



Appendix B: Area B Assessments



CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN: INITIAL SETTLEMENTS CAPACITY STUDY

Appendix IIB: Area B Initial Settlement Capacity Assessment

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ARLESEY

Arlesey is a small town in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 5580 people in around 2470 dwellings¹. The settlement is bordered to the west by the East Coast Main Line, and is located around 6 miles south of Biggleswade. The settlement extends around 3 miles north to south along the River Hiz valley and is characterised by early linear development and mid-twentieth century estates, with dwellings and residential estates east and west of Hitchin Road, the High Street, House Lane and Church Lane. There are attractive areas of Victorian housing to the southern end of Arlesey and a small historic enclave around St Peter's Church. The local church, St Peters, is in the north of the settlement around Church End and is over 900 years old.

There were 6 operational brick works within the settlement but these are all now closed². Over many years Arlesey has experienced small-scale piecemeal redevelopment within its built-up area. Such developments have not brought about additions or improvements to facilities and services in the town. For this reason, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) opted to include provision for large-scale mixed used development (Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy), to bring about improvements in service provision and local traffic conditions. The Arlesey Cross Masterplan was adopted as technical guidance by the Council in March 2014 to assist in delivering this vision.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Arlesey has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary³ however the Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed. Arlesey is not constrained by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴ for Arlesey Ward identifies the area as consisting of "urban renters of social housing", "mature suburban owners in mid-range housing", "householders in inexpensive village homes", "younger households in housing priced within their means", "elderly people reliant on support" and "thriving families with children and careers". ONS data⁵ for the Arlesey ward area shows the median age of residents to be 40 years old. The ONS data also reveals that the ward area has a higher number of residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Arlesey has a collection of services and facilities including 2 community centres, 3 pre-schools/nurseries, a lower school, a middle school, a college/academy, an ATM, a convenience store, 2 newsagents, a post office, a chemist, a GP surgery/health centre, 5 restaurants/takeaways, 2 food serving pubs, 2 non-food serving pubs, a non-food serving pub, a children's play area, outdoor recreational facilities and a leisure centre. The settlement also has a public library, and other retail shops. Most of the key facilities in Arlesey are at, or close to, the

¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

² Arlesey Parish Council (2016) [Online] <http://www.arleseyc.co.uk/about.html>

³ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Arlesey Ward Profile

Arlesey Resource Centre and the Gothic Mede Lower School. Shops and pubs are dispersed along the principal route through the settlement. Notable towns with superstores close⁶ to the Arlesey area include Shefford (approx. 5 miles), Biggleswade (approx. 10 miles) and Letchworth Garden City (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). The settlement has an active community, with several clubs operating in the area.

The settlement has several Leisure Strategy sites⁷ throughout the town, including allotments and recreation grounds. Arlesey has a small surplus of facilities for young people, but a deficit of countryside recreation sites, urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments⁸.

Education: Gothic Mede Academy is at capacity and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Etonbury Academy has existing capacity, although an increase in pupil numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast. An expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion⁹.

Employment: Arlesey does contain a significant employment centre¹⁰. Shefford, Stofold and Arlesey have a combined employment land area of 74 hectares, with most of the employment land being identified as Very Good and Good. ONS data¹¹ for the Arlesey ward area¹² shows that 47% of residents are in full time employment, 14% work part time and 11.5% are retired. This area has a higher proportion of residents in full time employment than the average for Central Bedfordshire, and the proportion of residents who are retired is lower. The main industries of employment for residents of Arlesey ward are wholesale & retail, public administration and defence, and health & social work. 23% of ward residents work within the ward and 14% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is North Hertfordshire¹³.

Transport and Movement: Arlesey has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A507 to the east and north. The settlement also contains a railway station and bus stops for residential use. There is access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths.

Rail: Rail services operate to London Kings Cross in the south, and Peterborough in the north. The service between Arlesey and London is a limited-stop service which makes it particularly attractive to commuters and operates frequently throughout the day (a service every 25-35 minutes). Information on rail services is available at the station and this highlights the services operating from the station and the ability to interchange with routes further afield¹⁴.

⁶ Google Maps (2016)

⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

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

¹¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Arlesey Ward Profile

¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stofold Local Area Transport Plan

Bus: Very few bus services operate through Arlesey, with only three bus services operating once every two hours or more frequently. Most buses in Arlesey are interurban services, either passing through or running from the area into major urban areas, notably Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin, Bedford, and Biggleswade. There is a lack of bus services which directly serve the train station and this undermines the attraction of public transport based trips as opposed to the car for journeys further afield. Owing to the rural nature of the area, there is no central bus terminus and most stops are kerbside bus stops. The overall quality of the waiting facilities in the area is quite poor¹⁵.

Road: Arlesey has access to the A1 (M) via Junction 10 to the east of the settlement. The level of stress on the A1 / A1 (M) in the Arlesey and Stotfold area is relatively low. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor. The A1 / A1 (M) provides good north-south links from Arlesey and Stotfold to the rest of the region and further afield. Hitchin Road links Arlesey to Hitchin to the south, and the A507 to the north¹⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Arlesey is located in the Poppy Hill Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Langford and Stotfold. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1375 dwellings¹⁷.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Arlesey is located within the Upper Ivel Clay Valley LCT. The LCT is a level lowland with the River Ivel flowing from south to north and the River Hiz from east to west to join at Henlow. The land use is predominantly arable farmland with some pastoral land along the river courses. The LCT has open views across the arable farmland, but due to scattered woodland blocks views are restricted along the enclosed river corridors¹⁸.

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

Historic Environment: The settlement does contain a small collection of *Listed Buildings*, with almost all the buildings situated along the High Street in the southern half of the settlement apart from two buildings that are in the north, including the church. Most of the south of the settlement is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, with another area situated in the north around the church.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ I Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan.

¹⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Area (2015) Type 4

Biodiversity: There are four County Wildlife Sites to the west of the settlement, including Arlesey Meadows, Cityfield Farm Pits, and Arlesey Road Pits. There is another County Wildlife Site to the north-west, and one site to the south. There are a number of priority habitats to the west of the settlement, including Lowland Meadows, Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Wet Woodland and Wood Pasture and Parkland. The Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Network border the settlement to the west, with the Green Infrastructure Network extending to the north and south as well, forming part of GI corridor 4¹⁹.

Flood Risk: The settlement does not contain any areas of flood risk²⁰.

SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Arlesey contains key environmental receptors that are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, priority habitats and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement contains some valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement including listed buildings. Therefore, the sensitivity of the settlement community and environment to potential development growth is considered to be LOW.

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity at the existing schools, and most do not have space for expansion indicating a low capacity. New land and / or new school sites may be required to accommodate significant growth.
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: Some facilities present indicating a medium 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 countryside recreation sites, urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Well-served by a strategic rail link indicating good accessibility and connectivity and therefore high capacity. Less well-served by bus services which are infrequent and of varying quality. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre and linking to the railway station. Good access to the strategic road network A1 (M) and potential for new development to contribute measures to improve local congestion.

¹⁹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. Development to the north is constrained by flood risk, high quality agricultural land and designated biodiversity.
8. Development to the south and west is also constrained by designated biodiversity.
9. Development to the east is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

ARLESEY SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - High

Development is significantly constrained to the west of the settlement by flood risk and designated biodiversity. The railway line also creates a barrier to successful integration of growth in the west, and subsequently new development here would be likely to require significant infrastructure development.

Any development around the eastern settlement edge would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the heritage settings of Listed Buildings. Development could also contribute towards coalescence with Stotfold in the east, Henlow in the north-west, and Fairfield in the south-east.

Overall, the environmental constraints could be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the east of the settlement. Any development here is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Coordinated medium-high level development could contribute to the enhancement and provision of services and facilities in the town.

BIGGLESWADE

Biggleswade is a town and civil parish with a population of 17,600 residents in 8530 dwellings²¹. The East Coast Main Rail Line runs north to south through the centre of the settlement. The River Ivel borders the settlement to the west, and the A1 borders the town to the south and west. The settlement has a diverse range of buildings of all ages, with the Market Square being the commercial centre of the town. There have been several campaigns of rebuilding due to fires in the 18th, 19th and 20th century²².

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²³ and at this time there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Biggleswade. Biggleswade is not constrained by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁴ identifies the area as consisting of “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “families with limited resources”, “educated young people privately renting”, “single people privately renting”, “elderly people reliant on support”, “elderly people with assets”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles”, “thriving families with children and careers” and “established families in large detached homes”. ONS data²⁵ for Biggleswade shows that the median age of residents is 39, and that the area has more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Biggleswade has a wide range of services and facilities which include a community centre, pre-schools/nurseries, lower schools, 2 middle schools, an upper school with sixth form college, 5+ ATMs, 5+ banks, supermarkets, 5+ convenience stores, 5+ newsagents, a post office, chemists, dentists, 2 GP surgeries, 5+ restaurants/takeaways, 5+ pubs, outdoor recreational facilities, a leisure centre including an indoor pool. A number of clubs and groups operate within Biggleswade.

The settlement has a large number of leisure strategy sites²⁶ spread around the town, including Biggleswade Common and a skate park. The Parish however, has been identified in the Leisure Strategy²⁷, as having a small deficit of urban parks, formal large recreation areas and allotments. It also has a large surplus of informal large recreation areas, and a small surplus of facilities for young people, play areas for children and small amenity spaces.

²¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Biggleswade Town Profile

²² Biggleswade Conservation Area (2005) [Online]
http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/biggleswade_tcm3-12948.pdf

²³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Biggleswade Town Profile

²⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Biggleswade Ward Profile

²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Most of lower schools in the Biggleswade area do not have expansion capacity. Pupil forecasts are showing an increase in lower school pupils which is driven by planned housing development. St Andrew's CofE VC Lower School – East has an unknown capacity; however, an expansion is already planned - more land or a new lower school site would be required. St Andrew's CofE VC Lower School – West has existing capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted in the student forecast and the school site cannot accommodate expansion.

