



## **Employment Land Review for Central Bedfordshire (North) (Stage Three)**

January 2010



Nathaniel Lichfield  
and Partners

Planning Design Economics



# Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

Planning Design Economics

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW FOR  
CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE (NORTH)  
(STAGE THREE)**

**FINAL REPORT**

CL/11864/MS/JR

January 2010

**Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd**

14 Regent's Wharf  
All Saints Street  
London N1 9RL

T 020 7837 4477  
F 020 7837 2277

[london@nlplanning.com](mailto:london@nlplanning.com)  
[www.nlplanning.com](http://www.nlplanning.com)

Offices also in  
Cardiff  
Manchester  
Newcastle upon Tyne



# Contents

---

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>The Current Stock of Employment Space</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Review of Stage One and Two Analysis</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>The Local Commercial Property Market</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Review of Potential Employment Sites</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Planning for Future Employment Land Needs</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Additional Sites</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>73</b>



## Appendices

---

- Appendix 1: List of Consultees
- Appendix 2: Ranking of Stage 2 Sites
- Appendix 3: Stage 3 Site Assessment Sheets
- Appendix 4: Site Assessment Sheets for additional assessed sites (existing allocations)
- Appendix 5: Stage 3 Site Assessment Criteria
- Appendix 6: Study Area Map



## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Employment Land Review was commissioned to inform the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the former Mid Bedfordshire area (hereafter either Central Bedfordshire (North) or ‘the study area’), and specifically the allocation of land for employment uses to be included in the Site Allocations DPD.

1.2 It was originally commissioned by the former Mid Beds Council, prior to the creation of the Central Bedfordshire Unitary Authority in April 2009, and is based on information collected between January and April 2009.

1.3 In summary, the Council’s aims for the study are as follows:

- a) to review the work already undertaken on estimating future land requirements;
- b) an independent and impartial assessment and appraisal of potential development sites in the study area; and
- c) the recommendation of a portfolio of sites to carry forward into the site allocation process.

1.4 The main outputs required from the study are:

- a review of potential to attract inward investment, as well as threats to investment / local employment from within the wider sub-region;
- advice on sites which are likely to come forward for development;
- a recommended site portfolio of deliverable sites which meet local needs and the aspirations of the draft Core Strategy; and
- a sites database that enables on-going monitoring of take-up and development.

1.5 The study’s approach generally follows Government guidance on undertaking employment land reviews and also follows specific guidance for the East of England where it relates to the scope of this study. It focuses on employment space needs for the group of B Use Classes i.e. B1 (business), B2 (industry) and B8 (warehousing/distribution). It does not consider the future land needs of other employment generating uses such as retail, tourism, healthcare and education which have already been considered by a previous study.<sup>1</sup> “Employment space” in this report mean both employment land and floorspace, while “industrial space” includes both manufacturing and distribution uses.

---

<sup>1</sup> Employment Growth in Non-B Use Classes, RTP for Mid Beds Council, August 2007

- 1.6 A key input to this study was consultation with various organisations with an interest in the supply of employment land including employers, economic development and inward investment agencies, business groups, property agents and developers. Appendix 1 contains a list of consultees.
- 1.7 The study also draws on employment land studies prepared in adjoining districts and other relevant documents including planning policy guidance, property market information, local and regional economic strategy documents, planning policy documents, economic sector studies and published economic statistics. These Reference Documents are listed in Appendix 1.
- 1.8 This study builds on and draws together the work already undertaken on employment land issues by the former Mid Beds Council and effectively covers Stage 3 of the Employment Land Review, as required by Government Guidance. The previous studies undertaken include:
- Mid Bedfordshire Employment Land Review – Stage One (Mid Beds District Council);
  - Mid Bedfordshire Employment Sites Study (SQW, Aug 2007); and
  - Employment Growth in Non-B Use Classes (R. Tym & Partners, Aug 2007).
- 1.9 Between them, these earlier studies estimated future employment land needs and assessed the quality of existing employment sites and premises. This current study has taken the results of this earlier work as the basis for identifying the types and amounts of new sites needed to meet future needs. It also considers requirements in different parts of the study area based on the indicative employment land allocations set out in the Core Strategy and discussions with commercial agents. However, the study has not sought to validate the outputs of the earlier studies or the draft Core Strategy allocations.
- 1.10 The report is structured as follows:
- Chapter 2 contains a quantitative overview of the current stock of employment space in the study area, recent changes in supply and major developments and employment land supply in nearby areas;
  - Chapter 3 provides a summary of key conclusions from the previous studies on employment land issues and reviews the future land requirements set out in the adopted Core Strategy for the Central Bedfordshire (North) area;
  - Chapter 4 assesses the commercial property market in the study area, reviewing demand and supply of different types of employment space and any gaps in provision;
  - Chapter 5 assesses potential sites being promoted for employment development, in terms of suitability to meet future needs and attractiveness to the market,

- Chapter 6 translates the estimates of future employment land needs into the amounts and types of sites needed by broad location, and identifies a portfolio of preferred sites to allocate for employment use;
- Chapter 7 assesses some existing sites which had not been assessed by previous work in order to complete the evidence base, although they were not under consideration for the recommended site portfolio
- Chapter 8 provides overall conclusions and recommendations for the study.



## 2.0 The Current Stock of Employment Space

2.1 This section provides an overview of the stock of employment space in the study area, and recent trends and changes to that supply. The amounts of such space likely to come forward in the study area in future and losses to the current stock are also examined. In addition, the current supply of employment space in adjoining districts is reviewed along with major B class development proposals in the surrounding area that could affect future demand and the need for new sites in the study area.

2.2 Both the amount of employment land and the quantity of built employment floorspace are considered across the main types of employment uses – primarily offices (use class B1(a)), research and development (B1(b)), warehousing/distribution (B8) and manufacturing industry (B1(c)/B2). Trends in the supply of employment space in the study area were assessed from the following sources:

- a) commercial floorspace data from ONS and the Valuation Office Agency (VOA);
- b) Central Bedfordshire Council's monitoring data on commercial space;
- c) data on existing and allocated employment sites from Central Bedfordshire Council;
- d) commercial property marketing websites.

