CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

NOVEMBER 2009

CONTENTS

1: Introduction

1.1 Why does this affect me?

1.1.1 Planning policies have an impact on everyone, whether in relation to minor development like householder extensions or to larger-scale redevelopment and regeneration projects which transform whole areas. The current method of preparing Development Plans is called the Local Development Framework (LDF). This deals with spatial issues, for example those that involve the use of land, the movement of people and access to opportunities. A variety of new homes including those which are affordable will also be provided throughout the district by the planning policies contained in the LDF. These policies will affect for example; how those houses will look, where they are located and the facilities that they have access to. Issues related to employment opportunities, the countryside and landscape, and heritage and design will also be influenced by LDF policies.

1.1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (referred to in this document as 'the Act') requires local planning authorities to produce a LDF. This will include several documents known as Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that contain policies that will be used to determine planning applications submitted to the Council. Policies contained within these documents will supersede policies contained within the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (First Review) which was adopted in December 2005. Annex F sets out which Local Plan policies are superseded by policies in this document. A Glossary of Terms is provided at Annex A.

1.2 The Document

1.2.1 This document is the Council's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document. It sets out the Council's policies, which have been arrived at following a series of key public consultation exercises which are set out below. The policies in the first part of the document provide the long term vision and the direction for future development in the district over the period 2001 – 2026. Following on from this Core Strategy, specific sites for development will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

1.2.2 The vision, objectives and policies in the Core Strategy provide an overarching approach that supports the more detailed policies in the Development Management Policies, which sets out the policies against which planning applications for the use of land and buildings will be assessed.

1.2.3 Since April 2009, Central Bedfordshire Council has provided public services as an all-purpose unitary authority. It delivers all the previous services of the former Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils as well as those which were run by Bedfordshire County Council in these areas. The Local Development Framework for the former Mid Bedfordshire area remains in place. Further details are set out in the Local Development Scheme, the Project Plan for the LDF which is available on the website. The LDF for the

South Bedfordshire area remains as a joint working arrangement with Luton Borough Council. Accordingly, the policies in this document refer only to the geographical area of the former Mid Bedfordshire District.

1.2.4   The diagram below shows how the Core Strategy & Development Management Policies document fits into the Local Development Framework.

Statement of Community Involvement	Core Strategy & Development Management Policies	Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment
Supplementary Planning Documents	Site Allocations DPD	Gypsy & Traveller DPD
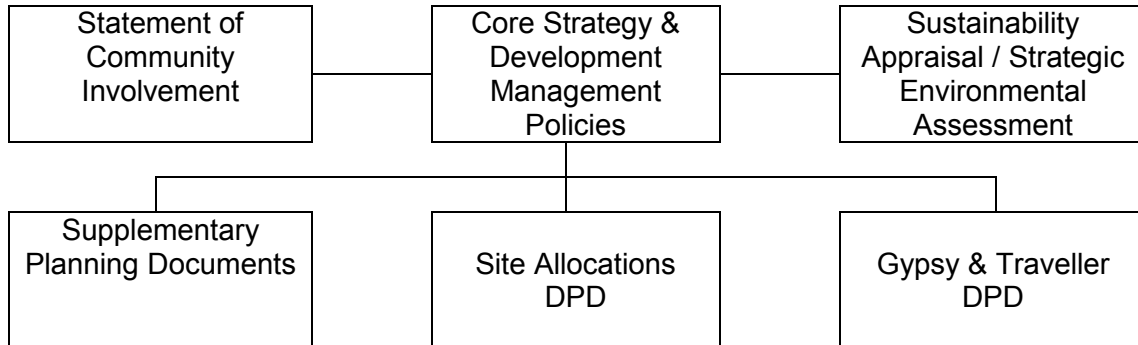
1.3   Context: Integration of Strategies and Conformity

1.3.1   The LDF has a key role in providing a spatial dimension for many other strategies, and helping in their co-ordination and delivery throughout the district. Annex B provides details of the documents, strategies and policies that have been used to shape this document. The most influential contextual documents in this process are outlined below. The vision of the Core Strategy needs to reflect these documents and the influences they will have on the future planning of different parts of the district. Equally it needs to provide an integrated context for the district as a whole.

1.3.2   **Regional Policy**
Regional policy sets the context for sustainable development in the region as a whole. The Core Strategy's vision and policies must support and generally conform to regional policy, and develop it at the local level. In the case of Mid Bedfordshire the regional context is complex. There are three key policy drivers:
- The East of England Plan,
- The Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS), and
- The South East Plan.

1.3.3   The **East of England Plan**, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England sets out the strategy for planning and development in the East of England to the year 2021. It is informed by the overall Integrated Regional Strategy that draws together the key linkages between, for example, the RSS and the Regional Housing and Regional Economic Strategies. This plan details the scale and location of development and provides guidance for general policies. It covers matters such as economic development, housing, the environment, transport, waste management, mineral extraction, culture, sport and recreation. These policies provide a development framework for the next 15 to 20 years that will influence the quality of life, the character of places and how they function, and inform other strategies and plans

1.3.4   The Northern Marston Vale along with Bedford and Kempston (in Bedford

Borough) form part of an identified growth area in which future development will be focused. Part of the northern Marston Vale is within Mid Bedfordshire. More detailed guidance on development within the growth area is contained in the **Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS)**, adopted in 2005. This includes the amount of development and infrastructure improvements expected.

1.3.5   Although within the East of England Region, Mid Bedfordshire is also affected by proposals in the **South East Plan**. Specifically this relates to the proposal for expansion to the South East of Milton Keynes as part of the overall major growth of the City. It should be noted that any development in Mid Bedfordshire arising from this Plan is in addition to the requirements of the East of England Plan.

1.3.6   **Local Context**
The Mid Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011 was approved by the District Council in January 2008. Although this is not a spatial planning document, most of the themes can be translated spatially and many can be implemented through the planning process. The 2004 Act requires the Council to have regard to it in DPD preparation. This enables us to give a spatial dimension to the Sustainable Community Strategy through the Core Strategy & Development Management Policies and other documents which will form part of the LDF. Consultation carried out for the Sustainable Community Strategy has been used to inform the preparation of the LDF.

1.3.7   The LDF needs to be in general conformity with the East of England Plan and the MKSM SRS as well as national planning policy contained in legal documents such as Acts, Circulars and Planning Policy Statements.

1.4   **Sustainability Appraisal**

1.4.1   A further requirement of the new planning system is to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the policies in the emerging LDF. In addition local planning authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC, which requires a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programmes which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment. These two processes are carried out as one joint appraisal in accordance with Government guidance. When the term Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is used in this document, it should be taken to include assessment under the SEA Directive.

1.4.2   Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic and iterative process, and involves the appraisal of the social, environmental and economic effects of strategies and policies to ensure that decisions can be made in accordance with the aims of sustainable development.

1.4.3   The process of Sustainability Appraisal must be fully integrated into the plan-making process through the regular assessment of policies and strategies as they evolve at key stages of the LDF process. This will ensure that the policies and proposals are effective and decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

1.4.4   The scoping report of the Sustainability Appraisal for Mid Bedfordshire was published for comment in Spring 2006, and the Sustainability Report on the

Preferred Options was published in September 2007. The results of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options and Preferred Options report have influenced the outcomes presented in this document.

1.5 Appropriate Assessment

1.5.1 The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) sets out the requirement for assessment of plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites (sites of European importance). The requirement is transposed into English law through the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 as amended. It is Government policy as set out in PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation that listed Ramsar (wetland) sites should also be subjected to Appropriate Assessment.

1.5.2 There are no Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites in Mid Bedfordshire. There are 5 European sites outside of the district boundary but within the potential influence of the plan. Consultants Enfusion were commissioned to undertake a 'screening' to consider if there is likely to be adverse effects. This has found that that the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD would have no adverse effects on these sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans. Further detail is provided in the Sustainability Appraisal report and Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment report available separately.

1.6 Consultation so far

1.6.1 Community consultation is vitally important to the LDF. We have consulted extensively on the issues and options available for the future spatial planning of the district. This led to the publication of the Council's Preferred Options for consultation in September 2007. The 'frontloading' or 'Issues & Options' and 'Preferred Options' stages of the process as described in the 2004 version of PPS12 was completed before the revision of PPS12 in June 2008. It complied with the then Regulations 25 and 26 of the 2004 Regulations and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The Council considers that the process also complies with the requirements of the 2004 Regulations as amended.

1.6.2 Consultation has taken place through a variety of methods including:

- A series of 'Plan this Place' workshops held in Autumn 2005 to identify the issues important to stakeholders and residents of the district;

- An 'Issues and Options' Paper which was published for comment in February 2006;

- A series of workshops held with council officers to look at the effectiveness of the current Local Plan policies;

- A series of Focus Group meetings was convened with a range of stakeholders being invited. These included representatives of statutory bodies, local groups, Bedfordshire County Council, planning agents and developers. Two stages of Focus Groups have been held: the first in summer 2006, focusing on strategic issues. The second in May/June 2007 directly looking at issues and options for development control

policies;

- A 'Plan this Place' questionnaire was sent to all residents in March 2007 containing a range of 23 questions. Over 5,000 responses were received and have been analysed by the Council;

- The Council's Preferred Options was published on the 24th September 2007 for a consultation period of six weeks.

- The Submission Draft of the Document was published in October 2008 for a six week period. All comments received were summarised and forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration.

- An Examination was held by the Planning Inspectorate in June and July 2009 to consider the 'soundness' of the DPD and the representations received.

1.6.3   In addition, wide-ranging consultation has taken place on a large number of sites put forward by interested parties through the Site Allocations DPD. This consultation, entitled Talk to Mid Beds, has helped inform the Core Strategy by enabling local people and other stakeholders to highlight key issues in each settlement, particularly infrastructure requirements associated with new development.

1.6.4   The outcomes of all of these exercises have been taken into consideration and the Council's Policies have been set out in this document together with a reasoned justification for each policy area.

2: The Spatial Vision

2.1   Description of the District (Spatial Portrait)

2.1.1   Figure 1 shows Mid Bedfordshire and its surroundings, together with some of the key issues facing the district. The district contains a number of towns and villages, separated by extensive areas of attractive open countryside. The following spatial portrait draws on the State of the Environment Technical Report and the SA/SEA baseline information review.

2.1.2   Mid Bedfordshire currently has a population of around 132,200 and approximately 54,000 households. This is predicted to rise to around 144,000 by 2021. The age profile is changing – the population is getting older and more elderly people are relocating here. Currently people over 65 years of age make up 13.4% of the population. This will rise by around 20% up to 2021. At the same time young people are moving out of the area. There is a low proportion of ethnic minority groups compared to the national picture. The gypsy and traveller population in the district broadly reflects the regional average. Health statistics show that the district's residents are generally healthier than the national average with a slightly higher participation in physical activity than in the rest of the region.

2.1.3   The main towns are Biggleswade (population 16,520), Flitwick (13,220), Sandy (11,610), and Ampthill (6,830), all of which have expanded with the building of modern estates (figures are ONS 2006 mid-year estimates). Stotfold had a population of 7,090 in 2006 but this is predicted to rise to 13,060 in 2011, making Stotfold the second largest settlement in Mid Bedfordshire by 2011. Mid Bedfordshire is one of the most rapidly growing districts in England – recent population growth is over double the national average. With substantial planned housing development population growth will continue.

2.1.4   Historically, the largest employment sectors in Mid Bedfordshire have been agriculture and manufacturing. Both of these sectors have been in steady decline for some time, but agricultural employment is still higher than the national average and there is still a higher percentage of manufacturing jobs in Mid Bedfordshire compared to the county and region.

2.1.5   The Mid Bedfordshire economy has key strengths, including: a high proportion of the population being economically active, high earnings, low unemployment, a mix of sectors, increasing jobs and numbers of businesses. However, there are also some relative weaknesses in the local economy which may well be challenged further if high growth continues in surrounding areas. These weaknesses include a lower proportion of service sector jobs compared to the County and Region, with particular under representation of the professional and financial services sector, and; low levels of economic self containment, with high levels of out-commuting.

2.1.6   High levels of professional and senior employees live in the district compared with the regional and national average. A particular characteristic of the working population however, is that many use the excellent road and rail links to travel to work outside the district. The 2001 census showed that less

than half of working residents work within the district. The principal work destinations are Hertfordshire (17.2%), Bedford (8.9%), London (6.6%) Luton (6.2%), and Milton Keynes (5%). Conversely around 33% of the workforce employed in Mid Bedfordshire commute in from outside.

2.1.7   Tourism, based on Mid Bedfordshire's environmental and historic assets, is a rapidly growing sector that contributes increasingly to the local economy. The recent planning permission for a Center Parcs holiday village near Millbrook and the NIRAH (National Institute for Research into Aquatic Habitats) proposals for an aquatic conservation and visitor centre and associated science park in the Marston Vale will further boost this sector.

2.1.8   The town centres in Mid Bedfordshire provide important local shopping and service facilities for residents. However, much of the retail spend from residents goes out of the district to larger centres such as Bedford, Milton Keynes and Stevenage.

2.1.9   Mid Bedfordshire is a relatively affluent district but localised problems of deprivation do exist. Escalating house prices, partly due to the influence of London, puts home ownership beyond the means of many residents. Housing is mainly detached and semi-detached and is built at a relatively low density. Energy efficiency in housing is good in relation to the UK average, but still over 10,000 homes are below the national average.

2.1.10   Figure 1 shows the strategic routes that run through the district: the M1, A6 and A1 that run north-south and the A507 running east-west. Car ownership in Mid Bedfordshire is very high relative to the county, regional, and national averages, with almost half of households owning two or more cars. Just over 70% of journeys to work are made by car and there is therefore a need to promote a choice of travel for commuters other than the car. In terms of railways, there are major lines into London on both sides of the district. However, rural bus services are often infrequent and poorly routed.

2.1.11   Mid Bedfordshire includes a varied and contrasting landscape and ecology. The Greensand Ridge is of high biodiversity value and comprises extensive woodlands, remnant heaths and acid grasslands, as well as open spaces for local people and visitors. Mid Bedfordshire also contains examples of national priority chalk grassland (slopes of the Chilterns) and wetland habitats (e.g. Flitwick Moor). The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a national designation and covers a small part of the south of the district around Harlington and the Pegsdon Hills.

2.1.12   Mid Bedfordshire is the most heavily wooded part of Bedfordshire mainly due to the Greensand Ridge. The Forest of Marston Vale is one of only 12 Community Forests throughout the UK and has made a significant impact in regenerating the local environment, whilst providing communities with access to green space.

2.1.13   The district contains a wide and interesting range of medieval settlements and sites and has a rich built and archaeological heritage. The district has over 1,400 Listed Buildings (120 of which are of outstanding interest and national importance), 39 designated Conservation Areas, 60 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 11 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens (four of which are of national importance). There is a diversity of character from one end of the district to another defined by the landscape, buildings and use of

local materials.

Figure 1: Spatial Issues Map

2.1.14   Mid Bedfordshire has long provided landfill capacity for waste (largely within worked out clay-pits) from a large area of South East England, particularly Greater London. Some landfill sites are old, having been begun in the 1940s, and were not built to high environmental specifications. Current landfills are at or close to capacity.

2.2   Challenges facing the District

2.2.1   From the spatial portrait above, consultation responses and technical reports, it is clear that a number of key challenges face the district. These challenges will be the focus of the Council's policy response in the LDF, representing the areas of most importance to the community. The challenges are as follows:

2.2.2   *Sustainability and Climate Change:*
- Reducing Mid Bedfordshires' contribution to climate change;
- Adapting to the potential effects of climate change;
- Making new development more energy efficient;
- Increasing generation of renewable energy;
- Preventing development in flood plains;
- Increasing recycling and reducing waste going to landfill sites;
- Potential increase in frequency and intensity of local flooding.

2.2.3   *Building Communities:*
- Integrating new development with existing communities;
- Providing appropriate infrastructure (physical, social and green) in line with new homes and jobs;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles through enhanced leisure and cultural opportunities;
- Addressing retail leakage from the district to surrounding centres.

2.2.4   *Transport:*
- Achieving an effective, efficient and sustainable transport system
- Achieving modal shift in the context of high levels of car ownership and use;
- Providing public transport to a scattered population;
- Providing access to services for those without a car;
- Improving peak time congestion 'hotspots'.

2.2.5   *Providing Homes:*
- Meeting increasing demand for housing, particularly affordable housing;
- Increasing provision of accommodation for elderly persons;
- Providing for Gypsies and Travellers.

2.2.6   *Providing Jobs:*
- Providing additional jobs for the increasing population;
- Creating a strong and sustainable local economy;
- Addressing current high levels of out-commuting.
- Continuing to support diversification of the local economy and in particular the growth of research facilities which have located in the district.
- Providing a choice of sites in terms of size, type and location to allow existing employers to relocate and attract new employers into the area.

2.2.7   *Local Character:*
- Ensuring new development and the public realm is high quality and respects its context;
- Protecting the district's historical assets, particularly formal parks and gardens, listed buildings and designated conservation areas;
- Securing landscape and biodiversity protection and enhancement;
- Providing additional green infrastructure in line with new homes and jobs.

2.3   **Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives**

2.3.1   The above characteristics of the district and the challenges it faces are also reflected in the Vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy *(January 2008)* which states:

"Mid Bedfordshire will be a place that celebrates its rural character and location where people can live and enjoy a high quality of life in a healthy and safe environment; where availability of decent and affordable housing is increased and supported by the creation of new jobs; where access to facilities and services is available for all; where there is shared green open space and where the countryside is enhanced for future generations."

2.3.2   The Spatial Vision for the LDF needs to be consistent and integrated with that of the Mid Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. Importantly it needs to be developed to give it a more locally distinctive spatial dimension. The success or otherwise of the Core Strategy will be based on how far the Spatial Vision is realised. A key challenge is to balance the aspirations of the local community with the regional planning context, which identifies the district as having an important role to play in delivering the Government's sustainable communities agenda and regional/sub regional growth requirements.

Spatial Vision

Mid Bedfordshire will be a place where sustainable growth has led to a higher quality of life in healthy, safe, inclusive and responsible communities and where the environmental impact of new development will have been considerably reduced.

People will lead more sustainable lifestyles because of greater environmental awareness and responsibility, better integration between home, workplace, services and facilities and increased options to travel by means other than the car. There will be more decent and affordable homes for all.

The majority of new development will be planned for at the Major and Minor Service Centres, which will see their role enhanced and their range of services and facilities broadened. This will include the provision of new and varied local employment reducing the need for people to travel out of the district to work.

The Northern Marston Vale will also continue to be a growth location where development will help to bring about environmental regeneration, support the urban renaissance of Bedford and make the Vale a more attractive place to live, do business and enjoy leisure time.

The countryside and open spaces will be enhanced by green infrastructure and the historic context of both landscape and buildings will be retained and enhanced. Overall, the district will have kept its rural character for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

2.3.3   To help meet the challenges identified and achieve the Spatial Vision a number of strategic objectives have been defined that provide a framework for policy development (Table 1). These have emerged during the preparation of the Core Strategy. They represent the process of going from where we are now ("Spatial Portrait" and "Challenges Facing the District") to where we want to be in the future ("Spatial Vision"). As such they provide the basis for the Spatial Strategy and core policies included in this document and subsequent LDF documents. Table 1 sets out strategic objectives together with the intended outcomes if the Spatial Vision becomes a reality and the strategic objectives are achieved. The Key Diagram appended to this document sets out these objectives and the following Development Strategy in diagrammatic form.

Table 1 Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives		Intended Effect	Policies
1	To deliver the regional and sub regional spatial planning requirements of the East of England Plan, the emerging South East Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy.	• Social, economic and environmental well being of the community will have been improved. • Regional and sub-regional growth requirements will have been met. • Communities will function more sustainably with individuals leading more sustainable and healthy lifestyles.	CS1: Development Strategy CS5: Providing Homes CS6: Delivery and Timing of Housing Provision CS9: Providing Jobs
2	To maintain the existing Green Belt.	• The Green Belt will have been protected to contain the outward growth of key settlements and retain the character and separate physical identity of towns and villages within it. •	CS1: Development Strategy DM6: Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries
3	To plan for the highest quality sustainable development in the most sustainable locations whilst ensuring that new development has a positive impact on communities and is supported by necessary infrastructure.	• Sustainable growth will have been embraced by ensuring that new development meets strict design and sustainability criteria, and is supported with an appropriate range of jobs, transport, affordable housing, health, social, community and recreational facilities, utility and emergency services and green infrastructure. • New development will have been located in the most accessible locations and the reuse of sustainably located previously developed land will have been maximised.	CS1: Development Strategy CS2: Developer Contributions CS3: Healthy and Sustainable Communities CS4: Linking Communities CS13: Climate Change DM1:Renewable Energy DM2: Sustainable Construction of new Buildings DM3: High Quality Development DM4: Development Within and Beyond

Strategic Objectives	Intended Effect	Policies
		Settlement Envelopes DM17: Accessible Greenspaces
4 To identify a hierarchy of settlements and concentrate development in the larger settlements, while seeking opportunities to direct growth to one or two key locations. In particular to: i. deliver planned growth in the identified Major Service Centres and consolidate and develop their role ii. deliver planned growth in the identified Minor Service Centres and allow development to serve the needs of their population and their rural catchment areas iii. Provide limited development outside of the identified Major and Minor Service Centres	• In the Northern Marston Vale major growth will have occurred at Wixams new settlement and at Marston Moretaine. • Outside of the Marston Vale the main growth will have occurred in Biggleswade, Arlesey, Stotfold (includes Fairfield Park), Ampthill and Flitwick, and on a more modest scale in Sandy, Cranfield, Shefford, Potton and Silsoe. • Arlesey and Stotfold will both have consolidated town centres offering additional retail and leisure facilities and more local jobs. In addition Arlesey will have a relief road to address traffic issues in the High Street.	CS1: Delivery Strategy CS5: Providing Homes CS10: Location of employment sites
5 To make Mid Bedfordshire a more environmentally, economically and socially sustainable place that positively responds to the challenges of climate change but is prepared for its effects.	• The wider global impacts of development in the district will have been recognised and responded to. • Energy use will have become more efficient and there will be greater use of renewable energy sources. • The risk of flooding will have been reduced.	CS13: Climate Change DM1: Renewable Energy DM2: Sustainable Construction of New Buildings
6 To support the role of towns and villages as locations for accessible services by the retention and enhancement of existing facilities and the provision of appropriate new ones.	• The vitality and viability of all communities will have been enhanced. • Key local facilities and services will have been enhanced and retained, and identified deficiencies remedied. • Greater use of local facilities will have occurred and with it more sustainable lifestyles.	CS2: Developer contributions CS3: Healthy and Sustainable Communities DM7:Development in Town Centres DM8:Village Shops and Pubs
7 Taking account of the rural nature of	• An effective, efficient and sustainable transport system will have made Mid	CS4: Linking

	Strategic Objectives	Intended Effect	Policies
	Mid Bedfordshire, reduce the need to travel, promote more sustainable transport modes, maximise capacity of the existing transport network and add additional capacity and new infrastructure where needed.	Bedfordshire a more sustainable place. • Transport modal shift will have occurred with more people walking, cycling and using public transport, and using the car less. • The Thameslink Programme will have been completed and a new station opened at Wixams to deliver improved rail services on the Midland Mainline by increasing train capacity and accessibility to Luton, Hertfordshire, London, the south of England and, through St Pancras International, mainland Europe. The Programme will have provided similar improvements for the rail service through Sandy, Biggleswade and Arlesey, by linking it, for the first time, to the Thameslink service through London. • E-W Rail improvements will have begun with enhanced accessibility through the Marston Vale Line to Milton Keynes and the West Coast Mainline. • The Marston Vale Line will have become a key element in delivering sustainable growth in the area. • The A421 between Bedford and Junction 13 of the M1 will have been dualled, the M1 widened between Junctions 10 and 13 and the Ridgmont Bypass/Woburn Link provided. This will have resulted in less traffic congestion, improved access to the M1 and Milton Keynes as well traffic relief in Ridgmont and Husborne Crawley. • The Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road will have been completed providing reduced congestion and improved safety and environmental conditions in the town. • The A6 will have been dualled, between the A421 and Wixams new settlement to provide improved access to this sustainable new community.	Communities – Accessibility and Transport DM9: Providing a Range of Transport
8	To provide the right mix of new high quality homes, including enough affordable homes to meet identified needs.	• A minimum of 14,230 dwellings will have been delivered between 2001 and 2021 and 3,560 between 2021 and 2026. • Provision made will reflect more closely local needs and will include at least 35% affordable housing to reach the target of 28% overall.	CS7: Affordable Housing CS8: Exceptions Schemes DM10: Housing Mix
9	To strengthen the local economy, providing new employment opportunities that help reduce the level of out-commuting.	• The provision of at least 17,000 jobs in the period 2001 to 2026 will have been provided for. • Major new employment opportunities will have been created through the completion of planned expansion at Cranfield Technology Park, Millbrook Proving Ground and Stratton Business Park in Biggleswade and delivery of	CS9: Providing Jobs CS10: Location of Employment Sites CS11: Local Economy and Tourism

Strategic Objectives	Intended Effect	Policies
	research and tourism based facilities at the NIRAH and Center Parcs developments. • Elsewhere further local employment will have been encouraged at the Major and Minor Service Centres and sustainable transport links improved to these and neighbouring employment centres.	CS12: Town Centres and Retailing DM11: Significant Facilities in the Countryside DM12: Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites
10 To ensure development respects and contributes to the district's diverse local character.	• The district's environmental resources, including land, air and soil quality, the water environment, biodiversity, landscape character and the historic and cultural environment will have been conserved and enhanced and pollution minimised.	CS14: High Quality Development CS15: Heritage DM:3 High Quality Development DM5: Important Open space within settlement envelopes DM13: Heritage in Development
11 To enhance and manage natural resources of the district in a sustainable and integrated way to bring about an increase in biodiversity, a net gain in green infrastructure, and the retention and enhancement of landscape character.		CS16: Landscape and Woodland CS17: Green Infrastructure CS18: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation DM5: Important Open Space within Settlement Envelopes DM14: Landscape and Woodland DM15: Biodiversity DM16: Green Infrastructure DM18: Equestrian Development

2.4 **Delivering Sustainable Communities**

2.4.1 Regional and sub-regional spatial planning policies of relevance to Mid Bedfordshire are set out in the East of England Plan, the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy and the South East Plan. They propose an ambitious and challenging response to economic, environmental and social needs. Sustainable development is at the heart of the respective spatial strategies.

2.4.2 It is recognised that to deliver such strategies a fundamental shift is required in the way natural, physical and financial resources are used. Delivery will only be effective if it is integrated and coordinated with a range of other national and regional programmes likely to have a bearing on land use, such as health, cultural and social issues, economic development, learning and skills and environmental infrastructure. For the East of England an Implementation Framework is being developed. It is clear that a 'business as usual' approach will not deliver the spatial strategy and will waste opportunities to make the best use of both public and private investment. The role of Local Development Documents, together with the Local Transport Plan, as the basic building blocks for implementation is crucial.

2.4.3 The Core Strategy is a key Local Development Document. The Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives provide the context for the Spatial Strategy for Mid Bedfordshire. Recognising the regional and sub regional context, and the vision and objectives of the Mid Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy, the Core Strategy aims to deliver improved social, economic and environmental well-being for the community. It also seeks to ensure new development is provided in a sustainable manner, as well as trying to improve the sustainability of existing communities.

2.4.4 There are seven key elements in delivering sustainable communities of particular relevance to the Core Strategy, which are set out in the box below. With the exception of community engagement, each of these elements is considered in subsequent sections of the Core Strategy. Community engagement is an integral part of the overall Local Development Framework process. Further details are given in the Statement of Community Involvement.

> - Focusing development in the most sustainable locations;
> - Ensuring development takes place to the highest sustainable standards;
> - Providing the appropriate range and scale of supporting social, community, economic, environmental and physical infrastructure;
> - Providing high levels of accessibility by sustainable means within and between communities;
> - Providing the right scale and mix of homes and jobs to meet local needs and ensure balanced communities;
> - Safeguarding and enhancing environmental assets; and
> - Encouraging continuing community engagement.

3: The Spatial Strategy

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Bedfordshire is a focus for regional and sub-regional growth and Mid Bedfordshire has a key role to play. Particular emphasis is placed on the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale and Milton Keynes growth areas to deliver the step-change in housing delivery. Where new development is located is a key sustainability issue and is probably the most important influence the planning system has in creating sustainable development.

3.1.2 This chapter explains the approach to accommodating new homes and jobs and their proposed spatial distribution across the district up to 2026. It sets out the broad scale of development anticipated in each of the district's main settlements. It also indicates the new infrastructure needed to support this development.

3.1.3 This Core Strategy also addresses the issue of a potential Eco-town in the Marston Vale and what the strategy will be if the Government confirm the Marston Vale as an Eco-town location.

3.2 Requirement for new homes and jobs

3.2.1 The three key regional and sub-regional policy drivers have been set out above in paragraph 1.3.2. Based on these policy drivers and national guidance on housing and employment provision, this Core Strategy will make provision for the following:

> **Net additional homes 2001-2026 = 17,950**
> **Net additional jobs 2001-2026 = 17,000**

3.3 Approach to Development

3.3.1 The Council's overall approach to accommodating these development requirements is set out below:

- To focus most new development in the larger settlements with best range of services and access to public transport
- To use a Settlement Hierarchy as the basis for apportioning growth but without excluding possibilities for larger-scale growth where there are sound sustainability benefits
- To seek opportunities to concentrate growth in one or two key locations
- To ensure new development has a positive impact on communities
- To protect and maintain the existing Green Belt
- To use previously developed land wherever possible when it is sustainably located
- To allow more limited new development in the rural areas to serve local needs and help support local services.
- To control development in the open countryside

3.3.2   The East of England Plan indicates the type of role towns can play in accommodating growth and encourages LDFs to direct development to towns with potential to become more sustainable in economic and social terms. At the top of the East of England Plan hierarchy are "Key Centres for Development and Change". These are major regional centres and include the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale growth area. However, beyond this none of the other settlements in Mid Bedfordshire are included as "Key Centres for Development and Change". Towns "with potential to increase their economic and social sustainability" are the next most preferred location for development as set out in Policy SS4 of the East of England Plan. These are unspecified and are to be identified in LDFs. The emphasis for development in rural areas and villages is to support agriculture, help diversify the economy, provide housing for local needs and to help sustain local services.

3.3.3   The Council's approach to development has been informed by the principle that, in general, the largest settlements with the highest level of existing facilities and transport links offer the most sustainable options for development. This reflects the approach in the East of England Plan. In addition, where appropriate to the scale of a settlement, large sites often offer greater opportunity for mixed-use development, which may assist in retaining and attracting employment opportunities to the district and creating more sustainable transport patterns. Larger sites can also bring forward more significant infrastructure improvements and mitigation against adverse impacts through developer contributions/planning obligations.

3.3.4   While larger settlements are the focus for new development, the Council is aware of the constraints to development that exist around the settlements of Mid Bedfordshire. While some settlements are relatively large with a good range of services, additional large-scale development around the periphery would not add to the sustainability of that settlement, as required by Policy SS4 due to constraints that exist around that settlement or transport problems that such development could create. This is particularly the case for Sandy where a number of constraints exist that limit the sustainability of large-scale new development. In contrast, large-scale development around smaller settlements can offer a greater overall sustainability benefit and align more closely to the requirements of Policy SS4 of the East of England Plan.

3.3.5   The Council's overall Development Strategy is therefore based on focusing new development at the Major Service Centres where this can be accommodated sustainably and add to the overall sustainability of that settlement. In addition, large-scale development is proposed at Arlesey on the basis that the overall sustainability benefits outweigh those offered by similar development at other settlements. Smaller-scale development is proposed at the other Minor Service Centres and a small amount of development will be accommodated in the Large and Small Villages.

3.4   **Settlement Hierarchy**

3.4.1   To help inform where new development should take place, the Council believes it is helpful to set out a hierarchy of settlements. The hierarchy set out in the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Report takes account of local sustainability credentials such as access to services and facilities (schools,

shops and public transport links etc) and is based on the current level of provision. The hierarchy of settlements is given in Policy CS1.

3.4.2 The hierarchy helps to provide a framework for considering the levels of new development to be directed at the strategic level through the Core Strategy and at a more detailed level through the site allocations process. It will also help to set the context for decisions on individual planning applications.

3.4.3 There are four tiers included in the Settlement Hierarchy. The requirements for new development have been apportioned between these tiers in line with the spatial approach to development set out in paragraph 3.3.1. Two settlements have been identified as having potential for sustainable growth beyond that which would be expected from their position in the Settlement Hierarchy. These settlements (Arlesey and Silsoe) have been specifically identified to receive more significant levels of development than might be expected as they are considered to be sustainable locations.

3.4.4 Setting aside these two locations and the new development proposed there, the remaining requirements for new development are broadly apportioned by the ratio 60/30/10 – 60% of development going to the Major Service Centres, 30% to the Minor Service Centres and 10% to the Large and Small Villages. The area profiles below show the broad range of development to be planned for at each of the Major and Minor Service Centres. The Site Allocations DPD will subsequently identify specific sites to achieve the levels of development being planned for.

3.5 **Green Belt**

3.5.1 The south-western part of Mid Bedfordshire lies within the South Bedfordshire Green Belt. Although the principle of Green Belt is well established in the district, its detailed boundaries were only recently finalised through the Adopted Local Plan in December 2005. The main aim of designating Green Belt is to preserve the openness of the area and this is achieved through restrictions on development as set out in Planning Policy Guidance: Green Belts (PPG2). The main purpose of the South Bedfordshire Green Belt is to contain the outward growth of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linslade, Ampthill and Flitwick; and to prevent the coalescence of these and other settlements within it. This original purpose remains important today and at a local level, maintenance of the Green Belt ensures that Ampthill and Flitwick in particular, which lie very close together, remain physically separate.

3.5.2 Settlements that lie within the Green Belt fall into two categories. Some are "inset" in the Green Belt and are defined by Settlement Envelopes. The remainder are 'washed over' by the designation. Some of the villages washed over by Green Belt have defined 'infill only' boundaries and policy DM8 sets out the Council's policy in these areas. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt and infill boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map.

3.5.3 The East of England Plan considers the broad extent of Green Belts in the region is appropriate and should be maintained. PPG2 states that existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless exceptional circumstances exist which necessitate a revision. The Council has looked at its development requirements and considers that these can be fully accommodated in a sustainable way without the need to loosen Green Belt

boundaries. No Green Belt land will therefore be allocated for development through this LDF.

3.5.4   At Ampthill and Flitwick, detailed Green Belt boundaries are shown on the LDF Proposals Map. Between the settlement boundaries and the green belt boundaries, areas of land were safeguarded to meet development needs beyond the end of the Local Plan period (2011). The land is safeguarded to meet longer-term needs under saved Local Plan Policy GBT5 which will remain in effect unless, and until, all of the safeguarded land is allocated for development through the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD. In the meantime, the safeguarded land will be treated as if it were green belt and subject to the policies in section 3 on Annex B of PPG2. Additional Safeguarded Land will not be identified through this LDF at this stage. The need for a future review of Green Belt and the identification of new development and safeguarded land presently in the Green Belt will be considered following conclusion of the current review of the East of England Plan.

3.6   Settlement Envelopes

3.6.1   The physical boundaries of settlements in the district are defined to differentiate between the built-up part of settlements and open countryside. Settlement Envelopes were developed through the Local Plan and are an established policy tool for determining planning applications. The Settlement Envelope Review which is referenced in Annex G, made recommendations to amend the Settlement Envelope boundaries. The boundaries can be viewed on the Proposals Map which accompanies the DPD.

3.7   **CS1: Development Strategy**

3.7.1   The following policy translates the overall approach to development into a strategy for specific locations. The Council has considered a number of options and alternatives and has concluded that the Development Strategy below represents the most appropriate strategy for the future. It will successfully deliver the growth requirements of the East of England Plan and contribute to a higher quality of life in Mid Bedfordshire over the plan period.

Policy CS1: Development Strategy

Northern Marston Vale
Planned growth will bring about environmental regeneration, support the urban renaissance of Bedford and make the Vale a more attractive place to live, do business and enjoy leisure time. Sites will be identified and developed for new homes, jobs and key infrastructure. Contingency provision may be allocated to ensure delivery of housing. Future growth in the Vale will be informed by a "Growth Strategy". The Council will particularly focus on the following settlements:

- **Wixams – Major Service Centre**
  The Council will support and help deliver the emerging new settlement. Additional mixed-use development will be allocated beyond 2021.

- **Marston Moretaine – Minor Service Centre**
  The Council will seek to enhance the sustainability of Marston Moretaine through development of the committed housing and employment sites together with additional employment development, community facilities and services and small-scale housing development.

