



Appendix D: Area D Assessments



CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN: INITIAL SETTLEMENTS CAPACITY STUDY

Appendix IID: Area D Initial Settlement Capacity Assessment

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BLUNHAM

Blunham is a village and civil parish in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 950 people in around 490 dwellings¹. The settlement is located to the east of Bedford, and the River Ivel and its floodplain borders the settlement to the east. Further to the east on the other side of the river is the A1. The village is low-lying and contains a large church, with part of the masonry dating back to 1100². The southern part of the historic village includes the parkland of Blunham House which combines with the aforementioned river valley landscape to provide a pleasant rural backdrop to the village. Further to the south, the disused railway line cuts east-west³.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Blunham. The settlement is not constrained by Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁵ identifies the area as consisting of "householders in inexpensive village homes" and "well-off homeowners in rural locations". ONS data⁶ for Blunham LLSOA identifies the median age of the area as being 46 and that there are more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16. This suggests that the area has an older population with fewer young people and young families residing in the area.

The settlement has a number of key services and facilities including 2 community centres, 2 pre-schools/nurseries, a lower school, a restaurant/takeaway, a pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have any secondary education facilities, healthcare, banking facilities, supermarkets, convenience stores or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close⁷ to the Blunham area include Sandy (approx. 3 miles) and Biggleswade (approx. 7 miles). The settlement has an active community with a number of clubs and groups operating in the settlement.

There are a variety of Leisure Strategy sites⁸ within the centre of the settlement, including a recreation ground. To the south of the settlement in the old Blunham railway track, now a designated Leisure Strategy site. The settlement has a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, but a deficit of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments⁹.

¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Sandy Ward Profile

² <http://blunham.bedsparishes.gov.uk/assets/documents/about-blunham>

³ Blunham Conservation Area (2005) [Online]

<http://blunham.bedsparishes.gov.uk/assets/documents/conservation-area>

⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Sandy Ward Profile

⁶ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Blunham Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁷ Google Maps (2016)

⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁹ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: John Donne Lower School has a net capacity of 110 pupils, with 65 pupils on the roll as of January 2016. The school site does not have the capacity for expansion. Sandy Upper School has a net capacity of 1021 pupils, with 553 pupils on roll as of January 2016. The school site does not have the capacity for expansion¹⁰.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Blunham¹¹. ONS data¹² for Blunham LLSOA shows that 37% of residents work full time, 12% work part time and 21% are retired. The proportion of residents in employment is lower than the average for Central Bedfordshire, however the proportion of residents who are retired is higher. The main industries of employment for the area are construction, wholesale and retail and manufacturing. 27% of Sandy ward (which Blunham is located within) residents work within the ward, and 17% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main destination commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford¹³.

Transport and Movement:

Road: The settlement has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A1 to the east via Tempsford Road. The level of stress on the A1 in the LATP area is relatively low¹⁴. The local road network also connects Blunham to Sandy, Moggerhanger and Tempsford.

Rail: The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement, with the nearest station being Sandy, 4 miles to the south-east and on the East Coast Main Line.

Bus: The settlement contains bus stops for residential use, and there is access to the town centre via public footpaths/cycle paths. The quality of the waiting facilities is of poor quality. In a number of cases raised kerbs are provided to enable easier access onto buses, although there is a lack of shelters, lighting and service information in the majority of cases. There is a lack of bus services which actually directly serve the train stations and this undermines the attraction of public transport based trips for journeys further afield¹⁵.

Priorities: Through traffic and associated speeding, parking issues connected to the school and a lack of footpaths for leisure walks are among the key transport concerns in the village¹⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Blunham is located in the Tempsford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Moggerhanger and Tempsford. The

¹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

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

¹² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Blunham Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Sandy Ward Profile

¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Biggleswade & Sandy Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 884 dwellings¹⁷.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Blunham is located within the Great Ouse Clay Valley. The valley follows the course of the rivers Ouse and Ivel, including their confluence at Tempsford. The valley is founded on Oxford Clay and Alluvium with deposits of Valley and Glacial Gravel. The valley has large areas of open water, with the courses of the river being marked by narrow woodland belts and willow trees. The valley slopes are mostly used for arable farming, with the valley floor used for pasture, quarrying and recreational use¹⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: A large area of land immediately to the west and south of the village is Grade 1 agricultural land. The eastern side of the settlement is Grade 3 agricultural land; however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Blunham has a number of *Listed Buildings*. The majority of the Listed Buildings are located in a cluster to the south of the settlement around the local church. Heading north along the High Street Listed Buildings can be found at regular intervals. The settlement contains a *Conservation Area* which covers a large area of the southern half of the settlement, and extends north along the High Street. Many of the older buildings in the settlement are situated around the church, which provides a strong character to the settlement. The position of the church on the edge of the floodplain, coupled with the rising land up the hill towards Great Barford means that glimpse views of the church are a vital component of the village's character. Equally important are the views out over open countryside to the south, east and north of the village which act as a backdrop to many of Blunham's fine buildings. Most of the settlement is located in an *Archaeological Notification Area*. There are areas of similar designations in the surrounding land.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement. To the east of the settlement is Zwetsloots Pits, a designated County Wildlife Site and to the south-west is South Mills Pit County Wildlife Site. There are areas of Floodplain Grazing Marsh to the north-east of the settlement, as well as a small area of Wet Woodland. The Green Infrastructure Network Corridor No 3 borders the settlement to the east and south. The Biodiversity Network borders the settlement to the north, east and west.

Flood Risk: The settlement is particularly constrained by flood risk zones 2 & 3, to the north, east and west due to the Rivers Ivel and Great Ouse¹⁹.

¹⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

¹⁹ 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. There are large areas of land surrounding the settlement which are designated flood zones. 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 provision for primary education but not at secondary level within the village. There appears to be some limited capacity at both levels both within and outside the settlement.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities, indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: The retail offer in Blunham appears to be very limited, indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Blunham is provided with a variety of recreational sites but there are certain types of recreation for which there is a deficit of provision.
5. Green Belt: No Green Belt constraints

Transport & Movement

6. The settlement has access to the primary road network, and rail networks are outside of the settlement. Bus services are limited and facilities for waiting are poor, indicating a low capacity.

Environment

7. The village is bordered to the east by flood zones, severely restricting growth in that direction. This area is also identified as part of the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure networks. There are also Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area within the settlement.
8. To the west north and south Blunham is partially encircled by best and most versatile agricultural land.

BLUNHAM SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

The village of Blunham is constrained by significant flood risk constraints in the east and highest quality agricultural land around the rest of settlement. In addition it lacks some community facilities that would be necessary to support development. New growth could support enhanced service and facility provisions, however this is likely to result in the loss of BMV agricultural land and the scale required to address the existing lack of provisions may affect settlement identity.

CAMPTON

Campton and Chicksands is a civil parish in Central Bedfordshire comprising the villages of Campton and Chicksands, with a population of around 1700 residents in around 580 dwellings²⁰ (Combined population and number of dwellings for both settlements). Campton village stands on a tributary of the River Ivel and is centred around the 13th Century All Saints' Church.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: At this stage there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement, and the Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²¹. Campton is not located within or surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²² identifies the area consisting mostly of “younger households in housing prices within their means” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data²³ for the Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst Lower Layer Super Output Area identifies the median age for the area being 33 which is lower than the median age for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The area has a much higher number of residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65. This fits with the geo-demographic profile of younger households and families residing in this area.

Campton contains a small range of services and facilities, including a village hall, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a pub (with a children's play area) and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not contain any secondary education facilities, healthcare, banking facilities, convenience stores or supermarkets, restaurants or food serving pubs or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close²⁴ to the Campton area include Shefford (approx. 1 miles), Ampthill (approx. 7 miles) and Flitwick (approx. 8 miles).

There are a 4 Leisure Strategy sites²⁵ around the settlement, with 3 located in the settlement and a larger site to the east. Campton has a large surplus of informal large recreation areas and a small surplus of small amenity spaces. However, the settlement has a small deficit of allotments, facilities for young people, play areas for children and formal large recreation areas²⁶.

Education: Campton Lower School is at capacity and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is over capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion²⁷.

²⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

²¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

²³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst Lower Layer Super Output Area- Central Bedfordshire O11E

²⁴ Google Maps (2016)

²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

²⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Campton²⁸. ONS data²⁹ for the Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst Lower Layer Super Output Area reveals 55% of residents are in full time employment, 13% are work part time and 8% are retired. This area has a much higher proportion of residents working full time and a lower number of retired residents than the Central Bedfordshire average. The main industries of employment for residents of Shefford ward were public administration & defence, wholesale & retail, and education. 30% of ward residents worked within the ward and 16% worked elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire was North Hertfordshire³⁰.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Campton has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A507. The local road network connects the settlement to Shefford, Upper Gravenhurst, Meppershall and Chicksands.

Rail: The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Arlesey, 4 miles to the east. Arlesey station is on the East Coast Main Line from where 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 day³¹.

Bus: Campton is serviced by a small range of both commercial and community bus services. However, these run at infrequent times, with a small range of destinations and no services on a Sunday³².

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Campton is located in the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Clifton, Henlow, Broom, Old Warden, Southill, Stanford, Shefford and Chicksands. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 343 dwellings³³.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Campton is located in the Barton-Le-Clay clay vale which is defined by the underlying Gault Clay geology. The landscape is flat or gently rolling, and has expansive views across the vale. The land use is mostly intensive arable cropping with some small areas of pasture land. The north east

²⁸ Employment and Economic Study Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst Lower Layer Super Output Area- Central Bedfordshire 011E

³⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

³¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

³² Ibid.

³³ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

section where Campton is located is a narrower section, taking on more of a valley form³⁴.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Campton is largely surrounded by Grade 2 agricultural land, but east and further west of the settlement there are areas of Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Campton has a collection of *Listed Buildings* situated at the centre of the settlement, and along the road heading north-west that connects the settlement with Chicksands. The centre of Campton is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: North of the A507 there are 3 County Wildlife Sites within the settlement of Chicksands, as well as some Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Wood Pasture and Parkland. The centre of Campton is located within the Green Infrastructure Network, part of GI corridor 8³⁵. The Biodiversity Network immediately borders the settlement to the east and south.

Flood Risk: Campton is bordered by an area of flood risk zones 2 & 3 which stretch from the north-east to the south-west of the settlement³⁶.

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. There are areas of surrounding land classified as flood risk zones as well. The settlements also contain valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Campton Lower School is at capacity and the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is over capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion³⁷.
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. Development could contribute to

³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

³⁵ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³⁶ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

³⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

addressing small deficits in the provision of allotments, facilities for young people, play areas for children and formal large recreation areas.

5. Green Belt: No Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement, with the closest at Arlesey, around 4 miles away, and the bus services in the settlement are infrequent, indicating a low capacity. There is access to the primary road network.

Environment

7. There is an area of flood risk located to the south of the settlement.
8. Development is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. The southern half of the settlement is constrained by the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks.

CAMPTON 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 largely be avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the north, and the provision of mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.

Development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however, the quantum necessary to achieve this is likely to harm the character and identity of Campton. Some low level development could be supported, but this would likely result in an increased reliance on private vehicle.

Development to the north of the settlement could also increase accessibility to the services and facilities available in Chicksands. Any development however is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

CLIFTON

Clifton is a civil parish and village located in Central Bedfordshire with a population of around 2880 residents in around 1320 dwellings³⁸. The parish is fairly low lying and flat, with the current parish boundary being established in 1933. Clifton is bordered to the west by Shefford, to the south-west by Meppershall, to the south and east by Henlow and to the north by Stanford in the parish of Southill³⁹. The village has no dominant architectural style, but does contain a war memorial and village pond⁴⁰.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁴¹ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Clifton is not constrained by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁴² identifies the area as consisting of “established families in large detached homes”, “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”, “elderly people with assets” and “thriving families with children and careers”. ONS data⁴³ for the Clifton & Meppershall Lower LLSOA identifies the median age for the area being 49, higher than the median age for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The area has a higher proportion of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Clifton contains a small collection of services and facilities including a community centre, a lower school, a convenience store, an ATM, a food serving pub, a restaurant/takeaway, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. Clifton does not have any secondary education facilities, healthcare or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close⁴⁴ to the Clifton area include Shefford (approx. 1 mile), Biggleswade (approx. 5 miles) and Ampthill (approx. 10 miles). There are a number of active clubs and groups in Clifton.

In the centre of Clifton there are a collection of Leisure Strategy sites⁴⁵ including playing fields and a cricket ground to the north of the settlement. Clifton has a small deficit in formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments. There is a very small surplus in facilities for young people⁴⁶.

Education: Clifton All Saints Academy is at full capacity and does not have the space to accommodate expansion. Henlow Academy has a net capacity of 560

³⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

³⁹

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/Clifton/TheParishOfCliftonInGeneral.aspx>

⁴⁰ Clifton Conservation Area (2004) [Online at] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/clifton_tcm3-12951.pdf

⁴¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

⁴³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 013B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁴⁴ Google Maps (2016)

⁴⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁴⁶ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

pupils, with 504 pupils on the roll in January 2016, with an increase predicted in the pupil forecast, but does not have the potential for expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is also at capacity, and cannot accommodate expansion⁴⁷.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Clifton⁴⁸. ONS data⁴⁹ for the Clifton & Meppershall LLSOA identifies that 41% of residents work full time, 13.5% of residents work part time and almost 20% are retired. The proportion of residents in full or part time employment for the area is lower than the Central Bedfordshire average, whilst the proportion of residents who are retired is higher than the Central Bedfordshire average. The main industries of employment for ward residents are wholesale & retail, public administration and defence, and health & social work. Almost a quarter of the ward residents work within the ward, and 15% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire was North Hertfordshire⁵⁰.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Clifton has access to the primary road network, and is connected to the east to the A6001 via Broad Street and to the A507 to the south via New Road. The local road network connects Clifton to Shefford, Henlow and Henlow Camp.

Rail: The nearest railway station is Arlesey, around 2 miles to the east.

Bus: Bus services operate within Clifton; however further details were not available in the Local Area Transport Plan. 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 cases⁵¹.

Priorities: The village itself lacks footpaths, dropped crossings and tactile paving in places although is generally a pleasant and quiet village to walk around, with the A507 bypassing the village to the south ensuring that through traffic is minimised. Wide carriageways in places such as Shefford Road and Church Street provide potential for the provision of on-street cycle lanes or increasing the width of footways where necessary⁵².

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Clifton is located in the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Henlow, Broom, Old Warden, Southill, Stanford, Shefford, Campton and Chicksands. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 343 dwellings⁵³.

⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

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

⁴⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 013B Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

⁵³ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Clifton 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 landscape⁵⁴.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Clifton is surrounded by Grade 2 agricultural land in the north and south of the settlement. To the north-west there is a patch of Grade 1 agricultural land, and to the east and west there is Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: There are a number of *Listed Buildings* in the centre of Clifton, with a small number scattered around the north of the settlement, including Clifton Manor house. Clifton *Conservation Area* is situated in the centre of the settlement, and follows Church Street from north to south. The character of the Conservation Area is defined by the distinct contrast between the character of the road as a result of road widths and the character of areas beyond the back edge of the footpaths. The area around the village pond contributes to the rural character of the village. The area has no dominant architectural style, with most buildings using red and yellow bricks with clay tiled or natural slate roofs, although a few buildings do have thatched roofs⁵⁵. The centre of the settlement is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is the land to the east and north.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement, however there is a County Wildlife Site north of Clifton. There are a number of Traditional Orchards around the northern areas of the settlement and an area of Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the south-west. The Biodiversity Network passes north and east of the settlement, and the Green Infrastructure Network follows the same route.

Flood Risk: The settlement is largely bordered by flood risk zones 2 and 3 to the north and to the east⁵⁶.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

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

⁵⁴ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

⁵⁵ Clifton Conservation Area (2004) [Online at] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/clifton_tcm3-12951.pdf

⁵⁶ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Wildlife Site and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks. 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 LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is a lack of capacity for accommodating more school children with all four academies at or near capacity.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities and consequently no capacity for growth.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Some limited facilities are present indicating a limited capacity in this respect.
4. Leisure/Cultural: There are very limited outdoor recreational facilities indicating very limited capacity for growth.
5. Green Belt: Clifton is not in the Green Belt.

