



## Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 The context appraisal describes the physical, social, economic and policy contexts that have influenced the design proposals for SWMK. It sets out and summarises the key findings and conclusions from the technical studies that accompany the application. The assessment also considers the site and its relationship with the wider landscape and built environment, and the local character.
- 3.2 Legislation places a statutory duty on decision-makers to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section provides a brief overview of the current planning policy context for the site which is relevant to the design of the proposed development and the identification of appropriate uses on the site; further detail is provided in the Planning Statement, prepared by Januarys, which accompanies the application.
- 3.3 The site is located within the district of Aylesbury Vale but its access points and its form and structure as a sustainable urban extension to Milton Keynes, require due consideration of both Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes extant development plans.

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.4 The Framework (NPPF, 2012) outlines the purpose and role of the planning system and replaces the raft of former Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance that previously made up the national tier of planning policy, supported by some technical guidance.
- 3.5 The Framework requires planning authorities to 'boost significantly' the supply of housing (paragraph 47) and stresses the importance of delivering a wide choice of high quality homes which meets local needs (paragraph 50), delivered through high quality and inclusive design (paragraph 56).
- 3.6 The Framework sets out the approach to sustainable transport, requiring developments that generate significant movement to be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment, (paragraph 32). Consideration should be given to opportunities for sustainable transport modes, safe and suitable access to the site for all people (paragraph 34); and required improvements to transport network that limit the significant impacts of the development.
- 3.7 The Framework advocates for a balance of land uses within the area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities, (paragraph 37).
- 3.8 The Framework acknowledges the key role of the planning system in the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. New development should take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption (paragraph 96).
- 3.9 The Framework seeks the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and minimising development impacts on biodiversity, providing net gains where possible, (paragraph 109).
- 3.10 In accordance with the Framework, the applicant recognises the importance of good design in sustainable development and the overall benefits it presents in terms of establishing a new community and enhanced values. The Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the scheme has been designed to achieve the highest design standards and establish a strong sense of place. Given the site's rural edge location, it is vital that the scheme responds positively to local and historic character and landscape topography.
- 3.11 High standards of architecture, urban design and landscaping are principles enshrined in the Design and Access Statement that will be taken forward at reserved matters stage.

### NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDANCE

3.12 In respect of the principles of sustainable development and best practice in urban design, the application has been prepared in light of the following national design and sustainability guidance:

- » **National Planning Practice Guidance: Design, DCLG (2014)**

This online resource provides advice on the key points to take into account in relation to design, to include how to deliver a well designed place; how buildings and the spaces between them are best laid out as well as providing more detailed advice on housing and street design.

- » **The Urban Design Compendium (2000) by English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation**

The document examines a spectrum of core design issues through different stages of the development process, from concept to detailed design.

- » **Manual for Streets (2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (2010) by the Department for Transport**

The documents provide guidance for practitioners involved in the planning, design, provision and approval of new residential streets, and modifications to existing ones. It aims to increase the quality of life through good design which creates more people-orientated streets.

- » **Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004)**

The document focuses on seven attributes of sustainability that are particularly relevant to crime prevention.

- » **Planning and Design for Outdoor Play (2008) published by the Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association)**

The document sets out clear guidance on the level of open space required in new developments and how outdoor play areas are best distributed and designed.

- » **Sport England's Active Design**

This guidance sets out a range of hard (physical) measures and soft (management) measures relating to promoting recommended levels of physical activity and good design through the three Active Design objectives ("the three As"):

- » Improving Accessibility: providing easy, safe and convenient access to a choice of opportunities for participating in sport and physical activity and active travel for the whole community;
- » Enhancing Amenity: promoting environmental quality in the design and layout of new sports and recreational facilities, their links and relationship to other buildings and the wider public realm; and
- » Increasing Awareness: raising the prominence and legibility of sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for physical activity through the design and layout of development.

**REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

- 3.13 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South East was part of the statutory development plan covering the application site. Section 109 of the Localism Act received Royal Assent in November 2011 gave the Secretary of State the power to revoke Regional Strategies. In March 2013 the RSS for the South East was revoked.
- 3.14 The South East Plan (SEP) provided a robust evidence base for the application proposals, identifying a Strategic Development Area to the south-west of Milton Keynes, as part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) sub-region and Growth Area.

**LOCAL PLANNING POLICY: AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN (2004)**

- 3.15 The adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) covers the period to 2011. It accords with the principles of sustainable development by seeking to provide affordable homes, develop further infrastructure and protect and enhance the area's vitality. The Secretary of State issued a direction on the 24th September 2007 'saving' certain policies of the adopted Local Plan until such time as they are replaced by Local Development Framework policies. It is only the general development control policies that have been saved that are relevant to the determination of this application.

- 3.16 Policy GP2 sets out the proportion of affordable housing that will be required, which is that a minimum of 20% and up to 30% affordable housing should be provided for developments of 25 or more dwellings. Policy GP3 seeks to ensure that low cost market housing (the smallest size of units) is provided. 10% of dwellings on developments of 25 or more dwellings should be low cost housing. The proportion of affordable housing to be provided within the overall development will be up to 30%, subject to viability. The proportion of affordable and low cost housing to be delivered would be specified in the S106 Agreement.
- 3.17 Policy GP8 seeks to protect the amenity of residents by avoiding unreasonable harm to nearby residents. The potential amenity impacts on residents are assessed in the ES, the conclusions of which, report that no adverse impacts on the amenities of residents are predicted to result from the proposed development.

- 3.18 Policy GP24 seeks to ensure that car parking is provided in accordance with the standards contained in the adopted Parking Guidelines SPG (May 2000). The parking guidelines range from 1 space for a one bedroom flat to 3 spaces for a 4+ bedroom house. The proposed residential areas will provide sufficient car parking, with the exact amount to be determined at detailed design stage.
- 3.19 Policy GP35 identifies the key factors to consider in the design of new development, which in summary are the physical characteristics, existing building styles, the scale and context, natural features, and visual impact. Policy GP38 expects new development to incorporate landscaping and to complement existing features. Policy GP39 expects existing trees and hedgerows to be protected or replaced as part of development proposals. Policy GP40 in particular seeks to retain trees and hedgerows which have amenity, landscape or wildlife value. Policy GP45 relates to secured by design considerations, and expects development to incorporate measures to assist crime prevention and help reduce risks to personal safety. Policy GP59 expects development proposals affecting a site of archaeological importance to protect, enhance and preserve the historic interest and its setting.
- 3.20 This Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the development has been informed by the characteristics of the site and the surrounding area, and is strongly influenced by principles that have governed the planned expansion of Milton Keynes. The application proposals include a mix of uses, built at a range of densities and heights that are reflective of their context and siting within the development to include walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and facilities, to promote travel by non-car modes of transport. The landscape features and the existing trees and hedgerows have been incorporated into the proposed development. The built development is surrounded by substantial areas of green infrastructure and multi-functional open space encompassing broadleaved native structural woodland, extensive areas of species rich wet meadow, footpaths and bridleways, play areas, and community sports fields. The proposed development avoids areas of known archaeological potential. The four areas of late prehistoric/Roman settlement within the development site are to be preserved within open space and school playing fields. An archaeological watching brief will be implemented to record any peripheral remains.
- 3.21 Policy GP84 seeks to protect existing public rights of way. Weasel Lane, an existing bridleway and cycle route, and other public rights of way across the site, including the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk, will be retained and incorporated into the proposed development.
- 3.22 Policy GP86 relates to the provision of outdoor playing space within development, with a standard of 2.43 hectares outdoor play space per 1000 persons, subject to existing open space provision in the locality. Policy GP87 expects equipped play areas for children to be provided, and Policy GP91 expects informal amenity open spaces to be provided within development. The proposed development includes a total of 55.75 Ha of open space to include recreation facilities, a local park and district park, formal sports pitches, tennis courts and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), a skateboard park, children's play areas comprising two Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) and eight Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), and allotments.
- 3.23 Policy GP90 seeks to ensure that indoor sports facilities are provided, according to the need arising from the proposed development. The proposed development includes a sports hall, as part of the mixed-use local centre.

