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Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire

Revised Pre-submission Version
June 2014

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A good planning system is essential for the economy, environment and society. The development plans that local authorities draw up, in consultation with local people, developers, investors and statutory bodies, set a vision for what an area should look like in the future and help decide who can build what, where and how, and make sure that buildings and structures get built in the right place and to the right standards.
- 1.2 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this document is the Local Plan for Central Bedfordshire and is titled the “Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire”. The Development Strategy sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and overarching policies to guide development in Central Bedfordshire to 2031. The Development Management policies provide the policy framework against which all planning applications will be assessed.
- 1.3 The Development Strategy 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. The greater part of the north Site Allocations Document (2011) remains in addition to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Strategic Sites and Policies (2014) which sits alongside the Development Strategy forming part of the Development Plan for Central Bedfordshire.
- 1.4 A Glossary of Terms is provided at Appendix 1. The policies that have been superseded are identified within Appendix 2, whilst those policies that remain in place will be detailed within a report published separately.

National and Regional Policy

- 1.5 New legislation has recently been put in place which changes the way Local Authorities produce the plan for their area. The Localism Act, 2011 contains provisions to make the planning system clearer, more democratic, and more effective by planning at the local level rather than a higher, more centralised level.
- 1.6 New Planning Regulations following the Localism Act have changed some of the terminology used to describe the documents that the local planning authority is required to produce. The Development Strategy is a ‘local plan’. There is no longer a LDF suite of documents.

- 1.7 In addition, the overarching direction of national policy which was previously set out within a series of documents known as Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes, has been replaced by the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which came into effect in March 2012.
- 1.8 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework to be used by local authorities, local businesses, communities and individuals on how to produce their own local and neighbourhood plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.
- 1.9 The publication of the Localism Act and NPPF as well as the withdrawal of the Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy from the Examination process, has enabled the Council to plan for the area as a whole in a comprehensive and sustainable manner for the first time since becoming a Unitary Authority in 2009. The revocation of the East of England Plan in January 2013 has also enabled the level of growth to be delivered across Central Bedfordshire to be identified through objectively assessed local needs, including demographic and economic trends, whilst also having regard to the Localism Act, NPPF and consultation undertaken to date.
- 1.10 The Development Strategy has therefore been produced in accordance with policies set out within the NPPF and whilst the new Strategy covers the whole of Central Bedfordshire, the Council has worked closely with Luton and our other neighbouring authorities in order to ensure a cohesive approach to the delivery of sustainable development.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.11 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, requires the assessment of environmental impacts of strategic actions contained in a wide range of plans and programmes, including planning policy documents. The objective of the SEA Directive is to provide high level protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.12 SEA and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) are very closely linked. SA aims to integrate sustainability issues into decision making by appraising the plan or strategy using environmental, social and economic objectives. SEA also aims to facilitate sustainable development, but its emphasis is on integrating environmental considerations into decision making through a thorough analysis of environmental issues.
- 1.13 Although the requirement to carry out both an SA and SEA is mandatory, it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of

legislation through a single appraisal process. The SA therefore incorporates the requirements of both the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the SEA Regulations.

- 1.14 A SA and SEA have been undertaken and should be considered together with the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy.

Appropriate Assessment: the Habitats Directive

- 1.15 When preparing planning policy documents, the Council needs to assess whether an “Appropriate Assessment” is required under European Directive 92/43/EEC – the Habitats Directive. The Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of wildlife habitats and species of interest to a favourable condition.
- 1.16 There are no Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites in Central Bedfordshire. There are nine European sites outside of Central Bedfordshire’s boundary but within the potential influence of the plan. The Council’s Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that the Development Strategy would have no adverse effects on these sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans.

Why is this document important to me?

- 1.17 The Development Strategy is the first opportunity for Central Bedfordshire Council to spell out the local targets for housing and jobs growth that have been identified through extensive evidence base studies including future demographic and economic trends. It is also an opportunity for all to comment upon the targets and how the Council envisages they will be achieved alongside other aspects of growth including the regeneration of our town centres, improvements to our transport networks and the enhancement of our historic and natural environments.
- 1.18 A Consultation Statement has been produced setting out the various forms of consultation that have been undertaken during the production of the Development Strategy. The Statement sets out how events have been advertised, who has been consulted, how they have been consulted and when events have taken place. It also identifies the various ways that people could, and have, commented upon the draft Strategy and the key issues that were raised during the consultations as well as providing an overview of how comments made have informed the Development Strategy.

2.0 PROFILE, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Profile

- 2.1 Central Bedfordshire is a varied area containing a mixture of rural countryside, attractive villages, and small to medium sized towns. It is well connected, being traversed by the M1, A1, A5 and A6 as well as the East Coast Mainline, West Coast Mainline and the Midland Mainline. London Luton Airport is also in close proximity.
- 2.2 With assets such as the Greensand Ridge, now identified as a Nature Improvement Area, much of the rural area is of high landscape and biodiversity value with extensive tracts of high-grade agricultural land. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a national priority area for landscape conservation and also covers a substantial part of the area as does the Forest of Marston Vale, a designated Community Forest and national priority area for landscape regeneration. The southern part of Central Bedfordshire, outside of the main towns and villages, is designated as Green Belt.
- 2.3 With almost 11,000 records relating to designated and non-designated buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites and monuments, Central Bedfordshire has a rich historic environment and a number of heritage assets that the Council is committed to protecting, conserving and enhancing.
- 2.4 Covering 716 square kilometres, Central Bedfordshire currently has a population of approximately 260,000¹ and is the 11th largest Unitary Authority in England by area and the 17th 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 65% of the population are within the working age group, being between 16 and 65 years of age, although 75% of the population are considered to be economically active (aged 16-74) which includes both those in employment as well as those who are unemployed but actively seeking employment.
- 2.5 Central Bedfordshire has a number of towns of varying size. The two largest towns, Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable are located in the south of Central Bedfordshire whilst the north of Central Bedfordshire comprises a series of smaller towns including Biggleswade, Sandy and Flitwick.

¹ Central Bedfordshire Key Facts and Figures. July 2013 – ONS 2012 Mid-Year Estimate

- 2.6 Deprivation is a broad measure of poverty and is identified through income-based measures as well as more social issues such as crime, education, employment and health. 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 20-30% most deprived areas. The majority of these wards are within the southern area of Central Bedfordshire.
- 2.7 Unemployment is lower in Central Bedfordshire than in England, with 3,529 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in June 2013, a rate of 2.1% compared to the England rate of 3.4%. Whilst the overall rate of unemployment in Central Bedfordshire has fallen since December 2011, there remains a higher rate of unemployment in the southern area of Central Bedfordshire particularly in Dunstable and Houghton Regis, although Biggleswade and Sandy in northern Central Bedfordshire also have consistently high rates of unemployment.
- 2.8 The 2001 Census identified that just over half of Central Bedfordshire's working age residents (60,900) commute outside the area to work, with Hertfordshire and Luton being the most common destinations. At the same time, 29,300 people travelled from other areas to work in Central Bedfordshire, resulting in a net out-commuting level of 31,600. However, the initial 2011 Census indicates that net out-commuting has increased to 45,300. Other work destinations for Central Bedfordshire residents include London, Milton Keynes and Bedford.

Central Bedfordshire



- 2.9 Educational attainment within Central Bedfordshire is relatively good, with almost 58% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE's (including Maths and English) at grades A* to C in 2011. This is fractionally lower than the England average which is 59%.
- 2.10 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. During 2011-2012, Child obesity levels were lower in Central Bedfordshire than the England average although the number of overweight children (14%) was similar to the England average at around 15%. Despite this, residents of Central Bedfordshire do experience inequalities in health outcomes. For example there is a life expectancy

gap between females in the 20% most affluent and 20% least affluent areas of 6.5 years, whilst the difference for males is 8.3 years. (Reference Slope Index of Inequality, 2009-11).

Issues and Challenges

- 2.11 The Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (2010-2031) was written by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): Central Bedfordshire Together. The SCS sets out what sort of place Central Bedfordshire could be, which is described in the vision statement as “Globally connected, delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all”.
- 2.12 The LSP vision is one of greater economic prosperity based on sustainable growth and reflects the views of the local people, communities and stakeholders and responds to their aspirations.
- 2.13 The above profile, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping exercise and the Sustainable Community Strategy have identified a number of issues within Central Bedfordshire that may be addressed through the Development Strategy.
- 2.14 It is possible to consider the issues and the subsequent challenges that Central Bedfordshire is facing in three categories – economic, social and environmental. It is important to note however, that just because an issue or challenge has been recognised, it is not necessarily done so in a negative context, in other words, some aspects have been identified for their positive influence. The challenge in these instances may be to maintain current attainment levels and improve on them where possible. It is also important to remember that the issues and challenges that have been identified are likely to change as new development is delivered, and it is essential that the Development Strategy whilst being robust, is flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances.
- 2.15 For clarification, it is recognised that some issues and challenges apply and relate to all three categories although for succinctness and to avoid repetition, are specifically identified in relation to just one category. For example, reducing the level of out-commuting is identified under the economic heading as this is considered to be the primary focus of this issue; however, out-commuting also has bearings in relation to both social and environmental issues and challenges, although has not specifically identified under these headings.

Economic

- 2.16 Given the issues identified within the above profile, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Sustainable Community Strategy, there are a number of economic challenges and opportunities within

Central Bedfordshire. The key challenges and opportunities are considered to include:

- Providing sufficient land and premises that are of a high standard and quality and in the right place, to retain existing businesses and help them grow, as well as to attract new businesses and inward investment to the area.
- Providing the right circumstances and support to current and future businesses in order to achieve a increase in the number and variety of jobs available within Central Bedfordshire.
- Reducing the disparity in deprivation and unemployment rates between southern Central Bedfordshire and the more affluent north.
- Ensuring the level of out-commuting by residents to other areas for employment is reduced.
- Ensuring the right infrastructure including roads, rail and broadband is in place to ensure that connectivity in every sense within Central Bedfordshire is at an optimum level to support businesses and residents.
- Ensuring the regeneration of our town centres in order to improve their attractiveness and usability and to offer quality retailing experiences.
- Raising educational and qualification attainment to improve individual employment prospects and the attractiveness of Central Bedfordshire to future employers.

Social

2.17 Given the issues identified within the above profile, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Sustainable Community Strategy, there are a number of social challenges and opportunities within Central Bedfordshire. The key challenges and opportunities are considered to include:

- Providing sufficient housing in line with national policy, which is of the right size, type and tenure to meet the needs of all residents and communities within both urban and rural Central Bedfordshire.
- Ensuring the needs of the increasing elderly population as well as those with special needs are met in the right locations and in line with arising needs.
- Integrating new development with existing communities.
- Ensuring services within the rural area are of a high quality and meet the needs of the local communities.
- Improving connectivity between the more rural and urban settlements to ensure access to services and facilities for all.
- Ensuring the level of growth envisaged for the area is comprehensively planned through pre application discussions and

pre application consultation to ensure that it does not detrimentally impact upon the quality of life, health and well-being of residents.

Environmental

2.18 Given the issues identified within the above profile, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Sustainable Community Strategy, there are a number of environmental challenges and opportunities facing Central Bedfordshire. The Council is developing an over-arching strategic vision for the natural environment in the form of an Environmental Enhancement Strategy (EES) to address these issues. The EES will link existing environmental policies and documents and provide a framework for future strategies and plans. It will be a strategic integrated approach to planning for the environment to create and enhance natural networks in line with the requirements in the NPPF and the Natural Environment White Paper. These will enable us to deliver a series of environmental outcomes:

- Taking action at the local level to protect and enhance the priority habitats and species identified in the England Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and working towards its outcomes.
- Halting the overall decline in biodiversity by helping establish coherent and resilient ecological networks and a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the biodiversity opportunity mapping for Bedfordshire.
- Protecting our valuable townscapes, villages, conservation areas and natural and historic landscape designations, including the Forest of Marston Vale, the Greensand Ridge and the Chilterns AONB.
- Improving access to the local and wider countryside.
- Protecting and enhancing the area's rich historic environment.
- Balancing the role and function of the Green Belt with the need to deliver significant levels of growth.
- Reducing the carbon footprint of Central Bedfordshire residents and businesses through mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- Improving water quality and efficiency, and air quality levels across Central Bedfordshire.

2.19 In addition to the internal issues and challenges above, there is also the need to consider key strategic issues within neighbouring authority areas and the potential impact that these may have upon our residents and the delivery of growth within Central Bedfordshire. Careful consideration therefore needs to be given to the cross-boundary impacts of development and infrastructure, and open and transparent communications will need to be maintained with neighbouring authorities. The cross-boundary work relating to the provision of key strategic infrastructure by the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), and led by Central Bedfordshire, has provided

a strong foundation for continued communications and good working relations.

- 2.20 Having established the issues, opportunities and key challenges within Central Bedfordshire, the Council has identified an overarching vision and a series of objectives for the Development Strategy. These are set out in the following section.

3.0 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy Vision seeks to ensure the delivery of growth in a sustainable and complementary manner, and to ensure that the various elements of the Strategy are working coherently to achieve the same goal through the delivery of significant growth over a 20 year period.
- 3.2 The Development Strategy Vision reflects the Council's 5 Priorities and is in accordance with the Council's Core Values. Details about our Priorities and Values can be found on the Council's website .The Vision and Objectives have been identified having considered the above priorities and values, the key issues and challenges, the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy and, importantly, the comments that were received through stakeholder workshops and consultations. The Vision, shown in diagrammatic form below, reflects the enhanced dynamic and sustainable characteristics of Central Bedfordshire in 2031 – making it the place where people want to live, work and socialise. This will be achieved through delivery of the Strategic Objectives, responding to and building upon our diverse nature and characteristics, and by attaining cohesive and sustainable development across the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

The Vision for Central Bedfordshire



Development Strategy Objectives

- 3.3 To help achieve the Vision and to meet the challenges that have been acknowledged, a number of Strategic Objectives have been identified. These have been formulated based upon the key issues and challenges, the Sustainability Appraisal, consultation feedback and through collaboration with various departments across the Council and external partners whose activities impact upon and contribute to the delivery of the Development Strategy.
- 3.4 The 8 Strategic Objectives of the Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire which are in accordance with Policies set out within the NPPF are detailed in the table below, which also identifies the relevant policies within the Strategy that will contribute to achieving the Objectives and the overarching Vision.

	Table 3.1: Strategic Objective	Relevant Policies
1.	31,000 net new homes will be delivered between 2011 and 2031 to meet the housing needs of all our existing and future residents, ensuring the efficient use of land to provide safe, sustainable communities and development, promoting sustainable forms of transport and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Emphasis will be placed upon the regeneration needs of the Dunstable & Houghton Regis area as well as the wider urban conurbation.	2, 4, 5, 24-27, 29-31, 31, 37, 38, 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 58, 60-64
2.	A variety of housing types and sizes will be provided, including larger family homes. Up to 30% of the homes delivered will be affordable and will be provided across a range of tenures to facilitate social inclusion. All new housing will be located so as to offer good accessibility to jobs, services and facilities, ensuring integration with existing settlements and communities.	2, 4, 5, 29, 34, 37, 38, 46, 50, 60-64
3.	27,000 net new jobs will be delivered across a variety of sectors so as to ensure the economic potential of both the urban and rural area is achieved and to reduce the level of out-commuting. An appropriate mix of sites will be provided of sufficient scale to ensure the right balance between new homes and jobs, and to promote Central Bedfordshire as a location for economic growth and success.	2, 4-10, 26, 27, 44, 46, 49, 58 60-65
4.	Development will promote our unique identity and maximise the potential of our habitats and natural environment by respecting, conserving and enhancing our green spaces, our natural and cultural heritage and our landscape designations. Other than in very special circumstances, the newly defined Green Belt within Central Bedfordshire will be respected, protected and maintained.	2-7, 9, 10, 24-26, 33 – 41, 43, 45, 50, 52, 54, 55, 58-63
5.	Development will maximise the potential for creating strong, vibrant, healthy and inclusive communities, enhancing a sense of place and delivering health, environmental, social and economic benefits for all our communities and businesses.	2, 4-18, 22, 23, 29, 31, 34-38, 40, 41, 43, 45-47, 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59

6.	The town centres will be regenerated, promoted and enhanced, and their viability and vitality will be supported, building upon their own unique characteristics and attributes to meet their economic, retailing, leisure and social potential. High quality, well designed development which is sensitive to our existing heritage, buildings, landscapes and townscapes will contribute to the quality of our town centres. Within the urban areas, the use of previously developed land will be promoted and important recreation facilities and open spaces will be protected and enhanced where appropriate.	4, 5, 8, 11-18, 24-27, 44, 45, 46
7.	The distinctive and individual characteristics of Central Bedfordshire will be reflected across all new development at the same time as incorporating new, and innovative designs. High quality, well designed, sustainable development will take account of the need to adapt to, and mitigate against climate change as well as the need to be energy efficient by incorporating standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes.	2, 4-18, 22, 23, 29, 31, 34 -41, 43, 45-48, 52, 54, 55, 58 – 65.
8.	Central Bedfordshire will enable the delivery of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate and complement the delivery of housing and economic growth required by our residents, communities and businesses to meet their needs, such as new educational establishments, healthcare services, social and religious venues, roads, rail, public transport, utilities and broadband facilities. This will be secured through contributions from a variety of sources such as CIL and s106 Agreements as well as through Planning Conditions.	2, 4-9, 11-26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 37-41, 43-45, 46, 52, 54, 55, 58-65

Implementation and Monitoring

3.5 Policies will be implemented through various mechanisms including:

- the consideration of planning applications against the policies,
- the production of supplementary planning guidance
- the production of other documents by the Council
- working in partnership with other organisations
- working with communities to produce Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders

3.6 Planning applications will be determined in accordance with these policies; and planning conditions will be applied to ensure that the detailed requirements of the proposals will be carried out. Enforcement action may be taken to ensure that planning permissions are adhered to. The Council's Planning Enforcement Plan sets out the Council's approach to enforcement. Where planning permission has been granted, further detail will be required for Building Control applications to ensure that the health, welfare and safety of people using them are ensured. Building Control works under its own separate Regulations and policy. For example, proposals that need to take climate change and adaptation into account will also be required to comply with Building Regulations and it may be that these requirements are enforced as part of the Building Regulations process.

- 3.7 The Council will assess the performance of individual policies within the Development Strategy through the monitoring of indicators identified within the monitoring framework, Appendix 3. The monitoring framework is essential to check on the effectiveness of policy implementation and identify any need for policy adjustment. The monitoring framework along with more detailed monitoring such as processing of planning applications and enforcement will be monitored and reported through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

4.0 PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The NPPF sees a “presumption in favour of sustainable development” as the golden thread running through planning activities. Plans should be based on that presumption and include policies that explain how the presumption will be applied locally. In the context of Central Bedfordshire, sustainable development means providing a sufficient level of development to meet the needs of a growing population, supported by appropriate infrastructure, while protecting and enhancing the high quality natural, built and historic environment for future generations. Policy 1 below sets out how the presumption will be applied.

Policy 1: 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 NPPF. It will always work proactively with applicants, the community, Parish and Town Councils and other stakeholders to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Development Strategy (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or 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:

- 1) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
- 2) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

5.0 A STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

Background

- 5.1 With the Localism Act, responsibility for determining the amount of growth to be planned for has passed from the regional to the local level. The NPPF requires local authorities to meet objectively assessed needs for their area. The Localism Act and NPPF also require consideration of issues beyond a local authority's boundary through the Duty to Cooperate. In line with this Duty, Central Bedfordshire Council has worked actively, constructively and on an ongoing basis with a range of Councils and organisations to seek a joined-up approach. This process of cooperation will be ongoing through to adoption of the Strategy and beyond into implementation of development proposals.

Housing provision

- 5.2 Looking ahead to 2031, the Council will plan for the delivery of 31,000 new homes. Of this, 25,600 new homes are required for growth in Central Bedfordshire, based on a continuation of recent trends in terms of births, deaths and migration patterns. Migration into Central Bedfordshire plays a strong role in the functioning of the local housing market and while the Council is not seeking to encourage migration into the area, it recognises that not planning for it could have serious implications for housing affordability locally. Chapter 10 has more details. The remaining 5,400 homes being planned for will help meet housing need in the wider area, specifically Luton. However, despite this significant contribution, there remains unmet housing need in Luton. To address this, nine surrounding local authorities have signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting out a series of actions to collectively look at additional growth locations within and beyond the Luton Housing Market Area. This work will feed into the plan-making processes of each Council.

Jobs provision

- 5.3 This Development Strategy plans for an increase of **27,000 new jobs** between 2011 and 2031. This increase is higher than that suggested by recent economic modelling and is also slightly higher than recent job increases. However, given the Council's economic aspirations and the need to secure a sustainable balance of new homes and jobs, the higher level figure is considered appropriate. Around 45% (12,000) of these jobs are predicted to be in the B use classes and appropriate sites are identified for the increase in this Strategy. Chapter 6 has more details.

Distribution of development

- 5.4 Central Bedfordshire has a legacy of suitable allocated sites, many of which already have planning permission. These are displayed in the housing trajectory. The conclusion from this information is that there is considerably more provision in the north of Central Bedfordshire than the south, primarily due to the more advanced nature of previous planning policy work. The focus for this Development Strategy has therefore been to achieve a sustainable approach to development across Central Bedfordshire.
- 5.5 Information included within the Housing Technical Paper also points to the degree of migration experienced in the south of the area, particularly from Luton. Attempting to provide development near to where the need is arising has been an important factor in determining the overall distribution of development.
- 5.6 The Green Belt continues to play an important role in shaping the pattern of development in the south of Central Bedfordshire. Nevertheless, when previously looked at through the regional and sub-regional planning processes, the conclusion reached was that reviewing the Green Belt boundaries in order to accommodate development was unavoidable. With the demise of regional and sub-regional planning it is appropriate to reconsider this position in the light of current circumstances.
- 5.7 Central Bedfordshire Council considers the Green Belt to be a vital part of the planning policy approach across the area. It is highly valued by local residents, continuing to keep settlements apart and preventing unplanned urban sprawl. Moreover, the principle of Green Belt protection is important on a much larger, national scale. The Government recognises the importance of the Green Belt in the NPPF, stipulating that Green Belt boundaries can only be changed in exceptional circumstances. The Council agrees with this and have sought to incorporate this approach in our policies throughout this document.
- 5.8 The Council is also mindful of the need to provide for the housing, employment and other needs of the area and of the implications if we do not make this provision. It has considered and appraised alternative approaches to accommodating development that do not impinge on the Green Belt but these have significant sustainability issues, as set out in the Sustainability Appraisal. Overall, the Council is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances that require the Green Belt to be amended to provide for the development needs of the south of the area, and that there is sufficient evidence to support rolling back the Green Belt boundary in order to support employment provision at Flitwick. This is documented within the Green Belt Technical Paper (June 2014).

- 5.9 Having established exceptional circumstances, it is then necessary to consider which sites are the most appropriate to accommodate growth. The Council has considered a number of possible alternative sites and subjected them to a rigorous assessment process which is documented in the Sustainability Appraisal. The conclusion is that there are a number of strategic scale sites that are considered appropriate to include as allocations in this Development Strategy. These are listed in the policy below and are covered specifically in site-specific policies.
- 5.10 In addition to the specific allocations and policies within the Development Strategy, an Allocations Local Plan is proposed to identify development sites to deliver a further 2,000 homes. Completion of this Plan will enable timely delivery of sites within the plan period. A significant element of this Allocations Plan will be the examination of development potential around the villages within the Green Belt. 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. More details of the scope of the Allocations Plan are set out in the Plan Making Programme. Any delivery from Neighbourhood Plans will be deducted from the 2,000 total to be allocated.

Countryside and Rural settlements

- 5.11 The Council recognises the value that people place on the countryside and its contribution to the high quality environment of the area. The Council will protect the open countryside for its own intrinsic value and for the wider benefits it provides for agriculture and biodiversity. It will also safeguard landscapes against inappropriate development and work to ensure new development works with the landscape. Historically, the villages in Central Bedfordshire have played a small but important role in meeting development needs. The Green Belt and general countryside policies in this Strategy generally aim to prevent development outside of settlement boundaries but flexibility is provided for small-scale development brought forward through Neighbourhood Plans where it does not conflict with other policies to support rural communities. In addition, the Market-Led Sustainable Development policy and Allocations Local Plan will enable further limited growth to occur.

Environmental Enhancement

- 5.12 Protecting and enhancing the environment and making the best and most efficient use of the area's resources is key to sustainable development. The Council's Environmental Enhancement Strategy includes:
- Identifying the most sustainable locations using sustainability criteria to identify where development minimises negative effects on the environment, and maximises the opportunity to deliver benefits.

- Adopting an "ecosystems services" approach to ensure an integrated approach is taken to identifying and maximising the services and benefits provided by the environment.
- Using innovative pieces of research (Spatial Mapping of Regulating Ecosystem Services, April 2012), to map the area's environmental resources and demonstrate how these can be used to provide a wider range of benefits; an example is reducing climate change risk through carbon storage through land use change which can also benefit wildlife, recreation, fuel and food production.
- Mapping of the area's environmental assets so that planning applications can be properly assessed. This will also help identify for example, where applications can provide biodiversity enhancements in line with opportunities and should therefore contribute to restoring and enhancing the network of habitats and species.
- Promoting a comprehensive approach to countryside management, particularly where this enhances or integrates growth.
- Giving support to the Local Nature Partnership.
- Identifying where the areas most at risk from climate change and environmental risks are (Local Climate Change Impact Profile, April 2012; Spatial Mapping of Regulating Ecosystem Services, April 2012) ensuring that development takes account of any mitigation measures required to minimise these environmental risks, and ensuring that all development has a neutral impact or helps lessen the effects of climate change through greener design.
- Promoting renewable energy that is appropriate for the area and is located to provide maximum benefit to residents whilst minimising environmental impact.
- Growing a green economy and recognising that economic growth and protecting and enhancing the natural environment can be mutually compatible and that natural areas can provide benefits many times more valuable than the cost of their protection.

Policy 2: Growth Strategy

The Development Strategy plans for the delivery of a total of 31,000 new homes and 27,000 new jobs between 2011 and 2031. The Council will support the delivery of the existing planned sites that make up the majority of provision.

In addition to the existing planned sites, new development will be planned for at the following locations:

- North of Houghton Regis
- North of Luton
- East of Leighton Linlade
- Sundon Rail Freight Interchange

- North East of Flitwick
- Land south of Wixams
- Land at Stratton Farm, Biggleswade
- Land at Chaul End

In addition to these strategic sites, development will also be brought forward through Neighbourhood Plans, the Market-Led Sustainable Development Policy and the proposed Allocations Local Plan.

- 5.13 The Key Diagram in Appendix 4, which portrays the aspirations of the Development Strategy, identifies the locations of the strategic allocations.

Green Belt

- 5.14 Green Belt is a valuable tool in maintaining the separate identity of settlements and checking unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. One of the original and main reasons for creating the South Bedfordshire Green Belt was to prevent the coalescence of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard, Ampthill and Flitwick as well as the villages that lie within it. The Southern Bedfordshire Green Belt was last finalised in 2005 in the former South Bedfordshire and 2009 in the former Mid Bedfordshire. It extends across much of the south of the area. In order to accommodate the growth required up to 2031 in a sustainable and controlled manner, the boundaries will be redrawn around the outer edges of the proposed strategic allocations. The Green Belt will continue to prevent the towns from coalescing and retain its key characteristics of openness and permanence and is illustrated on the Policies Map. The new Green Belt boundaries, around the urban extensions, are shown in Appendix 10.

Policy 3: Green Belt

The Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map and generally covers the southern and western parts of Central Bedfordshire, outside the main settlements. The boundary of the Green Belt excludes the urban extensions identified elsewhere in this Strategy.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 5.15 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.
- 5.16 The hierarchy, which contains four tiers, helps to provide a framework for considering the levels of new development to be directed through

Neighbourhood Plans or the site allocations process. It will also help to set the context for decisions on individual planning applications.

- 5.17 A number of settlements within the hierarchy lie within the Metropolitan Green Belt, particularly in the south of the area. 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.

Policy 4: 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 large villages or small towns 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
Caddington*	Stotfold
Cranfield	Toddington*
Marston Moretaine	

Large Villages

Aspley Guise*/**	Houghton Conquest
Blunham	Langford
Clifton	Lower Stondon
Clophill	Maulden
Eaton Bray*	Meppershall
Fairfield	Shillington (including Ends)
Harlington*/**	Silsoe
Haynes (main village)	Slip End*
Heath and Reach*	Upper Caldecote
Henlow	Westoning**
Hockliffe*	Woburn**

Small Villages

Aspley Heath**	
Brogborough	Northill
Broom	Old Warden
Campton	Pulloxhill
Chalton**	Ridgmont**
Dunton	Salford
Eversholt***	Southill
Everton	Stanbridge**
Flitton	Steppingley***
Greenfield	Streatley***
Husborne Crawley***	Studham***
Ickwell	Sutton
Kensworth**	Tempsford
Lidlington	Tilsworth***
Lower Shelton	Totternhoe***
Maulden (Clophill Rd)	Upper Gravenhurst
Millbrook	Upper Shelton
Moggerhanger	Upper Sundon***
	Wrestlingworth

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

* Settlements that are inset from the Green Belt

** Settlements that are washed over by the Green Belt and have infill only boundaries

*** Settlements that are washed over by the Green Belt

Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.18 Neighbourhood planning is a new way of allowing neighbourhoods to have a say in land use planning of their own areas. In the case of Central Bedfordshire, the organisations who are able to carry out neighbourhood planning are the Town and Parish Councils. A 'neighbourhood' may be part of an existing parish or town or may comprise the whole of the area within the boundary. In cases where two or more parishes have the same issues or aspirations, they may work together.
- 5.19 Neighbourhood planning will be supported by the Council, provided the aspirations of the community involved comply with the strategic policies of the Development Strategy and the NPPF. Advice and help will be given by the Council to those communities who choose to produce and implement a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.20 Neighbourhood planning must arise from the community, with individuals and groups working in partnership together, and with local

businesses and developers and landowners in the area, to deliver sustainable development to meet the communities needs for the future. There are two 'tools' for neighbourhood planning that may be produced;

- Neighbourhood Plans which may allocate land for development and/or include policies against which planning applications are judged; and
- Neighbourhood Development Orders which can grant planning permission for a specific type of development. Included in this type of neighbourhood planning is 'Community Right to Build' which allows for development such as affordable housing or community facilities to be built without a separate planning application and will remain as a facility managed by the community.

5.21 The community is free to decide the content of the plan, although it needs to be land use based and generally deal with proposals that require planning permission. They can include a wide range of policies such as design policies and allocate land for development such as open space, allotments, housing, commercial buildings and community facilities. A Neighbourhood Plan could deal with many issues or just one, depending on the needs of the individual community. Other issues that are more practically based such as hedge cutting, street lighting etc. would not be included, but can be included within a Town or Parish Plan.

5.22 Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders are subject to a formal process. The plan area needs to be agreed by the Council at the beginning of the process and then the Town or Parish Council will need to undertake a series of consultation and engagement activities to formulate the draft plan. The plan is then submitted to the Council who will invite comments and then arrange for an independent examiner to check that it is in conformity with the strategic planning policies of the Council, the NPPF and European directives. If the plan is successful at examination it then must be subjected to a community referendum. If a simple majority is achieved at referendum, the Council will adopt it as part of the formal development plan. Subsequent planning applications which comply with the provisions set out in the Development Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan will therefore be approved.

Settlement Boundaries and Green Belt

5.23 New development may be identified by the community as needed, but due to constraints or lack of space within the existing settlement, can only be located outside the existing settlement boundary, whether a Settlement Envelope, Green Belt Infill boundary or Green Belt boundary. A robust assessment of all alternative sites available will be required to show that no land within the boundary is available or suitable in the first instance. The sites chosen must be located

sustainably, minimising the need for travel by car to facilities within the settlement. The scale of development must be in keeping with the character and scale of the settlement and account must be taken of visual amenity, the impact on existing residents and impact on natural and built heritage and environment.

- 5.24 Exceptional circumstances for development in the Green Belt have been set out in order to provide sufficient growth in the plan period. In addition to the strategic sites, these exceptional circumstances also apply to the provision of smaller scale development through Neighbourhood Plans which, whilst contributing to overall growth, will cater for more local needs. Where a Neighbourhood Plan has identified significant new housing sites, the Allocations Local Plan will not then identify further sites.
- 5.25 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 document because Neighbourhood Plans become part of the formal development plan for Central Bedfordshire, upon adoption. The boundaries may be adjusted if appropriate to reflect completed development at the next review of the Development Strategy.

Policy 5: Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders may allocate and bring forward land for development that is:

- generally in keeping with the scale of the existing settlement
- beyond the Settlement Envelope, Green Belt Infill Boundary or Green Belt boundary where there is no suitable alternative within the existing settlement.

6.0 EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

- 6.1 Central Bedfordshire has a relatively strong economy and so has remained reasonably resilient throughout the post-2008 global economic crisis. Moving forward, it is expected that Central Bedfordshire will mirror the national picture of economic growth that has been forecast post 2014.
- 6.2 Central Bedfordshire also has a relatively robust workforce. The number of people who are out of work within Central Bedfordshire has been consistently low whilst the number of people of working age (16 to 64) who are in employment is higher than across the South East Midlands, the East of England and England as a whole. The number of people within Central Bedfordshire who are in employment further rises when taking into account those people who remain in work beyond the age of 65.
- 6.3 The Local Economic Assessment (LEA)² identifies that there are 11,545 active enterprises within Central Bedfordshire and that in 2011 the five year survival rate for new businesses was higher than national, regional and SEMLEP rates. The LEA also identifies that in the twelve months to February 2012, fewer businesses became insolvent in Central Bedfordshire than nationally, which further highlights the strong survival rates of local businesses.
- 6.4 Business turnover in Central Bedfordshire has witnessed an upward trend over the last ten years, and whilst in recent years this trend has continued, turnover in England and the East of England has fallen during the same time period, further highlighting the continuing strength and robustness of the Central Bedfordshire economy.³
- 6.5 Central Bedfordshire has a dynamic and diverse economy with key strengths in advanced manufacturing technologies, research and development and engineering including sectors such as aerospace and automotive, food production and processing. Central Bedfordshire's strategic location and excellent transport links mean we have a strong logistics sector, and our high quality natural and historic environment support a growing visitor economy. Population and economic growth also mean the sectors of construction and care are also growing.
- 6.6 As part of enabling economic growth, future existing and future key sectors will be supported to develop and grow in the area, building on and enhancing Central Bedfordshire's existing assets and businesses. The area is home to world leading companies such as B/E Aerospace, Lockheed Martin, Nissan Technical Centre Europe, Amazon, Whitbread, Superdrug and The Jordan and Ryvita Company. The

² The Central Bedfordshire Local Economic Assessment, September 2013

³ The Inter Departmental Business Register 2011

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, Millbrook Proving Ground, the Hertfordshire and South Midlands NHS and local Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Ministry of Defence, Woburn Enterprises, the major supermarkets and the RSPB. There are also a number of smaller businesses within Central Bedfordshire which make a significant contribution to the local economy, with 98% of businesses employing fewer than 50 people.

- 6.7 There are a number of employment specialisms which reflect Central Bedfordshire's strengths in the engineering/manufacturing and logistics sectors as well as indicating the importance of the rural economy, particularly through leisure, tourism and veterinary based activities. There is however an under-representation in certain sectors, notably business services, finance and insurance.
- 6.8 Tourism is an important, rapidly growing sector and job creator within Central Bedfordshire and attractions such as the Woburn Estate, ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, Wrest Park and the Shuttleworth Collection, contribute significantly to the local economy. The new Woburn Forest Center Parcs holiday village near Millbrook and the NIRAH (National Institute for Research in to Aquatic Habitats) proposals for an aquatic conservation and visitor centre with associated science park, hotels, conference and exhibition centres will further boost this sector within Central Bedfordshire.
- 6.9 Central Bedfordshire Council is fully supportive of the movement to a low carbon economy and seeks to ensure that in the coming years carbon reduction will be at the heart of ensuring businesses thrive and grow. The Council will support the creation of opportunities for the development of new technologies, industries and services and will seek to support business growth in the low carbon economy.
- 6.10 Central Bedfordshire benefits significantly from good transportation access. There are two main strategic road corridors running north to south through Central Bedfordshire, the M1 and the A1, which provide businesses with direct access to London and the strategic road network. Two further strategic road corridors, the A5 and the A6 along with the A507 and the A421, create a robust transportation network within Central Bedfordshire and provide local residents with direct access to employment opportunities across the whole area.
- 6.11 The area is also well served by rail with mainline stations at Sandy, Biggleswade, Arlesey, Flitwick, Harlington and Leighton Buzzard, and is within close proximity to the London-Luton Airport which provides good access to destinations across Europe. A new Guided Busway also offers a fast, frequent and reliable service linking Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Luton town centre and Luton Airport.

- 6.12 The Economic Development Plan (EDP)⁴ strives to ensure that the economic potential of the area is met, and the Development Strategy will work in partnership with the EDP to achieve this.
- 6.13 In order for Central Bedfordshire to achieve its economic potential, the Council is taking a positive and pro-active approach to creating the right conditions to enable 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 ensure that Central Bedfordshire is recognised as a place truly open for business and to create more opportunities for job creation and local employment within Central Bedfordshire.
- 6.14 The Central Bedfordshire Employment and Economic Study (Stage 1, May 2012) identifies that, based on past trends; around 20,200 jobs might be expected within the area up to 2031. As this is based upon economic forecasting (which estimates future trends based upon past information), 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 1,200 jobs per annum and our aspiration to realise fully the area’s economic potential.
- 6.15 The quality of jobs provided within Central Bedfordshire is of paramount importance. In order to ensure the quality and choice of employment offer across Central Bedfordshire, and to increase economic activity, it is important that a wide variety of job opportunities across all sectors are attracted and catered for.
- 6.16 During recent years, Central Bedfordshire has worked closely with our neighbours to ensure that the growth within Central Bedfordshire is complementary to growth in neighbouring authorities. Due to historical working arrangements and the ‘Duty to Co-operate’ set out within the NPPF, Central Bedfordshire needs to consider the growth requirements of our neighbours and any limitations there may be to delivering that growth within their own administrative areas. As a result, Central Bedfordshire will need to make provision in order to accommodate some of Luton’s jobs growth requirement which cannot be met within Luton due to the tight boundary around their administrative area. This particularly relates to the provision of B Class Uses which are more land-hungry.
- 6.17 In addition to accommodating part of Luton’s jobs growth, the expansion proposals of London-Luton Airport are a key consideration in determining the level of jobs to be provided within Central Bedfordshire. The proposals are expected to create a significant number of jobs related not only to the expansion itself, but also in relation to complementary services once the expansion is completed, such as

⁴ The Central Bedfordshire Economic Development Plan November 2011

offices, hotels, restaurants and leisure activities. An increase in employment land to the north of the Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis conurbation within Central Bedfordshire will help meet these employment needs as well as easing any employment land supply constraints across the conurbation.

- 6.18 The South East Midlands Local Economic Partnership (SEMLEP) will also play an important role as they have been identified in the regulations as bodies that those covered by the Duty to Co-Operate 'should have regard to' when preparing local plans and other related activities. In addition, paragraph 160 of the NPPF highlights the benefits of councils and other bodies working with Local Enterprise Partnerships as LEPs will also be involved in helping to prioritise infrastructure investment, with for example the Growing Places Fund.
- 6.19 The Development Strategy will support the delivery of 27,000 net new jobs between 2011 and 2031 within Central Bedfordshire. This ambitious target has been identified through a robust evidence base to deliver identified local needs taking into consideration current economic forecasts and modelling as well as local circumstances such as market demand, past take up rates, and the 'Duty to Co-operate'.
- 6.20 This target is stretching in the current economic conditions. However, the ambition to deliver sustainable growth is essential, and without this level of job creation the longer term economic future of the area could be significantly hindered.
- 6.21 In order to ensure the delivery of sustainable development, jobs should complement housing growth and should be provided where local needs have been identified. Employment generating uses will therefore be delivered through the extensive portfolio of employment sites as identified within Policy 6 which includes the strategic allocation sites as well as stand-alone employment sites.

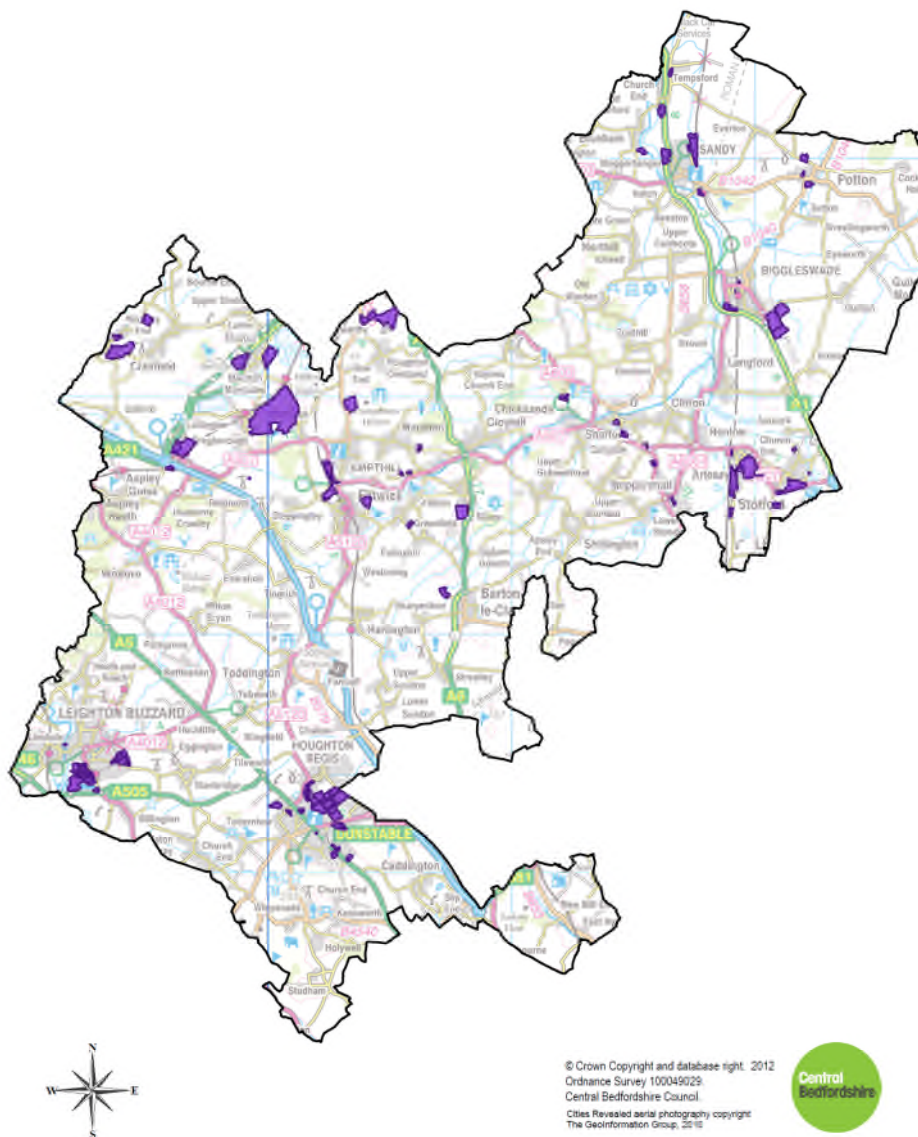
B-Uses and Non B-Uses

- 6.22 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, Development Strategies 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.
- 6.23 Within Central Bedfordshire it is anticipated that 12,150 (45%) of new jobs will be from B-Uses with the remaining 14,850 (55%) being delivered through non B-Uses.

