6.0: ACCESS

Policy Context

6.1 Reference to national, regional and local transport policy is provided in the Environmental Statement and the Transport Assessment that are submitted in support of this planning application. These documents demonstrate how the proposed development satisfies all tiers of transport policy.

6.2 The development proposals at SWMK are supported by integrated measures to provide access by all modes of transport and maximise existing infrastructure to deliver a sustainable development. These measures are supported by a Framework Travel Plan to make best use of the existing and proposed infrastructure work.

6.3 The local transport policy context for the site is set in part by the adopted Aylesbury Vale Local Plan of 2004 and the emerging Aylesbury Vale Local Plan. The adopted local plan is silent on the issue of growth in this rural part of the District whilst encouraging the use of sustainable patterns of transport. The emerging Local Plan is at a very early stage. As such, no papers have been published by Aylesbury Vale District Council on how it will work with adjoining local authorities and districts to provide a holistic framework for the sustainable growth of housing and economic development in the future.

6.4 In tandem with Aylesbury Vale's District Council's desire for sustainable patterns of growth in appropriate areas of the district it is prudent, due to its siting – directly abutting Milton Keynes to consider the recently adopted Milton Keynes Core Strategy and its Transport Plan.

6.5 The Milton Keynes Core Strategy acknowledges that in the revoked South East Plan an area of land which includes this application site was put forward for development of some 5,390 new homes with ancillary educational, commercial, cultural and sporting facilities. In relation to delivering much needed homes and jobs on all or part of this site Milton Keynes Council state that:

"if any new development sites are promoted and allocated on sites adjoining the city but in the area of a neighbouring local authority, they will require proper planning as sustainable urban extensions to the city. This would be considered through joint working with neighbouring local authorities and should be addressed (if necessary) through the replacement of this Core Strategy with Plan:MK."

6.6 Furthermore in developing Milton Keynes as a 21st Century city the Council's Vision in the period to 2026 includes:

"Transport links to other towns, including Aylesbury, Bedford, Luton and Northampton, will have been improved. These include the East - West rail link between Oxford and Cambridge via Milton Keynes, the A421 corridor through the city (linking the A1, M1 and M40). Promotion of a direct train service from Milton Keynes to the European rail network will be underway.

The linear parks will be extended along the Broughton, Caldecotte and Loughton brooks into the city extensions, and along the Ouse and Ouzel valleys to the north. These multi-purpose open spaces will provide extended leisure routes, strategic flood management, improved wildlife habitats and new sports provision, helping provide the population with opportunities for more healthy lifestyles.

Older town centres such as Bletchley and Wolverton, will have experienced a renaissance as a result of new housing, facilities and environmental improvements."

6.7 In relation to transport measures the Milton Keynes Core Strategy seeks to bring forward:

» East - West rail with better passenger services by 2012; and
» better links to Aylesbury so as to maximise the areas acknowledged importance to creative industries in the centre of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

EXISTING STREETS

6.8 The principal existing road is the Whaddon Road which links the A421 Buckingham Road to Newton Longville. This road will form the western extremity of the proposed development. Other than some limited works at the Bottledump roundabout the physical character of Whaddon Road will be unaltered. This will be achieved in three ways:

» as a direct result of the feedback from the local authority workshops there is only to be one access point into the development area. This will provide an alternative access point to Tattenhoe Roundabout and provide a future link to any station that may or may not be provided by a third party at Salden Sidings;
» a new access to Pearce Recycling is proposed in order that the current access which is close to Bottle Dump Roundabout can be removed. The new access will be provided with a right turn holding lane on Whaddon Road which does not exist at the present access. Closure of the existing access also allows the installation of a safer crossing point for cyclists and equestrian users on the old Buckingham Road."

» new buildings proposed as part of this development will be at least 70m from Whaddon Road thereby limiting the visual impact of the new buildings on the character of Whaddon Road; and

» the planting along the eastern side of Whaddon Road will be supplemented in a new linear park and woodland planting so as to enhance its rural identity.

