

site & context

two

the site

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 The Western Expansion Area is located to the south of Stony Stratford, south west of Two Mile Ash and north west of Crownhill and Grange Farm (see Figure 2.1). It comprises land predominantly in agricultural use and can most conveniently be considered as two separate areas.

2.1.2 The area between Crownhill and Calverton Lane, is a roughly square shaped area of about 230ha. V4 Watling Street forms the north eastern boundary, H4 Dansteed Way the south east boundary and Calverton Lane the north west boundary. The south west boundary follows the Stratford Road from Upper Weald to Shenley Grounds Farm. East from the farm, the southern boundary follows a hedge and the edge of a prominent ridgeline, from where the land falls to the south west.

2.1.3 The topography of this area gently undulates with a slight overall fall from the south west to V4 Watling Street in the north

east. There is a shallow valley lying between Common Farm and Whitehouse Farm. There are several clusters of farm houses and outbuildings within the area and the field pattern is quite tightly enclosed, with strong hedges forming the field boundaries. Small ponds and copses, notably Lady Margery's Gorse, are features in the local landscape. Hazeley Wood, and a belt of trees running parallel with H4 Dansteed Way form a strong vegetation screen.

2.1.4 The North Buckinghamshire Way, comprising a wide grass path bounded by hedgerows on both sides, cuts across the area in a north west/ south east direction. A number of other footpaths criss-cross through the area.

2.1.5 The northern area (Area 11), between Stony Stratford and Calverton Lane, comprises a roughly rectangular shaped area extending to about 130ha. V4 Watling

Street forms the north eastern boundary, H1 Ridgeway the north western boundary and Calverton Lane the south eastern boundary. The south western boundary follows hedge lines running about 500m north east of, and parallel with, Stratford Road which runs through the Calverton villages of Upper Weald, Middle Weald and Lower Weald.

2.1.6 A valley runs from east to west through the centre of the area, following the course of Kiln Farm Brook. The land falls into the valley both from the northern corner of the site adjacent to V4 Watling Street and from Calverton Lane to the east. There is a farm and some isolated dwellings on Calverton Lane and a Travellers Site near the junction of Calverton Lane and V4 Watling Street. The area is generally open, with a large field pattern, and there are extensive views to the west from much of the site. A number of footpaths pass through, or run along the boundaries of the area.