**NEWTON LONGVILLE VILLAGE PLAN (2012)**

- 3.24 In November 2012 the Newton Longville Village Plan was published. The document was prepared by a Steering Group comprising local residents. The Village Plan, includes comments on the previous larger application at SWMK, the future expansion of Milton Keynes towards Newton Longville, and traffic related issues in the village, which are relevant to this application. This current application is substantially smaller than the previous Salden Chase application. Therefore, the comments on Salden Chase are not relevant. Although the comments are helpful in identifying village concerns, the plan is a non-statutory document and therefore we give the document no weight.

**LOCAL PLANNING POLICY: THE VALE OF AYLESBURY PLAN (2013)**

- 3.25 Between late-2010 and mid-2013 AVDC prepared a new development plan document – the Draft VAP. In August 2013, the Draft VAP was submitted for examination to the Secretary of State. In December 2013 two hearing sessions were held to consider the key matters associated with the legal compliance and soundness of Draft VAP; the duty to co-operate and the overall provision for housing and jobs. In January 2014, the Inspector appointed to examine the Draft VAP wrote to AVDC setting out his conclusions on these two matters. The Inspector concluded that the duty to co-operate had not been complied with and that the proposed approach to the overall provision for housing and jobs was not sound. Therefore, as recommended by the Inspector, AVDC decided to withdraw the Draft VAP. We therefore give the document no weight.
- 3.26 The Inspector's letter sets out matters that will need to be addressed by AVDC, in a future development plan document. This includes an understanding that Milton Keynes will continue to be a major focus for housing and economic growth, and that there is a relationship between Aylesbury Vale and the future growth of Milton Keynes beyond its boundaries (paragraph 9 of the Inspectors letter).

**AYLESBURY DESIGN GUIDANCE**

- 3.27 Comprises:
- » Building Materials (1995)
  - » SPG Parking Guidelines (2002)
  - » SPG Safety through Design (2001)
  - » SPG Sport and Leisure Facilities (2004)
  - » Sport and Leisure Facilities SPG Companion Document Ready Reckoner (2005)

**MILTON KEYNES CORE STRATEGY (2013)**

- 3.28 The spatial vision of Milton Keynes is for an iconic 'city' which retains its individuality and dynamism whilst embracing the changes in lifestyles necessary to ensure a more sustainable future. Its new buildings will be innovative, well designed and constructed to the best possible standards. The whole city will be linked together by a safe, modern and efficient public transport system and a strategically planned and managed network of accessible, high quality, sustainable open spaces.
- 3.29 Policy CS 6 identifies the 'Place shaping Principles for sustainable urban extensions on Adjacent Local Authorities', the edge of Milton Keynes, which are wholly or partly within the administrative boundary of a neighboring authority. Central to the provisions of the policy is the requirement for joint working on planning, design and implementation. The policy requires the structure and layout of the development to be based on the principles that have shaped the evolution of Milton Keynes, principally the grid road system, redways and linear parks. Reference is also made to the need to agree an appropriate mechanism to secure developer contributions towards improvement and provision of infrastructure to support development including Milton Keynes facilities that will be used by the residents of the development area.
- 3.30 Figures 5.1 and 5.2 of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy demonstrate the development strategy for the whole Borough, and show an alignment of the potential Southern Relief Road, which makes an illustrative reference to expansion of the urban area into the application site. The master plan responds to the requirement to accommodate for the future construction of a southerly strategic link road and provides land to be reserved for an extension of the grid road system.
- 3.31 Policy CS 11 refers to the requirement for joint working to meet the demand for increased movement of people and good, improved accessibility across the Borough and references the need to maintain and future proof the city's grid road network, extending into new development areas. The proposed development includes provides for a range of transport modes which would connect to the existing networks in the surrounding area thus providing residents with the opportunity to travel by non-car modes of transport. The Transport Assessment recommends improvements to various junctions and roundabouts that would operate above capacity as a result of the proposed development, traffic calming in adjacent villages, and a new bus service through the application site.
- 3.32 Policy CS 12 'Developing Successful Neighbourhoods' and Policy CS 13 'Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places' encourages the provision of 'walkable neighbourhoods', siting services and facilities such as shops, schools, leisure and employment in easily accessible locations, well served by cycle and public transport routes. This Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the proposed development has been designed to be a standalone new neighbourhood with its own characteristics, to include a neighbourhood centre providing retail and community facilities, land for a primary school with early years provision and a secondary school and a range of formal and informal open space functions.



**MILTON KEYNES LOCAL PLAN (DECEMBER 2005)**

- 3.33 The relevant local plan design, transport and housing policies are saved and have informed the design and content of the proposed development.
- 3.34 Policy D1 relates to the impact of development on the surrounding area, with a need to address issues relating to traffic generation, drainage, visual impact, pollution, and highway access for example. Policy D2A seeks to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design, by taking into account factors such as existing character, street frontage, public realm, and ease of movement in the design and layout of development. Policy D2 relates to the design of buildings, and requires scale, relationship, access, and landscaping to be considered in the design of development. The proposed development has been informed by the characteristics of the site and the surrounding area, and is strongly influenced by principles that have governed the planned expansion of Milton Keynes.
- 3.35 Policy T1 defines a transport user hierarchy in order to encourage non-car modes of transport, prioritising pedestrian movement. Policy T3 seeks to ensure that pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is provided within development and Policy T4 identifies the priorities for improving access and conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Policy T5 relates to public transport provision and infrastructure within development, and seeks to deliver safe and convenient bus routes, bus priority measures, and for bus stops to be located within 400m of new development. The layout of the proposed development provides a range of movement networks to include walking, cycling and public transport to provide opportunities for residents to reduce car dependency.
- 3.36 Policy T9 requires roads to be designed for their intended function. The development includes improvements to the existing highway network to provide the primary access points from the A421, and identifies primary and secondary routes at this stage (see figure 6.2 proposed street hierarchy). The local residential roads and access points would be determined at detailed design stage.
- 3.37 Policy T15 relates to parking provision, and seeks to ensure that maximum parking standards are not exceeded and that parking areas are well-designed. Policy T17 expects development to include traffic calming to enable safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. Parking provision and traffic calming measures are matters that would be addressed at detailed design stage.

