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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Milton Keynes will see a new phase of long term growth establishing it as a centre of regional importance and adding a high quality public transport system to its unique advantages of modernity and good environment.

1.1.2 The Western Expansion Area (WEA) is one of three expansion areas allocated in the Milton Keynes Local Plan. These will assist the City in achieving its housing growth targets up to 2016. The development of the WEA provides an opportunity to comprehensively plan a major extension to the thriving and developing City of Milton Keynes.

New Housing within the WEA will take its cue from nearby traditional settlements such as Stony Stratford where higher densities were combined with streets and squares to create an attractive townscape



The WEA development framework responds to the topography of the area by retaining key features such as tree groups, woodland and significant hedgerows

development framework



A view across existing farmland within the allocated WEA development area



A view across existing farmland to the adjacent Kiln Farm employment development



A view across existing farmland



View over the southern portion of Area 11

1.2 The Role of the Development Framework

1.2.1 The preparation of a comprehensive plan, or development framework, is an essential first step to guide all future stages of development. It establishes a context for planning applications and briefs for individual sites and phases of development, which will follow on and contain more detailed proposals.

1.2.2 The development framework sets out general planning policies, proposals and design principles specific to the WEA. It establishes:

- How the expansion area fulfils the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's objectives for the strategic growth of Milton Keynes
- How the emerging local plan policy requirements will be met
- The disposition of land uses and facilities.
- The relationship of land uses with each other, and the surrounding areas.
- The general phasing of development.
- General design and development principles to guide the form and nature of development.
- Transport and infrastructure requirements.

1.2.3 The development framework has been prepared by Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Partnership, in consultation with other stakeholders and the main landowner interests in the WEA. They have provided substantial technical and supporting information to provide the basis for the development framework. It has also been informed by a design principles workshop held in March 2003, facilitated by Oxford Brookes University.

1.3 Evolution of the Development Framework

1.3.1 The Milton Keynes Local Plan (second deposit version) identified an area, to the north west of Milton Keynes, for the WEA (see Figure 1.1). This would accommodate about 5050 to 5550 dwellings. It included an area to the north west of Crownhill and Grange Farm and south west of Two Mile Ash (known as Areas 10.1-10.3) and an area immediately to the west of Hazeley and Oakhill (known as Area 10.4).

1.3.2 During the local plan inquiry, it was proposed by the promoters of Area 10.4 that the development of this part of the WEA should be linked to the restoration of Whaddon Park, formerly an extensive area of parkland, which has considerable historic landscape value.

1.3.3 A number of objections were heard at the Inquiry about the WEA, with many questioning the inclusion of Area 10.4. They considered that the Shenley Ridge and Oakhill Wood formed a strong visual boundary to the City and that Area 10.4, which lies west of the ridge on slopes facing the Whaddon Valley and to the north of the village of Whaddon, should not be included.

1.3.4 The Inspector also heard objections to the omission of Area 11 from parties proposing the development of a site to the north of the WEA, and Calverton Lane, and to the south west of Kiln Farm and Fullers Slade (known as Area 11), which had been omitted from the Local Plan. This area was one of a number of possible areas identified for additional development from 2011 to 2016 in the draft Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy. Milton Keynes Council, in its response to the draft sub regional strategy, had accepted the identification of this area as an appropriate location for further growth post 2011, subject to conditions relating to the delivery of key infrastructure and the preservation of the character and separate identity of the existing villages.

1.3.5 The Inspector, in his report, agreed with those seeking the deletion of Area 10.4 and the allocation of Area 11. He recommended that the boundary of the WEA should be revised to exclude Area 10.4 but include Area 11, with no net impact on the overall housing figures.

1.3.6 To continue to make progress towards achieving the City's housing targets, it was agreed that two development scenarios, covering different areas, would be prepared and consulted upon, in the draft Development Framework. The two scenarios were referred to as the Southern and Northern Scenarios. The Northern Scenario substituted Area 11 for Area 10.4 and covered about 360 hectares. The Southern Scenario comprised the WEA allocated in the Local Plan (second deposit version) and covered about 325 hectares.

1.3.7 Whilst the two scenarios had different boundaries, many of the development policies and principles applied equally to both.

