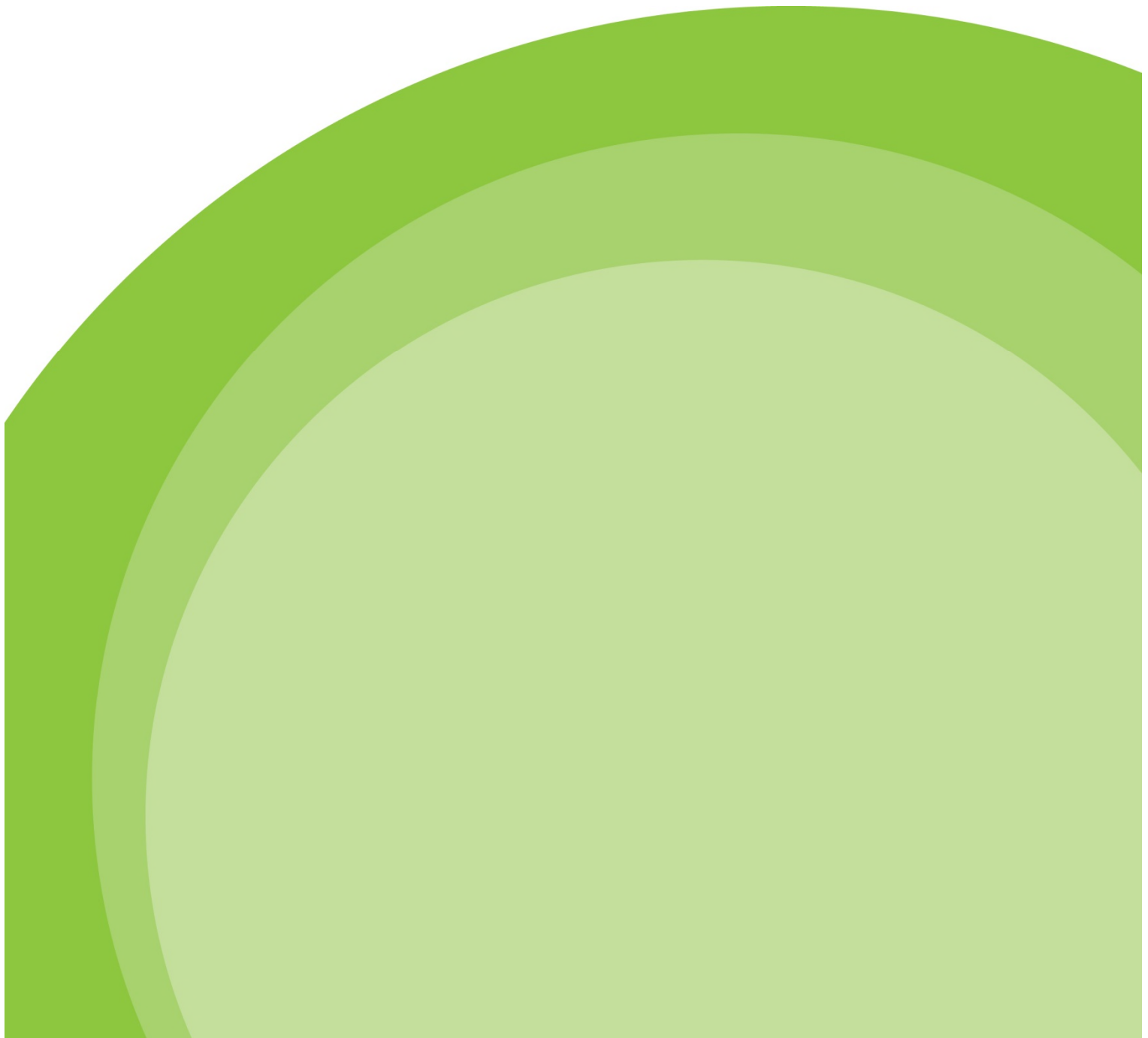




# **Draft Passenger Transport Strategy 2016**



## Executive Summary

The Passenger Transport Strategy aspires to

- Support residents to access employment and services they need to live well through a range of passenger transport services
- Ensure that residents at risk of isolation and deprivation are able to access the transport they need
- Support and strengthen a mixed economy of transport services, including commercial, voluntary, community and subsidised options.
- Achieve value for money for residents and council tax payers

## Subsidised Bus Services

- Network of core, secondary and least-used routes with subsidies determined by a Subsidised Bus Service Assessment Process
- Subsidies limited to times of higher passenger demand:  
Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm  
Saturday 8am to 3pm  
No subsidies for Sunday services

## Concessionary Travel

- Allow free travel for Central Bedfordshire Council residents bus pass holders twenty four hours per day seven days per week
- Changes to travel pass issue and renewal:  
No automatic renewal  
Option to undertake online applications from April 2017

## Community Transport

- Introduce clear and transparent tender process for awarding of funding to support Dial a Ride services
- Encourage voluntary community bus service providers to take on additional services

## Fleet Services and Operations

- Adopt a Fleet Services Policy for Central Bedfordshire Council that ensures that all fleet vehicles owned leased or hired are bought and managed through Fleet Services.
- Undertake an annual review of all clients transported on behalf of Adult Social Care Health and Housing

## Home to School Transport Walking Routes

- Assessment criteria for available routes confirmed

## Smarter Procurement for School Transport

- Move from use of frameworks to a Dynamic Purchasing Scheme

## Introduction

The aim of the Passenger Transport Strategy (PTS) is to deliver transport services that are safe, effective and fit for purpose and provide a framework for decision making processes in relation to all PTS services.

