

WOBURN SANDS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY
APPRAISAL

Final

April 2013

1. This Sustainability Appraisal was carried out prior to the preparation of the Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan. As agreed by the principal organisations in Woburn Sands, and by neighbouring parish councils, both documents have been prepared by Woburn Sands Town Council but have benefitted from contributions from those organisations.

Nature of Woburn Sands

2. Woburn Sands is an established community on the outskirts of Milton Keynes. A map of the parish boundary is attached as Appendix A.
3. The settlement now known as Woburn Sands was part of the original ecclesiastical parish of Wavendon along with part of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath. Until about 1820 the settlement was known as Hogsty End although references to the name Woburn Sands appear in the late 18C. In 1846 the railway arrived. In 1865 the boundaries of the ecclesiastical parishes were re-drawn and the Woburn Sands parish established; at that time it included part of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath and it is for that reason that the Parish Church is located on the Heath. In 1907 civil parishes were established and the current boundaries with Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath were fixed. In 1972 the Woburn Sands Parish Council declared that Woburn Sands was a town and the Parish Council became the Town Council.
4. Most of the central part of the town dates from the mid-19C; much of this now forms a Conservation Area. The town has evolved continuously since then but the most significant expansion came in the 1960s and 1970s (the Elm Grove area, Tidbury Close, Tavistock Close and Vandyke Close). Around the turn of the century small developments took place (Cranbrook and Turnpike Court). The town is currently undergoing a major expansion which started in 2006 following the purchase of a former industrial site (occupied by Nampak) by Taylor Wimpey (the Parklands development). Planning Permission for 392 dwellings has been granted with 341 dwellings already completed and sold; 32 properties are under construction with the remaining 19 yet to start. Taylor Wimpey have just submitted (January 2013) a planning application for the remainder of the site (Phase 4) which proposes a further 157 dwellings. If granted Parklands will therefore increase the number of dwellings in the town by 549 which will represent an increase of about 53% over the number of dwellings in 2000.
5. The parish of Woburn Sands is classified as a Clayland Fringe overlooked by the Brickhills Greensand Ridge (*MKC Landscape Report*). There are no specific environmental challenges to development in the parish although the area between the railway line and Frosts Garden centre is liable to flooding. The built environment is influenced by the fact that the central area is designated as a Conservation Area, and a number of buildings are listed of particular interest. (See Appendix B)
6. A particular feature of the town is that the county boundary runs through the settlement. Broadly speaking the area to the east of Weathercock Lane and south of Hardwick Road are in Bedfordshire (the parishes of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath respectively). The population of the civil parish of Woburn Sands is approximately 3000 but the wider population who regard the Woburn Sands High Street as their “centre” is about twice this number. The wider Woburn Sands population makes use of the facilities in all three parishes and this has a significant impact when reviewing the sustainability of Woburn Sands; there are no shops or library in the other parishes but the schools serving Woburn Sands are in Aspley Guise and the Parish Church is in Aspley Heath.
7. Following discussions with the neighbouring parishes of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath it has been agreed that the Plan should cover the parish of Woburn Sands; this proposal was approved by Milton Keynes Council in July 2012. The Parish Councils of Aspley Guise and Aspley Heath are happy to work closely with the Woburn Sands Town Council in developing the town’s Neighbourhood Plan, and one of the key objectives of the Plan will be to minimise the effect of the boundary.

8. Woburn Sands has been identified as a Key Settlement in the settlement hierarchy set out by Milton Keynes Council in its draft Core Strategy. Further details of this policy are set out below but it should be noted that Woburn Sands is already in the middle of a major expansion through the Parklands development; as noted above in para 4 Woburn Sands has already contributed 302 additional dwellings to the overall development of Milton Keynes since 2006. This contribution is placing an increasing strain on the existing infrastructure and this can only become more pronounced since the Parklands development is only about half way towards completion.