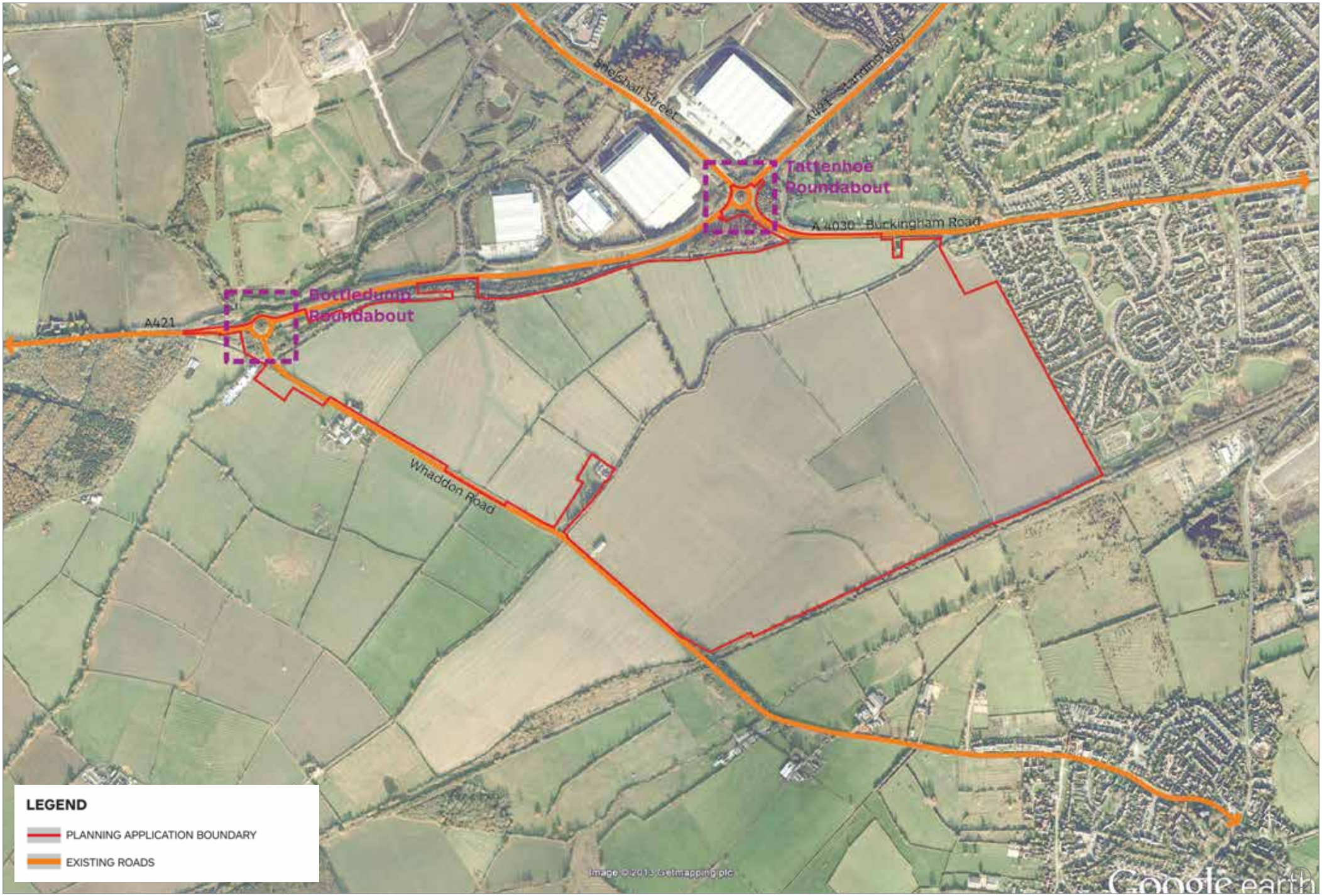

Figure 6.1: Existing Streets

Design Approach

KEY STREETS AND SPACES

6.9 The following key streets and spaces will be the focus for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian movement, and will be at the centre of public activity, facilitating community interaction and engagement with facilities and services.

6.10 The key strategic route within the scheme is the allocation of space for a future grid road. This is aligned from the Tattenhoe Roundabout south of the future the East – West railway line. In this allocation a new primary street will be provided. This will be sited so as some time in the future, when there is a need and a scheme in place for a By-pass to the south of Bletchley and to prevent HGVs using Newton Longville, the road can be dualled, the railway crossed and a link provided through Newton Leys (on land already reserved for the road) to the A4146 Stoke Hammond By-pass.