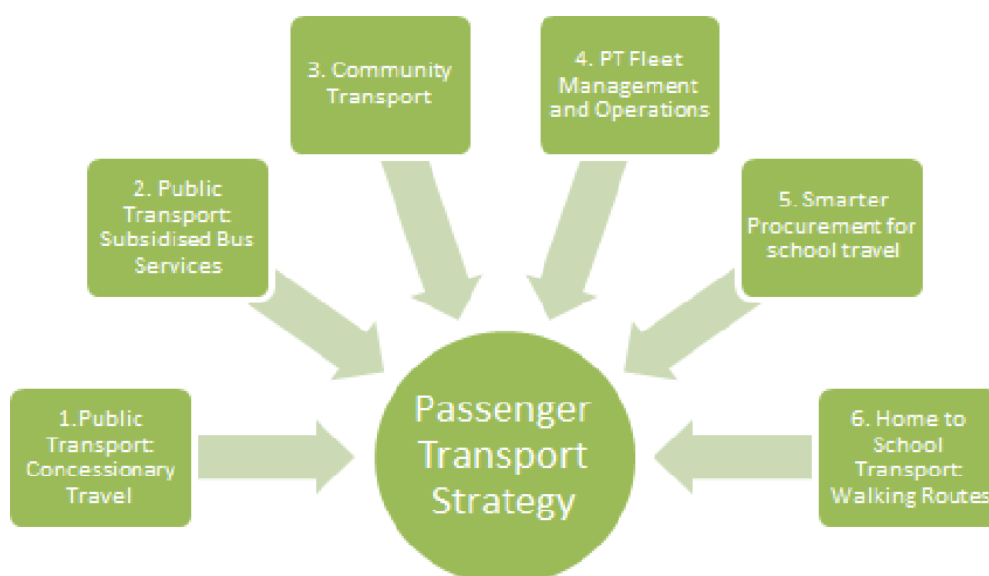
The Strategy will be developed alongside and sit within the Central Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is also currently under review.

The Strategy sets out the Council's objectives for passenger transport in Central Bedfordshire and will be supported by relevant policies and best practice.

The Strategy refers to users of road based 'public' transport such as commercially operated local bus routes and community transport as well as fleet transport for the provision of home to school transport and home to day setting transport for vulnerable children and adults

## Scope of the Passenger Transport Strategy

- Subsidised Bus Services
- Concessionary Travel
- Community Transport
- Home to School Transport – Available Walking Routes
- Smarter Procurement for School Transport
- Fleet Services and Operations



## **Subsidised Bus Services**

### **Subsidies will be determined by a Subsidised Bus Service Assessment Process**

The following five key principles are considered in the Subsidised Bus Service Assessment Process to determine how subsidies will be allocated.

#### **i) Available alternatives**

Central Bedfordshire Council aims to ensure there is a network of services, with subsidised bus and community bus services provided where there is a proven need to connect people with family, friends and shops.

Duplication of subsidised bus services is avoided in order to improve sustainability. Where there may be currently more than one service from some villages to a number of destinations, priority is given to the service with the highest demand.

An alternative service is considered to be any viable alternative, be it another bus service, community transport, voluntary transport or taxi

#### **ii) Accessibility**

Central Bedfordshire Council aims to ensure there is bus service provision in areas where there is proven demand, of more than seven passengers per journey, from older people and people with a disability.

#### **iii) Commercial bus services**

The Council encourages the provision of commercial services, providing operators with advice and expert knowledge when required to do so, in preference to subsidising services at taxpayers' expense.

#### **iv) Reducing congestion**

An evaluation is made on how many passengers use each journey. There are certain journeys which may have very few or no passengers, but the return journey is quite well used. Therefore an average number of passengers per single journey are considered. With a single journey of an hour in length, an average of seven or more passengers per journey could be considered to be the minimum number of passengers required on average to subsidise a service. Fewer than seven passengers could be accommodated in a taxi or voluntary transport.

Central Bedfordshire Council should ensure that bus services are provided in accordance with the Local Plan.

#### **v) Affordability**

With a greater emphasis on a commercially provided bus services, the finances available can be more targeted.

Central Bedfordshire Council takes account of available budgets in determining the frequency of individual services, and the provision of services normally running with less than seven people.

A variable maximum rate will be considered – for example £1.50 per passenger in urban areas within two miles of a town centre; £2.00 per passenger in urban fringe areas within four miles of a town centre; £3.00 per passenger in rural areas. Provision of any service beyond £3.00 per passenger would be assessed on a proven need for social inclusion of older people and people with a disability which could not be met by any other form of transport service.

### **Creation of a network of core, secondary and least-used routes**

A network of core, secondary and least-used routes will be created as part of the Subsidised Bus Service Assessment Process with priority being given to services on the core and secondary network.

#### **Core Network**

There will be a core network across Central Bedfordshire with a desired minimum of 10 journeys in each direction per day, Monday to Saturday. Core routes (defined as services connecting major towns with a proven demand for 10 or more journeys in each direction per day) will be expected to be mainly commercially provided, although subsidy may be required in some instances to maintain the desired minimum frequency.

#### **Secondary Routes**

Secondary routes will be feeder services to a local town where there are shopping facilities and connections to the core network. Such services would have a desired minimum lower frequency, possibly four journeys in each direction per day Monday to Friday **between 8am and 6.30pm** when there is higher demand; and two journeys in each direction per day Saturday.

## **Least-used Routes**

Least-used routes would be seen as infrequent services where there is limited demand, necessary for social inclusion so people can visit family, friends and shops. Such services would vary from one journey per week to one journey per day, or alternatively would be met by the voluntary sector.

Central Bedfordshire Council will work with bus operators to redraft timetables but will also look at alternative solutions for services bus operators no longer wish to provide, such as community transport and voluntary bus services.

## **Restrictions to subsidies for Saturday services**

Passenger levels on bus services on Saturdays have fallen over the years. In the smaller towns, this is particularly noticeable in the afternoons and evenings.

