

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE (North)**

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

**DRAFT SUBMISSION**

**December 2010**

Please note that this document will be formatted and the relevant covers attached, prior to consultation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

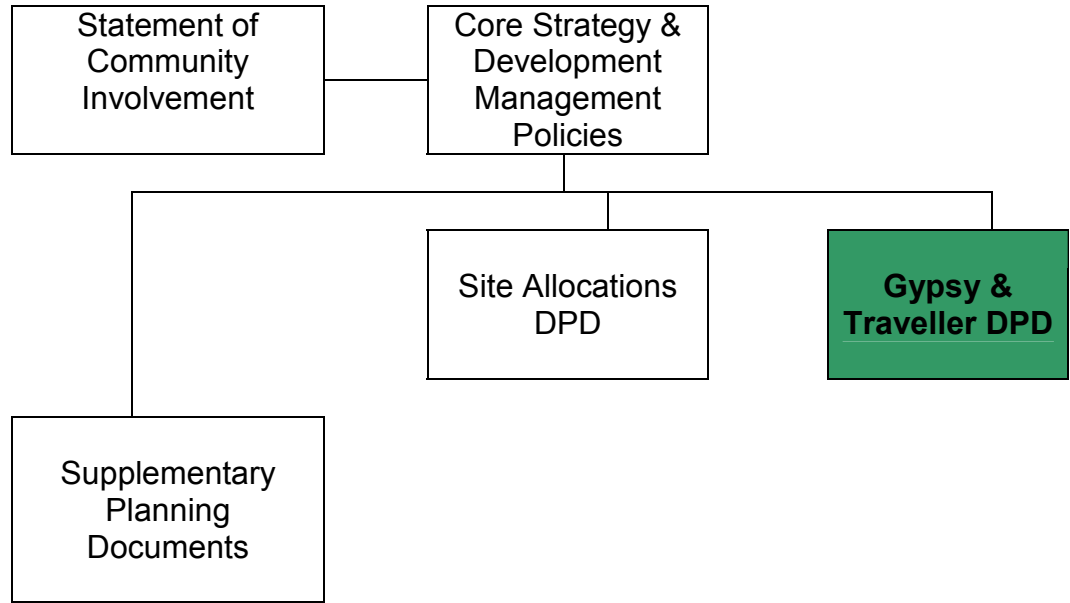
### What is the LDF?

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which came into force in September 2004. The LDF comprises several documents known as Development Plan Documents (DPDs) containing policies that will be used in the process of determining planning applications for any type of development which is submitted to the Council. The LDF (North) will replace the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan (First Review), which was adopted in December 2005. All LDF (North) documents cover the former Mid Bedfordshire District Council area which is referred to as Central Bedfordshire (North) for the purposes of this document.

The LDF deals with spatial issues, i.e. those issues that involve the use of land and the movement of people and access to opportunities. The overarching document in the Central Bedfordshire Council (North) LDF portfolio is the adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (November 2009). It sets out the Council's spatial vision, objectives and policies for future development in the area over the period 2011 – 2026. Following on from the Core Strategy, specific sites for development will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD. The identified sites and policies in that document will help deliver the spatial vision, objectives and policies of the Core Strategy.

This Gypsy and Traveller DPD is specifically intended to identify accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The policies contained in this document will affect how sites are developed. The diagram below shows how the Gypsy and Traveller DPD fits in the Local Development Framework.

Gypsies and Travellers are defined as 'persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' education or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such'.



## **Sustainability Appraisal**

A requirement of the planning system is to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the policies in the 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 throughout.

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

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. A Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken on this document and is available to download from the Council website.

## **Appropriate Assessment**

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. The Habitats Directive establishes a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological status. These are referred to as Natura 2000 sites or European Sites, and comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There are no Natura 2000 or Ramsar sites in Central Bedfordshire (North). There are 5 European sites outside of the Council's boundary but within the potential influence of the plan.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening has been undertaken to consider if there is likely to be adverse effects any important sites designated for their ecological status. This has found that that the Gypsy and Traveller DPD would have no adverse effects on such sites.

Current guidance indicates that HRA of higher tier plans is not a substitute for HRA of other lower level plans, but that the findings and analysis undertaken can usefully inform decisions as to whether further screening work is necessary. Given that: there are no Natura 2000 sites within the Central Bedfordshire North area, the scale and nature of Gypsy and Traveller sites is small, localised and regulated and the conclusion of 'no significant effect' arising from the HRA screening for the Gypsy and Traveller DPD; it was assessed that further HRA screening work on the Draft Submission Gypsy and Traveller DPD was not required.

## **Consultation & Site Assessment**

This document sets out the Council's policy approach and shortlist of sites for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. These policies and shortlisted sites were the result of extensive work and consultation on a range of issues and options beforehand.

The first consultation undertaken was the Issues and Options in March 2007. In addition to a number of policy 'issues', this first consultation document considered twenty sites that had been received as submissions through the site search process, or were existing tolerated sites or sites with temporary permission that were being considered for their suitability. The Council received over 700 comments to the consultation.

This was followed by a Second Issues and Options document in October 2007. After the close of the first Issues and Options consultation a number of sites were withdrawn from the process. In light of this the Council undertook a further site search. This search involved revisiting the Vacant Land Register, rechecking the Council's own database of land, contacting the Ministry of Defence and liaising with the County Council. A further round of consultation then took place on the five sites identified, receiving over 3,500 comments.

Following detailed consideration by the Council, a number of sites were selected as 'preferred options' for further comment and consideration. This consultation was undertaken from November 2008 to January 2009. Overall 1815 comments were received to this consultation.

After these consultations, a set of criteria and scoring system against which new and previously considered sites was applied. This was done to guide the shortlisting of sites for preferred sites consultation.

At this stage a sequential approach to site shortlisting was applied starting with sites in or on the edge of settlements; secondly, in areas where Gypsies and Travellers already have authorised sites, where extension of those sites is subservient in scale and would not lead to problems of assimilation with the settled community; thirdly, in more rural locations where those sites are free from environmental and planning constraints and are within reasonable distance of local facilities.

In addition the criteria from Government guidance in Circular 01/2006 and other related guidance documents and all technical planning constraints were considered. The results of each of these criteria were scored and the scores of each tallied in order to give a total score for each considered site. This enabled shortlisting of sites.

Following the work set out above, the Council consulted on a set of Preferred Sites to accommodate a higher level of need which was required in the East of England Plan. This document was published from April to June 2010 and received 1050 comments.

In the summer of 2010, Regional Strategies were abolished, accordingly the requirements of the East of England Plan are no longer key in determining the number of pitches required. The total provision is therefore based on the local assessment referred to later in this document.

## **THE REQUIREMENT FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PITCHES**

### **Why a Gypsy and Traveller DPD?**

Local authorities are required by Government, through the Housing Act 2004, to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers alongside the settled population. Local authorities are also required by the Act to develop a strategy that addresses any unmet need that is identified. That strategy is the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD). The Council's progress on meeting this statutory duty is regularly and rigorously monitored by Central Government.

Travelling is an integral part of cultural identity for Gypsy and Traveller households. The courts have accepted that nomadism, and living in a caravan is a reflection of the cultural heritage of Gypsy and Irish Traveller families, not simply a lifestyle choice.