### **Main Employment Areas**

2.3 The main existing employment areas in the study area are:

- Cranfield Technology Park – a 44 ha regionally significant employment site adjacent to Cranfield University;
- Stratton Park, Biggleswade – a 35 ha industrial estate containing a range of B1-B8 uses;
- Middlefield Industrial Estate, Sandy – a 28 ha industrial estate with a variety of B class uses;
- a range of smaller industrial estates in the main settlements; and
- the four main town centres of Ampthill, Biggleswade, Flitwick and Sandy.

2.4 There are also a number of smaller employment developments in rural areas, including small industrial estates in villages and workshops in converted rural buildings.

## Stock of Employment Floorspace

2.5 Table 2.1 shows the number of B class premises in the study area and nearby districts by main use categories. This shows that the study area has fewer employment premises than all nearby districts except Central Bedfordshire (South), and fewer warehousing premises than all these districts.

District/Area	Commercial Offices	Factories	Warehouses	All Types
<b>Central Bedfordshire (North)</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>1,778</b>
Milton Keynes	1,530	1,068	889	3,487
Bedford	847	741	694	2,282
Huntingdonshire	762	943	747	2,452
South Cambridgeshire	1,289	681	613	2,583
North Hertfordshire	797	746	550	2,093
Central Bedfordshire (South)	527	547	522	1,596

Table 2.1: Number of Employment Premises, 2008 Source: Neighbourhood Statistics / Physical Environment / Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics , 2008

2.6 The total amounts of B class employment floorspace by main uses in the study area and adjoining districts are shown in Table 2.2, along with amounts per head of population. This indicates that northern part of Central Bedfordshire has a lower level of employment space than all nearby districts except for North Hertfordshire. It also has a particularly low level of office space, even once population size has been taken into account.

District/Area	Commercial Offices		Factories		Warehouses		All Types	
	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	m <sup>2</sup> / capita	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	m <sup>2</sup> / capita	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	m <sup>2</sup> / capita	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	m <sup>2</sup> / capita
<b>Central Bedfordshire (North)</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>1,043</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Milton Keynes	639	2.8	931	4.1	1,702	7.5	3,272	14.3
Bedford	193	1.2	493	3.2	710	4.6	1,396	9.0
Huntingdonshire	175	1.0	787	4.7	624	3.7	1,586	9.5
South Cambridgeshire	437	3.2	534	3.9	382	2.8	1,353	9.9
North Hertfordshire	138	1.1	413	3.4	303	2.5	854	7.0
Central Bedfordshire (South)	113	1.0	487	4.1	611	5.2	1,211	10.2

Table 2.2: B-class Employment Floorspace, 2008 Source: Neighbourhood Statistics / Physical Environment / Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics, 2008

Note: 'Commercial offices' includes purpose-built and converted offices including central Government but not local government offices

2.7

Figure 1 below illustrates the relative proportions of different employment uses in the study area relative to other nearby districts. Industrial space predominates in Central Bedfordshire (North) with some 52% of the area's space being factory/manufacturing space with a further 41% being warehousing and distribution, probably reflecting the combination of the area's good strategic road accessibility from the M1 and A1 road corridors and lack of major office centres within the study area. Just 8% of all employment space is B1 offices, a lower proportion than in all adjoining districts.

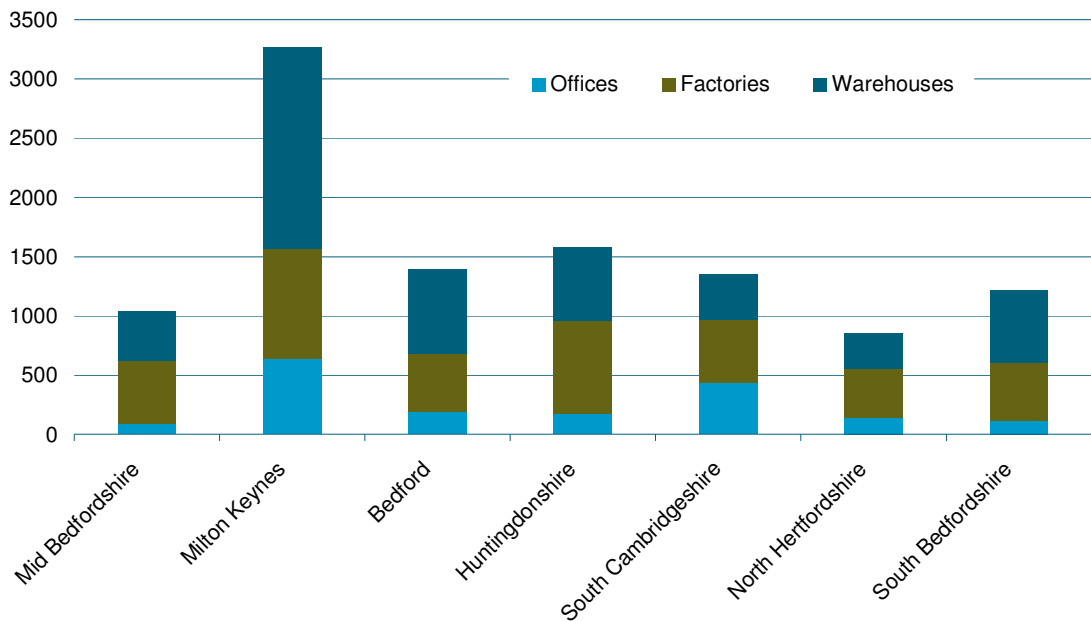


Figure 1: Employment premises stock by type, 2008 ('000 sq m)

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics / Physical Environment / Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics, 2008

2.8

An indication of the scale of change in the study area's employment space in the last decade is provided in Table 2.3 below.