Biggleswade Academy Lower is at capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required. Lawnside Lower School is close to capacity and the school cannot accommodate expansion. Biggleswade Academy-Middle has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned to accommodate existing housing growth - more land or a new school site would be required. Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned to accommodate existing housing growth - more land or a new school site would be required.

Stratton Upper School has capacity and an expansion is already planned to accommodate existing housing growth - more land or a new school site would be required. Langford Village Academy has capacity but an increase in student numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is also at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Sandy Upper School has capacity but cannot accommodate site expansion²⁸.

Employment: Biggleswade does contain a significant employment area²⁹. The Biggleswade/Sandy area has 168 hectares of existing allocated employment land, with a large amount of the land being classified as 'Good' or 'Very Good' however some of the land is classified as being in 'Poor' condition. ONS data³⁰ from Biggleswade shows that 15% of residents work part time, 45% work full time and 12% are retired. The main industries of employment within the ward are wholesale & retail, manufacturing and construction. 30% of ward residents work within the ward, 15% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and the most commuted to destination outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is North Hertfordshire³¹.

Transport and Movement: The settlement does have access to the primary road network, being connected to the A1 to the south and west. The settlement also contains a railway station, situated in the middle of the town. There is access to the town centre via footpaths and cycle paths, and there are bus stops situated throughout the town.

Rail: Heavy rail services operate between Biggleswade and London to the south and Sandy and Peterborough in the north as part of the Capital Connect franchise. The services between Biggleswade and Sandy and London includes fast, limited stop services, which makes them particularly attractive to commuters

²⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Biggleswade Ward Profile

³¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Biggleswade Town Profile

and operates frequently (twice an hour) throughout the day. Information on rail services is available at Biggleswade station and this highlights the services operating from the station and the ability to interchange with routes further afield. Access to each platform at Biggleswade is via a set of staircases. There is no lift access to the platforms and this causes difficulties for those with limited mobility and parents with pushchairs³².

Bus: The terminus for buses in Biggleswade is located within the heart of the town on the edge of the Market Place. This provides a very convenient pick up and drop off point for passengers wishing to access the facilities within the town centre. It is also only around a 5-minute walk to the train station to the south. Whilst the terminus is centrally located, the waiting facilities and information available to passengers is of poor quality. The information on services operating from the bus station is very poor with a limited number of timetables which are hard to follow. There is a lack of real time, or any other form of electronic information detailing potential delays to service provision. In the residential areas of the town the waiting facilities are of poor quality³³.

Road: Biggleswade is well served by the strategic road network with two junctions providing direct access onto the A1 to the north west and south of Biggleswade. The A1 provides good north-south links from the towns to the rest of the region and further afield and the level of stress on the A1 in the LAMP area is relatively low. The B1040 (comprising The Baulk and Potton Road) links Biggleswade to Potton. The eastern relief road has a junction on Potton Road to the north of the town. The B658 (known as Langford Road) links Biggleswade with Shefford to the south west, passing under the A1. It provides a link to the A507, the main east/west route across Central Bedfordshire. Just to the north of the Plan area is the key A1/A421 interchange, known as The Black Cat Roundabout. This crossroads of strategic north/south and east/west routes has suffered from significant delays and congestions for a number of years, impacting upon the movements of residents within the Plan area³⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Biggleswade is located in the Biggleswade Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements located in this catchment area include Upper Caldecote, Ickwell Green, Northhill and Thorncote Green. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 3272 dwellings³⁵. National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Biggleswade town is an urban area surrounded by the Lower Ivel Clay Valley LCT. This LCT is a level, open river valley which the River Ivel runs through from north to south. The area has a number of open water bodies which were once quarries and are now commonly used for fishing. Farmland is typically largescale arable land to the south and east of Biggleswade,

³² Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Biggleswade & Sandy Local Area Transport Plan

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

with active mineral workings to the west. The area is fragmented by the presence of the A1 and large settlements³⁶.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Biggleswade is bordered to the east by Grade 2 agricultural land, and partially to the south and west by Grade 1 agricultural land. Interspersed between Grade 1 & 2 are areas of Grade 3, however at this stage the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is unknown.

Historic Environment: Most of Biggleswade's *listed buildings* are clustered in the west of the settlement, around the High Street, Market Square and the Parish Church. The settlement's *Conservation Area* is also centred around this area and is characterised by the Market Square with the oldest buildings in the settlement. Former industrial buildings such as Biggleswade Mill also contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. There are 2 scheduled monuments within the settlement, Stratton Park moated enclosure is to the south-east of the town, and Biggleswade Castle earthworks is to the east. The Market Square area and much of the land surrounding the settlement is a designated *archaeological notification area*.

Biodiversity: Biggleswade Common to the north of the town is a large County Wildlife Site containing Floodplain Grazing Marsh. Stratton Park Balancing Pond is another County Wildlife Site to the south-east, Biggleswade Allotments Meadows is another site to the east, and the River Ivel & Hiz site borders the settlement to the west. The Biodiversity Network borders the settlement to the north, east and west, and the Green Infrastructure Network surrounds the settlement on all 4 sides, and is part of GI corridor 4³⁷.

Flood Risk: The settlement is bordered to the west by a large area of flood risk (2 & 3) which follows the river course. Another area of flood risk is located slightly north of the town, and this area continues south along the eastern border of the settlement³⁸.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including high quality agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites, areas of flood risk and land as part of the Biodiversity Network. The settlement 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.

³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 4

³⁷ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Most of schools within Biggleswade would not be able to accommodate continued growth indicating a low capacity. New development in Biggleswade would require additional land for new expansions to existing schools, or alternatively 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: Full range present including supermarkets indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Full range present including a leisure centre indicating a high capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal large recreation areas and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Well-served by a strategic rail link indicating good accessibility and connectivity and therefore high capacity. Well established bus connections indicating high capacity, however bus infrastructure generally poor quality and requires updating. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre and linking to the railway station. Good access to the strategic road network, however development may increase congestion on the major road network.

Environment

7. Growth in the west of the settlement is severely limited by flood risk, as well as Grade 1 best and most versatile agricultural land, the biodiversity and green infrastructure networks, and a strong heritage setting.
8. Growth in the east of the settlement is also limited by flood risk, as well as Grade 2 best and most versatile agricultural land, designated biodiversity sites, identified leisure sites, the green infrastructure network and areas within the biodiversity network. There are however small opportunity areas which are free from the majority of these constraints, for example, land just south of the hospital (although this would still be subject to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land).
9. The north and south of the settlement both contain a mix of Grade 1 and Grade 2 best and most versatile agricultural land. Development in the south is more likely to result in the loss of the higher Grade 1 land than development in the north which is predominantly Grade 2. Development in the north would also encroach upon the large County Wildlife Site and flood risk area further north.

BIGGLESWADE SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - High

Any development that expands the urban area of Biggleswade is likely to result in the loss of high quality best and most versatile agricultural land. The remaining environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting and integration of development in either the north or south of the settlement, as well as smaller opportunity areas in the east. Development in the north is constrained by Biggleswade Comment meaning the scope for development limited to north.

Development in the west may require biodiversity mitigation measures, but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between habitats and existing green spaces.

Development in the settlement however would require significant educational infrastructure provisions/contributions to accommodate an increase in the population.

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to encourage sustainable development, including opportunities for expansion and enhancement to existing industrial/employment areas and brownfield regeneration, which is well connected, could deliver development gains with a range of housing for the local community, and there may be potential for environmental improvements. Growth however would need to be carefully planned and balanced to ensure the appropriate infrastructure provisions can be delivered.

DUNTON

Dunton is a village in the east of Central Bedfordshire with a population³⁹ of 700 residents in around 320 dwellings⁴⁰. The settlement is around 3 miles to the east of Biggleswade. The church is located within the centre of the village.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴¹ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Dunton. Dunton is not surrounded by or located within designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴² identifies that Dunton is comprised of "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data⁴³ for the LLSOA shows that the median age for the area is 46, and that the area has more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Dunton include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have secondary education facilities, banking facilities, health facilities, supermarkets, convenience stores, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close⁴⁴ to the Dunton area include Biggleswade (approx. 3 miles) and Sandy (approx. 8 miles).

The village has 7 Leisure Strategy sites⁴⁵, with the largest being Dunton Playing Field. Dunton has a deficit of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and allotments. However, there is a small surplus of formal large recreation areas⁴⁶.

Education: Dunton CofE VC Lower School is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School is also close to capacity; however, an expansion is already planned to manage existing housing growth - more land or a new school site would be required. Stratton Upper School is also close to capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new lower school site would be required⁴⁷.

³⁹ Combined with Edworth

⁴⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁴¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁴³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003A Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁴ Google Maps (2016)

⁴⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: Dunton does not contain a significant employment area⁴⁸. ONS data⁴⁹ for the LLSOA reveals that 13.8% of residents work part time, 41.7% work full time and 14.8% are retired. Compared to Central Bedfordshire data as a whole there are fewer people employed and more people who are retired in this area. Manufacturing, construction, and wholesale & retail are the major employment sectors within the area. Bedford is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire⁵⁰.

Transport and Movement: The settlement is connected to Biggleswade via Biggleswade Road to the east, but does not have access to the primary road network. However, the A1 can be accessed to the south-west of the village. The A1 provides good north-south links from the towns to the rest of the region and further afield.

The village does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Biggleswade, 3 miles to the east. The village does contain bus stops, and has access to the village centre via footpaths/cycle paths.