Aside from this statutory duty, there are practical reasons for making provision. Gypsies and Travellers can sometimes find themselves in a cycle of 'enforced' nomadism, being continually moved on by the authorities because of the shortage of authorised sites. As a result, Gypsies and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than any other ethnic group in terms of access to healthcare and education. The lack of authorised public sites and the difficulties associated with getting planning permission for private sites, has meant Gypsies and Travellers have to set up home on land belonging to others or on their own land without permission.

If provision is not made for enough authorised sites, unauthorised camping is likely to continue. The problems associated with unauthorised sites, such as the costs of taking enforcement against unauthorised sites, the tension that exists between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community and the social exclusion experienced by Gypsies and Travellers on unauthorised sites, will continue. The aim of this DPD is to reduce the occurrence of unauthorised sites by making sufficient new provision for Gypsies and Travellers in the area.

## **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEED**

### **Pitch Requirements to 2011**

The Council, in partnership with the Bedfordshire local authorities, undertook a sub regional study to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Bedfordshire and Luton in 2006.

The sub regional approach adopted accorded with guidance on the preparation of Accommodation Assessments prepared by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Adopting a sub regional approach allowed for:

- A bigger sample, and therefore more accurate results;



- A better understanding of the travelling patterns and the need for accommodation, across administrative boundaries;
- A common approach and consistency across the study area;
- A reduced risk of double counting; and
- Opportunities to work together to devise a wider strategic approach to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation shortages and enforcement action taken on unauthorised sites.

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) made projections of Gypsy and Traveller pitch needs for five years. This was consistent with the DCLG guidance, which recommends projections of need between five to ten years.

The assessment found the need for 74 (15 per year) total extra pitches between 2006 and 2011, across Bedfordshire and Luton. The assessment stated that 20 pitches should be provided in Central Bedfordshire (North) up to 2011.

The findings of the accommodation needs assessment also included important observations of the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community in Bedfordshire and Luton. These are:

- The Gypsy and Traveller community prefer smaller sites. However, there was also some need identified for larger family pitches to accommodate larger modern trailers.
- There was a strong preference for provision of family owned sites.
- There was a desire for additional capacity to be provided on new sites to allow families to accommodate visitors.
- Most households wished to remain in the area they are currently settled in.
- The Gypsy and Traveller community were supportive of clear restrictions on the size of sites and where appropriate supported a “cap” on the number of people living on a site on a permanent basis and for transit / visiting.
- The Gypsy and Traveller community wanted sites to be effectively managed.
- The Gypsy and Traveller community often supported a procedure for regular inspection of sites, covering the provision of basic facilities including water and sanitation, as well as health and safety.
- Support for security of tenure for families living on authorised local authority sites being brought in line with that for social housing tenancies.
- Many of the Gypsy and Traveller households within the study area are very settled, travel is predominately seasonal, and 81.1% of households in Bedfordshire and Luton have not traveled in the last 12 months.

### **What is a Pitch?**

A pitch is the space required to accommodate one household and their caravans, parking space and enough room for the turning of vehicles. A study in the East of England found that the average household size for Gypsies across the region was 1.7 caravans. However, this will vary from area to area and according to family need. There is no one-size-fits-all measurement of a pitch as, in the case of the settled community, this depends on the size of individual families and their particular needs.

Guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide 2008), states that as a general guide, it is possible to specify that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a large trailer and touring caravan, (or two caravans) drying space for clothes/a small garden area, a lockable shed (for bicycles, wheelchair storage etc) and parking space for two vehicles. Smaller pitches must be able to accommodate at least an amenity building, a large trailer, drying space for clothes and parking for at least one vehicle.

### Recently Approved Pitches

Since the completion of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment in 2006, 3 pitches have been permitted through the planning application process. Two pitches were granted permission on appeal at Magpie Farm and one pitch was granted permission at Houghton Conquest. These three pitches count towards meeting the pitches needed in Central Bedfordshire (North). 17 pitches are therefore needed up to 2011.

### Pitch Delivery from 2011 to 2016

During the review of all local needs assessments in the Eastern area, it was assessed by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) in 2007 that the compound growth rate in the region is 3% per year. This figure remains valid. By applying the 3% to the yearly total number of pitches in Central Bedfordshire North an additional 10 pitches will be required to 2016. In total therefore the pitch requirement from 2006 to 2016 would be 27 pitches. Table 1 sets out this level of need.

Table 1: Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Requirement in Central Bedfordshire North

Required Pitches 2006 - 2011	20
Required Pitches 2011 – 2016 (using 3% compound growth rate)	10
Total Required Pitches (to 2016)	30
Recent Pitches with Planning Permissions (Granted Since 2006)	3
<b>Total Pitch Requirement to 2016 (minus permissions)</b>	<b>27</b>

## QUANTITY OF PROVISION

### Providing Permanent Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

Central Bedfordshire Council is firmly committed to making adequate site provision for Gypsies and Travellers. It is accepted that at a local level, Central Bedfordshire (North) needs to accommodate 27 additional new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2006 and 2016 to accommodate existing households within the area.

This DPD identifies sites to accommodate 23 pitches which satisfies accommodation need until 2014 through the allocation of sites. All other windfall applications for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be considered against GT3 and all relevant Development Management policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy GT1: Providing Permanent Gypsy And Traveller Pitches**

**The Council will make provision for 27 pitches to meet identified Gypsy and Traveller needs in Central Bedfordshire (North) up to 2014.**

**All planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites will be considered against Policy GT3 and other relevant Development Management policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.**

### Visitor Spaces and Transit Pitches

A preference was expressed in the GTAA for permanent family sites with visitor spaces, which enable the Gypsy and Traveller community to accommodate members of their family who are visiting. A visitor space would be offered on a short term basis to visiting friends and families of the Gypsies and Travellers residing on the site. These pitches would be in addition to the permanent pitches on site.

As well as visitor spaces, provision will be made for transit pitches. A transit pitch is intended for short term use by Gypsies and Travellers in transit. The pitch is itself permanent, while its residents are temporary, with a maximum period of stay imposed, usually by the site manager. Such sites are provided with basic amenities and services such as boundary fencing, hardstanding, water supply, toilet and washing facilities, waste disposal and (possibly) electricity. Permissions for transit pitches could restrict the size of sites and recommend a “cap” on the number of people allowed to stay on the pitch on a transit basis.

There are opportunities for providing transit pitches on existing permanent sites. The appropriateness of sites for this purpose will be determined on a site by site basis using Policy GT3 to determine applications.

### **Policy GT2: Provision for Visitor and Transit Spaces**

**Provision will be made for visitor space on appropriate sites across Central Bedfordshire (North). Visitor space provision will be restricted to control the number of people visiting and their length of stay, to be determined on a site by site basis.**

**All planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites will be considered against Policy GT3 and other relevant Development Management policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.**

**Provision for transit pitches will be considered on existing sites with permanent provision, at site locations determined in accordance with GT3 and in consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community. Transit provision will be restricted to control the number of people visiting and their length of stay, to be determined on a site by site basis.**

## **CONSIDERATION OF NEW SITES**

### **The Location of Gypsy and Traveller Sites**

The following policies provide a more detailed policy framework against which planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites or pitches, Visitor pitches, Transit sites or pitches and Travelling Showpeople sites or pitches will be assessed.