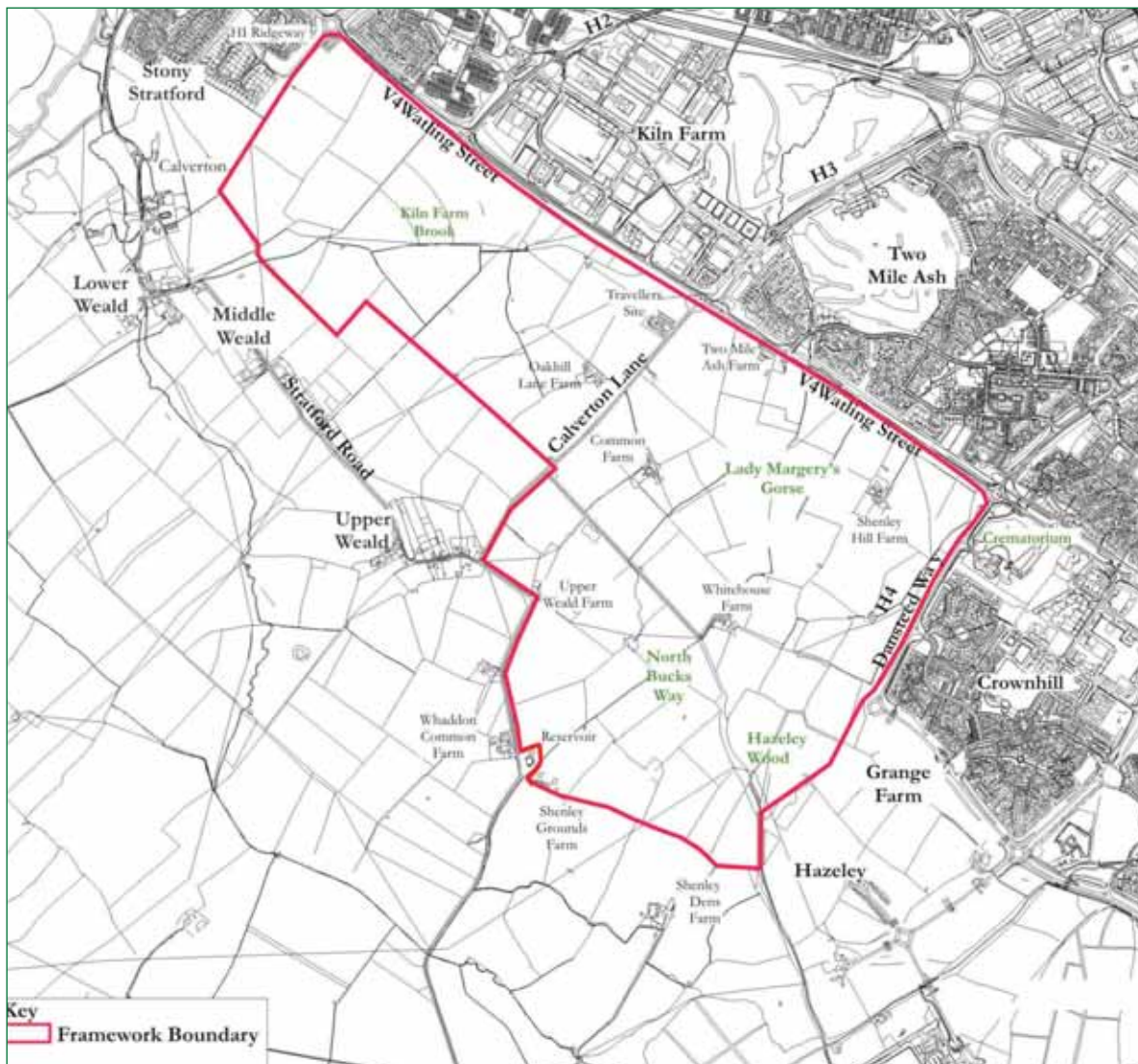


Figure 2.1 Western Expansion Area - the site and immediate environs

surroundings

2.2 Surroundings

2.2.1 The built up area of Milton Keynes follows the line of V4 Watling Street and H4 Dansteed Way, to the north and east of the Framework Area respectively. The developed grid squares of Fullers Slade, Kiln Farm and Two Mile Ash lie to the north of V4 Watling Street and Crownhill and Grange Farm to the east of H4 Dansteed Way. Hazeley has been identified as the site for a secondary school, which is under construction. Abutting the north west boundary lies the Calverton End housing area on the southern edge of Stony Stratford.

2.2.2 The landscape to the west, and south west, is open and largely rural, with the small settlements of Upper Weald, Middle Weald and Lower Weald lying along Stratford

Road. About 1.5 km to the south is the larger settlement of Whaddon. Whaddon Brook forms the administrative boundary between Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes.

2.2.3 Redways run along V4 and H4 and also provide connections to the local centre facilities and schools in Fullers Slade, Two Mile Ash and Crownhill, as well as the employment areas in Kiln Farm and Crownhill. About 2.5km to the south east is the Westcroft District Centre. The grid road network provides linkages to Central Milton Keynes, 3.5km to the east. Public transport services running through, or adjacent to the area, are very limited at present.



Central Milton Keynes is located 3.5km to the east of the WEA



The Calverton villages are located to the south west of the WEA



Stony Stratford town centre is located 1.5km to the north west of the site



Existing housing areas to the north and east of the site are permeated by a complex network of redways



Figure 2.2 Western Expansion Area - Aerial Photograph

constraints

2.3 Constraints & Opportunities

2.3.1 The development of the WEA should have regard to a number of constraints and should be designed to take advantage of potential opportunities.