Public transport provision and information of the limited services in place is in need of improvement. Dunton along with Eyeworth is situated on a busy route between the south of Biggleswade and Cambridge. As such it is subject to relatively high flows of through traffic. The 30mph speed limit through the village seeks to reduce the danger to pedestrians which this traffic presents⁵¹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Dunton is the only settlement located within the Dunton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, and the WwTW capacity gives Dunton an additional capacity of 160 dwellings⁵².

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Dunton is located within the Dunton Clay Vale LCT. This LCT is an undulating vale with an elevated ridge. There are some expansive views across the vale but generally enclosed due to the undulating landform. Land use is predominantly used for intensive arable cropping, with limited woodland cover⁵³.

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

⁴⁸ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁴⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003A Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Potton Local Area Transport Plan

⁵² JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

Historic Environment: Dunton has a single *Listed Building* which is the local church. Newton Bury Moated Site is to the north-west of the village, and is a designated *Scheduled Monument*. Most of the settlement is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, apart from a small area in the north of the village.

Biodiversity: There are no international, national or local sites around the village, and no Priority Habitats have been identified.

Flood Risk: To the east of the village is an area of land classified as Flood Zone 2 & 3⁵⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains best and most versatile agricultural land, a Listed Building and is close to a Scheduled Monument. There is a flood zone (2 & 3) to the east of the village. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity and expansions are already planned at local schools to accommodate existing housing growth. 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: Lack of retail and convenience 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 deficits in the provision of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Biggleswade around 3 miles away, and the settlement is less well-served by bus services which are of poor quality indicating a low capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is no direct access to the strategic road network, and the settlement suffers from through traffic.

⁵⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. There are limited environmental constraints in Dunton, however the settlement is surrounded by best and most versatile agricultural land. There is an area of flood risk to the east of the settlement, however, this is quite far removed from the settlement edge. The appropriate siting of development could avoid negative effects on designated heritage settings within and in close proximity to the settlement.

DUNTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare and retail / convenience facilities. Small-scale development is unlikely to bring about additions or improvements to facilities and services in the settlement. Small scale development would also be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle. Whilst large/medium scale development here could bring about improvements in service provision, this is likely to be at the expense of the character and identity of the settlement. Development may negatively affect a rural landscape and will also result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

EDWORTH

Edworth is a very small village in the east of Central Bedfordshire.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁵⁵ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. The settlement is not located within or surrounded by Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵⁶ identifies Edworth as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁵⁷ for the LLSOA Edworth is located within identifies that the median age of residents is 46, and that the area has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

There are no services and facilities in the settlement, only a church. Notable towns with superstores close⁵⁸ to the Edworth area include Biggleswade (approx. 4 miles), Shefford (approx. 8 miles) and Letchworth Garden City (approx. 8 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). Edworth has one Leisure Strategy site⁵⁹, which is the church cemetery. However, the surplus/deficit of open spaces within Edworth is not known.

Education: Stratton Upper School has some existing capacity but an increase in pupil numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast. An expansion is already planned - more land or new lower school site would be required⁶⁰.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Edworth⁶¹. ONS data⁶² for the LLSOA Edworth is located within reveals that 13.8% of residents work part-time, 41.7% work full-time, 15.5% are self-employed and 14.8% are retired. The main industries of employment for residents of the ward area are construction, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail. Overall 23% of residents work within the ward and 19% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford⁶³.

Transport and Movement: Edworth has access to the A1 to the west of the village. The Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 90-100% of capacity on the northbound section

⁵⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁵⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003A Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁸ Google Maps (2016)

⁵⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁶¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁶² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003A Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

south of Biggleswade as a consequence of increase in demand to travel along the corridor⁶⁴.

Edworth does not contain a railway station, with the closest station being in Biggleswade, 4 miles to the north. Edworth is serviced by bus services however no further details could be found in the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The sewerage and wastewater capacity of Edworth is not known.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Edworth is located within the Dunton Clay Vale LCT. This area is an undulating vale with an elevated ridge with some expansive views but more enclosed areas due to the undulating landform. The area is essentially an open arable landscape with limited woodland cover and tributary streams and drainage channels run through the landscape⁶⁵.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Edworth itself and the land to the east and south is grade 3 agricultural land (sub-grade 3a or 3b unknown). The land to the north and west of the settlement is grade 2 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: Edworth has 5 *Listed Buildings* which are mainly situated around the church in the south of the settlement. The entire settlement is also located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: Dunton Green Lane County Wildlife Site is a narrow lane just to the north of the settlement and there is a small block of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the south of the village.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood zone around the village⁶⁶.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land. The settlement contains some 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.

⁶⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Potton Local Area Transport Plan

⁶⁵ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

⁶⁶ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There are no schools within the settlement and limited capacity in the catchment. 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: No facilities present indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Biggleswade, around 4 miles away. Bus services are available in the settlement however, the frequency and quality of the services are unknown at this stage. There is access to the strategic road network. Overall indication of a low capacity.

Environment

7. Development around the settlement may affect the designated heritage settings of the Listed Buildings.
8. Development in the west may affect Priority Habitats.

EDWORTH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Whilst the biodiversity and heritage constraints in Edworth can be avoided through the appropriate siting of development, development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities. Small-scale development is unlikely to bring about additions or improvements to facilities and services in the settlement and would also be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle. Whilst large/medium scale development here could bring about improvements in service provision, this is likely to be at the expense of the character and identity of the settlement.

There is also potential for negative effects on the rural landscape and the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

FAIRFIELD

Fairfield is a village in the east of Central Bedfordshire with a population of 2,680 people in around 1,140 dwellings⁶⁷. The village is built on the grounds of the old three counties psychiatric and Fairfield hospitals which closed in 1999, and so the village was constructed in the early 2000's. The hospital is now apartments⁶⁸. The settlement itself is located approximately one mile south of Stotfold and one mile north of Letchworth Garden City.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Fairfield has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area which follows the parish boundary, however, the Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed⁶⁹. There is Green belt land to the south-west of the village, however this land is not located in Central Bedfordshire.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁷⁰ identifies Fairfield as consisting of “thriving families with children and careers”, “younger households in housing priced within their means” and “educated young people privately renting”. ONS data⁷¹ for the LLSOA shows that the median age of residents is 35, and that the area has significantly more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities present within Fairfield include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, an ATM, a convenience store, a restaurant/takeaway, outdoor recreational facilities and children's play areas. The settlement does not have secondary education facilities, healthcare facilities, a supermarket, a post office or any entertainment venues. Notable settlements with superstores close⁷² to the Fairfield area include Letchworth Garden City (approx. 3 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire), Hitchin (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire) and Shefford (approx. 6 miles).

There are a number of Leisure Strategy sites⁷³ within Fairfield including a community orchard. The settlement has a small deficit of formal and informal large recreation areas, allotments and facilities for young people. However, there is a surplus of play areas for children and small amenity spaces⁷⁴.

Education: Fairfield Park Lower School has some existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required⁷⁵.

⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

⁶⁸ <http://www.fairfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/story-of-fairfield/>

⁶⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁷⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

⁷¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 014F Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁷² Google Maps (2016)

⁷³ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁷⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁷⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: Fairfield does not contain a major employment centre⁷⁶. ONS data⁷⁷ for the LLSOA shows that 11.3% of residents work part time, 54% work full time and 8.1% are retired. Compared to the employment data for Central Bedfordshire as a whole the proportion of residents who work full time is significantly higher, whereas the proportion of resident who are retired is lower. This fits with the geo-demographic profile of the area as a younger population with careers. Wholesale & retail, construction and professional scientific and technical are the main industries for the area. Only 18% of residents work within the ward, 13% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire is the most commuted to location outside of the county by ward residents⁷⁸.

Transport and Movement: The settlement is connected to the A507 to the north which provides access to the A1 to the east. The level of stress on the A1 / A1 (M) in this area is relatively low. Junction 10 of the A1 (M) is a 'grade-separated' junction where the link is accessed via a roundabout and slip road. There is anecdotal evidence that this junction can be subject to delays in peak periods. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor⁷⁹.

The village does not have a railway station, with the nearest station being in Arlesey, around 3 miles to the north-west. No further details could be found using Local Area Transport Plans.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works whose catchment Fairfield 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): Fairfield is located within the Fairfield Rolling Chalk Farmland LCT. This is a gently rolling landform, medium to large scale with arable crop production and large open water bodies left over from quarrying operations. Areas of lavender add seasonal colour and texture⁸⁰.

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

Historic Environment: Fairfield has 3 *Listed Buildings* which are located in the north of the village. One of the buildings is the old Fairfield Hospital, a considerably large Listed Building which occupies a large are in the north of the village, the

⁷⁶ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁷⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 014F Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁷⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

⁷⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 10

other 2 are smaller buildings relating to the hospital. There is an *Archaeological Notification Area* to the west of the settlement, and 3 more to the north-east.

Biodiversity: Fairfield West Orchard and Fairfield East Orchard are two County Wildlife Sites located in the middle of the village and Blue Lagoon CWS is located to the south-west of the settlement. There are Traditional Orchards in Fairfield, and an area of Lowland Calcareous Grassland to the south-west. The Green Infrastructure network borders the village to the south and east forming part of GI corridor 4, the Ivel River Valley⁸¹.

Flood Risk: A small band of Flood Zone (2 & 3) runs to the east of the settlement from north to south⁸².

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, land in the Green Infrastructure Network and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of 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 and an expansion is already planned at the local school to accommodate existing housing growth. A new school is planned to the east of Hitchin Road.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Retail and convenience facilities limited to a convenience store only 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 small deficits in the provision of formal and informal large recreation areas, allotments and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Arlesey around 3 miles away, and the quality and frequency of bus services in the settlement are unknown at this stage, indicating a low capacity. There is access to the strategic road network.