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.

New sites should be planned sensitively to take account of the needs of both the travelling and settled communities. Issues of sustainability are important and relevant sustainability considerations include:

- The promotion of peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community;
- The wider benefits of easier access to GP and other health services;
- Access to local schools to enable Gypsy and Traveller children to attend school regularly;
- A settled base that reduces the need for long distance travelling, and the possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampments; and
- Not locating sites in areas of high flood risk, and functional floodplains.
- Access to local shops; and
- Access to local employment opportunities.

New sites will be considered favourably where they are located in areas considered appropriate for general residential use and with access to local services and facilities such as health and education. New sites should be located next to, or in close proximity to existing settlements.

In sustainability terms, first preference should be given to sites that are better located to existing settlements and facilities. However, the results of the Bedfordshire and Luton Accommodation Needs Assessment did show that some Gypsy and Traveller families would prefer to live in the countryside, on privately owned and managed sites. Such locations will be considered where they are constraint free.

Government guidance indicates that new Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Green Belt, will normally be considered inappropriate. However, local landscape and local nature conservation designations should not be used to refuse planning permission. The Core Strategy states the South Bedfordshire Green Belt will be protected and maintained.

Applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites will be assessed in accordance with Policy GT3.

## **Assessing Planning Applications**

Planning applications will be judged using the policies set out in this DPD and the relevant Development Management policies set out in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies document.

Applications will be considered on their merits in the context of site size and location, and the characteristics of the surrounding area. Planning permissions might restrict the size of sites and where appropriate recommend a “cap” on the number of people allowed to live on the site on a permanent basis or the number of caravans being stationed on a site. Consideration must also be given to site specific factors such as vehicular access from the public highway, as well as provision for parking, turning, servicing on site, and road safety for occupants and visitors.

### **Flood Risk**

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, permanently occupied caravan sites should not be permitted in areas of high flood risk as they are considered as highly vulnerable development.

In areas of flood risk, where a site is considered suitable for development, a flood risk assessment will be required to identify the extent of flood risk and recommend mitigation measures necessary to address the problem. The Environment Agency or Internal Drainage Board will be consulted on sites proposed within the flood risk areas.

Gypsy and Traveller sites will only be permitted in areas which are not liable to flooding, or where development does not give rise to flooding elsewhere, unless it is demonstrated that these effects can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation, as agreed by the Environment Agency and secured by planning condition or Section 106 agreement.

### **Highway Access**

Safe and convenient vehicular access to a Gypsy and Traveller site is essential. Access and road safety must adhere to the Highway Authority's guidance. Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople pitches will not be permitted where site access is deemed unsafe or inadequate. As well as an appropriate access, there must be adequate space is provided on sites for the turning and servicing of vehicles.

Safe pedestrian access to nearby local services should ideally be available, to reduce the reliance on private vehicles.

### **Residential Amenity**

Consideration should be given to the potential for noise and other disturbance from the movement of vehicles, the stationing of vehicles on the site and any on site business activities. This will be judged on a site by site basis.

Gypsy and Traveller sites will not be permitted in the vicinity of dangerous roads, railway lines, water bodies or power lines.

Sites within walking distance of community facilities such as recreational facilities will be encouraged. An area for children to play may be required where access to existing facilities is not available.

More detail about site design is set out in the DCLG guidance document *Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide* (2008). Site design will also have to comply with the conditions of a license issued by the Local Authority under the Caravan Sites Control of Development Act 1960.

### **GT3: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites**

**Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be granted planning permission providing that:**

- 1. Satisfactory evidence is submitted to justify local need for the scale and nature of the accommodation proposed;**
- 2. Satisfactory and safe vehicular access to and from the public highway is provided both to allow manoeuvrability of living accommodation to the site and the pitch, and to ensure the safety of other road users with the use of traffic calming measures where appropriate;**
- 3. Site layout, including the use of hard and soft landscaping, ensures that any detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the locality is minimised, including impact on biodiversity and nature conservation;**
- 4. The amenity of nearby occupiers will not be unduly harmed by the development;**
- 5. Pollution from light and noise sources on the site are minimised and visual and acoustic privacy is maintained for both site residents and the occupiers of nearby land and property;**
- 6. Boundaries which may include fences, hedges and low walls are erected to provide clear demarcation of the perimeter of the site;**
- 7. The scale of the site and the number of pitches would not dominate the nearest settled community and would not place undue pressure on local infrastructure;**
- 8. Adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, preferably reached by foot, cycle or public transport;**
- 9. Surface Water Drainage and storm water drainage systems are installed with interceptors within the drainage system where appropriate;**
- 10. The site would not be located in an area at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplain;**
- 11. The site is adequately serviced by electricity and water.**

## **The Provision of Space/Facilities for Business Use on Permanent Sites**

The Gypsy and Traveller community tends to be self employed, sometimes running their businesses from the site on which their caravans are stationed.

Gypsy and Traveller sites suitable for mixed residential and business uses should have regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants and their children, and neighbouring residents. Mixed uses should not be permitted on rural exception sites.

The Council will consider applications for business use for the Gypsy and Traveller community provided they meet criteria set out in the policy below.

### **Policy GT4: Provision of Space/Facilities for Business Use on Permanent Sites**

**Planning applications for business use on or adjacent to Gypsy and Traveller sites for the Gypsy and Traveller community will be considered in settlement or edge of settlement locations provided the following criteria can be met:**

- **The business use proposed is in scale and proportion to site and would not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the visual appearance of the surrounding area;**
- **The amenities and safety of the occupants of the site and/or neighbouring residents should not be harmed;**
- **A safe, convenient and adequate standard of access can be provided;**
- **There are suitable areas for the parking vehicles or storage of materials; and**
- **Appropriate safeguards are put in place to prevent the pollution of surface and ground water.**



## **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS**

The land allocated within the following policies has been identified on the Proposals Maps, in Annex 1.

### **Land South of Gypsy and Traveller Site, between Common Road and Myers Road, Potton**

This site is conveniently located on the edge of Potton. Potton is a sustainable location and offers a level of facilities and services greater than most settlements in the District. This is recognised in the Core Strategy, which defines the settlement as a Minor Service Centre.

The site is within a reasonable distance of community facilities and does not have to be entirely car dependant, as there is access to services and facilities in Potton by walking and cycling.

The allocated site is currently grass land, set down lower than the existing site and there is a large bund separating it from the adjacent field. With some groundwork and tree removal, the site can be developed as a Gypsy and Traveller site. Careful consideration will need to be given to foul drainage and to storm drainage due to the enclosed topography of the site. Access is considered acceptable.

This site sits adjacent to an existing Gypsy and Traveller site at Myers Lane. The existing site is a publicly owned and managed site, however this additional site is privately owned.

The existing site is currently very overcrowded and configured badly and will benefit from expansion. This allocation will help ease overcrowding on the existing site. Expansion will also allow reconfiguration of the existing site to improve both the quality of life of the residents occupying the current site and its appearance. The allocation of this site would make no overall increase in pitch numbers. There are currently 14 pitches on this site.