Milton Keynes growth area
A substantial new sustainable city neighbourhood is proposed in the South East Plan to be created to the south-east of Milton Keynes comprising some 10,400 new homes, new employment, schools, recreation and community infrastructure, the context and extent of new development and the number of new homes to be delivered within Central Bedfordshire is to be assessed through a forthcoming review of the East of England Plan. A development framework will be jointly prepared and in Mid Bedfordshire will cover the area shown on the Proposals Map.

Policy CS1: Development Strategy (continued)

Ivel Valley

The Ivel Valley will be a particular focus for development, creating a string of complementary settlements where new development improves their individual and combined sustainability.

- **Biggleswade – Major Service Centre**
  Eastern expansion of the town will be completed, together with additional jobs, homes and town centre redevelopment and expansion.

- **Sandy – Major Service Centre**
  Additional employment land will be provided, together with small-scale housing development located as close to the town centre as possible.

- **Arlesey/Stotfold/Fairfield Park**
  Comprehensive planning will ensure these three settlements remain separate entities but support higher-level services commensurate with their combined population, including a broader range of shops, services and larger-scale business provision. A development framework will be developed to guide development in the area.

  - **Arlesey – Minor Service Centre**
    Arlesey will grow to bring forward large-scale new mixed-use development, including significant improvements in levels of service and local traffic conditions, together with substantial areas of new, publicly accessible green infrastructure.

  - **Stotfold – Minor Service Centre**
    Additional shops and services will be provided at Stotfold as part of the existing committed housing site and through new mixed-use development on the western side of the town, incorporating the proposed leisure centre, a new supermarket and "town square".

  - **Fairfield Park – Small Village**
    Fairfield Park will be maintained within its existing defined boundaries. Additional physical links will enable access to new green infrastructure and local facilities at Arlesey and Stotfold.

Ampthill & Flitwick – Major Service Centres

Additional housing, employment and services will be provided through continued redevelopment within the built up area and expansion onto land already committed or safeguarded for development. The creation of new public open space and a country park between the two towns will be actively pursued and a new leisure centre will be provided.

Shefford, Potton & Cranfield – Minor Service Centres

At each of these Minor Service Centres new housing development will help deliver new community infrastructure and facilities that benefit the sustainability of the town. New employment opportunities will be provided to balance with recent and new housing growth. In Cranfield additional employment opportunities will be provided for at the University campus and the Technology Park, to help reinforce its importance as a sub-regional employment location.

Policy CS1: Development Strategy (cont.)

Silsoe – Large Village
The former Cranfield University Campus will be redeveloped for housing, employment and new community facilities and will be planned in a way that complements and enhances the historic character of the village. Given the lower level of existing services and facilities available in Silsoe, development of the Campus will deliver a higher level of new services and facilities than would normally be expected.

Rural Areas – Large and Small Villages
In the rural part of the district new development will be limited in overall scale. The Site Allocations DPD will make small-scale allocations of new homes, jobs and community facilities that reflect the size and character of the community.
The Settlement Hierarchy distinguishes Large and Small Villages as follows:

- Large Villages – Blunham, Clifton, Clophill (including Hall End, Maulden), Harlington (where excluded from the Green Belt), Haynes, Henlow, Houghton Conquest, Langford, Lower Stondon, Maulden (main village), Meppershall, Shillington (main village), Silsoe, Upper Caldecote, Westoning

- Small Villages – Aspley Guise (where excluded from the Green Belt), Brogborough, Broom, Campton, Dunton, Everton, Fairfield, Flitton, Greenfield, Ickwell, Lidlington, Maulden (Clophill Road), Millbrook, Moggerhanger, Northill, Old Warden, Pulloxhill, Salford, Southill, Sutton, Tempsford, Upper Gravenhurst, Upper Shelton, Wrestlingworth.

3.7.2   To support this policy and its implementation a more detailed "area profile" is set out for each main area. These profiles set out the context within which the area or settlement sits and the Council's vision of the way it will develop over the Plan period to 2026. The profiles also give an indication of the scale of new housing and employment development planned, as well as key infrastructure issues and requirements arising from new development in each area. Infrastructure information is largely taken from the Infrastructure Audit carried out as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy and is to be developed further through the Local Implementation Strategy.

3.7.3   Some of the profiles deal with large-scale strategic areas such as the Ivel Valley, the Northern Marston Vale and the Milton Keynes growth area. Other profiles address groups of settlements – smaller areas than the strategic areas but involve more than one settlement. These profiles examine the linkages between settlements and plan for the area on a comprehensive basis. The final type of profile sets out the specific planning approach for individual settlements. The relationship between these profile areas is shown on the Key Diagram and is described in each profile.

| 3.8 | **Northern Marston Vale** |

3.8.1 **Context**

The Marston Vale runs from the area around Brogborough to the outskirts of Bedford. The northern part of the Marston Vale is designated as part of the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale growth area in the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy. This Strategy sets out targets for housing and employment within the growth area in order to provide for urban renaissance at Bedford and support the continued environmental regeneration of the wider Marston Vale.

3.8.2 In Central Bedfordshire, the largest settlements in the Northern Marston Vale are Marston Moretaine and Houghton Conquest. Also within this area is the emerging new settlement of Wixams. In terms of the extent of the growth area in Central Bedfordshire, the parishes of Marston Moretaine and Houghton Conquest contribute to housing delivery in the growth area, with significant committed housing sites due to come forward. The focus of employment provision will also be on the parishes of Marston Moretaine and Houghton Conquest, but surrounding areas also have an important role to play in providing employment to support the growth area.

3.8.3 The sustainability of the Northern Marston Vale as a location for new development must be viewed in the context of its relationship with Bedford. The Northern Marston Vale is a rural area and, in isolation, it would not be a priority location for growth. However, it is defined as part of the growth area in the sub-regional strategy due to its proximity to Bedford and the key role it can play in supporting the County town's urban renaissance and because of continuing need to regenerate the environment of the wider Marston Vale following decades of clay extraction, brickmaking and landfill activity.

3.8.4 The sub-regional strategy indicates that a sequential approach should be adopted to address any non-delivery of housing up to 2021 or the need for additional provision required post 2011. This would ensure sites within the urban area come forward before further sustainable urban extensions.

3.8.5 **Vision**

The vision for the Marston Vale is for continued environmental regeneration. Over the plan period the northern part of the Marston Vale will continue to be a growth location where development will help to bring about environmental regeneration, will support the urban renaissance of Bedford and will make the Vale a more attractive place to live, do business and enjoy leisure time. To bring about this vision, the Council's focus will be to deliver the major housing and employment sites already committed in the Northern Marston Vale. It will also continue to formally support the creation of the Forest and Waterway Park, working with them to ensure appropriate opportunities are taken to realise these projects where new development is planned.

3.8.6 To ensure housing requirements in the sub-regional strategy up to 2021 are met the Council will identify an additional housing site or sites to underwrite delivery in the area. This is necessary because the expansion areas at Wixams are unlikely to contribute to housing delivery prior to 2021 due to restrictions on the existing planning permission.

3.8.7   The 'contingency' allocation will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD but will only be brought forward after 2016 if the housing trajectory for the whole of the Bedford/ Kempston/Northern Marston Vale Growth Area (including those parts in Bedford Borough Council's area) indicates the clear likelihood of a shortfall in housing delivery by 2021.

3.8.8   The scale of the contingency allocated will be equivalent to two years worth of the annual required rate of housing development in the Central Bedfordshire part of the Northern Marston Vale (i.e. approximately 390 dwellings).   The Site Allocations DPD will identify the location of the contingency within the Central Bedfordshire part of the Northern Marston Vale (i.e. the parishes of Marston Moretaine and Houghton Conquest) based on the most sustainable location available.

3.8.9   New employment sites will also be brought forward in the Northern Marston Vale and surrounding areas, to help create a better balance of homes and jobs in the growth area and to support the economic regeneration of Bedford. New sites of 10-20ha will be allocated through the Site Allocations DPD in the parishes of Marston Moretaine and Houghton Conquest and in the surrounding area that includes the important existing employment areas of Prologis Park, and Millbrook Proving Ground. Cranfield University and Technology Park is not within the Marston Vale but clearly plays a role in supporting the growth area. A separate figure of 5-10ha for employment growth is provided for at Cranfield (see section 3.22). In addition, the proposed development of NIRAH, which includes a Science Research Park of some 13ha also has the potential to provide a significant number of highly skilled jobs in the area. Additional service sector jobs will also be provided by the development of a new Center Parcs holiday village close to Millbrook during the period of this plan. New jobs provision will help to meet the sub-regional employment objectives by strengthening the economic links through Bedfordshire as part of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc initiative. Development will also be planned to realise the potential to attract to the area other high technology-oriented businesses well adapted to the knowledge economy, creating clusters of similar activity.

3.8.10   To help determine appropriate levels of housing development for the growth area beyond 2021, work will need to be completed by Bedford Borough Council to first determine the continuing potential for development through urban capacity and further urban extensions of Bedford. Until this work is undertaken the Council cannot finalise a specific allocation of homes and jobs in its part of the Northern Marston Vale.

3.8.11   Once this work is complete, the Council will work jointly with Bedford Borough Council and the local delivery vehicle, Renaissance Bedford, to agree a longer-term growth strategy for the Marston Vale. This longer-term growth strategy will be progressed through the review of the East of England Plan to 2031 and will then be reflected within the LDF system through a future review of this Core Strategy. Part of the growth strategy will incorporate further urban extensions of Wixams new settlement, bringing forward the expansion areas, outlined in the approved Development Brief.

3.8.12   In the meantime, and in line with Policy H1 of the East of England Plan, the Core Strategy will plan for a continuation of the 2006-2021 average annual

rate for the Central Bedfordshire current growth requirements in the Central Bedfordshire part of the Northern Marston Vale (i.e. 194 dwellings per year, together with employment development) between 2021 and 2026 as an interim measure. This development will be directed to Wixams in the first instance.

3.8.13 **Infrastructure requirements**
In terms of road infrastructure, significant improvements are already completed, underway or programmed. This includes the A6 Wixams diversion, the Ridgmont Bypass/Woburn Link, dualling of the A421 (Bedford-M1) and M1 Widening J10-J13. These strategic road improvements will improve accessibility to and through the Marston Vale. The levels of additional housing and employment development being proposed in the Vale up to 2021 will not require further substantial investment in major strategic road infrastructure. At a local level, however, there are road constraints which would need to be mitigated to allow further significant development at Millbrook Proving Ground and Cranfield University and Technology Park.

3.8.14 In terms of rail infrastructure and public transport, the Bedford/Bletchley Community Railway line provides rail access from a number of rail halts in the Vale into Bedford and Milton Keynes (via Bletchley). Station improvements have recently been undertaken along the line and further improvements could come forward as part of the East West Rail project to provide a new strategic rail route between Oxford, Cambridge and the east coast ports. In principle the Council continues to support the East West Rail project but is opposed to any scheme that would fundamentally lessen the frequency of local rail services on the Bedford/Bletchley line. The creation of a new railway station at Wixams on the Midland Mainline will give direct access to London, Bedford and intercity services and will be of significant benefit to residents and employers in the Vale.

3.8.15 Bus services in the Vale are limited though contributions to new services will be provided by Wixams new settlement and other major developments in the Vale. Additional cycleways will also be provided in the Vale in line with the Council's Cycle Mapping Project, funded from the Local Transport Plan capital budget and developer contributions collected through the Council's Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.8.16 In terms of Green Infrastructure, the Marston Vale Community Forest was established in the early 1990s as a key element to enable the environmental regeneration of the Vale. The Forest is a key part of the wider green infrastructure network being developed in the district with a target to deliver 30% woodland cover in the Vale by 2030. Opportunities will also be sought to create habitat linkages between the existing ancient woodlands on the wooded slopes surrounding the Vale. There are also proposals at Marston Thrift linking Cranfield to Marston and at Wixams new settlement including green buffers and new off roads links to the Millennium Country Park. Development of the Forest will also now be accompanied by creation of the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Park and together both projects are recognised as being of regional significance in the East of England Plan. Developer contributions collected through the Planning Obligations Strategy will supplement other sources of funding to bring these projects forward.

3.8.17   In terms of new community infrastructure, there are no new strategic facilities planned within the Vale. However, new development will be expected to provide contributions or on-site infrastructure in accordance with the requirements of service providers and the Planning Obligations Strategy as part of the normal planning application process. Wixams new settlement for example, will deliver new education, health, community and recreational infrastructure to meet the new community's needs. Other developments in the Vale will also be expected to provide for or contribute to improvements of community infrastructure where those needs have been identified locally.

3.9   Wixams

3.9.1   **Context**
Wixams is the planned new settlement now being built on the former Elstow Storage Depot, which straddles the boundary of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough. Planning permission exists for around 4,500 homes in total. By arrangement between the two authorities, half of the homes count towards Mid Bedfordshire's housing requirements in the Northern Marston Vale and half count towards Bedford Borough's requirements. The new settlement will include the creation of a local centre with a range of shopping and other community facilities and when complete, will be an important local retail centre within the hierarchy for the district.

3.9.2   **Vision**
The Core Strategy designates Wixams as a **Major Service Centre** in the Settlement Hierarchy recognising the scale and nature of the settlement and the level of facilities that will be created there over the next 20 years. Clearly the settlement will take time to build out and at present the Council considers it unlikely that additional large-scale development over and above that presently permitted could be delivered before 2021. Beyond 2021, however, the 970 or so dwellings required in the Northern Marston Vale will be accommodated by bringing forward the expansion areas identified in the Development Brief for a mix of uses.

3.9.3   **New Development**

	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	0	0
Already planned for sites	2,250	0*
Total	2,250	0*
New allocations required	1,000	10-20**

*Excludes provision of 16ha outside the district in Bedford Borough (see footnote to Table 5)
**Combined figure for Northern Marston Vale and surrounding areas in Central Bedfordshire

3.9.4   **Infrastructure requirements**
In addition to the requirements listed above further expansion at Wixams will be expected to bring forward provision and contributions towards local community infrastructure through the planning application process, as agreed with service providers and in accordance with the Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.10 **Marston Moretaine**

3.10.1 **Context**
Marston Moretaine is the only existing settlement of any size within the Northern Marston Vale growth area. With its position on the A421 between Bedford, the M1 and Milton Keynes, it is well located to the strategic road network. Small-scale retail and service provision meets the basic needs of local people but for most shopping needs residents need to travel to Bedford, Milton Keynes or to the market towns of Ampthill and Flitwick. The village does not have a railway station but Millbrook station on the Bedford/Bletchley line is close by. The village has experienced quite significant housing growth in the recent past and a further large committed housing site on the eastern side of the village will be developed over the plan period, together with new employment development.

3.10.2 Future development in Marston Moretaine is constrained by floodplain to the north and east and by the A421 dual carriageway to the west. The route of the A421 is due to be realigned in the next few years with the route running several hundred metres further west.

3.10.3 **Vision**
The sustainability of the Northern Marston Vale must be viewed in the context of its relationship with Bedford. Marston Moretaine will continue to build on its role as a **Minor Service Centre** as it assimilates existing planned growth on land East of Marston which will provide nearly 500 additional homes and additional jobs and community facilities and services. Any further housing development allocated at Marston Moretaine will be of a smaller scale and will be expected to contribute to making Marston Moretaine a more sustainable community. Marston Moretaine may also be a potential location for the Northern Marston Vale contingency allocation to be determined through the Site Allocations DPD. The potential for development to enable or contribute to strategic flood mitigation measures will also be considered in line with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

3.10.4 **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	309	0.06
Already planned sites	480	3.84
Total	789	3.9
New allocations required	0-100	10-20*

* Combined figure for Northern Marston Vale and surrounding areas within Central Bedfordshire

3.10.5 **Infrastructure requirements**
A key infrastructure requirement for Marston Moretaine is delivery of the A421 road improvements between Bedford and the M1. Future development in Marston will be expected to bring forward provision and contributions towards new infrastructure through the planning application process, as agreed with service providers and in accordance with the Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.12 **Milton Keynes Growth Area**

3.12.1 **Context**
The city of Milton Keynes lies close to the western boundary of the district. The MKSM SRS sets out plans for substantial growth of the city to 2021. It also states that beyond 2016 growth of the city could extend beyond its present administrative boundaries into Mid Bedfordshire and Aylesbury Vale districts.

3.12.2 A substantial new city neighbourhood is proposed in the South East Plan to be created to the south-east of Milton Keynes comprising some 10,400 new homes, new employment, schools, recreation and community infrastructure. The context and extent of new development and the number of new homes to be delivered within Central Bedfordshire is to be assessed through a forthcoming review of the East of England Plan. This new neighbourhood will be environmentally sustainable, minimising waste and conserving energy and water resources. It will be well integrated with and accessible from the existing urban framework of Milton Keynes yet will retain the identity and character of existing settlements. New development will be planned jointly between the two local planning authorities.

3.12.3 The Council has committed in principle, to joint working with the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee (MKPC) and Milton Keynes Council to take forward the South East Milton Keynes Strategic Development Area and will be jointly preparing a development framework to guide its development. When complete the framework will be adopted as part of the LDF.

3.12.4 In Mid Bedfordshire the development framework will cover the area outlined on the Proposals Map. Within this area provision will be made for a mix of residential, employment and other uses. The distribution of jobs between the Mid Bedfordshire part of the new city neighbourhood and the Milton Keynes part will be determined through the development framework. Development within Mid Bedfordshire will not take place before 2021 unless the development framework indicates otherwise.

3.12.5 The growth of Milton Keynes into Mid Bedfordshire will not contribute towards meeting the housing requirements of the current East of England Plan but will be included as part of the district's housing requirements in the review of the East of England Plan.

3.12.6 **Infrastructure requirements**
The Milton Keynes Urban Development Area Tariff SPD sets out infrastructure requirements for the existing expansion areas within the Milton Keynes area. The Tariff SPD will be revised or a new tariff/planning obligations approach jointly adopted by the Council and Milton Keynes Council to ensure all necessary infrastructure is provided in association with the new city neighbourhood. The key infrastructure will include the following:
- Affordable housing as required in the relevant LDD.
- Transport infrastructure including the dualling of the A421 between the Kingston roundabout and the M1 (junction 13), rail station improvements or a new railway station at Woburn Sands, contributions to the East-West Rail project, new park and ride

facilities, a strategic high quality pubic transport link into Milton Keynes and a network of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Education (new primary and secondary schools), health facilities, sport and recreation provision, local community facilities and emergency services.
- Strategic green infrastructure, parks, play areas and nature reserves.
- Provision for renewable energy.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and a sustainable surface water drainage strategy.

3.13   Ivel Valley

3.13.1   **Context**
The settlements in the Ivel Valley are of key importance to the district in meeting its housing needs and creating new employment opportunities. The Ivel Valley runs north-south on the eastern side of the district and contains some of its larger settlements, in particular Biggleswade, Sandy, Arlesey and Stotfold, which have developed primarily due to the presence of the A1 and the railway line. Their relatively large size and easy access to the railway line means that these settlements represent some of the most sustainable locations for development in the district.

3.13.2   The Hertfordshire towns to the south create a strong draw down the A1 but this level of car-borne commuting adds to severe congestion along the A1 at peak times and the outflow of activity reflects the more limited job opportunities within these local centres at present. A better balance of employment and homes in each of these locations is required if local people are to have the opportunity of living and working in closer proximity.

3.13.3   **Vision**
The vision for the Ivel Valley is to maintain a string of complementary settlements where new development is planned to improve their individual and combined sustainability so that they can meet a greater proportion of their own needs.

3.13.4   The Employment Land Review indicates that the Ivel Valley provides some of the more economically sustainable locations for employment growth in the district. By providing a better balance of employment and homes the Council aims to address the high levels of out-commuting to Hertfordshire from this part of the district. Opportunities will be taken to build upon and expand established employment locations such as at Biggleswade, Sandy, Shuttleworth College etc as well as creating new employment sites in Arlesey and Stotfold.

3.13.5   **Infrastructure requirements**
Enhancements to the rail links serving the Ivel Valley are programmed through the Thameslink Programme. This will provide enhancements to station facilities and rail services including platform lengthening at the Sandy, Biggleswade and Arlesey railway stations to enable them to accommodate 12-car trains.

3.13.6   There are considerable congestion issues on the southbound A1(M) during

the morning peak period. These issues are strategic in scale and will require intervention at the strategic level by the Highways Agency to fully address the issues. However, new development in the Ivel Valley needs to play its part in addressing the issue and a full package of sustainable travel measures will be required for major new development to minimise the number of new journeys created and promote sustainable alternatives. Particular priority will be given to developing the cycleway network in the Valley in line with the Council's Cycle Mapping Project and in particular, to completing a high quality link between the key settlements in the Valley.

3.13.7   Improvements to the strategic leisure facilities are planned to help meet the additional needs of permitted and future growth in Biggleswade and Stotfold. New development should contribute towards delivering these facilities in line with the Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.13.8   The Ivel Valley also provides a strategically important north-south corridor for green infrastructure which follows the River Ivel. However there is an identified deficit in strategic accessible greenspace throughout the corridor serving the communities of Sandy, Biggleswade, Stotfold, Arlesey, Henlow and Clifton. Proposals to remedy this include the creation and enhancement of "Green wheels" around Sandy and Biggleswade. Key opportunities to create new green infrastructure will be taken in the Ivel Valley including restoration schemes associated with minerals workings, consideration of a new Country Park at the lagoons in Arlesey and the strengthening of linkages between.

3.13.9   Additional education, health and community infrastructure will also need to be provided in association with new development in the Ivel Valley as agreed with service providers and in accordance with the Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.13.10 In terms of education, new lower schools will need to be provided with new development at Stotfold, Arlesey and Biggleswade. Extensions to middle and upper school provision will also be required to provide additional school places associated with new development. The Local Education Authority (LEA) will continue to keep educational needs under review in the area. Significant new investment is also planned to health provision in Biggleswade, Sandy, and Arlesey/Stotfold.

3.14   Biggleswade

3.14.1   **Context**
Biggleswade is the district's largest settlement and offers the largest range of shops and services in Mid Bedfordshire, together with a mainline railway station and several bus links. In terms of its catchment area, Biggleswade plays an important role in the economy of the district, providing retail and community facilities for residents from a relatively wide area.

3.14.2   Biggleswade is both a commuting destination and a commuting origin. Although almost half of those working in Biggleswade also live in the town, significant numbers travel to work in the town from other parts of Mid Bedfordshire as well as from areas in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Of those that commute out of the town, the majority head south into Hertfordshire and London, or north to Cambridgeshire.

3.14.3　Biggleswade's population and services have grown steadily over the past 20 years and there is already further growth planned to the east of the town which will bring forward around 2,000 additional new homes in the plan period. In terms of employment, while there is a broad mix of local jobs in the town, many light industrial sites have been redeveloped for housing in recent years and there is now a focus of employment at one or two key sites including the Stratton Business Park, which is the district's largest key employment site.

3.14.4　In terms of retailing, new convenience stores have been developed in the town centre and new comparison stores brought forward at the town's out-of-centre retailing location in London Road. The Town Centres and Retailing Technical Report indicates that there is little quantitative need for further new convenience or comparison goods floorspace up to 2011. However there is a qualitative need to improve the range of comparison shopping available and, as the pre-eminent centre in the district, the study considers that Biggleswade will remain the main focus for new investment in comparison shopping facilities in the district.

3.14.5　Development options around the town are constrained to the west by the A1 and the River Ivel. Biggleswade Common also lies a short distance to the north of the town. Floodplain constraints also exist to the east. Future directions for growth will need to take account of these constraints and suggest some potential for development to the north, south and south east.

3.14.6　**Vision**
Biggleswade will build on its role as a **Major Service Centre** and will enhance its sustainability through new development that meets the needs of the town and its catchment area. The integration of major development east of the town within the existing fabric, both physically and socially, will be a priority, as will provision of new services and facilities to support the increase in population.

3.14.7　Further housing growth will be identified towards the end of the plan period when the existing commitments are near completion. Additional employment space will also be created to provide a better balance with housing growth in the area and to broaden Biggleswade's economic base. Further service-sector employment opportunities will also be created through expansion of town centre services and facilities.

3.14.8　In the town centre there are currently limited opportunities for major redevelopment, focused mainly in the area south of Bonds Lane, partly due to the relatively dense nature of the built form and established residential areas surrounding the centre. There may, however, be some new opportunities for the redevelopment of existing buildings and sites in the town's core to create additional commercial and mixed-use floorspace arising from the Biggleswade Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan, which is to be undertaken by the Council. This document, which will be adopted as SPD, will identify specific areas for priority and regeneration. Town centre development and expansion will focus on creating an increased retail and service offer to consolidate and build upon the town's role as a key local service centre and will also take the opportunity to bring new residential use into the town centre above ground floor, and consider community and other uses appropriate to a town centre location. Transport

options and parking would need to be considered as part of any scheme.

3.14.9　The London Road Retail Park fulfils an important role in providing large-format retailing space that cannot be readily accommodated in the town centre. Nevertheless the Council's priority area for new retail development, in line with PPS6, will be the town centre and any new sites identified through the SPD. The Technical Report did not identify sufficient need to justify allocating additional space in out-of-centre locations. If this situation changes over the plan period, any new development will have to be robustly justified in terms of the sequential approach in PPS6 and, in particular, maintain a complementary relationship with the town centre.

3.14.10　**New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	484	0.964
Already planned	2370	18.69
Total	2854	19.654
New allocations required	250-500	10-15

3.14.11　**Infrastructure requirements**
Considerable change will occur in Biggleswade over the plan period with the eastern expansion of the town and this will require new infrastructure to be provided locally. The new eastern relief road will remove some through-traffic from the town centre and will be accompanied by a reworked junction on the A1 south of the town. Sustainable travel options to and from Stratton Business Park should also be enhanced and any new development will be expected to contribute to increasing the accessibility of this key employment location.

3.14.12　Other social infrastructure such as schools, leisure and GP services will continue to be expanded to cope with increased demand. This will include additional built leisure facilities and open space in the vicinity of the existing Saxon Pool, further investment in the Biggleswade Community hospital, a new health centre and consideration of a new central community centre for the town. Transport and car parking would need to be considered as part of any scheme.

3.14.13　The proposal for a "Green Wheel" around Biggleswade comprises a number of elements that will enhance existing sites and provide new green infrastructure. This will include extensions and buffering to Biggleswade Common and improvements to existing facilities. Other projects will provide better access and habitat links between sites such as the proposed linear park as well as new links across the A1 in the southern section of the wheel in particular.

3.15　**Sandy**

3.15.1　**Context**
Sandy sits about 3 miles north of Biggleswade and although smaller than Biggleswade, it offers a reasonable range of shops and services to meet the needs of its community. It also has relatively good public transport links and has a mainline railway station. The town benefits from its proximity to the A1 but this proximity also raises problems of congestion at peak times.

3.15.2   Like Biggleswade, Sandy has grown steadily in the past 20 years. Housing growth has largely been focused to the north of the town though there have also been a number of infill redevelopments where employment uses have been redeveloped for housing. The town is also a strong and established employment location with a major industrial area at Sunderland Road offering a mix of employment uses and premises with excellent access onto the A1.

3.15.3   Growth options around Sandy are heavily restricted by the A1 and River Ivel floodplain to the west and south. The railway line and topography mark the eastern boundary of the town. Additional development north is unconstrained, but it lies some distance from the town centre and the station.

3.15.4   **Vision**
Sandy will build on its role as a **Major Service Centre** and will enhance its sustainability through new development that meets the needs of the town and the surrounding communities that look to it for goods and services.

3.15.5   In principle, Sandy is a sustainable location for future growth, but the constraints around the town make it difficult to accommodate major new development in a satisfactory way. Future development in Sandy will therefore be of a scale that reflects the town's role in the Ivel Valley growth corridor but recognises and respects its constraints. Housing development will be focused as close to the town centre as possible to support shops and services and ensure good access to sustainable transport.

3.15.6   Additional employment land will also be provided, together with improvements to the town's existing employment areas such as Land West of the A1, Girtford Underpass to make them more attractive to a wider range and higher quality of jobs.

3.15.7   In the town centre, the Retail Study indicates that the demand for more shopping floorspace is likely to be limited. The local retailing role for Sandy will therefore be one of consolidation, but opportunities will be taken to create additional convenience shopping floorspace within and adjacent to the town centre, to meet locally generated needs and increase the choice available to local shoppers.

3.15.8   **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	428	4.045
Already planned sites	29	3.56
Total	457	7.605
New allocations required	50-200	5-10

3.15.9   Given the constraints to developing around the town, development will focus on development and redevelopment opportunities within the existing built-up area in the first instance.

3.15.10   **Infrastructure requirements**
Transport remains a key infrastructure priority for Sandy with problems at

the Bedford Road/A1 junction adding to local congestion issues. The Sandy–Beeston A1 bypass remains a local priority but is not currently part of the Regional Transport Strategy.

3.15.11   In terms of community infrastructure, the levels of development proposed up to 2026 will not require the provision of new significant facilities, but there will be investment in a new local health clinic and new library space. Cemetery provision is also required locally.

3.15.12   In terms of green infrastructure, the Sandy "Green Wheel" project will link greenspace and access routes north to east at Hassall's Hedge with a southern link to Route 51 cycleway. At Kingfisher Lakes proposals being considered include the expansion of existing habitats and improved public access including to land south of Girtford Bridge and north beyond route 51 to form the western section of the wheel.

| 3.16 | **Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park** |

3.16.1   **Context**
Arlesey and Stotfold have seen considerable growth since 2001. By 2011, the parishes of Stotfold and Arlesey combined will have grown by over 70% in population terms, with further growth in adjacent Henlow parish of nearly 50%. The continued build out of existing planning permissions and commitments at Stotfold and Arlesey will see this growth continue up to 2021 and beyond.

3.16.2   Despite having a joint population of approaching 17,000 people, Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park have relatively poor levels of local service provision. In particular, neither of the towns has a defined town centre and both communities look to the north Hertfordshire towns of Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin for all but local-level services and shopping needs. It would be beneficial, both in sustainability and self-sufficiency terms, to increase the provision of shops and services locally. An uplift in local provision will also provide services for other nearby settlements.

3.16.3   It is also clear that housing growth in these communities has not been matched by employment growth, illustrated in part by the high levels of out-commuting locally. The situation has been exacerbated by the loss of existing employment sites to other uses. It is therefore desirable to safeguard established key employment sites as well as ensuring sufficient new land is allocated for employment.

3.16.4   **Vision**
Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park will be planned for in a comprehensive and complementary way up to 2026 to deliver growth sustainably. Existing housing commitments will be built out and additional development planned for which brings forward new services, community facilities and employment opportunities. Future growth will particularly focus on Arlesey, where larger-scale development will be planned to provide convenient access to the railway station and help to reduce current levels of traffic along the main route through the town.

3.16.5   The three settlements will still remain separate entities but taken together, they will be planned to support higher-level services commensurate with

their combined population, including a broader range of shops, services and larger-scale business provision.

3.16.6 New shopping/service areas will be developed for both Stotfold and Arlesey. While both will serve the needs of their local community, one of these areas should function at a higher level, incorporating a new supermarket (of around 2,500 square metres gross floorspace) and accompanying retail and service units appropriate to a town centre.

3.16.7 The Site Allocations document will determine the location of this higher-order retail/service centre in either Stotfold or Arlesey. As the larger settlement, Stotfold is the preferred location but consideration will need to be given to detailed locational factors such as convenience to other facilities and services, to provide for linked trips and the ability of a location to encourage non-car modes of transport.

3.16.8 The Site Allocations document will also determine the location of additional employment areas, including a high quality business park serving the area. This business park will provide new jobs to balance recent and future housing growth and will help to address out-commuting. New employment provision will need good access to the A1(M) and A507, as well as being accessible to the local population. Marketability and demand issues will also be relevant in determining the best location for new employment.

3.16.9 To coordinate the appropriate planning of development in this area a greater level of detailed planning is required than is possible in the Core Strategy. A development framework will therefore be produced to take forward this vision and will be adopted as an LDD. The development framework will include long-term landscaping proposals, linked to local green infrastructure provision, to maintain separation between the separate settlements, taking account of Green Infrastructure plans for the area.

3.16.10 **Infrastructure requirements**
In planning for Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park on a comprehensive basis, it is vital that the links between them increase. The network of walking and cycling routes between the settlements will therefore be extended and enhanced to enable convenient access to key services, including the railway station, without the need to travel by car. This will need to be supported by an improved quality bus service. Improvements will be necessary to junction 10 of the A1(M), together with key junctions on the A507. If so developer funding will be required from any major new development sites brought forward.

3.16.11 Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park each have their own lower schools while Etonbury Middle School serves all three settlements. The nearest upper school is Samuel Whitbread School in Shefford. Any new development will need to contribute towards improved education provision at all tiers of education locally. Larger scale development at Arlesey will require provision of an additional lower school.

3.16.12 Additional health care provision will also be required locally to serve the proposed growth. At present the Primary Care Trust are planning to invest in an Enhanced Health Centre for the Arlesey/Stotfold area, though this will be reviewed as the development framework for the area emerges.

3.16.13   In terms of other community facilities, plans are already in place to deliver a new leisure centre at Stotfold which, when complete will serve a wider catchment on the eastern side of the district. The Infrastructure Audit also identifies that new development at these settlements will bring forward the need for other community facilities including, additional recreational open space, library facilities, youth facilities, railway station car parking and burial space.

3.16.14   In terms of green infrastructure, the Blue and Green Lagoons south of Arlesey, represent a significant opportunity to provide for a new country park. A detailed feasibility study has previously been undertaken for use as a country park, however, considerable investment will be required to make this environment suitable for such use. Small-scale enabling development will be considered to help bring forward a country park but the Council will not support proposals for large-scale development to bring this forward given that it would lie a significant distance from local facilities. All new development locally will be expected to contribute to strategic-scale green infrastructure provision, in line with the Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.17   **Arlesey**

3.17.1   **Context**
           Arlesey is one of six **Minor Service Centres** in the district. It is a long, linear settlement with no identifiable focal point. The main route through the town, High Street and House Lane, suffers from local congestion and an environment that discourages walking and cycling. Local services are limited and spread out through the village. The railway station, which sits at the northernmost point of the town, provides convenient rail access to London.

3.17.2   Over the past 20 years, Arlesey has grown steadily through piecemeal redevelopment within its built up area and smaller-scale housing allocations. Little of this development however, has added new facilities and services to the town. The town has also retained a number of established employment sites, though few of these sites have seen any investment or refurbishment over that time and there are a number of employment units which now lie vacant.

3.17.3   The need to improve the level of local facilities in Arlesey will be the key challenge to resolve in the period of this plan. New employment opportunities should also be brought forward to provide additional local jobs and help facilitate refurbishment of existing employment sites.

3.17.4   Arlesey Town Council has indicated that it will support larger-scale development locally rather than smaller piecemeal development, if it brings forward tangible benefits in services and local jobs provision. It has also indicated its desire to see a reduction in congestion and traffic using House Lane and High Street.

3.17.5   **Vision**
           Arlesey will be planned to grow over the plan period to bring forward large-scale new mixed-use development, including significant improvements in levels of service and local traffic conditions. Large-scale mixed-use development will be brought forward, focusing on the northern part of the

town, in order to provide convenient access to the railway station, and the local highway network. Development will create a new focal point for the town, including new retail and service provision and other uses appropriate to a town centre. Development will provide a relief road, taking traffic off the main route through the town, helping to make it more pedestrian and cycle friendly. Development will be accompanied by substantial areas of new, publicly accessible green infrastructure which in part, will also act as strategic landscaping and open space to ensure the separate identity of Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield Park in the long-term.

3.17.6   At least 1,000 dwellings will be provided from 2011 together with employment land and services. A number of existing employment sites will be safeguarded for continued employment use and their refurbishment encouraged. Redevelopment of existing employment sites will only be considered where they are no longer fit for purpose or their redevelopment would lead to substantial improvement to the appearance of the local area.

3.17.7   **New Development**

	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	333	3.17
Already planned for	27	2.53
Total	360	5.7
New allocations required	1000+	10-15*

* Figure for Arlesey and Stotfold combined

3.17.8   **Infrastructure requirements**
New transport infrastructure in the form of a relief road will be brought forward to remove traffic from the main route through the town. This relief road will be provided early in development scheme and will ensure a direct link from High Street to the A507. The completion of the relief road will provide the opportunity to enhance the environment of High Street and House Lane to give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists. Enhancements will be undertaken at Arlesey Station, and additional railway station car parking space provided. On-street car parking restrictions close to the station will be considered once additional station car parking is in place. Enhancements will also be required to local bus services to maximise the use of non-car travel.

3.17.9   Health facilities will be expanded locally to match the level of new growth planned in the area. A new lower school will be required as part of the development, together with contributions towards additional middle and upper school provision. Additional community, recreation and green infrastructure will also be required in line with the Planning Obligations Strategy.