⁸¹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

⁸² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. The settlement is immediately surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however there is a strong presence of best and most versatile agricultural land in the north and west beyond this.
8. Development in the south is constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWS) and the Green Infrastructure Network.
9. Development in the north is constrained by a sensitive heritage setting containing numerous Listed Buildings as well as smaller areas of locally designated biodiversity (potentially also affecting development in the (north-east and north-west).
10. There is an area of flood risk to the east of the settlement, however, this is removed from the settlement edge.

FAIRFIELD SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium

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

Development in the south and areas of the north of the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity. Development in the north of the settlement may also require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on the heritage setting of Listed Buildings.

Development in the east may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on human health arising from the sewage works in the south-west of the settlement (outside of the Central Bedfordshire administrative area).

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however development may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and may affect environmental amenities. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

HENLOW

Henlow is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 3820 people in around 1705 dwellings⁸³. The village won the Bedfordshire village of the year award in 2007. The Church of St Mary the Virgin stands in the centre of the village, dating back many centuries, and the River Ivel borders the settlement to the east. There is an RAF base around the Henlow Camp area, which is located south of the A507, whereas the main settlement of Henlow is north of the A507. The RAF base includes an airfield and accommodation for military personnel⁸⁴.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Henlow has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that follows the parish boundary⁸⁵, however the Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is not constrained by designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁸⁶ identifies that the Parish consists of “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data⁸⁷ for the area shows the median age for residents to be 42. The area also contains a higher number of residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Henlow contains a number of services and facilities, including, community centres, a pre-school/nursery, lower schools, a middle school, convenience stores, newsagents, a post office, a dentist, a restaurant/takeaway, food serving pubs, a non-food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and children’s play areas. The settlement does not have any banking facilities, secondary education facilities or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close⁸⁸ to the Henlow area include Shefford (approx. 3 miles), Biggleswade (approx. 5 miles) and Hitchin (approx. 6 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). Henlow has an active community with a range of clubs and groups for residents to join.

The settlement has a large number of Leisure Strategy sites⁸⁹ located in and around the village, including recreation grounds and an allotment. Henlow has a deficit of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments. However, there is a surplus of informal large recreation areas in the village⁹⁰.

Education: Derwent Lower School has some existing capacity and has the possibility to accommodate an expansion of 3 FE’s⁹¹ which will increase the pupil capacity by 300, equivalent to 857 dwellings. Raynsford Academy is at capacity and the school site does not have the existing capacity to accommodate

⁸³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

⁸⁴ <http://henlow-pc.gov.uk/about-henlow/>

⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

⁸⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 010F Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁸⁸ Google Maps (2016)

⁸⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁹¹ Form of Entry

expansion. Henlow Academy has existing capacity however an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school site does not have the existing capacity to accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school site does not have the existing capacity to accommodate expansion⁹².

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Henlow⁹³. However, Henlow Grange offers a variety of local employment opportunities and there is the RAF base at Henlow Camp just south west of the settlement. ONS data⁹⁴ for the area reveals that 45% of residents are in full time employment, 15% are in part time employment and 13.5% are retired. These percentages are very similar to the percentages for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment for the area are construction, wholesale and retail and human health and social work. 23% of residents of the ward area work within the ward and 11% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to destination outside of Central Bedfordshire is North Hertfordshire⁹⁵.

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the primary road network being connected to the A507 to the south, and has easy access to the A1 to the east. The level of stress on the A1 / A1 (M) in the Arlesey and Stoffold area is relatively low. Junction 10 of the A1 (M) is a 'grade-separated' junction where the link is accessed via roundabout and slip roads. There is anecdotal evidence that this junction can be subject to delays in peak periods. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor⁹⁶.

The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement at Arlesey, around a mile to the east. The settlement has a number of bus stops for residential use.

The B659 (formerly the A6001) through the centre of Henlow forms an important link between the A507 and Langford and Biggleswade to the north. It results in a considerable amount of through traffic in the village which can lead to delays and generate safety concerns for pedestrians and other road users. The amount of on-street parking helps to reduce the actual speed of traffic through the village centre but also adds to delays experienced at peak times, particularly when it relates to access to the lower and middle schools⁹⁷

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Henlow is located in the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Clifton, Broom, Old Warden, Southill, Stanford,

⁹² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁹³ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁹⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 010F Lower Layer Super Output Area

⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stoffold Local Area Transport Plan

⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stoffold Local Area Transport Plan

Shefford, Campton and Chicksands. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 343 dwellings⁹⁸.

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 Upper Ivel Clay Valley. The wide river valley is founded on Gault Clay, Chalk and Alluvium with deposits of Glacial and Valley Gravel. The River Ivel runs from north to west through the area, and the River Hiz runs east to west. The area has a mixed land use with areas of arable farmland and areas of pasture along the river courses. There are areas of woodland scattered around the area and open bodies of water close to the River Ivel which are the result of mineral extraction⁹⁹.

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

Historic Environment: Henlow has a number of *Listed Buildings* scattered along the High Street and the A6001 which passes through the centre of the village. Henlow Grange to the east is also a listed building, as is the local church. There are a number of RAF buildings around Henlow Camp which are also Listed Buildings. Henlow has a *Conservation Area*, which extends from the A6001 southwards to the southern end of the High Street. There are designated *Archaeological Notification Areas* to the east and west of the settlement.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement. There is a large collection of priority habitats to the east of the settlement along the River Ivel, including a large area of Wood Pasture and Parkland, areas of Wet Woodland and areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. There are three different County Wildlife Sites to the east of the settlement. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (GI corridor 4¹⁰⁰) Networks borders the settlement to the east.

Flood Risk: Henlow is largely constrained by flood risk zones (2 & 3) which border the settlement to the east and west¹⁰¹.

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 land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks.

⁹⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

¹⁰⁰ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁰¹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

The settlement is bordered to the east and west by flood risk areas. 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 room for limited growth and also expansion at Derwent Lower School 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 and Children's Play areas present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement at Arlesey around 1 mile away indicating a medium capacity. Bus connections exist within the settlement however the quality of bus services are unknown at this stage. There is good access to the strategic road network however the settlement suffers from congestion.

Environment

7. Development in the east and west of the settlement is constrained by areas of flood risk and areas of best and most versatile agricultural land.
8. Development in the east may affect locally designated biodiversity.
9. Development is constrained by sensitive heritage settings

HENLOW SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - Low

Development could avoid the environmental constraints through appropriate siting, particularly in small areas to the north of the settlement. There are further opportunity areas in the south-east and east of the settlement, however, this could result in the loss of best and most versatile land and development in the east (particularly moving north-east) could contribute towards coalescence with Clifton. Larger scale development in the south would be separated from the

existing urban area by the A507. Development around the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity and sensitive heritage settings, but could also 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 to the urban area, which could also support improved services and facilities. Development could deliver a range of housing for the local community, and there may be potential for environmental improvements.

LANGFORD

Langford is a village and civil parish located in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 3090 people in around 1320 dwellings¹⁰². The settlement is less than 2 miles to the south of Biggleswade and is bordered to the west by the River Ivel and to the east by the East Coast Railway Line. Henlow Common and Langford Meadows are located west of the settlement, and are part of the Ivel Valley countryside project. At the centre of the settlement stands a War Memorial erected in 1920. The settlement dates back to Saxon times, and the local church was constructed around the 14th century¹⁰³.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁰⁴ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Langford is not constrained by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁰⁵ identifies the Parish as consisting of "householders in inexpensive village homes", "established families in large detached homes" and "thriving families with children and careers". ONS data¹⁰⁶ for the Stotfold and Langford area identifies the median age for the area as being 40. The area also has more residents under the age of 15 than over the age of 65.

The settlement contains a number of services and facilities, including a village hall, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 2 newsagents, a post office, a chemist, a GP surgery (limited surgery times), a convenience store, a restaurant/takeaway, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. There is also a garden centre to the south of the settlement. The settlement does not have any secondary education, supermarkets or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁰⁷ to the Langford area include Biggleswade (approx. 3 miles) and Shefford (approx. 5 miles). The settlement has a large number of active clubs and groups.

Langford has a number of Leisure Strategy sites¹⁰⁸, with the largest being Langford Meadow and Harlow Common bordering the settlement to the west. There are also tennis courts and a recreational ground closer to the settlements centre. Langford has a surplus of informal large recreation areas, but has a deficit of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, allotments and facilities for young people¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

¹⁰³ <http://www.langfordhistorysociety.org.uk/history.html>

¹⁰⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁰⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

¹⁰⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood statistics- Stotfold & Langford ward

¹⁰⁷ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁰⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁰⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Stratton Upper School has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned - more land or a new lower school site would be required. Langford Village Academy has some existing capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school site does not have the capacity for expansion. Henlow Academy also has some existing capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school site does not have the capacity for expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy has a small amount of existing capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the school site does not have the capacity for expansion¹¹⁰.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Langford¹¹¹. ONS data¹¹² for the Stotfold and Langford area reveals that 46% of residents work full time, 14% work part time and 14% are retired. This area has a higher proportion of residents who work full time than the proportion for Central Bedfordshire, whereas the proportion of residents who work part time or are retired is the same as the average for Central Bedfordshire. The main industries of employment for residents of the ward area are wholesale & retail, construction, and manufacturing. 18% of residents work within the ward area and 13% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire for ward residents is North Hertfordshire¹¹³

Transport and Movement: The settlement is connected to the A1 to the east. The level of stress on the A1 / A1 (M) in the Langford area is relatively low. Junction 10 of the A1 (M) is a 'grade-separated' junction where the link is accessed via a roundabout and slip road. There is anecdotal evidence that this junction can be subject to delays in peak periods. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 as a consequence of the increase in demand for travel along the corridor¹¹⁴.