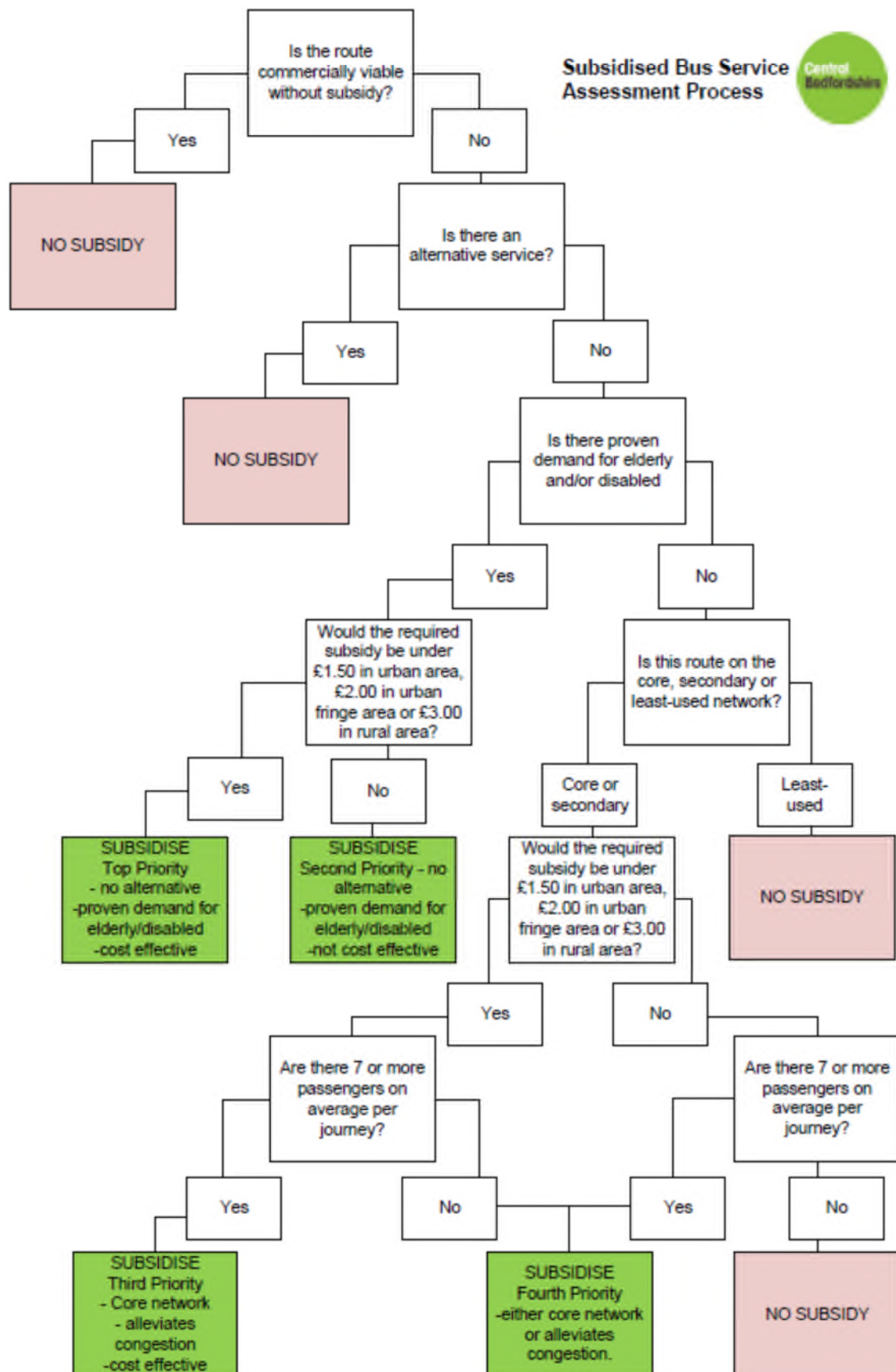
The Council subsidies will be allocated to those times of the week when there is more demand. Due to lower demand on Saturday afternoons and evenings, it is proposed that only commercial services would operate at this time. Subsidies will therefore only be considered for services **between 8am and 3pm**.

There will be no change to services while they are covered by development funding from a Section 106 agreement.

## **Withdrawal of subsidies for evening and Sunday services**

In times of restricted finances, the Council subsidy should be allocated to those times of the week when there is more demand. Evening services after 6.30pm and Sunday services therefore will only be provided on a commercial basis without subsidy.

Evening and Sunday services will continue if they are supported by a Section 106 agreement from new development funding.



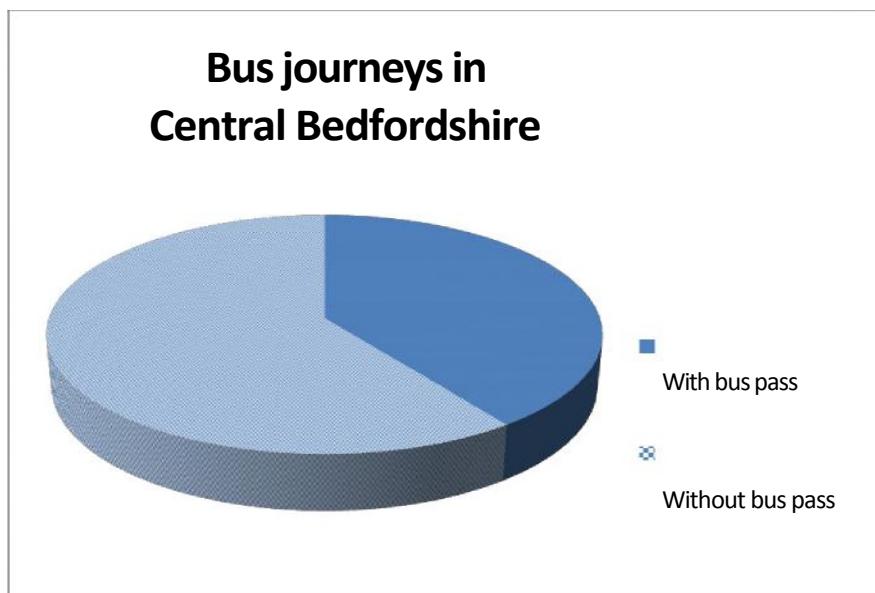


## Concessionary Travel

The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme allows free travel on local buses across England for older people (currently those over 63) and people with a disability on Mondays to Fridays between 09:30 and 23:00, and any time on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The age at which residents are entitled to a free travel pass is currently rising, and is the equivalent to the retirement age of women.

The Central Bedfordshire Council scheme also includes the additional discretionary elements:

- Free travel for Central Bedfordshire residents before 09:30 and after 23:00 (Monday to Friday) if the journey starts in Central Bedfordshire.
- If mobility is severely impaired so that assistance is required when travelling (either because of age or disability), there is entitlement to a Companion Pass. This allows a companion to travel free with the pass holder in Central Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Luton and Bedford.
- Travel on Dial a Ride services, for scheme members, for a special far



- Travel passes are issued free to those entitled who apply. Travel passes have a lifespan of five years, pass holders will need to apply for a new travel pass when renewal is required. This would be free of charge.
- Should a travel pass be lost, there is a fee of £11 (from April 2016) for a replacement. This does not apply if stolen. There are approximately 43,000 pass holders in Central Bedfordshire. Their journeys represent in approximately 40 per cent of all total bus journeys within Central Bedfordshire Council.