2.3.2 Constraints, as shown in Figure 2.3, include the following:

- Safeguarding the North Buckinghamshire Way as a recreation route and wildlife corridor
- Protection of listed buildings (eg Whitehouse Farm) and their setting
- Minimising the visual and physical impact of development on the Upper Weald Conservation Area
- Avoiding coalescence with other settlements
- Protection of Shenley Ridge
- Protection, and enhancement of existing woodland and copses such as Lady Margery's Gorse and Hazeley Wood.
- Mitigating the visual impact from the west and south west
- Treatment of the hedgerows, and other features such as ponds, particularly those of ecological interest
- Protection of the oil and water pipelines that cross the site
- Recognition of the potential effects of overhead electricity lines that cross the site
- Avoidance of rat running through Whaddon, and other settlements, to and from the WEA.
- Mitigation of increased flood risk along Calverton and Whaddon Brooks.
- Overcoming the potential severance effect of surrounding grid roads

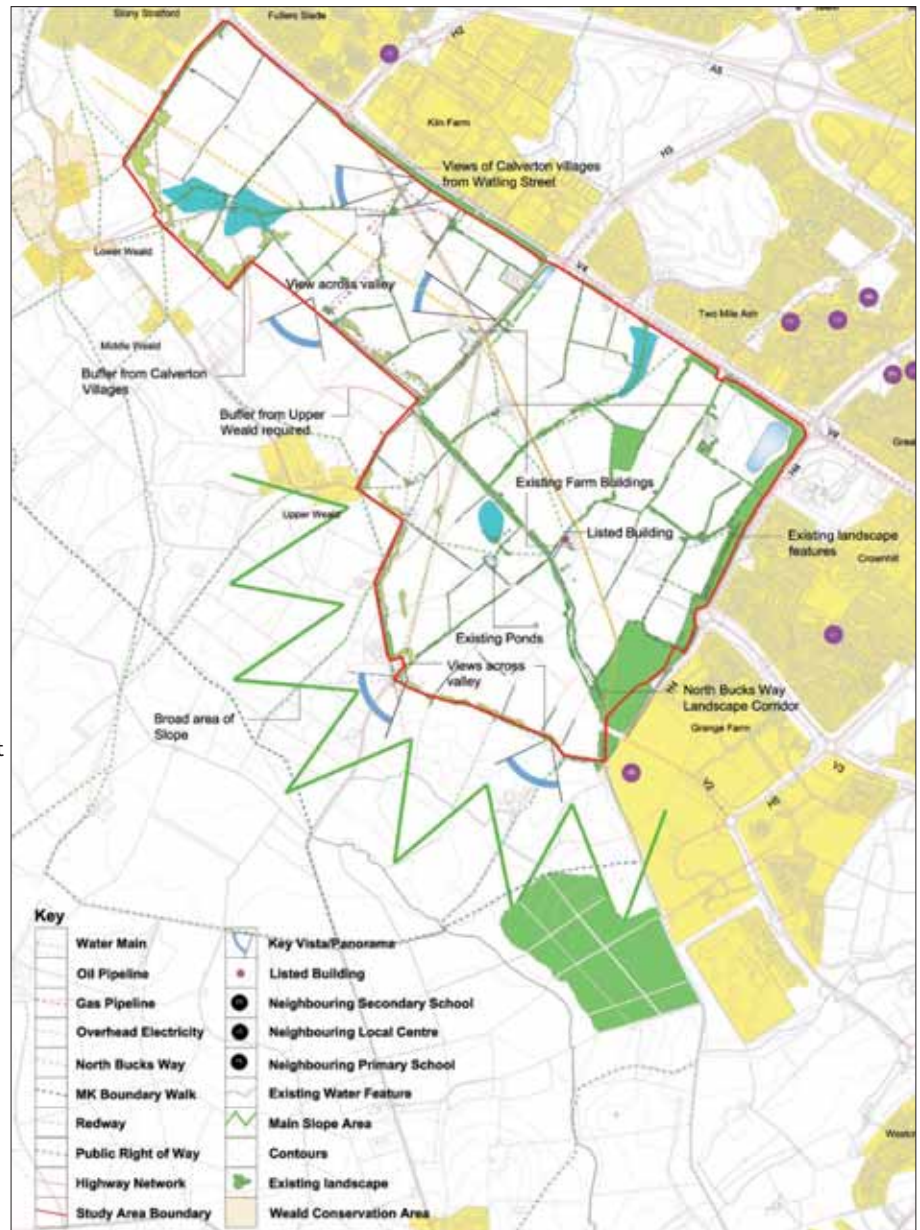


Figure 2.3 Key Constraints & Opportunities Plan



Panoramic view across the northern WEA

opportunities

2.3.3 Opportunities include the following:

- The potential to create a new pattern of development that evolves from the existing grid square development in Milton Keynes.
- The development of a sustainable urban extension, with a unique identity and character
- To promote, where appropriate, higher average net densities, whilst still providing a wide range of housing.
- The provision of a dedicated public transport route with frontage development through the WEA at an early stage.
- Links to the existing grid roads V4 and H4, that provide good quality highway access to the rest of Milton Keynes.
- Good integration with existing development, and developing connections to the existing Redway network.
- Expansion of the City's burial facilities.
- Enhancement of the WEA's features of nature conservation, heritage and archaeological interest.
- Responding to the existing landscape features, by creating a sustainable urban edge to the City.
- Development of a linear park, along Calverton and Kiln Farm Brooks.
- Provision of advance structure planting and extension of the 'forest city' concept.
- Where appropriate, the use of sustainable urban drainage systems.



The North Bucks Way is an old drovers way and is very wide in places



Calverton Lane runs along the western edge of Areas 10.1 - 10.3



Mature hedgerows within the site will provide a sense of place for the new development



Long distance views across Area 11



There are long distance views across the north to the Calverton Villages from Watling Street



Sections of the North Bucks Way are metalled through the central area



Looking east from across the valley back to the WEA

planning policy