The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement, with the settlement being equal distance between Biggleswade to the north and Arlesey to the south. The settlement contains bus stops for residential use.

Located on the main route between Shefford and Biggleswade, Langford experiences a considerable amount of through traffic. Combined with local vehicles and on-street parking, it can lead to localised congestion, and a traffic dominated centre.

Bus - The overall quality of the waiting facilities in the area is quite poor. In a number of cases raised kerbs are provided to enable easier access onto buses, although there is a general lack of shelters, lighting and service information in the majority of cases¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹¹¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹¹² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood statistics- Stotfold & Langford ward

¹¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

¹¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

¹¹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Langford is located in the Poppy Hill Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Stoffold and Arlesey. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1375 dwellings¹¹⁶.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Langford is located within the Upper Ivel Clay Valley, a level wide river valley founded on Gault Clay, Chalk and Alluvium with deposits of Glacial Gravel and Valley Gravel. The River Ivel and River Hiz run through the area. The land use is predominantly arable farmland with some areas of pasture which are bounded by hedgerows in mixed conditions with some hedgerow trees. The area is mostly flat with some long views over the surrounding landscape¹¹⁷.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is bordered to the north by Grade 1 agricultural land, and to the east, south and west by Grade 2 agricultural land. The centre of the settlement contains Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether the Grade 3 agricultural land is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The settlement contains a small number of *Listed Buildings*, most of which are located in the northern half of the settlement around the church. There are three *Archaeological Notification Areas* in the centre of the settlement, situated around the main roads which run through the village. Most of the land to the west of the settlement is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*, and there are areas of land to the north and east which are similarly designated.

Biodiversity: The settlement does not contain any internationally or nationally designated biodiversity. Henlow Common and Langford Meadows directly border the settlement to the west, and are designated *County Wildlife Sites* and *Local Nature Reserves*. To the south of the settlement is Poppyhill Pits, another *County Wildlife Site*. *Mixed Deciduous Woodland* and *Wet Woodland* form part of the land to the west. Both the *Biodiversity* and *Green Infrastructure Network* border the settlement to the west, running from north to south. The *Green Infrastructure Network* also borders the settlement to the north, forming part of *GI corridor 4*¹¹⁸.

Flood Risk: Due to its location next to the River Ivel, the settlement is heavily constrained by flood risk zones (2 & 3) to the west. From north to south the flood risk zone follows the western border of the settlement¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁶ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹¹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

¹¹⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹¹⁹ 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, County Wildlife Sites and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Network. The settlement is bordered to the west by flood zone. The settlement also contains 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 MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity at the existing schools, and most do not have space for expansion indicating a low capacity. New land and / or new school sites may be required to accommodate significant growth.
2. Healthcare: Limited to a chemist 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. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, allotments and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Biggleswade and Arlesey however the settlement is served by poor quality bus infrastructure. There is good access to the strategic road network, however the roads within the settlement are subject to congestion constraints.

Environment

7. Development to the west is significantly constrained by flood risk and designated biodiversity.
8. Development around Langford is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. Development in the north is constrained by the Biodiversity Network.

LANGFORD SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium - Low

Development in Langford is constrained by a lack of services and facilities, particularly educational and healthcare facilities.

Development is constrained to the west by significant flood risk, and development north or south of the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, however it could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity. The environmental constraints can largely be avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the east.

Overall, whilst development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, the scale needed to achieve this is likely to be of detriment to the character and identity of Langford, and is likely to lead to some loss of high quality agricultural land. Smaller scale development is less likely to improve service and facility provisions and is therefore likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

POTTON

Potton is a town and civil parish within the east of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 4,870 people in around 2,250 dwellings¹²⁰. The settlement is around 3 miles east of Sandy and 4 miles north of Biggleswade. Potton Brook borders the town to the east. Potton contains a Market Square and was originally a prosperous market town¹²¹. There are 2 sand quarries in the land surrounding the town, one to the north and one to the west.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Potton has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, which follows the parish boundary¹²², however the Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is not constrained by Green Belt designated land. Potton has experienced considerable growth in recent years, with a number of residential developments permitted in recent years.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹²³ of Potton identifies the Parish as consisting of “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “educated young people privately renting”, “established families in large detached homes” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data¹²⁴ for Potton ward reveals the median age of residents to be 43, and there are slightly more residents under the age of 16 than over 65. This is a similar age profile for Central Bedfordshire as a whole.

Potton's services and facilities include 4 village/church halls, 2 pre-schools/nurseries, a lower school, a middle school, an ATM, 2 small supermarkets a convenience store, 2 newsagents, a post office, a chemist, a dentist, a GP surgery/health centre, 3 restaurants/ takeaways, 3 food serving pub, a non-food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and 2 children's play areas. Notable towns with superstores close¹²⁵ to the Potton area include Biggleswade (approx. 4 miles) and Sandy (approx. 3 miles). There are a number of clubs and groups operating in the settlement.

The settlement has a small range of Leisure Strategy sites¹²⁶ across the town, including allotments and a playing field. Potton has a large surplus of informal large recreation areas, and a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of urban parks, small amenity spaces and allotments¹²⁷.

Education: Potton Lower School is close to capacity and predicts a rise in pupil numbers and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Potton Middle

¹²⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹²¹ <https://www.pottontowncouncil.co.uk/history/>

¹²² Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

¹²³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹²⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Potton Ward

¹²⁵ Google Maps (2016)

¹²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹²⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

School has existing capacity but the site has no capacity for expansion. Sandy Upper School also has existing capacity but the site has no capacity for expansion¹²⁸.

Employment: Pottton does not contain a significant employment area¹²⁹. Pottton employment data shows that 13.7% of ward residents work part time, 43.3% work full time and 13.7% are retired. The employment figures are similar for the figures of Central Bedfordshire as a whole, although Pottton ward has a slightly higher proportion of residents who are self-employed. Pottton wards main industries of employment are wholesale & retail, manufacturing and retail. 23% of ward residents work within the ward, 19% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and Bedford is the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire¹³⁰.

Transport and Movement: Pottton has does not have a railway station. The closest station is Sandy, 3 miles to the west. Bus stops are available in the settlement, and there is access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths.

Bus: Pottton is on the fringes of the public transport networks in Central Bedfordshire, connected to Sandy and Biggleswade by infrequent bus services passing through the town. The quality of the waiting facilities varies within the town and across the Plan area. Services operate infrequently (at best there is one service an hour on any given route) whilst there are no services at all on Sundays. Issues persist over the lack of direct services to Bedford and Cambridge, the coordination of services with trains departing from Biggleswade and Sandy Stations, and a lack of integrated ticketing for example¹³¹.

Roads: Access onto the Strategic Road Network from Pottton and the surrounding villages is via the A1 at Sandy, Tempsford or Biggleswade, as well as via t Edworth to the south of Biggleswade. The A1 provides north-south links to the rest of the region and beyond and links to the A14 and the A421. The B1040 links Pottton with Biggleswade in the south and Gamlingay to the north. The B1042 is an east - west route connecting Pottton with Sandy and Wrestlingworth¹³².

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Pottton is located in the Pottton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The only other settlement located in this catchment area is Sutton. The 2 settlements have a combined capacity of 1996 dwellings.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Pottton is located within the Everton Heath Greensand Ridge LCT, an elevated landscape that forms the eastern most part of the ridge. There is a varied landscape pattern with open heathland, arable

¹²⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Constraint Information (2016)

¹²⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹³⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Pottton Ward Profile

¹³¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Pottton Local Area Transport Plan

¹³² Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Pottton Local Area Transport Plan

cropping, plantation and deciduous woodland. There are a number of large estate houses and surrounding parkland, as well as active and restored mineral extraction works¹³³. Potton is bordered to the east by the Dunton Clay Vale LCT, a vale with an elevated ridge with some expansive views on the ridge and enclosed lower down. The land is mostly used for intensive arable cropping¹³⁴. To the west, the hamlet of Deepdale is set within a distinctive narrow valley.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Potton is bordered to the west and north-east by Grade 2 agricultural land, to the north by Grade 3 agricultural (sub-category 3a or 3b unknown) and to the east by Grade 1 agricultural land. Directly to the south of Potton is non-agricultural land, beyond that the land is classified as Grade 2.

Historic Environment: Potton has a large number of *Listed Buildings* which are mostly situated around the Market Square, King Street and Sun Street, in the south of the town. Additional buildings are located around the parish church in the north-east. Potton has a *Conservation Area* which encompasses the market square and the streets around the square, and extends along the Church Causeway, which connects the market square area with the parish church in the north-east of the town. The Market Square and its immediate surrounding area is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*. The land immediately to the south-east is also designated, as are 2 areas to the north of the settlement.

Biodiversity: Potton Wood SSSI is a SSSI and CWS around 2km to the north-east of the town. Bunker's Hill CWS and Sutton Fen & Woods CWS are to the south-west of the town. Small blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland exist to the north and south of the town, and to the south-west is an area of Lowland Dry Acid Grassland. The settlement and the land to the north and west is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network to the east, south and west is part of GI corridor 2, the Ivel River Valley¹³⁵. The Biodiversity Network encompasses much of the land to the west and follows the path of the Potton Brook from north to south along the town's eastern boundary.