## Other Concessionary Schemes

### Companion Passes

Will continue to be used within and from Central Bedfordshire, and in other local authorities for which an agreement has been made with Central Bedfordshire Council. This currently applies to Bedford, Luton and Hertfordshire. The agreements with other local authorities are subject to change.

### Travel Aid

The Travel Aid scheme will continue until it is superseded by bus companies own schemes or changes to Universal Credit.

## Community Transport

### Dial a Ride

In order to create a clear and transparent process for funding Dial a Ride services, which will still enable the operators to diversify and provide alternative provision, the council will introduce a tender-based system where organisations are invited to provide Dial a Ride proposals for Central Bedfordshire with options for members of the public to pay part of the fare. Market research was undertaken with Community Transport and Central Bedfordshire Council Fleet Service users between 23 November 2015 and the 11 January 2016. The outcomes from this research will be used to inform the requirements for the Dial a Ride service provision going forward.

### Voluntary Community Buses

The Council will encourage voluntary service providers to take on additional services which cannot be met by conventional bus services. Where changes are made to commercial routes that result in a gap in provision we will work with community transport providers to find suitable alternative provision

## **Fleet Services & Operations**

Fleet Services within Public Protection and Transport provide home to day setting transport for clients from Adult Social Care Health and Housing in order ensure the most efficient use of fleet these routes will be reviewed annually and in line with any changes arising from the day settings being offered by Adult Social Care Health and Housing.

In order to ensure that the Central Bedfordshire Council is making the most efficient use of its fleet and achieving best value when purchasing leasing or hiring vehicles all fleet procurement and management will be undertaken by Fleet Services in line with the fleet policy.

## **Home to School Transport**

Assessments of available walking routes will be undertaken in line with the criteria set out in the Home to School Transport Policy.

## **Smarter Procurement for School Transport**

Central Bedfordshire Council will tender its home to school transport routes by means of a dynamic purchasing scheme.

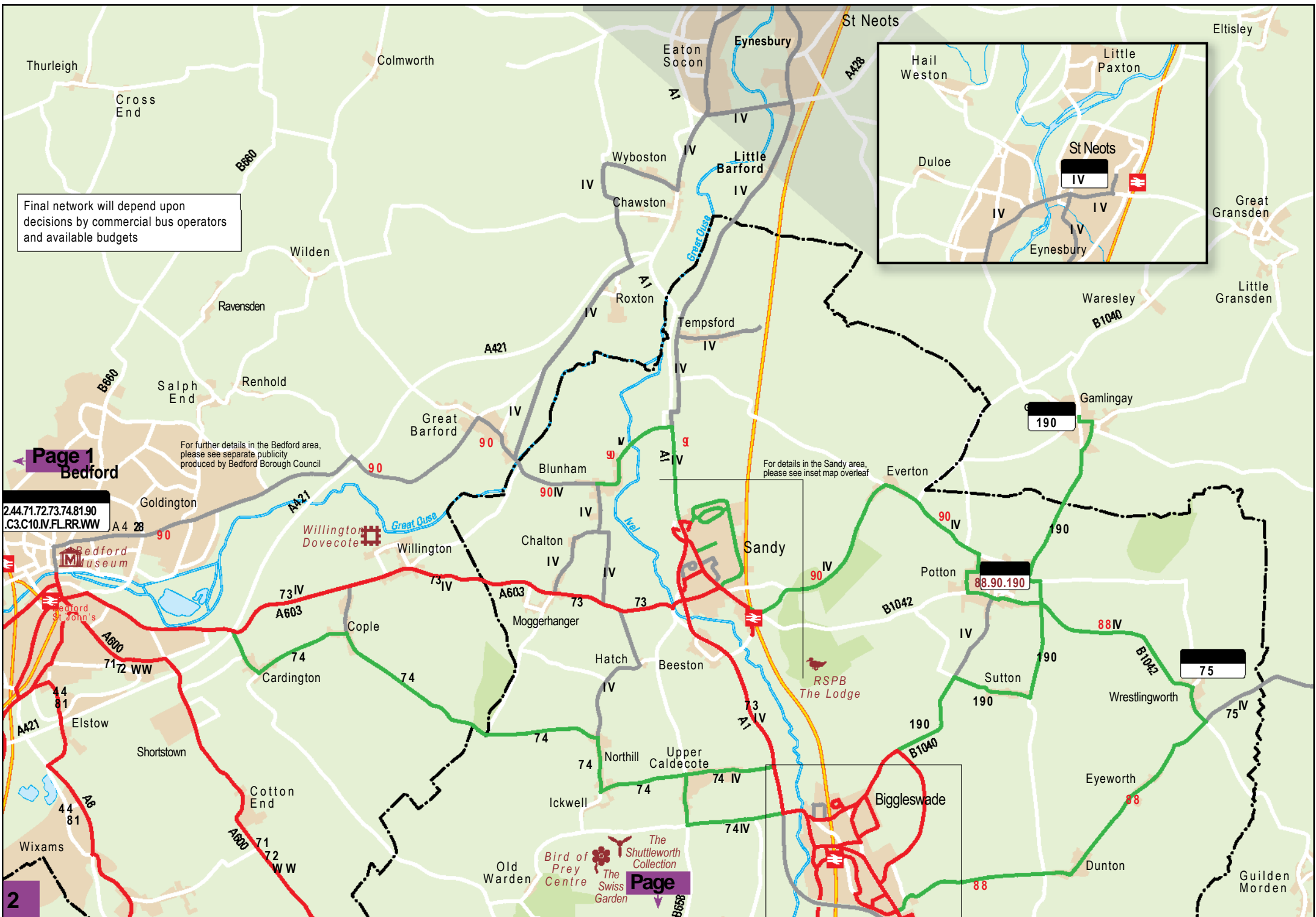
# **Appendix A: Proposed Bus Routes Area Map**



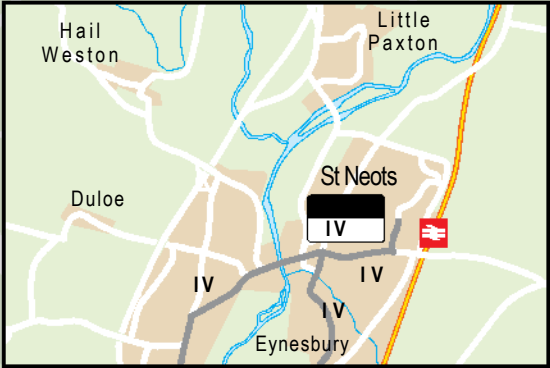
Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