### **Policy GT5: Land south of the Gypsy and Traveller site, Common Road, Potton**

**Land south of the Gypsy and Traveller site on Common Road, Potton is allocated to enable reconfiguration of the existing publicly managed Gypsy and Traveller site. No additional pitches will be added to this site which accommodates 14 pitches. The site should be managed as part of the wider Potton site. The development will provide the following:**

- **Suitable site design;**
- **Satisfactory means of access, ensuring the needs of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are considered;**
- **Appropriate landscaping proposals; and**
- **Acceptable methods of foul and surface water drainage.**

### **Oak Tree Nursery and Magpie Farm, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote**

Oak Tree Nursery is conveniently located on the edge of Upper Caldecote and about half a mile west of Biggleswade. Upper Caldecote is recognised in the Core Strategy as a Large Village where further small scale housing development is considered acceptable in principle.

Magpie Farm, the adjacent site, and a small area at the front of Oak Tree Nursery currently comprises of three Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Oak Tree Nursery is occupied by a mixture of grassland and a nursery. The rear of Oak Tree Nursery is currently occupied by large glasshouses in various states of disrepair, no longer being utilised. It is intended by the site owner to retain one glasshouse for horticultural purposes.

The additional 3 pitches at Oak Tree Nursery will create a total of 6 pitches on this and the adjacent site Magpie Farm. This respects the scale of the adjoining village as well as acknowledging the closeness of the site to Biggleswade.

The Highways Authority has advised that adequate visibility onto Hill Lane could be achieved by the removal of the fence and newly planted hedge.

#### **Policy GT6: Oak Tree Nursery and Magpie Farm, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote**

**Oak Tree Nursery, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote, is allocated for 3 pitches in addition to the existing 3 pitches. The mix of pitch size will be determined following further consideration and consultation. The development will provide the following:**

- **Suitable site design;**
- **Satisfactory means of access, ensuring the needs of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are considered;**
- **Off site highway improvements where necessary;**
- **Landscaping and appropriate boundary treatment, particularly on the north and west sides;**
- **Removal of the ancillary equipment/structures not utilised; and**
- **Acceptable methods of foul and surface water drainage.**

## **1 Old Acres, Barton Road, Pulloxhill**

The site is situated off the A6, south of Pulloxhill, adjacent to Barton le Clay settlement. This site has been occupied since July 2004 by a single Gypsy and Traveller family, occupying 8 caravans.

This site is in a rural location. The rural setting of sites is considered acceptable where the sites are not subject to special planning constraints. Nearby Barton Le Clay does offer a good level of services including a doctor's surgery. A footpath links this site from the A6 junction to Barton, which is a mile away.

The site has temporary permission for 8 pitches. As this site is currently privately owned and occupied, no further public investment will be required. This site will be privately managed by the current owner.

The site lies within an area of ridge and furrow medieval earthworks. However as development of this site has already occurred there is probably little of archaeological significance left on the site.

The Highways Authority has confirmed that an acceptable access can be provided off Barton Road to give access to the A6 at the "Speed the Plough" junction. The Environment Agency has requested details of drainage and ground conditions.

### **Policy GT7: 1 Old Acres, Barton Road, Pulloxhill**

**1 Old Acres, Barton Road, Pulloxhill, is allocated for 8 pitches of a mix to be determined by the needs of the existing family. The development will need to provide the following:**

- **Suitable site design;**
- **Satisfactory means of access, ensuring the needs of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are considered;**
- **Off site highway improvements where necessary;**
- **An appropriate landscaping scheme; and**
- **Appropriate methods of foul and surface water drainage**

### **Land to the Rear of 197 Hitchin Road, Arlesey**

This site is located on the edge of Arlesey. Arlesey offers a level of facilities and services greater than most settlements in the District. This is recognised in the Core Strategy, which defines the settlement as a Minor Service Centre.

The site would use the existing access from Hitchin Road, to which the Highways Authority have no objection. Landscaping will be necessary along each of the boundaries of the site. Possible mitigation measures such as acoustic fencing or a bund may be necessary at the rear to minimise noise from the railway line, but this is not considered to be a significant constraint that would prevent development.

A planning application for four Gypsy and Traveller pitches at this site was allowed in 2009 on a temporary, three year basis and the use of the site has been restricted to members of the applicant's immediate family and their dependents. The site owner also owns a piece of land to the rear of his site for these additional pitches. The whole area is shown on the indicative site plan.

The site is proposed for the allocation of the existing 4 temporary pitches and an additional 6 pitches, creating a site total of 10 pitches

#### **Policy GT8: Land to the Rear of 197 Hitchin Road, Arlesey**

**Land to the Rear of 197 Hitchin Road, Arlesey is allocated for 10 pitches. The development will need to provide the following:**

- **Suitable site design;**
- **Satisfactory means of access, ensuring the needs of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are considered;**
- **Off site highway improvements where necessary;**
- **An appropriate landscaping scheme; and**
- **Appropriate methods of foul and surface water drainage.**

### **Hermitage Lane, off Westoning Road, Greenfield**

This site currently occupied by Gypsies and Travellers as a 'tolerated' site. This means the site has been occupied by Gypsies and Travellers for over 10 years. It is believed that this particular site has been at this location for approximately 45 years, occupied by the same family.

It is located near to the village of Greenfield, between the nearby settlements of Flitwick and Pulloxhill. This site is in a countryside location, away from any local services and facilities. The surrounding land is in agricultural use. The site borders the South Bedfordshire Green Belt.

This site has no water or electricity available to it. The family collect and pay for their water once a week from Pulloxhill church. A skip is provided for rubbish which is emptied on a monthly basis but this is inadequate. When collected, any excess rubbish is dumped on the side of the site.

The track on which the family reside is adopted highway, although there is no evidence to suggest that the highway is maintained. The highway traversing this site currently provides a link from the public highway known as Westoning Road to a network of public footpaths.

Negotiations can be carried out with the landowner to enable an alternative public footpath to be created. By enabling a diversion of the pathway, the family could consider applying for a certificate of lawful development, enabling the family to stay on the site.

The current site accommodates two pitches. The constraints of the site are such that the site could not accommodate any additional pitches for the accommodation of other families.

<b>Policy GT9: Hermitage Lane, Hillside Farm off Westoning Road, Greenfield</b>
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<b>Hermitage Lane, Hillside Farm off Westoning Road, Greenfield is granted a certificate of lawful development for two pitches for the existing family.</b>
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## **TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE**

### **Introduction**

Travelling Showpeople are defined as members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers.

Travelling Showpeople's needs are distinct to the needs of the wider Gypsy and Traveller community:

- Travelling Showpeople do not share the same cultures or traditions as Gypsies and Travellers;
- Travelling Showpeople sites combine residential, storage and maintenance uses – Travelling Showpeople require secure permanent bases for the storage of their equipment.

The Showpeople community is well settled in Bedfordshire. Records show that members of the Travelling Showpeople community have resided in Central Bedfordshire North since the late 1800s. These families currently reside on two sites in Biggleswade, at Mill Lane and at Sun Street. Those families have been historically based in Biggleswade and continue to have strong connections with the town but now need additional space to meet their families' needs.