Supply of sites

6.24 There is a broad range and quality of existing employment sites and premises within Central Bedfordshire which equate to approximately 1100ha of land. Both the urban and rural areas accommodate a number of existing and established employment sites which perform a crucial role in maintaining a steady level of employment land stock and contributing significantly to the local economy. Map 1 identifies the broad distribution of existing and established employment sites across Central Bedfordshire.

Map 1: Distribution of Existing Employment Sites within Central Bedfordshire



- 6.25 In order to enable the growth of the local economy, expand the range of employment sectors available and create the right conditions for higher levels of job creation and investment, the employment land stock within Central Bedfordshire needs to be expanded and diversified. Greater choice in the range and size of land and premises across Central Bedfordshire will contribute to enable new business start-ups, allow existing businesses to expand within the area, and will attract new inward investment to the area in the form of multinational, national, regional and local businesses.
- 6.26 This has in part been achieved through the Central Bedfordshire (North) Site Allocations Development Plan Document (April 2011) which identifies and allocates a number of sites suitable for the accommodation of employment and job generating uses. In total, 77ha of additional land was allocated in order to accommodate B1-B8 employment uses.
- 6.27 These employment allocations which are shown on the policies maps are to be delivered as part of mixed-use developments as well as stand alone employment sites. The allocations were only recently made and, having been re-evaluated⁵, are still considered to be suitable for B Class employment uses and are expected to contribute towards meeting the jobs growth target.
- 6.28 The Stage 2 Employment and Economic Study identifies that in quantitative terms there is sufficient existing supply in Central Bedfordshire to satisfy demand, but that the nature of the supply, in terms of scale, quality and location is unlikely to meet the needs of the warehousing logistics sector in relation to access to major strategic transport routes and the accommodation of the scale of development required. The study also identifies that in order to meet the job targets, the contribution of Non B Class employment generating opportunities must also be considered alongside the delivery of B Class uses.
- 6.29 In order to maintain a sustainable approach to the delivery of employment land and premises across Central Bedfordshire, it is essential that jobs are provided where needs arise and that there is a reasonable distribution of jobs across the whole area. It is also important that the allocations respond to market demand as far as this can be foreseen. The current distribution of sites across Central Bedfordshire results in a higher concentration of land, and therefore potential for B class jobs growth, in the north of Central Bedfordshire. To ensure a more even distribution and to make sure the needs of the whole area are met, there is a requirement for further allocations of land particularly within the southern part of Central Bedfordshire. Additional allocations within southern Central Bedfordshire will also enable the delivery of jobs within close proximity to the Luton urban

⁵ Central Bedfordshire Economic and Employment Study Stage 1 Report. June 2013

area which will therefore benefit residents and businesses within Luton as well as Central Bedfordshire.

- 6.30 The settlements of Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard already accommodate a number of existing and established employment areas which will continue to contribute to the local economy and job creation. However, in order to deliver the number of jobs required, there is a need to provide additional and alternative land to accommodate employment generating uses, particularly for B1-B8 uses.
- 6.31 As there is limited new land available within the existing settlement boundaries, and to avoid a high quantity of small to medium sized sites being 'pepper-potted' around all the settlements in the southern part of Central Bedfordshire, including the smaller, more rural settlements; additional land will be allocated for the delivery of employment and job generating uses in the form of larger, more strategic allocations adjacent to the existing larger settlements. This approach will deliver sustainable patterns of development and will be more attractive and responsive to market demand over the plan period.
- 6.32 The Council recognises however, that there are sites in the north that have not been allocated previously but which can contribute to meeting employment land deficits on a more localised scale. Such locations include Flitwick and Biggleswade, where there are identified needs for additional B Class employment land locally to meet the needs of existing businesses and residents as well as future inward investment opportunities.
- 6.33 Having considered demand for B- uses across the sub-region in order to provide a broader view, the Study identifies that employment in B Class activities (business, general industry and storage and distribution) are forecast to grow at the sub-regional level as well as within Central Bedfordshire. There is also expected to be a small increase in the manufacturing sector within Central Bedfordshire despite an overall decline within the sub-region.
- 6.34 Growth in the logistics and distribution sector 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.
- 6.35 It is essential that land for such employment uses is located in the right areas and the strategic access and the quality of sites offered within Central Bedfordshire indicates it has the potential to meet both local and sub-regional requirements.
- 6.36 The strategic allocations will be delivered in line with the allocations made in chapter 13 of this document. In total, up to 139ha of additional

employment land will be allocated within the plan period 2011 to 2031, as set out in the table below.

Table 6.1: Strategic Employment Allocations

North Houghton Regis*	30ha
North Luton*	13ha
East Leighton Linslade	16ha
Sundon RFI	40ha
North East of Flitwick	Up to 18ha
Stratton Farm, Biggleswade	22ha
Total employment land delivery 2011-31	Up to 139ha

*Additional employment land will also be delivered beyond 2031. See policies 60 & 61.

- 6.37 Chapter 13 provides greater detail about the location of employment land within the urban extensions and in relation to the Sundon RFI, north east of Flitwick and Stratton Farm, Biggleswade.
- 6.38 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 employment land currently identified to be delivered within the North of Houghton Regis and North of Luton Strategic Allocations beyond the Plan period. Additional locations for the delivery of employment generating uses will be considered where it is appropriate to do so and will be considered against the criteria set out in Policy 9.

Policy 6: Employment Land

The Council will work with the development industry, landowners and local communities to deliver an appropriate portfolio of employment land within Central Bedfordshire.

The portfolio will consist of:

- existing allocated employment sites (as identified on the Policies Map);
- established (non-allocated) sites in employment use;
- allocations from the North Site Allocations DPD; and
- up to 139ha of additional Strategic Sites.
- Existing Significant Facilities as identified in Policy 51

Employment Land Uses

- 6.39 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.

- 6.40 The Council's preferred approach is to continue to maintain a diverse portfolio of employment sites for B1 to B8 uses and as such, in relation to the portfolio of land identified in Policy 6, permission will generally be granted for B Class uses. Through the portfolio of employment sites, the Council will seek to ensure a mix of type and size of premises to support business and jobs growth. 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.
- 6.41 Whilst the Council would not wish to see current employment land lost to other uses, it is recognised that non B-uses can make a significant contribution to the local economy and to 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 existing and allocated 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 7. In instances where allocated land is no longer suitable for employment generating uses, detailed evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the site has been effectively marketed for these uses and that no suitable interest has subsequently materialised. In these cases the loss of employment land to a non-employment generating use may therefore be the only reasonable option.
- 6.42 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 existing 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 such provision will not detrimentally impact upon the town centres. Chapter 7 provides greater detail in relation to the appropriate location of retail uses within Central Bedfordshire and specifically the town centres.
- 6.43 In line with the Council's growth aspirations, Economic Development Plan and desire to be truly open for business 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. An LDO has already been progressed for the Woodside Industrial Estate, Dunstable; 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 7: 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 employment generating uses will be permitted where:

- (i) the proposal would not unacceptably reduce the supply, variety or quality of available industrial and commercial land and property in the district; and
- (ii) the proposal would contribute towards meeting the employment needs of the district, or widening the range of employment opportunities; and;
- (iii) the proposal would be suitable in relation to the location and neighbouring land uses; and
- (iv) the location is appropriately accessible and the proposal would not result in unacceptable levels of traffic generation.

Evidence such as marketing information and detailed information on the proposed use may be required to demonstrate that the proposal would conform with criteria (i) and (ii).

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 normally be considered appropriate on employment sites, except as an ancillary operation. Exceptions will be considered on a site by site basis for bulky goods and other forms of specialist retailing less suited to a town centre location and will be subject to the separate retail policies set out in this Plan.

Policy 8: Change of Use

Proposals for non-employment generating uses on employment land as identified in Policy 6 will only be considered where suitable and detailed evidence is submitted proving that the following criteria can be met:

In relation to unallocated land:

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

In relation to allocated land, in addition to the above:

- the site has been comprehensively marketed for the current employment generating uses as well as for alternative employment generating uses;
- 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.

Employment proposals outside settlement boundaries

6.44 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 sites does not meet the needs of a specific proposed employment use.

6.45 In order to promote Central Bedfordshire as a location which is 'open for business' and to ensure a variety of employment generating uses, the Council will, exceptionally, consider proposals for employment uses outside Settlement Envelopes where there are no suitable alternative sites.

Expansion of Existing Businesses

6.46 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.

- 6.47 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 order to secure the retention of existing businesses, the Council has adopted a flexible approach to business expansion within Central Bedfordshire. Policy 9 applies only to sites that are outside of the Green Belt.

Policy 9: Employment proposals outside Settlement Envelopes

Exceptionally, it will be appropriate to consider favourably applications for employment generating uses outside Settlement Envelopes and outside of the Green Belt where there are no existing or allocated sites, or existing buildings that are available, suitable, achievable or viable.

1. For proposals to extend existing businesses onto adjoining land, evidence will need to be provided that intensification within the existing site is not possible.
2. For proposals for new employment generating uses outside Settlement Envelopes, evidence will need to be provided of the significant economic benefits that would flow from the proposal taking account of the environmental and social aspects.
3. Proposals to expand businesses within existing curtilages will also be considered favourably outside of the Green Belt; providing that they would not result in an unacceptable increase in traffic and any adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring sites

In all cases the criteria set out in Policy 7 will also be relevant considerations.

Education and Skills

- 6.48 Central Bedfordshire is home to leading higher and further education institutions, including Cranfield University, Central Bedfordshire College and Shuttleworth College. We recognise that for Central Bedfordshire to fulfil its economic potential, the importance of skills cannot be overstated. Skills are critical to all employees and employers in all sectors: public, private and the voluntary and community sectors. 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.
- 6.49 The importance of training and apprenticeships and the contribution these can make not only to the local economy but also in relation to getting people into work and providing them with useable skills is also recognised. The Council actively encourages the provision of training and apprenticeship opportunities on development sites throughout

Central Bedfordshire, and will seek to work with developers, education institutions and others to ensure this aspiration is realised.

- 6.50 This approach is also in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire All Age Skills Strategy (March 2012) 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.

Rural Economy and Tourism

- 6.51 The Local Economic Assessment has identified that 49.2% of businesses in Central Bedfordshire are based in wards that are classed as rural and 53.7% of all people employed in Central Bedfordshire are employed in wards classed as rural. The rural economy is therefore of critical importance to the overall economy of 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
- 6.52 Central Bedfordshire's attractive natural and historic environment is identified as one of the best aspects of the area by local businesses in Central Bedfordshire Business Survey 2012 and brings visitor spend into the economy each year. In 2009 there were 5,269,100 trips⁶ to Central Bedfordshire either just for a day or to stay longer. More recently, the 'Visit Britain' Great Britain Tourism Survey, carried out by Visit England, which monitors overnight stays by domestic visitors; and found that between 2009 and 2011 visitors spent an average of 358,000 nights per year in Central Bedfordshire, spending an average of £18 million annually.
- 6.53 Tourist attractions range from major facilities such as 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. The presence of Center Parcs Woburn Forest, which is part of a national chain of holiday villages, will significantly increase visitor numbers to the area and help to put Bedfordshire on the map. Overall the growing interest in Bedfordshire for tourism suggests potential for a wider tourist destination which could further increase the number of jobs generated in this sector. A positive policy 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.
- 6.54 There is already a reasonable variety of tourist accommodation in the area ranging from country house hotels to budget hotels and self catering accommodation. The Tourism Growth Strategy for

⁶ East of England Tourism, Economic Impact of Tourism in Central Bedfordshire, 2009

Bedfordshire and Luton (2007-2012) however, identifies the potential for significant growth in this sector. In particular it promotes the growth of the family and short breaks market and the attractions of the County's 'green offering' including countryside sites and rivers.

- 6.55 The need to increase self-catering accommodation and the provision of low-cost accommodation has also been identified. Provision could take the form of lodges, barn conversions, campsites and rural public houses. The Council is willing to be flexible where these can support local services and provide opportunities for rural diversification. There is also potential for more hotels in the area because of the main transport links; these could cater for the 'budget' end of the market but could also include the conversion of large character properties to serve the luxury market.
- 6.56 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 10: Rural Economy and Tourism

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 tourism will be considered in relation to:

- the suitability and impact of the proposal in relation to the location and neighbouring land uses;
- an increase in the number of jobs that can be delivered; and
- traffic generation and suitable accessibility.

The Council will seek to promote the rural area and tourism across the whole of Central Bedfordshire by supporting 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 for static holiday and touring caravan parks and holiday chalet developments, will be considered against the need to protect valuable landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites as well as the potential impact on local residents.

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

7.0 TOWN CENTRES AND RETAILING

Retail Hierarchy

- 7.1 Town Centres play an important role in supporting the local economy. 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 diverse retail offer, office accommodation and a good range of leisure uses.
- 7.2 While it is recognised that towns in Central Bedfordshire suffer from a leakage of expenditure to larger centres like Milton Keynes and Luton; the towns still play an important function, and in the main are characterised by high occupancy rates and attractive shop fronts. Thus the role of the retail hierarchy set out in Table 7.1 below is to support the growth of new retail development in appropriate locations and at appropriate scales in order to further consolidate the existing centres.
- 7.3 The planned housing growth will lead to a considerably increased population in Central Bedfordshire over the next twenty years. During this period, convenience retail expenditure and leisure spend is expected to continue to increase steadily and broadly in line with previous rates of growth. The amount of comparison goods spend is also likely to increase albeit at a slower rate of growth than in the past. In order to cater for a growing population, and to support and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the town centres, a significant amount and range of additional floorspace will need to be provided for town centre uses in line with the indicative figures set out in the hierarchy below. This will need to cater for a range of specialist and brand retail that encourages footfall to these centres. More information on specific requirements can be found in the adopted town centre development briefs and masterplans.
- 7.4 Due to its size and strategic importance, the North Houghton Regis urban extension will need to provide for additional retail provision. This will be subject to sequential and retail impact assessments in accordance with Policy 11. It is considered that retail provision within the urban extensions to the north of Luton and east of Leighton Linlade however, should be of a scale to meet local convenience needs in order to complement existing centres.
- 7.5 With the exception of the new settlement of Wixams, each of the Major Service 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 retail and leisure uses are focused within the designated area. The town centre boundaries can be viewed on the Policies Maps.

Table 7.1: Retail Hierarchy

Type of Centre	Location	Floorspace Requirement Identified (m ²) to 2031		Principal Function
		Comparison	Convenience	
Principal Town Centres	Leighton Buzzard	8,500 (25%)	8,500 Priority to be given to Flitwick, Biggleswade (both currently have overtrading stores) & North of Houghton Regis SA	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
	Dunstable	17,000 (50%)		
	Biggleswade	7,000 (20%)		
Secondary Town Centres	Ampthill Flitwick Houghton Regis Sandy Wixams	2000 (5%)		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
Total		34,500		
Minor Service Centres	See Policy 4	Not defined		Provides a number of local shops and a small to medium sized supermarket
Large Villages	See Policy 4	Not defined		Provides a small number of local shops serving a small catchment

The Sequential Approach

- 7.6 The approach of requiring new retail development 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
- 7.7 However 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.
- 7.8 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.
- 7.9 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 2,500m². Although Central Bedfordshire does have existing food stores with a gross floorspace of more than 2,500 m², 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. It is therefore considered that any proposals over 500m² gross, outside of town centre boundaries, should be subject to an impact assessment.

Policy 11: Town Centre Uses

All proposals should have regard to the Retail Hierarchy

Within the identified town centre boundaries the Council will seek to retain A1 uses at ground floor level. Proposals for changes of use, or re-development of properties, away from A1 uses to A2, A3, A4 or A5 uses will be granted providing that they meet all of the following criteria:

- the proposed use would be appropriate within a town centre setting and would have a level of customer attraction equivalent to an A1 (retail) use;
- there is not an existing over-concentration of such uses within the town centre;
- 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;
- the proposed use maintains 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.

The Sequential Test will be applied to proposals for retail, office and leisure uses that are not within a designated town centre boundary.

Impact Assessments will be required for all retail, office and leisure proposals over 500m² gross external floorspace that are outside a designated town centre boundary.

Proposals for bulky goods retailing outside of town centre boundaries will be considered, in conjunction with Policy 7, on a site by site basis taking into account the following:

- the suitability of the site;
- the impact on the town centre; and
- the potential increase in traffic generation.

Neighbourhood and Rural Retail and Services

- 7.10 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 existing neighbourhood centres and Large and Small Villages are therefore encouraged where appropriate; while existing services should be maintained where they remain viable.
- 7.11 Many outlying neighbourhoods and much of the rural community are poorly served by public transport, so 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 a strict planning policy in the past so it is increasingly vital to maintain this strong policy stance in the face of current economic pressures.
- 7.12 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.
- 7.13 Evidence indicates that A5 uses (hot food takeaway outlets) in close proximity to and surrounding schools lead children to make unhealthy food choices. Land use planning can contribute to tackling childhood obesity by restricting the development of new A5 fast food premises within the vicinity of schools. To this end 400 metre exclusion zones will be put in place within which planning conditions to restrict the opening times of new A5 fast food premises will be imposed.

Policy 12: Retail for Neighbourhood Centres and the Rural Area

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

- 1) the proposal is of a suitable scale;
- 2) the site is an appropriate location;
- 3) 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 neighbourhood centres or villages which would result in the loss of such facilities, will not be permitted unless:

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

Proposals for retail premises such as local farm shops which are located outside of settlement boundaries will also be considered against the above criteria.

Planning conditions will be used to restrict the opening hours of new out of centre A5 uses that are to be located within 400m of schools and sixth form colleges. These establishments will not be permitted open between 12:00-14:00 hours and between 15:00-17:00 hours, Monday to Friday

Supporting Town Centre Development

Dunstable Town Centre

- 7.14 Dunstable is an historic town dominated by the A5 (T) 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 (26% compared to the national average of 17%), 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, the majority of which are concentrated within the Quadrant Shopping Centre.
- 7.15 There have been longstanding proposals to redevelop the Quadrant Centre which have not materialised. The Quadrant Centre offers only poorly configured and designed space that is based on a cost model that no longer facilitates twenty-first century retail operations. The current retail offer in Dunstable is too disparate and is further hampered by poor pedestrian connections across the busy A5 and A505 trunk roads.
- 7.16 In order to provide additional competitive and appropriate retail space in the town, it is recognised that attention might need to shift beyond the Quadrant Centre to other locations near to the town centre. One such location is the already well-established White Lion Retail Park which has both larger footprint stores which accommodate big box retail, but also offers restaurants and leisure uses. The recent opening of the Luton-Dunstable Busway which has 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 construction 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.

- 7.17 Accessible centres like the White Lion Retail Park, that both provide consumers with an experience and provide shop units commensurate with retailer demand, are now required to adapt to the changing nature of shopping habits. While the frequency of visits may be limited due to the rise of online shopping, it is certainly the case that overall spend and dwell time will increase. This significant repositioning and redevelopment is required to revitalise and reinvigorate Dunstable town centre to meet the needs of today's shoppers.

Policy 13: Dunstable Town Centre

The 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.

Planning permission will be granted for additional retail floorspace and other uses appropriate within town centres as defined in national policy within the existing town centre boundaries and, subject to the sequential approach, edge of centre locations.

Consideration should also be given to the retail hierarchy and the sequential approach as outlined in Policy 11.

Proposals should reflect the scale and characteristics of the existing centre and should be subject to a Traffic Impact Assessment.

Leighton Buzzard Town Centre

- 7.18 Leighton Buzzard is an attractive market town which grew significantly during the 1970s. The Town Council has prepared a document entitled 'The Big Plan' which outlines 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.
- 7.19 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 (25%) is above the national average of 17%. Notably, vacancy rates are significantly below the national average. The town centre is characterised by a good choice of independent shops alongside some national chains.
- 7.20 Development Briefs have been endorsed by the Council 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. The former will provide an opportunity to extend the retail offer of the town centre, the latter is an important site close to the town centre.

Houghton Regis Town Centre

- 7.21 Houghton Regis town centre contains a significant higher proportion of convenience retail units than the national average (25% 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 also recently undergone substantial public realm improvements along the complete length of the High Street. The public transport network has recently undergone improvements with the opening of the Luton-Dunstable Busway and the proposed A5-M1 Link Road and the Woodside Connection should further improve the general environment, local public transport and congestion throughout the town centre.
- 7.22 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

- 7.23 Biggleswade town centre has an attractive market town feel. There are a number of historic buildings in the town centre which give it character and contribute 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. The proportion of vacant units is well below the national average.
- 7.24 The provisions of the adopted town centre Masterplan will increase the retail offer of the town, whilst improving transport infrastructure and the public realm.

Flitwick Town Centre

- 7.25 Flitwick is characterised by a relatively disjointed town centre and a fairly unattractive physical environment. The disjointed nature of the town centre is largely caused by the roads which run through it, which also have a detrimental effect on the town centre's environment, and the railway which splits the centre in two. 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.

- 7.26 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 Flitwick railway station which will also provide additional facilities for cyclists

Policy 14: Town Centre Development

Development proposals should be in accordance with the principles and objectives of:

- The two endorsed development briefs for Leighton Buzzard
- The Houghton Regis Masterplan SPD
- The Biggleswade Town Centre Masterplan SPD
- The Flitwick Framework Plan and Indicative Masterplan

Development proposals elsewhere in these towns should complement and not prejudice development proposed, and should make a financial contribution towards their development where possible.

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 11.

8.0 INFRASTRUCTURE

- 8.1 Infrastructure means the facilities and services that help us live our everyday lives. It can range from strategic provision, such as a new road or school, to the creation of a children's play area. Providing the type and level of new social, community, economic, environmental and physical infrastructure is crucial to delivering healthy and sustainable communities.
- 8.2 The delivery of growth and development is dependent on the timely provision of supporting infrastructure. It will be important to ensure that certain infrastructure is provided ahead of development to safeguard against adverse impacts. To facilitate this, it is essential that the local planning authority understands the infrastructure needs and costs early on as part of plan making.
- 8.3 As such, the Council has produced an Infrastructure Schedule to identify the infrastructure provision required to support growth. The Infrastructure Schedule identifies a broad estimated cost, funding sources and who would be responsible for delivery. The Schedule brings together the results of extensive work with the service providers to set out a clear picture of new infrastructure needed to serve future needs. The areas covered by the Schedule include education, health and social care, transport, housing, recreation, leisure, green infrastructure, utility services, and recycling facilities.
- 8.4 The Infrastructure Schedule will provide an overview of the action required, who is responsible for delivery, a broad indication of phasing, costs and funding mechanisms. It will act as a focus for delivery by encouraging direct action, co-ordination of others and lobbying where appropriate. The Schedule should not be seen as a detailed investment programme.
- 8.5 Delivering sustainable communities and the successful implementation of the Development Strategy is the collective responsibility of a wide range of organisations. This entails a shared vision and shared objectives. It involves making sure there is co-ordinated action to ensure essential infrastructure is delivered effectively and on time.
- 8.6 In order to aid the prioritisation of infrastructure delivery the Council has categorised the infrastructure in the Schedule as critical, essential and desirable:

Critical: Critical infrastructure is that which has been identified as infrastructure that must happen to enable physical development. These infrastructure items are often known as 'blockers' or 'showstoppers', and are most common in relation to transport and

utilities infrastructure. Failure to provide these pieces of infrastructure could result in significant delays in the delivery of development.

Essential: Essential infrastructure is infrastructure that is required if development is to be achieved in a timely and sustainable manner. Although infrastructure in this category is unlikely to prevent physical development in the short term, failure to invest in it could result in delays in development in the medium term. This type of infrastructure needs to be provided alongside development to make sure that the impacts of development are mitigated and therefore not creating unacceptable overuse of existing facilities or leaving developments without necessary support facilities. The most common type of essential infrastructure is social and community infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and children's play space.

Desirable: Desirable infrastructure is infrastructure that is required for sustainable development but is unlikely to prevent development in the short to medium term. Although infrastructure identified within this category has less priority in allowing sites to be developed, its importance to the overall success of development and the delivery of this Development Strategy should not be underestimated.

- 8.7 Whilst the Council would not generally support the commencement of development until any critical infrastructure associated with the development (as identified in the Infrastructure Schedule) has been shown to be fully funded to the satisfaction of the Council; it is recognised that there may be the potential for early enabling development ahead of major infrastructure delivery within the Strategic Allocations. Any proposals for the early delivery of development ahead of infrastructure will be subject to scrutiny and must be accompanied by reasoned justification as well as evidence that it will not adversely impact upon existing infrastructure.

Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 8.8 The development industry will be required to fund a substantial proportion of identified infrastructure. This will be achieved either through developer agreements made in the course of individual planning applications (known as Section 106 agreements) or through the emerging Community Infrastructure Levy, (CIL), a tariff based charge.
- 8.9 An adopted CIL charge will allow the Council to raise funds to support development by assisting the funding of a wide range of projects included in the Infrastructure Schedule. The infrastructure to be funded by CIL will be defined in the Regulation 123 list. The Council needs to strike an appropriate balance between the desirability of funding infrastructure from the levy and the potential effects of CIL upon the economic viability of development. A viability assessment has been undertaken by the Council which will inform the Charging

Schedule and ultimately the amount of CIL to be charged. The Council is required to demonstrate that the CIL charges are sufficient to provide the infrastructure that is required, but not too onerous as to make development unviable.

- 8.10 A proportion of the funds raised from CIL must be placed with the neighbourhoods where development takes place for local Town and Parish Councils to spend on locally identified infrastructure priorities. This proportion is higher if an adopted Neighbourhood Plan is in place.
- 8.11 In certain circumstances the infrastructure required to serve Central Bedfordshire may be provided across administrative boundaries and the 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 are collected on an equitable basis.
- 8.12 Following the introduction of CIL, from April 2015, Section 106 infrastructure requirements will be scaled back to those matters that are directly related to the specific site. Section 106 agreements will continue to be used to ensure conformity with other policy requirements which cannot be dealt with through CIL, including the provision of affordable housing. A Planning Obligations SPD will be prepared about the use of Section 106 agreements.

Policy 19: Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

All new development must be supported by the required infrastructure at the appropriate stage. Where existing infrastructure will be placed under strain due to the impact of new development, improvements to existing infrastructure or compensatory provision should be made such that there is no overall reduction in provision.

Developers will be required to make appropriate contributions, following viability testing, as necessary to offset the cost of providing new physical, social, community 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 introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy and retain the use of Section 106 agreements where appropriate. In advance of

the adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy, the Council will continue to ensure the delivery of strategic infrastructure by Planning Obligations and other appropriate funding sources. An SPD on the continuing role and purpose of Section 106 agreements when a CIL has been adopted will be prepared.

Next Generation Broadband

- 8.13 In December 2010 the Government launched a Strategy entitled Britain's Superfast Broadband Future. A key objective of this Strategy is to put in place a framework capable of supporting the roll out of next generation superfast broadband. This states that new homes, where they are part of a larger development, should be built as standard with a superfast broadband connection. This is further supported in the NPPF which states that in preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of high speed broadband.
- 8.14 Providing a minimum level of ICT connectivity and high speed broadband provision will be an important factor in supporting and growing businesses and improving the areas 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.
- 8.15 The Council's approved Joint Local Broadband Plan sets out the vision to:
- Deliver improved standard universal broadband of at least 2 Megabits per second (Mbps) to all and deliver superfast broadband to at least 90% of premises in Central Bedfordshire by 2015 and ultimately 100% of premises. The technology should be future proofed, innovative, cost effective and flexible for upgrade
 - Increase competition between broadband providers, inline with the need to support the effective operation of the market.
- 8.16 A key part of delivering this vision for the area is ensuring that new developments adequately plan for and put in place the provision of digital infrastructure to support the delivery of high speed broadband services.
- 8.17 Superfast broadband is generally considered to be internet access with connection speeds of greater than 24Mbps, and ideally around 30Mbps. 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.

- 8.18 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.
- 8.19 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 utility 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. This means that the development will seek to put in place the infrastructure to facilitate a fibre optic network to deliver superfast broadband services. This should ideally be fibre to the premise solution, which provides for the highest level of potential speeds to consumers, but as a minimum should be based on a fibre to the cabinet network. Whilst fibre based solutions are preferred, the Council will consider the use of appropriate alternatives to deliver superfast broadband services
- 8.20 Detailed proposals will need to consider the necessary conduits/ducting to be incorporated into the development and consideration for relevant telecommunications infrastructure, including exchanges, cabinets, and any other necessary equipment to ensure accessing/ maintenance requirements and minimal environmental/ visual impact. Such infrastructure should seek to alleviate the need in future for additional civil or excavation work to existing footways & highways.
- 8.21 The Council will expect new residential developments of 25 units or more and all employment development to include provision for broadband infrastructure to support the delivery of superfast broadband services. Smaller schemes of less than 25 units would be encouraged to make provision for superfast broadband, using a fibre optic network or an appropriate alternative. It is recognised that the availability of high speed digital infrastructure is increasingly becoming demanded from residential and commercial premises as a matter of course, and high speed connectivity can increase the value of developments

Policy 20: Next Generation Broadband

Central Bedfordshire Council will expect new residential development of 25 units or more and all employment development to include provision for superfast next generation broadband infrastructure.

This should ideally facilitate a fibre to the premise solution, or the equivalent technology, but as a minimum this should be based on a fibre to the cabinet network, or the equivalent technology. This should facilitate the provision of the highest level of broadband speeds to consumers

Provision should be made with minimal disruption and minimal need for reconstruction, and allow for future growth/improvements in service infrastructure/broadband service.

Where the minimum standards are not met, evidence will be required to demonstrate why this would not be feasible or viable.

Social and Community Infrastructure

- 8.22 The Development Strategy has an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating strong, vibrant, healthy and inclusive communities. It aims to improve the health, social and cultural wellbeing of all; deliver sufficient community facilities and accessible services to meet local needs
- 8.23 Social and community infrastructure requires strong working partnerships between the Council, developers, public sector agencies, the voluntary and community sector and the business sector. Providers will need to meet the health and social care needs; educational, cultural and learning needs; social and community development needs of residents in new and existing communities.
- 8.24 Social and community infrastructure is considered to be those facilities and activities that support a community's need for social interaction, meet local needs and improve the well-being of those live and work in the locality. These include community development, childcare, education and training, libraries, arts and culture, sports and leisure, places of worship, health services, emergency services, utilities. The services and facilities supporting employment and housing growth makes for a more sustainable environment and adds to the place shaping agenda by helping to improve the well-being of all who live, work and play in the locality.

Delivering Social Infrastructure

- 8.25 Social infrastructure is less about the physical infrastructure and more concerned with the activities that will bring about strong communities. Social infrastructure therefore includes:
- opportunities for residents to be actively involved in their community through their participation in community activities, forums, groups and volunteering;
 - the networks of people and organisations that provide contacts, services and opportunities for association with one another;
 - promoting and developing volunteering; recruiting and supporting volunteers;
 - promoting and developing cultural activities and learning;
 - opportunities for social action and community engagement
 - support, advice, training and assistance with the formation of new community groups, including the provision of 'start up' grants;
 - the recruitment, development and support of community leaders
- 8.26 Providing places for people and local groups to meet, along with maintenance and running costs is essential and needs to be available in a timely manner. For new developments this will be prior to the occupation of the first dwelling.

Delivering Community Infrastructure

- 8.27 Community Infrastructure is about providing sufficient community facilities to deliver accessible services required to meet local needs. Community Infrastructure includes:
- meeting places, such as community centres and places of worship;
 - leisure, recreational and cultural facilities, including sports venues and pitches;
 - local shops, food outlets and public houses;
 - post boxes, community notice boards, public art and other 'street furniture';
 - household waste collection services;
 - schools and child care facilities;
 - libraries, adult and community learning;
 - health centres, GP surgeries, dental practices and emergency services;
 - other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
 - access to green spaces.
- 8.28 Community facilities require a pattern of development that makes fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and provides ease of access to facilities and services.

- 8.29 Access to high quality well located facilities and services are essential to people's quality of life and the well being of our communities. Well designed community facilities and public spaces with inclusive access and social integration will influence the way a place looks, how it works and how it is used; and thus contribute to a strong sense of place, as well as a strong sense of community.
- 8.30 In some communities certain facilities and services may be essential because they are one of a limited number in that area, or because it is necessary for the quality and convenience of everyday life in a community.
- 8.31 There may be opportunities for the co-location of facilities and services, providing shared facilities and integrated service delivery. This increases foot fall and helps to make services more sustainable; it also reduces unnecessary journeys and means that residents can access services and meet their every day needs with ease. A "community hub" approach is encouraged, where community facilities can be co-located and form part of wider service delivery, meeting a range of community needs in a single location.
- 8.32 Developers making provision for social or community facilities will be required to work closely with those affected by their proposals and to evolve designs for community facilities and services that take account of the views of the community and have regard to the specific design requirements of those operating the facilities, at an early stage.

Provision for Social and Community Infrastructure

- 8.33 New residential development will increase pressures on existing and sometimes depleted social and community infrastructure, as well as necessitate new infrastructure. In urban and rural areas alike new residential development will impact some of the existing infrastructure and this will need to be taken account of when new housing is planned for. Where existing services and facilities are not adequate to support new development, developers will be required to contribute towards or provide these.
- 8.34 The creation of new communities will normally lead to the requirement and provision of additional social and community infrastructure over and above that which already exists.
- 8.35 The need for social and community infrastructure generated by new development should be planned ahead, with interim or temporary provision provided ahead of full provision 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, and would be determined on a site by site basis. Schemes must include an agreed timescale for the delivery of all social and community infrastructure.

- 8.36 Developers will be required to contribute to the long term management and maintenance of facilities to ensure future communities benefit from provision.

Policy 21: Provision for Social and Community Infrastructure

To deliver the facilities and services the community needs, 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, encouraging the co-location and shared use of facilities through community hubs where appropriate and where possible;
- Provide community facilities and services, including the creation of neighbourhood centres and places of worship;
- Ensure the timely delivery of social and community infrastructure;
- Utilise the principles of multi-functional space where appropriate, by maximising opportunities for co-location, shared facilities and integrated service delivery; and
- Protect and retain existing facilities including public houses unless satisfactory alternative provision is either made or is available in the locality, or it can be demonstrated that facilities are no longer needed or are economically unviable

Where an application fails to provide adequate social and community infrastructure without reasoned justification, it will be refused.

Developers will be required to make appropriate contributions towards the maintenance and running costs of the social and community infrastructure needs of the local community. Contributions will be secured through planning obligations or CIL.

Planning permission will be granted for the provision, expansion or enhancement of social and community infrastructure providing that it would meet the following criteria:

- (i) the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact to users of neighbouring land; and
- (ii) the location is appropriately accessible and the proposal would not result in unacceptable levels of traffic generation.

Healthy Communities

- 8.37 The NPPF identifies the improvement of health and wellbeing as a core principle that planning should take account of in both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 8.38 Health is one of eight key priorities set out in the Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Communities Strategy. Overall health in Central Bedfordshire is better than the UK national average. There are however, significant differences in health experience and life expectancy, depending upon a number of social and physiological factors, including gender, ethnicity, income, lifestyle choices and residential location.
- 8.39 The Development Strategy provides a series of policies which seek to enhance the health and wellbeing of communities in Central Bedfordshire. The health and wellbeing of communities is not just about the provision of health and care services. It is also about providing sports, recreation, leisure and community facilities which enable people to participate in physical and cultural pastimes; delivering accommodation which meets the needs of different sectors of the community; designing high quality environments which increase social interaction; promoting walking and cycling as sustainable forms of transport that also bring health benefits to participants; and facilitating the improvement of health and well being through the reinforcement of positive health messages and supporting good lifestyle choices.
- 8.40 All development has a role in addressing and enhancing health and wellbeing. This is supported by the main policy areas, listed below, where the Development Strategy seeks to secure more healthy communities:
- Provision for convenient walking and cycling routes facilitating regular and habitual physical activity through active travel (for example for short journeys to school or to local amenities)
 - Promoting sustainable and accessible transport modes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Protecting and increasing provision of high quality public open space and recreational facilities accessible to residents
 - Promoting and enhancing access to the countryside and protecting public rights of way
 - Ensuring appropriate provision of multi-functional space, community facilities and other local services, including healthcare services
 - Delivering appropriate physical infrastructure in line with growth
 - Using design and layout to reduce crime and the fear of crime
 - Ensuring high standards of design, maintaining a high quality visual environment, providing opportunities for social interaction and promoting planting to promote mental and physical well being

- Providing accommodation to meet the needs of different sectors of the community and delivering various tenures of affordable housing
- Ensuring buildings are accessible for all. 70% of new dwellings are required to meet the specific elements of the Lifetime Homes Design Criteria as stated in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide
- Promoting person-centred supported living housing options such as Extra Care Housing, minimising the requirement for residential and nursing home admissions

Leisure and Open Space

- 8.41 With increased mobility and more people participating in sporting and recreational activities in their leisure time, the provision of sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities is assuming greater importance. At the same time, large numbers of new houses are proposed to be built across Central Bedfordshire during the Plan period. The residents of these new homes will place pressure on existing facilities in addition to creating additional demand for new sport, leisure open space and facilities.
- 8.42 The health and wellbeing of communities is not just about the provision of health and care services but also about providing new sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities, improving existing facilities and access to enable people to participate in physical activities which in turn help enhance quality of life and improve health. The Development Strategy can assist by making provision for new or improved sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities through new development and by protecting and improving access to existing facilities. It can also use, where appropriate, new development to address pressures on existing facilities. Sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities should be planned in at the start of development and be a coherent part of it.

Leisure Strategy

- 8.43 The Leisure Strategy will address the provision of new or improved sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities in Central Bedfordshire. It sets out the overarching principles by which the Council will seek to improve existing facilities or create new ones in association with new housing development.
- 8.44 The facility types assessed within the Leisure Strategy have been grouped into the following chapters:
- Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy (indoor, built facilities)
 - Chapter 2: Recreation and Open Space Strategy (nine types of open space)
 - Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy (nine types of outdoor sports facility)

- 8.45 Each chapter of the Leisure Strategy provides an audit and assessment of existing facilities and identifies the policy standards and facility requirements to be met through development. These standards are set out in Appendix 6. The identified open spaces are designated on the Policies Map.

Open Space

- 8.46 Central Bedfordshire provides a variety of opportunities for residents to enjoy open spaces. There is a variety of open space provision, including:
- countryside recreation spaces
 - large recreation areas
 - informal recreation areas
 - small amenity spaces
 - children's play spaces
 - provision for young people
 - allotments
- 8.47 The enhancement of the open space network as the population of Central Bedfordshire and surrounding areas grows is an important factor in residents' quality of life. The Council will therefore protect existing open space and provide new open space. The maintenance of the existing and new open space provision is also important and the Council will seek contributions to secure the long term management of sites.
- 8.48 Open space also forms part of the Green Infrastructure network alongside biodiversity, heritage and landscape assets. The wider Green Infrastructure network is covered under the Environment Section of this Strategy.

Policy 22: Leisure and open space provision

The Council will require:

- new development to be supported by the delivery of sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities. These will be provided as an integral part of new development, planned in at the early stages to meet both the needs arising on and off-site.
- this provision to be made on-site in line with the required standards in the Leisure Strategy and at Appendix 6.
- where adequate on-site provision is not possible, contributions will be sought to create new facilities or maintain and enhance existing sport, recreation open space and leisure facilities.
- Where appropriate, the restoration of mineral extraction and landfill sites will be required to enhance and /or extend opportunities for public access.

The Council will safeguard existing leisure and open space facilities. If open space is lost as a result of development replacement open space of equal size and quality will be required.

Developers will also be required to make contributions towards maintenance and running costs. Contributions will be secured through planning obligations or CIL.

Public Rights of Way

- 8.49 The public rights of way network offers people access to enjoy Central Bedfordshire's countryside and heritage to the benefit of their quality of life and health. It also forms a practical part of our overall transport network providing valuable access on foot and often by cycle, to the wider countryside, shops and other local amenities.
- 8.50 There will be a need for improvements to the rights of way network linked to development proposals to improve accessibility, surfacing and connectivity. Where the scale and location of development will require connections and/or lead to increased use the Council will secure appropriate contributions. Particular consideration will be given to achieving off site local pedestrian/cycleway routes which connect development sites with open spaces and leisure/community uses and strategic access routes.
- 8.51 The Outdoor Access Improvement Plan, Local Transport Plan, Green Infrastructure Plans and other emerging plans and policies will detail the routes for improvement and will provide the specific standards for how rights of way affected by development are to be provided.
- 8.52 As part of development proposals, applicants are required to record the route of any public rights of way affected by development, and develop a scheme for their improvement, accommodation or diversion in accordance with the Council's Rights of Way Standards.

Policy 23 : Public Rights of Way

Development proposals should seek to protect, enhance and promote the public rights of way network and seek improvements to help restore and re-connect it. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought through planning obligations towards the public right of way network including the delivery of routes both on-site and off-site.

9.0 TRANSPORT

Overview of the Network

- 9.1 Outside of Dunstable and Houghton Regis, Central Bedfordshire is a largely rural area with a number of small to medium sized towns that provide services to their inhabitants and to surrounding villages.
- 9.2 The area is relatively well served by strategic north-south road links, notably the A1, A6, A5 and M1. East-west movement by road is less well served and is largely based on the A421, the A507 and a series of more rural roads.
- 9.3 The major rail links are north-south orientated with the Midland Mainline, and East and West Coast Mainlines all running through the authority and providing frequent services. The only east-west route is the Marston Vale branch line, which connects Bedford to Bletchley, and provides a link through to Milton Keynes and Oxford. It is due to be upgraded and electrified as part of the East-West Rail project by 2019.
- 9.4 Bus services operate between the main urban areas within the authority and to key service centres in neighbouring areas such as Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes and the Hertfordshire towns of Hitchin and Stevenage. However, most of these services are reliant on local authority subsidies to operate and, apart from some buses running within and between urban areas; the services they provide are infrequent.