Transport and Movement

6. The village is well served by rail, and has good accessibility to the national road network. This indicates capacity for development.

Environment

7. Development at Clifton would adversely affect grade 1 agricultural land and consequently this limits the capacity for development.
8. Depending on the location of new development there are dangers posed to the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks and a locally designated wildlife area.
9. The village benefits from both a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings and consequently new development pressures could adversely affect the setting and future of these heritage assets.

CLIFTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Although the settlement is outside the Green Belt it is constrained by a lack of facilities particularly in education, health and retail.

Transport access is good offering potential for development, however there are countervailing constraints of both natural and historic environments.

While development of sufficient scale may provide an impetus to provide new social and community facilities this could only be achieved via the delivery of large scale development which is likely to be to the detriment of Clifton's character and identity, and would result in the loss of high quality agricultural and environmental amenities.

CLOPHILL

Clophill is a village and civil parish with a population of 7030 people in around 3615 dwellings⁵⁷. Clophill is around 5 miles to the east of Flitwick and is bordered by the River Flit to the south. The settlement is the mid-point in a string of settlements lying along the valley of the River Flit⁵⁸. The settlement has a Village Green which was most likely a market place in the medieval period⁵⁹. A church was built for the village in the 15th century, however this fell into disrepair, and a new church was constructed in 1849⁶⁰.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

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

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁶¹ identifies the Parish as consisting of “householder in inexpensive village homes”, “established families in large detached homes” and “thriving families with children and careers”. ONS data⁶² for the Clophill LLSOA identifies the median age of residents to be 47 and that there are slightly more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available in Clophill include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a convenience store, a post office a restaurant/takeaway and 2 food serving pubs. The settlement does not have any secondary educational facilities, any banking facilities or any recreational facilities. Notable towns with superstores close⁶³ to the Clophill area include Ampthill (approx. 4 miles), Flitwick (approx. 4 miles) and Shefford (approx. 5 miles).

The settlement has some small leisure strategy sites⁶⁴, including an allotment plot. Clophill has a deficit of countryside recreation sites, urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments⁶⁵.

Education: St Mary's VA CofE Lower School has a small amount of capacity but cannot accommodate expansion on site. Arnold Academy is close to capacity with an increase in numbers predicted, and an expansion already planned. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE⁶⁶ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra

⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Ampthill Ward Profile

⁵⁸ Clophill Conservation Area (2008) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/clophill_tcm3-12952.pdf

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ <http://www.stmaryschurchclophill.org/st-mary-clophill/st-marys-the-virgin-history.html>

⁶¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Ampthill Ward Profile

⁶² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 008E Clophill Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁶³ Google Maps (2016)

⁶⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁶⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁶⁶ Form of Entry

pupils, or around 1143 dwellings. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size. Redborne Upper School and Community College is close to capacity and any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion⁶⁷.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Clophill⁶⁸. ONS data⁶⁹ for the Clophill LLSOA reveals that 39% of residents work full time, 12.3% work part time and 18% are retired. The employment figures for the area are lower than those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whereas the proportion of people who are retired or self-employed is higher. Wholesale & retail, education, manufacturing and professional, scientific and technical are the main industries of employment within the area. 26% of residents work within the ward, 18% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and the most commuted to location by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford.

Transport and Movement: The settlement is connected to the primary road network with access to the A6 and the A507. The settlement does not have a railway station, and the nearest station is Flitwick, 4 miles to the west. There are bus stops within the settlement available for residents to use.

Bus: Whilst there are a large number of different services operating in the plan area, they are infrequent, do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods, and are heavily reliant on being subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council. The lack of frequent links to the main employment centres of Bedford, Milton Keynes and Luton in particular, reduces the potential to travel local residents to commute by bus. This is compounded by the old and often poor quality vehicles which operate along these routes⁷⁰.

Roads: The A6 is a key north / south route through Central Bedfordshire linking Clophill with Luton in the south with Bedford in the north. Clophill is also connected to the A507, a key east / west link through Central Bedfordshire providing access to both the A1 and the M1 at Junction 13⁷¹. The M1 in the vicinity of Clophill operates at between 110-130% of capacity. However, the Highways Agency anticipates that levels of stress on the network will increase in the period up until 2026 to 130-150% of capacity as a consequence of the increase in demand for to travel along the corridor⁷².

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Clophill is located in the Clophill Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Silsoe and Maulden. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 2442 dwellings⁷³.

⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁶⁸ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁶⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 008E Clophill Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁷⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Amphill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Clophill is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT. This area is a large scale ridge with an undulating ridge top with far reaching views across the adjacent landscapes. The area has a high ecological value and a strong underlying heathland character, as well as extensive areas of deciduous woodland.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The settlement contains and is bordered to the north, east and partially in the south by Grade 2 agricultural land. To the west there is an area of Grade 1 agricultural land. Some land north of the settlement is classified as non-agricultural.

Historic Environment: *Listed Buildings* can be found mostly along the High Street running from east to west, and are fairly evenly spread out along this road. There are around three other Listed Buildings in the north of the settlement, including the church and the old granary. The *Conservation Area* within Clophill encompasses most of the settlement with the character of the area being defined by its 3 broad types; the High Street (mostly narrow and long plots); Kiln Lane, Little Lane & Mill Lane (less formal and more varied in shape) and suburbanised 20th century infilling. The predominant building material in the Conservation Area is red brick. There is a *Scheduled Monument* to the south of the village, and the High Street is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: To the east of Clophill is Maulden Woods & Pennyfather's Hills SSSI and County Wildlife Site (CWS). Flit Valley CWS borders the settlement along its southern edge, and Warren Wood CWS is on the other side of that site. Chicksands Wood CWS is to the north-east of the village. There are a number of priority habitats around the village including Traditional Orchards, Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Lowland Meadows, and the village and surrounding land is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (GI corridor 6⁷⁴) Networks surrounds the settlement.

Flood Risk: The settlement is bordered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 along its southern boundary⁷⁵.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

Clophill contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, an SSSI, numerous County Wildlife Site. The settlement is also part of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area, and close to a flood risk area. The settlement is a sensitive heritage setting with numerous designated heritage assets contributing

⁷⁴ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

⁷⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

the overall character and identity of the area including a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There are no schools within the settlement indicating a low capacity. Outside of the settlement there is limited capacity in schools. There is potential expansion capacity at Harlington Upper School to accommodate between 214 and 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Some facilities present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Lack of leisure facilities indicating a low 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, facilities for young people and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Flitwick, around 4 miles away, and the settlement is not well-served by bus connections which are infrequent and of varying quality. There is good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Any development around the settlement is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Development is also constrained by the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks, and growth in the north of the settlement may affect the designated SSSI. Development could however also contribute to the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.
8. Development in the south is constrained by flood risk areas and the large locally designated County Wildlife Site.
9. Development east of the A6, around the settlement edge, could affect the heritage setting, including the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

CLOPHILL SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

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

Development may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, particularly in the north and south of the settlement. Development in the south is further constrained by significant areas of flood risk.

Whilst development of a sufficient quantum could support improved service and facility provisions, this scale may also affect environmental amenities, particularly biodiversity, as well as the character and identity of Clophill. Some small scale development could deliver a range of housing for the local community, however it may also increase reliance on the private vehicle.

EVERTON

Everton is a village located in the east of Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 520 people and containing 230 dwellings⁷⁶.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council⁷⁷ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. The settlement is not located within or surrounded by any designated Green belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁷⁸ identifies Everton as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data⁷⁹ for the LLSOA Everton is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 42, and that the area has slightly more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Everton include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a non-food serving pub and outdoor recreational facilities. Everton does not have secondary educational facilities, banking facilities, healthcare facilities, supermarkets, convenience stores, post offices or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close⁸⁰ to the Everton area include Sandy (approx. 3 miles) and Biggleswade (approx. 6 miles).

Everton has 3 Leisure Strategy sites⁸¹ in the centre of the village. The settlement has a small deficit of allotments, informal large recreation areas and small amenity spaces. However, there is a small surplus of formal large recreation areas and play areas for children⁸².

Education: Everton Lower School is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Sandy Upper School has existing capacity but does not have the existing site capacity to accommodate expansion⁸³.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Everton⁸⁴. ONS data⁸⁵ for the LLSOA Everton is located within reveals that 15% of residents work part-time, 43.2% work full-time and 12.3% are retired, all figures similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are wholesale & retail, manufacturing and education. Overall 23% of residents work within the ward and 19% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The

⁷⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁷⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

⁷⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁷⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003C Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁸⁰ Google Maps (2016)

⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

⁸² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

⁸³ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

⁸⁴ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

⁸⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 003C Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford⁸⁶.

Transport and Movement: The road network connects Everton to the nearby settlements of Sandy and Potton. The village has no railway station, and the closest station is in Sandy, around 2.5 miles to the south-west. The settlement is supported by bus services; however further in-depth details are not available in the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Everton is located in the Everton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area, and is the only settlement located in the catchment. The existing capacity of the WwTW is equivalent to a capacity of 244 dwellings in Everton⁸⁷.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Everton is located within the Everton Heath Greensand Ridge LCT. This LCT is an elevated landscape and the sense of scale and enclosure varies from enclosed dark beech plantations, to vast open panoramas from the ridge top. There is a strong underlying heathland character, a number of estate parklands and a sparse road network. It can also be seen as a recreational landscape with facilities and extensive walks associated with the RSPB reserve and the long distance route of the Greensand Ridge Walk⁸⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Most of the village and the land to the east and south is grade 3 agricultural land, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known. The land to the north and west is designated as Grade 4 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: Everton has 5 *Listed Buildings* which are located in the centre of the village. There is a moated enclosure to the north of the village, which is also a *Scheduled Monument*. Most of the settlement is located within a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is much of the land to the north, east and south.

Biodiversity: Everton Hill County Wildlife Site (CWS), which contains Lowland Meadow Priority Habitats, and Everton Churchyard CWS are located in the centre of the village. There are 4 additional CWS to the north of the village which contain Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Lowland Beech and Yew as well as an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland. The settlement is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. Everton is located within and surrounded by the Biodiversity Network, which encompasses the land around the CWS and Priority Habitats. The Green Infrastructure Network encompasses much of the same land, and is part of GI corridor 4⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Potton Ward Profile

⁸⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

⁸⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

⁸⁹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk around the settlement⁹⁰.

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. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings, and a Scheduled Monument. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in the catchment and no room for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: No healthcare facilities present indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: No retail / convenience facilities present, indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Limited facilities present indicating a medium to low capacity. Development could contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of allotments, informal large recreation areas and small amenity spaces.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Everton does not benefit from any retail provision so residents must travel to nearby towns for their day to day needs. Rail links are located in Sandy, around 2.5 miles away. Bus services are available in the settlement however, the frequency and quality of the services are unknown at this stage. There is no access to the strategic road network. Overall indication of a medium - low capacity.

Environment

7. Development in the north, and far south of the Parish could affect a designated heritage setting (Scheduled Monument and Registered Historic Park and Garden in neighbouring Parish of Sandy).

⁹⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

8. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks surround the settlement and development in the east and west is constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWSs).

EVERTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities.

The biodiversity and heritage constraints in Everton can be avoided through the appropriate siting of development.

Overall, development of a limited could be supported by the existing service and facility provisions. However, larger scale development is likely to be of detriment to environmental amenities and the character of the settlement.

FLITTON & GREENFIELD

Greenfield is a small village about 1.2 miles from the town of Flitwick. It lies across Flitwick Moor and is on the opposite side of the River Flit. It forms part of the parish of Flitton and Greenfield. The area was once well known as a strawberry producing area, and the fields were full of strawberry plants on either side of the main road. It is now a thriving village with several small businesses. Flitton forms the other part of the parish and derives its name from River Flit. It is the home of the De Grey Mausoleum adjacent to St John the Baptist Church. Flitton contains the hamlet of Wardhedges. It too has a number of small businesses and working farms⁹¹. Flitton and Greenfield have a combined population of 1420 with around 570 dwellings⁹²

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Flitton and Greenfield has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area that is joint with Pulloxhill and which follows the parish boundaries⁹³. The Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed. Flitton & Greenfield is slightly bordered by the Green Belt designation to the north-west, however this is not sufficient to significantly constrain the settlement.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile⁹⁴ for Flitton & Greenfield Parish shows that the parish is mostly comprised of “established families in large detached homes” and “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data⁹⁵ for the Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill LLSOA shows the median age being 44 for the area, with 45% of the population being between the ages of 30 and 60. The area has a higher number of residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65. This supports the geo-demographic profiling for the area as having a high number of families.

The area contains a number of services and facilities including 2 community centres, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 3 food serving pubs, a children's play area and outdoor recreational facilities. However, there are no financial, health, restaurants/takeaways, secondary education or supermarket facilities in the parish. Notable towns with superstores close⁹⁶ to the Flitton & Greenfield area include Flitwick (approx. 1 mile), Shefford (approx. 7 miles) and Houghton Regis (approx. 9 miles). Flitton and Greenfield parish has an active local community, with a quarterly news magazine available for local residents, an annual gala, a vibrant church group and a 3D youth theatre run in the village hall⁹⁷.

There are a number of Leisure Strategy sites⁹⁸ in both Greenfield and Flitton, including recreation grounds and allotments. Flitton & Greenfield have a small

⁹¹ Flitton & Greenfield Parish Council

⁹² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁹³ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

⁹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

⁹⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

⁹⁶ Google Maps (2016)

⁹⁷ Flitton & Greenfield Parish Council

⁹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

surplus in formal large recreation areas and a large surplus in informal large recreation areas. There is also a small surplus in allotments and play areas for children. The settlements have a deficit in Small Amenity Spaces and facilities for young people⁹⁹.

Education: Greenfield lower school is operating at capacity and the school site does not have any site capacity for expansion. Arnold Academy has a net capacity of 600 pupils, with 586 pupils registered as present in January, and an increase in this figure is predicted in the pupil forecasts. However, an expansion of the school is planned for September 2018. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, which would allow for 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size¹⁰⁰.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Flitton & Greenfield¹⁰¹. ONS data for the for the Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill LLSOA shows that 39% of residents work full-time, 14% work part-time and 17% are retired. The full and part-time employment figures are lower than those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment for ward residents are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. 25% of the ward residents commute outside of the ward but stay within Central Bedfordshire, and less than a fifth of the ward residents stay within the ward to work. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton¹⁰².

Transport and Movement:

Rail: The closest train station is located in Flitwick, which is around 2 miles to the north-west.

Road: The main route that travels through the two areas is Greenfield Road and the High Street. These roads connect to the A507 and A6, providing the settlements with access to the primary road network. The local road network also connects the settlement with Silsoe, Flitwick, Pulloxhill and Westoning.

Bus: The settlements are served by bus services for residential use, however further details about the regularity and range of services was not available in the Local Area Transport Plan.

Priorities: The prevalence of HGVs within the villages and the lack of public transport provision are central to the issues to be addressed in the area. An absence of footpaths and narrow footpaths in places also contribute towards the heavy dependency on the private for accessing employment opportunities and service provision¹⁰³.

⁹⁹ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

¹⁰⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹⁰¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁰² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

¹⁰³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Flitton & Greenfield are located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Wardhedges, Westoning, Eversholt, Tingrith, Steppingley and Ampthill. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings¹⁰⁴.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement lies partially within the Flit Greensand Valley which is a medium scale valley cutting through the diagonal band of Greensand with small areas of Oxford Clay and Gault Clay¹⁰⁵. The settlement also lies partially within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT which is a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top; forming part of the prominent band of Greensand that extends SW-NE across Central Bedfordshire. The land use pattern is a mix of arable and pasture, with smaller scale fields enclosed by hedgerows which provide enclosure.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: A significant part of Greenfield and Flitton is Grade 2 agricultural land. The remaining land is Grade 3, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: There are numerous *Listed Buildings* within both Flitton and Greenfield. Within Flitton these are largely within the central area, and within Greenfield the majority of the Listed Buildings are located in the west of the settlement. The central area of Flitton is a designated *Conservation Area*. The Conservation Area is largely homogenous in character and encompasses the historic core of the village including the High Street. The character is expressed by the use of local materials and built form, giving it local distinctiveness, as well as hedgerows and trees which establish continuity and enclosure of the streetscape. The dominant material at the centre of the Conservation Area is the iron stone of the church and retaining wall of the churchyard.