3.17.10   The Blue Lagoon provides a major focus for the delivery of green infrastructure in the area but there are other opportunities such as Arlesey landfill site restoration, habitat and access improvements between Glebe Meadows, Arlesey Old Moat and Arlesey Common which would link with the Blue Lagoon

3.17.11   Scope for strategic flood mitigation measures on Pix Brook to the east of

the town has been identified through the SFRA. The potential for schemes to enable or contribute to such measures will be a consideration.

3.18 **Stotfold and Fairfield Park**

3.18.1 **Context**
Stotfold is one of the district's **Minor Service Centres** and is located close to the A1 and A507. The permitted southern expansion of Stotfold and remaining areas of development at Fairfield Park are due to be built out and will take time to assimilate into the life of the town, though Fairfield Park already has established itself as a thriving community with a number of local interest and residents groups.

3.18.2 In terms of population, Stotfold (including Fairfield Park) will be the second-largest settlement in Mid Bedfordshire by 2011. However, the town does not have a recognised town centre and lacks the level of service and employment provision which might reasonably be expected in a town of its size.

3.18.3 Like Arlesey, the need to improve the level of local facilities in Stotfold will be the key challenge to resolve in the period of this plan. New employment opportunities will also need to be brought forward to provide additional local jobs and reduce levels of out-commuting and green infrastructure provision will need to be improved, taking account of the local GI plans being developed.

3.18.4 In terms of scale of development, the Town Council and local community do not support further substantial housing development at this stage, but it does support the need for improved services and jobs.

3.18.5 There is relatively little to constrain further development at Stotfold, though there are areas at risk of flooding to the east and south west following the River Ivel and Pix Brook respectively. The Council also considers that A507 will mark the southern boundary to residential development of the town over the longer term.

3.18.6 **Vision**
Stotfold will continue to grow steadily over the plan period as existing permissions are built out and further development is planned for. New development will be of a lower order than provided for in recent years and will be planned to come forward in direct association with new shops and services. The provision of additional shops and services will be pursued in association with the existing permission for Land South of Stotfold, adding to the cluster of services that already exist in the vicinity of High Street. In addition a new shopping/service area may also be created on the western side of the town in close proximity to the new leisure centre and existing health facilities. This new service area will complement and enhance the existing service offer in the town and will act as a new community focal point. A new "town square" or form of public meeting space will be designed into the area to be developed. A number of new homes will also be planned for in association with this new community area and may form part of a wider development of land west of Stotfold beyond the end of this plan.

3.18.7 Additional employment land will also be provided to add to the limited existing employment offer locally. This will include a new business park

serving the wider Arlesey/Stotfold/Fairfield Park area.

3.18.8 Fairfield Park will not be planned to expand over the plan period and will be maintained within its existing well established and defined boundaries. Additional physical links will however be considered between the Fairfield Park community to enable access to new green infrastructure and local facilities which come forward at Arlesey and Stotfold.

3.18.9 **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	913	0.57
Already planned for	1272	-1.23
Total	2185	-0.66
New allocations required	150-250	10-15*

* Figure for Arlesey and Stotfold combined

3.18.10 **Infrastructure requirements**
The key piece of "infrastructure" required for Stotfold is an increase in the level of local shops and services. Adjacent to the new service area that might be provided to the west of the town, the new leisure centre proposed for Stotfold will be brought forward and will provide a level of facilities to serve the town and the wider area of east Mid Bedfordshire. When complete, the centre will be an important strategic leisure asset for the district. Investment will also take place to improve library, community, youth and health facilities in the town.

3.18.11 Additional allotments, recreational open space and cemetery space are also needed. Some of this additional recreational open space will be provided with the new leisure centre, including the relocation of the town football club from Roker Park.

3.18.12 New green infrastructure will be provided locally in line with local green infrastructure plans. In particular, opportunities will be considered to create a 'green wheel' around Stotfold linking existing habitats and green areas together, making new areas publicly accessible along the River Ivel and creating improved links to wider features in the locality, such as Radwell Spring and Glebe Meadows at Arlesey.

3.19 Ampthill & Flitwick

3.19.1 **Context**
Ampthill and Flitwick are the two largest towns in the western part of the district. They are separate towns with their own clear identities, but face many similar issues. They offer a good range of local services and facilities, particularly when viewed together and while they do not compete with the retail and service offer of Bedford, Milton Keynes and Luton as shopping or employment locations, they act as important service and employment centres for their local area. Both towns are reasonably well served by bus routes and Flitwick has a good mainline rail link to Bedford and London.

3.19.2 In the past 20 years Ampthill has grown steadily through redevelopment within its built up area and through controlled expansion. At 2008

commitments remain for some 350 additional homes which are yet to be built out. The town has also preserved its outstanding historic quality over that time and the town centre has recently been improved by redevelopment of Bedford Street, which has brought forward a new supermarket and a number of new shops. Following this redevelopment, the Council's Retail Study indicates no quantitative need nor any strong qualitative need for new convenience shopping in the town. It also suggests that whilst there may be a local aspiration, there is unlikely to be interest from retailers to sustain significant expansion for comparison shops.

3.19.3   At Flitwick, housing growth has been more significant over the past 20 years and there are now few permissions remaining to be built out. In the town centre, the existing retail offer is limited. A large Tesco foodstore is the focal point, but there are few other shops and the town centre is disjointed, split by the railway line and the roads running through the centre. This creates a poor environment for pedestrians and difficulties in accessing shops and services on either side of the centre. Long-running, shared aspirations to remodel the town centre and provide additional shopping, services, housing, car parking and an improved environment for users of the town centre are now being progressed by the Council with local stakeholders and developers. When complete these will provide major improvement to the retail and service offer of the town.

3.19.4   Plans to replace the existing leisure centre at Flitwick and provide new open space are also continuing to progress. The existing leisure centre is a strategic leisure facility for the western part of the district and when its replacement is complete it will provide improved facilities for local communities.

3.19.5   Taken together, the towns provide a reasonable supply of employment land however, provision is largely centred on Ampthill and there is a lack of employment land in Flitwick. The SQW Employment Land Review Sites study reports a good supply of office space in Ampthill but a strong demand in the area for new small scale industrial premises, the lack of which could be stifling opportunities for existing companies to expand. The development of Center Parcs will of course create significant additional jobs locally and will help in further diversifying the variety of local jobs available. Further opportunities need to be created for local employment during the plan period.

3.19.6   Both Flitwick and Ampthill are surrounded by Green Belt following final adoption of detailed Green Belt boundaries by the Council in December 2005. The primary role of Green Belt around the two towns is to safeguard against their coalescence. The existence of Green Belt limits the expansion potential of the two towns. However, both have areas of land that is already safeguarded for future development and that will be able to contribute to development needs during the plan period.

3.19.7   **Vision**
Ampthill and Flitwick will build upon their role as **Major Service Centres** during the period of this plan and will provide for additional housing, employment and service provision through a combination of continued development within the built up area and expansion onto land already committed or safeguarded for development. All new development will be

achieved without impacting on the existing Green Belt in order to protect the openness of Green Belt land and in particular, ensure against coalescence of the two towns. In the most sensitive part of the gap between Ampthill and Flitwick, either side of the A507, the Council will actively pursue the creation of new public open space and a country park and link it with existing open spaces in the two towns.

3.19.8　To accommodate further new homes and jobs in Ampthill and Flitwick, development of Safeguarded Land will be brought forward during the plan period. Significant new homes and jobs will also be provided through redevelopment of Flitwick town centre and the build out of existing housing commitments. Safeguarded Land will only be brought forward once key development sites within the urban areas have been developed. In the first instance, preference will be given to bringing forward the land safeguarded at Flitwick. This is better located to support the town centre redevelopment of Flitwick and to access the railway station. The Site Allocations DPD will determine the appropriate mix of uses on sites brought forward and the timing of release of sites in accordance with Policy CS6.

3.19.9　In terms of town centre redevelopment, Ampthill is unlikely to have the same scale of opportunities as Flitwick, given the historic nature of the town. However, smaller proposals may help to consolidate the town's position in the shopping hierarchy.

3.19.10　Additional employment space will be created in both Ampthill and Flitwick to bring additional jobs to the area. In Flitwick provision will include new office and service jobs created as part of town centre redevelopment proposals and on the Safeguarded Land. There are also opportunities to provide additional industrial and office employment land close to both settlements by better utilisation and expansion of existing sites to provide a wider range of high quality jobs. This may also enable some existing uses to relocate. Opportunities will also be taken to increase service provision in Ampthill town centre, though physical constraints will limit the scale of opportunities available over the plan period.

3.19.11　A new leisure centre, replacing the existing Flitwick Leisure Centre will also be delivered during the plan period. The centre will be built to serve the western part of Mid Bedfordshire.

3.19.12　**New Development – Ampthill**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	118	0.82
Already planned for	291	-0.66
Total	409	0.16
New allocations required	250-500	5-10

3.19.13　**New Development – Flitwick**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	360	-0.079
Already planned for	38	1.72*
Total	398	1.641
New allocations required	500-750	3-5

*Mixed use development

3.19.14 **Infrastructure requirements – Ampthill**
The recent Waitrose supermarket and town centre development has provided new shopping facilities, together with increased town centre car park, although there remains a need for additional long-term car parking in the town.

3.19.15 The Town Plan for Ampthill identifies a need for a new community hall in the town. This could either be provided in the form of extension and improvement of the existing hall or new premises. Additional sports pitches are also required; particularly for the town's rugby club and the Site Allocations DPD will allocate space for new playing pitches to meet this need. Further investment is also required to bring forward a new health centre and improved local health services, extra library space and youth facilities in the town. The Council will seek to use the Site Allocations DPD to identify sites to meet these needs as part of new development. Should sites not be available within the existing built up area of the town, some of these facilities will be brought forward on the safeguarded land.

3.19.16 In terms of green infrastructure, there are already some high quality parks and open spaces in and around Ampthill. During the plan period, there will be increasing visitor pressure on many sites particularly Ampthill Country Park and further enhancements to the Park, linkages to and from it and improved management and resources will be required.

3.19.17 **Infrastructure requirements – Flitwick**
The town centre redevelopment is expected to bring forward significant improvements to local infrastructure. In particular the scheme will deliver a new public transport interchange, new car park for rail station users, a cycle/footbridge linking High Street and Steppingley Road, improved access to the railway station, a new station building, a new community hall or improvements to the existing building, improvements to library facilities and new accommodation for the Town Council, Police and youth groups. If the scheme currently under consideration does not proceed, the Council will need to reconsider how best to address the infrastructure needs of the town. Development of the Safeguarded Land will assume a higher priority if this is the case and appropriate infrastructure contributions will be sought. The new leisure centre will also bring significant improvements to the quality of local leisure facilities.

3.19.18 New development at both Ampthill and Flitwick will need to bring forward commensurate improvements to local educational facilities. Depending on school rolls at the time, large-scale development on the safeguarded land at either location may require the provision of an additional lower school on site. Investment is also needed to develop a new enhanced health clinic in Flitwick and to bring forward further allotments and cemetery provision.

3.19.19 In terms of transport, investment is planned as part of the Thameslink programme to increase platform length to enable the station to accommodate 12-car trains. A bypass for the A5120 to the west of Flitwick and Westoning has also been under consideration for some time which would help reduce through traffic and local congestion. A feasibility study is due to be undertaken but the proposal is not yet a firm enough proposal for the Core Strategy to be able to respond.

3.19.20   In terms of green infrastructure, the proposal for a new Country Park will improve access to local greenspace in the town and bring positive use of the permanently open land included in the Green Belt between Ampthill and Flitwick. It will also help to relieve some of the existing pressure on Ampthill Park. In addition, the River Flit forms an important green corridor close to Flitwick. Much of the river is inaccessible and therefore opportunities for improved linkages and access routes will be investigated.

3.20   **Shefford**

3.20.1   **Context**
Shefford lies in the less-populated central part of the district and although it is not a large town, it serves a local catchment area, providing a range of shops and services. For a small settlement, the town has experienced quite a high degree of housing growth over the past 20 years and further development is already committed which will be built out during the plan period. Local employment, however, has not kept pace and a number of employment sites have been redeveloped for housing. The majority of the local work force therefore commute out of the town to work. In terms of public transport, reasonable bus links run north-south between Bedford and towns in North Hertfordshire but there is little in the way of east-west links. There is no train station serving Shefford. The nearest station is Arlesey some 5 miles away.

3.20.2   Further development at Shefford is physically constrained by floodplain. This effectively prevents a northward extension of the town and although some development has leapfrogged the flood plain, it is difficult to maintain coherence and proximity to the town centre with such development. Land beyond the floodplain also exists south of the town adjacent the A507 but again, development here would be some distance from the town centre.

3.20.3   The Local Education Authority (LEA) also indicates that Lower and Middle school provision in Shefford is running at or very close to capacity and will require extensions to the existing schools to enable new pupil places to be provided.

3.20.4   **Vision**
Shefford will consolidate its role as a **Minor Service Centre** during the period of this plan. Existing housing commitments will be built out and limited new housing development brought forward where it helps to deliver new community infrastructure and facilities which benefit the sustainability of the town or meet an important existing need. New employment opportunities will also be provided to balance with recent and new housing growth, including opportunities which arise through redevelopment in and adjacent to the town centre. New sporting open space, health, community facilities and green infrastructure will also be provided to accompany growth which comes forward.

3.20.5   **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	250	-1.273
Already planned for sites	214	-0.37
Total	464	-1.643
New allocations required	150-250	2-4

3.20.6   **Infrastructure requirements**
Key community infrastructure requirements for Shefford over the period of the plan include a new health centre, improvements to education provision, particularly the Lower and Middle School, new sporting facilities, playing pitches, cemetery space and green infrastructure.

3.20.7   Plans currently exist for the new health centre to be provided off Hitchin Road. Locations for new sports facilities, playing pitches and cemetery space will be considered in the Site Allocations DPD. The replacement or renovation of the existing community/sports building at Digswell Park may provide the opportunity for new sports facilities to be provided locally though additional playing field space would need to be provided elsewhere.

3.20.8   Scope for strategic flood mitigation measures has been identified by the Environment Agency. The potential for new development to enable or contribute to such measures will be considered by the Site Allocations DPD.

3.21   **Potton**

3.21.1   **Context**
Potton is a small historic town in the far north-eastern part of the district, about 3 miles north-east of Biggleswade. The town maintains strong links with the settlements of Biggleswade and Sandy but sits beyond the Ivel Valley corridor.

3.21.2   Although a relatively small town Potton has grown steadily in recent years, helping to maintain the viability of local services for residents within its local catchment area. The town has a particularly attractive town centre which offers a good range of local shops and services. It also has Lower and Middle Schools, both of which, the LEA indicate, offer scope for additional pupil numbers. Its location some distance from mainline rail and road connections (4 miles), however, has meant that like Shefford, it has traditionally been a difficult location to attract new jobs. Many of its residents therefore travel to work in the larger centres nearby such as Biggleswade, Sandy, Cambridge, the centres in north Hertfordshire and London. Direct public transport provision from the town to many of those centres is also limited.

3.21.3   Whilst the town is relatively isolated from major transport connections, there are few physical or planning constraints to further growth. The key constraint is the flood plain which follows Potton Brook and runs along the eastern side of the town. The historic town centre, which is designated as a Conservation Area, is also not well suited to large volumes of traffic.

3.21.4   **Vision**

Potton will consolidate its role as a **Minor Service Centre** during the period of this plan. Existing housing commitments will be built out and limited new housing development brought forward where it helps to deliver new community infrastructure and facilities which benefit the sustainability of the town or meet an important existing need. New small-scale additional employment space will also be provided to balance with recent and new housing growth and opportunities will be taken to provide additional jobs and services which arise through redevelopment in and adjacent the town centre.

3.21.5   **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	224	0
Already planned for	32	0.16
Total	256	0.16
New allocations required	150-250	1-2

3.21.6   **Infrastructure requirements**
Proposals for the environmental enhancement of Potton town centre will be completed in the near future. During the plan period consideration will also be given to proposals or initiatives which could reduce traffic through the town centre.

3.21.7   In terms of community facilities, improved surgery facilities for doctor and dentistry practices, additional library space, improved children's play and sporting open space will all be required. Potton also has a range of community halls but many are outdated and need renovation or replacement and there may be scope to provide a new facility within any new development proposed.

3.22   **Cranfield**

3.22.1   **Context**
Cranfield sits on a plateau overlooking the Marston Vale, about 3 miles west of the A421. Essentially a large village, Cranfield has grown significantly in recent years and further permissions for growth exist, notably at Home Farm which will be built out in the future

3.22.2   The village is linear in character and has a number of facilities and services dispersed through it including a variety of local shops and two small supermarkets. The village also includes a Middle and Lower school, both of which are presently operating at or near their capacity. Development at Home Farm will contribute towards new pupil places and facilities at both schools and the Local Education Authority is continuing to work with the governing bodies to bring new capacity and facilities forward.

3.22.3   Next to the village lies Cranfield University, a feature that has given Cranfield and Bedfordshire international renown. Adjacent to the University, lies Cranfield Airfield and Cranfield Technology Park. The airfield functions for recreational and business flying as well as being home to a nationally recognised flight training school. Cranfield Technology Park is regarded as a strategic site and referred to in Policy E4 of the East of England Plan as

part of a regionally significant cluster specialising in research into life sciences. The Technology Park is now partially complete and provides high-tech space for 'seed-bed', small and large companies. Some of the bigger companies occupying the site include Nissan and Trafficmaster. All three assets provide significant numbers of jobs and make the area a sub-regionally important employment location.

3.22.4   The village is relatively isolated from major transport connections which limits its sustainability for further substantial growth. However, there are few physical or planning constraints to development, though to the east any development would begin to fall from the plateau into the valley and would be more likely to have detrimental impacts in the wider landscape.

3.22.5   **Vision**
Cranfield will consolidate its role as a **Minor Service Centre** during the period of this plan. Existing housing commitments will be built out and limited new housing development brought forward where it helps to deliver new community infrastructure and facilities which benefit the sustainability of the village or meet an important existing need, in particular the needs for new playing pitches, a new surgery, library and further improvements to local education facilities. Further large-scale growth around Cranfield will not be provided for in the plan period whilst the community is given time to assimilate existing housing commitments and population growth.

3.22.6   Additional employment opportunities will be provided for at the University campus and the Technology Park, to help reinforce its importance as a sub-regional employment location and the continued aviation use of the Cranfield Airfield will be protected.

3.22.7   **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	83	1.373
Already planned	399	23.6
Total	482	24.973
New allocations required	150-250	5-10

3.22.8   **Infrastructure requirements**
During the period up to 2026, new community infrastructure will need to be provided in Cranfield to 'catch up' with recent and committed housing and population growth. The Home Farm development in the southern part of the village will bring forward contributions to be invested in local education including pre-school, new health facilities, library facilities, green infrastructure and will provide a new community hall with youth group space and playing pitches. Further investment will be required to bring forward additional playing pitches to meet current deficits, a new doctor's surgery and library. Sites for these facilities will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

3.22.9   In terms of education, particularly at Lower school level, it will be important that a solution to providing new pupil places and school playing field space is agreed locally between the LEA and the Lower school governing body before any new development allocated in the Site Allocations DPD is given planning permission.

3.23 **Silsoe**

3.23.1 **Context**
Silsoe is an attractive and historic village situated along the A6 between Luton and Bedford, about 4 miles east of Ampthill and 3 miles north of Barton-le-Clay. The village is designated as a **Large Village** in the settlement hierarchy and has grown to a limited extent over the past 20 years. In the context of the Development Strategy therefore, it would not normally be a location to accommodate significant new development. However in 2005, Cranfield University began the process of relocating the activities on its Silsoe campus to the campus at Cranfield. This left a large, previously developed site within the Settlement Envelope of the village whose future falls to be considered through the LDF process.

3.23.2 Silsoe does not have the same level of service provision as the Minor Service Centres but does have a Lower school and Pre-school and a small number of retail facilities. Any significant growth of the village will require a parallel uplift in the level of community infrastructure provision if it is to be sustainable.

3.23.3 **Vision**
Silsoe village will grow over the plan period as opportunity is taken to redevelop the former Cranfield University Campus. Redevelopment will consist of a mix of uses including housing, employment and new community facilities and will be planned in a way that complements and enhances the historic character of the village. Given the lower level of existing services and facilities available in Silsoe, development of the Campus will deliver a higher level of new services and facilities than would normally be expected. These facilities will be planned so that they can conveniently serve the wider community and ensure the sustainability of larger-scale development at Silsoe.

3.23.4 **New Development**

Net figures (includes losses and gains)	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	37	0.28
Already planned	143	0
Total	180	0.28
New allocations required	400	1-2

3.23.5 **Infrastructure requirements**
Redevelopment of the Campus site will need to be accompanied by a new recreation centre, a new lower school, new outdoor sporting open space, an on-site renewable energy centre and new business and employment space. It will similarly be expected to contribute towards new local health facilities, green infrastructure and environmental enhancements to High Street and Barton Road.

3.23.6 In addition, the Council will support additional retail provision for the village within the plan period and if possible will allocate a suitable site through the Site Allocations DPD.

3.24 **Rural Areas**

3.24.1   **Context**
In many large and smaller villages in the district, the level of development which has come forward over the past 20 years has been locally significant, in order to help meet previous housing requirements. However, the scale of development in these lower order settlements is not sustainable in the longer term. The East of England Plan continues to highlight the need to meet some rural housing needs locally but is now quite clear that sustainability considerations should limit the overall amount of development in rural areas. It also states the need to carefully examine how settlements and their services function to help determine the best solutions for each local area or community. The Core Strategy therefore needs to set out an approach which balances the need for development to meet local needs with the overriding sustainability imperative to concentrate most development close to larger, more sustainable centres.

3.24.2   **Vision**
In the rural part of the district (beyond the Major and Minor Service Centres) new development will be limited in overall scale. The Site Allocations DPD will determine the most appropriate locations for small-scale allocations of new homes, jobs and community facilities, where development:

- has the clear potential to support and retain existing local services;
- will bring forward important new services or community infrastructure;
- is targeted at bringing forward new affordable or specialist housing at rural settlements where there is a specific local housing need; or
- would lead to the beneficial reuse of previously developed land.

3.24.3   The nature and scale of development will be expected to reflect the size and character of the community within which it is proposed and will be expected to be conveniently located to access local services and facilities.

3.24.4   **New Development**
New housing will be allocated to specific Large and Small Villages by the Site Allocations DPD in accordance with the approach set out above. No specific figure is given for the scale of new rural employment allocations as the number and size will depend on the sites coming forward.

	Homes	Jobs (ha)
Already built 2001-2008	1,346	N/A
Already planned	544	N/A
Total	1890	N/A
New allocations required	400	N/A

3.24.5   **Infrastructure requirements**
The Infrastructure Audit identifies current infrastructure requirements in each parish. Given the scale of expected allocations in the villages, it is very unlikely that sites will require new large-scale infrastructure provision. Where new development is proposed, the Planning Obligations Strategy will be used to set out the local developer contributions required to help meet the demands arising from new development.

4: Infrastructure

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 'Infrastructure' means the facilities and services that help us live our everyday lives. It can range from strategic provision, such as a new road or school, to the creation of a children's play area. Providing the type and level of new social, community, economic, environmental and physical infrastructure is crucial to delivering healthy and sustainable communities. This section of the Core Strategy focuses on the Council's role in delivering new infrastructure and the mechanisms it will need to use.

4.1.2 Across Bedfordshire, there is a widely expressed view that infrastructure provision has not kept pace with new development. This has resulted in increased concern that infrastructural deficiencies will be exacerbated by further growth unless a substantial and co-ordinated effort is made to address those deficiencies and new development is accompanied by additional infrastructure. In some of its local communities, it is clear that new development must be accompanied by a 'step change' in infrastructure provision.

4.1.3 The Government, whilst seeking to accommodate the growing need for housing, acknowledges the need for a full range of facilities to be provided as part of new developments. The East of England Plan's objectives seek to ensure new development is sustainable and provides well-designed living environments supported by social, community, economic, physical and green infrastructure.

4.1.4 Delivering sustainable communities is the collective responsibility of a wide range of organisations. Successful implementation of the LDF Spatial Strategy depends not only on the action of the Council but is heavily dependant on co-ordinated and sustained action from a wide range of other organisations. This entails a shared vision and shared objectives. It involves making sure related strategies are consistent with the Spatial Strategy and that there is co-ordinated action to ensure essential infrastructure is delivered effectively and on time. Delivery is dependent upon having appropriate mechanisms in place that have the support and confidence of all the relevant agencies and organisations involved. It is crucial that infrastructure programmes, whether for transport, utilities or social infrastructure, meet current deficiencies and the requirements of new development. It is also crucial that the responsible agencies commit the resources needed to implement these programmes and co-ordinate delivery with development.

4.1.5 Delivery of infrastructure needed will be partly dependent upon planning obligations which require the provision of new infrastructure or contributions from the development process. However, it must equally recognise that there needs to be a wider contribution to providing new infrastructure from the public and private sector. This includes recognition from government that it has a crucial role in providing the necessary capital investment to achieve sustainable growth, and thereafter, an increase in ongoing revenue support by local authorities and agencies who manage or serve new development.

4.1.6   Improved alignment of investment is critical to timely delivery of infrastructure. The investment decisions of a number of organisations ranging from Central Government, regional agencies, local authorities, delivery agencies, environmental bodies, the private sector and regulatory bodies need to be aligned. Alignment is also critical to ensure the efficient use of the funds made available for investment.

4.1.7   In a rural district like Mid Bedfordshire, where there are many smaller settlements, the opportunities for using the planning system to deliver improvements to infrastructure is often more limited. This heightens the importance of ensuring good accessibility to facilities and services in nearby larger settlements, some of which may be just outside the district. Good accessibility also helps ensure that there is a network of local employment opportunities and educational, retail, leisure social and community facilities available to all, including those who currently may be socially excluded, or at risk of being so.

4.1.8   Ensuring good accessibility to facilities in the district is therefore a key issue. A particular problem exists for those without access to a car. This potentially results in deprivation and exclusion for sectors of the community such as the elderly and young. Public transport is largely outside the direct control of the Council but there are still significant ways in which the Council can influence travel patterns and promote access to services in the district. This includes the promotion of alternatives to the car such as public transport, cycling and walking which can provide social and environmental benefits as well as improving the overall health of the community.

4.2   **Auditing, Planning and Delivering Infrastructure**

4.2.1   To improve its understanding of infrastructure provision and needs locally the Council has carried out a comprehensive Infrastructure Audit for the district. The Audit brings together the results of extensive work with the service providers and local communities to identify existing levels of infrastructure and more importantly, to set out a clearer picture of new infrastructure which is needed to serve present and future needs. The areas covered by the Audit include education, health and social care, transport, housing, leisure and recreation, green infrastructure, community facilities and meeting places, utility services, emergency services and waste, minerals and recycling facilities.

4.2.2   The Audit has helped to establish current infrastructure deficits, identify the additional infrastructure needs associated with further growth, has improved the understanding of service providers in the range of infrastructure issues and encouraged partnership working on delivery. It has led to the production of the Council's recently adopted Planning Obligations Strategy. In parallel with the LDF, the Council is developing this work to prepare a Local Delivery Strategy.

4.2.3   The Local Delivery Strategy and the adopted Planning Obligations Strategy will continue to be key mechanisms in delivering infrastructure. Both will be updated to ensure any changes to the delivery of new development are accompanied by similar changes in infrastructure delivery.

4.2.4 **Local Delivery Strategy**
Some of the necessary future infrastructure to accompany new growth, and practically all of that to remedy existing deficiencies, will need to be delivered and funded with sources outside the planning system. The planning system may help address existing infrastructure deficiencies if it can be shown that a development proposal would exacerbate an existing infrastructure problem.

4.2.5 Recognising the need to maximise the delivery of the required infrastructure from both the public and private sector, in addition to that delivered through the development process, it is important that a Local Delivery Strategy is prepared. This will complement the Regional Investment Strategy being prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly, which provides an overview of the strategic action required to help deliver the East of England Plan and subject-specific regional action plans, (such as the Regional Housing Strategy) and appropriate sub regional action plans.

4.2.6 The Local Delivery Strategy will provide an overview of the action required, who is responsible for delivery, a broad indication of phasing, costs and funding mechanisms, but this time for the local level. It will act as a focus for delivery by encouraging direct action, co-ordination of others and lobbying where appropriate. Again, as with the regional document, it should not be seen as a detailed investment programme. This will rightly be the shared responsibility of the relevant infrastructure providers/funders.

4.2.7

A Local Delivery Strategy will be prepared which provides:
- An overview of the action required to deliver the LDF;
- Who is responsible for delivery; and
- A broad indication of phasing, costs and funding mechanisms.

It will be prepared in association with appropriate partners including the Local Strategic Partnership and will complement the Regional Investment Strategy.

4.2.8 Recognising the close relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework, particularly the Core Strategy, the Local Strategic Partnership has an important role to play in preparing the Local Delivery Strategy.

4.2.9 To provide a context for the Local Delivery Strategy and Monitoring Framework. Annex D sets out for each of the strategic objectives the key delivery agencies, how successful implementation will be monitored and the implications of non delivery. More detailed arrangements for monitoring and reporting results are set out in the Annual Monitoring Report which is produced by the Council.

4.3   **CS2: Developer Contributions**

4.3.1   The planning system has an important role to play in delivering new infrastructure. Developer contributions provide a means for development to take place taking account of its impact. The current legislative framework is set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Circular 05/2005 which enable contributions to be secured through documents known as 'planning obligations'. The Council's Planning Obligations Strategy SPD seeks to significantly improve the approach to negotiating and securing developer contributions associated with new development in the district. In some circumstances the infrastructure required to serve the Mid Bedfordshire community may be provided in neighbouring administrative areas. Likewise in some cases it will be reasonable to seek a contribution from development from adjoining areas outside the district towards infrastructure in Mid Bedfordshire that will serve the needs of such areas.

4.3.2   The Planning Bill provides for the possibility of planning authorities introducing an alternative in due course, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Council is committed to updating the Planning Obligations Strategy in the context of this document (the Core Strategy) and in the light of new legislation and government advice.

4.3.3   In order to provide sustainable communities, Table 2 sets out the types of infrastructure and/or contributions that may be sought by the Council in association with new residential development. Obligations may also be sought from commercial development. They will be considered on a site by site basis. More detail on this is set out in the Planning Obligations Strategy and/or other relevant documents that the Council may produce.

Policy CS2: Developer Contributions

Developer contributions will be expected from any development which would individually or cumulatively necessitate additional or improved infrastructure, or exacerbate an existing deficiency.

The nature and the scale of development for which contributions will be sought, the level of such contributions and the mechanism for securing will be set out in the Planning Obligations Strategy.

Table 2: Summary of types of Planning Obligations likely to be sought for residential development

Obligation	Specific matters
Education:	Mainstream Education: Lower, Middle & Upper Schools, Early Years Education and Daycare, Children's Centres and Children's Social Services, School Transport
Sustainable Transport:	Transportation: General Requirements, Highways Works, Walking/Cycling and Safer Routes to Schools, Mid Bedfordshire Cycle Network, Public Transport/Sustainable Transport Measures
Health Care:	Health Care Facilities
Environmental Impacts:	Climate Change, Carbon Impact Contribution, Archaeology, Historic Environment, Biodiversity and Geology, Landscape, Planting, Flood Risk Management, Sustainable Construction
Mix of Housing:	Affordable Housing, Extra care and Enhanced Sheltered Housing
Leisure, Recreational Open Space & Green Infrastructure:	Indoor Sports and Leisure Centres, Recreational Open Space, Allotments, Countryside Recreation Space, Green Infrastructure and Forest of Marston Vale, Rights of Way
Community Facilities and Services:	Village & Community Halls, Youth Services, Libraries, Local Shops and Services, Places of Worship, Cemeteries & Burial Grounds
Community Cohesion:	Welcome Information Packs, Information Technology and Community Websites
Waste Management:	Waste Collection, Kerbside and Bring Recycling Facilities,
Emergency Services:	Fire and Rescue Services, Policing
Public Realm and Community Safety:	Public Art, CCTV

4.4 CS3: Healthy and Sustainable Communities

4.4.1 The promotion of healthier lifestyles is one of three main themes in the Mid Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. The health and well being of communities is not just about the provision of health and care services but also providing sports, recreation, leisure and community facilities which enable people to participate in physical and cultural pastimes which in turn can help enhance quality of life. The LDF can assist by making provision for new open space, leisure and community facilities through new development and by protecting existing facilities in the district. The LDF can also assist by promoting walking and cycling as sustainable forms of transport that also bring health benefits to participants.

4.4.2 The Council will focus attention on areas where pressure on services and facilities already exists within the context of the development strategy and

settlement hierarchy. It will use, where appropriate, new development to address these needs, either directly or by creating a critical mass to enable a solution.

4.4.3   The Infrastructure Audit identifies the need for a range of facilities at different locations, including for example village halls, doctors surgeries, sports halls, schools etc. The consultation process for the audit concludes that most parishes were keen to retain facilities or build new ones. One of the key requirements for community facilities is that they are located where they can be accessed easily by local people. This would normally be within the settlement and allow for users to travel to the facility by means other than a car. Another key requirement is that such facilities are accessible to all sectors of the population and therefore multi-use or shared facilities will be encouraged.

4.4.4   The Council has been extremely successful in improving the provision of formal and informal play and open space through Supplementary Planning Guidance. This guidance is the Recreational and Open Space Strategy (ROSS) which was reviewed in 2004. However, the ROSS does not cover all types of open space. A more comprehensive list is set out in PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' covering additional types of open space such as natural greenspace, cemeteries and allotments. Government thinking in this area has evolved significantly in recent years with regard to the nature and standards of provision. As a result and to update the ROSS, the Council commissioned a Needs Assessment for sports, recreation and open space in accordance with the requirements of PPG17. The results of this work have provided a more accurate understanding of the current distribution of provision, its quality and its accessibility and are contained in the Open Space, Sports & Recreational Needs Assessment Technical Report. The new standards are set out in Annex E. Guidance on how the standards will be implemented may be incorporated into a Supplementary Planning Document which will review and replace the ROSS.

4.4.5   Sites to provide for necessary new infrastructure will be identified in either the Core Strategy, in the case of key strategic facilities, or in the Site Allocations DPD. The Planning Obligations Strategy SPD currently sets out the requirements to provide for or contribute towards new community and sports facilities including educational and health facilities in conjunction with new development. With the help of the Local Delivery Strategy, the Council will work in partnership with developers, service providers, local communities and the Government to ensure that infrastructure is properly planned for, funded and provided. Detailed policies for design of new buildings and the extension of existing buildings will be set out in the Development Management Policies and subsequent Supplementary Planning Documents.

Policy CS3: Healthy and Sustainable Communities

The Council will ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided for existing and growing communities by:

- Safeguarding existing community, education, open space, recreation, sports, play and health facilities.

- Supporting in principle, the upgrading of community, education, open space, recreation, sports, play and health facilities.

- Identifying appropriate sites for new facilities to meet identified needs and shortfalls in accessible locations that are well served by sustainable modes of transport. All new facilities should meet the needs of the entire community, particularly socially excluded groups, facilitating multi-use facilities where possible.

- Directing development, within the context of the development strategy and settlement hierarchy, to locations where developer contributions can facilitate a solution or where additional development could achieve a critical mass to make a solution viable.

- Approving new development which provides new recreational and sports facilities and open space which meets the requirements of the Planning Obligations Strategy and the standards set out in Annex E

4.5   **CS4: Linking Communities – Accessibility and Transport**

4.5.1   Effective, efficient, but above all, sustainable, transport is essential for both a strong local economy and a better quality of life for residents in the district. Poor transport limits opportunities to access employment as well as services and facilities.

4.5.2   The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies transport as a key issue for many people and contains objectives that seek to enhance the accessibility of services, promote sustainable transport modes and direct development to areas with the best range of services and travel options.

4.5.3   Mid Bedfordshire covers a wide and largely rural area and includes a number of small towns that provide services to their inhabitants and to surrounding villages. This dispersed settlement pattern creates a dense and complex network of journeys that are difficult to service by public transport. In addition, the presence of large urban areas on the edge of the district (Bedford, Milton Keynes, Stevenage etc) creates an even larger spread of destinations.

4.5.4   In terms of overall provision, the district is relatively well served by strategic north/south road and rail links. East/west movement by road is less well served and is based on the A507 running through the district. East/west movement by rail is currently very limited. The geography of the district and the provision of transport infrastructure is reflected in statistics showing the

car as by far the most frequently used mode of transport, with car ownership levels above the county and regional averages.