Main Issues

- 9.5 The main transport issues affecting Central Bedfordshire are:
- Settlements lack of self containment resulting in residents travelling long distances to access employment and everyday services.
 - High proportion of cross boundary movements within the Luton-Dunstable conurbation over which the authority only has partial influence;
 - Localised congestion, especially in the larger towns such as Dunstable and Houghton Regis.
 - Air quality concerns associated with high volumes of traffic in urban areas.
 - Limited access to sustainable transport provision particularly in rural areas.
 - Poor connectivity in terms of both services and infrastructure, and the ability to interchange between different modes of travel.
 - Junction capacity issues on the local and main road network.
 - Parking pressures in town centres, around schools and at other key trip generators.

- Inappropriate routing of traffic, including HGVs, through some urban areas.
 - Public perceptions of transport and overcoming ingrained transport behaviour.
 - Road safety, both in terms of actual accidents and perceived safety of vulnerable road users.
- 9.6 Effective land use planning to ensure the appropriate location of development and a mix of housing, employment and services, together with the delivery of both small and large scale transport measures will help to mitigate and prevent the exacerbation of these issues. Properly implemented, development can foster local economic benefits, mitigate the impact of climate change, improve the health and well being of local residents and reduce the impact of social exclusion.
- 9.7 Traffic modelling carried out in preparing this Development Strategy makes it clear that if growth on the scale set out in this document is to be delivered sustainably, all development sites will need to be designed so as to reduce the need for travel and secure modal shifts towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- 9.8 This will be required alongside the additional road capacity provided by new roads such as the A5-M1 Link and the Woodside Link, to increase the ability of the network to cope with the increase in demand to travel.
- 9.9 The Development Strategy alongside the Local Transport Plan, the document which sets out the strategic vision for transport within the authority, provide a framework for ensuring sustainable transport is integral to the growth and development of the authority.

Key Principles

- 9.10 There is a hierarchy of actions and interventions which should be adhered to through the planning process to ensure that new development minimises the impact on the local transport network whilst also contributing towards addressing the main concerns associated with transport across the authority. These actions are:
- Reducing the need to travel,
 - Embedding sustainable transport to, from and within new developments,
 - Promoting alternative modes of transport, including for the transportation of freight.
 - Increasing accessibility particularly through sustainable travel opportunities,
 - Making best use of existing infrastructure and services
 - Effective management of motorised travel within the context of sustainable transport objectives, and;
 - Providing additional network capacity and public transport where necessary.

- 9.11 Developers will be expected to ensure that new schemes fully mitigate their adverse impact on the transport network through adhering to this hierarchy. They will also be expected to demonstrate the actions they will undertake are in line with the principles set out above and explored in more detail below.

Freight

- 9.12 A key issue with regard to transport planning is the management of freight. 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.
- 9.13 There are a number of freight generators in Central Bedfordshire. These include a number of 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 clustered around trunk roads by Ampthill/Flitwick, Sandy/Biggleswade, Houghton Regis/Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard/Linslade; and the transportation of aggregates and waste by road from local quarries and waste management facilities throughout Central Bedfordshire. Such movements can have considerable local impacts, especially where vehicles move from the strategic network onto local roads.
- 9.14 To this end the Central Bedfordshire Freight Strategy 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. To support these aims the Council will:
- Support alternatives to the movement of freight by road based haulage;
 - Ensure that developments forecast to generate significant freight movements are located where they deliver the greatest benefit for local communities, businesses, and the environment, for example within industrial areas close to the designated road freight network (DRFN).
 - Ensure that sufficient land is provided for anticipated freight facilities associated with new developments including construction traffic; and
 - Ensure provision of lorry parking facilities to facilitate safe freight operations and minimise any adverse impacts upon the local community and the environment.

Accessibility and Connectivity

- 9.15 Transport services and infrastructure are central to ensuring the accessibility of new developments and providing links between residential areas, employment provision, education, retail, healthcare, and leisure facilities for example. Areas with good accessibility by a

range of means of travel create an environment conducive to economic growth, help to reduce social exclusion, encourage social interaction and develop a sense of place.

- 9.16 Accessibility issues are particularly important for those without access to a car and in addressing concerns associated with reliance on the car and unchecked growth in traffic.
- 9.17 The provision of realistic alternatives to the car is vital in this regard including through the encouragement of walking trips particularly for distances of under two miles, providing the opportunity to cycle to local services within a five mile radius and through the encouragement of public transport use for trips further afield.
- 9.18 Developments will also be required to demonstrate their links to strategic public transport corridors in place across the authority, as set out in the Public Transport Strategy. All buildings in sites to be taken forward should be within a 400 metre threshold of a bus stop or rail station with at least a half-hourly peak hour service connecting to the wider public transport network. The connectivity of the pedestrian, cycle and public transport networks is vital to ensuring accessibility. They should also be comprehensive, convenient, coherent and convivial. The ability to interchange between services and different types of transport is a key part of this.
- 9.19 Alternatives to the movement of freight by road based haulage will be sought, with particular focus on opportunities for rail based solutions.
- 9.20 The Local Area Transport Plans which sit within the framework of the Local Transport Plan provide the basis for the delivery of schemes to increase accessibility along these lines. Such works should be supplemented by the provision of sustainable transport measures embedded within new developments to ensure that alternative travel options are available to residents and that sustainable travel habits can be developed from first occupation.

Policy 24: Accessibility and Connectivity

Connections to services will be strengthened through schemes identified within the Local Transport Plan. Public transport initiatives will be implemented in order to increase accessibility to services and facilities. When considering development proposals, consideration will be given to the need to:

- Design which reduces the need to travel;
- Promote sustainable modes of transport;
- Ensure convenient access for walking and cycling to healthcare, retail and leisure provision, education and employment, as well as within the site itself.
- Locate development within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop or rail station offering at least a half-hourly peak hour service to a variety of service centres and interchanges.
- Provide or build upon use of public transport services that are effective, viable, sustainable and match local needs; and
- Develop sustainable and adaptable approaches to public transport in rural areas.

With respect to the movement of freight the Council is keen to limit the reliance on road transport and will support schemes which encourage the movement of freight by means other than road haulage (including the provision of rail freight interchange facilities) where appropriate and feasible.

Functioning of the Network

- 9.21 To cater for the increase in demand to travel which will arise from future economic and population growth it is important that the capacity of the local transport network can cater for the additional trips which will be undertaken across the authority.
- 9.22 A lack of capacity can lead to congestion on the roads, overcrowding on public transport and an increase in conflict between different types of road users which itself raises safety concerns and detracts from the attractiveness of the local environment. Conversely spare capacity can encourage investment, increase the competitiveness of business through reduced delays and foster an environment more conducive to sustainable travel.
- 9.23 The Local Transport Plan identifies a number of strategic transport schemes which are either planned or currently under construction to meet future capacity requirements, namely:
- A5-M1 strategic link road and new M1 Junction 11a
 - M1-A6 strategic link road
 - Luton and Dunstable guided busway and possible extensions;
 - Woodside Connection

- M1 Junction 10a
 - East of Leighton Linlade Distributor road
 - Biggleswade Eastern Relief road
 - East-West Rail including the Marston Vale line
- 9.24 Ease of movement between and within settlements will be strengthened with these improvements. They will deliver significant reductions in congestion in urban areas and enable existing highway space to be used for improvements to public transport, cycling and walking networks. Without them, development on the scale currently envisaged cannot be delivered.
- 9.25 While the area is relatively well served by north-south routes, additional east-west capacity and junction improvements would be of benefit. The A5-M1 link road and the M1-A6 link road will provide additional capacity, while improvements to the A507 would also ease existing problems. The Woodside Connection will help improve connection between the Dunstable business area and the wider road network and help reduce traffic, particularly HGV traffic, passing through the centre of Dunstable. East-West Rail, particularly the proposed Central section from Bedford to Cambridge, could add further east-west capacity. Given the strategic importance of this scheme, its potential route across Central Bedfordshire should be taken into account when considering any proposals for development.
- 9.26 The Council also wishes to explore potential to create a new bus route linking Leighton Linlade with Dunstable and Houghton Regis in the medium term. Such a route would have the potential to link a number of town centres, together with a large number of new homes and major employment provision, as well as linking major rail routes.
- 9.27 Alongside the commitment to new capacity, development should seek to take advantage of existing spare capacity on the transport network through the location of development in urban areas and particularly around established public transport links and hubs. This ensures the potential for more sustainable travel patterns, reduces the need for new road building, helps to secure the viability of existing public transport services and increases the scope for improved service provision in the future.
- 9.28 Capacity issues are prevalent in places on the public transport network however, particularly at some railway stations and other public transport hubs. Particular emphasis will be placed upon increasing capacity for access by sustainable modes at key hubs to be identified as part of the Passenger Transport Strategy. These include, but are not limited to:
- Arlesey Station
 - Biggleswade Station
 - Dunstable Town Centre
 - Flitwick Station

- Leighton Buzzard Town Centre and Station
- Sandy Town Centre and Station

- 9.29 Furthermore development located near employment and service provision reduces the need to travel, the pressure placed on the transport network and the demand for additional infrastructure provision.
- 9.30 With reference to highway safety, it is a general requirement for all new development that it should not be damaging to the safety needs of highway users, therefore planning permission will not be granted for development that would endanger highway safety or prejudice the free flow of traffic on the highway network.

Policy 25: Functioning of the Network

The Council will seek to facilitate the delivery of the strategic transport schemes identified within the Local Transport Plan.

Development should seek to maximise the capacity of the existing transport network. Where such capacity is insufficient to cater for the increase in demand to travel including developments forecast to generate significant freight movements, the provision of new transport and travel infrastructure will be sought as a priority.

In the case of new development, such provision will be sought in parallel or before commencement. When considering development proposals for development that generate significant freight movements, the suitability and capacity of available access routes will be taken into account and proposals which use significant lengths of unsuitable road to gain access to the strategic highway network will not be permitted, unless suitable improvements can be agreed with the developer.

With reference to highway safety, planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that development will not endanger highway safety or prejudice the free flow of traffic on the highway network.

Finally, when considering proposals for development the Council will take account of sites and routes (existing and potential) which could be critical in delivering transport infrastructure, including the route of the East-West Rail scheme as and when it is defined.

Smarter Travel

- 9.31 Encouraging sustainable travel is at the heart of creating sustainable and inclusive communities. The location of development and provision of infrastructure and services are the building blocks upon which this

can be achieved. However on top of the provision of these actual networks, there is a requirement to raise awareness of the travel options which exist within our communities and to ease the ability of local residents and visitors alike to utilise the provision on offer.

- 9.32 As such the concept of smarter travel relates to assisting people in the travel choices people make and increases their sense of empowerment and actual ability to negotiate the transport networks in place. Smarter travel initiatives cover a wide area of works, including the development of Travel Plans at places of work, information provision both on the internet and at bus stops for example, integrated and electronic ticketing, and teleworking. All of these interventions help enable an individual to make smarter choices when deciding how to travel, when to travel, and whether or not they need to make the trip in the first place.
- 9.33 Travel Plans are a proven means of delivering transport benefits. An effective Travel Plan will explore the relationship between a Transport Assessment and accessibility/access by all modes, including public transport, walking and cycling and also car parking. They help assess the transport impact of a development and the mechanisms necessary to ensure that sustainable travel options are considered at all stages of development.
- 9.34 Developers will be expected to reflect opportunities to encourage sustainable travel as and when development sites come forward through the provision of a site specific Travel Plan. Guidance on Travel Plan requirements is available on the Council's website.

Policy 26: Travel Plans

Travel Plans will be required to accompany a Transport Assessment and submitted as part of planning applications in line with the thresholds set out in Appendix 7 demonstrating how new development will be accessible by a range of travel modes.

Where a Travel Plan is in place, the Council will expect the developer and/or user to implement and monitor the plan. The Council will also require, as appropriate, financial contributions towards sustainable travel options where connectivity to existing infrastructure is not of the required standard.

The Council will require that proposals likely to generate freight sufficiently mitigate any forecast impacts on local communities and the environment through traffic management measures and developer contributions (e.g. Section 106 agreements) to achieve these aims. The Travel Plan should complement the Transport Assessment and detail a long term strategy to mitigate any adverse impacts and maximise the potential for achieving sustainable transport behaviour.

Parking

- 9.35 The provision of car parking associated with new developments should adhere to the guidelines included within the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and the Parking Strategy. The guide considers the type as well as the quantity of parking required.
- 9.36 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.
- 9.37 Innovative approaches to parking such as the provision of electric charging points, dedicated spaces for people car sharing and secure, covered cycle lockers all help imbed sustainable transport options within new development.
- 9.38 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 27: Parking

Developers will be required to provide appropriate car parking for new residential developments in line with the adopted standards set out in Appendix 8

Parking for commercial developments must be provided in accordance with the standards set out in the Central Bedfordshire Parking Strategy.

Provision for cycle parking should be in line with the standards in the Central Bedfordshire Cycling Strategy.

Electric charging points for vehicles should also be provided in line with requirements in the Central Bedfordshire Parking Strategy.

With respect to the provision of lorry parking facilities, the Council will require that proposals for all new industrial and commercial units, including quarries and waste management facilities cater for anticipated lorry parking requirements on site.

With regards to lorry rest facilities, proposals for formal rest facilities in appropriate locations that seek to minimise any potential impacts on local community and the environment will be viewed favourably subject to industry demand, community needs and anticipated environmental impacts.

Understanding the Impact of New Developments

- 9.39 In order to help ensure sustainable development, all planning applications will be assessed on their ability to reduce the need for travel. They will need to demonstrate the opportunities for travelling by sustainable modes, making full use of strategic public transport routes, identifying and improving cycle routes and cycle parking facilities, promoting more sustainable car use and encouraging and providing for pedestrians.
- 9.40 Transport Assessments (TA) consider the transport impacts of proposed developments detailing the measures to be taken to mitigate them, improving accessibility and safety for all modes of travel particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- 9.41 Where a new development is likely to have significant transport implications, including those forecast to generate significant movements of freight, a TA should be prepared and submitted with a planning application for the development.
- 9.42 A Transport Assessment should be written and the Council must be satisfied that the Travel Plan measures and mechanisms will achieve the necessary mitigation.

Policy 28: Transport Assessments

The authority will seek the submission of a Transport Assessment with any major new development in line with the thresholds set out in Appendix 7.

Transport Assessments should be in line with appropriate best practice guidance.

10.0 HOUSING PROVISION

- 10.1 Provision of an appropriate level of new homes is vital; both to meet the social needs of the local community and help underpin the competitiveness of the economy.
- 10.2 This Development Strategy plans for the period from 2011 to 2031. A total of 31,000 new homes is planned for this period. This provision meets the needs of Central Bedfordshire (25,600) and also makes a significant contribution (5,400) to meeting Luton's unmet need, including provision for affordable housing. Further technical work is underway with other surrounding authorities in relation to meeting Luton's remaining unmet need.
- 10.3 Around half of the 31,000 new homes have already been planned for through previous plans. Table 10.1 below sets out the level of existing committed development in each of the main locations (those with committed development of more than 500 dwellings). Table 10.2 shows the planned approach to delivery of the required new homes.

Table 10.1: Existing committed development

Area	"Committed" new homes*
Wixams	3,250
Biggleswade	1,972
Leighton Linlade	1,311
Arlesey	1,364
Dunstable	1,071
Stotfold	382
Amphill	566
Marston Moretaine	759
Flitwick	570
Cranfield	530
Houghton Regis	74
Other sites (north)	1,504
Other sites (south))	243
Expired Permissions	-150
G&T Allocation Pitches	70
Total commitments	13,516

Table 10.2: Housing Delivery

Net Completions 2011/2014	3,540
Committed* sites	13,516
New sites – North Houghton Regis**	4,796
New sites – North Luton**	3,200
New sites – East Leighton Linslade	2,500
New sites – Wixams extension	500
New sites – Chaul End	325
Market-Led Sustainable Development	1,000
Allocations Plan/Neighbourhood Plans	2,000
Total planned housing delivery 2011-31	31,377

* = Committed sites are those either with planning permission, or that have been allocated in previous plans, or that have been identified as likely to come forward during the plan period (see Housing Trajectory for details)

** = The housing delivery for these sites is that which is estimated to be delivered by 2031. Additional capacity is expected to come forward beyond 2031, see chapter 13 for details.

- 10.4 Large-scale housing provision will be delivered through the proposed Strategic Allocations set out in chapter 13. The Council will also make provision for 1,000 homes to be delivered on Market-Led Sustainable Development sites. A further 2,000 homes will be provided for through an allocations Local Plan.
- 10.5 The Development Strategy contains a positive enabling framework for local communities to bring forward development through Local Neighbourhood Plans. The Council will particularly welcome Neighbourhood Plans from those villages that have not had recent developments or allocations. The actual scale of development that will emerge from Neighbourhood Plans across the area is unknown at this stage.
- 10.6 Windfall sites are sites that come forward outside of the plan-making or allocation process but that receive planning permission. Historically windfall sites have represented a considerable proportion of overall housing delivery in both north and south Central Bedfordshire (see SHLAA for more details). The Council is not specifically relying on windfall sites to meet the planned housing target. However, the windfall development that will happen through the plan period will provide a contingency provision to help ensure the housing targets are met.

Policy 29: Housing Provision

The Council will work with the development industry, landowners and local communities to deliver a minimum of 31,000 new homes between 2011 and 2031. The Council will support the delivery of the existing planned sites that make up the majority of provision.

New strategic sites are identified in this Development Strategy to deliver around 11,500 new homes.. The Council is also planning for an additional 1,000 homes to come forward through the Market-Led Sustainable Development policy. In addition, a further 2,000 homes will be planned for through an Allocations Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

Market-Led Sustainable Development

- 10.7 Household projections have increased and an increase in housing supply is therefore needed as a response. In addition, delays in the plan making process, largely outside the Council's control, have led to delays in delivering strategic sites, which has increased pressure for provision in the short-term. The policy below aims to ensure that pressure is released in as sustainable and as positive a manner as possible. This policy should be seen in the context of the other allocations and policy approaches to deliver housing elsewhere in this Development Strategy.
- 10.8 The policy provides for a limited amount of growth outside certain settlements beyond the Green Belt to come forward without the normal allocation process. Once this level of development has been permitted, no further development beyond settlement envelopes will be permitted under this policy unless there is local support.
- 10.9 It is critically important that such sites are of the highest design quality and respond to their context. The Council will expect significant supporting material to illustrate this commitment.
- 10.10 As this policy is an exception to the usual policy provisions, such sites will not be subject to negotiation on viability grounds. If a development is not viable, taking into account infrastructure provision/contributions and affordable housing provision at 40%, then it should not be brought forward under this policy. Accordingly, applications will need to be accompanied by commitments illustrating the appropriate levels of infrastructure contribution and affordable housing can be made.
- 10.11 Given that this policy is a departure from the local historic approach, it will not be deployed until the Development Strategy is formally adopted. Paid pre-application discussions may take place before adoption but until this time this particular emerging policy will be given limited weight.

- 10.12 As there are limits imposed on the development potential in each settlement it is possible that there could be more than one proposal under consideration by the Council at any one moment. In order not to breach these limits, only the best available site will be granted planning permission. Issues such as the location, design quality and community support for the proposal will be taken into account to determine the best of the registered planning applications before the Council at any one time. The Council will prepare further guidance as to how decisions will be made in such circumstances.

Policy 29a: Market-Led Sustainable Development

As an exception to Settlement Envelope policies the Council will permit residential development on sites that are not allocated for residential use where the proposal:

- in combination with other sites considered under this policy, would not result in cumulative growth of more than the figures listed below for the relevant tier of the Settlement Hierarchy:
 - Major Service Centres – 150 additional dwellings
 - Minor Service Centres – 60 additional dwellings
 - Large Villages – 30 additional dwellings
 - Small Villages – 15 additional dwellings
- Growth beyond these limits would be considered where there was local support including, but not restricted to, the Town or Parish Council;
- has followed the Council's practice guidance in terms of local pre-application consultation and the proposal responds to the outcome of the consultation;
- is adjacent to, or very close to, the settlement boundary and is capable of being well integrated with the settlement;
- is of the highest design quality and enhances the existing built and natural environment. Outline applications will need to be accompanied by a masterplan and design code to demonstrate a commitment to design quality;
- provides 40% of the dwellings as affordable. At least 20% of the affordable dwellings should be provided on-site, with a commuted sum towards off-site provision of the remainder. Provision of 40% affordable housing will not be subject to negotiation on viability grounds;
- makes a significant contribution to improving infrastructure;
- has an acceptable impact on the highway network, as demonstrated by a Transport Assessment, and can be

accessed by sustainable modes of transport;

- has been informed by pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority.
- can be demonstrated to be deliverable within a 5-year period through the provision of a phasing and viability assessment;
- represents the best available planning application before the Council in relation to that settlement; and
- is consistent with other policies in this Strategy.

Housing Mix

10.13 The dominant theme running through the NPPF is the need for sustainable development. The social dimension of this theme cites providing a supply of housing to meet the needs of the current and future generations as a key component of creating sustainable development.

10.14 Achieving a good mix of housing will be critical in meeting the needs of Central Bedfordshire. Development of an appropriate mix of property sizes, types and tenures will provide a wide range of choice of quality homes, opportunities for various forms of home ownership and create mixed & sustainable communities.

10.15 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was undertaken for Bedfordshire in 2010 and this work was refreshed for Central Bedfordshire and Luton in early 2012. The SHMA explored the various housing types, sizes and tenures needed to meet housing requirements at the time. Information from Central Bedfordshire's population & household forecasts also indicates that there will be particular growth amongst the elderly population over 65 years of age by 2031. These results will form a key consideration in terms of determining an appropriate mix of housing on development sites.

10.16 The housing needs of older people are to a large extent, similar to those of younger people, insofar as they need well designed, well located properties that are easily adaptable to their needs. Older people will generally require fewer bedrooms than younger families but still require good-sized properties with sensible parking provision, attractive outdoor space and close to local amenities. Providing suitable properties for older people to move into may free up larger homes for families, thereby making more efficient use of the housing stock. However, some older people have more specific care needs and these are addressed in the section below.

- 10.17 Providing accommodation to support the ageing population will form a key area of the overall housing mix. As such, developers will need to demonstrate how this has been achieved as part of development schemes.
- 10.18 The principle of creating sustainable and mixed communities should be the overarching theme which governs decisions on housing mix for all development sites.

Policy 30: Housing Mix

All new housing development will provide a mix of housing types, tenure and sizes in order to meet the needs of all sections of the community. The overarching principle is to encourage sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

The main considerations for determining an appropriate mix of housing will be:

- the most up-to-date, strategic evidence base on the housing needs across Central Bedfordshire and adjoining housing markets.
- local Housing Needs Assessments
- local Authority Population & Household projections
- census information
- current Housing Market Conditions
- locality and characteristics of the site including it's accessibility to local services
- existing housing mix of the locality

Supporting an Ageing Population

- 10.19 The demographics of Central Bedfordshire mirror national trends in that there is significant growth in the older population over 65, with particular growth in the 85+ category. Alongside this population growth is the fact that residents of Central Bedfordshire have a longer life expectancy than the national average⁷. The combination of these statistics poses a challenge in terms of providing appropriate accommodation and care for an ageing population. With ageing, there is an increase in disease, disability and frailty that can lead to complex and challenging care needs, perhaps requiring specialist care.
- 10.20 The Government's Housing Strategy; Laying the Foundations, encourages local authorities to provide accommodation which promotes greater independence for older people. Central Bedfordshire Council proposes to achieve this aim through various models of care including lifetime homes, extra/flexi care, care homes, nursing care

⁷ Office of National Statistics

homes amongst other forms of accommodation based support which offers the individual greater independence.

- 10.21 Properties should be described as housing for older people if they are intended for older people (regardless of the actual characteristics of each tenant) and they either incorporate the range of basic facilities and special design features set out and are specially designated supported housing for older people. The distinctive design features should be over and above Lifetime Homes adaptations to general needs properties.
- 10.22 In order to promote choice within these forms of accommodation we expect them to offer various forms of tenure such as social rent, shared ownership and other intermediate tenures. There will also be the option for outright purchase/leasehold for those able to do so.
- 10.23 Examples of accommodation which may be suitable for older people will include:
- Bungalows
 - Lifetime Homes
 - sheltered Housing
 - extra/flexi Care Housing
 - residential Care Homes
 - care homes with Nursing
 - retirement villages
 - short-term Services – respite, reablement, rehabilitation
- 10.24 Larger sites usually have more scope to make specific provision for older people, compared with smaller sites. Sites above 100 units will be expected to make specific provision for older people. On a site of 100 dwellings, for example, a cluster of 10 bungalows or low-density flats might be provided, with facilities for care to be brought in. On a larger site of 200 dwellings, an 80-bed extra-care facility would often be appropriate. Given the higher densities possible with this type of development, this could lead to increased dwelling delivery from sites. All provision will be considered in terms of site viability and a flexible approach will be adopted, within the context of needing to increase older persons accommodation. This will be achieved through the policy below. This will be achieved through the policy below.

Policy 31: Supporting an Ageing Population

Opportunities to secure appropriate accommodation for older people will be supported in planning terms where they meet the following criteria:

- A suitable location based on information from the latest evidence base available.
- Sustainable location in terms of access to local services and shops.
- Offers various affordable tenures such as social rent, shared

ownership and outright purchase to promote choice & independence.

- Financially viable in terms of the whole care and support package rather than just the physical building.
- Meeting the standards set by the Department of Health and the Housing Corporation for Extra Care Housing developments
- Meeting the standards set by Care Quality Commission for Residential Care Homes and Care Homes with Nursing
- Consistent with other policies in the Development Strategy.

In accordance with the latest evidence base available, the Council will support planning applications which meet the strategic aims of the Council in relation to meeting the housing and support needs of the ageing population.

Applicants for all residential developments will be expected to demonstrate how they have responded to the accommodation needs of older people.

For developments of 100 dwellings or more, applicants will be expected to deliver some form of specialist accommodation with care support for older people on site.

Lifetime Homes

10.25 The Council is keen to meet the accommodation needs of all sections of the community through an effective housing mix. However, within the Development Strategy there is a particular responsibility to place a focus on specific needs from within the community.

10.26 The 2011 Census showed that 14.4% of people in the authority area had a disability. While this is partly due to the increased elderly population, the increase can be seen in younger age groups too.

10.27 When surveyed, approximately half of those households that had someone with physical disabilities and whose home did not currently meet their needs, felt that their home could potentially be adapted. For those households, the availability of a Lifetime Home or an appropriately accessible home, would enable quicker, easier and cheaper adaptations to be undertaken. Given this demand for adaptable homes which are responsive to a households' changing needs, the Council will seek to promote the delivery of Lifetime Homes until Part M of the Building Regulations is updated to make the delivery of adaptable housing with enhanced access standards for wheelchair adaptable and accessible homes mandatory.

10.28 Lifetime Homes are standard homes which incorporate 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at relatively minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and

convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. These include widths of parking spaces and doorways, wet rooms, approaching gradients and layouts. Lifetime Homes enable the property to adapt to changing needs over time and therefore promote flexibility, adaptability and independence.

- 10.29 The Council has set an interim target of delivering 70% of all homes to meet those Lifetime Homes design criteria that are considered to be the most practical solutions to meet the changing needs of Central Bedfordshire's diverse households. This will be reviewed when Part M of the Building Regulations is updated to include more stringent standards on accessibility and adaptability.
- 10.30 On all exceptions sites delivered under Policy 35, all units should be delivered to Lifetime Homes Standard.
- 10.31 Further guidance on the essential criteria that must be complied with is set out in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide. It is expected that evidence of compliance with the policy on Lifetime Homes will be produced as part of the Design and Access Statement that is submitted with each planning application.
- 10.32 As well as the delivery of Lifetime Homes which are adaptable, there are also households who need properties that accommodate their needs immediately. Key points from the Council's 2011/12 review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) show that the majority (54%) of all DFG's are for bathroom adaptations. In response to this demand for bathroom adaptations, the Council will require developers to design a portion of their Lifetime Homes standard properties to also specifically include bathroom adaptations as part of the construction. This type of home will be known as a Mobility Standard Home.
- 10.33 The future requirement for these Mobility Standard Homes can be demonstrated through a review of the Council's recent DFG activity. If the level of referrals were to continue around the same level over the next 19 years, this would total 5,130 households in need of bathroom adaptations over the plan period. This equates to 3.8% of all housing stock at 2031. To ensure that development meets this existing need and also deals with the backlog of need, an interim target of 5% Mobility Homes Standard Homes on all developments will be applied within the 70% overall interim target.
- 10.34 The Council is also aware of an increasing demand for appropriate housing from members of our community who are wheelchair users. Many wheelchair users manage as best as they can in properties which are not suited to their particular needs. In 2011/12, it was estimated that approximately 9% of all DFG clients were wheelchair users. This demonstrates that a significant proportion of wheelchair users need a home that is specifically adapted to meet their needs. If this level of

demand were to continue over the next 19 years, this would generate a need for 855 disabled adapted homes up to 2031. This proportion only represents the quantum of households that we know about. There will be many more wheelchair users who have not formally asked us for help in the form of a DFG application.

- 10.35 Information from the Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) anticipates that 4,539 people will be living in Central Bedfordshire with a severe physical disability by 2030. This represents 3.3% of the projected total households in 2031.
- 10.36 In view of this, it is expected that 5% of the 70% interim Lifetime Homes target will be delivered as Wheelchair accessible homes. This ambitious target tackles the existing demand and also takes account of the backlog of need due to the lack of delivery in recent years.
- 10.37 There are certain exemptions where delivering the Lifetime Homes standard would not be feasible, such as Listed Buildings, as these buildings can only be refurbished, and no structural changes to the building can be made. In these instances a Conservation Officer should be consulted before any works are conducted.

Policy 32: Lifetime Homes

Developers must demonstrate that they have delivered 70% of all developments over 4 units to meet at least those Lifetime Homes standards defined as 'essential' in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

As part of the 70% target; 5% of homes should be Mobility Standard Homes and another 5%, Wheelchair Accessible Homes.

On Exceptions Sites, all homes must be delivered to meet at least those Lifetime Homes standards defined as 'essential' in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

Evidence of compliance should be set out in the planning application itself and accompanying Design & Access Statement.

These requirements will be reviewed when the revised Part M of the Building Regulations is formally adopted

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

- 10.38 Central Bedfordshire Council is required to set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople to address their likely accommodation needs.

- 10.39 Specific allocations to meet the levels of identified local need for both the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show people community will be addressed through a Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan. The Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan will also identify policies to assess planning applications for windfall sites.
- 10.40 In making provision, the Council needs to identify and update a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against the locally set targets and sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15. If the Council is unable to demonstrate an up-to-date five-year supply of deliverable sites, this should be a material consideration in any subsequent planning decision when considering applications for the grant of temporary planning permission.

Policy 33: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Provision

The Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan sets out how the Council will meet the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities up to 2031.

The Council will facilitate the development of 128 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 20 plots for Travelling Showpeople to meet locally identified accommodation needs.

The Council will allocate 66 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 4 plots for Travelling Showpeople that are deliverable in the first five years of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

Applications for Gypsy and Traveller windfall sites will be considered, having regard to the unmet level of need. Relevant and up to date guidance will inform this process.

Affordable Housing

- 10.41 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.
- 10.42 The case for affordable housing is well documented both nationally and particularly within Central Bedfordshire. The updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2012 highlights how the average house price within Central Beds has risen over the years to £206,388. 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.
- 10.43 Mortgage availability has been a problem for prospective house buyers primarily because it is extremely difficult to save the amount of deposit

that the national lenders require to secure the mortgage. Subsequently, the volume of house sales within Central Beds has reduced dramatically over a ten year period since 2001. This means an increasing number of households find it extremely difficult to access home ownership.

- 10.44 The task of meeting housing needs is set against a backdrop of significant changes in national policy in terms of both affordable housing reform and welfare reform. These national pressures have taken effect within Central Bedfordshire and although the Council is cognisant of these factors, other factors such as the value paid for land and all other development assumptions will affect viability in each particular case.
- 10.45 Based on the results of the SHMA, this Development Strategy requires that 30% of all qualifying sites should be affordable housing. This policy, together with the exceptions policy below, should help meet the affordable housing needs within Central Bedfordshire.
- 10.46 In addition to meeting housing need within Central Bedfordshire, this Strategy will also deliver some of the unmet housing need from Luton. Separate discussions will take place between the two Councils about access to affordable housing provided on the allocated sites North of Houghton Regis and North of Luton.

Viability Testing Framework (DS)

- 10.47 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.
- 10.48 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.
- 10.49 If a scheme is approved on the basis of an affordable housing offer below policy requirements, the section 106 agreement will include provision for a re-appraisal of viability. 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 housing provision will be sought in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy.

- 10.50 The Council will give due consideration to the practicalities of achieving further on site provision in each individual case. As such, the Council considers that it will primarily seek additional on site provision from major or multi-phased schemes. Further guidance/advice on the deferred contributions mechanism and reappraisal process will be provided.
- 10.51 When assessing viability, the Council will expect to use the Residual Land Value approach with viability tested against existing use value or where, a former use is capable of resurrection, alternative use.
- 10.52 The Council will, in general, not accept a premium on existing use value unless it can be demonstrated that the land owner is relocating or extinguishing an existing business or there is a complex site assembly involved in the scheme. Where this is the case appropriate evidence will be required.
- 10.53 For outline applications where the level of detail may not be available, the Council will require a further viability assessment to be undertaken at reserved matters stage.
- 10.54 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 occasions, mainly for larger sites, 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 standard 106 agreement.

Policy 34: Affordable Housing

Residential development of four dwellings should provide at least one affordable dwelling. For all development above this threshold, 30% of the dwellings on the qualifying site should be provided for affordable housing on-site. The affordable homes should meet the following requirements:

- An appropriate mix of affordable tenures, including Social Rent, Affordable Rent, First Buy and Intermediate Tenures, having regard to housing needs and best available evidence;
- Small clusters and pepper potting of affordable homes which are dispersed throughout the site in order to integrate with the private homes;

- The quality & design of the affordable homes must be of an equally high standard to that of the private homes on site.

If the above requirements are not achieved due to financial constraints, a financial appraisal should be submitted to the Council demonstrating exactly why the above requirements are not viable. This financial assessment will form the basis of further viability testing by the Council and detailed discussions with the applicant. The emphasis of these discussions will be to enable a viable degree of affordable housing.

Provision will normally be made onsite but commuted sums in lieu of part of the 30% requirement will be considered. In exceptional circumstances, and where justified, commuted sums will be considered instead of on-site provision.

Exceptions Sites

- 10.55 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 more urban areas. This often makes it difficult for some households to purchase or privately rent properties within the villages.
- 10.56 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 development within these villages. Rural exceptions sites – sites outside the settlement boundary used for affordable housing – have been the most efficient way of providing affordable housing for rural communities to date.
- 10.57 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 need. The policy below therefore enables exceptions sites to be brought forward around the larger settlements.
- 10.58 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 delivery from exception sites, a limited number of open market dwellings can be provided if a rural exception scheme is not viable at reasonable, agricultural plot prices.
- 10.59 A careful balance must be struck in terms of having regard for a settlement's character and settlement boundaries whilst being cognisant 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.

- 10.60 The underlying purpose of an exception site is to meet the 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.
- 10.61 A pre-requisite of any household being eligible for these properties will be that they have a demonstrable housing need. This will be evidenced by the household being registered with the housing association or alternative affordable housing provider.
- 10.62 A local housing needs survey will be conducted within the settlement to evidence the level of demand for affordable housing. It will record the demand for the number of affordable homes, the tenure and size of property needed. This will form the evidence base upon which the Council, landowners, house builders and the Town or Parish Council will work-up plans for the exception site.
- 10.63 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.
- 10.64 The site will be subject to a Section 106 agreement which will set out that the affordable properties will remain as affordable housing in perpetuity. In essence no affordable homes will be sold or converted into private properties at all. A householder of a shared ownership property will be able to buy additional equity shares of their property. However, this will be restricted to an 80% equity share of the property so that the property is not completely owned outright by the householder. 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.
- 10.65 The overall aim of the policy below is to provide high quality, affordable homes for local people in housing need.

Policy 35: Exception Sites

The Council may make an exception to the usual settlement boundary constraints surrounding settlements within Central Bedfordshire under certain specific circumstances. This will only apply to the development of Exception Sites which meet the following criteria:

- Designed to meet local housing needs. It is recognised that a significant demographic need may arise from older persons. The local needs of all sections of community will be evidenced by a housing needs survey.
- Subject to a Section 106 legal agreement or unilateral undertaking.
- Allocated in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Lettings Policy
- Small-Scale development (usually 10 dwellings but in special circumstances larger developments may be considered)
- Provide affordable homes that will remain affordable in perpetuity
- Provide only a limited number of open market dwellings subject to site specific viability testing (up to 20% of the total dwellings). Within the Green Belt any enabling market homes would need to demonstrate very special circumstances.
- A mix of tenures to be made available to meet the identified local need
- 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 is to ensure that the property remains affordable in perpetuity.
- Situated outside the existing settlement boundary but relates well to the existing settlement and is in-keeping with surrounding character.

11.0 SETTLEMENTS, GREEN BELT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Green Belt

- 11.1 Green Belt is a valuable tool in maintaining the separate identity of settlements and checking unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. One of the original and main reasons for creating the South Bedfordshire Green Belt was to prevent the coalescence of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard, Ampthill and Flitwick as well as the villages that lie within it. The Southern Bedfordshire Green Belt was last finalised in 2005 in the former South Bedfordshire and 2009 in the former Mid Bedfordshire. It extends across much of the south of the area. In order to accommodate the growth required up to 2031 in a sustainable and controlled manner, the boundaries will be redrawn around the outer edges of the proposed strategic allocations. The Green Belt will continue to prevent the towns from coalescing and retain its key characteristics of openness and permanence and is illustrated on the Policies Map.
- 11.2 The NPPF sets out the general restrictions on development that apply to the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is defined as any development harmful to the Green Belt and should not be granted consent except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings for example, is generally inappropriate as it would adversely affect the openness of the designated areas. Extensions to residential and non residential buildings could also have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, further guidance on this will be given in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide. The NPPF also makes it clear that Green Belt land can also have a positive role to play. 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 will favourably consider development proposals that will actively improve the character and quality of the Green Belt.
- 11.3 Previous development plans have identified safeguarded land i.e. safeguarded for future development. Two of these areas have not been developed, nor has there been any prospect of them coming forward for new development and therefore these two areas will not be carried forward as safeguarded land.
- Land at Slip End: car storage site and adjacent land (9.59 hectares) forms airport car parking and associated storage. It does not comply with the purposes of designating Green Belt as set out in the NPPF and is therefore designated as part of the settlement of Slip End and illustrated as such on the Policies Map.
 - Land at The Paddocks, Dunstable (1.8ha) is under a lease as a wildlife site for a 60 year period. Accordingly there is no prospect of it being developed in the future. Given its open nature in close

proximity to an urban area, it complies with the purposes of Green Belt in the NPPF and is designated as such on the Policies Map.

Development in the Green Belt

- 11.4 Maintaining and improving the quality of development throughout Central Bedfordshire is an important aim of the Council. All development proposals will be expected to pay due regard to the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide. Within the Green Belt, however, the need to protect the character and openness of the landscape is a primary consideration and any development proposals in the Green Belt, 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. The NPPF in paragraph 89 sets out the possible exceptions to the presumption that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt and this includes the redevelopment of brownfield land.

Affordable housing and the Green Belt

- 11.5 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 36: Development in the Green Belt

Within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Planning permission will only be granted where there are demonstrable, very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt will be regarded as inappropriate subject to the following exceptions:

- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development.

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. These are:

- mineral extraction;
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and

development brought forward under the Community Right to Build Order.

Green Belt Settlements

- 11.6 Settlements that fall within the Green Belt fall into three categories. Some are 'inset' and are defined by inner Green Belt boundaries which effectively define the settlement boundary. Essentially the 'inset'

settlements are excluded from the Green Belt. The remainder are either completely 'washed over' by the Green Belt designation or have a defined 'infill only' boundary. This means that whilst some of the settlement is 'washed over', the remainder is considered suitable for appropriate infill development.

- 11.7 Within the 'infill' boundaries, proposals for development will be considered acceptable in principle. Infill development can generally be defined as small-scale development for two dwellings in a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage, utilising a plot which should continue to complement the surrounding pattern of development. The dwelling or dwellings proposed should have a plot size and frontage length which is similar to those of adjoining frontage properties. 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.

Policy 37: Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries

The Council will consider infill development acceptable in principle within the defined Green Belt Infill Boundaries. Particular attention will be paid to assessing the quality of development proposed and the likely impact on the character of the settlement and its surroundings.

Development Within Settlements

- 11.8 In the north of Central Bedfordshire, the boundaries between settlements and surrounding countryside are defined by Settlement Envelopes. In the south of Central Bedfordshire, Green Belt is predominant and the boundary between the settlement and the countryside is defined by Green Belt boundaries. Some smaller settlements are washed over by Green Belt and may have a Green Belt Infill Boundary. These three types of boundary are referred to in general terms as settlement boundaries. The policies relating to settlements washed over by Green Belt and proposals within Green Belt Infill boundaries are set out above.
- 11.9 The Council has defined Settlement Envelopes for all those communities outside the Green Belt that are identified in the Settlement Hierarchy. The Settlement Envelopes separate the settlement from the countryside and are shown on the Policies Map. They are not 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.
- 11.10 Within the Settlement Envelope, 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. In some instances, where there is ambiguity in defining that boundary, the Envelope has been used to reflect the character of the predominant land use, using the most appropriate and clear physical features on the ground.

- 11.11 Settlement Envelopes have been defined to enable the clear, unambiguous and consistent application of policies in the control of development. Settlement Envelopes also serve to prevent coalescence between settlements and in the case of places like Shillington they also protect the separate character and physical identity of the various 'Village Ends'.
- 11.12 The scale of any type of new development should reflect the scale of the settlement in which it is located. Most of the opportunities for development within settlement boundaries will be infill development which can be defined as small-scale development utilising a vacant plot which should continue to complement the surrounding pattern of development. For housing proposals these will generally be for two dwellings - in a small gap in an otherwise built up residential frontage. The dwelling or dwellings proposed should have a plot size and frontage length which is similar to those of adjoining frontage properties. There should be no adverse impact on the setting of the site, the character of the area, and surrounding properties and uses. This type of development will generally be acceptable but will need to be designed carefully to minimise the impact on surrounding properties and the street scene. Design and sustainability criteria relating to the proposal will also be major factors in determining any planning application. More detailed guidance is given in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.
- 11.13 Within settlements, housing development will be considered acceptable in principle. Proposals for community, education, health, sports and play facilities are specifically encouraged. Given the need to provide both more jobs as set out in the Development Strategy and to reduce out commuting, new employment generating uses within settlements will also be encouraged, provided they are compatible with residential properties. This approach accords with one of the key principles in the NPPF which advocates patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, and allow improved access to jobs and services particularly in rural areas.
- 11.14 In planning policy terms, the countryside is that part of Central Bedfordshire outside of settlement boundaries. Certain types of development are considered appropriate in the countryside and are specifically provided for through policies in this Development Strategy, for example affordable housing exceptions schemes. Other than as provided for by these specific policies, development outside settlement boundaries will not be permitted.

