the starting point for this. The Council needs to strike a balance between the desirability of funding infrastructure from the levy and the potential effects of the levy upon the economic viability of development
- 17.2.3 A meaningful proportion of the funds raised from CIL will be placed with the neighbourhoods where development takes place for local Town and Parish Councils to spend on local infrastructure priorities.
- 17.2.4 In some circumstances the infrastructure required to serve Central Bedfordshire may be provided in neighbouring administrative areas. Likewise in some cases it will be reasonable to seek a contribution from development from adjoining areas towards infrastructure in Central Bedfordshire that will support those developments. Central Bedfordshire Council will work constructively with adjoining local planning authorities to ensure that development is supported by the right infrastructure and that contributions towards infrastructure provision is collected on an equitable basis.
- 17.2.5 With the introduction of CIL, s106 agreements will only be used in restricted circumstances. A Planning Obligations SPD will be prepared about the use of s106 agreements in light of CIL approval.



## **Policy HQ2: Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy**

New development must be supported by the required infrastructure at the appropriate stage. Where existing infrastructure will be placed under more strain due to the impact of new development, compensatory provision should be made such that there is no overall reduction in provision.

Developers will be required to make appropriate contributions to offset the cost of providing new physical, social and environmental infrastructure required as a result of their proposals either by way of financial contributions, or direct provision of such infrastructure within larger developments.

The Council will work in partnership with infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities and other delivery agencies in seeking the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support new development.

Contributions will be phased or pooled to ensure the timely delivery and implementation of the necessary infrastructure.

The Council will seek to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy and retain the use of Section 106 agreements where necessary. In advance of the adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy, the Council will seek to ensure the delivery of strategic infrastructure by Planning Obligations and other appropriate funding sources.

An SPD on the role and purpose of S106 agreements will be prepared.

### **17.3 Social and Community Infrastructure**

17.3.1 The Council recognises the importance of facilitating social interaction and creating strong, vibrant and inclusive communities. The delivery of sufficient community facilities and accessible services to meet local needs helps to improve the health, social and cultural wellbeing of all.

17.3.2 Community infrastructure is the facilities and services that support and meet the local everyday of those who live or work in the locality. For example this may include:

- Leisure, recreational or cultural facilities and community buildings;
- Local shops, public houses and services, including those for social; educational and health use;
- Libraries and other information services that help residents to access local services;
- Health and Social Care Hubs; and
- Any other services or facilities supporting employment and housing growth which enhance the sustainability of communities.

17.3.3 Social infrastructure is the organisation, services and activities that support a community's need for social engagement and participation; build strong, vibrant



healthy and inclusive communities; and improve the wellbeing of those who live and work in the locality. This can include: opportunities for residents to be actively involved in their community through their participation in community activities, social networks, forums, groups and volunteering; opportunities for social action and community engagement; and support, advice, training and assistance with the formation of new social networks, volunteering opportunities and community groups, including the provision of 'start up' grants.

- 17.3.4 New residential development often increases pressures on social and community infrastructure. In line with national guidance, the Council will aim to protect existing community facilities whilst also working towards enhancing provision across Central Bedfordshire. Where existing facilities are not adequate to support proposed residential development, developers will be required to contribute towards or provide new or enhanced facilities.
- 17.3.5 Access to high quality well designed community facilities and public spaces contribute to a strong sense of place, as well as a strong sense of community. Community facilities require a pattern of development that makes the fullest appropriate possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and provides ease of access to facilities and services.
- 17.3.6 A "community hub" approach is encouraged, where community facilities can be co-located and form part of wider service delivery role, meeting a range of community needs from a single location. The co-location of facilities and services, providing shared facilities and integrated service delivery, increases foot fall and helps to make services more sustainable; it also reduces unnecessary journeys and means that residents can access services to better and meet their every day needs with ease.
- 17.3.7 The need for social and community infrastructure generated by new development must be planned ahead, with interim or temporary provision provided ahead of full provision made at a later date to a standard that ensures future residents are well served and that any existing community does not suffer adverse impacts. This may require certain facilities and services to be provided before dwellings are occupied or at a very early stage to establish preferred trends and would be determined on a site by site basis. Temporary schemes must be accompanied by a clear exit strategy that provides for overlap with the onset and transfer to permanent provision. Schemes must include an agreed timescale for the delivery of all social and community infrastructure. Developers will be required to contribute to the long term management, running costs and maintenance of temporary and permanent community facilities and to the provision of social infrastructure to ensure future communities benefit from provision.
- 17.3.8 Social and community infrastructure requires strong working partnerships between the Council, Town and Parish Councils, developers, public sector agencies, the voluntary and community sector and the business sector. Providers will need to meet the health and social care; educational, cultural and learning; social and community development needs of residents in new and existing communities. Developers will be required to work closely with those affected by their proposals, in particular Town and Parish Councils, to develop designs and specifications and





### **Policy HQ3: Provision for Social and Community Infrastructure**

The Council will support the principle of applications for the expansion or enhancement, or the provision of new social and community infrastructure.

To deliver new facilities and services, subject to viability, the Council will work with developers, service providers and partners to:

- Ensure an integrated approach to the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services;
- Ensure the timely delivery and transfer of social and community infrastructure; and
- Utilise the principles of multi-functional space where appropriate, by maximising opportunities for co-location, shared facilities and integrated service delivery through community hubs where appropriate.
- Ensure that where temporary spaces are provided these are replaced by occupation of the last dwelling by a permanent space

New housing developments will be required to contribute towards the provision of social and community infrastructure to meet the need generated by the development. Where an application fails to provide adequate social and community infrastructure without reasoned justification, or fails to make appropriate planning obligation contributions, it will be refused.