District/Area	Commercial Offices		Factories		Warehouses		All Types	
	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	%	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	%	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	%	'000 m <sup>2</sup>	%
<b>Central Bedfordshire (North)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>27</b>
Milton Keynes	96	18	18	2	477	39	591	22
Bedford	36	23	-84	-15	245	53	197	16
Huntingdonshire	7	4	75	11	159	34	241	18
South Cambridgeshire	244	126	61	13	48	14	353	35
North Hertfordshire	14	11	2	0	79	35	95	13
Central Bedfordshire (South)	31	38	-245	-33	112	22	-102	-8

Table 2.3: Change in Employment Space, 1998-2008

Source: ONS Rateable Value Statistics, 2008 and 1998

Note: includes purpose built and converted offices but not local government offices

- 2.9 These figures suggest the study area had a net gain of some 219,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment space between 1998 and 2008, equivalent to a 27% gain in its stock. Proportionally, Central Bedfordshire (North) gained more employment space than all nearby districts except South Cambridgeshire, which had a particularly high rate of office development. The largest floorspace gains within the study area were by warehousing (+42%), which made up more than half of the study area's total floorspace increase, although a similar scale of increase was also found in several adjoining districts. Central Bedfordshire (North) factory space also increased over the period (+19%), which was the highest increase of all surrounding districts in this category. The study area's stock of office floorspace rose more slowly (+13%) than all surrounding districts except Huntingdonshire.
- 2.10 This data suggests that net development rates in the past decade for offices has been 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> per annum, 8,500 m<sup>2</sup> per annum for factories and 12,400 m<sup>2</sup> per annum for warehouses.

### Available Employment Land

- 2.11 In March 2008 there was an estimated 44 ha of land allocated for employment use without planning permissions within Central Bedfordshire (North) and a further 12 ha of land on sites with outstanding planning permission.<sup>2</sup> Cranfield Technology Park accounted for 18 ha of land without planning permission and 3 ha with permission whilst Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade had 18 ha without permission and 1 ha with permission. In total these two sites together account for around 70% of the 56 ha of current supply.

<sup>2</sup> Central Bedfordshire monitoring database extracts

Proposed Use	Permitted Floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> )	Land Area
<b>B1a</b>	6,948	2.5
<b>B1b</b>	8,831	2.9
<b>B1c</b>	2,373	0.9
<b>Other B1</b>	27,280	7.6
<b>B2</b>	96	0
<b>B8</b>	380	0
<b>Mixed-B</b>	7,723	4.1
<b>All B Uses</b>	53,630	18.1

Table 2.4: Unimplemented Permissions for Employment Space, 2008

Source: Based on monitoring by Central Bedfordshire Council

## Emerging Supply of Employment Space

- 2.12 An indication of the amounts of new employment space in the development pipeline in Central Bedfordshire (North) can be gauged from sites with unimplemented planning permissions. In 2008, there was nearly 54,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment space in unimplemented permissions within the study area, as shown in Table 4. This was equivalent to just over 2.5 years of gross completions at past rates. Most of this permitted space (85%) was for B1 uses, with just 1% for B2 and B8, and 14% in schemes with a mix of B uses. Over 14,000 m<sup>2</sup> (26%) of this space was in a single permission for hangarage, training facilities, airfield related uses and business units at Cranfield Airfield. Other significant permissions include 5,175 m<sup>2</sup> of research and development premises at Cranfield Technology Park and 3,070 m<sup>2</sup> of office and workshop space at land south of Hitchin Road Industrial Estate, Arlesley.

## Property Availability/Vacancy Levels

- 2.13 Figure 2 indicates that vacancy levels of commercial property in the study area have been broadly similar to regional and national averages in recent years. The latest published rate in 2004/05 was equivalent to 8% of the total stock of employment space – a rate only slightly lower than the 9/10% typical of a normal market with a reasonable amount of space available for firms to relocate and expand.
- 2.14 Based on commercial property being marketed in January 2009, there was around 26,200 m<sup>2</sup> of industrial space available in the study area, much of it at Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade and Wrest Park, Silsoe.<sup>3</sup> This was equivalent to just 3% of all industrial space in the study area, a relatively low level. Regarding office space, around 6,700 m<sup>2</sup> of office space was indicated as available across the study area, equivalent to around 8% of the current stock.

<sup>3</sup> Based on properties being marketed through the Novaloca and Estates Gazette on-line databases

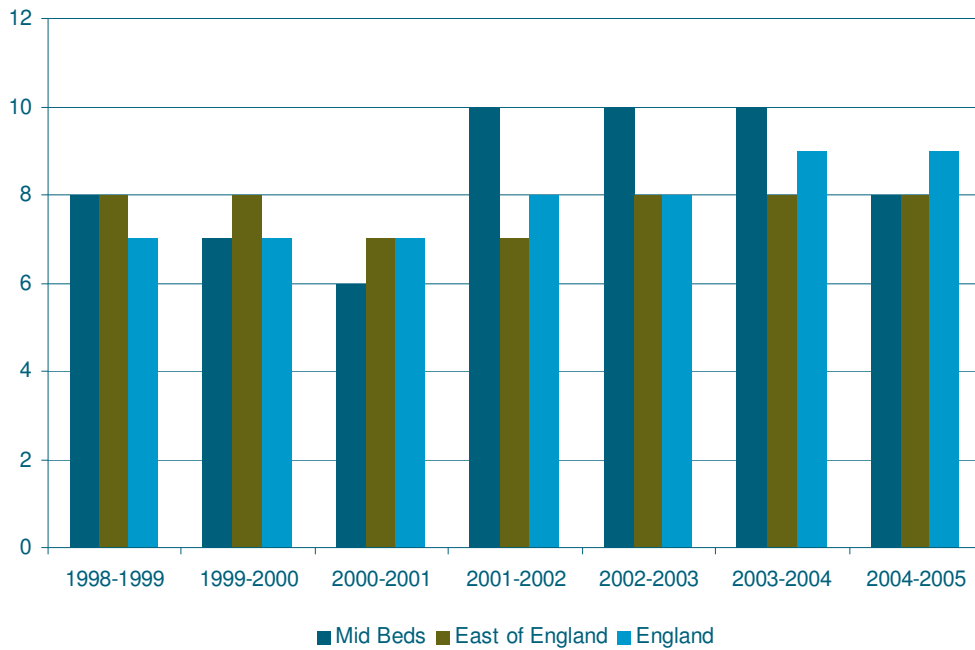


Figure 2: Commercial property vacancy rates for the study area compared with regional and national rates

2.15

As Table 2.5 below shows, most nearby districts have also had moderate levels of vacancy in recent years, most broadly similar to that in Central Bedfordshire (North), although the Central Bedfordshire (South) rate has been much higher.

