



Appendix A: Area A Assessments



CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN: INITIAL SETTLEMENTS CAPACITY STUDY

Appendix IIA- Area A-Initial Settlement Capacity Assessment

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AMPTHILL

Amphill is a densely developed urban settlement located in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of approximately 7000 people in around 3615 dwellings¹. The settlement is an ancient market town containing a number of Georgian buildings and a Market Square which holds a market every Thursday². The settlement is located just north of Flitwick, and around 6 miles south of Bedford. Amphill Park, previously a royal lodge and hunting park, and Houghton House are to the north of the settlement, and is now used as public open space.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Amphill. The settlement is bordered to the east, south and west by designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴ for the area identifies the Parish as consisting of “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “elderly people reliant on support”, “established families in large detached homes”, “elderly people with assets”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing” and “thriving families with children and careers”. ONS data⁵ for the Amphill ward area shows the median age to be 43. The area also has more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Amphill contains a wide range of services and facilities including 4 community centres, 2 pre-schools/nurseries, 2 lower schools, a middle school, an upper school, 2 ATM's, a bank/building society, a supermarket, a newsagent, a post office, a chemist, a dentist, an optician, 3 GP surgeries/health centres, 15 restaurants/takeaways, 6 food serving pubs, a non-food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities, 2 children's play areas and an entertainment venue. The settlement also contains a variety of other retail stores. Amphill has a very active community with numerous community clubs.

The settlement contains a large number of Leisure Strategy sites⁶. These include 2 large sites to the north (Coopers Hill Nature Reserve and Amphill Park) and smaller sites around the town centre including allotment sites and a playing field. Amphill has a small deficit of urban parks, formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, facilities for young people and allotments. However, the

¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Amphill Ward Profile

² <http://www.information-britain.co.uk/county39/townguideAmphill/>

³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Amphill Ward Profile

⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics-Amphill Ward

⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

settlement has a surplus of countryside recreation sites, informal large recreation areas and play areas for children⁷.

Education: The Firs Lower School is close to capacity however an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school cannot accommodate expansion. Russell Lower School has existing capacity, however an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school cannot accommodate expansion. Alameda Middle School has some existing capacity, however an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school does not have the site capacity for expansion⁸. Redborne Upper School and Community College has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast but an expansion is already planned.

Employment: Ampthill contains a significant employment area⁹. The Ampthill/Flitwick employment area has 190 hectares of existing employment land, most of which is identified as in 'Good' or 'Very Good' condition¹⁰. ONS data¹¹ for the Ampthill ward area shows that 40% of residents work full time, 14.6% work part time and 15.7% are retired. The main industries of employment for residents of Ampthill ward are wholesale & retail, education, and health & social work. 26% of residents work within the ward and 18% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Bedford¹²

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the primary road network and is connected to the A507 to the west and south. The B530 runs from the north of the settlement to Bedford. The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement in Flitwick, 2 miles to the south. The settlement contains bus stops for residential use, and there is access to the town centre via public footpaths.

Bus: Ampthill is served by bus services connecting to surrounding villages and the larger towns of Milton Keynes, Bedford and Luton further afield. Whilst there are a large number of different services, they are infrequent, do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods, and are heavily reliant on being subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council. In addition, where services are provided, the scheduling of these in Ampthill often results in large gaps in provision followed by a number of buses turning up within a short timeframe.

The quality of the waiting facilities varies. In some cases, bus shelters are provided complete with lay-bys, raised kerbs and lighting, and bespoke timetable information, whilst in other cases only bus stop flags are provided with timetable information stuck or tied to the pole. Many stops also appear to be neglected and poorly maintained¹³.

⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics-Ampthill Ward

¹² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Ampthill Ward Profile

¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

Road: The B530 links Flitwick, Ampthill and Bedford and carries a significant volume of traffic between the towns as an alternative north-south route to the A6. Flitwick Road forms the main road through the centre of Ampthill and is subject to flows in the region of 12,700 vehicles per day. Whilst this is lower than many of the other key routes in the transport plan area it suffers from significant delays in peak times.

The A507 is the key east / west link through Central Bedfordshire providing access to both the A1 and the M1 at Junction 13. Flows on the route, which forms a bypass to Ampthill, equated to around 16,700 in 2009. The M1 in the vicinity of Ampthill and Flitwick operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor¹⁴.

Air Quality: Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) No 3 Ampthill¹⁵ is a declared area for levels of nitrogen dioxide along parts of Bedford, Church, Woburn and Dunstable Streets.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Ampthill is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements located in this catchment area are Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Greenfield, Fliton, Wardhedges, Westoning, Eversholt, Tingrith and Steppingley. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings¹⁶.

National Grid to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is an urban area surrounded to the north, east and west by the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT. This is a large scale elevated landscape with a gently undulating ridge top. The land is primarily in arable cultivation and the landscape area has a high ecological value due to the number of SSSIs present. There are small areas of remnant heathland and neutral/acid grassland¹⁷. The settlement is bordered to the south by a different landscape type, the Flit Greensand Valley. This landscape is a medium scale valley cutting through the Greensand, and the valley is overlain with alluvium/peat and narrow terraces of river gravel. The landscape has low lying areas of riverside farmland with improved pasture and some arable fields¹⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is bordered to the east and south by Grade 2 agricultural land. To the north and west the settlement is bordered by Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma_id=1088

¹⁶ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

¹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 7

Historic Environment: Ampthill has a large number of *Listed Buildings*, most of which are clustered along Church Street, Dunstable Street, Bedford Street and Woburn Road and at the point where these 4 roads meet. Ampthill Park House to the north is also a Listed Building. The remains of Ampthill Castle, in Ampthill Park, is a designated *Scheduled Monument* and the park itself is a designated *Historic Park and Garden*. Ampthill has a large *Conservation Area* which centres around the Market Place in the north of the settlement and extends westward to include Ampthill Park. The settlement character is defined by the high concentration of historic buildings and the contrast between open landscape and the compact nature of the historic core. The dominance of red brick and clay tiles form a strong part of the character of the Conservation Area.

The topography of the settlement means long vistas can be achieved from various high points within the towns, and the mature parkland trees provide a backdrop to many parts of the town¹⁹. The Market Square and roads leading off it are in an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is the land where the castle used to be. There are small areas widely spread around the settlement which are similarly designated.

Biodiversity: Coopers Hill is a lowland heathland SSSI, Local Nature Reserve and County Wildlife Site bordering the settlement to the west. Ampthill Park to the north is another designated County Wildlife Site, and to the east Ampthill Cemetery and The Knoll are two small County Wildlife Sites. Ampthill Park contains Lowland Dry Acid Grassland and Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. Coopers Hill also contains Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The settlement is bordered to the north, east, west and partially to the south by the Biodiversity Network and Green Infrastructure Network, forming part of GI corridor 6²⁰. The settlement is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

Flood Risk: A small area of flood zone, running from east to west borders the settlement to the south²¹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, an SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Network. The village is bordered by Green Belt designated land. The settlement also contains a number of valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including a large number of Listed Buildings, a Historic Park and Garden, a Conservation Area and a Scheduled Monument. Ampthill includes a declared AQMA in the centre for nitrogen dioxide levels associated with transport emissions. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be HIGH.

¹⁹ Ampthill Conservation Area (2005) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/ampthill_tcm3-12941.pdf

²⁰ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²¹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: An expansion is planned at Redborne Upper School and Community College which can accommodate further growth
2. Healthcare: Facilities present although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Full range present including a supermarket indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Full range present including entertainment venue indicating a high capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, facilities for young people and allotments.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded in the east, south and west by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Flitwick (in relatively close proximity) however the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent and of varying quality. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is good access to the strategic road network.
7. Air Quality: AQMA in centre associated with emissions from road transport.

Environment

8. Growth in the north of the settlement may affect the designated heritage setting at Ampthill Park.
9. Development in the west may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity and is constrained by the existing SSSI.
10. Development in the south is constrained by an area of flood risk. Development in the east and south is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

AMPTHILL SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

Any development in the north of the settlement would affect the setting of Ampthill Park and the Conservation Area, and would require sensitive design mitigation measures, and would be required to demonstrate that the public benefits would outweigh any identified harm. The land north of Alameda Middle School is outside of the Green Belt but is constrained by both the setting of heritage assets and its proximity to the SSSI and potentially sensitive lowland heathland habitat.

There is land to the south of the settlement that is outside of the Green Belt and largely free from significant environmental constraints.

Development in the rest of the land surrounding the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions. Development would need to be carefully sited to avoid contributions to coalescence with Flitwick in the south and Maulden in the east.

Despite the presence of a wide range of services and facilities present in Ampthill's town Centre, the absence of brownfield land means that new development would be located in locations on the edge of the settlement resulting in population living further from the town centre, leading to increased reliance on private vehicle and worsening congestion.

Any development would need to be managed to avoid adverse impacts on the historic core and character of the settlement, while ensuring access to services in the town centre is improved. Development would also need to manage the impacts of increased road traffic on the designated AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) and central area. This means that despite the apparent wide range of services and facilities available within Ampthill, that the potential capacity is effectively constrained.

ASPLEY GUISE

Aspley Guise is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 2,200 people in around 1000 dwellings²², and is located around 6 miles south-east of Milton Keynes and a mile south of the M1. It is a sprawling and disjointed settlement, comprising both rural and urbanising influences. The majority of the settlement is made up of large detached dwellings set within large gardens and set back from roads behind generous verges, hedges/walls, which contributes to the sense of openness and 'ruralness'. Ribbon development from Woburn Sands along Weathercock Lane/West Hill grows denser towards the historic centre of the village. However, the red brick buildings and walls and mature vegetation contribute to the rural scene. The settlement has Saxon origins, and originally developed around a spring. Aspley Guise has a number of buildings of architectural and historic interest, many of which are located around the village square, which can be found where the 4 main roads leading into the settlement from north, east, south and west meet. The village lies on the edge of the Greensand Ridge escarpment²³.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Aspley Guise has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary²⁴ however, the Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is located within and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁵ identifies the Parish as comprising of "established families in large detached homes", "householders in inexpensive village homes" and "thriving families with children and careers". ONS data²⁶ for Aspley Guise LLSOA shows the median age of residents to be 47. The area has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

The settlement has a small collection of services and facilities. These include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 2 convenience stores, a newsagent, a dentist, 2 restaurants/takeaways, a food serving pub and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any secondary education, banking facilities, a post office, GP surgery or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close²⁷ to the Aspley Guise area include Milton Keynes (Approx. 5 miles away, and outside of Central Bedfordshire administrative boundary), and Leighton Linlade (Approx. 7 miles away). A variety of clubs and groups are active within the community, these include a cricket club, a drama society, a WI group, a golf club, a football club and a Scouts group.

²² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

²³ Aspley Guise Conservation Area (2008) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/images/aspley-guise_tcm3-12944.pdf

²⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

²⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 007B Lower Level Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²⁷ Google Maps (2016)

The settlement has a number of Leisure Strategy sites²⁸ in and around the village including a recreation ground and an allotment site. To the south-west of the settlement is Aspley Woods, a large area of woodland designated as a Leisure Strategy site. The Parish however, has been identified in the Leisure Strategy²⁹ as having a small deficit of countryside recreation sites, informal large recreation areas and facilities for young people. It does however, have a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, allotments and play areas for children.

Education: Aspley Guise Lower School is over capacity and the school site has no existing capacity for expansion. Fulbrook Middle School (in nearby Woburn Sands) has a net capacity of 440 pupils, with 413 being registered as of January 2016 and the school does not have the site capacity to accommodate expansion. Cedars Upper School (Leighton Buzzard) has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site does have the capacity for expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College (Leighton Buzzard) has capacity, and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required³⁰.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Aspley Guise³¹. ONS data³² for Aspley Guise LLSOA shows that 37.5% of residents are in full time employment, 13% work part time and 19.3% are retired. The proportion of residents for the area who work full or part time is lower than the proportion of residents similarly employed in the whole of Central Bedfordshire. The proportion of residents for Aspley Guise who are retired is higher than that for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment for residents are wholesale and retail, education and professional, scientific and technical. 27% of residents work within the ward and 12% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Milton Keynes³³

Transport and Movement: The settlement does have access to the primary road network, being connected to the A5130 to the west and access to the M1 to the north-east. The settlement has a railway station which is on the Bletchley-Bedford Marston Vale Line. There are a number of bus stops in the village for residential use and there is access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths.

Bus: The quality of the waiting facilities varies within each village (within the Transport Plan Local Area). In some cases, bus shelters are provided complete with lay bys, raised kerbs and bespoke timetable information, whilst in other cases only bus stop flags are provided with timetable information stuck or tied to the pole. There is a wide variation in the frequency of services with many of the villages and rural areas having weekly or even monthly services only³⁴.

²⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

³⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 007B Lower Level Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

Rail: The Area is served by the Marston Vale railway line between Bletchley and Bedford with services operated by London Midland. There are 16 trains per day in each direction, running at approximately hourly intervals. There is no Sunday service³⁵.

Roads: Aspley Guise has access to the M1 via junction 13, however the M1 is congested and is currently over capacity, operating between 110-130% of capacity³⁶. The main local authority managed road in the area is the A507 which runs east to west between the A421 at Junction 13 and the A1. The local road network in the area links the various settlements quite comprehensively. Delays may occur at the three level crossings in the area but the levels of traffic on both the roads and the railway line are currently light enough to have no major effects³⁷.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- The sewerage and wastewater capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works that Aspley Guise is within the catchment for is unknown. Possible that the Wastewater Treatment Works is located within Milton Keynes.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Aspley Guise is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge, a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape occurring on the solid band of Lower Greensand. The LCT area has large blocks of Mixed Deciduous Woodland, which provides a strong sense of enclosure to the area. The land is predominantly under arable cultivation, however there are areas of pasture contained by extensive woodland. There are a number of SSSIs in the area, and active and restored mineral works are dispersed across the area³⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is bordered to the east by Grade 3 agricultural land however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Aspley Guise contains an assortment of *Listed Buildings*, with the main cluster being located around the village square. Listed buildings can be found north along Church Street, south along Woburn Lane and west along West Hill Road. The Aspley Guise *Conservation Area* covers a large portion of the settlement, with the central point being the village square. Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are in residential use. The Conservation Area has an enclosed character created by tight-knit built development and high hedgerows bordering the lanes. There are several areas where enclosed space opens up and panoramic views of the surrounding countryside occur. Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area date from the 17th and 18th centuries. Red brick is the dominant historic building material although there is some timber framed structures. Roofs are predominantly clay tiles, and locally quarried ironstone is

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

visible in a few buildings³⁹. There are 2 *Archaeological Notification Areas* within the village, one around the village square which extends northwards and westwards and a second to the east of the square. There are patches of land around the north of the settlement that are also designated.

Biodiversity: The settlement does not contain any internationally or nationally designated biodiversity. Aspley Woods to the south-west is a designated County Wildlife Site containing Lowland Beech and Yew, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland. Aspley Guise Meadows County Wildlife Site and Greystone County Wildlife Site are small sites located to the north of the settlement. There are five Traditional Orchards, as well as an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland. The Biodiversity Network surrounds most of the settlement, apart from a small area of land to the south. The Green Infrastructure Network borders the settlement to the south and partly to the east and north. The settlement area and land south of the village is within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

Flood Risk: An area of flood zone (2 & 3) to the east of the settlement passes from north to the south, but is small and is removed from the main urban area⁴⁰.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites and land as part of the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Network. The settlement is largely washed-over by Green Belt and contains many valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement including a Conservation Area and a number of Listed Buildings. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is room for limited growth and expansion at Cedars Upper School (Leighton Buzzard) indicating a medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Limited facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Some facilities present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities present indicating a medium to low capacity. Development could contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of countryside recreation sites, informal large recreation areas, and facilities for young people.

³⁹ Aspley Guise Conservation Area (2008) [Online]
http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/aspley-guise_tcm3-12944.pdf

⁴⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

5. Green Belt: Most of the urban area is largely washed-over by Green Belt indicating a low capacity without Green Belt release.

Transport & Movement

6. Served by a less frequent rail link indicating medium accessibility and connectivity and therefore medium capacity, however, the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are of varying quality. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is also good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Any development around Aspley Guise may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity. Development in the east may also lead to the loss of agricultural land, though it is unknown at this stage whether this is higher grade best and most versatile land.
8. Development in the east, west and south of the settlement may affect designated heritage settings.

ASPLEY GUISE SUMMARY

9. Development in the south-west of the settlement is constrained by the CWS.

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Medium - Low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and leisure facilities, although these are available in nearby Milton Keynes and further afield in Leighton Linlade.

Development in the north of the settlement is outside of the Green Belt designation, however, it is also segregated from the main settlement area by the railway line. Development here may require significant infrastructure investment to achieve successful integration.

Any development in the south, east or west of the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Any development around the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and existing green spaces. Any development around the eastern, western or southern edge may need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

Whilst development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, provide sustainable growth that is well connected with the existing built up area and beyond (via the railway and in light of future rail development), and could deliver a range of housing for the local community, including affordable housing, large-scale development is likely to negatively

impact upon the settlement character, and would therefore be inappropriate in this location.

ASPLEY HEATH

Aspley Heath is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 580 people in around 320 dwellings⁴¹. The settlement is located around two miles to the south east of Milton Keynes and immediately to the south of Woburn Sands, and sits on the Greensand Ridge escarpment and is surrounded by an extensive area of woodland and heathland to the east, south and west⁴². It was originally an area of unsettled heathland but in the 19th century settlements developed and the civil parish was formed in 1883, and mainly comprises large, detached dwellings set back from the wooded Church Road, and bounded by high holly hedges. The vegetation and sense of openness afforded by the large private garden contribute to the rural character. The northernmost end of the village (north of the church) is the much more densely developed and urban character and includes a dense cluster of flats and maisonettes.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴³ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. The settlement is located within designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴⁴ identifies the Parish as consisting of “established families in large detached homes”. ONS data⁴⁵ for the Aspley Heath LLSOA reveals the median age of the area’s residents to be 50, higher than the median age of Central Bedfordshire as a whole which is 40. The area also has almost twice as many residents over the age of 65 than under 16. This data, coupled with the geo-demographic profile, suggests the settlement has an older population with fewer families.

The settlement does not contain many services and facilities limited to only 2 restaurants/takeaways and 2 food serving pubs. Therefore, the settlement lacks educational facilities, healthcare facilities, banking facilities, supermarkets, convenience stores, recreational facilities or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores include Milton Keynes (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire administrative boundary) and Leighton Linlode (approx. 7 miles). No active clubs and groups for the settlement could be found through internet searching.

The settlement is linear in character and largely surrounded by Aspley Woods, a large Leisure Strategy site⁴⁶. There is an additional Leisure Strategy site around the church. Aspley Heath has a deficit of formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments⁴⁷.

⁴¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

⁴² Aspley Heath Conservation Area (2015) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/aspley-heath_tcm3-12945.pdf

⁴³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

⁴⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009E Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Fullbrook middle School has a small amount of existing capacity but cannot accommodate an existing site expansion. Cedars Upper School has some existing capacity, however, is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site could accommodate expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned – however more land or a new school site would be required⁴⁸.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Aspley Heath⁴⁹. ONS data⁵⁰ for Aspley Heath LLSOA reveals that 36% of residents work full time, 9.8% work part time and 21% are retired. The proportion of residents in part and full time employment is lower than the Central Bedfordshire average, however the proportion of residents who are retired or self-employed is higher. The main industries for ward residents are wholesale and retail, professional, scientific and technical and education. In total 27% of ward residents work within the ward and 12% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Milton Keynes⁵¹.

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A5130 in the north of the settlement. The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement at Woburn Sands, around a mile to the north of the settlement. The settlement has access to the village centre via public footpaths/cycle paths and contains bus stops for residential use. No in-depth information was available on the Local Area Transport Plan for the settlement.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- The sewerage and wastewater capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works that Aspley Heath is within the catchment for is unknown. Possible that the Wastewater Treatment Works is located within Milton Keynes.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Aspley Heath is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT. The area is a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape with areas of high ground underlain by drift deposits of boulder clay. The landscape area has large blocks of Mixed Deciduous Woodland, which provides a strong sense of enclosure to the area. The land is predominantly under arable cultivation, however there are areas of pasture contained by extensive woodland. There are a number of SSSIs in the area, and active and restored mineral works are dispersed across the area⁵².

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement does not contain and is not surrounded by any best or most versatile agricultural land.

⁴⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁵⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009E Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

⁵² Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

Historic Environment: The settlement has a single *Listed Building*, which is the local church. The settlement has a *Conservation Area* which encompasses the whole of the village. The Conservation Area is characterised by the large detached homes set in extensive grounds, with large front gardens separating the dwellings from the road. The subtle variations in topography along Church Road (the backbone of the village) adds to the character. The Conservation Area has an enclosed feel due to high hedgerows and groups of mature trees. Most of the buildings date from the 19th and 20th century, with red brick being the prevalent building material. There is little stylistic cohesion between buildings due to the development of plots by individual owners⁵³.

Biodiversity: Wavendon Heath Ponds SSSI is just under a 1km to the south of the settlement. Wavendon Heaths and Aspley Wood County Wildlife Site borders the settlement from the north to the south, and due to its size encompasses much of the land around the settlement. Aspley Heath Field is a smaller County Wildlife Site in the north of the settlement. There is an area of Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the north-west of the settlement, and additional areas to the east, as well as an area of Lowland Heathland. The entire settlement and surrounding land is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area and the Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Network encompass most of the land to the east and south of the village.

Flood Risk: The settlement is not constrained by any flood zones⁵⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including an SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and land as part of the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks. The settlement is also constrained by Green Belt land. The village contains a few cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement including a Conservation Area and a Listed Building. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There are no educational facilities within the settlement indicating a low capacity. There is limited capacity at school sites in the wider catchment, and potential for expansions.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.

⁵³ Aspley Heath Conservation Area (2008) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/aspley-heath_tcm3-12945.pdf

⁵⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Lack of leisure facilities indicating a low capacity.
Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is located within designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. A rail link is located at Woburn Sands around one mile away. The condition and quality of bus services in the settlement is unknown at this stage, however, the settlement does have good access to the village centre via footpaths and cycle routes. There is also good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development in east and south is significantly constrained by the large locally designated County Wildlife Site. This woodland then continues around the west to include Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats. As such any development around these areas is likely to result in the loss of habitats and affect biodiversity to some degree, particularly through increased noise and light pollution and disturbance.
8. Any development around the settlement edge may affect the sensitive heritage setting of the Conservation Area and in the north, Listed Buildings.
9. Any development could contribute to the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

ASPLEY HEATH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Development is also constrained by locally designated wildlife sites to the east and south, and development in the west would also be likely to affect heathland and woodland habitats.

There are areas of land in the north-west which are less significantly constrained by biodiversity, however development here would further contribute to the coalescence of Aspley Heath and Woburn Sands, which already connects in the north.

Overall, development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare, retail / convenience and leisure facilities, however it is connected to the larger settlement of Woburn Sands and

nearby Milton Keynes, and the services and facilities available there and offers close proximity to rail connections. Development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions; however, this scale is likely to affect environmental quality and amenities.

BARTON-LE-CLAY

Barton-le-Clay lies at the foot of the northern slope of the Barton Hills. The village is situated on a strong clay soil and chalk subsoil, and has a population of around 5000 residents in 2115 dwellings⁵⁵. The settlement lies along the Bedford and Luton main road with a few houses on the branch roads to Sharpenhoe in the west and Hexton in the east. The local church is south-east of the settlement and, with the Rectory and a group of small houses on the west and north.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Barton-le-Clay has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area that follows the Parish boundary, however the Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. Barton-le-Clay is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation which surrounds the entire settlement.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵⁶ identifies Barton-le-Clay as having a mix of “established families in large detached homes”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “thriving families with children and careers”, “elderly people with assets” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. The biggest group present are the thriving families with children and careers, which comprise 20% of all households in the ward. ONS data⁵⁷ shows that around 45% of the Barton-Le-Clay population are between 30-60 years old and that there are a higher number of residents over 65 than under 16.

The village contains a number of services and facilities including 2 pre-schools/nurseries, 2 lower schools, a health centre, a chemist, 2 dentists, 2 ATMs, a bank, a superstore, a convenience store, a newsagent, a post office, 5+ restaurants and takeaways, 2 food serving pubs, a non-food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and 2 children’s play areas. To the west of the settlement on the other side of the A6 is ‘Olde Watermill Shopping Village’, and more centrally there is a veterinary practice. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁸ to the Barton-Le-Clay area include Flitwick (approx. 5 miles), and Luton. Barton-le-Clay has an active community, with a number of clubs and groups for residents to attend.

To the south of the settlement there are a number of large Leisure Strategy sites⁵⁹ including sports fields and allotments, with some smaller sites located in the northern areas of the settlement. Barton-Le-Clay is identified as having a deficit of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, play areas for children

⁵⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Barton-Le-Clay Ward Profile

⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Barton-Le-Clay Ward Profile

⁵⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Barton-Le-Clay Ward

⁵⁸ Google Maps (2016)

⁵⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

and facilities for young people. However, the settlement also has a small surplus of allotments and small amenity spaces⁶⁰.

Education: Ramsey Manor Lower School is over capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Arnold Academy is close to capacity and pupil forecast predicts an increase in numbers, however an expansion is already planned. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁶¹ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or the development of 1143 dwellings. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size⁶².

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Barton-le-Clay⁶³. ONS data⁶⁴ shows that 41% of the residents are in full time employment, 15% are in part time employment and 16% are retired. The main industries of employment for the ward are wholesale and retail, construction, education and manufacturing. Around a fifth of the Barton-le-Clay residents work within the ward and around 17% of the ward residents commute outside of the ward to other locations within Central Bedfordshire.

Transport and Movement: The closest railway station is located west of the settlement in Harlington, around 4 miles away, and there are direct road connections to this. The A6 runs west of the settlement providing good connections to Luton in the south and Bedford in the north. The settlement contains a number of bus stops as well as access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths.

Bus: Within Barton-le-Clay, local bus services provide the main strategic sustainable transport links in the village. The main bus service is an hourly bus to Bedford and Luton, provided commercially by Stagecoach. Services can be infrequent and some do not operate outside of peak periods or on Sundays. The quality of the waiting facilities is generally poor across the area⁶⁵.

Rail: Barton-Le-Clay does not have a railway station however, residents of Barton-le-Clay, Streatley, and Sundon also use Harlington, Leagrave stations and Luton, with services operated by First Capital Connect and East Midlands Trains. Up to 9 trains per hour operate in both directions to Bedford, Flitwick, London, Brighton, and Leicester among other places. Some 40 residents also access Leagrave station, where trains from First Capital Connect every 15 minutes serve Bedford, Flitwick, Luton, London and Brighton⁶⁶.

⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁶¹ Form of Entry

⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁶³ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁶⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Barton-Le-Clay Ward

⁶⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington and Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Road: The A6 is a key north / south route through Central Bedfordshire linking Barton-le-Clay with Luton in the south with Bedford in the north⁶⁷.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Barton-Le-Clay is located in the Barton-Le-Clay Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. There are no other settlements located within this catchment area, and therefore Barton-Le-Clay has a capacity of 187 dwellings⁶⁸.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: The settlement is adjacent to the Chilterns AONB to the south. Development in and around Barton-le-Clay therefore has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape, and effects are likely to be most significant in areas in the south of the settlement

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is located within the Barton-le-Clay Clay Vale which is a flat or gently rolling large scale open landscape (defined by Gault Clay geology), with the River Flit, River Ivel and their associated tributary streams running through the Vale. Within this area there are expansive views across the vale to the prominent hill landscapes of the Chalk Escarpment, Greensand Ridge and Clay Hills that border the vale and provide a sense of containment⁶⁹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: There are large areas of Grade 2 agricultural land to the east, south and south-west of the settlement. The remaining land surrounding the settlement is Grade 3 agricultural land, however it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Numerous *Listed Buildings* are dispersed widely across the settlement. There is a *Scheduled Monument* located north of the settlement around Faldo Farm, and another two in the west of the settlement in Sharpenhoe. A designated *Conservation Area* also covers much of the south of the settlement. The large *Conservation Area* comprises two parts. A rectangular area of land in the south is focused around Old Road, Hexton Road and Church Road including the hamlet surrounding the Church of St Nicholas and meadows. To the north is a long narrow area comprising the village centre on Bedford Road and houses on Sharpenhoe Road. The *Conservation Area* comprises almost exclusively two-storey buildings with some single-storey. The buildings in the *Conservation Area* exhibit a wide array of materials including timber framing, thatched and clay tiles roofs and chequered brickwork⁷⁰. Hexton Manor to the east of Barton-le-Clay is a designated *Historic Park & Garden*. There are numerous *Archaeological Notification Areas* around all sides of the settlement and within the central area of the settlement.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁶⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015)-Type 5

⁷⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2009) Barton-Le-Clay Conservation Area Appraisal

Biodiversity: To the south of the settlement there are two SSSIs (Barton Hills and Smithcombe, Sharpenhoe and Sundon Hills). Both of these SSSIs are County Wildlife Sites and Barton Hills SSSI is also a National Nature Reserve. Much of this land to the south forms part of the Biodiversity Network and Green Infrastructure Network, and there is a Roadside Nature Reserve alongside the A6 to the south. There are areas of Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitats in the west of the settlement, and also in the south alongside Lowland Calcareous Grassland Priority Habitats.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk within or immediately surrounding the settlement. However, small areas of flood risk exist in the north of the settlement where the A46 meets Barton Road⁷¹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key sensitive environmental receptors, particularly by its proximity to the Chilterns AONB and designated SSSIs. Development south and east and west of the settlement is likely to affect the setting of the AONB. There is a strong presence of best and most versatile agricultural land, particularly in the east of the settlement. Numerous heritage assets including a Historic Park and Garden support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, and are susceptible to any changes. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential expansion capacity at Arnold Academy and Harlington Upper School to accommodate up to 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Facilities are present in the settlement although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Full range present including a supermarket indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, play areas for children and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

⁷¹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Harlington, Leagrave and Luton however the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent and of varying quality. There is good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development to the south is significantly restricted by the AONB, National Nature Reserve and SSSI designations. Any development in this direction is likely to affect the AONB or its setting and require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.
8. Development in the west would need to be responsive to sensitive heritage settings in some areas, including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments and the setting of the AONB.
9. Any development around Barton-le-Clay would result in the loss of agricultural land, the highest quality of which is in the east, north-east, south and south west areas.

BARTON-LE-CLAY SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium (without Green Belt release: low)

Any development in Barton-le-Clay would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions, and, development in the south and east is likely to affect the setting of the AONB.

The environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of and mitigation of development in the west, north and east. Though development in the west and north west would be less well connected to the existing urban area by the A6 creating a barrier, and would require significant infrastructure provisions to increase accessibility, but development here would be poorly related to the settlement

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities in certain areas to encourage sustainable development that is well connected to the existing built-up area and the services and facilities it contains, and could deliver development gains (including new open space) with a range of housing for the local community.

BILLINGTON

Billington is a civil parish in Central Bedfordshire which contains Great Billington and Lower Billington (considered here as one settlement). Billington has a residential population of 250 people in around 190 dwellings⁷² and is around 2 miles south of Leighton Buzzard. The A4146 passes through Great Billington, and on the west side of the road is Billington Hill which the Parish Church sits on top of⁷³. The settlement has some half-timbered thatched cottages and some old farmhouses. Grovebury Quarry, which is still in operation, is a sand quarry with a large body of water and is less than a mile to west of Little Billington.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁷⁴ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. The settlement is located within and entirely surrounded by designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁷⁵ identifies the Parish as consisting of "well-off homeowners in rural locations". ONS data⁷⁶ for the Eaton Bray Ward (which Billington is located within) shows the median age of residents to be 48. The area also has significantly more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Billington has limited services and facilities including, a community centre, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have any schools, any banking facilities, any supermarkets, any convenience stores, a post office, any healthcare facilities or, any pubs or any entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close⁷⁷ to the Billington area include Leighton Linlade (approx. 2 miles) and Dunstable (approx. 7 miles). No active clubs and groups operating within the settlement could be found through internet searching.

The settlement has 6 leisure strategy sites⁷⁸ which includes an allotment, a recreation ground and an amenity area. Billington has a small deficit of formal and informal large recreation areas and facilities for young people. The settlement has a small surplus of allotments, play areas for children and small amenity spaces⁷⁹.

⁷² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

⁷³ <http://billington.bedsparishes.gov.uk/>

⁷⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁷⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

⁷⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Eaton Bray Ward

⁷⁷ Google Maps (2016)

⁷⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁷⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Cedars Upper School has existing capacity, although this is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. However, the school does have existing site capacity for expansion.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Billington⁸⁰. ONS data⁸¹ for the Eaton Bray Ward (which Billington is located within) shows that 37% of residents are in full time employment, 12.4% are in part time employment and 18.6% are retired. For the ward area the percentage of residents in employment is lower than the average for Central Bedfordshire, however the number of ward residents retired is higher. The main industries of employment for residents of Eaton Bray ward are wholesale & retail, construction, and manufacturing. Around 20% of ward residents work within the ward, and 21% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton⁸².

Transport and Movement: The settlement is connected to the A505 to the north and the A4146 passes through the settlement. The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement in Leighton Buzzard, 3 miles to the north-west. The settlement contains bus stops for residential use, and has access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths.

Bus - Billington has limited bus services which do not operate on Sundays and can be irregular, with some services only available 1-4 times per day, whilst others are more regular⁸³.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Billington is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements located in this catchment area include Stanbridgeford, Totternhoe, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Stanbridge, Tilsworth, Tobworth, Hockliffe and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Billington is located within the Billington Clay Hills LCT. The LCT is very small and is defined by the small scale rounded clay 'knoll'. The hill is characterized by small arable fields and pockets of pasture, with sheep, horses and cattle grazing the hillsides. The hill provides medium to long ranging views across the surrounding clay vale. The A4146 cuts across the area and connects the hill with the adjacent vale⁸⁴.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land; however, it is not known whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

⁸⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁸¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Eaton Bray Ward

⁸² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward

⁸³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

⁸⁴ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Area (2015) Type 8

Historic Environment: Billington has a small collection of *Listed Buildings*, which are all located in Great Billington. There are three in the northern half of the settlement, and five in the southern half, including the church. Billington does have a *Conservation Area* which encompasses the majority of Great Billington, following the A4146 through the settlement from north to south. Both Great Billington and Lower Billington are entirely located in *Archaeological Notification Areas*.

Biodiversity: The settlement does not contain any internationally, nationally or locally designated biodiversity sites. There is an area Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland between the halves of the settlement, and three Traditional Orchards to the north of them. The Biodiversity Network borders Little Billington to the west, as does the Green Infrastructure Network. The Biodiversity Network passes from east to south along the southern borders of both settlements. The Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area borders the settlement to the north.

Flood Risk: A small area of flood risk runs along the southern border of the parish, however this is quite far from the settlement edge⁸⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and land as part of the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks. The settlement is surrounded by designated Green Belt land and contains some valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement including a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Increased growth is likely to require a school expansion at Cedars Upper School, however there is the capacity for this indicating a medium to high capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of formal and informal large recreation areas and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is located within and surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

⁸⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. A rail link is located in Leighton Buzzard (in relatively close proximity), however, the settlement is less well served by bus connections which are infrequent. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development around the settlement is likely to affect designated heritage settings and could result in the loss of agricultural land, although it is unknown at this stage whether it is higher grade best and most versatile land. Development would also need to be directed away from Mineral Safeguarding Area to avoid the sterilisation of minerals.

BILLINGTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail/convenience facilities, as well as wastewater infrastructure.

Any development in Billington would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Any development around the settlement edge would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. Appropriate siting of development can avoid negative effects on mineral resources.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this may affect environmental amenities, and would require significant water infrastructure. There are opportunity areas for small scale sustainable development that is well connected with the existing urban area, and could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, however small scale development may also increase reliance on the private vehicle.

CADDINGTON

Caddington is a village and civil parish located in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 3700 people in around 1720 dwellings⁸⁶. The settlement is located to the south-west of Luton, and to the south-east of Dunstable, and comprises a dense network of residential cul-de-sacs connected to dense development along its main roads, namely Dunstable/Luton Road and Manor Road. The M1 passes the settlement to the west. Caddington lies on the north-east edge of the Chiltern Hills with the highest point being 675 feet above sea level, and the lowest being 450 feet above sea level. It is partly located within the Chilterns AONB. The parish was originally partly in Bedfordshire and partly in Hertfordshire, however in 1894 the parish boundaries were changed so that the parish is now located wholly in Central Bedfordshire⁸⁷.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: In March 2013 the whole of the Caddington and Slip End parishes was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Area. Caddington and Slip End Parish, and the Councils currently preparing a Joint Neighbourhood Plan which was subject to consultation in Summer 2016. The Plan identifies three preferred sites for residential development (Millfield Farm, Former Heathfield School site, and Prebendal Farm Yard – c.400 dwellings in total) and one for employment (land adjacent to Cotswold Business Park) as a small extension to the existing business park. The settlement is significantly constrained by Green Belt designated land which completely surrounds the settlement.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁸⁸ identifies the Parish as consisting of “established families in large detached homes”, “elderly people with assets”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “elderly people reliant on support” and “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁸⁹ for Caddington ward shows the median age of residents to be 47, and that the ward has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age 16. This supports the geo-demographic profile by showing that the ward area has an older population with more elderly people than children.

Caddington contains a range of services and facilities which includes 2 community centres, a pre-school/nursery, a lower and middle school (combined), an ATM, a post office, 2 convenience stores, a newsagent, a chemist, a GP surgery/ health centre, 4 restaurants/cafés/takeaways, 2 food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and 3 children's play areas. Notable towns with superstores close⁹⁰ to the Caddington area include Luton (approx. 3 miles, and outside of the Central Bedfordshire administrative area), Dunstable (approx.. 3

⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁸⁷

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/Caddington/CaddingtonPagesIndex.aspx>

⁸⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁸⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Caddington Ward

⁹⁰ Google Maps (2016)

miles) and Houghton Regis (approx.. 5 miles). Caddington has a number of active clubs and groups which include a cricket club, a Scout group, a golf club, a football club and a drama society.

The settlement has a variety of Leisure Strategy sites⁹¹ which are located throughout the village. These include multiple play areas in the south of the settlement and leisure gardens and a recreation area in the north of the settlement. Caddington has a deficit of urban parks, formal large recreation areas and small amenity spaces. However, the settlement has a small surplus of informal large recreation areas, play areas for children, allotments and facilities for young people⁹².

Education: Caddington Village School has a net capacity of 450 pupils, with 364 pupils registered as of January 2016, however an increase in this number is expected in the pupil forecast. The school does not have the existing site capacity to accommodate expansion⁹³.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Caddington⁹⁴. ONS data⁹⁵ for Caddington ward shows that 40% of residents work full time, 13.4% work part time and 18.8% are retired. Whilst the percentages of residents of the ward who work full or part time are similar to the percentages for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, the percentage of residents who are retired is higher. The main industries of employment for ward residents are wholesale & retail, construction, and education. 22% of ward residents work within Caddington ward and 11% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to destination by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton⁹⁶.

Transport and Movement: Caddington is located in relatively close proximity to the Luton town centre and the M1 motorway. However, the character of the existing road network does not feature existing capacity to cope with significant increase in vehicular movements. The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement, at Luton Airport Parkway around 4 miles to the east. The village also has a number of bus stops available for residential use.

Bus - Caddington has limited bus services which do not operate on Sundays or frequently (apart from the Dunstable to Luton service which operates every half hour, however only in the AM). The standard of bus stops and shelters varies from village to village with some stops in prestige condition whilst there are a number of stops and timetable facilities that are inadequate⁹⁷.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Caddington is located in the Caddington Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements

⁹¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁹² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁹³ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁹⁴ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁹⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Caddington Ward

⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

located in this catchment area include Slip End. Capacity is limited in Caddington but appears adequate in Slip End⁹⁸.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: Caddington is bordered to the north and west by the Chilterns AONB. Development in and around Caddington therefore has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape, and effects are likely to be most significant in areas in the west and north of the settlement.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Caddington is located within the Caddington-Slip End Chalk Dipslope LCT. This is a large scale open landscape with a broad plateau that undulates to form subtle valleys. Arable cropping defines most of the land cover with smaller areas of horse grazing within fenced paddocks. The northern area has blocks of mixed woodlands, and large farm landscapes characterize the rural area. There are a number of busy roads crossing the plateau, as well as pylon lines which form a prominent vertical feature⁹⁹. The area forms important landscape buffer between M1 corridor / Luton and Caddington / wider rural AONB landscape to the west.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement and the surrounding area is located in Grade 3 agricultural land; however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The church is the only *Listed Building* located within the settlement, with 1 other Listed Building located in Aley Green to the south. The settlement has a small *Conservation Area* which centres around the village green. The settlement contains 2 *Archaeological Notification Areas*, one of which centres around the village green and the second one is slightly further north. There are numerous areas of similarly designated land surrounding the settlement to the north, east and west. To the north-east of the settlement are archaeological areas with the potential for significantly important Palaeolithic remains.

Biodiversity: The settlement does not contain any internationally or nationally designated biodiversity sites. There are eight County Wildlife Sites to the north of the settlement. These are mostly small areas comprised of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, with one site (Cotton Bottom Fields) also being a Local Nature Reserve. There are areas of land within the Biodiversity Network to the north of the settlement.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk around the settlement¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Area (2015) Type 11

¹⁰⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, AONB, and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement is surrounded by designated Green Belt land and contains some valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement including a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: The village school has a limited space and no room for expansion indicating a low capacity. New development in Caddington may require additional land for new school sites to facilitate the increased educational requirements.
2. Healthcare: Facilities present although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Range present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas present indicating a medium capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal large recreation areas and small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Luton however the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent and of varying quality. There is no direct access to the strategic road network, with access being via Luton.

Environment

7. Growth in the north-east, north-west, west and east of the settlement is likely to affect the setting of the AONB, and may contribute towards coalescence with Luton, with the area immediately to the west of the settlement being most sensitive. Development in the south could also contribute towards coalescence with smaller settlements Aley Green, Lower Woodside and Woodside.
8. Growth in the north-east of the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, and would need to be responsive to sensitive heritage settings in some areas, including the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

CADDINGTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low - Medium (without Green Belt release: low)

Development in Caddington would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Development in the north-west and west of the settlement may affect the setting of the AONB. Other environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the south-east and east. Development may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and existing green spaces. Any development around the northern settlement edge would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. However, development could positively benefit heritage through further evidence of the recognised Palaeolithic landscape previously recorded in the area. In addition, noise impacts on development in the Luton flight path would need to be considered

Overall Caddington is proximate to Luton, but is currently served by rural roads. Development and here may deliver improved connections to Luton, and could deliver development gains (including new service and facility provisions and investment for sustainable transport improvements) with a range of housing for the local community, support the objectives of Neighbourhood Planning proposals, and there may be potential for environmental improvements.

DUNSTABLE

Dunstable is a densely developed town and civil parish with a population of 37,400 residents in 16,380 dwellings¹⁰¹, and is contiguous with the urban areas of Houghton Regis to the north and Luton to the east. The town is divided into 5 different wards. The settlement is located around 4 miles west of Luton (centre to centre), and the A5 passes through the middle of the town. Dunstable was originally a Roman town, before becoming a Market Town during the Medieval period where it prospered and in the 20th century the town grew as an engineering centre¹⁰². The urban landscape has a level topography with a variety of buildings of different ages, shapes and styles¹⁰³.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁰⁴ and at this time there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the town. The settlement is constrained by Green Belt designation which borders the settlement to the north, south and west.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁰⁵ reveals that Dunstable is comprised of “established families in large detached homes”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “elderly people with assets”, “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “educated young people privately renting”, “mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles”, “single people privately renting”, “families with limited resources”, “elderly people reliant on support” and “urban renters of social housing”. ONS data¹⁰⁶ for the area shows the median age of residents is 41, and that there are more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Due to its size Dunstable has a wide range of services and facilities including 3 community centres, 5+ pre-schools/nurseries, 5+ lower schools, 4 secondary schools, a College/Academy, 5 ATMs, 5+ banks/building societies, 3 supermarkets, 2 post offices, 5+ chemists, 3 dentists, 3+ GP surgeries, 5+ restaurants/takeaways, 5+ food serving pubs, 5+ non-food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities, a children's play area, a leisure centre and 5+ entertainment venues. There are a number of active clubs and groups in the settlement including a football club, a tennis club, a cricket club and a Scouts group.

The town has a large collection of Leisure Strategy sites¹⁰⁷ spread around the settlement. Dunstable is identified as having a deficit of urban parks, formal and

¹⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Dunstable Town Profile

¹⁰² Dunstable Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) [Online]
http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/dunstable_tcm3-12953.pdf

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁰⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Dunstable Town Profile

¹⁰⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Dunstable

¹⁰⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

informal large recreation areas, play areas for children, allotments and small amenity spaces. However, the settlement has a small surplus of facilities for young people¹⁰⁸.

Education: Expansions are already planned to manage the impact of housing within Dunstable and Houghton Regis with limited capacity for further expansions. Any significant new development here would require new school provision¹⁰⁹.

Employment: Dunstable does contain a significant employment area¹¹⁰. The Dunstable/Leighton Linlade area has 292 hectares of existing allocated employment land, of which the majority is in 'Very Good' and 'Good' condition. ONS data¹¹¹ for the area also shows that 14% of Dunstable residents work part-time, 42.5% work full time and 13.7% are retired. These figures are similar to the percentages for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment for residents of Dunstable are wholesale & retail, education, and manufacturing. 29% of residents work within Dunstable, 13% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Luton is the most commuted to location by residents outside of Central Bedfordshire¹¹².

Transport and Movement: Dunstable has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A5 which runs through the town and access to the M1 to the east. There is some congestion in Dunstable town centre due to limited road capacity and high volumes of traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles. The A5 trunk road lies at the heart of Dunstable's transport infrastructure, directing movement north and south¹¹³.

The town does not have its own railway station and the nearest stations for residents are Leagrave (north Luton) around 4 miles away. Access to the railway station can be made via the Luton – Dunstable Guided busway, which offers a regular service between Dunstable and Luton railway station. There is access to the town centre via footpaths and cycle paths, and there are multiple bus stops in the town.

Bus- A minimum of 11 buses an hour operates directly between Dunstable and Luton - Monday to Saturday daytime. An alternative service operates between Dunstable and Luton via Caddington with a basic frequency of 1-2 buses per hour. These services also provide connections to the rail stations in Luton. 5 buses an hour operate Monday to Saturday daytime Dunstable – Houghton Regis – Luton. Most neighbourhood estates have a basic frequency of 2 buses per hour. Services are less frequent in evenings and on Sundays. The Langdale Road and Lowther Road areas do not have evening services or buses on Sundays. Buses are affected by heavy traffic congestion which has adverse effects upon the reliability and frequency of the services. Bus stops in the area are sometimes owned by the council and sometimes by the bus companies. Some stops are in the wrong place and a few stops are completely lacking as a result of a contract

¹⁰⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

¹⁰⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹¹⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹¹¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Dunstable

¹¹² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Dunstable Town Profile

¹¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Area Transport Plan Baseline report Dunstable & Houghton Regis

passing from one bus company to another. In Houghton Regis in particular, there is a high incidence of graffiti at bus shelters. There is a need for a review of this situation. There are currently three main bus stopping points in the centre of Dunstable which results in an inflexible and impractical interchange option¹¹⁴.

As part of the solution to Dunstable's growing traffic problems and the housing growth forecast, the A5-M1 Link road North of the town has recently been opened in May 2017. The project comprises of a two lane dual carriageway running east from the A5 north of Dunstable to join the M1 at a new Junction 11a south of Chalton. An additional new road proposal, currently being developed, which will contribute towards alleviating congestion in Dunstable, is the proposed Woodside Connection. This will run from the new M1 Junction 11A to the Woodside Industrial area in north-east Dunstable. It will relieve pressure from M1 Junction 11, the A505 and the centre of Dunstable, by providing an alternative route into Dunstable / Houghton Regis, which will be of particular benefit for freight traffic and traffic accessing the conurbation from the north. Current timetables put the start of construction in 2016 for completion in late 2017 or early 2018. There are also proposals to introduce a ban on HGVs travelling through the centre of Dunstable (High Street and Church Street) and Poynters road connecting the A505 to Porz Avenue. However, as the A5 is currently part of the trunk routes network the HGV ban for this area can only be put in place once this road has been de-trunked, after the opening of the A5-M1 link. Furthermore, as these roads are part of the diversion routes for the M1 Motorway, the proposed signs need to be capable of being switched off at the time when either of these sections is used as a diversion route for the M1 Motorway¹¹⁵.

Air Quality: the town centre was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)¹¹⁶ in 2005 due to nitrogen dioxide levels, principally from road traffic emissions. An action plan has reduced concentrations of nitrogen dioxide but some areas remain above target levels.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Dunstable is located in the Dunstable Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, with the only other settlement in this catchment being Houghton Regis. Dunstable WwTW is not at capacity, and therefore Dunstable and Houghton Regis have an estimated combined capacity of 20187 dwellings¹¹⁷.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: The Chilterns AONB borders the settlement to the south and development in and around Dunstable therefore has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape. Effects are likely to be most significant in areas in the south of the settlement.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Dunstable is an urban area bordered by a number of different LCTs. The north of Dunstable is bordered by the Totternhoe-

¹¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Area Transport Plan Baseline report Dunstable & Houghton Regis

¹¹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Area Transport Plan Baseline report Dunstable & Houghton Regis

¹¹⁶ https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma_id=361

¹¹⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Dunstable Downs Rolling Chalk Farmland LCT¹¹⁸, a gently rolling landscape forming the foothills of the escarpments of the Dunstable Downs. To the south, the town is bordered by the Whipsnade Chalk Dipslope LCT and the Caddington-Slip End Chalk Dipslope LCT¹¹⁹. The Whipsnade Chalk Dipslope LCT is an elevated landform dominated by arable crop production and the Caddington-Slip End Chalk Dipslope LCT is an open landscape with a broad plateau.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The north, east and south of the settlement is bordered by Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Dunstable has a number of *listed buildings* which are mainly situated around the crossroads at the centre of Dunstable and along the A5. Dunstable's *Conservation Area* is also centred around the crossroads. The area is characterised by the architectural diversity and urban form, as well as individual and groups of trees which have townscape significance. The historic core is characterised by some narrow frontages with gaps between buildings also being narrow. The lack of architectural uniformity produces a picturesque informality, characterized by steeply-pitched roofs, gables and bay windows¹²⁰. Maiden Bower hillfort to the north-west, Dunstable Priory in the town centre and an abandoned village to the south-east are all *scheduled monuments*. A large area around the crossroads is a designated *archaeological notification area*, as is much of the land surrounding the town.

Biodiversity: There are a number of SSSIs in the land surrounding Dunstable. To the east of the town is Blow's Down SSSI and County Wildlife Site (CWS) (containing Lowland Calcareous Grassland). To the south is Kensworth Chalk Pit SSSI and CWS, to the south-west is Dunstable Downs & Whipsnade SSSI and CWS containing Lowland Calcareous Grassland) and to the north is Houghton Regis Marl Lakes SSSI containing Lowland Calcareous Grassland) and Houghton Regis Chalk Pit CWS. There are additional CWSs around the settlement including The Paddock to the east of the town, Barley Brow CWS, Suncote Pit CWS, and Dog Kennel Down CWS to the north. Areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland can be found to the south, east and west of the settlement. The settlement is surrounded by Biodiversity Network to the north, south and west, with all of the SSSI and CWS sites located within the Network Land. The settlement is bordered to the west by Green Infrastructure which is part of GI corridor 10, and to the north by GI corridor 9¹²¹.

Flood Risk: Dunstable is largely not constrained by flood risk. There is only a small area of flood zone (2 & 3) north-west of the urban area beyond Sewell¹²².

¹¹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 10

¹¹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 11

¹²⁰ Dunstable Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/dunstable_tcm3-12953.pdf

¹²¹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹²² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement is largely surrounded by highly sensitive environmental receptors including AONB land, best and most versatile agricultural land, SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites. The land around the town is also designated Green Belt. The settlement contains designated heritage assets in the form of listed buildings, a Conservation Area and Scheduled Monuments. The town centre is a declared AQMA in relation to nitrogen dioxide principally due to road traffic. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Existing school expansions are already planned in Dunstable, and there is limited capacity for further expansion beyond these indicating a low capacity. New development would require new school sites to facilitate the increased educational requirements.
2. Healthcare: Facilities are present in the settlement although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium to high capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Full range present including supermarkets indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Full range present including entertainment venues and a leisure centre indicating a high capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, play areas for children, allotments and small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links in the adjacent settlement of Luton are accessible by cycle and bus connections indicating a medium capacity, however bus connections become more limited in evening and on the weekends, and are affected by heavy traffic congestion and poor infrastructure in places. There is good access to the strategic road network including the A5 and M1.

Environment

7. Growth in the south and south-east is severely limited by the AONB, as well as designated SSSIs, the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks, and a Scheduled Monument.
8. The urban area of Houghton Regis to the north and Luton to the east prevents further expansion of the Dunstable urban area in these directions.
9. Development to the west and north-west is constrained largely by the Green Belt designation, but also by sensitive heritage setting areas (including Scheduled Monuments and a Conservation Area), the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks, and Grade 3 agricultural land. Further west lies a

designated SSSI and there is an area of flood risk beyond Sewell. There are also areas of Archaeological Notification Areas.

DUNSTABLE SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium-Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

Dunstable has a wide range of services and employment opportunities, and development could help in improving the quality of the townscape.

Development in Dunstable would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions. However, these areas are within or adjacent to the AONB and in close proximity to SSSIs. There are key concerns regarding development to west of Dunstable in terms of landscape – exposed chalk terrace and scarp forms setting to AONB Dunstable Downs, historic landscape including Maiden Bower, setting and associated historic green lanes. Moreover development here may lead to potential coalescence of historic settlements at Tottenhoe and Sewell is not acceptable. There are however opportunities for redevelopment of intensification of brownfield sites.

EATON BRAY

Eaton Bray is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire, with a resident population of 2,590 people in around 1170 dwellings¹²³. The village is located to the west of Dunstable and the south-east of Leighton Buzzard, and comprises a dense network of residential cul-de-sacs connected to dense semi-detached and terraced ribbon development along its main roads Eaton Bray is part of an urban area which crosses into the parish of Edlesborough in Buckinghamshire. The settlement once had a moated castle. The moat, today all that remains, is open to the public for fishing at 'Park Farm'¹²⁴.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Eaton Bray has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary¹²⁵. The Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is significantly constrained by Green Belt land, which surrounds the village.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹²⁶ identifies the area as consisting of "established families in large detached homes", "householders in inexpensive village homes", "mature suburban owners in mid-range housing" and "younger households in housing priced within their means". ONS data¹²⁷ for Eaton Bray ward shows that the median age for the area is 48, which is higher than the average for Central Bedfordshire. The ward area also has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 15.

Eaton Bray has a number of key services and facilities, including 2 community centres, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a convenience store, a restaurant/takeaway, 2 food serving pubs and 3 outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any healthcare facilities, secondary education, banking facilities, superstores, post offices or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close¹²⁸ to the Eaton Bray area include Dunstable (approx. 5 miles), Houghton Regis (approx. 6 miles) and Leighton Linlade (approx. 5 miles). The village has a variety of active community clubs and groups.

Eaton Bray contains a number of Leisure Strategy sites¹²⁹ around the village, including allotments and a recreation ground. The settlement has a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and facilities for young people. There is a large surplus of informal large recreation areas. However, the settlement has a deficit of allotments and play areas for children¹³⁰.