Depending on the use of the social and community infrastructure and adoption arrangements, developers may be required to make appropriate contributions towards maintenance.

Development which proposes the change of use or loss of land and buildings which are currently or were previously a community infrastructure use will be resisted. Permission will not be granted for change of use or redevelopment unless the applicant can prove that:

- The use no longer serves the community, and significant evidence is provided to demonstrate that it is surplus to requirements and there is a lack of need for any other community uses at the facility; or
- The loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision either on site or at an appropriate accessible location; or
- Evidence is provided which satisfactorily demonstrates that the use is no longer financially viable, and all reasonable efforts have been made to sell or let the premises for a community use at a reasonable price for at least 12 months.

Where a site or building is listed by the Council as an Asset of Community Value the Council will consider this to be a material consideration in any applications regarding its change of use



### 17.4 Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities

17.4.1 Indoor sport and leisure facilities are not only important in contributing to improving the physical health of communities but they also perform a function as valued community hubs where people meet and socialise. Indoor sports facilities including swimming pools, gyms, sports courts and work-out studios are usually provided by public leisure centres. The Council has six multi-facility public leisure centres spread across its area. Access to these buildings is central to creating and maintaining healthy communities. It is therefore important that existing facilities are retained and that new development plays a role in delivering appropriate infrastructure to serve its residents.



17.4.2 The Council also has policies which address the protection and provision of outdoor sport facilities and open space in relation to new development. These are included within the Environmental Enhancement section of this Plan (Section 17).



### **Policy HQ4: Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities**

Central Bedfordshire Council will protect indoor sports and leisure facilities from development. Redevelopment of these sites for other purposes will only be appropriate in exceptional situations, in line with NPPF requirements.

Where they are lost to development, equal or better replacement provision within a reasonable proximity of the original facility must be delivered by the developer, or a contribution provided to the council to re-provide the facility where land has been identified which is suitable and available for that provision.

On new residential developments, the Council will require;

- the provision of indoor sports and leisure facilities must have regard to the Leisure Strategy standards and facility requirements.
- developments to provide indoor sports and leisure facilities on site unless this is demonstrably inappropriate or impossible.
- the enhancement and / or extension of existing facilities must have regard to the Leisure Strategy requirements, where the provision of indoor sports and leisure facilities is not on the development site. Where the priority facility for improvements is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council a contribution will be required from the developer to deliver the identified improvements.
- on-site indoor sports and leisure facilities which are to be delivered by the developer to be designed and constructed in accordance with Sport England facility guidance, together with the facility guidance of the relevant National Governing Body for Sport (NGB).
- proposals for on-site indoor sports and leisure facilities to provide a management scheme which details the future ownership, management and maintenance of the site, and where the site is to be adopted commuted sums are to be paid for the maintenance of the facility.

## **17.5 Communications Infrastructure**

### **Broadband**

- 17.5.1 National policy requires Local Plans to support the expansion of electronic communications networks. The expansion and development of these networks is critical to supporting and growing businesses and improving the area's productivity; in addition to attracting new investment in knowledge based and technology intensive sectors. Such provision enables people to access services and work from home and can have wider impacts on the need to travel, accessibility and the low carbon economy
- 17.5.2 The Council's approved Joint Local Broadband Plan 2012 sets out the Council's ambition to deliver improved broadband with Next Generation Access for all by 2020. The Council has met its initial targets and further measures are planned to support existing premises to receive superfast broadband services.



- 17.5.3 A key part of delivering this vision for the area is ensuring that new developments put in place the provision of digital infrastructure to support the delivery of high speed broadband services.
- 17.5.4 Superfast broadband is considered to be internet access with connection speeds of greater than 100Mbps. However, technological advances means available speeds are constantly increasing, and the Council wishes to ensure a network that can be upgraded, so residents and businesses are able to benefit from increasing access speeds, for example Gigabit (1000Mbps) ultra fast services.
- 17.5.5 New build infrastructure can be designed to provide high rates of connectivity. The Government and the British Standards Institution have produced a Publicly Available Specification (PAS 2016) which aims to inform builders and developers about how to install digital infrastructure into all new build domestic dwellings. Likewise, builders and developers should also consider the Data Ducting Infrastructure for New Homes Guidance Note (2008) when planning digital infrastructure requirements for developments.
- 17.5.6 As such, the Council wishes to see the necessary on-site infrastructure put in place at the time of construction, to ensure future connectivity to superfast services. Developers should therefore consult with telecommunications providers at the earliest opportunity in the planning process in relation to the provision of appropriate infrastructure services and the co-location of utilities and broadband.
- 17.5.7 The Council will expect all new residential developments of 30 dwellings or more to include provision for broadband infrastructure to support the delivery of superfast broadband services to all dwellings. Developments of less than 30 dwellings and all employment development should also make fibre provision or demonstrate, using evidence, why fibre connections can not be made and what alternative if any will be made.
- 17.5.8 It is recognised that the availability of high speed digital infrastructure is increasingly becoming essential for residential and commercial premises. High speed connectivity can increase the value of developments. In addition to the Council's investment in enhancing existing broadband infrastructure, it is recognised that new infrastructure enabling new communities to access superfast broadband services can also support improved access for nearby communities. The Council would support investment that improves wider superfast broadband connectivity where practicable.