District/Area	Vacancy Rate (%)
<b>Central Bedfordshire (North)</b>	<b>8</b>
Milton Keynes	8
Central Bedfordshire (South)	14
Bedford	7
North Hertfordshire	10
Huntingdonshire	8
South Cambridgeshire	8

Table 2.5: Commercial Property Vacancy in Adjoining Districts/Areas, 2004/5

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics / Physical Environment / Commercial and Industrial Property Vacancy Statistics, 2004/5

## Development Rates

2.16

Gross completions of employment space in the study area over the last four years have averaged just over 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> per annum. The bulk (42%) of this new development was for industrial space, with B8 space averaging 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> annually, B2 completions 2,600 m<sup>2</sup> and B1 (c) some 2,100 m<sup>2</sup>. B1(a) offices did, however, record the largest individual increase, averaging just over 4,500 m<sup>2</sup> of new space annually albeit that levels of change have fluctuated during the period. B1(b) (research and development, laboratories etc.) gained 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>, largely reflecting growth at Cranfield Technology Park.

## Losses of Employment Space and Net Development Rates

- 2.17 Based on annual monitoring data for the period 2004–08, Central Bedfordshire (North) experienced a loss of employment land to other uses of around 4,400 m<sup>2</sup> per annum, as shown in Table 2.6. Around 30% of this loss was from B1 offices and 15% through other B1 losses, with a further 18% from B2 uses.
- 2.18 This meant that the net development rate was some 15,700 m<sup>2</sup> annually. Detail on the land area (hectares) lost is not available from annual monitoring data. However, between 2002 and 2008 the net take-up of employment land was estimated to be 2.75 ha per annum.

Previous Use	Losses 2004-08 (m <sup>2</sup> )	Average p.a. (m <sup>2</sup> )
B1(a)	5,293	1,323
B1(b)	0	0
B1(c)	2,664	666
B2	3,198	800
B8	1,650	413
Unknown B-class	4,702	1,176
All B Uses	17,507	4,377

Table 2.6: Employment Land in the study area lost to other uses, 2004-2008

Source: Mid Bedfordshire Annual Monitoring reports

- 2.19 This net development rate appears to be broadly similar to the 21,900 m<sup>2</sup> per annum suggested by this VOA data shown in Table 2.3 which takes an average over the longer time-scale of the last decade.

## Age of Premises

- 2.20 A very broad indication of the age of the current stock of employment space in Central Bedfordshire (North) is provided by Table 2.7 below.

Use	Pre-1940	1940-70	1971-80	1981-90	1991-00	2001+	Age Unknown
<b>Offices</b>	55%	10%	7%	6%	8%	N/A	N/A
<b>Factories</b>	6%	24%	28%	22%	12%	N/A	N/A
<b>Warehouses</b>	5%	17%	18%	11%	42%	N/A	N/A
<b>All types</b>	14%	19%	21%	15%	23%	3%	5%
<b>East England Average</b>	15%	31%	15%	18%	12%	4%	5%

Table 2.7: Age of Premises in the study area

Source: ODPM Planning Statistics

- 2.21 This suggests that the study area's stock of employment premises is relatively modern with the proportion (62%) built after 1970 being well above the regional average (49%). In particular, a high proportion of the warehouse stock is modern, with at least 42% built since 1990, compared with a regional average of 16%. However, the study area's office stock is much more dated with over half (55%) of this space built pre-war and only 8% post 1990. This data measures when the building was built, rather than converted and it might therefore reflect the fact that much of the office stock is in converted

agricultural buildings rather than modern purpose-built premises. However, as no break-down of these figures is available this is difficult to corroborate.

## **Employment Space in Adjoining Areas**

- 2.22 It is also important to understand whether any major new economic developments coming forward in surrounding areas might compete with the study area for future demand. Figure 3 shows Central Bedfordshire (North) within its sub-regional context and a brief review has been undertaken of the current position in each adjoining district.
- 2.23 **Bedford** has around 585 ha of employment land of which around half lies within the town itself, and the remainder within the rural area of the Borough. Bedford has traditionally been a major service and employment centre, with significant public sector employment in administration, health and education as well as retail, light industry and distribution. However, this role has been diluted in recent years by the growth of Milton Keynes and Northampton, which have been able to provide better quality employment sites and premises, particularly for office occupiers. As a result, Bedford's main economic focus has shifted towards light industry/engineering and distribution uses. The Borough's existing employment land is dominated by a small number of post war industrial estates and business parks. The largest two of these, the Viking / Elms Estate and the Woburn Road Estate, account for 31% of the Borough's businesses between them and have very little available land left.
- 2.24 Outside the town, small sites exist in most of the large villages and a number of former MOD sites have been reused for employment purposes, such as Thurleigh Airfield. Although this supply broadly meets current levels of demand, the Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM) aims to create 16,000 additional jobs in Bedford by 2021 with a 'step-change' in the provision of employment land and premises.<sup>4</sup> The strategy to achieve this focuses on enhancing the office stock in Bedford town centre, which is currently dated and with a high level of vacancy, through an Area Action Plan. Much of this new provision will be in a major new office quarter focussed on the station. In addition, the Borough's business parks, including the 'flagship' 28 ha Priors Business Park, are now fully developed and there is therefore an acknowledgement in the adopted Core Strategy (2008) that one or two strategic sites may be allocated. These are likely to be situated in the Northern Marston Vale, close to the A421 and would probably be focussed on attracting high-tech firms to a business park environment. These sites will come forward through an 'Allocations and Designations' DPD which is currently in preparation and will be released for preferred options consultation in May/June 2010. In addition, the existing Colworth Science Park near the village of Sharnbrook, which is a 52,000 m<sup>2</sup> research and development cluster, has planning permission for a further 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of start-up and grow-on space for small firms.

