



- 4.1 The SWMK proposals have evolved via an iterative design process alongside an appraisal of the physical characteristics of the site, and site constraints (as set out in Section 3). This section describes how the design has evolved in response to the process set out above and an extensive series of workshops and consultations. Full details of involvement, stakeholder and public consultations, responses and how these have influenced the development proposals are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement which accompanies the planning application.

## Site Analysis

- 4.2 Several site factors have been identified as key influences for the development concept. These are outlined in the Parameter Plans, and represent key opportunities or potential constraints which the development concept has taken into account:

### DEVELOPMENT AREA

- 4.3 The development area is defined by its clear physical boundaries which establish set edge margins on all sides except to the west, where the site fronts open countryside. Consequently, development can be considered within this defined parcel albeit with differing edge treatments: to the west a defensible boundary must be established to more clearly define the edge of development and transition into countryside. SWMK must achieve integration with existing development and a positive relationship with the movement network (roads and rail) within which it sits.
- 4.4 The eastern edge of SWMK is bounded by the existing Far Bletchley residential estate, the edge treatment is characterised by timber fences delineating back gardens. Further to the south east beyond the future East–West Rail line is the established village of Newton Longville. The relationship between the western edge of Far Bletchley and the development site is a key consideration. A number of alternative design options have been considered, all of which have been explored as part of the evolution of the proposals, to protect amenity of residents as required by Aylesbury Vale District Council Local Plan Policy GP8 and Policy D1 of the Milton Keynes Local Plan.

### KEY VIEWS

- 4.5 The significant ridge line which dissects the site from the south west to the north east corner has significant potential in terms of providing key views into and out of the site. These views are enhanced through the sensitive positioning of development and building heights and reinforced by additional planting to retain the landscape dominated ridge in accordance with AVDC Policy 35 which identifies these elements as key design considerations.

### TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.6 The site has topography that is dominated by the broadly central east–west ridge line. This undulating land form creates three discrete land parcels which will generate different characters and require individual design response. The development must contend with a frequently continuous sloping topography.
- 4.7 The site naturally divides into two areas along Weasel Lane Ridge: the north/ northwest with its undulating land falling northwards towards the A421; and the south/ southeast which gradually falls toward the south eastern corner of the site. The varied topography of the site creates natural points of drainage which will be foci of activity and designed as key spaces and places within the master plan. The overall landscape framework also accommodates means of strategic surface water attenuation in accordance with Milton Keynes Local Plan Policy D1.

### CONNECTIVITY

- 4.8 The site is located on the edge of Milton Keynes and must be positively connected to the existing grid road network by accommodating a potential future dual carriageway grid road through the development, in accordance with Milton Keynes Core Strategy Policy CS11 which seeks to ensure improved accessibility across the Borough and future proofing of the City's grid network. Connections to established routes are essential and these provide the structure around which the layout is based to provide a hierarchy of movement networks reflecting Milton Keynes Local Plan policy T1 which seeks to encourage non-car modes of transport and policy T3 which seeks to ensure that pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is provided within development. The development provides strong pedestrian routes through the site. Public rights of Way particularly along Weasel Lane are retained and enhanced with additional opportunities for connections established as part of the development itself, to include connections with Far Bletchley via Chepstow Park and possible connections along Hamilton Lane, in accordance with AVDLP policy GP84 that seeks to protect existing rights of way.

### EXISTING LANDSCAPE

- 4.9 The site comprises some features of landscape value including Weasel Lane, some hedgerows and field boundaries. These will be retained and will form important structuring elements of the proposed layout. A wider network of green infrastructure – equivalent to some 38% of the entire site - will add to the existing landscape characteristics, enabling the development to positively respond to the transition from urban edge to the north and east to open countryside to the west and south.

### EXISTING ECOLOGY AND HABITATS

- 4.10 The site has limited habitats or features of interest other than the existing network of hedgerows and small areas of semi-natural woodland, which occupy a small proportion of the site. Much of those areas considered to be of localised ecological value, to include existing hedgerow network, associated hedgerow trees and broadleaved woodland, will be retained to form linkages with the new green infrastructure throughout the site in accordance with AVDC Policy 38 and GP39 that seek incorporation of natural landscape features within development. A Biodiversity Management Plan will be prepared, to balance habitat establishment with recreational requirements.

### UTILITIES

- 4.11 There are various utilities which cross the site as shown in figure 4.1. A pair of oil pipelines run north/south through the site and will be accommodated within the proposed development through provision of a landscaped strip of land. This alignment provides the basis for introducing a new north-south linear open space and pedestrian route through the development. There are also a number of overhead power lines that will be diverted underground as part of the development proposals.