- 3.38 Turning to policies relating to housing, policy H4 sets an affordable housing target of 30%, which is identical to the upper limit specified in the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan. Subject to viability up to 30% affordable housing will be provided.
- 3.39 Policy H8 provides guidance on housing density, so that development is built at a density which is appropriate to the location and policy H9 requires residential development to provide a mix of types and sizes of dwellings, including lifetime homes. The proposed development is for up to 1,855 mixed tenure dwellings with a range of house types, the detailed mix of dwellings will be determined at detailed design stage.
- 3.40 Policy LC1 requires new local centres to be provided as part of the new city expansion areas. The proposed development includes an accessible neighbourhood centre providing retail and community facilities to serve the new residential community.

## Site Evaluation and Physical Context

### PHYSICAL LOCATION

- 3.41 The application site is located to the south west of Milton Keynes, immediately to the west of Far Bletchley. It is contained by the boundary of rural hinterland of Aylesbury Vale District, but physically relates to the urban area of Milton Keynes, completing its western flank.



Figure 3.1: View from west

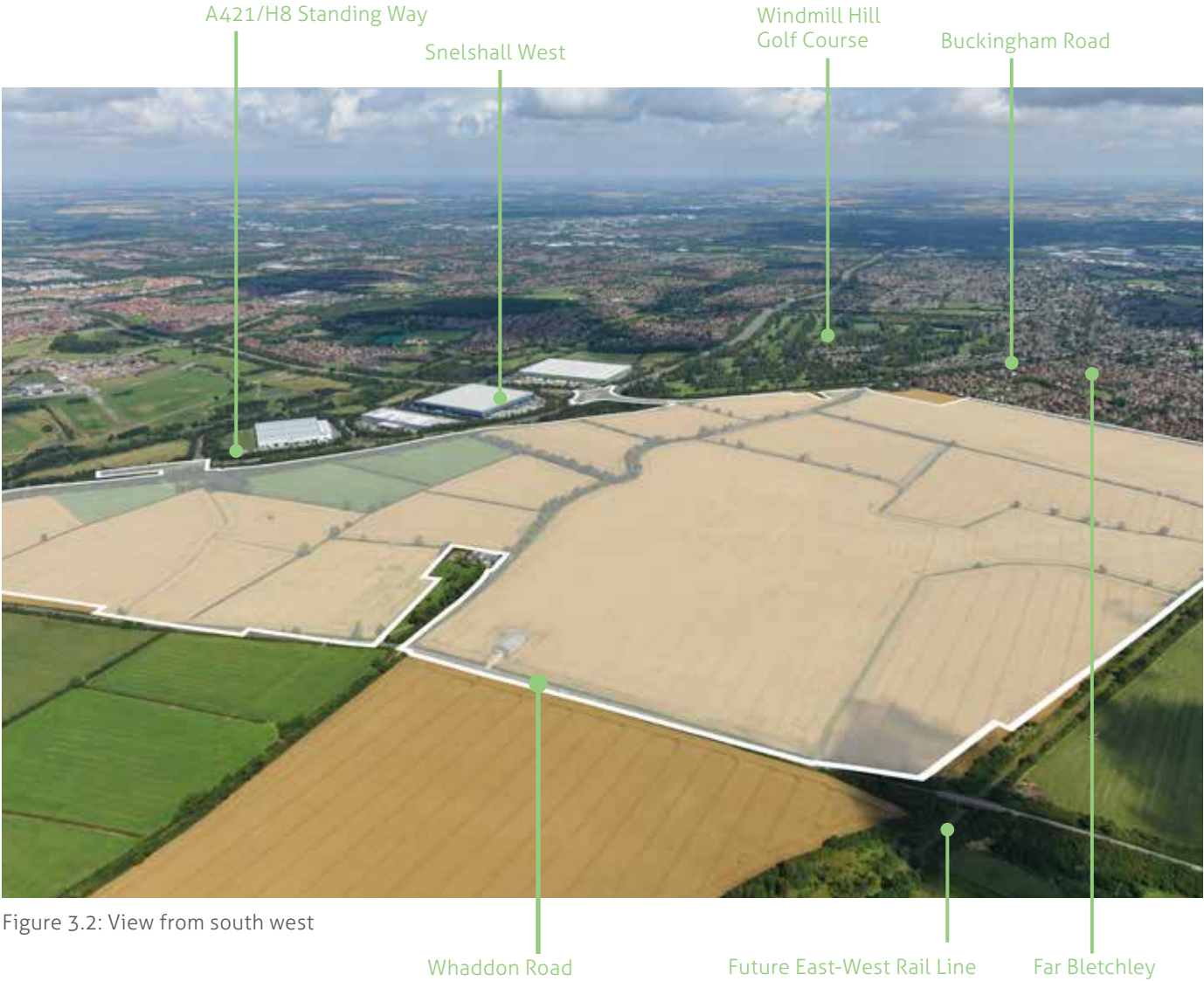


Figure 3.2: View from south west





Figure 3.3: View from south



View along Weasel Lane



View along Whaddon Road looking north

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.42 The site is bordered to the north by the industrial area of Snelshall West and to the east by the established residential area of Far Bletchley. The western boundary and southern boundaries predominantly comprise agricultural farmland, with the expanded village of Newton Longville also located to the south of the site.
- 3.43 The application site covers an area of approximately 145 hectares. The site is defined by the A421 (Standing Way) to the north, Whaddon Road which links the Bottledump roundabout in the north west corner of the site to Newton Longville, to the west and the disused railway line to the south which now forms part of the East West Rail proposals. The eastern boundary is defined by the existing residential neighbourhood of Far Bletchley.



Figure 3.4: Aerial Photograph of the Site



- 3.44 The site currently comprises of a mix of agricultural land and two farm buildings, hedgerows and public rights of way. The site is currently utilised as agricultural farmland. A residential property "The Leys" sits at the western edge of the site but lies outside of the site boundary, and a further residential dwelling is located outside of the site in the north eastern corner, north of Weasel Lane.

- 3.45 A pair of existing high pressure oil pipelines run north-south through the central axis of the site. Additionally, both high and low voltage overhead electricity lines cross substantial parts of the site. The site is also crossed by a gas main, sewer and various drainage routes which are identified in figure 4.1.

### TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT NETWORKS

- 3.46 The site is well connected on a local, sub-regional and regional scale. The A421 runs adjacent to the site and enables connections to Buckingham and the M40 to the west and to the Milton Keynes grid road network around the City and providing links to the wider region via the A5 and M1.







Figure 3.5: Existing Public Transport



- 3.47 Two existing recreational routes fall within the physical limits of the site. Weasel Lane runs along an elevated physical ridge running north-east. Milton Keynes Boundary Walk also runs through the eastern part of the south in a north-south direction.
- 3.48 Three sections of public footpaths are also within the site. One footpath traverses the South West section of the site, linking Newton Longville to Weasel Lane, itself a public right of way and part of the long distance National Cycle Route (Sustrans no. 51). The other two sections of footpath converge in the north-east corner of the site, connecting to the wider rural area and Thrift and Broadway Woods.