Background Data

9. The population of Woburn Sands in April 2011 was estimated to be 2,900 (*Census*) and expected to grow as follows over the next few years based on current planning approvals (including Parklands Phases 4, 5 and 6) and rates of completion:

April 2011	2900
April 2014	3250
April 2019	3800
April 2026	4000 (End of Neighbourhood Plan period)

10. The age breakdown in 2011 was follows:

Pre School			150	5%
School Age	Primary (5 – 11yrs.)	160	430	15%
	Secondary (12 – 18yrs.)	<u>270</u>		
Working Age	Age 19 – 34	520	1,590	55%
	Age 35 - 60	<u>1070</u>		
Retirement Age	Age 61 – 74	430	730	25%
	Over 75 yrs.	<u>300</u>		
TOTAL			2,900	100%

(MKC Population Bulletin)

11. It is estimated that a further 2,800 live in the adjacent parishes of Aspley Guise (2,200) and Aspley Heath (600).

12. In the tax year 2012/13 there are the following dwellings by tax band

Band A	80	Single Occupancy	56
Band B	222		118
Band C	287		102
Band D	368		105
Band E	217		42
Band F	103		12
Band G	22		3
Band H	2		-
TOTAL	1301		438

(MKC Council Tax Database)

13. There are no schools in the Woburn Sands parish. Most primary age children in State Education attend Swallowfield School just over the boundary in Central Bedfordshire which has approximately 290 pupils drawn from Woburn Sands, Aspley Guise, Aspley Heath and other parts of Milton Keynes. Transfer to Fulbrook Middle School, also in Central Bedfordshire, takes place at the end of Year 4. From there pupils have the option of continuing in the three tier Bedfordshire system (subject to capacity) or into Milton Keynes schools which operate on a two tier system.
14. Woburn Sands is served by Asplands Medical Centre, located in the centre of the town but currently funded by Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust. The practice draws its patients from both Woburn Sands and the adjacent parishes in both Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes.
15. There is a flourishing High Street with a variety of shops, two banks and a garage. The Library, which is jointly funded by Milton Keynes Council and Woburn Sands Town Council, is also located on the High Street. The High Street is the centre for residents from all the neighbouring parishes.
16. Other facilities in the town include two community halls, two residential homes for the elderly, and various amenity areas.

Vision and Sustainable Objectives

17. Following widespread consultations with local organisations, adjacent parish councils, and residents the following draft Vision has been adopted. (Note: An initial Issues Meeting with local organisations was held on 29 March 2012; a Town Meeting was held on 10 May; and copies of the consultation papers were placed on the website and in the Library, with summaries included in the July Newsletter circulated to all residents).

Woburn Sands will remain an attractive and sustainable location which meets the aspirations of residents, the wider Woburn Sands community, and all those who use the facilities

18. When discussing sustainability the participants at both the Issues and Town Meetings emphasised the need to protect, enhance, maintain and encourage the current characteristics of the town. Specifically the following draft Sustainable Objectives were agreed:
 1. The existing environment (both landscape and built) will be protected and enhanced where possible; specifically
 - the existing open spaces within the town and the open spaces on the edge of the town will be preserved,
 - links into the surrounding countryside in adjacent parishes will be maintained,
 - the historic nature of the Conservation Area will be protected,
 - the quality of the built environment will be maintained.
 2. A balanced stock of housing, with no significant increase in either the number or diversity will be maintained (once the Parklands development has been completed).
 3. The number and variety of retail and service businesses will be maintained and expanded in line with demand.
 4. The establishment of a limited number of employment opportunities for those who wish to work locally will be encouraged.
 5. The existing recreational facilities will be preserved and, where possible, expanded.
 6. Community development will be encouraged through the promotion of community use of all the facilities in the town.
 7. Access to a full range of educational provision will be encouraged.
 8. The welfare of the population will be promoted through the encouragement of integrated community and health services.

Relevant National and Local Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

19. In his Foreword to the NPPF the Minister makes the following statements:

- The purpose of planning means sustainable development
- Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves doesn't mean worse lives for future generations
- Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations

20. Para 7 of the NPPF gives three dimensions to sustainable development:

- An economic role – contributing to economic development
- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the right supply of housing and creating a high quality of built environment with accessible local services
- An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historical environment

21. Para 16 specifies that “[the Neighbourhood Plan] should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development”

22. The NPPF then has specific chapters setting out general guidance on the topics which Local Plans must cover, as follows:

- Building a strong competitive economy.
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres.
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy.
- Protecting sustainable transport.
- Supporting a high quality communications infrastructure.
- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.
- Requiring good design.
- Promoting healthy communities.
- Protecting Green Belt land.
- Meeting the challenge of climate change.
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

23. The draft Woburn Sands Sustainable Objectives, as set out in para 18 above, cover these same topics.

Milton Keynes Local Plan

24. The current Milton Keynes Local Plan runs until 2011 and is in the process of being replaced by a Core Strategy which has been the subject of an Inquiry in mid-2012; the Inspector's report is awaited. In view of this timeframe it is inappropriate to quote any policies in the Local Plan.