¹²³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

¹²⁴ Eaton Bray Parish Council [Online] <http://www.eatonbray.com/history/>

¹²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

¹²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

¹²⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Eaton Bray Ward

¹²⁸ Google Maps (2016)

¹²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹³⁰ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Eaton Bray Academy has a capacity of 210 pupils with 189 pupils registered as of January 2016. The pupil forecasts show an increase on existing numbers, and the school site cannot accommodate expansion.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Eaton Bray¹³¹. ONS data¹³² for Eaton Bray ward shows that 37% of residents are in full time employment, 12.4% are in part time employment and 18.6% are retired. For the ward area the percentage of residents in employment is lower than the average for Central Bedfordshire, however the number of ward residents retired is higher. The main industries of employment for residents of Eaton Bray ward are wholesale & retail, construction, and manufacturing. Around 20% of ward residents work within the ward, and 21% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton¹³³.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Eaton Bray does not have any primary road connections, but the A505 to the north of the settlement can be accessed by following Totternhoe road. The local road network connects the settlement to Totternhoe, Whipsnade and Dunstable.

Rail: The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement, in Cheddington (located within Buckinghamshire), around 6 miles to the south-west.

Bus: The settlement is serviced by bus services, however the predominant problem is access to services in the evening and at weekends. Unfortunately bus services need to be commercially viable and in rural areas, where there is a lower population, it is difficult to ensure good public transport is available. The standard of bus stops and shelters varies from village to village with some stops in prestige condition, whilst a number of stops and timetable facilities that are inadequate¹³⁴.

Priorities: The main issues in Eaton Bray are centred on the High Street where residents have raised concerns about speeding traffic, vehicles mounting the pavement and inadequate crossing facilities particularly on the route to school¹³⁵.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Eaton Bray is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stanbridgeford, Totternhoe, Lower End, Billington, Stanbridge, Tilsworth, Tobworth, Hockcliffe and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity¹³⁶.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

¹³¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹³² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Eaton Bray Ward

¹³³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward

¹³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Landscape & Land Quality: The Chilterns AONB is located adjacent to the settlement in the south and east. Development in and around Eaton Bray therefore has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape, and effects are likely to be most significant in areas to the south and east of the settlement.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is located within the Eaton Bray Clay Vale, an area of landscape defined by its Gault Clay and Lower Chalk geology. The landscape is large scale, low lying and flat making the area feel open and exposed. Most of the area is intensive arable crop production, with medium to large sized fields. A number of busy 'A' roads cross the vale, including the A4146 and A5. These have a strong visual and audible presence. There are also a number of pylon lines which cut across the vales open landscape¹³⁷.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: To the north-east and south-west of the settlement there are areas of Grade 2 agricultural land. The settlement itself is located within an area of Grade 3 agricultural land which extends to the north and south of the village, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Eaton Bray contains a number of *Listed Buildings*, which are mostly situated along the High Street and Totternhoe Road. The Listed Buildings are fairly well spaced, appearing at regular intervals as you follow the main roads from the north-west to the south-east of the village. There is a designated *Conservation Area* at the centre of Eaton Bray. The area has a central point where Totternhoe Road and Northall Road join the High Street. To the west of the village is Park Fra, a *Scheduled Monument* due to its moated site. To the north-east of the village is the site of a Roman villa, another scheduled monument. Most of the settlement is located in a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is much of the surrounding land.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement. There are 2 small County Wildlife Sites to the east of the village and the settlement contains a large number of Traditional Orchards. The Biodiversity network and Green Infrastructure network borders the settlement to the north and east.

Flood Risk: There is an area of flood risk zones 2 & 3 at the centre of the village, where Totternhoe Road and Northall Road join the High Street. To the north of the settlement there is a band of flood risk zones 2 & 3 which extends from east to west¹³⁸.

¹³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

¹³⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors that are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement is close to a sensitive landscape area (AONB), and is surrounded by designated Green Belt land. Some of the northern part of the settlement is also located in designated flood zones. The settlements also contain valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: the village has limited educational facilities and none at secondary level.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: There are limited retail facilities with no post office.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Eaton Bray has a number of outdoor Leisure Strategy sites but no entertainment facilities.
5. Green Belt: The village is surrounded and severely constrained by designated Green Belt.

Transport & Movement

6. Apart from a bus stop Eaton Bray is poorly served by access to road and rail transport.

Environment

7. The proximity of the Chilterns AONB adjoining the settlement to the south and east limits development. To the north-east and south-west of the village are areas of grade 2 agricultural land.
8. There are Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area in the centre of the village and there are two Scheduled Monuments, one to the west is Park Fra, and another is the site of a Roman villa to the north-west.
9. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure networks border Eaton Bray to the north and west.

EATON BRAY SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

The settlement has limited services and facilities, is surrounded by Green Belt and has very limited capacity for growth. There are environmental and heritage designations in close proximity and also flood risks from watercourses running east to west through the village and encircling the north. In addition, community facilities and wastewater capacity are limited restricting the possibility of development. Development in the south could also exacerbate coalescence with Edlesborough.

EGGINGTON

Eggington is a small village in the west of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 290 residents and contains 120 dwellings¹³⁹. The village is a linear settlement along its High Street, and its rural character is reinforced by the location of nearby farms. The village's setting is influenced by its undulating topography with higher ground to the west, flatter land to the south and undulating ground to the north. Surrounding fields are mainly laid to pasture interspersed with collections of mature trees and belts of young plantations, part of Stockwell Farm's Woodland Project to create three new woods. A brook runs south of the village in front of Langley Cottage¹⁴⁰.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁴¹ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Eggington is located within and surrounded by Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁴² identifies Eggington as consisting of "well-off homeowners in rural locations". ONS data¹⁴³ for the LLSOA reveals the median age of residents to be 49, and that the area has more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Eggington has a small collection of services and facilities which includes a community centre, a lower school and a restaurant/takeaway. The settlement does not have any secondary education facilities, any banking facilities, any healthcare facilities, any pubs, any supermarkets or convenience stores, any post offices or any recreational facilities. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁴⁴ to the Eggington area include Leighton Linlade (approx. 2 miles) and Dunstable (approx. 6 miles). Eggington has 3 Leisure Strategy sites¹⁴⁵ which are located in the centre of the settlement. However, the surplus/deficit of open spaces within Eggington is not known.

Education: Cedars Upper School has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site does have the capacity for expansion¹⁴⁶.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Eggington¹⁴⁷. ONS data¹⁴⁸ for the LLSOA reveals that 12.2% of residents work part-time, 35.7% work full

¹³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

¹⁴⁰ Eggington Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/eggington_tcm3-12954.pdf

¹⁴¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

¹⁴³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹⁴⁴ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁴⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁴⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹⁴⁷ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

time and 19.7% are retired. The percentage of residents in full or part-time work is lower than that for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentage of residents who are retired is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail and construction. Overall 19% of residents work within the ward and 23% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Milton Keynes¹⁴⁹.

Transport and Movement: Eggington has access to the A4012 to the north, which connects the village to Leighton Buzzard to the west and the A5 to the east. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands¹⁵⁰.

The village does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Leighton Buzzard, around 3 miles to the west of the village. There is access to the village centre via footpaths/ cycle paths and the settlement is serviced by bus services.

A key issue raised by local people is the level and quality of buses serving Eggington. The village is served by an irregular bus service, and local stops are of poor quality. Local aspirations are to improve the levels of service, particularly to Leighton Buzzard railway station. Eggington benefits from being on the National Cycle Network Route 6, and the route through the village is lightly trafficked making it more attractive for local journeys¹⁵¹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Eggington is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Totternhoe, Stanbridgeford, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Stanbridge, Tilsworth, Tobworth and Hockliffe. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity¹⁵².

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Eggington is located within the Toddington-Hockliffe Clay Hills LCT. This LCT is a medium scale landscape defined by a series of connected hills. There is a strong sense of elevation on areas of highest ground (e.g. near Tebworth, Eggington, Potsgrove or Milton Bryan) with distant views across the adjacent vales. Characterised by dispersed settlement, the area contains numerous villages and hamlets as well as major transport corridors¹⁵³.

¹⁴⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹⁴⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

¹⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁵² JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Eggington and the surrounding land is located within Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

Historic Environment: Eggington has a number of *Listed Buildings* which are all situated along the High Street, the main road in the settlement. Eggington's *Conservation Area* encompasses the High Street of the village. The Conservation Area is characterised by a varied mix of building types, styles and periods. The simple layout and development of the village is key to its character. Ribbon development, strung out along the High Street, is largely confined to the north side of the road. Buildings in the Conservation Area exhibit a wide array of materials including timber framing and red bricks¹⁵⁴. Most of the settlement is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is much of the surrounding land.

Biodiversity: Eggington Fields County Wildlife Site is located to the east of the village and just under a mile to the north is Clipstone Brook County Wildlife Site which follows the route of the Brook from east to west. Eggington contains a Traditional Orchard, an area of Lowland Meadow and a small area of Wood Pasture and Parkland. Eggington is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network borders the settlement to the north and along the High Street, and is part of GI corridor 7¹⁵⁵. The Biodiversity Network follows the route of the Brook to the north of the village and encompasses the land around the High Street and the land to the east of the village.

Flood Risk: A small flood zone (2 & 3) follows the route of Clipstone Brook to the north of Eggington¹⁵⁶.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement is also located within designated Green Belt land. The settlement contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

¹⁵⁴ Eggington Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) [Online]
http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/eggington_tcm3-12954.pdf
¹⁵⁵ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>
¹⁵⁶ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

10. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools which have space for expansion, indicating a medium capacity.
11. Healthcare: No healthcare facilities present indicating a low capacity.
12. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: No retail / convenience facilities present, indicating a low capacity.
13. Leisure/Cultural: No facilities present indicating a low capacity.
14. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

15. Rail links are located in Leighton Buzzard, around 3 miles away. Bus services are available in the settlement; however, the services are infrequent and of poor quality. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is also access to the strategic road network though this is known to be congested in the east. Overall indication of a low capacity.

Environment

16. Development around the settlement is likely to affect the designated heritage settings of the Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings.
17. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks largely surround the settlement. Development could result in the loss of agricultural land though it unknown at this stage whether this is higher grade best and most versatile land.
18. Development in the far east could affect locally designated biodiversity (CWS). Development could also contribute to the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

EGGINGTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare, retail / convenience and leisure facilities, as well as wastewater capacity.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions. It should be noted that a large area west of Eggington is already identified as a permitted urban extension within the Green Belt.

Any development around the settlement edge is likely to require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on heritage, and development (particularly in the east) may also require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions and deliver a range of housing for the local community, however this scale may also affect environmental amenities, particularly the heritage setting and landscape character, and would require significant water investment. Small scale development may also increase reliance on the private vehicle.

EVERSHOLT (CHURCHEND)

Eversholt is a small village in the west of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 440 people and containing 185 dwellings¹⁵⁷. It comprises a disparate collection of detached dwelling spread unevenly along a number of small country lanes. It is rural in character with no settlement edge. In this capacity assessment, only the Church End section of Eversholt shall be assessed.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁵⁸ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Eversholt (Churchend) is surrounded by and located within Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁵⁹ identifies Eversholt (Churchend) as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data¹⁶⁰ for the Lower Layer Super Output Area that Eversholt is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 44, and that there are slightly more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Eversholt (Churchend) include a community centre, a lower school, a food-serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have any secondary educational facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, a post office, any supermarkets or convenience stores, or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁶¹ to the Eversholt (Churchend) area include Flitwick (approx. 4 miles), Ampthill (approx. 5 miles) and Leighton Linlade (approx. 9 miles).

The settlement has 4 Leisure Strategy sites¹⁶², which are closely situated and includes a recreation ground. Eversholt has a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and allotments, whilst there is a small deficit of informal large recreation areas¹⁶³.

Education: Eversholt Lower School is at capacity and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Parkfields Middle School (Toddington) is at capacity and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE¹⁶⁴ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143

¹⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

¹⁵⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁵⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

¹⁶⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009D Lower Layer Super Output Area

¹⁶¹ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

¹⁶⁴ Form of Entry

dwellings. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Eversholt¹⁶⁵. ONS data¹⁶⁶ for the Lower Layer Super Output Area that Eversholt is located within reveals that 12.8% of residents work part-time, 41.2% work full-time, 18% are self-employed and 13.3% are retired. The percentage of residents who work full and part-time and who are retired is similar to that for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the proportion of residents who are self-employed is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, education and professional, scientific & technical. Overall 27% of residents work within the ward, 12% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents¹⁶⁷.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Eversholt does not have access to the primary road network, but the local road network connects the settlement to Tingrith and Milton Bryan.

Rail: There is no railway station in the settlement, with the closest station being Flitwick, 4.5 miles to the east. First Capital Connect operates rail services from Flitwick Station to Bedford to the north and London and Brighton in the south. They operate at a 14-16 minute frequency with additional trains in peak periods¹⁶⁸.

Bus: Eversholt is serviced by a small range of bus services to limited destinations that run highly infrequently and do not run at the weekends¹⁶⁹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Eversholt is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Greenfield, Fliton, Wardhedges, Westoning, Tingrith, Steppingley and Ampthill. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings¹⁷⁰.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Eversholt (Churchend) is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT. This LCT is a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape. The area has large blocks of mixed woodland, SSSIs, active and restored mineral extraction works and the land is predominantly under arable cultivation¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁵ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁶⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

¹⁶⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁷¹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is located within and surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade 3a or 3b is not known.

Historic Environment: The *Listed Buildings* in the settlement are clustered in the centre. The *Conservation Area* encompasses the centre of the village and extends north along the settlements major road. The Conservation Area has a strong sense of enclosure created by the grouping of buildings, walls and hedges. The majority of the buildings in the area are constructed of red brick, with a smaller number of timber framed buildings¹⁷². Just under half a mile to the west of the settlement is *Woburn Abbey Historic Park and Garden*. Eversholt (Churchend) is located entirely in an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: Eversholt Millennium Pond County Wildlife Site (CWS) is in the settlement, with Woburn Park CWS, Milton Wood CWS and Palmer's Shrub CWS border the settlement boundary to the south and west. Just to the west of the settlement is a small area containing Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Wet Woodland, and Wood Pasture and Parkland. Bordering the settlement boundary to the west is a large area of Wood Pasture and Parkland, whilst bordering the settlement boundary to the south are blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The settlement and surrounding land is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area and is covered by the Biodiversity Network and Green Infrastructure Network, forming part of GI corridor 6¹⁷³.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk in or around the settlement¹⁷⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. Green Belt land surrounds and encompasses the village. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

¹⁷² Eversholt Conservation Area (1992) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/eversholt_tcm3-17853.pdf

¹⁷³ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁷⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

1. Education: The local lower school has no capacity, and the closest middle and upper schools are some distance from the settlement, although there may be capacity to expand at Harlington. This indicates low/medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: There are no facilities in the settlement and access to the nearest is by car indicating low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: The settlement has very limited facilities and access to those nearby would be by car, indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: The settlement has very limited informal facilities indicating low capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is washed over by Green Belt and capacity is therefore considered to be low.

Transport & Movement/Infrastructure

6. The settlement is relatively remote and does not have good access to the primary road network. The bus service is very limited and the nearest rail station some distance away, indicating low capacity.

Environment

7. There are no SSSIs proximate and the area is washed over by the Biodiversity Network - currently predominantly intensive agricultural use with a number woodlands around the settlement that are County Wildlife Sites, although these are unlikely to be particularly sensitive to proximate development. Development could however contribute to the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.
8. Development may affect the heritage setting of the Conservation Area and cluster of Listed Buildings.

EVERSHOLT CHURCHEND SUMMARY

Capacity: LOW (without Green Belt release: low)

This small settlement is relatively remote with few services and relatively poor accessibility. It is washed over by Green Belt. Development would be likely to result in loss of BMV agricultural land, likely affect the rural character of the settlement, and would be likely to be at a scale where enhancements to green infrastructure or biodiversity would be limited.

FLITWICK

Flitwick is a town in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 13,000 people and 5,510 dwellings¹⁷⁵. The settlement is located around 10 miles south of Bedford and 10 miles north of Luton. The settlement dates back to Saxon times and the Midland Main Line passes through the centre of the settlement from north to south. The River Flit borders the settlement to the south.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Flitwick does not as of yet have a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, and the Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁷⁶. Flitwick is constrained by the Green Belt designation which surrounds the entire settlement and helps prevent coalescence with Ampthill to the north.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁷⁷ identifies the Parish as consisting of “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “thriving families with children and careers”, “families with limited resources”, “elderly people with assets”, “mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles”, “urban renters of social housing”, “single people privately renting”, “established families in large detached homes”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing” and “elderly people reliant on support”. ONS data¹⁷⁸ for Flitwick ward shows the median age of residents to be 39, and that there are more residents under 15 than over 65.

Flitwick has a range of services and facilities available for residents including a community centre, 5+ pre-schools/nurseries, 3 lower schools, a middle school, 5+ ATMs, a bank/building society, a supermarket, 2 convenience stores, 4 newsagents, a post office, 3 chemists, 3 dentists, a GP surgery/health clinic, 5+ restaurants/takeaways, 4 pubs (non-food serving), outdoor recreational facilities, children’s play areas and a leisure centre. Flitwick has a vibrant community with a variety of clubs and groups including a tennis club, a football club, a Scouts group, a swimming club, a Brownies & Guides group and a gardener’s association.

The settlement has a number of Leisure Strategy sites¹⁷⁹, with smaller sites in the central areas of the town and larger sites such as Flitwick Wood on the outskirts. Flitwick is identified as having a deficit of urban parks, formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments. However, the settlement also has a surplus of informal large recreation areas¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Flitwick Ward Profile

¹⁷⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁷⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Flitwick Ward Profile

¹⁷⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Flitwick Ward

¹⁷⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Redborne Upper School and Community College has some capacity and has space for expansion, however this is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. Woodland Middle School Academy has capacity, as does Flitwick Lower School and Templefield Lower School. Kingsmoor Lower School has capacity and can accommodate an expansion of 2 FE's¹⁸¹ which is around an extra 75 pupils, equivalent to 214 dwellings. It is likely to be difficult to expand the other lower schools on existing sites. Capacity here may be required to manage existing development within Flitwick.

Employment: Flitwick does contain a significant employment area¹⁸². The Ampthill/Flitwick employment area has 190 hectares of existing employment land, most of which is identified as in 'Good' or 'Very Good' condition, however there are areas which are identified as being in 'Poor' condition¹⁸³. ONS data¹⁸⁴ for Flitwick ward reveals that 46% of residents work full time, 14.8% work part time and 12% are retired. The main industries of employment for the ward are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. 23% of residents work within the ward, and 19% worked elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Bedford.

Transport and Movement: Flitwick has access to the A507 to the north and the A5120 to the south. The settlement contains a railway station which has access to Luton, Bedford and London, and bus stops in the town for residential use.

Rail: First Capital Connect operates rail services from Flitwick Station to Bedford in the north and London and Brighton in the south. They operate at a 14-16 minute frequency with additional trains in peak periods¹⁸⁵. Access to Flitwick Station is via a footbridge, with no surface level access or lifts dedicated to those with limited mobility. A proposed town centre redevelopment is expected to bring forward significant improvements to local infrastructure, although at present access, particularly for those with limited mobility, is often inconvenient.

Bus: Flitwick is served by bus services connecting to surrounding villages and the larger towns of Milton Keynes, Bedford and Luton further afield. In some cases, bus shelters are provided complete with lay-bys, raised kerbs and lighting, and bespoke timetable information, whilst in other cases only bus stop flags are provided with timetable information stuck or tied to the pole. Many stops also appear to be neglected and poorly maintained. Whilst there are a large number of different services, they are infrequent, do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods, and are heavily reliant on being subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council. In addition, where services are provided, the scheduling of these in Flitwick often results in large gaps in provision followed by a number of buses turning up within a short timeframe¹⁸⁶.

Road: The A5120 links Flitwick with Junction 12 of the M1 and forms the main north / south route through the town. The B530 links Flitwick, Ampthill and Bedford and

¹⁸¹ Form of Entry

¹⁸² Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁸³ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁸⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Flitwick Ward

¹⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

carries a significant volume of traffic between the towns as an alternative north-south route to the A6¹⁸⁷. The M1 in the vicinity of Ampthill and Flitwick operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity¹⁸⁸.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Flitwick is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements located in this catchment area include Ampthill, Pulloxhill, Greenfield, Fliton, Wardhedges, Westoning, Eversholt, Tingrith and Steppingley. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings¹⁸⁹.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Flitwick is an urban area bordered by 2 LCT areas. To the north, east and south the settlement is bordered by the Flit Greensand Valley LCT. This LCT is a medium scale valley and a mostly open landscape and has a wide variety of land uses including farming, mineral extraction and dominant road corridors¹⁹⁰. To the west the settlement is bordered by the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale elevated landscape with an undulating ridge top and a strong underlying heathland character and high ecological value¹⁹¹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Grade 2 agricultural land can be found to the north, north-east and north-west of the settlement, with Grade 3 land to the east, south and west of the town however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Flitwick does not have a large number of *listed buildings*, the small number it has are mostly clustered in the south of the settlement, around Flitwick Manor and Flitwick Church. Flitwick Manor also has a *Registered Park and Garden*. To the north-east of the town is a moated site which is a *Scheduled Monument*, and in the south-west are the remains of a motte and bailey castle, also a *Scheduled Monument*. The area around the church and Manor is an *Archaeological Notification Area*, and there are *Archaeological Notification Areas* to the west and east of the town.

Biodiversity: Flitwick Moor SSSI and County Wildlife Site (CWS) is south-east of the town and contains Wet Woodland, Floodplain Grazing Marsh and Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. Flitwick Manor CWS is to the south of the settlement and has Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Wood Pasture and Parkland. Flitwick Wood CWS and Local Nature Reserve is to the west of Flitwick and also has Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The settlement is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 7

¹⁹¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 6

borders the settlement to the east, south and west, and is part of the Flit Valley GI corridor¹⁹². The Biodiversity Network borders the settlement to the east, south and north-west.

Flood Risk: Flood Zones 2 & 3 border the settlement to the east and south, following the course of the River Flit from the north-east to south-west. Flood zones 2 & 3 can also be found slightly further to the north between the south of Ampthill and the north of Flitwick¹⁹³.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, a SSSI, a Local Nature Reserve and County Wildlife Sites. Flitwick is surrounded by Green Belt land, and bordered by Flood Zones 2 & 3 to the north and south. The settlement has some sensitive heritage settings including designated Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Archaeological Notification Areas. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential expansion capacity at Kingsmoor Lower School
2. Healthcare: Facilities are present in the settlement although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Full range present including a supermarket indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: A range present including a leisure centre indicating a medium to high capacity. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Well served by a strategic rail link indicating good accessibility and connectivity and therefore a high capacity, but less well-served by buses, in which service and quality levels vary. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes

¹⁹² <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁹³ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

available in the centre and linking to railway station. Good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development in the south of the settlement is significantly constrained by flood risk, and further SSSI land in the south-east, along the flood corridor, as well as a sensitive heritage setting. There is further flood risk to the north that limits development in this direction.
8. Development in the east and west may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on sensitive biodiversity designations.
9. Any development around Flitwick would result in the loss of agricultural land, the highest quality of which is in the northern areas.

FLITWICK SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - High (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development in Flitwick would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

The identified environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development in the north east, or the west of the settlement. Development in the west could largely avoid significant contributions to coalescence. Development here may require mitigation measures but could lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and existing green spaces.

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to encourage sustainable development that is well connected, particularly by rail, and could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community. There may also be the potential for environmental improvements. There is also the potential for brownfield development and regeneration which can support townscape enhancement.

HARLINGTON

Harlington is one of the most southerly parishes in Mid Bedfordshire, covering an area of 713 hectares with a population of around 2300 in around 960 dwellings¹⁹⁴. It is a hill top village in a rural setting, centred on a church and village green. It is comprised of a dense network of suburban residential streets containing a mixture of relatively modern detached, semi-detached houses and maisonettes. The church and village green are both key features of the village and are within a designated Conservation Area that covers the central area of the settlement¹⁹⁵. Harlington contains a railway station and the settlement is bound to the west by the railway line. The settlement is surrounded by Green Belt land.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁹⁶ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. Harlington is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation that surrounds the entire settlement, and which in the north contributes to preventing the coalescence of Westoning and Harlington.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁹⁷ identifies that Harlington Parish contains a mix of “well-off homeowners in rural locations” “established families in large detached houses”, and “thriving families with children and careers”. ONS data¹⁹⁸ identifies higher numbers of 45-65 year olds in the Harlington Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA). The data also demonstrates that a higher proportion of the residents are under the age of 16 than are over the age of 65. This evidence supports the geo-demographic profile in demonstrating that the area is predominantly built up of family households.

The settlement contains the majority of services and facilities including a lower and upper school (with a wide catchment area), a GP surgery (0.5-day satellite of the Sundon Medical Centre open Monday to Friday and reflecting the preferences from the local population of commuters and older persons), and a chemist (0.5-day satellite pharmacy). There are two newsagent/convenience stores, selling everyday purchases one of which includes a post office; notable towns with superstores close¹⁹⁹ to the Harlington area include Flitwick (approx. 4 miles), Dunstable (approx. 8 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 6 miles).

There are three community centres, three pubs, a restaurant, and outdoor recreational facilities which includes a children's play area. There are three recreational sites²⁰⁰ in the north of the settlement (including allotments and school fields) and one in the south (open space with a woodland area). The settlement

¹⁹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

¹⁹⁵ Harlington Parish Council

¹⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

¹⁹⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics – Harlington Lower Layer Super Output Area 017B

¹⁹⁹ Google Maps (2016)

²⁰⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

has a small surplus of allotments, and a small deficit of facilities for young people, play areas for children, informal large recreation areas and small amenity spaces²⁰¹. One active community group was found through internet searching - a Scouts group.

Education: Harlington Lower School is at capacity; however, the school site could accommodate an expansion of 2 FE's, which would accommodate 150 extra pupils and extending the schools capacity to 300 pupils. Parkfields Middle School is over capacity and the existing school site cannot accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, which would allow for 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size²⁰².

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Harlington²⁰³. ONS data²⁰⁴ identifies that the majority of residents (aged 16-74) are economically active, and around 14% of these residents are retired. Higher numbers of residents were identified as working in the industries of: education; wholesale and retail trade; professional, scientific and technical; and construction.

Transport and Movement:

Rail: Harlington benefits from a high frequency rail service²⁰⁵, operated by Thameslink. Services operate at a 15-minute frequency, linking Harlington to Bedford, Flitwick, Luton (including the Airport), London, and Brighton. Additional services operate from Harlington to London during weekday morning peak hours, and from London during weekday evening peak hours.

Road: Harlington enjoys good access to the strategic road network, with direct access to the M1 to the south west via Junction 12, and two junctions onto the A5120 near M1 Junction 12 and Westoning. The M1 in the vicinity of Harlington operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for to travel along the corridor²⁰⁶. The settlement is connected by major and minor roads to the adjacent settlements of Westoning and Toddington.

Harlington is served by relatively infrequent buses, running once every 2 hours, providing a direct link to Bedford, Ampthill, Flitwick, and Toddington; also infrequent bus services linking the village to Luton. There is access to the central area via public footpaths and cycle paths, also providing sustainable transport links with the railway station.

²⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

²⁰² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁰³ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁰⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics – Harlington Lower Layer Super Output Area 017B

²⁰⁵ <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/transport/strategy/plans.aspx>

²⁰⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage & Wastewater Treatment: The wastewater capacity for Harlington is not known.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: The Chilterns AONB is located adjacent to the settlement in the east. Development in and around Harlington therefore has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape with effects likely to be most significant in areas in the east of the settlement.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Most of the land in and around Harlington lies within the Harlington – Pulloxhill Clay Hills LCT - a narrow line of hills with wide-ranging views south to the Chalk Escarpment and northwards. A smaller area to the north-west of the settlement is located within the Barton-le-Clay Clay Vale LCT - a flat or gently rolling large scale open landscape, with the River Flit, River Ivel and their associated tributary streams running through the Vale²⁰⁷.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Harlington is surrounded by arable land, with a large area of Grade 2 agricultural land located in the west of the settlement²⁰⁸.

Historic Environment: *Listed Buildings* are largely clustered in the central village area. A *Conservation Area* was designated (1972) for the central area of Harlington. An *Archaeological Notification Area*²⁰⁹ also exists in the north, adjacent to Harlington Upper School.

Biodiversity: The adjacent AONB and land continuing west through the centre of the settlement to join the River Fit, forms part of the Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Network²¹⁰. No Priority Habitats have been identified within or immediately adjacent to the settlement.