### NOISE AND VISUAL INTRUSION

- 4.12 The proximity of the East-West Rail Line to the southern boundary of the site means that development on the southern edge of the site will need to be carefully designed to avoid any adverse noise or visual intrusion. The use of landscaping to create a new linear park, incorporating sustainable urban drainage features such as swales and ponds will mitigate against any adverse noise intrusion, whilst providing a soft informal southern edge to the development in accordance with AVDC Policy GP8 that seeks to protect amenities of residents.

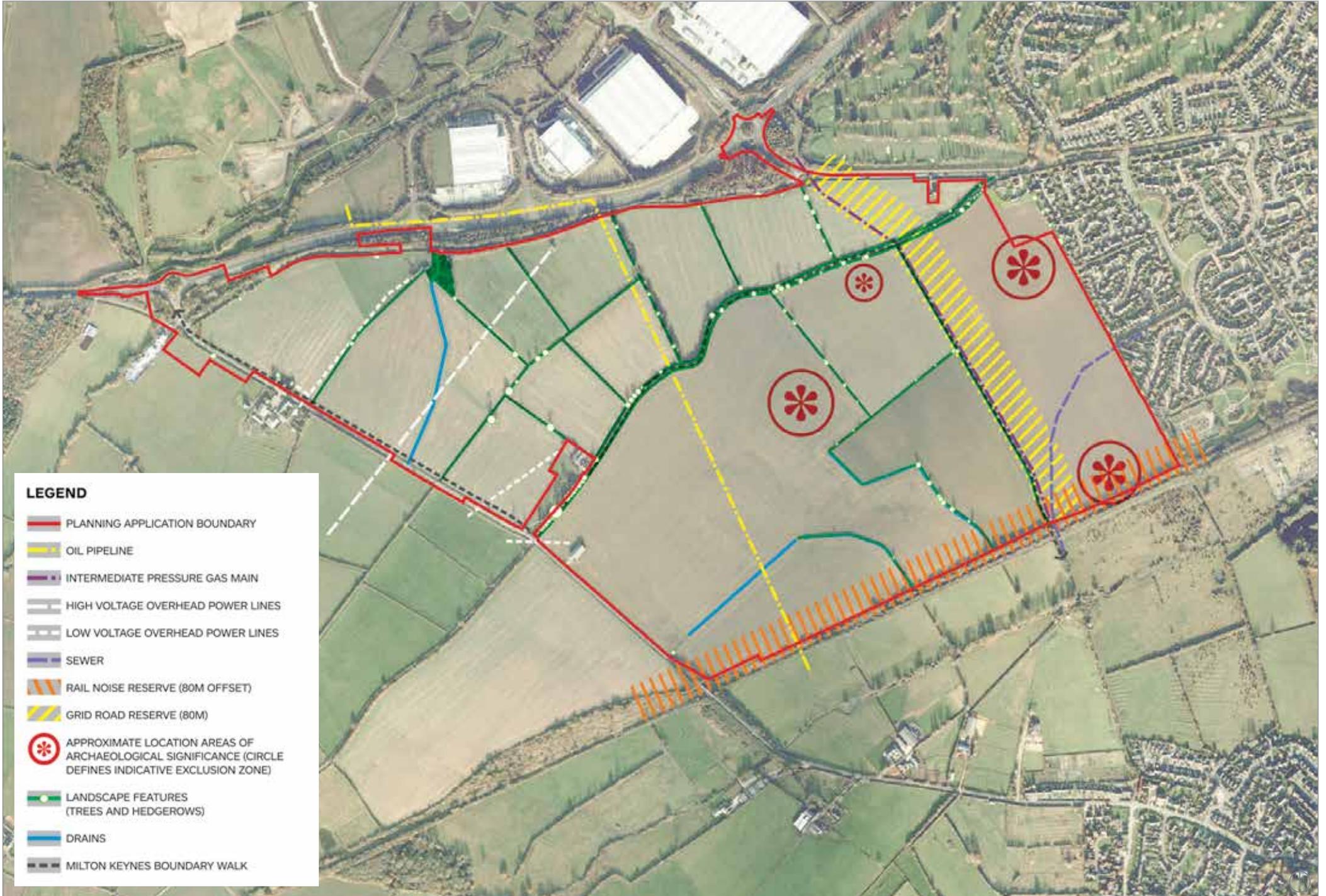


Figure 4.1: Constraints Plan

### ARCHAEOLOGY

- 4.13 There are three distinct areas of identified archaeology within the site, located on the eastern part of the site. The master plan respects these areas of archaeological interest and precludes built development from these defined areas by incorporating them within the green infrastructure network in accordance with AVDC Policy 59 which requires presentation of archaeology as part of development.