2.4 Planning Policy Context

2.4.1 The final Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy was published in March 2005. Its purpose is to provide strategic guidance on the scale, location and timing of development to 2021 and a longer-term perspective for the sub-region to 2031. Its objectives include the achievement of a major increase in the number of new homes provided in the area and the provision of a commensurate level of economic growth.

2.4.2 The majority of development will be focused on six growth areas, including Milton Keynes. The City should embrace its growth potential to mature as a major regional centre, particularly through the substantial development of its central area, supported by a significantly enhanced public transport system to facilitate and support growth in major development areas.

2.4.3 The Strategy envisages the development of a total of 44,900 new homes by 2021 in Milton Keynes and a further 23,700 by 2031. 14,900 of these, up to 2016, should be provided in sustainable urban extensions. Quickening the pace of housing delivery will be a key objective for Milton Keynes, and the housing and phasing targets up to 2021 are summarised in Table 2.1.

2.4.4 The delivery of an enhanced intra-urban public transport system, in parallel with the new development, is also a key objective. This is essential for enhancing accessibility for all and achieving more sustainable travel patterns within the urban area.

2.4.5 Section 2 of the Sub Regional Strategy 'Sustainable Communities for the sub region' stresses the importance of creating sustainable, balanced communities. Key requirements in building sustainable communities are listed in Table 2.2, which forms a useful checklist for development in the WEA.

2.4.6 The planning policy context is provided by a range of national, regional and local planning policies. Of most relevance is the Milton Keynes Local Plan (Second Deposit Version), which was published in October 2002 and is the emerging Local Plan. Following consideration of the recommendations of the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector, the Council published Proposed Modifications to the plan in May to July 2005. The Proposed Modifications include changes to the policies that apply to the WEA.

2.4.7 At present the key policies in the Local Plan of most relevance to the WEA are as follows:

2.4.8 Policy S3 identifies the WEA as one of three City Expansion Areas. Policy H8 refers to housing density requirements.

Table 2.1 Sub Regional Strategy Proposed Housing Completions

	Total (dw)	Annual Rate (dw/yr)
2001-2006	7,900	1,580
2006-2011	15,000	3,000
2011-2016	11,000	2,200
2016-2021	11,000	2,200
2001-2021	44,900	2,245

Table 2.2 MKSM Strategy - March 2005

Sustainable Communities will be achieved in the sub region through the implementation of development in accordance with the following principles;