### **Meeting the Identified Need Of Travelling Showpeople In Central Bedfordshire North**

The Council, working with the other Local Authorities in Bedfordshire, commissioned a separate Accommodation Needs Assessment for Travelling Showpeople.

The report recommends the provision of additional permanent authorised pitches to accommodate Showpeople households across Bedfordshire to accommodate the backlog of demand and demand from new family formation between 2007 and 2012. The need for Showpeople accommodation in Central Bedfordshire (North) is identified as 4 new pitches.

It may be preferable to make further site provision through the expansion of existing sites to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and build on existing community relationships. However, the two existing sites on Mill Lane and at Sun Street are both built up to their boundaries with no room to expand.

### **Policy GT10 Provision for Travelling Showpeople**

**The Council will make provision for 4 pitches to meet identified Travelling Showpeople needs in Central Bedfordshire (North).**

**All planning applications for Travelling Showpeople sites will be considered against Policy GT3 and other relevant Development Management policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Document.**

### **Kennel Farm Holding, Off Dunton Lane, Biggleswade**

This site is designated as open countryside and is bounded on its south-western side by a small watercourse fed from the main channel of the River Ivel. The site lies adjacent to some small industrial units at Stratton Park and the Manor Court mobile home site.

This site is conveniently located on the edge of Biggleswade. It is one of the most sustainable site options available in terms of location, as Biggleswade offers the highest level of facilities and services in Central Bedfordshire North. This is recognised in the Core Strategy, which defines the settlement as a Major Service Centre.

The site will accommodate 4 pitches. This will meet the full extent of the current identified need for local Travelling Showpeople. Provision will be made for both living accommodation and the storage of vehicles and equipment.

Vehicles associated with the Travelling Showpeople community are often long and can comprise a number of vehicles connected as one unit. Highways Authority agree that the access requirements are unique and as such will require detailed analysis. The Highways Authority consider that access to the north west of the site, using an existing roundabout and where the public highway is subject to a 40 mph limit, will be acceptable. This westerly access will utilise an existing track running over Council owned land.

The site will enable walking and cycling into the centre of Biggleswade and access to nearby shops at the Saxon Gate development. The site is located partially within the Internal Drainage Board's area and adjacent to an adopted watercourse. Development of the site will therefore need to be set outside the byelaw zone, at least 7 metres from the top of the watercourse along its south-western boundary. Impact of the watercourse will have to be controlled in accordance with a Flood Risk Assessment.

The site is located adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Stratton Moat, so an appropriate buffer will have to be provided to ensure the historical site is protected. The archaeological potential of this site will be investigated prior to the submission of a planning application.

### **Policy GT11 Kennel Farm Holding, Biggleswade**

**Kennel Farm Holding, Biggleswade, is allocated for 4 pitches for the Travelling Showpeople community. The mix of pitch size will be determined following further consideration and consultation. Limited and small scale commercial activity and maintenance will be allowed on this site provided this is connected to the Travelling Showpeople business only. The development will provide the following:**

- **Suitable site design**
- **Satisfactory means of access, ensuring the needs of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists are considered;**
- **Off site highway improvements where necessary;**
- **Landscaping;**
- **Acceptable methods of foul and surface water drainage, including a Flood Risk Assessment;**
- **An archaeological field investigation being undertaken prior to a planning application being submitted; and**
- **Contributions in accordance with the Planning Obligations Strategy.**



## The Safeguarding of Sites

To ensure that the levels of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation are maintained and that a range of sites exist, existing authorised sites across the District will be safeguarded as set out in the table below. Safeguarding also applies to any new sites allocated in this Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document.

Safeguarding will ensure that development or redevelopment of land on for uses other than for Gypsy and Traveller/Travelling Showpeople accommodation would not be permitted. A permanent protected site will give certainty to the Gypsy and Traveller community and settled community, therefore aiding community cohesion and understanding.

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
Hillside, Myers Road, Potton,	Public
Old Cartwheel Nurseries Great North Road, Sandy	Private
Twin Acres, Hitchin Road, Arlesey	Private
Little Acre, Langford Road, Biggleswade	Private
Talamanca, 63 Great North Road, Sandy	Private
Land adjacent to 145 Chapel End Road, Houghton Conquest	Private
Home Farm, 145 Chapel End Road, Houghton Conquest	Private
Magpie Farm, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote	Private
Mill Lane, Biggleswade	Private
Sun Street, Biggleswade	Private

## MONITORING

### Monitoring of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

A key requirement to assess the effectiveness of policies and proposals is regular monitoring and review. The Government endorses a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach to plan making in order to check whether policies are working and if changes are necessary.

There is a requirement for all local planning authorities to submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to Government, providing an assessment of its policies against a series of core and local output indicators. The monitoring and evaluation of progress towards objectives and targets will form part of the feedback mechanism to ensure the effective operation of policies or highlight any revisions that maybe required.

The following indicators will be used by the Council in order to monitor and review the effectiveness of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople policies and proposals:

- Net additional permanent Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and transit pitches
- The levels of vacancy on permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites in Central Bedfordshire North.
- The levels of vacancy on Travelling Showpeople sites in Central Bedfordshire North.
- The number of illegal encampments and enforcement action carried out in Central Bedfordshire North
- The number of applications by Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople approved and refused .