### Radio and Telecommunications

- 17.5.9 Voice and mobile telecommunications services are increasingly critical aspects for residents and businesses, and the Council supports enhancement of indoor and outdoor connectivity across Central Bedfordshire. Telecommunications technology is rapidly evolving, as highlighted in the Government's Next Generation Mobile Technologies: A Five Year Strategy for the UK which seeks to provide faster and more reliable communications, such as 5G, for applications from self driving cars to the "internet of things".
- 17.5.10 In line with the Government's policy, the Council supports the principle that there should be high quality access to communications technology where people live,



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work and travel. The Council would be supportive in principle for 5G pilot projects that can play a key part in achieving high levels of indoor and outdoor coverage.

- 17.5.11 Central Bedfordshire Council require that existing radio and telecommunications structures and sites should be used wherever feasible. Where new installation sites are proposed, justification should be provided to demonstrate that there are no feasible opportunities for mast or site sharing.
- 17.5.12 There is a clear need to balance the social and economic benefits of any particular telecommunications development against their potential environmental impact. The principal issues that are likely to arise are landscape and visual considerations because of the height and massing of masts and equipment.
- 17.5.13 Some smaller scale masts fall within 'permitted development' but require the 'prior approval' of the LPA. In such cases, the consideration of proposals will be limited to the acceptability of the proposal in relation to appearance and siting. Appearance of a mast includes its materials, colour and design, and consideration of siting will involve its impact on the ecological value of the site, the wider landscape and its proximity to buildings and housing and the availability of alternative infrastructure in the area.
- 17.5.14 The criteria at Policy HQ5 will be applied in these cases and for those more significant radio and telecommunications that do not constitute 'permitted development'.



**Policy HQ5: Broadband and Telecommunications Infrastructure**

Residential development of 30 dwellings or more shall provide superfast next generation broadband infrastructure to serve all dwellings within the development.. Developments of less than 30 dwellings and all employment development should also make fibre provision, or demonstrate, using evidence, why fibre connections can not be made and what alternative, if any, will be made.

This should where possible facilitate a fibre to the premises solution, or the equivalent technology, capable of providing superfast broadband services with a minimum of 100Mbps (subject to Government policy).

Provision should be made with minimal disruption and minimal need for reconstruction, and allow for future growth/improvements in service infrastructure/broadband service.

The Council supports the provision of high quality communications technology offering access to places where people live, work and travel in Central Bedfordshire.

Existing radio and telecommunications structures and sites should be used wherever feasible. Where new installation sites are proposed, justification should be provided to demonstrate that there are no feasible opportunities for mast or site sharing.

Any new masts or telecommunications equipment must:

- enhance indoor and outdoor mobile telecommunications coverage and reliability for voice services and mobile broadband.
- be sited to minimise visual intrusion and to ensure that local amenity is not significantly adversely affected;
- be sympathetically designed;
- be sited so they are not overly prominent or visually dominating within the street scene;
- Would not cause an overbearing impact upon neighbouring dwellings due to height, proximity and/or design of structures;
- be sited so that there is no significant adverse impact on the Chilterns AONB, SSSIs, identified heritage assets and any important landscape features identified in the Landscape Character Assessment 2016.

**17.6 Public Art**

17.6.1 Public Art is recognised as a key mechanism to enhance public realm, promote local distinctiveness and legibility Public Art is also a valuable tool in engaging local communities, existing and new, in the design and creative processes which assists in engendering a sense of involvement and ownership.



- 17.6.2 Central Bedfordshire Council requires developers and promoters of sites to take responsibility for funding and managing the implementation of Public Art as part of development either directly or through specialist advisers and in consultation with Central Bedfordshire Council.



### **Policy HQ7: Public Art**

The Council requires Public Art appropriate to the scale of development to be provided as part of development consisting of:

- Residential development of 100 or more units
- Any new development facing on to the public realm where floor area exceeds 1000m<sup>2</sup> including retail, leisure, public buildings and educational establishments.
- New public spaces associated with town centre development and enhancement.
- Transport interchanges and major highways and transport infrastructure projects especially within an urban context.

All development proposals should take account of the detailed guidance presented in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

## **17.7 Back-land Development**

- 17.7.1 Back-land development refers to the development of land which sits behind the existing building line with little or no frontage onto the public highway, for example residential gardens. Proposals on back-land sites are often for residential development, however in some cases smaller scale office or ancillary uses are proposed.

- 17.7.2 The Council does not object to all back-land development, but it must be ensured that it is well designed and suitable to the existing character and context. There will however be some cases where development of back-land is not suitable, for example if it would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area or if it would be depart significantly from the existing grain of development.



**Policy HQ8: Back-land Development**

Proposals for the development of back-land sites will be resisted where they are against the existing pattern and grain of development and the character and appearance of the area would be harmed.