---

<sup>4</sup> Bedford Employment Land Study, 2006

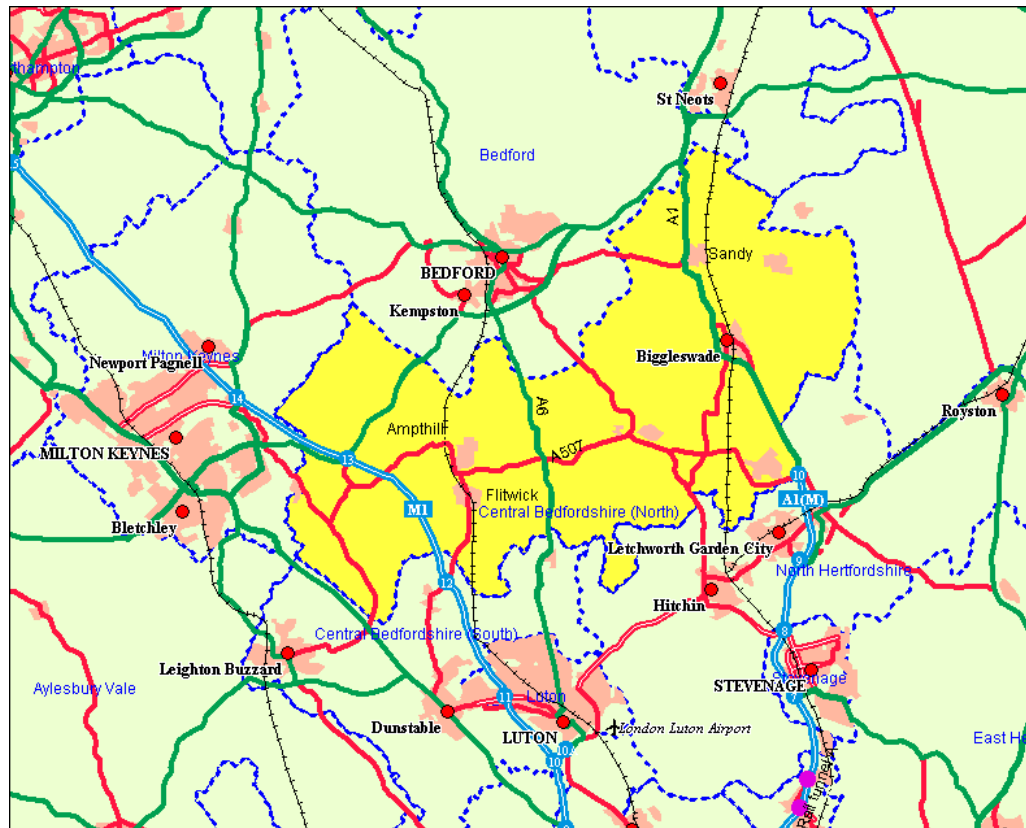


Figure 3 : Sub-regional context of Central Bedfordshire (North)

2.25

**Central Bedfordshire (South)** comprises the southern portion of Central Bedfordshire and was formerly the District of South Bedfordshire. It contains two distinct employment concentrations, in Dunstable and in Leighton Buzzard, with quite different markets and functions.<sup>5</sup> The area has around 225 ha of employment land in total. Important existing sites include the 50 ha Woodside Estate in Dunstable which is a major industrial and distribution location, although there is very little land left available for future development. The joint employment land study recommended that over 100 ha of additional land should be allocated for employment use in Luton and South Bedfordshire. A potential area for a new strategic employment allocation is adjacent to the proposed new M1 Junction 11a, to the north of Luton and close to Houghton Regis within South Bedfordshire, although it is not yet known how large this will be. This southern part of Central Bedfordshire is preparing a joint Core Strategy with Luton which will proceed to adoption.

2.26

**Milton Keynes** is at the heart of the MKSM growth area and is expected to deliver 44,900 homes and the same number of jobs by 2031 through redevelopment of the city centre, and large urban extensions. It lies to the north-west of Central Bedfordshire (North) and has significant influence over the M1 'corridor' employment premises market, in particular. The Council's Core Strategy is due to be submitted to government in spring 2010. The town's

<sup>5</sup> Luton and South Bedfordshire Employment Land Review, 2008

existing employment stock comprises a large amount of industrial and warehousing space which have taken advantage of the lower cost land and large sites which are a legacy of Milton Keynes' new town origins. The aspiration is to increase the rate of employment growth by attracting an increased number of headquarters and professional office-based firms as well as increases in the number of research and development based industries. Current office developments include the 19,000 m<sup>2</sup> Pinnacle scheme, which is the largest office development in Milton Keynes for 25 years, and 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> of space being developed at 'the Hub'. Both schemes involve intensification of town centre brownfield sites.

- 2.27 The city's eastern expansion area, adjacent to the M1, includes the 80 ha Magna Park site which is intended for large footprint employment uses (B2/B8 uses over 9,000 m<sup>2</sup> in size). Within the western expansion area there are two designated employment areas, totalling around 17 ha which are intended to be developed for a range of medium-size B1 and B2 uses. The northern expansion area also includes 3 ha of employment land adjacent to the M1 where a mixture of different B-class uses is proposed.
- 2.28 **North Hertfordshire** District borders Central Bedfordshire (North) to the south-east and contains four main towns; Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock and Royston. It has around 230 ha of existing employment land, of which almost half is located within Letchworth. The District's office sector is poorly developed and the industrial estates are not generally well located for distribution so that this sector suffers from low demand, although a lack of new supply ensures that vacancy levels are only slightly above average.<sup>6</sup> Letchworth contains significant industrial areas but with very little new employment land left for development. The District's employment land and premises market is therefore generally small and localised and, in addition, there was only around 7 ha of employment land available for development in 2007. This generally comprises small-scale opportunities such as Third Avenue, Letchworth (5,000 m<sup>2</sup> of B2/8 space on 1 ha of land) and Jarman Way, Royston (2,300 m<sup>2</sup> of B1/2/8 space on 1.5 ha of land). Despite this, the low levels of demand in the District mean it is unlikely that Central Bedfordshire (North) could cater for North Herts' needs, particularly as an option to allocate a further 24 ha of land has been proposed as part of the Core Strategy. 12 ha of this land would be at Royston which has had the most buoyant employment premises market of the District's towns in recent years. The District is due to submit its Core Strategy to the government in late 2009.
- 2.29 Although **Stevenage** is not adjacent to Central Bedfordshire (North), it is a major centre on the A1 and thus has the potential to compete with the study area, particularly on its eastern side. The property market in Stevenage shows recent levels of take-up have been declining, rental values are lower than some other similar centres and there is a high degree of availability of offices, with

---

<sup>6</sup> North Hertfordshire Employment Land Review, Bone Wells Associates, 2006

over 20% of stock currently vacant.<sup>7</sup> However, whereas Stevenage is perceived as a weak office market, recent development activity at Gunnels Wood has demonstrated the market for light industrial activity in the town, and this is further corroborated by a low vacancy level of around 7%. The stock of employment land in Stevenage caters for a range of occupiers with a substantial proportion geared towards B1 (i.e. light industrial/R&D) occupiers. Much of the stock however is lacking in modern specification and is designed for larger employers. There is a lack of modern small premises and a general dearth of high quality premises. As the main employment area, Gunnels Wood accounts for a substantial proportion of stock and is also the location of the majority of Stevenage's major occupiers such as GSK, MBDA and Astrium EADS. The town centre and old town area is dominated by office accommodation, although much of the stock is ageing and lacking in quality in terms of both appearance and specification. It is recognised that the Town Centre Masterplan will play an important role in restructuring the town centre and improving its profile, potentially leading to new opportunities for office developments in the future.