Milton Keynes Core Strategy

25. The draft Milton Keynes Core Strategy (covering the period to 2026) was published in late 2010; the Examination in Public was delayed slightly due to national planning policy changes but was held in mid-2012. The Report of the Inspector is expected shortly. The following extracts are based on the draft Strategy.

26. The overall Vision for Milton Keynes (Chapter 4 page 16) is as follows:

To Develop Milton Keynes as a major 21st Century City

27. Supplementing that overall vision are various more specific objectives, the most relevant of which is the following:

“14. Some limited development will occur in Newport Pagnell, Olney, and Woburn Sands to support provision of services for the Borough’s rural community. Any development in the towns and villages will reflect the distinct character of its surrounding”

28. Woburn Sands is classified as a Key Settlement in the rural area. Para 9.1 (Development in the Rural Area) states “Only a limited amount of development should therefore take place in the other towns and villages in the Borough [which includes Woburn Sands] and any shortfall in housing completions in the city will not be offset by more development in rural settlements”. Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands are recognised as having the best transport links and most facilities and also serving surrounding villages; they are therefore classified as being Key Settlements.

29. Table 5.2 of the Strategy gives proposed housing targets for various areas; the target for Rural Areas is as follows:

Total for Plan period	1760
Annual Total	110

These figures are not broken down by settlements.

(Note: A preliminary report from the Inspector suggests that these targets may be increased slightly)

30. Policy CS4 covers Retail and Leisure Development and states:

“The long established town centres of Newport Pagnell, Olney, Stony Stratford and Woburn Sands will function primarily as local shopping destinations catering for daily of specialist shopping needs and in recognition of the constraints placed on their development by conservation and allied considerations”

31. Table 5.7 summarises the Overarching Development Strategy. The section relating to the rural settlements (including Woburn Sands) makes the following comments:

- There is a housing target of 1760
- Approximately 530 dwellings have full or outline permission (the majority of these are in Woburn Sands – the former Nampak site)
- Focus is on protecting the roles of the key settlements and supporting opportunities for rural diversification
- Protection of the retail role of town centres
- Specific improvements in Woburn Sands to be provided through the redevelopment of the former Nampak site identified as:
 - Public open space and play facilities
 - Enhanced community facility on Station Road
 - Financial contribution to Asplands Medical Centre.

Sustainability Appraisal of Woburn Sands

Overall Scale of Development

32. As indicated above Woburn Sands is an established community which has continued to evolve over many years. For the last few years, since the start of the Parklands development, the pace of growth has increased substantially. This has been achieved without breaking the town’s “envelope” – all the change has occurred within the established boundaries (the Parklands development is on a brownfield site previously used for industrial purposes).

33. This pattern of development has enabled the town to retain its identity and attractiveness which are seen as the key elements for the future as reflected in the agreed Vision.
34. The town is fortunate to have green field/allotments surrounding it to the North and West; on the South the adjacent parish of Aspley Heath includes woodland while to the West the golf club in the Aspley Guise parish provides protection.
35. The nature of Woburn Sands would be irreversibly changed should development be permitted on any of these areas. Furthermore any expansion of the current development envelope would have a significant detrimental effect on the landscape environment.