**17.8 Larger Sites**

- 17.8.1 This plan allocates a number of housing sites to meet the identified need. All of these allocations which propose 300 dwellings or more, or which are on a sensitive site will be expected to work with the Council to produce a Development Brief as outlined in the site allocation policies. Any allocations which are on a sensitive site, or are to be phased may be expected to provide a Design Code for the site as a whole in addition to a Development Brief.
- 17.8.2 A Development Brief is intended to bridge the gap between the Local Plan and a planning application. It will focus on planning issues and must be consistent with the Local Plan. A Development Brief often details a site's constraints and opportunities, and outlines what type of development is expected by the Local Planning Authority. The guidance in Development Briefs will focus on planning issues.
- 17.8.3 A Design Code is a detailed technical guidance document which plans for high quality design across a site through the use of written text and supporting drawings. Design Codes clarify the quality and type of design which is expected for a site, setting out key design principles. This provides certainty for developers and the local community, whilst ensuring high quality development.
- 17.8.4 Whilst this Plan aims to make provision for enough housing to meet the Council's need as identified in Section 7, the Council recognises that circumstances may arise where larger windfall sites come forward. A mix of uses is expected to enable to creation of sustainable communities. All mixed-use development must ensure that the range of uses provided are properly integrated and respect neighbouring uses, including those which are already existing.



### **Policy HQ9: Larger Sites**

Larger sites are expected to provide a mix of uses to ensure an integrated approach towards delivery of residential, economic and community uses.

Where development exceeds 300 dwellings, where there are complex design or amenity issues, or where the site is sensitive, a Development Brief must be agreed with the Council prior to submission of a Full or Outline planning application

A Design Code will also be required for developments in excess of 300 dwellings where the site is:

- Made up of multiple related sites that will be built out in phases over a long period of time;
- In multiple ownership and coordination between the parties is desirable;
- Likely to be developed by two or more different developers; or
- Requires a well considered approach to design due to its sensitivity or the sensitivity of a surrounding area.

## **17.9 Small open spaces**

- 17.9.1 The Council recognises the importance of retaining open spaces within our towns and villages as they can contribute to the greening of the built environment, have a positive impact on health and wellbeing, provide havens for wildlife, establish a sense of place and generally create attractive and enjoyable places in which to live and work.
- 17.9.2 Small open spaces can provide an attractive landscape setting, contribute to traffic calming and screen or soften views by creating buffers between different uses. These types of open spaces can also support habitat connectivity for wildlife and form a key component in sustainable drainage.
- 17.9.3 The Council's Leisure Strategy sets out the requirements for the creation of new open spaces in developments. It also identifies Central Bedfordshire's stock of open spaces which meet Leisure Strategy typologies and are above a threshold of 200 sqm. In accordance with national guidance these are protected by this Plan from their inappropriate redevelopment. There is however a need to resist the loss of other, often smaller areas not identified in the Leisure Strategy, which while they may or may not have a recreational function, contribute positively to the visual amenity, character and environment of our settlements.

### **Policy HQ10: Small Open Spaces**

Verges, landscape strips and other areas which provide opportunities for recreation or contribute positively to the visual amenity and/or the ecological networks of the area will be safeguarded from encroachment or loss unless social, environmental or economic benefits which significantly outweigh the need to protect the land can be demonstrated.



### 17.10 Modern Methods of Construction

- 17.10.1 'Modern methods of construction' (MMC) is a collective term used to describe a number of construction methods. These differ significantly from conventional construction methods such as brick and block. They are fundamentally about better products and processes which improve efficiency, quality, customer satisfaction, environmental performance, sustainability and the predictability of delivery timescales.
- 17.10.2 There are many types of approaches that are encompassed within MMC. These include:
- Panellised units produced in a factory and assembled on-site to produce a three dimensional structure.
  - Volumetric construction to produce three-dimensional modular units in controlled factory conditions prior to transport to site.
  - Hybrid techniques that combine both panellised and volumetric approaches.
  - Floor or roof cassettes, pre-cast concrete foundation assemblies, pre-formed wiring looms, mechanical engineering composites and innovative techniques such as tunnel form or thin-joint block work.
- 17.10.3 This is an area of considerable innovation with new methods and products being developed on an on-going basis. To reflect this additional guidance will be provided in the Council's Design guide.
- 17.10.4 The Council recognises the potential benefits in promoting and encouraging innovation in relation to modernising construction and will therefore consider applications that embrace these favourably.
- 17.10.5 The Council will maintain a 5-year land supply of housing delivery and in doing so will hold landowners, developers and housebuilders to account on timescales for on-site delivery. MMC could play an important role in accelerating the pace of this delivery on site. MMC is also seen as being a key approach that will be necessary to counter the increasing current and future implications in the shortage of skilled labour in the construction sector.
- 17.10.6 We would encourage partnerships between housebuilders, Registered Providers and MMC manufacturers with a view to achieving increased build rates and accelerated housebuilding. This will be monitored and recorded as part of the 5-year land supply calculations.
- 17.10.7 The Council will take an evidence-based approach to commissioning partners who can deliver quality homes at an accelerated pace. This may include manufactures that make effective use of modern building techniques and innovative methods of construction.



**Policy HQ11: Modern Methods of Construction**

The Council aims to encourage innovation and appropriate use of modern building techniques. Therefore, proposals that embrace modern methods of construction will be considered favourably. This will include being more flexible with regards to design and finishes whilst still maintaining high quality.

Developers will be asked to demonstrate how they have considered use of MMC in their proposal to determine the relative benefit or appropriateness of MMC.