- 11.15 In circumstances where there is a clear need for community, education, health, sports and play facilities development and employment generating uses, but a lack of suitable sites within the Settlement Envelope, sites adjacent to the Settlement Envelope will be considered acceptable except in the Green Belt. Such development should make the best use of available land.

Policy 38: Within and Beyond Settlement Boundaries

Within the settlement boundaries of both Major and Minor Service Centres, the Council will approve housing, employment and other settlement related development commensurate with the scale of the settlement, taking account of its role as a local service centre.

Within settlement boundaries of Large Villages, small-scale housing and employment uses, together with new retail and service facilities to serve the village and its catchment will be permitted.

Within Settlement Envelopes of Small Villages beyond the Green Belt, development will be limited to infill residential development and small-scale employment uses.

Beyond settlement boundaries only development appropriate to the countryside and specifically provided for in policy will be permitted

The Council will support schemes for community, education, health, recreation, employment generating uses or mixed community and other uses where a need for such facilities is identified through the Infrastructure Schedule or up to date evidence. For this type of development, where no land is available within the Settlement Envelope, a site adjacent to the Settlement Envelope may be granted planning permission particularly if brought forward through a Neighbourhood Plan.

Important Open Spaces

- 11.16 Open spaces within a settlement may have a number of important functions; as recreational open space, as amenity open space, or simply adding to the character of a settlement and making it a pleasant and distinctive place to live.
- 11.17 Within the settlement there may be a presumption in favour of development, subject to other policies and material considerations. However if every area of land within the settlements were to be developed, then there would be a detrimental impact on their character and appearance, particularly in those settlements that have retained their rural character or historical heart.

- 11.18 In order to protect the character of settlements, open spaces which are important both in visual and functional terms, should be protected from development or enclosed as private gardens unless there are exceptional circumstances. Open space also performs a variety of other important functions such as enhancing biodiversity, helping to create linkages for wildlife and humans, improving health and well being, carbon fixing and reducing the heat island effect of built development.
- 11.19 Within Central Bedfordshire some open spaces within settlements have already been designated as Important Open Space and these areas are shown on the Policies Map. In other areas they have not been formally designated but still need protecting. These areas include amenity areas and allotments. There are two policy approaches for these areas and it is proposed to keep these until new designations have been agreed with Town and Parish Councils through the Neighbourhood Plan or other formal process.

Policy 39: Formally Designated Important Open Space

The Council will protect designated Important Open Space within Settlement Envelopes by refusing planning permission where proposals would result in the loss of Important Open Space and this would have an unacceptable adverse impact on its value either in visual or functional terms.

Redevelopment or partial redevelopment of an Important Open Space will only be considered favourably:

- where proposals would result in enhanced provision in functional terms (for both the facility itself and its location),
- where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in overall community benefit;
- where there would be no adverse effect on the visual quality of the settlement.

Policy 40: Other Areas of Open Space within Settlements

Within the towns and villages of Central Bedfordshire where Important Open Space has not been designated, planning permission will not be given for the development of open space, including amenity open space and allotments, which contributes to the character of the area either functionally or visually, for non-open purposes.

Redevelopment or partial redevelopment of open space will only be considered favourably:

- where proposals would result in enhanced provision in functional terms (for both the facility itself and its location),
- where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in overall

- community benefit;
- where there would be no adverse effect on the visual quality of the settlement.

Local Green Space

11.20 The NPPF introduced a new landscape designation known as Local Green Space. The designation, which can be made through Neighbourhood Plans or Local Plans, will allow protection of valued local areas from new development other than in very special circumstances. The land to be designated must be demonstrably special to a local community and hold 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 must be local in scale and in reasonably close proximity to the community. In those settlements where Important Open Space is designated it will normally be located beyond the Settlement Envelope. In those settlements without, it may be present both within the settlement and beyond its boundary.

11.21 Local Green Space, once designated, is subject to the same strong development restrictions as Green Belt. Because of this the Council would not normally expect Local Green Space to be designated within the Green Belt.

Policy 41: Local Green Space

The Council will support designation of Local Green Space through Neighbourhood Plans where the space has a special character and significance to the local community by virtue of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value or wildlife value.

Development that would affect the openness and character of Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless very special circumstances would outweigh harm to the Local Green Space.

11.22 Aspley Guise Parish Council wish to protect land in close proximity to the settlement to protect its rural setting. There is long term potential new development resulting from the expansion of Milton Keynes. In accordance with the criteria set out in the NPPF land has been considered for possible Local Green Space designation. Land parcels were identified by the Council and scored using the scoring system against each of the criteria set out in the NPPF. A public consultation has been carried out by the Parish Council with the community in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council. Those areas which met the requirements are designated as Local Green Space and illustrated on the Policies Map.

Policy 42: Local Green Space Aspley Guise

Local Green Space is designated to the north of Aspley Guise as set out in the Policies Map.

High Quality Development

- 11.23 Design is a crucial issue, and encompasses far more than the aesthetics of a building. New development should create a sense of place and a safe and attractive environment for people to live and work in. Good design also involves the space around buildings and the features required to make buildings function successfully, e.g. parking, garden space, and wider landscaping. More detailed guidance on design for all types of development is provided in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.
- 11.24 The Council places great emphasis on the need for new development to be of the highest possible quality, ensuring that the places created now provide a lasting legacy. New residential development will need to provide homes and gardens that are of the right size to facilitate family life and provide residential amenity. A mix of dwelling types and sizes will be needed, including larger family homes to rebalance the previous focus on smaller homes and flats.
- 11.25 Local distinctiveness is an important characteristic. Without it the towns, villages and rural areas would lose their individual identities and their interest and attractiveness would be greatly diminished. New development, including extensions and conversions, should therefore seek to contribute towards maintaining and where possible, enhancing local character and distinctiveness. This does not rule out bold, contemporary designs providing that they relate well to the surrounding context.
- 11.26 The Council recognises the important role that public art plays as part of wider public realm improvements in the creation of local distinctiveness. Accordingly the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide sets out the councils approach to delivering Public Art. The Design Guide sets a threshold to include Public Art on public facing developments of over 100 homes or 1000 square metres and requests that developers and promoters of projects produce a Public Art Strategy for sites to be agreed with the Council.
- 11.27 A well designed and implemented landscaping and planting scheme can also add considerable amenity, quality of life and environmental value to any development scheme or proposal. Planting schemes will generally be expected to be of native species and where possible add to the local distinctiveness of an area.

- 11.28 New development proposals within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty must follow the guidance set out in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that the special character of this area is conserved and enhanced. Elsewhere the Landscape Character Assessment should be used to determine areas of particular landscape sensitivity and to understand the landscape characteristics, geology and historical settlement patterns which any new development should be sympathetic to.
- 11.29 The Council requires development briefs to be provided at an early stage for housing developments for 35 dwellings or more. A site-specific brief forms a useful stepping stone between the provisions of this development plan and the requirements of a planning application. The process of preparing and implementing a planning brief also provides a framework for collecting information about a site, and investigating and evaluating different interests in it. It is therefore considered that the quality and consistency of advice provided to developers; the efficiency of the planning process; and the quality of the built environment can be enhanced by the preparation of these briefs. These must be consulted upon with the local community prior to the submission of any planning application, in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
- 11.30 On larger schemes, the use of Design Codes, such as that used at Fairfield Park has been very successful in achieving a high quality and cohesive development. Thus Design codes are an effective mechanism for implementing development briefs or masterplans, particularly when there is more than one housebuilder involved in the development of a site. They comprise detailed written and graphically presented rules for building out a site or an area. The elements which are coded may include aspects relating to layout, townscape and landscape considerations, building form and materials. Accordingly, Design Codes must be prepared for sites of 400 or more dwellings and will be encouraged on smaller sites in multiple ownership or with multiple house builders working on the site.
- 11.31 The Council recognises that each larger development site will have different social, economic and environmental opportunities and challenges and therefore for sites of over 400 dwellings require a Sustainable Communities assessment to be carried out to inform and shape how the development is designed and delivered. This should be done to a nationally recognised standard or methodology (for example BREEAM Communities or BRE Green Print).
- 11.32 It is not considered appropriate to set out in the plan a prescriptive series of densities. Appropriate densities will vary depending on the location. Higher densities may be appropriate in town centres and neighbourhood centres, making best use of land while still providing suitable facilities such as amenity space and parking provision. Lower densities will also be appropriate to provide a mix of new development.

- 11.33 Some developments by their very nature (for example industrial operations, mineral extraction and waste management etc.) have the potential to cause disturbance (e.g. noise, vibration, odour, mud on highway, illumination problems etc.) to neighbouring land uses. The planning system allows for such concerns to be addressed through the imposition of planning conditions which seek to mitigate the worst effects of these operations. However the degree of mitigation required by conditions will reflect site circumstances (e.g. what other nearby land uses were) at the time the original application was determined, and these may not be sufficient to protect proposed sensitive land uses. The possible consequences of this are two-fold. Firstly the amenity of future residents of the proposed development could be adversely affected by the existing land-uses. Secondly the proposed development could prejudice the existing permitted land-uses. When considering planning applications for new development proposals it is important to consider what other nearby existing or planned land uses are there, whether the proposed sensitive land uses be adversely affected by these, and if yes, to consider whether the design and layout could mitigate the potential impacts.

Policy 43: High Quality Development

The Council aims to deliver the highest possible quality of new development within Central Bedfordshire to provide a lasting legacy and to continue to meet the needs of residents and businesses. As such, proposals for all new development will:

- be appropriate in scale and design to their setting,
- contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness through design, layout, use of materials and planting,
- use land efficiently, taking into account quality of life,
- consider what other nearby existing or planned land uses there are and whether these could be adversely affected/prejudiced by the proposed development (including impacts on amenity),
- respect the amenity of surrounding properties, and their occupiers
- provide adequate areas for parking and servicing,
- provide a high level of highway safety and enable/support the free flow of traffic on the highway network.
- be complementary to the landscape setting both in the immediate proximity as well as longer views,
- respect and complement the context and setting of all Heritage Assets particularly those that are designated.

Where appropriate development will;

- enhance community safety,

- meet the required standards for energy and resource efficiency and include climate change adaptation and mitigation measures,
- comply with the current guidance on noise, waste management, land instability, contaminated land, vibration, odour, water, light and airborne pollution,
- incorporate appropriate access and linkages, including provision for pedestrians, people with disabilities, elderly persons and for those with prams and pushchairs, cyclists and public transport,
- promote the use of shared space principles, speed management measures and for residential development the design speed should normally be 20mph,
- provide soft and hard landscaping, greenspace, and green corridors appropriate in scale and design to the development and its setting with appropriate linkages for wildlife and human access to existing landscape features, corridors and green infrastructure,
- provide art in the public realm for developments of 100 dwellings or more or 1000 square metres,
- for housing, contain a locally appropriate mix of sizes and types of dwellings, including larger family homes,
- ensure that buildings are accessible for all, and comply with current guidance on accessibility to buildings.

A development brief covering the above issues will be required for any proposal for 35 dwellings or more or where there are complex design or amenity issues; this, along with the level of community involvement will be agreed prior to the submission of a planning application.

In addition, a Design Code and a Sustainable Communities Assessment will be required for proposals for 400 dwellings or more. A Design Code may also be required for smaller sites with the following characteristics:

- Multiple related sites that will be built out in phases over a long period of time.
- Sites in multiple ownership, where coordination between the parties is desirable.
- Sites likely to be developed by several different developers.

Safeguarding the Environment and Development from Pollution

- 11.34 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.
- 11.35 Some development has the potential to harm the environment and impact on public health in a variety of ways, including the emission of pollutants to the air (including odour), water courses and soils, 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.
- 11.36 In addition to pollution, the NPPF (paras. 120 and 121) 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.
- 11.37 The Council will seek to maintain sustainable and healthy environments through the careful consideration of development proposals which are likely to cause pollution or are likely to be exposed to potential sources of pollution. Proposals will be required to comply with the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide or any site specific Development Briefs or Masterplans. Where necessary the Council will use planning conditions and/or legal agreements to help limit the impact of pollution.

Policy 44: Protection from Environmental Pollution

Development proposals which are likely to cause, or pollution or are likely to be exposed to potential unacceptable levels of pollution or land instability sources of pollution will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures can be implemented to minimise impacts to a satisfactory level which protects health, environmental quality and amenity.

Heritage

- 11.38 Central Bedfordshire Council recognises that 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. 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. Heritage Assets include: Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Historic Landscapes, Archaeological Sites and Monuments, other non-designated assets.

- 11.39 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 is 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.
- 11.40 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 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. 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.
- 11.41 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.

Archaeology and Development

- 11.42 The Historic Environment Record contains information on around 5,000 archaeological sites and monuments. However this resource is not static, it is constantly evolving as new research is undertaken. Prospective 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.
- 11.43 Where it is deemed that there is archaeological potential the minimum developers will be required to submit is 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.

- 11.44 These requirements are in line with paragraph 128 of the NPPF and applications submitted without sufficient information regarding the heritage asset with archaeological interest may be refused. Where a permitted development affects a heritage asset with archaeological interest resulting in the loss, wholly or in part, of the significance of the asset, developers will be required to secure the implementation of a scheme of archaeological investigation. This scheme will be approved in writing by the Council in advance of development and include the provision for the long term curation of any resulting archive and appropriate publication.
- 11.45 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.
- 11.46 Non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments will be subject to the policy requirements applied to designated heritage assets.

Historic Buildings and Development

- 11.47 The repair, renovation, alteration and extension of a Listed Building 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.
- 11.48 When considering applications for change of use to Listed Buildings, the original use is usually the most appropriate and will be encouraged where possible. Where this is not practicable, the alternative use proposed must not require alteration to the extent that the character and historic interest of the building is destroyed. If the Listed Building is in the countryside and not suitable for conversion to employment use, then the most appropriate use for that building will be considered, retaining the original use where possible.

- 11.49 In cases where Listed Buildings may become vacant and derelict, there is a presumption in favour of their retention so consent to demolish will be wholly exceptional and only allowed if all other options to retain the building are demonstrated to have been thoroughly explored. 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.
- 11.50 The Council takes an active role in promoting the repair and reuse of historic buildings or other listed structures to reduce the number of vulnerable historic buildings, structures and objects, particularly those considered 'at risk' on the Council's 'buildings at risk' register. Occasionally as an exception to policy, in a situation where the public benefit of retaining an 'at risk' feature or building is significant and there is no other means of securing its retention, enabling development will be considered by the Council. Further guidance on enabling development is set out in publications by English Heritage.

Historic Landscapes and Development

- 11.51 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 importance. 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.
- 11.52 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.

Historic Settlements and Development

- 11.53 Another important feature of Central Bedfordshire is the number of historic market towns and villages with their traditional buildings built from local materials. 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.

- 11.54 Whilst individual settlements have their own character, there are four broad settlement types in Central Bedfordshire: market towns; linear settlements; villages, and estate villages. With the exception of estate villages, the other settlement types are mainly medieval in origin and display classic characteristics of layout and form. The area has a surprising number of estate villages, mostly linked to large historic parklands. The groups of estate cottages provide a rich selection of neo-vernacular cottages which have been the model for the 'suburban dream' throughout the 20th Century.
- 11.55 Other local buildings include: vernacular cottages, farm houses, town houses, artisan houses, barns, onion sheds, model farms, and watermills amongst other building types. These buildings usually have few architectural pretensions and are simple in form and detailing. Their building materials were generally sourced from the locality and this is reflected in the pattern of distribution of brick colour across the area – from pale Gault clay brick to , red/orange Oxford clay brick .
- 11.56 The Council is required to regularly survey its area to determine whether to designate Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest). The Council is also required to regularly review and update (as required) existing Conservation Areas in order to protect or enhance their special architectural or historic interest through the implementation of an on-going programme of Conservation Area Appraisals. These appraisals will evaluate the appropriateness of the Conservation Area boundary, define their special character and set out guidelines for development and enhancement schemes. 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.
- 11.57 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.
- 11.58 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.

- 11.59 It is important to reiterate the importance of high quality, appropriate and locally distinctive design when submitting planning or Listed Building applications in the historic environment context. Applications are required to be accompanied by good quality plans and designs which meet high standards. 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. Guidance for making applications is contained on the Council's web site under the Heritage, Conservation and History within the Planning section. Further detailed guidance on conservation and heritage issues are contained in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

Policy 45: The Historic Environment

The Council will conserve, enhance, protect and promote the enjoyment of the historic environment: This will be achieved by:

- requiring developers (where applicable) to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development, including any contribution made by their setting, and the role they play in defining local character and distinctiveness.
- requiring the highest quality of design in all new development, alterations and extensions and the public realm in the context of heritage assets and the historic environment. Design which positively contributes to local character and distinctiveness, and sustains and enhances the character or appearance of heritage assets and their settings will be encouraged and supported.
- safeguarding and promoting improvements to Central Bedfordshire's historic environment including securing appropriate viable and sustainable uses and improvements to heritage assets and reducing the number of heritage assets "at risk".
- requiring applications that affect heritage assets with archaeological interest or which affect potential heritage assets with archaeological interest to give due consideration to the significance of those assets, and ensure that any impact on archaeological remains, which occur as a result of a development are appropriately mitigated.
- encouraging the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment by supporting appropriate management and interpretation of heritage assets.
- refusing development proposals that will lead to harm to or loss of significance of a heritage asset or its setting whether designated or non-designated, unless the public benefits outweigh the harm or loss.

Renewable & low carbon energy development

- 11.60 Renewable energy is a broad term covering a range of sustainable energy sources which can not be depleted. Sources include wind power, solar power, the movement of water (tidal and other flows), combustion or digestion of materials such as biomass (crops and wood) and waste products and ground source heat.
- 11.61 Low carbon energy is power that continues to utilize the world's natural resources, such as natural gas and coal, but employs techniques that reduce carbon emissions from these sources when burning them for fuel. An example of this is Combined Heat and Power and other area heating schemes which can be up to 95% efficient in comparison with traditional fossil fuel powered electricity generating stations, which are only about 40% efficient.
- 11.62 Overall the development of new more sustainable energy sources brings opportunities for increased diversity and security of energy supply, protecting residents from fuel poverty as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Where these projects are either community-led, or have community engagement at their heart, there is also scope to provide some protection against the impact of increasing fuel cost as well as other benefits.
- 11.63 In order to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, the Council, as it is required to do under the NPPF, recognises the responsibility it has, alongside the communities in Central Bedfordshire, to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. The Council therefore proposes proactive policy to support developers of renewables to ensure that the technologies they deploy are most appropriately placed and that negative impacts are mitigated.
- 11.64 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (July 2009) sets a renewable energy target of 15% of total energy to be generated from renewable sources by 2020. In addition to this the Climate Change Act 2008 makes binding the need to cut UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.
- 11.65 The Council recognises that on-site solutions may not always be feasible or viable in meeting the standards set out in Policy 47: Resource Efficiency. In such cases, near-site solutions are to be encouraged to allow greater flexibility to the developer and increase the feasibility and viability of renewable and low carbon energy developments. Smaller scale development could also incorporate on-site renewable energy measures or contribute to strategic schemes across the area.

- 11.66 Clearly the strategic allocation sites set out in this plan, present significant opportunities for the provision of large scale low carbon energy schemes due to the concentration of significant demand in a single location, and the fact that they can be integrated into the development at the initial design stage. It is expected that medium to large-scale development schemes will play a critical role in meeting targets by providing on site renewable energy generation at a more commercially viable scale.
- 11.67 The Council will, through its Environmental Enhancement Strategy, identify areas suitable for renewable and low carbon energy sources. This will form the basis of technical guidance which will steer and advise on appropriate mitigation measures, including separation distances to alleviate negative impacts, such as noise. In accordance with guidance set out in the NPPF, careful consideration will be given to proposals in order to minimise adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, on landscape and amenity in the widest sense.
- 11.68 Applications for renewable or low carbon energy generating schemes will be considered favourably in these areas if their impacts are, or can be made acceptable. Proposals outside of these areas will be expected to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used by the Council in identifying suitable areas. Wind power generation should pay particular regard to mitigating adverse impacts on the sensitive receptors, for example Heritage sites, landscape and local communities, including cumulative impacts.
- 11.69 Studies like the East of England Low Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Capacity Study (DECC, April 2011) and the Central Bedfordshire Utilities and Growth Study (Arup, 2012) have shown that certain technologies are particularly 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 district heating schemes, including combined heat and power, as well as photovoltaic energy, locally sourced biomass and utilisation of landfill gas. These will therefore be looked at favourably.
- 11.70 The Council recognises the potential for biomass, particularly wood fuels, to provide cheap and renewable energy. Whilst further work is to be done to fully explore the potential of this, there is scope to utilise locally grown biomass and to also use this as a mechanism to ensure that this is used as a driver for better management of woodland in Central Bedfordshire.
- 11.71 Currently Central Bedfordshire has landfill gas generators at Arlesey, Brogborough and Sundon, which generate about 45MW of electrical energy. When the BEaR project contract for the procurement of the management of municipal waste in Central Bedfordshire is awarded, the new strategic waste facility could provide significant renewable heat

and power. This would help to off-set carbon emissions from current energy generation methods and reduce the amount of municipal waste going to landfill.

- 11.72 The Council will support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy. The Council is also keen that developers of renewables take a proactive approach to working with affected communities at the earliest stage in order to mitigate impacts and provide adequate compensation and benefits.

Policy 46: Renewable and low carbon energy development

The Council recognises the environmental, social and economic benefits of renewable or low-carbon energy. It will work with developers to ensure that proposed developments are:

- directed to those areas where negative impacts can be most effectively mitigated. Any unavoidable adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, such as noise, pollution and harm to visual amenity, should be mitigated through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures;
- have good accessibility to the transport network;
- located and designed so as to have no unacceptable adverse impact on heritage assets, sensitive landscapes such as the Chilterns AONB, or any area identified through the Landscape Character Assessment as being of high sensitivity; green belt areas and townscapes.
- All developers of renewables schemes are required to engage with all affected stakeholders, including local communities, at the earliest stage in order to proactively mitigate impacts and provide adequate compensation and benefits.

Where a district heating scheme is proposed, where technically and economically viable and appropriate, all occupiers must be connected to that installation.

Sustainable Buildings

- 11.73 Sustainable buildings are buildings that seek to minimise the negative environmental impacts by efficient use of materials and natural resources. We depend on many resources including fuels, water, and clean air for our survival, but the supply of natural resources is limited, and is fast being eroded. Growing global demand is increasing pressure on the environment, and inevitably competition for resources is also increasing. Many natural resources are fundamental to our health, well-being and quality of life, so it is essential that we urgently reduce our consumption.

- 11.74 The UK government's target to make all new homes zero carbon from 2016 previously demanded that all emissions from the house and the activities that take place within it must be net zero over the course of a year. In view of the fact that this has only been achieved in practice by a handful of exemplar schemes, it was considered that this definition presented too great a challenge in mainstream roll out, not least because it treats every home as an individual energy 'island' which must generate all the power and heat it needs.
- 11.75 The new definition is represented by the Zero Carbon Hierarchy triangle below, addresses these difficulties and makes the zero carbon standard genuinely achievable. Zero carbon is made up of three parts, Energy Efficiency, Carbon Compliance and Allowable Solutions. The overall onsite contribution to zero carbon (including energy efficiency above) is called Carbon Compliance. This includes on-site low and zero carbon energy such as PV and connected heat such as a community heating network.

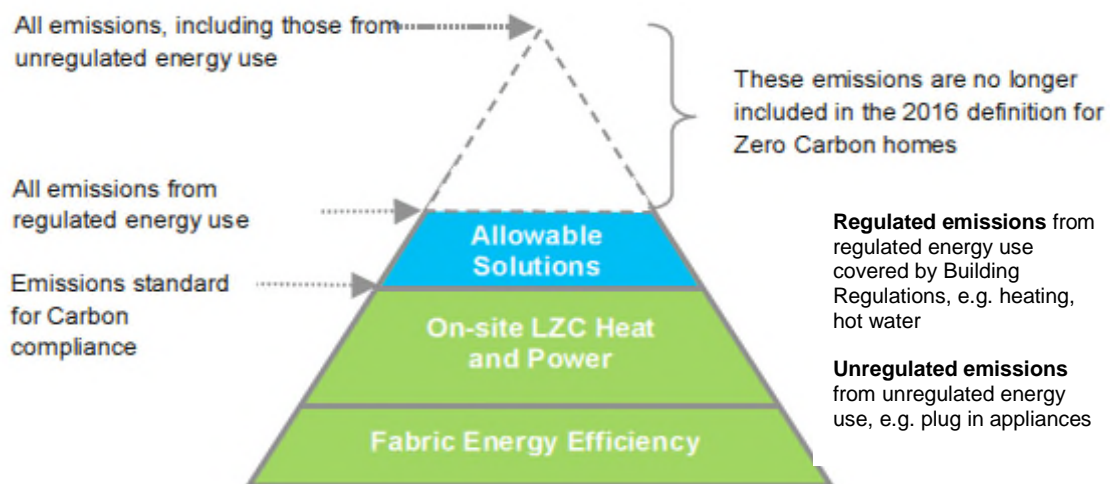


Figure 1 The Zero Carbon Policy 'Triangle', showing the post-Budget 2011 extent of Allowable Solutions and its relationship with Carbon Compliance.

Source: Allowable Solutions for Tomorrow's New Homes (Zero Carbon Hub, 2011)

- 11.76 Any carbon not mitigated on site will be dealt with through a range of 'allowable solutions'. These represent the remaining carbon emissions from the energy use regulated by the Building Regulations and cover carbon emitted from the home for thirty years following its completion.
- 11.77 The Zero Carbon Hub proposes a framework for how allowable solutions might work⁸, and gives examples of what measures could be considered as potential allowable solutions. These include "on-site" options such as 'smart' energy efficient appliances, home electric vehicle charging facilities and LED street lighting. "Near-site" options

⁸ 'Allowable Solutions for tomorrow's new homes – towards a workable framework', Zero Carbon Hub (July 2011)

including investment in the creation or expansion of locally planned sustainability infrastructure or the export of low carbon or renewable heat from the development to other developments, with “Off-site” options include investments in low and zero carbon heat infrastructure and investment in low carbon energy generation assets up to a maximum determined scale, e.g. excluding large scale off-shore generation.

- 11.78 As developers may be able to invest in properly accredited offsite renewables as an ‘allowable solution’, the Council will ensure that the benefits of these measures are captured within the unitary authority area.
- 11.79 Further guidance is awaited from government on how ‘allowable solutions’ are to be implemented. Once this is in place the Council will develop further guidance and policy on how ‘allowable solutions’ will be managed with respect to development in Central Bedfordshire. This will clarify the range of measures that are acceptable, how emissions will be accounted for and what other measures could also contribute to delivering a portfolio of options for allowable solutions, for example woodland creation.
- 11.80 The step change necessary to achieve zero carbon homes, will be delivered through revisions to the Building Regulations. Whilst the Council can no longer require energy efficiency standards above this level, we will look to work proactively with developers to build new homes above and beyond the standards set by the Building Regulations. The Planning and Energy Act (2008 as amended) permits local authorities to set targets for renewable and low carbon generation in the new developments. Therefore the Council will require all new residential developments to deliver 10% of their energy needs from those sources. The baseline for 10% calculation is energy demand of a fully Part L compliant dwelling (meeting a Target Emission Rate).
- 11.81 The Energy Act 2011 included provision for the 'Green Deal', which is intended to reduce carbon emissions cost effectively by increasing the energy efficiency of existing properties in the UK. The Green Deal financial mechanism eliminates the need to pay upfront for energy efficiency measures and instead provides assurances that the cost of the measures will be covered by savings in energy bills. This will mean that the cost of retrofitting in particular is made more affordable.
- 11.82 The Council therefore requires planning applications for extensions and alterations to existing buildings (not building minor works such as porches) to be accompanied by the Energy Performance Certificate,(EPC) Green Deal Assessment or an equivalent nationally recognised assessment. The applicant will need to demonstrate how any improvements that are technically, functionally and economically feasible will be carried out, with these being set as planning conditions.

- 11.83 The Local Climate Impact Study (CBC, 2012) identified that the Central Bedfordshire area is within region with predicted scarcity of water resources. The study highlights Anglian Water's assessment of deployable water output for the region which estimates that even in a 'typical' rainfall scenario they will face a shortfall of 70% in deployable water supply by 2020. The study highlighted that climate change alone is likely to cause significant water supply shortages. The predicted growth in Central Bedfordshire will put additional stress on our water resources, making it is essential that any new development is as water efficient as possible, and justifying water efficiency standards to be set at a level higher than those set nationally. The Council will therefore require that all new housing meets a higher level of water efficiency set at 110 litres/person/day
- 11.84 In addition to this Environment Agency recommends that areas with high growth should aspire to achieve water neutrality⁹. This means that growth will not result in an increase in water demand or usage. This could be for example, through grey water recycling and other measures. In order to achieve this, and in addition to the high water efficiency standard for new development, water efficiency in existing developments needs to be improved.
- 11.85 The Council's Climate Change Risk Assessment, alongside data provided by Anglian Water also indicates that in a zero growth scenario the area faces a 20% shortfall in the deployable water output. This places an emphasis on encouraging uptake of water efficiency measures in existing homes. The Council will therefore require that any planning application for extensions to existing buildings will be accompanied by a proposal detailing how water efficiency will be improved in the existing building. The Council will also require a water meter to be installed, where none is present, as a planning condition.
- 11.86 Non residential buildings including care homes are also an important consideration. Their environmental performance is measured to recognised standards by the BREEAM environmental assessment method and rating system. A BREEAM assessment uses established benchmarks, to evaluate a building's specification, design, construction and use. Like the Code for Sustainable Homes, the measures used represent a broad range of categories and criteria from energy to ecology. Based on the above rationale the Council will require non-residential buildings over 1000m² to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating; or a comparable standard if a new nationally recognised scheme like the mooted Code for Sustainable Buildings is introduced.
- 11.87 Reducing the need for primary materials, reusing and recycling can both save money and lead to better resource efficiency. The earlier this is considered in any planned development, the greater and more achievable the options are which in turn should lead to more

⁹ Briefing Note on Water Neutrality, (Environment Agency, 2009)

sustainable development being designed and built. The detailed benefits of this approach are identified in more detail in an Adopted Supplementary Planning Document, 'Managing Waste in New Developments'.

Policy 47 : Resource Efficiency

The Council will work to mitigate the impacts of climate change and deliver sustainable and resource efficient development.

All new residential developments will be required to demonstrate how they will:

- Meet higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres of water/person/day in every new home built
- provide a 10% of their energy consumption from renewable and low carbon sources

Planning applications for extensions or alterations to existing buildings (excluding minor works) must demonstrate how the identified energy and water efficiency improvements which are technically, functionally and economically feasible will be implemented.

Non-residential developments larger than 1000m² will be required to:

- meet BREEAM Excellent or an equivalent standard for all elements by 2015.

Developments that are likely to generate significant volumes of waste through the construction or operational phases will be required to include a waste audit as part of any planning application.

Adaptation

11.88 Adaptation to both Climate Change and to meet the differing needs of our population throughout their lifetimes is essential if Central Bedfordshire is going to be able to deliver growth effectively. The aim of adaptation is to reduce the impact of changes to the population and climate which are happening now and to increase our resistance and resilience to future impacts. The adaptation process requires that risks and any opportunities, are identified and action is taken to develop appropriate responses.

11.89 The case for designing for future climate is strong. Buildings and infrastructure have long life spans and what we build today will, in many cases still be around in fifty years or more. We generally build to suit the current climate and take no account of their performance in future. As a result, the impacts of climate change can make buildings

and infrastructure uncomfortable, unsafe or even commercially unviable to maintain.

- 11.90 Climate change will affect different aspects of spatial planning and the built environment, including external building fabric, structural integrity, internal environments, service infrastructure (e.g. drainage, water, waste, energy, transport and telecommunications), open spaces, human comfort, and the way people use indoor and outdoor space. It is predicted that we will have hotter drier summers, milder wetter winters with the associated extreme weather impacts of drought and flooding.
- 11.91 Nationally, the Climate Change Act 2008 makes the United Kingdom the first country in the world to have a national, legally binding, long-term framework to cut carbon emissions. Following this, the Environment Agency is leading on the development of the government's first National Climate Adaptation Programme. This will use the findings of the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment that DEFRA published in January 2012. This document highlighted the need to take early action to mitigate the risks to the environment, the economy and to health. The National Planning Framework is similarly clear in its requirement that development plans must develop policies that require developments to adapt to take account of the impacts of climate change.
- 11.92 Adaptation needs to be a dynamic and flexible process, with decisions made in light of the long lifespan of buildings and infrastructure. This includes opportunities that might be exploited to adapt existing buildings and towns. For example, increasing the amount of urban greenery can help absorb floodwater and can help make buildings and public spaces more comfortable in hot weather. They can help improve air and water quality; encourage use of public spaces; while at the same time adding to the value of nearby homes.
- 11.93 At a local level the findings of the Central Bedfordshire Climate Change Adaptation Evidence Base show we must be particularly responsive to the impacts of water scarcity. Water resources are already under pressure across the East of England and Central Bedfordshire is considered to be under serious levels of water stress by the Environment Agency. This pressure is expected to increase in the future, due to the effects of climate change, population growth, demand changes and environmental constraints. Therefore new developments should not put additional pressure on water supplies.
- 11.94 Across the Anglian river catchment region (in which most of Central Bedfordshire is located), there is expected to be a deficit of deployable water supply of 70 million litres per day (Ml/day) by the 2020s rising to 207Ml/day by the 2050s and 368Ml/day by the 2080s. (Central Bedfordshire Climate Change Adaptation Evidence Base, 2012). Consequently, new development will be expected to achieve water efficiency standards as set out in the Resource Efficiency Policy.

- 11.95 Central Bedfordshire is also at risk of impacts arising from flooding, subsidence, overheating and climate impacts on natural environment, which need to be appropriately addressed. The study recommends that all development proposals must demonstrate how they have considered climate change resilience in their design. It also recommends that the Council promotes on-site ecological enhancement as an easily implementable method to support adaptation.
- 11.96 It is clear that green infrastructure can provide many benefits for climate change adaptation including flood storage, localised climate cooling and habitat creation. Site conditions are important in deciding the approach to planting and habitat creation in particular soil, exposure, drainage, space, hardiness and human activity need to be considered. However with careful consideration of these sorts of factors, it is accepted that appropriate green infrastructure provision is one of the most practical and achievable ways of mitigating against the future effects of climate change.

Policy 48: Adaptation

To ensure development is resilient and adaptable to the impacts arising from climate change all new developments, where relevant, will be required to:

- use design, layout and orientation to maximise natural ventilation, cooling and solar gain;
- retain and properly manage existing trees, landscaping and other natural features;
- incorporate additional landscaping including green and brown roofs and walls and suitable street tree planting;
- use appropriate strategies including Sustainable Drainage Schemes to prevent surface water flooding; and
- use water efficient fixtures and fittings and incorporate rain water harvesting and storage.

Managing Flood Risk and Maintaining Water Quality

- 11.97 The predicted effects of climate change include a greater risk of extreme weather events which may increase the risk of flooding, including flash flooding and droughts. An important role for local planning authorities, in partnership with the Environment Agency, the water companies and developers, is to help new and existing development adapt and mitigate current and future flood and drought risk.
- 11.98 The Council's Climate Change Adaptation Evidence Base identifies areas at higher risk of flooding and hot spots such as along the River Ivel at Biggleswade, Sandy and Langford. The Clipstone Brook and the

Ouzel Valley are prone to problems in the south of the area. The risks in these areas, and potentially elsewhere, could be increased if climate predictions are accurate. The spatial evidence base to improve regulating ecosystem services in Central Bedfordshire (Cranfield University, 2012) identifies both existing runoff rates and the implications for surface runoff of changes to urban land use.

- 11.99 Developers will be expected to use this information to identify the extent to which developing sites could result in increased runoff rates, and demonstrate what mitigation measures have been put in place to ensure that the development does not result in a net increase in runoff rates. Therefore, the provision of sustainable ways of managing flood risk, including surface water run-off from new and existing development is important. This is particularly applicable to larger scale new proposals.
- 11.100 Central Bedfordshire Council will support the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage flood risk and improve water quality. SuDS enable different design solutions, dependent on site circumstances such as underlying geology, to be used to create environmentally sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.
- 11.101 There are a number of benefits to using SuDS, for example:
- they can be used to control peak flows of surface water run-off to watercourses or sewers by using more natural drainage features such as swales and ponds. Not only can SuDS reduce on site flood risk, they can also be used to reduce flooding elsewhere by providing flood water storage;
 - they can be used to provide valuable open space and new or improved habitats based around new planting, water channels and storage ponds. Therefore, they can make significant contributions to green infrastructure, landscapes and making quality places to live, play and work.
 - SuDS can, depending on location, nature and size, provide economies of scale so helping to reduce developer costs. For example a strategic SUDS scheme could be shared by a number of developments;
 - SuDS will also act to improve water quality at source.
- 11.102 The underlying ground conditions will usually determine the types of SuDS approach suitable. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) give an indication of the ground conditions in the area, chiefly around the larger settlements. However, the SFRAs are a guide only and detailed ground investigations will need to be carried out to assess the suitability of a specific proposal for SuDS. Where the local geology

and detailed site investigations indicate that infiltration SuDS are suitable, these must be designed so as to mimic natural infiltration as much as possible. 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.

- 11.103 Under the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 the Council has a duty to form a SuDS Approving Body (SAB). This means it will have responsibility for the approval of proposed drainage systems in new developments and redevelopments, subject to exemptions and thresholds. Therefore the Council will expect all development to use SuDS as normal practice in order to help achieve sustainable forms of development. This will include schemes to ensure long-term maintenance.
- 11.104 The NPPF sets out a number of requirements that flood management policies need to meet in local plans. Therefore, in Central Bedfordshire, when locating development, the floodplain will be protected by applying the Sequential Test and, if necessary, the Exception Test where the Sequential Test cannot be satisfied for wider sustainability reasons. (The Sequential and Exception tests are set out in Appendix 9). The Flood Risk Assessments will provide the basis for applying the Sequential Test.
- 11.105 Land will also be safeguarded which is needed for current and future flood management and opportunities provided by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding will be pursued. Development that increases the risk of flooding elsewhere will not be permitted.

Water Quality and the Water Framework Directive

- 11.106 The Water Framework Directive came into effect in 2000 and became UK law in 2003. It recognises that development near water bodies can affect their quality and ecology and 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. It recognises that the causes of poor water quality and poor ecological status include point source pollution such as that from a pipe discharge, diffuse pollution including that from agricultural fertilisers and pesticides, low flows, flooding, modifications to water courses and habitat degradation.
- 11.107 The objectives of the Framework include:
- achieving 'good' ecological status for all water bodies and preventing their deterioration overall
 - reducing pollution from specified Priority Substances and Priority Hazardous Substances i.e. those that pose a significant risk as set out under the Directive;
 - preventing and/or limiting the pollution of groundwater;

- protecting new and existing development from pollution including pollution from surface water runoff;
- conserving aquatic ecosystems, habitats and species;
- mitigating the effects of floods and drought on new and existing development
- promoting the sustainable use of water and balancing abstraction and recharge; and
- Protecting flood plains from development including the green infrastructure associated with the water environment

11.108 In planning terms the Framework means that developments affecting water bodies will be expected to deliver benefits such as:

- integrating SuDS and green infrastructure into new development;
- de-culverting, restoring or re-profiling rivers and naturalising river banks to promote natural flows and habitat improvements. Naturalistic flood defence solutions should take priority over the provision of hard flood defences in order to mitigate flood risk wherever possible;
- adopting water efficiency measures; and
- cleaning up contaminated land.

11.109 Detailed site specific flood risk assessments will be prepared to inform the preparation of master plans for the Strategic Allocations and any other development as required. This will ensure appropriate and specific flood mitigation and sustainable drainage measures are in place that build on the recommendations of the Water Cycle Studies. The Councils will work with the EA, Drainage Boards and developers to seek contributions for the creation and maintenance of practicable river restoration and habitat creation programmes that also manage flood risk.

11.110 The implications of removing minerals and/or depositing waste above and below the water table should be assessed at an early stage. Such proposals may affect underground storage capacity, water purifying potential, flow characteristics and abstraction potential in both the immediate and surrounding areas. Proposals should consider whether dewatering may affect local groundwater levels. Fish stocks in nearby still waters must be protected from the impact of drawdown. Site dewatering may involve pumping into a river fishery. Proposals should consider the water quality and rate of the discharge, especially that which contains suspended solids. Fish spawning, feeding and survival must be protected.

11.111 The Council will work with the Environment Agency (EA) to ensure minerals and waste applications do not adversely affect groundwater. In all cases minerals and waste activities must be operated carefully and closed and restored in such manner as to ensure no long term pollution problems. The Council's approach to SuDs is set out in a new Supplementary Planning Document entitled 'Central Bedfordshire

Sustainable Drainage guidance: March 2014'. This provides technical guidance on sustainable drainage and is in line with other policy objectives. The document incorporates local requirements including how to design SuDs for a range of sites and how they should relate to local environmental character.

Policy 49: Mitigating Flood Risk

The Council will promote and support a strategic and sustainable approach to flood management to include SuDs in accordance with our adopted SuDs guidance. Furthermore, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, the Council will support:

- improvements to the ecological quality of water bodies; and
- developments that deliver a positive impact on the water environment.

In order to safeguard the floodplain from inappropriate development and help prevent flooding overall, the Council will follow the sequential approach when identifying new sites for development. If necessary the Exception Test will be applied if the wider benefits for sustainable development significantly outweigh flood risk.

Detailed Flood Risk Assessments and Design Statements will be required to demonstrate how proposals will:

- make a positive contribution to reducing or managing flood and drought risk and improving water quality through the implementation of SuDS;
- operate within the provisions of Marston Vale Surface Waters Management Plan;
- meet the required Greenfield run-off rate, ensure that the development does not result in a net increase in runoff rates from the existing baseline and maximise the potential for on-site storage;
- avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere;
- adapt to future changes in climate conditions;
- contribute to the provision of a range of green infrastructure networks and achieving a net gain in biodiversity;
- contribute to the recommendations of the Landscape Character Assessment and aims of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide; and
- safeguard land required for current and future flood management.

Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will not have an unacceptable impact on water bodies.