Flood Risk: Flood Zone 2 borders the town to the east along the route of Potton Brook, and to the north-east Flood Zones 2 and 3 follow the Brook's route¹³⁶.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, land in the Green Infrastructure Network and County Wildlife Sites. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. In common with other settlements in Central Bedfordshire Potton has already experienced considerable growth in recent years, meaning that existing services which is impacting on

¹³³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 6

¹³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 5

¹³⁵ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹³⁶ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

existing services and facilities. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited existing capacity and no room for expansion indicating a low capacity. New development in Potton would 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: Some facilities present indicating a medium 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, small amenity spaces and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links available in the settlement of Sandy around 3 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus services which are infrequent and of varying quality, indicating a low capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is access to the strategic road network via Sandy.

Environment

7. Development in the north and west of the settlement is constrained by the Biodiversity Network, and development in the south and east of the settlement is constrained by the Green Infrastructure Network. Development in the south-west of the settlement is constrained by locally designated biodiversity. Any development however could contribute to the objectives of the Nature Improvement Area.
8. Development in the east, west and north-east of the settlement may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. Development in the east of the settlement is significantly constrained by flood risk areas.
10. Development in the south of the settlement may affect designated heritage assets, including the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

POTTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium

Development in Potton may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity but may also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and contributions to the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. Development may lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and development to the east is significantly constrained by flood risk.

Most of existing services and facilities are located centrally and more recent expansion of the settlement, particularly in the west finds access to the core constrained which has led to increased reliance on the private vehicle and a degree of local congestion. Development would need to be appropriately located to avoid exacerbating these effects. Development could also contribute to addressing these issues by delivering new provisions in more accessible locations.

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to deliver sustainable development, particularly in the south and west of the settlement. Development here that is sensitively designed could largely avoid significant environmental constraints, and deliver development gains including service and facility enhancements and a range of housing for the local community. New service and facility provisions in the west could address existing sustainability issues. Larger scale development could contribute to improved access to educational facilities in the settlement, and support enhanced sustainable transport connections to nearby Sandy and its railway station. Piecemeal development should be avoided as it may exacerbate effects on local congestion and accessibility.

SANDY

Sandy is a small town in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 11,660 people in 5130 dwellings¹³⁷. The settlement is bordered to the east by the East Coast Main Line and to the west by the A1 and the River Ivel. The town has existed since Roman times, and expansion of the settlement largely began after the Second World War. This included the development of a London 'overspill' housing scheme. The potential of Sandy as a commuter town for workers in London, Cambridge, Bedford, Stevenage and Peterborough remains thanks to the A1 and the railway links¹³⁸.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹³⁹ and at this stage there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Sandy. The settlement is not constrained by Green Belt designation

People, Community Facilities and Services: Sandys geo-demographic profile¹⁴⁰ identifies that the Parish consists of "younger households in housing priced within their means", "thriving families with children and careers", "mature suburban owners in mid-range housing", "educated young people privately renting", "mature homeowners enjoying stable lifestyles", "elderly people with assets", "urban renters of social housing", "householders in inexpensive village homes", "established families in large detached homes", "single people privately renting", "elderly people reliant on support" and "families with limited resources". ONS data¹⁴¹ for Sandy ward reveals the median age of residents to be 40 and that the ward has more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65. The settlement also contains one of the most deprived wards in Central Bedfordshire¹⁴².

Services and facilities available within Sandy include community centres (village & church halls), 8 pre-schools/nurseries, 4 lower schools, a middle school, an upper school, a 6th form college, 5 ATMs, a bank, a superstore, convenience stores, newsagents, a post office, chemists, 3 dentists, 2 GP surgeries/health centres, an optician, 10+ restaurants/takeaways, 4 non-food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities, children's play areas and a leisure centre. Sandy has an active community with multiple clubs and groups available for residents.

The settlement has a range of Leisure Strategy sites¹⁴³ across the town which includes recreation grounds and amenity areas. The Leisure Strategy¹⁴⁴ identifies that Sandy has a deficit of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, play areas for children and allotments. There is a small surplus of small amenity spaces.

¹³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Sandy Ward Profile

¹³⁸ Sandy Town Council (2016) [Online] <http://www.sandytowncouncil.gov.uk/about-sandy>

¹³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁴⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Sandy Ward Profile

¹⁴¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Sandy Ward

¹⁴² <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/census/deprivation.aspx>

¹⁴³ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁴⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: A number of schools in the Sandy Planning area are consulting on moving to a 2-tier system which require existing lower/ middle/ upper schools to extend their age ranges to become primary/ secondary. If these proposals go ahead then this is likely to have an impact on site capacity and the amount of space available as it would require an extension on existing sites. Currently, Sandy Place Academy has some space for expansion.

Employment: Sandy does contain a significant employment area¹⁴⁵. The Sandy/Biggleswade area has 168 hectares of existing allocated employment land, with a large amount of the land being classified as 'Good' or 'Very Good' however some of the land is classified as being in 'Poor' condition. ONS data¹⁴⁶ for Sandy ward reveals that 44.5% of residents work full time, 14.4% work part time and 13.2% are retired. All these figures are similar to the averages for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment for residents of Sandy ward are wholesale & retail, manufacturing, and health & social work. 27% of residents work within the ward, 17% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and the most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Bedford¹⁴⁷.

Transport and Movement: The settlement has access to the primary road network being connected to the A1 in the west. The settlement has its own railway station and bus stops, and there is access to the town centre via footpaths and cycle paths.

Rail: Heavy rail services operate between Sandy and Biggleswade and London to the south and Peterborough in the north as part of the Capital Connect franchise. The services between Sandy and Biggleswade and London includes fast, limited stop services, which makes them particularly attractive to commuters and operates frequently (twice an hour) throughout the day. Information on rail services is available at Sandy station and this highlights the services operating from the station and the ability to interchange with routes further afield. Sandy station can be accessed on level ground on both sides, with the northbound platform being accessed via the car park and ticket office, and the southbound platform being accessed via a walking route off Potton Road¹⁴⁸. Sandy is also considered a potential corridor for further consideration for the proposed 'Central Section' of the East West Rail to link Bedford and Cambridge¹⁴⁹.

Bus: The main bus stop, and terminus of some services in Sandy is located in the Market Square in the heart of the town. This provides a very convenient pick-up and drop-off point for passengers wishing to access the facilities within the town centre. At the railway station, the bus stop is located right outside the door to the ticket office, providing convenient bus-rail integration for those services that do operate to the station. In the residential areas of the town the waiting facilities are of poor quality¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁵ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁴⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Sandy Ward

¹⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Sandy Ward Profile

¹⁴⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Biggleswade & Sandy Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁴⁹ Network Rail (2016) www.eastwestrail.org.uk

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Road: The primary access to the A1 in Sandy is via the roundabout between the A1, A603, and Bedford Road, an interchange which suffers from congestion at peak periods. To the south of Sandy is the junction with New Road, which is an at-grade crossing and to the north access is via St Neots Road and a slip road leading to Sunderland Road and the industrial estate to the east of the town. The A603 (Bedford Road) acts as the main link between Sandy and Bedford to the west, from its junction with the A1. The single carriageway route provides access to the A421 for longer distance east/west movements. The B1041 (also known as Bedford Road, High Street and Potton Road) is the main east-west route through Sandy, running from the A1 roundabout, through the town centre, past the railway station and out towards Potton. There is a 20mph speed limit in place on the section through the town centre and it forms the primary link within the town¹⁵¹.

Air Quality: Sandy adjacent to the A1 was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)¹⁵² in 2015 for nitrogen dioxide, principally due to road traffic emissions. An action plan is being developed.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Sandy is located in the Sandy Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The only other settlement located in this catchment area is Beeston. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 910 dwellings¹⁵³.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The town of Sandy is an urban area bordered by 4 different LCTs. To the north and west the town is bordered by the Great Ouse Clay Valley LCT, a wide river valley that follows the course of the River Great Ouse, and with open water bodies and tributary streams scattered across the floodplain¹⁵⁴. To the north-east Sandy is bordered by the Biggin Wood Clay Vale LCT, an open vale landscape with good views, small woodland blocks and large areas of arable cropping¹⁵⁵. To the east and south-east the settlement is bordered by the Everton Heath Greensand Ridge, an elevated landscape with a varied land cover pattern (woodland, open heathland and arable cropping), a strong underlying heathland character and a sparse road network¹⁵⁶. Finally, to the south and south-west the settlement is bordered by the Lower Ivel Clay Valley, an open river valley which the River Ivel runs through and has mixed land use and numerous disused quarry locations (now water bodies)¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma_id=1089

¹⁵³ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁵⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 4

¹⁵⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 5

¹⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 6

¹⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 4

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: To the north and west there are areas of Grade 1 agricultural land, to the north there is also an area of grade 2 agricultural land. To the east, south and partially to the west there is Grade 3 land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: *Listed buildings* in Sandy are mostly situated in the town centre, and to the west along London Road. *Sandy Conservation Area* is situated in the south of the settlement, with no uniform character but it is divided into 3 nodal points: Bedford Road roundabout, Market Square and Ivel Road High Street junction. Most of the Conservation Area buildings date back to the Victorian/Edwardian period, with a variety of building materials used. The character of the area is defined by its setting by the river and the difference between tranquillity of areas such as the church grounds and Sandy Place to the noise and movement on the High Street. To the east is Hazells Hall, *a historic park and garden*. The Conservation Area and London Road are both *Archaeological Notification Areas* and there are similar designations around the land south of the town.

Biodiversity: Sandy Warren County Wildlife Site (CWS) and SSSI is south of the town and contains Lowland Heathland and Wood Pasture and Parkland. Next to Sandy Warren is Bunkers Hill CWS, and to the east of the town are Sandy Cemetery, The Pinnacle, and Lord's Wood, CWSs and The Lodge RSPB nature reserve. Waterloo Thorns CWS is to the north and South Mills Pits CWS and Zweetsloots Pits CWS is to the west. The Riddy is a Local Nature Reserve to the south-west. There are areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Lowland Beech and Yew and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland to the east of the town. The south of the settlement is located in the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The town is surrounded by the Green Infrastructure network which is part of GI Corridor 4, the Ivel River Valley¹⁵⁸ and by the Biodiversity Network to the east, south and west.