- Designing attractive cities, towns and public places;
- Promoting the highest standards of environmental performance, including all aspects of water resource management;
- Ensuring good accessibility and providing better public transport
- Facilitating safe and convenient movement on foot and by cycle;
- Reducing reliance on car based transport;
- Maximising the opportunities afforded by growth to facilitate the regeneration of deprived communities;
- Protecting and enhancing the Sub-Region's stock of strategic environmental and cultural assets;
- Providing green infrastructure for existing and expanding communities, including access to green space that promotes healthy lifestyles and can be used for formal and informal recreation and educational purposes;
- Ensuring that the countryside in and around towns is sensitively designed to assimilate urban extensions into the landscape and accommodate links to and from the wider countryside;
- Improving skills levels and enterprise support;
- Ensuring a supply of housing of the right types, sizes and tenure, and providing a step change in both the quantity and quality of affordable housing to meet the needs of the Sub-Region;
- Providing the social (e.g. primary, secondary, further and higher education, health and social care) and environmental (e.g. water supply and treatment) infrastructure to meet current deficits and additional demands;
- Managing and reducing demand where appropriate (e.g. demand for water)
- Taking advantage of development opportunities for different scales of renewable energy in the Sub-Region;
- Providing high quality employment land and premises which meets the needs of growing industries;
- Maximising the contribution of previously developed land to the Sub-Region's growth;
- Promoting and facilitating community development through the active involvement of the voluntary and community sectors.
- Ensuring improved community safety.



Table 2.3 Western Expansion Area Policy EA5
Amended in accordance with the Inspector's recommendations

Proposals for the Western Expansion Area must include:

- (i) Housing and ancillary uses (about 200 ha)
- (ii) B1 / B2 / B8 employment uses (10-20ha)
- (iii) A secondary school of about 10 ha
- (iv) Local centres, including first / combined schools
- (v) Open space to include land for a burial ground and remembrance garden (about 10ha)
- (vi) Protection and enhancement of the wildlife corridor along the North Bucks Way, and the creation of an alternative route for the North Bucks Way north of Calverton Lane, along the western boundary of the area, to connect with the Ouse Valley Way near Calverton
- (vii) Retention of the Listed Buildings at Whitehouse Farm
- (viii) Landscape / open space buffers between development and The Wealds and other measures to reduce the visual impact of development when viewed from the countryside and villages to the west
- (ix) 30% affordable housing
- (x) Measures to reduce the risk of flooding in Lower Weald
- (xi) Measures to avoid traffic rat-running through nearby villages and residential areas
- (xii) Proposals for public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes that will provide convenient, direct, safe and clear routes to CMK and Westcroft District Centre.
- (xiii) The provision of a dedicated public transport route connecting the Western Expansion Area with CMK and Stony Stratford, through each phase of development prior to the occupation of development in that phase. This route should be designed to be capable of upgrading to mass transit characteristics as and when appropriate
- (xiv) The retention of the existing travellers' site at Calverton Lane, including land for extending the site (Site MK16 - see Policy H12)
- (xv) The undergrounding of the 132kV power lines across the site

Para 8.28 For the purposes of Policies EA3 and EA5, the dedicated public transport route is defined as a road that can carry modern, high quality, articulated buses on separate lanes within the carriageway, and has priority for buses along its entire length. Shared use with other vehicles will be acceptable for short distances in places such as the mixed use, 'high street' areas, provided that bus priority can still be maintained. To be capable of upgrading to mass transit characteristics, the route must be designed so that it can be adapted to offer a form of vehicle guidance in the future

2.4.9 Policy EA1 requires a comprehensive master plan and development briefs to be prepared and states that they will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance (SPG).

2.4.10 Policy EA2 establishes a number of general requirements, including planning obligations, which development proposals in the WEA will need to provide.

2.4.11 Policy EA5 establishes what the proposals for the WEA must specifically provide in terms of housing numbers, facilities and open space etc. (see Table 2.3) This policy has been amended by the Council during the inquiry process to include proposals for a dedicated mass transit route, the avoidance of 'rat running' and measures to protect the visual impact of development in the WEA.

2.4.12 Para 8.32 notes that housing in the WEA is expected to start before 2006 and will continue after 2011 and requires a logical and orderly sequence of development to be identified.

2.4.13 Policy H8 provides guidance on minimum housing density and seeks net densities of 35 dph. There are a number of other local plan policies, which will have implications for the development of the WEA. These are listed in Appendix A. Also listed are relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents and other relevant studies and strategies. It should be noted that the Faber Maunsell Public Transport Long Term Vision illustrates the Public Transport proposals for Milton Keynes in more detail. These proposals are at the heart of the WEA development framework.