## Developing the Structure

- 4.14 Section 3 has explained the duality that the master plan must accommodate for. That is to deliver a site within the administrative boundary of Aylesbury Vale, that responds appropriately to the rural character of Aylesbury Vale villages, but also, a site that demands vehicular access via grid road connections, that are inherently part of the character and structure of Milton Keynes. As such, in addition to the existing physical characteristics and the various constraints and opportunities that the site presents, the development concept has also been influenced by the intrinsic functional character and structure of Milton Keynes and local context of rural villages.

### CABE DESIGN REVIEW

- 4.15 The master plan illustrates a scheme considerably reduced and further refined from that submitted in 2010, for up to 5,390 dwellings known as Salden Chase. The Salden Chase scheme was the subject of a CABE Design Review. Comments received as part of the review of Salden Chase have been reconsidered in the context of the new SWMK proposals to ensure that all appropriate key design principles are taken forward to inform the emerging design proposals.

- 4.16 The key design principles that have been taken forward include the following:
- » ensure sufficient consideration is given to drainage and water supply capacity;
  - » accommodate future grid road as part of layout;
  - » ensure sufficient quantum of open space and number and location of pitches;
  - » ensure density of development is appropriate to its context;
  - » provide sufficient amount of education facilities to meet needs of development;
  - » an educational reserve needs to be provided (expansion potential needed);
  - » ensure adequate noise mitigation between development and railway;
  - » consider how buildings and their form address site topography;
  - » ensure good connections with eastern community (Far Bletchley);
  - » consider potential for community orchard.