# Proposed Area Map



Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



2,44,71,72,73,74,81,90,103,C10,IV,FL,RR,WW

2

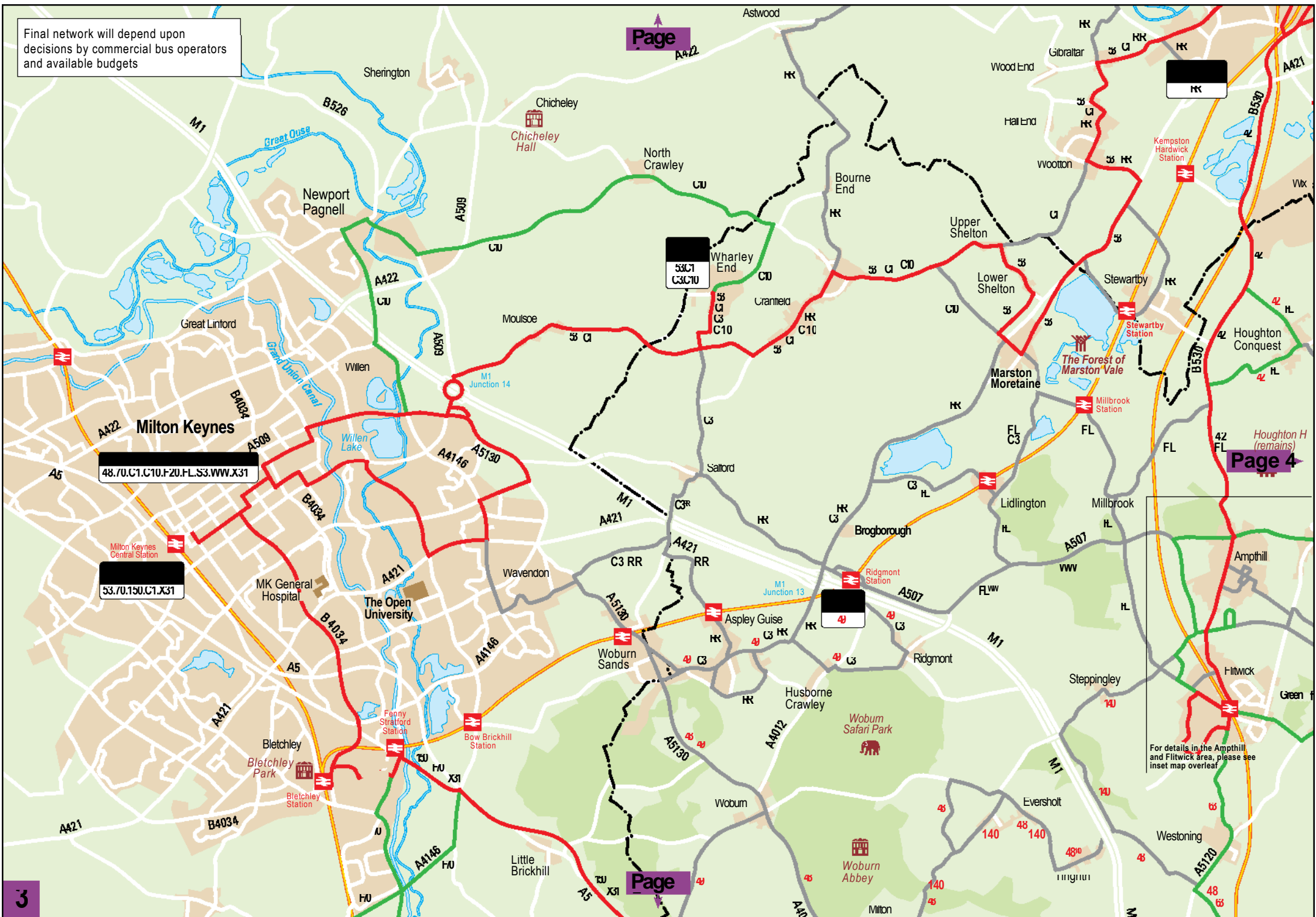
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RSPB The Lodge