Flood Risk: There are flood zone areas (2 & 3) to the east and west of the settlement, however these are located around 1km from the settlement edge²¹¹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, and land as part of the Biodiversity Network. It is in a sensitive landscape area adjacent to the AONB, and is surrounded by designated Green Belt land that prevents the coalescence of Harlington and Westoning in the north. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct

²⁰⁷ LUC (2015) Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

²⁰⁸ DEFRA Magic Map Application [online]

²⁰⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps (2016) supported by GIS Map Layers

²¹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council GIS Map Layers (2016)

²¹¹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

identity of the settlement. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Harlington Lower School is currently full but could accommodate one Form of Entry expansion on its existing site (subject to financial contributions), which would be an additional 150 places, equivalent to around 430-750 homes. Parkfields Middle school (located nearby in Toddington) has very little spare capacity and is on a fairly constrained site, so is unlikely to be able to accommodate any significant housing growth without additional land. Looking at the location of the school it seems unlikely that adjacent land could be provided. Harlington Upper school has a large site, and could potentially accommodate up to a further 600 pupils, equivalent to approximately 1,700 to 3,000 homes within its catchment²¹² that covers a very wide area and indicating a high capacity.
2. Healthcare: The GP Practice Manager has advised that the opening hours of the existing surgery could be extended to accommodate some additional population, indicating a medium capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/ Post Office: Present and indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Facilities and services present in the settlement and indicating a medium capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of facilities for young people, play areas for children, informal large recreation areas and small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: Development growth around Harlington is constrained by the Green Belt that also in the north contributes to preventing the coalescence of Westoning and Harlington.

Transport & Movement

6. Well-served by a strategic rail link indicating good accessibility and connectivity and therefore a high capacity, but less well-served by buses. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre and linking to the railway station. Good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. It is recognised that infrastructure improvements would be required in order to accommodate any development in this area and ensure its connection to the existing settlement area. Potential development in the west would involve the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land.

²¹² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

8. There is limited capacity for growth in the east of the settlement given the AONB designation, and the designated recreational land should be retained for existing and any new residents.
9. There are small areas located to the north and south of the settlement that are free from significant environmental constraints and could accommodate low levels of growth. This would elongate the settlement and would require the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

HARLINGTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - High (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development in Harlington would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

The identified environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development in either the north or south of the settlement. Development in the north may require biodiversity mitigation measures but could lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and existing green spaces. Given the topography however development in the south and east may have high visual impact.

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to encourage sustainable development that is well connected, particularly by rail, could deliver development gains (including service and facility provisions) with a range of housing for the local community, and there may be potential for environmental improvements.

HEATH AND REACH

Heath & Reach is a comprised of a dense network of suburban residential streets and cul-de-sacs containing a mixture of relatively modern dwellings and historic red brick buildings, and has a population of 1,350 people in around 640 dwellings. The settlement lies around a mile north of Leighton Buzzard and is in the west of Central Bedfordshire. Heath and Reach were originally 2 separate hamlets, now classified as a single settlement due to the residential infilling. Large scale quarrying has occurred in the land around the settlement leaving a number of large scale pits which are still visible in the modern landscape²¹³.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²¹⁴ and at this stage there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Heath & Reach. The settlement is surrounded by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²¹⁵ for Heath & Reach identifies the area as consisting of “established families in large detached homes” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data²¹⁶ for the Heath & Reach LLSOA shows the median age of residents to be 44, and that there are slightly more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities present within Heath & Reach include a community centre, a lower school, a convenience store, a post office, 3 food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and a children’s play area. The settlement does not have any secondary educational facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, a supermarket or any entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close²¹⁷ to the Heath & Reach area include Leighton Linlade (approx. 2 miles) and Milton Keynes (approx. 7 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). Heath & Reach has a boxing club, a tennis club and a football club.

The settlement has a range of Leisure Strategy sites²¹⁸, with Rushmere Country Park and Kings Wood Local Nature reserve being the 2 largest sites. The settlement has a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, informal large recreation areas and allotments. However, the settlement has a small deficit of facilities for young people, play areas for children and small amenity spaces²¹⁹.

Education: St Leonards, Heath and Reach, VA Lower School is over capacity and does not have the site capacity to accommodate expansion. Vandyke Upper

²¹³ Heath & Reach Conservation Area (2010) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/heath-reach_tcm3-12957.pdf

²¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²¹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

²¹⁶ ONS (2015) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019A Heath & Reach Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²¹⁷ Google Maps (2016)

²¹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²¹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2016) Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

School and Community College has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required²²⁰.

Employment: Heath & Reach does not have any significant employment areas²²¹. ONS data²²² for the Heath & Reach LLSOA shows that 13.7% of residents work part-time, 44.6% work full-time and 15.6% are retired. Employment figures for the area are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whereas retirement figures are slightly higher. The main industries of employment in the area are wholesale & retail, education and construction. 19% of ward residents work within the ward, 23% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents²²³.

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the A5 to the east and north and access to Leighton Buzzard to the south. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands²²⁴. The village has access to the town centre via public footpaths/ cycle paths, as well as bus stops.

Bus: Heath and Reach is served by an hourly commercial bus service, which runs north-south through the village along Birds Hill. This provides the village with a link to Milton Keynes, Leighton Buzzard (including the station), and Aylesbury. A peak hour bus service also operates directly to Leighton Buzzard Rail Station. Some of the services are infrequent and don't operate on Sunday's or outside of peak periods. The quality of the waiting facilities is generally poor across the area²²⁵.

Rail: Heath & Reach does not contain its own railway station, however in the Heath and Reach, Hockliffe, and Stanbridge area, Leighton Buzzard station is a popular local station located around 3 miles from the settlement, with services operated by London Midland and Southern Railway. Services operate at around 4 trains per hour in both directions, serving London (Euston and West London), Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Milton Keynes, and with a reduced service Northampton and Birmingham²²⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Heath & Reach is located in the Leighton Linlade Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Linlade, Leighton Buzzard and Leedon. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 9680 dwellings²²⁷.

²²⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²²¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²²² ONS (2015) Neighbourhood Statistics- Heath & Reach Lower Layer Super Output Area (019A)

²²³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

²²⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington & Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

²²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington & Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

²²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington & Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

²²⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Heath & Reach is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT, a rolling, elevated landscape occurring over the solid band of Lower Greensand. The LCT is predominantly under arable cultivation, with blocks of mixed woodland and a number of SSSIs. A number of primary transport routes pass through the area, including the M1, and active and restored mineral extraction works can be found dispersed throughout the area²²⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement and some of the land to the east (which has been used for quarrying) is classed as non-agricultural. Further to the east is Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is unknown.

Historic Environment: *Listed Buildings* in Heath & Reach are mainly clustered in the south of the settlement around Heath Green and Leighton Road. A few additional Listed Buildings are located along Woburn Road in the north of the village. The settlements *Conservation Area* is centred around Heath Green. The Conservation Area is characterised by the mix of building types, styles and periods. Footpaths and groups of trees add character to the area, and key views to the north, south and east give a sense of the rural setting of the settlement. Buildings in the Conservation Area span from the 16th century to the 20th. There are examples of timber framed dwellings, red bricked buildings, thatched roofs and plain clay tiled roofs²²⁹. Most of the settlement is designated as an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: King's and Baker's Wood & Heath SSSI, National Nature Reserve and County Wildlife Site (CWS) is to the north and west of the village, Double Archers Pit SSSI & CWS, is to the east and Nine Acres Pit SSSI & CWS is to the south-east. Rushmere Park CWS and Rushmere Manor Woods CWS are to the west and south-west of the village. Most of the land to the west of Heath & Reach is Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland with blocks of Lowland Dry Acid Grassland. To the north-west there is an area containing Lowland Meadow, Wet Woodland, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland. The settlement and surrounding area is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network encompasses the settlement and the land to the north, east and west and is part of GI corridor 7²³⁰. The Biodiversity Network covers the same area and is likely present due to the SSSI and CWS sites around the village.

Flood Risk: Around one mile to the east of the settlement there is an area of land classed as Flood Zone 2 & 3²³¹.

²²⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

²²⁹ Heath & Reach Conservation Area (2010) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/heath-reach_tcm3-12957.pdf

²³⁰ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²³¹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, SSSIs, County Wildlife Sites, National Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats. The village is surrounded by Green Belt designation. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There appears to be capacity to expand Vandyke Upper school and so it is determined that there is medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: There are no facilities in the settlement indicating low capacity.
3. Retail/Grocer/Newsagent/Post Office: Facilities are limited to a convenience store, post office and pubs, with supermarkets and other retail offers a short drive or bus journey away in Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and Milton Keynes. The capacity is considered to be low.
4. Leisure/Cultural: There are limited formal facilities, although there are a number of sports clubs. There are more extensive informal outdoor recreational assets including the Country Park and nature reserve. The capacity is considered to be low.

Transport & Movement/Infrastructure

5. The nearest rail station is 3 miles distant at Leighton Buzzard. The bus services are not particularly good but do provide a link to the rail station at Linslade/Leighton Buzzard and Leighton Buzzard town. The capacity is considered to be medium.

Environment

6. A number of extensive SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites in close proximity to the settlement, which could be affected directly or indirectly by development. The whole of the northern part of the settlement is covered by Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Network indicating ecological and recreational connectivity that would need to be protected but also potentially enhanced by development.
7. There are a number of listed buildings and a Conservation Area in the much of the south of the village, indicating a low capacity.

HEATH AND REACH SUMMARY

Capacity: LOW (without Green Belt release: low)

The small settlement has limited community, recreational and retail facilities, and is not well served by public transport, although it is within a short distance of the larger settlement with associated services including rail station at Leighton Buzzard/Linslade.

The village sits within the Green Belt. Much of the surrounding area to the north and west is covered by national or local protective designations for biodiversity and land to the south would be unsuitable/unavailable for development due to existing or restored mineral workings. There may be opportunities to expand in quarry areas at the end of their life-cycles. Development would be likely to result in loss of Grade 3 agricultural land and could negatively impact on the rural character, but could potentially benefit biodiversity and green infrastructure and connectivity.

HOCKLIFFE

Hockliffe is a dense village of ribbon development along Watling Street (Roman road), with a residential population of around 820 people in around 480 dwellings²³². Several historic buildings line the wide, open Roman road; however, the vast majority of the village is comprised of densely developed suburban and urban cul-de/sacs to the north of the Roman road. The settlement is located on the A5 between Dunstable and Milton Keynes and many of the dwellings face onto the road. Leighton Buzzard is located around 4 miles to the west.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Hockliffe has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary²³³. Preparation is still at its formative stages. The settlement is significantly constrained by Green Belt designated land which surrounds the entire settlement.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²³⁴ identifies the area as consisting of "householders in inexpensive village homes" and "younger households in housing priced within their means". ONS data²³⁵ for the Hockliffe ward Lower Layer Super Output Area identifies the median age for the area being 44. The ward area also contains a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 15.

Hockliffe has a range of services and facilities available for residents, including a pre-school/ nursery, a primary school, an ATM, a newsagent, a post office, 3 restaurants/takeaways, a food serving pub, a children's play area and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any community centres, healthcare, secondary education facilities or entertainment venues. There are a number of other retail stores in the settlement, including a men's clothes store. Notable towns with superstores close²³⁶ to the Hockliffe area include Leighton Buzzard (approx. 3 miles), Houghton Regis (approx. 5 miles) and Dunstable (approx. 4 miles). No active community groups operating within Hockliffe could be found through internet searching.

There are 3 Leisure Strategy sites²³⁷ located in the settlement, these include a recreation ground and a cemetery. The settlement has a small surplus of facilities for young people and formal large recreation areas, but a deficit of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments²³⁸.

²³² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

²³³ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

²³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

²³⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Hockliffe Ward Lower Layer Super Output Area

²³⁶ Google Maps (2016)

²³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²³⁸ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Hockliffe Lower School is almost at capacity, with an increase in numbers predicted in the pupil forecast and no opportunity for expansion. Fulbrook Middle School has 413 pupils as of January 2016, and has a net capacity of 440 pupils. The site cannot accommodate expansion. Cedars Upper School existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast, although the site has capacity for expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has capacity and expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required²³⁹.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Hockliffe²⁴⁰. ONS data²⁴¹ for the Hockliffe ward Lower Layer Super Output Area shows that 44.6% of residents are in full time employment, 13.7% work part time and 15.6% are retired. The number of people in the area who work full time or are retired is higher than the Central Bedfordshire average. The main industries of employment for residents of Heath & Reach ward (which Hockliffe is located within) are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. Around 20% of ward residents worked within the ward and 25% worked elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Milton Keynes²⁴².

Transport and Movement:

Road: The settlement does have access to the primary road network, as it is situated on the A5 which provides the settlement residents easy access to Milton Keynes and Dunstable. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands. This performance includes the impacts of the A5 to M1 Link Road²⁴³. The staggered junction with the A5 in Hockliffe is the cause of much traffic congestion in Hockliffe. The settlement also has access to the A4012 which passes through the village²⁴⁴.

Rail: The closest railway station is located outside of the settlement, at Leighton Buzzard on the West Coast Main Line, 5 miles to the west.

Bus: Despite being located on a strategic transport corridor, Hockliffe is relatively poorly served by public transport. The primary public transport link through the village is an hourly bus service that links the village to Luton, Dunstable, and Milton Keynes throughout most of the day. Another bus service operates every two hours through the village on its route between Woburn and Leighton Buzzard²⁴⁵.

²³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁴⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁴¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Hockliffe Ward Lower Layer Super Output Area

²⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

²⁴³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Hockliffe is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stanbridgeford, Totternhoe, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Billington, Stanbridge, Tilsworth, Tobworth and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity²⁴⁶.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is located within the Toddington-Hockliffe Clay Hills. This LCT is defined by a series of connected hills. The area is dominated by arable crop production but interspersed with pockets of pasture (sheep and some cattle grazing). Within this LCT there is a strong landscape pattern of fields defined by hedgerows, punctuated by mature trees and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels²⁴⁷.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: To the south-east of the settlement there is a patch of Grade 2 agricultural land. The settlement itself and the rest of the surrounding land is in Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The settlement contains a number of *Listed Buildings*, mostly situated along the A5 which runs through the centre of the settlement. To the north west, around the church, there is a small collection of Listed Buildings further back from the main road. The settlement does have a designated *Conservation Area*, however it is not at the centre of the village but to the north-west, around Hockliffe Grange and the local church. The Conservation Area is fairly compact, with the church at the centre of the area. Also to the north-west is Church Farm moated site, a designated *Scheduled Monument*. The centre of the village and Church End are located in an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is much of the surrounding landscape.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement. There is a single County Wildlife Site to the south-west of the settlements centre, which contain an area of Lowland Meadow. To the north of the settlement there is an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland, and around half of the settlement is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The settlement is bordered to the west by land located within the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks.

Flood Risk: Most of the settlement is not constrained by flood risk, however there is a band of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) which passes through the village from north-east to west. The flood zone area is most concentrated where the A4012 joins the A5²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁶ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

²⁴⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, a County Wildlife Site and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks. The settlement is surrounded by designated Green Belt land and some of the settlement is also located in flood zone designated land. The settlement contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings, a Scheduled Monument and a Conservation Area.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: The village has a primary school but no secondary provision and capacity is restricted in neighbouring secondary schools.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Hockcliffe has a post office and some shops of a limited scale.
4. Leisure/Cultural: There are three leisure strategy sites although one of these is a cemetery. There is a shortage of small scale recreation provision.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is surrounded and tightly constrained by Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. The village is situated on the A5 and consequently has good access to the national network but this is also the source of congestion locally. There is access to main line railway provision at Leighton Buzzard, five miles away.
7. There is relatively poor bus service provision.

Environment

8. There is an area of grade 2 agricultural land to the east of Hockcliffe and a flood zone to the north.
9. There are Scheduled Monuments, Archaeological Notification Areas and a Conservation Area which all limit the opportunity for development.

HOCKLIFFE SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

The settlement is isolated and completely surrounded by Green Belt and consequently the opportunity for development is limited without Green Belt release

In addition, there are limited community facilities, limited capacity in wastewater infrastructure, heritage and environmental constraints and existing congestion problems. While development might provide an impetus for correction of some of these deficiencies it seems unlikely that the scale of development would be sufficient and could not be achieved without significant loss of Green Belt.

HOUGHTON REGIS

Houghton Regis is a densely developed town in the south of Central Bedfordshire and merges into the northern side of Dunstable²⁴⁹, and Luton to the east. Houghton Regis has a population of 17,900 people and contains 7,340 dwellings²⁵⁰. The oldest building within the settlement today is All Saints Parish Church, dating back to the 13th century, with most of the present buildings being built around the church²⁵¹. New housing estates were constructed in the 1960's and 70's, transforming the rural village into a small town²⁵².

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²⁵³ and at this time there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Houghton Regis. Green Belt land borders the settlements on all its side, apart from in the south where the settlement adjoins Dunstable. Significant growth is already planned to the north of Houghton Regis, in the form of the Houghton Regis North urban extension. Comprising two sites – HRN1 and HRN2 – with outline planning permission, the extension will deliver in excess of 7,000 over the next 20 years. This will extend the settlement northward towards the line on the new A5-M1 Link Road, which will form the new Green Belt boundary around the urban area.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁵⁴ identifies the Parish as consisting of “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “elderly people with assets”, “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “educated young people privately renting”, “mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles”, “single people privately renting”, “families with limited resources”, “elderly people reliant on support” and “urban renters of social housing”. Houghton Regis has a lower median age than the average of Central Bedfordshire as a whole (which is 40) and has almost twice as many residents who are under 16 than over 65²⁵⁵.

The settlement has a wide range of services and facilities which include 6 community centres, 6 pre-schools/nurseries, 6 primary schools, 2 secondary schools, a college/academy, 3 ATMs, a supermarket, 5 convenience stores, 2 newsagents, 2 post offices, 3 chemists, a dentist, 2 GP surgeries/health centres, 5 restaurants/takeaways, 4 food serving pubs, 2 non-food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities, children's play areas and a leisure centre. Clubs and groups operating in the settlement include a ladies' choir, a horticultural society, a cricket club, an over 60's Bingo club and a reading group.

²⁴⁹ Houghton Regis Conservation Area (2008) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/houghton-regis_tcm3-12959.pdf

²⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Houghton Regis Town Profile

²⁵¹ http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/houghton-regis_tcm3-12959.pdf

²⁵² <http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/todays-houghton-regis>

²⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²⁵⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Houghton Regis Town Profile

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

Leisure Strategy sites²⁵⁶ are located throughout the town, these include a village green and football pitches. Houghton Regis has a surplus of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and facilities for young people. However, the settlement has a deficit of allotments and play areas for children²⁵⁷.

Education: Expansions are already planned to manage the impact of housing within Dunstable and Houghton Regis, with limited capacity for further expansions. Any significant development here would require new school provision²⁵⁸.

Employment: Houghton Regis contains a significant employment area²⁵⁹. The Leighton Buzzard/ Dunstable/Houghton Regis area has 292 hectares of existing allocated employment land, of which the majority is in 'Very Good' and 'Good' condition although a small proportion of the land is in 'Poor' condition. Employment data²⁶⁰ for the area shows that 13.2% of residents work part time, 43% work full time and 9.6% are retired. The town has a lower proportion of retired residents than the Central Bedfordshire average, but a higher proportion than Central Bedfordshire for people who are unemployed or sick/disabled (6.2% and 4.9% respectively). The main industries of employment in the town are wholesale & retail, health & social work, and construction. Only 18% of Houghton Regis work within the town, 23% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire and 21% commute to Luton²⁶¹.

Transport and Movement: Houghton Regis has access to the primary road network being connected to the A5 to the west via Houghton Road. There is some congestion in Houghton Regis town centre, due to limited road capacity and high volumes of traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles²⁶².

The town does not have its own railway station, with the closest stations being Leagrave (In Luton, around 4 miles to the east). Bus stops can be found situated throughout the town, with access to the town centre available via footpaths/cycle paths.

Bus- A minimum of 11 buses an hour operates directly between Dunstable and Luton - Monday to Saturday daytime. An alternative service operates between Dunstable and Luton via Caddington with a basic frequency of 1-2 buses per hour. These services also provide connections to the rail stations in Luton. 5 buses an hour operate Monday to Saturday daytime Dunstable – Houghton Regis – Luton. Most neighbourhood estates have a basic frequency of 2 buses per hour. Services are less frequent in evenings and on Sundays. The Langdale Road and Lowther Road areas do not have evening services or buses on Sundays. Buses are affected by heavy traffic congestion which has adverse effects upon the reliability and frequency of the services. Bus stops in the area are sometimes

²⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

²⁵⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁵⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Houghton Regis Town Profile

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Area Transport Plan Baseline report Dunstable & Houghton Regis

owned by the council and sometimes by the bus companies. Some stops are in the wrong place and a few stops are completely lacking as a result of a contract passing from one bus company to another. In Houghton Regis there is a high incidence of graffiti at bus shelters. There is a need for a review of this situation. There are currently three main bus stopping points in the centre of Dunstable which results in an inflexible and impractical interchange option²⁶³.

As part of the solution to Dunstable's growing traffic problems and the housing growth forecast, a new A5-M1 Link road North of the town has been constructed and is open to traffic (May 2017). This comprises a two-lane dual carriageway running east from the A5 north of Dunstable to join the M1 at a new Junction 11a south of Chalton. An additional new road proposal, currently being developed, which will contribute towards alleviating congestion in Dunstable, is the proposed Woodside Connection. This will run from the new M1 Junction 11A to the Woodside Industrial area in north-east Dunstable. It will relieve pressure from M1 Junction 11, the A505 and the centre of Dunstable, by providing an alternative route into Dunstable / Houghton Regis, which will be of particular benefit for freight traffic and traffic accessing the conurbation from the north. Current timetables put the start of construction in 2016 for completion in late 2017 or early 2018. There are also proposals to introduce a ban on HGVs travelling through the centre of Dunstable (High Street and Church Street) and Poynters road connecting the A505 to Porz Avenue. However, as the A5 is currently part of the trunk routes network the HGV ban for this area can only be put in place once this road has been de-trunked, after the opening of the A5-M1 link. Furthermore, as these roads are part of the diversion routes for the M1 Motorway, the proposed signs need to be capable of being switched off at the time when either of these sections is used as a diversion route for the M1 Motorway²⁶⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Houghton Regis is located in the Dunstable Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlement within this catchment is Dunstable. The 2 settlements in the WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 20187 dwellings²⁶⁵.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is an urban area bordered to the north by Houghton Regis-North Luton Rolling Chalk Farmland LCT. This is a medium scale chalk landscape with variable landform, with rolling terrain to subtle undulations and levelling out on areas of highest ground. The area is also dominated by arable cropping and a sense of openness pervades across much of the landscape. The LCT is strongly influenced by the urban edges of Luton and Houghton Regis²⁶⁶.

²⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Area Transport Plan Baseline report Dunstable & Houghton Regis

²⁶⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Area Transport Plan Baseline report Dunstable & Houghton Regis

²⁶⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁶⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 10

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The land to the east of Houghton Regis is Grade 2 agricultural land, and the land to the north is Grade 3 agricultural land, however it is unknown at this point if it is sub-grade 3A or 3B. The land to the south and west is classified as Urban.

Historic Environment: The town has a small number of *listed buildings* which are mostly situated around Houghton Hall in the centre of the town. A few additional buildings are based by the church and Park Road. The towns *Conservation Area* is based in the middle of the settlement and encompasses Houghton Hall and the historic core of the town. The church and High Street provide context due to the contrast between the two areas. Most of the Conservation Areas historic buildings are farmhouses and cottages dating from the 17th & the 19th centuries. There are a mix of styles, with timber framed and brick buildings following the vernacular and classical style²⁶⁷. An *Archaeological Notification Area* encompasses the High Street, The Green and Sundon Road. Land to the north and west also contain large Archaeological Notification Areas.

Biodiversity: Houghton Regis Marl Lakes SSSI, Houghton Regis Chalk Pit County Wildlife Site (CWS), Barley Brow CWS, Suncote Pit CWS and the Sewel Disused Railway CWS are all to the west of the town. Thorn Spring CWS is to the north, and Dog Kennel Down CWS is to the south. Houghton Hall in the centre of the town is an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland and Houghton Regis Chalk Pit contains Lowland Calcareous Grassland, as does Houghton Park to the east. The Green Infrastructure Network encompasses the southern half of the settlement and the land to the west, and is part of GI corridor No. 9, The Chalk Arc²⁶⁸. The Biodiversity Network encompasses the land to the west (where the SSSI and CWS sites are located), and the land around Ouzel Brook which arcs from the north of the town round to the east.

Flood Risk: Flood Zones 2 & 3 follow the course of the Ouzel brook to the north of the town and the River Lea which flows in from the east to the centre of the town has areas of Flood Zone 2 along its running course²⁶⁹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement is largely surrounded by sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, a SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and land within the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks. The land around the town is designated Green Belt. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of listed buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

²⁶⁷ Houghton Regis Conservation Area (2008) [Online]

²⁶⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²⁶⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Existing school expansions are already planned in Houghton Regis, and there is limited capacity for further expansion beyond these indicating a low capacity. New development would require new school sites to facilitate the increased educational requirements.
2. Healthcare: Facilities are present in the settlement although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium to high capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Full range present including a supermarket indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: A range present including a leisure centre indicating a medium to high capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of allotments and play areas for children.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity without Green Belt release.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links in the adjacent settlement of Luton are accessible by cycle and bus connections indicating a medium capacity, however bus connections become more limited in evening and on the weekends, and are affected by heavy traffic congestion and poor infrastructure in places. There is good access to the strategic road network including the A5 and M1.

Environment

7. The urban area of Dunstable to the south and Luton to the south-east prevents further expansion of Houghton Regis in these directions.
8. Development in the north and north east may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks. Development to the north and north west will need to avoid areas of flood risk. Any development in these areas would result in the loss of agricultural land, the highest quality of which is located in the north east.

HOUGHTON REGIS SUMMARY

Capacity: High (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development in Houghton Regis would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to encourage sustainable development that is well connected to the existing urban areas, including Luton and Dunstable, and the services, facilities and transport connections that it

contains, and could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, and there may be potential for environmental improvements. There are opportunities for regeneration and intensification in areas including industrial areas, Kingland Campus, Bedfordshire Square, High Street Area and Woodside. Development could also support regeneration in an area of higher deprivation.

HUSBORNE CRAWLEY

Husborne Crawley is a small village in the west of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 240 people and containing 110 dwellings²⁷⁰. It comprises a disparate collection of detached dwellings spread unevenly along Turnpike Road. It is rural in character with no clear settlement edge.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: At the time of writing this Plan there is no Neighbourhood Plan for Husborne Crawley, and the settlement is located within and completely surrounded by Green belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁷¹ of Husborne Crawley identifies the settlement as consisting of “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data²⁷² for the Lower Layer Super Output Area that Husborne Crawley is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 45 and that there are slightly more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Husborne Crawley are limited to a community centre, a lower school, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have secondary education facilities, any community centres, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, any post offices, any restaurants/takeaways or any recreational facilities. Notable towns with superstores close²⁷³ to the Husborne Crawley area include Flitwick (approx. 7 miles), Ampthill (approx. 6 miles) and Cranfield (approx. 6 miles). Husborne Crawley has two small Leisure Strategy sites²⁷⁴, one at each end of the settlement, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces in Husborne Crawley has not been identified.

Education: Husborne Crawley Lower School has a small amount of existing capacity; however, the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Fulbrook Middle School also has a small amount of existing capacity; however, the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has some capacity although an increase in the student numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast. An expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required.

Employment: Husborne Crawley has an employment centre. ONS data²⁷⁵ for the Lower Layer Super Output Area that Husborne Crawley is located within reveals that 15% of residents work part-time, 39% work full-time, 14.7% are self-employed

²⁷⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 007A Lower Layer Super Output Area

²⁷³ Google Maps (2016)

²⁷⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁷⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 007A Lower Layer Super Output Area

and 15.4% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time are lower than those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired and self-employed residents are higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, education and construction. Overall 27% of residents work within the ward, 12% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents²⁷⁶.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Husborne Crawley is connected to the M1 via Junction 13, just north of the settlement. The level of stress on the M1 is high. The M1 in the vicinity of Junction 13 operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for to travel along the corridor²⁷⁷. The local road network also connects the settlement to Aspley Guise, Ridgmont and Woburn.