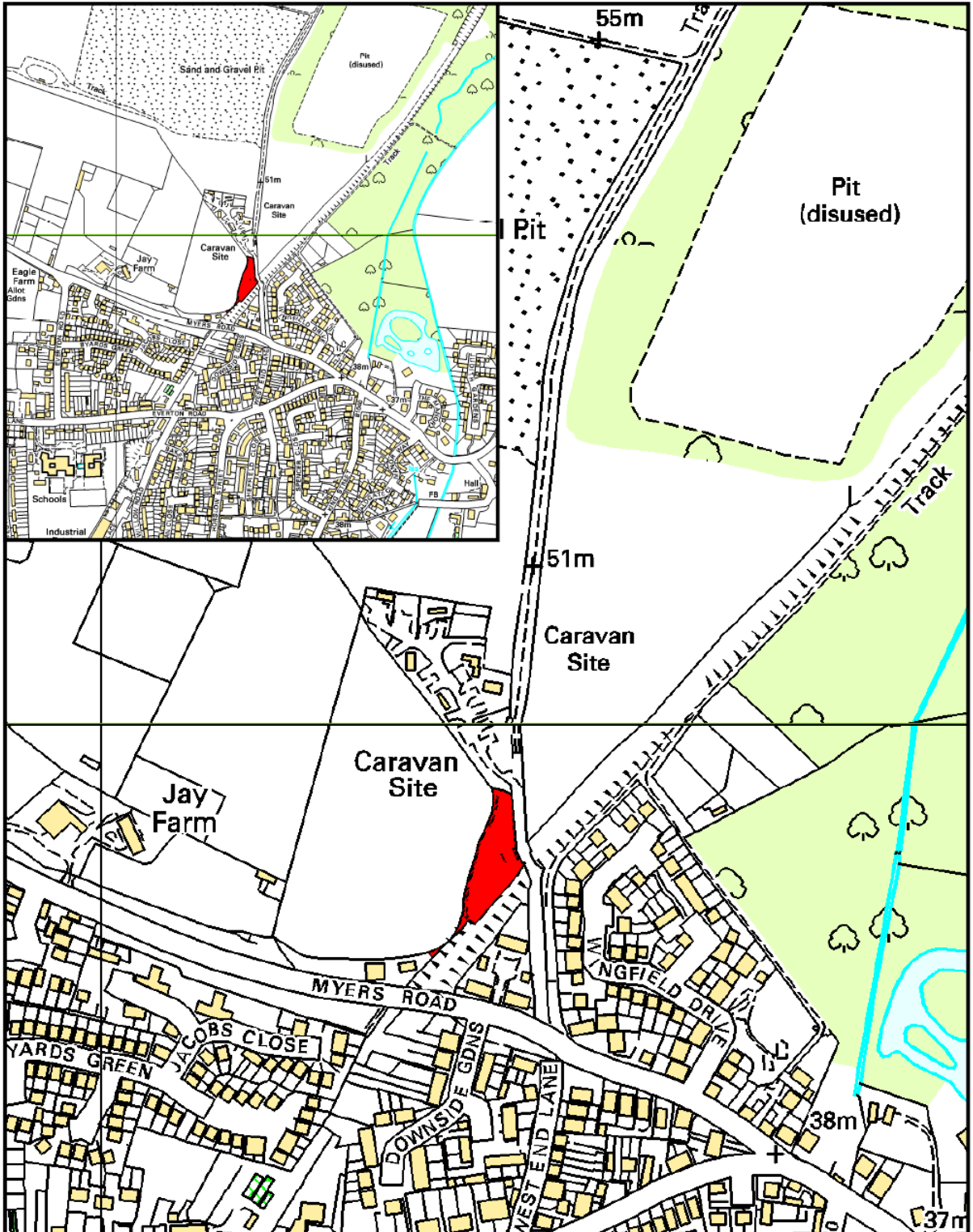
## GLOSSARY

<b>Caravans</b>	Mobile living vehicles/trailers used by Gypsy and Travellers.
<b>DCLG</b>	Department of Communities and Local Government
<b>Development Plan Document (DPD)</b>	Those documents contained within the LDF that are part of the statutory development plan. They are subject to Independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
<b>Gypsy</b>	Members of Gypsy and Traveller communities. Usually described Romany (English) Gypsies from India. The term is not acceptable to all Travellers.
<b>Household</b>	One person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping – that is, they normally share at least one meal per day and the housekeeping costs. Any students or school children that normally live there should be included as part of the household, even if they are currently away at school, college or university.
<b>Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)</b>	European legislation and the Government's regulations have introduced a need to carry out Habitats Regulations Assessments (sometimes known as Appropriate Assessments) for local development documents and for particular development projects to protect the integrity of internationally important nature sites.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	This is a term which includes all the built facilities that we need to live our lives such as schools, roads, drainage, electricity supplies etc. The term 'services' is used to cover some of these facilities.
<b>Mobile Home</b>	Legally a 'caravan', but not usually capable of being moved by towing.
<b>Pitch</b>	A pitch is the space provided on a Gypsy and Traveller site to accommodate one family; typically this may contain an amenity building, parking space and one or more caravans. In the Eastern Region the average pitch accommodates 1.7 caravans.
<b>Planning Policy Statement</b>	Issued by Government to set out its national land use policies for England on different areas of planning.
<b>Registered Social Landlord (RSL)</b>	A housing association or a not for profit company registered by the Housing Corporation to provide social housing.
<b>Section 106</b>	A voluntary legal agreement between the Local Planning Authority and developer, tied to a planning permission, which covers matters outside the scope of normal planning conditions.
<b>Settled Community</b>	Reference to non Travellers (those who live in houses).

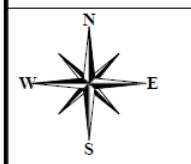
<b>Site</b>	An area of land laid out and used for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. An authorised site will have planning permission (and a site license if privately owned) for use as a Gypsy caravan site.
<b>Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</b>	This sets out the standards for community Involvement for all LDF documents and planning applications. It may be subject to an independent Examination.
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</b>	A process of systematically appraising the environmental opportunities and constraints of a project, and identifying and managing its implications. SEA is a statutory requirement of certain plans and programmes, under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
<b>Sustainability</b>	This is a term which has come to mean using resources in a manner which will conserve those resources for future generations whilst leading to a pleasant and safe environment.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>	A Sustainability Appraisal evaluates the social, economic and environmental impacts of policies and strategies in a Local Development Document to ensure that the policies and strategies are in accordance with Sustainable Development objectives.
<b>Transit Site</b>	A Gypsy & Traveller site intended for short-term use by Gypsy and Travellers in transit. The site is normally permanent, while its residents are temporary and a maximum period of stay is usually imposed.
<b>Traveller</b>	A member of the travelling community. Often used to refer to Irish Travellers. This term is generally acceptable to all Gypsy and Travellers.
<b>Travelling Showpeople</b>	Travelling people who work in the circus / fairs.
<b>Unauthorised Development</b>	This refers to land owned by Gypsy and Travellers without planning permission.
<b>Unauthorised Encampment</b>	An area where Gypsies and Travellers reside in vehicles or tents without permission of the land owner. Unauthorised encampments can occur in a wide variety of locations (e.g. at the side of the road).