The Bird of Prey Centre  
The Shuttleworth Collection  
The Swiss Garden

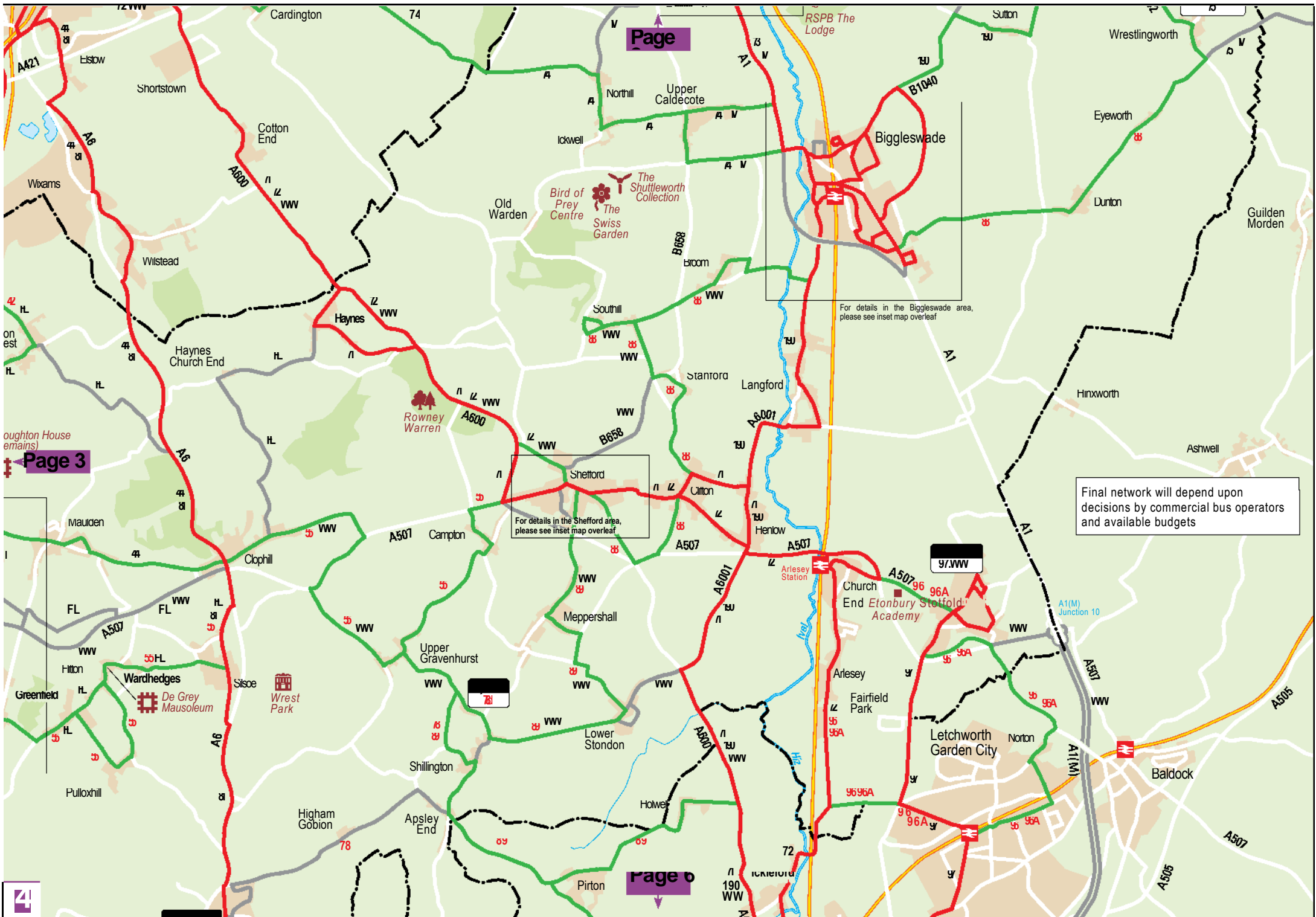


Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



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For details in the Shefford area, please see inset map overlay

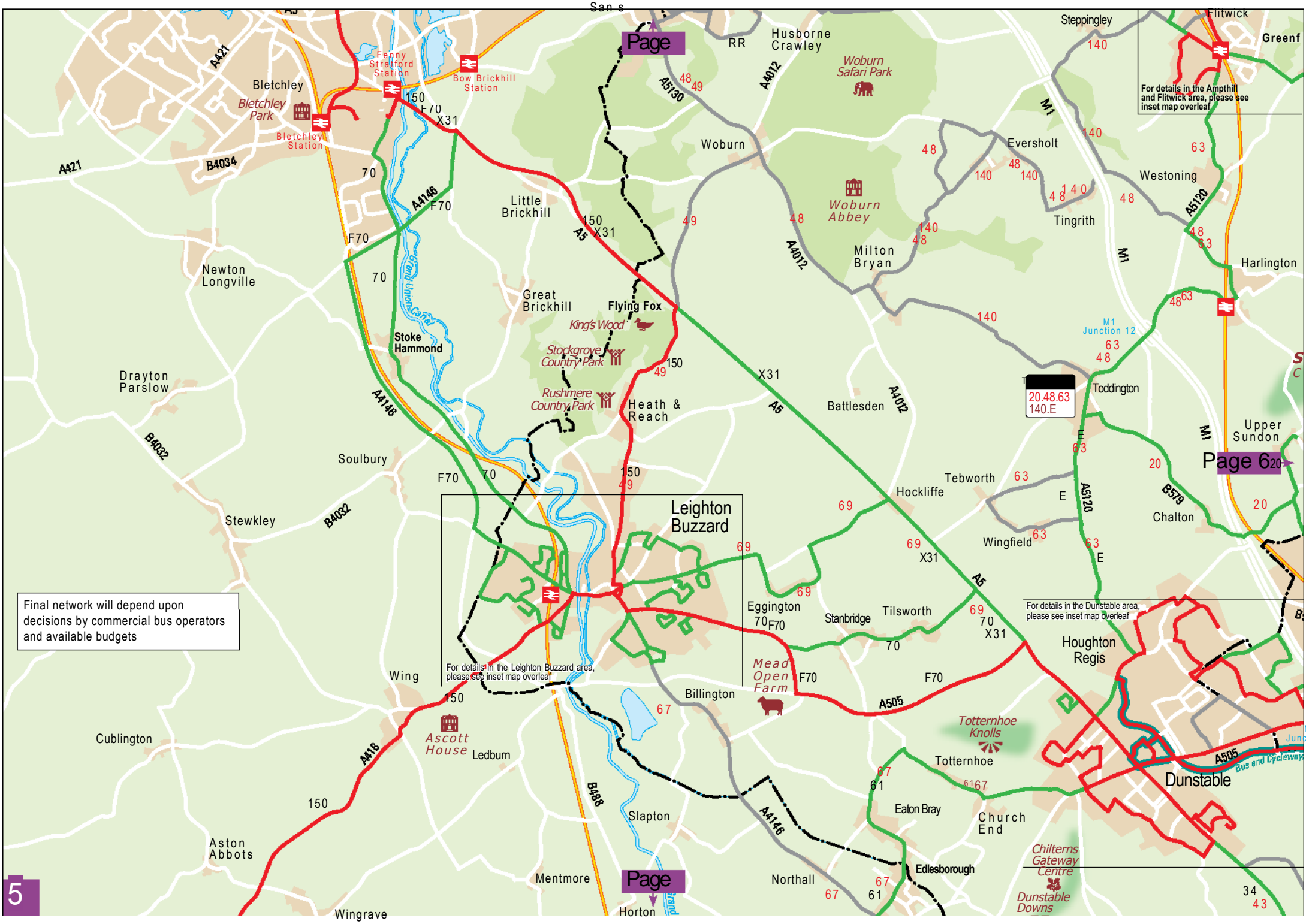
For details in the Biggleswade area, please see inset map overlay

Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets

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Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets

For details in the Ampthill and Flitwick area, please see inset map overlay

For details in the Leighton Buzzard area, please see inset map overlay

For details in the Dunstable area, please see inset map overlay



Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets

For details in the Luton area, please see separate publicity produced by Luton Borough Council

For further details in Hertfordshire, please see separate publicity produced by Hertfordshire County Council

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For further details in Buckinghamshire, please see separate publicity produced by Buckinghamshire County Council