6.11 Within the site, from its initial construction, the Primary Street will be the principal circulation route for all vehicular traffic through the development. The Primary Street will connect with the existing highway network at a three key points, from a junction with Standing Way forming a central gateway to the development, from a new signalised cross roads with the Buckingham Road to the south of the existing Tattenhoe Roundabout and from a new junction with Whaddon Road.

6.12 The Primary Street connects each of the proposed residential parcels and makes the transition between the higher density residential development to the north of the central ridgeline and the lower density character of the residential areas to the south of the ridgeline. The Primary route is the focus for the highest density of development proposed (excluding areas around the Neighbourhood Centre) and will facilitate the delivery of taller buildings at key nodes and landmarks. The Primary Street provides a vehicular connection between the location of the proposed primary school, secondary school campus and the Neighbourhood Centre and will accommodate the public transport services and cycleways / Redways. The detailed design of the Primary Street has not been established although some key design principles suggesting the character of the street can be identified. The Primary Route could have a maximum width of 16m, with a 6.2m carriageway within a wider zone of around 11m which would be sufficient to accommodate public transport services, on street visitor car parking, bus stops, street tree planting and street lighting.

6.13 Secondary Streets will provide connections through and between residential development parcels where this is not provided by the Primary Street. Secondary Streets will be well integrated into the layout of residential areas and will be narrower than the Primary Street.