Housing and Population Numbers

36. The Core Strategy was drafted at the end of 2010 and proposed a target of 1760 homes for rural housing in the period up to 2026. Since that time 92 dwellings have been completed on the Parklands development. A further 51 are either under construction or have planning permission. Assuming that Taylor Wimpey's Phase 4 application is granted approximately 300 dwellings (92 plus 51 plus 157) have either been built or will be built in Woburn Sands since publication of the draft Core Strategy. This will represent approximately 17% of the total requirement for rural homes over the period up to 2026 and, furthermore, will be built within the next five years. Woburn Sands is only one of the three Key Settlements identified in the Core Strategy and there is no guidance yet on how the proposed rural target will be met (to be done through the preparation of a Site Allocation DPD – Policy CS9).
37. This suggests that, on a purely statistical basis, Woburn Sands has made a more than adequate contribution to the target in the draft Core Strategy, without taking into account any impact on the town's infrastructure by the current development. Indeed it should be noted that, in her Report on Taylor Wimpey's Appeal in respect of Phases 3 and 4 of Parklands (August 2010), the Inspector stated "The 280 dwellings of phases 1 and 2, together with the 303 dwellings currently proposed, would increase the number of dwellings in the town by more than 50% compared to pre-Nampak site development. I share the Town Council's view that this represents a substantial influx of dwellings and people, something that has the potential to materially harm the equilibrium and identity of the town and its community." (para 21).
38. As indicated in Table 5.7 of the draft Core Strategy the developers of Parklands, Taylor Wimpey, have been obliged to make a significant contribution to the local infrastructure – this is in recognition of the fact that the infrastructure was insufficient to support the additional dwellings proposed by Taylor Wimpey. To date Taylor Wimpey have made a contribution towards the relocation of the town's Library, a contribution to Asplands Medical Centre which allowed its expansion on its existing site, and converted the former Nampak Social Club to a community centre (the Summerlin Centre). These additional facilities have been much appreciated by the town but the level of contribution was calculated on the basis of the initial phases (1 – 3).
39. Two further phases are now planned and Taylor Wimpey have recognised that a further contribution to the Woburn Sands infrastructure will be necessary; it is hoped that the principal item will be the provision of a small Sports Hall but further contributions elsewhere will be requested. These discussions are a good indication of the acceptance by all of the lack of adequate facilities for the town as Parklands is developed.
40. There is insufficient land in Woburn Sands to provide any step-increase in infrastructure facilities – for example there is no land available for a further extension to the Asplands Medical Centre, and there is no room for additional car parking in the High Street despite the increase in population generated by Parklands.

41. It follows that it would be unsustainable in infrastructure terms to expand the number of houses in the town beyond that which is already planned although it would clearly be reasonable to allow small infilling or replacement building where possible.
42. The combination of the historic centre of the town (which is covered by a Conservation Area designation), the modest estates built towards the end of the last century, and the range of dwellings provided on Parklands means that Woburn Sands already houses a wide variety of property to buy or rent. The only perceived shortage relates to small houses for families progressing from flats or as starter homes.
43. Although at national level there is a perceived shortage of housing for the elderly this is not the case in Woburn Sands. There are already two residential homes for the elderly in the town (Burlington Hall and Devon House) and a MKC Warden-assisted complex of flats at Shelton Court. There is also an outstanding Planning Permission for another residential development for the elderly on the current Greens Hotel site in the centre of the town. Furthermore there is one other Local Authority Warden-assisted block of flats just across the boundary in Aspley Guise and a private development of flats in Aspley Heath. Overall the town and the surrounding area are more than self-sustainable for facilities in this category.

Education Provision

44. Achieving sustainability in education provision is complicated by the fact that Woburn Sands does not have any schools within its boundaries; furthermore the two closest schools which most of the pupils attend are across the county boundary in Central Bedfordshire which are run under a three tier system as opposed to the two tier system operating in Milton Keynes.
45. While the standard of education offered by Swallowfield Lower School and Fulbrook Middle School is excellent the age of transfer (Year 5 and Year 8) compared to the single transfer at Year 7 in Milton Keynes presents choices for parents in Woburn Sands, most of whom are oriented towards Milton Keynes for employment, shopping or leisure.
46. Currently Swallowfield has approximately 290 pupils, the largest single group of which come from Woburn Sands; others come from various parishes in Central Bedfordshire and a handful from other parts of Milton Keynes. Other primary age children from Woburn Sands attend various schools in Milton Keynes.
47. Approximately 15 – 20 % of Woburn Sands pupils who go on to Fulbrook School transfer at Year 7 into Milton Keynes secondary schools; this reduces the size of the top class in Fulbrook. Those who stay in Fulbrook then transfer to Central Bedfordshire schools.
48. Provision at the senior level is undergoing considerable change. Central Bedfordshire has advised that there will be increasing pressure on their upper schools as a result of housing developments in Bedfordshire after 2015; this means that they will not be able to guarantee places to out-of-county pupils in the long run as at present. In Milton Keynes plans are currently being drawn up for the development of the area between Kingston and the M1 (the Strategic Land Allocation Area). This area will include secondary school provision which will be sized to accommodate Woburn Sands pupils.