Rail: The settlement does not have a railway station, with the nearest station being Ridgmont, 1.6 miles to the north. This station is on the Marston Vale Line between Bletchley and Bedford Midland with services operated by London Midland. There are 16 trains per day in each direction, running at approximately hourly intervals²⁷⁸.

Bus: Husborne Crawley is serviced by a small number of bus services, both commercial and community, which run at infrequent times and have limited destinations²⁷⁹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The sewerage and wastewater capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works that Husborne Crawley is within the catchment for is unknown. Possible that the Wastewater Treatment Works is located within Milton Keynes.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Woburn is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape. The area has large blocks of mixed woodland, SSSIs, active and restored mineral extraction works and the land is predominantly under arable cultivation²⁸⁰.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The centre of Husborne Crawley and the land to the north is in Grade 4 agricultural land, whereas the rest of the surrounding land is Grade 3, although the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

²⁷⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

²⁷⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

²⁷⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

Historic Environment: Husborne Crawley has a number of *Listed Buildings*, which are split into two separate groups. One group is located in the north of the village, in the Church End section. The second group is located to the east along Turnpike Road. The settlement has two separate *Conservation Areas*. One encompasses the Church End section of the village and the second encompasses Turnpike Road in the east of the settlement. Woburn Abbey is a *Historical Park and Garden* which is located to the east and south of the settlement. Turnpike Road and Church End are both designated *Archaeological Notification Areas*.

Biodiversity: Woburn Park Grassland County Wildlife Site is a short distance to the south of the settlement. There is a large area of Wood Pasture and Parkland to the east and south of the village, and a smaller area located in the Church End section of the settlement. There is also a small block of Wet Woodland to the south of Husborne Crawley, and larger blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the east and south, in the same area as the Wood Pasture and Parkland. The settlement is also located in the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network surrounds and includes the village, forming part of GI corridor 6²⁸¹. The Biodiversity Network also surrounds and includes the settlement.

Flood Risk: A band of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) passes through the centre of the settlement from north to west²⁸².

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, a County Wildlife Site and Priority Habitats. Husborne Crawley is located within the Green Belt, and Flood Zones pass through the settlement. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and two Conservation Areas. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools in the catchment area. New expansion land or new school sites would be required to accommodate significant new growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.

²⁸¹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²⁸² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and Children's Play Area present indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement, with the closest at Ridgmont, around 1.5 miles away indicating a medium capacity, however, the bus services in the settlement are infrequent. There is access to the primary road network.

Environment

7. There is an area of flood risk located between the two Conservation Areas.
8. The settlement areas are constrained by the designated heritage settings of the Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
9. The settlement is largely surrounded by the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks, and areas of best and most versatile agricultural land. Development could however contribute towards the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

HUSBORNE CRAWLEY SUMMARY

Capacity: Low-Medium (without Green Belt release: Low)

The settlement is relatively remote and rural, lacking a range of facilities. Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare, and retail / convenience facilities. The environmental constraints can largely be avoided through the appropriate siting of development and the provision of mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity

Development in the settlement would affect the linear nature and encroach on countryside, and be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Overall, and development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, with close rail connections to support sustainable access. This scale however is highly likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and may affect environmental amenities, particularly the sensitive heritage setting. Small scale development is likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

KENSWORTH

Kensworth is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire, with a residential population of around 1460 people in around 650 dwellings²⁸³. The village is located to the south of Dunstable, and was originally part of Hertfordshire before being transferred to Bedfordshire in 1897²⁸⁴. The village is located to the west of the A5. To the north of the settlement is Kensworth Chalk quarry and to the west is Whipsnade Zoo. It is a long thin village with two distinct character areas – ribbon development and suburban estates. The sprawling ribbon development along Common Road/Isle of Wight Lane largely comprise of detached dwellings of varying densities and sizes. The vast majority of this development is one dwelling deep and often set back from the road, maintaining openness and a connection with the wider countryside along the full length of the road.

Two densely developed estates emanate from the southern side of Common road and represent a significant urbanising influence on the countryside within the immediate vicinity. The estates contain a diverse range of modern housing types which are much denser and more enclosed than the rest of the village. The tightly packed dwellings have relatively small private gardens and small pockets of communal open space which do little to improve the sense of openness.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Kensworth has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary²⁸⁵. The Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. Kensworth is significantly constrained by Green Belt designated land, which the settlement is surrounded by and located within.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁸⁶ identifies the area as consisting of “thriving families with children and careers”, “mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles” and “established families in large detached homes”. ONS data²⁸⁷ for the Kensworth LLSOA shows that the median age of residents is 46. The area also has a higher proportion of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Kensworth contains a number of key services and facilities which include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 2 convenience stores, an in-shop post office, a food serving pub, a children’s play area and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any secondary education, healthcare, banking facilities, restaurants/takeaways or entertainment venues.

²⁸³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

²⁸⁴ Guide to Bedfordshire Parishes [Online]

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/GuidesToCollections/GuideToBedfordshireParishes.aspx>

²⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

²⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

²⁸⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Kensworth Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

Notable towns with superstores close²⁸⁸ to the Kensworth area include Dunstable (approx. 4 miles), Luton (approx. 6 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 6 miles).

The settlement contains 3 Leisure Strategy sites²⁸⁹, including allotments and a recreation ground. The settlement has a deficit of informal and formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and play areas for children. However, there is a surplus of facilities for young people and allotments²⁹⁰.

Education: Kensworth Primary School is close to capacity and there is a predicted increase of numbers in the pupil forecast, and the school site has no space for expansion²⁹¹.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Kensworth²⁹². ONS data²⁹³ for the Kensworth Lower Layer Super Output Area shows that 40% of residents work full time, 12.5% work part time and 15% are retired. The main industries of employment for residents of Caddington ward (which Kensworth is located within) are wholesale & retail, construction, and education. Almost 25% of ward residents work within the ward and 10% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton²⁹⁴.

Transport and Movement:

Road: The settlement contains access to the primary road network, being connected to the A5 to the east of the settlement via the B4540 which passes through the centre of the village. The settlement is also connected to the B4541 to the west.

Rail: The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement, with the closest station being in Luton around 7 miles away.

Bus: Kensworth has limited bus services which are infrequent²⁹⁵.

Priorities: Kensworth benefits from some relatively recent highways improvements including a pedestrian crossing. Residents have raised issues with regards to the speed of traffic through the village, particularly those vehicles travelling from the Holywell direction. Parking restrictions or yellow lines have been requested on the Isle of Wight Lane as a result of parking charges being introduced at the Gateway Visitors Centre and there have also been a number of improvements suggested in the Green Infrastructure Plan which has identified a number of places where footpaths should be improved/created or upgraded²⁹⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

²⁸⁸ Google Maps (2016)

²⁸⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁹⁰ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

²⁹¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁹² Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁹³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Kensworth Lower Layer Super Output Area

²⁹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

²⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Kensworth is located in the Markyate Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, and is the only settlement located in this catchment area. The Sewer capacity in Kensworth appears to be adequate, however potential capacity (in terms of number of dwellings) is not known²⁹⁷.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: Kensworth is located within the Chilterns AONB. Development in and around Kensington therefore has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Kensworth is located within the Whipsnade Chalk Dipslope LCT. The elevated chalk dipslope landscape of Whipsnade contains two contrasting landforms: flat, plateau areas that form broad ridges are cut by wide dry combe valleys where the land dramatically sweeps away. The area is predominantly under arable cultivation, however there are small areas of pasture. Some degree of enclosure is also provided by the large mixed woodland blocks, including a number of ancient woods that frequently frame views on the open ridges²⁹⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement and the surrounding area is situated in grade 3 agricultural land, however it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The largest concentrations of *Listed Buildings* can be found to the east of the settlement towards Kensworth Lynch, and to the north around Church End. The rest of the Listed Buildings are mostly situated along the B4540 which passes through the settlement. The settlement contains 2 *Conservation Areas*. One is situated to the north by Church End, and encompasses a number of Listed Buildings. The second Conservation Area is to the east, around Kensworth Lynch. This area also contains a number of Listed Buildings, and is larger than the Conservation Area around Church End. The settlement is mostly situated in an *Archaeological Notification Area* which follows the B4540 which passes through the village. Kensworth Lynch and Church End are also in Archaeological Notification Areas.

Biodiversity: To the north of the settlement is Kensworth Chalk Pit, a designated SSSI and a designated County Wildlife Site. There are 2 additional County Wildlife Sites around the settlement, one is located to the south, the other is to the west. A lot of the land to the west is Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The Green Infrastructure Network borders the settlement to the west, and there are areas of land located in the Biodiversity Network to the north, south and west of the settlement.

Flood Risk: The settlement is not located in an area of flood risk²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

²⁹⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and an SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks. The settlement is in a sensitive landscape area (AONB), and is surrounded by designated Green Belt land. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings, a Scheduled Monument and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: The settlement has a primary school but no secondary school.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Kensworth has two convenience stores and a post office. Otherwise the retail offer is limited.
4. Leisure/Cultural: There are three leisure facilities but a deficit of informal and large formal recreation areas.
5. Green Belt: Kensworth is washed over by Green Belt designation.

Transport & Movement

6. Kensworth has access to the national road network, the national rail network and some limited bus services.

Environment

7. The settlement is entirely covered by the Chilterns AONB designation. There is an SSSI to the north, a county wildlife site to the south and the biodiversity network lies to the north and south. There are a few listed buildings scattered throughout the village and it is covered by an archaeological notification area. A Conservation Area is located to the east.
8. The agricultural land immediately around the village is grade 3.

KENSWORTH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

The settlement is covered by both Green Belt and AONB designations which severely restricts any development potential. In addition, there are various environmental designations and limited community facilities which add to the limitations on the potential for growth.

LEIGHTON LINSLADE

Leighton Linslade is a town in the west of Central Bedfordshire. The settlement is comprised of Linslade and Leighton Buzzard, and the two settlements are commonly referred to as Leighton Linslade³⁰⁰. The settlements are divided by the River Ouzel and the Grand Union Canal which flows north to south between the settlements. The population of Leighton-Linslade is 39,300 and the town has around 17,820 dwellings³⁰¹. A settlement has existed at Leighton Buzzard since Saxon times and the arrival of the railway and canal in the early 1800's increased the towns industry and population³⁰². Leighton Buzzard is known for its sand quarrying industry which exports sand as far as the Middle East.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³⁰³ and at this stage there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Leighton Buzzard. The settlement is constrained by Green Belt land which borders the town to its north, east and south. There is significant growth planned to the east of the settlement in the form of the East Leighton Linslade urban extension. Comprising three sites – Clipstone; Chamberlains barn, and Stearn Land – with outline planning permission, this extension will deliver 2,500 new homes over the next 10 – 15 years.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁰⁴ identifies the area as consisting of “established families in large detached homes”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “elderly people with assets”, “families with limited resources”, “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “urban renters of social housing”, “single people privately renting”, “educated young people privately renting”, “elderly people reliant on support” and “thriving families with children and careers”. ONS data shows that Leighton Buzzard north³⁰⁵ has a median age of 41, whereas Leighton Buzzard south³⁰⁶ has a median age of 35. Leighton Buzzard north has slightly more residents under 16 than over 65, whereas Leighton Buzzard south has significantly more residents under 16 than over 65.

The town has a range of services and facilities available for residents including 2 community centres, 5+ pre-school/nurseries, 5 lower schools, a middle school, 2 upper schools, a College/Academy, 5+ ATMs. 5+ banks/building societies, 5 supermarkets, 2 convenience stores, 5+ newsagents, 3 post offices, 5+ chemists, 5 dentists, 3 GP surgeries/health centres, 5+ restaurants/takeaways, 5+ food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities, a children's play area, 2 leisure centres and an entertainment venue. Leighton Linslade has a range of clubs and groups.

³⁰⁰ In this study Leighton Buzzard and Linslade are assessed as 2 separate settlements

³⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Leighton Linslade Town Profile

³⁰² <http://www.leighton-buzzard.co.uk/history.htm>

³⁰³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³⁰⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Leighton Linslade Town Profile

³⁰⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Leighton Buzzard North

³⁰⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Leighton Buzzard South

Leisure Strategy sites³⁰⁷ are located throughout the settlement, including allotments sites and recreation grounds. Leighton Linlade has a large deficit of countryside recreation sites and informal large recreation areas, and a smaller deficit of urban parks, formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, allotments and play areas for children. Leighton Linlade has a small surplus of facilities for young people³⁰⁸.

Education: Lower School: it is likely to be difficult to expand the other lower schools on existing sites. New lower school are planned within the Land East of Leighton development site.

Middle School: Any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast.

Upper School: Any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast³⁰⁹.

Employment: Leighton Linlade does contain a significant employment area³¹⁰. The Leighton Linlade/ Dunstable area has 292 hectares of existing allocated employment land, of which the majority is in 'Very Good' and 'Good' condition although a small proportion of the land is in 'Poor' condition. ONS data shows that in Leighton Buzzard south³¹¹ 13% of residents work part time, 52% work full time and 9.4% are retired, whereas in Leighton Buzzard north³¹² 14% of residents work part time, 44% work full time and 14% are retired. The north of the town has an older population with more retired residents and fewer full time workers than the south which has a younger population. Leighton Linlades main industries of employment are wholesale & retail, manufacturing and education. Approximately 20% of Leighton Linlade residents work within the town, around 20% commute elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by residents is Milton Keynes³¹³.

Transport and Movement: Leighton Linlade has access to the primary road network, and is connected to the A5 to the east and to the A505 to the south, and to the A4146. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands³¹⁴. The settlement contains a railway station and bus stops. There is access to the town centre via foot paths/cycle paths.

Bus: A lack of bus stops in the High Street, and increasingly the railway station, means that both areas are becoming increasingly congested. Poor integration between bus and rail services in terms of co-ordinated timetables and ability to

³⁰⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³⁰⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2016) Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

³⁰⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³¹⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³¹¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Leighton Buzzard South

³¹² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Leighton Buzzard North

³¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Leighton Buzzard North & South Ward Profiles

³¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington and Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

interchange between services. Congestion at bus stops can also impact upon the reliability of bus services, making them less attractive as an alternative to the car. Increase in congestion on the local highway network can affect the reliability of bus services in Leighton Linlade. Services also need to be provided as part of major developments to establish sustainable travel patterns early on³¹⁵.

Rail: London Midland operates along the West Coast Mainline between London Euston and Birmingham, with a stop at Leighton Buzzard³¹⁶. Trains currently run at 33, 53 and 59 minutes past the hour³¹⁷.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Leighton Linlade is located in the Leighton Linlade Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Linlade, Heath & Reach and Leeton. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 9680 dwellings³¹⁸.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Leighton Linlade itself is not located within a defined LCT, but is bordered by a number of different LCTs. The settlement is largely bordered to the south by the Eaton Bray Clay Vale LCT³¹⁹, a low lying open landscape with intensive agriculture and a number of busy 'A' roads. To the east the town is bordered by the Toddington-Hockcliffe Clay Hills LCT³²⁰, a medium scale landscape defined by a series of connected hills with large individual farmsteads and some high ecological and key conservation sites. To the north the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT³²¹ borders the town. This LCT is a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape with areas of high ground and mixed woodland blocks and a number of SSSIs. Also bordering the settlement to the north and south is the Ouzel Greensand Valley LCT³²², a small scale river valley with a low lying floodplain and a strong recreational value (walkers and cyclists).

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is bordered by Non-Agricultural land to the north and by Grade 3 agricultural land to the south and east, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b. At this stage it is recognised that there is the potential for the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Historic Environment: There is a large number of *Listed Buildings* in the settlement, with almost clusters located around the High Street and Lake Street in the east of the settlement, and around Church Road in the west. There are 2 designated *Conservation Areas*, containing the settlements Listed Buildings. There are 2 small

³¹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Leighton Linlade Local Area Transport Plan- Part 2

³¹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local transport Plan 3

³¹⁷ The Trainline (2016) [Online] <https://www.thetrainline.com/>

³¹⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

³¹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 5

³²⁰ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 8

³²¹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 6

³²² Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 7

Scheduled Monuments in the north of the settlement. The land around the Conservation Area in the east and Listed Buildings in the east is an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is the land around the Leighton Buzzard Railway in the south of the town. Further Archaeological Notification Areas can be found in the land to the east and south of Leighton Linlade.

Biodiversity: Rackley Pitt CWS, Tiddenfoot Park CWS, Ouzel Valley CWS and the River Ouzel CWS and Church Meadows CWS are all to the west of the town. Stanbridge Meadows CWS is to the south-east and Clipstone Brook CWS passes through the settlement from east to west. Rushmere Manor Woods CWS and Heath Wood CWS are to the north of the town. There are blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the north and some Lowland Calcareous Grassland to the south. The settlement and land to the north and east is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network follows the River Ouzel along the west of the settlement, being part of corridor No.7, the Ouzel River Valley³²³. Green Infrastructure to the east of the town forms part of corridor No. 10, the Leighton Linlade to Dunstable corridor³²⁴. The Biodiversity Network also follows the path of the River Ouzel through the town.

Flood Risk: Flood Zones 2 & 3 border the town to the west from north to south along the path of the River Ouzel. Flood Zones 2 & 3 also follow the Clipstone brook, going from north-east to west through the town³²⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites and land designated as flood zones. The land around the town is designated Green Belt. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings, a Conservation Area and Scheduled Monuments. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: The planned new lower school will provide additional capacity. Capacity at upper schools appears to be limited, indicating low/medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: The good range of healthcare facilities indicates high capacity.
3. Retail/Grocer/Newsagent/Post Office: The wide range of services including superstores indicates a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: The settlement has a range of formal and informal leisure facilities, including an arts centre and library, indicating high capacity.

³²³ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

5. Green Belt: The settlement is surrounded by Green Belt. The capacity is therefore considered to be low.

Transport & Movement/Infrastructure

6. The settlement has good access to the road network, although congestion is an issue, and a mainline rail station with a reasonable service. Bus services appear to be stressed with poor integration with rail services. The capacity is considered to be high given the accessibility and rail station, although it appears that bus services need to be improved.

Environment

7. There are a number of SSSIs to the north of the settlement, the closest being a geological SSSI associated with a mineral working and not considered to be particularly vulnerable to development in and around the settlement. There are a number of County Wildlife Sites in the north and south of the settlement, including along the river valley extending close to the town centre. There are parts of the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks around the settlement, particularly the south and east indicating the need to protect and opportunities to enhance these areas.
8. There are a large number of listed buildings located within the Conservation Areas in the town centre and in Linslade town centre either side of the rail station. These could be vulnerable to harm by new development, although growth would be likely to be outside of the town centre.
9. The floodplain along the River Ouzel is in Flood Zone 2 and 3 and so presents a constraint on development through the town centre and the north west, east and southern boundaries of the town.

LEIGHTON LINSLADE SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - High (without Green Belt release: Low)

As a major town, the settlement has the amenities and services that would provide capacity to accommodate further growth and population. However, it is also constrained by Green Belt, landscape and potential effects of development valuable green infrastructure which could affect quality of life.

However, development could enable enhancement of some assets, and the accessibility of the settlement to the primary road network and by rail to other centres including London, indicates capacity to accommodate growth. There are also opportunities for regeneration and intensification, including in existing employment areas.

Linslade and Leighton Buzzard are contiguous, only separated by the river. The Green Belt review considered the 2 settlements together (Leighton Linslade), and so the capacity assessment that applies to Leighton Buzzard also applies to Linslade.

MILLBROOK

Millbrook is a village in the north of Central Bedfordshire, with a residential population of 150 residents and containing 50 dwellings³²⁶. The village is essentially a linear settlement along the eastern side of a narrow winding valley running from south to north. On the highest spur of land stands the church³²⁷.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³²⁸ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. The settlement is bordered to the south by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³²⁹ identifies Millbrook as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data³³⁰ for the LLSOA which Millbrook is located within, reveals the median age of residents to be 40, and that there are more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Millbrook include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children’s play area. The village does not have any secondary education facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close³³¹ to the Millbrook area include Ampthill (approx. 2 miles) and Flitwick (approx. 3 miles) The settlement has 4 Leisure Strategy sites³³², including a recreation ground, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces within the settlement has not been identified.

Education: Redborne Upper School and Community College has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site does have the capacity to accommodate expansion³³³.

Employment: Millbrook Proving Ground is a completely unique vehicle testing and proving facility which has regional and even national importance³³⁴. ONS data³³⁵ for the LLSOA which Millbrook is located within identifies that 16% of residents work part-time, 41% work full-time and 12.5% are retired. These percentages are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main

³²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Cranfield & Marston Moretaine Ward Profile

³²⁷ Millbrook Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/milbrook_tcm3-12962.pdf

³²⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Cranfield & Marston Moretaine Ward Profile

³³⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 012C Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³³¹ Google Maps (2016)

³³² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³³³ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³³⁴ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³³⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 012C Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

industries of employment in the LLSOA are construction, wholesale & retail and education. 28% of ward residents work within the ward and 12% worked elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to destination outside of Central Bedfordshire is Milton Keynes³³⁶.

Transport and Movement: Millbrook is connected to Ampthill via Woburn Road to the east, and to Flitwick via Fordfield Road to the south. The settlement also has access to the M1 via Junction 13, around 6 miles from the village. The M1 in the vicinity of Junction 13 operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor³³⁷.

Millbrook has a railway station; however, it is not located in the centre of the village, but a mile to the north. The Area is served by the Marston Vale railway line between Bletchley and Bedford Midland with services operated by London Midland. There are 16 trains per day in each direction, running at approximately hourly intervals and there is no Sunday service³³⁸.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The capacity of the WwTW whose catchment Millbrook is located within is not known.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Millbrook is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top. The area has a strong underlying heathland character and a high ecological value due to the number of nationally important sites present. The LCT also has extensive areas of deciduous woodland, mixed woodland and coniferous plantations, and primary transport routes, such as the M1, cross the area³³⁹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The land to the south of the village is Grade 2 agricultural land, and the land to the east and partially to the north is grade 3 agricultural land (sub-grade 3a or 3b unknown).

Historic Environment: Millbrook has a small number of *Listed Buildings* located in the centre of the settlement. *Millbrook Conservation Area* encompasses almost all the settlement and is characterised by public footpaths linking the village to the parish church, the predominately residential properties grouped in small clusters with areas of open space between them, and the trees and hedgerows that contribute to the wooded character of the Conservation Area. The dominant building style is best described as Victorian estate-cottage architecture with rows of buildings being more common than detached buildings. The buildings are predominately constructed in red brick with clay plain roof tiles. There are only a

³³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Cranfield & Marston Moretaine Ward Profile

³³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

³³⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

³³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

few examples of alternative external finishes which include some thatch and some rendered properties³⁴⁰. The entire settlement is also located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: Within the settlement there are two County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Millbrook Churchyard CWS and Millbrook CWS, which contains Lowland Fens and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland Priority Habitats. To the west of the village is Heydon Hill CWS, and to the south and south-west is Millbrook Warren CWS. There is a block of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland just to the west of Millbrook, and the entire village is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network incorporates the land to the east and west, including the centre of the village, and is part of GI corridor 5³⁴¹. The Biodiversity Network encompasses the land around and in the centre of the village, incorporating the CWSs and Priority Habitats in the area.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk located in or around the settlement³⁴².

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlements contain some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement is bordered by Green Belt land to the south. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools, which have no room for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate significant further growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and Children's Play area present indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is bordered to the south by designated Green Belt land indicating a medium capacity.

³⁴⁰ Millbrook Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/milbrook_tcm3-12962.pdf

³⁴¹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³⁴² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. Served by a less frequent rail link indicating a medium level of accessibility and connectivity and therefore medium capacity. There is no information at this stage on the provision of bus services within the settlement, there is however, good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. The east of the settlement is constrained by a designated heritage setting (Registered Historic Park and Garden and Scheduled Monument) however, this is beyond the railway line.
8. Development around the settlement is constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWS) and a designated heritage setting (Conservation Area and Listed Buildings).
9. The Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks largely surround the settlement. Development in the south could result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Development could however contribute towards the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

MILLBROOK SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and leisure facilities.

Any development in the south of the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Development in the west is constrained by existing development (golf course and nationally significant vehicle proving ground).

Whilst development of a sufficient scale could improve service and facility provisions, growth at this scale would impact on the character of this settlement. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle. Overall capacity is therefore judged to be low.

MILTON BRYAN

Milton Bryan is located in the west of Central Bedfordshire and has a residential population of 220 people in around 120 dwellings (combined population and dwellings with Battlesden and Potsgrove)³⁴³.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³⁴⁴ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Milton Bryan is located within and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁴⁵ identifies Milton Bryan as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data³⁴⁶ for the LLSOA which Milton Bryan is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 44, and that there are more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Milton Bryan include a food serving pub and recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any education facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, any community centres, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close³⁴⁷ to the Milton Bryan area include Leighton Linlade (approx. 6 miles), Houghton Regis (approx. 7 miles) and Flitwick (approx. 6 miles). Milton Bryan has 3 Leisure Strategy sites³⁴⁸ which includes a recreation ground and allotments, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces in the village has not been identified. Milton Bryan has a cricket club; however, no other clubs and groups could be found through internet searching.

Education: Parkfields Middle School is at capacity and the school site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE³⁴⁹ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size. Fulbrook Middle School has a small amount of existing capacity and the school site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required³⁵⁰.

³⁴³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

³⁴⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³⁴⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

³⁴⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁴⁷ Google Maps (2016)

³⁴⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³⁴⁹ Form of Entry

³⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Milton Bryan³⁵¹. ONS data³⁵² for the LLSOA which Milton Bryan is located within reveals that 12.8% of residents work part-time, 41.2% work full-time, 18% are self-employed and 13.3% are retired. The percentage of residents who work full and part-time and who are retired is similar to that for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the proportion of residents who are self-employed is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, education and professional, scientific & technical. Overall 27% of residents work within the ward and 12% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Milton Keynes³⁵³.

Transport and Movement: Milton Bryan has access to the A5 via the A4012 to the south. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands³⁵⁴. Milton Bryan is also connected to Toddington in the south-east and to Woburn to the north. The village does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Harlington, 5.3 miles to the east.

Milton Bryan is serviced by bus services however these are infrequent and most do not run at weekends or on Sundays³⁵⁵.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The existing capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works whose catchment area Milton Bryan is located within is not known.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Milton Bryan is located within the north of the Toddington-Hockliffe Clay Hills LCT. This LCT is defined by a series of connected hills and is dominated by arable crop production but interspersed with pockets of pasture (sheep and some cattle grazing). Within this LCT there is a strong landscape pattern of fields defined by hedgerows, punctuated by mature trees and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels³⁵⁶.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Milton Bryan is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

Historic Environment: The village has two small groups of *Listed Buildings*, one group is situated in the north of the settlement, and the second, larger group is in

³⁵¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³⁵² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

³⁵⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

³⁵⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

³⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

the south of the village. Milton Bryan *Conservation Area* encompasses almost all of the village, and is characterised by the well kempt village, neat hedgerows, mature trees that all create a snug, cosy feel to the village. There is no dominant building type in the village, with a range of building styles present including thatched, timber framed, red bricks and red clay tiles³⁵⁷. There is a moated site in the north of the settlement, which is also a *Scheduled Monument*. To the north of the village is Woburn Abbey and to the west is Battlesden Park, both *Historic Parks and Gardens*. The north and the south of the settlement are both designated *Archaeological Notification Areas*.