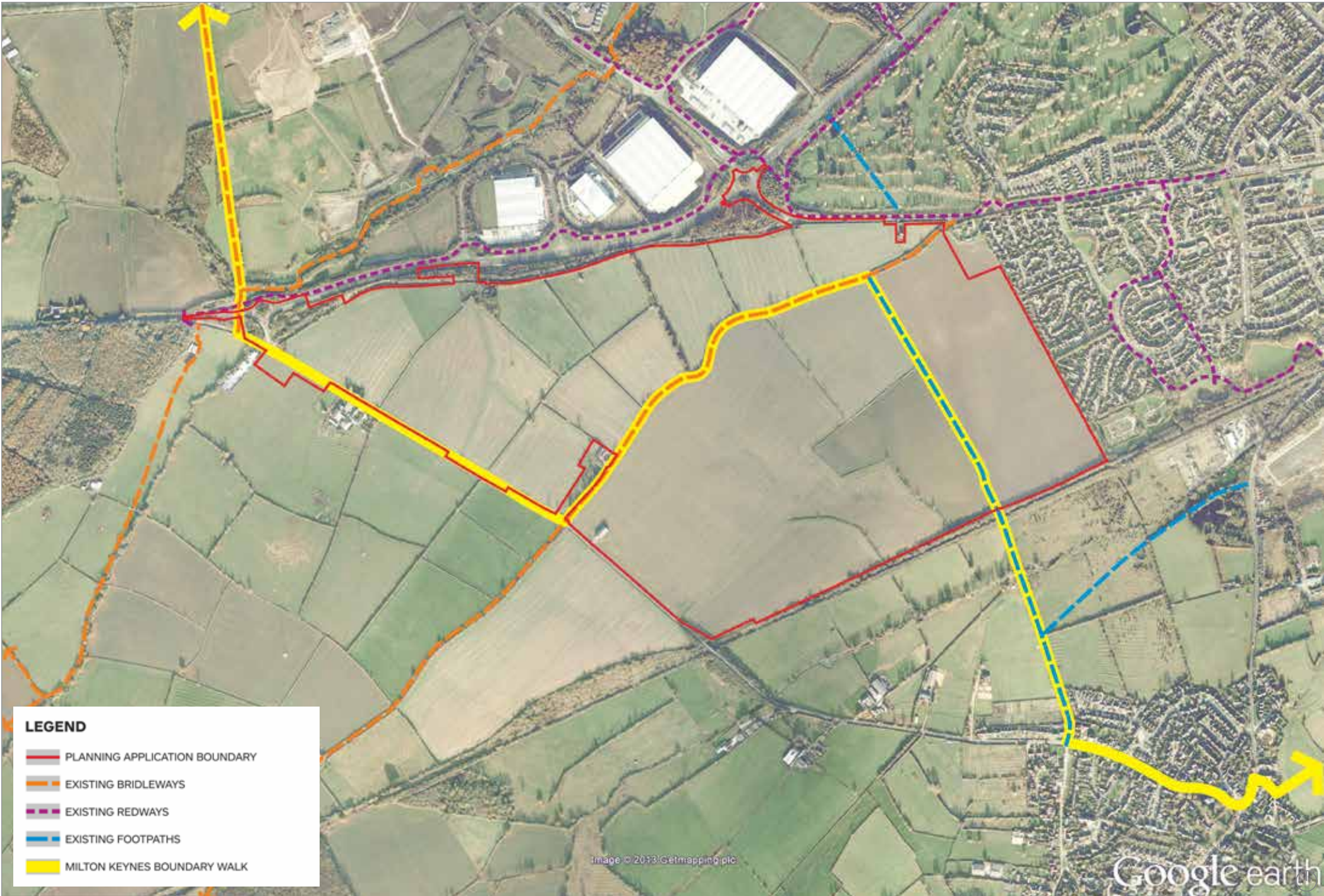


Figure 3.6: Existing Footpaths, Cycleway and Bridleways



### TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.49 The topography of the site is undulating and characterised by a ridge running across the central length of the site from east to west aligning with Weasel Lane. The predominant topographic features are therefore shallow ridges and valleys sloping away from this focal ridge line, which run broadly on a south west alignment.





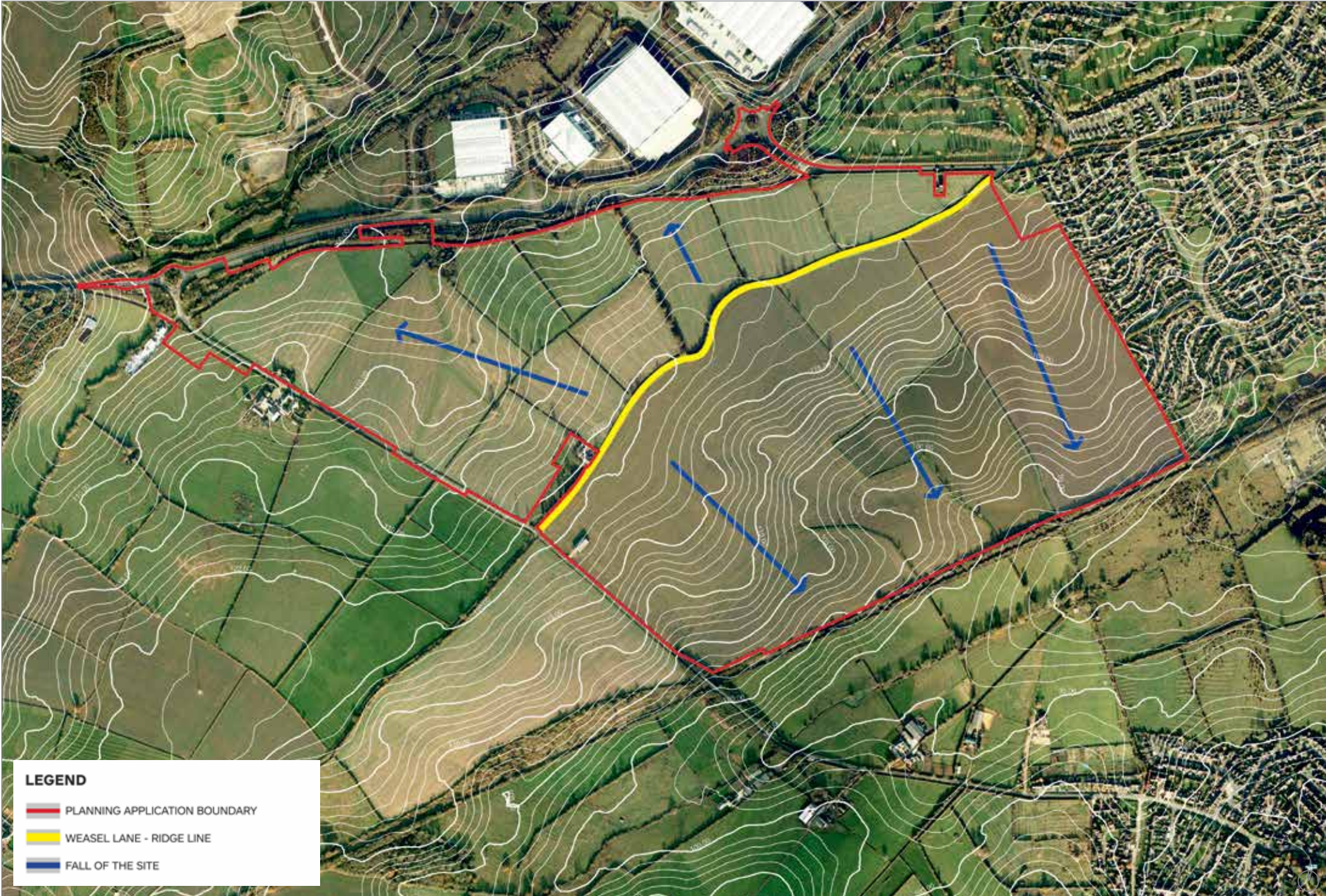


Figure 3.7: Topography



### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 3.50 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken to assess the character, value and sensitivity of the site and the surrounding landscape. Further details are provided in chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement that supports the application.
- 3.51 The site lies within Character Area 88 "Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands". It is not situated within a landscape that is afforded any statutory landscape quality protection or designation at an international, national, regional or local scale.