49. It should also be noted that Fulbrook School has recently achieved academy status.
50. There is local agreement between both schools and the local parish councils that:
- All parents in the area should have maximum freedom of choice between the educational systems offered by Milton Keynes and Central Bedfordshire
 - The local schools and authorities will cooperate in the promotion of that freedom to all parents
 - Every effort should be made to improve sustainable routes to local schools.

Employment

51. There is one major employer in the town – Frost Garden Centre – with a second garden centre just over the Wavendon boundary. There is also a car repair facility in Cranfield Road (Aspley Guise) and the Cranfield Road is home to a number of small units. Others are employed in the High Street, Asplands Surgery, and small professional firms.
52. In 2009 the Town Council carried out a survey of households on a number of issues; just over 500 individual replies were received. 236 people indicated that they worked in the following locations:
- 11% worked from home
16% worked in the wider Woburn Sands area
37% worked in Milton Keynes
8% worked in London
28% worked elsewhere

This suggests that some 25% of the working population work locally either or from home or in local workplaces.

53. A key sustainability criteria is to ensure a strong local economy so that residents can obtain employment locally. Woburn Sands has always maintained that capability – the Parklands estate was previously an industrial site employing some 200 at its peak (although many of these workers commuted in to Woburn Sands).
54. A planning application for the final phases of Parklands has just been submitted. Discussions with Taylor Wimpey, and at the Inquiry held to investigate the previous applications, confirmed the need to re-establish some employment opportunities in the final phase. Accordingly it is proposed that the land immediately adjacent to the railway line will be developed as small industrial units. Not only will this provide a buffer zone between residences and the railway but it will also provide space for about 80 – 100 jobs.
55. There are no other significant areas available on which to create any major employment sites in the town but the Parklands units will considerably enhance the employment sustainability of Woburn Sands.

Retail

56. There is a reasonably wide range of retail outlets in the town which provide all the basic needs for the community. As indicated above these serve the neighbouring parishes as well as Woburn Sands.
57. There is a major retail park at Kingston and it is possible that further retail development will take place when the development brief for the expansion area between Kingston and the M1 is finalised.
58. Although there are reasonable public transport links between Woburn Sands, Kingston and Central Milton Keynes (see below) it will be important for the future sustainability of the town that the health and diversity of the High Street is maintained.

Leisure and Recreational Facilities

59. Within the town there are the following facilities:

- There is a small Recreation Ground at the North end of the town with a kickabout area, a small skateboarding area, and some exercise machines.
- A small play area has been created in the Parklands development.
- Parklands also includes a landscaped lake.
- There is a Bowls Club and a Tennis Club adjacent to Greens Hotel but these are subject to an approved Planning Application to develop the area into an elderly care facility which will result in the move of the Bowls Club to a site in Aspley Guise.
- Mowbray Green is a small area where fetes and other similar events can take place.
- Edgewick Farm is an area of about 23 acres on the South of the town which is managed by the Greensand Trust on behalf of the Town Council; this is a public access area while encouraging the natural grassland through a managed grazing regime. It is used occasionally for community events such as the annual Folk Festival.
- There are 150 privately owned allotments at the South end of the town.
- There is a flourishing Library in the High Street which serves the wider Woburn Sands area.
- There are two community halls; the Memorial Hall in the High Street and the Summerlin Centre adjacent to Parklands.
- There are a wide range of clubs and societies, the membership of which is drawn from the wider Woburn Sands area.

60. There is a lack of sports facilities in the town – no full size football or cricket pitch although these are available in Aspley Guise; there are also two Golf Courses in adjacent parishes (Aspley Guise and Wavendon).

61. There are plans to alleviate this to some extent; Taylor Wimpey has agreed to provide a small Sports Hall for badminton, short mat bowls etc as part of their Phase 5 development.