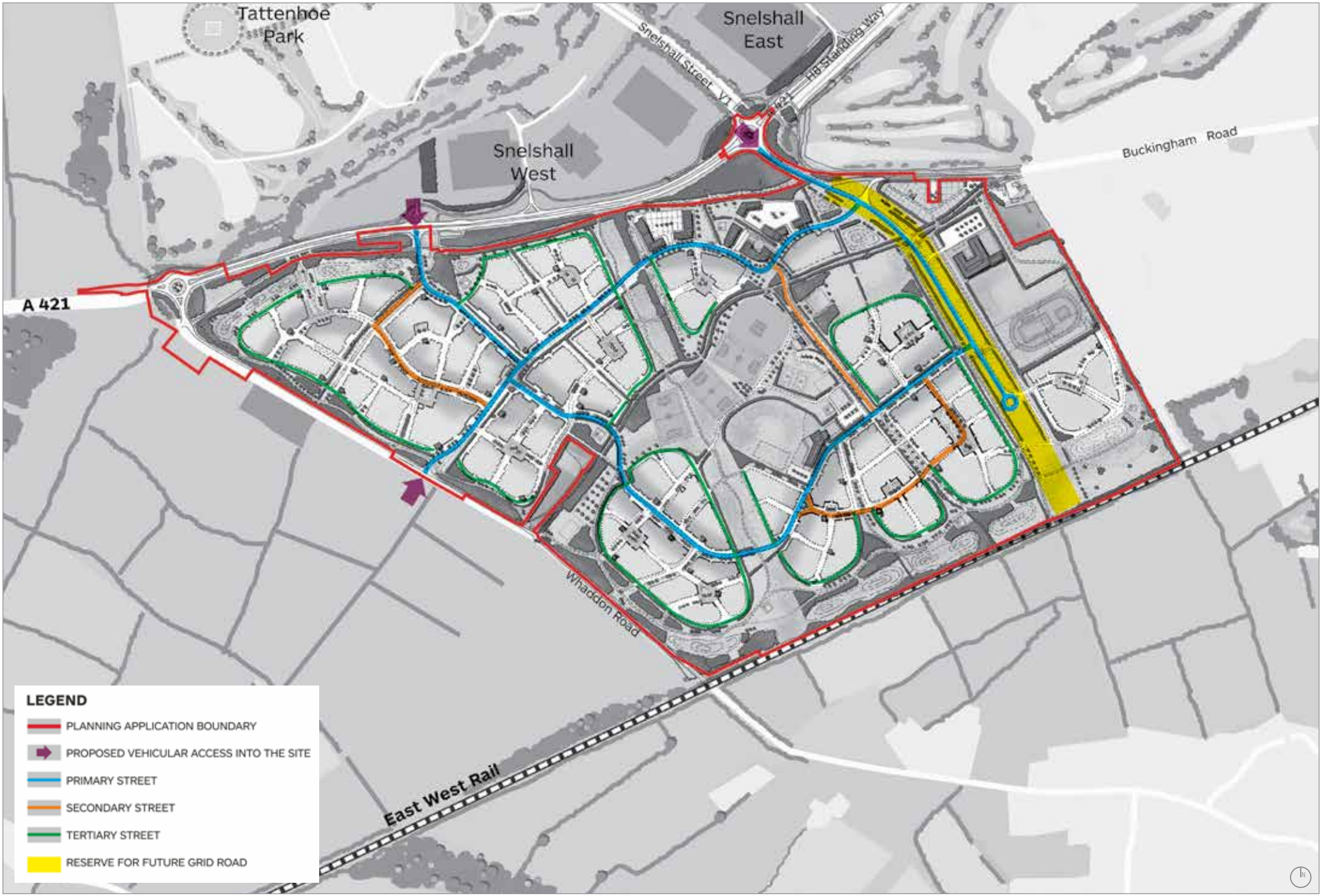

Figure 6.2: Proposed Street Hierarchy

6.14 A varied order of streets within residential parcels will be provided. The layout of residential streets will help to define the character of residential areas and will be delivered to provide a permeable, legible network.

6.15 The proposed development has been designed to accord with sustainable development principles and meets a number of key objectives which ensure consistency with relevant policy provisions by:

- minimising the need to travel by providing a mix of land-uses;
- maximising the opportunity for travel by non-car modes of transport, particularly by the design of the urban form itself, by maximising priority to pedestrians and other non-car users;
- minimising the impact of traffic associated with the development;
- maximising integration with adjacent development areas;
- allowing for and indeed future proofing the provision of a possible extension of the grid road so in the long term a connection can be made from the A421 to the A4146 – as is shown on the Milton Keynes Core Strategy Key Diagram and in so doing alleviating through traffic in many of the villages in the northern Vale; and
- incorporating, and being supported by, a travel demand management strategy.

6.16 These objectives will be achieved through the following approach to public transport, proposed and existing streets and parking.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

6.17 Public transport provision has been a key driver behind the proposals for the site. The site lies at the end of the possible future Milton Keynes BRT route which is proposed to eventually link directly to the centre of the city via the Westcroft District Centre. A public transport loop will be provided on the Primary Streets through the development with access and egress from the Tattenhoe roundabout. Two bus services could link to Central Milton Keynes – one via the grid roads and the other via Snelshall West and a third could provide a connection to Bletchley to the east.

6.18 In order to maximise accessibility to these public transport routes, on-site bus stops have been carefully located. The location of these bus stops will ensure that of all homes, schools and work places will be within an easy 400m/5 minutes walk of a bus stop. To aid access to the neighbourhood centre an additional stop will be located here.