- 3.52 The landscape of the site falls into two broadly distinct areas, distinguished by the physical ridge that follows the line of Weasel Lane. The northern landscape is characterised by a pattern of elm hedgerows and hawthorns, providing ecological and visual value to the site and important habitat corridors. The southern element of the landscape no longer maintains a strong network of hedgerows, being largely lost to modern farming methods. It is dominated instead by arable farmland.





Figure 3.8: Existing Green Infrastructure Context

### GEOLOGY, HYDROLOGY AND FLOOD RISK

- 3.53 The site is part of the Newton Longville Claylands and is principally chalky till with slowly permeable calcareous, clayey soils with occasional outcrops of permeable non-calcareous clayey soils.
- 3.54 The site is crossed with drainage ditches that imitate the gentle sloping topography (see Figure 3.7). Accordingly two catchment areas are delineated, one draining to the north via a pair of Loughton Brook tributaries, and one to the south of Weasel Lane where a series of ditches along the dropping land mediate flow towards the railway line.
- 3.55 A Hydro-geological assessment is reported within chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement. A Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for the proposed development. In terms of fluvial flood risk, the site lies within Flood Zone 1; being an area of Low Probability of flooding.





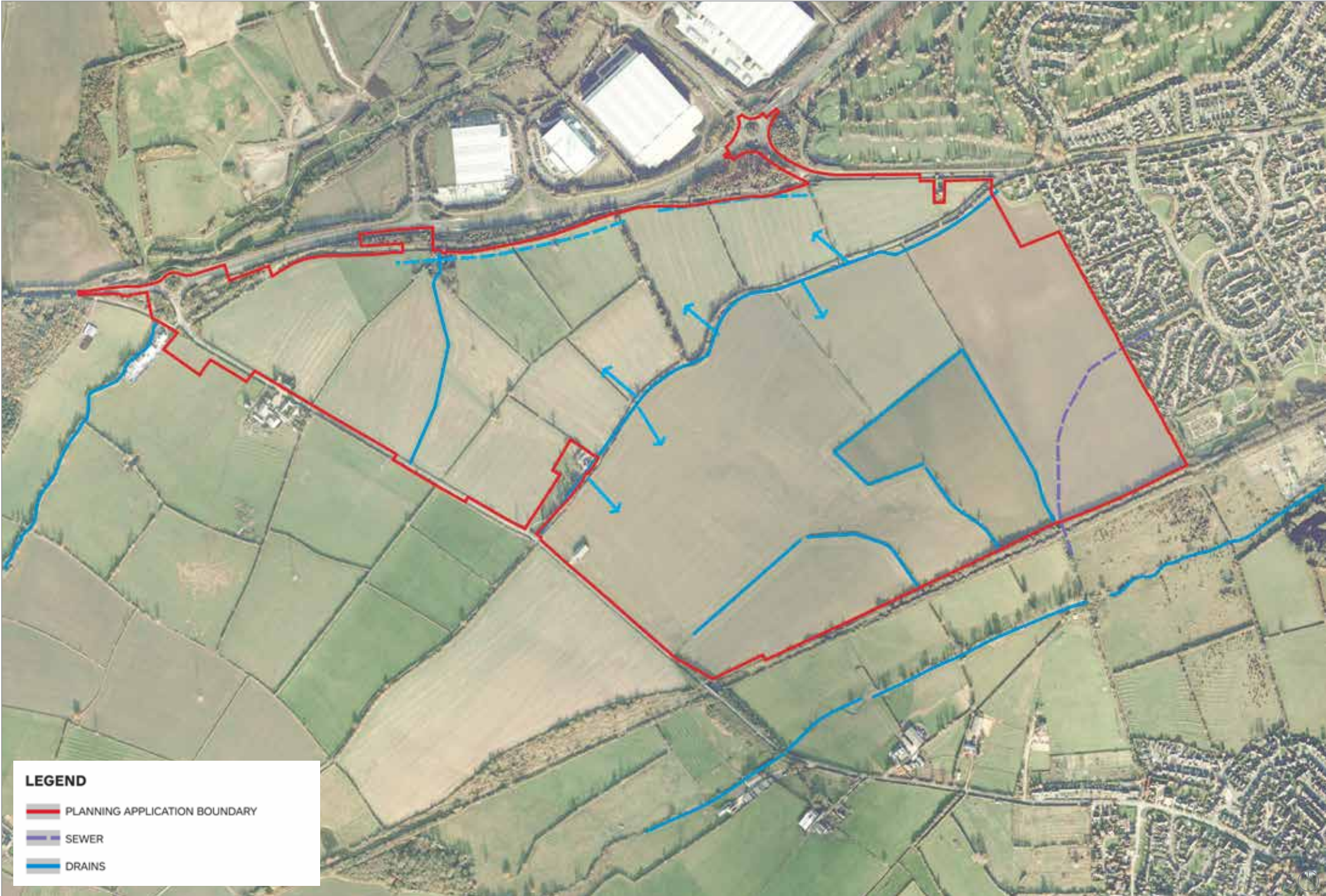


Figure 3.9: Existing Hydrology and Drainage



### BIODIVERSITY, TREES AND HEDGEROWS

- 3.56 A range of habitats are present within the site and are heavily influenced by its current agricultural management. The site is dominated by arable fields with several small fields of poor semi-improved grassland divided by hedgerows. The predominant hedgerow species within the site is Hawthorn, a number of the site hedgerows are identified as being "important" under the Hedgerow Regulations.
- 3.57 Mature trees are mostly confined to boundary hedgerows, mostly in the north of the site including Weasel Lane. The dominant species on site are Ash and English Oak.
- 3.58 There are no veteran trees on site, however there are five individual trees and 3 further tree groups, considered to be "Category A – high quality" which include both Ash and Oak species (refer to the full Arboricultural Assessment).

- 3.59 There are no statutory sites of international nature conservation importance (e.g. Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Ramsar Sites) present within the Site or within a 5km radius. Howe Park Wood SSSI is approximately 1.2km north of the subject site and designated for its semi-natural woodland. Milton Keynes Wildlife Corridor Wetland and Woodland fall partially within the north-western area of the site and provide linking habitat to the surrounding area. There is a Local Wildlife Site, to the west of the site and east of Salden Wood/83F08, separated from the site by Whaddon Road. The site is of county level importance supporting species-rich grassland and scrub mosaic within a disused railway cutting.

- 3.60 The application has been informed by a number of surveys to include targeted protected species surveys for reptiles, birds, great crested newts and bats. The site has limited habitats or features of interest other than the existing network of hedgerows and small areas of semi-natural woodland. The dominant habitat types identified within the site are considered to be of negligible conservation value. Areas of Local nature conservation value include woodland, hedgerows and mature trees and these areas occupy a small proportion of the site.