Inset map overlaid please see

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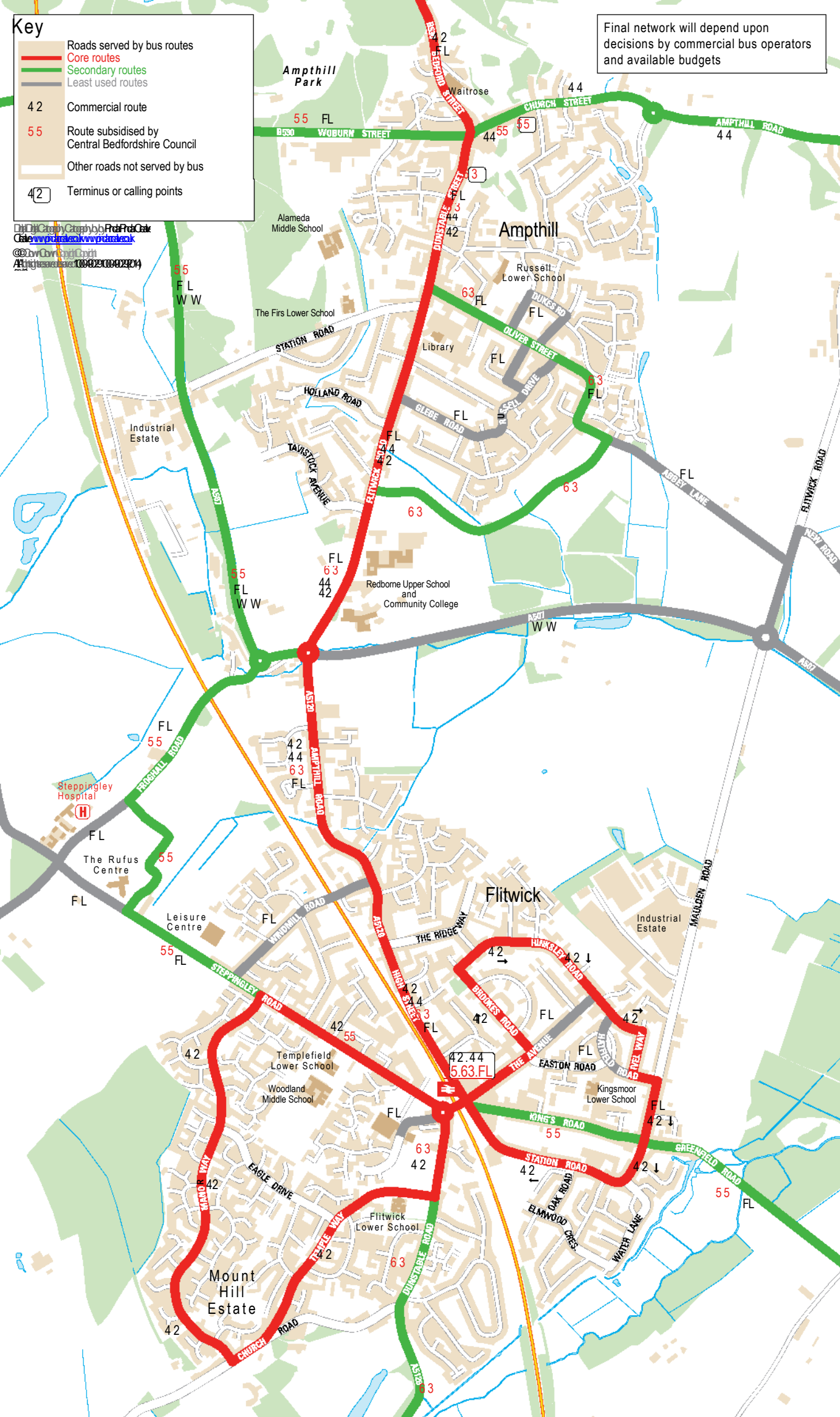




Key

- Roads served by bus routes
- Core routes
- Secondary routes
- Least used routes
- 42 Commercial route
- 55 Route subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council
- Other roads not served by bus
- Terminus or calling points

Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



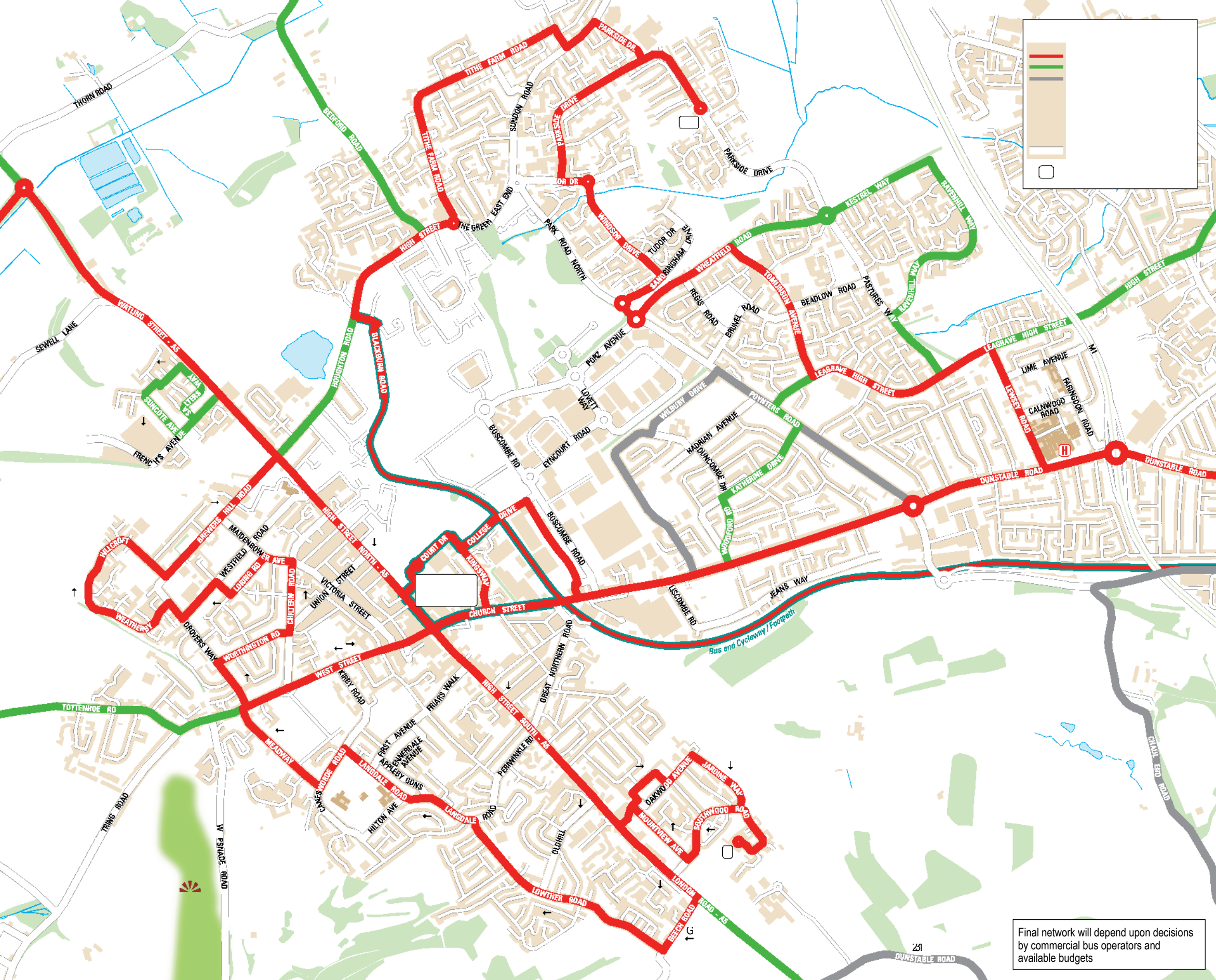


### Key

- Roads served by bus routes
- Core routes**
- Secondary routes**
- Least used routes
- 74** Commercial route
- 88** Route subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council
- Other roads not served by bus
- 74** Terminus or calling points

Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets









Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets

Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



## Key

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|   | Roads served by bus routes                       |
|  | Core routes                                      |
|  | Secondary routes                                 |
|  | Least used routes                                |
| <b>34</b>   | Commercial route                                 |
| <b>69</b>   | Route subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council |
|  | Other roads not served by bus                    |
| <b>70</b>   | Terminus or calling points                       |



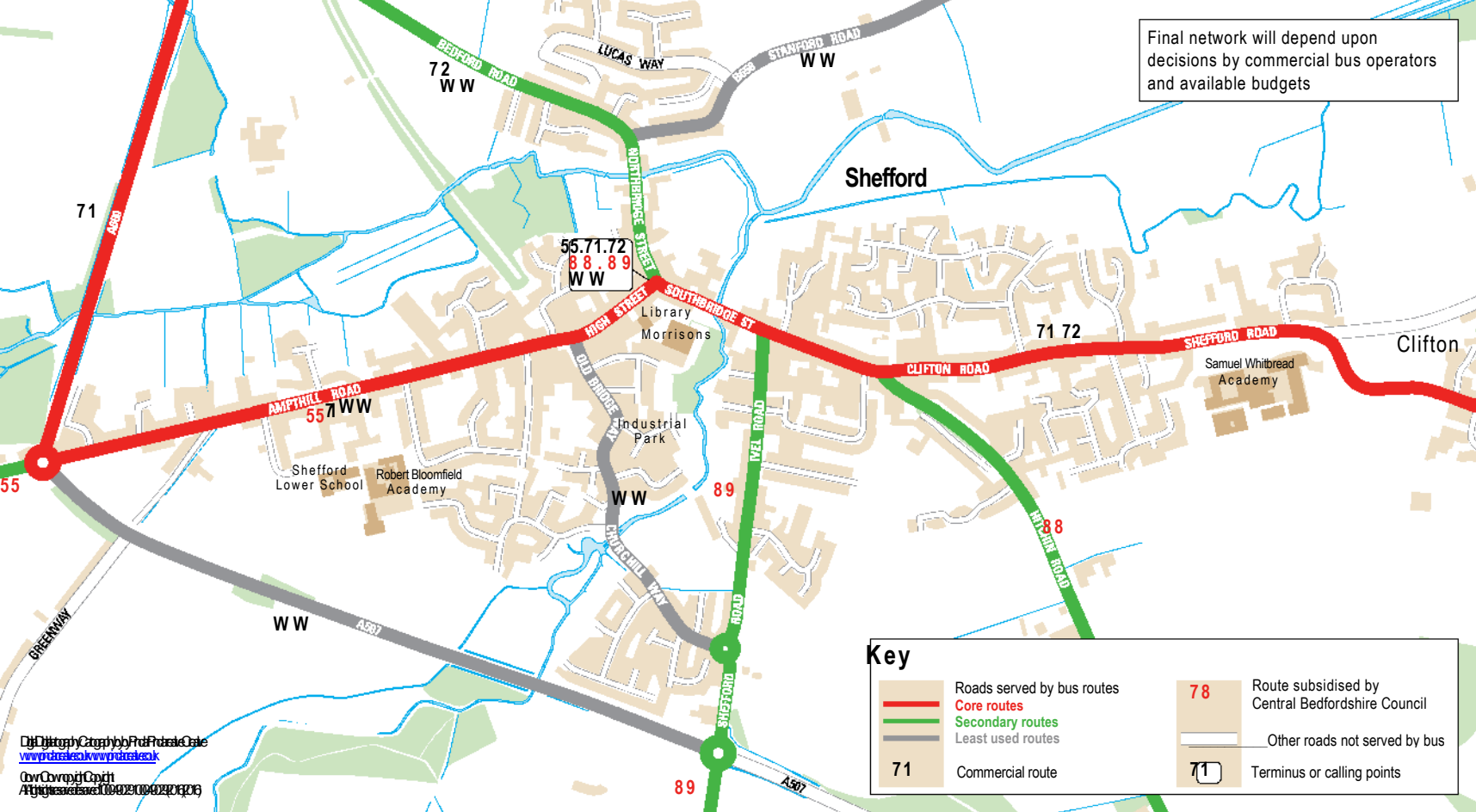
Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



## Key

- Roads served by bus routes
- Core routes
- Secondary routes
- Least used routes
- 73** Commercial route
- 90** Route subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council
- Other roads not served by bus
- 73** Terminus or calling points

Final network will depend upon decisions by commercial bus operators and available budgets



## Key

- Roads served by bus routes
- Core routes**
- Secondary routes**
- Least used routes
- 71 Commercial route

- 78** Route subsidised by Central Bedfordshire Council
- Other roads not served by bus
- 71** Terminus or calling points



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by telephone: 0300 300 8049

by email: [Public.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Public.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

on the web: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,  
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