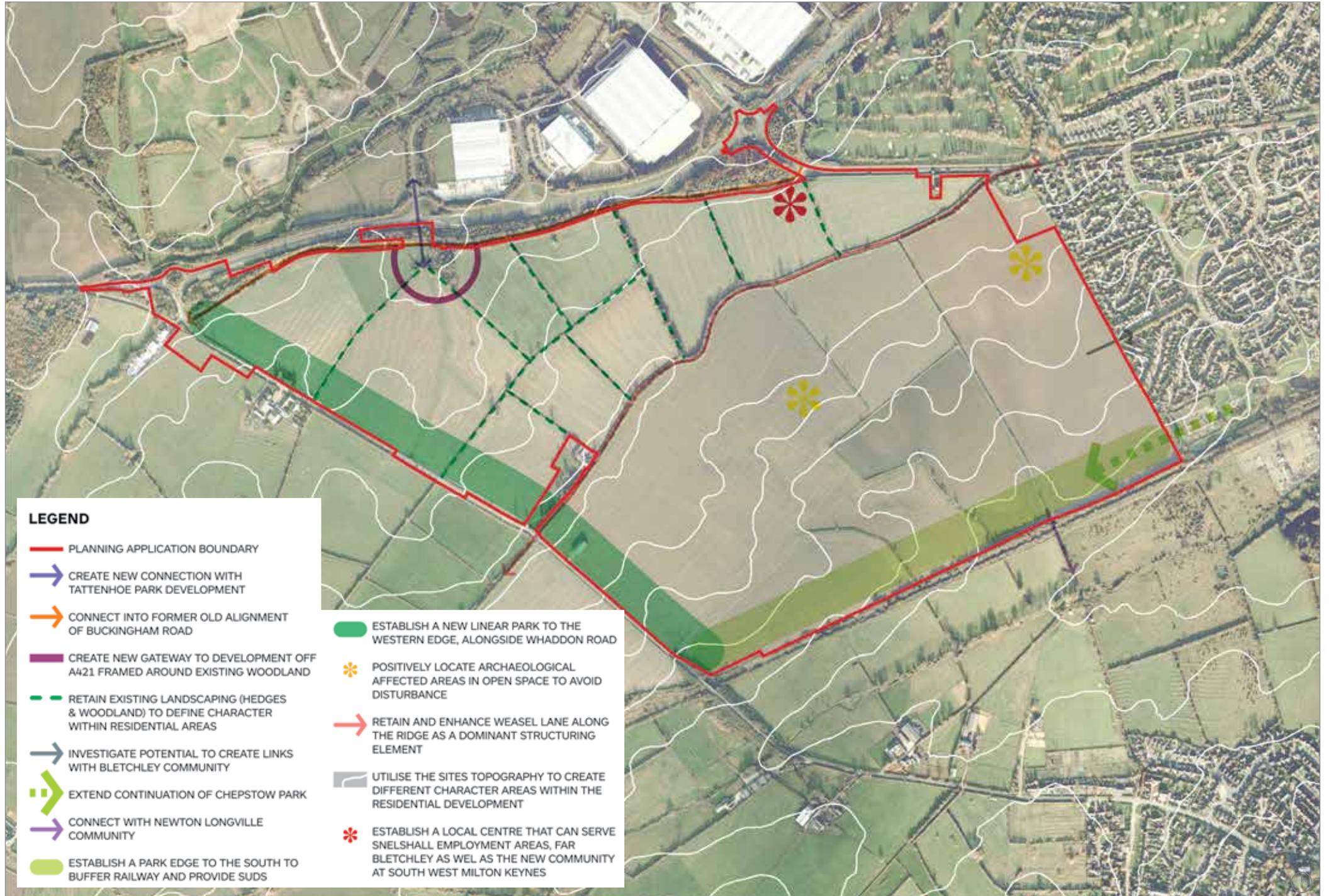


Figure 4.2: Opportunities Plan

### PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS AND DESIGN WORKSHOPS

- 4.17 A series of pre-application meetings and design workshops have been held with officers from both AVDC and MKC in 2013 and 2014 between the consortium's team, stakeholders and the planning authorities in order to attempt to establish and resolve key issues where differences of opinion existed.
- 4.18 It has been recognised and identified within Milton Keynes Core Strategy and the outcome of the Examination of the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan, that there are clear advantages to close joint working arrangements between the local authorities. The Consortium is committed to engaging with members of both local authorities in the preparation of these proposals. The Consortium has also been actively engaging with members and local communities of Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes.

- 4.19 A first iteration of the Illustrative Master plan was tabled to Milton Keynes Councillors on 12th December (ref: Figure 4.3). The site abuts the administrative boundary of Milton Keynes on two of its sides, and due to its siting and scale, forms a logical extension to Milton Keynes and this approach is reflected in the clear urban design principles employed within the site's design.
- 4.20 Inherently, there will be mutual relationship between the site and Milton Keynes in terms of the provision of services, amenities and infrastructure. In this regard, the Consortium have considered ways in which the development can deliver benefits to the wider community in terms of infrastructure and/or facilities that are either presently lacking or overstretched within the wider community.

### PRE-MEETING IN ADVANCE OF FORMAL PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS (6TH MARCH 2013)

- 4.21 Prior to commencement formal pre-application meetings, a pre-meeting was held with Aylesbury Vale District Council to introduce the scheme and emerging master plan proposals. A number of key points were highlighted as important considerations to be worked through as part of the progression of the master plan. These included:
- » an aspiration to co-locate of community and education facilities, such as sports hall/meeting rooms;
  - » provision of community facility as part of neighbourhood centre;
  - » public open space requirements should be consistent with existing AVDC policies to include AVDC GI strategy and adoption and maintenance should be detailed and agreed through the planning process;
  - » provision of surface water drainage strategy must be considered at earliest opportunity, likely to be located within open space, but should not reduce its function nor accessibility;
  - » agreement to commencement of a series of design workshops with both Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes Council's to review and influence the master plan.



### FIRST DESIGN WORKSHOP HELD WITH AVDC AND MKC – 19TH APRIL 2013

A draft Illustrative Master Plan was tabled (Ref: Figure 4.4) (April 2013)

#### 4.22 The key components of this plan included:

- » a central park for the development which provided community sport and recreation activities. Adjacent to which was located a primary school and local centre.
- » at the northwest corner of the site was located 7 Ha of B8 employment sheds, located adjacent to the Snelshall employment area on the northern side of the A421;
- » Weasel Lane was shown to be retained and enhanced to provide rural green east-west link through the development which connected open space parcels to the west to the central park open space and primary school within the heart of the development;
- » residential development was proposed at the eastern extent of the site to include the provision of an enhanced landscape edge to the existing housing at Far Bletchley; and
- » allotments were provided at the southern edge of the site adjacent to the railway and the existing allotments serving Far Bletchley.

4.23 The design workshop prompted a number of comments relating to the design approach, layout and form of development illustrated by the initially prepared master plan.