Flood Risk: Flood Zones 2 & 3 border Sandy to the west and south, following the course of the River Ivel¹⁵⁹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including significant flood risk, best and most versatile agricultural land, a SSSI, a Local Nature Reserve, numerous County Wildlife Sites and land in the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of listed buildings and a Conservation Area. Also, an AQMA associated with road traffic emissions from the A1. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM-HIGH.

¹⁵⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: The educational facilities in Sandy are potentially subject to capacity changes as a result of a proposed move to a 2-tier system, with limited capacity for further expansion as a result of new growth indicating a low capacity at this stage.
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: A range present indicating a medium to 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 and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Well served by a strategic rail link indicating good accessibility and connectivity and therefore a high capacity, and well-served by buses although facilities in the residential areas are of poor quality. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre and linking to railway station. Good access to the strategic road network, however local congestion issues at peak periods, particularly at the roundabout between the A1, A603 and Bedford Road in the west, and other access/egress points in Sandy. There is also limited town centre parking.
7. AQMA adjacent to the A1 associated with road traffic emissions.

Environment

8. Development to the east is restricted by the rail line and development to the west is restricted by the A1 which both create natural barriers to integration with the existing urban area and may require significant infrastructure provisions. Meanwhile land to east of industrial area/ railway forms setting to historic parkland and without access, and is bounded by the Greensand Ridge. Development in the west is also significantly restricted by a large area of flood risk.
9. Development in the east, south and west may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, sensitive heritage settings and landscapes, particularly arising from increased recreational pressures.
10. Any development around Sandy would result in the loss of agricultural land (the highest quality of which is in the north and west areas).

SANDY SUMMARY

Capacity: High

Sandy is well served by a strategic rail link indicating good accessibility and connectivity and therefore a high potential capacity.

The environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting and integration of development, particularly in the north of the settlement. However, land to the north around Highfield farm rises so that growth would be more dominant, and location is remote from the town centre. This may require significant service and facilities provisions and investment in sustainable transport connections to the south of the settlement, to increase accessibility in the north. Though environmental constraints in the east of the settlement could be largely avoided through appropriate siting, the separation from the existing urban area by the railway line is likely to require significant new infrastructure provisions. Any development that expands the urban area of Sandy is likely to result in the loss of agricultural land, some of which is identified as best and most versatile (including grade 1).

Development in the settlement may also require significant educational infrastructure provisions/contributions to accommodate an increase in the population. As such, the level of development at Sandy may need to be large scale to deliver the required infrastructure and service provisions. There is potential to address existing sustainability issues through new provisions such as a new health centre and new open space including allotments, as well as potential to support new housing development with increased employment opportunities through regeneration and expansion of existing industrial areas. Care will be needed to minimise increased road traffic and exacerbation of nitrogen dioxide emissions and the declared AQMA.

STOTFOLD

Stotfold is a town in the east of Central Bedfordshire with a population of 6,950 people and containing 3,020 dwellings¹⁶⁰. The River Ivel borders the settlement to the east, and just beyond the river is the A1. The settlement is bordered to the south by the A507. The oldest building in the town is the parish church which dates as far back as the Norman period, and Stotfold still retains its village green¹⁶¹. Stotfold and adjacent areas have seen considerable development in recent years. This includes both sites which have already been built out, as well as recent permitted development which has yet to be built, including significant development at nearby Arlesey Cross (1,000 dwellings).

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁶² and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Stotfold. The settlement is not constrained by the Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁶³ for Stotfold identifies the area as consisting of "mature suburban owners in mid-range housing", "mature home owners enjoying stable lifestyles", "established families in large detached homes", "younger households in housing priced within their means", "elderly people with assets", "single people privately renting" and "thriving families with children and careers". ONS data¹⁶⁴ for the Stotfold MLSOA identifies the median age of residents to be 39, and that the area has more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available in Stotfold include 6 community centres, 3 pre-schools/nurseries, 2 lower schools, 2 ATMs, 2 convenience stores, a newsagent, a post office, a chemist, a dentist, a GP surgery/ health centre, 6 restaurants/takeaways, 3 food serving pubs, 2 non-food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and 5 children's play areas. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁶⁵ to the Stotfold area include Letchworth Garden City (approx. 4 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire), Shefford (approx. 5 miles) and Baldock (approx. 3 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). There are a number of groups and clubs operating within Stotfold.

Several Leisure Strategy sites¹⁶⁶ are located throughout the town, with Etonbury Woods, to the west of Stotfold, being the largest site. Stotfold has a surplus of formal and informal large recreation areas, allotments and play areas for children. However, there is a deficit of urban parks, small amenity spaces and facilities for young people¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

¹⁶¹ http://www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk/Core/StotfoldTC/Pages/About_Stotfold_1.aspx#stotfoldhistory

¹⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

¹⁶⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 014 Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA)

¹⁶⁵ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁶⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Fairfield Park Lower School has a small amount of existing capacity; however, an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required. Roecroft Lower School has some existing capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. St Mary's CofE Academy Stotfold also has some existing capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Etonbury Academy has existing capacity however; an expansion is already planned - more land or a new school site would be required. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity although an increase in student numbers is predicted and the school site cannot accommodate expansion¹⁶⁸.

Employment: Stotfold does contain existing allocated employment land¹⁶⁹. The Stotfold/ Shefford area has 74 hectares of existing employment land. Most of the employment land is classed as being in 'Very Good' or 'Good' condition, although some of the land is in 'Poor' condition, and a very small amount (2.4 hectares) is in 'Very poor' condition¹⁷⁰. ONS data¹⁷¹ for the Stotfold MLSOA shows that 13.8% of residents work part-time, 47.6% work full-time and 12.8% are retired. Compared to Central Bedfordshire as a whole, Stotfold has a higher proportion of residents who work full-time. The main industries of employment within the ward are wholesale & retail, construction and manufacturing. Only 18% of residents work within the ward, 13% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire is the most commuted to location outside of the county by ward residents¹⁷².

Transport and Movement: Stotfold has access to the primary road network, being connected with the A1 to the east, as well as having access to the A507 to the south and west. There is no railway station in the town, with the nearest station being in Arlesey, around 1.7 miles to the west. The settlement does contain bus stops and there is access to the town centre via footpaths/cycle paths.

Bus: Very few bus services operate through Stotfold, with only three bus services operating once every two hours or more frequently. Most of buses in Stotfold are interurban services, either passing through or running from the area into major urban areas, notably Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin, Bedford, and Biggleswade. There is a lack of bus services which directly serve (Arlesey) train station and this undermines the attraction of public transport based trips as opposed to the car for journeys further afield. Owing to the rural nature of the area, there is no central bus terminus, with the majority of stops being kerbside bus stops. The overall quality of the waiting facilities in the area is quite poor¹⁷³.

Road: Arlesey has access to the A1 (M) via junction 10 to the east of the settlement. The A1 / A1 (M) provides good north-south links from Arlesey and Stotfold to the rest of the region and further afield. Hitchin Road links Stotfold to

¹⁶⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹⁶⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 014 Middle Layer Super Output Area

¹⁷² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Stotfold & Langford Ward Profile

¹⁷³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

the A507 and Letchworth Garden City to the south¹⁷⁴. The level of stress on the A1 / A1 (M) in the Arlesey and Stotfold area is relatively low. Despite this, no schemes are planned to increase the link capacity on the A1 / A1 (M) in the Arlesey and Stotfold area. Junction 10 of the A1 (M) is a 'grade-separated' junction where the link is accessed via a roundabout and slip road. There is anecdotal evidence that this junction can be subject to delays in peak periods¹⁷⁵.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Stotfold is located in the Poppy Hill Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Langford and Arlesey. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1375 dwellings¹⁷⁶.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Stotfold is located in the east of the Upper Ivel Clay Valley LCT. This is a level and wide river valley which the Rivers Ivel and Hiz run through. The land use is predominantly arable farmland with scattered woodland blocks that create a semi-enclosed landscape along the river courses, but open views exist away from the river corridors¹⁷⁷.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement is bordered on all sides by Grade 2 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: Stotfold's *Listed Buildings* are mostly situated in the east of the town, around St Mary's Church and Stotfold Mill. There are 3 more in the north of the town around the village green, 1 on the High Street and 2 in the west of the settlement. *Archaeological Notification Areas* encompass the east and south of the settlement, following the routes of the main roads. There are areas of land similarly designated as to the north, east and south of the town.

Biodiversity: The River Ivel & Hiz County Wildlife Site borders the town to the east following the river routes. Stotfold Mill Meadows Local Nature Reserve and Stotfold Watermill Meadows County Wildlife Site are also located to the east, around Stotfold Mill area, where there is also a block of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks follow the course of the River Ivel along the north and east of the town. The Green Infrastructure Network also encompasses an area of land to the west and is part of GI corridor 4¹⁷⁸.