There is also timber framed cottages and soft mellow cream/red brick used for more recent buildings¹⁰⁶. There is a *Scheduled Monument* located to the west of Flitton and north of Greenfield, and another located to the south of both settlements. There are *Archaeological Notification Areas* located within the central area of Flitton and in the northern/western area of Greenfield. There are additional designations in between the two settlements.

Biodiversity: Flitwick Moor SSSI and County Wildlife Site is located to the north-west of Greenfield and Flitton Moor Local Nature Reserve is located just to the north of Flitton. Both of these sites contain Priority Habitats of Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Deciduous Woodland and Lowland Fens. The land north and south of the settlements is located within the Biodiversity Network and Green Infrastructure

¹⁰⁴ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁰⁵ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 7

¹⁰⁶ http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/flitton_tcm3-12955.pdf

Network. The settlement is also part of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.

Flood Risk: The settlement is bound to the north by Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3¹⁰⁷.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

Flitton & Greenfield contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, an SSSI, a local nature reserve and 2 County Wildlife Sites. The settlement is also part of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area, and close to a flood risk area. The settlement is also a sensitive heritage setting with numerous designated heritage assets contributing the overall character and identity of the area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: While there is a primary school it is at capacity and there is no secondary school in the settlement. Secondary schools nearby are also operating at or near capacity.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities in the settlement.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: There is no retail offer in Flitton and Greenfield.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Despite having a very active community the leisure and cultural facilities are restricted to the out-doors in the form of a recreation ground and allotments.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is not in the Green Belt.

Transport & Movement

6. There is a railway station within two miles and bus services serve the settlement. There is access to the national road network nearby but the parish suffers from heavy HGV through traffic.

Environment

7. To the west of the settlement are SSSI, a County Wildlife Site, the green infrastructure network and Local Nature Reserve designations which severely limit the growth potential. There is also a Conservation Area in central Flitton.
8. The settlement is surrounded by grade 2 agricultural land and to the north-west lies a flood zone.

¹⁰⁷ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

FLITTON & GREENFIELD SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

The capacity of Flitton and Greenfield to accommodate new development is highly constrained by both social and environmental factors. The lack of social facilities including schools, shops and healthcare suggest that development would add to the existing shortfall.

In addition, the environmental constraints of wildlife designations, high quality agricultural land and flooding all add to the conclusion that this is a settlement with low development capacity.

UPPER GRAVENHURST

Gravenhurst is a civil parish created in 1888 by amalgamating Lower Gravenhurst¹⁰⁸ and Upper Gravenhurst¹⁰⁹. The parish has a population of around 600 residents and around 240 dwellings¹¹⁰. The upper village is built upon irregular ground on a prominent piece of land about 200 ft. above ordnance datum, with a steep fall to the south. The church is in the middle of the village close to the point where a road running north-west from Shillington meets the High Street¹¹¹. The River Hit flows to the east of the settlement.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹¹² and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Gravenhurst. The settlement is not constrained by the Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹¹³ for Gravenhurst shows that the settlement is a mix of “well-off homeowners in rural locations” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data¹¹⁴ for the Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst LLSOA show the median age for the area as being 33. The area has a higher number of people between the ages of 20-30 than the average for Central Bedfordshire. The area also has a higher proportion of people under the age of 16 than over 65.

The settlement does not have a wide range of facilities and services, with only a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, outdoor recreational facilities and a lower school present in the settlement. The settlement does not have any secondary education facilities, health facilities, pubs, restaurants, supermarkets, convenience stores, banking facilities or leisure facilities. Notable towns with superstores close¹¹⁵ to the Gravenhurst area include Shefford (approx. 4 miles), Flitwick (approx. 7 miles) and Ampthill (approx. 6 miles).

There are 2 Leisure Strategy sites¹¹⁶ located in Upper Gravenhurst, 1 being a recreation ground and 1 being an allotment. The settlement has a deficit of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and play areas for children. However, there is a surplus of formal large recreation areas and allotments¹¹⁷.

Education: Gravenhurst Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is also at capacity and cannot

¹⁰⁸ Lower Gravenhurst is considered as a hamlet in this study and will therefore not be included

¹⁰⁹ Gravenhurst Parish Council

¹¹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

¹¹¹ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol2/pp336-338>

¹¹² Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

¹¹⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹¹⁵ Google Maps (2016)

¹¹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹¹⁷ Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is also at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE¹¹⁸ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size¹¹⁹.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Gravenhurst¹²⁰. ONS data¹²¹ for the Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst LLSOA shows that 55% of residents are in full time employment which is significantly higher than the average for Central Bedfordshire. Around 13% of the residents are in part time employment with 8% of the residents being retired. Both of these figures are lower than the average for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment for ward residents are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. Around 20% of the residents work within the ward, and 20% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire. The main destination ward residents commute to outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Gravenhurst is connected to the A6 via Gravenhurst Road to the south, and connected to the A507 to the north via Clophill Road. The local road network also connects the settlement to Clophill, Campton and Silsoe.

Rail: The closest railway stations are located outside of the settlement, with Arlesey station (East Coast Main Line) being 6 miles to the east and Flitwick station (Midland Main Line) being 6.5 miles to the west.

Bus: Gravenhurst benefits from a small range of bus services, both commercial and community. However, these services are largely infrequent and many do not run at the weekends or on Sundays¹²².

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Upper Gravenhurst is located in the Shillington Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Shillington, Meppershall, Apsley End and Lower Stondon. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1992 dwellings¹²³.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

¹¹⁸ Form of Entry

¹¹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹²⁰ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹²¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shefford, Campton and Gravenhurst Lower Layer Super Output Area

¹²² Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Shefford, Silsoe and Shillington Local Area Transport Plan

¹²³ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is located within the Upper Gravenhurst-Meppershall Clay Hills. The two sections of this LCT are separated by part of the Barton-Le-Clay Vale. The area is characterised by two groups of undulating low hills. There is a strong sense of elevation with distant views across the adjacent vales and across the intervening low ground to the other section of the area. The area is predominantly arable farmland with irregular, medium to large fields. Rural roads rise up the slopes of the hills, and the expansion of settlements along the roads has partially concealed the largely open, rural landscape¹²⁴.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Upper Gravenhurst is located within an area of Grade 2 agricultural land which extends north-east of the settlement.

Historic Environment: Upper Gravenhurst has a collection of *Listed Buildings* in the centre and to the north-east of the settlement. Although there are no *Conservation Areas* within the settlement Wrest Park Conservation Area borders Upper Gravenhurst to the west. Upper Gravenhurst is situated in *Archaeological Notification Areas* and to the east of Gravenhurst is Wrest Park, a designated *Historic Park and Garden*.

Biodiversity: There are no nationally or internationally designated biodiversity or nature conservation areas within Gravenhurst. There are 2 County Wildlife Sites to the North of Upper Gravenhurst and 2 to the West. The Green Infrastructure Network covers Upper Gravenhurst and divides into two strands going southwards, bordering Lower Gravenhurst to the north, east and west but does not cover the settlement. The Biodiversity Network passes to the east of Upper and Lower Gravenhurst. There are areas of Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the west of Lower Gravenhurst.

Flood Risk: The settlement is bounded to the east and south by flood risk zones 2 and 3¹²⁵.

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 is significantly constrained to the west by a large Conservation Area, Historic Parks and Gardens and Archaeological Notification Areas. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

¹²⁴ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

¹²⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Gravenhurst has a lack of capacity of schools both within and serving the settlement. Any new development would probably require new school capacity to be created.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities in the village.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: There are no retail facilities in Gravenhurst although neighbouring settlements do provide facilities.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Only very limited leisure facilities are available in the settlement.
5. Green Belt: Gravenhurst is not in the Green Belt

Transport & Movement

6. The settlement is poorly served by public transport but has access to the national road network to the north and south. There are no railway stations within convenient distance.

Environment

7. Gravenhurst is highly constrained by environmental designations. To the west is Gravenhurst Lodge historic park and garden which is a Conservation Area. It is surrounded by the green infrastructure network and contains a number of listed buildings. The biodiversity network runs from south-west to north-east to the east of the village.
8. The settlement is also surrounded by grade 2 agricultural land as well as flood zones to the south and east.

UPPER GRAVENHURST SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

The capacity of Gravenhurst to accommodate new development is highly constrained in respect of both social and environmental factors. There are insufficient facilities to support growth and the lack of educational capacity both within and nearby reinforces this conclusion. The plethora of environmental constraints adds further weight to this judgement.

HAYNES

Haynes is a village and civil parish with a residential population of 1,200 people in around 500 dwellings¹²⁶. The parish is comprised of four ends, West End, Church End¹²⁷, Silver End and Northwood End¹²⁸. The village of Hayne is located in the north-east of the parish, Haynes is situated around 8 miles south of Bedford, with the A6 bordering the parish to the west.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹²⁹ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Haynes. The settlement is not located within or surrounded by any designated Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹³⁰ of Haynes identifies the area as consisting of “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data¹³¹ for the Haynes LLSOA reveals the median age of residents to be 48 and that the area has more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Haynes has a small range of services and facilities which includes a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a newsagent, a post office, a food serving pub, recreational facilities and a children's play area. The settlement does not have secondary educational facilities, healthcare facilities, supermarkets or convenience stores, restaurant/takeaway, banks or ATMS, or any entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close¹³² to the Haynes area include Shefford (approx. 4 miles), Ampthill (approx. 6 miles) and Biggleswade (approx. 8 miles). No active clubs and societies operating within Haynes could be found through internet searching.

Haynes has a small number of Leisure Strategy sites¹³³ that includes an allotment site and a recreation ground. The settlement has a small deficit of formal and informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children, facilities for young people and allotments¹³⁴.

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

¹²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Houghton Conquest & Haynes Ward Profile

¹²⁷ Haynes Church End is considered a hamlet in this study, and so is not assessed here

¹²⁸ Haynes Conservation Area (1989) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/haynes_tcm3-12956.pdf

¹²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹³⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Houghton Conquest & Haynes Ward Profile

¹³¹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 008A- Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹³² Google Maps (2016)

¹³³ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

some small capacity, but an increase in numbers is shown in the pupil forecast. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast. The site cannot accommodate expansion¹³⁵.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Haynes¹³⁶. ONS data¹³⁷ for the Haynes LLSOA shows that 13.9 % of residents work part time, 38.8% work full time and 21% are retired. Compared to Central Bedfordshire as a whole the proportion of residents who work full time is slightly lower, whilst the proportion of residents who are retired is significantly higher, with a fifth of the area's residents being retired. Wholesale and retail, construction and professional, scientific and technical are the main industries of employment in the area. 22% of ward residents worked work within the ward and 20% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main destination to commute to outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford¹³⁸.

Transport and Movement: Haynes is connected to the primary road network, with access to the A6 via Church End Road to the west of the village and access to the A600 to the west. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest stations being in Stewartby (7.7 miles to the west) and in Biggleswade (7.9 miles to the east). The settlement has bus stops for residential use.

Bus: The area is served mainly by local bus routes and Community Transport services. The quality of the waiting facilities is generally poor across the area. Bus stops often consist of little more than a pole with a flag, with little or no timetable information or shelters, and where a shelter is provided it is often dirty and uninviting to users. Haynes benefits from bus services running every 30 minutes – via a combination of two bus services – that provide access to employment, services, and leisure opportunities in nearby towns and villages. For Haynes, these bus services provide links to Bedford, Shefford, Henlow, Arlesey, and Hitchin¹³⁹.

Road: The A6 is a key north / south route through Central Bedfordshire linking Barton-le-Clay with Luton in the south and Bedford in the north, and Haynes is connected to the A6 via Church End Road to the west. The A600 links Bedford to Shefford, via Haynes. This route is busy, but relatively free flowing for much of the day. This route provides onward connections to the A421 in the North, and the A507 in the South¹⁴⁰.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Haynes is the only settlement located in the Haynes Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area and the WwTW capacity gives Haynes an additional capacity of 423 dwellings¹⁴¹.

¹³⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹³⁶ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹³⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 008A- Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹³⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Houghton Conquest & Haynes Ward Profile

¹³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Haynes & Old Warden Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Haynes is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale elevated landscape with an undulating ridge top. The area has a strong underlying heathland character, a high ecological value, extensive areas of woodland and a large number of Historic Parks and Gardens. Primary transport routes such as the M1 pass through this LCT¹⁴².

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Grade 2 agricultural land dominates the land around the settlement and in the parish, with a small area of Grade 3 (sub-grade 3a or 3b not known) to the south of Haynes.

Historic Environment: Haynes has 3 *Listed Buildings* in the village itself, and an additional building to the south-west of the village. An *Archaeological Notification Area* extends from the centre of the village to the east following the main road. There is a smaller area in the north of the village, and additional areas in the land to the east and west.

Biodiversity: Warden Great Wood County Wildlife Site (CWS) is directly to the north-east of the settlement, Chicksands Wood CWS, Grange Meadow CWS and Rowney Warren CWS are to the south and St Machute's Wood CWS is to the north-west. There are 3 Traditional Orchards in the village, an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland to the south and blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland within the CWS sites. The entire parish is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network can be found to the north and south of the village, and is part of GI corridor 6¹⁴³. The Biodiversity Network can also be found to the north and partially to the south, mostly encompassing CWS sites within the surrounding area.

Flood Risk: A band of Flood Zones 2 & 3 can be found around half a mile to the south of the village¹⁴⁴.

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 Archaeological Notification Areas. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

¹⁴² Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 6

¹⁴³ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity but some room for expansion indicating a medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Some facilities present indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and 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, 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 in either Stewartby or Biggleswade, both around 8 miles away. Bus services are frequent in the settlement however the infrastructure is of poor quality, indicating a medium to low capacity. There is access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. There is an area of flood risk to the south of the main settlement area, however, this is quite far removed from the settlement edge.
8. Development may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. Development in the north and north-west is constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWS). Development could however also contribute to the objectives of the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area.
10. Development around Haynes Church End is constrained by the designated heritage setting of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.
11. Development around Haynes West End is constrained by designated biodiversity.

HAYNES SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

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

Environmental constraints can largely be avoided through the appropriate siting of development.

Development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however, the quantum necessary to achieve this is likely to be of detriment to environmental amenities and the character of the settlement. Some low level development could be supported, but this may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and is likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle due to the lack of easily accessible services and facilities.

LOWER STONDON

Stondon is a village in the east of Central Bedfordshire and has a population of 2,300 people and contains 1,110 dwellings (population and dwellings combine Upper and Lower Stondon)¹⁴⁵. The settlement is around 10 miles east of Flitwick and around 7 miles south of Biggleswade. Stondon is divided into two sections, Upper Stondon and Lower Stondon¹⁴⁶, with Lower Stondon being the larger of the two villages. Upper Stondon is assessed separately.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Stondon has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area that follows the parish boundary¹⁴⁷, however The Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is not located in or surrounded by any designated Green belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁴⁸ for the area identifies Lower Stondon as consisting of “established families in large detached homes”, “householders in inexpensive village homes”, “elderly people with assets” and “mature suburban owners in mid-range housing”. ONS data¹⁴⁹ for the area shows the median age of residents to be 41, and that there are more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Lower Stondon include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, an ATM, 2 convenience stores, a post office, a chemist, a GP surgery/health centre, 3 restaurants/takeaways, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and 2 children's play areas. There is also a golf course in the settlement, a garden centre, 2 bowling alleys and a theatre. The village does not have secondary education facilities or a supermarket. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁵⁰ to the Lower Stondon area include Shefford (approx. 4 miles), Hitchin (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire) and Biggleswade (approx. 7 miles). The settlement has a variety of clubs and groups.