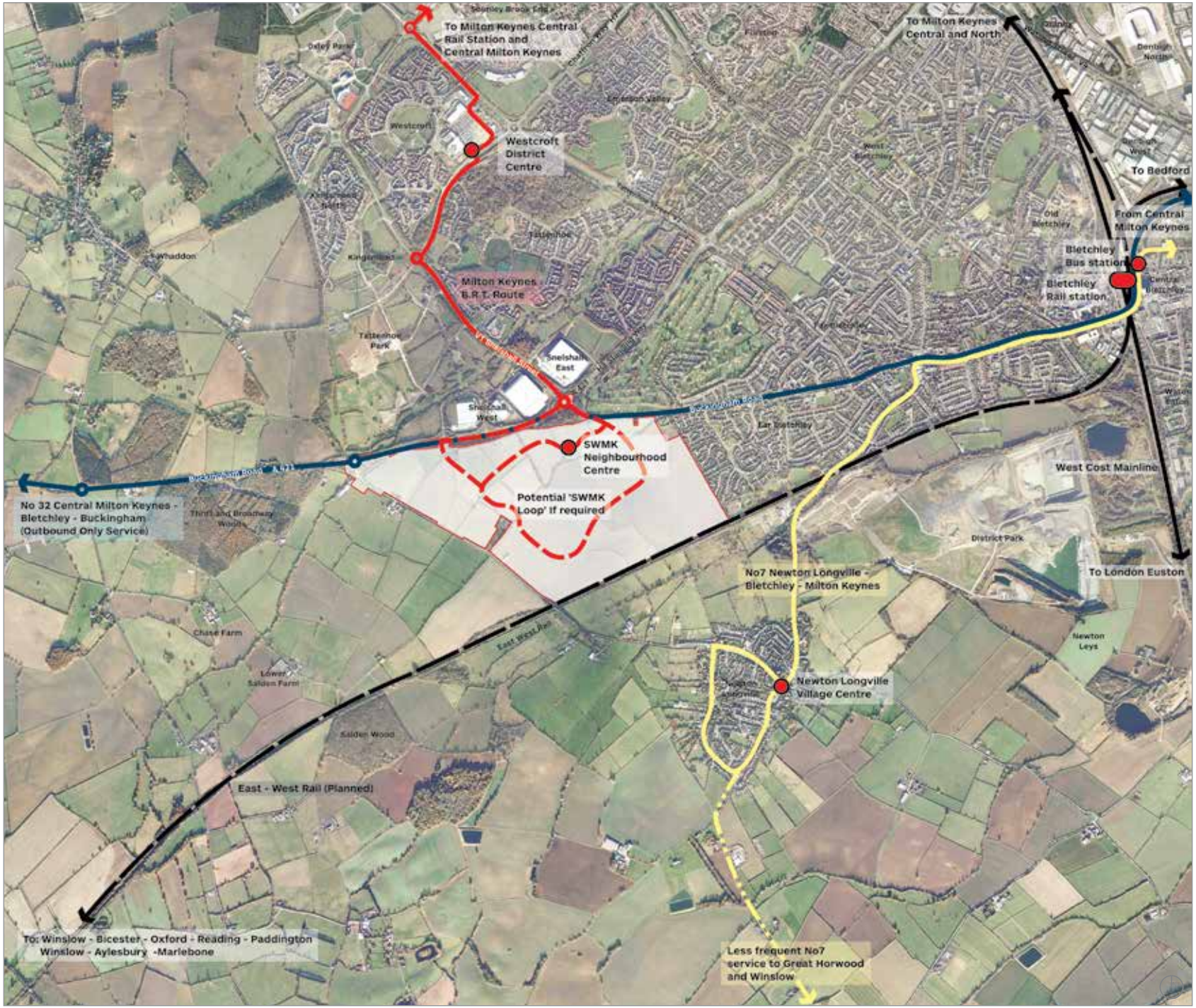

Figure 6.3: Public Transport connectivity to local train stations

6.19 To minimise the delay experienced by these bus services on-site, a public transport priority strategy for the site has been developed alongside the on-site traffic management strategy to both maintain a reliable on-site public transport service and to address local concerns raised during the scoping process with the local authorities regarding the potential for development traffic to rat-run through Newton Longville to the A4146.

6.20 Use of bus services will be encouraged. In addition, the provision of high quality bus shelters and up-to-date timetable information displays within bus stops will encourage public transport use.

6.21 An interim bus route along a secondary street has been provided to serve the phase 1 development of the site.

6.22 The East-West Rail Consortium aims to provide new and upgraded railway infrastructure between Oxford and Cambridge and beyond, with the initial focus on the western section, between Bedford, Milton Keynes, Oxford (and Aylesbury). Phase 2 of the East West Rail covers the route from Bicester to Bedford and Milton Keynes to Aylesbury Vale. This includes the line to the immediate south of the application site.