4.5.5 Current travel patterns raise a number of concerns from a sustainability perspective. As well as the global concerns over carbon emissions caused by transport, there are local environmental concerns over air quality and congestion in the district's towns. Public transport limitations, especially in rural areas, can cause access problems for those without access to a car, those on low incomes, young people, older people and those with disabilities. Continuing congestion issues also affect the competitiveness of the district's economy.

4.5.6 While acknowledging the need to address high levels of car use, the Council is taking a realistic approach in this Core Strategy. For the plan period the most frequently used form of transport will continue to be the private car and this Core Strategy will plan on this basis. The emphasis here will be on limiting the harmful effects of car use, for example by supporting cleaner technology and encouraging lift-sharing through Green Travel Plans for new development. However, there are genuine measures the Council can adopt to shift the emphasis away from the car – measures that are tailored to the specific local circumstances of Mid Bedfordshire. In this respect the focus will be on the shorter journeys within settlements that are suitable for walking and cycling.

4.5.7 The Council's overall strategy for transport is based on that set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The strategy is set out below in four hierarchical stages and provides examples of how the strategy is being implemented through this Core Strategy.

4.5.8 ***Reducing the need for travel***
- Emphasis on mixed-use developments
- Focus on urban areas where walking and cycling are viable alternatives
- Provision of safe and convenient walking and cycling routes
- Better provision of local services

Encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport
- Focus on urban areas with best public transport provision and potential
- Plan development to be orientated around sustainable transport modes
- Use developer contributions to enhance public transport
- Require Green Travel Plans for new development

Managing the use of the existing network better
- Use developer contributions to maximise the capacity of the existing network

Adding additional capacity
- Facilitate planned road improvements
- Use developer contributions to secure new and improved infrastructure

4.5.9 This approach means that any significant proposed developments will be required to consider future management of the highway network, as well as seeking to encourage and achieve modal shift.

4.5.10 Responsibility for the provision of transport is, currently, largely outside the

control of the Council. The emphasis is therefore on full engagement with those agencies responsible for transport policy, plans and detailed programmes, to ensure that the current and future transport needs of the district are provided for. Whilst changes to local government in Bedfordshire will provide opportunities for greater co-ordination and reference at the local level there will remain a need for co-ordinated action with a range of organisations involved with transport policy, delivery and operation. Linked with this is the need for continued lobbying of Government to help provide those strategic transport schemes which are important to the delivery of sustainable growth in the district.

4.5.11   The next round of Local Transport Plans from 2011 present an opportunity to look again at the approach to securing and sustaining a suitable transport system. This process, linked with the future review of this Core Strategy, can fully evaluate the transport needs of the area and produce a sustainable transport strategy for the future.

4.5.12   A technical study, "Transport Impact Evaluation", has been produced jointly by Mid Bedfordshire District Council and Bedfordshire County Council to evaluate the potential traffic impacts of the proposed spatial distribution of development on the strategic road network (SRN) and other main routes. It is based on the methodology for a reduced transport assessment described in the Highways Agency's Advice Note: Evaluating Transport Impacts of LDFs (August 2007). The Council has undertaken a limited evaluation because of the relatively low levels of additional growth being proposed above existing allocations and commitments and the limited number of growth locations that will potentially impact on the SRN.

4.5.13   The study has revealed that there will be impacts on the Strategic Road Network associated with the proposed development strategy. However these impacts are small-scale and can be accommodated through modest improvements and signalisation to existing junctions. The Highways Agency, through involvement in the study, have given the view that the impacts on the network do not represent a significant barrier to development.

4.6   Transport Infrastructure

4.6.1   The 'Infrastructure Audit' sets out the current responsibilities for transport provision with details of new transport infrastructure and improvements being planned to help meet the additional requirements from growth in the district.

4.6.2   **Roads**
The Council is keen to encourage alternatives to car usage but recognises that in a district with a dispersed settlement pattern, many trips cannot be serviced effectively by public transport. For those journeys where alternatives are not viable, the Council will support the use of cleaner technology, higher occupancy rates through lift-sharing schemes and the management of the road network to avoid congestion, particularly in built-up areas. Focusing attention on the shorter journeys that can be undertaken by alternative modes should relieve a small amount of pressure on the road network, making journeys that have to be undertaken by car more efficient.

4.6.3   As well as the broader environmental issues, there is also an issue of how to address current 'backlogs' or 'deficits as well as the additional requirements from future growth in and around the district.   When considering the issue of transport deficits it is important to distinguish between an infrastructure deficit and capacity deficit. It is clear that at some congestion hotspots, on the road network efforts will need to be focused on improving capacity. There will of course be times when the only appropriate solution will be the provision of new infrastructure.

4.6.4   Major strategic roads such as the M1 and A1, which run through the district, are the responsibility of the Highways Agency and local transport infrastructure is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council. The Council also has responsibility for ensuring that development is accessible and that provision is made for any new infrastructure requirements as a result of development.

4.6.5   The current Local Transport Plan sets out priorities and the funding programme for roads and rights of way and covers a 5-year period from 2006/7 to 2010/11. It also identifies reserve schemes that haven't yet received funding but could come forward in the period of this plan. Some of the major road schemes recently completed, currently under construction or with funding include:

- A421 from Bedford to M1 (Junction 13) improvements, partly through the district;
- Ridgmont Bypass/Woburn Link from J13 M1 onto the A507;
- Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road;
- Diversion of the A6 linking to the A421 as part of Wixams Development;
- M1 widening from J10-13 which passes through a number of parishes in the district.

4.6.6   Other longer-term schemes include improvements to the A603 Bedford to Sandy corridor and the possibility of a Flitwick Westoning By-Pass. Schemes which are outside but could affect the district are the Dunstable Northern Bypass and Luton Northern Bypass

4.6.7   The provision of parking spaces, both the overall amount and their location within a development, can also have an influence on the choice of how people travel, even in a rural context. However, inadequate provision can cause long-term problems of congested parking within developments. Parking standards for new development will be defined through a Supplementary Planning Document.

4.6.8   **Rail**
         The rail system is a critical asset in Mid Bedfordshire and there are three important rail routes operating through the district:

- The Midland mainline with stations at Harlington and Flitwick which provides access to London, (and with the opening of St Pancras International, direct links to continental Europe), with a further station to be provided at Wixams new development.
- The East Coast mainline with stations at Arlesey, Biggleswade and Sandy which also provides access to London.
- The Marston Vale line (a Community Rail Partnership) which is mainly

a local route with stations at Aspley Guise, Millbrook, Lidlington, and Ridgmont which provide access to Bedford and Bletchley.

All three lines provide the opportunity to link to stations providing intercity services, in particular to London, the midlands, the north west, the north east and Scotland.

4.6.9   Proposals to improve the mainline service in the district are included within the Thameslink Programme, a £3.5 billion rail infrastructure project to enhance the network in and around London. The key benefits of the Programme for Mid Bedfordshire are the increased capacity resulting from longer trains, 12 rather than 8 coaches as a result of platform extensions and the linking, for the first time, of the service through Sandy, Biggleswade and Arlesey with the Thameslink service through London.

4.6.10   Major new development is proposed in Flitwick town centre and part of the redevelopment will include improvement of the access, interchange and parking for the station. The scale of works will be significant with the overall aim of creating a central focal area for town activity and the Council would in principle be in support of such proposals.

4.6.11   There is now a strong case for an East - West rail link from Swindon, Oxford and the Thames Valley to Cambridge and East Anglia via Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Bedford. The route potentially connects a number of designated growth areas and would achieve a high quality public transport link where existing east-west road movement is difficult. However, it is vital that the faster east west rail route which will share the existing Marston Vale Line, does not compromise the local service which will be crucial to helping to deliver sustainable growth in the Vale now and in the future.

4.6.12   The fundamental importance of the western section of the line, from Oxford to Bedford, via Milton Keynes/Bletchley, has been identified in the MKSM SRS and the South East Plan as a key element in delivering planned sustainable growth in the sub region. The western section largely utilises an existing rail network and is now progressing towards the GRIP 4 stage of the project. The eastern section, east of Bletchley through Bedfordshire between the Midland Mainline and the East Coast Mainline has no agreed route at this stage although it will use part of the Bletchley to Bedford local line as it travels eastwards. The level of uncertainty currently over the future of this section means that at present a route cannot yet be safeguarded by the LDF.

4.6.13   Rail use provides a sustainable travel option, particularly for journeys into London, but is not a viable alternative for all journeys. In addition, capacity restraints on the mainline services (notwithstanding the Thameslink programme) and the importance of creating local employment opportunities mean that instigating a large-scale modal shift towards rail travel is not part of this strategy. Instead, the strategy focuses on ensuring convenient access to stations and the Council will seek to encourage new or enhanced public transport links and additional station car parking, such as is being proposed at Flitwick and Arlesey.

4.6.14 **Bus**

Achieving a bus service that provides a realistic alternative to the car is difficult in most parts of the district. Rural bus services provide important links between communities but in most cases do not provide a competitive alternative to the car. One area where bus services may be able to provide a more effective service is within the larger towns, particularly when linking residential areas with the town centres, railway stations and key employment areas. While this is unlikely to create a large-scale modal shift, the removal of relatively small amounts of traffic from the roads can help to relieve pressure on the network.

4.6.15 Central Bedfordshire Council is working in partnership with the bus service operators and Town and Parish Councils to improve availability and upgrade bus stops and shelters, as well as vehicles. A Bus Strategy has also been produced, which was adopted in 2005. There is likely to be an increase in demand responsive services across the district in the future with an emphasis on integration with the core interurban services. Wherever possible, funding is sought from major new development to provide new or extend and improve frequencies on existing commercial services, helping to ensure that they are sustainable. Clearly, it will be important that major new development continues to contribute towards new and improved services in future so that new residents have convenient access to public transport services.

4.6.16 **Walking and Cycling**

Walking and cycling is a key area where modal shift can be achieved in a rural context like Mid Bedfordshire. Nationally, 25% of all car journeys are less than 2 miles and while not everyone will be able to walk or cycle these journeys, achieving even a small modal shift can help relieve the pressure on the road network. Encouraging walking and cycling, particularly within the larger towns in the district, should therefore be a key element of any transport strategy and the Council will seek to ensure that it is given full consideration in new development schemes.

4.6.17 The Local Transport Plan supports a programme for integrated transport such as footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, local safety schemes, travel plans and safer routes to schools, and traffic management. There are already a number of important strategic access routes in the district which allow residents and visitors to travel by bike, horse or on foot across and beyond the district. Some of these routes are largely recreational, providing improved access to the countryside for example, Sustrans cycle route (Route 51), footpaths (Greensand Ridge Walk) and bridleways (Skylark Ride). All of these routes link into the network of Rights of Way but there is no comprehensive network which allows safe travel by cycle or foot between all key centres within the district. The Council is therefore aiming to complete a new comprehensive cycleway network across the district over the next 20-25 years (known as the "Cycle Mapping Project"). This network will have links to the existing rights of way network and will also complement the proposals for the new green infrastructure proposals set out in the Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan (Technical Report). All new housing development will be expected to contribute to its delivery in accordance with the Council's Planning Obligations Strategy.

4.6.18 **Air**

A number of local airfields are located in the district. Cranfield Airport is a

busy general aviation airport which has world-class training facilities linked to Cranfield University's School of Aeronautics and also provision for private charter flights for both business and recreational purposes. Other smaller airfields at RAF Henlow and Old Warden Park are also used for training and recreational use. It is recognised that these facilities all make an important contribution to the local economy by facilitating air travel for business users in the case of Cranfield Airport, and tourism in the case of Old Warden and the wider Shuttleworth Collection. The Council will therefore ensure that development proposals do not compromise their continued use for aircraft purposes.

4.6.19   The Council also acknowledges the proposed expansion of London Luton Airport (LLA) in line with the Future of Air Transport White Paper (FATWP) and the positive contribution that this expansion could have on the economy of Mid-Bedfordshire. It notes that London Luton Operations Ltd (LLAOL) intends to publish a revised Master Plan in due course for the period to 2015, with proposals for the period 2015-2030 following thereafter and will maintain a dialogue with LLAOL on issues of mutual interest. The Council will also fully engage on any issues relating to existing and future LLA flight paths.

Policy CS4: Linking Communities – Accessibility and transport

The Council will seek to facilitate the delivery of strategic transportation schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and other strategies:
- road improvements
- rail improvements
- National Cycle Network routes

The Council will seek to maximise the capacity of the existing transport network. Where such capacity is insufficient, the provision of new transport and travel infrastructure will be sought as a priority. In the case of new development, such provision will be sought in parallel or before commencement.

The Council will focus new development in locations, which due to their convenient access to local facilities and public transport, promote sustainable travel patterns. Development will be expected to contribute towards new facilities and services that support sustainable travel patterns.

When allocating land for development, priority will be given to development schemes that:
- make best use of the existing public transport services and provide clear opportunities for improving and sustaining the viability of those services;
- ensure convenient access for walking and cycling to local facilities and employment, linking to and helping to deliver the Council's Cycle and Walking Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Plan;
- develop innovative and adaptable approaches to public transport in rural areas of the district; and
- make appropriate parking provision, in terms of both the number of spaces and their location, given the need to both encourage sustainable travel patterns and avoid creating congestion caused by excessive on-street parking.

5: Providing Homes

5.1   Introduction

5.1.1   More homes are needed in Mid Bedfordshire for two main reasons: because the number of local households is growing; and because it is part of a designated growth area to which people will relocate. Whilst population growth is relatively constant, the growth in the number of households includes young people leaving their family home to set up home; people staying single for longer; more couples or families separating and people living longer and continuing to live in their home, often alone. The main challenge for the district is to provide the right amount of homes, in the right places with enough of them being affordable to those on lower incomes. This challenge is also reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

5.1.2   As well as being the Local Planning Authority, the Council is also the strategic housing authority for the area. Its functions include tackling homelessness and working in partnership with developers and housing associations to provide additional units of affordable housing. In its role as the planning authority, the Council is tasked with bringing forward new housing by allocating suitable sites and granting planning permission for housing across the district. To ensure sustainable development, new housing schemes need to be located close to existing services and facilities, or provide their own. They also require thoughtful design incorporating both energy and water efficiency measures. In particular, the Council is keen to ensure that sustainable communities are created when providing new housing and, importantly, include new community facilities for incoming residents and existing.

5.2   **CS5: Providing Homes**

5.2.1   Housing requirements for Mid Bedfordshire up to 2021 are set out in the East of England Plan (RSS14) and the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS).

5.2.2   The East of England Plan proposes a housing requirement for the part of the district outside the growth area of 11,000 new homes in the period 2001-2021. In addition to this figure, the East of England Plan incorporates the housing requirements of the MKSM SRS for the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale growth area. In the part of the growth area within Mid Bedfordshire an additional 3,230 dwellings are anticipated between 2001 and 2021. The East of England Plan makes it clear that these regional housing targets are to be regarded as minimum targets to be achieved rather than ceilings that should not be exceeded.

5.2.3   The East of England Plan excludes any potential growth of Milton Keynes into Mid Bedfordshire though the emerging South East Plan suggests that south-eastern expansion of the city into Mid Bedfordshire should be provided for subject to its inclusion within a future review of the East of England Plan.

5.2.4   PPS3: Housing requires Local Planning Authorities to *"enable continuous*

delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption". In response to this requirement, the LDF will plan for housing development up to 2026. At the rate of housing development set out in the East of England Plan, the LDF will therefore plan for a further 2,750 dwellings in the period 2021-2026 outside the growth area.

5.2.5   In the part of the district that lies within the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale Growth Area further work is needed to establish the level of urban capacity and the most sustainable options for the growth of Bedford beyond 2021. This work will inform the eventual scale of future development within the Mid Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough parts of the Northern Marston Vale beyond 2021. In advance of this work, and in line with Policy H1 of the East of England Plan the Core Strategy will plan for a continuation of the 2006-2021 average annual rate for the Central Bedfordshire part of the growth area (i.e.194 dwellings per year, together with employment development) up to 2026 as an interim measure. A contingency allocation may need to be made in the Growth Area to ensure delivery up to 2021 as described in the Northern Marston Vale section of Chapter 3. As explained, an alternative approach may be required if the proposed Eco-town is supported by the government.

5.2.6   The Core Strategy therefore plans for the delivery of:

 • **14,230** new homes in the district between 2001-2021 and
 • **3720** new homes in the period 2021-2026, making a total of:
 • **17,950** between 2001-2026.

5.2.7   Some new housing has already been built since 2001. Significant housing is also already committed in the district, much with detailed planning permission. The most recent Housing Land Availability Statement provides further information on completions and current commitments to 31 March 2008. Table 3 indicates the remaining housing requirement to be identified in the LDF.

Table 3: Housing Completions and Commitments (as at 31 March 2008)

	Northern Marston Vale	Remainder of Mid Bedfordshire	District total
Total requirement 2001-2021	3230	11000	14230
Requirement 2021-2026	970	2750	3560
Total requirement 2001-2026	**4200**	**13750**	**17950**
Completions 2001- 2008	346	4539	4885
"Deliverable" commitments @ 31/3/08 *	1047	3595	4642
"Developable" commitments @ 31/3/08 *	1860	1598	3458
Total Completions & Commitments @ 31/3/08	**3253**	**9732**	**12985**
Requirement 2001-2021 not yet identified	-23	1268	1245
Requirement 2021-2026 not yet identified	970	2750	3720
Total requirement 2001-2026 not yet identified	**947**	**4018**	**4965**

* "deliverable" and "developable" commitments are those sites that meet the requirements of PPS3: Housing

Table 4: Housing Completions, Commitments and New Allocations by Main Settlement (as at 31 March 2008)

	Completions 2001-2008	5-year "deliverable" supply	Remaining "developable" commitments	Sub-total	New allocations - indicative range only
Biggleswade	484	1170	1200	2854	250-500
Sandy	428	29		457	50-200
Ampthill	118	281	10	409	250-500
Flitwick	360	38		398	500-750
Wixams	0	550	1700	2250	1000
Arlesey	333	27		360	1000+
Cranfield	83	249	150	482	150-250
Marston Moretaine	309	391	100	800	0-100
Potton	224	32		256	150-250
Shefford	250	214		464	150-250
Stotfold*	913	1034	238	2185	150-250
Silsoe	37	143		180	400
Sub-total	3539	4158	3398	11095	4450
Rest of the district	1346	484	60	1890	400
Total	4885	4642**	3458	12985	5000

* Figures for Stotfold include Fairfield Park
**This total includes 463 dwellings from small sites that are spread across the district

*** Difference between the total of 4,965 in Table 3 and 5,000 in Table 4 is as a result of rounding up and is intended to ensure no under-delivery of housing.

5.2.8   Table 3 indicates that the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs need to make minimum provision for 1,245 dwellings between 2001 and 2021, and a total of 4,965 between 2001 and 2026. Table 4 indicates the indicative range of development to be planned at each of the main settlements in line with the Development Strategy set out in Chapter 3.

5.2.9   The Council will allocate sites to provide 5000 additional dwellings. It does not anticipate the need to allocate sites to go significantly beyond this minimum but expects that windfalls will mean that at least 17,950 new homes will be provided between 2001-2026.

5.2.10   The indicative ranges shown in Policy CS5 provide strategic guidance on the distribution of new housing development. The Site Allocations DPD will be guided by those ranges and the sub-totals for each group of settlements will broadly equal those shown in Policy CS5.

5.2.11   The Council will not plan for the bottom of the range at every settlement, since to do so would result in an under-provision for that group of settlements. Within the indicative range, the specific figure to be planned for at each settlement will be determined through the Site Allocations DPD based on the relative sustainability of the sites in question, the need to balance the provision of homes and jobs, the availability of infrastructure and the level of existing commitments within each settlement.

5.2.12   **Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**
         There is also an important ongoing requirement to provide additional accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community. The Single Issue Review of the East of England Plan dealing specifically with the level of additional Gypsy and Traveller provision in the Eastern Region, will indicate what level of pitches the Council should accommodate in the period 2006 – 2011. As recent permissions have been granted for 3 pitches, the total number of pitches required for the Gypsy and Traveller community will reflect this provision. Beyond 2011 there is an ongoing requirement for pitches of approximately 3% growth per year. This level will be tested through subsequent local needs assessments and planned for in future reviews of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD and/or Site Allocations DPD.

5.2.13   Alongside Gypsy and Traveller need, the Bedfordshire and Luton Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (2007) indicates that a minimum of 4 additional Travelling Showpeople pitches are needed in the district up to 2012.

5.2.14   Specific allocations to meet the levels of identified local need for both the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community are being addressed through the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

Policy CS5: Providing Homes

The Council will make provision for new housing sites sufficient to ensure the delivery of at least 17,950 new homes between 2001-2026. In addition to delivering the existing committed sites, new sites will be allocated to provide for a minimum of 5000 new dwellings up to 2026. The distribution of this growth will be in line with the table below. Specific sites for housing provision will be established through the Site Allocations DPD and the phasing of housing development will be governed by Policy CS6.

Group	New Allocations
Major Service Centres	2350
Minor Service Centres	900
Villages	400
Arlesey	1000
Silsoe	400
Total	5000

The figures set out for specific settlements below are indicative and are intended to guide overall housing provision at the strategic level.

Group	Settlement	New allocations – indicative range only
Major Service Centres	Biggleswade	250-500
	Sandy	50-200
	Ampthill	250-500
	Flitwick	500-750
	Wixams	1000
Minor Service Centres	Cranfield	150-250
	Marston Moretaine	0-100
	Potton	150-250
	Shefford	150-250
	Stotfold	150-250

Provision will be made for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, in accordance with the adopted East of England Plan requirement. Site-selection criteria and the allocation of sites will be made through the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

5.3   **CS6: Delivery and Timing of Housing Provision**

5.3.1   The task of the LDF is not just about 'allocating' sufficient land to provide new homes but is about ensuring that, subject to prevailing housing market conditions, allocations will actually deliver this amount of housing within the specified period. This relies largely on allocating sites where there is a real prospect of delivery within the timescale anticipated. In also relies on a mechanism to ensure that sufficient sites are brought forward at the right time to enable delivery.

5.3.2   PPS3 requires local planning authorities to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of housing land that reflects the "Plan, Monitor, Manage" approach. This supports the need for a clear policy approach that indicates the timing of potential housing sites in relation to the housing trajectory and the 5-year supply of housing land. The Council will use the 5-year housing land supply to ensure an appropriate supply of sites with planning permission is maintained.

5.3.3   In addition to the 5-year supply of deliverable land, PPS3 also requires a further supply of specific, developable sites for years 6-10 and, where possible, years 11-15. Sufficient sites will therefore be allocated up to 2026 to meet the 15-year requirement in PPS3. In the event that the market does not deliver sufficient new homes to meet requirements, sites will be brought forward from future years allocations to ensure housing delivery targets are met.

5.3.4   In addition, the 15-year supply will be provided for without reliance on windfall sites, even though monitoring has shown that since 2001, more than half of housing completions were on sites that were not specifically allocated. While the past level of windfall is unlikely to continue, the Council is still confident that windfall housing will continue to emerge from unallocated sources that it could not be aware of at this stage. This is particularly the case for small sites (e.g. less than five dwellings) which, since 2002, have provided over 25% of new homes built in the district. The potential scope for windfalls to contribute to overall housing delivery therefore needs to be acknowledged, although it is not part of the Council's strategy to rely on windfalls to meet its housing targets.

5.3.5   The development strategy explains that in the Northern Marston Vale Growth Area the reliance on a single large development site means that a contingency allocation may need to be made in the to ensure delivery up to 2021. This contingency, together with the absence of a windfall allowance in the housing requirement calculations and the fact that longer-term sites can be brought forward if needed, results in a robust strategy to ensure delivery of housing to 2021.

5.3.6   The district's 5-year housing land supply as at 31 March 2008 is shown on the housing trajectory at Figure 2, in Table 3 and in the Housing Land Availability Statement. The 5-year supply is calculated on the basis of the remaining dwellings needed to meet the overall requirements. This way, if the actual completion rate falls behind the required rate, the 5-year supply will be calculated on a higher annual requirement so as to make up the difference. Additional sites will then be advanced into the 5-year supply to meet the requirement. Similarly, if the completion rate exceeds the required

rate the 5-year supply will be calculated using a lower annual rate and fewer sites would need to be advanced.

5.3.7   In future years, the 5-year supply will be added to from the current supply of "developable" sites shown in the Housing Trajectory, new sites allocated through the Site Allocations DPD and additional windfall sites that meet the PPS3 "deliverability" criteria.

5.3.8   The Council will monitor the geographical distribution of housing against the Development Strategy. The Council will aim to ensure that provision for housing is made during the 5-year supply in each of the Major and Minor Service Centres. Provision will also be made in at least one of the Large or Small Villages.

5.3.9   The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will determine which, if any, new sites need to be advanced into the 5-year supply each year. There may be occasions when a choice exists as to the sites to be advanced into the 5-year supply. To enable the AMR to determine which site or sites are advanced the Site Allocations DPD will indicate a priority order for the advancement of allocated sites.

Policy CS6: Delivery and Timing of Housing Provision

The Council will maintain a 5-year housing land supply in accordance with PPS3. The Annual Monitoring Report will be used to identify the required rate of housing delivery for the following 5-year period, based on the remaining dwellings needed to meet overall requirements. To maintain the 5-year supply, sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD will be added in line with the priority order to be set out in the Site Allocations DPD.

Housing Trajectory 2001-2021
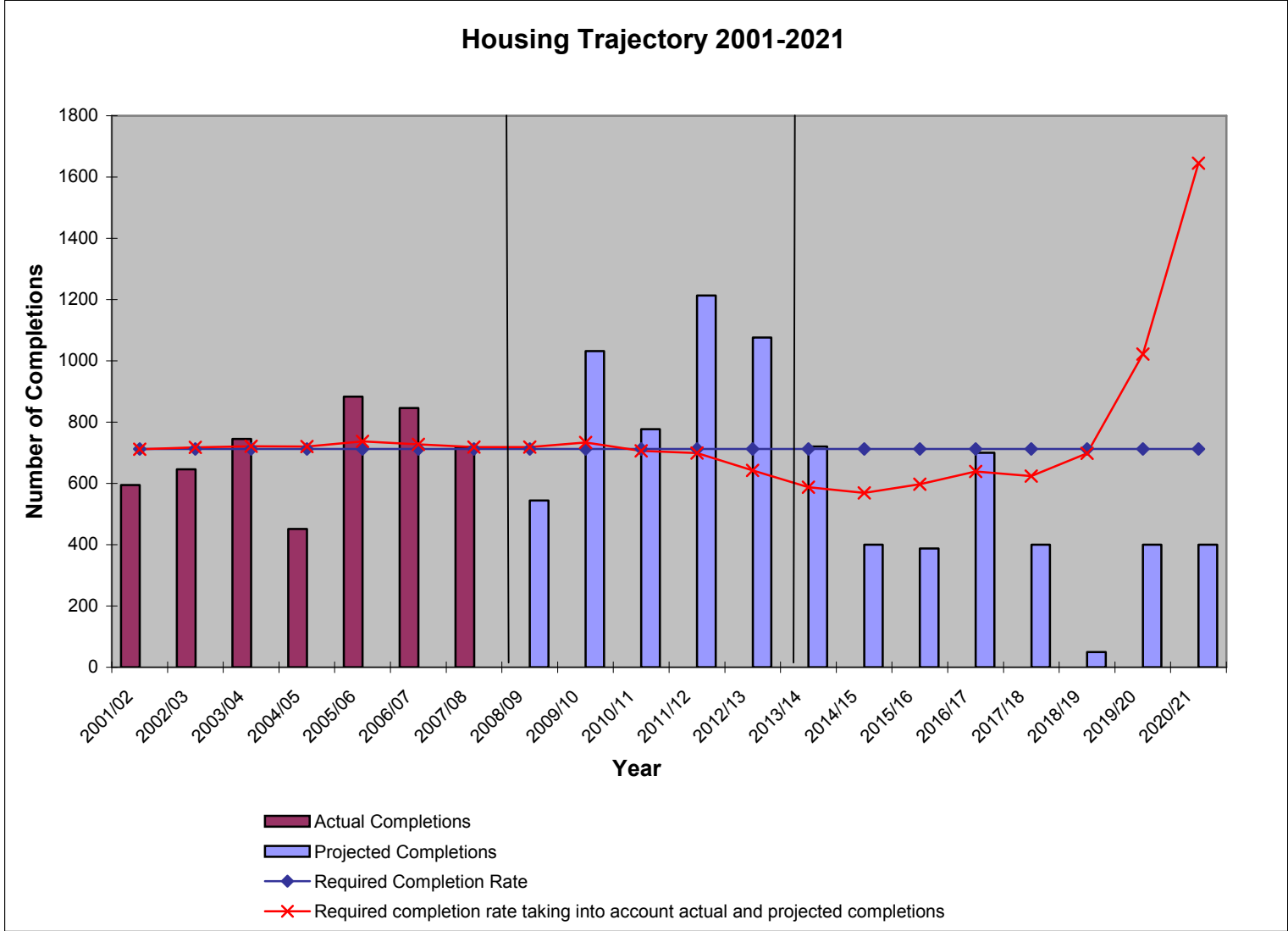
5.4 **CS7: Affordable Housing**

5.4.1 House prices in the district have increased considerably since 1991. This has had implications for the district's economy, particularly in terms of people living in the district and working outside it and providing for people with local links. It is a Council priority to provide affordable homes. PPS3: Housing states that "Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market."

5.4.2 **Need for Affordable Housing**
The Council's approach to affordable housing is based on the Housing Requirements Study 2003 undertaken by consultants (Opinion Research Services) on behalf of the Council. The Study concluded that there will be an annual overall need for 916 units of all types and tenures, of which 260 are affordable and 656 are open market dwellings – 28% affordable and 72% open market. This study pre-dated PPS3, and some low cost market housing was included which PPS3 no longer defines as affordable housing. However, provision of new affordable dwellings since 2003 has been below planned targets and the price of an average home in Bedfordshire has increased faster than average earnings. There is currently no evidence to suggest that the need for affordable housing has reduced since 2003.

5.4.3 The Council is currently working with other local authorities in Bedfordshire and Luton to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in line with Government guidance. This will update the results of the 2003 Housing Requirements Study. The SHMA will not be finalised in time to influence the content of this Core Strategy but the Council will respond to the findings through future SPD and the review of the Core Strategy.

5.4.4 The Council is confident that the conclusions of the Housing Requirements Study will still be valid in the initial part of the Plan period and this Core Strategy is based on those findings. 28%, as a proportion of all housing completions, will therefore be the Council's affordable housing target.

5.4.5 **Delivery of Affordable Housing**
At the Regional level, the East of England Plan states that delivery should be monitored against the target for some 35% of housing coming forward through planning permissions to be affordable.

5.4.6 A small proportion of affordable homes comes from rural exceptions schemes (see Policy CS8). Around 10 new affordable homes have come from such sources each year for the past 4 years.

5.4.7 The amount of affordable housing delivered as part of new development is influenced by two issues: the threshold for qualifying sites and the proportion sought. Since a proportion of homes will come forward on non-qualifying sites, the proportion sought must be higher than 28% in order to deliver 28% in total. The higher the threshold, the higher the proportion needs to be on qualifying sites.

5.4.8 The Government has recently published PPS3 which gives guidance on the definition and provision of affordable homes. It requires the LDF to identify the overall target for providing affordable homes. Most importantly for rural

authorities such as Mid Bedfordshire, it allows for the local authority to set lower minimum thresholds than the national indicative minimum site size of 15 dwellings. In Mid Bedfordshire around half of all new homes come forward on sites below the national indicative minimum threshold in PPS3. A lower threshold is therefore justified and required to help meet the established level of affordable housing need locally.

5.4.9   A threshold of four dwellings is considered to be appropriate in order to meet the affordable housing requirement. A Viability Study has assessed the impact of such a threshold and reported that for the sites investigated, there were no viability reasons that should prevent the Council adopting a new threshold at this lower level.

5.4.10   In adopting this threshold, around 75% of all new homes would be on qualifying sites. A proportion of 35% affordable housing on qualifying sites, making a small allowance made for rural exceptions schemes, would result in the delivery of 28% overall.

5.4.11   The delivery of sufficient new affordable housing is a Council priority and the Council will continue to monitor the delivery of affordable homes closely. Should there be a continuing shortfall of affordable housing in the context of updated housing needs assessments, the Council will, in the future, increase the target for affordable housing on qualifying sites through subsequent SPD if it is demonstrated that this would be economically viable and would deliver more affordable homes.

5.4.12   The purpose of the LDF is to provide developers with information on the affordable housing requirements likely to be required in association with new development at the earliest stage, so that the associated costs may be factored into negotiations on land acquisition. Where a developer considers that the requirements of the Council would significantly harm the viability of a proposal, the onus will be on them to demonstrate this. Proven impact on the viability of the scheme will be a material consideration in the assessment of the planning application.

5.4.13   PPS3 states that there is a presumption that affordable housing will be provided on site. However, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu may be acceptable where it can be robustly justified. Such occasions will be rare. Commuted sums will be calculated on the basis of 50% of the open market units provided in order to maintain parity with on-site provision and retain the 35% affordable/65% open market split.

5.4.14   In terms of tenure split, the Council will require both social rented and intermediate tenure housing. Specific requirements will be set out in SPD. The location of units in larger developments will be expected to be 'clustered'. All units will be designed and constructed to the same high standards as market housing. Policy DM10 details the main considerations for determining the appropriate mix of all housing.

5.4.15   The Council will consider allocating sites solely for affordable housing where a need has been clearly identified that will not be met through conventional housing allocations in the Site Allocations DPD.

Policy CS7: Affordable Housing

New housing development for 4 or more dwellings should provide an element of affordable housing. Sites of 4 dwellings should include one affordable dwelling. On all other qualifying sites, 35% or more units should be affordable.

The Council's preference is for developers to provide fully serviced land on site, at no cost to the affordable housing provider. Use of alternative mechanisms should be fully justified with evidence that this would not prejudice the level of delivery of affordable homes. A mix of tenures will be required, in accordance with figures set out in a Supplementary Planning Document. Affordable housing should be constructed and designed to the same standard as market housing and should be fully integrated into the development. Within large housing developments, the affordable housing will be scattered through the development, or in small clusters.

Where a site has been divided and brought forward in phases, the Council will consider the site as a whole for the purposes of calculating the appropriate level of affordable housing provision.

In exceptional circumstances and where robustly justified, commuted sums may be considered to achieve off-site provision of affordable housing.

Provision of fewer affordable homes may exceptionally be considered on sites only if the applicant produces evidence to demonstrate that to provide the full amount would make the scheme unviable.

5.5   **CS8: Exceptions Schemes**

5.5.1   Mid Bedfordshire is a rural area and it is important to provide for local housing needs in smaller settlements where it is unlikely that affordable housing would come forward as a proportion of a larger allocated housing scheme. In addition to Policy CS7, the Council considers that there is a need to continue with the approach of allowing rural 'exceptions' housing as set out in the Local Plan.

5.5.2   Exceptions schemes are constructed on sites beyond the Settlement Envelope and provide 100% affordable housing. Sites can be developed at a relatively low cost as the land value will be low. This saving can be passed on as affordable housing, either for rent or for part-purchase. The number, size and tenure of the houses built through local exceptions schemes will reflect the specific local housing need identified by a local survey in that settlement or parish (or in some cases adjacent settlements or parishes which cannot support their own scheme).

5.5.3   Where exceptions schemes are allowed, development will be expected to relate well to the structure and form of the village and in most instances will not exceed 10 dwellings. To be considered favourably, any proposal must demonstrate local need; be shown to be viable; be capable of continuing management; and remain available to meet local needs in the longer term.

5.5.4   It is expected that settlements with an existing range of services will provide suitable locations, allowing potential residents to have access to a range of

services without being reliant on the car as transport. Exceptions schemes will mainly be focused in smaller settlements where substantial allocations of housing are unlikely to be provided. Exceptions schemes may also be appropriate in larger settlements (Minor Service Centres and, occasionally, Major Service Centres) where there is a significant need for affordable housing which cannot be met through housing allocations or known windfall sites in that settlement.

5.5.5   The Council will work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords, bodies representing the interests of local people and developers to bring forward proposals under this policy.

Policy CS8: Exceptions Schemes

The Council will support proposals for 100% affordable housing designed to meet local housing needs adjacent to the defined Settlement Envelopes provided that:

- the local need is demonstrated;
- the scheme is viable;
- the scheme will remain available in perpetuity to local people who demonstrate a need for affordable accommodation;
- the design and location of the scheme relates well to the built up area of the settlement;
- the mix of size and tenure will relate to the needs identified in that area.

6: Providing Jobs

6.1   Introduction

6.1.1   Mid Bedfordshire has a relatively strong economy compared to the rest of the UK. A high proportion of the population is economically active; it has a skilled workforce, high earnings, a mix of sectors and increasing jobs and numbers of businesses. Unemployment is low, recording only 0.9% compared to the regional rate of 1.8% and the UK rate of 2.3% (Unemployment Quarterly, Bedfordshire County Council - July 2007).