## **Annex 1: New Allocations Site Maps**

### GT5 Land North of Myers Road, Potton



Land North of Myers Road, Potton

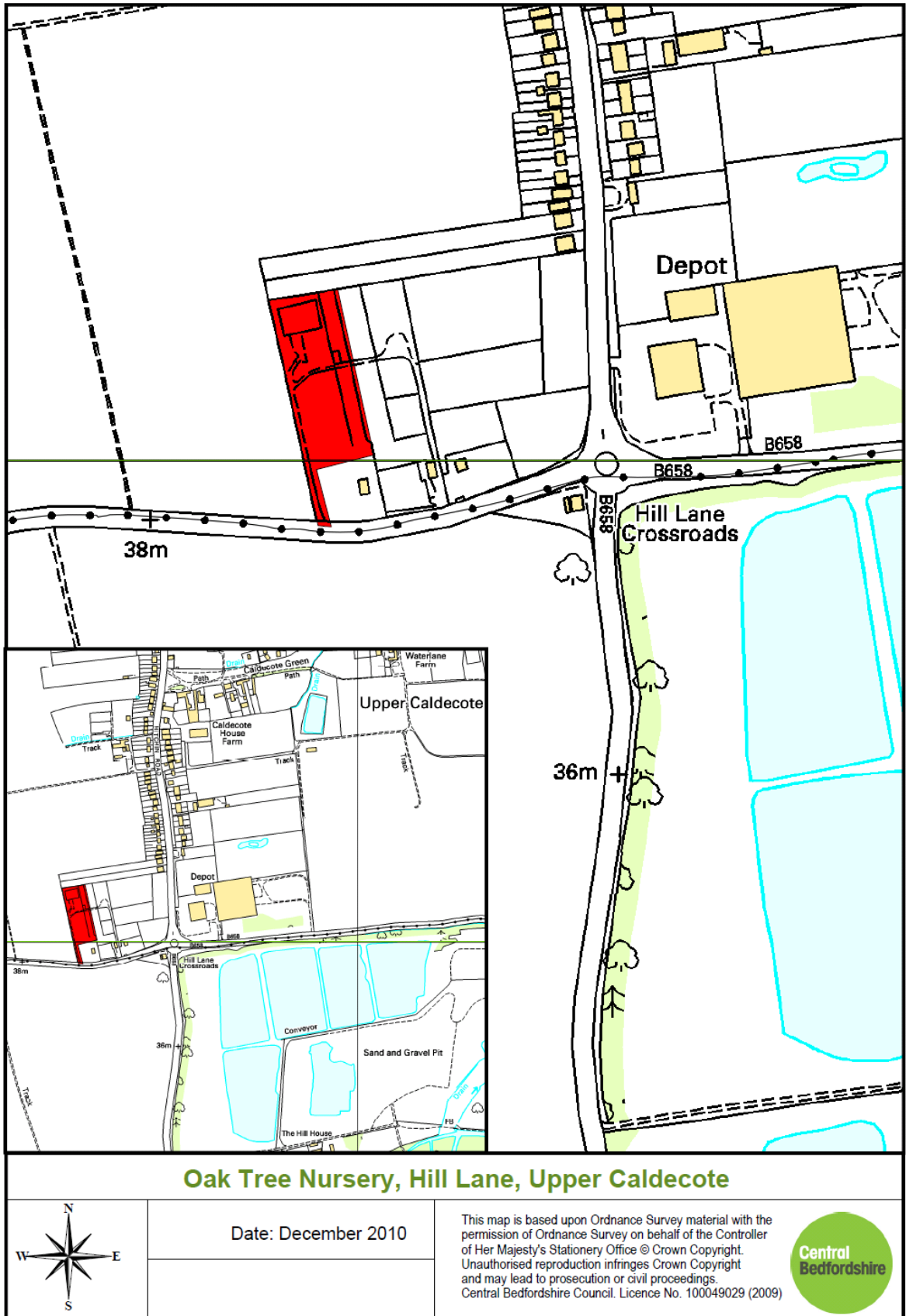


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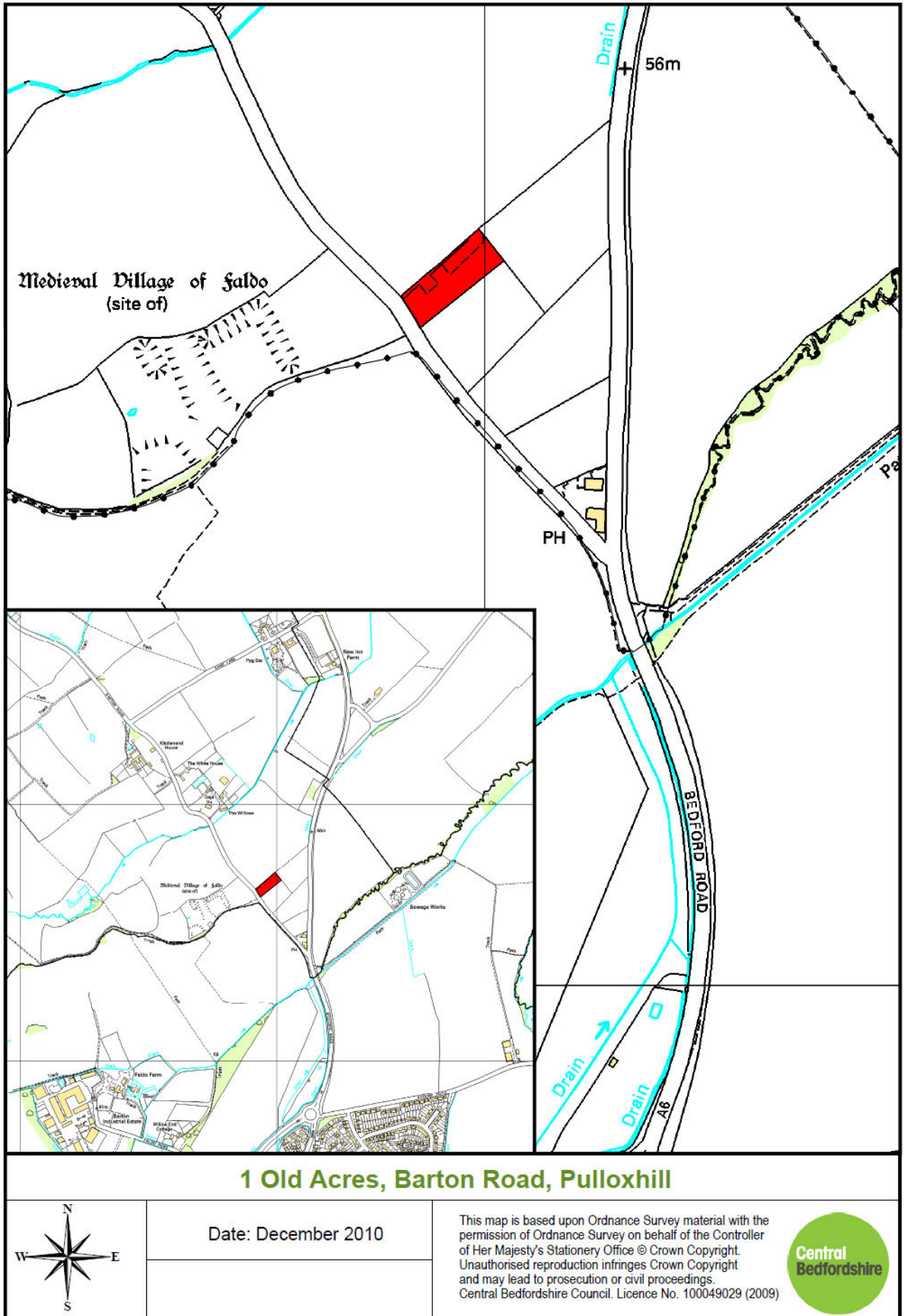
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### Policy GT6: Oak Tree Nursery and Magpie Farm, Hill Lane, Upper Caldecote