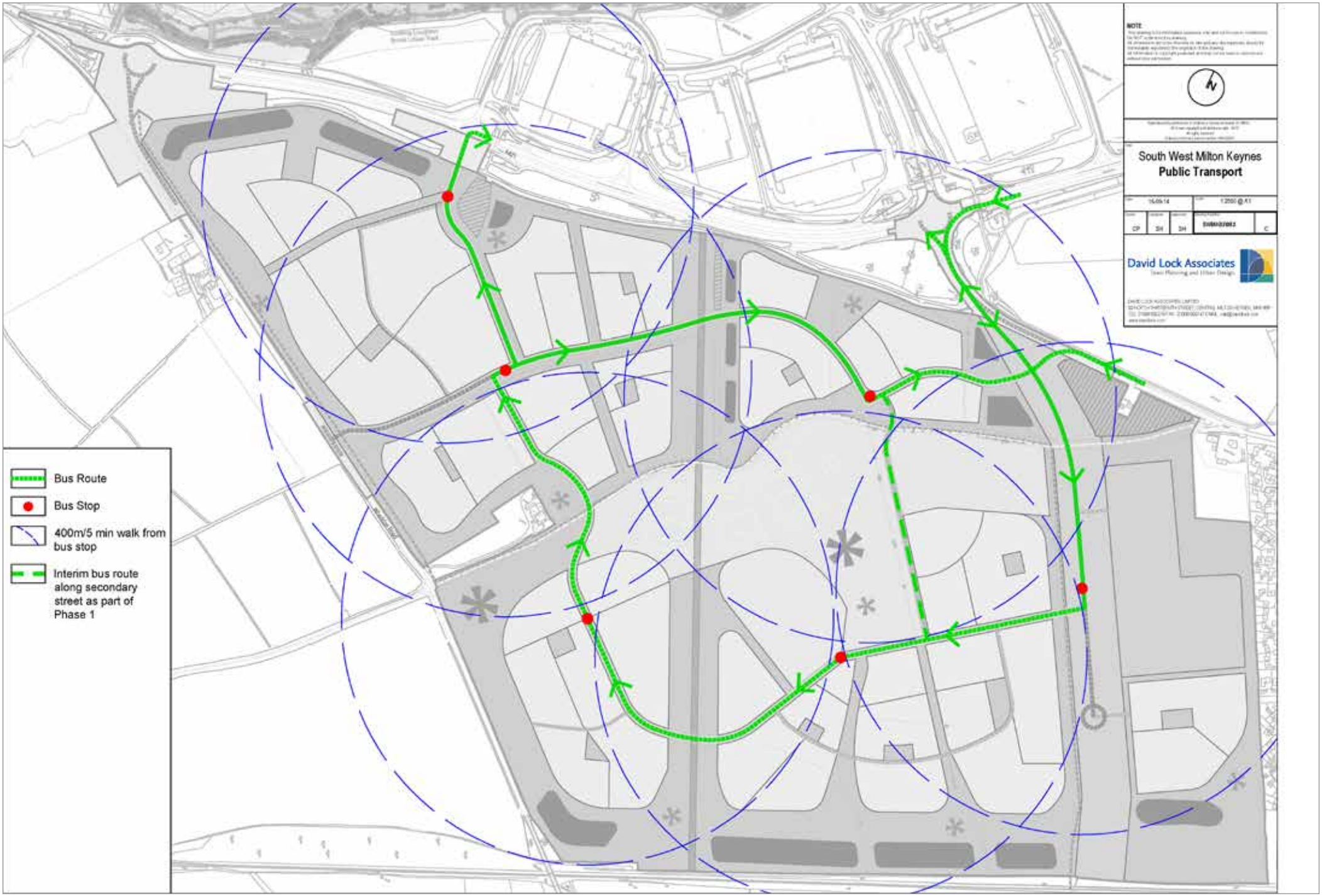

Figure 6.4: Public Transport

6.23 A case could be made that a station could potentially be built is at the former Salden Sidings. Whilst the former sidings are to the immediate south west of the application site as there are currently no plans for its delivery and the master plan and proposed public transport routes do not focus on this aspect of the site. Instead, the master plan for the application allows an access onto the Whaddon Road and so be readily accessible in the future.

6.24 The direct impact of the reuse of the line on the master plan has been the need to consider the amenities of those that will live and work near the railway line. Air quality and acoustic assessments have been undertaken - which are detailed in the Environmental Impact Assessment which accompanies this planning application. This has resulted in all of the dwellings being set back from the railway – as per the built layout on the adjacent Chepstow estate – and the separation area being used for a new area of parkland which includes water bodies as part of the site wide drainage management system.

Figure 6.5: Primary Street Section Locations and Grid Road Reserve