62. Assuming permission is given for Phase 5 as planned the community is reasonably sustainable in leisure/recreational terms provided good relations are maintained with the adjacent parishes. In this connection it is noted that all concerned have agreed to undertake an audit of existing facilities and letting policies so that the use of facilities across all the parishes and schools can be optimised.

Community Development

63. The Asplands Medical Centre serves patients from Woburn Sands, Aspley Heath and Aspley Guise, with a few from outside these parishes. Although located in the middle of Woburn Sands the centre is currently funded by the Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust; it will come under the umbrella of the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group in March 2013. 95% of its patients are referred to Milton Keynes Hospital with the balance referred to Bedford Hospital. Asplands also runs a secondary centre in Woburn and can offer a number of specialised clinics. The centre was extended recently with the help of funds provided under the s106 agreement in respect of the development of Parklands. There is also a dental practice which takes some NHS patients.

64. There is no space to extend Asplands any further although it would be possible to locate specialist clinics elsewhere if space could be found. The practice considers that it could accommodate the additional population envisaged under Parklands Phases 4 and 5 but no further increase could be handled particularly if the development of Greens Hotel and the Bowls Club to provide a Nursing Home and care facilities goes ahead.

65. The geographic location of the wider Woburn Sands area means that other medical and social services are provided through a range of agencies based in either Milton Keynes or Central Bedfordshire. These services are all considerably stretched – a situation which is not helped by the fact that Woburn Sands is on the periphery of both councils. Coordination between these services (particularly for the elderly) could be improved.
66. Two Police Forces serve the wider area – Thames Valley and Bedfordshire. The same comment as in the previous paragraph applies.

Transport and Communications

67. Woburn Sands is located at the junction of a number of significant routes. The High Street is a direct North-South route between junction 14 of the M1/ the Kingston roundabout and Woburn/the A5 at Hockliffe, and Woburn Sands is also a direct link between the A5 and junction 13 on the M1. Although there are alternative routes the town's location results in a considerable volume of through traffic. This inevitably causes congestion (particularly in the High Street where there are two pedestrian crossings) and makes parking difficult. The flow of traffic may change following the development of the Strategic Land Allocation Area to the north of Woburn Sands as identified in the draft MK Core Strategy.
68. These issues will need to be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan if the town is to retain a vibrant High Street which continues to meet the basic needs of the local population.
69. As far as public transport is concerned there are three bus routes serving the town:
- Number 300 Woburn Sands – Central Milton Keynes
 - Number 49 Bedford – Leighton Buzzard
 - Number 17 Bletchley – Cranfield

The first of these routes (which is the most popular) is currently subsidised through a grant from the first phases of Parklands. It will be important to maintain this service in the future.

70. There is also a railway station which links Woburn Sands with Bedford and Bletchley. The line is due to undergo a major upgrade (the East-West Rail project). Under the scheme announced in mid-2012 the line will be electrified and will become a key component of the route linking the West and East Coast Main Lines. Both passenger and freight traffic is expected to increase significantly but detailed proposals will not be available until mid-2013.
71. While this development has the potential to be of considerable benefit to Woburn Sands residents and businesses there will be significant consequences to the flow of traffic along the A5130, and to pedestrians crossing the line. Network Rail have undertaken to bring forward details of the scheme for consultation in 2013.
72. The town's internet communications are currently being upgraded by BT as part of their nationwide installation of super-fast broadband; work is about to start on the modifications to the switching cabinet but no completion date has yet been published. The enhanced service will be of considerable benefit to both residents and businesses in Woburn Sands.

Summary

73. The following Table assesses the proposed Sustainability Objectives against national sustainability policies.

National Policies (NPFF)	A Sustainable Environment	Quality of Built Environment	Housing Balance	Education & Leisure Opportunities	A Sustainable Economy	Good Transport Links
WS Objectives						
Protection of environment	xxx	xxx	xx	xx	x	xx
Balanced housing stock	xx	xx	xxx	xx	xxx	xx
Variety of retail services	xx	xx	xx	xx	xxx	xxx
Employment opportunities	xx	x	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Recreational facilities	xx	x	xx	xxx	x	xxx
Community development	x	x	xxx	xxx	x	xx
Educational provision	x	x	xx	xxx	xx	xx
Welfare of population	x	x	xxx	xxx	xx	xxx
Public transport	xxx	x	xxx	xx	xxx	xxx

74. The Neighbourhood Plan which is published in conjunction with this Appraisal sets out specific policies to achieve these objectives. The Plan also provides targets where appropriate and gives details of how the policies will be monitored and amended where necessary.