4.24 The key design changes discussed at this meeting and implemented as part of the evolution of the master plan were:

- » creation of a new access of Whaddon Road to the west, to aid legibility;
- » parameter plan to show indicative locations for pedestrian underpasses along grid road section to demonstrate how pedestrian movement across the grid road is achieved;
- » parameter plan shows a strong landscape buffer of some 30m in width to provide a softer transition from rural edge to demonstrate appropriate edge treatments on the southern and western edge of the site;
- » more conscious application of variation in development density is illustrated to provide distinction between looser knit block structure at the rural edges to respond to Vale of Aylesbury character and regular form of north-eastern parcels to reflect Milton Keynes typology;

- » creation of an ecological corridor at the eastern edge of the development site provides a biodiversity route from the railway edge to Weasel Lane and beyond and further serves as a green buffer to development from Far Bletchley;
- » community facilities to be co-located within educational sites to improve efficiency of management of those services; and
- » creation of open space and recreation strategy to include provision of surface water drainage which provide structuring elements of distinctiveness within the master plan.



Figure 4.4: Illustrative Master Plan – April 2013

## SECOND DESIGN WORKSHOP HELD WITH AVDC AND MKC – 2ND JULY 2013

- 4.25 Following careful consideration of the comments received from participants of the first design workshop, further work was carried out to refine the development proposals. A concept plan (Figure 4.5), was tabled to demonstrate the design approach and development principles that were to underpin the emerging masterplan (Figure 4.6).
- 4.26 The concept plan demonstrates the sites interrelationship with neighbouring development and the cross boundary position. Links, Redways and pedestrian links via the existing underpass beneath the A421 are shown to be established, strengthening the links between Tattenhoe and the development site.
- 4.27 The concept plan demonstrates a Milton Keynes neighbourhood relating to Tattenhoe to the north and a development that responds to Far Bletchley. A further neighbourhood is established to the south, separated by the green wedge aligning with Weasel Lane which responds more to the character of Aylesbury Vale villages, in particular Newton Longville.
- 4.28 The key design changes discussed at this meeting, and implemented as part of the evolution of the master plan are:
- » relocation of the employment parcel at the north west of the site and creation of a new gateway to define the approach to Milton Keynes from the west;