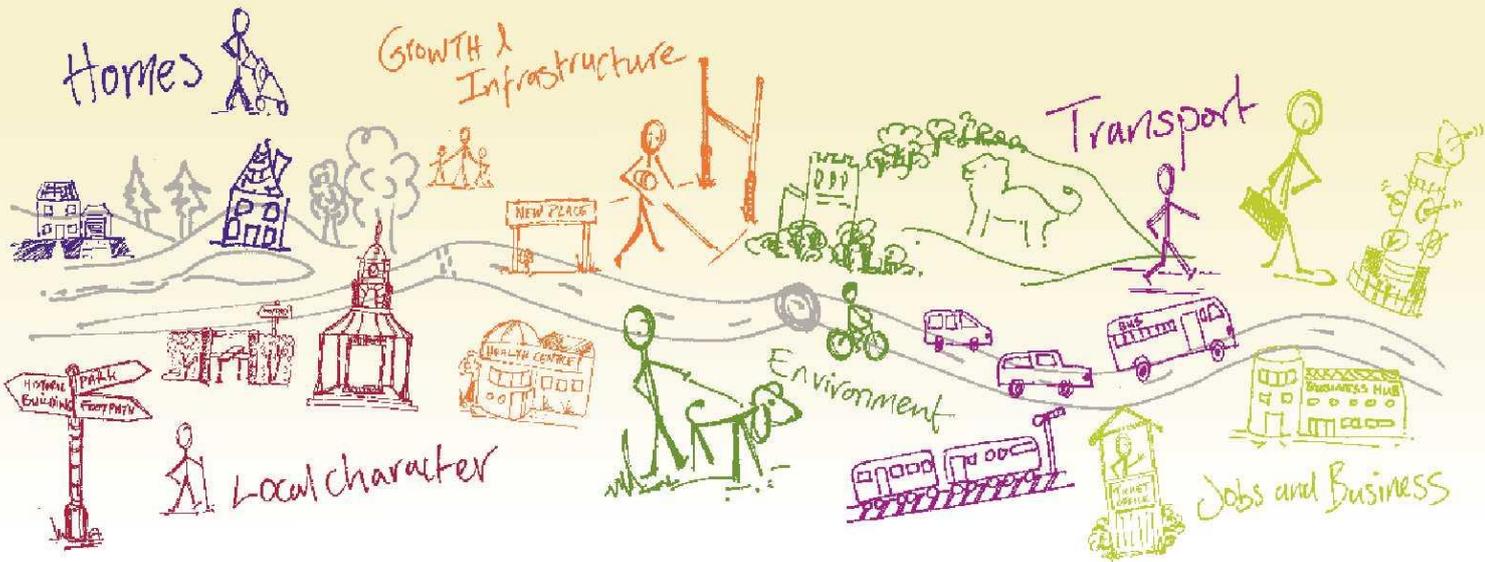
The Council aspires for 20% of all new development over the period of this plan to be delivered by utilising modern methods of construction.



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# Shaping where you live 2035



## Historic Environment

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## 18 Historic Environment

### 18.1 Overview

- 18.1.1 The historic environment forms the basis of local character, plays an important role in the shaping of places and can help to create a sense of social, physical and mental wellbeing.
- 18.1.2 Heritage assets and their settings are a non-renewable resource and the Council is committed to their protection, enhancement and conservation so that they can be enjoyed by the whole community now and in the future and this includes seeking every opportunity to encourage a reduction in the number of Heritage Assets on the Historic England Heritage@Risk Register. Heritage Assets include: Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Historic Landscapes, Archaeological Sites and Monuments, and other non-designated assets. It is an objective of Government policy to conserve and enhance all aspects of the historic environment. National advice on the identification and conservation of the historic environment, as well as development management decisions are set out in the NPPF and the Council will take full account of those requirements in the consideration of planning applications and allocations for development.
- 18.1.3 The Council is required to maintain or have access to a Historic Environment Record which contains details of all known heritage assets within the area. In Central Bedfordshire, the Historic Environment Record (HER) comprises nearly 11,000 records relating to buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites and monuments and includes designated and non-designated heritage assets. The Council will ensure that information gathered through plan making or development is made publicly accessible via the Historic Environment Record.
- 18.1.4 In addition the Council may require developers to make a record of any works to a heritage asset or an asset that will be lost, wholly or in part, as a result of any permitted development, and to make that information publicly accessible, through the Historic Environment Record. The Council also supports the distribution of information about the historic environment to the community through a variety of media; including public open days, displays, the internet and leaflets.
- 18.1.5 Understanding the value and significance of a place is essential to inform decisions about its future. The degree of significance will determine what, if any, protection, including statutory and local designation, is appropriate for heritage sites.



### 18.2 Archaeology

- 18.2.1 The Historic Environment Record (HER) contains information on around 5,000 archaeological sites and monuments. Prospective



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developers should contact the Council's Archaeology Team in order to establish whether there is potential archaeological interest at a proposed development site and to determine if there is a need for a field evaluation of this resource prior to the submission of a planning application.

- 18.2.2 Where it is deemed that there is archaeological potential developers will be required to submit an archaeological desk-based survey for the site. Appropriate expertise may be necessary to ensure that the work is carried out to the correct standard and all the relevant issues are appreciated and understood. In some cases, developers will be required to commission an archaeological field evaluation to define the character, extent and condition of any remains.
- 18.2.3 Central Bedfordshire also has 83 Scheduled Monuments, protected under the terms of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. The Council will maintain a presumption against development that will result in harm to or loss of any Scheduled Monument or its setting. Any development that has the potential to impact upon a Scheduled Monument or its setting will have to demonstrate that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve public benefits which outweigh the harm or loss and will have to comply with paragraphs 132 to 134 of the NPPF.
- 18.2.4 Non-designated archaeological assets that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments will be subject to the policy requirements applied to designated heritage assets.