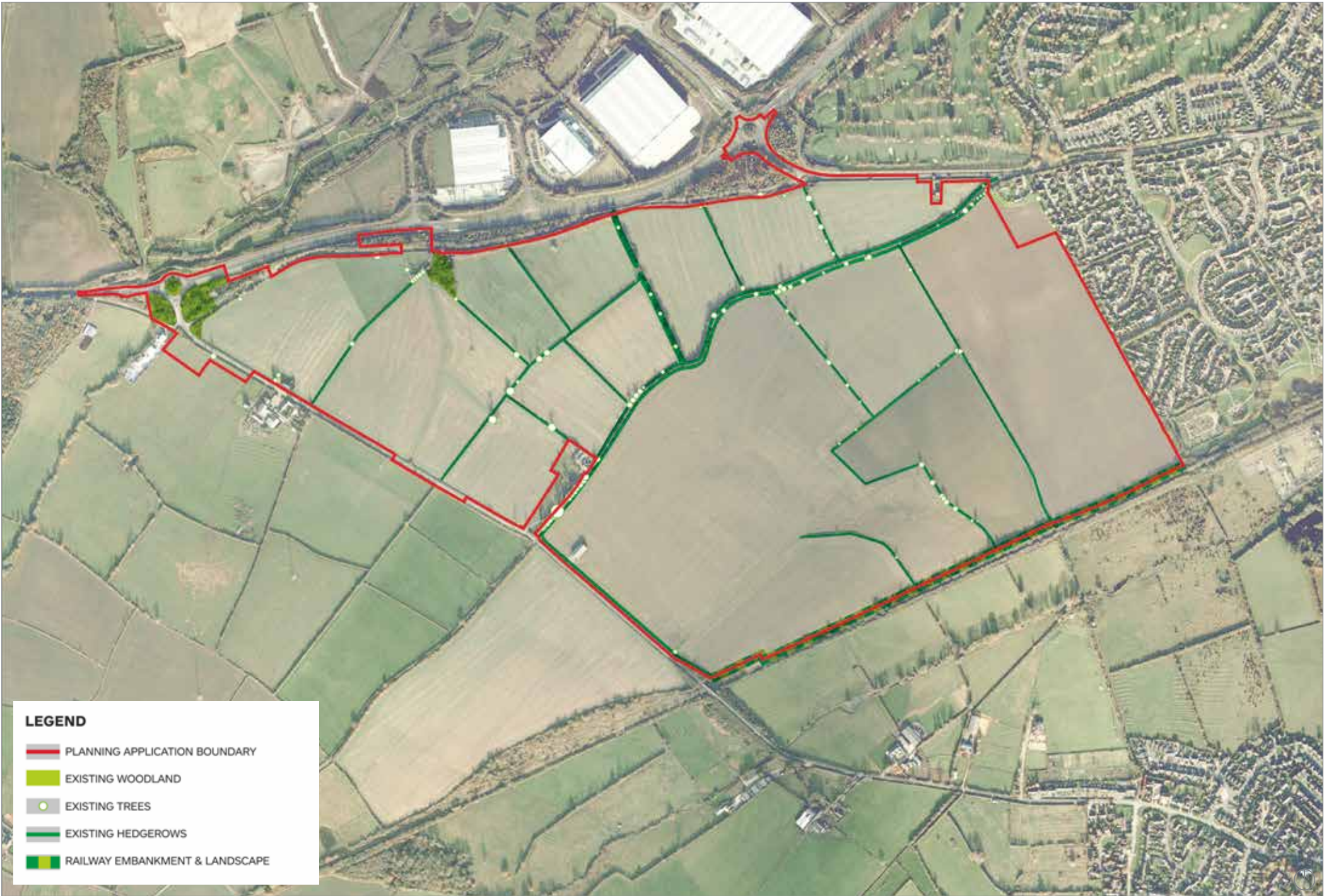


Figure 3.10: Existing Biodiversity, Trees and Hedgerows

### ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 3.61 There are no scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, battlefields or conservation areas within or abutting the application site.
- 3.62 A detailed geophysical survey of the site identified a set of areas within the site that are considered to have the highest potential for archaeological remains have been undertaken. A set of localised anomalies of archaeological origin have been recorded at the eastern edge of the site. Chapter 5 of the Environmental Statement provides further comment in this regard.
- 3.63 Figure 3.11 shows the approximate location of areas of potential archaeological significance within the site.





Figure 3.11: Existing Archaeology and Historic Environment Plan

## Local Character Study

### INTRODUCTION

- 3.64 The SWMK site context embraces the local authority administrative boundaries of Aylesbury Vale District and Milton Keynes Councils. As such, it is necessary that the design of the development proposed within the outline planning application for SWMK responds to the specific spatial context of both Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale.

### MILTON KEYNES CITY STRUCTURE

- 3.65 In c1980 Milton Keynes Development Corporation published its review of 10 years of development in preparation for the planning of the remainder of the city. The review, "Milton Keynes City Structure", established principles to guide the relationship between future homes, parks, roads and businesses with an emphasis on overall structure and connections.
- 3.66 A finer grain structure beneath that of the grid is advocated. With reference to the approach articulated in policy CS 6 of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy, the established principles which have guided the historical development of Milton Keynes, as referred to above, have been adopted by the SWMK proposals, as outlined below:

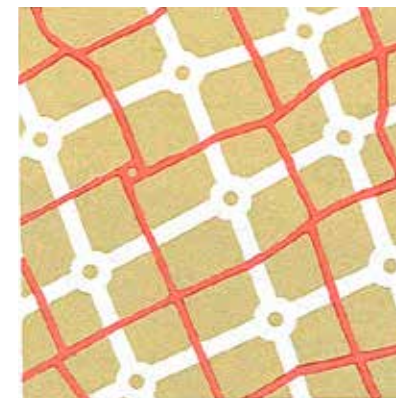
### THE GRID STRUCTURE

- 3.67 SWMK has deliberately been designed to accommodate potential extension of the city wide grid structure, extending from H8 Standing Way into development site (see Figure 6.5). The primary road networks are laid out to reflect the grid structure, the alignment of the easternmost primary route provides the ability to construct 'grid road spurs', linking into the grid network at Tattenhoe roundabout.



### LOCAL ROUTES

- 3.68 Local routes form the second tier of the movement network within the development in accordance with the MKDC review. The local routes provide a permeable network of streets providing north-south and east-west connections through the development site, accommodating vehicular, cycle and pedestrian movements. Crossing points along the Buckingham Road are restricted due to the existence of the buildings which form the Snelshall employment area and the formal structured linear open space, both of which are constraints that require appropriate design solutions.





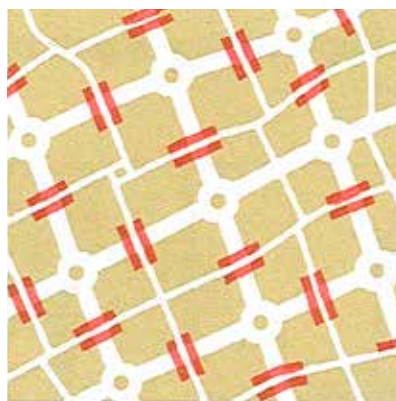
### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.69 Residential development will be a key part of the street scene, compatible with other mixed uses which will front local routes to create lively, well used streets.