Lower Stondon has a small number of Leisure Strategy sites¹⁵¹, which are located throughout the village. The settlement has a surplus of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and allotments¹⁵².

¹⁴⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

¹⁴⁶ Upper Stondon is assessed separately

¹⁴⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

¹⁴⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

¹⁴⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 013D- Lower Layer Super Output Area

¹⁵⁰ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁵² Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Education: Stondon Lower School is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site¹⁵³.

Employment: Lower Stondon does not contain a significant employment area¹⁵⁴. ONS data¹⁵⁵ for the area reveals that 14% of residents work part-time, 44.7% work full-time and that 13% are retired. These figures are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. Wholesale & retail, education and manufacturing are the main industries of employment for the area. Overall 23% of ward residents work within the ward, 14% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire is the most commuted to location by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire¹⁵⁶.

Transport and Movement: The village has access to the primary road network, connected to the A600 and further to the north the A507. Lower Stondon is connected to Shillington to the west, Henlow Camp to the east, Meppershall to the north-west and Henlow to the north-east. The village does not have a railway station, and the nearest station to the settlement is in Arlesey, 3 miles to the north-east. There are bus stops present within the settlement. No further information could be found in the Local Area Transport Plan.

Priorities: The A600 Bedford Road runs between Stondon and Henlow and causes some degree of severance between the two areas. There are concerns as to the speed of traffic on the road both in terms of that approaching the village from Shefford in the north and Hitchin in the south, and the concerns over speed discourage walking and cycling in the area and add to the perceived barrier the road creates for east-west movements. The parade of shops close to the Henlow Camp RAF base, at the junction of Bedford Road and Hitchin Road, together with the lower school in Lower Stondon, are key trip attractors in the area and generate significant parking concerns at peak times. On-street parking also impedes the smooth and efficient flow of traffic at these peak times, whilst also accentuating road safety concerns¹⁵⁷.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Lower Stondon is located in the Shillington Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Shillington, Meppershall, Upper Gravenhurst and Aspley End. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1992 dwellings¹⁵⁸.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

¹⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

¹⁵⁴ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

¹⁵⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 013D- Lower Layer Super Output Area

¹⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

¹⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁵⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Lower Stondon is located within the Upper Gravenhurst-Meppershall Clay Hills LCT. This LCT is formed of 2 groups of undulating low hills and the landscape is predominantly under arable use. The area has scattered blocks of woodland and a strong sense of elevation with views across the surrounding landscape¹⁵⁹.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Lower Stondon and the land to the south is located within Grade 3 agricultural land however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known. To the north, east and west the land is classified as Grade 2.

Historic Environment: Lower Stondon has 2 *Listed Buildings* which are both in the middle of the village. The centre of the village is also a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: There are no international, national or local wildlife sites around the settlement, however there are two Traditional Orchard Priority Habitats within the village, and a small area of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the north-west.

Flood Risk: Directly to the south of the village is a band of flood zone (2 & 3) that stretches from east to west along the southern border of Lower Stondon¹⁶⁰.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including agricultural land and areas of flood risk. The settlement contains some 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 LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is very limited capacity in existing schools which have no space for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: 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, Children's Play areas and theatre present indicating a medium capacity. Development could also

¹⁵⁹ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

¹⁶⁰ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

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 Arlesey, around 3 miles away. Bus services are available in the settlement however, the frequency and quality of these services are unknown at this stage. There is access to the strategic road network, however there are also a variety of concerns over road safety in and around the area which lends to discouraging sustainable forms of transports such as walking and cycling, indicating overall a low capacity.

Environment

7. The settlement is significantly constrained to the south by high flood risk areas.

8. Development in the west may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

LOWER STONDON SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium

Overall, there are opportunities for sustainable development in the north, east and west of the settlement, which would be well connected to the existing urban area, and could deliver development gains including a range of housing for the local community. Development in the west however, is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

MAULDEN

Maulden is a small village with a residential population of 3,130 people in around 1,290 dwellings¹⁶¹. The village is located 1.5 miles to the east of Ampthill and 3 miles to the north-east of Flitwick, and is located on a minor road from Ampthill to Clophill. The settlement is situated on the Greensand Ridge and is classed as a residential village and serves larger settlements in commuting distance.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁶² and Maulden does have a Neighbourhood Planning Area, however the plan is yet to be developed. Maulden is bordered by Green Belt land to the west of the village which prevents coalescence with Ampthill to the west.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁶³ of Maulden identifies the Parish as consisting of “elderly people reliant on state support”, “owner occupiers in older-style housing in ex-industrial areas” and “successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes”. ONS data¹⁶⁴ for Maulden reveals the median age of residents to be 43, and that the village has more residents under 16 than over 65.

Maulden has a small collection of services and facilities which include a community centre, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a convenience store, three food serving pubs, outdoor recreational facilities and a children’s play area. The settlement does not have secondary education facilities, restaurants/takeaways, health facilities or entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁶⁵ to the Maulden area include Ampthill (approx. 1 mile), Flitwick (approx. 3 mile) and Shefford (approx. 7 miles). Maulden has a number of active clubs and groups.

Leisure Strategy sites¹⁶⁶ are present in and around the village, including a recreation ground and amenity space. The settlement has a large surplus of informal large recreation areas and a small surplus of formal large recreation areas and allotments. However, there is a deficit of small amenity spaces, play areas for children and facilities for young people¹⁶⁷.

Education: Redborne Upper School and Community College is close to capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site has the capacity for expansion. Maulden Lower School is at capacity, however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the

¹⁶¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Ampthill Ward Profile

¹⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Ampthill Ward Profile

¹⁶⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Maulden Lower Layer Super Output Area (008D)

¹⁶⁵ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁶⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

pupil forecast. The school site has the site capacity for expansion. Alameda Middle School has some existing capacity, although pupil forecasts predict an increase and the school cannot accommodate expansion¹⁶⁸.

Employment: The village does not contain a major employment area¹⁶⁹. Employment data¹⁷⁰ for the area shows that 14.7% of residents work part time, 38.8% of residents work full time and 14.7% are retired. Full time employment figures for the village are lower than the Central Bedfordshire averages, whereas the retired figures are higher. The main industries of employment in the village are wholesale & retail, construction and education. 26% of residents work within the ward and 18% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The most commuted to location outside of Central Bedfordshire by ward residents is Bedford¹⁷¹

Transport and Movement: Maulden does not have access to the primary road network, but is connected to Flitwick via Flitwick Road to the south and Clophill via Clophill Road to the east. The village does not have a railway station, and the nearest station for the village is Flitwick, 3 miles to the south-west. Bus Stops are also present within the village. Ampthill Road through Maulden is often seen as an alternative to the congested A507 for some motorists travelling between Clophill and Ampthill. This has prompted concerns to be aired by local residents and the Police as to the safety implications of speeding traffic within the village, and a priority for local action¹⁷²

Bus: Whilst there are a large number of different services, they are infrequent, do not operate on Sundays or outside of peak periods, and are heavily reliant on being subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁷³.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Maulden is located in the Clophill Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Clophill and Silsoe. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 2442 dwellings¹⁷⁴.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Maulden is located partly within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top. The village extends south to the Flit Greensand Valley ,with it's small pockets of wetland vegetation, market gardening and scattered farmsteads. The area has a strong underlying heathland character and a high ecological value due to the number of nationally important sites present. The LCT also has extensive areas of

¹⁶⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

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

¹⁷⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Maulden Lower Layer Super Output Area (008D)

¹⁷¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Ampthill Ward Profile

¹⁷² Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Deciduous Woodland, Mixed Woodland and Coniferous Plantations, and primary transport routes, cross the area¹⁷⁵.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The village of Maulden is located within Grade 3 agricultural land (sub grade 3a or 3b unknown) which extends north, east and west of the village. To the south of the town the land is Grade 2, and further north, beyond the band of Grade 3, is additional Grade 2 land. Further to the south-east of the village is an area of Grade 1 land.

Historic Environment: Maulden has a small collection of *Listed Buildings* which are mostly situated around the former village green in the east of the village. A small number of individual Listed Buildings are located in the south of Maulden. Maulden's *Conservation Area* is situated in the east of the village around the former village green. The area is characterised by the green space, dramatic views of countryside to the south and the separation of the church from the village gives significance to the spaces between them. Earlier houses in the Conservation Area have timber frames and thatched roofs, whereas red brick has been used for infilling¹⁷⁶. Bolebec Farm moated enclosure is to the north of the village, and is a *Scheduled Monument*. The entire eastern side and middle of the village is in an *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: Maulden Church Meadow is a SSSI, County Wildlife Site (CWS) and Local Nature Reserve is east of the village, as is the much larger Maulden Wood and Pennyfathers Hills SSSI, which also contains the Maulden Woods & Heaths CWS. Duck End Marshy Grassland CWS is to the south of the village and along the southern border of the settlement boundary is the Flit Valley CWS. Lowland Dry Acid Grassland exists to the east, as does Lowland Meadows. The settlement is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network borders the settlement to the north and south and is part of GI corridor 6¹⁷⁷. The Biodiversity Network surrounds the settlement to the north, east and west.

Flood Risk: Flood Zones 2 and 3 border the town to the south, however the flood zones are not directly bordering the village, but are around 1.5km south of Maulden¹⁷⁸.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

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

¹⁷⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

¹⁷⁶ Maulden Village Conservation Area (2008) [Online] <http://www.mauldenvillage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Maulden-Conservation-Area.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

¹⁷⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is room for limited growth and also expansion at Redborne Upper School and Community College as well as Maulden Lower School indicating a medium to high capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Convenience store and post office present indicating a medium to 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 small amenity spaces, play areas for children and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: The west of the settlement is constrained by designated Green Belt land.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links available in the settlement of Flitwick 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. There is no direct access to the strategic road network and the settlement suffers from through-traffic.

Environment

7. Development in the north-east has the potential to affect nationally designated biodiversity (SSSIs). Any development in the north, east and west of the settlement is constrained by the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks.
8. Any development around the settlement is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. Development in the far south of the settlement is constrained by flood risk areas, and locally designated biodiversity.
10. Development in the east of the settlement may affect designated heritage settings.
11. Development to south of Maulden would be visually highly intrusive, mean loss of attractive and good quality soils.
12. Additional infill results in loss of characteristic open space which give Maulden character and provide views to Maulden Woods or the panoramic views to south.

MAULDEN SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium (without Green Belt release: Medium)

Development in the north-east of the settlement may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between Priority Habitats and existing green spaces. Though there are flood risk areas to the south of the settlement these could be avoided through the appropriate siting of development.

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

Overall, the settlement offers opportunities to encourage sustainable development, particularly in the south of the settlement, which is well connected to the existing urban area, and could deliver development gains and improve service and facility provisions in the settlement. Development could also deliver a range of housing for the local community, and there may be potential for environmental improvements.

MEPPERSHALL

Meppershall is a village in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 1,750 people and containing 700 dwellings¹⁷⁹. The village is around 12 miles south of Bedford and 13 miles north of Luton and lies on a low ridge above the valleys of the Flit and Ivel¹⁸⁰. The dwellings are strung out for almost a mile along Shefford Road and the High Street.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

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

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁸² identifies the area as consisting of "single people privately renting", "householders in inexpensive village homes" and "thriving families with children and careers". ONS data¹⁸³ for the Meppershall area reveals that the median age of residents is 45, and that the area has more residents under 16 than over 65.

Services and facilities in Meppershall include a lower school, a newsagent, a post office and a food serving pub. The village does not have secondary education facilities, healthcare facilities, banking facilities, a supermarket, any restaurants/takeaways, any recreational facilities or any entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁸⁴ to the Meppershall area include Shefford (approx. 2 miles), Flitwick (approx. 10 miles) and Ampthill (approx. 9 miles). There are a number of active clubs and groups active within Meppershall.

The settlement contains a small number of Leisure Strategy sites¹⁸⁵ which are mostly situated around the centre of the village. Meppershall has a surplus of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments. However, there is a deficit of formal large recreation areas and facilities for young people¹⁸⁶.

Education: Meppershall Church of England Academy has some capacity but the site cannot accommodate expansion. Henlow Church of England Academy has capacity but an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast and the site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site. Samuel Whitbread

¹⁷⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

¹⁸⁰

<http://bedsarchives.bedford.gov.uk/CommunityArchives/Meppershall/TheParishOfMeppershallInGeneral.aspx>

¹⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁸² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

¹⁸³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 013C Lower Layer Super Output Area

¹⁸⁴ Google Maps (2016)

¹⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

¹⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site¹⁸⁷.

Employment: Meppershall does not contain a significant employment area¹⁸⁸. ONS data¹⁸⁹ for the Meppershall area reveals that 15.1% of residents work part-time, 43.8% work full-time and 12.6% are retired. These figures are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The main industries of employment in the ward are wholesale & retail, construction and education. Overall 30% of residents work within the ward, 16% work elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire is the most commuted to location by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire¹⁹⁰.

Transport and Movement: Meppershall has access to the primary road network, being connected to the A507 to the north, and the village is connected to Shillington in the south and Shefford to the north. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the nearest station being in Arlesey, around 4 miles to the east. There is access to the centre of the village via public footpaths/cycle paths, as well as bus stops for residential use.

Bus: Meppershall has limited bus services which are infrequent and don't operate on Sundays. The overall quality of the waiting facilities in the area is variable. In a number of cases raised kerbs are provided to enable easier access onto buses, although there is often a lack of shelters, while lighting and service information is also of variable quality across the area¹⁹¹.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Meppershall is located in the Shillington Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Shillington, Upper Gravenhurst, Apsley End and Lower Stondon. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1992 dwellings¹⁹².

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Meppershall is located within the Upper Gravenhurst-Meppershall Clay Hills LCT which contains two groups of undulating low hills. The landscape is predominantly under agricultural use, and there are small scattered areas of woodland and a strong sense of elevation with wide ranging views across the surrounding areas¹⁹³. This increases sensitivity of settlement edges to development.

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- 013C Lower Layer Super Output Area

¹⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

¹⁹¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Shefford, Silsoe and Shillington Local Area Transport Plan

¹⁹² JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

¹⁹³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Meppershall itself and the majority of the surrounding land is located within grade 2 agricultural land, with some areas of grade 3 to the east and west, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

Historic Environment: Meppershall has a small number of *Listed Buildings*, the majority of which are located in the south of the settlement around the church. There is a small *Conservation Area* to the south of the village which encompasses the church and Manor House, however further details are not known. There is a *Scheduled Monument* within the same area, at the site where a motte and bailey castle once stood. An *Archaeological Notification Area* encompasses most of the south of the village, although there are 2 areas of land similarly designated in the north of the settlement.

Biodiversity: Nunswood County Wildlife Site is just to the north of the village and the site contains Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. There is also a Traditional Orchard just to the east of the village. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks follows the River Hit from north to south around a mile to the west of the village.

Flood Risk: A mile to the west flood zones 2 & 3 follow the path of the River Hit along its course from north to south¹⁹⁴.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains sensitive environmental receptors including best and most versatile agricultural land, and a County Wildlife Site. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools which have no space for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: No facilities present indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Few facilities present, including a post office, indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: No facilities present, indicating a low capacity. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of formal large recreation areas and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

¹⁹⁴ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Arlesey, around 4 miles away. Bus services are infrequent in the settlement and of varying quality, 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. Development in the far south of the settlement may affect designated heritage settings (Scheduled Monument, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings).
8. Development in the far north of the settlement may affect locally designated biodiversity (CWS).
9. Development around the settlement may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

MEPPERSHALL SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium

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

The biodiversity and heritage constraints in Meppershall can be avoided through the appropriate siting of development.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, and deliver a range of housing for the local community, however it is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. Small scale development may increase reliance on the private vehicle.