- 2.30 **South Cambridgeshire** adjoins Central Bedfordshire (North) to the east, is largely within Green Belt and covers a large rural area with many sizable villages surrounding the City of Cambridge. The District has seen rapid economic growth in recent years particularly on business/research parks linked to the high technology cluster focused on Cambridge. The District has a large employment land supply of around 193 ha of which 103 ha comes from sites with planning permission and a further 50 ha from the strategic allocations in the Northstowe new settlement and the Cambridge East and north west Cambridge urban extensions.<sup>8</sup> Existing commitments for research and development include sites at Granta Park, Babraham Hall (30,000 m<sup>2</sup> of additional laboratory and office space); Cambridge Research Park (11 ha of available land for office, light industrial and research uses); and Cambridge Science Park which lies on the border with the City of Cambridge. Other commitments include land at Cambourne Business Park (up to 70,000 m<sup>2</sup> of B1 space), Papworth Business Park (primarily industrial space), and a number of smaller business parks and sites, including in rural areas, which take advantage of the large stock of rural buildings available. Whilst this business/science park space may compete to a limited extent with potential business parks in Central Bedfordshire (North), the effect is likely to be negligible on the more general commercial property market. The District's LDF is well progressed with a Core Strategy DPD, Development Control Policies DPD and Northstowe AAP having already been adopted.
- 2.31 **Huntingdonshire** is a primarily rural District which lies to the north of the study area. Its main towns are St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives and it has a primarily industrial commercial property market. However, its close proximity to Cambridge and good transport links have meant that some high-technology

---

<sup>7</sup> Based on floorspace availability stated in Stevenage Employment Capacity Study, November 2006

<sup>8</sup> South Cambridgeshire Adopted Core Strategy, 2007

firms have recently been attracted to the District, particularly to St Neots and St Ives. The District is expected to create around 14,000 jobs under the East of England plan between 2001 and 2021 and in April 2008 it had around 504 ha of employment land available for development. However, 480 ha of this is at the Alconbury Airfield site, which has an extant consent for B8 space, leaving only 24 ha of other available land. This available land includes parts of the 19 ha St John's Business Park in Huntingdon which has 5 ha of undeveloped land remaining for general business use. Alpha Park in St Neots is a partly-developed warehousing and distribution site adjacent to the A1 which has around 3 ha of land remaining. Colmworth Business Park is a development of office and light industrial premises lying to the south of St Neots, adjacent to the A1, and with 3 ha of land remaining. In order to accommodate future B class land requirements, around 15 ha of land to the east of St Neots and the East Coast Main Line has been identified as being suitable to fulfil future needs in this part of the District.

## **Conclusions**

- 2.32 Central Bedfordshire (North) currently has a relatively low level of employment space compared to nearby districts and to its population size. The stock of office space is particularly small, being well below the level of all adjoining districts and industrial uses predominate.
- 2.33 In recent years, the study area has experienced a reasonable net gain in employment floorspace, with modest increases in office space, a larger increase in factory space and a particularly sizeable increase in warehousing stock. This overall increase in space has been higher than in all nearby districts except South Cambridgeshire. Vacancy levels of commercial premises in the study area remain similar to surrounding districts and regional/national averages.
- 2.34 There is a reasonable amount of permitted floorspace in the development pipeline, the vast majority of which is B1 space and equivalent to 2.5 years supply at recent take-up rates. The major sources of this space are Cranfield Airfield, Cranfield Technology Park and Hitchin Road Industrial Estate, Arlesey. There are also large allocated sites with potential to provide significant new employment space, notably at Cranfield Technology Park and Stratton Business Park.
- 2.35 Central Bedfordshire (North) contains a reasonable range of industrial sites and areas and the stock of premises is generally fairly modern, particularly amongst warehousing. However, the small stock of offices is relatively dated.
- 2.36 There has been a moderate level of new employment space completed over the last 4 years, averaging around 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> annually in gross terms and 15,700 m<sup>2</sup> in net terms. Just over 20% of completed space was accounted for by offices with the remainder being for industrial uses (B1c/B2/B8).

- 2.37 There may be the potential for the study area to capture some demand from adjoining areas where land supply is constrained. This particularly applies to areas close to North Herts, although given that demand is generally low here, the potential appears to be limited. More importantly, there are a number of development proposals in adjoining districts which have some potential to compete with Central Bedfordshire (North) for future employment development. In particular, the potential designation of one of two strategic sites for high-tech uses within Bedford Borough in the Northern Marston Vale is likely to provide intense competition for these uses, particularly in the north of the district. In addition, the growth agenda in Milton Keynes (which has a number of developing 'flagship' employment sites), the improving office provision in Bedford and Milton Keynes, and the possible allocation of a strategic employment site in the southern part of Central Bedfordshire means that competition, particularly along the M1 corridor is likely to intensify in the years to come. These developments have the potential to attract or divert some businesses from the northern part of Central Bedfordshire. The high-profile office developments in and around Cambridge also offer competition for this type of space, although this applies much more to the A1 corridor than the M1 and only to a rather limited extent.
- 2.38 In the A1 corridor, Stevenage contains a significant quantity of available larger office premises and would be competitor to any aspirations for significant new office sites in this part of the study area. In addition, the higher than average levels of vacant space in North Herts may already be resulting in lower levels of demand in the south-east of Central Bedfordshire (North).
- 2.39 Overall, the study area has a strong industrial focus, albeit with a significant cluster of higher technology uses around Cranfield, and a fairly modest development rate compared with nearby areas.