Biodiversity: Milton Bryan is surrounded by a number of County Wildlife Sites (CWS). To the north is Woburn Park CWS, Milton Wood CWS and Palmers Shrubs CWS, to the east is Wood near Washer's Wood CWS and to the west is Hungerhill Wood CWS. In the centre of the village is an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland, and larger areas of the same to the north and west. There are areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the north and east of Milton Bryan, and the entire village is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network encompasses all of the land north of the village and is part of GI corridor 6³⁵⁸. The Biodiversity Network encompasses the land north of the village and partially to the east and west, surrounding the CWSs and Priority Habitats.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk in or around the settlement³⁵⁹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement is surrounded by and located within Green Belt land. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings, a Conservation Area and a Scheduled Monument. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools. There is potential expansion capacity at Harlington Upper School to accommodate between 214 and 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the

³⁵⁷ Milton Bryan Conservation Area (2006) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/milton-bryan_tcm3-12963.pdf

³⁵⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³⁵⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.

2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Recreational facilities present indicating a medium to low capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Harlington around 5 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus services which are infrequent, indicating a low capacity. There is access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development in the north of the settlement is constrained by designated heritage (Scheduled Monument and a large Registered Historic Park and Garden further north), as well as locally designated biodiversity (CWS). Development could contribute towards the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.
8. Development around the settlement edge is constrained by a designated heritage setting (Conservation Area and Listed Buildings). Development could result in the loss of agricultural land; however, it is unknown at this stage whether it is higher grade best and most versatile land.
9. Further heritage and local biodiversity constraints (Registered Historic Park and Garden and CWS) exist beyond the A4012.

MILTON BRYAN SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail / convenience facilities.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Medium to large scale development would need to be provided in order to support improved service and facility provisions, however this would be likely to significantly affect the heritage settings of the settlement and open/dispersed character of this settlement and may require further mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

RIDGMONT

Ridgmont is a small village located in the north-west of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 410 people and containing 180 dwellings³⁶⁰. It is a relatively small, historic village largely comprising ribbon development along High Street and Eversholt Road. The buildings along the roads vary in density and scale but are generally one dwelling deep, which maintains a sense of openness. There are views of the wider countryside from the core of the village around the open ground that surrounds the church.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³⁶¹ and there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Ridgmont. Ridgmont is located within and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁶² identifies Ridgmont as consisting of “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data³⁶³ for the LLSOA that Ridgmont is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 44, and that there are more residents in the area under 16 than over 65.

Services and facilities available within Ridgmont include a community centre, a lower school, a restaurant/takeaway and a food serving pub. The village does not have any secondary education facilities, any banking facilities, any healthcare facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office or any recreational facilities. Notable towns with superstores close³⁶⁴ to the Ridgmont area include Flitwick (approx. 5 miles), Ampthill (approx. 5 miles) and Milton Keynes (approx. 7 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). Ridgmont has 5 Leisure Strategy sites³⁶⁵, 4 of which are clustered in the centre of the settlement, and 1 being located to the east of the village. However, the surplus/deficit of open spaces within the settlement has not been identified.

Education: Ridgmont Lower School has some small existing capacity, and the school site has the capacity to accommodate an expansion of 1 FE³⁶⁶, which would result in an additional 75 pupil places, equivalent to 214 new dwellings. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, which would allow for 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size. Fulbrook Middle School has a small amount of existing capacity and the school site does not have the capacity to

³⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Cranfield & Marston Moretaine Ward Profile

³⁶¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Cranfield & Marston Moretaine Ward Profile

³⁶³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁶⁴ Google Maps (2016)

³⁶⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³⁶⁶ Form of Entry

accommodate expansion. Parkfields Middle School is at capacity and the school site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required³⁶⁷.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Ridgmont³⁶⁸. ONS data³⁶⁹ for the LLSOA which Ridgmont is located within reveals that 12.8% of residents work part-time, 41.2% work full-time, 18% are self-employed and 13.3% are retired. The percentage of residents who work full and part-time and who are retired is similar to that for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the proportion of residents who are self-employed is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, education and professional, scientific & technical. Overall 28% of ward residents work within the ward and 12% worked elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to destination outside of Central Bedfordshire is Milton Keynes³⁷⁰.

Transport and Movement: Ridgmont has access to the primary road network, with access to the M1 from Junction 13 around 2 miles from the village. The settlement is also connected to Flitwick & Ampthill. The level of stress on the M1 is high. The M1 in the vicinity of Junction 13 operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor³⁷¹.

There is no railway station within the settlement; however, Ridgmont Station is just over a mile to the north-west of the settlement, and is on the Marston Vale Line between Bletchley and Bedford Midland with services operated by London Midland. There are 16 trains per day in each direction, running at approximately hourly intervals³⁷². Ridgmont has been identified for the development of a new rail interchange on the western section of the East West rail scheme. East West Rail is a scheme to re-establish a rail link between Cambridge and Oxford to improve rail services between East Anglia, Central and Southern England with enhanced connections to national mainline rail services. It is anticipated that the planned service improvements will encourage more people to take the train, and will bring significant economic benefits to Central Bedfordshire by encouraging more businesses to start up and grow in our area.

Bus: Ridgmont is serviced by a number of bus services, however these are infrequent and limited in terms of destinations. A recent introduction has been the 49Connect service. Twice a day this service runs between Wootton and Leighton Buzzard through the Marston Vale area (with an additional service each way on school days). Crucially, the section between Wootton and Aspley Guise which passes through Marston, Lidlington, Brogborough, Ridgmont and Husborne Crawley, is run as a demand-responsive service and requires potential customers to telephone to book a seat for the outbound journey though they can just tell

³⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³⁶⁸ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³⁶⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁷⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Cranfield & Marston Moretaine Ward Profile

³⁷¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

³⁷² Ibid.

the driver where they want to get off on the return. The bus stops in place are poorly positioned and maintained³⁷³.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The sewerage and wastewater capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works that Ridgmont is within the catchment for is unknown. Possible that the Wastewater Treatment Works is located within Milton Keynes.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Ridgmont is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT. The area is a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape with areas of high ground underlain by drift deposits of boulder clay. The landscape area has large blocks of mixed and deciduous woodland, which provides a strong sense of enclosure to the area. The land is predominantly under arable cultivation, however there are areas of pasture contained by extensive woodland. There are a number of SSSIs in the area, and active and restored mineral works are dispersed across the area³⁷⁴. The parkland and historic Church at Segenhoe are important features in the wider setting of the village.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Ridgmont is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known. North of the settlement there is an area of Grade 2 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: *Listed Buildings* in Ridgmont are clustered in the centre of the settlement around the parish church, with another small groups of buildings in the south of the village along the High Street. *Ridgmont Conservation Area* encompasses the village High Street and the buildings located within the immediate surrounding area. The Conservation Area is characterised by estate cottages, the parish church, the local footpaths, the well-hedged gardens and the village water tower³⁷⁵. To the east of the settlement is Malting Spinney medieval moat and All Saint's Church, both designated *Scheduled Monuments*. An *Archaeological Notification Area* follows the linear route of the High Street and includes most of the dwellings, and another area can be found to the east around the two *Scheduled Monuments*.

Biodiversity: Within the village there are areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and a Traditional Orchard. To the south there is an area of Lowland Dry Acid Grassland and a large area of Wood Pasture and Parkland that also contains Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. Around half a mile to the south of Ridgmont is Hay Wood County Wildlife Site. The settlement is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network surrounds the village to the east, south and west, and is part of GI

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

³⁷⁵ Ridgmont Conservation Area (1992) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/ridgmont_tcm3-12965.pdf

corridor 6³⁷⁶. The Biodiversity Network also encompasses the land to the south and partially to the west of the settlement, focusing on the areas which contain Priority Habitats.

Flood Risk: A small area of flood zone (2 & 3) is located half a mile to the west of the settlement³⁷⁷.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement is surrounded by and located within Green Belt land. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings, a Conservation Area and two Scheduled Monuments. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools, however there is room for expansion at Ridgmont Lower School (allowing for growth of around 200 dwellings) as well as at Harlington Upper School to accommodate between 214 and 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, at Harlington Upper School this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Lack of leisure facilities indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located just outside of the settlement, around 1 mile away which will support sustainable connections to the wider area (indicating a medium to high capacity), however, the settlement is less well-served by bus services which are infrequent, though new services (e.g. 49Connect) are emerging. There is also access to the primary road network.

³⁷⁶ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³⁷⁷ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. Development in the south of the settlement is significantly constrained by designated heritage and local biodiversity settings (Registered Historic Park and Garden and CWS).
8. Any development around the settlement edge is also likely to affect the designated heritage setting of the Conservation Area and its associated Listed Buildings.
9. Development in the east is constrained by the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks. Development in the north could result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

RIDGMONT SUMMARY

Capacity: Low - Medium (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development is currently constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare, retail / convenience, and leisure facilities. As well as strong heritage settings restricting the level of development, particularly in the south.

The proximity to the committed East-West rail interchange/station at Ridgmont is likely to unlock significant economic potential by encouraging more businesses to start up and grow in the area. Housing in this area could therefore assist in the creation of sustainable communities. Opportunity areas for such development exist in north-west of the settlement, towards the M1, which can avoid the significant environmental constraints and offer the potential for the settlement to grow, providing increased access to services and facilities and providing a range of new housing to support local needs that is well connected by rail. This could also contribute to reducing existing reliance on the private vehicle. However, the visual impact of development on the high quality countryside of the Greensand escarpment would be a major issue – this has the effect of reducing the capacity potential of Ridgmont. Finally, any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

SLIP END

Slip End is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 1830 people in around 870 dwellings³⁷⁸. It comprises a dense network of suburban residential streets containing a mixture of relatively modern detached, semi-detached houses and maisonettes, two terraced streets at its northern end and a large area of hardstanding used to store cars. The settlement stands at a higher elevation than much of Bedfordshire, with the south-east end of Front Street being 549 feet above sea level. Slip End is a relatively recent development, with the settlement at Slip End forming only in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1878 a church was built at Slip End to serve the growing population. All the settlement's houses were built of locally made brick³⁷⁹. The settlement is located to the south of Luton, and is bordered to the east by the M1.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³⁸⁰. In March 2013 the whole of the Caddington and Slip End parishes was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Area. Caddington and Slip End Parish, and the Councils currently preparing a Joint Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan identifies land at the rear of Slip End School as a preferred location for residential development. Slip End is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation which the settlement is surrounded by.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁸¹ identifies the Parish as consisting of “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “elderly people with assets” and “established families in large detached homes”. ONS data³⁸² for the Caddington, Hyde and Slip End LLSOA shows the median age for the area being 46. The area also has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Slip End contains a number of key services and facilities including 3 community centres, a pre-school/nursery, a primary school, a convenience store, 2 food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not contain any secondary education facilities, healthcare, restaurants/takeaways or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close³⁸³ to the Slip End area include Luton (approx. 2 miles, outside Central Bedfordshire), Dunstable (approx. 6 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 7 miles). The settlement has a social club, as well as an archery group and a tennis club.

The settlement has a variety of Leisure Strategy sites³⁸⁴, including allotments and a recreation ground. Slip End has a large surplus of informal large recreation areas

³⁷⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

³⁷⁹ <http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/SlipEnd/SlipEndIndexOfPages.aspx>

³⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

³⁸² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Caddington, Hyde and Slip End Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁸³ Google Maps (2016)

³⁸⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

and a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, allotments and facilities for young people. However, the settlement has a deficit of play areas for children and small amenity spaces³⁸⁵.

Education: Slip End Village School is close to capacity, and an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast. The school cannot accommodate expansion³⁸⁶.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Caddington³⁸⁷. ONS data³⁸⁸ for the Caddington, Hyde and Slip End Lower Layer Super Output Area shows that 40.5% of residents are in full time employment, 15.5% work part time and 17.5% are retired. The percentage of residents working full time is lower than the average for Central Bedfordshire, whilst the percentage of residents in part time work or retired is higher. The main industries for the area are construction, wholesale and retail trade and education. Almost 25% of ward residents work within the ward and 10% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton³⁸⁹.

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the primary road network, being connected to the M1 at Junction 10 which borders the settlement to the east. The existing junction experiences severe congestion during the peak periods that needs to be addressed to cater for the proposed growth in Luton³⁹⁰. The settlement is also connected to the A5 to the west via the B4540. There is no railway station in the settlement, with the closest station being Luton Airport Parkway, 3 miles to the north-east (located outside of Central Bedfordshire). The settlement does contain bus stops for residential use.

Bus- Slip End has a limited number of bus services which operate infrequently and not on Sundays. Service 202 runs from Caddington and Slip End to Harpenden Station – first arrival at 0823 and last departure from station at 1615³⁹¹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Slip End is located in the Caddington Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The only other settlement located within this catchment is Caddington. Capacity is limited in Caddington, however appears to be adequate in Slip End³⁹².

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Slip End is located within the Caddington-Slip End Chalk Dipslope. The landscape is defined by a broad plateau, which gently

³⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

³⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³⁸⁷ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³⁸⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Caddington, Hyde and Slip End Lower Layer Super Output Area

³⁸⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

³⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2011) Local Transport Plan 3

³⁹¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

³⁹² JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

undulates in places to form a series of subtle valleys. The landscape is predominantly under arable cultivation within large open fields. A number of busy roads run across the plateau, as do a series of pylon lines that form a prominent vertical feature in the open views³⁹³. This forms important landscape buffer separating M1 corridor and Luton from wider rural landscape to the west including Slip End.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement and the surrounding area is grade 3 agricultural land, however it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The settlement only contains 1 *Listed Building* which is the local church. There is an archaeological notification area to the north-west of the settlement, however the surrounding land and the settlement itself does not contain any archaeological notification areas.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement. To the north-east of the village is Stockwood Park County Wildlife Site, which contains areas of Lowland Meadow, however the site itself is not located in Central Bedfordshire. There are areas of Lowland Deciduous Woodland to the south of the settlement. There are areas of land within the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure networks to the east of the M1, however they do not directly border the settlement.

Flood Risk: The settlement is not located in or bordered by and flood zones³⁹⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement is also surrounded by designated Green Belt land. The settlement contains a single Listed Building. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity and no expansion space at the local school indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Only a convenience store present indicating a medium to low capacity.

³⁹³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 11

³⁹⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing a deficit in the provision of play areas for children and small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is largely surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Luton however the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent. There is good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Any development around Slip End is likely to result in the loss of agricultural land, and development to the north and south of the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.

SLIP END SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare and retail facilities, although the settlement is close to Luton with access to the wide range of services provided there.

An area of land north west of the settlement is free from significant constraints and is not located within the Green Belt.

The rest of the land surrounding Slip End would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this may affect environmental amenities and settlement identity. There are opportunity areas for small scale sustainable development that is well connected with the existing urban area, and could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, and support Neighbourhood Planning proposals, however, small scale development may also increase reliance on the private vehicle.

STANBRIDGE

Stanbridge is located in the west of Central Bedfordshire and has a residential population of 710 people and contains 330 dwellings³⁹⁵. It comprises of four roads of ribbon development arranged in a diamond formation around a small cluster of irregular-shaped agricultural fields.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³⁹⁶ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. The village is located within and surrounded by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁹⁷ identifies the settlement as consisting of “established families in large detached homes” and “well-off homeowners in rural location”. ONS data³⁹⁸ for the LLSOA that Stanbridge is located within, reveals the median age of residents to be 49, and the area has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Stanbridge include a community centre, a lower school, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have any secondary education facilities, any banking facilities, any healthcare facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office, any restaurants/takeaways or a post office. Notable towns with superstores close³⁹⁹ to the Stanbridge area include Leighton Linlade (approx. 3 miles), Dunstable (approx. 5 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 5 miles). Stanbridge has a small number of Leisure Strategy sites⁴⁰⁰ located in the centre of the village, including a village green, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces within the settlement has not been identified.

Education: Stanbridge Lower School has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site has the capacity to accommodate expansion. Cedars Upper School has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school has the site capacity to accommodate expansion⁴⁰¹.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Stanbridge⁴⁰². ONS data⁴⁰³ for the LLSOA that Stanbridge is located within reveals that 12.2% of

³⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

³⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

³⁹⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁹⁹ Google Maps (2016)

⁴⁰⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴⁰² Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

residents work part-time, 35.7% work full-time, 15.7% are self-employed and 19.7% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time is lower than the figures for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired and self-employed residents is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, construction and manufacturing. 19% of ward residents work within the ward, 23% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents⁴⁰⁴.

Transport and Movement: Stanbridge has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A505 to the south, and having access to the A5 to the east, via Tilsworth. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands⁴⁰⁵.

The village is also connected to Leighton Buzzard via Leighton Road to the west. The village does not have a railway station, and the closest station is Leighton Buzzard, 7.5 miles to the west.

In Stanbridge a half-hourly bus service provides frequent access to Leighton Buzzard, Milton Keynes, Dunstable, and Luton. Local people value this service as an alternative way of accessing key employment areas and services not provided in the village⁴⁰⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Stanbridge is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stanbridgeford, Totternhoe, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Billington, Tilsworth, Tebworth, Hockcliffe and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity⁴⁰⁷.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Stanbridge is located in 2 separate LCTs. The south of the settlement is located within the Eaton Bray Clay Vale. The landscape is large scale, low lying and flat making the area feel open and exposed. Most of the area is intensive arable crop production, with medium to large sized fields. A number of busy 'A' roads cross the vale, including the A4146 and A5. These have a strong visual and audible presence⁴⁰⁸. The north of the village is located within the Toddington-Hockcliffe Clay Hills. This LCT is defined by a series of connected hills and is dominated by arable crop production but interspersed with pockets of

⁴⁰³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁰⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

⁴⁰⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington, & Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁴⁰⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington, & Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁴⁰⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁴⁰⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

pasture (sheep and some cattle grazing). Within this LCT there is a strong landscape pattern of fields defined by hedgerows, punctuated by mature trees and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels⁴⁰⁹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Stanbridge is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

Historic Environment: Stanbridge has a number of *Listed Buildings* which are largely clustered in the north and west of the village, including the village church. The entire village is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: Stanbridge and Blackgrove Woods County Wildlife Site is located to the south-east of the village and contains Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. There are 3 Traditional Orchards in the settlement.

Flood Risk: A band of flood zone (2 & 3) runs from east west along the south of the settlement⁴¹⁰.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement is surrounded by and located within Green Belt land. The settlements also contain valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools. Expansion land or new school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low to medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and Children's Play area present indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

⁴⁰⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

⁴¹⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Leighton Buzzard around 7.5 miles away, however, the settlement is well-served by frequent bus services, indicating a medium capacity. There is access to the strategic road network however this is congested in the east.

Environment

7. Development around the settlement edge may affect designated heritage settings of Listed Buildings. Development could result in the loss of agricultural land however it unknown at this stage whether this is higher grade best and most versatile land.

STANBRIDGE SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail / convenience facilities, as well as wastewater infrastructure.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Medium to large scale development would need to be provided in order to support improved service and facility provisions, however this would be likely to affect the heritage settings of the settlement and its character/identity. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

STEPPINGLEY

Steppingley is a compact rural village situated on raised ground formed by the Greensand Ridge. It is 2.5 miles south-west of Ampthill and a short distance from the M1 motorway to the west. The village is situated in gently undulating countryside of mixed land use⁴¹¹. Steppingley has a residential population of 240 people and contains 90 dwellings⁴¹². It is a small, open cluster of detached dwellings, a pub and a church centred on a junction between three roads – Rectory Road, Eversholt Road and Flitwick Road. The buildings are spread unevenly with no clear settlement edge.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴¹³ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Steppingley is located within and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴¹⁴ identifies Steppingley as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁴¹⁵ for the LLSOA which Steppingley is located within, identifies the median age of residents to be 38, and the village has more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available in Steppingley include a community centre, 2 food-serving pubs and a children's play area. The settlement does not have any education facilities, banking facilities, healthcare facilities, supermarkets, convenience stores, post offices, or restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close⁴¹⁶ to the Steppingley area include Flitwick (approx. 2 miles) and Ampthill (approx. 2 miles). Steppingley has two Leisure Strategy sites⁴¹⁷ in the centre of the village, although the deficit/surplus of open spaces in the settlement has not been identified. Steppingley has a cricket club, however no other clubs and groups could be found through internet searching.

Education: Parkfields Middle School (Toddington) is at capacity and the site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁴¹⁸ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size⁴¹⁹.

⁴¹¹ Steppingley Conservation Area (2005) [Online]
http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/steppingley_tcm3-12969.pdf

⁴¹² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Flitwick Ward Profile

⁴¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Flitwick Ward Profile

⁴¹⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 016D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴¹⁶ Google Maps (2016)

⁴¹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴¹⁸ Form of Entry

⁴¹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Steppingley⁴²⁰. ONS data⁴²¹ for the LLSOA which Steppingley is located within reveals that 15.6% of residents work part-time, 47% work full-time and 10.2% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time is higher than those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired residents are lower. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, education and construction. 23% of residents work within the ward, and 19% worked elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Bedford⁴²².

Transport and Movement: Steppingley is not connected to the primary road network, but is connected to Flitwick and Ampthill to the east. The village does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Flitwick, around 1.7 miles to the south-east.

The lack of public transport, and information on the services which do operate, are concerns of residents, as are road safety issues and the lack of footpaths to Flitwick⁴²³. No further information was available from the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Steppingley is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Greenfield, Fliton, Wardhedges, Westoning, Eversholt, Tingrith and Ampthill. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings⁴²⁴.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Steppingley is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top. The area has a strong underlying heathland character and a high ecological value due to the number of nationally important sites present. The LCT also has extensive areas of deciduous woodland, mixed woodland and coniferous plantations, and primary transport routes, such as the M1 cross, the area⁴²⁵.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The land to the north, south and west is Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub grade (3a or 3b) is not known. The land to the east of the village is Grade 2 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: The settlement has a small number of Listed Buildings, with the majority of these being located in the centre of the village and around the church. A collection of farm buildings, designated as Listed Buildings, are located

⁴²⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁴²¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 016D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴²² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Flitwick Ward Profile

⁴²³ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴²⁴ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁴²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

to the south of the village. Steppingley Conservation Area encompasses almost all the village, and is characterised by the red brick buildings, timber-framed buildings and the slate and tile roofs⁴²⁶. All the village is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, apart from some of the Park Farm buildings in the south of Steppingley.

Biodiversity: Rod Wood and Steppingley Copse County Wildlife Site is to the west of Steppingley and contains Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Lowland Beech and Yew. The settlement is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The land to the north and east of the village is within the Biodiversity Network, and the Green Infrastructure Network encompasses the entire settlement and the surrounding land, and is part of GI corridor 6⁴²⁷.

Flood Risk: The settlement is not constrained by flood risk⁴²⁸.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites and the village is located within Green Belt land. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There are no schools in the settlement but a range of schools are accessible in nearby Flitwick and Ampthill, and slightly further afield in Harlington, indicating medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities in the settlement indicating low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: The settlement has no retail but there are supermarkets easily accessible in nearby Flitwick and Ampthill indicates low/medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: The settlement has no formal facilities although these are accessible in Flitwick, including a leisure centre, indicating medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is washed over by Green Belt and so capacity is therefore considered to be low.

⁴²⁶ Steppingley Conservation Area (2005) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/steppingley_tcm3-12969.pdf

⁴²⁷ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

⁴²⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement/Infrastructure

6. The settlement is close to Flitwick but has relatively poor access to the primary road network and no rail station itself, indicating low capacity.

Environment

7. There are no SSSIs proximate to the settlement, although there are a number of woodland County Wildlife Sites to the west. These are unlikely to be particularly sensitive to development. The Biodiversity Network covers the area but to realise opportunities development would need to be at sufficient scale. Development could contribute towards the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.
8. Most of the village is a Conservation Area and contains a number of Listed Buildings.

STEPPINGLEY SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

The settlement is small with poor public transport. Large scale development could improve provision of facilities and service as well as connections to Flitwick and its rail station and leisure and retail offer, but large scale development of this kind is likely to have a detrimental impact on its character and identity.

There are few environmental constraints but the settlement is covered by Green Belt and development would result in loss of BMV agricultural land.

STREATLEY

Streatley is a village and Parish in Central Bedfordshire with a population of around 1840 residents in around 760 dwellings⁴²⁹. The village is approximately 5 miles north of central Luton and is bordered on the west by the A6 and Luton Road. The village has a strongly defined linear form which is mostly single plot depth, lining the roadside as it steadily drops down the hill to the south, and is centred on a junction between two country roads – Sharpenhoe Road and Church Road.

The village's historic centre sits between Sundon Road and Sharpenhoe Road and contains the village church and a cluster of detached dwellings, most of which are set within large, private gardens. The parish is long and narrow, stretching from north to south, and includes the village of Sharpenhoe prominently situated on a spur of the hills a mile north of the upper village⁴³⁰. Streatley has never been a large settlement and the buildings on the slope between the church and Streatleybury farm are the result of infilling over time rather than being the remains of a much shrunken medieval settlement⁴³¹. The Icknield Way trail passes through the village.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴³² and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. Streatley is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation which the settlement is surrounded by and located within.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴³³ identifies Streatley as consisting mostly of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁴³⁴ for Streatley LLSOA identifies the median age for the area to be 37, with almost a quarter of residents being between the ages of 30 and 44. The data also reveals that there are almost twice as many residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65 for the area.

Streatley does not contain a wide range of services and facilities, however it does have a community centre, a food serving pub, 2 children's play areas and membership outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have educational facilities, healthcare, banking facilities, supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office, or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close⁴³⁵ to the Streatley area include Houghton Regis (approx. 5 miles) and Luton (approx. 4 miles, and outside of the Central Bedfordshire administrative boundary). Streatley has an active dance club, however no other active community groups within Streatley could be found through internet searching.

⁴²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

⁴³⁰ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol2/pp381-384>

⁴³¹ Streatley Parish Council (online) <http://streatley.bedsparishes.gov.uk/short-histor/>

⁴³² Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴³³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

⁴³⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 018d Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴³⁵ Google Maps (2016)

Within the centre of Streatley there are a variety of Leisure Strategy sites⁴³⁶, including allotments and a recreation ground. To the north of the settlement, stretching from east to west, are a number of Leisure Strategy sites including Smithcombe Hill and Sundon Hills Country Park. The settlement has a large surplus of informal large recreation areas and a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children, allotments and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of small amenity spaces⁴³⁷.

Education: Arnold Academy is close to capacity and pupil forecast predicts an increase in numbers, however an expansion is already planned. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁴³⁸ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwellings. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size⁴³⁹.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Streatley⁴⁴⁰. ONS data⁴⁴¹ for Streatley LLSOA shows that 47% of residents are in full time employment, 14% are in part time employment and 10% are retired. Compared to the averages for Central Bedfordshire, this area has a higher proportion of residents in full time employment, and a lower proportion of residents who are retired. The main industries identified in the ward were manufacturing, construction, education and wholesale and retail trade. Almost 25% of the wards residents commute into Luton, with around 20% remaining in Toddington ward for work and another 20% commuting elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire.

Transport and Movement: Streatley has good primary road connections, being connected to the A6/Luton Road via Church Road to the east. The nearest railway station, Harlington Station, is outside of the settlement around 4 miles to the north-west. The settlement has a number of bus stops available for residential use.

Bus: In Streatley, an infrequent bus service running once every 2 hours links the village to Shefford, Upper Gravenhurst, Shillington, Barton-le-Clay, and Luton. This service also links Barton-le-Clay to villages towards Shefford, as well as complimenting the hourly bus service to Luton. Sharpenhoe, however, has no bus service in operation. The quality of the waiting facilities is generally poor across the area. The services are infrequent and do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods⁴⁴².

Rail: Although Streatley does not have a railway station, residents of Barton-le-Clay, Streatley, and Sundon also use Luton station, with services operated by First Capital Connect and East Midlands Trains. Up to 9 trains per hour operate in both directions to Bedford, Flitwick, London, Brighton, and Leicester among other

⁴³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁴³⁸ Form of Entry

⁴³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴⁴⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁴⁴¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 018d Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington & Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

places. Some 40 residents also access Leagrave station, where trains from First Capital Connect every 15 minutes serve Bedford, Flitwick, Luton, London and Brighton⁴⁴³.

Road: The settlement is connected to the A6 to the east, which is a key north / south route through Central Bedfordshire linking Barton-le-Clay and Streatley with Luton in the south with Bedford in the north⁴⁴⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Streatley is located in the Chalton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. However, no data of sewer capacity is available in Streatley⁴⁴⁵.