MOGGERHANGER

Moggerhanger is located in the east of Central Bedfordshire and has a residential population of 620 people and contains 280 dwellings¹⁹⁵.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The settlement boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council¹⁹⁶ and there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Moggerhanger is not located within or surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile¹⁹⁷ identifies Moggerhanger as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations” and “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data¹⁹⁸ for the LLSOA which Moggerhanger is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 47, 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 village hall, a lower school, a food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and a children's play area. The village does not have any secondary education facilities, healthcare facilities, banking facilities, any supermarkets, any convenience stores, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close¹⁹⁹ to the Moggerhanger area include Sandy (approx. 2 miles), Biggleswade (approx. 5 miles) and Bedford (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire).

Moggerhanger has 4 Leisure Strategy sites²⁰⁰, with 3 located in the village centre and 1 to the south-west. Moggerhanger has a small surplus of formal and informal large recreation areas, however there is a small deficit of allotments, play areas for children and small amenity spaces²⁰¹.

Education: Moggerhanger Lower School has existing capacity but the site does not have the capacity to accommodate expansion. Sandy Upper School has existing capacity but does not have the existing site capacity to accommodate expansion²⁰².

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within the village but within the wider parish there are significant employment areas to the north east at South Mills and The Ridgeway. Moggerhanger²⁰³. ONS data²⁰⁴ for the LLSOA which Moggerhanger is located within reveals that 11.3% of residents work part-time,

¹⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

¹⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

¹⁹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

¹⁹⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

¹⁹⁹ Google Maps (2016)

²⁰⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

²⁰² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

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

²⁰⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

38% work full-time, 18.4% are self-employed and 16.2% are retired. The numbers for 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 for the LLSOA are manufacturing, wholesale & retail and construction. Overall 25% of ward residents work within the ward and 23% work elsewhere within central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford²⁰⁵.

Transport and Movement: Moggerhanger is connected to the surrounding settlements of Sandy and Blunham where the A1 can be accessed via the A603 and Tempsford Road. The A1 through the area operates close to capacity for much of the day, particularly during peak hours, resulting in congestion on approaches to Biggleswade and Sandy²⁰⁶. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Sandy, 3 miles to the east.

Moggerhanger benefits from bus services running every 30 minutes that provide access to employment, services, and leisure opportunities in nearby towns and villages including Bedford, Sandy, and Biggleswade. The A603 is a busy east-west link between Bedford and Sandy, running through Moggerhanger. This route is very busy, but mostly free-flowing through Moggerhanger itself. The nearby National Cycle Route 51 also offers traffic-free access to Sandy and Bedford by bicycle, although this does require cycling along rural roads to access²⁰⁷.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Moggerhanger is located in the Tempsford Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Tempsford and Blunham. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 884 dwellings²⁰⁸.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Moggerhanger is located in two separate LCTs. The north of the settlement is located within the East Marston Clay Vale LCT. This is a large scale, flat and open clay vale with expansive views to the contrasting elevated landscape. Land use is now predominantly defined by intensive arable cropping²⁰⁹. The southern part of the settlement is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT. This LCT has a large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top. The area has a strong underlying heathland character and a high ecological value due to the number of nationally important sites present²¹⁰.

²⁰⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northhill Ward Profile

²⁰⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Haynes and Old Warden Local Area Transport Plan

²⁰⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Haynes and Old Warden Local Area Transport Plan

²⁰⁸ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁰⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 5

²¹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Moggerhanger is located within an area of Grade 2 agricultural land, and the land to the east, south and west is also Grade 2. Most of the land north of the village is Grade 1 agricultural land.

Historic Environment: Moggerhanger has a number of *Listed Buildings* which are mostly situated in the centre of the village around the crossroads. To the south-west of the village are a small collection of Listed Buildings around Moggerhanger House. Moggerhanger Park, located around Moggerhanger House, is a registered *Historic Park and Garden*. An *Archaeological Notification Area* follows the main road from north to south through the village and encompasses the crossroads and the land around the church.

Biodiversity: Moggerhanger Park County Wildlife Site (CWS), which is also an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland, and Bottom Wood CWS are directly to the south-west of the village. Both these sites contain Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The land to the south-east of Moggerhanger is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. Biodiversity Network encompasses the land to the south-west, around the CWSs. A band of Green Infrastructure Network goes from north to south, through the centre of Moggerhanger.

Flood Risk: Moggerhanger is not constrained by Flood Zones²¹¹.

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. 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 some capacity in the catchment but no room for expansion, indicating a medium to 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: Limited facilities present indicating a medium to low capacity. Development could contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of allotments, play areas for children and small amenity spaces.

²¹¹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Sandy, around 3 miles away, and the settlement is served by frequent bus services. There is a national cycle route supporting local connections, and there is access to the strategic road network although this can be congested in the east. Overall indication of a medium capacity. Moggerhanger does not benefit from any retail provision so residents must travel to nearby towns for their day to day needs.

Environment

7. Development in the south-west is significantly constrained by a designated heritage setting (Registered Historic Park and Garden) and locally designated biodiversity (CWS).
8. The Green Infrastructure Network and best and most versatile agricultural land surrounds the settlement. Development around the settlement edge may also affect the setting of Listed Buildings.

MOGGERHANGER SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities.

The biodiversity and heritage constraints in Moggerhanger can be avoided through the appropriate siting of development, particularly away from the south west of the settlement.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, and deliver a range of housing for the local community, however this would be likely to affect environmental amenities, particularly the heritage setting and negatively impact on the rural landscape. Small scale development is also likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

NORTHILL & ICKWELL

Northill and Ickwell are adjacent villages in Central Bedfordshire with a residential population of 2,270 people and containing 1,110 dwellings²¹².

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²¹³ and Northill does have a Neighbourhood Planning Area, however the plan is yet to be developed. The settlements are not located within or surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²¹⁴ identifies Northill & Ickwell as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data²¹⁵ for the LLSOA which Northill is located within, reveals the median age of residents to be 47, and that there are more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Northill and Ickwell include, village halls a pre-school, lower school, outdoor recreational facilities, including a traditional village green, and a food serving pub. The settlements do not have any secondary education facilities, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office or any restaurants/takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close²¹⁶ to the Northill area include Sandy (approx. 3 miles), Biggleswade (approx. 3 miles) and Shefford (approx. 5 miles).

Northill has 4 Leisure Strategy sites in the north of the village, and a larger site just west of the village. Ickwell has a large Leisure Strategy site in the centre of the settlement. The settlement has a surplus of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children and allotments (This is based on Northill, Upper Caldecote and Ickwell combined)²¹⁷.

Education: Northill CofE VA Lower School has some existing capacity however the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School in Biggleswade is close to capacity however an expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required. Stratton Upper School has some existing capacity however the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity however the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity however the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Sandy

²¹² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

²¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

²¹⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²¹⁶ Google Maps (2016)

²¹⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

Upper School has capacity however the school site cannot accommodate expansion²¹⁸.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Northhill and Ickwell²¹⁹. ONS data²²⁰ for the LLSOA which Northhill is located within reveals that 11.3% of residents work part-time, 38% work full-time, 18.4% are self-employed and 16.2% are retired. The numbers for 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. Overall 25% of ward residents work within the ward and 23% work elsewhere within central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford²²¹.

Transport and Movement: Northhill does not have direct access to main road network. The A1 can be accessed at Sandy and Upper Caldecote. The level of stress on the A1 in the LATP area is relatively low²²². The settlements do not have a railway station, with the closest station being Sandy, 3.3 miles to the north-east. There is access to the village centre via footpaths/cycle paths.

Northhill benefits from commercial bus services however the majority of these are infrequent and limited, although there is an hourly bus service to Bedford and Biggleswade. An issue raised by residents is the need to upgrade bus stops to provide a higher quality of service²²³.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Northhill and Ickwell are located in the Biggleswade Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Biggleswade, Upper Caldecote, and Thorncote Green. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 3272 dwellings²²⁴.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Northhill & Ickwell are located in the north of the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT. A large scale, elevated landscape. Agricultural land is mostly in arable cultivation but with some variation of land use including free-range pig farming that bring localised variation. There is a strong underlying heathland character with areas of neutral/acid grassland²²⁵.

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

²¹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²¹⁹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²²⁰ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004D Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²²¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northhill Ward Profile

²²² Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Biggleswade & Sandy Local Area Transport Plan

²²³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Haynes and Old Warden Local Area Transport Plan

²²⁴ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

Historic Environment: Northhill has a large number of *Listed Buildings* clustered in the centre of the village around the local church. Northhill *Conservation Area* centres around the church and churchyard, standing at the junction of the two roads that give the structure to the settlement. The Conservation Area is characterised by the parish church which is the dominant building in the settlement and the residential character of the settlement²²⁶. Ickwell contains several *Listed Buildings* situated in the centre and to the west of the settlement. Ickwell Conservation Area encompasses almost the whole of the village which is centred around an historic village green. Ickwell Bury is a *Historic Park and Garden* encompassing a large area of land to the west of the village which also contains a medieval fishery which is designated as a *Scheduled Monument*. The majority of the settlement is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, apart from a small area in the south and a small area in the east of the village.

Biodiversity: College Wood, Ickwell Bury and Home Wood are all County Wildlife Sites to the west of the settlement and contain Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. There are two small areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the east and south-east of the village, and an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland to the south. The entire settlement is also located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Biodiversity Network encompasses the land to the south and west of the settlement, around the County Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats. The Green Infrastructure Network can be found in the same areas as the Biodiversity Network, and is part of GI corridor 6²²⁷.

Flood Risk: A band of Flood Zone (2 & 3) borders the settlement to the east and south, partially encroaching on the southern half of the village²²⁸.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

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

²²⁶ Northhill Conservation Area (2004) [Online]

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/northill-appraisal_tcm3-17058.pdf

²²⁷ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²²⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools which have no room for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate significant new growth indicating a low to medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities only indicating a low capacity. Development could also contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children and allotments.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in the settlement of Sandy around 3 miles away, and the settlement is less well-served by bus services which are infrequent, indicating a low capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is access to the strategic road network. Northill and Ickwell do not benefit from any retail provision so residents must travel to nearby towns for their day to day needs.

Environment

7. Development in the west of the settlement is significantly constrained by designated heritage settings of a Scheduled Monument and Registered Historic Park and Garden as well as locally designated biodiversity (CWS).
8. Any development around the northern half of the settlement is also likely to affect the designated heritage setting of the Conservation Area and its associated Listed Buildings, as well as the Green Infrastructure Network.
9. Development in the southern half of the settlement is constrained by areas of flood risk, and development in the east and west of the settlement could result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

NORTHILL & ICKWELL SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare and retail / convenience facilities, as well as flood risk to the south. Development in the south would also contribute to the coalescence of Northill and Ickwell Green.

Medium to large scale development would need to be provided in order to support improved service and facility provisions, however this is likely to significantly and unacceptably affect heritage settings. There are small scale opportunity areas for development in the east of the settlement, however, this is likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

OLD WARDEN

Old Warden is a small village, located to the North East of the A600. This small village of just 350 people and 140 dwellings has very little growth taking place in the village itself. The Shuttleworth College, Shuttleworth Collection, and Bird of Prey Centre to the East of the village are the major trip generators in this area, and have been expanded and upgraded over the years. Old Warden itself is a linear village. Shuttleworth College is the main education provision in the area, but this is a specialist Land and Agricultural College²²⁹.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²³⁰ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement. Old Warden is not located within or surrounded by Green belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²³¹ identifies Old Warden as consisting of “well-off homeowners in rural locations”. ONS data²³² for the LLSOA which Old Warden is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 45, and that there are a similar number of residents under the age of 16 as over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Old Warden include a village hall, an agricultural/horticultural college, a food serving pub and outdoor recreational facilities. The village does not have any lower or middle schools, any healthcare facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office or any takeaways. Notable towns with superstores close²³³ to the Old Warden area include Shefford (approx. 4 miles), Biggleswade (approx. 4 miles) and Sandy (approx. 6 miles).

Old Warden has 4 Leisure Strategy sites²³⁴, two in the centre of the settlement, one in the west, and one in the east, which is the largest site. The settlement has a surplus of informal large recreation areas, but a small deficit of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments²³⁵.

Education: Edward Peake Coffey VC Middle School has a small amount of existing capacity; however, an expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required. Stratton Upper School also has a small amount of existing capacity; however, an expansion is already planned - more land or new school site would be required. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and the

²²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Haynes and Old Warden Local Area Transport Plan

²³⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²³¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

²³² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004A Lower Layer Super Output Area

²³³ Google Maps (2016)

²³⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²³⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

school site cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and the school site cannot accommodate expansion²³⁶.

Employment: Significant areas of employment within Old Warden include the college and Shuttleworth Collection. ONS data²³⁷ for the LLSOA which Old Warden is located within reveals that 14% of residents work part-time, 37.8% work full-time, 15.2% are self-employed and 13.5% are retired. These percentages are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, apart from residents who are self-employed which is slightly higher.. Overall 25% of ward residents work within the ward and 23% work elsewhere within central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford²³⁸.

Transport and Movement: The settlement is not connected to the primary road network. Old Warden is connected to Biggleswade via Hill Lane to the east, and to the north the village is also connected to Northill. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Biggleswade, 4.5 miles to the east. There is access to the centre of the village via footpaths/ cycle paths. No further details could be found on the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Old Warden is located in the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Henlow, Clifton, Broom, Southill, Stanford, Shefford, Campton and Chicksands. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 343 dwellings²³⁹.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Old Warden is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT, a large scale elevated landscape with an undulating ridge top. The area has a strong underlying heathland character, a high ecological value, extensive areas of woodland and a large number of historic parks and gardens. Primary transport routes such as the M1 pass through this LCT²⁴⁰.

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

Historic Environment: Old Warden has a large number of *Listed Buildings* which are largely situated around Bedford Road which forms the backbone of the settlement. There is another small cluster in the north of the village around the local church, and to the east there is another group around the College, Swiss

²³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Education Capacity Information (2016)

²³⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004A Lower Layer Super Output Area

²³⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

²³⁹ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁴⁰ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Type (2015) Type 6

Garden and Aerodrome. Old Warden has a large *Conservation Area* which encompasses the settlement and a large area of land to the east of the village and to the south of the College, including Old Warden Park. Further details about the *Conservation Area* are not known. Warden Abbey is a large *Scheduled Monument* to the west of the village, and to the north is Quince Hill ringwork, another *Scheduled Monument*. Old Warden Park is a *Historic Park and Garden* to the east of the village and encompassing the College and Swiss Gardens. The centre of the village is located within an *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is the land around the church in the north of the village.

Biodiversity: Old Warden is surrounded by a number of County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Palmers Wood CWS is to the north-west of the settlement, Swiss Garden Woodland CWS is next to the College to the east of the settlement, Warden Warren CWS is directly to the east of the village and Warden Abbey Grasslands CWS is to the west. There is an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland around the College, and a large number of blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland surrounding the village. The entire settlement is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Networks (GI corridor 6²⁴¹) encompass the entire settlement and the surrounding land.

Flood Risk: A band of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) is located to the south and west of the settlement, however this does not immediately border the settlement²⁴².

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

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

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

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

²⁴¹ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²⁴² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities only indicating a low capacity. Development could contribute to addressing small deficits in the provision of formal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces, play areas for children and allotments.
5. Green Belt: The settlement is located within the Green Belt indicating a low capacity.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement, with the closest in Biggleswade, around 4.5 miles away, and the provision of bus services in the settlement are not known at this stage, indicating a low capacity. There is also no direct access to the primary road network. There is however, sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available into the centre. Old Warden does not benefit from any retail provision so residents must travel to nearby towns for their day to day needs.

Environment

7. The settlement is significantly constrained by the designated heritage setting of the Registered Historic Park and Garden, Scheduled Monuments, and Conservation Area and its associated Listed Buildings.
8. The settlement is also significantly constrained by locally designated biodiversity (CWS) and in the east, habitats that directly connect to and support nationally designated habitats (SSSI), and a strong presence of best and most versatile agricultural land.
9. The settlement is surrounded by the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks.