### **Policy HE1: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments**

Development proposals that affect known archaeological heritage assets or areas which have the potential for archaeological heritage assets must be accompanied by an Archaeological Heritage Statement.

Archaeological Heritage Statements must:

- Describe the significance of the archaeological heritage assets that will be affected by the development; and
- Assess the level of impact that the development proposals will have on those assets including where necessary an assessment of the impact of the development proposals on their setting.

Exceptions will be made where advice from the Council's Archaeological specialists indicates that an Archaeological Heritage Statement is not necessary.

Where development proposals will impact upon archaeological heritage assets, where possible, the Council will seek the preservation of those remains *in situ*.

Where preservation *in situ* cannot be achieved, a scheme of archaeological investigation, recording, analysis and publication (i.e preservation by record) will be required prior to the completion of the development. This scheme will be approved in writing by the Council in advance of development and include provision for the long term curation of any resulting archive and appropriate publication. This is required in order to record and advance understanding of the significance of any archaeological heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) as a consequence of the development.

The Council will support proposals that include provision for the enhancement, conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment by the creation of appropriate management and interpretation schemes. Schemes that will result in a reduction of the number of heritage assets on the Heritage@Risk Register will be encouraged.

Development proposals that cause substantial harm to the significance of archaeological heritage assets or their settings, whether designated or non-designated, will be refused unless the application demonstrates that the public benefits which the development will bring substantially outweigh the loss of significance.



### 18.3 Historic Landscapes and Development

18.3.1 A particular feature of Central Bedfordshire is the presence of a high number of historic parks and gardens. The 13 registered parks and gardens within the area include those of exceptional interest and international importance; namely Woburn Abbey, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Old Warden Park (including Swiss Garden), Luton Hoo Park and Southill Park. There are also a number of undesignated historic parks and gardens across Central Bedfordshire. All of the



parkland makes an important contribution to local distinctiveness both in the wider landscape and historic significance. Historic parks and gardens often contain other heritage assets such as Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments. Therefore, any development proposal that affects a park and garden will need to take a holistic approach to the impact on the landscape and collective of heritage assets as a whole.

18.3.2 Historic landscapes similarly add interest and variety to the generally farmed countryside. Over 168 historic landscapes and features are protected by other policies or legislation, for instance if they are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, the complexity of the historic landscape means that there are many sites, features and areas which do not have such a designation but nevertheless should be retained because of their contribution to the wider landscape and our ability to read our heritage.



# Central Bedfordshire Council **Local Plan 2035**

## Pre-submission January 2018

### **Policy HE2: Historic Parks and Gardens**

Development proposals that affect Registered Parks and Gardens or their settings must be accompanied by a Historic Parks and Gardens Heritage Statement. The Historic Parks and Garden Heritage Statement must:

- Describe the significance of the designed landscape that will be affected by the development; and
- Assess the impact that the development proposals will have, including the loss or harm to of any historic features.

Exceptions will be made where advice from the Council's specialist advisors indicates a Historic Parks and Gardens Heritage Statement is not necessary.

The Council will support development proposals that encourage the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the Historic Parks and Gardens (both designated and non-designated). Proposals that will result in a reduction of the number of heritage assets on the Heritage@Risk Register will be encouraged. Development proposals that would degrade the character, appearance and setting resulting in the loss of significance of Registered Parks and Gardens will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the public benefits which development will bring substantially outweighs the loss of significance.

### **18.4 Built Heritage**

18.4.1 Central Bedfordshire has 61 Conservation Areas, 1,938 Listed Buildings, 290 historic rural settlements and 9 historic towns. These are a key indicator of local distinctiveness. The Council recognises the need to conserve and enhance all of these important features, which make up an essential component of the character of the area.



### **18.5 Listed Buildings**

18.5.1 When considering applications for Listed Buildings (including for change of use), the repair, renovation, alteration and extension of should not be at the expense of its intrinsic special interest and significance. It is important to guard against



unnecessary change or over-restoration. In any change, materials should be sympathetic and appropriate to those used in the original building. In particular the Council will resist applications that result in the loss of traditional local features such as long straw thatched roofs, locally manufactured clay tiles and bricks and local stone.

- 18.5.2 it is demonstrated that the loss will be compensated by substantial public benefits. In exceptional cases where there is no alternative to demolition, the Council will require an appropriate record to be made and the appropriate salvage of materials.

### 18.6 Conservation Areas

- 18.6.1 Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the overall quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of buildings and open spaces.
- 18.6.2 Designation also takes into account the need to protect trees, hedges, walls, railings and other characteristic features. Once designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The boundaries are identified on the Policies Map.
- 18.6.3 The Council will require new development to provide a level of visual interest that is equivalent to the existing buildings in the Conservation Area. Choice of materials and detailed design are vital elements in achieving new buildings worthy of the local character and interest which typifies Central Bedfordshire's Conservation Areas.
- 18.6.4 Further detailed guidance on conservation and heritage issues are contained in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and can be obtained from the Council's specialist advisors.