6.1.2   The district has a balanced economy with no one dominant industry, sector or firm. Historically, the largest sectors in Mid Bedfordshire have been agriculture and manufacturing. Both of these sectors are in decline, but agricultural employment is still higher than the national average and there is still a higher percentage of manufacturing jobs in Mid Bedfordshire compared to the county and region. The Roger Tym forecasts of employment growth (B1-B8) in the district suggest that all sectors will grow but office employment will show the largest increase, especially in the business service sector.

6.1.3   The level of out-commuting has long been identified as a weakness in the local economy and has featured strongly in past and present Community Strategies. A main reason for the current levels of out-commuting is the district's rural character (a dispersed settlement pattern with several relatively small scale major service centres), combined with the close proximity of several major retail and employment centres such as Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes and Stevenage.

6.1.4   In order to strengthen the local economy the Council is taking a positive stance in supporting and promoting a step change in employment growth particularly by increasing the supply and range of sites available in the district. In addition the strategy seeks better alignment between homes and jobs to address the issue of out commuting.

6.1.5   A Joint Economic Development Strategy (JEDS 2008) has been developed by the Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership, a partnership of businesses and organisations, private and public setting out the key economic development actions to deliver economic growth. The Council is a key player in delivering the Strategy. Actions from the JEDS have been carried through into the Delivery Strategy to ensure that the aims set out in the Core Strategy are delivered.

6.1.6   The Employment Land Review (ELR) into growth in non B use classes (August 2007) confirms that the district has lower self containment levels than other comparable local authorities. The study reveals that between 1991 to 2001 the number of workplace jobs of all types in Mid Bedfordshire rose by 3,794 whereas the number of working residents increased by 7,548 (Census 1991 and 2001). The result of this imbalance between jobs and homes is that the net out-commuting figure has continued to increase. The study concludes that access to local job opportunities is poor, not only

compared to national and regional norms but also to other districts whose geography is similar.   This will continue unless a better balance between job opportunities and the available workforce is planned for. The Core Strategy seeks to address this issue by:

- creating more jobs in the district's main settlements;
- providing flexibility and a range of employment locations;
- encouraging mixed use development;
- recognising the potential for growth in non B use classes;
- protecting rural employment sites;
- promoting rural diversification.

The Council will be generally supportive of employment generating development that is consistent with these aims.

6.2   **CS9: Providing Jobs**

6.2.1   The East of England Plan (Policy E1) sets an indicative target for Bedford Borough and Mid Bedfordshire District to provide 27,000 net additional jobs between 2001-2021. As part of the joint working between the Districts and County to inform the East of England Plan the figure was disaggregated and a split agreed between Bedford Borough and Mid Bedfordshire of 16,000 and 11,000 jobs respectively. This agreed level of growth replaced the job targets of 11,400 in Bedford Borough and 8,400 for Mid Bedfordshire which were published in the MKSM SRS.

6.2.2   Policy E1 states that the targets are adopted as reference values for monitoring purposes and guidance for regional and local authorities, importantly, the RSS makes clear that jobs growth should be planned to be in broad alignment with housing. The Council considers the RSS target of 11,000 jobs (550 jobs per annum) to be the minimum required to support the economy of Mid Bedfordshire to 2021. The Annual Business Index supplied by the Office of National Statistics shows that higher job growth levels in the district have been achieved. Between 1995 and 2005, some 900 jobs per year were created locally. In addition, the East of England Plan housing target of 14,230 implies that unless a higher level of jobs is planned for, out-commuting from new households created could increase further, or at least continue at current levels. There is a strong case for improving local residents access to jobs, the Core Strategy will therefore plan for a higher level of growth up to 2021 of 14,000 new jobs.

6.2.3   In addition, the Core Strategy is planning for additional homes to be delivered up to 2026 to enable a continuous supply to be maintained for at least 15 years from the date of adoption in accordance with requirements in PPS3. It is therefore reasonable to require the equivalent time period for the provision of jobs to ensure a broad alignment with housing growth. A further 3,000 jobs will bring the total to 17,000 jobs up to 2026 which provides approximately 1 job per house. Sites will be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD to tie in with the future delivery of housing sites during this period.

6.2.4   **Providing New B1-B8 Employment Land**
There is an existing supply of allocated land (56.79 ha as at 31st March 2008) which can be brought forward for development now, largely made up of allocations at Cranfield Technology Park in the north west of the district and Stratton Business Park in the east. The requirement for new employment land will be calculated on the basis that half of total jobs growth will be in B1-B8 employment sectors. This means that in total around 8,500 new B1-B8 jobs will be planned for up to 2026.

6.2.5   To translate the requirement for new jobs to employment land the Council has used a methodology which makes a number of assumptions about employment densities and plot ratios. These are explained in detail in the Council's ELR. Employment land requirement calculations are set out in Table 7 of the ELR which is up to date at May 2008. Calculations take into account jobs already created up to 2005 and a lower job creation rate up to 2010 recognising the potential slow down in the economy. These jobs are therefore deducted from the overall requirement up to 2010 when the site allocations DPD is to be adopted. The table shows that the level of B1-B8

land required for the remainder of the period (2010 to 2026) is about 77ha. This includes a 50% over allocation of land required in line with that recommended by CB Hillier Parker (CB Hillier Parker Bedfordshire and Luton Commercial Property Study 2003) to enable a wider range of sites to be identified in the district providing a choice in terms of size, type and location to ensure a healthy and growing economy.

6.2.6   The Council will of course continue to update its ELR and will thereafter review its employment land needs in line with latest government advice and guidance. Initial review will involve detailed analysis to show where there is a surplus or deficit of land for employment purposes and hence where additional land should be identified post 2010.

6.2.7   In the meantime, the current supply of allocated land together with opportunities for intensification of safeguarded sites and any employment windfalls will help generate jobs until additional sites are allocated through the Site Allocations DPD due to be completed in 2010. The Council is taking a positive approach to job creation by allocating a further 77ha of employment land across the district which will provide a much wider range of sites. As a result it is expected that the needs of new and growing businesses will be met. If there are further proposals for B1-B8 employment on unallocated land within or adjacent to settlements the Council will be supportive, provided it can be demonstrated that no other suitable sites are available.

6.2.8   The Council recognises that by significantly increasing provision of employment land there may be additional pressure for the redevelopment of established employment sites for residential development. This concern together with the strategy to address out commuting means that consideration will be given to the phasing of sites where appropriate through the Sites Allocations DPD in part to reflect the priority order for housing sites. To ensure employment growth is not restricted, job creation, market evidence and availability of sites will be monitored closely through the AMR. This evidence will be used to inform when further sites should be released to ensure a sufficient range, quantity and quality of land is available to cater for all employment sectors.

Policy CS9: Providing Jobs

The Council will plan for a minimum target of 17,000 net additional jobs in the district for the period 2001-2026.

In support of this target, approximately 77 hectares of net additional B1-B8 employment land will be identified for the remainder of the period 2010-2026. Land will be allocated through the Site Allocations DPD which will identify whether phasing is required. The AMR will inform when sites should be released to ensure a sufficient range, quantity and quality of land is available to cater for all employment sectors or, identify where there is a demand that cannot be met by available sites.

6.3   **Non-B1 to B8 Uses**

6.3.1   In order to assess the employment growth prospects in the 'non-B-sectors' (activities such as retail, leisure and public services), the Council commissioned Roger Tym and Partners to undertake a study of potential

growth together with actual forecasts specific to these sectors. The study indicates that around 50% of job growth up to 2021 will be in 'non-B-sectors' This is also backed up by the East of England Employment Land Review Guidance Manual March 2008. The planning process generally allocates land for B1-B8 uses which are office, industrial and warehousing. Non-B uses are much more subject to market demand and tend to grow in line with population growth.

6.3.2   The Roger Tym study concludes that the highest potential for growth in non-B uses locally is in tourism, restaurants and food, car sales, leisure and sporting activities, human health activities and retailing. However, at the present time, Mid Bedfordshire has a very low number of total non-B workplace jobs at 169 per 1000 resident population compared to 236 in the East of England and 246 in Great Britain. This is likely to be because of the largely rural nature of the district with no large towns, where a high proportion of the services 'consumed' by local residents are provided in larger towns outside the district. While Non-B jobs are more difficult to plan for, there are a number of approaches the Council can take to encourage such jobs. The Core Strategy's positive framework towards providing non-B jobs is set out below.

6.3.3
- A positive stance towards additional retail provision across the district, particularly in town centres (Policy CS12);
- A positive stance towards consolidation and development of the evening economy in town centres (Policy CS12);
- Positive planning for new education and health facilities, including securing developer contributions (Policy CS3);
- Increased flexibility in the use of Key Employment Sites (CS10);
- Support for expansion at major facilities such as Cranfield University, Shuttleworth College and Millbrook Proving Ground (Policy CS10);
- A positive stance towards proposals for new tourist facilities which builds on existing attractions and those coming into the area (Center Parcs fifth UK village and the NIRAH aquatic conservation and visitor centre) (Policy CS11).

6.3.4   In addition to this positive policy framework, the Council will take a very proactive role in helping to bring to fruition developments which deliver new jobs. This will include for example taking a leading role in the delivery of master planning and development within Flitwick and Biggleswade town centres where the Council has already secured significant growth area funding from Central Government.

6.4   **CS10: Location of Employment Sites**

6.4.1   The district has around 166 sites in B1-B8 employment use above 0.25ha. These provide a range of type, quality and locations that are well suited to the characteristics of the district and offer accommodation to a wide variety of occupiers. This range includes a small number of purpose built sites such as the Proving Ground at Millbrook and the Insys Site at Reddings Wood, Ampthill providing for well established local employers. Cranfield Technology Park is also a key strategic site locally and sub regionally and is referred to in Policy E4 of the EEP as being part of a regionally significant cluster of industries specialising in research into life sciences. The adopted Local Plan 2005 identified a number of 'Key Employment Sites' (listed in policy EMP1 and shown on the Proposals Map) which were to be safeguarded for future

employment use. Employment uses on those sites will continue to be safeguarded pending review by the Site Allocations DPD, subject to the provisions of policy CS10 of this DPD.

6.4.2　In terms of the type and scale of premises available in the district, the ELR suggests that there is a relatively good supply of medium to large sized B2 units on the eastern side of the district. The study suggests there is also strong demand from distribution companies, although there are already a number of distribution and storage premises there is an opportunity to make some additional provision for B8 employment. The Council will direct this type of development to locations close to the strategic road network which could also mean restricting this type of use in some locations to ensure a mix of employment uses.

6.4.3　The Property Market Review undertaken as part of the SQW Employment Sites Study (August 2007), found in its 'property market review', that there is demand for industrial land and floorspace in Ampthill and Flitwick. It also suggested there is strong demand for large scale warehousing and distribution uses near the M1 and for industrial units up to 10,000 sqft and large distribution units close to the A1. In addition, the review found that a quality business park close to the A1 could be successful. Demand generally exists for freehold space, as opposed to leasehold.

6.4.4　The Roger Tym Employment Forecasts for B Use Classes Technical Note (December 2007) suggests that highest growth in the district will be in office employment especially in the business service sector. It also suggests there will be a slight decline in industrial and manufacturing sectors but an increase in wholesale and other warehousing sectors.

6.4.5　Over the past 10 years there has been considerable pressure for local employment sites to be redeveloped for housing. Many local employment sites have been lost in this time, including some at appeal and whilst the redevelopment of some older 'nuisance sites' has benefitted some localities, most sites are appropriate for other types of local employment and therefore their retention is important to ensure there isn't a critical net loss in employment land in the district. The Council has therefore undertaken a rigorous assessment of its existing employment sites to judge which are likely to remain fit for employment use in the longer term. The assessment shows that the majority of sites are well suited to employment use and should continue to be safeguarded from change to other uses. The study has also revealed a number of other sites that should be safeguarded because they are potentially well suited to a wider range of employment purposes.

6.4.6　The assessment also identifies several employment sites in need of improvement which are showing signs of under occupation even though they are well located. The Council will look to encourage and support the regeneration of such sites so that they are retained in employment use thus avoiding the need to allocate greenfield sites in less sustainable locations. To improve viability there will be a more flexible approach to redevelopment for employment purposes by allowing for some non-B1 to B8 uses that provide for additional job creation. The Council will also positively consider the expansion of employment sites in appropriate circumstances where larger scale redevelopment would help their revitalisation or would turn around their underperformance.

6.4.7   Finally the ELR assessment identified a small number of sites which are clearly identified as not fit for purpose. Where these sites are in sustainable locations, the Council will promote mixed use schemes to help provide a balance of homes and jobs. However, some sites identified as not fit for purpose may still be occupied by existing users on part of the site. Where existing users would be displaced by redevelopment alternative employment land would need to be available in the locality to allow existing users to relocate first.

6.4.8   In terms of locating new employment land, clearly it is important to try and provide a better balance where job levels may currently be low or where further housing growth is being planned. There are some settlements where the 'jobs to working population ratio' is relatively good such as Ampthill, Biggleswade and Sandy. However, other towns such as Flitwick, Stotfold and Arlesey that have had recent housing development but very little employment growth, have a very poor 'jobs to working population ratio'. High out-commuting figures also exist at these settlements, although both Flitwick and Arlesey have mainline rail stations which will influence the level of commuting.

6.4.9   Having assessed the locational requirements for employment development and mindful of the objective of reducing out-commuting, the Core Strategy will direct most new employment growth to the settlements which will receive a higher level of housing growth outlined earlier in the area profiles. The Council will also consider small scale allocations in villages which would support the rural economy and/or provide opportunities for people to work closer to home. Where feasible, mixed use developments will be encouraged but a range of additional high quality sites will be needed to provide choice and flexibility to attract potential employers. In most cases land will be allocated to allow for the full range of B1-B8 uses to allow market flexibility in line with emerging guidance in PPS4. However, the Council also recognises the need to promote efficient use of land and high quality jobs which will mean restricting the type of use in some locations. The level of employment provision which will broadly be allocated at various locations is outlined below and set out in further detail in the development strategy.

Table 5: Employment Completions, Commitments and New Allocations (2001-2026) by Main Settlement

	Completions since 2002	Remaining Commitments	Sub Total	New Allocations indicative range
Biggleswade	0.964	18.69	19.654	10-15
Sandy	4.045	3.56	7.515	5-10
Ampthill/ Flitwick	0.741	1.06	1.8	8-15
Northern Marston Vale	6.63	16.84*	23.47*	10-20
Arlesey/Stotfold/Fairfield	3.74	1.3	5.04	10-15
Cranfield	1.373	23.6	24.973	5-10
Potton	0	0.16	0.16	1-2
Shefford	Minus 1.273	Minus 0.37	Minus 1.274	2-4
Silsoe	0.28	0	0.28	1-2
Total				Approx 77ha

*excludes provision of 16ha as part of Wixams new settlement. This employment provision is outside the district in Bedford Borough and will therefore not contribute towards the employment targets for Mid Bedfordshire. Nevertheless it is an important element in the overall provision of employment land in the Northern Marston Vale.

Policy CS10: Location of Employment Sites

The Council will safeguard for future employment use the Key Employment Sites pending review by the Site Allocations DPD.

Where sites are identified as 'not fit for purpose' in the ELR but are in sustainable locations, the Council will support mixed use schemes to help improve the balance of homes and jobs locally. Developments proposing small flexible units will be encouraged. However, where these sites are still occupied in part by existing users who would be displaced by redevelopment, alternative employment land will need to be available in the locality to allow them to relocate prior to redevelopment

There will be a flexible approach to safeguarded sites which have been underperforming. The Council will support the employment generating redevelopment of these sites allowing for appropriate non B1 to B8 uses that provide for additional job creation. More efficient use and redevelopment of these sites for employment will be supported and encouraged.

Sites will be allocated in sustainable locations close to major transport routes that will include a mix of type and scale of premises, allowing for employment uses to fill any acknowledged gaps in the employment market or to meet demand for a particular use.
Support will be given to the growth/intensification of employment uses at Cranfield University and Technology Park, Shuttleworth College and Millbrook Proving Ground. The growth of these sites will be subject to Development Management Policy DM11.

The broad level of employment provision to be allocated at the main settlements and growth areas is outlined below

	New Allocations indicative range (hectares)
Biggleswade	10-15
Sandy	5-10
Ampthill/ Flitwick	8-15
Northern Marston Vale	10-20
Arlesey/Stotfold/Fairfield	10-15
Cranfield	5-10
Potton	1-2
Shefford	2-4
Silsoe	1-2

The Council will also make small scale allocations in villages which would support the rural economy and/or provide opportunities for people to work closer to home.

6.5   **CS11: Rural Economy and Tourism**

6.5.1 **Rural Economy**
The rural economy is an important part of the economy in Mid Bedfordshire and the East of England. The ELR survey found 39% of the 166 employment sites which exist in the district to have been converted from a non B1-B8 use, often agricultural buildings. This indicates that farm diversification has provided a significant contribution to the Mid Bedfordshire economy.

6.5.2 The agricultural jobs sector has undergone huge changes over the last few decades and there continues to be a steady decline in agricultural jobs locally. Further growth in new types of rural employment is therefore necessary to help maintain the rural economy. Continued rural diversification will help to give people greater access to a range of jobs closer to home. It will also contribute to reducing out-commuting and help increase consumer expenditure in local facilities. The Council will also consider allocating small employment sites in villages where appropriate and there seems to be demand locally.

6.5.3 The Council will continue to support the reuse of redundant buildings and sites in the countryside outside settlement envelopes, for employment purposes. The Council has also approved carefully designed conversions of agricultural buildings to residential use. However, support will continue to be given to the conversion of agricultural buildings to employment uses in the first instance, whilst acknowledging that residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations and for some types of building.

6.5.4 Once a significant part of the rural economy in Mid Bedfordshire, market gardening has also been in steady decline resulting in a number of redundant horticultural nursery sites often comprising of glasshouses that have remained vacant for long periods of time. Past policy has often prevented their redevelopment from agricultural uses but they have the potential to provide rural employment opportunities provided that proposals are appropriate in scale, design and use to their rural location.

6.5.5 **Tourism**
Although the district is not currently a main destination for tourism it does have a number of visitor attractions which are nationally or regionally recognised. There has also been recent approval for two further large scale visitor attractions NIRAH and Center Parcs, likely to be built in the near future. The growing interest in Bedfordshire for tourism suggests that as one or both of these large-scale developments take place they could act as a catalyst for further development creating a wider tourist destination which has the potential to further increase the number of jobs which could be generated in this sector. A positive policy will help to ensure this opportunity can be taken further, although considerations such as the impact on landscape and the rural road network will continue to be taken into account.

6.5.6 There is already a reasonable variety of tourist accommodation in the district ranging from country house hotels to budget hotels and self catering accommodation. The Tourism Growth Strategy for Bedfordshire and Luton (2007-2012) however, identifies the potential for significant growth in this sector. In particular it promotes the growth of the family and short breaks market and the attractions of the County's 'green offering' including countryside sites and rivers. The need to increase self-catering accommodation and the provision of low-cost accommodation has also been identified. Provision could take the form of lodges, campsites and rural pubs

and the Council is willing to be flexible where these can support local services and provide opportunities for rural diversification. There is also potential for more budget hotels in the district because of the main transport links as well as at the higher end of the market, such as the conversion of large character properties.

Policy CS11: Rural Economy and Tourism

The Council will seek to support the rural economy and promote tourism by:

- Safeguarding rural employment sites in the district unless it can clearly be demonstrated that they are unfit for purpose and unable to be redeveloped for employment use.
- Supporting diversification of the rural economy and the conversion of redundant properties to commercial, industrial, tourism and recreational uses in the first instance.
- Providing for new small-scale employment allocations in the rural area where appropriate and there is demand locally.
- Supporting diversification of redundant horticultural or farm buildings in settlements or in the countryside for employment purposes.
- Supporting proposals for tourist or leisure developments in settlements or in the countryside including new tourist accommodation which provides opportunities for rural diversification and are well located to support local services, businesses and other tourist attractions.

6.6   CS12: Town Centres and Retailing

6.6.1   PPS6: Planning for Town Centres seeks to promote the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for their growth and development. This is to be achieved by promoting and enhancing existing centres, focusing new retailing and services there and encouraging a wide range of services in an attractive environment, accessible to all.

6.6.2   PPS6 also advocates development in town centres by use of the sequential approach:

- Finding locations which are within the main centres
- Followed by extensions to the centres or edge of centre locations
- Then out of centre sites well served by a choice of means of transport

6.6.3   The Council's objectives for the town centres of Mid Bedfordshire is:

- To strengthen the position, vitality and viability of existing and planned centres by locating new retail, cultural and service development in accordance with a sequential approach;
- To meet the forecast capacity for new convenience and comparison retailing and direct further development to Major Service Centres, particularly Flitwick and Biggleswade;
- To create new local shopping facilities in Stotfold and Arlesey
- Ensure the scale of development is consistent with the role and function of centres and does not harm the vitality and viability of other centres;
- To protect town centre-related uses within town centre boundaries and avoid changes of use that would damage the vitality and viability of town centres;
- To maximise the accessibility of retail facilities for all, including those without a car, by concentrating new development in existing centres which are accessible by a range of means of transport; and
- To ensure that residential areas, including new housing developments, have good access to town centres and local shopping facilities.

6.6.4   To help inform preparation of the LDF, the Council has produced a Town Centres and Retailing Technical Report in two stages, which explores the main issues in the district and helps to set an appropriate strategy for retailing and services in the district.

6.6.5   The Stage 1 Technical Report identifies the challenge to retain the vitality and viability of the district's market towns in the face of national trends that see 'polarisation' by retailers towards larger schemes in larger centres. The study indicates that this polarisation will increase pressure on underperforming stores and smaller shopping centres and may lead to a rise in town centre vacancies due to relocation or closure. Mid Bedfordshire's largest centres of Biggleswade, Sandy, Flitwick and Ampthill do not qualify as 'larger centres' and are likely to prove vulnerable in these circumstances. In addition, the district suffers from the competitive draw of nearby higher-order shopping and service centres such as Milton Keynes, north Hertfordshire (Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock and Stevenage) and Bedford – a process known as leakage. Nevertheless, the district's centres are important in meeting local convenience (food) shopping and lower order comparison (non-food) shopping needs and in providing local residents with a range of everyday services.

6.6.6   **Convenience Goods (food and drink shopping)**
The Stage 2 Technical Report carried out an in depth analysis across the district using interviews with local residents. The results show that for convenience shopping stores in the district account for 55% of trade (i.e. a leakage rate of 45%). For top-up shopping the district outlets account for 73.3% of trade. The most important destinations outside the district are in north Hertfordshire (Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock and Stevenage), as well as Bedford and Milton Keynes.

6.6.7   Nationally, supermarkets are seeking to improve their floorspace, and there has been a push for extensions to existing stores. However, the Stage 2

report suggests that within Mid Bedfordshire, the demand for new convenience floorspace is presently limited.

6.6.8   The Stage 2 Technical Report also shows that convenience outlets in Ampthill, Biggleswade and Sandy are currently undertrading and therefore there appears to be limited scope for convenience growth. The Tesco store in Flitwick is overtrading, which means there is scope for more growth. The new town centre redevelopment proposals presently being planned are aiming to meet this demand by significantly increasing convenience retailing as part of the scheme.

6.6.9   **Comparison Goods (non-food shopping)**
The Stage 2 Technical Report suggests that nationally there will be significant growth in comparison goods, with an anticipated 10% growth as compared to 2005. They anticipate retailers will focus on 'prime' or 'super-prime' pitches (high profile locations with the highest footfall) and therefore the towns in Mid Bedfordshire are unlikely to see interest from this potential expansion.

6.6.10   The district currently has a limited choice of comparison goods retail outlets. Most existing comparison goods retailers are within the town centres of the four main towns, Biggleswade in particular. Biggleswade also has a separate area for comparison goods shopping at an out-of-centre retail park off London Road. Planning permission for extra retail units in this area with a total floorspace of 4,180 metres was granted in April 2007 and is now under construction.

6.6.11   The Stage 2 study shows that for comparison goods (clothes and footwear) stores within the district account for only 8.9% of trade (i.e. a considerable leakage rate of 91.1%). The most important destinations outside the district are Bedford and Milton Keynes.

6.6.12   The results also show that for bulky comparison goods (electrical/furniture and carpets/DIY and hardware) stores within the district account for only 19.3% of trade (i.e. a leakage rate of 83.7%)/ The most important destinations outside the district are Bedford and Milton Keynes, and to a lesser extent Stevenage.

6.6.13   With regard to likely demand for additional comparison goods floorspace, the Stage 2 study reveals that if existing floorspace is improved in terms of sales density, there is little scope for increasing comparison floorspace locally.

6.6.14   **Town Centres**
The four main town centres of Ampthill, Biggleswade, Flitwick and Sandy are currently attractive and relatively vibrant centres. Whilst the broad levels of leakage in trade referred to in the Stage 2 study are unlikely to change, it is important to maintain the retail importance of the town centres to provide for local residents, in particular those who may not have access to a car.

6.6.15   PPS6 requires local authorities to establish a hierarchy of centres in order to guide new retail and service development. The Major Service Centres set out in the Settlement Hierarchy, including Wixams when construction is complete, will be treated as "town centres" and Minor Service Centres as "district centres" in terms of Annex A of PPS6. Retail development will

primarily be directed to the Major Service Centres. Additional retail provision to meet the needs of Minor Service Centres and the Villages will also be supported.

6.6.16   PPS6 also indicates that local planning authorities should identify the extent of these centres and the primary shopping areas, having regard to the definitions set out in the guidance. The hierarchy of centres is justified by evidence from the Stage 2 study. These areas are shown on the Proposals Map. The Stage 2 study has recommended that because the level of non-retail town centre uses is limited a Town Centre boundary could also function as a Primary Shopping Area for the purposes of assessing planning applications.

6.6.17   The Stage 2 study revealed little scope for growth in commercial leisure facilities in any of the district's centres. The study did identify some continuing demand for small-scale high quality office space within the main town centres throughout the plan period. This demand is likely to be met in part through the re-use or refurbishment of existing town centre buildings but there is also likely to be some limited commercial interest in providing new office floorspace as part of mixed-use development schemes.

6.6.18   The Council will identify sites where development offers opportunity to enhance the vitality and viability of town centres through the Site Allocations DPD. These sites will address the potential for mixed used development, appropriate to a town centre e.g. leisure, retail, offices, residential and community purposes.

Policy CS12: Town Centres and Retailing

The Council will support and encourage new retail and service provision that provides for more sustainable communities.

- In Major Service Centres, town centre boundaries will be established, within which new retail and service provision should be focused. Development will be assessed against the sequential approach in PPS6.
- In Minor Service Centres, additional retail provision that meets the needs of that centre and that consolidates and enhances existing retail provision will be supported. Specific opportunities will be identified at Stotfold and Arlesey to create new local shopping facilities.
- In Villages, important retail and other community facilities will be retained and additional local provision supported.

7: Climate Change

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Section 39 of the Planning Act 2004 requires LDDs to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. PPS1 uses the definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 to define sustainable development: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

7.1.2 PPS1 identifies four areas for immediate priority action, these are climate change and energy; sustainable consumption and production; natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; and sustainable communities. The approach taken in the whole of the Local Development Framework is to ensure that each of these areas has been developed into policies taking into account the relevant issues and characteristics of the district.

7.1.3 Biodiversity is not covered specifically in this chapter, as the relationship with climate change is recognised in section 8.6 of the Core Strategy.

7.2 CS13: Climate Change

7.2.1 Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Global scientific opinion is that human activity is changing the world's climate. Recent scientific and Government reports, as well as events, have demonstrated that we are likely to experience more frequent droughts and flooding which are more severe in their impact. The UK Government is actively seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and has set targets in the Energy White Paper 2003 to reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by 60% below current levels by 2050. More recently the Draft Climate Change Bill (March 2007) is looking to set a statutory goal of a 26-32% reduction in CO_2 on 1990 levels by 2020 and a long-term target of 60% by 2050. These targets already exist on a non-statutory basis. The PPS on Climate Change (December 2007, Supplement to PPS1) sets out how spatial planning can be used as one of many elements to tackle climate change.

7.2.2 The Council has undertaken studies to identify its own CO_2 emissions and is looking at ways in which it can reduce them. (Carbon Management Plan 2007 – 2010). The key areas relate to transport usage in terms of efficiency and reduction in total miles travelled and reduction in energy use serving the Council's buildings. Since estimated 1990 levels, the Council's own carbon emissions have reduced by 25% and further reductions can be made. In addition to reducing its own CO_2 emissions, the Council wishes to make progress towards a reduction in CO_2 emissions in the district through the application of LDF policy, Building Regulations and the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy.

7.2.3   The East of England Plan requires new development to be located and designed to optimise its carbon performance. Government policy including the Code for Sustainable Homes and Building Regulations provide the starting-point for more sustainable building. The Council expects these policies to be taken forward through the Development Management Policies and through its Site Allocations DPD.

7.2.4   **Water supply**
         The East of England is the driest region in the UK. Effective rainfall, i.e. water that enters rivers and recharges aquifers, is only 150mm per year on average, less than a third of the average for England and Wales. In drought conditions it can be as low as 50mm a year.

7.2.5   Drinking water in Bedfordshire comes from various sources including boreholes in the chalk, oolitic limestone and Lower Greensand aquifers. Some also comes from the River Great Ouse and from Grafham Water in Cambridgeshire. As set out in the Regional Plan, there is a need to encourage sensible water use and water conservation as part of sustainable development in the Eastern Region.

7.2.6   Climate change could have further fundamental effects on water supply and therefore in line with EC Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and other guidance this policy promotes the sustainable use of water resources.

7.2.7   **Flooding and drainage**
         Flood risk is an important issue in spatial planning and as the effects of climate change are being realised, the need to take account of flood risk is integral for sustainable development. The Key Diagram indicates broad areas of flood risk, shown in more detail on the Proposals Map.

7.2.8   The suitability of any new land for development needs to be considered in accordance with the sequential approach towards flood risk management advocated in Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25). This has been a key factor in determining the broad locations for future development within the district. It will also be relevant when decisions are made about the allocations of individual sites within the Site Allocations DPD and determining planning applications for development. Development is only considered acceptable in high risk areas where it is demonstrated that there are no available sites in the lower risk areas and where the benefits of the new development are shown to outweigh the risk of flooding.

7.2.9   In all cases, the Council will seek to ensure that development is located, designed and laid out to ensure that the risk of damage from flooding is minimised the risk of flooding elsewhere does not increase and that residual risks are safely managed.

7.2.10   A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was commissioned to provide a robust assessment of the extent and nature of flooding and its implications for planning future development. The SFRA evaluates the current (2007) flood risk situation and provides an indication for of the future flood risk up to 2115, incorporating the impacts of climate change in line with PPS25. The data is based principally based upon Flood Zone Maps published by the Environment Agency.

7.2.11   The SFRA identifies a number of opportunities for strategic flood mitigation

improvements to flood storage facilities within the district at locations around Arlesey, Marston Moretaine, Shefford and Stotfold. Further details are provided by the area profiles set out in the Spatial Strategy. The Council will seek the implementation of these improvements by way of developer contributions and allocate land accordingly to provide such facilities.

7.2.12 **Strategy for climate change**

The Council will take measures to:

- Implement a sustainable spatial development strategy which aims to locate development to reduce the need to travel and build cohesive communities with convenient access to services and community infrastructure;
- Enable an increase in local renewable energy production, both large and small scale;
- Ensure sustainable design and construction of new buildings including high standards of energy and water efficiency;
- Increase awareness of climate change issues including promoting reduced car use, energy efficiency, waste minimisation and recycling;
- Promote enhancement of the environment and carbon offsetting through the planting of trees and other measures.

7.2.13 The Development Management Policies provide further detail on the climate change measures set out in Policy CS13. These measures will be carried forward through the Development Management Policies, mandatory targets and other LDF documents, including the Site Allocations DPD, District Wide Design Guide SPD and other local strategies. The Local Delivery Strategy and Planning Obligations Strategy will provide a delivery mechanism.

Policy CS13: Climate Change

The Council working with other stakeholders will secure new development including new housing, new commercial development (including substantial extensions to existing commercial buildings) and new community and leisure facilities, which incorporate measures to take account of climate change.

Individual targets for new allocated developments may be set through the Site Allocations DPD where these can be justified by local circumstances taking account of economic viability.

The range of measures to be considered will include:

- The use of renewable energy options to provide energy requirements of new development including on-site and near-site low-carbon technologies.
- The use of sustainable design and construction and high efficiency standards for all developments and refurbishments with residential schemes referring to the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' and all non residential schemes referring to BREEAM ratings (or its successor);
- Contributions to waste minimisation, reuse and recycling. Adequate facilities to store materials for recycling must be part of the design of new housing;
- Provision for walking and cycling, access to public transport and the production of green travel plans
- Tree planting and other carbon-offsetting measures to help mitigate the impact of carbon emissions produced by the production of building materials, the construction process and use of new development;
- Provision for conserving water resources and recycling water as well as limiting any adverse effects on water quality;
- Minimising the risk of flooding and management of residual risks; and
- Provision of sustainable water supply and drainage infrastructure.

The Council will consider positively energy generating proposals with low carbon impact.

8: Natural and Built Environment

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The district covers some 50,000 hectares and has a variety of distinctive landscapes, settlements, vernacular buildings and local construction materials. It is a part of Bedfordshire well known for its attractive villages, countryside, and a number of important heritage and wildlife assets.

8.1.2 The natural and built environment of the district will come under greater pressure in the future from the increase in people which will live in its expanding towns and communities. Statistics show that the countryside of Mid Bedfordshire attracts people from the urban centres of Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes. The LDF needs to ensure that the natural and built environment of Mid Bedfordshire is safeguarded and enhanced through good quality design and by creating places of character that are sensitive to their context and setting.

8.1.3 Countryside needs to be protected from inappropriate development. Environmental enhancement can make the countryside more vibrant, attractive and accessible. The most notable natural physical features of the district are the Greensand Ridge and the Chiltern Hills in the south which is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

8.2 CS14: High Quality Development

8.2.1 The Council is committed to delivering high quality new development throughout the district. National objectives for design are set by PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development that outlines the common characteristics of high quality and inclusive design. PPS3: Housing and PPS12: Local Development Frameworks also require that local policies must address design as a crucial element of the delivery of sustainable development. Raising the design quality of new buildings, developments and the public realm of streets, parks and open spaces is essential to the future quality of life for residents. It is particularly important that local character is reinforced by locally distinctive new development.

8.2.2 The Council is committed to raising the design quality of new development in all locations and actively encourages the preparation of design codes to produce attractive, well-planned environments quickly and efficiently. Use of codes and other detailed design tools can help to deliver design quality, establish a vision, and bring together professional resources, processes, stakeholders and aspirations to deliver it.

8.2.3 Recently published research by the Department for Communities and Local Government on the use of design codes in practice, highlights the Council's role at Fairfield Park where on the site of a Grade I listed former hospital building, design codes were successfully employed to deliver a highly successful and award-winning residential development.

8.2.4   Building on its current approach, detailed policies relating to the design of new buildings and spaces, and conservation and enhancement of the natural environment will be set out in the Development Management Policies DPD. Supplementary Planning Documents will also be prepared to give further guidance to developers.

Policy CS14: High Quality Development

The Council will require development to be of the highest quality by:

- Respecting local context, the varied character and the local distinctiveness of Mid Bedfordshire's places, spaces and buildings in design and employs a range of urban design tools including urban design frameworks, design briefs and design codes to fulfil this undertaking;
- Focusing on the quality of buildings individually and collectively to create an attractive, accessible, mixed use public realm;
- Ensuring it is accessible to all; and
- Reducing the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and enhancing community safety

---

8.3   CS15: Heritage

8.3.1   The Council is committed to protecting the historic assets that the district already has and recognises the need to ensure new development respects their special interest and value. The historic environment is central to the identity of the district. Reconciling its protection with the economic and social needs and aspirations of the local community is essential for the benefit of present and future generations.

8.3.2   It is an objective of Government policy to protect and enhance all aspects of the historic environment. National advice on the identification and protection of the historic environment is set out in PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment and PPG16: Archaeology and Planning. Guidance with regard to development control decisions is set out in this PPG and the Council will take full account of those requirements in the consideration of planning applications and allocations for development.

8.3.3   When the Heritage Protection Bill becomes law, it will require local authorities to maintain a historic environment record which contains details of any known archaeological, historic building and historic landscape resources in the local authority area. In addition, local authorities will need to maintain a list of registrable structures or open green space that the authority considers to be of special local:
- historic interest;
- archaeological interest;
- architectural interest; or
- artistic interest

8.3.4   Understanding the value and significance of a place is essential to inform

decisions about its future. The degree of significance will determine what, if any, protection, including statutory and local designation, is appropriate for heritage sites.