OLD WARDEN SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly educational, healthcare, retail / convenience, and leisure facilities. Development is further constrained by the abundance of local habitats and biodiversity that also support the SSSI in the far south of the settlement, as well as an abundance of sensitive heritage settings and best and most versatile agricultural land.

Overall, development of a sufficient scale could support improved service and facility provisions, however this scale is highly likely to unacceptably affect environmental amenities, the sensitive heritage setting, rural landscape and character of the village. Small scale development is also likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

PULLOXHILL

Pulloxhill is a village in Central Bedfordshire that consists of about 1000 people in about 440 houses²⁴³ and is a vibrant village supporting a wide range of community groups and events²⁴⁴. The village is placed on a slight elevation, with lower lying ground surrounding it and is one of the oldest villages in Bedfordshire. The oldest building in the village is the Church of St James which was consecrated in 1219. Many of the historic buildings in Pulloxhill are 2 storeys, with many dwellings located close to the roads and are evenly spaced²⁴⁵.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Pulloxhill has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, that is joint with Flitton and Greenfield, and which follows the parish boundaries²⁴⁶. The Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed. Pulloxhill is not constrained by Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile identifies the settlement as consisting of a mix of "established families in large detached homes" and "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data²⁴⁷ for the Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill LLSOA shows the median age being 44 for the area, with 45% of the population being between the ages of 30 and 60. The area has a higher number of residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

The settlement does not have a wide range of services and facilities, but does contain a community centre, a pre-school, a primary school, a public recreation ground and a food serving pub. The settlement lacks a number of key services and facilities including healthcare, secondary education, a supermarket, a convenience store, banking facilities or entertainment facilities. Notable towns with superstores close²⁴⁸ to the Pulloxhill area include Flitwick (approx. 2 miles), Ampthill (approx. 4 miles) and Shefford (approx. 8 miles).

There are 2 Leisure Strategy sites²⁴⁹ within Pulloxhill, both are located in the centre of the settlement. Pulloxhill has a number of active clubs and groups.

Education: Pulloxhill Lower School is at capacity and the site cannot accommodate expansion. Arnold Academy is close to Academy and an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast, however an expansion is already planned. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity, however the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE²⁵⁰ expansion, which would

²⁴³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield Ward Profile

²⁴⁴ Pulloxhill Parish Council (online) <http://www.pulloxhillparishcouncil.bedsparishes.gov.uk/>

²⁴⁵ Pulloxhill Conservation Area (1996)(online) http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/pulloxhill_tcm3-12964.pdf

²⁴⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

²⁴⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²⁴⁸ Google Maps (2016)

²⁴⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁵⁰ Form of Entry

allow for 320 extra pupils, or around 1143 dwellings. However, a 14 form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size²⁵¹.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Pulloxhill²⁵², however half a mile to the north of the settlement is Pulloxhill Business Park which contains a number of business centres including a distribution warehouse and a machinery hire business. ONS data for the for the Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill Lower Layer Super Output Area shows that 39% of residents are in full time employment, 14% are in part time employment and 17% are retired. The full and part time employment figures are lower than the Central Bedfordshire averages. The main industries of employment for residents of the Westoning, Flitton & Greenfield ward (which Pulloxhill is located within) are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. 25% of the ward residents commute outside of the ward but stay within Central Bedfordshire, and less than a fifth of the ward residents stay within the ward to work. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton

Transport and Movement:

Road: Pulloxhill is connected to the A6 via Barton Road to the south of the settlement. Greenfield Road connects Pulloxhill with Greenfield to the north, and Flitton Road connect Pulloxhill with Flitton to the north.

Rail: The nearest railway station is located outside the settlement in Flitwick, which is located 2 miles to the north-west, and is on the Midland Main Line.

Bus: Pulloxhill bus services are limited, with no services operating on a Sunday and extremely infrequently²⁵³.

Priorities: For short trips within the village the lack of footpaths and the narrow widths of many of the footpaths provided form a priority to be addressed. This is of particular concern for accessing the local school and for those with pushchairs or of limited mobility within the village²⁵⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Pulloxhill is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Flitwick, Greenfield, Flitton, Wardhedges, Westoning, Eversholt, Tingrith, Steppingley and Ampthill. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 16491 dwellings²⁵⁵.

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

²⁵¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁵² Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Ampthill & Flitwick Local Area Transport Plan

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): The settlement is located within the Harlington-Pulloxhill clay hills, a narrow line of connected hills (forming a subtle ridge) formed where deposits of Boulder Clay have capped the underlying Gault Clay geology. The area has a strong sense of elevation with wide ranging views to the Greensand Ridge, chalk hills and scarps (AONB) and across intervening vales. The landscape is mostly open, with some small areas of deciduous woodland. There are numerous secondary roads that cut through the hills and have the effect of visually and audibly diluting the rural tranquillity of the area²⁵⁶.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The northern area and south-western area of Pulloxhill are situated in grade 2 agricultural land. The remaining land is Grade 3, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: There is a large collection of *Listed Buildings* alongside the main road at the centre of the settlement. To the south-west of the settlement Portobello Farmhouse is classified as a Listed Building.

To the east of Pulloxhill lies Upbury moated site and associated fishponds, a designated *Scheduled Monument*. The central area of the settlement is a designated *Conservation Area* and the boundaries of the Conservation Area include the northern part of Church Road, the High Street and Orchard Road. The predominant material used in the Conservation Area are combinations of red brick and clay tile, as well as roughcast render and thatch. Within the Conservation Area there is an overall sense of enclosure which is emphasised by the positions of buildings close to the road, and the limited width of the road itself²⁵⁷. The centre of the settlement is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: To the west of Pulloxhill is Pulloxhill Marsh, a designated SSSI containing Lowland Fens and Lowland Meadows. Immediately to the south of the centre of the settlement lies Pulloxhill South Grasslands County Wildlife Site, which contains Lowland Meadows. The Green Infrastructure Network (GI corridor 6²⁵⁸) and Biodiversity Network runs from the north-east of the settlement along its southern Borders and continues on south-west of Pulloxhill.

Flood Risk: There are no flood zones within or immediately surrounding the settlement²⁵⁹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including best and most versatile agricultural land, an SSSI site, a County Wildlife Site and land located within the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Network. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed

²⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

²⁵⁷ Pulloxhill Conservation Area (1996) (online) http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/pulloxhill_tcm3-12964.pdf

²⁵⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

²⁵⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Pulloxhill has a primary school but no secondary school. At the secondary level there are a number of schools in the vicinity have limited capacity.
2. Healthcare: There is no healthcare facility in the village.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Retail facilities are very limited.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Leisure and cultural facilities are limited.
5. Green Belt: There is no Green Belt designation.

Transport & Movement

6. The village is connected to the national road network and railway links are close by. Bus services are limited.

Environment

7. To the south-east is a county wildlife site and the green infrastructure and biodiversity networks run south-west to north-east to the east of the settlement. To the south-west is a SSSI.
8. The northern end of the village is surrounded by grade 2 agricultural land but to the west, at the southern end, the designation is grade 3.

PULLOXHILL SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

While much of the settlement is heavily constrained by environmental and agricultural land constraints there is an opportunity to consider development to the west of the southern end of the village. This would need to avoid the SSSI/County Wildlife Site and needs to be considered in the light of the limitations to the settlement's limited access and community facilities. However, given the relatively remote location of Pulloxhill, and its rural character / identity, mean that only small-scale growth is likely to be acceptable here.

SHEFFORD

Shefford is a small town with a population of 5880 people and containing 3000 dwellings²⁶⁰. The town lies between the River Flit and the River Hiz. Shefford was a prosperous market town and a thriving commercial centre during the medieval period, and the towns foundation likely came about due to its location as a crossing point of the river. The street plan of the town has remained unchanged since 1736, with most development occurring in the 20th century with the construction of new housing estates²⁶¹.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Shefford has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, which follows the parish boundary²⁶², however the Neighbourhood Plan has yet to be developed. Shefford is not constrained by Green belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁶³ identifies the settlement as consisting of “younger households in housing priced within their means”, “established families in large detached homes”, “elderly people with assets”, “urban renters of social housing”, “thriving families with children and careers”, “single people privately renting”, “educated young people privately renting”, “families with limited resources” and “elderly people reliant on support”. ONS data²⁶⁴ shows that the median age for Shefford Ward is 38 and that there are more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Services and facilities available within Shefford include 3 community centres, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a middle school, 2 ATMs, a bank/building society, a supermarket, a convenience store, a newsagent, a post office, a chemist, a dentist, a GP surgery/health clinic, 5+ restaurants/takeaways, 3 food serving pubs, a non-food serving pub, outdoor recreational facilities and 6 children’s play areas. Shefford has a number of active clubs and groups operating within the settlement.

Shefford has a variety of Leisure Strategy sites²⁶⁵ which includes a recreation ground and a nature reserve. The settlement has a deficit of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, play areas for children, allotments and facilities for young people. There is also a small surplus in small amenity spaces²⁶⁶.

Education: Shefford Lower School is close to capacity and a rise in students is predicted in the pupil forecast, however the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is over capacity and cannot

²⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

²⁶¹ Shefford Conservation Area (2010) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/shefford_tcm3-12967.pdf

²⁶² Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

²⁶³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

²⁶⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shefford Ward

²⁶⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

²⁶⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion²⁶⁷.

Employment: Shefford does contain existing allocated employment land²⁶⁸. The Shefford/Stotfold area has 74 hectares of employment land, most of which 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' condition²⁶⁹. Employment data²⁷⁰ for the ward area reveals that 14.7% of residents work part time, 48% work full time, and 10.7% are retired. The proportion of residents in full time employment is higher than the Central Bedfordshire average, whilst the percentage of residents who are retired is lower. The main industries of employment for Shefford ward are public administration & defence, wholesale & retail, and education²⁷¹. 30% of ward residents worked within the ward and 16% worked elsewhere within Central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire was North Hertfordshire²⁷².

Transport and Movement: Shefford has access to the primary road network with the A507 to the south and the A600 to the west. The town also has access to the B658 to the north. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Arlesey, around 3.5 miles to the east. Bus stops are present within the town, and access to the town centre is possible via footpaths/cyclepaths.

Road: The Shefford, Silsoe and Shillington area is crossed from West to East by the A507, including a bypass of Shefford, and from North to South by the A6 including a bypass of Silsoe. In addition, the A600 from Bedford to Hitchin runs North West to South East and utilises part of the A507 Shefford Bypass, while in the extreme South of the area Pegsdon lies on the B655 route between Hitchin and Barton. Shefford is also linked to Biggleswade by the B658 and is therefore very well served by good quality roads in all directions²⁷³.

Bus: The main stops in Shefford High Street are provided with open fronted shelters and timetable cases which contain information for the majority of services. However, the timetables for the Grant Palmer services identified above are outside of the shelter attached to adjacent lamp posts, in one case at the back of the pavement and not easily spotted. There are very few commercial services which serve the Shefford, Silsoe and Shillington area on a daily basis (including Sunday). Stagecoach operate two interurban services which pass through the area: the 71 / 72 between Hitchin and Bedford which together operate at half hourly intervals during the day and serve Shefford, and the hourly 81 between Luton and Bedford which serves Silsoe²⁷⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Shefford is located in the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements

²⁶⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁶⁸ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

²⁷¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Shefford Ward Profile

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Shefford, Silsoe & Shillington Local Area Transport Plan

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

located in this catchment area are Clifton, Henlow, Broom, Old Warden, Southill, Stanford, Campton and Chicksands. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 343 dwellings²⁷⁵.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Shefford 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. The land use is predominantly arable farmland with some pastoral land along the river courses. The LCT has open views across the arable farmland with views to the Greensand Ridge to the north, but due to scattered woodland blocks views are restricted along the enclosed river corridors²⁷⁶. To the south, Shefford is enclosed by the rising ground of the Gravenhurst – Meppershall Clay Hills.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: An area of Grade 1 agricultural land can be found to the east of the town, with areas of Grade 2 land to the south, north, east and south-west. The settlement itself is located in Grade 3 agricultural land (sub-grade 3a or 3b unknown), but the land to the west of Shefford is classed as Non-Agricultural.

Historic Environment: Shefford's *Listed Buildings* are clustered in the centre of the settlement, where High Street joins Northbridge Street and Southbridge Street. Shefford's *Conservation Area* occupies the same area around the High Street. The Conservation Area is characterised by the continuous frontage of buildings forming a sense of enclosure, with most of the buildings in the Conservation Area being commercial. There are good examples of traditional shop fronts, as well as timber frames, timber windows and red brick²⁷⁷. The same area is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*, with additional area present in the south-west and south-east of the town.

Biodiversity: The River Flit County Wildlife Site (CWS) passes from the east to the west through the centre of Shefford. Beals Wood CWS is to the north of the town, as is the Old Warden Disused Railway CWS. To the south is Nunswold CWS, to the west is Lower Alders CWS, to the north-east is Stanford Plantation and to the north-west is Rowney Warren CWS. Small blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland surround the town, and small blocks of Wet Woodland can be found along the rivers route through the town. Green Infrastructure Network passes through the town from north to south and from east to west, and is part of GI corridor No.8, the Flit Valley²⁷⁸. The Biodiversity Network follows the rivers course through the town.

²⁷⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

²⁷⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Landscape Character Area (2015) Type 4

²⁷⁷ Shefford Conservation Area (2010) [Online] http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/shefford_tcm3-12967.pdf

²⁷⁸ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

Flood Risk: Flood Zones 2 & 3 pass through the settlement from east to west following the rivers route, and so a large amount of land within the centre of the town is designated as a flood risk area²⁷⁹.

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 town is located within an area of designated flood risk. The settlement also contains designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: Shefford Lower School is close to capacity and a rise in students is predicted in the pupil forecast, however the school site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is over capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion²⁸⁰.
2. Healthcare: Facilities are present in the settlement although capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities however indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Full range present including a supermarket indicating a high capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities and Children's Play areas present indicating a medium capacity. Development could contribute to addressing deficits in the provision of urban parks, formal and informal large recreation areas, play areas for children, 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 3.5 miles away, and the settlement is less well-served by bus services which are largely infrequent and of varying quality. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is good access to the strategic road network.

²⁷⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

²⁸⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Environment

7. Many areas in the north of the settlement are constrained by flood risk, as well as some areas in the south of the settlement.
8. Development in the north is constrained by locally designated biodiversity and the Biodiversity Network.
9. Development in the west of the settlement is constrained by the Green Infrastructure Network and sensitive heritage settings.
10. Development around the settlement may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

SHEFFORD SUMMARY

Capacity: Medium

Growth in Shefford can largely avoid significant constraints by the appropriate siting of development, particularly in the south-east. Additionally, there is some scope for development to the north-east of the settlement, but this may compromise the setting of Greensand Ridge and Ivel Valley. Any development here would need to be carefully sited and integrated. Development may still however result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity.

Overall, there are opportunities for sustainable development that is well linked with the existing urban area, and can deliver development gains including a range of housing to support the local community.

SHILLINGTON

Shillington is a village and civil parish in Bedfordshire with a population of 1,840 residents in around 910 dwellings²⁸¹. The slope of the ground is from south to north, the greatest height being 581 ft. and the lowest being 156 ft. above the ordnance datum²⁸². The Village has a distinctive shape made up of 5 'ends' or hamlets, and has grown around the church. The village centre and the different 'ends' are connected by a dense network of footpaths running across fields and along field boundaries²⁸³. Located at the north-east end of the Chiltern Hills, part of the parish lies within an area of outstanding natural beauty²⁸⁴.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council²⁸⁵ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. The settlement of Shillington is not located within the Green Belt, however a small part of the south western area of the Shillington parish is located in Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile²⁸⁶ identifies that Shillington Parish is a mix of "well-off homeowners in rural locations" and "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data²⁸⁷ for the Shillington and Stondon LLSOA identifies the median age for the area to be 45. And that there are more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16. The data and geo-demographic profile suggest the area is more dominantly older resident homeowners rather than families.