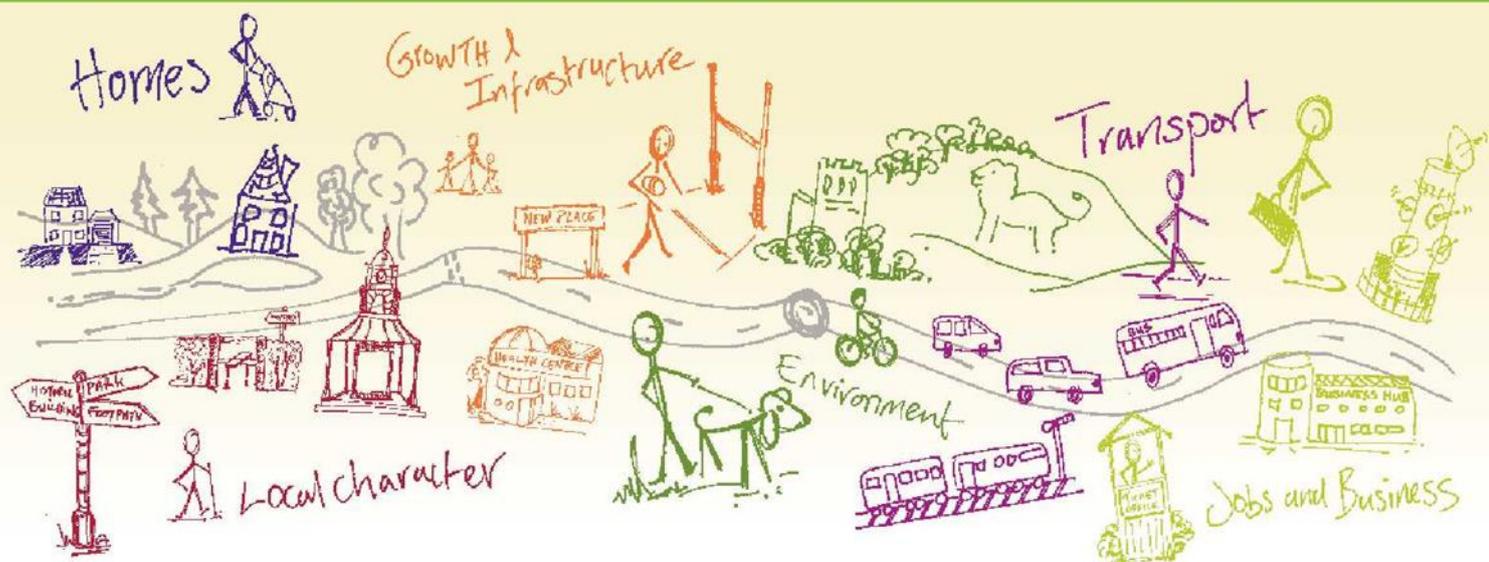
### **Policy HE3: Built Heritage**

Development proposals that could affect the significance of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and non-designated heritage assets of local importance and/or their setting will be granted provided they:

- Uphold the key criteria of the NPPF (including having regard to “substantial harm” and “less than substantial harm”, para 132 – 136) and accord with the relevant sections of the Design Guide for Central Bedfordshire; and
- Preserve, sustain and enhance the special character, significance, appearance and locally distinctive features of the asset/s whether it be a Listed Building, Conservation Area or non-designated building/structure in terms of scale, form, proportion, design, materials and the retention of features; and
- Make a positive contribution to the setting of the asset/s and it’s historic significance, and include hard and soft landscape proposals, where appropriate, that respect it’s character and appearance of the heritage asset;
- Are accompanied by a Built Heritage Statement informed by appropriate expertise and describing all the heritage assets (designated and undesignated) that will be affected by the development and include an assessment of the level of impact that the development proposal will have on the asset/s, having regard to the relevant Conservation Area appraisal. Exceptions will be made where advice from the Council by appropriate expertise and describing all the heritage assets (designated and undesi
- Where development proposals have the potential to impact on the setting or significance of these assets then a consideration of the affect of the development on that setting must be included in the Built Heritage Statement.
- Developments that will result in a reduction of the number of heritage assets on the Heritage@Risk Register will be encouraged.



# Shaping where you live 2035



## Development in the Countryside

Local Plan 2015-2035

## **19 Development in the Countryside**

### **19.1 Overview**

19.1.1 Community planning across Central Bedfordshire has shown that preserving the countryside and landscape is an important issue to local people. Central Bedfordshire has a varied and contrasting landscape, ecology and settlement pattern, all of which contribute to the much valued countryside and rural nature of the area. Development in the countryside is sometimes necessary and it is therefore important that it is delivered in accordance with sustainability principles and is appropriate to the character and appearance of the local landscape.

### **19.2 Re-use and replacement of buildings in the countryside**

19.2.1 The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings has an important role to play in ensuring the sustainability of rural areas. Making efficient use of land, including through re-use of previously developed land, is central to the approach to delivering sustainable development. It can assist in agricultural diversification, avoid dereliction, improve the visual appearance of the landscape, reduce demands for new building in the countryside, provide opportunities for tourism and recreation and produce local employment.

19.2.2 In the interests of promoting the rural economy, the re-use of existing building in the countryside to employment generating uses will be particularly encouraged by the Council. The Council, whilst recognising the benefits of the re-use of rural buildings, wishes to ensure that development in the countryside is properly managed. The original building or group of buildings to be converted should therefore be appropriate to the rural setting in terms of scale and appearance. Purely functional buildings such as glass houses and metal framed buildings will not be considered suitable candidates for conversion to residential use. Applicants for the re-use of agricultural buildings erected under permitted development rights will be carefully examined to ensure these rights are not abused and to avoid the proliferation of farm buildings.