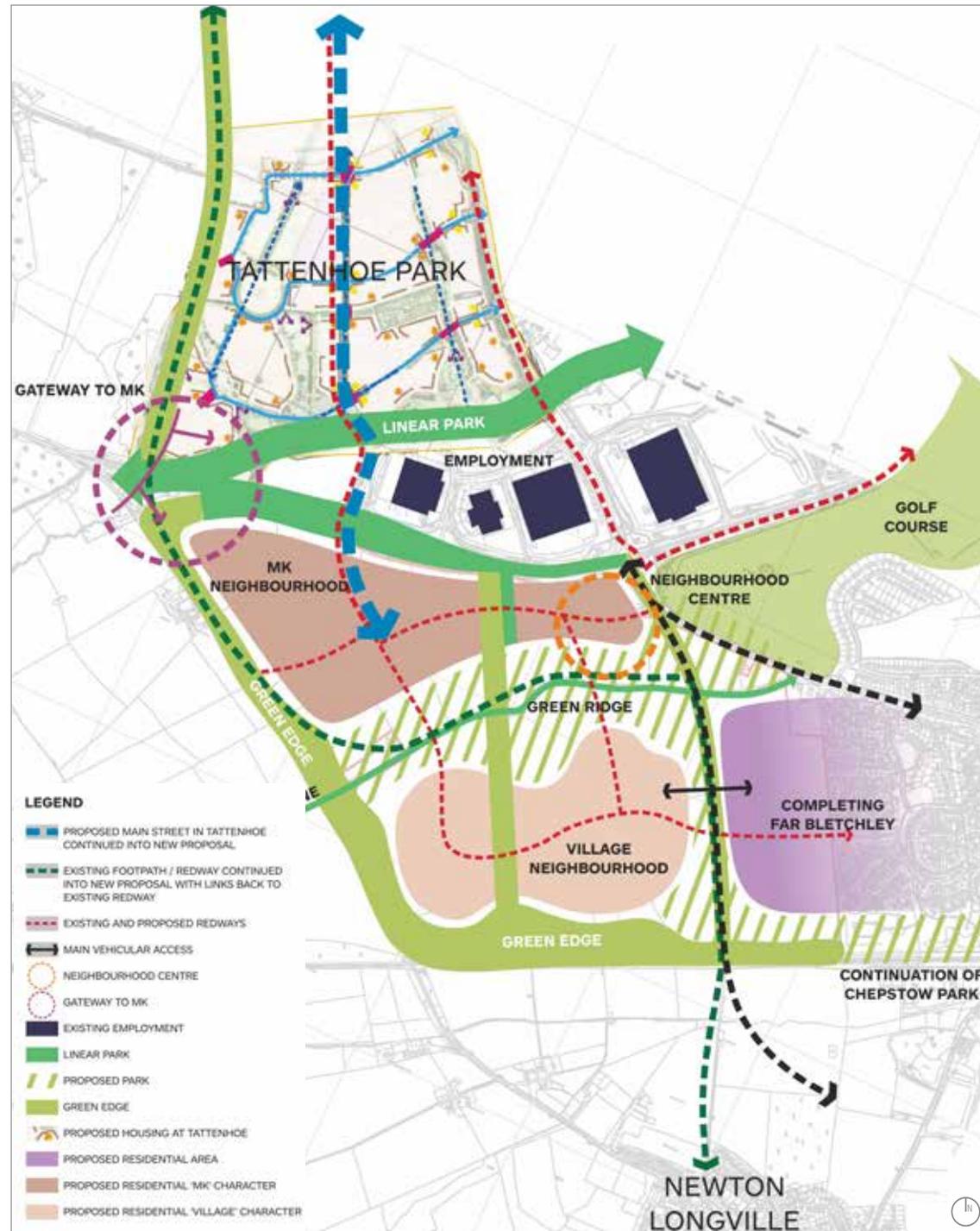


Figure 4.5: Concept/ Design Influences Plan

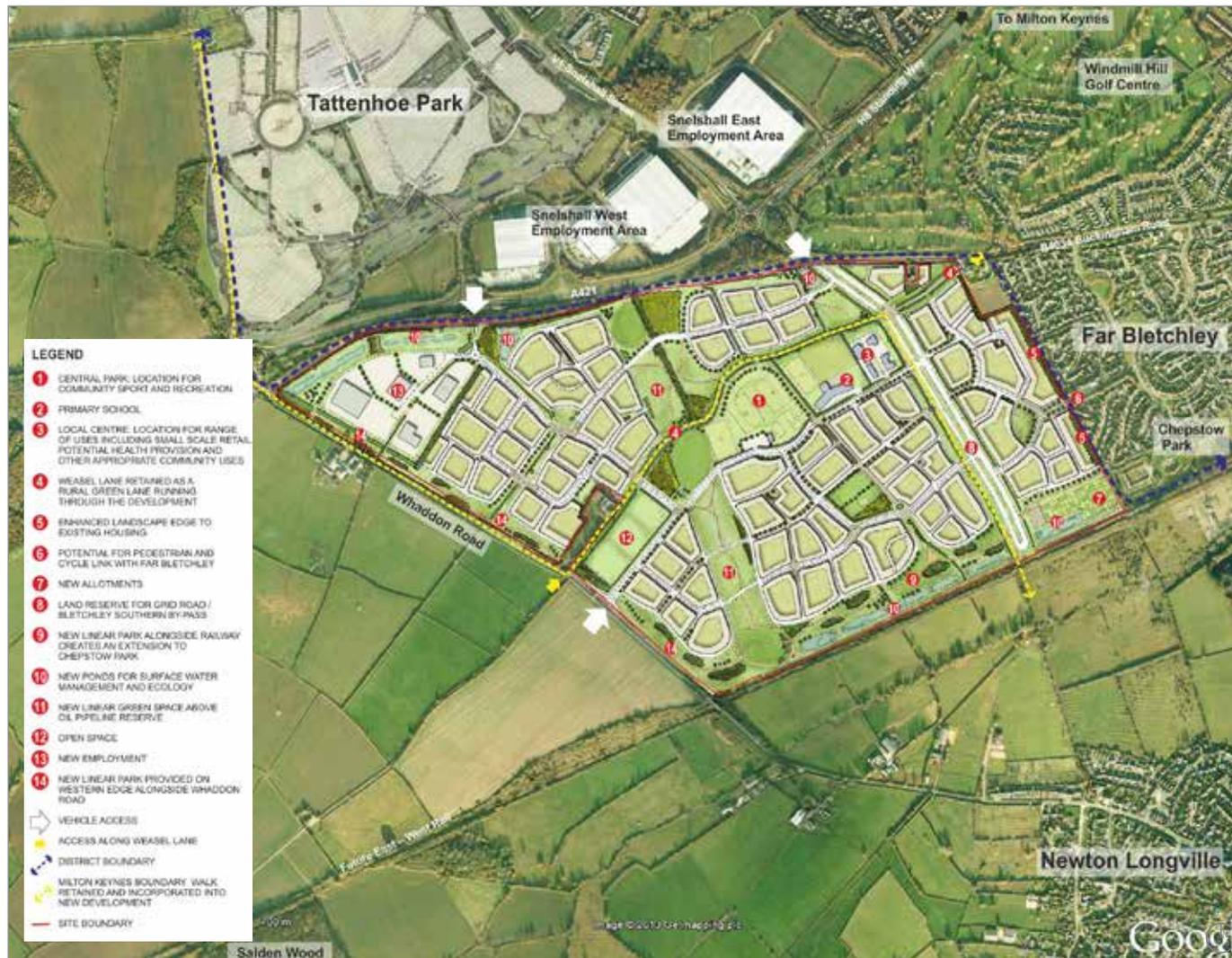


Figure 4.6: Illustrative Master Plan – May 2013

- » reduction of scale of employment to a more modest 2Ha to be provided in the form of smaller office start-up units as identified through consultation with the local community.
- » The employment is relocated to a more central position along the northern boundary of the site, to benefit from presence on the A421 frontage and to provide a focal gateway into the new development. The employment area is adjacent to the neighbourhood centre and close to the proposed grid road;
- » opening up views of the development along the A421 frontage at key locations, to invite better connections between the development and the former Buckingham Road;
- » improving connections up to the northern Tattenhoe Park area and the Snelshill linear park system;
- » exploring the potential to accommodate a secondary school campus on the eastern flank of the site; and
- » clarification that the land safeguarded over the high pressure pipelines could be reduced and provides an opportunity to create a strong landscape feature for the development.

### THIRD DESIGN WORKSHOP HELD WITH AVDC AND MKC – 6TH SEPTEMBER 2013

- 4.29 The final pre-application review helped to fix key design elements of the development proposal. An Illustrative Master Plan was tabled (Figure 4.7). The key elements discussed are listed below:

#### SECONDARY SCHOOL

- 4.30 There was agreement to the benefits of securing a secondary school as part of the development and general agreement was given for its location at the eastern extent of the site, where the areas of archaeology interest remains unaffected by the development and the school grounds forms a robust landscape buffer to Far Bletchley. Consideration was also given to an element of housing south of the secondary school to provide for community safety/overlooking of the open space.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