12.0 COUNTRYSIDE AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Development in the Countryside

- 12.1 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. Some of the change that takes place in the countryside does not constitute development and therefore falls beyond the scope of its control. Where control is possible the Council accepts the need to ensure that necessary change is accommodated in the countryside, in accordance with sustainability principles.
- 12.2 However, such change must be appropriate in terms of the Green Belt and other policies of the Strategy. Any development must be appropriate to the character and appearance of the local landscape. The use of Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) will help to protect the essential character of defined types of landscape and enhance landscapes of lesser quality. The Council accepts that in some cases new development can also result in the improvement of the countryside and enhancement of degraded landscapes.
- 12.3 A grading system for the quality of agricultural land has been in place for many years. Any development proposal, identified to be within the most valuable agricultural land (grades 1-3a), must consider alternatives in areas of less valuable agricultural land. If there are no viable alternatives, development within higher grades of valuable agricultural land may be considered acceptable.
- 12.4 The Council will provide positive support to new sustainable development within 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 landscape character, the protection of important features in the landscape, existing accessibility and the compatibility of design of development with forms and patterns of settlement in the area.
- 12.5 Outside settlements, where the countryside needs to be protected from inappropriate development, only particular types of new development will be permitted. This includes residential development within Exceptions Schemes, or dwellings for the essential needs of those employed in agriculture or forestry. Proposals which re-use or replace an existing dwelling will be acceptable provided they do not have an adverse visual impact on the rural nature of the surroundings. Resulting dwellings should not be disproportionately larger in height and scale than the original unless the proposed dwelling would result in an improvement to the character of the area. Development which supports the expansion of major existing facilities, promotes tourism and visitor facilities, caters for horse and livestock development and seeks to

diversify the rural economy will be generally permitted, in accordance with the specific policies.

- 12.6 Extensions to gardens beyond settlement boundaries that are limited in scale may be permitted where there would be no harm to the character of the area, particularly to the intrinsic value of the countryside or to the need to safeguard agricultural land or land with ecological or environmental value on a farm. This would be where a garden extension is of very limited size, or creates a natural rounding off or where the original garden size is very restricted. They must be suitably landscaped or screened from the surrounding countryside and by restricting permitted development rights, buildings would not be permitted on the extended garden area. Gardens will only be permitted to be extended once, even if, in the future, the settlement boundary is redrawn to incorporate the extended garden.

Policy 50: Development in the Countryside

The Council will work to maintain and enhance the intrinsic value of the countryside. All appropriate development will be expected to address positively its impact on the area's biodiversity, landscape, accessibility and the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Outside the defined settlement boundaries new development will only be supported if it satisfies the appropriate policies and the following criteria where applicable:

- Where development would represent the most sympathetic, viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- Where development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting

Limited extensions to gardens beyond settlement boundaries may be permitted provided they do not harm the character of the area or the intrinsic value of the countryside.

Significant Facilities in the Countryside and Green Belt

- 12.7 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 of the Development Strategy.
- 12.8 It is clear that these major sites can continue to make a significant contribution to the local economy. A number of these facilities also

have the potential to attract high technology orientated businesses, creating a cluster effect.

- 12.9 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 emerging sectors like green technology, the Council supports the development of 'green' industries which may include the development of low emission vehicles or renewable energy equipment particularly around the existing cluster of high technology centres of excellence of Cranfield University and Technology Park and Millbrook Proving Ground.
- 12.10 In the future, major new sites may emerge in Central Bedfordshire, such as Centre Parcs and NIRA (National Institute of Research into Aquatic Habitats), that should also be included within the remit of this policy issue.

Policy 51: Significant facilities in the Countryside and Green Belt

Planning permission will be granted for infilling at or redevelopment of major development sites listed in this policy provided that the infilling or redevelopment is within the boundaries of the existing use, relates to that use and enhances its contribution to the local or national economy.

Significant expansion of sites into the open countryside will be subject to the production of a management plan, development brief or masterplan prior to any application.

These facilities have been identified as: Cranfield University and Technology Park, Shuttleworth College, Millbrook Proving Ground, RAF Henlow, DISC Chicksands, ZSL Whipsnade, Woburn Safari Park, Toddington Motorway Services Area, and Faldo Road Industrial Estate in Barton-le-Clay. All proposals for significant development at these facilities will be assessed against their:

- 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.
- compatibility with Green Belt policy

Planning applications that are considered acceptable against these criteria and 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.

Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside

- 12.11 The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings has an important role to play in ensuring the sustainability of rural areas. It can assist in agricultural diversification, conserve resources, 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, thereby reducing the need for travel.
- 12.12 In the interests of promoting the rural economy, employment generating uses will be the preferred end use of the converted building or buildings. Residential conversions will be resisted where the most appropriate use of the building is commercial. Residential conversions are generally the least suitable form of re-use as they usually require the greatest change to the fabric of the building and this, together with the need for gardens, fencing and parking areas can have a suburbanising effect on the countryside and villages. The only circumstances where residential conversions are acceptable are where the siting and access would not be suitable for commercial development.
- 12.13 Industrial, commercial, tourism and recreation re-uses which are of a scale appropriate to a rural area can make suitable conversions provided they do not require new areas of hardstanding, parking areas, vehicle turning areas, extensive new boundary fencing/walling or substantial areas for outside storage. The conversion of an existing building must be carried out in a manner which is beneficial to the rural area and does not result in harm to the character and appearance of the building, the countryside or the Green Belt.
- 12.14 The Council, whilst recognising the benefits of the re-use of rural buildings, wishes to ensure that development in the countryside is properly controlled. The original building or group of buildings to be converted should therefore be appropriate to the rural setting in terms of scale and appearance. Generally these are more traditional buildings of substantial and permanent construction. Purely functional buildings such as glass houses and metal framed buildings will not be considered suitable candidates for conversion. Applications 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.
- 12.15 In many instances it may be possible, through re-use and adaptation, to achieve improvements to the external appearance of a building and its surroundings thereby enhancing the visual appearance of the countryside.

Policy 52: Re-Use and replacement of buildings in the Countryside

The Council will support the re-use or replacement of existing buildings in the countryside provided the proposal complies with the following criteria and other relevant policies:

- The building contributes to the rural setting in terms of its scale and appearance, and has a permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion.
- The proposals including, where appropriate, conversion to residential use, helps support the sustainability of existing rural communities and delivers positive benefits in terms of the immediate landscape setting.
- The re-use or replacement is sympathetic and in keeping with the character and appearance of the rural surroundings and in the case of re-use the appearance of the original buildings.
- No harm will be caused to features of architectural, or historic importance; and
- would not be detrimental to protected species.

Where re-use or replacement is proposed in the Green Belt and the Chilterns AONB, Green Belt and AONB policies will be applied in addition to the above.

Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites

12.16 In Central Bedfordshire, the long tradition of horticulture and market gardening has led to the existence of a number of glasshouses and sites upon which glasshouses used to be located. Such sites are classified as 'greenfield' sites and thus previously have not been considered suitable for employment related uses. Whilst conversion or replacement with a commercial facility may not be appropriate in remote locations, it may well be acceptable in some circumstances. In particular, the design of new or converted commercial buildings should respect the rural character of the surrounding countryside with reference to the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment.

12.17 Some of these sites, as well as small agricultural holdings, have developed into the considerable number of garden centres that often sell goods which display no relationship to horticulture. There is still significant pressure from existing horticultural nurseries to expand into garden centres that sell a range of products. However, it is considered that medium to large scale sporadic retail development in open countryside puts pressure on rural roads and may also affect the viability of existing village and town retail outlets and should therefore be resisted.

12.18 While intensification of existing nurseries and horticultural enterprises should not be explicitly encouraged, it is considered that the change of

use of horticultural sites or redundant small scale agricultural holdings to similarly small-scale and low impact commercial uses may be appropriate; particularly in the context of the NPPF where emphasis has been placed on creating additional employment opportunities. However, each planning application needs to be decided on its own merits depending on the location of the site and the proposed use subject to the criteria below.

- 12.19 Converted agricultural premises have made a significant contribution to the local rural economy. Occupier satisfaction in these sorts of units is generally higher than average and the users tend to be small companies employing small numbers of people from the local area. There is a vital role played by commercial uses in the countryside in diversifying the agricultural sector enabling small business start-ups, and in reducing out-commuting and the associated problems this engenders. When an agricultural or horticultural use has ceased or is demonstrably not viable and where the appropriate criteria have been satisfied, the Council will consider favourably the redevelopment, conversion or change of use of existing redundant agricultural or horticultural sites. Where these buildings are within the Green Belt or Chilterns AONB then the relevant policies and guidance for these areas take precedence.

Policy 53: Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites outside the Green Belt and AONB

Proposals for the appropriate re-development, conversion or change of use of horticultural or redundant agricultural sites in the countryside will be considered favourably if they are found acceptable when considered in terms of their:

- Scale, layout and design in relation to their setting;
- Impact on protected species and any heritage assets;
- Assimilation into the rural setting and impact, including cumulative impact, on the surrounding countryside when assessed against the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment;
- Relationship with the road network and neighbouring rural settlements;
- Potential impact on existing local facilities including retail facilities;
- Provision of suitable vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements; and
- Impact on other relevant plan policies.

Proposals for redevelopment will require evidence that an agricultural, market gardening or horticultural nursery use is not viable.

Rural Worker's Dwellings

- 12.20 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.
- 12.21 In order to sustain some work practices, it is accepted that in some cases there is a required need to have workers living in close proximity to a specific location or use. This predominantly, but not solely, relates to agricultural and forestry uses. A functional need test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. This may include the need to provide essential care at short notice or to deal with the serious loss of crops or products.
- 12.22 A functional need will have to be established and capable of being sustained over a period of time. 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.
- 12.23 The siting, design and external appearance of agricultural and forestry residential development can be visually intrusive in 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 54: Rural Workers' Dwellings

Where there is a clearly established, existing functional need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside new, permanent dwellings will be permitted provided the proposals comply with the following criteria and other relevant plan policies:

- 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; and
- the functional 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 for occupation by the workers concerned.

Where rural worker's dwellings are proposed in the Green Belt and

Chilterns AONB, Green Belt and AONB policies will be applied in addition to the above.

Equestrian Development and Development Related to the Keeping and Breeding of Livestock

- 12.24 By its very nature, equestrian and livestock development requires a countryside location. There continues to be considerable pressure for equestrian and animal related development within Central Bedfordshire. 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 the appraisal of development proposals. In Central Bedfordshire it is particularly important to consider the context of proposed development in the flat landscapes towards the eastern part of the area where even small buildings will be prominent against the skyline.
- 12.25 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.
- 12.26 In recent years a number of alternatives to traditional grazing and livestock have become popular. The keeping and breeding of livestock includes any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins, fur or for the purpose of farming land. These uses often support the ability of an existing business to diversify and can contribute to the rural economy.

Policy 55: Equestrian Development And Development Related To The Keeping And Breeding Of Livestock

Horse-related facilities and small scale extensions to existing equestrian enterprises in the countryside will be considered favourably subject to the following criteria and other relevant plan policies:

- the proposals should be closely related to the bridleway network and should not have an adverse impact on the public rights of way network.
- new freestanding stables and provision for vehicle parking should be well screened from the surrounding countryside, should avoid adverse impact on the public rights of way network and should not interfere with the amenity of adjoining residents.
- new buildings for indoor equestrian use should be located adjacent to existing buildings.

- any proposals for equestrian development including jumps, schooling areas and new buildings/extensions will be considered in the context of the Landscape Character Assessment and their design, scale, siting and use of materials should respect the rural setting.

Additionally, proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises (comprising ten horses or more) will only be considered where the applicants can demonstrate the sustainable nature of their location by means of a traffic impact assessment.

Proposals for small scale development related to the keeping and breeding of livestock will be considered favourably subject to the following criteria and other relevant plan policies:

- their design, scale, siting and use of materials should respect the rural setting.
- development should be well screened from the surrounding countryside and should not interfere with the amenities of adjoining residents.

Where equestrian or livestock development is proposed within the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB, Green Belt and AONB policies will also be applied.

Natural Environment

12.27 Central Bedfordshire will develop a strategic, integrated approach to planning for the environment to maximise the opportunities and benefits provided by the areas natural resources. These will be delivered through the following policy areas:

- Implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures;
- Identifying opportunities and constraints to support the delivery of renewable energy;
- Planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure whilst protecting valued landscapes, geological conservation and soils;
- Recognising the economic benefits of natural capital delivered by ecosystems services;
- Requiring high standards of design and access to open space through a “green framework for growth” which maximises the regeneration and health benefits derived from sustainable development.
- Protecting and enhancing the water environment, including surface water features and groundwater.

All these elements will be set out in an Environmental Enhancement Strategy.

Green Infrastructure (GI)

12.28 The proposed Green Infrastructure (GI) network is set out in the Green Infrastructure Plans that cover Central Bedfordshire. The plans have been developed at a variety of scales as follows:

- A strategic level plan covering the whole historic county of Bedfordshire;
- Separate district level plans for the former Mid and South Beds areas and for Luton; and
- Community level plans developed by many individual towns and parishes.

12.29 The strategic plan is available on the Council's website.

12.30 The GI network is designed to be a strategically planned and managed system of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which meet the needs of existing and new communities by providing:

- some of the essential ecosystem services on which we rely;
- a healthy and diverse environment;
- attractive places to live and visit and a good quality of life; and
- help in achieving a carbon neutral future.

12.31 The GI Plans describe a 'multifunctional' network of GI which includes protected habitats, nature reserves, landscapes, heritage sites, green spaces, the rights of way network and green links which, when taken together, will help provide a robust natural environment which not only respects biodiversity for its intrinsic value, but will help create the quality environment needed for a healthy society. One of the principle outcomes of the GI planning process has been the designation of The Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Network. The Strategic Network will be the focus of GI provision. New development will be expected to contribute to the on-site delivery and ongoing management of GI to help achieve the aims of the GI plans. Development should not fragment or cause the loss of the existing or proposed GI network or build over key GI opportunity sites

12.32 The NPPF recognises the wider benefits of ecosystems services and the need to encourage the most effective use of land. Green infrastructure provides an integrated way of promoting this approach and the Council has undertaken further work in partnership with Cranfield University to understand the role that GI can play in ecosystems services (Spatial Mapping of Regulating Ecosystem Services (April 2012). This work has mapped the area's environmental resources and demonstrates how these can be used to best effect to

reduce environmental risk through carbon storage and water quality and quantity management.

- 12.33 Central Bedfordshire Council currently works in partnership with neighbouring local authorities, environmental groups and others to promote an integrated approach to providing GI through the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium. This has led to the identification of the network across Central Bedfordshire. The Consortium has produced the two GI plans that cover the northern and southern parts of the area. The Consortium has recently been awarded Local Nature Partnership (LNP) status as recognised in paragraph 180 of the NPPF. The new partnership will include a broader cross section of partners including those from the health sector and the Local Enterprise Partnership. The aim of LNP's is to help strengthen local action for nature highlighting the benefits of a healthy natural environment.
- 12.34 The GI network includes publicly accessible green spaces that are highly valued by local communities and visitors. The Leisure Strategy will define a hierarchy of publicly accessible green spaces. The Council will protect these sites and also take opportunities to promote their improvement through, for instance, proper management and take opportunities to create new green spaces where the need is identified (e.g. by the Leisure Strategy). This will be achieved through the invaluable work of local groups and communities with funding sought from development through planning obligations to help ensure GI is delivered. Whilst development in the GI priority areas may be expected it should not fragment the existing or proposed GI network or build over key GI opportunity sites.
- 12.35 In addition to the larger GI sites there are numerous smaller areas that are no less valuable, especially when taken in combination. All are valuable and especially where they form an important part of a wider GI network. There are a number of existing Parish Green Infrastructure Plans and through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan system, the Council will work with local communities to help identify protect and improve local GI.

The Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area

- 12.36 The Government has also introduced other initiatives such as Nature Improvement Areas (NIA's) These are large areas in the region of 10,000- 15,000 ha, where there are opportunities to focus efforts and deliver significant improvements for wildlife and people through the sustainable use of natural resources. Although a number of pilot areas have been designated it is now the intention of Government that these areas are proposed by partnerships at the local level and identified in Local Plans. Within Central Bedfordshire there is currently one NIA covering the Greensand Ridge National Character Area, the majority of

which is located in Central Bedfordshire. The Council acknowledges that this proposal meets the required DEFRA criteria (September 2012) and as such has identified it on the Policies Map. It is not the intention to restrict development in the NIA by specifying types of development that may be appropriate but to look for opportunities to enhance nature conservation through development. The Council is also only able to recognise the part of the NIA which falls within its administrative boundary but will work with neighbouring local authorities and other partners to achieve implementation of the NIA and GI network across the area.

Forest of Marston Vale (FoMV)

12.37 The Council remains committed to the Forest of Marston Vale and its adopted Forest Plan, as the principal means by which the environmental regeneration of the Vale will be achieved. The FoMV is one of 12 nationally designated community forests created in the 1990s. Their primary purpose is to lead in the regeneration of degraded industrial landscapes, which, in the case of the FoMV means addressing the effects of the brick making industry. The primary aim of the FoMV is to achieve 30% tree coverage in the Marston Vale. It is a strategic and regionally important Green Infrastructure initiative which will provide social, economic and environmental benefits. It covers some 61 square miles and extends into Bedford Borough in the north and to the M1 in the south. The creation of the Forest is guided by the Forest Plan which sets out aims and objectives as well as clear principles and proposals to 2031.

The Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway

12.38 Within the GI network there are other strategic scale projects such as the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway. This proposes to create a new waterway within a green corridor between the River Ouse in Bedford and the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes. Not only would it provide opportunities for water based tourism and recreation it would also enable the delivery of major GI components such as canal-side footpaths, cycleways and water habitats. The Council is supporting the delivery of the Waterway and development will not be permitted that prejudices its delivery. Furthermore, the Council will ensure that development along the route of the Waterway includes the delivery of the Waterway and the associated green corridor. The route is shown on the Key Diagram.

Policy 56: Green Infrastructure

The Council will achieve a net gain in Green Infrastructure (GI) by:

- requiring developer contributions to help provide GI including, the delivery of a linked network of new and enhanced open

spaces and corridors off-site.;

- requiring high quality multifunctional GI within development, that incorporates sustainable urban drainage systems and enhances biodiversity, landscape character, the rights of way network and design quality and makes provision for the ongoing and effective management of GI;
- continuing its support for the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale and the vision set out in the Forest Plan.
- focussing significant GI provision in the priority areas as identified in the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan. This will include maintaining support for the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park by safeguarding the route and, where appropriate, seeking developer contributions towards delivery of the Waterway.
- working positively with communities, for example through the neighbourhood planning process, developers, landowners and environmental groups to identify locally significant GI and any potential shortfalls in provision and the means by which shortfalls can be rectified
- not normally permitting development that would fragment or prejudice the GI network.
- supporting the creation of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area and other NIA's should they come forward.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

12.39 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when going about their activities. The role of the planning system has been reinforced by documents such as the Government White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' 2011, the 'UK National Ecosystem Assessment Understanding Nature's Value to Society' and 'Biodiversity 2020 and 'A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services'. The National Ecosystem Assessment shows that over 30% of the "ecosystem services" provided by the natural environment are in decline. Habitats are fragmented and unable to respond to pressures such as climate change and poor or inappropriate development. Critically, these recent publications help to establish and demonstrate the true value of ecosystem services and the very positive economic benefits they have for the Country as a whole.

12.40 Through the White Paper and the NPPF, government expects the planning system to facilitate a strategic and integrated approach within and across local areas. Planning should guide development to the best locations, encourage green design and enable development to enhance natural networks making them coherent and resilient as part of sustainable development. Most importantly it reinforces the overall

objective of no net loss of biodiversity and supports a net gain in biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.

- 12.41 The NPPF also requires policies to reflect the strength of protection according to the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated conservation sites and to map components of local ecological networks for habitat restoration or creation; planning permission for development that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused.
- 12.42 Central Bedfordshire contains a variety of habitats and landscapes which are integral to its character. These not only have an intrinsic value but also make a vital contribution to improving the quality of life of the people who live here.
- 12.43 Within the locality some areas are designated as being of particular importance for biodiversity and geology/geomorphology. They include 32 nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) such as Dunstable Downs, Sundon Chalk Quarry, Marston Thrift, Flitwick Moor, Wavendon ponds and Sandy Warren. There are also three National Nature Reserves (NNRs) at King's Wood near Heath and Reach, Barton Hills and Knocking Hoe near Shillington.
- 12.44 Additionally there are also 12 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and numerous County Wildlife Sites. There are also Local Geological Sites. There are no internationally designated sites in Central Bedfordshire.
- 12.45 Beyond these sites there are also a large number of local priority habitats and species which are identified in Section 41 of the NERC Act. Such habitats found in Central Bedfordshire include a range of rare grassland habitats, traditional orchards, lowland heath and wetland habitats such as wet woodlands. In addition Central Bedfordshire is home to a number of species of European and national significance which are protected by law, for example the great crested newt. Although relatively common locally the species is rare at the European scale.
- 12.46 The Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Forum has done valuable work mapping the opportunity areas which have the greatest potential for enhancing, restoring and creating priority habitats. This work, contained in "Rebuilding Biodiversity in Bedfordshire and Luton" 2006 has also informed the production of the various Green Infrastructure Plans across Central Bedfordshire.
- 12.47 Compared to the national average, a lower percentage of Central Bedfordshire is covered by ecological designations. One of the most serious problems facing biodiversity is the continued fragmentation of habitats, including migration and feeding corridors for birds and bats, many of which have become isolated islands surrounded by intensively farmed agricultural land, unsympathetic development and busy

transport routes. Not only does isolation critically reduce genetic diversity and hence chances for long term survival, it also makes habitats more susceptible to the effects of climate change as species cannot easily adapt, for example by migration. The Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Landscape Character Assessments and the Green Infrastructure Plans together provide a detailed framework and strategy designed to address the problems facing biodiversity in Central Bedfordshire.

- 12.48 Furthermore the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide also provides advice and guidance aimed at ensuring biodiversity is protected, improved and/or created in new development.

Policy 57: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Council will seek a net gain in biodiversity and geodiversity and support the maintenance and enhancement of habitats, identify opportunities to create buffer zones and restore and repair fragmented biodiversity networks.

Where appropriate, planning permission will not be granted for development that fails to enhance or create wildlife habitats or, where potential exists, sites of geological interest.

The Council will refuse planning permission for proposals that would result in harm to designated or proposed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Nature Reserves (NNR), unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site and the national policy to safeguard such sites. Where such development is permitted, measures will be required to mitigate and/or compensate for the effects of the development.

Development that would impact on the strategic ecological network, including County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Roadside Nature Reserves, causing fragmentation or otherwise prejudice its effectiveness will not normally be permitted.

Where the need for development outweighs its impact and is permitted within, adjacent to, or in proximity to designated sites or known locations of protected species or elements of the ecological network, appropriate mitigation and/or compensation to minimise such impacts will be necessary.

Soils and Agricultural Land

- 12.49 Soils are one of the most valuable and vital components of the environment and yet their importance is often overlooked. Not only are soils a critical factor in supporting varied biodiversity they also underpin

agriculture and therefore our food supply. Central Bedfordshire contains a high proportion of some of the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as Grades 1, 2 & 3a) and their protection is not only important in terms of our food security but also in maintaining a relatively small, but important number of agricultural jobs.

- 12.50 Since 1945 intensive agricultural practices have often harmed biodiversity. Fortunately modern farming methods are increasingly geared to redress past damage and the official policy is now to promote farming that balances environmental needs with those of food production, for example the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England for DEFRA. The Council fully recognises and supports the value of such schemes and the important role they play in supporting the Environmental Enhancement Strategy.
- 12.51 The Council will also continue to protect the best and most valuable agricultural land from significant development. It will achieve this by steering proposals to less valuable land accept where outweighed by other sustainability considerations, for example locational factors or where lower quality land supports valuable biodiversity assets.

Landscape

- 12.52 The landscape is probably the most defining feature of any location. The underlying topography and geology of any landscape will fundamentally shape human activity and biodiversity. Central Bedfordshire possesses a large number of varied landscapes and these have been identified and described in the Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment.
- 12.53 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. Character is what makes each part of the landscape distinct and gives each area its particular sense of place.
- 12.54 The LCA approach considers that all landscapes are valuable and seeks to protect their essential character. The purpose of the LCA is to help ensure change and development does not undermine whatever defines and or is valued about a place. It also advises on ways of improving character. The LCA for Central Bedfordshire provides a comprehensive evidence base which helps underpin forward planning and development management decisions. It provides key information for local authority officers, developers, local interest groups and local communities. It should be used to provide guidance for Neighbourhood Plans and should help steer development to the best location and positively influence its scale and design.

- 12.55 The landscapes and associated countryside of Central Bedfordshire are highly valued by the people who live within them as well as visitors. The Council will protect the open countryside for its own intrinsic value and for the wider benefits it provides for agriculture and biodiversity. It will also safeguard landscapes against inappropriate development and work to ensure new development respects landscape character, including tranquility. The LCA will be critical in this process and particular note should be taken of the key sensitivities and the related development guidelines. Development proposals will be required to include plans for landscape improvements in accordance with the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment. This will apply to all landscapes, but particularly to those affected by the Strategic Allocations, the existing urban fringe, the built edge of other settlements and 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.
- 12.56 The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide has been produced to enable high quality 'placemaking', a critical element in achieving sustainable development. It sets out policies and 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 might provide landscape (and biodiversity) improvements, for example by protecting views or softening an inappropriate hard urban edge.

The Chilterns AONB

12.57 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are the highest national landscape designation and are therefore subject to very robust protection, equivalent to that afforded to National Parks. 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.

Policy 58: Landscape

The Council will ensure that the highest level of protection will be afforded to the landscape of the Chilterns AONB primarily through conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Any development which has an unacceptable impact on the Chilterns landscape will be refused except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated the proposals are in the public interest and that there are no suitable alternative sites. This will, where relevant, include development outside of the AONB which is judged harmful to the AONB, through for example, adverse impacts due to visual intrusion including noise and light pollution.

Elsewhere landscapes will be conserved and improved in accordance with the Landscape Character Assessment and, where appropriate, the Forest Plan. Proposals that have an unacceptable impact on the landscape quality of an area will normally be refused. In particular, proposals will be refused that have an adverse impact on important landscape features or highly sensitive landscapes.

Where appropriate; development proposals will be required to include plans for landscape improvements in accordance with the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment, Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and the Forest Plan. This will apply in particular to the Strategic Allocations, the built edge of existing settlements and along prominent transport corridors.

Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

- 12.58 Woodlands, especially semi-ancient natural woodlands, Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), individual trees and hedgerows not only provide some of the most important habitats but also contribute to landscape character and help mitigate the effects of climate change. Throughout Central Bedfordshire trees, woodlands and hedgerows make up distinctive elements of the landscape. Unfortunately the area has a relatively low level of woodland cover compared to other areas of the Country, and many trees and hedgerows have been lost due to post war agricultural intensification. A lack of proper management of many remaining assets has also been an issue leading to stress and susceptibility to disease. The impacts of Dutch Elm Disease have already been experienced and there are also new threats from pests and diseases which could affect many species of tree including the beech. Poorly planned development has also had adverse impacts due, for example, to root damage during construction.
- 12.59 Development must be located with particular care. Construction close to, though not directly involving destruction of an ancient or semi ancient woodland can nevertheless still be damaging. Normally development will be kept as far as possible from these woodlands (and other vulnerable habitats). However, if nearby development is unavoidable on wider sustainability grounds, a minimum buffer of 15 metres should be maintained between the development boundary and the woodland.
- 12.60 Fortunately, initiatives like the Forest of Marston Vale and the adoption of more environmentally friendly farming practices such as the Environmental Stewardship scheme and support through the English Woodland Grant Scheme are helping to stop and even reverse losses. A better understanding and management of woodlands, trees and hedgerows is also helping deliver benefits as is the Council's support for tree planting both within the rural area and as part of new development.
- 12.61 Trees have a vital role to play in helping to offset the potential effects of climate change. The predicted worsening of the urban heat island effect can, at least in part, be mitigated through tree planting which provides shade as well as helping store carbon. Short rotation coppice can also provide renewable fuel for biomass boilers.
- 12.62 The landscape and biodiversity value of individual trees, notably ancient and specimen trees, including those found in avenues and traditional orchards, should not be underestimated particularly where they provide 'stepping stones' between otherwise isolated habitats. Hedgerows also provide vital wildlife corridors as well as being habitats in their own right. Development proposals will be expected to protect these features and contribute towards new planting where required.

Policy 59: Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

The Council will ensure that:

- woodlands, including ancient and semi-ancient natural woodlands, planted ancient woodland sites, orchards, hedgerows, specimen and veteran trees found outside woodlands will be protected from development and improved through proper management. Developers will be required to retain and protect such features from root damage and avoid changes to soil structure that could also increase the risk of subsidence where they lie in close proximity to building works.
- Any trees, including avenue trees, orchards, or hedgerows unavoidably lost to development will, where appropriate, be replaced with landscape and habitat features of at least equivalent value.
- an increase in tree cover, including new and/or expanded woodlands, will be promoted where it would not threaten other valuable habitats and sensitive heritage assets. New planting or contributions towards planting for the purposes of enhancing or regenerating urban areas and rural landscapes will be sought from new developments.
- appropriate tree planting for the purposes of mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change, including minimising the urban heat island effect and providing fuel from biomass will be sought in line with best practice.

Applications for Minerals and Waste Development

12.63 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.

12.64 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.

- 12.65 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.
- 12.66 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. 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.
- 12.67 Once land is lost to certain development it can be difficult to return it to agriculture. The best and most versatile land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a) 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.
- 12.68 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.
- 12.69 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.
- 12.70 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 59a: Applications for Minerals and Waste Development

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 the 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.

13.0 SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES

Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation

- 13.1 The area to the north of Houghton Regis has been identified as a suitable location for major new mixed-use development and all associated infrastructure.
- 13.2 A figure of around 7,000 new homes can be accommodated in total; at least 4696 homes on site 1 and at least 1,500 on site 2. Similarly around 40 hectares of employment is planned for – 32ha on site 1 and 8ha on site 2. However, of these totals only a proportion is likely to be delivered during the plan period. The figures in tables 6.1 and 10.1 (4,796 homes and 30ha of employment) represent the totals that are likely to be delivered during plan period.
- 13.3 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 proposed A5-M1 strategic link road provides the northern boundary for both sites.
- 13.4 Sufficient land has been removed from the Green Belt in order to accommodate the full development potential of the SA, as this will remove the need for a further review of the Green Belt boundary immediately after the plan period. The new Green Belt boundary is aligned with the A5-M1 link road.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 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.

Site 1

Vision - Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation Site 1

- 13.7 Site 1 of the SA will provide a community where people want to live, work, shop and visit. It will form a distinctive place whilst appropriately integrating with the existing urban edge. It will complement the wider regeneration of Houghton Regis and surrounding area by providing a range of housing, community facilities, employment and retail opportunities. A mix of commercial, residential and leisure uses will be focused around high quality public spaces connected to each other and the existing urban area by sustainable modes of transport. Networks of green infrastructure will create links with the surrounding environment to promote a healthy lifestyle and a safe and well-balanced community.
- 13.8 Although relatively unconstrained, Site 1 does contain some existing features which need to be considered as part of the development proposals. These include small areas of flooding in relation to the River Lee and the River Ouzel both of which fall within Flood Zone 2 and the subsequent impact that these have upon the Houghton Brook which is identified as having a high risk of flooding. There are also existing landscape and ecological characteristics within the site as well as a number of archaeological sites, features and listed buildings within the vicinity of the strategic allocation and there are electrical power lines running along the eastern edge of the site following the M1 corridor.
- 13.9 The relative lack of large scale significant constraints combined with its proximity to existing facilities makes this site a suitable location for a new large scale development and provides an opportunity to contribute to the regeneration of the existing urban area as well as enhancing the area as a whole.
- 13.10 The Houghton Regis North Framework Plan identifies key aspects of the strategic allocation including the A5-M1 link road, new Junction 11a and the Woodside Connection. These, and others, are being taken fully into account to facilitate the provision of a fully integrated and sustainable development.

Development Principles and Land Uses

- 13.11 Site 1 has the capacity to deliver at least 4696 new homes. The final number, however, along with the delivery of affordable housing and the mix of housing types and sizes, will be determined through the preparation of Master Plans and planning applications. Applying the affordable housing requirements to this site would result in the provision of up to 1409 affordable homes, subject to viability testing. The scale of infrastructure provision necessary for this site is likely to mean a reduction in the overall provision of affordable housing. However, given the scale of need the Council will ensure as much affordable housing is provided as possible through a variety of means.

This will include the use of review mechanisms to increase provision should viability improve over the life of the development.

- 13.12 Provision for at least 30 hectares of new employment land will be made within the plan period. This will comprise a range of employment uses and be concentrated at the proposed new Junction 11a and along the M1 corridor so as to maximise opportunities for good road access. Smaller pockets of employment land will be located in the strategic allocation within local centres.
- 13.13 The Infrastructure Schedule identifies the critical, essential and desirable infrastructure requirements associated with the strategic allocation. The Schedule identifies the need for new nursery provision, new educational facilities, community and health facilities, quality open spaces and facilities that promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including the delivery of high quality public transport. The master plans and planning applications will also make provision for a number of facilities and services within Site 1 which may include a hotel and public house, retail facilities including a foodstore, commercial uses such as a car showroom and leisure facilities. The Infrastructure Schedule identifies the provision of a new Junction 11a, the A5-M1 link road and the Woodside Connection as critical infrastructure. Initial enabling works will start towards the end of 2014.
- 13.14 Site 1 will benefit from strategic and local connections from the proposed A5-M1 link road that will connect to the M1 at a new junction, Junction 11a. The proposed Woodside Connection will alleviate heavy goods traffic by directing this away from the strategic allocation and Houghton Regis. The site will provide for connections between the Luton and Dunstable Busway into Site 1, contributing to an improved choice of sustainable transport modes including facilities that support improved access to the existing urban centres for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- 13.15 New development will be of a high quality, integrating local natural features and incorporating sustainable construction and design, creating a distinct identity and sense of place for Houghton Regis and encouraging the regeneration of the existing urban area. Site 1 of the strategic allocation will be developed with distinctive character areas and connected to the urban area at Houghton Regis by green corridors, movement corridors and key access routes such as the Chiltern Way and National Cycle Route 6. These will forge strong links with the existing communities and ensure opportunities for connectivity with Site 2 encouraging the use sustainable modes of transport.
- 13.16 The development site is located in an area which has a number of high value sites for biodiversity including SSSIs and NNRs in the vicinity. A development of this scale will have an impact on habitats and species beyond its boundaries caused by additional recreational activity. It is therefore essential that the proposed development contains appropriate

amounts of greenspace on site as well as making a significant contribution to increasing the carrying capacity of open spaces off site. A network of green infrastructure will be provided in and around the strategic allocation, linking to the surrounding countryside, this will provide a range of multifunctional greenspaces and incorporates the best environmental assets of the site.

- 13.17 A significant environmental risk from developing this site that has been modelled is the increase in runoff that could be generated. The development should cause no net increase in runoff rates. This can be achieved through sustainable design; maximising the amount of permeable surfaces (including permeable paving, brown and green roofs), and incorporating a comprehensive SuDS throughout the development site. The use of SuDS should also minimise potential negative effects on water quality. Soil carbon loss arising as a result of development should be also considered when planning green infrastructure and can be mitigated through appropriate planting schemes to maximise carbon capture.
- 13.18 Existing areas at risk of flooding have been identified in the south eastern corner of Site 1 along the Houghton Brook in the Luton and South Bedfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2008. Opportunities to reduce the risk of flooding here and further downstream in Luton along the River Lea will be investigated and alleviation methods will be implemented. Opportunities to reduce the risk of flooding downstream will be undertaken in liaison with Central Bedfordshire Council, Environment Agency and, where appropriate, Luton Borough Council. Master Plans will be supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment, which will take account of the advice in the Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Phase 1 Water Cycle Study 2008, Phase 2 Water Cycle Study 2010 and Luton and South Bedfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1, 2008 relating to flood risk mitigation and betterment.

Site 2

Vision - Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation Site 2

- 13.19 Site 2 will build upon the strong sense of existing local community and will complement the wider regeneration of Houghton Regis initiated through development of Site 1. High quality residential, commercial, community, leisure and open space facilities will be located in accessible locations that can be reached by walking, cycling or by public transport. Neighbourhoods will be connected by a green infrastructure network, maximising the opportunities created by the existing natural features and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Development Principles and Land Uses

- 13.20 Being slightly smaller in scale, Site 2 will accommodate at least 1,500 homes. As with Site 1, the final delivery of affordable housing and mix of housing types and sizes will be determined through the preparation of the Master Plan. Applying the affordable housing requirements to this site would result in the provision of up to 450 affordable homes, subject to viability testing. The scale of infrastructure provision necessary for this site is likely to mean a reduction in the overall provision of affordable housing. However, given the scale of need the Council will ensure as much affordable housing is provided as possible through a variety of means. This will include the use of review mechanisms to increase provision should viability improve over the life of the development.
- 13.21 Provision of approximately 8ha of new employment land will be provided within Site 2 that complements and supports employment opportunities provided in Site 1 and maximises its direct access to the strategic road network via the A5-M1 link.
- 13.22 The Infrastructure Schedule identifies the critical, essential and desirable infrastructure requirements associated with the Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation and growth as a whole. The schedule identifies the need for new nursery provision as well as new schools. However the strategic allocation will also contribute to the delivery of community and health facilities, quality open spaces and the delivery of reliable public transportation. The masterplan for the strategic allocation will also make provision for a number of facilities and services within Site 2 including retail facilities and commercial uses. The Infrastructure Schedule also identifies the provision of a new Junction 11a, the A5-M1 strategic link road and the Woodside Connection as critical infrastructure. As indicated above, these are included within the Houghton Regis North Framework Plan with the initial enabling works starting towards the end of 2014.
- 13.23 Site 2 will also be accessed from the existing urban area, the A5 and the A5120 and will be supported by public transport opportunities such as the extension of the Luton-Dunstable Guided Busway. Access by sustainable modes of transport will be further encouraged through the development of movement corridors that create a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 13.24 To contribute to the regeneration of Houghton Regis and provide a distinctive identity and character, the design of Site 2 will be of a high quality and incorporate sustainable design and construction. The design, scale and height of the new development will also reflect the existing urban character as well as the topography of the local landscape and will protect views from this area into the surrounding countryside. It will also have regard to the natural and heritage features found in this area, such as hedgerows and woodlands, the County Wildlife Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Houghton Quarry and Thorn Spring Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

- 13.25 As with site 1 this development site is located in an area which has a number of high value sites for biodiversity including SSSIs and NNRs. This development together with site 1 will have an impact on habitats and species beyond its boundaries. It will therefore be expected to provide suitable mitigation and contribute to significant biodiversity enhancements on and off site. Houghton Regis Chalk Pit (SSSI and CWS) is a particularly ecologically sensitive location and the development will therefore be expected to mitigate impacts as a result of construction and those resulting from increased visitor pressure to safeguard the biodiversity of this site. This will be through suitable onsite provision of green infrastructure and open space but there will also be a requirement for contributions towards long term management and maintenance.
- 13.26 The natural features within and surrounding the site, together with the area at risk of flooding along the Ouzel Brook provides a key opportunity to develop a green infrastructure network. As with site 1 there are also opportunities to enhance sustainable transport including walking and cycling routes along the National Cycle Network Route 6, the guided busway, the Icknield Way and the Chilterns Way.
- 13.27 The Council-owned site at Thorn Turn has been identified by the BEaR Project as the likely site to develop the infrastructure required under the contract. The procurement will see the delivery of a residual waste treatment solution, an organic waste solution, the redevelopment of the Council's existing Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) as well as the relocation of Dunstable HWRC to Thorn Turn and the delivery of two strategically located salt barns. The site has also been identified in the submitted Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. The masterplan will consider the possible linkages with this proposed development and any potential synergies.
- 13.28 As with Site 1, Site 2 will be developed in accordance with the detailed masterplan. There are also similar issues with regard to runoff, water quality and loss of soil carbon which equally need to be dealt with as with site 1. The development will also be supported by a site specific flood risk assessment, taking account of the advice in the Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment relating to flood risk mitigation and betterment.

Policy 60: Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation

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

1. provides a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable community. These will include:
 - approximately 4700 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
2. provides opportunities to assist in the regeneration of Houghton Regis through the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure that complements and supports existing facilities;
 3. provides the opportunity for long term integration with Site 2 to facilitate the delivery of the wider strategic allocation for this area;
 4. 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;
 5. 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; and
 6. 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.
 7. incorporates measures to adapt to climate change, minimise energy use, compensate 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:

1. provides a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable community. These uses will include
 - approximately 1,500 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.

2. provides opportunities to assist in the regeneration of Houghton Regis, through the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure that complement and supports existing facilities;
3. integrates with Site 1 to facilitate the delivery of the wider strategic allocation for this area;
4. 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;
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

...

Delivery and monitoring

13.29 The delivery of Site 1 will be phased over a number of years and will be secured by both public and private funding. There is the potential for early development within the plan period to be delivered ahead of major highway infrastructure, such as the A5-M1 link and Woodside Connection, subject to detailed consideration within a transport assessment for any planning application. There is the potential within the strategic allocation for this early delivery of homes and jobs to be provided across multiple “start points” within the strategic allocation. This will allow the maximum potential to be realised in relation to the

delivery of development whilst taking advantage of existing access points to the site.

- 13.30 Site 2 will be delivered in phases over a number of years and will be secured by both public and private funding. There is the potential for early development within Site 2 across multiple “start points” that could be delivered alongside major highway infrastructure, such as the A5-M1 link road. This will allow the maximum potential to be realised in relation to the delivery of development whilst taking advantage of existing access points to the site.
- 13.31 The masterplan and planning applications will outline in more detail the phasing of housing, employment and infrastructure provision. It will also confirm the roles and responsibilities for the delivery and funding of the associated infrastructure. An overview of the key milestones in relation to the delivery of the strategic allocation as a whole is provided below.

Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation Key Milestones

Framework Plan Completed	October 2012	
Masterplans/Applications Submitted	October 2012 onwards	
Estimated development phasing	2012-2016	19
	2016-2021	1821
	2021-2026	1693
	2026-2031	1263
	Post 2031	1,400
Total Dwellings	6196	
Start of A5-M1 Link Road and Junction 11A	2015	
Start of the Woodside Connection	2016	
Start of Development (Employment)	2014-2031	30ha
	post-2031	10ha

North of Luton Strategic Allocation

- 13.32 The North of Luton Strategic Allocation (SA) lies to the north of the built edge of Luton, between the M1 to the west and A6 to the east. The villages of Lower Sundon, Upper Sundon and Streatley lie to the north of the site. The area to the north is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the Chilterns AONB).
- 13.33 The SA will help meet the market and affordable housing needs of Luton which cannot be met within its administrative area. Combined with its good proximity to existing facilities and public transport, the land to the North of Luton is a suitable location for new, large scale sustainable development.