8.3.5   The East of England Plan requires local planning authorities' policies to ensure new development preserves and, where appropriate enhances the region's historic environment including its archaeology, historic buildings, places and landscapes, conservation areas and other regionally significant features and their settings.

8.3.6   The Council takes an active role in promoting the repair and reuse of historic buildings or other listed structures to reduce the number on the 'at risk' register. Occasionally as an exception to policy, in a situation where the public benefit of retaining an 'at risk' feature or building is significant and there is no other means of securing its retention, enabling development will be considered by the Council. Further guidance on enabling development is set out in publications by English Heritage.

8.3.7   A particular feature of the district is the presence of an exceptionally high number of historic parks and gardens. The eleven designated parks and gardens within the district include those of exceptional interest and international importance; namely Woburn Abbey, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Old Warden Park (including Swiss Garden) and Southill Park.

8.3.8   Another important feature of the district is the number of historic market towns and villages and the traditional buildings built from local materials. Mid Bedfordshire has 39 Conservation Areas and over 1400 Listed Buildings and around 60 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Both are a key indicator of local distinctiveness. In addition the district has a significant number of locally important heritage features with historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. Work is also underway on the historic characterisation of Bedfordshire which will help in the evaluation of assets, their contribution to local character and their capacity to absorb change. The Council recognises the need to protect and enhance of all of these important features, which make up an essential component of the character of the area.

8.3.9   Whilst individual settlements have their own character, there are four broad settlement types in the district: market place towns; linear settlements; villages, and estate villages. With the exception of estate villages, the other settlement types are mainly medieval in origin and display classic characteristics of layout and form. The district has a surprising number of estate villages, mostly linked to large historic parklands. The groups of estate cottages provide a rich selection of neo-vernacular cottages which have been the model for the 'suburban dream' throughout the 20th Century.

8.3.10   Other local buildings include: vernacular cottages, farm houses, town houses, artisan houses, barns, onion sheds, model farms, and watermills. These buildings usually have few architectural pretensions and are simple in form and detailing. Their building materials were generally sourced from the locality and this is reflected in the pattern of distribution of brick colour across the district – in the east of the district a gault brick predominates, whereas in the west of the district a red/orange brick is found

8.3.11   The Council is required to survey its area from time to time to determine whether to designate Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or

historic interest). Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the overall quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of buildings and open spaces. Designation also takes into account the need to protect trees, hedges, walls, railings and other characteristic features. Once designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.3.12 Further detailed guidance on conservation and heritage issues will be prepared as SPD, 'Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development'.

Policy CS15: Heritage

The Council will:

- Protect, conserve and enhance the district's heritage including its Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and archaeology and their setting.
- Conserve and where appropriate enhance the quality and integrity of the local built and natural environment, including historic structures or open green spaces considered to be of special local interest.
- Designate and keep under review Conservation Areas in order to protect or enhance their special architectural or historic interest. This will include the implementation of an on-going programme of Conservation Area Character Appraisals to include a review of their special interest and boundaries.
- Monitor and survey the condition of Listed Buildings and periodically review and update a Register of Buildings at Risk, providing appropriate grant assistance to encourage their essential sympathetic repair.

8.4 **CS16: Landscape and Woodland**

8.4.1 The countryside outside settlements is a highly valued resource for agriculture, recreation, landscape and wildlife. The Council will protect the countryside for its own sake safeguarding it from the increasing pressures of development. It will also work with partners to enhance its recreational, landscape and wildlife value.

8.4.2 The Chilterns AONB forms a prominent chalk scarp located along parts of the southern boundary of the district. The Chilterns Conservation Board which came into force as an organisation by Parliamentary Order in 2004, produces a management plan which provides a framework within which the local authorities, government bodies and the Board itself operates. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 significantly raised the profile of AONBs, however, as their landscape qualities are equivalent to those for National Parks they should be protected and managed in the same manner. The Council works in partnership with the Board to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape and will continue to protect it from inappropriate development. The extent of the AONB in the district is set out

on the Proposals Map.

8.4.3   All landscapes are valuable and Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the nationally recognised tool used to help protect the essential character of defined types of landscape and enhance landscapes of lesser quality. Its purpose is to ensure that change does not undermine whatever is characteristic or valued about a particular place and that ways of improving the character of a place can be considered. This makes it a useful tool to aid the planning, design and management of landscapes. The Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment provides a comprehensive landscape evidence base to help underpin planning and management decisions in the district. It also addresses the requirements of the landscape policy (ENV2) in the East of England Plan.

8.4.4   The contribution that trees, whether as woodland or individual specimens, and hedgerows make to the landscape is significant. Bedfordshire has relatively low woodland cover compared to the national average. The district has the highest percentage coverage in the County. Although parts of the district, particularly the Greensand Ridge are relatively well-wooded, however, other areas have declined in terms of the number of trees and hedgerows through modern farming practices and the impact of Dutch Elm disease.

8.4.5   The district also contains the major part of the Forest of Marston Vale (FOMV) Community Forest. The Forest of Marston Vale's national designation recognises the need to regenerate the environmentally damaged landscape of the Marston Vale through woodland creation in line with ENV1 and ENV5 of the East of England Plan and Government targets for 30% woodland cover in the Forest area by 2030.

8.4.6   The district also has a wide variety of woodland habitats which provide a wealth of benefits for people, wildlife and importantly, directly contribute to reducing the causes of climate change. The protection and planting of trees, hedgerows and woodland is largely assisted by the Biodiversity Action Plan system. The Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan (BLBAP) was endorsed by the Council in 2002 and is continually updated through the work of 'BedsLife', the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Forum, of which the Council is a partner. Specific actions in the BLBAP will help to achieve an increase in planting. In certain locations, in particular within the FOMV area, new development may contribute to tree planting through landscape schemes associated with the development, or through financial contributions to aid strategic planting in the vicinity.

8.4.7   Contributions either on site or off site may be required for planting associated with new development. Further guidance will be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents.

Policy CS16: Landscape and Woodland

The Council will:

- Protect, conserve and enhance the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Conserve and enhance the varied countryside character and local distinctiveness in accordance with the findings of the Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment;
- Resist development where it will have an adverse effect on important landscape features or highly sensitive landscapes;
- Require development to enhance landscapes of lesser quality in accordance with the Landscape Character Assessment;
- Continue to support the creation of the Forest of Marston Vale recognising the need to regenerate the environmentally damaged landscape through woodland creation to achieve the target of 30% woodland cover in the Forest area by 2030;
- Conserve woodlands including ancient and semi-natural woodland, hedgerows and veteran trees; and
- Promote an increase in tree cover outside of the Forest of Marston Vale, where it would not threaten other valuable habitats.

8.5   **CS17: Green Infrastructure**

8.5.1   Green Infrastructure has been defined within the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Plan as "a strategically planned and managed network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which meets the needs of existing and new communities by providing :
- An essential environmental foundation and support system
- A healthy and diverse environment
- attractive places to live and visit and a good quality of life
- a sustainable future"

8.5.2   Regional Plan policy ENV1 promotes the creation of a hierarchy of green infrastructure (GI) at every spatial scale with the purpose of providing a substantial connected network of green space as an integral part of new sustainable communities. This net gain in the quantity and quality of green infrastructure to meet growth needs can also help contribute, as part of a package of measures, to achieving carbon neutral development.

8.5.3   The Council works in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and local and regional organisations to promote an integrated approach to green infrastructure through the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium. The Consortium has produced the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan at the sub regional level. This document defines a multi functional network of protected sites, nature reserves, greenspaces and green linkages. The land can be both publicly and privately owned and is intended to serve a range of functions to benefit both local communities and the wider population, whilst protecting and enhancing the landscape, the historic environment and biodiversity. The Strategic GI Plan has informed the preparation of a more detailed Mid Bedfordshire GI Plan

which in turn is being used to help inform GI plans at the parish level. Together these plans will form a three tiered GI network identifying the best and most beneficial opportunities for additional sites, linkages and enhancement. At all levels there has been stakeholder involvement including input from local communities.

8.5.4 New development will be expected to aid the delivery and management of GI and will result in an important net gain in the quantity and quality of green infrastructure assets to meet existing and future needs of a growing population. The Strategic GI Plan has identified a network of priority areas which are also shown on the Key Diagram including the Chilterns AONB, the Forest of Marston Vale and the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway. The latter is a canal project managed by The Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Partnership. The preferred route of the canal passes through the district, travelling from Milton Keynes, across the M1 around Junction 13, through the Marston Vale and up to Bedford. The Council strongly supports the proposed scheme and will ensure that the route is not prejudiced by proposed development, whilst recognising that funding for the project remains uncertain.

The remit of the Strategic GI Plan is to integrate the needs of the population and wildlife by identifying green networks. For accessible greenspace, the methodology has been developed based on PPG17 to identify a hierarchy of accessible greenspaces in Bedfordshire from strategic to local. Some of the largest strategic sites lie beyond the boundaries of the district. Nevertheless, within the district are several sites of strategic importance that are considered major assets by residents. These sites are Ampthill Park, Aspley Woods, Marston Vale Country Park, Maulden Wood, Rowney Warren, and Smithcombe Hills. The Council wishes to protect these sites and take opportunities to support their enhancement, mainly through the work of local groups and by requiring contributions from new housing developments if necessary. In addition to these accessible greenspace sites, there are major visitor attractions that draw people from a wide area and are key features of the district. These sites are Moggerhanger House, The Lodge at Sandy, Shuttleworth/Swiss Garden, Wrest Park, and Woburn Abbey and Safari Park.

8.5.5 For accessible greenspace, the methodology has been developed based on PPG17 to identify a hierarchy of accessible greenspaces in Bedfordshire from strategic to local. Some of the largest strategic sites lie beyond the boundaries of the district. Nevertheless, within the district are several sites of strategic importance that are considered major assets by residents. These sites are Ampthill Park, Aspley Woods, Marston Vale Country Park, Maulden Wood, Rowney Warren, and Smithcombe Hills. The Council wishes to protect these sites and take opportunities to support their enhancement, mainly through the work of local groups and by requiring contributions from new housing developments if necessary.

8.5.6 Whilst development in the GI priority areas may be expected it should not have the effect of fragmenting GI assets or building over key GI opportunity sites. The district GI Plan has further defined a number of local areas where projects for the creation of GI should be focussed. Plans produced at the parish level will provide details of projects which local communities can be involved in delivering. The spatial strategy section provides more detail about GI proposals around the main settlements.

8.5.7 The GI Plans will be used to inform the Site Allocations DPD, in the consideration of planning applications and in the production of Supplementary Planning Documents including the Planning Obligation Strategy. The Local Delivery Strategy will identify action required to implement the enhancement of the Green Infrastructure network.

Policy CS17: Green Infrastructure

The Council will:

- Seek a net gain in green infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of assets and provision of new green spaces as set out in the Strategic, Mid Bedfordshire and Parish Green Infrastructure Plans.
- Take forward priority areas for the provision of new green infrastructure in the Forest of Marston Vale (including the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway), the Ivel Valley, the Greensand Ridge, the Flit Valley and the Chilterns.
- Require new development to contribute towards the delivery of new green infrastructure and the management of a linked network of new and enhanced open spaces and corridors.

Development that would fragment or prejudice the green infrastructure network will not be permitted.

8.6 CS18: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

8.6.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when going about their activities. PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and its Companion Guide provide the guidelines for protection of these important assets and require policies to be prepared for their protection and enhancement in the LDF. There are also a number of other acts and directives that protect wildlife and need to be taken into account by developers and the Council when considering new development.

8.6.2 The European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the Habitats Directive) protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance (Natura 2000 sites). It requires an Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be undertaken on proposed plans or projects which are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites either individually, or in combination with other plans and projects. This requirement is transposed into UK law through the Habitats Regulations, and applies to all land use plans in the Local Development Framework. The requirement for AA is first determined by an initial 'screening' stage of designated Natura 200 sites in or near the area of the plan, to determine if the plan will have a potential negative effect. Whilst there are no Natura 2000 sites within Mid Bedfordshire, there are 5 European sites outside of the district boundary but within the potential influence of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD. Consultants

Enfusion were commissioned to undertake a 'screening' to consider if there is likely to be adverse effects. This has found that that the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies would have no adverse effects on Natura sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans. Further detail is provided in the Sustainability Appraisal report and Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment report available separately.

8.6.3   The district contains a variety of wildlife and habitats integral to its character. These are fundamentally important to local biodiversity but also make an important contribution to quality of life for local residents. Partnerships already exist to support the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan and this will be further supported by new emphasis on green infrastructure and habitat creation. Within the district some areas are designated as being of particular importance for biodiversity or geology/geomorphology. They include a number of nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest such as Flitwick Moor, National Nature Reserves and more local sites termed County Wildlife Sites (CWS) and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGGS). CWS and RIGGS are identified on the Proposal Map and monitored by the Bedfordshire and Luton County Wildlife Sites Panel. There are no internationally designated sites in the district.

8.6.4   Outside of these sites, there are other local priority habitats and species which are detailed in the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan 2001 which include for example, lowland heathland, lowland acid grassland, lowland calcareous grassland and wetland habitats. In addition, the district is home to a number of species protected by law. Following a review of national biodiversity targets and priorities in 2006, a review of the Bedfordshire and Luton Plan is now underway.

8.6.5   One of the most concerning issues in recent years is the continued fragmentation of habitats many of which have become isolated islands surrounded by agricultural land or development. Extreme weather or drought makes them more vulnerable to the effects of climate change and these islands cannot persist long term. The East of England Plan includes a biodiversity opportunity map for the region which has been translated to a more local level by the Biodiversity Forum for Bedfordshire and Luton in 2006. This information is valuable in identifying the distribution of habitats which if restored, expanded, linked and buffered could form important biodiversity networks. The local map forms an important element of the GI Plan which will help deliver the ecological network. The Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD will give further guidance to support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity when new development is proposed.

Policy CS18: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The Council will:

- Support the designation, management, and protection of biodiversity and geology including national designations (SSSI's), locally important County Wildlife Sites (CWS's) and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS); as well as those local priority habitats and species identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Support the maintenance and enhancement of habitats, identify opportunities to create buffer zones and restore and repair fragmented and isolated habitats to form biodiversity networks.

Development that would fragment or prejudice the biodiversity network will not be permitted.

9: Development Management Policies: Introduction

9.1 Development Management Policies – what are they?

9.1.1 The Development Management Policies are an essential part of the LDF and provide a more detailed policy framework as well as principles and standards against which planning applications will be assessed. The policies will achieve the Local Development Framework objectives and reflect Mid Bedfordshire's unique blend of economic opportunities and rural character. The policies conform to Core Strategy policies and in some cases elaborate on them, to allow their practical application by the Council in its role as Local Planning Authority.

9.1.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) will also be produced as part of the LDF. The two main documents the Council will produce are the Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development and the Planning Obligations Strategy. The first will guide developers through the process of making a planning application by both explaining the context in which new development will be set, and by outlining a series of locally specific urban design principles including those to support sustainable development. A series of more detailed notes dealing with differing types of development will also be appended to this Design Guide. The second SPD will update the Council's current Planning Obligations Strategy (adopted February 2008) which sets out the type and level of contributions levied from new development.

9.1.3 In addition, the Council may provide detailed advice to developers in the form of Technical Guidance Notes which whilst not having the status of SPD's, may be adopted by the Council for Development Management purposes.

9.1.4 The Council has developed its own list of requirements of the supporting material that must be submitted with planning applications. These Local Validation Checklists provide clear guidance and direction to all potential applicants or their agents on what must be submitted with any specific type of planning application. Most planning applications will need to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which sets out any reasoning behind the type, scale and design of the proposed development. It should also include further information to enable the Council to determine the application, such as the provision of renewable energy, parking or playspace. Some advice on the content of this will be set out in the. Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development.

9.2 The Local Plan

9.2.1 The Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (First Review) was adopted in December 2005 and contains nearly 200 policies, many of which provide detailed criteria which is used to determine planning applications. The majority of these policies will be 'saved' and thus will remain in force until the LDF policies replace those in the Local Plan upon adoption of this document.

9.3 **Sustainability Appraisal**

9.3.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) the policies have been subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal. Due to the detailed nature of the issues, and the fact that the Development Management Policies DPD must comply with, and elaborate on, the Core Strategy, the type of appraisal undertaken is different from that undertaken for the Core Strategy. Unlike the Core Strategy there are no Development Management policy options that are considered "strategic options" in terms of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The Sustainability Appraisal therefore consists of a "compatibility matrix" that assesses each of the options put forward and their compatibility with the Sustainability Appraisal framework.

10: Sustainability and Climate Change (Development Management)

10.1   **DM1: Renewable Energy**

10.1.1   More than a quarter of the UK's carbon emissions come from energy used in homes. Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) explains how Development Plans can contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change. The Supplement to PPS1 reinforces the importance of planning for Climate Change and provides guidance on assessing planning applications.

10.1.2   The Government's energy policy is to cut carbon dioxide emissions, with a target to generate 10% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2016. The East of England Plan (ENG2) builds on this target and sets an increasing target for on-shore sources of renewable energy to account for 10% of total electricity consumption in the East of England by 2010 with an increase to 17% by 2020. In addition, the East of England Plan (ENG1) suggests that as an interim target, a minimum 10% of energy consumed in developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1000 m2 of non-residential floorspace, should come from either low-carbon or decentralised renewable sources.

10.1.3   To help meet national and regional targets, the provision of renewable energy sources must be explored both for new and existing development. The 'Merton Rule' is now well established in both policy and practice and confirms the principle of setting targets for the on-site use of renewable energy in order to reduce annual carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from development. However, the Council recognises that on-site solutions may not always be feasible or viable. In such cases, near-site solutions will be considered to allow greater flexibility to the developer and increase the feasibility and viability of renewable energy developments. Medium to large-scale development schemes could play a large part in meeting targets by providing on site renewable energy generation which would, at this scale, be more commercially viable. Smaller scale development could also be required to incorporate on-site renewable energy measures or to contribute to strategic schemes across the district. Individual targets for specific developments may be pursued through the Site Allocations DPD. The Council will prepare SPD and/or technical guidance to help guide developers achieve these objectives.

10.1.4   The Council will also explore the potential for a local strategic project (or projects) that may include for example, a grant scheme for fitting micro-generation technologies to existing properties, support for community schemes or the provision of new renewable energy installations. In addition, the Council may seek to set a local target or lower the threshold as compared to the Regional target. If local justification exists to do this the Council will consider producing a topic specific DPD or an early revision of this DPD.

10.1.5   In line with Government Guidance, any proposals for new renewable energy generating schemes or those with low carbon impact will be considered favourably. Such facilities could include technologies for harnessing photovoltaic energy, solar energy, wind energy, energy crops and biomass. Currently Bedfordshire has landfill gas generators at Arlesey, Brogborough, Stewartby, Elstow and Sundon, but no wind power or biomass energy generation facilities of strategic consequence. It does however have some scope to provide for both. In accordance with PPS22, careful consideration will be given to proposals which could affect the landscape of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In other areas, a scheme that may have an impact upon the landscape will be assessed against the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment. Only in areas of high sensitivity where there is an unacceptable impact on the landscape will this be a material consideration upon which an application may be refused. Noise and traffic resulting from a scheme will also be factors the Council will take into account when determining planning applications.

10.1.6   New commercial and residential development will be expected to meet or exceed the regional target for renewable energy production. Full details of proposals will need to be submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement which accompanies planning applications. It is recognised that some types of development, due to their design, small scale or those to be constructed on land needing remedial work may have viability issues particularly given the package of requirements the Council has set out in the Planning Obligations Strategy. Under these circumstances, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that meeting the targets would render the proposals nonviable or unfeasible.

Policy DM1: Renewable Energy

The Council will consider favourably proposals for renewable energy installations. Proposals should satisfy the following criteria:

- Have good accessibility to the transport network;
- Not be harmful to residential amenity , including noise and visual amenity;
- Be located and designed so as not to compromise the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns AONB;
- In other areas identified through the Landscape Character Assessment as having high sensitivity, be located and designed so as to respect the character of the landscape.

Proposals for all new development of more than 10 dwellings or 1,000 square metres of non-residential buildings should contribute to renewable energy targets by incorporating on-site or near-site renewable or low carbon technology energy generation. Developments should achieve 10% or more of their own energy requirements through such sources, unless it can be demonstrated that this would be impracticable or unviable.

10.2   DM2: Sustainable Construction of New Buildings

10.2.1 Sustainable construction methods can help to reduce the amount of energy needed to build new development, reduce energy use by the occupants of the new buildings and limit the overall environmental impact of housing.

10.2.2 The sustainable construction of buildings in terms of the design, materials and technologies used and installed will be a major factor in reducing CO2 emissions. The Government is putting into place a large number of initiatives to produce new zero-carbon homes by 2016, including the Code for Sustainable Homes. Building Regulations will be progressively altered to require the carbon performance element of the Code to be mandatory Level 3 by 2010, 4 by 2013 and 6 (or zero-carbon) by 2016. For commercial schemes, the Buildings Research Establishment have a recognised set of standards (BREEAM). As well as applying Building Regulations, the Council will require standards to be met as set out in the Development Management Policies and/or the Site Allocations DPD.

10.2.3 Developers will be expected to provide data on emissions to enable the Council to monitor progress towards meeting the interim target for reducing CO_2 emissions of 26 – 32% by 2020 and the long-term target of 60% by 2050 from 1990 levels. Proposals to reduce CO_2 emissions from new development will be required to be submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement supporting a planning application.

10.2.4 The 'Code for Sustainable Homes' which seeks to provide stepped changes in sustainable home building practice measures the sustainability of a home against design categories which are; energy/CO_2 emissions, water, materials, surface water run off, waste, pollution, health and well being, management and ecology. It builds upon the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) EcoHomes standards and will become the single national standard for measuring sustainable homes. The Code uses a rating system from one to six stars, one being above current Building Regulations and six being exemplar development. A three star rating is broadly similar to BRE's EcoHomes 'Very Good' level and the Energy Saving Trust's Best Practice Standard for energy efficiency.

10.2.5 It is mandatory for new dwellings to be rated for carbon emissions and the Government intends to progressively increase the requirements under Building Regulations, making decreasing levels of carbon emissions mandatory. These levels will equate to levels within the Code. In particular, the application of the code will make a major contribution to the Government's target for all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016. To secure Housing Corporation funding, affordable homes are required to achieve Level 3 of the Code.

10.2.6 With regard to the provision of new homes within Conservation Areas, close to Listed Buildings or in locations where the appearance of the dwelling is of importance, sustainable construction will still be expected and can often be achieved through principles of high quality design. Further detail of the Council's requirements in this particular context will be contained within the Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD.

10.2.7   The Council is keen to promote the principle of minimising waste and maximising recycling within all new developments and has developed guidance on managing waste in new developments in partnership with neighbouring authorities. (Waste in New Developments, Bedfordshire County Council). New development will be expected to provide facilities or space to maximise opportunities for recycling. However this matter is covered by the Code so it is not necessary to have a separate policy.

10.2.8   New housing development will be encouraged to meet or exceed Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes from 2010. In line with Government expectations, this level is likely to be raised, either through mandatory targets implemented through mechanisms such as the Building Regulations, or more local targets either at regional or district level. The Council may develop local standards through a Development Plan Document, or require specific levels of the Code for individual sites through the Site Allocations DPD. Developers will be expected to design their schemes to comply with these requirements. Advice to applicants on how to achieve sustainable development will be set out in the Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD

10.2.9   Full details of proposals will need to be submitted as part of the information accompanying planning applications. It is recognised that some types of development, due to their design, small scale or those to be constructed on land needing remedial work may have problems achieving the target. Under these circumstances, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that meeting the target would render the proposals nonviable or unfeasible.

10.2.10   **Sustainable Construction of Non-Residential Buildings**
There is a need for all new buildings to be constructed more sustainably in future. The Government's White Paper 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' states 'Following on from the Code for Sustainable Homes, we believe more progress is now needed in the commercial sector'.

10.2.11   The Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) created by the Building Research Establishment (BRE), is a tried and tested system. It sets the standards for best practice in sustainable development and provides measurable criteria to enable assessment of a building's environmental performance. Since 2003, the Government's own new building projects must achieve an 'Excellent' rating under the BRE (BREEAM) rating and all refurbishment projects 'Very Good'.

10.2.12   Currently BREEAM assessment systems exist for the following types of non-residential buildings; industrial, offices, retail, schools, courts and prisons. There is a bespoke standard for leisure complexes, laboratories, higher and further education facilities and hotels.

10.2.13   It is considered that a Government recognised accreditation scheme such as BREEAM is a sound benchmark against which to ensure the best possible move towards sustainable construction of non-residential buildings. New development and refurbishments will be encouraged to meet or exceed the rating of 'Excellent' or 'Good' respectively. Full details of proposals will need to be submitted as part of the information accompanying planning applications. It is recognised that some types of development, due to their design, small scale or those to be constructed on

land needing remedial work may have problems achieving this target. Under these circumstances, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that meeting the target would render the proposals nonviable or unfeasible.

10.2.14 There are a number of ways to improve the sustainable construction of non-residential buildings. One way of increasing the sustainability credentials for large buildings is by providing a green roof. These are also known as vegetated roof covers or eco-roofs and are essentially comprised of vegetation and soil. They potentially offer a number of advantages: reducing heating bills by adding thermal mass to the roof, reducing the urban heat island effect, reducing storm water run off, purification of water and air, reducing energy consumption and increasing biodiversity habitats for insects and birds. There is considerable scope for non-residential buildings to embrace this idea. Accordingly on major non-residential buildings in this district, this approach could be useful in contributing towards reducing CO_2 emissions, and therefore the Council would wish to support such schemes.

10.2.15 For some commercial developments the Council may specify the rating required through the Site Allocations DPD. The Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD will provide further detail on the design of sustainable commercial buildings.

10.2.16 **Water Efficiency**
Demand for water will increase in tandem with the planned growth in homes and industry, so it is crucial that this resource is used efficiently in order to maintain sufficient supplies. The East of England is traditionally a dry area and therefore the Council recognises a need for new development to be as water efficient as possible. In addition, one of the effects of climate change is increased flood risk caused by surface water run off, so it is important that sustainable ways of managing this potential problem e.g. Sustainable Urban Drainage are implemented, particularly in larger scale developments.

10.2.17 Three basic categories of water are recognised:

- **White water -** water processed for human consumption
- **Grey water -** run off from rooftops, drainage channels or dishwashing, showers or baths, sinks and laundry
- **Black water -** water contaminated with liquid and human waste

White water is provided for all dwellings and most other premises, and using it for example, for flushing toilets or washing cars is a waste of purified water, when alternative grey water sources such as rainwater could be available. Around 85,000 litres of rainwater fall on the average house each year. The installation of water butts for storing rainwater for domestic use has significant potential for water conservation. In addition, water saving initiatives could be implemented, including dual flush toilets, low flow showers, washing machines and dishwashers that are designed to use less water overall and have high environmental ratings. Construction costs are generally lower if water saving devices are built in as part of the development (estimates vary but £3,000 per house is an average estimate) and the technology is fairly straightforward. Retrofitting these systems is more expensive, however, if a comprehensive refurbishment is proposed

for a residential or commercial building there will be scope in most cases to accommodate a grey water recycling system.

10.2.18　In addition, waste water can be processed and reused through grey-water collection systems. In the right conditions, even sewage waste can be processed more sustainably, through the use of reedbed filtration systems or constructed wetlands as an alternative to sewage treatment works. Constructed wetlands are a series of ponds, which filter waste material, using bacterial breakdown to render the waste harmless. Reedbeds comply with, and exceed current accepted minimum design specifications for treating settled domestic waste water, as outlined in the Government's Good Building Guide 42 Part 2.

10.2.19　All new 'major' developments (i.e. 10 or more dwellings/0.5 ha or 1000 square metres for commercial proposals or 1 hectare or more) which will use white water should be aiming towards the conservation of water and as such, developers will be required to submit, as part of their planning application, a statement of how they intend to address this issue. This requirement will also apply to proposals which will have high water consumption. The Code for Sustainable Homes sets out the mandatory minimum standards and corresponding predicted average household water consumption in order to regulate water efficiency in homes. Level 3 requires a maximum daily usage of 105 litres per person per day. There are no mandatory standards in place for non-residential buildings. Water is one of the ten BREEAM standards of sustainability, in which water consumption, re-use and recycling are measured.

10.2.20　One of the effects of climate change is increased flood risk. Whilst flooding is not a widespread issue for Mid Bedfordshire, the Ivel Valley in particular is vulnerable and was subject to flooding in 2003 in Biggleswade, Sandy and Langford. The provision of sustainable ways of managing surface water run off, particularly in larger scale developments is therefore important. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) enable different design solutions, dependent on the circumstances of a particular site, to be used for sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management. The benefit of SUDS is that they reduce peak flows of surface water run-off from new development to watercourses or sewers by replicating natural drainage patterns, avoiding the possibility of new development contributing towards flooding. SUDS can also be used to provide open space and wildlife habitat around areas of vegetation, water channels and storage ponds. Planning Policy Statement Flood Risk (PPS25) is clear on the need for proactive action with regard to drainage and water attenuation.

10.2.21　The underlying ground conditions of a development site will often determine the type of SUDS approach suitable. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Stage 2 Technical Report gives an indication of the ground conditions in the area around the largest settlements in the district. However, the data is a guide and ground investigations will need to be carried out to assess suitability for SUDS.

10.2.22　Advice will be sought from the Environment Agency on the type and size of development which should be providing a SUDS, although at present it is considered appropriate to seek them on all 'major' schemes. The Council believes their incorporation should become normal practice in striving to achieve sustainable development.

10.2.23   SUDS and constructed wetlands when provided as part of new development schemes require adoption and long-term maintenance. This will be achieved through legal agreements to ensure continuing maintenance and the control of run-off to those levels in perpetuity.

Policy DM2: Sustainable Construction of New Buildings

All proposals for new development should contribute towards sustainable building principles. Where the minimum standards are not met, evidence will be required to demonstrate why this would not be feasible or viable.

- Future new housing development will be expected to comply with mandatory standards in relation to the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- Non-residential buildings should comply with building regulations. The Council will encourage and support the design and implementation of features that will increase the environmental credentials of a building including green roofs.
- Major developments and developments which will have high water consumption should incorporate measures to minimise their use of 'white' water.
- The provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems for the disposal of surface water within and leading from development sites will be expected.

10.3   DM3: High Quality Development

10.3.1   Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) sets out the Government's objectives for good design. These objectives include all new buildings. Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) seeks to achieve high quality housing through good design that, fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, contributes to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities. The East of England Plan requires development that is of a high quality and provides buildings based on clear site analysis and urban design principles.

10.3.2   Design is a crucial issue, and encompasses far more than the aesthetics of a building. It also involves the space around buildings, the features required to make the building function successfully, e.g. parking, garden space, and also minimising the role of new buildings in contributing to climate change. The Council has been very proactive in its approach through the preparation of design guides, and on larger housing schemes, the promotion of the use of design codes, such as that used at Fairfield. Design and sustainability criteria relating to any proposal will also be major factors in determining any planning application. More detailed guidance will be given in the Design for Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD.

10.3.3   Commercial proposals can be small or large scale and involve the erection of all sizes and types of structures that are often not subjected to as rigorous an assessment in terms of their design. The range of such development includes industrial, retail, tourist related and telecommunications facilities. While the Core Strategy encourages

commercial schemes as part of its aim to increase employment, the Council is also mindful of the need to promote high quality and sustainably designed buildings.

10.3.4 Design principles for the design and layout of buildings and the public realm will be set out in the Design for Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development that will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document. Other requirements for providing sustainable features and the provision of infrastructure will be set out in other Supplementary Planning Documents including the Planning Obligations Strategy.

Policy DM3: High Quality Development

All proposals for new development, including extensions will:

- be appropriate in scale and design to their setting.
- contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness through design and use of materials.
- use land efficiently.
- use energy efficiently.
- respect the amenity of surrounding properties.
- enhance community safety.
- comply with the current guidance on noise, waste management, vibration, odour, water, light and airborne pollution.
- incorporate appropriate access and linkages, including provision for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- provide adequate areas for parking and servicing.
- provide hard and soft landscaping appropriate in scale and design to the development and its setting.
- incorporate public art in line with the thresholds determined by the Planning Obligations Strategy.
- ensure that public buildings are accessible for all, and comply with current guidance on accessibility to other buildings
- respect and complement the context and setting of all historically sensitive sites particularly those that are designated.

11: Building Communities (Development Management)

11.1   **DM4: Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes**

11.1.1   To define the boundaries between settlements and surrounding countryside the Council has through the Proposals Map, defined Settlement Envelopes for all those communities within the district that are set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. The Settlement Envelope Review which is referenced in Annex G, made recommendations to amend the Settlement Envelope boundaries. In some instances, where there is ambiguity in defining that boundary, the Envelope has been used to reflect the character of the predominant land use, using the most appropriate and clear physical features on the ground.

11.1.2   That land use must be settlement related, for example residential development, domestic gardens, playing fields and community facilities; and not related to agriculture or considered to be part of the countryside. Settlement Envelopes have been defined to enable the clear, unambiguous and consistent application of policies in the control of development. They are not an attempt to define the extent of a particular town or village community. Thus the Envelopes are unrelated to the administrative boundaries of town and parish, which serve this particular function. Settlement Envelopes also serve to prevent coalescence between settlements and in the case of places like Shillington they also protect the separate character and physical identity of the various 'Village Ends'.

11.1.3   Within settlements, proposals for community, education, health, sports and play facilities are specifically encouraged, in particular those identified as being required in any given parish by the Infrastructure Audit Technical Report. This approach accords with one of the key principles in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1) which advocates both patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, and improved access to services particularly in rural areas. In circumstances where there is a clear need for this sort of development, but a lack of suitable sites within the Settlement Envelope, sites adjacent to the Settlement Envelope will be considered favourably.

11.1.4   Given the need to provide both more jobs in total as set out in the Core Strategy and to reduce out commuting, new employment uses within settlements will also be encouraged.

11.1.5   Outside settlements, where the countryside needs to be protected from inappropriate development, only particular types of new development will be permitted in accordance with national guidance (PPS7- Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) and the East of England Plan. This includes residential development on Exceptions Schemes as set out by CS7, or dwellings for the essential needs of those employed in agriculture or forestry, or that which re-uses or replaces an existing dwelling.

11.1.6   Extensions to gardens that are limited in scale will be permitted where there would be no harm to the character of the area. This would be where a

garden extension is of very limited size, or creates a natural rounding off or where the original garden size is very restricted. By restricting permitted development rights, buildings would not be permitted on the extended garden area.

11.1.7   The scale of any type of new development should reflect the scale of the settlement in which it is located. Infill development can be defined as small-scale development utilising a vacant plot which should continue to complement the surrounding pattern of development. Design and sustainability criteria relating to the proposal will also be major factors in determining any planning application. More detailed guidance will be given in the Design for Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD.

Policy DM4: Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

Within Settlement Envelopes, the Council will support schemes for community, education, health, sports and recreation uses or mixed community and other uses where a need for such facilities is identified through the Infrastructure Audit or up to date evidence. Where no land is available within the settlement, a site adjacent to the settlement may be granted planning permission. Such development should make the best use of available land and lead to more sustainable communities.

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

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

Within Settlement Envelopes in Small Villages, development will be limited to infill residential development and small-scale employment uses.

Beyond Settlement Envelopes, limited extensions to gardens will be permitted provided they do not harm the character of the area. They must be suitably landscaped or screened from the surrounding countryside and buildings may not be erected on the extended garden area.

11.2   DM5: Important Open Space within Settlement Envelopes

11.2.1   Open space within a settlement may have a number of important functions; as recreational open space, as amenity open space, as open space to meet highway safety requirements or simply adding to the character of a settlement and making it a pleasant and distinctive place to live.

11.2.2   PPG17 indicates that open space and sports and recreational facilities that are of high quality, or of particular value to a local community, should be recognised and given protection by local authorities through appropriate

policies in plans. The Council's PPG17 Open Space Sports & Recreational Needs Study identifies a range of types of green spaces which will normally be protected from development through being designated an Important Open Space, or protected in more general terms through Core Strategy Policy CS3.

11.2.3   Within the Settlement Envelopes there is a presumption in favour of development. However if every area of land within the settlements were to be developed, then there would be a detrimental impact on their character and appearance, particularly in those settlements that have retained their rural character or historical heart. In order to protect the character of settlements, open spaces which are important both in visual and functional terms, should be protected from development unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Site Allocations DPD will designate Important Open Space for the LDF.