1.3.8 Milton Keynes Council considered the Inspector's Local Plan Report and decided in December 2004 to allocate the Northern Scenario area. This decision is carried through into the Proposed Modifications to the local plan, which were placed on deposit for 6 weeks between May and July 2005. This Development Framework reflects the latest stage of the local plan process in that it is based on the WEA as set out in the Proposed Modifications - ie including Area 11 and excluding Area 10.4.

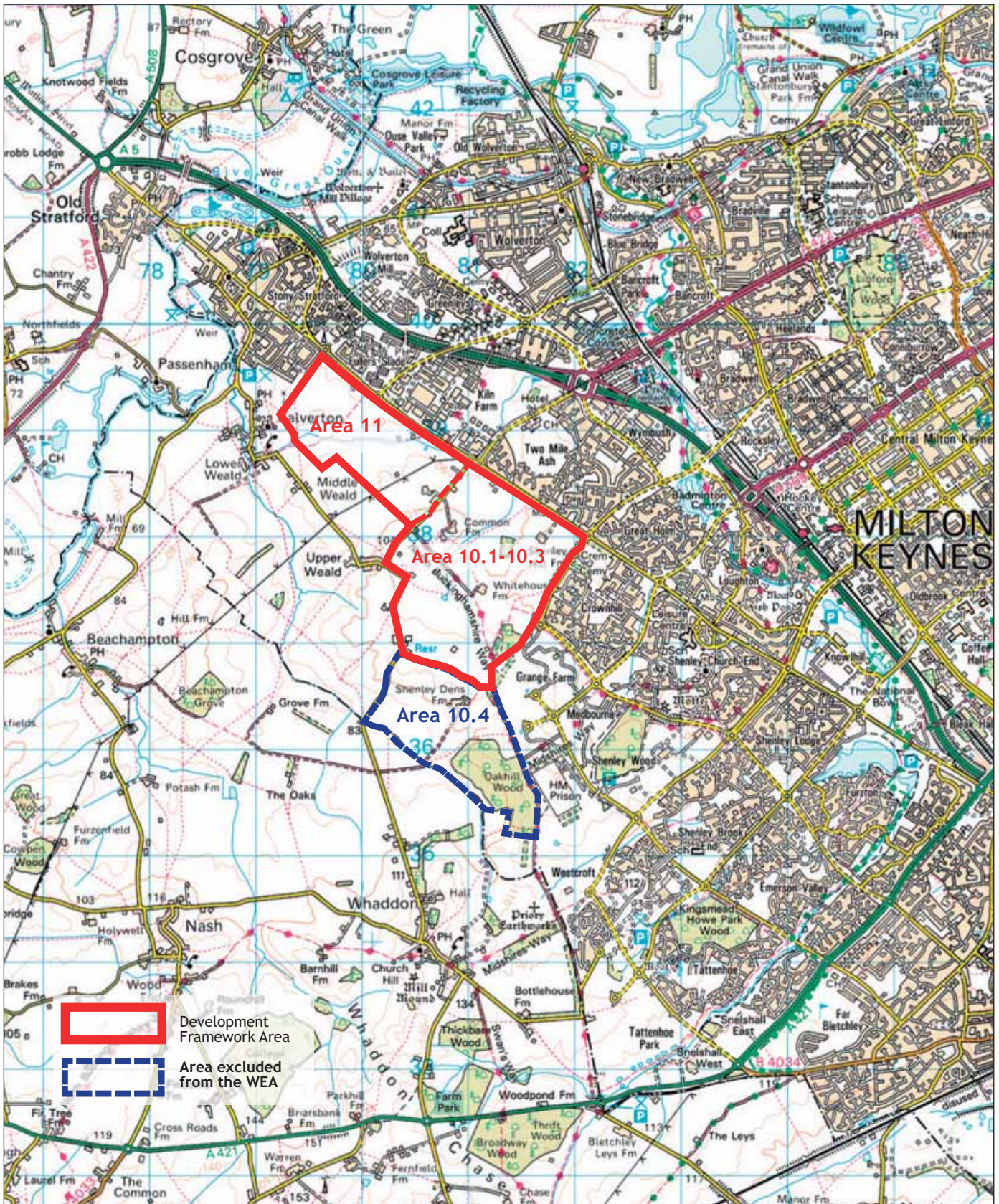


Figure 1.1 Context Plan showing the boundary of the Development Framework (in the unbroken red line) and the Local Plan sub areas