- 13.34 The revised Green Belt boundary will follow the boundary of the allocation. The extent of the site and the revised Green Belt boundary is shown on the Policies Map. A new strategic link road between the M1 and A6 will run along the northern edge of the site providing a long term defensible boundary to the Green Belt. There will be a limited incursion in the Chilterns AONB along the northern edge of the site and any development in this location will be in accordance with AONB policies.
- 13.35 The site is characterised by a large scale and relatively open field network which currently provides open views to Sundon Ridge and part of the AONB on the northern edge, and there are power lines which transect the site, both of which will impact upon the design and location of development within the site. Apart from the Chilterns AONB it is a relatively unconstrained area although it contains some discrete landscape and ecological features. There is scope for protection, mitigation and enhancement of the local features within the topography and proposed development, and there is likely to be a limited negative impact on the adjoining AONB and the predominantly open arable farmland.
- 13.36 In other respects, this location has a relative lack of constraints being of predominantly low environmental sensitivity. However, there are areas of historic landscape associated with Sundon Manor and Park which sits to the north outside of the allocation boundary; the Scheduled Monument of Drays Ditches along the northern edge of the Luton built up area within the allocation boundary; and the potential for other heritage assets within and surrounding the allocation. A programme of evaluation to establish the location, extent, nature and state of any archaeological features or deposits will be required as part of technical work to inform any Masterplan or planning application. Sufficient protection must be afforded to Drays Ditches Scheduled Monument and a carefully considered mitigation and enhancement strategy will be required.
- 13.37 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1 and the risk of fluvial, groundwater and sewer flooding will be investigated as part of a Flood Risk Assessment. Development should cause no net increase in runoff rates and this can be achieved through sustainable design; maximising the amount of permeable surfaces (including permeable paving, brown and green roofs), and incorporating a comprehensive SUDS throughout the development site. The use of SUDS should also minimise potential negative effects on water quality. Soil carbon loss arising as a result of development should also be considered when planning Green Infrastructure and can be mitigated through appropriate planting schemes to maximise carbon capture.

Vision - North of Luton Strategic Allocation

- 13.38 The North of Luton SA will contribute to the regeneration and enhancement of the surrounding area through provision of a greater range of housing and employment opportunities to meet some of Luton's needs, and through contributions to improved transport links. A new strategic link road between the M1 and A6 will provide relief for surrounding villages and the wider urban area. New local centres with community facilities and public spaces will provide a focal point for community activity and social interaction. New green infrastructure will be provided, linking existing and new green spaces within the Luton urban area through the development and to the countryside to enable greater accessibility and enjoyment of the area's rich historic and natural environment. The development will be designed to respond to and respect its attractive setting and location adjoining the Chilterns AONB.

Development Principles and Land Use

- 13.39 The site has the capacity to accommodate between 3,500 and 4,000 dwellings and up to 20 hectares of employment land along with community facilities, green infrastructure and a new strategic link road between the M1 and A6. The exact quantum of homes will be determined through the detailed design and layout of the scheme. A Framework Plan is being prepared for the North Luton SA and Sundon Rail Freight Interchange SA to set out the overall structure of the essential elements and will include an identification of broad areas for residential development, employment land, associated infrastructure and the route of the M1 to A6 Link Road. The specific locations of infrastructure and land uses will be developed through the production of more detailed site and area Masterplans and future planning applications.
- 13.40 A mix of approximately 3,200 private and affordable homes will be delivered in the plan period with the potential to provide additional homes to meet future needs beyond the plan period. The phasing of residential development, number, percentage of affordable housing and mix of housing types and sizes will be determined through detailed Masterplanning. Applying the affordable housing requirements to this site would result in the provision of up to 1,200 affordable homes, subject to viability testing. The scale of infrastructure provision necessary for this site is likely to mean a reduction in the overall provision of affordable housing. However, given the scale of need the Council will ensure as much affordable housing is provided as possible through a variety of means. This will include the use of review mechanisms to increase provision should viability improve over the life of the development.
- 13.41 Provision will be made for the delivery of approximately 13 hectares of new employment land within the plan period and the potential for a

further 7 hectares beyond the plan period. This will be concentrated to the western end of the SA to maximise opportunities for good road access and a range of employment generating uses may be considered to allow for flexibility. Opportunities within the local centres will be encouraged where appropriate and deliverable.

- 13.42 The Infrastructure Schedule identifies the critical, essential and desirable infrastructure requirements associated with the SA and growth as a whole. It identifies the need for new early years, primary and secondary educational facilities as well as significant utility infrastructure including a new primary sub-station. The SA will also contribute to the delivery of retail, community and health facilities, quality open spaces and public transport. Contributions may be sought towards some larger community facilities such as swimming pools and sports halls provided within the existing urban conurbation, in addition to nearby facilities in Central Bedfordshire, which will meet the needs of current and future residents of Luton and the North of Luton SA.
- 13.43 Green infrastructure provision here will focus on the creation of new infrastructure as well as the enhancement buffering and linking of existing biodiversity, landscape, heritage, access and open space features, and ensuring that the setting of the Chilterns AONB is maintained. Particular opportunities include the possible creation of new multifunctional greenspaces at Sundon House, Sundon Quarry, Warden and Galley Hills, and between Sundon and Sharpenhoe. Existing assets include Sundon Quarry (SSSI), Bramingham Park, George Wood (CWS), Sundon Wood (CWS), Sundon Park, Bramingham Wood (CWS), Sharpenhoe Clappers (SSSI), Drays Ditches (SAM) and the Theedway.
- 13.44 The development will create a new strategic Link Road between the M1 and the A6. This road is an essential element of the SA, linking the two existing major roads and providing relief for surrounding villages and the Luton urban area. It will also be the primary access to the North of Luton SA, linking to new spine and subsequent estate roads, and is critical in releasing access to Sundon RFI and its employment provision. The road will be delivered as part of the North of Luton SA and the Sundon RFI SA and will be funded by Section 106 agreements with the respective developers. It is anticipated to be dual carriageway between the new M1 Junction 11a and Sundon Park Road and wide single carriageway from Sundon Park Road to the A6 with land reserved to fully dual the road at a later stage should it be necessary. The timing of delivery of the road will be informed by detailed transport modelling and viability considerations, and will be delivered as soon as is viably possible. The specific route, nature and timing of this road will be set out in the Framework Plan and in greater detail at the detailed Masterplanning and planning application stage. The route will be carefully designed to take account of its context and address any impacts on the AONB and its setting. The site will be phased from west to east, delivering the first section of the Link Road between the M1

Junction 11a and Sundon Park Road to release access to the Sundon RFI and associated employment.

- 13.45 Junction 11a is committed by the Highways Agency and has been designed to cater for growth at Houghton Regis North and future proofed to accommodate growth at North Luton. Future proofing means that the footprint of the junction will be able to accommodate changes that may be required as part of the complete development for North of Luton and Sundon RFI. Some limited development may be delivered ahead of the M1-A6 Link Road and the amount and location will be determined by a full Transport Assessment to be submitted alongside any detailed Masterplan or planning application. It will need to demonstrate that any impact on the existing road network can be mitigated against.
- 13.46 The network of strategic green infrastructure, existing roads and access points will provide the basis for dividing the SA into separate areas for development. These will be linked principally by a spine road(s). High density development, local centres and other land uses generating significant volumes of travel will be located along the spine road(s) to encourage public transport use. Along these roads and within the neighbourhoods, priority will be given to cycling and walking to encourage and enable sustainable travel opportunities. Opportunities for walking and cycling access onto existing roads and footpaths linking to the existing Luton area will be maximised.
- 13.47 The design, scale and height of new development will protect key views and reflect the gentle rolling nature of the landscape. New development will be expected to be of high design quality in line with the requirements of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and the Chilterns Design Guide in those areas adjoining the AONB. Where there are key visual areas adjacent to the AONB or access points to the development such as the M1, A6 and new Link Road it is important that design reflects the location and provides a visually attractive access to Luton.

Policy 61: North of Luton Strategic Allocation

The North of Luton SA will

1. Provide a mix of uses necessary to achieve a sustainable and vibrant community including:
 - approximately 3,200 homes within the plan period;
 - up to 30% affordable homes, subject to viability testing;
 - approximately 13 hectares of new employment land within the plan period; period focused primarily to the west of the allocation to maximise access to the M1;
 - provision for educational facilities; comprising early years, primary, secondary and sixth form;
 - parks and children's play facilities;
 - allotments; and

- formal and informal open spaces.

2. Potential to provide up to 800 additional homes and 7ha employment beyond the plan period;
3. Create a series of attractive and well connected neighbourhoods comprising high quality new development and well designed amenity spaces;
4. 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 SA and the wider Luton conurbation;
5. Provide for efficient public transport routes through the SA that link with the guided busway and contribute to improving public transport links to Leagrave Station and Luton town centre;
6. Provide a new strategic Link Road between the M1 Junction 11a and the A6 to 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 SA;
7. Mitigate the impact of development on the nationally designated Chilterns AONB, through sensitive design of new development and significant landscape enhancements on and beyond the northern allocation boundary. Residential or employment development will not be permitted within the extent of the Chilterns AONB;
8. Provide a green infrastructure network, retaining, linking conserving and enhancing existing biodiversity, landscape, heritage, access and open space features which links the existing urban area and the wider countryside;
9. 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.

Delivery and Monitoring

13.48 A Framework Plan will be prepared as technical guidance for the North Luton SA and Sundon Rail Freight Interchange SA in partnership between the developers and Central Bedfordshire Council; and in consultation with Luton Borough Council, service providers and statutory bodies. Further detailed Masterplans and Design Codes will be required before the commencement of any development. Whilst the potential for some development ahead of the M1-A6 Link Road has been identified, this early delivery should not impact upon the existing urban area and should not prejudice the future delivery of the SA as a whole. A full Transport Assessment will be required to demonstrate that any impact on the existing road network can be mitigated against. Any

early delivery of development within the SA should also provide for the delivery of associated infrastructure improvements. The Framework Plan will set out the broad distribution of land uses and infrastructure. Subsequent Masterplanning will finalise the detailed layout of the SA and provide greater guidance about the scale and location of different land uses and infrastructure requirements. Design Codes will be required to provide more detailed principles to guide the design of the development.

- 13.49 A phasing plan to be provided as part of the Masterplanning process will outline in more detail the phasing of housing, employment and infrastructure provision. It will also confirm the roles and responsibilities for delivering and funding the associated infrastructure. An overview of the key milestones in relation to the delivery of the SA as a whole is provided below.

North of Luton SA Key Milestones

Framework Plan Completed	Late 2014	
Application Submitted	2015	
Application Determined	2016	
M1 Junction 11a*	2017	
1 st phase of Link Road (M1 Junction 11a to Sundon Park Road)*	2017-18	
Estimated development phasing	2011-2016	0
	2016-2021	700
	2021-2026	1,250
	2026-2031	1,250
	2031+	800
Total Dwellings	4,000	
Employment	2011-2031	13ha
	Post-2031	7ha

*Timing of delivery to be determined by the Highways Agency

East of Leighton-Linslade Strategic Allocation

- 13.32 Leighton-Linslade is an attractive market town located on the western edge of Central Bedfordshire that is made up of two historic settlements, Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, which straddle the River Ouzel. The town has a current estimated population of about 37,000.
- 13.33 The town is well connected to London, Milton Keynes, and Birmingham by road and rail and it is ideally located to access the strategic highway network. These key routes also provide access to a number of surrounding towns including Luton, Dunstable Houghton Regis and Aylesbury.
- 13.34 The town centre offers a range of retail and community facilities that contribute substantially to its attractiveness as a place to live but both

its physical and social infrastructure would benefit from improvement. There are several national retailers represented in the town and the historic layout of the town with its Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Market Square, make it an attractive retail centre, with its own special character. In the latest retail study the town centre is considered to be performing well with a good level of turnover and few vacancies. The absence of heavy traffic makes it a pleasant shopping experience.

- 13.35 The town is surrounded by a rural hinterland but has significant amounts of land which have either been quarried (with limited restoration) or which are currently being quarried for minerals.

Vision - East of Leighton-Linslade Strategic Allocation

- 13.36 The Leighton-Linslade urban extension will be integrated physically and socially into the town in a way that respects the character of the place as a market town, meets overall sustainability objectives, improves public transport for both new and existing residents and reduces outward commuting. It will improve the green infrastructure network and help to address the deficit of sporting facilities in the town. It will also introduce new community facilities commensurate with the needs of the urban extension in particular.
- 13.37 The East of Leighton-Linslade SA lies on the eastern and north-eastern edge of the town, about 2 miles from the town centre. It is about 240 hectares in size and extends from Heath Road in the north to the Stanbridge Road in the south. Vehicular access to the site will be largely through the use of existing roads, with access to the A505 via Stanbridge Road, but access by other modes will extend to off highway corridors such as that along the Clipstone Brook and other links provided primarily by the rights of way network.
- 13.38 The current uses of the site primarily consist of a large area of existing and proposed mineral extraction which has had a major impact on the character of the existing urban edge, and open farmland which extends southwards to Stanbridge Road. The topography of the site is relatively flat although land further to the east has occasional small hills or knolls.
- 13.39 There are two watercourses, the Clipstone Brook and the Eggington Brook, which extend across the site into the existing urban area to the River Ouzel. There are also other minor watercourses and ditches which bound and cross the site and form part of the existing natural and man-made land drainage system. The Clipstone Brook has a flood plain which falls within Zone 2 and Eggington Brook currently includes a flood attenuation feature. Increased runoff as a result of development is a risk and development should cause no net increase in runoff rates. This can be achieved through sustainable design; maximising the amount of permeable surfaces (including permeable paving, brown and

green roofs), and incorporating a comprehensive SUDS throughout the development site. The use of SUDS should also minimise potential negative effects on water quality. Soil carbon loss arising as a result of development is significant and should also be compensated.

- 13.40 There are a number of existing ecological features within the site including small areas of woodland, scrub and grassland such as at Broomhills, Chamberlains Barn and Shenley Hill, as well as numerous hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The Clipstone Brooke is also a designated County Wildlife Site.
- 13.41 The Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway, which currently operates as a tourist attraction, runs within the site close to Vandyke Road. There is a level crossing near the junction with Meadway and another across Shenley Hill Road, however a new crossing would be required to access the site north of the Vandyke Road.
- 13.42 Leighton-Linslade Town Council has published its "Big Plan" following extensive public consultation. The "Big Plan" proposed a comprehensive and ambitious agenda for improving the town's infrastructure and facilities in order to address the implications of expected housing and employment development over the coming years. This has been taken into consideration during the identification of the Vision for the SA as well as during the production of the East of Leighton Linslade Framework Plan.

Development Principles

- 13.43 As outlined above, an appropriate mix of private and affordable homes will be delivered in the SA to the East of Leighton Linslade. Up to 2,500 homes will be delivered in this SA by 2031. Applying the affordable housing requirements to this site would result in the provision of up to 750 affordable homes, subject to viability testing. The scale of infrastructure provision necessary for this site is likely to mean a reduction in the overall provision of affordable housing. However, given the scale of need the Council will ensure as much affordable housing is provided as possible through a variety of means. This will include the use of review mechanisms to increase provision should viability improve over the life of the development.
- 13.44 In addition, provision for approximately 16 hectares of new employment land will be made. This will comprise a range of employment uses to contribute to local employment opportunities, strengthen the local economy and help reduce out-commuting.
- 13.45 In relation to the East of Leighton Linslade SA, a need has been identified for new lower and middle schools as well as a contribution to the expansion of the existing upper school. These will be included within the delivery of this site. Additional community facilities will also be provided, the exact nature and type of facility will be agreed at the

planning application stage but could include delivery of a neighbourhood centre to accommodate retail facilities, a multi-purpose community hall, youth facilities and other uses such as a new doctor's surgery, a nursery and a public house/restaurant. Smaller-scale local centres will also be provided to ensure residents have access to local facilities.

13.46 A new Eastern Distributor Road, which is a critical piece of infrastructure. This will be delivered as part of the overall development in order to:

- provide a high standard multi-modal transport link through the development, linking new homes with schools, the neighbourhood centre, community facilities and employment areas;
- link the town's four existing eastern radial routes and providing an alternative route for cross-town movements, avoiding the town centre;
- facilitate the delivery of new, looped public transport routes to serve the development and town; and
- to facilitate the introduction of potential traffic management, road safety and environmental improvement schemes for the eastern side of the town.

13.47 A 'Green Wheel' of interconnecting green infrastructure will be provided, that provides open space, recreation and walking, cycling and riding routes, and enhances the landscape, biodiversity and heritage, including the setting of the Narrow Gauge Railway. Particular opportunities include creating multifunctional greenspace at Clipstone and Shenley Hill, enhancing the Clipstone Brook (CWS), Ouzel and railway line corridors, and creating links to and enhancing nearby green infrastructure assets including Tiddenfoot Waterside Park, Linslade Wood, and the area around Stockgrove (including Stockgrove Country Park, Rammamere Heath, Kings Wood, Oak Wood and Rushmere Park).

13.48 This eastward expansion of the urban fringe into the historic agricultural hinterland and landscape setting of the town also has particular potential impact upon the rural character of the associated historic hamlet of Clipstone (incorporating 3 listed buildings) and the designated Conservation Area of Eggington village (incorporating 15 listed buildings)

13.49 In the case of the latter, the particular importance of outward views to open countryside, underscoring the essential rural character of the village, have been emphasised in a recent review of the Conservation Area (March 2010).

13.50 Along the entire eastern edge of the proposed development, therefore, every effort should be made to mitigate the impact upon the historic environment, (through lesser densities and green open space

provision, for example), with the objective of retaining as much as possible of the existing open countryside character.

- 13.51 New social and community infrastructure will be provided to meet the needs of new residents in a way and on a scale as to also benefit existing residents. These facilities will include retail, community, health and education uses.
- 13.52 The highway network leading from or associated with the new development will be designed or altered to both promote the use of sustainable modes of transport and to minimise the impact of any increase in vehicular traffic on the town centre.
- 13.53 The new development will bring about improvements to local facilities that support the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport routes linking the new development to the existing urban area.
- 13.54 The new development will be supported by a travel plan designed to promote access to/from the site or area by sustainable modes of transport and to facilitate travel choice.

Policy 62: East of Leighton-Linslade

The East of Leighton–Linslade SA will comprise the area from Shenley Hill to the north to Stanbridge Road to the south. The development will provide a mix of uses to achieve a sustainable community. These will include:

- up to 2,500 dwellings;
- up to 30% affordable homes, subject to viability testing, to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire residents
- approximately 16 hectares of employment land creating up to 2,400 new jobs;
- a range of community facilities;
- provision for educational facilities;
- a Country Park
- allotments;
- parks and childrens' play facilities; and
- formal and informal open spaces and sports provision.

In conjunction with delivering the above, the development will provide:

- an Eastern Link Road through the development such that it minimises impact on the existing road network. It is to be provided on a phased basis concurrently with new development to link Heath Road with Stanbridge Road, new or extended bus services and in a manner that accords with best practice urban design principles.
- new employment land in locations that are attractive to employers, give good access to the primary route network and

will provide good quality, local job opportunities.

- residential land which can be developed with a mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures and respects the general character of Leighton–Linslade using best practice urban design principles.
- land for assisted living for the elderly.
- additional and improved educational capacity, one Lower School and Middle School immediately to the south of the Neighbourhood Centre and a further Lower School located on the south side of the Eastern Link Road between Heath Road and Vandyke Road, in accessible locations to meet the demand of new residents. Land will be provided for the expansion of Vandyke Upper School in a way that allows for replacement of the buildings in due course.
- a contribution to Green Infrastructure around the town by helping to create a ‘Green Wheel’ of corridors that include open spaces, walking and cycling routes and preserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity and heritage of the area,
- a main area of formal sports pitches and associated facilities, in excess of 10 new full pitches, will be provided on the outer edge of the development to the east of the neighbourhood centre and a second informal recreation area will be located to the north of Vandyke Road near to the summit of Shenley Hill,
- a form of layout and design that responds positively to the Narrow Gauge Railway by providing an attractive setting for its continued operation through the site
- travel plans that set out the long term strategy for managing multimodal access both within, to and from the site by sustainable modes of transport including the mechanisms for their future development and funding.
- contributions to the rail station interchange that facilitates multi modal access to the site
- contributions for walking/cycling and public transport enhancements linking the development to the town
- a neighbourhood centre, adjacent to Vandyke Upper School, and local centres in accessible locations within the new development. The facilities will include a community hall, health services and retail facilities commensurate with the size of the development, residential areas and small scale Class B1 uses.
- land for a new town cemetery.
- a form of development that incorporates measures to adapt to climate change, minimises energy use, compensates for loss of carbon in soils and includes recycling centres and renewable energy technologies.

The Green Belt boundary will follow the extent of the Strategic Allocation.

Delivery and Monitoring

- 13.55 A Framework Plan has been prepared and endorsed for Development Management purposes. for the East Leighton Linslade SA in partnership between the Local Authority, developers, statutory bodies and service providers. The Framework Plan sets out the general layout of the SA and provides guidance on the scale and location of different land uses and infrastructure requirements.
- 13.56 The East of Leighton-Linslade SA will be delivered in phases over a number of years and will be secured by private funding. This will be outlined in greater detail within the Framework Plan which will also confirm the roles and responsibilities for those partners who will be responsible for the delivery and funding of the associated infrastructure. An overview of the key milestones in relation to the delivery of the SA as a whole is provided below.

East of Leighton Linslade SA Key Milestones

Framework Plan Completed	Spring 2013	
Application Submitted	Summer 2011	
Application Determined		
Start of Development (Housing)	2011-2016	0
	2016-2021	1185
	2021-2026	1170
	2026-2031	Up to 145
Start of Development (Employment)	2014-2026	Approximately 16ha

Wixams Southern Extension

- 13.57 Wixams is a new settlement being built on the former Elstow Storage Depot, which straddles the boundary of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough. Planning permission has been granted for about 4,500 homes in total. The adopted Planning and Development Brief for Wixams identified land to the south as an expansion area, which was subsequently allocated in the Site Allocations DPD for mixed use development comprising 1,000+ dwellings, a minimum of 5 ha of employment land and other uses to be identified in a Planning and Development Brief and Masterplan (Policy MA3). The Site Allocations DPD also restricted development on MA3 to beyond 2021.
- 13.58 The Wixams is designated as a Major Service Centre, recognising the scale of the settlement and the level of facilities committed, and is considered a sustainable location to accommodate additional development. The Site Allocations DPD identified a need to explore the potential of additional land to the south of allocation MA3 to deliver further mixed-use development, together with a countryside park.

Development Principles and Land Uses

- 13.59 The Wixams Southern Extension, as shown on the Policies Map, will deliver mixed use development, including 500 dwellings, a countryside park and other associated infrastructure. This new development will be well integrated with, support and help to deliver the Wixams main settlement, and will benefit from the significant infrastructure being delivered. Accordingly, contributions will be sought from the Wixams Southern Extension towards infrastructure provision within the main settlement, including the railway station and the secondary school.
- 13.60 Development will continue to be focused on Villages 1 – 4 of the Wixams main settlement to support the delivery of infrastructure. Commencement of development on the Wixams Southern Extension is not expected before 2021, however, if certain delivery targets are not met within the Wixams main settlement, the Policy below enables the early delivery of the Wixams Southern Extension.
- 13.61 A Masterplan and subsequent Design Code(s) will be produced to ensure the comprehensive development of both allocated site MA3 and the Southern Extension and to ensure both are integrated with the main settlement. The Masterplan will determine the timing and phasing of development.
- 13.62 In order to safeguard and maintain adequate separation from Houghton Conquest, a countryside park will be established on land within the allocation boundary at the southern end of the Southern Extension. The scale and exact location of the countryside park will be determined through the Masterplan. This countryside park will include community woodland that will contribute to the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale. Advance planting will be needed in this area as close to the outset of development as possible in order to establish the countryside park.

Policy 63: Wixams Southern Extension

The Wixams Southern Extension, as shown on the Policies Map, will deliver mixed use development, including 500 dwellings and a countryside park, as an integrated extension to the Wixams main settlement.

A Masterplan and subsequent Design Code(s) will be prepared to ensure the comprehensive development of both allocated site MA3 and the Southern Extension and to ensure both are integrated with the main settlement.

To ensure the viability and timely delivery of the physical and community infrastructure necessary at the Wixams main settlement,

development will only commence on the Southern Extension Area site before 2021 if any of the following infrastructure delivery targets are not met at the Wixams main settlement:

By the end of 2015: The material commencement of the fourth Village at the Wixams.

By the end of 2017: The completion of the consented Station Access Road providing a link from the B530 to the Wixams Railway Station

By 2020: The delivery of the Wixams Railway station, as shown on the approved Masterplan, or any subsequently approved plans.

Should any of the above delivery targets not be met, then the Southern Extension Area site permitted under this policy will be brought forward. Planning applications for the Southern Extension can be brought forward in advance of 2021 to ensure timely delivery post 2021 or in the event that the targets above are not met.

Advance planting on the southern boundary of the Southern Extension will be required as close as reasonably practical to the commencement of development, in order to safeguard and maintain separation from Houghton Conquest. A countryside park of strategic importance will be delivered on land within the allocation boundary, at the southern end of the Southern Extension, incorporating this advance planting.

Development of this site must be consistent with the Masterplan for the Wixams main settlement, and will be subject to:

- production of a Masterplan and subsequent Design Code(s);
- provision of strategic landscaping and publicly accessible open space within the site;
- contributions towards infrastructure provision within the main settlement;
- preparation of a town-wide Transport Assessment to ensure that potential cumulative impacts on the Strategic Road Network are taken into account;
- provision of sufficient capacity within the public foul water system and the wastewater treatment works to meet the needs of the development; and
- the provision of a suitable buffer zone to protect significant water and wastewater infrastructure from inappropriate development.

Chaul End Vehicle Storage Depot Strategic Allocation

13.63 The Vehicle Storage Depot lies to the north of Caddington with an access onto Chaul End Road. It is 27 hectares in size and was originally developed by General Motors as a test track for new and

concept vehicles it was producing in Luton. When testing moved to a new facility, the site was converted to be used as a storage facility for cars and vans. The site is mainly laid to hard standing and is enclosed by both woodland and landscape bunds which screen it from the surrounding rural landscape. The Vehicle Storage Depot has been identified as a suitable location for a housing scheme with associated open space and community facilities.

- 13.64 The site lies close to Luton, immediately south of the Chaul End hamlet. To the east of the site is the M1 which is separated from the site by some woodland and open fields. Fields lie between the site and Caddington village to the south. Chaul End Road runs past the western edge of the site and provides a direct link to the A505 Hatters Way north of the site. Chaul End Road also forms the boundary to the Chilterns AONB to the west of the site.
- 13.65 The site is washed over by Green Belt, and therefore the boundary will be altered to remove the land allocated. The new defensible Green Belt boundary will surround the site along the existing site boundaries which are clearly marked on the ground with the woodland and fences.
- 13.66 It is a standalone site, disconnected from Caddington and Luton, and the surrounding area is characterised by the large scale and relatively open field network which includes the Chilterns AONB. Any development will need to ensure that the surrounding landscape and views are protected and that the impact on the AONB is minimised.
- 13.67 In addition to the above, this site is also located within an area that has produced Palaeolithic archaeological remains, the significance of which is internationally recognised. The quality of the Palaeolithic remains thus far recovered in Bedfordshire and in particular Caddington means that the site has the potential to produce further evidence of the Palaeolithic landscape. The previous land-use of this site may have impacted upon the later archaeological features, however, the depth at which Palaeolithic remains are commonly found in such upland contexts means that their survival at this site cannot be ruled out without on site assessment. Research into the Palaeolithic is a national archaeological priority, and therefore any work on the archaeological potential of the site would need to include input from an appropriately qualified Palaeolithic specialist.
- 13.68 Whilst the site is smaller than other strategic allocations in the Development Strategy, there are several reasons why the site is being allocated for development at this time. Firstly, the proposal is being promoted through the neighbourhood planning process by Caddington and Slip End Parish Councils (who are producing a joint Neighbourhood Plan). Whilst the community is generally supportive of the proposals, the uncertain timetable and risks associated with the neighbourhood planning process means that a proposal of this size is more appropriately allocated within the Development Strategy. The

proposals have already been publicised in the vicinity of the site by the developers between April 2013 and December 2013 via an extensive community consultation programme including a community planning weekend, a masterplan update event and a further public consultation event. Secondly, it is a brownfield site and reduces the necessity to identify further greenfield sites to contribute to meeting housing need in Central Bedfordshire. Thirdly, the site is surplus to General Motors requirements and it is timely to allocate the site in line with the exceptional circumstances set out in the Green Belt Technical Paper.

Development Principles and Land Uses

- 13.69 The site will be developed to include a mix of 325 dwellings and 300 square metres of community buildings are also to be provided to support the community. Two accesses from Chaul End Road are proposed. The development will form a distinctive place whilst appropriately integrating with the surrounding area and be focused around high quality public spaces, connected to each other and the existing settlements by sustainable modes of transport. Pedestrian and cycle links to the village of Caddington will be provided alongside appropriate public transport and sustainable urban drainage infrastructure. A network of Green Infrastructure will be provided, linking with the surrounding environment to promote the network of green infrastructure proposed in the Caddington and Slip End Neighbourhood Plan, which aspires to achieve the highest quality level of sustainability possible in accordance with recognised good practice.
- 13.70 Being a standalone development, sustainable transport connections must be in place to access employment, retail and community facilities in neighbouring towns and villages. Suitable pedestrian and cycle links must be provided to connect with existing routes on Hatters Way and within the village of Caddington including a new footway along Chaul End Road as well as enhanced Public Rights Of Way connections to the wider area. Public transport connections will be required to link the development to both Caddington and the Luton conurbation, including the Guided Busway. Highways improvements to Chaul End Road will also be necessary, to include traffic calming measures and an appropriate layout agreed with the Council's Highways team for the junction of Chaul End Road and Hatters Way.
- 13.71 The development of this site will respond to its proximity to the Chilterns AONB. Accordingly the development will be expected to be of high design quality in line with the requirements in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide and Chilterns Design Guide and must ensure that the wider landscape and views are protected. The existing site is current landscaped using woodlands and bunds and this alongside any extra landscaping proposed must pay respect to the sensitive nature of the AONB.

Policy 63a: Land at Vehicle Storage Depot, Chaul End, Caddington

Land at the former Storage Depot in Chaul End is allocated for 325 homes, community facilities, open space and Green Infrastructure.

Development will provide the following:

- 325 market and affordable homes.
- Two access points from Chaul End Road.
- Suitable pedestrian and cycle links to connect with existing non-vehicular routes on Hatters Way and within the village of Caddington including a new footway along Chaul End Road. New public transport connections to Caddington, Luton and the Guided Busway.
- Delivery of measures to improve traffic issues along Chaul End Road and appropriate junction re-configuration works for the junction of Chaul End Road and A505 Hatters Way.
- A Green Infrastructure network within the site which links in to the existing and proposed green infrastructure beyond the site
- Appropriate provision of community buildings, community facilities, and children's play and formal sport space in line with the Leisure Strategy.
- Mitigation against the impact of development on the nationally designated Chilterns AONB, through the sensitive design of new development and landscape enhancements within and at the boundary of the allocation.
- A form of development which incorporates measures which allow it to adapt to climate change, provide sustainable urban drainage, minimises energy use, compensates for loss of carbon in soils and provide recycling measures and renewable energy technologies.

The site will be removed from the Green Belt, and the boundary will follow the existing landscape and fenced perimeter, A Masterplan and Design Code will be prepared to help ensure the above is delivered.

Given the location of this site within a recognised Palaeolithic archaeological landscape, an assessment of the site's Palaeolithic archaeological potential and the investigation and characterisation of any Palaeolithic archaeological remains, by a recognised specialist in the discipline, must form part of any planning application for this site.

Sundon Rail Freight Interchange Strategic Allocation

Sundon RFI – Vision

- 13.72 Sundon Rail Freight Interchange (RFI) Strategic Allocation (SA) is located on land adjacent to Sundon Quarry and lies to the north of the built edge of the urban area of Luton bounded to the west by the Midland Mainline railway and the M1. The North of Luton SA adjoins the site in the south east, the village of Upper Sundon is located to the north east and the Chilterns AONB lies beyond Upper Sundon village.
- 13.73 The site referred to as the Sundon RFI SA refers to the arable land adjoining the rail line, adjacent to the former Sundon Quarry. The adjacent County Wildlife Site (CWS) and Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) formerly used for quarrying, are not included in the SA. Current access to the site is obtained via a gated private road east of Chalton Cross however the development will necessitate improved and direct access to the site from a new M1 Junction 11a. A new and improved road network to this junction will be constructed prior to the occupation of Sundon RFI SA forming the first part of the M1 to A6 strategic Link Road.
- 13.74 Adjoining the site to the east is a disused quarry comprising Sundon Chalk Pits (CWS) and within the CWS is Sundon Chalk Quarry (SSSI). The SSSI comprises a variety of habitats containing important plant and animal species. Due to unauthorised access to the site over the years there are areas of the CWS and SSSI that could be enhanced and better managed. The CWS forms part of a larger CWS that extends to the north into the Chilterns AONB. There is also a further small CWS to the south of the site, Chalton Scrub and Grassland CWS.
- 13.75 Only the land to be developed as part of the Sundon RFI SA will be removed from the Green Belt. This will provide a permanent Green Belt boundary.

Sundon RFI – Vision

- 13.76 The strategic allocation on the land at Sundon Quarry is adjacent to the North of Luton SA, and will maximise the advantages arising from its specific location, alongside the Midland Mainline railway and M1 to provide a Rail Freight Interchange for the sub-region. It will contribute to the regeneration of Luton and Central Bedfordshire through the provision of a range of employment opportunities and reduction in freight movements. A strategic road link from the new M1 Junction 11a will improve accessibility to the RFI, as well as to the north of Luton and the North of Luton SA. Green Infrastructure in the adjoining SSSI and CWS, will be well managed and maintained enabling greater accessibility to the areas rich and diverse natural environment.

Development Principles and Land Use

- 13.77 The land at Sundon RFI SA, approximately 55 hectares in area, will be developed as a Rail Freight Interchange providing an intermodal facility for pick-up/drop-off access to the rail network on the western side of the site. The RFI itself will be approximately 5 hectares in size. Provision will be made for approximately 40 hectares of employment land, accommodating some 170,000 sqm of B8 floorspace in the central and eastern parts of the site. This employment floorspace will complement the RFI and will be expected to utilise the opportunity for rail based freight movements. Therefore the on site rail infrastructure and operational intermodal terminal should be constructed during the first phase of development.
- 13.78 It is essential for the site that the M1 junction 11a is constructed and an appropriate road connection to the junction is in place prior to the occupation of the RFI. The development of the RFI will contribute towards the delivery of a road connection from Junction 11a to Sundon Park Road, which will form the first part of the strategic route linking the M1 and the A6. The Infrastructure Schedule identifies the provision of the new Junction 11a and M1-A6 link as critical infrastructure for the sub-region. Opportunities for access by sustainable modes of transport will be determined through a Transport Assessment.
- 13.79 Although the development is primarily of a warehousing nature, the design of the buildings and site layout will be of a high quality so as to enhance the site and surrounding area. The design, scale and height of the buildings will respect the topography especially to the south of the site, and will seek to minimise the intrusiveness of the development on the Chilterns AONB. Landscaping will be used to enhance the environment of the RFI and be sensitive due to its close proximity to the adjoining CWS and SSSI. Landscaping will also be used to mitigate potential visual and noise impacts and improve the local wildlife habitats creating linkages with the adjoining CWS and SSSI.
- 13.80 The use of sustainable building techniques and technologies that are energy efficient and the use of renewable energy sources, where viable, will be adopted to minimise the impact on the environment.
- 13.81 The development of the RFI offers the opportunity to enhance and manage Sundon Chalk Pit CWS and Sundon Chalk Quarry SSSI because these are in the same ownership as the SA. Enhancement and mitigation measures will be carried out to increase the ecological value of the site and these adjacent designated areas. Specific opportunities for enhancement measures and improvement to the management of the CWS and SSSI to enhance the Green Infrastructure links will be identified at the masterplanning stage.
- 13.82 There is the potential for heritage assets to be present within and surrounding the SA. A programme of evaluation to establish the

location, extent, nature and state of any archaeological features or deposits will be required as part of any technical work to inform any masterplanning or planning application.

13.83 Although there are no areas at risk of flooding on site, SUDs will be incorporated into the development to manage the run-off. These will also ensure that there is no increased run-off into the SSSI and CWS which could impact upon its ecology.

13.84 The RFI is a specific form of development responding directly to its particular location adjacent to the Midland Mainline railway and proposed Junction 11a on the M1 motorway, and to the consequent opportunity to provide a strategic rail freight interchange resource for the sub-region. The RFI will also provide an opportunity to reduce road freight movements in the wider sub-region and is critical to the delivery of a substantial proportion of the employment resource for Luton and Central Bedfordshire.

Policy 64: Sundon Rail Freight Interchange

The Sundon RFI will:

- provide an intermodal rail facility on approximately 5 hectares of the site;
- provide for approximately 40 hectares of new employment land accommodating approximately 170,000 sqm of B8 floorspace;
- 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; and
- preserve and enhance heritage assets within and around the site.
- provide opportunities for sustainable transport links to be determined through a Transport Assessment.

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.

Delivery and Monitoring

13.85 A Framework Plan will be prepared as technical guidance for the Sundon RFI SA and North of Luton SA in partnership between the developers and Central Bedfordshire Council; and in consultation with Luton Borough Council, service providers and statutory bodies. This

will include a transport assessment which assesses the cumulative impact of the proposals on the strategic and local road network.

- 13.86 It is essential for the site that the M1 Junction 11a is constructed and an appropriate strategic road connection to that junction is in place prior to the occupation of the RFI development. That road connection will form the first part of the M1-A6 link between M1 Junction 11a and Sundon Park Road. The on-site rail infrastructure and operational intermodal terminal should be constructed during the first phase of development
- 13.87 A detailed Masterplan will finalise the layout of the SA and provide more detailed guidance about the scale of development and infrastructure requirements, including the enhancement and management measures for the adjoining CWS and SSSI. A Design Code will also be required to provide more detailed principles to guide the design of the development taking into account the proximity to Chilterns AONB, CWS and SSSI.
- 13.88 The Framework Plan and subsequent masterplanning will outline in more detail the phasing of the development. It will also confirm the roles and responsibilities for delivering and funding the associated infrastructure. An overview of the key milestones in relation to the delivery of the SA as a whole, is set out below

Sundon Rail Freight Interchange SA: Delivery of key milestones

Framework Plan Completed	2014
Application Submitted	2015
Application Determined	2016
Completion of M1 Junction 11a*	2017
Delivery of a road link between site and M1 Junction 11a*	2017/18
Start of development	2018
Completion of development	2021

*Timing of delivery to be determined by the Highways Agency

North East of Flitwick Strategic Allocation

- 13.89 Land to the north east of Flitwick, to the north of the Maulden Road, Industrial Estate and to the south of the A507, has been identified as a suitable location for an employment site and Country Park. The allocation extends to the A507 as indicated on the Policies Map.
- 13.90 The employment site, which will deliver up to 18ha of B1, B2 and B8 employment generating uses, is accessed directly from Maulden Road which in turn provides direct access to the A507 and subsequently the A1 and M1. The site is also in close proximity to the railway station within Flitwick as well as Flitwick town centre which offers a range of services and facilities.

- 13.91 The employment site will form a direct extension of, and will be linked to, the existing industrial estate off Maulden Road, providing the opportunity for existing businesses to expand as well as the opportunity to attract new inward investment to the town.
- 13.92 The Green Belt boundary will be altered to remove the land identified to deliver employment uses within the allocation. The new defensible Green Belt boundary will be enforced by the creation of the Country Park to the north of the site up to the A507, which could include a new burial ground. The Country Park, which will remain within the Green Belt, will also act to further ensure the permanent separation between Flitwick and Ampthill.

The Vision for North East Flitwick

- 13.93 The vision for North East Flitwick is for B1 to B8 employment generating uses to contribute to the regeneration and enhancement of Flitwick through the provision of an attractive business development, with landscaping and boundary planting which seeks to provide a separation between this site and existing residential areas to the west. The Country Park will provide accessible informal open space which enhances the area and ensures the retained separation of Ampthill and Flitwick.

Development Principles and Land Uses

- 13.94 An appropriate mix of B Use employment will be provided within the site. The provision of non-B employment generating uses will be considered in line with employment policies set out within the Strategy.
- 13.95 18ha of land are to be removed from the Green Belt. The existing field boundaries will form a logical and defensible boundary to contain built development within the allocation. However, the topography of the land within the site is such that the visual impact of development will be a key consideration in determining the extent to which built development will extend. A Landscape Impact Assessment will therefore be undertaken to determine the extent of the area that can be occupied by built development. A Scheduled Monument at Ruxox Farm is located on the other side of Maulden Road and south of the A507 and as such an assessment of any potential impact and the identification of mitigation measures will also be required.
- 13.96 The layout would be designed along a link road between Maulden Road and Enterprise Way, with extensive landscaping adding to a high quality development. Shared surfacing around the public open space could ensure a pedestrian friendly environment and traffic calming devices would be employed to prevent the road being over-used by through traffic. Additional planting would be provided on the western side of the site where it borders the residential use and B1 employment

uses, which will have limited impact on the neighbouring residential area would be promoted in this part of the site.

Policy 65: North East of Flitwick Strategic Allocation

Land to the north east of Flitwick, to the north of Maulden Road Industrial Estate and south of the A507, is allocated for the delivery of B1 to B8 employment uses and a Country Park.

The Green Belt will be amended to exclude the employment aspect of the allocation up to the current field boundaries. A Landscape Impact Assessment will be undertaken to identify the extent of the built area.

In addition to appropriate contributions to infrastructure provision, development on this site will be subject to the following:

- production of a masterplan to guide development;
- provision of adequate access;
- preparation of a Transport Assessment to help identify the impact of the development on the local and strategic highway network and to identify off-site transport improvements and provide appropriate and acceptable mitigation to offset any impacts.

Stratton Farm Strategic Allocation

- 13.97 Land to the south east of Biggleswade and to the east of the A1 and the existing Stratton Park employment development and allocation, has been identified as a suitable location for an employment site.
- 13.98 The employment site, which will deliver up to 22ha of B2 and B8 employment uses with some ancillary B1 as well as 5ha of strategic landscaping, has good transport connections and is accessed via the existing business park and allocation, directly from the A1 and has subsequent access to the A1(M). The site is also in close proximity to the railway station within Biggleswade as well as Biggleswade town centre which offers a range of services and facilities.
- 13.99 The allocation will form an extension to and complete the existing employment area at Stratton Business Park as indicated on the Policies Map, providing the opportunity for existing businesses to expand as well as the opportunity to attract new inward investment to the area.