11.2.4   In the particular circumstances where functional open spaces are proposed to be redeveloped to provide an improved replacement facility in close proximity, the visual impact of the loss of an Important Open Space will be a critical factor in considering the proposal.

Policy DM5: Important Open Space within Settlement Envelopes

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

Redevelopment or partial redevelopment of an Important Open Space will only be considered favourably:
- where proposals would result in enhanced provision in functional terms (both the facility itself and its location),
- where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in overall community benefit;
- where there would be no adverse effect on the visual quality of the settlement

---

11.3   DM6: Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries

11.3.1   The principles to be applied to the consideration of planning applications for development within the Green Belt are restrictive and set out in detail in Planning Policy Statement 2: Green Belts (PPG2). The Council will adhere to the principles contained within this document. Settlements that lie within the Green Belt fall into two categories. Some are inset in the Green Belt and are defined by Settlement Envelopes. The remainder are 'washed over' by the designation. Some of the villages washed over by Green Belt have defined 'infill only' boundaries. These include Aspley Guise, Aspley Heath, Harlington (west of the railway line), Ridgmont and Woburn. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt and Infill Boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map.

11.3.2   Within the Infill Boundaries, proposals for infill development will be considered acceptable in principle. Infill development can be defined as small-scale development utilising a vacant plot which should continue to complement the surrounding pattern of development. However, in these particular areas, the quality of the landscape and existing development is very high, which is reflected in part by the designated Conservation Areas that cover much of the built up area. The principles of high quality and locally distinctive design will therefore be applied by the Council in considering proposals for any kind of development within these boundaries. The Design for Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development SPD gives further detail on these matters.

Policy DM6: Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries

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

11.4   DM7: Development in Town Centres

11.4.1   The Council is firmly committed to protecting and strengthening the retail and service-centre roles of the towns and villages within the district in line with Planning Policy Statement 6: Town Centres (PPS6). The Council considers it essential that the scale and nature of new retail development should appropriately reflect and reinforce the established retailing role of the centre within which it is proposed. A sequential approach will be followed to ensure new retail development has a positive impact on the vitality and viability of centres.

11.4.2   Where there is a demonstrable need for new retail development, which cannot be accommodated within a town centre, this should be in a location that is highly accessible by a range of modes of transport and where there is the potential for one journey to serve multiple purposes. Any development that is likely to cause harm to the vitality and viability of any town or village centre, or that would undermine the Council's retail strategy in any way will be strongly resisted. Applicants should have regard to the indicative convenience and comparison floor space requirements of each town centre identified within the Town Centres and Retailing Technical Report Stage 2 and set out in the Core Strategy.

11.4.3   There is also a need to ensure that a balance of uses comes forward in town centres, not only to serve local residents but also to provide important employment opportunities. When sites come forward in town centre locations, residential use is often the market's preferred use since it is the most valuable land use. However this reduces the potential floorspace available for retail and other uses including offices, health centres, leisure uses and other community facilities. The Council will support and encourage such proposals within town centres.

11.4.4   Food and drink facilities within the town and village centres are an

important component of local life which provide convenience and places for socialising, as well as local employment and business opportunities. The best locations for food and drink venues in Use Class A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (drinking establishments) or A5 (hot food takeaway) are within the town and village centres in order to maintain and improve their vitality.

11.4.5   The evening and night-time economy in Mid Bedfordshire is fairly restricted as indicated in the Stage 2 Technical Report and some increase in facilities may provide more local choice for local residents who currently travel outside the district.

11.4.6   Town centre boundaries for Ampthill, Biggleswade, Flitwick and Sandy have been defined on the Proposals Map. In the future, a town centre boundary will be identified at the Wixams, and additional retail development will be directed to the new centre as set out in the policy, subject to an updated assessment of retail need.

Policy DM7: Development in Town Centres

The Council will support and encourage additional convenience and comparison retail provision and other uses such as cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities inside the designated town centre boundaries in Biggleswade, Sandy, Ampthill and Flitwick. All new retail and service development, including extensions to, or the redevelopment of existing edge of centres and out of centres stores over 200 square metres, including mezzanines, will be assessed against the criteria set out in PPS6.

The Council will seek to retain existing retail uses within town centre boundaries. Permission will only be granted for changes of use away from retail (A1) to A2, A3, A4 and A5 at ground floor level if there is no realistic prospect of the property being utilised for retail purposes (evidence of marketing will be required) and the proposed use would enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Proposals for residential development at ground floor level within town centres will only be approved if it can be demonstrated that there is no need for the premises to be used for other town centre related uses.

11.5   DM8: Village Shops and Pubs

11.5.1   Mid Bedfordshire is a rural district with many small settlements which are in the main, poorly served by public transport. Local shops offer an important service to residents and meet day-to-day shopping needs whilst minimising the need to travel. Similarly, village pubs provide a facility that can act as a focus for community life. The Town Centres and Retail Technical Report (Stage 2) survey reveals that for top-up convenience goods shopping, the outlets within the district like local shops account for 73.3% of trade with 61.5% of Mid Bedfordshire residents also visiting pubs and/or clubs within the district.

11.5.2   The Council has successfully retained facilities in several locations across the district through implementation of Local Plan policy and Technical Planning Guidance 'Retention of the Last Village Pub' and 'Retention of

Village and Neighbourhood Shops' (published in 2002). Nevertheless, 43% of all rural parishes are without a permanent shop or post office of any kind.

11.5.3   Considering that 13.1% of the population of Mid Bedfordshire lack a car, and public transport is relatively poor across much of the district, the decline of community facilities will be keenly felt and could contribute to social exclusion in rural areas. All local shops and pubs should be considered important features of the settlement, particularly if there are no alternative facilities within easy walking distance. Protection of those facilities through planning policy is a crucial element in ensuring their continued existence. Council Officers will determine the appropriate level of evidence required if an applicant seeks a change of use due to lack of viability, with reference to the guidelines set out in Technical Guidance.

Policy DM8: Village Shops and Pubs

Planning permission will not be permitted for the change of use or redevelopment of shops or pubs in villages which would result in the loss of such facilities unless:

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

11.6   DM9: Providing a range of transport

11.6.1   Car ownership in Mid Bedfordshire is higher than the average car ownership in the other Bedfordshire Districts, the Eastern Region and England and Wales (see the State of the Environment Technical Report). There are a high number of residents travelling to work by car. Contributory factors to this may be the rural nature of the district, the historic lack of public transport and also the number of employment centres beyond the boundaries of Mid Bedfordshire.

11.6.2   The Council, as the local transport authority, manages the local road network and has responsibility for a wide range of transport related initiatives, which are set out in the Local Transport Plan. The Council also works closely with the Highways Agency who are responsible for managing and improving the strategic road network.

11.6.3   The Strategic Road Network Impact Study provides evidence in relation to the impact of the proposed spatial distribution of development set out in the Core Strategy on the strategic road network (SRN) and other main routes. However, in order to support the aims of sustainable development, all planning applications will be assessed on their ability to reduce the need for travel. Planning Policy Statement 13: Transport (PPG13) sets out advice on the submission of transport assessments in support of planning applications. This is supplemented by Circular 02/07 and the Guidance on Transport Assessment (2007 DCLG/DfT). Transport Assessments set out transport impacts of a proposed development and measures to be taken to

mitigate them and improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel including alternatives to the car. The Council will also require Travel Plans to be submitted for certain larger scale proposals where considered appropriate. Together, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans are crucial supporting documents to inform the decision making process for planning applications.

11.6.4   Travel Plans provide a proven means of delivering transport benefits. An effective Travel Plan will explore the relationship between the Transport Assessment and accessibility/access by all modes, including public transport, walking and cycling and also car parking. They help assess the transport impact of the development and the mechanisms necessary to ensure that sustainable travel options are considered at all stages of the development.

11.6.5   The need for this information would be dependent on the type of planning application, its location and the number of likely users. All development proposals may have an impact. However, for planning applications that comprise 50 dwellings or more or 1000 square metres of commercial development the Council requires a Transport Assessment. It considers that this variation from national requirements is justified by the rural nature of the district. Travel Plans will be sought for housing proposals of 50 or more houses. For all other developments the requirement for a Travel Plan will be a matter to be considered in discussion with the local transport authority. Broadly speaking, if a Transport Assessment is required then so is a Travel Plan since the latter is the tool for addressing the mitigation measures of the Travel Assessment. Where a proposal is approved with a Travel Plan in place, the developer and/or end user of the building will be expected to implement and maintain the Travel Plan.

11.6.6   Where any development is proposed which will attract a large number of users, it is important to consider how people can reach that facility by means other than the car. In some cases, the location may be unsustainable i.e. requiring single purpose trips. The application may therefore be refused, based on the impact on the environment in general and the impact on the local road network in terms of congestion.

11.6.7   Encouraging walking and cycling is an effective way of promoting sustainable travel that also has health and recreation benefits. The Council has a Cycle Mapping Project that identifies the need for cycleway improvements across the district as part of the creation of a single and comprehensive network. Contributions to this and to other sustainable transport initiatives will be sought in line with the Planning Obligations SPD.

11.6.8   Nearly a third of all new development is on small sites and it would be desirable to ensure they contribute to sustainable transport in the future where necessary improvements or facilities are needed. The Planning Obligations Strategy SPD sets out the Council's requirements.

Policy DM9: Providing a range of transport

The Council, when considering development proposals will:

- require planning applications for all developments of 50 or more dwellings or 1,000 square metres of commercial development to submit a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan. Travel Plans will be required to demonstrate how the development is accessible by a range of travel modes.;
- where a Travel Plan is in place, expect the developer and/or user to implement and monitor the plan to the Council's satisfaction;
- require, as appropriate, financial contributions towards sustainable travel options including the development of the local cycle network as set out in the cycle mapping project.

12: Providing Homes (Development Management)

12.1   **DM10: Housing Mix**

12.1.1   Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) states a key objective of the planning system is to deliver a mix of market and affordable housing, of varying tenure, price and size in order to accommodate a range of different households such as families with children, single person households and elderly people. The emerging East of England Plan also makes it clear that new development must have regard to all sectors of the community.

12.1.2   The Council is keen to promote balanced communities. Incorporating a mix of dwelling types and sizes into development contributes to this aim by helping to meet the full range of housing needs in the district. The district's housing stock is made up of predominantly detached and semi-detached housing (70%). Only around 17% of the stock is made up of terraced houses and flats or maisonettes. The Housing Requirements Study (2003) showed that the demand for housing by size for 2000 – 2007 was 54% for 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation. Over the last 5 years, 70% of new housing built was 3 or more bedrooms. Although the trend has been towards an increasing proportion of smaller units over that time (see Affordable Housing Technical Report Stage 1), there remains a mismatch between the demand and potential supply of smaller units of housing.

12.1.3   Smaller sized units provide opportunities for first time buyers, young people and single person households to find appropriate and more affordable accommodation. There is a need to have a more balanced mix of dwellings so there is wider choice, and more opportunities for people to get into the housing market. The provision of affordable homes is dealt with in the Core Strategy.

12.1.4   The type of housing to be provided should meet the needs of the population including those with disabilities and the elderly. Population projections (Population Estimates and Forecasts, Bedfordshire County Council 2006) show that the proportion of the district's population over 65 will have risen from 13.3% in 2001 to 20.8% in 2021. This should be reflected in the provision of new housing in the district and accordingly homes suitable for the elderly including bungalows and sheltered accommodation should be provided. Similarly, units should be provided for those with disabilities, currently 8% of households (Housing Requirements Study (2003)) include individuals with a mobility disability.

12.1.5   'Lifetime Homes' are houses designed with features that allow all age groups to meet whatever comes along in life, such as wider doorways and level thresholds. The specification of such homes is different to that required by current Building Regulations. Homes built to meet this standard will provide for the needs of the changing age profile in the district and the Council wishes to see as many market homes as possible meeting this specification. This is in line with Government advice 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods', which sets out a target for all new homes to be built to this standard by 2013.

12.1.6   The size and types of homes provided by new development should reflect the needs of the district and local community where the development is proposed. Different types of housing may be needed in different parts of the district. The need for an appropriate mix applies to all sites, including smaller sites for housing that make up a large proportion of all planning applications for houses in this semi-rural area. The appropriate mix for particular schemes will be defined through reference to district and local housing needs assessments including the emerging Strategic Housing Market Assessment (anticipated first report is likely to be December 2008), census information, population projections and the existing housing mix of the locality.

12.1.7   If deemed appropriate, the Council may publish Guidance Notes or Supplementary Planning Documents to clarify the mix required.

12.1.8   It is acknowledged by the Council, in line with Government Guidance, that, as well as responding to local need, schemes will need to be viable and take into account the characteristics of the site and surrounding area. The particular nature of the site (e.g. topography) and its location (e.g. close to a town centre) may make a site especially suitable for a particular type of housing or sector of need, such as housing designed for elderly people. Despite these sorts of constraints, developers will be expected to put forward schemes which contribute towards the overall aim of creating a more sustainable mix of housing, and further to this will be required to submit evidence to demonstrate their adherence to these principles. Accordingly, collaboration will be required between developers and landowners, the Council, local communities and housing bodies such as Registered Social Landlords, to achieve the best possible contribution to balanced communities.

Policy DM10: Housing Mix

All new housing developments will provide a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes, in order to meet the needs of all sections of the local community, promote sustainable communities and social cohesion. This includes the provision of 'lifetime' homes.

The main considerations in determining the appropriate mix for the development will be:
- The most up to date district-wide and local housing needs assessments, including evidence of need identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, population projections and census information;
- The existing housing mix of the locality;
- The location and particular physical characteristics of the site, including its accessibility to local services;
- Current housing market conditions.

13: Providing Jobs (Development Management)

13.1   **DM11: Significant Facilities in the Countryside**

13.1.1   Mid Bedfordshire is notable for the presence of a number of significant higher educational and research institutes which make a significant contribution to the local economy through their activities. These are Cranfield University and Technology Park, Shuttleworth College and Millbrook Proving Ground. These existing employment sites have the potential to provide additional jobs, which would help to meet the employment objectives of the Core Strategy. These facilities also have the potential to attract other high technology-oriented businesses well adapted to the knowledge economy to the area creating a cluster effect. It is clear that these major sites can continue to make a significant contribution to the local economy.

13.1.2   The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is a major landowner and employer within the district at RAF Henlow and DISC Chicksands, and has a duty to ensure that the future operational capability of the Armed Forces is not compromised. The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Crown bodies to apply for planning permission to carry out development on Crown land. The MOD is under an obligation to work with public sector bodies to ensure best use of the public sector estate. This may mean expansion, redevelopment or disposal of surplus land. The changing nature of operational activities within the Armed Forces means that decisions can be made with very short notice and may also be subject to review. The release of surplus land for development will be subject to policies in the LDF and where possible should be addressed through the Site Allocations process.

13.1.3   All of the sites are located in open countryside where normally there are restrictions on development. In order to facilitate continuing development or redevelopment of these premises, some support and flexibility is required for those proposals that are ancillary to the existing operation of the facility, and would not lead to a material change in the character and intensity of its use. Conversely, any significant proposals for expansion within or beyond the current boundaries should be justified and agreed with the Council by way of management plans or similar documents that could appropriately address all issues including infrastructure deficits and travel assessments, prior to the submission of any planning applications. Any major expansion beyond the boundaries should be addressed through the Site Allocations DPD where possible.

13.1.4   In the future, major new sites may emerge in the district for example NIRAH (National Institute of Research into Aquatic Habitats) that should also be included within the remit of this policy issue.

Policy DM11: Significant Facilities in the Countryside

Management plans, development briefs or masterplans agreed by the Council will be required prior to the significant expansion or redevelopment of the facilities at Cranfield University and Technology Park, Shuttleworth College, Millbrook Proving Ground and RAF Henlow and DISC Chicksands.

All proposals for significant development at these facilities will be assessed in terms of their:
• Impact on the open countryside;
• Provision of sustainable transport;
• Justification;
• Scale, layout and design - which must be appropriate to the establishment and its setting.

Planning applications that are considered acceptable against these criteria will be approved.

Further major facilities that may be developed within the district with a similar level of importance in terms of employment or research will be considered under this policy.

13.2   DM12: Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites

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

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

13.2.3   While intensification of existing nurseries and horticultural enterprises should not be explicitly encouraged in policy, it is considered that the change of use of horticultural sites or redundant small scale agricultural

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

13.2.4 The Employment Land Review Stage I has shown that converted agricultural premises have made a significant contribution to the Mid Bedfordshire economy. Occupier satisfaction in these sorts of units is generally higher than average and the users tend to be small companies employing small numbers of people from the local area. The Mid Bedfordshire Community Plan also recognises the vital role played by commercial uses in the countryside in diversifying the agricultural sector and in turn reducing out-commuting and the associated problems this engenders. However, redevelopment rather than a change of use, or conversion of existing buildings is felt to be more appropriate when an agricultural use has ceased or is demonstrably not viable.

Policy DM12: Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites

Proposals for commercial development on horticultural or redundant agricultural sites in the countryside will be approved if they are considered acceptable when considered in terms of their:

- Scale, layout and design in relation to their setting;
- Assimilation into the rural setting and impact on the surrounding countryside when assessed against the findings of the Landscape Character Assessment;
- Relationship with the road network and neighbouring rural settlements;
- Potential impact on existing local retail facilities;
- Provision of suitable vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements;

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

Proposals will be approved if they are considered acceptable against the above criteria.

14: Local Character and Countryside (Development Management)

14.1 DM13: Heritage in Development

14.1.1 Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage value, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations. The historic environment includes Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, historic landscapes and archaeology and the Council is committed to protecting the historic assets in line with Planning Policy Guidance notes PPG15 and PPG16.

14.1.2 Listed Buildings represent a heritage of national importance as they are included in the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Importance. They are a finite resource and they contribute significantly to the character of the district. The repair, renovation, alteration and extension of a Listed Building should not be at the expense of its intrinsic value and special interest. It is important to guard against unnecessary change or over-restoration. In any change, materials should be sympathetic to those used in the original building. In particular the Council will resist applications that result in the loss of traditional local features such as long straw roofs and locally manufactured clay tiles and bricks.

14.1.3 When considering applications for change of use to Listed Buildings, the original use may be the most appropriate and will be encouraged where possible. Where this is not practicable the alternative use proposed must not require alteration to the extent that the character and historical importance of the building is destroyed. If the listed building is in the countryside and not suitable for conversion to employment use, then the most appropriate use for that building will be considered.

14.1.4 In cases where Listed Buildings may become vacant and derelict, there is a presumption in favour of retaining Listed Buildings so permission to demolish will be the exception and only allowed if all other options to retain the building are demonstrated to have been thoroughly explored. In cases where there is no alternative to demolition, the Council will require by condition an appropriate record to be made and the appropriate salvage of materials.

14.1.5 In Mid Bedfordshire, there are 39 Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest) which make a very significant contribution to protecting the attractiveness of the district. Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the overall quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of buildings and open spaces. It also takes into account the need to protect trees, hedges, walls, railings and other characteristic features. The Council is required to survey its area from time to time to determine whether to designate or review Conservation Areas. Such appraisals will review the appropriateness of the Conservation Area boundary, define their special character and evolve guidelines for

development and enhancement schemes. The boundaries are identified on the Proposals Map.

14.1.6 Once designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character and appearance. In order to enable an assessment of the impact of development proposals, the Council will require details to accompany planning applications including drawings or other pictorial material which shows the proposed development in its context. In most cases this means that outline planning applications will not be acceptable. The Council will be looking for new development to provide a level of visual interest equivalent to that of the existing buildings in the Conservation Area. The choice of materials and detailed design are vital elements in achieving new buildings worthy of the local context which typifies Mid Bedfordshire's Conservation Areas.

14.1.7 Enabling development is development that would deliver substantial benefit to the historic environment, but which would be contrary to other objectives of national, regional or local planning policy. It is an established planning principle that such development may be appropriate if the public benefit of rescuing, enhancing, or even endowing a significant place decisively outweighs the harm to other material interests. Enabling development must always be in proportion to the public benefit it offers.

14.1.8 The Bedfordshire & Luton Historic Environment Record gives information on archaeological sites and monuments. However, given the wealth of the past in Mid Bedfordshire, this record can never be complete and new areas will be added as new information comes forward. Prospective developers should contact the Archaeological Officer for information to establish whether there is potential archaeological interest and establish the need for investigation and evaluation at an early stage. Where it is deemed that there is archaeological potential, the developer will be required to commission an archaeological evaluation to define the character and condition of any remains. This will include the character and depth of remains together with the impact of development upon the remains together with any mitigation measures to avoid unnecessary damage.

14.1.9 Historic landscapes are particularly valuable in Mid Bedfordshire where they add interest and variety to a farmed countryside. Some historic landscapes and features are protected by other policies or legislation, for instance if they are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or a Scheduled Ancient Monument. However, the complexity of the historic landscape means that there are many sites and features which do not have such a designation but nevertheless they should be retained because of their contribution to the wider landscape and our ability to read our heritage. The historic characterisation work which is being carried out for Bedfordshire will help in the evaluation of assets.

14.1.10 Parkland is an important landscape feature in the district and makes a particularly valuable contribution to local distinctiveness. Some of these are included in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Interest and are of national importance. They may be added to over the plan period. Others have a more local value, often forming the setting of a Listed Building.

14.1.11 Planning applications will be determined in line with advice contained within

PPG15, PPG16 and any more up to date guidance which may supersede them. The Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development.
will provide detailed advice for developers on Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and enabling development.

Policy DM13: Heritage in Development

The Council will ensure that:

- proposals for development relating to Listed Buildings and registered Parks and Gardens will pay particular attention to the conservation of locally distinctive features and uses;
- planning applications for development within Conservation Areas will be assessed against the Conservation Area appraisals and inappropriate development will be refused.

14.2 DM14: Landscape and Woodland

14.2.1 Developments at all scales may have an impact on the landscape of Mid Bedfordshire. The landscape is valued by the residents and is varied in character, the main geographical feature being the Greensand Ridge that runs through the centre of the district. The district is the most heavily wooded part of Bedfordshire with around 4,000 ha of woodland, (Source: Bedfordshire County Council Environmental Capacity Study 2002).

14.2.2 A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the district at strategic and local scale has been carried out and has subsequently been published as a Technical Report underpinning the LDF. The Mid Bedfordshire LCA identifies areas of particular landscape character in which differing approaches to development in those areas will be appropriate. It provides a tool to assess the approach the Council will take in determining planning applications and seeking contributions towards conservation or enhancement of the landscape. The Planning Obligations Strategy will give further details on contributions towards landscape matters through new development.

14.2.3 The main strategic conclusions of the LCA are:

- To conserve the landscape in the Chilterns AONB and the Greensand Ridge. Any development likely to have an adverse impact on the visual quality or the special features of these areas will be resisted
- To conserve the landscape in the Flit Valley and encourage management of the landscape and assets within this area. Any development likely to have an adverse impact on the visual quality or the special features of these areas will be resisted
- To actively seek landscape enhancement in the Forest of Marston Vale and the Ivel Valley, support the activities of the countryside management projects that operate in these areas and to seek contributions through Planning Obligation Agreements in relation to new development
- To actively seek landscape enhancement on a strategic scale (either by

small scale improvements such as planting, or on a larger scale resulting from new developments) in the urban fringes around Ampthill, Biggleswade, Flitwick, Sandy, Stotfold/Arlesey

- To actively seek landscape enhancement on a strategic scale (either by small scale improvements such as planting, or on a larger scale resulting from new developments) in the following transport corridor routes; M1, A1, A421, A6 and A507

14.2.4 Individual planning applications that may have an impact on the landscape will need to be assessed against information and criteria set out in the LCA Technical Report.

14.2.5 Two areas within the district will have special measures applied to the management of development proposals in order to enhance and conserve the landscape. One is the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that covers a small part of the south of the district around Harlington and the Pegsdon Hills. The other is the Forest of Marston Vale that is one of twelve community forests in England created in the 1990s. The Forest area is dominated by minerals extraction and subsequent landfill operations, and the main objective of the organisation is the environmental regeneration of the scarred landscape. The East of England Plan identifies the Forest of Marston Vale as one of only two green infrastructure assets of particular regional significance in Bedfordshire (Policy ENV1) and specifically supports the target of creating 30% woodland cover across the Forest area (Policy ENV5). The Council confirms its continued support for the delivery of the Forest of Marston Vale as set out in the Forest Plan and in particular confirms its support of the government target of 30% woodland cover reiterated in the East of England Plan. The Forest will be delivered through a mix of planting by land-owners, community involvement, the activities of the Marston Vale Trust and others and contributions from development in the Forest area.

14.2.6 Other strategic countryside projects are also being undertaken in the district and supported by the Council that include the provision of additional planting and woodland cover.

14.2.7 Aligned with the East of England Plan and the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan, the Council would like to see development contributing to the provision of more planting and the protection of existing woodland, ancient woodland and specimen trees. The Council also considers it appropriate to continue to require developers to implement measures to protect existing trees and hedgerows within development sites, and require replacement for such features where they are lost. The use of Tree Preservation Orders will be used to protect important trees under threat.

14.2.8 More widely, the planting of trees can also be used to offset carbon emissions involved in the production and construction of buildings. Additional tree and woodland planting therefore supports the Governments aspiration that all new development should be 'carbon neutral' by 2016.

14.2.9 The details of how landscape enhancement will be applied and the scale of measures sought through new development will be defined in the Supplementary Planning Documents.

Policy DM14: Landscape and Woodland

The Council will ensure that:

- the highest level of protection will be given to the landscape of the Chilterns AONB, where any development which has an adverse impact on the landscape will be refused;
- planning applications are assessed against the impact the proposed development will have on the landscape, whether positive or negative. The Landscape Character Assessment will be used to determine the sensitivity of the landscape and the likely impact. Any proposals that have an unacceptable impact on the landscape quality of the area will be refused.
- proposals for development that lie within the Greensand Ridge or the Flit Valley will be required to conserve or enhance the landscape. Any proposals that have an adverse impact on the landscape in these areas will be rejected unless there is a particular need for, or benefit arising from the proposal that would override this requirement.
- proposals for development within the Northern Marston Vale, the Forest of Marston Vale, Ivel Valley, the urban fringe around the major service centres and along the main road corridors will be required to provide landscape enhancement on or adjacent to the development site or contribute towards landscape enhancement in these areas.
- trees, woodland and hedgerows in the district will be protected by requiring developers to retain and protect such features in close proximity to building works. Tree Preservations Orders will be used to protect trees under threat from development. Any trees or hedgerows lost will be expected to be replaced.
- tree planting or contributions towards planting for the purposes of enhancing the landscape will be sought from new developments. Any planting for the purposes of mitigating the carbon impact of new development will be sought in line with government advice.

14.3 DM15: Biodiversity

14.3.1 The current suite of Local Plan policies relating to biodiversity has been effective in protecting wildlife and habitats in the district. The Council also published Technical Planning Guidance on Wildlife in Development that gives more details on locally important species and habitats and the protection and enhancement of wildlife through development proposals.

14.3.2 The Council fully endorses the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan that seeks to protect locally important habitats and species. In addition the district has a network of sites that are designated for the protection of flora and fauna. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological sites (RIGGS), National Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites.

14.3.3 Wildlife is likely to be affected by almost all new development. In order to protect the districts wildlife assets, all planning applications will need to be assessed for their potential impact. Where proposals could affect wildlife

interests, the Council will work in partnership with local organisations to minimise this impact.

14.3.4   The Council is keen to continue supporting the protection of designated sites from the effects of new development. In addition, locally and nationally important species should be protected through implementation of legislation and supporting the Biodiversity Action Plan. Further details of requirements for protection, enhancement and mitigation will be contained within Supplementary Planning Documents and details of circumstances where contributions should be sought from developers to protect and enhance biodiversity will be set out in the Planning Obligation Strategy.

14.3.5   All new planting schemes in the district are likely to appear more appropriate in visual terms if locally appropriate native species ranging in scale from broad leaved trees to ground cover plants are used. The Council will be able to advise on which plants are appropriate to use in different locations across the area.

Policy DM15: Biodiversity

The Council will ensure that:

- where planning applications are considered to have an impact on wildlife, whether habitats or species or where applications are close to nationally or locally designated sites or important species, advice will be sought from relevant national and local organisations and applications considered to be harmful to wildlife will be refused.
- where any development is permitted within, adjacent to or in close proximity to designated sites or known locations of identified species, the developer will be expected to take steps to secure the protection of such animals and plants. In cases where new development is unavoidable and may harm wildlife interests, mitigation is required.
- for developments where there is a need to protect or enhance biodiversity, developers will be required to carry out such work and/or make contributions to secure longer term benefits for wildlife.
- the use of native and locally appropriate species, including locally sourced plants and seeds and plants of local provenance, in planting schemes will be required where appropriate.

14.4   DM16: Green Infrastructure

14.4.1   Green Infrastructure (GI) is a term used to describe a network of spaces, often linked by green corridors that include green places accessible to the public, commons and greens, nature reserves, country parks, historic parks and gardens waterways and waterbodies, rights of way and ancient monuments. The green infrastructure network is defined and set out in the Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan and seeks to protect existing GI assets and build on them to provide a multi functional network, connecting settlements to the countryside, allowing an enhanced quality of life to existing and new residents.

14.4.2   Given the valuable contribution green infrastructure makes to the character of the area and quality of life enjoyed by residents, planning applications which could harm existing identified GI or prejudice the implementation of key GI opportunities are unlikely to be approved.

14.4.3   The Council works in partnership with organisations such as the Forest of Marston Vale, the Greensand Trust, and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, who may be in a position to implement the GI Plan. It is also a member of the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium who will coordinate and update the content and activities related to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan.

14.4.4   New development may provide opportunities to enhance the network through the provision of new features such as planting, footpath links and providing accessible land for informal recreation. The Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan identifies specific opportunities for enhancement. The Local Delivery Strategy sets out the strategic projects and priorities. Developers will be expected to contribute towards GI in accordance with the Infrastructure Requirements for areas in the Spatial Strategy, and with reference to these other documents.

Policy DM16: Green Infrastructure

The Council will promote and protect green infrastructure by ensuring that proposed residential and commercial development:

- will contribute to the provision, extension and maintenance of green infrastructure in accordance with the requirements outlined in the area profiles in Chapter 3 Spatial Strategy, and in accordance with the mechanisms in the Planning Obligations Strategy.

- which adversely affects identified green infrastructure assets and/or prevents the implementation of green infrastructure projects will not be permitted.

14.5   DM17: Accessible Greenspaces

14.5.1   The Green Infrastructure network comprises assets and opportunities form a number of themes: accessible greenspace, access routes, biodiversity, historic environment and landscape. 'Accessible Greenspace' is a term used to mean an area of land that provides opportunities for open access to the public for recreational purposes. These can include:

- Country and urban parks,
- Historic parks and gardens,
- Natural greenspaces,
- Green corridors
- Amenity green spaces
- Playing pitches and children's play areas.

They may provide an important visual contribution to the area and they may also be important for wildlife.

14.5.2   With regard to sites of local importance, a comprehensive assessment of locally accessible greenspace is set out in the Council's Open Space, Sports & Recreational Needs Assessment Technical Paper. New standards of Open Space to be provided for new development have been set out in the Core Strategy Annex E and will be applied when planning applications are received for new housing development.

14.5.3   Mid Bedfordshire provides a variety of opportunities for residents to enjoy green spaces, both close to home and further afield. The maintenance of the existing greenspace network and enhancement of the network as the population of the district and surrounding areas grows is an important factor in resident's quality of life. The Council will therefore protect existing green space and provide new green space accessible to the public through financial contribution to partners who provide and maintain such facilities. Further detail will be set out in Supplementary Planning Documents and the Green Infrastructure Plan.

Policy DM17: Accessible Greenspaces

The Council will require the following:

- For new housing developments, contributions for the provision, extension and maintenance of accessible green space, including green space for sport and children's playspace for the enjoyment of residents in accordance with the Council's open space standards.
- For smaller scale housing development, where there is no practical way of providing green space on the development site, off site contributions will be required.

Planning applications that contain proposals that would adversely affect existing accessible green space will not be permitted.

14.6   DM18: Equestrian Development

14.6.1   There continues to be considerable pressure for equestrian related development within Mid Bedfordshire; and indeed PPS7 recognises the contribution equestrian activities can make to sustainable recreation, conservation grazing and the diversification of agricultural holdings. However, intensive private equestrian activity as well as commercial activities can be visually harmful in the countryside so it is important that environmental quality and landscape character is respected. In Mid Bedfordshire it is particularly important to consider the context of the proposed development in the flat landscapes towards the eastern side of the district where even small buildings will be prominent against the skyline.

14.6.2   It is considered that a distinction needs to be drawn between larger commercial and small-scale domestic developments, although it is

acknowledged that certain types of activities in certain locations, whether private or commercial can have an adverse impact on the landscape and countryside in general. Experience in the district has shown that former agricultural land that has been subdivided into smaller plots is generally more affordable for individual horse owners. In these circumstances there is a demand for small developments for recreational use. Larger developments (comprising 10 horses or more) usually take the form of equestrian centres, livery stables and stud farms that may comprise indoor riding arenas, manège facilities and significant stabling.

14.6.3   By its very nature, equestrian development requires a countryside location but the cumulative impact of either small or large-scale developments can have an adverse impact on the rural character of the district and can lead to further intensification of uses on the site. As such the Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment should be employed to inform the appraisal of all development proposals. There is also a need to introduce a degree of control in order to mitigate the potential impacts on landscape, woodland, bridleways and the amenities of neighbouring residents. Limitations on the location of developments are considered inappropriate for domestic scale activities but sensible for larger commercial livery yards on the grounds of sustainability and accessibility.

Policy DM18: Equestrian Development

Horse-related facilities and small scale extensions to existing equestrian enterprises in the countryside will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

- The proposals should be closely related to the bridleway network and should not have an adverse impact on bridleways.
- New freestanding stables should be well screened from the surrounding countryside and should not interfere with the amenities of adjoining residents.
- New buildings for indoor equestrian use should be located adjacent to existing buildings.
- Any proposals for equestrian development including jumps, schooling areas and new buildings/extensions will be considered in the context of the Landscape Character Assessment.
- Their design, scale, siting and use of materials should respect the rural setting.

Proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises (comprising ten horses or more) should demonstrate the sustainable nature of their location by means of a traffic impact assessment.

Annex A: GLOSSARY

List of acronyms and technical terms. Items in *italics* each have a definition.