- 4.31 The neighbourhood centre is located further north, adjacent to the employment area and benefitting from close proximity to the principal access. The neighbourhood centre will cater for a range of unit sizes. Within the neighbourhood centre would be small scale convenience retail and a flexible commercial space that could be used to provide community facilities such as a community hall and doctors surgery.

#### INTRODUCTION OF SECONDARY STREET

- 4.32 The master plan included the addition of a secondary street in a southerly alignment, linking the primary street adjacent to the neighbourhood centre to the primary school.

#### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4.33 The master plan demonstrates some 40 % of the total site area as green infrastructure. The general disposition of green space was supported with further detail requested to be provided in relation to the location and layout of formal pitch provision. Pitches could be accommodated with the secondary school for shared, dual use. Allotments were also relocated further north, to provide a buffer to the existing properties and maintain the green swathe which runs from Weasel Lane toward Windmill Hill Golf Course. The allotments would be conveniently served by pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access in this location.

#### GRID ROAD

- 4.34 The provision of a grid road is a fundamental element to be accommodated by the proposals. The proposed development only requires the construction of a single carriageway primary street with a signalised crossroads junction with Buckingham Road (A421). The grid road corridor will however provide a landscaped reserve strip to enable future provision of a dual carriageway grid road with roundabout at the aforementioned crossroads.



Figure 4.7: Illustrative Master Plan – September 2013

## Illustrative Master Plan

4.35 The subsequently enhanced master plan was the product of collaborative and proactive discussions with officers at AVDC and MKC local authorities. The master plan which now forms the basis of this planning application includes:

- » a more prominent neighbourhood centre located close to new business space and homes;
- » mixed use development of B1 offices and dwellings at a higher density overlooking a landscaped areas and SUDS to provide a new attractive gateway to the development;
- » allotments to contribute to the east-west green swathe through the site along Weasel Lane ridge line;
- » the Weasel Lane and SUSTRANS route 51 retained and enhanced as an important route through the new development, new homes set back from Weasel Lane and existing landscape features and orientated to provide overlooking of public routes, and provision of two appropriately designed, at grade, highways crossings;
- » a secondary school campus with a prominent new building facing onto the primary street;
- » a green link providing ecological corridor from the railway edge to Weasel Lane and beyond;
- » a new linear park to southern edge of development provides acoustic set back from the railway line and creates an extension to Chepstow Park;
- » lower density homes to the southern edge to create a more informal edge response;
- » an extensive linear park running alongside Whaddon Road fronted by lower density homes, incorporating new landscape plating, trees, footpaths and cycleway links to improve northwest section of MK Boundary Walk;
- » the existing alignment of oil pipelines reserve provides the basis for a new north-south linear open space link through the development – as has been the positive design response to this piece of national infrastructure elsewhere in Milton Keynes;
- » a centrally located formal open space, sports pitch provision and children’s play areas to serve new residents and reinforce the Weasel Lane green swathe through the development;
- » a centrally located primary school fronting onto primary street, overlooking the main sports provision;
- » new highway improvements to Bottledump roundabout;
- » new highway improvements to Tattenhoe roundabout; and
- » a new roundabout terminates southern end of primary street on the proposed alignment of the grid road reserve.





76 Figure 4.8: Illustrative Master Plan

## Illustrative Master Plan

1. Prominent neighbourhood centre facilities located close to new business space and homes as well as main open space and recreational areas.
2. Mixed use development of B1 offices space and new high density homes overlooking a landscape area with SUDS. which provides a high quality gateway.
3. New signalised cross roads at junction to Buckingham Road.
4. New allotments contribute to the green swathe running through the site along the Weasel Lane ridge line.
5. Weasel Lane and Sustrans route 52 retained as an important route through the new development.
6. Secondary school campus with a prominent new building facing onto primary street.
7. Green route provides a buffer between new development and Far Bletchley as well as providing a new link from the southern linear park up to Weasel Lane and beyond.
8. New underpass beneath primary street provides a safe route to new secondary school campus.
9. Potential for pedestrian and cycle links from Hamilton Lane to new development.
10. Green link provides biodiversity and ecological link from railway edge to Weasel Lane and beyond.
11. New linear park to southern edge of site provides an acoustic set back from the railway but also acts as an extension to the existing Chepstow Park.
12. New linear orchard provides community and ecological benefit.
13. New linear park, incorporating sustainable drainage features [swales and ponds], new landscape planting and trees, footpaths and cycle ways.
14. Lower density homes to southern boundary to create a more informal edge response.
15. Surface car park located off primary street provides access to main community sport and recreational space as well as serving the adjoining primary school.
16. Alignment of oil pipeline reserve provides the basis for a new N-S linear open space linking a new perimeter walkway with the former Buckingham Road.
17. Varied built form and green open space provides a softer, informal edge to the southern and south western edges.
18. Varied order of streets utilised within development help establish character and aid orientation within the development.
19. Strong linear walks and routes through central green space helps residents move across the space and between different neighbourhoods.
20. Built form organised around existing landscape feature provides a more formal and higher density response to the north of Weasel Lane.
21. Centrally located formal open space, sports pitches and children's play areas serve new residents and contributes to the green swathe running through the development.
22. Centrally located primary school fronting onto main street, overlooking main sports provision and set alongside new homes. School playing fields also contributes to a greener heart for the new development.
23. New development offset from existing property with landscaping planting to help screen development.
24. Linear park running alongside Whaddon Road overlooked by lower density homes.
25. New linear park incorporating new landscape planting, trees, footpaths and cycleway to improve north western section of the MK Boundary Walk.
26. Green open space and formal landscaping to provide new and safer links between new homes and the old Buckingham Road.
27. Higher density homes located at main northern gateway.
28. Existing area of woodland retained and reinforced to contribute to new northern gateway overlooked by higher density homes, swales and play provision.
29. Existing landscape features retained and incorporated into new development to provide variety and interest and help establish differing characters within the development.
30. Existing woodland strip and hedgerows retained and incorporated into new N-S linear open space.
31. Tighter, higher density urban form around the Neighbourhood Centre.
32. Development from lower to higher density development as new homes approach the grid road reserve.
33. New homes to be set back from Weasel Lane and existing landscape features but orientated to provide overlooking onto public routes.
34. New highway improvements to Bottledump roundabout.
35. New improvements to Tattenhoe roundabout.
36. New underpass provides alternative route for Weasel Lane and Sustrans beneath primary street.
37. New roundabout terminates southern end of primary street.