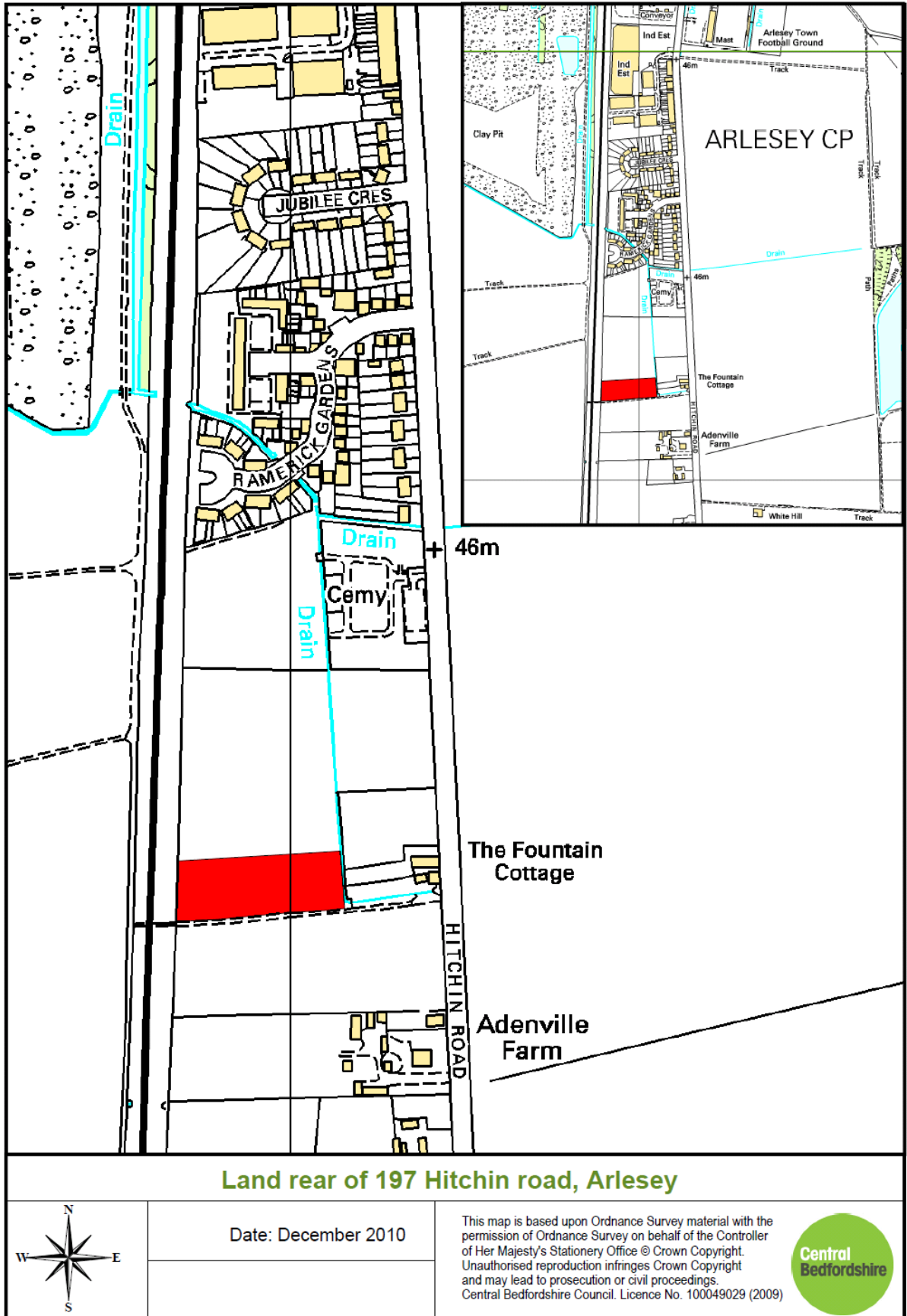


### Policy GT7: 1 Old Acres, Barton Road, Pulloxhill

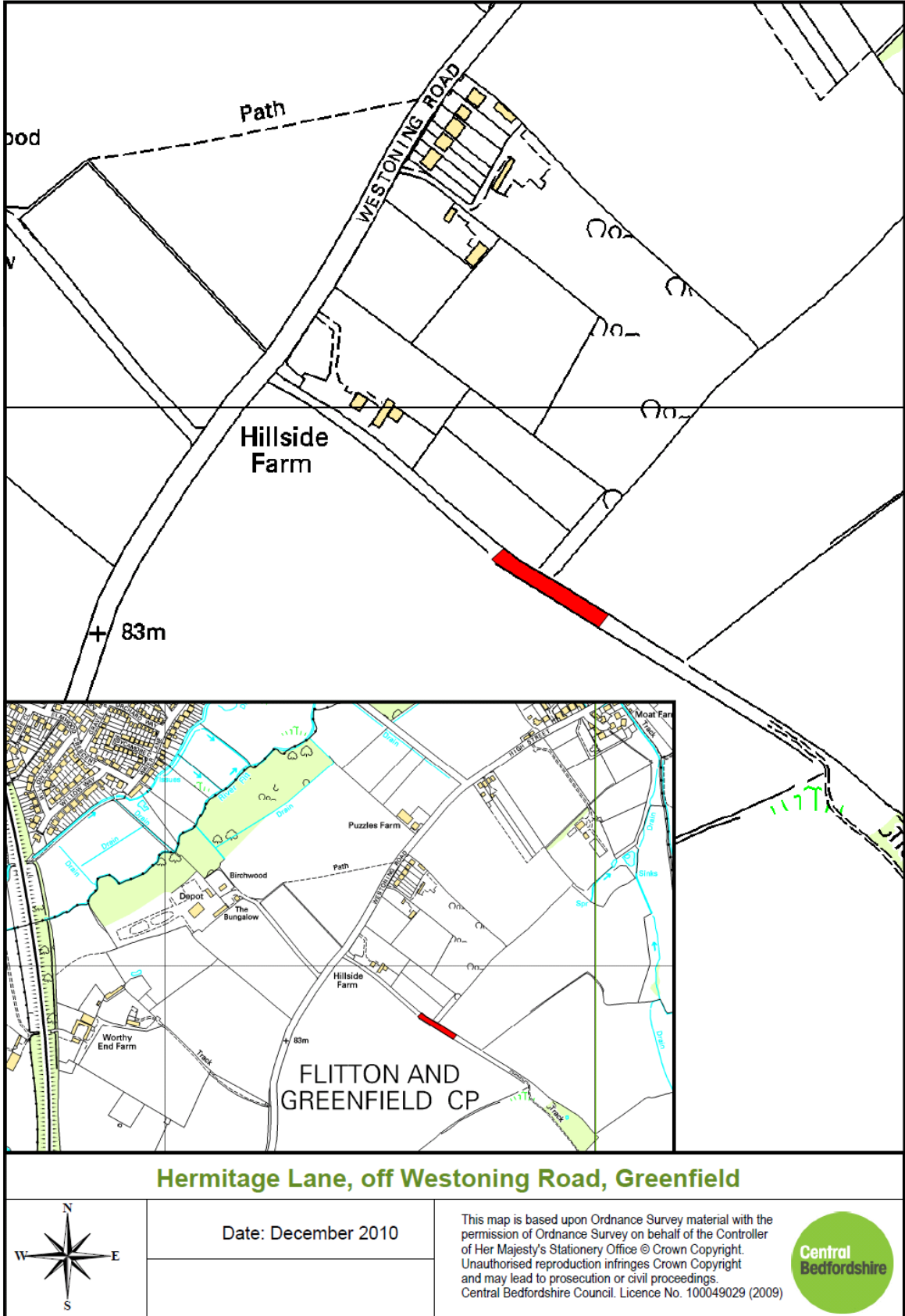




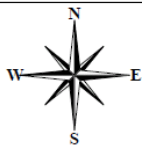
### Policy GT8 Land to the Rear of 197 Hitchin Road, Arlesey



### Policy GT9: Hermitage Lane, Hillside Farm off Westoning Road, Greenfield



#### Hermitage Lane, off Westoning Road, Greenfield



Date: December 2010

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### Policy GT11: Kennel Farm Holding, Biggleswade