### ACTIVITY CENTRES

- 3.70 The local routes in conjunction with the primary streets establish mid-point crossings at which activity centres can be located. The Neighbourhood Centre within SWMK is located at an area of high connectivity, along the site frontage and at the confluence of the main access into the development. A cluster of community activities will create an animated street scene, providing a prominent commercial frontage and focus for the development.



### OPEN SPACE

- 3.71 A significant proportion of open space at SWMK will be located on the edge of the development area, particularly along the eastern, western and southern flanks, on the edge of the grid. In addition, a centrally located green heart is provided as part of the green east-west swathe of open space that runs through the development. A strategic east-west and north-south open space network also provides formal and informal open spaces within walking distance of as much of the population as possible. Open space also acts as a key focus for community activity and is therefore carefully located to maximise access.



### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 3.72 Community facilities will form an integral part of the proposed mixed use centres. They will be co-located where possible to create vibrant, busy places and to encourage social interaction and shared trips. Location of such facilities in the centres will maximise ease of access from all areas of SWMK and the surrounding community.



### STUDY AREA SELECTION CRITERIA

- 3.73 Understanding spatial context is the first step in the design process which will inform a range of subsequent design decisions. The purpose of this study is not to identify a range of prescriptive design principles relating to the future design of buildings and spaces such as the specific use of materials, fenestration and other elements of building detailing. Rather, this study aims to identify the broad characteristics which generally define the built form of the residential areas located around or in close proximity to SWMK.
- 3.74 The location plan provided at Figure 3.12 shows the spatial location of the study areas in relation to SWMK.

- 3.75 All of the study areas have been selected due to their relative proximity to SWMK. A range of study areas have been chosen both within Milton Keynes and to the south of SWMK in Aylesbury Vale. The SWMK site's location on the edge of the existing urban area of Milton Keynes also requires that the proposed development will facilitate a transition in character from the urban form of Milton Keynes to the rural open context of Aylesbury Vale. In recognition of this, study areas displaying these varied characteristics have been identified. The study areas are:
- » Tattenhoe – A typical Milton Keynes grid square approximately 1.5 km to the north of the SWMK site;
  - » the neighbourhoods to the south of the centre of Newton Longville, a small village within Aylesbury Vale, approximately 1 km to the south east of the SWMK site; and
  - » the western neighbourhoods of Far Bletchley directly to the east of the SWMK site which also respond to the specific urban and rural characteristics of the Aylesbury Vale/Milton Keynes context.



Figure 3.12: Location of the Study Areas



Local Context

STUDY AREA 1: TATTENHOE

23

house icon/ha

Study area:

16.05 Ha

39.66 Acres

LOCATION

- 3.76 The Tattenhoe grid square in Milton Keynes (MK) is located approximately 1.5 km to the north of SWMK. The Tattenhoe grid square is 4.5 km to the south east of the centre of MK.
- 3.77 The study area is located on the northern edge of the Tattenhoe grid square, adjacent to V2 Tattenhoe Street grid road and the Tattenhoe Valley Park (TVP).

BUILT FORM

- 3.78 The Tattenhoe grid square was developed in the 1990's and in the most part, can be characterised as being typical of suburban development of this time. Vehicular movement through the grid square is facilitated by a spine road/primary route which extends from a junction with Tattenhoe Street to the north of the study area, through the centre of the residential neighbourhood, to a junction with Snellsall Street to the south. Vehicular access to dwellings which do not front the spine road/primary route is provided from other



Block Number	Block Area (Ha)	No. of Dwellings	Density (Units/ Ha)
B1	5.1	120	23.5
B2	5.96	156	26.1
B3	4.99	97	19.4
TOTAL	16.05	373	23

*\*Total Density excludes green infrastructure*

secondary residential streets which connect with the spine road/primary route and from multiple cul-de-sac's and shared driveways. This street layout limits vehicular permeability through the neighbourhood and focuses vehicular movement to the spine road/primary route. As a result the cul-de-sac's and residential streets lack vitality through activity but conversely have a quiet, relaxed residential character.

- 3.79 Residential properties are set out in a series of perimeter blocks. Some of these blocks have development which extends into the centre of the block with dwellings set around cul-de-sac's. This arrangement means that most dwellings face the street or overlook communal open spaces with the backs of properties and private open spaces unexposed to the street frontage. Most dwellings have on plot parking, with private drives that have space

to accommodate more than one vehicle. Most dwellings also have private garages.

- 3.80 The central spine road is lined with trees and has generous grass verges meaning that dwellings are set well back from the street. In general, properties have large front gardens with lawns. Boundaries are defined by low hedgerows and shrubbery.

EDGE CHARACTER

- 3.81 Edges to the existing built form within the study area are defined by the TVP to the east, Tattenhoe Street to the north and Howe Park Wood (HPW) to the west.
- 3.82 Residential development is well insulated from the impact of Tattenhoe Street with dwellings set well back from a landscape buffer which extends along the southern side of the road.
- 3.83 Residential properties back onto the street in this location and front onto Highveer Croft, a quiet cul-de-sac which connects to the pedestrian and cycle routes leading to the TVP. Whilst this edge arrangement provides a comfortable residential environment for properties which front Highveer Croft, it provides a poor relationship with Tattenhoe Street, the landscape buffer and pedestrian routes within this space. However, it should be noted that this dynamic is consistent with the design principles of grid roads in MK.

3.84 The TVP is located on the south eastern edge of the study area. The relationship between TVP and residential dwellings which line this edge is good as dwellings overlook the open space in most places. Landscaping and tree planting provides a soft development edge and attractive residential aspect.

3.85 HPW, an area of ancient semi-natural woodland located to the northern edge of the study area, is formally designated as a SSSI by Natural England. The relationship between the urban area of the study area and HPW is poor. Separation between buildings and the southern edge of the wood is inconsistent along the northern edge of the study area. In places (for example adjacent to Stolford Rise), houses are built only 10 metres from the edge of the woodland making the relationship between the woodland, dwellings and the pedestrian/cycle route within this space seem awkward, constrained detrimental to the setting of the SSSI. In other places separation between dwellings and the wood is less constrained providing a more appropriate setting for this protected landscape feature.

## OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

3.86 Outdoor sports facilities, indoor community sports facilities and other important public open spaces are located within a green corridor which permeates through the centre of the study area. Giles Brook primary school is located on the southern edge of the study area adjacent to Snelshall Street, but relates well to the central open spaces and sports facilities.

3.87 TVP is an excellent north east/south west green corridor through the centre of the grid square. However, connections from the north-west to south east of the grid square are less prominent.

3.88 The lack of a green corridor to connect HPW and TVP through the study area using pedestrian and cycle routes is a missed opportunity. Although this route is possible, the alignment of Stolford Rise and Sharkham Court is such that the legibility of this route is limited.