National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: Streatley is located within the Chilterns AONB and development in and around Streatley has the potential to affect the designated landscape.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Streatley is located within the Houghton Regis – North Luton Rolling Chalk Farmland LCT, a landscape area defined by the superficial deposits of boulder clay and glacial drift. The landscape is a gently rolling terrain dominated by arable crop production. Surviving hedgerows and remnant ancient blocks of woodland provide some landscape pattern and enclosure but overall there is a generally open character. Busy transport corridors interrupt the landscape, including the M1 and A6⁴⁴⁶.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The land to the east and south west of Streatley is Grade 2 agricultural land. The land to the north, and at the centre of Streatley is Grade 3, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: There are a few *Listed Buildings* located within Streatley, a small cluster can be found at the centre of the settlement, with a few more located sporadically going southwards along Sharpenhoe Road. To the north of Streatley there is an Iron Age promontory fort which is a designated *Scheduled Monument*. Streatley contains a *Conservation Area* at the centre of the settlement and it extends southwards along Sharpenhoe Road. The area is designated due to the important mix of historical buildings, important individual and groups of trees and the extensive far reaching views of the surrounding countryside. The Conservation Area is characterised by its topography and settlement pattern. Most of the village buildings are brick, with predominantly natural slate roofing, although two properties are thatched⁴⁴⁷. The settlement is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, and is surrounded by pockets of similarly designated land.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁴⁴⁶ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 10

⁴⁴⁷ Streatley Conservation Area Appraisal (2009) [online at]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/streatley_tcm3-12970.pdf

Biodiversity: To the north of Streatley is the Smithcombe, Sharpenhoe and Sundon Hills SSSI, with Sundon Hills County Wildlife Site located in the same area. There is a Roadside Nature Reserve north-east of the settlement, and another County Wildlife Site to the north-west. The Biodiversity Network is north of Streatley and runs east to west, as does the Green Infrastructure Network which also passes south through the centre of the village.

Flood Risk: There are no flood risk areas around Streatley⁴⁴⁸.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, an SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks. Streatley is also located in the sensitive AONB landscape, and constrained by Green Belt. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential capacity expansion at schools outside of the settlement for example at Arnold Academy and Harlington Upper School to accommodate up to 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing the deficit in the provision of small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is located within and surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. A rail link is located in Luton, however, the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent. There is good access to the strategic road network.

⁴⁴⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. Any development in Streatley is likely to affect the AONB landscape and setting, and may also affect designated heritage settings.
8. Development that would extend the settlement to the north is constrained by a large designated SSSI and County Wildlife Site, as well as the GI and Biodiversity Networks. The GI Network covers most of the land north and south of the settlement as well as the immediate land to the east and west.
9. Development to the south and east of the settlement may also result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

STREATLEY SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail / convenience facilities.

Any development in Streatley would affect the AONB landscape and be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

The environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development, and development may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and existing green spaces. Any development around the settlement edge would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, and there are opportunity areas for small scale sustainable development that is well connected with the existing urban area, and could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community. However development on this scale may affect environmental amenities and impact on the rural character and identity of this settlement and the landscape. Small scale development may avoid these impacts but would likely increase reliance on the private vehicle.

STUDHAM

Studham is a small village to the south of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 1,130 people and containing 490 dwellings⁴⁴⁹.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Studham has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary⁴⁵⁰, however the Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed. Studham is located within and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴⁵¹ identifies Studham as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁴⁵² for the LLSOA that Studham is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 53, and that there are significantly more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Studham include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 2 food serving pubs and outdoor recreational facilities. The village does not have secondary education facilities, healthcare facilities, banking facilities, supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office, any restaurants/takeaways or any entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close⁴⁵³ to the Studham area include Dunstable (approx. 5 miles) and Hemel Hempstead (approx. 8 miles). Studham has 4 Leisure Strategy sites, with the largest being Studham Common, located directly to the east of the village, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces in the village has not been identified. Studham has a cricket club, a football club, a carpet bowls club, Scouts group, a tennis club, a WI group and a dancing club⁴⁵⁴.

Education: Studham CofE Village School has a small amount of existing capacity; however, the school site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion⁴⁵⁵.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Studham⁴⁵⁶. ONS data⁴⁵⁷ for the LLSOA that Studham is located within reveals that 12% of residents work part-time, 34.7% work full-time, 17.8% are self-employed and 22.2% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time are lower than those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired and self-employed residents are higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, construction and professional, scientific & technical. Overall, 22% of ward residents work within Caddington ward and 11% work

⁴⁴⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁴⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁴⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁴⁵² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 032D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁵³ Google Maps (2016)

⁴⁵⁴ <http://www.studhamparish.co.uk/studham-parish-organisations>

⁴⁵⁵ Central Bedfordshire Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴⁵⁶ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁴⁵⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 032D Lower Layer Super Output Area

elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to destination by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton⁴⁵⁸.

Transport and Movement: Studham is not connected to the primary road network, however the A5 can be accessed to the east of the settlement. Studham is also connected to Whipsnade and Kensworth to the north. There is no railway station in Studham, with the closest station being Berkhamsted, 15 miles to the south-west. Studham is serviced by limited bus services which do not run on Sundays and operate at a low frequency⁴⁵⁹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Studham is located in the Studham Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, with the only other settlement located within the catchment being Whipsnade. No data of sewer capacity is available in Studham⁴⁶⁰.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: Studham is located within the Chilterns AONB, and therefore development in and around Studham has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Studham is located within the Whipsnade Chalk Dipslope LCT. This LCT is an elevated landform resulting in an exposed and open landscape. The LCT is predominantly under arable cultivation with large mixed woodland blocks that provide some degree of enclosure. The skyline contains several communication masts which are visually dominant⁴⁶¹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Studham is located within and surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

Historic Environment: Studham has five *Listed Buildings* which are dispersed widely around the settlement. Studham has a small *Conservation Area* which encompasses a small collection of buildings, which includes the villages 2 pubs. The local church is located in an *Archaeological Notification Area*, and another *Archaeological Notification Area* extends along common Road in the south of the village, incorporating a number of large detached dwellings.

Biodiversity: A number of County Wildlife Sites (CWS) are located around the village. To the north is Ashen Grove CWS, Long Grove CWS, Dedmansey Woods CWS and Oldhill Wood CWS. In the centre of the settlement is Studham Common CWS, to the south is Dell Wood CWS and to the south-west is Ravensdell Wood & Meadows CWS. There are numerous areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland around Studham, and an area of Lowland Meadow to the south of

⁴⁵⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁴⁵⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

⁴⁶⁰ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁴⁶¹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 11

the village. The Biodiversity Network encompasses the land to the north, south and partially within the village, forming a network around the local CWSs.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk within or around Studham⁴⁶².

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. Studham is located in the AONB and Green Belt land. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools in the catchment area, which have no room for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate significant new growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities only indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement, with the closest at Berkhamsted, around 15 miles away, buses serve the settlement but these are infrequent, indicating a low capacity. There is also no direct access to the primary road network.

Environment

7. The settlement is located within the AONB and development is likely to affect the designated landscape setting.
8. The settlement is constrained in the east by locally designated biodiversity (CWS) and is largely surrounded by the Biodiversity Network.

⁴⁶² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

STUDHAM SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare, retail / convenience, and leisure facilities. Development may also require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this scale is highly likely to affect environmental amenities, the sensitive AONB landscape setting as well as the character of the village. Small scale development could avoid these issues but would likely increase reliance on the private vehicle.

TEBWORTH

Tebworth is located in the west of Central Bedfordshire, and is 5 miles to the north of Central Bedfordshire and 5 miles to the east of Leighton Buzzard.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: At this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement, and Tebworth is located in and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴⁶³ identifies Tebworth as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data⁴⁶⁴ for the Lower Layer Super Output Area that Tebworth is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 49, and that there are more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Tebworth are limited to a community centre, a children’s play area and a non-food serving pub. The settlement does not have any educational facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any post offices, any supermarkets/convenience stores, any recreational facilities or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close⁴⁶⁵ to the Tebworth area include Houghton Regis (approx. 3 miles), Dunstable (approx. 4 miles) and Leighton Linlade (approx. 4 miles). Tebworth has 2 Leisure Strategy sites⁴⁶⁶, 1 being a cricket ground and the other a small amenity space. However, the surplus/deficit of open spaces within Tebworth has not been identified.

Education: Parkfields Middle School is at capacity and the school site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁴⁶⁷ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwellings. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required⁴⁶⁸.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Tebworth⁴⁶⁹. ONS data⁴⁷⁰ for the Lower Layer Super Output Area that Tebworth is located within reveals that 12.2% of residents work part-time, 35.7% work full-time, 15.7% are self-employed and 19.7% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time is lower than the figures for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired and self-employed residents is higher. The main industries

⁴⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

⁴⁶⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁴⁶⁵ Google Maps (2016)

⁴⁶⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴⁶⁷ Form of Entry

⁴⁶⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴⁶⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁴⁷⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, construction and manufacturing. Overall, 23% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents⁴⁷¹.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Tebworth is connected to the primary road network, with access to the A5 directly to the west. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands⁴⁷². The settlement is also connected to the A5120 which provides access to Houghton Regis and Toddington.

Rail: The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Harlington, 4.5 miles to the north-east. Services from Harlington on Thameslink services on the Midland Mainline are often very busy. Many trains are overcrowded during the morning and evening peak periods, and there is little scope to increase capacity further within the limits of the existing infrastructure⁴⁷³.

Bus: The only strategic sustainable public transport link operating through Wingfield and Tebworth is provided by an occasional bus service operating every 2 hours. This bus links the villages to Toddington and to Dunstable⁴⁷⁴.

Priorities: In the village of Tebworth, levels of through traffic in the village were highlighted as the major local transport priority. Local stakeholders are particularly keen to reduce speeds through the village, and deliver measures that discourage traffic from passing through. Narrow pavements, and a lack of footpaths in some areas, further discourage local walking⁴⁷⁵.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Tebworth is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stanbridgeford, Totternhoe, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Billington, Stanbridge, Tilsworth, Hockliffe and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity⁴⁷⁶.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is located within the Toddington-Hockliffe Clay Hills. This LCT is defined by a series of connected hills.

⁴⁷¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

⁴⁷² Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

The area is dominated by arable crop production but interspersed with pockets of pasture (sheep and some cattle grazing). Within this LCT there is a strong landscape pattern of fields defined by hedgerows, punctuated by mature trees and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels⁴⁷⁷.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: There is a small area of Grade 2 agricultural land immediately to the west of the settlement, however most of the surrounding land is Grade 3 agricultural land (sub-grade 3a or 3b not known).

Historic Environment: Tebworth has a small collection of *Listed Buildings* which are clustered in the centre of the settlement around the crossroads. The settlement's *Conservation Area* encompasses the same area around the crossroads. Almost all of the settlement, excluding some of the settlements along Tebworth Road to the south of the village, is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: To the north of Tebworth is Tebworth Meadow County Wildlife Site, which contains Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat. There is also a Traditional Orchard within the village, and the Biodiversity Network encompasses the land to the north around the County Wildlife Site.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk constraining Tebworth⁴⁷⁸.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement is surrounded by and located within Green Belt land. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential expansion capacity at Harlington Upper School to accommodate up to 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.

⁴⁷⁷ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

⁴⁷⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas present indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located in the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement in Harlington, around 4.5 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are very infrequent, indicating a low capacity. There is good access to the strategic road network, including the A5, however the settlement does suffer from through traffic.

Environment

7. The north of the settlement is constrained by the Biodiversity Network.
8. Development around the settlement edge could affect the designated heritage setting of the Conservation Area and its associated Listed Buildings.
9. Development in the south west could result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

TEBWORTH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

The settlement is relatively remote and rural. Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare facilities. The environmental constraints can largely be avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the south east of the settlement.

Any development in Tebworth would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Overall, while development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions (also increasing accessibility for existing residents), and deliver a range of housing to support local needs, development at this scale is likely to be of detriment to the character and identity of the settlement. Small scale development is likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

TILSWORTH

Tilsworth is a village in the west of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 330 people and containing 180 dwellings⁴⁷⁹. It is a small historic village largely comprised of ribbon development along Stanbridge Road. The buildings along the road vary in density and scale but are generally only one dwelling deep, and set back from the road within large private gardens maintaining a sense of openness.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴⁸⁰ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the village. The village is located within and surrounded by Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴⁸¹ identifies the settlement as consisting of “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data⁴⁸² for the LLSOA that Tilsworth is located within, reveals the median age of residents to be 49, and the area has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available in Tilsworth include a community centre, a food serving pub, a children’s play area and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any educational facilities, any banking facilities, any healthcare facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close⁴⁸³ to the Tilsworth area include Houghton Regis (approx. 4 miles), Dunstable (approx. 4 miles) and Leighton Linlade (approx. 4 miles). Tilsworth has a small number of Leisure Strategy sites⁴⁸⁴ which are mainly located in the east and west of the village, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces within Tilsworth has not been identified. Tilsworth has a golf club, however no other clubs and groups could be found through internet searching.

Education: Cedars Upper School has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school has the site capacity to accommodate expansion⁴⁸⁵.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Tilsworth⁴⁸⁶. ONS data⁴⁸⁷ for the LLSOA that Tilsworth is located within reveals that 12.2% of residents work part-time, 35.7% work full-time, 15.7% are self-employed and 19.7% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time is lower than the

⁴⁷⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

⁴⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

⁴⁸² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁸³ Google Maps (2016)

⁴⁸⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁴⁸⁶ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁴⁸⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 019B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

figures for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired and self-employed residents is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, construction and manufacturing. 19% of ward residents work within the ward, 23% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents⁴⁸⁸.

Transport and Movement: Tilsworth has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A5 to the east of the village. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands⁴⁸⁹.

The village does not have a railway station, and the closest station is Leighton Buzzard, 5 miles to the west, which provides a regular 30-minute service. There is access to the centre of the village via footpaths/cycle paths.

In Tilsworth a half-hourly bus service provides frequent access to Leighton Buzzard, Milton Keynes, Dunstable, and Luton. Local people value this service as an alternative way of accessing key employment areas and services not provided in the village⁴⁹⁰.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Tilsworth is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stanbridgeford, Totternhoe, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Billington, Stanbridge, Tebworth, Hockcliffe and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity⁴⁹¹.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Tilsworth is located in 2 separate LCTs. The south of the settlement is located within the Eaton Bray Clay Vale. The landscape is large scale, low lying and flat, making the area feel open and exposed. The majority of the area is intensive arable crop production, with medium to large sized fields. A number of busy 'A' roads cross the vale, including the A4146 and A5. These have a strong visual and audible presence⁴⁹². The north of the village is located within the Toddington-Hockliffe Clay Hills. This LCT is defined by a series of connected hills and is dominated by arable crop production but interspersed with pockets of pasture (sheep and some cattle grazing). Within this LCT there is a strong landscape pattern of fields defined by hedgerows, punctuated by mature

⁴⁸⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Heath & Reach Ward Profile

⁴⁸⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁴⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁴⁹¹ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁴⁹² Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

trees and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels⁴⁹³.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Tilsworth is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

Historic Environment: Tilsworth has 3 *Listed Buildings*, and in the west of the settlement are Warren Knoll and Tilsworth manor, 2 *Scheduled Monuments*. The village is entirely located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is much of the land to the north, east and west of Tilsworth.

Biodiversity: Stanbridge and Blackgrove Woods County Wildlife Site is located to the south of the village and contains Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The village also contains a Traditional Orchard.

Flood Risk: A band of flood zone (2 & 3) is located just over half a mile to the south of the village, and is therefore unlikely to be constraining⁴⁹⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement is surrounded by and located within Green Belt land. The settlements also contain valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and two Scheduled Monuments. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools which have no room for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate significant new growth indicating a low to medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and Children's Play area present indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

⁴⁹³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

⁴⁹⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Leighton Buzzard around 5 miles away, however, the settlement is well-served by frequent bus services, indicating a medium capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is access to the strategic road network however this is congested in the east.

Environment

7. Development in the east of the settlement is constrained by designated heritage settings of Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings.
8. Development in the south is constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWS). Development could result in the loss of agricultural land; however, it is unknown at this stage whether this is higher grade best and most versatile land.

TILSWORTH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail / convenience facilities, as well as wastewater capacity.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Medium scale development would support improved service and facility provisions, and the environmental constraints could largely be avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the western half of the settlement, however this would require significant water investment. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

TINGRITH

Tingrith is a small village bordered by the M1 motorway on its eastern side, and washed over by Green Belt. The population of Tingrith is around 150 people in 80 dwellings⁴⁹⁵. The settlement is located north of Toddington and west of Westoning, and is grouped around a T junction where the cul-de-sac Church Street climbs north from High Street to the church. The Church of St Nicholas dates back to the 13th century and the village is surrounded by arable and pastoral farmland⁴⁹⁶.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴⁹⁷ and there is currently no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Tingrith. Tingrith is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation which the settlement is surrounded by and located within.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴⁹⁸ for Tingrith identifies that the Parish consists mostly of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁴⁹⁹ for Central Bedfordshire 0175 LLSOA (which Tingrith is located within) identifies the median age for the ward being 43, with a high proportion of the population being between the ages of 30-60. The ward also has more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

The settlement significantly lacks service and facility provisions, including schools, health facilities, banking facilities, recreational facilities, pubs and restaurants, supermarkets and convenience stores. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁰⁰ to the Tingrith area include Flitwick (approx. 4 miles), Ampthill (approx. 5 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 6 miles). There is a single Leisure Strategy site⁵⁰¹ within the settlement which is the cemetery for St Nicholas's Church, however information regarding the deficit/surplus of open spaces within Tingrith is not available. No active community groups in the settlement could be found through internet searching.

Education: Arnold Academy is close to capacity and the pupil forecast predicts an increase in numbers, however an expansion has been planned. Parkfields Middle School is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁵⁰² expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, which would allow for 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size⁵⁰³.

⁴⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁴⁹⁶ <http://www.tingrith.bedsparishes.gov.uk/>

⁴⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴⁹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁴⁹⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 0175 Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁰⁰ Google Maps (2016)

⁵⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁵⁰² Form of Entry

⁵⁰³ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Tingrith⁵⁰⁴. ONS data⁵⁰⁵ shows that for Central Bedfordshire 0175 LLSOA (which Tingrith is located within) 40% of residents are in full time employment, 15% are in part time employment and 14.5% are retired. The main industries of employment for residents of the ward are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. 25% of the ward residents commute outside of the ward but stay within Central Bedfordshire, and less than a fifth of the ward residents stay within the ward to work. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton⁵⁰⁶.

Transport and Movement: The closest train station is located outside of the settlement, with the nearest station being Flitwick, 4 miles to the north-east. The M1 motorway lies just east of the settlement and the main route through the village is the High Street. The level of stress on the M1 is high. Stress relates to the strategic capacity of the route in relation to the daily flow of vehicles, and does not take into account junction specific delays. The M1 in the vicinity of Tingrith operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand to travel along the corridor⁵⁰⁷. No further information could be found in the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Tingrith is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements located in this catchment area include Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Greenfield, Fliton, Wardhedges, Westoning, Eversholt, Ampthill and Steppingley. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings⁵⁰⁸.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement lies partially within the Toddington – Hockliffe Clay Hills LCT which is a medium scale landscape defined by a series of connected hills. The underlying geology is Gault Clay overlain with deposits of Boulder Clay. Within this LCT there is a strong landscape pattern of fields defined by hedgerows, punctuated by mature trees and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels. The settlement also lies partially within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, which is a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top. Within this area there is a dramatic northwest facing slope as well as far-reaching, clear views across the adjacent open landscapes. There is a strong underlying heathland character with fine examples of remnant

⁵⁰⁴ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁵⁰⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 0175 Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁰⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁵⁰⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

⁵⁰⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

heathland and neutral/acid grassland, and the area has a high ecological value⁵⁰⁹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The land surrounding Tingrith is Grade 3 agricultural land. It is however unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The central area of Tingrith contains a small collection of *Listed Buildings*. The central of the settlement is also a designated *Conservation Area*, which includes a church and Listed Buildings. The Conservation Area stretches along the High Street and north along Church Road, forming a T shape. There is a *Scheduled Monument* (a moated site) to the east of the settlement however this is beyond the M1 motorway. The majority of the settlement itself and areas to the east of the M1 motorway and south of Tingrith are designated *Archaeological Notification Areas*.

Biodiversity: There are no nationally or internationally designated biodiversity or nature conservation areas. A significant amount of the land north of the settlement is Wood Pasture and Parkland. There is a County Wildlife Site to the north of the settlement and another to the south-west. The Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks encompass the land to the north and west of Tingrith. The north of the settlement is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

Flood Risk: There is an area of flood risk (2 & 3) located north of Tingrith, adjacent to Hill's plantation⁵¹⁰.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement is in close proximity to the sensitive environmental receptors of locally designated biodiversity and an area of flood risk. The settlement is also a sensitive heritage setting with designated Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area contributing the overall character and identity of the area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential capacity expansion at schools outside of the settlement for example at Arnold Academy and Harlington Upper School to accommodate up to 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.

⁵⁰⁹ LUC (2015) Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

⁵¹⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Lack of facilities indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is located within and surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. A rail link is located around 4 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus connections. There is however, good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development that would extend the settlement to the north is constrained by flood risk and locally designated biodiversity. Development could however contribute towards the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.
8. Development within or immediately around the existing urban area is likely to affect the heritage setting of the small settlement.

TINGRITH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare, retail / convenience and leisure facilities.

Any development in Tingrith would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Development in the north may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity. Any development around the settlement edge would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this may affect environmental amenities, particular the heritage setting. Small scale development could deliver a range of housing for the local community, however, it would most likely increase reliance on the private vehicle.

TODDINGTON

The small town of Toddington, inset from the surrounding Green Belt, is situated 4 miles north-west of Luton, 2 miles from Harlington Railway Station and half a mile from the M1 motorway. It comprises dense network of residential cul-de-sacs connected to dense development along its main roads, namely High Street and Leighton Road. The Icknield Way passes through the village as well as other public footpaths. It stands on a hill at a point where five roads converge on the triangular shaped green known as the Square, with three of the roads going to major towns.

There is considerable ribbon and modern estate development along the roads, especially along the course of the High Street or Dunstable Road to the south. In the centre of town most of the buildings are grouped around the green, which is dominated by St George's Church on its north-eastern side. The ground slopes gently southwards from the church. To the east of the church is the large mound of the former motte-and-bailey castle known as Congar Hill⁵¹¹. Toddington currently has a resident population of around 4590 people in around 1970 dwellings⁵¹².

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Toddington has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary⁵¹³ however the Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed. Toddington is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation which surrounds the entire settlement⁵¹⁴.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵¹⁵ identifies that Toddington contains a mix of "established families in large detached homes", "thriving families with children and careers", "younger households in housing priced within their means", "elderly people reliant on support", "elderly people with assets", "single people privately renting", "families with limited resources" and "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data⁵¹⁶ shows that the median age for Toddington ward is 42, with a high number of people between the age of 30 and 60 residing in the area, as well as a relatively high percentage of the population being between 8-18 compared with the Central Bedfordshire average.

The settlement contains a good range of services and facilities including a preschool, a lower school, a middle school, a health centre, chemist, a dentist, 3 community centres, a convenience store, 2 newsagents, a post office, a petrol station, 4 restaurants/takeaways, 5 pubs (3 of which serve food), 2 children's play areas, outdoor recreational facilities and an entertainment venue. Notable towns with superstores close⁵¹⁷ to the Toddington area include Houghton Regis (approx.

⁵¹¹ http://www.touruk.co.uk/beds/bed_todd.htm

⁵¹² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

⁵¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁵¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Map supported by GIS Map Layers

⁵¹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

⁵¹⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Toddington Ward

⁵¹⁷ Google Maps (2016)

3 miles), Dunstable (approx. 5 miles) and Flitwick (approx. 5 miles). Toddington has its own theatre, owned and run by the charity group Tads Theatre⁵¹⁸, and a brass band⁵¹⁹ – the ‘Toddington Town Band’ or ‘TTB’ providing entertainment and cultural values for the settlement. There are a large number of active groups within Toddington, which includes baby and toddler groups, charity groups, child care groups, hobby groups (including dance, cross stitch, historical society and music society), keep fit groups and leisure groups, sports groups, youth groups, and religious groups⁵²⁰.

There are a number of leisure strategy sites⁵²¹ situated in the centre and to the south of the settlement. Toddington has a small surplus of formal large recreation areas and facilities for young people. However, the settlement has a small deficit of urban parks, informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, allotments and play areas for children⁵²².

Education: Toddington School is at capacity and the school cannot accommodate expansion. Parkfields Middle School is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁵²³ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwellings. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size⁵²⁴.

Employment: ONS data⁵²⁵ shows that 43% of residents aged between 16-74 are in full time employment, 14% work part time and 12% are self-employed. 14.5% of residents are retired, which is higher than the average for Central Bedfordshire. The main industries identified in the ward are manufacturing, construction, education and wholesale and retail trade. There are no significant employment areas within the settlement of Toddington⁵²⁶. A fifth of Toddington ward residents worked within the ward, however, the majority of residents commute outside of Central Bedfordshire for work, with Luton being the most common destination⁵²⁷.

Transport and Movement: The closest railway station is located around 2 miles to the north-east of the settlement in Harlington. The settlement has access to the primary road network, including easy road access to the M1 motorway located east of the settlement. The A5120 is the main route through the village connecting with Houghton Regis and Dunstable in the south, and Harlington, Westoning and Flitwick in the north. The settlement has a number of bus stops for residential use.

Bus: Toddington is located at the intersection between a number of local bus services, with all services commencing or terminating at The Green. An hourly bus service provides a link between the village and Harlington, Flitwick, Ampthill, and

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.tadstheatre.org/>

⁵¹⁹ <http://toddingtontownband.weebly.com/>

⁵²⁰ Toddington Parish Council

⁵²¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁵²² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁵²³ Form of Entry

⁵²⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁵²⁵ Ibid

⁵²⁶ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁵²⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Toddington Ward Profile

Bedford. An hourly bus also operates to the south towards Tebworth and Dunstable, and this service has been timed so as to provide an integrated bus service operating between Bedford and Dunstable. The integrated timings are supported by roadside facilities, with the bus stop on The Green being equipped with a Real Time Information screen. The other main bus service in Toddington provides a 2-hourly connection between the village, Chalton, Sundon, and northern Luton. Whilst there are a large number of different services, they are infrequent and do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods. The quality of the waiting facilities is generally poor across the area⁵²⁸.

Road: The A5120 links Toddington and Harlington with Junction 12 of the M1. The M1 in the vicinity of Toddington operates at between 110-130% of capacity. The Highways Agency further anticipate that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150%. The B579 provides access from Toddington, Chalton, and Sundon to Luton⁵²⁹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Toddington is located within the Chalton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Chalton and Fancott. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 5653 dwellings⁵³⁰.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement lies within the Toddington – Hockliffe Clay Hills LCT, which is a medium scale landscape defined by a series of connected hills with a distinct sense of elevation. There are wide ranging open views across adjoining landscape areas from / to settlement edge. The underlying geology is Gault Clay overlain with deposits of Boulder Clay. The area is dominated by arable crop production but interspersed with pockets of pasture (sheep and some cattle grazing). Glacial Gravels underlie the hill top village of Toddington⁵³¹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, at this stage the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is unknown⁵³².

Historic Environment: The settlement contains many *Listed Buildings*, the majority of which are located in the north of the settlement. Charlton Manor also contains designated Listed Buildings. The Fancott Arms Public House, Willow Farmhouse and the Barn at Stockwell Farm are also Listed Buildings located south east of the settlement yet in close proximity. Herne Poplar in the west and the Toddington Manor estate / parkland in the north-west also contain Listed Buildings. The settlement contains a *Scheduled Monument* (Conger Hill: a motte and bailey

⁵²⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Heath & Reach, Toddington and Barton-Le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁵³¹ LUC (2015) Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

⁵³² Central Bedfordshire Council GIS Map Layers

castle). Another Scheduled Monument lies south-east of the settlement (Fishponds south east of Chalgrove Manor). The *Conservation Area* is located in the north of the settlement and covers the Church Square area where the High Street, Park Road, Leighton Road and A5120 all intersect. The *Conservation Area*, along with further areas located east and west of the settlement, are also designated *Archaeological Notification Areas*⁵³³.