Shillington has a number of key services and facilities, including 2 community centres, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a convenience store, a post office, 2 food serving pubs and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement lacks any secondary education facilities, healthcare, banking facilities and entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close²⁸⁸ to the Shillington area include Shefford (approx. 5 miles), Luton (approx. 10 miles) and Hitchin (approx. 6 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire). Shillington has an active social life with many societies, clubs and groups. group, a Guides group, a baby and toddler group, a riding club, a bowls club and a football club²⁸⁹.

Shillington has a number of Leisure Strategy sites²⁹⁰ around the centre of the settlement, including a playing field and an allotments site. The village has a large

²⁸¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

²⁸² <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/beds/vol2/pp293-299>

²⁸³ Shillington Conservation Area (2006) Online at:

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/shillington_tcm3-12968.pdf

²⁸⁴ <http://www.shillington.org.uk/>

²⁸⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

²⁸⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

²⁸⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shillington and Stondon Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²⁸⁸ Google Maps (2016)

²⁸⁹ <http://www.shillington.org.uk/clubsandgroups.htm>

²⁹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

surplus of informal large recreation areas and a small surplus of formal large recreation areas, allotments and facilities for young people. However, the settlement has a deficit of small amenity spaces and play areas for children²⁹¹.

Education: Shillington Lower School is close to capacity with an increase in numbers predicted in the pupil forecasts, and the site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and an increase in numbers is predicted in the pupil forecast²⁹².

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Shillington²⁹³. ONS data²⁹⁴ for the Shillington and Stondon LLSOA shows that 42% of the residents are in full time employment, and 13.8% are in part time employment. These figures are lower than the averages for Central Bedfordshire. 15% of residents are retired, which is higher than the average for Central Bedfordshire. The main industries of employment for residents of the Silsoe & Shillington ward are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. 21% of ward residents worked within the ward and 18% of ward residents commuted to other locations in Central Bedfordshire. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton²⁹⁵.

Transport and Movement:

Road: The main roads for the village include Shillington Road which goes east towards Stondon and Meppershall Road which goes north towards Meppershall. The A6 can be reached from both Shillington and Aspley End by heading west along Higham Road.

Rail: The nearest railway station is located outside of the settlement in Arlesey, around 5 miles to the north-east, and is on the East Coast Main Line.

Bus: Shillington has limited bus services that operate infrequently and do not operate on Sundays. While some bus stops in Shillington are of an appropriate standard there are others which may need to be updated and these have been included in an overall scheme to upgrade bus stops where necessary²⁹⁶.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Shillington is located in the Shillington Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Meppershall, Upper Gravenhurst, Aspley End and Lower Stondon. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 1992 dwellings²⁹⁷.

²⁹¹ Leisure Strategy Parish Schedules

²⁹² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

²⁹³ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

²⁹⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Shillington and Stondon Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

²⁹⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

²⁹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Shefford, Silsoe & Shillington Local Area Transport Plan

²⁹⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Shillington is located within the Upper Gravenhurst-Meppershall Clay Hills, which are two groups of undulating low hills. There is a strong sense of elevation with distant views across the adjacent vales to the Chiltern Hills and across the intervening low ground to the clay hills and greensand ridge, which increases landscape sensitivity at settlement edges. The landscape is predominantly under agricultural land use with a mix of both arable and pastoral land use. There is a strong connection between the village “Ends “ and the agricultural setting. Medium to large fields are confined by hedgerows in mixed condition with some hedgerow trees²⁹⁸. The hilltop Church is a notable landmark.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Shillington is bordered on the eastern side by Grade 2 agricultural land, and there are areas of Grade 2 to the south, west and north-west of the settlement. The centre of the settlement is Grade 3 agricultural land however; it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: The south of Shillington has a large cluster of *Listed Buildings*, however there are a number of buildings spread around the settlement. There are 2 *Scheduled Monuments* located to the west of Aspley End and to the south-west of Shillington. Shillington also contains a *Conservation Area*. Shillington Conservation Area is located in the southern part of the settlement. The village skyline is a crucial factor contributing to the character of the Conservation Area.

The village's character is also defined by the building styles, including timber framed medieval buildings, Victorian buildings and the village churches. Another strong factor contributing to the areas character is the relationship of the townscape to the landscape, including the open landscape to the west meeting the development along Church Street²⁹⁹. South Shillington is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: There are no nationally or internationally designated biodiversity or nature conservation areas within Shillington. To the west of both Shillington and Aspley End the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Networks passes from north to south. There are 2 County Wildlife Sites to the west of Shillington and 1 site to the west of Aspley End. Shillington also has two Lowland Meadow sites.

Flood Risk: There is an area of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) located to the west of the settlement³⁰⁰.

²⁹⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 8

²⁹⁹ Shillington Conservation Area (2006) Online at:

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/shillington_tcm3-12968.pdf

³⁰⁰ 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 Networks. The settlement also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be LOW-MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: the settlement has provision for primary but not secondary education. There are capacity issues at both levels.
2. Healthcare: There are no healthcare facilities.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: The village has a convenience store and post office and is moderately well served in this respect.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Shillington is described as having a surplus of both large and small leisure spaces although there is a shortage of play areas for small children.
5. Green Belt: The village is outside green Belt designation.

Transport & Movement

6. There is access to both the road and rail national networks but local bus services are limited.

Environment

7. There is a Conservation Area to the southern end of the village centre and a number of listed buildings. To the west of the village there are limitations to development because of flood zones, three county wildlife sites, and the green infrastructure and biodiversity networks.
8. Immediately to the east of the settlement the agricultural classification is grade 3 while further out there is a broad area of grade 2 land.

SHILLINGTON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Overall Shillington has some potential capacity to the east on poorer quality agricultural land, however potential growth is constrained as a result of limited community facilities and some environmental designations. Development of a sufficient quantum could support the provision of improved services and facilities, but this is likely to be of detriment to environmental amenities and the settlement character.

SILSOE

Silsoe is a village located in Central Bedfordshire with a population of around 1800 residents in around 1400 dwellings³⁰¹. The settlement is bordered by the A6 to the east and is situated midway between Bedford and Luton. Silsoe is classed as a large village with dwellings dating from the 16th century to the present day. The centre of the village with its narrow High Street is dominated by the sandstone Church of St James the Great. The driveway past the church leads into Wrest Park with an impressive tree lined route to Wrest Park House, at its end. The mansion, its gardens, a large area of park and farmland and historic sections of the village were designated a Conservation Area in 2005. Wrest Park hosts many private and public events - including the St Georges Day Festival - and is a big tourist attraction for the area, mainly because of its beautiful gardens³⁰².

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³⁰³ and there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for the settlement as of yet. Silsoe is not constrained by Green Belt designated land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁰⁴ for Silsoe identifies the Parish as consisting of "younger households in housing priced within their means", "established families in large detached homes" and "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data³⁰⁵ for the Silsoe LLSOA shows the median age being 46. The Silsoe and Shillington ward profile shows that the area has a higher number of residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Silsoe has a range of services and facilities, including a pre-school, a lower school, a community centre, a newsagent, a restaurant/takeaway, a food serving pub, a children's play area, a nursing home and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not contain any secondary education facilities, healthcare facilities, banking facilities or entertainment facilities. Notable towns with superstores close³⁰⁶ to the Silsoe area include Flitwick (approx. 5 miles), Ampthill (approx. 4 miles) and Shefford (approx. 6 miles). There are a number of active social clubs and groups operating within the village.

There are a number of Leisure Strategy sites³⁰⁷ situated to the north and east of Silsoe, with a single site to the south of the settlement. Silsoe has a deficit of formal and informal large recreation areas, and facilities for young people. However, the

³⁰¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

³⁰² Silsoe Parish Council (Online) <http://silsoe.bedsparishes.gov.uk/local-services/clubs/>

³⁰³ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³⁰⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

³⁰⁵ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Silsoe Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁰⁶ Google Maps (2016)

³⁰⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

settlement has a surplus of allotments, play areas for children and small amenity spaces³⁰⁸.

Education: Silsoe Lower School is at capacity and cannot accommodate further expansion. Arnold Academy is close to capacity and pupil forecast predicts an increase in numbers, however an expansion is already planned. Harlington Upper School is close to capacity; however, the school has the potential to accommodate a 14FE³⁰⁹ expansion, which would allow for 320 extra pupils, which would allow for 1143 dwelling. However, a 14-form entry upper school is very large, and may not be feasible due to the educational implications of managing a school of this size³¹⁰.

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Silsoe³¹¹. ONS data³¹² for the Silsoe LLSOA shows that 38% of residents are in full time employment, 13 % are in part time employment and 16% are retired. The data reveals that the number of people in full and part time work within Silsoe is lower than the Central Bedfordshire average, however the number of residents who are retired is higher. The main industries of employment for residents of the Silsoe & Shillington ward are wholesale & retail, education, and construction. 21% of ward residents worked within the ward and 18% of ward residents commuted to other locations in Central Bedfordshire. The most popular location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Luton³¹³.

Transport and Movement: The settlement is well connected by primary and secondary roads and has easy access to the A6 and the A507. The nearest railway station is outside of the settlement, around 4 miles to the west in Flitwick.

Bus: There are very few commercial services which serve the Silsoe area on a daily basis (including Sunday). The hourly 81 between Luton and Bedford serves Silsoe, as do two other commercial services. A number of community run services also serve the village. In Silsoe the stops in the centre of the village are uncovered though the two to the North of the village have small brick built shelters but do not appear to serve a large number of people³¹⁴.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment- Silsoe is located in the Flitwick Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. Other settlements located in this catchment area include Clophill and Maulden. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 2442 dwellings³¹⁵. The National Grid is to be investigated when other technical studies are completed.

³⁰⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

³⁰⁹ Form of Entry

³¹⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³¹¹ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³¹² ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Silsoe Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³¹³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Silsoe & Shillington Ward Profile

³¹⁴ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Shefford, Silsoe & Shillington Local Area Transport Plan

³¹⁵ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Silsoe is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge, a large scale, elevated landscape which forms the central section of the band of Greensand which stretches SW-NE across Central Bedfordshire. Cut by the Flit Greensand Valley, the ridge is divided into two sections with a larger northern section and a small outlying section to the south, which Silsoe is located within. Village and surrounds form part of landscape setting to Wrest Park Historic Park and Gardens. Agricultural land is mostly in arable cultivation but with some variation of land use including free-range pig farming that bring localised variation. There is a strong underlying heathland character with areas of neutral/acid grassland³¹⁶.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The northern areas of Silsoe contains Grade 2 agricultural land, which extends to the west of the settlement. The southern part of the settlement is Grade 3 agricultural land, however, it is unknown whether this is sub-grade 3a or 3b.

Historic Environment: Silsoe contains a number of *Listed Buildings*, mainly clustered at the centre of the settlement along the High Street. There are individual buildings west of the centre of the settlement, and to the east a large collection at Wrest Park. Wrest Park is also a large *Scheduled Monument*, whilst to the north Newbury farm moated enclosures and their associated enclosures are designated Scheduled Monuments. There is a designated *Conservation Area* at the centre of Silsoe. The Conservation Area follows the High Street north to south, with areas extending both east and west. Wrest Park to the east of the settlement is also a designated Conservation Area, and is only separated from the Silsoe Conservation Area by a bridge on Park Avenue which crosses the A6. The Conservation Area encompasses much of the land east of Silsoe. Wrest Park is a designated *Historic Park and Garden*, and covers most of the land east of the settlement. The centre of the settlement is a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*, as is the land to the east around Wrest Park.

Biodiversity: There are no internationally or nationally designated sites around the settlement. Wrest Park and Buckle Grove to the east and south-east of Silsoe are designated County Wildlife Sites. To the north of Silsoe on the southern side of the A507 there are a number of County Wildlife Sites, and a small site to the south-west. The Green Infrastructure Network encompasses much of the land to the east and south of Silsoe, including the centre of the settlement, and is part of GI corridor 6³¹⁷. There are areas of Biodiversity Network to the west and north of Silsoe. The Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area lies to the north of the settlement.

Flood Risk: The settlement is bordered by flood zones 2 and 3 to the north, and to the south-west there is a large area of flood zone 3³¹⁸.

³¹⁶ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

³¹⁷ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³¹⁸ 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 also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including Listed Buildings, 2 Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments. Wrest Park is a very sensitive heritage area to the east of Silsoe. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM - HIGH.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is potential capacity expansion at schools outside of the settlement for example at Arnold Academy and Harlington Upper School to accommodate up to 1143 dwellings indicating a high capacity. However, this would be a combined consideration with development in other settlements within the catchment of Harlington Upper School, and there is uncertainty in regards to feasibility.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: A newsagent is present, however there is a lack of other retail 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 formal and informal large recreation areas, and facilities for young people.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints

Transport & Movement

6. A rail link is located around 4 miles away, however, the settlement is not well-served by bus connections. There is however, good access to the strategic road network.

Environment

7. Development that would extend the settlement to the north is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on local biodiversity.
8. Development to the east is constrained by a highly sensitive heritage setting, which includes a Scheduled Monument, Listed Buildings, Wrest Park Registered Park and Garden and Conservation Area. Development beyond the A6 in the east will impact Historic Park & Garden, and is less likely to successfully integrate with the existing urban area and is likely to require significant new infrastructure development to accommodate growth.

9. Development to the south and west would need to be responsive to further heritage settings, including a Scheduled Monument, and may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on local biodiversity.

SILSOE SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

Development is likely to result in the loss of agricultural land. The other environmental constraints present in Silsoe can be largely avoided through the appropriate siting of development in the north, south and west of the settlement. Development may require mitigation measures to avoid negative effects on biodiversity, but could also lead to environmental improvements through increased connectivity between habitats and existing green spaces.

Overall, whilst some development could be supported by the existing service and facility provisions, Silsoe has seen a considerable amount of development in recent years. Whilst some low level growth could be supported, there is a risk that further development may harm the character, identity and feel of the settlement as well as environmental amenity.

SOUTHILL

Southill is a village and civil parish with a residential population of 1,190 people and containing 510 dwellings³¹⁹. The village is around 11 miles south-west of Bedford and 4 miles east of Biggleswade. The church is located on the edge of Southill Park, which is in the west of the settlement, and there are several thatched roof buildings in the village³²⁰.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: The Parish boundary is identified by Central Bedfordshire Council³²¹ and at this stage, there is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Southill. The settlement is not constrained by the Green Belt designation.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³²² identifies the area as consisting of "well-off homeowners in rural locations" and "householders in inexpensive village homes". ONS data³²³ for the area reveals the median age of residents to be 45, and that the area has a similar number of residents who are under 16 as are over 65.

Facilities and services available within Southill include a village hall, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, a tea room, a food serving pub and outdoor recreational facilities. The settlement does not have any secondary education facilities, any banking facilities, any supermarkets or convenience stores, a post office, any healthcare facilities or any entertainment venues. Notable towns with superstores close³²⁴ to the Southill area include Shefford (approx. 3 miles), Biggleswade (approx. 5 miles) and Sandy (approx. 7 miles). The village has 5 Leisure Strategy sites³²⁵ which are mostly located in the west of the settlement, however the surplus/deficit of open spaces in Southill is not known.

Education: Southill Lower School has some existing capacity; however, any spare existing capacity is likely to be used to accommodate growth already showing in the pupil forecast. The school site does have the capacity for expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and an increase in numbers is shown in the pupil forecast. The school cannot accommodate expansion³²⁶

Employment: Southill does not contain a significant employment area³²⁷. There is local employment opportunities at Trees Nurseries, Southill Estate and Sawmill however. ONS data³²⁸ for the area shows that 14% of residents work part-time,

³¹⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

³²⁰ <http://www.britainexpress.com/counties/bedfordshire/az/southill.htm>

³²¹ Central Bedfordshire Council Call for Sites Settlement Maps

³²² Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

³²³ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004A Lower Layer Super Output Area

³²⁴ Google Maps (2016)

³²⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³²⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³²⁷ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³²⁸ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004A Lower Layer Super Output Area

15.2% are self-employed, 37.8% work full-time and 13.5% are retired. Compared to Central Bedfordshire as a whole, this area has a higher proportion of residents who are self-employed and a lower proportion who work full-time. Figures for part-time and retired individuals are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. Overall 25% of ward residents work within the ward, 23% work elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire and outside of Central Bedfordshire, Bedford is the most commuted to location³²⁹.