## 3.0 Review of Stage One and Two Analysis

3.1 This section reviews the work undertaken by the former Mid Beds District Council and independent consultants that together form Stages One and Two of the Employment Land Review for Central Bedfordshire (North), following the approach set out in the ODPM guidance. This has informed the Stage Three work completed by this study. It should be noted that this analysis was undertaken prior to the examination into, and adoption of the Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy.

3.2 The key documents referred to in this section are:

- *Employment Land Review (Stage One)*, Submission for Core Strategy, Mid Beds District Council, 2007;
- Mid Bedfordshire Employment Sites Study, SQW Consulting, August 2007;
- *Employment Growth in Non-B Use Classes*, R. Tym and Partners, August 2007; and
- *Employment Forecasts for B-Use Classes*, Technical Note, R. Tym and Partners, December 2007.

### **Stage One (Taking Stock of the Existing Situation)**

3.3 A total of 166 existing employment sites above the 0.25 ha threshold recommended by the ODPM guidance were identified by the former Mid Beds District Council, based on existing Local Plan allocations, consultation with Parish Councils, and a review of Council ratings records and aerial photographs. These sites were subject to a visual inspection and a qualitative assessment against a range of site evaluation criteria. Furthermore, an occupier survey was distributed to all occupiers on the sites surveyed and sought occupier views on their current site, how well it met their current requirements, and what their future needs might be.

3.4 The key findings of this assessment exercise were:

- of the 166 employment sites assessed, 94 were industrial estates, 47 were occupied by a single user, 23 were office complexes, two sites were undeveloped, and one site (Cranfield Technology Park) was categorised separately as a high technology business park;<sup>9</sup>
- only 40% of existing B1-B8 employment land (in terms of area) is protected by Local Plan Policy EMP1 as a Key Employment Site;

---

<sup>9</sup> These different categories of sites total 167 rather than the 166 stated in the report

- 59% of the identified employment land is situated outside of the District's key settlements, and 61% is located outside of any defined 'Settlement Envelope';
- 60% of occupiers responding to the survey expected their business to grow in the next three years, while 84% considered their current premises to be adequate for their immediate needs;
- 61% of respondents had no plans to move from their current premises, but 38% indicated that were looking to move in the next 10 years, primarily because they do not have room to expand on their current site. Affordable rents and a location easily accessible to main transport routes were the two most important factors for firms considering alternative premises.

3.5 In addition to the review of 166 employment sites, 50 of these sites were short-listed to assess their suitability for current and future employment uses in more detail. These sites consisted of Key Employment Sites (Policy EMP1) and Allocated Employment Sites (Policy EMP4) identified in the Local Plan, as well as other sites perceived to have special significance in the local economy because of their size, prestige or location. A traffic light system was adopted to measure the 'fitness for purpose' of these sites. The results of the Council's assessment indicated:

- 38 'green' sites showing clear fitness for purpose;
- 10 'amber' sites as potentially fit for purpose with some improvement;
- two 'red' sites unsuited for employment use because of their location and / or other characteristics.

3.6 In addition to the Council's assessments, SQW Consulting were commissioned to validate the 'fitness for purpose' assessment of 40 employment sites, out of the original 50 assessed by the Council. Ten of the short-listed sites were excluded from the SQW assessment as the Council considered a clear positive fitness for purpose existed in the case of these sites.<sup>10</sup> This further assessment considered each site against 10 criteria, with a score given against each criteria and a total score per site, to enable the site to be allocated a traffic light assessment of fitness for purpose consistent with the Council's own assessment approach. This process included a property market review which involved consultation with local commercial property agents. The main findings of this included:

---

<sup>10</sup> Sites excluded from SQW assessment included: Doolittle Mill, Doolittle Yard, Stratton Park, Stratton Park Phase IV, Prologis Park, Cranfield Technology Park, Land East of Bedford Road, ARC Progress / Beckerings Park, ARC Progress / Bury Farm and Land South of Stotfold.

- Central Bedfordshire (North) is characterised by two separate market areas, influenced by the M1 corridor to the west and the A1 corridor to the east. The A6 which runs north to south through the study area is broadly the dividing line between these two market areas;
- the western area, which contains Ampthill and Flitwick, is characterised by office premises centred on Ampthill and Cranfield Technology Park. Agents reported sufficient office supply at present, but with further space likely to be required in future. An acute shortage of industrial space was reported in Ampthill and Flitwick reflecting limited recent development, which had forced some firms to relocate elsewhere. Demand for industrial land and floorspace is therefore strong. Significant demand was also identified for large-scale warehousing and distribution units, but only limited sites identified which are easily accessible to the M1;
- the eastern area includes Biggleswade and Sandy, where the market tends to be influenced by nearby Stevenage and Letchworth. Reasonable demand was reported for industrial property, with Stratton Business Park considered the premier industrial location. The A1 corridor has a considerable supply of industrial property, although vacancy rates have increased as a result of this supply comprising mainly larger, older premises. The office market is limited to small office conversions in rural areas and smaller settlements, although agents perceived a 'quality business park' on the A1 could be successful but would probably require public sector support; and
- across the study area, agents reported that higher land values achieved by residential development has led to pressure from the market to change industrial uses to residential.

3.7 The SQW site assessments identified:

- 28 'green' sites showing clear fitness for purpose;
- 7 'amber' sites as potentially fit for purpose with some improvement;
- 5 'red' sites unsuited for employment use because of their location and / or other characteristics.

3.8 The SQW study noted an apparent mismatch between the present allocation of the selected employment sites and current Local Plan policies EMP1 and EMP4. Eleven of the 'green' sites are already designated by Policy EMP1 and / or EMP4, but the other 17 sites are not. Five of the 'amber' sites are designated by Policy EMP1 or EMP4, but two are not. It was therefore recommended that a review of those sites afforded protection under EMP policies was undertaken as part of the Local Development Framework, although this was in the context of having only assessed a sample of the study area's total employment sites. None of the 'red' sites are included within the EMP policies, and the SQW study advised that these did not justify any protection.