Biodiversity: Dropshort Marsh SSSI is located just south of the settlement, and Fancott Woods and Meadows SSSI is also in close proximity to the village, located in the south-east adjacent to the sewage works. There are areas of Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat in the north-west and north-east of the settlement, as well as new woodland planting located around 300-500m to the south of the settlement⁵³⁴. The Biodiversity Network wraps around Toddington largely surrounding it, excluding the land west of the settlement. The land north / north-east of the settlement is also identified as part of the Green Infrastructure Network.

Flood Risk: The settlement is not constrained by flood risk⁵³⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including agricultural land, designated biodiversity and land as part of the Biodiversity Network. The settlement is surrounded by designated Green Belt land and contains many valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential expansion capacity at Harlington Upper School to accommodate between 214 and 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Facilities are present in the settlement although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Range present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: A range present including an entertainment venue indicating a medium to high capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing

⁵³³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps supported by GIS Map Layers

⁵³⁴ DEFRA Magic Map Application [online]

⁵³⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

small deficits in the provision of urban parks, informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, allotments and play areas for children.

5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. A rail link is located in Harlington (in relatively close proximity), and the settlement is served by good quality hourly bus connections. There is good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development in the north, south and east of the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.
8. Development in the north and east may affect designated heritage settings.

TODDINGTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium (without Green Belt release: Low)

Any development in Toddington would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

The environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the west of the settlement. Development in the north, south and east may require biodiversity mitigation measures, but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between habitats and existing green spaces. Any development around the north-eastern settlement edge would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to encourage sustainable development that is well connected, could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, and there may be potential for environmental improvements.

TOTTERNHOE

Totternhoe is a village in the south of Central Bedfordshire with a population of 1,170 people and containing 560 dwellings⁵³⁶. The settlement is around 3 miles west of Dunstable and 5 miles south-east of Leighton Buzzard. The village dates back to around 1086 and at one point contained a Motte and Bailey Castle. Totternhoe Stone & Lime company owns the lime works next to the village, and have been in operation for over 150 years. The village is linear extending along Castle Hill Road/Church Road with traditional building materials comprising redbrown brick, timber frames, weatherboarding and slate and clay tiles⁵³⁷. The road runs along a south-facing slope which offers long-ranging views of the open countryside to the south. This feature maintains a strong sense of openness and a connection with the wider countryside along the full length of the road.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Totternhoe has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary⁵³⁸, however, The Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is located within and surrounded by designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵³⁹ identifies the area as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data⁵⁴⁰ for Totternhoe reveals the median age of residents to be 51, and that the area has over twice as many residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities present within Totternhoe include 3 community centres, a lower school (with a nursery), 2 food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and a children’s play area. The settlement also has butchers. The village does not have any secondary education facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, a supermarket, a convenience store, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁴¹ to the Totternhoe area include Dunstable (approx. 3 miles), Houghton Regis (approx. 5 miles) and Leighton Linlade (approx. 5 miles). Totternhoe has a variety of clubs and groups that includes a football club, a WI group, a gardener’s club, a cricket club and a Scout, Cub and Guide group.

Leisure Strategy sites⁵⁴² can be found across the settlement, with the largest site being Totternhoe Knolls in the north-west of the village. Totternhoe has a deficit of small amenity spaces, however there is a surplus of formal and formal large

⁵³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

⁵³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 9

⁵³⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁵³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

⁵⁴⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 032E- Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁵⁴¹ Google Maps (2016)

⁵⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

recreation areas, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments⁵⁴³.

Education: All Saints Academy Dunstable is close to capacity and has an increase in numbers predicted in the pupil forecast. The school site cannot accommodate expansion. Totternhoe Lower School has capacity and has an increase in numbers predicted in the pupil forecast. The school site cannot accommodate expansion⁵⁴⁴.

Employment: Totternhoe does not contain a significant employment area⁵⁴⁵. ONS data⁵⁴⁶ for Totternhoe shows that 12.5% of residents work part-time, 36% work full-time, 16% are self-employed and 20.2% are retired. Comparing the data for this area to Central Bedfordshire as a whole it is evident that the proportion of residents who are retired or self-employed in this area is higher than Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the proportion of residents who work full and part-time is lower. Within Totternhoe the main industries of employment are manufacturing, wholesale & retail and construction. 21% of ward residents work within the ward, 21% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire and outside of Central Bedfordshire Luton is the most commuted to location by ward residents⁵⁴⁷.

Transport and Movement: Totternhoe has access to the primary road network with access to the A505 to the north, which can get congested⁵⁴⁸. The settlement is connected to Eaton Bray to the south and to Dunstable to the east. The village does not have a railway station, and the nearest station is Leighton Buzzard, around 6 miles to north-west. There is access to the centre of the village centre via footpaths/cyclepaths, and there are bus stops present within the settlement.

Bus: The standard of bus stops and shelters varies from village to village (within the LATP area) with some stops in prestige condition, whilst other facilities are inadequate. The predominant problem is access to services in the evening and at weekends. Bus services need to be commercially viable and in rural areas, where there is a lower population, it is difficult to ensure good public transport is available. However, there is a need in terms of accessibility for many residents in the Chiltern Area to have public transport available, particularly those residents who are more likely to depend on public transport such as the elderly or young. It is therefore a problem that needs resolution⁵⁴⁹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Totternhoe is located in the Stanbridgeford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stanbridgeford, Eaton Bray, Lower End, Billington, Stanbridge, Tilsworth, Tobworth, Hockcliffe and Eggington. The Stanbridgeford WwTW is currently operating over capacity⁵⁵⁰.

⁵⁴³ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁵⁴⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁵⁴⁵ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁵⁴⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 032E- Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁵⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Eaton Bray Ward Profile

⁵⁴⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

⁵⁴⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

⁵⁵⁰ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: Half a mile to the east of the village is the Chilterns AONB and therefore development in and around Totternhoe has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape, and effects are likely to be most significant in areas in the east of the settlement

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Totternhoe is located within 3 separate LCTs. A small area of the village and most of the land to the north is located within the Totternhoe-Dunstable Downs Rolling Chalk Farmland, a gently rolling landscape forming the foothills of the escarpments of the Dunstable Downs⁵⁵¹. Most of the west of the village is located within the Totternhoe Chalk Escarpment LCT. This LCT is a prominent landform with a steep north-west facing slope that provides panoramic views across the surrounding areas⁵⁵². The east of Totternhoe is within the Eaton Bray Clay Vale LCT, a low lying, flat, open landscape with an exposed character. A number of busy 'A' roads cross the vale, including the A4146 and A5, which have a strong visual and audible presence⁵⁵³.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Totternhoe is mostly surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub grade (3a or 3b) is not known. There is an area of Grade 2 land to the south of the village, and the land to the north is designated as non-agricultural.

Historic Environment: *Listed Buildings* in Totternhoe are located throughout the settlement. Almost all the buildings are located along the main roads in the village, Castle Hill Road and Church Road. A *Conservation Area* exists in the Church End of the village (the east) however further details are not known. There are 2 *Scheduled Monuments* in the village, one is Totternhoe Castle remains in the north-west, and the other is the site of a Roman villa in the south-east. Maiden Bower Hillfort is another Scheduled Monument located just under a mile to the north of the village. Almost all the settlement and the surrounding land is designated as *Archaeological Notification Areas*.

Biodiversity: Totternhoe Stone Pit SSSI and County Wildlife Site (CWS), Totternhoe Knolls SSSI, Local Nature Reserve and CWS, Totternhoe Chalk Quarry SSSI and Totternhoe & Sewell Quarries CWS are all located in the north-west of the village. The Sewell Disused Railway CWS also borders the village to the north. Totternhoe has a large number of Traditional Orchards, and there is an area of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Lowland Calcareous Grassland in the north-west around Totternhoe Knolls. Land in the Green Infrastructure Network encompasses much of the town and the land to the east and north, forming part of GI corridor 9⁵⁵⁴. Biodiversity Network also surrounds the village, encompassing land where the SSSI and CWS are.

⁵⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 10

⁵⁵² Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 9

⁵⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

⁵⁵⁴ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

Flood Risk: There is an area of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) to the far north and north-west of Totternhoe⁵⁵⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites. The village is also located within Green Belt land. The settlement contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings, a Conservation Area and Scheduled Monuments. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools which have no space for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: No healthcare facilities present indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: No retail / convenience facilities present, indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and Children's Play area present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing a deficit in the provision of small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Leighton Buzzard, around 6 miles away. Bus services are available in the settlement however the frequency and quality is unknown at this stage. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is also access to the strategic road network though this is known to be congested in the north. Overall indication of a low capacity.

Environment

7. Development in the north east is constrained by designated heritage (Scheduled Monument) and nationally and locally designated biodiversity (SSSI, LNR and CWS).
8. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks largely surround the settlement.
9. Development in the far south of the settlement is constrained by designated heritage (Scheduled Monument, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings).

⁵⁵⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

TOTTERNHOE SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: Low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and leisure facilities, as well as wastewater infrastructure.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Development in the east could contribute to the coalescence of Totternhoe and Dunstable, however, it could also improve access to Dunstable and the services and facilities available there.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this scale may also affect environmental amenities and would require significant water investment. It would also likely have a detrimental impact on the character of the village, particularly the strong sense of openness and the connection with the wider countryside. There are opportunity areas for small scale sustainable development that could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, however small scale development may also increase reliance on the private vehicle.

WESTONING

Westoning is a vibrant village covering an area of 776 hectares with a population of around 2150 residents, and containing over 800 dwellings⁵⁵⁶. It is comprised of a dense network of residential streets and cul-de-sacs connected to dense ribbon development along Park Road/High Street, and consists of mostly modern dwellings, with some examples of half-timber and thatch. The settlement is bound to the east by the railway line and by the M1 motorway 2 miles to the west. The River Flit flows to the west of the settlement.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The settlement boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁵⁵⁷ and there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. Westoning is significantly constrained by the Green Belt designation which surrounds the entire settlement, and in the south of the settlement this contributes to preventing the coalescence of Westoning and Harlington.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic⁵⁵⁸ profile identifies Westoning contains a mix of "established families in large detached homes", "younger households in housing priced within their means" and "mature suburban owners in mid-range housing". ONS data⁵⁵⁹ identifies the median age for the Westoning, Flitton and Greenfield ward as being 43. Around 40% of the wards population are between the ages of 30 and 60, and there are more people under the age of 16 than over the age of 65. These statistics support the profiling of the area as predominantly comprising family households.

The village contains a number of services and facilities including a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 2 community centres, an ATM, a convenience store, a post office, 2 food serving pubs, a children's play area and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not contain any health facilities. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁶⁰ to the Westoning area include Flitwick (approx. 2 miles), Ampthill (approx. 3 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 6 miles). There are 6 recreational (Leisure Strategy) sites⁵⁶¹ located in the centre and the north of the settlement, including allotments and a cricket ground, however information regarding the deficit/surplus of open spaces within Westoning is not available. The village has a strong community spirit with two churches, a tennis club, an amateur dramatics society and a number of active religious and youth groups⁵⁶².

Education: Westoning Lower School has a net capacity of 135 students, with 120 registered in January 2016. The school cannot accommodate expansion. Arnold

⁵⁵⁶ Westoning Parish Council

⁵⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁵⁵⁸ Central Bedfordshire (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁵⁵⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward

⁵⁶⁰ Google Maps (2016)

⁵⁶¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁵⁶² Westoning Parish Council

Academy is close to capacity and pupil forecast predicts an increase in numbers, however an expansion is already planned. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁵⁶³ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, which would allow for 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size⁵⁶⁴.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Westoning, however the settlement is located around 1km south of Flitwick which contains 190 hectares of employment land, the majority of which is identified as in 'Good' or 'Very Good' condition⁵⁶⁵. ONS data⁵⁶⁶ identifies that within the ward around 40% of the residents are in full time employment, 14% are in part time employment and 16% are retired. The main industries of employment for the ward are wholesale and retail, education, construction and professional, scientific and technical. Less than a fifth of ward residents work within the ward, with just over 25% working elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire and the majority of people commuting outside of Central Bedfordshire⁵⁶⁷.

Transport and Movement: The railway line runs adjacent to the settlement in the east, however there is no railway station in Westoning. Residents can either travel north to Flitwick, around 1.5 miles away, or south to Harlington, around 2 miles, to access a train station. The A5120 provides access to the M1 motorway, and connects the settlement to Flitwick in the north, and Harlington and Toddington in the south. The level of stress on the M1 is high. Stress relates to the strategic capacity of the route in relation to the daily flow of vehicles, and does not take into account junction specific delays. The M1 in the vicinity of Ampthill and Flitwick operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for to travel along the corridor⁵⁶⁸.

There are a number of bus stops within the settlement, as well as access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths. Bus services in the area are infrequent, do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods, and are heavily reliant on being subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council. Many of the priorities for action in Westoning are associated with the A5120 which runs through the centre of the village. The route forms a key link to the M1 to the south and generates significant traffic flows through the village resulting in road safety concerns being a priority area to be addressed, in the vicinity of the school and the parade of shops in the village centre⁵⁶⁹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Westoning is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements

⁵⁶³ Form of Entry

⁵⁶⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁵⁶⁵ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁵⁶⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward

⁵⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁵⁶⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

located in this catchment area are Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Greenfield, Fliton, Wardhedges, Ampthill, Eversholt, Tingrith and Steppingley. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings⁵⁷⁰.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Westoning lies within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, which is a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top. Within this area there are clear views across the adjacent open landscapes. There is a strong underlying heathland character with fine examples of remnant heathland and neutral/acid grassland, and the area has a high ecological value. The land adjacent to the settlement edge in the south-east falls within the Harlington – Pulloxhill Clay Hills LCT, which is a narrow line of connected hills where deposits of Boulder Clay have capped the underlying Gault Clay geology⁵⁷¹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The land in the north of the settlement stretching up towards Flitwick is Grade 2 best and most versatile agricultural land⁵⁷².

Historic Environment: A small number of *Listed Buildings* are concentrated around Westoning Manor, with a few additional buildings on Park Road. The central area of the settlement extending west to include Westoning Manor and a moated site is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*⁵⁷³. The moated site (and fishponds south east of Westoning Manor) are also a designated *Scheduled Monument*.

Biodiversity: The settlement does not contain any internationally or nationally designated biodiversity sites. There are small areas of Traditional Orchards / Deciduous Woodland / Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitats in the west and east. The River Flit County Wildlife Site is located west of the settlement. The settlement is also in close proximity to the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area (NIA) in the north-west, and the Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Network connects the NIA to the west and south-western areas surrounding Westoning.

Flood Risk: The land to the west of the settlement is largely located within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3, as is some of the further land north and south of the settlement⁵⁷⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

⁵⁷⁰ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁵⁷¹ LUC (2015) Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

⁵⁷² Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps supported by GIS Map Layers

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including the landscape (particularly its ecological value), Priority Habitats and land as part of the Biodiversity Network, best and most versatile agricultural land, and areas of flood risk. The settlement is surrounded by designated Green Belt land and contains a sensitive heritage setting around Westoning Manor that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential expansion capacity at Arnold Academy and Harlington Upper School to accommodate up to 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Some facilities present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas present indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: The urban area is surrounded by designated Green Belt land indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Flitwick and Harlington however the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent and of varying quality. There is good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development to the north could result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
8. Development in the west would need to avoid areas of flood risk and be responsive to sensitive heritage settings, including the Scheduled Monument.
9. Development in the north and west may also require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.

WESTONING SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare facilities.

Development in Westoning would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Though the land to the east of the settlement is free from significant environmental constraints, the railway line creates a barrier to successful integration, and new development here is likely to require significant infrastructure provisions.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this may affect environmental amenities. There are opportunity areas for sustainable development that is well connected with the existing urban area and beyond via nearby rail connections, and could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, however small scale development is more likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

WHIPSNAD

Whipsnade is a small village located in the south of Central Bedfordshire which is washed over by the Green Belt and is entirely within the Chilterns AONB. It has a residential population of 420 people and containing 230 dwellings⁵⁷⁵. It has a distinctive pattern of settlement with village loosely arranged around the common.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁵⁷⁶ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Whipsnade is located within and surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵⁷⁷ identifies Whipsnade as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁵⁷⁸ for the LLSOA that Whipsnade is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 53, and that there are residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Whipsnade include a community centre and a food serving pub. The settlement does not have any educational facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office, any restaurant/takeaways or recreational facilities. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁷⁹ to the Whipsnade area include Dunstable (approx. 3 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 5 miles). Whipsnade is surrounded by several large Leisure Strategy sites⁵⁸⁰ including Whipsnade Heath and land that is part of the Dunstable Downs. The surplus/deficit of open spaces within Whipsnade has not been identified. Whipsnade has a golf club, however no other active clubs and groups could be found through internet searching.

Education: All Saints Academy Dunstable has a small amount of existing capacity, however an increase in student numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast. The school site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion⁵⁸¹.

Employment: Whipsnade Zoo is the only employment centre in the area. ONS data⁵⁸² for the LLSOA that Whipsnade is located within reveals that 12% of residents work part-time, 34.7% work full-time, 17.8% are self-employed and 22.2% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time are lower than those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentages of retired and self-employed residents are higher. The main industries of employment in the

⁵⁷⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁵⁷⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁵⁷⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁵⁷⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 032D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁷⁹ Google Maps (2016)

⁵⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁵⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁵⁸² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 032D Lower Layer Super Output Area

LLSOA are wholesale & retail, construction and professional, scientific & technical. Overall, 22% of ward residents work within Caddington ward and 11% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to destination by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton⁵⁸³.

Transport and Movement: Whipsnade does not have access to the primary road network but is connected to a number of nearby settlements such as Dunstable, Kensworth and Eaton Bray. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Cheddington (outside of Central Bedfordshire), 7.3 miles to the west.

Whipsnade is served from a very limited range of bus services, which are infrequent and do not operate on Sundays⁵⁸⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Whipsnade is located in the Studham Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, with Studham being the only other settlement in this catchment. Sewer capacity appears adequate in Whipsnade, however the capacity of the WwTW (equivalent to number of dwellings) is not known⁵⁸⁵.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality: Whipsnade is located within the Chilterns AONB and therefore development in and around Whipsnade has the potential to affect the setting of this designated landscape.

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Whipsnade is located within the Whipsnade Chalk Dipslope LCT. This is an elevated landscape containing two contrasting landforms: flat, plateau areas and wide dry combe valleys where the land dramatically sweeps away. The LCT is dominated by arable crop production. Some degree of enclosure is provided by the large mixed woodland blocks, including a number of ancient woods⁵⁸⁶.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Whipsnade is surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known. The land to the west of the settlement, around Whipsnade Zoo, is non-agricultural land.

Historic Environment: Whipsnade has a small number of *Listed Buildings* that are evenly spread out throughout the settlement, mostly along the B4540 which is the main road through the village. The village also has a *Conservation Area* which encompasses almost the entire settlement. Most of the settlement is also located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, apart from a few detached individual dwellings.

⁵⁸³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Caddington Ward Profile

⁵⁸⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Chiltern Area Local Area Transport Plan

⁵⁸⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁵⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 11

Biodiversity: Sallowspring Wood County Wildlife Site (CWS) is to the north of the village, Whipsnade Heath CWS is to the east, Whipsnade WAP Grasslands CWS is to the south-west, Whipsnade Wood CWS and Dunstable & Whipsnade Downs CWS and SSSI is to the west. There are areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the north, east and west of the settlement, and the Dunstable & Whipsnade Downs CWS and SSSI contains Lowland Calcareous Grassland. Both the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks surround and encompass the settlement.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk in or around the settlement⁵⁸⁷.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites, and a SSSI. Whipsnade is also located in the Chilterns AONB and is also located within Green Belt land. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: No local schools. There is limited capacity in existing schools in the catchment area, which have no room for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate significant new growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Lack of leisure facilities indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are quite far outside of the settlement, with the closest in Cheddington, around 7 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus services which are infrequent, indicating a low capacity. There is also no direct access to the primary road network.

⁵⁸⁷ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. The settlement is located within the AONB and development is likely to affect the designated landscape setting.
8. Development in the east and west of the settlement is constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWSs).
9. Any development around the settlement edge is also likely to affect the designated heritage setting of the Conservation Area and its associated Listed Buildings.
10. The settlement is constrained by the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks that surround it, containing Priority Habitats and supporting habitats for the SSSI located in the far west of the settlement.

WHIPSNADE SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare, retail / convenience, and leisure facilities. Development is further constrained by the abundance of local habitats and biodiversity that is likely to support the SSSI in the far west of the settlement. Any development is also likely to affect the nationally designated landscape setting.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this scale is highly likely to affect environmental amenities and the sensitive landscape setting as well as the character of the village. Small scale development could avoid these issues but would likely increase reliance on the private vehicle.

WOBURN

Woburn is a village in the west of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 930 people in around 510 dwellings⁵⁸⁸. The settlement is around 6.5 miles south-east of Milton Keynes and 6 miles north of Leighton Buzzard. It is a compact, historic settlement containing a long avenue of tall town houses in its historic core and pockets of more suburban detached, semi-detached and bungalow dwellings clustered around cul-de-sacs, including Drakeloe Close to the north, Timber Lane to the west and London End to the south.

It developed due to its location as a crossroads settlement. Three fires have destroyed large areas over the centuries, and so many of the buildings in Woburn today were constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries⁵⁸⁹. Woburn Park and Woburn Safari Park encompass the land to the east of the village. The main roads along which this historic village has developed are relatively wide, creating a strong sense of openness in contrast to the strong urbanising influences; however, the suburban cul-de-sacs are more enclosed and inward facing with limited views of the wider countryside.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁵⁹⁰ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Woburn. The settlement is surrounded by and located within designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵⁹¹ identifies Woburn as consisting of "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data⁵⁹² for the Woburn LLSOA reveals the median age of residents to be 50, and that the area has significantly more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Woburn include a community centre, a lower school, a newsagent, 2 post offices, 5+ restaurants/takeaways, 5 food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and an entertainment venue. The village does not have any secondary education facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or any convenience stores. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁹³ to Milton Keynes (approx. 6 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire), Flitwick (approx. 6 miles) and Leighton Linlade (approx. 6 miles). Woburn has a golf club; however, no other clubs and groups could be found through internet searching.

⁵⁸⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

⁵⁸⁹ Woburn Conservation Area (2008) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/woburn_tcm3-12978.pdf

⁵⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁵⁹¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

⁵⁹² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009E Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁹³ Google Maps (2016)

The settlement has 8 Leisure Strategy sites⁵⁹⁴ which are spread around the village, including 2 allotments and 2 recreation grounds. Woburn has a surplus of formal large recreation areas, allotments and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of play areas for children, small amenity spaces and informal large recreation areas⁵⁹⁵.

Education: Woburn Lower School is close to capacity and cannot accommodate additional expansion. Fulbrook Middle School is close to capacity and cannot accommodate additional expansion. Vandyke Upper School and Community College has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required⁵⁹⁶.

Employment: Woburn does not contain any significant employment areas⁵⁹⁷. ONS data⁵⁹⁸ for the Woburn LLSOA shows that 9.8% of residents work part-time, 36% work full-time, 16.6% are self-employed, and 21.8% are retired. Compared to Central Bedfordshire as a whole the proportion of residents who work full or part-time is lower, whilst the proportion of residents who are self-employed or retired is higher. Within the area the main industries of employment are wholesale & retail and professional, scientific and technical. Overall 27% of residents work within the ward, 12% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents⁵⁹⁹.

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A5 to the south and west, and the village also has access to the A5130 and the A4012. The A5 provides a direct strategic link to the nearby towns of Milton Keynes and Dunstable. In 2008, the Highways Agency estimated that the A5 in Hockliffe was operating at between 110% and 130% of capacity, leading to delays when entering Dunstable, and in Hockliffe at peak times. By 2026, it is estimated that the A5 will be operating in excess of 150% of capacity as a consequence of increasing travel demands. This performance includes the impacts of the A5 to M1 Link Road. The M1 is also readily accessible from the settlement, via Junction 13. The level of stress on the M1 is high. The M1 in the vicinity of Junction 13 operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for to travel along the corridor⁶⁰⁰.

The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being located in Woburn Sands, 3 miles to the north. The village does contain bus stops, and there is access to the town centre via public footpaths/cyclepaths.

Bus: The quality of the waiting facilities varies within each village (villages within the LTPA area). In some cases, bus shelters are provided complete with laybys, raised kerbs and bespoke timetable information, whilst in other cases only bus

⁵⁹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁵⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁵⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁵⁹⁷ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁵⁹⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 009E Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁵⁹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Aspley & Woburn Ward Profile

⁶⁰⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

stop flags are provided with timetable information stuck or tied to the pole. There is a wide variation in the frequency services with many of the villages and rural areas having weekly or even monthly services only⁶⁰¹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The sewerage and wastewater capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works that Woburn is within the catchment for is unknown. It is possible that the Wastewater Treatment Works is located within Milton Keynes.

The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Woburn is located within the Woburn Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale, rolling, elevated landscape. The area has large blocks of mixed woodland, SSSIs, active and restored mineral extraction works and the land is predominantly under arable cultivation⁶⁰².

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Woburn itself and most of the land to the north, east and south is Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub grade (3a or 3b) is not known at this time. There is also an area of Grade 2 land to the south of the village.

Historic Environment: Woburn has a large number of *Listed Buildings* which are almost all in the centre of the village around the crossroads, and continues north and south along the A4012. There are smaller clusters of Listed Buildings to the east and west of the village. The *Conservation Area* encompasses most of the settlement, with the central point being the crossroads. The Conservation Area is characterised by the vibrant village core, the enclosed character of the area and the quiet, semi-rural atmosphere. Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are 18th and 19th century, with red brick being the prevalent building material⁶⁰³. The centre of the settlement is an *Archaeological Notification Area* and all the land to the east of the village is registered *Historic Park and Gardens*.

Biodiversity: Woburn park County Wildlife Site (CWS) and Woburn Park Grassland CWS are to the east of the village, Utcoate Grange Meadows CWS is to the south, Apesfield Spring CWS and Lowe's Wood CWS are to the south-west and Charle Wood CWS is to the west. Caswell Lane Field CWS is in the west of the village. There are areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland in the land around the village, and to the east there are areas of Lowland Dry Acid Grassland. The eastern area is all Wood Pasture and Parkland. All the village and surrounding area is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. Almost all the land around the settlement is in the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Network, apart from an area to the south. The Green Infrastructure land forms part of GI corridor 6⁶⁰⁴.

⁶⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Marston Vale Local Area Transport Plan

⁶⁰² Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

⁶⁰³ Woburn Conservation Area (2008) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/woburn_tcm3-12978.pdf

⁶⁰⁴ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

Flood Risk: A band of Flood Zone (2 & 3) goes from the north-west of the village, along its northern and western borders, to the south of the village. There is also a flood zone area around Lower Drakeloe Pond in the east of the village⁶⁰⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, land in the Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Network and County Wildlife Sites. The village is located within Green Belt land, and contains some areas of flood risk. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools. Further expansion land or new school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low to medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Some facilities present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and entertainment venue present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of play areas for children, small amenity spaces and informal large recreation areas.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Woburn Sands around 3 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus services which are of varying frequency and quality indicating a low capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is access to the strategic road network, however the M1 and A5 are constrained by traffic.

Environment

7. The east of the settlement is significantly constrained by the large Registered Historic Park and Garden and locally designated biodiversity. Development could however contribute towards the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

⁶⁰⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

8. There are areas of high flood risk, however, apart from in the north-east, these are largely removed from the settlement edge.
9. Development in the west is constrained by locally designated biodiversity and the Green Infrastructure Network. Development in the south could result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
10. Development around the settlement edge may affect the heritage setting of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

WOBURN SUMMARY

Capacity: Low (without Green Belt release: low)

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and leisure facilities.

Any development in the settlement would be subject to the lifting of Green Belt restrictions.

Development is significantly constrained by heritage settings, particularly in the east.

Medium to large scale development would need to be provided in order to support improved service and facility provisions, however this would be likely to significantly affect the heritage settings of the settlement and may require further mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.