The Vision for Stratton Farm

- 13.100 The vision for Stratton Farm is for B2 to B8 employment generating uses as well as ancillary B1 uses to contribute to the continued success of the existing business park through the provision of an attractive business development. The existing boundary planting

around the site will be built upon through the delivery of additional landscaping which seeks to enhance the area and provide an attractive working environment as well as softening the visual impact of built development on the surrounding landscape.

Development Principles and Land Uses

- 13.101 An appropriate provision of B Use employment will be delivered within the site. The existing field boundaries will form a logical and defensible boundary to contain built development within the allocation and landscaping and boundary planting will limit any visual impact of development. The design of buildings and the impact on the surrounding landscape will be a key consideration in determining future planning applications and a Landscape Impact Assessment will be required.
- 13.102 The site will be designed and developed to form a comprehensive development with the existing business park, with a pedestrian friendly environment and appropriate traffic calming devices to ensure the safety of future users.

Policy 66: Stratton Farm Strategic Allocation

Land to the south east of Biggleswade, to the east of the A1 and the existing Stratton Park Business Park, is allocated for the delivery of 22ha of B2, B8 and ancillary B1 employment uses and 5ha of strategic landscaping.

The site is bounded by the current field boundaries and a Landscape Impact Assessment will be undertaken to identify and limit any potential impact upon the surrounding landscape.

In addition to appropriate contributions to infrastructure provision, development on this site will be subject to the following:

- provision of adequate access;
- satisfactory resolution of the impact of additional traffic on the A1 and provision of appropriate financial contributions towards improvements to the A1 southern junction and works required to increase the capacity of London Road. Contributions may be sought towards the construction of the Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road, if appropriate;
- provision of satisfactory cycleway, footpath and public transport network links to the town centre to be determined through a Transport Assessment;
- the provision of sufficient capacity at the wastewater treatment works to meet the needs of the development; and
- appropriate mitigation against any impact on the Stratton Park Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Appendix 1: List of acronyms and technical terms

Items in *italics* each have a definition.

-	Accessibility	The ability of everybody to go conveniently where they want.
-	Adoption	The final confirmation of a planning document as having statutory status by a <i>Local Planning Authority</i> .
-	Affordable housing	Housing which meets the present and future needs of households unable to secure adequate housing at prices determined by the market.
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report	Report on the extent to which policies are being achieved.
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving biological diversity.
-	Brownfield land	Brownfield land (also known as Previously Developed Land) is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Opposite to <i>greenfield</i> land.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. Unlike Planning Obligations, the levy is a non-negotiable flat rate fee which can be used by the Local Authority to fund any project or scheme.
-	Conservation Area	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
-	Core Strategy	The document which previously set out the long term spatial vision for the local planning authority area, and the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. Core Strategy's will be replaced by Local Plans (such as the Development Strategy) under the new planning system.
-	Development Plan	The statutory Development Plan comprises the <i>Regional Spatial Strategy</i> and the <i>Local Plan</i> .
DPD	Development Plan Document	A document that forms part of the Statutory <i>Development Plan</i> . DPD's will be replaced by Local Plans (such as the Development Strategy) under the new planning system.

-	Development Policies DPD	The document that contain adopted detailed policies guiding particular forms of development. This will be replaced by the detailed policies contained in the Development Strategy.
	Duty to Co-operate	Established through the National Planning Policy Framework, the Duty to Co-operate identifies the way in which local authorities will work together on cross-boundary issues.
	Freight	Goods transported in bulk by lorry, train, ship, aircraft or pipeline. Includes the transportation of minerals and waste.
-	Green belt	An area of open land where strict planning controls apply in order, in particular, to check the further growth of a large built-up area. Designated in a development plan.
-	Greenfield land	Land (or a defined site) which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time (opposite of <i>brownfield</i> land). Applies to most land outside the built-up area boundaries.
	High quality design	High quality design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes in towns and cities to create an attractive and welcoming environment. It also includes developing frameworks and processes that encourage successful, high quality development.
-	Housing Needs Study	A study that assesses the future housing needs of the district, in terms of the size, type and affordability of dwellings.
-	Inclusive design	Designing a building or space to consider the needs of the person with a disability.
-	Key Diagram	A diagram that illustrates the main strategic principles of the Development Strategy. It is not site specific, unlike the <i>Policies Map</i> .
-	Lifetime Homes Standard	Ordinary homes designed to provide accessible and convenient homes for a large segment of the population from young children to older people and those with temporary or permanent physical or sensory impairments. Lifetime Homes have 16 design features that ensure the home will be flexible enough to meet the existing and changing needs of most households.
-	Listed Building	A building included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State. It includes any object or structure fixed to the building and any object structure within the cartilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, formed part of the land and has done so since July 1948.

LDS	Local Development Scheme	A public statement setting out which documents will be prepared, and when they will be produced.
-	Local Plan	The plan produced under the new planning regulations i.e. the Development Strategy.
LPA	Local Planning Authority	Usually meaning Central Bedfordshire.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	The Central Bedfordshire LSP is a partnership of a large number of public and private organisations and community groups. One of its main tasks is to prepare and implement the <i>Sustainable Community Strategy</i> .
LTP	Local Transport Plan	The transport strategy prepared by the local transport authority, i.e. Central Bedfordshire Council.
-	Merton Rule	The 'Merton Rule' is the groundbreaking planning policy, pioneered by the London Borough of Merton, which requires the use of renewable energy onsite to reduce annual carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in the built environment.
MKSM SRS	Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy	The adopted Sub Regional Strategy for this area.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	The document which identifies national planning policy. The NPPF replaced all previous Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's).
	Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plans are produced by Town or Parish Councils. They identify how a local area will change over a period of time, including the allocation of sites for development if considered appropriate.
	Original building	A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
	Planning Obligations	Planning Obligations is a negotiable charge agreed between an applicant and the Local Authority. Planning Obligations are used to fund projects, the implementation of which will make the development acceptable in planning terms.
-	Policies Map	The adopted Policies Map illustrates on a base map (reproduced from an Ordnance Survey map to a registered scale) all the policies contained in Development Strategy. It is thus site and location specific, unlike the <i>Key Diagram</i> . The Policies Map will be revised each time a new Strategy is prepared which has site specific policies or proposals, and will always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area.

-	Public realm	This is the space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.
RFI	Rail Freight Interchange	A Rail Freight Interchange is a rail-connected warehousing and container handling facility providing pick-up/drop-off access to the rail network. The aim of a RFI is to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising rail trunk haul and minimising the distribution by road.
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy	The broad spatial strategy for the region, referred to as the Regional Plan, also known as the East of England Plan, and forming part of the statutory development plan.
	Substantial and permanent construction	A building capable of conversion without extensive alteration or rebuilding.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	Identifies and evaluates the effects of the strategy or plan on social, environmental and economic conditions.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Document setting out how and when stakeholders and other interested parties will be consulted and involved in the preparation of planning documents (and in the consideration of individual planning applications).
SE	Settlement Envelopes	Settlement Envelopes identify the area within which development proposals would be acceptable, subject to complying with other policies contained in the Development Plan. They seek to differentiate between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.
SA	Strategic Allocation	Allocation of a large scale site for mixed use development.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	An assessment of the environmental effects of a plan or programme required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC. Combined with the <i>Sustainability Appraisal</i> .
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment	A document which identifies the level of housing need in the local area.
-	Spatial planning	The concept of <i>spatial planning</i> is intended to be at the heart of the new planning system. Previously, the focus of the planning system was narrow and regulatory. The new spatial planning system of is much wider and more inclusive. Spatial planning concerns itself with places, how they function and relate together – and its objectives are to manage change to secure the best achievable quality of life for all in the community, without wasting scarce resources or spoiling the environment. It will include policies which can impact on land use, for example by influencing the demands on, or needs for, development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission, and which may be implemented by other means.

SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	Elaborates on policies or proposals in Local Plans, and gives additional guidance.
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy	The long term vision and action plan for Central Bedfordshire articulating the aspirations, needs and priorities of the local community – prepared by the <i>Local Strategic Partnership</i> .
-	Sustainable design	This mainly refers to the design of buildings, places and landscapes which aims to reduce the effect on the environment as far as possible. The design may also consider economic and social effects.
-	Structure Plan	The strategic plan produced under the former planning system by County Councils.
The Act	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	Puts in place the statutory framework for preparing Local Plans
The Regulations	Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004	The formal Government regulations that define how the Development Strategy is produced.

Appendix 2: List of superseded policies

The table below sets out the policies that are to be superseded by this Development Strategy. These policies will no longer be part of the local plan for Central Bedfordshire once the Development Strategy is adopted.

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD		
CS1	Policy 2; Policy 4; Policy 5	Development Strategy
CS2	Policy 19; Policy 21	Developer Contributions
CS3	Policy 21; Policy 22	Healthy and Sustainable Communities
CS4	Policy 24; Policy 25; Policy 26; Policy 27; Policy 28	Accessibility and Transport
CS5	Policy 29; Policy 33	Providing Homes
CS6	Policy 29	Housing Delivery and Timing
CS7	Policy 34	Affordable Housing
CS8	Policy 35	Exceptions Schemes
CS9	Policy 6	Providing Jobs
CS10	Policy 6; Policy 7; Policy 8; Policy 9	Location of Employment Sites
CS11	Policy 10	Rural Economy and Tourism

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
CS12	Policy 11; Policy 12; Policy 13 Policy 14	Town Centres and Retailing
CS13	Policy 43; Policy 24; Policy 26; Policy 46; Policy 47; Policy 48; Policy 57	Climate Change
CS14	Policy 43	High Quality Development
CS15	Policy 45	Heritage
CS16	Policy 58; Policy 59	Landscape and Woodland
CS17	Policy 56	Green Infrastructure
CS18	Policy 57	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
DM1	Policy 46	Renewable Energy
DM2	Policy 47; Policy 48; Policy 49	Sustainable Construction of New Buildings
DM3	Policy 43	High Quality Development
DM4	Policy 9; Policy 38; Policy 42	Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes
DM5	Policy 39; Policy 40	Important Open Space
DM6	Policy 37	Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries
DM7	Policy 11	Development in Town Centres
DM8	Policy 12 Policy 21	Village Shops and Pubs

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
DM9	Policy 26; Policy 28	Providing a Range of Transport
DM10	Policy 30	Housing Mix
DM11	Policy 51	Significant Facilities in the Countryside
DM12	Policy 53	Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites
DM13	Policy 45	Heritage in Development
DM14	Policy 58; Policy 59	Landscape and Woodland
DM15	Policy 54	Biodiversity
DM16	Policy 56	Green Infrastructure
DM17	Policy 22; Policy 56	Accessible Greenspaces
DM18	Policy 55	Equestrian Development
Site allocations (North) Development Plan Document		
HA2	Policy 29	Former London Road Council Offices, Biggleswade (Development complete)
TC1	Policy 14	Town Centre, Biggleswade
E1	Policy 6	Safeguarded Key Employment Sites
DM5a	Policy 39; Policy 40	Important Open Space
Saved Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan Policies		
CS21	Policy 41; Policy 50; Policy 58	Important Countryside Gaps
H08(1)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land East of Lidlington (Development complete)
H08(2A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land at High Street, Houghton Conquest (Development complete)

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
H08(3)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Woburn Road, Marston Moretaine (Development Complete)
H08(6)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Woburn Street, Ampthill (Development Complete)
H08(6A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Tavistock Avenue, Ampthill (Development Complete)
H08 (7)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Denel End, Flitwick (Development Complete)
H08 (9)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Hitchin Street, Biggleswade (Development Complete)
H08(11)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land at Queen Street, Stotfold (Development complete)
H08(12)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Fairfield Hospital, Stotfold (Development complete)
H08 (13)	Policy 2; Policy 29	House Lane, Arlesey (Development Complete)
H08(13A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land West of High Street, South of Cricketers Road, Arlesey (Development complete)
H08 (14)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Church Street, Langford (Development Complete)
H08(14A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land at Garfield Farm, Langford (Development complete)
H08(15)	Policy 2; Policy 29	The Dairy, Henlow (Development Complete)
H08(15A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land East of the Dairy, Henlow (Development complete)
H08(16)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Broad Street, Clifton (Development Complete)

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
H08(17A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Shefford Road/Pedley Lane, Clifton (Development Complete)
H08(18)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land at Bedford Road, Henlow (Development Complete)
H08(20)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Amphill Road, Shefford (Development Complete)
H08(21)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Amphill Road, Maulden (Development Complete)
H08(22)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Hall End, Maulden (Development Complete)
H08(22A)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Land East of the Woodlands Estate, Greenfield (Development complete)
H08(23)	Policy 2; Policy 29	High Street, Meppershall (Development Complete)
H08(24)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Myers Road, Pottton (Development Complete)
H08(25)	Policy 2; Policy 29	Sandy Road, Pottton (Development Complete)
H010	Policy 33	Travelling Showpeople
H012	Policy 33	Gypsies and Travellers
Saved South Bedfordshire Local Plan Policies		
SD1	Policy 1; Policy 2; Policy 4	Sustainability Keynote Policy
GB2	Policy 36 Policy 51	Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt
GB3	Policy 4; Policy 37	Green Belt Villages
GB4	Policy 3	Safeguarded Land

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
NE3	Policy 58	Landscape (Area of Great Landscape Value superseded by the Landscape Character Assessment)
NE10	Policy 50; Policy 52; Policy 53	Agricultural Land Diversification
NE11	Policy 55	Controlling Horse-related Development
NE12	Policy 36; Policy 52	Re-use of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt
NE13	Policy 36; Policy 50	Control of Agricultural and Forestry Development in the Countryside
BE6	Policy 43	Control of Development in Areas of Special Character
BE7	Policy 45	Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Parks and Gardens
BE8	Policy 43; Policy 58	Design Considerations
T4	Policy 25	Public Transport along the Former Luton/Dunstable Railway Line
T7	Policy 27	Controlling the Supply of Public Car Parking in Town Centres (Parking standards are set out in the CBC Local Transport Plan Parking Strategy)
T8	Policy 27	
T10	Policy 27	Controlling Parking in New Developments
T11	Policy 26; Policy 28	Securing Contributions for Alternatives to Parking
T13	Policy 25; Policy 60; Policy 61	Safeguarding the Routes of Proposed Roads
H1	Policy 2; Policy 29	<p>Making Provision for Housing and an Accompanying Schedule of Proposed Housing Sites</p> <p>The following sites have been superseded by policies 2 and 29 of the Development Strategy:</p>

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Carter’s Scrapyard, French’s Avenue, Dunstable • 7 – Hartwell Ford, Station Road, Dunstable • 9 – Brooke Engineering Union Street, Dunstable • 10 – Former Car Auction Site, Stanbridge Road, Leighton Buzzard • 11 – Camden Motors Site, Adjacent Bell Close, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard • 14 – Pratts Pit, Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard • 16 – Weston Avenue Allotments, Linslade • 18 – Car Storage Site, Grove Road, Slip End • 20 – Land between Waddington’s Yard and White Horse Close, Hockliffe • 22 – Land between Faldo Road and Bedford Road, Barton • 23 – Renault Sports Ground, Park Road North, Houghton Regis • 24 – Avery’s Garage and Land at Rear of 71-81 Plantation Road, Leighton Buzzard • 26 – Nursery Gardens, R/O Wing Road, Linslade • 28 – Land at Grove Road, Slip End • 29 – Land between Conger Lane and Recreation Ground, Toddington • 30 – “The Paddocks”, Dunstable
H1/TCS4(1)	Policy 13	<p>Making Provision for Housing and an Accompanying Schedule of Proposed Housing Sites</p> <p>Site 5 – Regent Street/Manchester Place, Dunstable, has been superseded by Policy 14 of the Development Strategy.</p>

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
H2	Policy 5; Policy 38; Policy 43	Making Provision for Housing via 'Fall-in' Sites
H3	Policy 30; Policy 31	Meeting Local Housing Needs
H4	Policy 34	Providing Affordable Housing
H5	Policy 35	Providing Affordable Housing in Rural Areas
H7	Policy 11; Policy 29; Policy 38	Controlling the Loss of Residential Accommodation
H8	Policy 43	Controlling Extensions to Dwellings (Detailed guidance on extensions and conversions is included within the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide)
H9	Policy 43	Controlling Conversions to Dwellings (Detailed guidance on extensions and conversions is included within the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide)
H10	Policy 36; Policy 50; Policy 54	Control of Agricultural Workers Dwellings
H11	Policy 54	Sub-Division of Agricultural Holdings and Proposals for New Agricultural Workers Dwellings
H12	Policy 37; Policy 38	Controlling Infilling in Villages
H13	Policy 36; Policy 43	Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt
H14	Policy 36	Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt
H15	Policy 4; Policy 36; Policy 37	Mobile Homes and Residential Caravans in the Green Belt
E1	Policy 6	Providing for B1-B8 Development within Main Employment Areas (Category 1)

Superseded policy reference	Replacement policy (Development Strategy)	Description
E2	Policy 6; Policy 7; Policy 8; Policy 9	Control of Development on Employment Land Outside Main Employment Areas (Category 2)
TCS1	Policy 11	Sustaining and Enhancing the District's Town Centres
TCS2	Policy 11 Policy 14	Main Shopping Areas
TCS3	Policy 14	Houghton Regis Town Centre
TCS4	Policy 13 Policy 14	Town Centre Regeneration Sites in Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard
TCS5	Policy 14	Houghton Regis Town Centre Enhancement
TCS7	Policy 12	Local and Village Shopping Facilities
R10	Policy 22 Appendix 6	Children's Play Area Standard
R11	Policy 22 Appendix 6	Provision of New Urban Open Space in New Residential Developments
R12	Policy 22; Policy 40	Protection of Recreational Open Space
R13	Policy 22; Policy 40	Protection of Recreational Open Space in Rural Area
R14	Policy 22; Policy 23	Protection and Improvement of Informal Recreational Facilities in the Countryside
R15	Policy 23	Retention of the Public Rights of Way Network
R16	Policy 22; Policy 36; Policy 50	Control of Sport and Formal Recreational Facilities in the Countryside

Appendix 3: Development Strategy Monitoring Framework

The Council will assess the performance of individual policies within the Development Strategy through the monitoring of indicators identified within the monitoring framework. The monitoring framework is essential to check on the effectiveness of policy implementation and identify any need for policy adjustment. The monitoring framework along with more detailed monitoring will be monitored and reported through the Councils Annual Monitoring Report.

Policy	Strategic Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target
Council Vision	Realising the area’s economic potential to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">globally connected,deliver sustainable growth,ensuring a green, prosperous and ambitious place.... for the benefit of all.		
Council Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creating safer communitiesEducating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young peopleManaging growth effectivelySupporting and caring for an ageing populationPromoting healthier lifestyles.		
Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respect and Empowerment – we will treat people as individuals who matter to usStewardship and Efficiency – we will make the best use of the resources available to usResults Focused – we will focus on the outcomes that make a difference to people’s lives; andCollaborative – we will work closely with our colleagues, partners and customers to deliver on these outcomes.		
Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development			
Policy 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development		Reference only	N/A

A Strategy for Growth			
Policy 2 Growth Strategy	1,2,3,4, 5,7,8	Refer to policy 6,7 and 29	N/A
Policy 3 Green Belt	4	Will be monitored through policy 29	N/A
Policy 4 Settlement Hierarchy	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Reference only – Hierarchy will be used to inform individual policy monitoring	N/A
Policy 5 Neighbourhood Planning	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Number of Neighbourhood plans created	N/A
		Number of neighbourhood development orders	N/A
		Land allocated/developed through Neighbourhood Planning (ha/of dwellings)	N/A
Employment and Economy			
Policy 6 Employment Land	3,4,5,7,8	Delivery of development on: - Existing employment land - Established non- allocated sites in employment use - Allocations from the North Allocations DPD - 99 ha of additional strategic sites	N/A
Policy 7 Employment Sites and Uses	3,4,5,7,8	Completions - Total amount of additional B1-B8 floorspace	N/A
		Completions - Total amount of B1-B8 floorspace on previously developed land	N/A
		Outstanding Commitments – B1-B8 land available	N/A
		Number of jobs created	Increase27,00 new jobs between 2011 and 2031. . 45% of new jobs . B uses- 45% of new jobs

			created (12,150) Non B-Use – 55% of new jobs created (14,850)
Policy 8 Change of Use	3, 5, 6, 7, 8	Amount of B1-B8 floorspace lost to residential development	N/A
Policy 9 Employment proposals outside Settlement Boundaries	3,4,5,7,8	Completions - Total amount of additional B1-B8 floorspace: - Business expansion on sites outside the settlement boundary - New employment generating uses outside the settlement boundary	N/A
		Number of redundant buildings outside the settlement envelope reused for employment purposes (sqm)	N/A
		Number of conversions to employment use in rural areas (sqm)	N/A
		Number of rural employment sites lost to other uses (sqm)	N/A
Policy 10 Rural Economy and Tourism	3,4,5,7	Number of permissions for tourist related development	N/A
Town Centres and Retailing			
Policy 11 Town Centre Uses	5,6,7,8	Completions - Total amount of A1-A5 floorspace for 'town centres uses'	N/A
Policy 12 Retail Strategy	5,6,7,8	Retail Floorspace provided	N/A
Policy 13 Retail in the rural area	5,6,7,8	Additional retail provision provided/lost (sqm)	N/A
Policy 14 Dunstable Town Centre	5,6,7,8	Update on progress in relation to the Masterplan	N/A
Policy 15 Leighton Buzzard Town Centre	5,6,7,8	Update on progress in relation to the Development briefs	N/A
Policy 16 Houghton Regis Town Centre	5,6,7,8	Update on progress in relation to the Masterplan	N/A

Policy 17 Biggleswade Town Centre	5,6,7,8	Update on progress in relation to the Masterplan	N/A
Policy 18 Flitwick Town Centre	5,6,7,8	Update on progress in relation to the Masterplan	N/A
Infrastructure			
Policy 19 Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy	8	Money that has been received and available for spending	N/A
		Money that has been spent	N/A
		Money that has been transferred to other parties	N/A
		Performance reports to show value of agreements signed/payments. received/money spent and balance at end of quarter	N/A
		breakdown of all payments received and expenditure	N/A
Policy 20 Next Generation Broadband	8	Provision of high speed next generation broadband infrastructure through a fibre optic network	100 % on residential developments of 50 units or more 100 % on employment development
Policy 21 Increasing Access to Quality Social and Community Infrastructure	8	How many facilities have been lost	N/A
		How many planning applications for community services	N/A
Policy 22 Leisure and open space provision	5,7,8	The number of new sport and leisure facilities provided	N/A
		Contribution for maintenance/enhancement of existing leisure and open space facilities as identified in the merging Leisure Strategy	
		Number of Green Flag awards	

Policy 23 Public Rights of Way	5,7,8	Length of new public rights of way provided/lost	N/A
Transport			
Policy 24 Accessibility and Connectivity	1,4,6,8	Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre New on site provision (by hectare and type of facility) for children's play	N/A
		Cycle routes completed (km)	N/A
Policy 25 Capacity of the network	1,4,6,8	Progress on strategic transport schemes in the Local Transport Plan	N/A
Policy 26 Travel Plans	1,3,4,6,8	Number of new travel plans completed.	New developments to provide travel plans - threshold in line with Appendix
Policy 27 Car Parking	1,3,6	No of electric charging points	N/A
Policy 28 Transport Assessment and Travel Plans	8	No of Travel Assessments	New developments to provide Travel Assessments - Threshold in line with Appendix
Housing Mix			
Policy 29 Housing Provision	1,2,3,5,7,8	Plan period and housing targets	28,700 new homes between 2011 and 2031
		Net additional dwellings completed – in the reporting and previous years	
		New and converted dwellings – on previously developed land	60% development to be on previously developed land

		5 year housing land supply	Are levels of supply being maintained to allow the Council to meet targets. Does supply need to be stimulated?
Policy 30 Housing Mix	1	Breakdown by type of dwellings developed	N/A
Policy 31 Supporting an Ageing Population	1,5,7,8	Applications for accommodation for older people – approved/refused	N/A
Policy 32 Lifetime Homes	1,4,5,7,8	No of Lifetimes Homes delivered No of Mobility Homes delivered No of Wheelchair Accessible Homes delivered	Developers are expected to demonstrate that they have delivered 70% of all homes to Lifetime Homes standard
Policy 33 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Provision	1,4	Number of additional pitches provided	Will be identified through the Gypsy and Traveller document
		Vacancy levels	N/A
		The number of applications for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople approved and refused	N/A
		The number of illegal encampments and enforcement action carried out	N/A
Policy 34 Affordable Housing	2,4,5,7,8	Gross affordable housing completions	Residential Development of 4 dwellings should provide at least 1 affordable dwelling. For all development above this threshold, 35% of the qualifying site should be provided for affordable housing on-site.

Policy 35 Exception Sites	4,5,7,8	Number of exception schemes approved	Constructed beyond the settlement boundary and provide 100% affordable housing.
Settlements, Green Belt and Sustainability			
Policy 36 Development in the Green Belt	4,5,7	Number/type of permissions/refusals within the greenbelt	N/A
Policy 37 Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries	1,2,4,5,7,8	Number/type of permissions/refusals within greenbelt infill boundaries	N/A
Policy 38 Within and Beyond Settlement Boundaries	1,2,4,5,7,8	% of development in settlement boundaries	N/A
Policy 39 Formally Designated Important Open Space	4,7,8	Net loss/gain of Important Open Space	N/A
		Number of applications resulting in a loss of Important Open Space – approved and refused	N/A
Policy 40 Other Areas of Open Space within Settlements	4,5,7,8	Number of applications resulting in the development of undesignated open space	N/A
Policy 41 Local Green Space	4,5,7,8	New Local Green space provided	N/A
		Net loss/gain of accessible local green space	N/A
Policy 42 Local Green Space Aspley Guise	4,5,7,8	Local Green space provided	N/A
Policy 43 High Quality Development	1,4,5,7,8	Dwelling density per hectare	N/A
		Building for Life	Quality of applications approved, for residential development of 10 units or more

Policy 44 Protection from Environmental Pollution	1,3,6,8	Number of applications approved subject to conditions relating to this policy.	N/A
		Number of applications refused consent based on this policy (the main reason or one of the reasons).	N/A
		Other indicators may be monitored by Environmental Health and included in the Annual Monitoring Report.	N/A
Policy 45 The Historic Environment	5,7,8	Number of applications refused due to impact upon the conservation area	N/A
		Additional dwellings/employment floorspace permitted within conservation area	N/A
		The number and location of new and reviewed Conservation Area	N/A
		Planning permissions granted contrary to English Heritage advice	Permissions granted contrary to English Heritage advice
		Applications refused due to impact on CA which were upheld/overturned on appeal	N/A
		The number of listed buildings removed or added to the statutory list or at risk	Reduce the number of buildings at risk
Policy 46 Renewable and low carbon energy development	5,7	No of applications incorporating renewable energy. Capacity of those applications	N/A
		CO ₂ reduction from Local Authority operations	From 2008/09 baseline 35% by 2015 and 60% by 2020
		Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area	
Policy 47 Resource Efficiency	5,7	% of completed new dwellings meeting Sustainable Homes Level 5 standard for water	
		Number of developments achieving relevant code for	New homes to meet code

		Sustainable homes or BREEAM standard	for Sustainable Homes: - Level 5 for water by 2013. - Level 5 for all elements by 2012-04-26 Non residential required to meet BREEM excellent or equivalent - for water by 2013 -All elements by 2015
		No of applications with energy assessment – extensions – improving existing stock	100%
		Water efficiency measures – water meters (planning conditions)	100%
		% of new dwellings meeting the Lifetime Homes Design Criteria	70%
Policy 48 Adaptation	7		
Policy 49 Mitigating Flood Risk	1,3,5	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds	N/A
Countryside and Natural Environment			
Policy 50 Development in the Countryside	1,2,4,7,8	Planning applications outside settlement boundaries – approvals/refusals	N/A
Policy 51 Significant facilities in the Countryside and Green Belt	4,5,7,8	Planning applications status on the identified facilities	N/A
Policy 52 Re-Use Of Buildings In The Countryside	4,5,7,8	Number of agricultural buildings converted to residential use	N/A

Policy 53 Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites outside the Green Belt and AONB	4,5,7,8		
Policy 54 Rural Worker's Dwellings	4,5,7,8	New workers dwellings created	N/A
Policy 55 Equestrian Development And Development Related To The Keeping And Breeding Of Livestock	4,5,7,8	Number of permissions for horse related facilities.	N/A
		Number of permissions for development related to the keeping and breeding of livestock	N/A
Policy 56 Green Infrastructure	5,7,8	Amount of contributions received through planning obligations to provide for GI	Net gain
		Update on the status of priority areas as identified in the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan	N/A
Policy 57 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	5	Change in areas of biodiversity importance	N/A
		Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites	N/A
Policy 58 Landscape	1,3,4,5,7,8	Additional dwellings or employment floorspace permitted within the AONB	N/A
		Number of applications refused due to impact upon the AONB	N/A
Policy 59 Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows	4,5,7,8	Increase in tree cover	Forest of Marston Vale - 30% of woodland cover in the forest area by 2030
Site Specific Policies			
Policy 60 Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation	1,2,3,4,7,8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A
Policy 61 North of Luton urban extension	1,2,3,4,7,8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A
Policy 62	1,2,3,4,7,8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A

East of Leighton Linlade			
Policy 63 Wixams Southern Extension	1,2,3,4,7,8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A
Policy 64 Sundon Rail Freight Interchange	1,2,3,4,7,8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A
Policy 65 North east of Flitwick	3, 4, 7 8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A
Policy 66 Stratton Farm Strategic Allocation	1,2,3,4,7,8	Progress of Planning Application	N/A

Appendix 4: Key Diagram

Appendix 5: Thresholds for Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

Travel Plans, Travel Plan Statements and Transport Assessments will be required for any development which meets or exceeds the following Gross Floor Area thresholds:

Land Use	Description of development	Size	Travel Plan Statement	Transport Assessment / Travel Plan
A1 Food retail	Retail sale of foods to the public – food superstores, supermarkets, convenience food stores.	GFA	>250<800sq.m	> 800 m2
A1 Non-food retail	Retail sale of non-food goods to the public; but includes sandwich bars – sandwiches or other cold food purchased and consumed off the premises, internet cafes.	GFA	>800<1500sq.m	> 1,500 m2
A2 Financial and professional services	Financial services – banks, building societies and bureaux de change, professional services (other than health or medical services) – estate agents and employment agencies, other services – betting shops, principally where services are provided to visiting members of the public.	GFA	>1000<2500sq.m	> 2,500 m2

A3 Restaurants and cafes	Restaurants and cafes – use for the sale of food for consumption on the premises, excludes internet cafes (now A1).	GFA	>300<2500sq.m	> 2,500 m2
A4 Drinking establishments	Use as a public house, wine-bar or other drinking establishment	GFA	>300<600sq.m	> 600 m2
A5 Hot-food takeaway	Use for the sale of hot food for consumption on or off the premises	GFA	>250<500sq.m	> 500 m2
B1 Business	(a) Offices other than in use within Class A2 (financial and professional services) (b) research and development – laboratories, studios (c) light industry	GFA	>1500<2500sq.m	> 2,500 m2
B2 General Industrial	General industry (other than classified as in B1)	GFA	>2500<4000sq.m	> 4,000 m2
B8 Storage or distribution	Storage or distribution centres – wholesale warehouses, distribution centres and repositories	GFA	>3000<5000sq.m	> 5,000 m2
C1 Hotels	Hotels, boarding houses and guest houses, development falls within this class if 'no significant	Bedrooms	>75<100 bedrooms	> 100 bedrooms

	element of care is provided'			
C2 Residential institutions – hospitals, nursing homes	Used for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care	Beds	>30<50 beds	> 50 beds
C2 Residential institutions – residential education	Boarding schools and training centres	Students	>50<150 students	> 150 students
C2 Residential institutions – institutional hostels	Homeless shelters, accommodation for people with learning difficulties and people on probation.	Residents	>250<400 residents	> 400 residents
C3 Dwelling houses	Dwellings for individuals, families or not more than six people living together as a single household. Not more than six people living together includes – students or young people sharing a dwelling and small group homes for disabled or handicapped people living together in the community.	Dwelling unit	>50<80 units	> 80 units

D1 Non-residential institutions	Medical and health services – clinic and health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres and consulting rooms (not attached to the consultant's or doctor's house), museums, public libraries, art galleries, exhibition halls, all Schools and higher/further education facilities, training centres, places of worship, religious instruction and church halls.		All developments to submit an updated or new Travel Plan	All developments to submit an updated or new Travel Plan
D2 Assembly and leisure	Cinemas, dance and concert halls, sports halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums, bingo halls and casinos, other indoor and outdoor sports and leisure uses not involving motorised vehicles or firearms.	GFA	>500<1500sq. m	> 1,500 m2

Others	For example: stadium, retail warehouse clubs, amusement arcades, laundrettes, petrol filling stations, taxi businesses, car/vehicle hire businesses and the selling and displaying of motor vehicles, nightclubs, theatres, hostels, builders' yards, garden centres, POs, travel and ticket agencies, hairdressers, funeral directors, hire shops, dry cleaners.	TBD	Discuss with highway authority	Discuss with highway authority
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GFA = Gross floor area; TBD GFA = Gross Floor Area TBD = To be developed.

Other considerations for Transport Statements, Assessments and Travel Plans

	Other considerations	TS	TA/TP
1	Any development that is not in conformity with the adopted development plan		✓
2	Any development generating 30 or more two-way vehicle movements in any hour		✓
3	Any development generating 100 or more two-way vehicle movements per day		✓
4	Any development proposing 100 or more parking spaces		✓
5	Any development that is likely to increase accidents or conflicts among motorised users and non-motorised users, particularly vulnerable road users such as disabled people, elderly people and children, particularly in developments on school sites likely to increase footfall.		✓
6	Any development generating significant freight or HGV movements per day, or significant abnormal loads per year.		✓
7	Any development proposed in a location where the local transport infrastructure is inadequate – for example, substandard roads, poor pedestrian/cyclist facilities and inadequate public transport provisions.		✓
8	Any development proposed in a location within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).		✓

These thresholds offer a guide and it is anticipated that pre-application discussions will confirm the need for a Travel Plan where the size or nature of the proposal may not be specifically covered by this guidance. It is likely that a travel plan will be required if it is anticipated that a development will generate a significant amount of travel demand.

The requirement for a travel plan is therefore at the discretion of the highway authority; however unacceptable development will not necessarily be permitted because of the existence of a travel plan especially if it cannot mitigate sufficiently any overriding concerns over traffic generation.

Appendix 6: Leisure Standards and Requirements

Strategic and General Priorities by Geographic Area

(Extract from the CBC Leisure Strategy 2014, Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy)

Dunstable & Houghton Regis (DHR)

Policy	Strategic Priorities	Priority	Short Term: 1-2 years Medium Term: 2-7 years Long Term: 7+ years
DHR 1	<p>Refurbishment and enhancement of Dunstable Leisure Centre; to also incorporate facilities identified in policies DHR 7, 10 and 11 below.</p> <p>Justification - Refurbishment of the existing pool, hall and other facilities at Dunstable Leisure Centre is a medium term priority which will retain the presence of these facilities in the middle of the Dunstable catchment. The condition survey considered that improvement was desirable, and there is much local support for enhancement and retention of separate leisure centres to serve Dunstable and Houghton Regis. Refurbishment will not improve capacity in the area, but will make Dunstable Leisure Centre more attractive for a number of years and would be expected to reduce users travelling to more modern facilities in Luton.</p>	High	Medium
DHR 2	<p>Provision of replacement of public leisure centre for Houghton Regis close to the site of the existing leisure centre, comprising 6 court sports hall, 6 lane 25m swimming pool and a range of other facilities, may also incorporate facilities identified in policies DHR 6, and 7 below.</p> <p>Justification - Construction of a new leisure centre near to the existing centre in Houghton Regis, with a larger pool and similar sized sports hall and other ancillary facilities, will retain choice among people in the Dunstable and HR area, and overcome the problems of lack of capacity if the centre was merely a replacement. This will comprehensively address demand and increase throughput of users at the new facilities. In Houghton Regis in particular this is the best option for meeting demand from residents without cars as the new larger HR pool (and sports hall) has a large walking catchment. This is also essential for helping address the additional demand generated by the proposed Houghton Regis urban extension which will be sited in close proximity to the leisure centre as this is proposed that the development will meet its indoor sports facility needs. This proposal must also consider the future of the existing centre, which can be</p>	High	Medium/long

	demolished or transferred to University, as there may be an impact on supply and demand in the HR area.		
DHR 3	<p>Market test re-opening of Houghton Regis pool in the short term pending longer term on development in HR.</p> <p>Justification - The recent closure of Houghton Regis pool highlights a need for additional swimming pool space in this part of the district, and this is a short term priority, recommended because of current community concerns about lack of swimming provision in Houghton Regis and the evidence showing the nearest pool in Dunstable being at capacity. Subsequent retention will depend on DHR2 and the provision of a new leisure centre and pool in Houghton Regis.</p>	High	Short
	General Priorities		
DHR 4	<p>Provision of improved leisure facilities required to protect and maintain the current accessibility, supply and quality of leisure in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area.</p> <p>Justification – the needs and evidence shows that supply in demand are in balance and facilities and generally well located, but are ageing and need investment. Therefore all existing community facilities are important and wherever possible should be retained and improved where necessary to continue to meet demand.</p>	Medium	Medium to Long
DHR 5	<p>Improve and enhance public access to existing school sports halls in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area at Manshead and All Saints Academy Schools.</p> <p>Justification - These schools already have existing 4 court halls and offer the most opportunities for improved access and are suitable for additional community use, probably on a club based management type. If through the implementation of the proposals, the priorities change this can be addressed at a later date through monitoring and review.</p>	Medium	Short to Medium
DHR 6	<p>Provision of new and improved health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area, in conjunction with new and enhanced overall provision (see DHR1 above).</p> <p>Justification - There is an estimated limited shortfall of health and fitness facilities in Dunstable and HR of about 150 stations, mitigated by good supply in Luton. Operators do not highlight a significant shortfall. Limited additional health and fitness stations should therefore be provided in conjunction with the refurbishment of Dunstable LC above.</p>	Medium	Medium to Long

DHR 7	<p>Provision of new health and fitness facilities required to meet the needs of new residential development in the Houghton Regis growth area at the new LC in HR.</p> <p>Justification - <i>New residents in the area will increase the demand for health and fitness facilities, and these should be provided in conjunction with a new leisure centre at HR which will meet the needs of the growth area, and on commercial sites where demand is proven. It is likely that up to 100 additional stations may be required across HR and these should form part of any new provision or enhancements.</i></p>	Medium	Medium
DHR 8	<p>Provision of new small health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in village & community halls in locations where accessibility to large facilities is an issue.</p> <p>Justification - <i>Priorities will be informed by Village & Community Halls assessment and projects will be prioritised which are in identified areas of deficiency and meet the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Halls that currently have a badminton court (i.e. sporting value and use) and need improvements (upgrades / refurbishments) to enhance sports use</i> <i>Existing halls that do not have facilities but can make a local case for sports provision for informal flexible activity e.g. exercise classes</i> <i>Halls that can make a case for adding new provision e.g. gym or fitness facilities (based on needs identified in the Leisure Strategy)</i> 	Low	Medium to Long
DHR 9	<p>Improve public access to existing or additional education health and fitness facilities in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area.</p> <p>Justification - <i>There are limited facilities at Central Beds College, and these should be considered for additional community use. Consideration may also be given to the provision of small facilities at All Saints Academy and Manshead School in conjunction with increased community use of the sports halls.</i></p>	Low	Short to Medium
DHR 10	<p>Retention and enhancement of existing squash facilities to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of squash in the D/HR area.</p> <p>Justification - <i>There are four existing courts in the area at HR and Dunstable LCs and these should be retained for club and casual use, or redeveloped in the case of a new HR LC.</i></p>	Medium	Short
DHR 11	<p>Provision of a new squash facility (3 courts) required to meet existing needs and additional requirements of new residential development in the Houghton Regis growth area.</p> <p>Justification - <i>There is already an identified need for additional 3 court facilities in the south of the county, and this should be provided on a free standing site or preferably in conjunction with</i></p>	Medium	Long

	<i>the new HR LC.</i>		
DHR 12	<p>Refurbishment of indoor bowls centre at Dunstable Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Justification - Despite the poor local provision for indoor bowls, the governing body considers that local provision is acceptable and that the existing club is being encouraged to increase its membership. At the same time there is some spare capacity at existing clubs and centres, particularly in Luton and Bedford. Refurbishment of the centre is a short term priority</p>	Medium	Long
DHR13	<p>Consideration of provision of additional or replacement new indoor bowls centre in the East, West or centre of Central Bedfordshire</p> <p>Justification - The location of the existing centre in Dunstable does not meet the needs of the whole district, which relies on neighbouring areas to meet much of its demand. Further research is required to assess whether any of the usage of neighbouring centres might be displaced if an additional or replacement centre is built in Central Beds.</p>	Low	Long

North (N)

Policy	Strategic Priorities	Priority	Short Term: 1-2 years Medium Term: 2-7 years Long Term: 7+ years
N 1	<p>Provision of replacement public leisure centre for Flitwick close to the site of the existing leisure centre, comprising 4 court sports hall, 8 lane swimming pool to also incorporate facilities identified in policies N4 and N7 below.</p> <p>Justification - The existing facilities at Flitwick LC are at capacity and there is a need to improve them as demonstrated by conditions survey. A replacement leisure centre of the size proposed is cost effective in sports terms and offers a long term solution to demand and cost of maintenance. An 8 lane pool would offer a greater range of usage options and would be better in terms of capacity, as illustrated by the fpm. The proposal would therefore help address capacity issues and reduce export to facilities in other LAs.</p>	High	Short

	General Priorities		
N 2	<p>Provision of improved leisure facilities required to maintain the current accessibility, supply and quality of leisure in the west of the area.</p> <p>Justification – <i>the needs and evidence shows that supply in demand are in balance and facilities and generally well located, but are ageing and need investment. Therefore all existing community facilities are important and wherever possible should be retained and improved where necessary to continue to meet demand.</i></p>	Medium	Medium to Long
N 3	<p>Improve public access to existing school sports halls in the West area: Redborne School, and Alameda Middle School, Ampthill.</p> <p>Justification - <i>These schools already have existing 4 court halls and offer the most opportunities for improved access and are suitable for additional community use. If through the implementation of the proposals, the priorities change this can be addressed at a later date through monitoring and review.</i></p>	Medium	Short to Medium
N 4	<p>Provision of new and improved health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in the west of the area.</p> <p>Justification – <i>health and fitness analysis identified large deficiencies, which in the main will be met at the larger CB sites however there remains potential for infill at smaller community /education / village locations (see N5 and N6). There are only two providers of ‘public’ health and fitness stations, and therefore a considerable shortfall of health and fitness facilities in the west of the area of about 150 stations. The main operator of the Flitwick LC has confirmed a need for additional stations. Significant additional health and fitness stations should therefore be provided in conjunction with the new Flitwick LC, and there may also be potential for free standing centres in other locations, subject to local demand and development of village halls (see below).</i></p>	Medium	Medium to Long
N 5	<p>Provision of new small health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in village & community halls in locations where accessibility to large facilities is an issue.</p> <p>Justification - <i>Priorities will be informed by Village & Community Halls assessment and projects will be prioritised which are in identified areas of deficiency and meet the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Halls that currently have a badminton court (i.e. sporting value and use) and need improvements (upgrades / refurbishments) to enhance sports use</i> 	Low	Medium to Long