### **Policy DC1: Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside**

The Council will support the re use of existing buildings in the countryside subject to proposals complying with the following criteria;

- The existing building or group of buildings are of permanent and substantial construction that are capable of conversion;
- The re-use is sympathetic to the setting of the site within the countryside and would reinforce local distinctiveness.
- The re-use would be of a high quality and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting; and
- The proposed use is suitable and would not be of detriment to the existing communities.

The conversion of functional metal framed buildings to residential use will not be permitted.

### **Policy DC2: Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

The Council will support the principle of replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside subject to proposals complying with the following criteria;

- There would be no net increase in the number of dwellings;
- The replacement dwelling is not disproportionately larger in height and scale than the original unless the proposed dwelling would result in an improvement to the character of the area,
- The replacement building is sympathetic to the setting of the site within the countryside and would reinforce local distinctiveness.

Relevant national and local policies will apply to developments within and outside the Green Belt

## **19.3 Rural Workers Dwellings**

- 19.3.1 To sustain and enhance the rural economy, the Council will seek to support the growth of the rural economy. Agriculture and forestry have a key role to play in the countryside, underpinning both the rural economy and the landscape character of those areas. Long term conservation objectives are also sometimes best served by environmentally friendly forms of farming and forestry.
- 19.3.2 The NPPF makes clear that isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification for planning permission to be granted. One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work.
- 19.3.3 The Council's preference for rural worker dwellings is for such workers to reside in nearby towns or villages or in existing properties nearby their place of work, which would avoid the need for new dwellings in the countryside. The Council accepts however that there may be cases where the nature and demands of the workers role requires them to live at or very close to the work place. Such instances will be



judged on the needs of the workplace and not the personal preferences of the specific individuals.

- 19.3.4 A functional need will have to be established. If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should, for the first three years be provided by temporary accommodation such as a caravan. Any temporary or permanent dwelling permitted will be restricted to occupancy of the worker on the establishment.
- 19.3.5 The design and external appearance of agricultural and forestry residential development can be visually harming on the landscape and can result in the loss of important features including those of historic and nature conservation value. Accordingly, any proposal would be considered against design policies set out in the document.

### **Policy DC3: Rural Workers Dwellings**

Permanent new dwellings for the use of agricultural and forestry workers will be supported in the countryside where;

- there is a clearly established, existing functional need for agricultural, forestry and other full-time workers to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside
- the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so;
- the need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available or could be made suitable and available for occupation through conversion and change of use; and
- the scale of the proposed dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the requirements of the enterprise.

The council will consider favourably a temporary new dwelling if it is essential to support a new farming or forestry activity. The dwelling should meet the functional test above and should be;

- for the first three years
- be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation.

Where agricultural, forestry and other full-time worker dwellings are proposed in the Green Belt, Chilterns AONB, Green Belt and AONB policies will be applied in addition to the above.

## **19.4 Equestrian Development**

- 19.4.1 By its very nature, equestrian and livestock development requires a countryside location. These activities can make a considerable contribution to sustainable recreation, conservation grazing and the rural economy through diversification of agricultural holdings in the area. However, intensive private activity as well as commercial activities can be visually harmful in the countryside so it is important that environmental quality and landscape character is respected. As such the



Landscape Character Assessment should be employed to inform development proposals.

- 19.4.2 Larger commercial livery yards may be restricted on the grounds of sustainability and accessibility as well as the impact on the landscape and surroundings and ideally should be based on an existing holding.

### **Policy DC4: Equestrian Development**

Horse-related facilities and small scale extensions to existing equestrian enterprises in the countryside will be supported subject to the following criteria;

- New freestanding stables and provision for vehicle parking must be well screened from the surrounding countryside, should avoid adverse impact on the public rights of way network and must not interfere with the amenity of adjoining residents.
- New buildings for indoor equestrian use will only be considered when located adjacent to existing buildings or where they are suitably screened by existing mature landscaping
- Any proposals for equestrian development including jumps, schooling areas, floodlighting and new buildings/extensions will be considered in the context of the Landscape Character Assessment,
- The design, scale, siting and use of materials should respect the rural setting including biodiversity interests.

Proposals which are located within close proximity to the bridleway network will be considered more favourably.

Additionally, proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises (comprising ten horses or more) can have severe highway impacts and will only be considered where the applicants can demonstrate the sustainable nature of their location by means of a traffic impact assessment.

## **19.5 Protecting Agricultural Land**

- 19.5.1 Soils are a very valuable and vital component of the environment. The NPPF requires that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. It states that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality.

- 19.5.2 Farmland is important to Central Bedfordshire in a number of ways. Not only does it have value in terms of food production and as an industry but it also has important environmental value. In the past intensive agricultural practices have often harmed biodiversity but fortunately modern farming methods are increasingly



geared to redress past damage and balance environmental needs with those of food production.

- 19.5.3 Central Bedfordshire has a valuable resource of good to excellent quality agricultural land. The most valuable and productive agricultural land is classified as Grade 1 and in Central Bedfordshire this is predominantly limited to areas along the River Ivel and Great Ouse corridors. In light of the pressures for development, the Council will seek to protect the best and most valuable agricultural land from development.

### **Policy DC5: Agricultural Land**

Other than for land that has been allocated within this Local Plan or previous development plans, development that would result in the significant loss of Grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land will not be permitted unless;

- Significant sustainability considerations which override the need to protect the land can be demonstrated; and
- There are no suitable alternative sites which are available for the proposed development.
- When considering the significance of the loss; the grade of the land, the size of the proposed site and the quantum of 'best and most versatile' land in the area will be taken into account.