Historical Context to Development of Woburn Sands

The name Woburn Sands did not exist until relatively recently. Hogsty End was the term covering the area of what we know as present day Woburn Sands. This unattractive sounding End was one of several which formed the village of Wavendon, amongst which were Cross, Church and Lower End. The Wavendon settlement can be found in the Domesday Book as a tiny band of farms and peasants. Obviously swine were farmed, and probably the main piggeries were away from the church and centre of Wavendon, and this most remote area of Wavendon was known as Hogsty End.

In the Middle Ages the first thing travellers would have seen as they came over the sand hills from Woburn would have been The Shoulder of Mutton Inn, on the west side of the Woburn Road, just before the main centre of Hogsty End. Once into the village, there was a large farm on the site of the present Swan Hotel. In the 1700s most of Hogsty End was owned under two farms. These belonged to the Hart family, who had a homestead where Shelton House now is, and the Higgins family (on the Swan Inn site).

The most famous local remaining historical site, Danesborough Camp in the adjacent parish of Aspley Heath, had three days of excavations in 1924 which led to finds that were attributed to no later than the second century AD. This was the Early Iron Age and Romano British, but whether there were pitched battles, with Roman Legions assailing the Britons on the steep inclines of Aspley Woods, is lost in the mists of time. Certainly, Sir Frank Markham in his "*History of Milton Keynes and District*", vol 1, 1973, believes that it could have been a base for the tribes who were resisting the Roman advance.

Woburn Sands attracted new settlers and expanded. One of the major turning points was the arrival of the Bedford - Bletchley Railway in 1846. The Duke of Bedford had supported the development, indeed most of the line ran on his land. Importing goods to the district was immediately easier and cheaper, and the local production of bricks and Fullers Earth could be exported around the country for the best price. The Duke had at first wanted his own station at Woburn, but the obstacle of the woods and undulating landscape meant the closest a station could be was at Woburn Sands.

Historically both the Oxford Clay and Woburn Sands formations have been of economic significance, with a number of brickworks being present to the north-west of the town, and quarries of Fullers Earth used principally in the 19th century for cleaning ('fulling') woollen cloth.

Today much of the central part of the town is designated as a Conservation Area; Woburn Sands includes many buildings of the Victorian and late Edwardian era. Shelton House, the Woburn Sands Station House, and the Milepost are all Grade II listed buildings. Other notable buildings include

- The Institute owned by the Town Council and built as a reading room by the people in 1874; it is now used as the Woburn Sands Library having been converted with the help of funds from the Parklands development.
- The Ellen Pettit Memorial Hall.
- The Friends Meeting House (Quakers) established 1675 with burial ground to rear of the building.

- The Methodist Chapel.
- The Victorian Villas in Station Road and Hardwick Road.
- The Ropeworks (rear of 16 Station Road).
- The Leys Villas (a row of terraced properties).
- Sandymount and grounds.
- Haydon House.
- Gibson Andrews Hardware shop.
- Former Down and Needham Maltings.
- Down & Needham Almshouses
- The Station Hotel.
- The Old Presbytery.
- The Swan Public House.
- The Fir Tree Hotel.
- The Weathercock Public House.

St. Michaels Church (the Parish Church of Woburn Sands & Aspley Heath) is located in the neighbouring parish of Aspley Heath as is the Sandpit Cottage (a Grade II listed building) which overlooks Hardwick.

The War Memorial was erected in the Square in 1919 but, due to traffic accidents, was moved in 1972 to the central Green and is now a feature of the High Street.

Crucial to the character of the town are the trees that stand within and around Woburn Sands; there are also very attractive woodlands in the neighbouring parishes of Aspley Heath and Aspley Guise.

Woburn Sands lies in open countryside positioned on a shallow ridge-like promontory which is reached by a gentle upward gradient that commences about a quarter of a mile south of the railway station. Above the town centre is the crest of the imposing and thickly wooded Greensand escarpment which is actually located in the neighbouring parishes.