-	Accessibility	The ability of everybody to go conveniently where they want.
-	Adoption	The final confirmation of a *Local Development Document* as having statutory status by a *Local Planning Authority.*
-	Affordable housing	Housing which meets the present and future needs of households unable to secure adequate housing at prices determined by the market.
-	Allocations DPD	The document within the *Local Development Framework* that will contain *site specific allocations*. It will have the status of a *Development Plan Document.*
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report	Report on the progress of preparing the *Local Development Framework* and the extent to which policies are being achieved.
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan	A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving biological diversity.
-	Brownfield land	Brownfield land (also known as Previously Developed Land) is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 "Housing" has a detailed definition. Opposite to *greenfield* land.
CP	Community Plan	The long term vision and action plan for Mid Bedfordshire articulating the aspirations, needs and priorities of the local community – prepared by the *Local Strategic Partnership.*
-	Conservation Area	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
-	Core Strategy	The *Local Development Framework* document which sets out the long term spatial vision for the local planning authority area, and the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will have the status of a *Development Plan Document*.
-	Development Plan	The statutory Development Plan comprises the *Regional Spatial Strategy* and the *Development Plan Documents* contained in the *Local Development Framework.*
DPD	Development Plan Document	A *Local Development Document* in the *Local Development Framework* that forms part of the Statutory *Development Plan.*
-	Development Policies DPD	The document within the *LDF* that will contain detailed policies guiding particular forms of development. It will have the status of a *Development Plan Document.*
-	General	The process by which the Government Office for the

-	conformity (assessing)	East of England (as Regional Planning Body) considers whether a Development Plan Document is in "general conformity" with the *Regional Spatial Strategy*. Also, all other DPDs must conform to a *Core Strategy DPD.*
-	Green belt	An area of open land where strict planning controls apply in order, in particular, to check the further growth of a large built-up area. Designated in a development plan.
-	Greenfield land	Land (or a defined site) which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time (opposite of *brownfield* land). Applies to most land outside the built-up area boundaries.
	High quality design	High quality design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes in towns and cities to create an attractive and welcoming environment. It also includes developing frameworks and processes that encourage successful, high quality development.
-	Housing Needs Study	A study that assesses the future housing needs of the district, in terms of the size, type and affordability of dwellings.
-	Inclusive design	Designing a building or space to consider the needs of the person with a disability.
-	Issues and Options	Document(s) produced during the early production stage of the preparation of *Development Plan documents* and issued for consultation.
-	Key Diagram	A diagram that illustrates the main strategic principles of the spatial strategy of the LDF. It is not site specific, unlike the *Proposals Map.*
-	Lifetime Homes Standard	Ordinary homes designed to provide accessible and convenient homes for a large segment of the population from young children to older people and those with temporary or permanent physical or sensory impairments. Lifetime Homes have 16 design features that ensure the home will be flexible enough to meet the existing and changing needs of most households.
-	Listed Building	A building included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State. It includes any object or structure fixed to the building and any object structure within the cartilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, formed part of the land and has done so since July 1948.
LDD	Local Development Document	The various individual documents (*DPD, SCI, SPD)* in the *LDF.*
LDF	Local Development Framework	The overall name for the folder or portfolio of *Local Development Documents* and the *LDS* and *AMR.*
LDS	Local Development Scheme	A public statement setting out which documents will make up the *LDF*, and when they will be produced over a three year period.
-	Local Plan	The plan produced under the former planning system

		by District Councils.
LPA	Local Planning Authority	Usually meaning the District or Borough Councils.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	The Mid Bedfordshire LSP is a partnership of over 40 public and private organisations and community groups. One of its main tasks is to prepare and implement the *Community Plan.*
LTP	Local Transport Plan	The transport strategy prepared by the local transport authority, i.e. Central Bedfordshire Council.
-	Merton Rule	The 'Merton Rule' is the groundbreaking planning policy, pioneered by the London Borough of Merton, which requires the use of renewable energy onsite to reduce annual carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in the built environment.
MKSM	Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area	A growth area designated by the Government. The part of the district in the Northern Marston Vale lies within this area.
MKSM SRS	The Growth Area Sub Regional Strategy	The adopted Sub Regional Strategy for this area.
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance Notes	Guidance produced by the Government on planning matters (being replaced by *PPSs*)
PPS	Planning Policy Statement	Statements of National Planning Policy issued by the Government (to replace *PPGs)*
-	Preferred Options	Document(s) produced as part of the preparation of *Development Plan documents*, and issued for formal public participation (under *Regulation 26)*
-	Proposals Map	The adopted Proposals Map illustrates on a base map (reproduced from an Ordnance Survey map to a registered scale) all the policies contained in *Development Plan documents*. It is thus site and location specific, unlike the *Key Diagram*. The Proposals Map will be revised each time a new *Development Plan document* is prepared which has site specific policies or proposals, and will always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area.
-	Public realm	This is the space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance	The strategic plan for the region prepared under the former planning system, now replaced by the *Regional Spatial Strategy.*
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy	The broad spatial strategy for the region, referred to as the Regional Plan, also known as the East of England Plan, and forming part of the statutory development plan.
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	Identifies and evaluates the effects of the strategy or plan on social, environmental and economic conditions.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Document setting out how and when stakeholders and other interested parties will be consulted and involved in the preparation of the *LDF* (and in the consideration of individual planning applications).
SE	Settlement Envelopes	Settlement Envelopes identify the area within which development proposals would be acceptable, subject

		to complying with other policies contained in the Development Plan. They seek to differentiate between the settlement and the surrounding countryside.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	An assessment of the environmental effects of a plan or programme required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC. Combined with the *Sustainability Appraisal.*
-	South East Plan	The broad spatial strategy for the South East Region. Part of the *Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area* lies within this region.
-	Site specific allocations	Allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development, to be contained in the *Allocations DPD*. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.
-	Spatial planning	The concept of *spatial planning* is intended to be at the heart of the new planning system. Previously, the focus of the planning system was narrow and regulatory. The new spatial planning system of *RSS* and *LDF* is much wider and more inclusive. Spatial planning concerns itself with places, how they function and relate together – and its objectives are to manage change to secure the best achievable quality of life for all in the community, without wasting scarce resources or spoiling the environment. It will include policies which can impact on land use, for example by influencing the demands on, or needs for, development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting or refusal of planning permission, and which may be implemented by other means.
SPD	Supplement Planning Document	Elaborates on policies or proposals in *DPDs*, and gives additional guidance.
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance	Provides guidance or development briefs to supplement policies and proposals in a *Local Plan* (being replaced by *SPD*).
-	Sustainable design	This mainly refers to the design of buildings, places and landscapes which aims to reduce the effect on the environment as far as possible. The design may also consider economic and social effects.
-	Structure Plan	The strategic plan produced under the former planning system by County Councils.
The Act	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	Puts in place the new statutory framework for preparing *RSS* and *LDFs*
The Regul-ations	Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004	The formal Government regulations that define how the LDF is produced.
-	Urban Potential Study	A study produced (and kept under review) to assess the amount of land available for housing on *brownfield* land (previously developed land).

Annex B: Reference Documents

Affordable Housing Technical Guidance (2004)*
Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan
Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan
Bedfordshire County Council Sustainable Community Strategy 2007
Bedfordshire County Council Environmental Capacity Study 2002
Bedfordshire County Council:Waste in New Developments
Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)
Building Research Establishment's (BRE) EcoHomes
Census 2001
Circular 02/07 and the Guidance on Transport Assessment (DCLG/DfT).
Climate Change Bill (Draft 2007)
Code for Sustainable Homes (2006)
Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2006
Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (English Heritage) April 2008
Cost Review of the Code for Sustainable Homes (Housing Corporation) February 2007
Cycle Route Mapping Project (2001)*
Design Guides Technical Planning Guidance*
DETR Good Building Guide 42 Part 2
DCLG/DH/DWP Lifetime homes, Lifetime Neighbours
East of England Plan(Regional Spatial Strategy RSSS14)
Employment Land Reviews Guidance Manual (March 2008)
Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places (English Heritage)
Energy Saving Trust Best Practice Standard for energy efficiency
Energy White Paper (2007)
European Union Directive 2001/42/EC
Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)
Hedgerow Regulations 1997
Heritage Bill (draft 2008)
Housing Green Paper (2007)
Housing Requirements Study 2003*
Joint Economic Development Strategy for Bedfordshire and Luton
Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2007
Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11
Marston Vale Forest Plan (2000)
Marston Vale Surface Water Strategy
Mid Bedfordshire Community Sustainable Plan*
Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (First Review) Adopted 2005*
Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan (2008)
Planning for a Sustainable Future (Government White Paper)
Planning Obligations Strategy SPD (Adopted February 2008)*
Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1)
Planning policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2)
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Heritage (PPG15)
Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3)
Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3)
Planning Policy Guidance 4:Industrial, commercial development and small firms (PPG4)

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS 9) & Companion Guide

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS 12)

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG 13)

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15)

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG 17)

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25)

Recreational Open Space Strategy (ROSS)*

Retention of Last Village Pub Technical Planning Guidance*

Retention of Village and Neighbourhood Shops Technical Planning Guidance*

South East Regional Plan (RSS9)

Statement of Community Involvement*

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The 'Merton Rule'

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act

Tourism Growth Strategy for Bedfordshire and Luton (2007-2012)

Town and Country Planning (Development Plans) (England) Regulations 2004

* denotes a document produced by Mid Bedfordshire District Council

Annex C: Technical Reports

Title	Produced by/in partnership with	Date
Affordable Housing Stage 1	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	2007
Affordable Housing Stage 2	Fordham Research	Aug 2007
Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan	Bedfordshire & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium	Feb 2007
Bedfordshire and Luton Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment 2006	David Couttie Associates	2006
Bedfordshire Travelling Showpeople Study 2007	David Couttie Associates	2007
Employment Land Review Stage 1	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Oct 2008
Employment Land Review – Non-B Employment Uses	Roger Tym & Partners	2007
Employment Land Review Sites Study	SQW Consulting	Aug 2007
Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report	Enfusion	Aug 2008
Housing Land Availability Report	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Oct 2008
Infrastructure Audit	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	2007
Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan	Greensand Trust	Sept 2008
Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment Report	Land Use Consultants	Aug 2007
Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Assessment	Ashley Godfrey Associates	Sept 2008
Settlement Envelope Review	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Sept 2007

Title	Produced by/in partnership with	Date
Settlement Envelope Review Further Changes	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Aug 2008
Settlement Envelope Review Further Changes Addendum	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Oct 2008
Settlement Hierarchy Technical Report	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	2007
State of the Environment Report	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Sept 2007
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Stage 1	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Sept 2007
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Stage 2	WSP Development & Transportation	Sept 2008
Transport Impact Assessment	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Oct 2008
Town Centres and Retailing: Stage 1	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	Sept 2007
Town Centres and Retailing: Stage 2	White Young Green Planning	Sept 2007
Urban Potential Study	Mid Bedfordshire District Council	2007
Milton Keynes Strategic Development Areas Study	GVA Grimley	April 2008
Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment	Enfusion	Sept 2008

Annex D: Monitoring Framework

The monitoring framework below shows how the Strategic Objectives will be monitored through relevant policies, targets and indicators. The Council's Annual Monitoring Report will contain more detailed targets and indicators against individual policies and information to show the extent to which policies are being successfully implemented.

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
List from Core Strategy	List from Core Strategy		*Government Departments, Agencies and Regional Offices. EERA, EEDA, Local Authorities, Local Delivery Vehicle – Renaissance Bedford, Local Strategic Partnership, Town and Parish Councils, English Partnerships, Housing Corporation, House Builders Federation, Environmental Agencies, Community, Health, Social Care and Emergency Services, Public Transport Providers, Businesses, Development Industry, Landowners, Registered Social Landlords, Utility Providers, Community, Amenity and Special Interest Groups and local community*		Monitoring indicators		Social, economic, environmental, physical, financial factors
1. **To deliver the**	• Social, economic and	CS1: Development	All	2001-2026 17,790 new		**BD1** Total amount of	• Social and economic

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
regional and sub regional spatial planning requirements of the East of England Plan and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy	environmental well being of the community will have been improved. • Regional and sub-regional growth requirements will have been met. • Communities will function more sustainably with individuals leading more sustainable and healthy lifestyles.	Strategy CS5: Providing Homes CS6: Delivery and Timing of Housing Provision CS9: Providing Jobs		homes 17,000 new jobs		additional employment floorspace – by type **H1** Plan period and housing targets **H2 (a)** Net additional dwellings – in previous years **H2 (b)** Net additional dwellings –for the reporting year **H2(c)** Net additional dwellings – in future years **H2 (d)** Managed delivery target	wellbeing of the community reduces • Environmental and physical quality declines • More sustainable lifestyles do not materialise resulting in declining local and global environments • Area does not contribute to growth in national economy

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
2. To maintain the existing Green Belt and extend it to ensure that existing towns and villages do not coalesce with growth of Milton Keynes	• The Green Belt will have been protected and extended to restrain development and retain the character and separate physical identity of towns and villages within it.	CS1 Development Strategy DM6: Development within Green Belt Infill Boundaries	GoEast, GoSE, BCC, MBDC, Relevant Town and Parish Councils, CPRE, Chilterns Conservation Board, Local Amenity Groups	No reduction in area of Green Belt	• Number/type permissions/ refusals in Green Belt		• Towns and villages within the Green Belt are expanded with the possible loss of their individual character and identity and the loss of surrounding countryside • Could inhibit urban regeneration • Could result in the non development of sustainable locations around larger major settlements within Green
3. To plan for the highest quality sustainable development in the most sustainable location whilst ensuring that new development has a positive impact on communities	• **Sustainable growth will have been embraced by ensuring that new development meets strict design and sustainability criteria, and is supported with an appropriate range of jobs, transport, affordable housing, health, social,**	CS1 Development Strategy CS2 Developer Contributions CS3 Healthy and Sustainable Communities CS4 Linking Communities CS13 Climate Change DM1Renewable	DCLG, DfT, DCSF, DBERR, DIUS, DCMS, DEFRA, Home Office, HM Treasury, GoEast, EERA, EEDA, Highways Agency, CABE, BRE, BCC, MBDC, BRCC, Town and Parish Councils, LSP, Renaissance Bedford, Developers, Landowners,	60% development to be on previously developed land New development to be within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital,	• The amount of derelict and vacant land in urban areas (ha) • Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and	**BD2** Total amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land – by type **H3** New and converted dwellings – on previously developed land	• Development fails to meet key sustainability criteria relating to its location, quality and level of supporting infrastructure • Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
and is supported by necessary infrastructure	**community and recreational facilities, utility and emergency services and green infrastructure.** • New development will have been located in the most accessible locations and the reuse of previously developed land will have been maximised.	Energy DM2 Sustainable Construction of New Buildings DM3: High Quality Development DM4: Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes DM17: Accessible Greenspaces	University of Bedfordshire, Cranfield University and Further Education Colleges serving Mid Bedfordshire East of England Strategic Health Authority, East of England Ambulance Trust, Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust Sport England – East, Theatres Trust Religious Organisations Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Internal Drainage Board, National Grid, Private Gas and Electricity Suppliers Telecommunications Companies Police, Fire and Rescue Services + other specific	primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre New on site provision (by hectare and type of facility) for children's play space, outdoor sport and informal use Mandatory targets for sustainable construction of homes and non residential buildings	secondary school, employment and a major health centre New on site provision (by hectare and type of facility) for children's play space, outdoor sport and informal use • Percentage of development meeting mandatory targets	**H6** Housing quality – Building for Life Assessments	environments • Current infrastructure deficits are exacerbated • Lack of local infrastructure results in additional travel to access facilities elsewhere • Use of previously developed land is not maximised • Homes/jobs balance fails to materialise and out commuting continues to increase

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
			transport, housing, employment, cultural and environmental organisations listed in 7-11 below				
4. To identify a hierarchy of settlements and concentrate development in the larger settlements, while seeking opportunities to direct growth to one or two key locations. In particular to: i. deliver planned growth in the identified Major Service Centres and consolidate and develop their role ii. deliver planned growth in the identified Minor Service Centres	• Outside of the Marston Vale the main growth will have occurred, by the delivery of existing commitments, in Biggleswade, Stotfold (includes Fairfield Park), and, on a more modest scale, in Sandy, Ampthill, Flitwick, Arlesey, Cranfield and Shefford. Further growth will have occurred at Arlesey and Silsoe on new allocations. • Arlesey will have a consolidated town centre offering additional retail and leisure facilities, more local jobs and a relief road to address traffic issues in the High Street. • Within the Marston Vale major	CS1: Delivery Strategy CS5: Providing Homes CS10: Location of employment sites	GoEast, EERA, CBC	• Indicative ranges set out in the Core Strategy settlement profiles	• Percentage of development in settlement envelopes • Percentage of development by settlement/area to be delivered through the Site Allocations DPD		• Development is dispersed rather than being in the most sustainable locations • Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global environments

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
and allow development to serve the needs of their population and their rural catchment areas iii. limit development outside of the identified Major and Minor Service Centres	growth will have occurred at a new settlement, The Wixams, and at Marston Moretaine, both of which reflect current commitments. • Land to accommodate the further growth necessary to meet the outstanding requirement of around 3,000 dwellings will have been focused primarily towards the identified major and minor service centres. • General locations for growth post 2021 will have been identified						
5. To make Mid Bedfordshire a more environmentally, economically and socially sustainable place that positively responds to the challenges of	• The wider global impacts of development in the district will have been recognised and respond to • Energy use will have become more efficient and there will be greater use of renewable energy sources.	CS13: Climate Change DM1: Renewable Energy DM2: Sustainable Construction of New Buildings	All	• Mandatory targets for sustainable construction of homes and non residential buildings • Targets being developed for Central	• Percentage of development meeting mandatory targets	**E1** Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds **E3** Renewable energy	• Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global environments • Social and economic wellbeing of the community reduces • Environmental

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
climate change but is prepared for its effects	• The risk of flooding will have been reduced.			Bedfordshire		generation	and physical quality declines • Flood risk increases
6. To support the role of towns and villages as locations for accessible services by the retention and enhancement of existing facilities and the provision of appropriate new ones.	• The vitality and viability of all communities will have been enhanced. • Key local facilities and services will have been enhanced and retained, and identified deficiencies remedied. • Greater use of local facilities will have occurred and with it more sustainable lifestyles.	CS2: Developer contributions CS3: Healthy and Sustainable Communities DM7:Development in Town Centres DM8: Village Shops and Pubs	GoEast, EERA, BCC, MBDC, PCT, Town and Parish Councils, LSP, BRCC, Local Businesses, Developers, Landowners, Community Groups	• All new residential development to be within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre • Meet standards in Annex E	• Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre New on site provision (by hectare and type of facility) for children's play space, outdoor sport and informal use • Number of new sports and leisure facilities provided	**BD4** Total amount of floorspace for 'town centres uses'	• Vitality and viability of settlements deteriorates due to loss of facilities • Current infrastructure deficits are exacerbated • Lack of local infrastructure results in additional travel to access facilities elsewhere • Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global environments
7. Taking account of the	• Transport modal shift will have	CS4: Linking Communities – Accessibility and	**DfT, Highways Agency, BCC, MBDC, Network Rail, Bus**	• All new residential	• Percentage of new residential		• Planned improvements in

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
rural nature of Mid Bedfordshire, reduce the need to travel, promote more sustainable transport modes and maximise capacity of the existing transport network and add additional capacity and new infrastructure where needed.	occurred with more people using public transport, cycling and walking and using the car less. • The Thameslink Programme will have been completed and a new station opened at The Wixams to deliver improved rail services on the Midland Mainline by increasing train capacity and accessibility to Luton, Hertfordshire, London, the south of England and, through St Pancras International, mainland Europe. The Programme will have provided similar improvements for the rail service through Sandy, Biggleswade and Arlesey, by linking it, for the first time, to the Thameslink service through London.	Transport DM9: Providing a Range of Transport	**and train operators - East Midlands Trains, National Express East Coast, First Capital Connect, Silverlink, Community Rail Partnership, Stagecoach, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, Sustrans, Town and Parish Councils, LSP, Passenger Organisations, Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterways Trust** *London Luton Airport Operations Ltd*	development to be within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre • Increase in cycle routes and rights of way • Relevant targets in the Local Transport Plan	development within 30 minutes public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre Percentage of completed non-residential development complying with car parking standards set out in the LDF Kilometres of cycle route completed in the district • Length of new public rights of way provided/lost as a result of development or other projects		transport infrastructure are delayed with the result that costs escalate and the network becomes further stressed and congested • Modal shift away from car use fails to materialise • Public transport usage declines resulting in reduced level of service • Health improvements fail to materialise as a result of • Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global environments

149

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
	• E-W Rail improvements will have begun with enhanced accessibility through the Marston Vale Line to Milton Keynes and the West Coast Mainline. • The Marston Vale Line will have become a key element in delivering sustainable growth in the area. • The A421 between Bedford and Junction 13 of the M1 will have been duelled, the M1 widened between Junctions 10 and 13 and the Ridgmont Bypass/Woburn Link provided. This will have resulted in less traffic congestion, improved access to the M1 and Milton Keynes as well traffic relief in Ridgmont and Husborne Crawley.						

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
	• The Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road will have been completed providing reduced congestion and improved safety and environmental conditions in the town. • The A6 will have been duelled, between the A421 and The Wixams new settlement to provide improved access to this sustainable new community. The Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway will have been completed.						
8. To provide the right mix of new high quality homes, including enough affordable homes to meet identified needs	Provision made will reflect more closely local needs and will include at least 35% affordable housing to reach the target of 28% overall.	CS7: Affordable Housing CS8: Exceptions Schemes DM10: Housing Mix	DCLG, EERA, MBDC, LSP, BRCC, Housing Corporation, Registered Social Landlords, House Builders Federation, Housebuilders, Developers, Landowners, Specialist Needs Providers, Renaissance Bedford, English Partnerships	28% affordable housing Targets will be identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment	• Affordable housing completions outside settlement envelopes • Number of 1,2,3,4,5 bed houses completed	**H1** Plan period and housing targets **H2(c)** Net additional dwellings – in future years **H2(d)** Managed delivery target **H5** Gross	• Housing stress increases • Local housing needs are not met • Homes remain too expensive for many within the community • Social wellbeing of the community reduces • More sustainable

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
						affordable housing completions	lifestyles do not materialise resulting in declining local and global environments
9. To strengthen the local economy, providing new employment opportunities that help reduce the level of out-commuting	• The provision of at least 14,000 jobs in the period 2001 to 2021 and 3,000 between 2021 to 2026 will have been encouraged. • Major new employment opportunities will have been created through the completion of planned expansion at Cranfield Technology Park and Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade and delivery of research and tourism based facilities at the Nirah and Centre Parcs development • Elsewhere further local	CS9: Providing Jobs CS10: Location of Employment Sites CS11: Local Economy and Tourism CS12: Town Centres and Retailing DM11: Significant Facilities in the Countryside DM12: Horticultural and Redundant Agricultural Sites	DBERR, DIUS, DEFRA, DCLG, DCMS, EERA, EEDA, BCC, MBDC, LSP, Renaissance Bedford, Chamber of Commerce, Learning and Skills Council, Local Businesses, Developers, Landowners ***Strategic Tourism Advisory Group (STAG)***	2001 – 2026 17,000 jobs Provision of new development in line with indicative ranges in policy CS10 Ratio of jobs to homes 1:1	• Total amount of completed retail, office and leisure development • Job creation figures for Mid Bedfordshire – Annual Business Index • Employment land supply by type • Net floorspace completions by sub area • Amount of employment land lost to residential development • Number of conversions to employment use in rural areas • Number of rural	**BD1** Total amount of additional employment floorspace – by type **BD4** Total amount of floorspace for 'town centres uses' **BD3** Employment land available – by type	• Diversification of local economy fails to materialise • Required level of jobs fails to materialise resulting in increased unemployment and/or further out commuting • Homes/jobs balance fails to materialise and out commuting continues to increase • Social and economic wellbeing of the community reduces • More sustainable lifestyles do not materialise resulting in declining local and

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
	employment will have been encouraged at the major and minor centres and sustainable transport links improved to these and neighbouring employment centres.				employment sites lost to other uses • Number of permissions for tourist related development		global environments
10. To ensure development respects and contributes to the district's diverse local character.	The district's environmental resources, including land, air and soil quality, the water environment, biodiversity, landscape character and the historic and cultural environment will have been conserved and enhanced and pollution minimised.	CS14: High Quality Development CS15: Heritage DM:3 High Quality Development DM5: Important Open Space within settlement envelopes DM13: Heritage in Development	DCLG, DEFRA, DCMS, BCC, MBDC, LSP, English Heritage, Natural England, Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust, CPRE, Beds and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterways Trust, Marston Vale Trust, Ivel and Ouse Countryside Project, Greensand Trust, Chilterns Conservation Board, Beds Life – Beds and Luton Biodiversity Partnership	• Review of Conservation Areas in line with Service Plan • Reduce number of buildings at risk	• The number of listed buildings removed or added from/to the statutory list or at risk • The number and location of new and reviewed Conservation Areas • Number of applications refused because they do not meet one or more of the above criteria and number allowed on appeal	**H6** Housing quality – Building for Life Assessments	• Character of District adversely affected by unsympathetic development • Districts environmental resources become further depleted • Environmental wellbeing of community reduces • Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global environments
11. To enhance	The district's	CS16:	DCLG, DEFRA, BCC,	• Net gain	• S106	**E2** Change in	• Character of

153

Strategic Objective	Intended Effect	Resulting Policies	Key Delivery Agencies	Targets	Local and Sustainability Appraisal Indicators	Core Indicators	Consequences of Non-delivery
and manage natural resources of the district in a sustainable and integrated way to bring about an increase in biodiversity, a net gain in green infrastructure, and the retention and enhancement of landscape character	environmental resources, including land, air and soil quality, the water environment, biodiversity, landscape character and the historic and cultural environment will have been conserved and enhanced and pollution minimised.	Landscape and Woodland CS17: Green Infrastructure CS18: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation DM5: Important Open Space within Settlement Envelopes DM14: Landscape and Woodland DM15: Biodiversity DM16: Green Infrastructure DM18: Equestrian Development	MBDC, LSP, BRCC, Natural England, Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust, Ivel and Ouse Countryside Project, Greensand Trust, CPRE, Beds and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterways Trust, Marston Vale Trust, Chilterns Conservation Board, Beds Life – Beds and Luton Biodiversity Partnership	in green infrastructure provision	Contributions towards green infrastructure • Green spaces within development envelopes (hectares) lost/developed • Area of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition • S106 contributions towards biodiversity • Net loss/gain of accessible greenspace	areas of biodiversity importance	District adversely affected by unsympathetic development • Districts environmental resources become further depleted • Environmental wellbeing of community reduces • Less sustainable development results in a further decline in local and global environments

Annex E: Standards for Open Space

The following standards have been taken from the Mid Bedfordshire Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Assessment Technical Report 2008. They should be used in conjunction with Policy CS3 and DM5.

Type of Open Space	Quantity Standard			Quality Standard	Accessibility Standard
Country Parks	The quantity standard is commensurate with the level of provision in Mid Bedfordshire at 1.8 Ha per 1000 population. Provision of Country Parks will be secured through developer contributions to Green Infrastructure.			The Green Flag Awards: Standards for Parks	3.2 kilometres
Informal Recreation Space	Quantity Standard 1.8 hectares per 1000 people.			Quality score of 75% Value Score of 61%	Informal recreation space should be located within approximately 400 metres or 5 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes (240 metres in a straight line).
	Minimum acceptable size standard				
	Settlement Classification	Population	Standard		
	Major Service Centre	6500 and above.	3 to 10 spaces depending on population size and effective catchment area (see Appendix D for guidelines) The accessibility requirement is that every home should be within 400 m of an informal recreation space of at least 2.4 ha,		
	Minor Service Centre	4000 to 6499	3 spaces		

	Large Village	2500 to 3999	2 spaces		
	Small Village	1000 to 2499	1 space (range 1.2 to 24. Ha)		
	Other Settlements	Below 1000	Could be met by other types of spaces e.g. Amenity Greenspace		

	Provision must be met by applying the following sequential steps. Step 1 - Creation of new 2.4 hectare informal recreation space or spaces depending on the scale of development to cater for people living within 5 minutes walking time (400 metres walking distance) from home, or if this is not possible, Step 2 – Provision of a smaller well-located and well-designed site or multiple sites (minimum size 1.2 hectares) depending on the need identified in the relevant settlement, and the quality/benefits of the smaller site, or if this is not possible, (Must achieve the benchmark score for Location when assessed using the Quality Tool.) Step 3 – Developer contributions to the provision of land that will facilitate the creation of a large (middle order significance) informal recreation space within a 1.2 km catchment, or if this is not possible, Step 4 - Improving the quality and accessibility of existing informal open space within the settlement.		
Allotments	The allotment standards proposed are: West subarea - 0.58 hecatres per 1000 population Central subarea -0.34 hecatres per 1000 population	The quality standard proposed for allotments is 70%. Benchmark site is Everton Road in Potton (AL001)	Over 100 plots = 1200m distance 50 to 100 plots = 900m distance

	East subarea - 0.34 hectares per 1000 population		10 to 49 plots = 600m distance 1 to 9 plots = 300m distance
Amenity Greenspace	0.6 hectares per 1000 people.	Quality score of 76% Value Score of 61% The benchmark site for quality is the Merlin Drive site at Sandy at 76 %. The value benchmark is War Memorial site at Cranfield at 61%.	100 metres
Children's Playing Space	The quantity standard for children's play space is 0.4 ha of designated equipped play space per 1000 population. The quantity standard for youth provision is that there should be specific teen provision in each parish of over 3,000 population, linked clearly to consultation with local young people about their specific needs and the best way of meeting these.	The recommended Quality Standard is: *Location:* a location score of 71% *Care & Maintenance:* a care and maintenance score of 68% *Play Value:* a play value score of 60% *Overall Quality:* an overall score of 64%	ccessibility standard should provide for: pe A space within 100m walking distance pe B facility within 400m walking distance pe C facility within 1000m walking distance A teen facility within 15 minutes walking distance
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	Provision should be made of at least 5.4 hectares of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit as follows: No person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of	The quality standard is 75 %. The value standard is 80%.	Under 10 hectares = 300 metres 10.1 to 20 hectares = 1 kilometre

	natural greenspace There should be at least one accessible site of between 10 and 20 hectares within 1 kilometres from home There should be at least one accessible 20 hectare site within 2 kilometres from home There should be one accessible 100 hectare site within 5 kilometres There should be one accessible 500 hectare site within 10 kilometres This standard does not apply to the following sites: NGS032 - Maulden Church Meadow NGS037 - Flitwick Moor NGS042 - Cooper's Hill NGS063 - Knocking Hoe NGS064 - Pegsdon Hills	The benchmark site for quality and value is Pix Brook Nature Reserve.	20.1 to 99 hectares = kilometres 100 to 499 hectares = 3.2 kilometres
Green Corridors	No Standard	No Standard	No Standard
Cemeteries & Churchyards	No Standard	Quality score is 72% Vaue Score is 67% Benchmark site is Southill Cemetery.	No Standard
Outdoor Sport	The quantity standard for playing pitches is 1.8 Hectares per 1000 population.	The recommended quality standards for sports pitches are: Football – 75% Cricket – 88%	The recommended accessibility standards for outdoor sport are: Sports pitches – 1000 metres straight line distance

		Rugby – 78% The recommended quality standard for bowling greens is 93%. The recommended quality standard for tennis courts is 88%.	MUGAs/Tennis courts – 1000 metres straight line distance Bowling greens – 1000 metres straight line distance Synthetic Turf Pitches – 20 minute drive time
Indoor Sport	Swimming Pools - 19.68 m^2 per 1000 population Sports Halls - 74.37 m^2 per 1000 population Health & Fitness - 5.23 stations per 1000 population.	To provide facilities that are both sustainable and energy efficient. The recommended quality standard is: A score of 87% on the Indoor Sports Facilities Quality Assessment Quest Scores as follows: Flitwick Leisure Centre 78% Sandy Sports Centre 72% Saxon Pool & Leisure Centre 76% Centres meet the requirements of Disability Discrimination Act	Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools - 15 minute drive time Village Halls and Community Centres: 1500 metres walking distance threshold 3000 metre cycle or drive distance threshold
Civic Spaces	No Standard	Quality score of 92%	No Standard

| | | Value score of 96% | |
| | | Benchmark site is Ampthill Market Place | |

Annex F: List of superseded Local Plan Policies

Certain policies of the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (adopted December 2005) were saved[1] by the Secretary of State on 23rd September 2008 and continue to be part of the development plan until the Council indicates that they are superseded by policies in Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Framework.

The table below sets out the saved policies from the adopted Local Plan that are superseded by this Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, and thus are no longer part of the development plan for Central Bedfordshire.

Saved Local Plan Policy	Core Strategy/Development Management Policy that supersedes Saved Local Plan Policy	Description
LPS1A	CS1	New Settlement at Elstow
LPS1	CS1	Selected Settlements
LPS2	CS1	Large Villages
LPS3	CS1	Small Villages
LPS4	DM4	Settlement Envelopes
CS1	CS16, DM14	Landscape
CS3	CS16, DM14	Areas of Great Landscape Value
CS5	CS16	Marston Vale Community Forest
CS7	CS17	Countryside Management Projects
CS10	CS11 DM12	Farm Diversification
CS15	CS11, DM3, DM12	Re-use of Rural Buildings (commercial)
CS17	DM12	Agricultural PD Rights
CS18	DM3	Re-use of Rural Buildings (residential)
CS19	DM4	Development in the Countryside
CS22	DM4	Re-building of Dwellings in the Countryside
CS23	DM18	Horse Related Development (Domestic)
CS24	DM18	Horse Related Development (Commercial)
CS25	DM12	Retailing in the Countryside
CS26	CS12	Outdoor Markets
CS27	DM4	Garden Extensions
NC3	CS18	CWSs & LNRs
NC8	CS17, CS18	Protection of Undesignated Sites
GBT3	DM6	Infill Development in Green Belt
CHE8	CS15	Historic Parks & Gardens
CHE11	CS15, DM13	New Development in Conservation Areas
CHE13	CS15	Retention of Unlisted Buildings

---

[1]   Under Schedule 8, paragraph 1(3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Saved Local Plan Policy	Core Strategy/Development Management Policy that supersedes Saved Local Plan Policy	Description
A1	CS15	Ancient Monuments
A2	CS15	Site Evaluations
DPS5	DM3	Protection of Amenity
DPS6	DM3	Criteria for Extensions
DPS9	CS2, CS3	Open Space for New Dwellings
DPS10	CS3, CS4	Highways Provision for New Developments
DPS11	CS17, DM3, DM14	Landscaping for New Developments
DPS12	DM3	Character of Village Ends
DPS16	CS16, DM14	Trees and Hedgerows
DPS17	DM2	Surface Water Drainage
DPS18	CS2	Sewerage Infrastructure
DPS19	CS2, DM9	Public Transport/ Cycling
DPS20	CS13, , DM1	Energy Conservation
DPS20A	DM3	Management of Development Waste
DPS23	CS14, DM3	Crime Prevention
DPS26	DM3	Temporary Buildings
DPS27	CS2, DM3	Public Art
EN2	CS13, DM1	Renewable Energy
EN3	CS13, DM1	Wind Turbines
EN4	CS13, DM1	Solar Energy
PHS3	CS13, DM3	Limiting Emissions
PHS5	DM3	Light Pollution
SR2	CS3	Sport & Leisure Facilities
SR5	CS3, DM17	Provision of Recreational Open Space
SR6	CS17	Rights of Way
SR8	CS17, DM16 DM17	Sport & Leisure Facilities in the Countryside
HO2	CS7	Affordable Housing
HO3	CS8	Rural Exceptions Sites
HO4	DM10	Housing Mix
HO5	DM3	Housing Density
HO6	CS1, CS5	Location of New Residential Development
HO9	DM10	Impaired Mobility Dwellings
EMP2A	CS11, DM12	Rural Workshops
EMP3	DM3	Protection of Amenity
EMP6A	CS11, DM12	Commercial Uses in the Countryside
EMP7	CS11	Small Scale Tourist Development
EMP9	CS11, DM11	Major Tourist Related Development
EMP10	DM11	Higher Education and Research Facilities
EMP11	DM3	Aviation Development
TCS2	CS12, DM7	Retail Development
TCS9	DM7	A3 Uses in town & village centres
TCS10	DM7	Residential Uses in Town Centres
TCS11	DM7	Office Uses in Town Centres

Saved Local Plan Policy	Core Strategy/Development Management Policy that supersedes Saved Local Plan Policy	Description
TCS12	DM7	Leisure and Cultural Facilities
TCS13	CS4	Off-Street Car Parking
TCS14	CS4	Town Centre Car Parking
TCS15	DM3	Shopfronts
TCS16	DM8	Village Shops & Local Retail Centres
TCS17	DM8	Last Public House
TP1A	DM9	Travel Assessments
TP1	CS4	Access for Cyclists & Pedestrians
TP4	CS4	Biggleswade-Sandy Cyclepath
TP5	CS4	Public Transport Provision
TP6	CS4	East-West Rail Link
TP7	CS4	Env. Impact of Rail Freight

Annex G: Settlement Envelope Review

A Settlement Envelope is a line on a map which defines the boundary between towns and villages and their surrounding countryside. In some instances, where there is ambiguity in defining that boundary, the Envelope has been used to reflect the character of the predominant land use, using the most appropriate and clear physical features on the ground. That land use must be settlement related, for example residential development, domestic gardens, playing fields and community facilities; and not related to agriculture or considered to be part of the countryside.

The matrix below gives an indication of the criteria relating to both land use, location and character, that have been used to assess the submissions put forward to the Settlement Envelope Review, and determine whether land can be appropriately included within any given Settlement Envelope. Clearly some criteria contradict other criteria and others are required in combination with other factors to merit inclusion. Thus this table has been created to introduce an element of clarity with the proviso that judgements have been made on a site by site basis taking into account elements like local topography and character in order to determine suitability for inclusion.

	Inclusion Within the Settlement Envelope	Exclusion from the Settlement Envelope
Permanent Structures	✔	
Temporary structures		✔
Follows the existing line of the settlement	✔	
Detached from the rest of the settlement by non-settlement related land uses		✔
Land which has the characteristics of open countryside		✔
Residential development of similar density and character to the rest of the settlement	✔	
Residential accommodation that only has temporary planning permission		✔
Large expanses of land associated with dwellings		✔
Agricultural and paddock land/ glasshouses whether redundant or in use		✔
Sites segregated from the settlement by features or constraints on the ground e.g. rivers, railway lines or roads		✔
Residential curtilages	✔	
Land with Planning Consent for residential development or community facilities.	✔	

Settlement Envelopes have been defined to enable the clear, unambiguous and consistent application of policies in the control of development. They are not an attempt to define the extent of a particular town or village community. Thus the Settlement Envelopes are unrelated to the administrative boundaries of towns

and parishes, which serve this particular function.

Settlement Envelopes will be illustrated on the Proposals Map. Three new Settlement Envelopes have been created for the newly defined Small Villages of Fairfield, Old Warden and Millbrook (Policy CS1).

KEY DIAGRAM

Mid Beds Core Strategy Key Diagram