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing halls that do not have facilities but can make a local case for sports provision for informal flexible activity e.g. exercise classes Halls that can make a case for adding new provision e.g. gym or fitness facilities (based on needs identified in the Leisure Strategy) 		
N 6	<p>Improve public access to existing school health and fitness facilities in the west of the area.</p> <p>Justification - There is only a very small health suite at Redborne School of all the school locations, and there is some justification in improving and extending local provision here to meet the needs of Ampthill, subject to feasibility.</p>	Low	Short to Medium
N 7	<p>Retention and enhancement of existing squash facilities to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of squash facilities in the West area, and meet additional demand in the future.</p> <p>Justification - There are six existing courts in the area at Flitwick LC and Cranfield Univ. and these should be retained for club and casual use, or redeveloped in the case of the new Flitwick LC to provide three courts here. Access by the wider community to the Cranfield courts should be improved by negotiation.</p>	Medium	Short
N 8	<p>Consideration of provision of additional or replacement new indoor bowls centre in the East, West or centre of Central Bedfordshire</p> <p>Justification- The location of the existing centre in Dunstable does not meet the needs of the whole district, which relies on neighbouring areas to meet much of its demand. Further research is required to assess whether any of the usage of neighbouring centres might be displaced if an additional or replacement centre is built in Central Beds. Flitwick may be considered an appropriate location for a centrally placed new centre.</p>	Low	
N 9	<p>Provision of new 3 court indoor tennis centre in the Flitwick area.</p> <p>Justification - There are no indoor tennis courts in Central Bedfordshire although there are 5 centres in neighbouring areas which may meet local need. There is some justification for the provision of indoor tennis at the present time in Central Bedfordshire, in the first instance on one site with 3 courts, and Flitwick is a central location which could service the whole district. Any new proposal should consider an enhancement of the existing Flitwick TC site or a new free standing centre with 3 courts.</p>	Medium	Medium to Long
N 10	<p>Refurbishment of Saxon Pool & Leisure Centre pool, provision of new 4 court sports hall.</p> <p>Justification - Biggleswade is the largest town in Central Beds and the main town in the east of the area without a 'public' sports hall and a new 4 court hall would help meet demand in the town,</p>	High	Short

	although the provision of an additional hall here would need to consider the displacement of demand from other facilities in the area, such as Stratton Upper School and Sandy Sports and Community Centre. The need relates to the expanding population and local access issues, ensuring a local provision for local people. Refurbishment of the existing pool would also make it more attractive and fit for purpose in the future.		
N 11	<p>Support development of joint use leisure facility incorporating a 4 court sports hall at Etonbury School, Stotfold.</p> <p>Justification - A new 4 court sports hall at Etonbury School as part of the redevelopment of the school would meet local demand in the Stotfold and Arlesey area with a local catchment of 15-20,000 (plus significant housing growth expected in this area), though it is likely there would be some displacement of demand from outside Central Beds where it is currently met in Letchworth and Baldock. This would also reduce the need to travel to Letchworth/Baldock to access a facility.</p>	Medium	Medium
	General Priorities		
N 12	<p>Provision of improved leisure facilities required to maintain the current accessibility, supply and quality of leisure in the east of the area.</p> <p>Justification – the needs and evidence shows that supply in demand are in balance and facilities and generally well located, but are ageing and need investment. Therefore all existing community facilities are important and wherever possible should be retained and improved where necessary to continue to meet demand.</p>	Medium	Medium to Long
N 13	<p>Improve public access to existing school sports halls in the east of the area: Stratton Upper School, Biggleswade, and Robert Bloomfield School, Shefford.</p> <p>Justification - These schools already have existing 4 court halls and offer the most opportunities for improved access and are suitable for additional community use. If through the implementation of the proposals, the priorities change this can be addressed at a later date through monitoring and review.</p>	Medium	Short to Medium
N 14	<p>Provision of new and improved health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in the east of the area.</p> <p>Justification - There are two main providers of 'public' health and fitness stations, and two</p>	Medium	Medium to Long

	commercial centres, in the east of the area. There is no significant shortfall of health and fitness facilities in the area, but the operator of the Saxon Pool has indicated an aspiration to improve and extend its health and fitness facilities. Some additional health and fitness stations should therefore be provided in conjunction with the new Saxon Pool hall and refurbished pool, in accordance with local need.		
N 15	<p>Provision of new small health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in village & community halls in locations where accessibility to large facilities is an issue.</p> <p>Justification - Priorities will be informed by Village & Community Halls assessment and projects will be prioritised which are in identified areas of deficiency and meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halls that currently have a badminton court (i.e. sporting value and use) and need improvements (upgrades / refurbishments) to enhance sports use • Existing halls that do not have facilities but can make a local case for sports provision for informal flexible activity e.g. exercise classes <p>Halls that can make a case for adding new provision e.g. gym or fitness facilities (based on needs identified in the Leisure Strategy)</p>	Low	Medium to Long
N 16	<p>Improve public access to existing education health and fitness facilities in the east of the area.</p> <p>Justification - There are no school health and fitness facilities in the area, but a small (and currently closed) centre at Shuttleworth College. Consideration should be given to improved community access to the latter, and the feasibility of providing a small centre at Stratton School in conjunction with enhanced usage of the sports hall there. This needs to be assessed in relation to developments at Saxon Pool.</p>	Low	Short to Medium
N 17	<p>Retention and enhancement of existing squash facilities to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of squash facilities in the East area, and meet additional demand in the future. Improve public access to other squash facilities in the East area</p> <p>Justification - There are six existing courts in the area at Biggleswade SC and Sandy Sports & Community Centre, and these are considered sufficient to meet demand. Better access to club facilities for the wider community should be sought by negotiation.</p>	Medium	Short
N 18	<p>Consideration of provision of additional or replacement new indoor bowls centre in the East, West or centre of Central Bedfordshire</p> <p>Justification - The location of the existing centre in Dunstable does not meet the needs of the whole district, which relies on neighbouring areas to meet much of its demand. Further research</p>	Low	

	<i>is required to assess whether any of the usage of neighbouring centres might be displaced if an additional or replacement centre is built in Central Beds.</i>		
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Leighton Buzzard & Rural South (LB/RS)

Policy	Strategic Priorities	Priority	Short Term: 1-2 years Medium Term: 2-7 years Long Term: 7+ years
LB/RS 1	Refurbishment of Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre pool and sports hall. Justification - <i>The refurbishment of Tiddenfoot LC pool and hall is a cost effective way of improving usage in the short term, but their increased attractiveness will mean that throughput increases and capacity is reached. This is likely to be only a short term solution, particularly in view of additional population in the Leighton Buzzard area.</i>	High	Short 2012/13
LB/RS 2	Provision of new 4 court sports hall in Leighton Linslade Growth Area in conjunction with proposed housing development. Justification - <i>In the longer term a new replacement hall in the growth area is justified, because of the relative age of Tiddenfoot and the inability to accommodate use during the day. However the alternative location in the growth area would attract fewer users without access to a car. This proposal would need to consider whether the existing Tiddenfoot hall is retained for more specific club use or similar.</i>	High	Long
LB/RS 3	Provision of replacement 8 lane swimming pool on the Tiddenfoot site in the longer term in conjunction with proposed housing development. Justification - <i>This is an expensive solution, but the opportunity exists to relate better to the growth area around the town and seek developer contributions. Additional water space is provided with an 8 lane pool, but the new pool would operate at relatively low capacity compared with the current pool, in view of the possible effect of a new pool in HR. There is significant local support for additional water space here.</i>	High	Long

	General Priorities		
LB/RS 4	<p>Provision of improved leisure facilities required to maintain the current accessibility, supply and quality of leisure in the LB/RS area.</p> <p>Justification – <i>the needs and evidence shows that supply in demand are in balance and facilities and generally well located, but are ageing and need investment. Therefore all existing community facilities are important and wherever possible should be retained and improved where necessary to continue to meet demand.</i></p>	Medium	Medium to Long
LB/RS 5	<p>Improve public access to existing school sports halls in the Leighton Buzzard/Rural South area: Vandyke School and, Linslade Middle School</p> <p>Justification - <i>These schools already have existing 3 or 4 court halls and offer the most opportunities for improved access and are suitable for additional community use. If through the implementation of the proposals, the priorities change this can be addressed at a later date through monitoring and review.</i></p>	Medium	Short to Medium
LB/RS 6	<p>Provision of additional health and fitness facilities at Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre to address the shortfall in current supply.</p> <p>Justification - <i>Tiddenfoot currently has a 40 station fitness suite, and the operator has highlighted a shortfall in provision in the area. It is estimated that a further 50 stations might be justified in Leighton Buzzard in the short term.</i></p>	High	Short to Medium
LB/RS 7	<p>Provision of new and improved health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current and future supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in the LB/RS area.</p> <p>Justification - <i>Apart from Tiddenfoot, the only provision for health and fitness in this sub area is at Energie and Colloseum health clubs with 95 stations. It is estimated that a further 50-100 stations could be justified in this area, in conjunction with the new sports hall and extended pool.</i></p>	Medium	Medium to Long
LB/RS 8	<p>Provision of new small health and fitness facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of health and fitness facilities in village & community halls in locations where accessibility to large facilities is an issue.</p> <p>Justification - <i>Priorities will be informed by Village & Community Halls assessment and projects will be prioritised which are in identified areas of deficiency and meet the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Halls that currently have a badminton court (i.e. sporting value and use) and need</i> 	Low	Medium to Long

	<p><i>improvements (upgrades / refurbishments) to enhance sports use</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Existing halls that do not have facilities but can make a local case for sports provision for informal flexible activity e.g. exercise classes</i> • <i>Halls that can make a case for adding new provision e.g. gym or fitness facilities (based on needs identified in the Leisure Strategy)</i> 		
LB/RS 9	<p>Provision of new and improved squash facilities required to address the shortfall in the current supply, accessibility, and quality of squash facilities in the LB/RS area.</p> <p>Justification - <i>Development should build on the existing infra-structure already in place. There are two existing courts in the area at Tiddenfoot and these should be retained for club and casual use, or redeveloped and extended in the case of the new Leighton Buzzard LC to provide three courts here.</i></p>	Medium	Medium to Long
LB/RS 10	<p>Consideration of provision of additional or replacement new indoor bowls centre in the East, West or centre of Central Bedfordshire</p> <p>Justification - <i>The location of the existing centre in Dunstable does not meet the needs of the whole district, which relies on neighbouring areas to meet much of its demand. Further research is required to assess whether any of the usage of neighbouring centres might be displaced if an additional or replacement centre is built in Central Beds.</i></p>	Low	Long
LB/RS 11	<p>Provision of new 3 court indoor tennis centre in the LB area.</p> <p>Justification - <i>There are no indoor tennis courts in Central Bedfordshire although there are 5 centres in neighbouring areas which may meet local need. There is some justification for the provision of indoor tennis at the present time in Central Bedfordshire, on a site with 3 courts, and Leighton Buzzard and Linslade are locations where existing tennis clubs have good membership and infrastructure and could be combined to justify such a centre to meet the needs of the sub area. Feasibility work would be required to consider the most appropriate site and location.</i></p>	Medium	Medium to Long

Summary of Open Space Requirements for New Developments

(Extract from the CBC Leisure Strategy 2014, Chapter 2: Recreation & Open Space Strategy)

Type of Open Space	Category	Existing Local Standard	Total Requirement	Justification for grouping
Countryside Recreation	Strategic Sites	3.19	3.58	Both types of open space are strategic open spaces and contributions are likely to be required off site (unless in exceptional circumstances in the case of very large developments)
Urban Parks		0.39		
Informal Recreation Areas	Informal Recreation	2.5	2.5	Open space
Large Formal Recreation Areas	Local Recreation	1.17	1.75	Both types of formal recreation space have similar functions. The provision of large recreation areas within local catchments also serves as small amenity space.
Small Amenity Spaces		0.58		
Facilities for Children	Facilities for Children and Young People	0.11	0.153	Facilities to be located together providing for all age ranges. (It should be noted that this includes the activity area only). Additional allowances should be made for appropriate buffer zones
Facilities for Young People		0.043		
Allotments	Allotments	0.37	0.37	Specific facility requirement

Local Standards by Typology

Type of Open Space	Definition	Accessibility	Quantity	Quality
Countryside Recreation Sites	Large countryside-type sites set aside for a variety of recreational activities, offering a range of formal and informal facilities and activities.	20 minute drive time	3.19 ha per 1000 population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate size and location Accessible via safe footpaths and public transport, cycleways Clear boundaries natural space offering a range of habitats and landscapes Clearly defined pathways and cycleways Accessible Appropriate and regular seating

Type of Open Space	Definition	Accessibility	Quantity	Quality
				Café and / or visitor centre, including toilets and refreshments Information and signage Play equipment Bins Management of dog fouling Secure parking Cycle storage Clear events programme Volunteer opportunities Visible daily staff presence
Urban Parks	Public parks in an urban setting that provide a variety of facilities e.g. play area, toilets, tennis courts etc.; as well as opportunities for informal recreation. Sites often provide formal community activities / events.	15 minute walk (720m) 20 minute drive time	0.22 ha per 1000 pop. Major Service Centres only 0.39ha per 1000 pop. (Minor towns where/if required.	Appropriately located Clear boundaries Clearly defined entrances Well maintained and landscaped Ornamental planting Reflecting the character and history of area Clearly defined pathways and cycleways Accessible Variety of opportunities within park Clearly defined surfaced paths Appropriate and regular seating Toilets and refreshments Information and signage Range of Play equipment Appropriate bins and management of dog fouling Sufficient parking Lighting Events programme Volunteer opportunities Visible daily staff presence

Type of Open Space	Definition	Accessibility	Quantity	Quality
Large Formal Recreation Areas	Large green sites which are easily accessible. These sites generally contain opportunities for formal recreation e.g. children's play, casual or formal outdoor sports. The majority of these sites are approximately 1ha in size or above	10 minute walk (480m) for Major Settlements or, 10 minute drive time for small settlements	1.17 ha per 1000 population	Sufficiently large to meet demand Appropriately located for local catchment Accessible via safe footpaths Clear boundaries Appropriate for residents of different ages and variety of facilities Clearly defined pathways and cycleways and cycle storage Appropriate and regular seating Information and signage Play equipment Sports facilities Appropriate bins and management of dog fouling Sufficient parking Clear events programme Volunteer opportunities for the local community
Informal Recreation Areas	Large green spaces that are natural in character. These sites generally offer informal recreational opportunities such as walking and relaxation and allow visitors to experience the natural environment. As well as offering recreational opportunities, many sites in this category are also important for biodiversity and ecology.	10 minute walk (480m)	2.5 ha per 1000 population	Appropriately located Accessible via safe footpaths Clear boundaries Predominantly natural space Balance between recreation and conservation Links with Public Rights of Way and cycle routes Appropriate and regular seating Information and signage Appropriate bins and management of dog fouling Sufficient parking Volunteer opportunities for the local community
Small Amenity Spaces	Small, local spaces which may enhance the local area and provide some opportunities for casual recreation use e.g. dog walking, as well as	5 minute walk (240m)	0.58 ha per 1000 population	Functional space Appropriately located Accessible via safe footpaths Clear boundaries that are locally appropriate Appropriate for residents of different ages Clearly defined pathways to the site

Type of Open Space	Definition	Accessibility	Quantity	Quality
	landscaping. These sites usually have few, or no formal functions.			Clearly defined paths Appropriate and regular seating Appropriate bins and management of dog fouling
Children's Play Spaces	Equipped play areas for children e.g. swings, slides and climbing frames This includes facilities currently referred to as LEAPs. Further detail will be provided in the relevant sections.	10 minute walk time (480m)	0.11ha per 1000 (it should be noted that this includes the activity area only). Additional allowances should be made for appropriate buffer zones in line with guidance	Within appropriate distance of target catchment area Accessible via safe footpaths and roads Appropriate location Appropriate boundaries and buffer zone Compliant with DDA and safety audit Bespoke design to suit location Age appropriate play facilities Range of play opportunities offering high play value Formal play equipment and safety surfacing Clear signage Fencing, seating and bins
Provision for Young People	Facilities designed to meet the needs of young people such as youth shelters, skate parks and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). This includes facilities currently referred to as LEAPs and LEAPS. Further detail will be provided in the relevant sections.	10 minute walk time (480m)	0.043ha per 1000 population (it should be noted that this includes the activity area only). Additional allowances should be made for appropriate buffer zones	Serving target catchment and appropriately located Accessible via safe footpaths and roads Accessible by bike (and with areas for cycle storage) Appropriate boundaries and buffer zone Compliant with DDA and safety audits Bespoke design to suit location Appropriate seating, fencing and bins Signage Lighting (if appropriate) Age appropriate facilities Any formal play equipment and safety surfacing compliant with British Standards
Allotments	Site designated for people who wish to grow their own produce.	10 minute walk time (480m)	0.37 ha per 1000 population (15	Appropriately located for local catchment Accessible via safe footpaths and roads Clear boundaries

Type of Open Space	Definition	Accessibility	Quantity	Quality
			plots)	<p>Clearly defined pathways</p> <p>Appropriate fencing and gates</p> <p>Appropriately sized.</p> <p>At least one car parking space per 10 plots provided.</p> <p>Hard surfaced parking area</p> <p>Space for up to one shed per plot</p> <p>Mains water</p> <p>Toilet and washing facilities</p> <p>Sustainable technologies</p> <p>Communal garden</p> <p>Clear signage</p> <p>Seating and lighting at entrance/s</p>
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	n/a	2.03 burial plots per 1000 population	<p>Appropriately located for local catchment</p> <p>Accessible</p> <p>Clear boundaries</p> <p>Clear entrance</p> <p>Clearly defined pathways</p> <p>Gates should comply with DDA</p> <p>Regular cut (at least 7 times per year)</p> <p>Removal of grass cuttings from site</p> <p>Management of gravestones and headstones</p> <p>Sensitive management</p> <p>Sufficient car parking</p> <p>Water Supply</p> <p>Clear signage</p> <p>Regular and appropriate seating</p>

Example Size Requirements

Category	Standard Per 1000 Population (ha)	Standard Per Person (Standard per 1000 / 1000) (ha)	Number of Dwellings	Number of People in Development (Number of dwellings x 2.4)	Open Space Requirement (People in Development X Standard Per Person) (Ha)
Strategic Sites	3.58	0.00358	300	720	2.5776
Informal Recreation	2.5	0.0025	300	720	1.8
Local Recreation	1.75	0.00175	300	720	1.26
Facilities for Children and Young People	0.153	0.000153	300	720	0.11016
Allotments	0.37	0.00037	300	720	0.2664

Summary of Key Priorities for Sports Pitch Provision

(Extract from the CBC Leisure Strategy 2014, Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy)

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
New Pitch Provision	<p>Football</p> <p>Capacity to meet current demand. Population growth will however generate unmet demand in both Houghton Regis and Dunstable.</p> <p>3g AGP North Houghton Regis</p> <p>Cricket</p> <p>Dunstable / Houghton Regis</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>Dunstable RUFC (increased capacity)</p>	<p>Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eaton Bray Totternhoe Tilsworth Leighton Buzzard (longer term depending upon closure of pitches following opening of Astral Park). <p>3g AGP</p> <p>Totternhoe / Eaton Bray</p> <p>Cricket</p> <p>Caddington</p> <p>Rugby</p> <p>n/a</p>	<p>Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amptill Arlesey Flitwick (proposed developments currently underway will address existing deficiencies) Cranfield Langford Maulden Potton Shefford Stotfold (proposed developments currently underway will address existing deficiencies) <p>3g AGP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddington / Harlington area

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
		Tennis Studham TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stotfold / Arlesey Biggleswade Cricket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggleswade Blunham Amptill Flitwick Rugby n/a Tennis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barton le Clay TC Langford TC
Quality Improvements	Football <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunstable Houghton Regis Cricket	Football <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eaton Bray Leighton Buzzard Slip End 	Football <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cranfield Biggleswade Harlington

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunstable <p>Rugby</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>Athletics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunstable 	<p>Cricket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leighton Buzzard <p>Rugby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leighton Buzzard RUFC (floodlights) <p>Hockey</p> <p>Van Dyke School</p> <p>Bowls</p> <p>Leighton Buzzard Bowls Club</p> <p>Tennis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linslade TC Studham TC (Impacting upon capacity) Eaton Bray TC Slip End Tilsworth Billington 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lidlington Marston Shillington Northill Westoning <p>Cricket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggleswade Sandy Silsoe Lidlington Henlow Milton Bryan Steppingley Aspley Guise <p>Rugby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amphill RUFC

	Dunstable and Houghton Regis	Leighton Buzzard and Rural South	North
		Athletics Leighton Buzzard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggleswade RUFC Hockey Sandy Sports Centre Bowls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biggleswade St Andrews Tennis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Langford (impacting upon capacity) Barton le Clay (impacting upon capacity) Potton Westoning Athletics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandy Biggleswade Netball Biggleswade

Appendix 7: Thresholds for Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

Travel Plans, Travel Plan Statements and Transport Assessments will be required for any development which meets or exceeds the following Gross Floor Area thresholds:

Land Use	Description of development	Size	Travel Plan Statement	Transport Assessment / Travel Plan
A1 Food retail	Retail sale of foods to the public – food superstores, supermarkets, convenience food stores.	GFA	>250<800sq.m	> 800 m2
A1 Non-food retail	Retail sale of non-food goods to the public; but includes sandwich bars – sandwiches or other cold food purchased and consumed off the premises, internet cafes.	GFA	>800<1500sq.m	> 1,500 m2
A2 Financial and professional services	Financial services – banks, building societies and bureaux de change, professional services (other than health or medical services) – estate agents and employment agencies, other services – betting shops, principally where services are provided to visiting members of the public.	GFA	>1000<2500sq.m	> 2,500 m2

A3 Restaurants and cafes	Restaurants and cafes – use for the sale of food for consumption on the premises, excludes internet cafes (now A1).	GFA	>300<2500sq.m	> 2,500 m2
A4 Drinking establishments	Use as a public house, wine-bar or other drinking establishment	GFA	>300<600sq.m	> 600 m2
A5 Hot-food takeaway	Use for the sale of hot food for consumption on or off the premises	GFA	>250<500sq.m	> 500 m2
B1 Business	(a) Offices other than in use within Class A2 (financial and professional services) (b) research and development – laboratories, studios (c) light industry	GFA	>1500<2500sq.m	> 2,500 m2
B2 General Industrial	General industry (other than classified as in B1)	GFA	>2500<4000sq.m	> 4,000 m2
B8 Storage or distribution	Storage or distribution centres – wholesale warehouses, distribution centres and repositories	GFA	>3000<5000sq.m	> 5,000 m2

C1 Hotels	Hotels, boarding houses and guest houses, development falls within this class if 'no significant element of care is provided'	Bedrooms	>75<100 bedrooms	> 100 bedrooms
C2 Residential institutions – hospitals, nursing homes	Used for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care	Beds	>30<50 beds	> 50 beds
C2 Residential institutions – residential education	Boarding schools and training centres	Students	>50<150 students	> 150 students
C2 Residential institutions – institutional hostels	Homeless shelters, accommodation for people with learning difficulties and people on probation.	Residents	>250<400 residents	> 400 residents

C3 Dwelling houses	Dwellings for individuals, families or not more than six people living together as a single household. Not more than six people living together includes – students or young people sharing a dwelling and small group homes for disabled or handicapped people living together in the community.	Dwelling unit	>50<80 units	> 80 units
D1 Non-residential institutions	Medical and health services – clinic and health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres and consulting rooms (not attached to the consultant's or doctor's house), museums, public libraries, art galleries, exhibition halls, all Schools and higher/further education facilities, training centres, places of worship, religious instruction and church halls.		All developments to submit an updated or new Travel Plan	All developments to submit an updated or new Travel Plan

D2 Assembly and leisure	Cinemas, dance and concert halls, sports halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums, bingo halls and casinos, other indoor and outdoor sports and leisure uses not involving motorised vehicles or firearms.	GFA	>500<1500sq.m	> 1,500 m2
Others	For example: stadium, retail warehouse clubs, amusement arcades, launderettes, petrol filling stations, taxi businesses, car/vehicle hire businesses and the selling and displaying of motor vehicles, nightclubs, theatres, hostels, builders' yards, garden centres, POs, travel and ticket agencies, hairdressers, funeral directors, hire shops, dry cleaners.	TBD	Discuss with highway authority	Discuss with highway authority

GFA = Gross floor area; TBD GFA = Gross Floor Area TBD = To be developed.

Appendix 8: Parking Standards

Type of Property	4/4 + bedrooms		3 bedrooms		2 bedrooms		1 bedroom	
	Minimum No. Of Spaces	Suggested Number of Spaces	Minimum No. Of Spaces	Suggested Number of Spaces	Minimum No. Of Spaces	Suggested Number of Spaces	Minimum No. Of Spaces	Suggested Number of Spaces
Detached	3	4	2	3	2	2	1	2
Semi-Detached	3	4	2	3	2	2	1	2
Terraced	2	2.5	2	2.5	2	2	1	2
Apartment	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2

A garage may be included as a qualifying parking space if it meets a minimum size of 3.3m x 7m.

Appendix 9: Guidance on the Sequential and Exception Tests

Guidance on the Sequential and Exception Tests as set out in The Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework

Introduction

The Technical Guidance provides additional information to local planning authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework on development in areas at risk of flooding. This guidance retains key elements of Planning Policy Statement 25 which are considered necessary and helpful in relation to managing flood risk. The retention of this guidance is an interim measure pending a wider review of guidance to support planning policy.

Flood risk

As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. For these purposes:

- “Areas at risk of flooding” means land within Flood Zones 2 and 3; or land within Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems and which has been notified to the local planning authority by the Environment Agency;
- “Flood risk” means risk from all sources of flooding - including from rivers and the sea, directly from rainfall on the ground surface and rising groundwater, overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems, and from reservoirs, canals and lakes and other artificial sources.

The Sequential and Exception Tests

As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. The flood zones (see table 1) are the starting point for this sequential approach. Zones 2 and 3 are shown on the flood map¹ with Flood Zone 1 being all the land falling outside Zones 2 and 3. These flood zones refer to the probability of sea and river flooding only, ignoring the presence of existing defences.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (see paragraphs 7-8) refine information on the probability of flooding, taking other sources of flooding and the impacts of climate change (see paragraphs 11-15) into account. They provide the basis for applying the Sequential Test, on the basis of the flood zones in table 1. Where table 1 indicates the need to apply the Exception Test (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework), the scope of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be widened to consider the impact of the flood risk management infrastructure on the frequency, impact, speed of onset, depth and velocity of flooding within the flood zones considering a range of flood risk management maintenance scenarios. Where a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is not available, the Sequential Test will be based on the Environment Agency flood zones.

The overall aim should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1. Where

there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities allocating land in local plans or determining planning applications for development at any particular location should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses (see table 2) and consider reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 2, applying the Exception Test if required (see table 3). Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and applying the Exception Test if required.

Table 1: Flood zones

(Note: These flood zones refer to the probability of river and sea flooding, ignoring the presence of defences)

Zone 1 - low probability

Definition

This zone comprises land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%).

Appropriate uses

All uses of land are appropriate in this zone.

Flood risk assessment requirements

For development proposals on sites comprising one hectare or above the vulnerability to flooding from other sources as well as from river and sea flooding, and the potential to increase flood risk elsewhere through the addition of hard surfaces and the effect of the new development on surface water run-off, should be incorporated in a flood risk assessment. This need only be brief unless the factors above or other local considerations require particular attention.

Policy aims

In this zone, developers and local authorities should seek opportunities to reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area and beyond through the layout and form of the development, and the appropriate application of sustainable drainage systems.

Zone 2 - medium probability

Definition

This zone comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding (1% – 0.1%), or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of sea flooding (0.5% – 0.1%) in any year.

Appropriate uses

Essential infrastructure and the water-compatible, less vulnerable and more vulnerable uses, as set out in table 2, are appropriate in this zone.

The highly vulnerable uses are only appropriate in this zone if the Exception Test is passed.

Flood risk assessment requirements

All development proposals in this zone should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment.

Policy aims

In this zone, developers and local authorities should seek opportunities to reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area through the layout and form of the development, and the appropriate application of sustainable drainage systems.

Zone 3a - high probability

Definition

This zone comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%), or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea (>0.5%) in any year.

Appropriate uses

The water-compatible and less vulnerable uses of land (table 2) are appropriate in this zone. The highly vulnerable uses should not be permitted in this zone.

The more vulnerable uses and essential infrastructure should only be permitted in this zone if the Exception Test is passed. Essential infrastructure permitted in this zone should be designed and constructed to remain operational and safe for users in times of flood.

Flood risk assessment requirements

All development proposals in this zone should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment.

Policy aims

In this zone, developers and local authorities should seek opportunities to:

- reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area through the layout and form of the development and the appropriate application of sustainable drainage systems;
- relocate existing development to land in zones with a lower probability of flooding; and
- create space for flooding to occur by restoring functional floodplain and flood flow pathways and by identifying, allocating and safeguarding open space for flood storage.

Zone 3b - the functional floodplain

Definition

This zone comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.

Local planning authorities should identify in their Strategic Flood Risk Assessments areas of functional floodplain and its boundaries accordingly, in agreement with the Environment Agency. The identification of functional floodplain should take account of local circumstances and not be defined solely on rigid probability parameters. But land which would flood with an annual probability of 1 in 20 (5%) or greater in any year, or is designed to flood in an extreme (0.1%) flood, should provide a starting point for consideration and discussions to identify the functional floodplain.

Appropriate uses

Only the water-compatible uses and the essential infrastructure listed in table 2 that has to be there should be permitted in this zone. It should be designed and constructed to:

- remain operational and safe for users in times of flood;
- result in no net loss of floodplain storage;
- not impede water flows; and
- not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Essential infrastructure in this zone should pass the Exception Test.

Flood risk assessment requirements

All development proposals in this zone should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment.

Policy aims

In this zone, developers and local authorities should seek opportunities to:

- reduce the overall level of flood risk in the area through the layout and form of the development and the appropriate application of sustainable drainage systems;
- relocate existing development to land with a lower probability of flooding.

Table 2: Flood risk vulnerability classification

Essential infrastructure

- Essential transport infrastructure (including mass evacuation routes) which has to cross the area at risk.
- Essential utility infrastructure which has to be located in a flood risk area for operational reasons, including electricity generating power stations and grid and primary substations; and water treatment works that need to remain operational in times of flood.
- Wind turbines.

Highly vulnerable

- Police stations, ambulance stations and fire stations and command centres and telecommunications installations required to be operational during flooding.
- Emergency dispersal points.
- Basement dwellings.
- Caravans, mobile homes and park homes intended for permanent residential use.
- Installations requiring hazardous substances consent. (Where there is a demonstrable need to locate such installations for bulk storage of materials with port or other similar facilities, or such installations with energy infrastructure or carbon capture and storage installations, that require coastal or water-side locations, or need to be located in other high flood risk areas, in these instances the facilities should be classified as “essential infrastructure”).

More vulnerable

- Hospitals.
- Residential institutions such as residential care homes, children’s homes, social services homes, prisons and hostels.
- Buildings used for dwelling houses, student halls of residence, drinking establishments, nightclubs and hotels.
- Non-residential uses for health services, nurseries and educational establishments.
- Landfill and sites used for waste management facilities for hazardous waste.
- Sites used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping, subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan.

Less vulnerable

- Police, ambulance and fire stations which are not required to be operational during flooding.
- Buildings used for shops, financial, professional and other services, restaurants and cafes, hot food takeaways, offices, general industry, storage and distribution, non-residential institutions not included in “more vulnerable”, and assembly and leisure.
- Land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry.
- Waste treatment (except landfill and hazardous waste facilities).
- Minerals working and processing (except for sand and gravel working).
- Water treatment works which do not need to remain operational during times of flood.
- Sewage treatment works (if adequate measures to control pollution and manage sewage during flooding events are in place).

Water-compatible development

- Flood control infrastructure.
- Water transmission infrastructure and pumping stations.
- Sewage transmission infrastructure and pumping stations.
- Sand and gravel working.
- Docks, marinas and wharves.
- Navigation facilities.
- Ministry of Defence defence installations.
- Ship building, repairing and dismantling, dockside fish processing and refrigeration and compatible activities requiring a waterside location.
- Water-based recreation (excluding sleeping accommodation).
- Lifeguard and coastguard stations.

- Amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms.
- Essential ancillary sleeping or residential accommodation for staff required by uses in this category, subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan.

Notes to table 2:

- a.** This classification is based partly on Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Environment Agency research on Flood Risks to People (FD2321/TR2)8 and also on the need of some uses to keep functioning during flooding.
- b.** Buildings that combine a mixture of uses should be placed into the higher of the relevant classes of flood risk sensitivity. Developments that allow uses to be distributed over the site may fall within several classes of flood risk sensitivity.
- c.** The impact of a flood on the particular uses identified within this flood risk vulnerability classification will vary within each vulnerability class. Therefore, the flood risk management infrastructure and other risk mitigation measures needed to ensure the development is safe may differ between uses within a particular vulnerability classification.

Table 3: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone ‘compatibility’

Flood risk vulnerability classification (see table 2)		Essential infrastructure	Water compatible	Highly vulnerable	More vulnerable	Less vulnerable
Flood zone (see table 1)	Zone 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zone 2	✓	✓	Exception Test required	✓	✓
	Zone 3a	Exception Test required	✓	✗	Exception Test required	✓
	Zone 3b functional floodplain	Exception Test required	✓	✗	✗	✗

Key:

- ✗ Development is appropriate.
 ✓ Development should not be permitted.

Notes to table 3:

This table does not show:

- a.** the application of the Sequential Test which guides development to Flood Zone 1 first, then Zone 2, and then Zone 3;
b. flood risk assessment requirements; or
c. the policy aims for each flood zone.

Flood Risk Assessment

Properly prepared assessments of flood risk will inform the decision-making process at all stages of development planning. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is a study carried out by one or more local planning authorities to assess the risk to an area from flooding from all

sources, now and in the future, taking account of the impacts of climate change, and to assess the impact that changes or development in the area will have on flood risk. It may also identify, particularly at more local levels, how to manage those changes to ensure that flood risk is not increased. A site-specific flood risk assessment is carried out by, or on behalf of, a developer to assess the risk to a development site and demonstrate how flood risk from all sources of flooding to the development itself and flood risk to others will be managed now, and taking climate change into account. There should be iteration between the different levels of flood risk assessment.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Plans should be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency, local planning authorities' own functions of emergency response and drainage authority under the Land Drainage Act 1991, and where appropriate, internal drainage boards. Initially the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will be used to refine information on the areas that may flood, taking into account other sources of flooding and the impacts of climate change, in addition to the information on the flood map. Local planning authorities should use the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to inform their knowledge of flooding, refine the information on the flood map and determine the variations in flood risk from all sources of flooding across and from their area. These should form the basis for preparing appropriate policies for flood risk management for these areas. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be used to inform the sustainability appraisal (incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) of local development documents, and will provide the basis from which to apply the Sequential Test and Exception Test in the development allocation and development control process.

Where local planning authorities have been unable to allocate all proposed development and infrastructure in accordance with the Sequential Test, taking account of the flood vulnerability category of the intended use, it will be necessary to increase the scope of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to provide the information necessary for application of the Exception Test. This should, additionally, consider the beneficial effects of flood risk management infrastructure in generally reducing the extent and severity of flooding when compared to the flood zones on the flood map. The increased scope of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will enable the production of mapping showing flood outlines for different probabilities, impact, speed of onset, depth and velocity variance of flooding taking account of the presence and likely performance of flood risk management infrastructure.

Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment

As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, local planning authorities should only consider development in flood risk areas appropriate where informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment. This should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed so that the development remains safe throughout its lifetime, taking climate change into account. Those proposing developments should take advice from the emergency services when producing an evacuation plan for the development as part of the flood risk assessment.

Minor developments are unlikely to raise significant flood risk issues unless they would:

- have an adverse effect on a watercourse, floodplain or its flood defences;
- would impede access to flood defence and management facilities; or

- where the cumulative impact of such developments would have a significant effect on local flood storage capacity or flood flows.

Taking Climate Change into Account

Global sea level will continue to rise, depending on greenhouse gas emissions and the sensitivity of the climate system. The relative sea level rise in England also depends on the local vertical movement of the land, which is generally falling in the south-east and rising in the north and west. In preparing a Strategic Flood

Risk Assessment or a site-specific flood risk assessment, the allowances for the rates of relative sea level rise shown in table 4 should be used as a starting point for considering flooding from the sea, along with the sensitivity ranges for wave height and wind speed in table 5.

Table 4: Recommended contingency allowances for net sea level rises

	Net sea level rise (mm per year) relative to 1990			
	1990 to 2025	2025 to 2055	2055 to 2085	2085 to 2115
East of England, east midlands, London, south-east England (south of Flamborough Head)	4.0	8.5	12.0	15.0
South-west England	3.5	8.0	11.5	14.5
North-west England, north-east England (north of Flamborough Head)	2.5	7.0	10.0	13.0

Notes to table 4:

a. For deriving sea levels up to 2025, the 4mm per year, 3mm per year and 2.5mm per year rates (covering the three geographical groups respectively), should be applied back to the 1990 base sea level year. From 2026 to 2055, the increase in sea level in this period is derived by adding the number of years on from 2025 (to 2055), multiplied by the respective rate shown in the table. Subsequent time periods 2056 to 2085 and 2086 to 2115 are treated similarly.

b. Refer to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs FCDPAG3 Economic Appraisal Supplementary Note to Operating Authorities – Climate Change Impacts, October 2006, for details of the derivation of this table. In particular, Annex A1 of this Note shows examples of how to calculate sea level rise.

c. Vertical movement of the land is incorporated in the table and does not need to be calculated separately.

The rise in sea level will change the frequency of occurrence of high water levels relative to today's sea levels, assuming no change in storminess. There may also be secondary impacts such as changes in wave heights due to increased water depths, as well as possible changes in the frequency, duration and severity of storm events. A 10 per cent sensitivity allowance should be added to offshore wind speeds and wave heights by the 2080s.

In making an assessment of the impacts of climate change on flooding from the land, rivers and sea as part of a flood risk assessment, the sensitivity ranges in table 5 may provide an appropriate precautionary response to the uncertainty about climate change impacts on rainfall intensities, river flow, wave height and wind speed.

Table 5: Recommended national precautionary sensitivity ranges for peak rainfall intensities, peak river flows, offshore wind speeds and wave heights

Parameter	1990 to 2025	2025 to 2055	2055 to 2085	2085 to 2115
Peak rainfall intensity	+5%	+10%	+20%	+30%
Peak river flow	+10%	+20%		
Offshore wind speed	+5%		+10%	
Extreme wave height	+5%		+10%	

Notes to table 5:

a. Refer to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs FCDPAG3 Economic Appraisal Supplementary Note to Operating Authorities – Climate Change Impacts, October 2006, for details of the derivation of this table.

b. For deriving peak rainfall, for example, between 2025 and 2055 multiply the rainfall measurement (in mm per hour) by 10 per cent and between 2055 and 2085 multiply the rainfall measurement by 20 per cent. So, if there is a 10mm per hour event, for the 2025 to 2055 period this would equate to 11mm per hour; and for the 2055 to 2085 period, this would equate to 12mm per hour. Other parameters in table 5 are treated similarly.

Sensitivity testing of the flood map produced by the Environment Agency, using the 20 per cent from 2025 to 2115 allowance for peak flows, suggests that changes in the extent of inundation are negligible in well-defined floodplains, but can be dramatic in very flat areas. However, changes in the depth of flooding under the same allowance will reduce the return period of a given flood. This means that a site currently located within a lower risk zone (e.g. Zone 2 in table 1) could in future be re-classified as lying within a higher risk zone (e.g. Zone 3a in table 1). This in turn could have implications for the type of development that is appropriate according to its vulnerability to flooding (see table 2). It will therefore be important that developers, their advisors and local authorities refer to the current flood map and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment when preparing and considering proposals.

Flooding in estuaries may result from the combined effects of high river flows and high sea surges. When taking account of impacts of climate change in flood risk assessments covering tidal estuaries, it will be necessary for the allowances for sea level rise in table 4 and the allowances for peak flow, wave height and wind speed in table 5 to be combined.

Managing Residual Flood Risk

Residual risks are those remaining after applying the sequential approach and taking mitigating actions. It is the responsibility of those planning development to fully assess flood risk, propose measures to mitigate it and demonstrate that any residual risks can be safely managed. Flood resistance and resilience measures should not be used to justify development in inappropriate locations.

Flood Resilience and Resistance

The relative benefits of resilient and resistant construction have been assessed both through risk assessment and the real time testing of model forms of construction. Resilient construction is favoured because it can be achieved more consistently and is less likely to

encourage occupiers to remain in buildings that could be inundated by rapidly rising water levels.

Flood-resilient buildings are designed to reduce the consequences of flooding and facilitate recovery from the effects of flooding sooner than conventional buildings. This may be achieved through the use of water-resistant materials for floors, walls and fixtures and the siting of electrical controls, cables and appliances at a higher than normal level. The lower floors of buildings in areas at medium and high probability of flooding should be reserved for uses consistent with table 1. If the lowest floor level is raised above the predicted flood level, consideration must be given to providing access for those with restricted mobility. In considering appropriate resilience measures, it will be necessary to plan for specific circumstances and have a clear understanding of the mechanisms that lead to flooding and the nature of the flood risk by undertaking a flood risk assessment.

Flood-resistant construction can prevent entry of water or minimise the amount of water that may enter a building where there is flooding outside. This form of construction should be used with caution and accompanied by resilience measures, as effective flood exclusion may depend on occupiers ensuring some elements, such as barriers to doorways, are put in place and maintained in a good state. Buildings may also be damaged by water pressure or debris being transported by flood water. This may breach flood-excluding elements of the building and permit rapid inundation. Temporary and demountable defences are not normally appropriate for new developments.

Appendix 10: Strategic Allocation Maps