Transport and Movement: The settlement is connected to the B658 to the east and has access to the A600 to the south-west. The village does not have a railway station, and the nearest station is in Biggleswade, around 4 miles to the north-east. The village does have bus stops, and has existing public footpaths/cyclepaths that provide access to the centre of the village.

Bus: Southill benefits from commercial bus services but at a lower frequency than the larger towns in the surrounding area. Southill has an hourly service to Bedford that also links them to Biggleswade. Supported bus services are typically infrequent bus services, with some running as little as once per week. As a result, they are typically used by a few off-peak passengers – particularly those with concessionary bus passes – to access services in nearby towns and villages. Regardless of their low patronage, they serve a useful social function³³⁰.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Southill is located in the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Clifton, Henlow, Broom, Old Warden, Stanford, Shefford, Campton and Chicksands. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 343 dwellings³³¹.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Southill is split across two LCT areas. The east of the settlement is located within the Lower Ivel Clay Valley LCT, a level, open river valley with mixed land use. There are former gravel workings in this LCT and shelterbelts of conifer and poplar³³². The west of the village is located within the Mid Greensand Ridge LCT. A large scale, elevated landscape. Agricultural land is mostly in arable cultivation but with some variation of land use including free-range pig farming that bring localised variation. There is a strong underlying heathland character with areas of neutral/acid grassland³³³.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: The eastern half of the settlement and the land to the south is classified as Grade 2 agricultural and, whilst the western half of the village and most of the land to the north is classified as Grade 3, however the sub-grade (3a or 3b) is not known.

³²⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

³³⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Haynes and Old Warden Local Area Transport Plan

³³¹ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

³³² Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

³³³ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 6

Historic Environment: Southill has a large number of *Listed Buildings*, which can be found all across the settlement, with the largest being Southill Park House in the west of the village. Almost all of the village is within *Southill Conservation Area*. Southill Park encompasses most of the land to the west of Southill and is a registered *Historic Park and Garden*. *Archaeological Notification Areas* encompass the entire settlement and most of the land to the east of the village.

Biodiversity: Southill Lake & Woods SSSI and County Wildlife Site (CWS) and Warren Wood CWS are the north of the village. Stanford Plantation CWS is to the south of the village, Beal's Wood CWS is to the south-west and Keepers Warren CWS is to the west. There is an area of Wood Pasture and Parkland to the west, blocks of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland can be found to the north and west. Land to the north and west is located within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area. The Green Infrastructure Network, part of GI corridor 4³³⁴, borders the town to the west and north-west, as does the Biodiversity Network.

Flood Risk: There is a band of flood risk (zones 2 & 3) to the north of Southill, however this does not infringe on the settlement³³⁵.

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 also contains valued cultural heritage assets that support the character and distinct identity of the settlement, including listed buildings and a Conservation Area. The sensitivity of the settlement community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity but some room for expansion indicating a medium capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Lack of retail / convenience facilities indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities only indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

³³⁴ <http://bedfordshirenaturally.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/GI-plan-leaflet.pdf>

³³⁵ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

6. Rail links are located in Biggleswade, around 4 miles away. Bus services are also infrequent in the settlement, indicating a low capacity. Sustainable transport of walking and cycling routes available in the centre. There is also access to the strategic road network. Southill does not benefit from any retail provision so residents must travel to nearby towns for their day to day needs.

Environment

7. The settlement is significantly constrained by designated heritage settings of the Registered Historic Park and Garden in the western half of the settlement, and Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in the eastern half.
8. Development in the north is further constrained by nationally and locally designated biodiversity (SSSI and CWS), and areas of flood risk.
9. Development around the settlement, particularly in the east may result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

SOUTHILL SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

There have been no sites submitted to the council in Southill through the 'call for sites'. Development is constrained by a lack of easily accessible services and facilities, particularly healthcare, retail / convenience and leisure facilities. Large scale development would need to be provided in order to support improved service and facility provisions, however this would be likely to significantly affect the heritage settings and rural landscape of the settlement. Small scale development would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.

UPPER CALDECOTE

Upper Caldecote is a village located in the east of Central Bedfordshire. The settlement is bordered to the east by the A1 and the River Ivel, and is directly to the west of Biggleswade and to the south of Sandy.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: There is no designated Neighbourhood Planning Area for Upper Caldecote and the settlement is not located within or surrounded by Green Belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³³⁶ identifies Upper Caldecote as consisting of "established families in large detached homes", "householders in inexpensive village homes" and "well-off homeowners in rural location". ONS data³³⁷ for the LLSOA that Upper Caldecote is located within reveals the median age of residents to be 48, and that there are more residents over the age of 65 than under the age of 16.

Services and facilities available within Upper Caldecote include a village hall, a pre-school/nursery, a lower school, 2 convenience stores one of which includes a post office, a large farm shop, and outdoor recreational facilities. Notable towns with superstores close³³⁸ to the Upper Caldecote area include Biggleswade (approx. 2 miles), Sandy (approx. 3 miles) and Shefford (approx. 5 miles).

Upper Caldecote has 8 Leisure Strategy sites³³⁹ that are located in the centre and in the west of the settlement. The settlement has a surplus of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children and allotments (This is based on Northill, Upper Caldecote and Ickwell combined)³⁴⁰.

Education: Caldecote VC Lower School has a small amount of capacity, and the school could accommodate an expansion of 2 FE³⁴¹ which would allow for an extra 180 pupils, equivalent to 514 dwellings. 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 required³⁴².

³³⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

³³⁷ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004B lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³³⁸ Google Maps (2016)

³³⁹ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³⁴⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

³⁴¹ Form of Entry

³⁴² Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

Employment: There are no significant employment areas within Upper Caldecote³⁴³. Local employment opportunities exist however at horticultural nurseries and G&M Growers. ONS data³⁴⁴ for the LLSOA that Upper Caldecote is located within reveals that 15.7% of residents work part-time, 37.7% work full-time and 20.7% are retired. The percentage of residents who work part and full-time are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, whilst the percentage of retired residents is higher. The main industries of employment in the LLSOA are construction, wholesale & retail and education. Overall 25% of ward residents work within the ward and 23% work elsewhere within central Bedfordshire. The main location commuted to by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire is Bedford³⁴⁵.

Transport and Movement: Upper Caldecote has access to the primary road network, being connected directly to the A1 to the east. The A1 connects the settlement to both Sandy and Biggleswade. The level of stress on the A1 in the LATP area is relatively low³⁴⁶. The settlement does not have a railway station, with the closest station being Biggleswade, 2.4 miles to the south-east. The settlement is serviced by bus services; however, no further details are available on the Local Area Transport Plan.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: Biggleswade is located in the Biggleswade Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) catchment area. The other settlements located in this catchment area are Biggleswade, Ickwell Green, Northill and Thorncote Green. The settlements in this WwTW catchment have a combined capacity of 3272 dwellings³⁴⁷.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Upper Caldecote is located within the Lower Ivel Clay Valley LCT. This LCT is an open, shallow valley and the River Ivel runs through the area from south to north with areas of open water, tributary streams and ponds. Shelterbelts of conifers and poplar are visually prominent in the flat landscape and former gravel workings now form open water bodies close to the Ivel, and are often used for fishing and enclosed by narrow woodland belts. Settlement takes the form of a few substantial villages, plus the market town of Biggleswade which is located on the eastern bank of the Ivel³⁴⁸.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Upper Caldecote and the immediate land to the east, and partially to the west and north, is Grade 1 agricultural land. The land to the south and partially to the north is Grade 2 agricultural land.

³⁴³ Employment and Economic Study (2012) Stage 1 Report [existing employment sites]

³⁴⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- 004B lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA)

³⁴⁵ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Northill Ward Profile

³⁴⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council (2012) Biggleswade & Sandy Local Area Transport Plan

³⁴⁷ JBA Consulting (2016) Central Bedfordshire Water Cycle Study

³⁴⁸ Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2015) Type 4

Historic Environment: Upper Caldecote has a small number of *Listed Buildings* with a few in the south of the village and the rest located in the centre of the village. An *Archaeological Notification Area* encompasses the central area and the east of the settlement, as well as much of the undeveloped land to the south.

Biodiversity: Upper Caldecote does not have any international, national or local designations, nor are there any areas of Priority Habitats located in the settlement. To the south of the settlement an area of land is located within the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure networks.

Flood Risk: Upper Caldecote is bordered to both the east and west by flood zones 2 & 3³⁴⁹.

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains best and most versatile agricultural land and designated heritage assets in the form of Listed Buildings and Archaeological Notification Areas. The village is also bordered by Flood Zones. The sensitivity of the settlement, community and environment is considered to be MEDIUM.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: There is limited capacity in existing schools in the catchment area, however there is room for expansion at Caldecote VC Lower School which would allow for around 500 new dwellings, indicating a medium to high capacity.
2. Healthcare: Lack of healthcare facilities indicating a low capacity.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: Convenience store only indicating a low capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: Outdoor recreational facilities only indicating a low capacity.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located outside of the settlement, with the closest at Biggleswade, around 2.5 miles away, buses serve the settlement but details of these services are unavailable at this stage, indicating a medium - low capacity. There is access to the primary road network.

³⁴⁹ Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

Environment

7. The settlement is surrounded by best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1).
8. Development is constrained in areas by the heritage settings of Listed Buildings.

UPPER CALDECOTE SUMMARY

Capacity: Low/Medium

Growth could be provided in the settlement; however, it would result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. This growth could provide a range of new housing to support local needs and at a sufficient scale, new service and facility provisions. Larger scale growth however may negatively impact upon the rural landscape and small scale growth could increase reliance on the private vehicle however.

UPPER STONDON

Stondon is a village in the east of Central Bedfordshire and has a population of 2,300 people and contains 1,110 dwellings (population and dwellings combine Upper and Lower Stondon)³⁵⁰. The settlement is around 10 miles east of Flitwick and around 7 miles south of Biggleswade. Stondon is divided into two sections, Upper Stondon and Lower Stondon³⁵¹, with Lower Stondon being the larger of the two villages.

CONTEXT & ASSETS

Planning: Stondon has a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area that follows the parish boundary³⁵², however The Neighbourhood Plan is yet to be developed. The settlement is not located in or surrounded by any designated Green belt land.

People, Community Facilities and Services: The geo-demographic profile³⁵³ identifies Upper Stondon as consisting of “householders in inexpensive village homes”. ONS data³⁵⁴ for the area shows the median age of residents to be 41, and that there are more residents under the age of 16 than over the age of 65.

Upper Stondon does not contain any services and facilities. Notable towns with superstores close³⁵⁵ to the Upper Stondon area include Shefford (approx. 3 miles), Hitchin (approx. 5 miles, outside of Central Bedfordshire) and Biggleswade (approx. 8 miles). Upper Stondon has 1 small Leisure Strategy site³⁵⁶, whilst Stondon as a whole has a surplus of formal large recreation areas, play areas for children and facilities for young people. However, there is a deficit of informal large recreation areas, small amenity spaces and allotments³⁵⁷.

Education: The schools site cannot accommodate expansion. Robert Bloomfield Academy is at capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site. Samuel Whitbread Academy is close to capacity and cannot accommodate expansion on the existing site³⁵⁸.

Employment: Upper Stondon has 2 existing employment centres which are Refectory Business Park and Manor Park Farm. ONS data³⁵⁹ for the area reveals that 14% of residents work part-time, 44.7% work full-time and that 13% are retired. These figures are similar to those for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. Wholesale & retail, education and manufacturing are the main industries of employment for the area. Overall 23% of ward residents work within the ward, 14% work elsewhere

³⁵⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

³⁵¹ Lower Stondon is assessed separately

³⁵² Central Bedfordshire Council – Neighbourhood Planning

³⁵³ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

³⁵⁴ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 013D- Lower Layer Super Output Area

³⁵⁵ Google Maps (2016)

³⁵⁶ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy GIS Map Data

³⁵⁷ Central Bedfordshire Council Leisure Strategy Parish Profile

³⁵⁸ Central Bedfordshire Council Education Capacity Information (2016)

³⁵⁹ ONS (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics- Central Bedfordshire 013D- Lower Layer Super Output Area

within Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire is the most commuted to location by ward residents outside of Central Bedfordshire³⁶⁰.

Transport and Movement:

Road: Upper Stondon is not connected to the primary road network, but the local road network connects the settlement to Lower Stondon, Meppershall and Henlow Camp.

Rail: The village does not have a railway station, and the nearest station to the settlement is in Arlesey, around 3 miles to the north-east. 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 day³⁶¹.

Bus: Upper Stondon is not serviced by commercial or community run bus services.

Other Infrastructure:

Sewerage and Wastewater Treatment: The sewerage and wastewater capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Works whose catchment area Upper Stondon is located within is unknown.

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

Landscape & Land Quality:

Landscape Character Type (LCT): Lower Stondon is located within the Upper Gravenhurst-Meppershall Clay Hills LCT. This LCT is formed of 2 groups of undulating low hills and the landscape is predominantly under arable use. The area has scattered blocks of woodland and a strong sense of elevation with views across the surrounding landscape, which increases sensitivity of settlement edges / rural interfaces..

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land: Upper Stondon and most of the surrounding land is Grade 2 agricultural land, although there is a small area of Grade 3 land to the south-west of the settlement (sub-grade 3a or 3b not known).

Historic Environment: Upper Stondon has 2 *Listed Buildings*, and is located in a designated *Archaeological Notification Area*.

Biodiversity: There are no international, national or local wildlife sites around the settlement, but there is a block of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland to the west of the settlement.

Flood Risk: There are no areas of flood risk in or around Upper Stondon³⁶².

³⁶⁰ Central Bedfordshire Council (2015) Arlesey Ward Profile

³⁶¹ Central Bedfordshire Council (2013) Arlesey & Stotfold Local Area Transport Plan

³⁶² Environment Agency (2016) Flood Map for Planning

SENSITIVITY & DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS

The settlement contains some key environmental receptors which are sensitive to development, including agricultural land and Priority Habitats. The settlement contains some 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 LOW.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Communities

1. Education: No facilities within Upper Stondon and in Lower Stondon there is very limited capacity in existing schools which have no space for expansion. New school sites would be required to accommodate further growth indicating a low capacity.
2. Healthcare: No facilities present in Upper Stondon however, there are facilities present in Lower Stondon. Capacity information is unavailable at this stage. The range of facilities in Lower Stondon however, indicates a medium capacity at this stage.
3. Retail/Groceries/Newsagent/Post Office: No facilities in Upper Stondon, but a range present in Lower Stondon, including a post office, indicating a medium capacity.
4. Leisure/Cultural: No facilities in Upper Stondon, however outdoor recreational facilities, Children's Play areas and theatre present in Lower Stondon, indicating a medium capacity.
5. Green Belt: No designated Green Belt constraints.

Transport & Movement

6. Rail links are located in Arlesey, around 3 miles away. Bus services are available in Lower Stondon however, the frequency and quality of these services are unknown at this stage, there are no bus connections between Upper and Lower Stondon. There is no direct access to the strategic road network, but there is indirect access through Lower Stondon. However there are also a variety of concerns over road safety in and around the area which lends to discouraging sustainable forms of transports such as walking and cycling, indicating overall a low capacity.

Environment

7. Development around the settlement is likely to result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

UPPER STONDON SUMMARY

Capacity: Low

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

Overall, environmental constraints are limited to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, however there are landscape concerns regarding coalescence between Upper and Lower Stondon. Small scale development, particularly if concentrated to the north of the settlement would be likely to increase reliance on the private vehicle.