Flood Risk: Flood zone 2 & 3 areas follow the course of the River Ivel and so land to the north and east of the town around the river is designated as flood risk areas¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁷⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁷⁶ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁷⁷ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

¹⁷⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, a Local Nature Reserve and County Wildlife Sites. The town is bordered by flood risk areas to the north and east. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and Archaeological Notification Areas. 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. Further expansion land or new school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low to medium capacity.
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 including a post office indicating a medium 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, small amenity spaces and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Arlesey, around 2 miles away. Bus services are infrequent in the settlement and of poor quality, and do not link well with the train station in Arlesey, indicating a low capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is also access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. The settlement is significantly constrained in the north and east by high flood risk areas.
8. Development in the east is constrained by locally designated biodiversity.
9. Development around the settlement is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

STOTFOLD SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium -Low

The level of development already planned and underway in Stotfold and adjacent areas is significant. This is putting considerable pressure on existing services, facilities and infrastructure in the town. Whilst there are opportunities for development in the west and south of the settlement, which would be well connected to the existing urban area, in close proximity to rail connections, which could in theory support the provision of additional services and facilities in the town, the scale needed to deliver these is likely to detrimentally affect landscape setting, and character of the settlement. Moreover, development in the north and east of the settlement is significantly constrained by flood risk and development in the north would further contribute to the coalescence of Stotfold and Astwick. Development is also likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

TEMPSFORD

Tempsford is a village in the north-east of Central Bedfordshire, with a residential population of 590 people and containing 250 dwellings¹⁸⁰. Tempsford is split in two by the A1.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁸¹ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Tempsford¹⁸². The settlement is not located within or surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁸³ identifies Tempsford as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data¹⁸⁴ for the LLSOA which Tempsford is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 46, and that there are more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available in the settlement include a community centre, a food serving pub and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any education facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any post offices, any supermarkets or convenience stores, or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁸⁵ to the Tempsford (west) area include Sandy (approx. 4 miles) and St Neots (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). The settlement has 6 Leisure Strategy sites¹⁸⁶ located in a cluster within the central area of the settlement, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces in the settlement has not been identified.

Education: Sandy Upper School currently has a good amount of existing capacity with no increase in student numbers predicted in the pupil forecast. However, the school site cannot accommodate expansion¹⁸⁷.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Tempsford¹⁸⁸, however there are local employment opportunities in the settlement including Kier headquarters and Zweetsloots Florists. ONS data¹⁸⁹ for the LLSOA which Tempsford is located within reveals that 12.2% of residents work part-time, 35.6% work full time, 18% are self-employed and 20.8% are retired. The percentage of

¹⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁸² The settlement boundary identifies Tempsford as a whole settlement, whereas in this case we are only assessing Tempsford West.

¹⁸³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹⁸⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004C Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹⁸⁵ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁸⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹⁸⁸ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁸⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004C Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

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, manufacturing and construction. Overall 23% of residents work within the ward and 19% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford¹⁹⁰.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Tempsford has access to the primary road network being directly connected to the A1 which gives the settlement access to Sandy and Biggleswade to the south and at Neots to the north. The local road network also connects the settlement to Blunham, Moggerhanger and Everton.

Train: The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Sandy, 4 miles to the south and on the East Coast Main Line. First Capital Connect provide services direct to London in the south and Peterborough in the north along this corridor with around 2 trains per hour operating throughout the day¹⁹¹.

Bus: A bus service operates between Tempsford and St Neots to allow the residents to access the Tesco store located within the town. However, no further details regarding bus services is present in the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Tempsford is located in the Tempsford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Moggerhanger and Blunham. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 884 dwellings¹⁹².

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Tempsford is located within the Great Ouse Clay Valley LCT. This is a level broad valley, low lying with large scale open water bodies, multiple channels and tributary streams are scattered across the floodplain. There is mixed land use with arable on the shallow slopes of the valley and pasture, quarrying and recreational uses along the valley floor¹⁹³.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The northern part of the settlement is Grade 4 agricultural land, whilst the south and west is located in Grade 1 agricultural land. To the east the settlement is bordered by Grade 2 agricultural land.

¹⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁹³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

Historic Environment: There are 2 clusters of *Listed Buildings*, 1 to the east and 1 to the west of the A1, and 2 Conservation Areas, also separated by the A1. Conservation Area and Gannocks Castle moated site is a *Scheduled Monument* just to the west of the settlement centre. The settlement is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is much of the surrounding land. Tempsford airfield has local historic significance due to its role during WW2.

Biodiversity: Tempsford is bordered to the west by the Rivers Ivel & Hiz County Wildlife Site (CWS) and partially to the north by the River Great Ouse CWS. Most of the land to the north and partially to the west is Floodplain Grazing Marsh. To the east and south of the settlement is a medium sized area of Wood Pasture and Parkland and a small area of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. There is a Traditional Orchard in the centre of the village, and a small area of Wet Woodland to the west. A band of the Green Infrastructure Network passes through the village from north to south and is part of GI corridor 4¹⁹⁴. The Biodiversity Network encompasses the land to the south and west along the river corridors and the CWSs.

Flood Risk: The land to the west of the settlement is located within is located within Flood Zone 2 & 3¹⁹⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, County Wildlife Sites and priority habitats. Tempsford (west) is located entirely located in flood zone. 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

1. Education: There is existing capacity at Sandy Upper School indicating a medium to high capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities only indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

¹⁹⁴ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement, with the closest at Sandy, around 4 miles away, buses serve the settlement but details of these services are unavailable at this stage, indicating a low capacity. There is access to the primary road network.

Environment

7. Development in the west is constrained by flood risk, locally designated biodiversity (CWS) and Priority Habitats, as well as the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks.
8. Development around the settlement edge is constrained by the designated heritage settings of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
9. Development around the settlement may also result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

TEMPSFORD SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare, retail / convenience, and leisure facilities. Development is further constrained by the abundance of Priority Habitats and best and most versatile agricultural land in the west of the settlement, as well as sensitive heritage settings.

Whilst development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, and the environmental constraints can largely be avoided in the east of the settlement, development at this scale would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the rural character and appearance of the settlement. Whilst small scale development could avoid such problems it is also likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

WRESTLINGWORTH

Wrestlingworth is a village in the east of Central Bedfordshire and has a residential population of 740 people and contains 320 dwellings¹⁹⁶.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Wrestlingworth has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, which follows the parish boundary¹⁹⁷, however the Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. Wrestlingworth is not located within or surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁹⁸ identifies Wrestlingworth as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data¹⁹⁹ for the LLSOA Wrestlingworth is located within, reveals the median age of residents to be 47, and that the area has more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Wrestlingworth include a village hall, a pre-school/nursery, 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 healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office or any restaurant/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close²⁰⁰ to the Wrestlingworth area include Biggleswade (approx. 6 miles) and Sandy (approx. 6 miles). Wrestlingworth has 3 Leisure Strategy sites²⁰¹ located in the south of the village, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces in the settlement has not been identified.

Education: Wrestlingworth Lower School is close to capacity and does not have the site capacity to accommodate expansion. Sandy Upper School has existing capacity but does not have the existing site capacity to accommodate expansion. Edward Peake Middle School has existing capacity and an expansion is already planned to accommodate existing housing growth - more land or a new school site would be required. Stratton Upper School has capacity and an expansion is already planned to accommodate existing housing growth - more land or a new school site would be required²⁰².

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Wrestlingworth²⁰³. ONS data²⁰⁴ for the LLSOA Wrestlingworth is located within identifies that 12% of residents work part-time, 42.3% work full-time, 15.6% are self-employed and 15.3 are retired. Whilst the percentage of residents in full or part-time employment is similar to that for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, the number of residents who

¹⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

¹⁹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

¹⁹⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²⁰⁰ Google Maps (2016)

²⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

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- 003B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

are self-employed or retired is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are manufacturing, wholesale & retail and education. Overall 23% of residents work within the ward and 19% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford²⁰⁵.

Transport and Movement: Wrestlingworth has access to the B1042 which connects the village with Potton, via Eyeworth Road and Cambridge Road. The settlement is also connected to Eyeworth and Dunton. The village does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Biggleswade, 6.5 miles to the west.

Situated on the B1042, Wrestlingworth provides an alternative route for traffic between Sandy and Cambridge which can result in a considerable amount of through traffic. Freight is particularly a concern in this respect, as is the availability of public transport information, waiting facilities require improvement and general road safety concerns²⁰⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Wrestlingworth is located within the Wrestlingworth Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, and is the only settlement located in this catchment. The existing capacity of the WwTW is the equivalent of 206 dwellings in Wrestlingworth²⁰⁷.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Wrestlingworth is located within the Dunton Clay Vale LCT. This LCT is an undulating vale with an elevated ridge. There are some expansive views across the vale but generally enclosed due to the undulating landform. Land use is predominantly used for intensive arable cropping, with limited woodland cover²⁰⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Wrestlingworth is immediately surrounded by Grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known. The land beyond this (close to the settlement edge in the west) is Grade 2 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: Wrestlingworth has a small number of *Listed Buildings* which are mostly located in the centre of the settlement around the church. The same area of the village is designated as a *Conservation Area*, further details about the Conservation Area are not available. The entire settlement is located in an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: There are no international, national or local wildlife designations in or around Wrestlingworth. The settlement does not have any priority habitats either.

²⁰⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

²⁰⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Potton Local Area Transport Plan

²⁰⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁰⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

Flood Risk: A band of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) borders the settlement to the south and partially to the east²⁰⁹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains best and most versatile agricultural land and 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 LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools, some of which have planned expansions to accommodate existing growth. Further expansion land or new school sites would be required to accommodate significant further growth indicating a medium to 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: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Biggleswade around 6.5 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus services which are of poor quality indicating a low capacity. There is access to the strategic road network, however, the settlement suffers from through traffic.

Environment

7. The south of the settlement is constrained by areas of flood risk.
8. Development in the west is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. Development in the southern half of the settlement is constrained by designated heritage settings (Conservation Area and associated Listed Buildings)

²⁰⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

WRESTLINGWORTH SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail / convenience facilities. The environmental constraints can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the northern half of the settlement.

Whilst development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, and the environmental constraints largely be avoided in the east of the settlement, development at this scale would likely have a detrimental impact on the rural character and appearance of the settlement. Whilst small scale development could avoid such problems it is also likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.