Neighbourhood Structure



Hartland Avenue



Mavoncliff Drive



St Ives Crescent



Langerstone Lane





Local Context

STUDY AREA 2: NEWTON LONGVILLE

14

house icon /ha

Study Area:

11.28 Ha

27.87 Acres

LOCATION

- 3.89 Newton Longville is a village and civil parish located in Aylesbury Vale district. The built form of the village has developed around the cross roads of Whaddon Road/Stoke Road and Bletchley Road. Newton Longville is approximately 1 km to the south east of the site.
- 3.90 The study area is located to the south west of the central cross roads and extends west from this point along Whaddon Road to its junction with Westbrook End.
- 3.91 To the south, the study area boundary extends to the southern boundary of residential properties which front onto Warners Road. The built form of Newton Longville has evolved through infilling and the periodic extension of the village envelope. As such, the study area includes a variety of residential development types which respond to the range of architectural and town planning ideas prevalent at the various times at which development has taken place.



Block Number	Block Area (Ha)	No. of Dwellings	Density (Units/ Ha)
B1	2.48	14	5.6
B2	3.86	70	18.1
B3	4.94	76	15.3
TOTAL	11.28	160	14

*\*Total Density excludes green infrastructure*

BUILT FORM

- 3.92 The cross roads of Whaddon Road/ Stoke Road and Bletchley Road (located immediately to the north of the study area boundary) is the natural centre of the village. Development within the study area adjacent to the cross roads responds to the historic setting of the centre of the village which is the location of a number of statutory listed

buildings including St Faiths Church (grade I listed). Development in this location is low density and set well away from historic buildings providing generous open spaces and landscaped areas. Properties within the study area which front Bletchley Road are set well back from the street have large front gardens and long private driveways.

- 3.93 Development around the cul-de-sac's of Warners Road and Manor Road (to the west of the centre of the village) has a more urban character with a significantly higher density. Again, residential development set around Betty's Close and Cobb Hall Road differs in character to the residential areas to the west (as described above). This area has less orthogonal building lines, with houses set well back from the street with large grass verges separating the street and residential properties. There are opens green spaces throughout although these are low quality and do not have a good relationship with residential properties. The area has a wider variety of house types than the neighbourhoods further to the east.
- 3.94 The neighbourhoods within the study area have a poor relationship with each other. Physical connections and routes between them are limited as housing is set around cul-de-sac's. The few pedestrian and cycle routes that exist are not integrated into the built form and have convoluted routes which pass between the back fences of properties and in places pass through left over, unsurveilled green spaces.

## EDGE CHARACTER

- 3.95 Westbrook End forms the western edge of the study area. Residential properties within the study area on the eastern side of the road and older properties on the western site of the road are set a long way back from the street. Mature vegetation within the front gardens of the older properties to the west increases the sense of disconnection between the street and houses.
- 3.96 Large grass verges separate properties on the east of the road within the study area from the street and whilst this provides a safe environment for pedestrians, it does provide a somewhat bleak, uneven street character. This character is also reflected along the northern edge of the study area along Whaddon Road where properties are set well back from the pavement and built upon land raised up above the level of the street. This arrangement provides a poor relationship between the residential neighbourhoods within the study area and other properties which front Whaddon Road to the north.

## OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 3.97 The study area has few open spaces. There is a green space at the centre of the loop formed by Betty's close although this has limited use, has no additional facilities and as it is located at the end of a cul-de-sac, is poorly connected with the surrounding residential areas.



Neighbourhood Structure



Manor Road



Drayton Road



Cobb Hall Road



Whaddon Road





Local Context

STUDY AREA 3: FAR BLETCHLEY

22

house/ha

Study Area:

9.48 Ha

23.42 Acres

LOCATION

3.98 The western neighbourhood of Far Bletchley (WNFB) is located at the western edge of the Milton Keynes administrative boundary and immediately to the east of the site. The WNFB is approximately 6.0 km from the centre of MK and the SWMK site is immediately to the east.

BUILT FORM

3.99 Residential areas within the study area and the wider WNFB were constructed in the late 1980's - early 1990's. The WNFB is an extension of earlier 1960 residential estate. The development at this location does reflect the general built form of MK in that it is not contained within a grid square.

3.100 The WNFB and the residential development within the study area is typical of early 1990's suburban residential housing. Chepstow Drive is a central distributor road, providing a vehicular route from



Block Number	Block Area (Ha)	No. of Dwellings	Density (Units/ Ha)
B1	3.16	58	18.3
B2	3.71	87	23.4
B3	2.61	73	27.9
TOTAL	9.48	218	22

*\*Total Density excludes green infrastructure*

the older residential areas to the east, via St. John's Road, through the centre of the study area to connect with Buckingham Road. Wincanton Hill provides a second connection to Buckingham Road from Chepstow Drive. In the most part, vehicular access to properties is provided by cul-de-sacs that connect to the central distributor road.

3.101 The average density of the study area is 22.9 dwellings per hectare (dph) reflecting the large number of detached dwellings on wide plots with generous back gardens. This character is particularly prevalent in Block 1 where densities within the study area are lowest.

- 3.102 The layout of the study area and the wider area of the WNFB limits vehicular permeability, reducing vitality and activity within residential areas. Conversely, the layout does provide quiet, comfortable residential streets.
- 3.103 The focus upon cul-de-sac's within the layout of residential areas provides a fragmented built form with the backs of properties exposed to public areas and streets. This is particularly evident around Wincanton Hill, where a central area of public open space is fronted on three of its sides by the back fences of residential properties which face cul-de-sac's within the interior of adjacent blocks.
- 3.104 There is a small local centre to the north of the study area providing some local services and retail. The local centre has a prominent position at the gateway to residential areas and is adjacent to redway cycle routes and pedestrian routes.

EDGE CHARACTER

3.105 The boundary of the SWMK application site and the back gardens of residential properties on the western edge of Far Bletchley form the western edge of the neighbourhood. The eastern boundary of the site comprises of rear gardens of the dwellings at the western edge of the WNFB providing a poor relationship to the proposed development.

3.106 The eastern edge of Far Bletchley is formed by St. Clement's Drive. The relationship between the study area and the earlier 1960's development to the east of St. Clement's Drive is very poor. The 1960's properties to the east of the study area provide an active frontage along St. Clement's Drive whilst the later development within the study area has no real interaction with the street as the frontage is formed by the backs of properties, screened by a high hedge row. This arrangement provides a degree of disconnection between the two neighbourhoods.

3.107 The southern edge of WNFB is formed by Chepstow Linear Park which provides separation between residential areas to the north and the future East-West Railway lines to the south. The green buffer provided by the linear park provides an attractive landscaped edge to Far Bletchley, softening the impact of the built form beyond.

3.108 To the north of the study area, Buckingham Road provides the northern edge of the WNFB. In this location (as it does throughout the neighbourhood), the residential layout, (predominantly development fronting cul-de-sac's), internalises activity and

street frontage to the interior of residential blocks so that there are no properties fronting Buckingham Road. Although it could be considered that this arrangement limits the impact of road traffic on residential properties, it also provides a weak edge to the neighbourhood and limits physical connections with other residential areas to the north.

3.109 A green corridor which contains pedestrian and cycle routes alongside Wincanton Hill and Blaydon Close provides an effective north/south connection between Chepstow Linear Park and Buckingham Road. East/west vehicular, cycle and pedestrian routes are however limited.

### OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

3.110 In general, open spaces within the study area seem to be underused, and rather than being an integral part of the residential layout, appear to be left over 'green spaces', lacking surveillance from properties and facilities.



Neighbourhood Structure



Chepstow Drive



Huntingdon Crescent



Kelso Close



Epsom Grove