- 3.9 The combined results of the Council's and the SQW site assessment processes are set out in the Council's Stage One Employment Land Review report. This provides a description of each site and a summary matrix of traffic light scores for a range of criteria. An overall recommendation on the strengths and weaknesses of each site is provided, and whether the site should be retained for employment uses or released.

### **Stage Two (Creating a Picture of Future Requirements)**

- 3.10 The Council's approach to estimating future employment land requirements is based largely on a future growth requirements method. This method assessed what level of job growth would be needed to achieve a 'balance' with planned Draft East of England Plan housing requirements. A number of job growth scenarios were developed.
- 3.11 First, the Draft East of England Plan sets out an indicative target of 27,000 net new jobs for Bedford and the Central Bedfordshire (North) area to 2021, of which 11,000 are attributable specifically to Central Bedfordshire (North) according to calculations by the former Bedfordshire County Council. This is now considered by the Council to be a 'baseline' job growth position for the area.
- 3.12 Second, the Panel Report for the East of England Plan increased the housing requirement for Central Bedfordshire (North) to 14,230, but did not change the jobs target. The Council considered that jobs growth should be better aligned with housing growth, and therefore introduced a higher scenario of 14,000 more jobs up to 2021.
- 3.13 The third scenario, which was taken forward in the Core Strategy, plans for 17,000 new jobs to 2026. This is based on the need to plan for additional homes to ensure a continuous supply of housing to be maintained for at least 15 years from the date of adoption in accordance with the requirements of PPS3. The draft Core Strategy notes that it is reasonable to require the equivalent time period for the provision of jobs to ensure a broad alignment with housing growth. Based on a projection of recent employment growth trends, a further 3,000 jobs (in addition to the 14,000 job scenario) brings the total to 17,000 jobs up to 2026, which would provide approximately one job per dwelling.
- 3.14 The drawback of this approach is that it represents a judgement about the level of job growth that should be planned for in order to achieve alignment with regional housing targets. It has therefore not been tested against any independent forecasts of economic activity to assess the extent to which these levels of job growth are actually achievable through general economic growth and market forces. This is particularly brought into focus at the current time of economic recession, when future patterns of job growth may not follow what has occurred in the past and housing development may be slower. However,

the approach adopted is similar to that used in the RSS in being job target driven, based on the planned level of housing growth.

- 3.15 To determine the potential split between different employment sectors that would make up the 11,000 and 14,000 job growth scenarios (the 17,000 job scenario was introduced at a later date), the Council commissioned Roger Tym and Partners to undertake analysis of the split between B1-B8 and non B1-B8 sectors.<sup>11</sup> This study found that almost half of all new jobs created in the study area would be in non B1-B8 uses (Table 8), in particular hotels, catering, retail, education and social work.

	2001	2021 (11,000 scenario)	2021 (14,000 scenario)
<b>Total Non B Space Employment</b>	23,548	28,985	30,548
<b>Total Employment</b>	44,633	55,633	58,633

Table 3.1 Employment Forecasts for Non B Space Employment in Central Bedfordshire (North)

Source Roger Tym and Partners, August 2007

- 3.16 Further work by Roger Tym and Partners also examined the composition of employment growth in the B-class sectors for both the 11,000 and 14,000 job growth scenarios (Table 9). Growth in all B-class sectors was forecast for both scenarios, with the largest increase in office employment, covering activities such as accountancy, advertising, consultancy and legal sectors. Some modest growth was also forecast for the manufacturing and warehousing sectors.

	2001	2021 (11,000 scenario)	2021 (14,000 scenario)
<b>Industrial</b>	9,650	10,179	10,728
<b>Warehousing</b>	3,261	5,240	5,522
<b>Offices</b>	8,125	11,141	11,741
<b>Total B Space Employment</b>	<b>21,035</b>	<b>26,559</b>	<b>27,991</b>

Table 3.2 Employment Forecasts for B Space Employment in Central Bedfordshire (North)

Source: Roger Tym and Partners, December 2007

- 3.17 Taking account of this likely sector split by jobs, the employment land requirements implied by the two higher job scenarios were calculated by the Council, and summarised in Table 10. This was based on a range of detailed assumptions used to translate jobs to land requirements, which are set out at Section 4 of the Stage One Employment Land Review report. This included using employment densities of 1 job per 30 m<sup>2</sup> (for B1 and B2 uses) and 1 job per 60 m<sup>2</sup> (B8), assuming a plot ratio of 40 % for all sectors. An additional safety margin of 50% was then applied to the resulting floorspace requirement.

<sup>11</sup> Based on Experian EG21(02) model used to inform 2004 Draft East of England Plan

Some assumptions were subject to revision, as set out at Annex One of the report.

- 3.18 For the 14,000 job scenario, this resulted in a total additional requirement of 54 ha (up to 2021), increasing to 77 ha for the 17,000 job scenario (up to 2026).

	Update for Submission CS using baseline of 14,000 jobs	2021-2026 3000 jobs
<b>Jobs Calculation</b>		
Jobs, 2006 to 2021 (ABI Job Creation 2001-2005 = 5,000)	9,000 (14,000 – 5,000)	N/A
Growth 2006 -2010 ABI jobs growth data for 2006 of 400 jobs pa projected to 2010	Job creation 2006-10 = 400 x 4 yrs = 1,600 9,000 – 1,600 = 7,400	N/A
Jobs, minus Business Expansion (5%)	7,030 (7,400 – 370)	2,850 (3,000 – 150)
B1 – B8 jobs (50% B1 – B8 employment)	3,515 (7,030 x 50%)	1,425 (2,850 / 2)
<b>Employment Sectors</b>		
B1 and B2 Employment (approx 2/3 of B1-B8 jobs)	2,162 (3,515 x 61.5%)	876.4 (1,425 x 61.5%)
B8 Employment (approx 1/3 of B1-B8 jobs)	1,353 (3,515 x 38.5%)	549.6 (1,425 x 38.5%)
<b>Floorspace Requirements</b>		
B1 Floorspace (30 sq m)	63,860 (2,162 x 30)	26,292 (876 x 30)
B8 Floorspace (60 sq m)	81,180 (1,353 x 60)	32,916 (548.6 x 60)
Gross Floorspace (total B1 & B8 sq m)	145,040	59,208
<b>Land Requirement</b>		
Net Land Requirement (ha) (40% x 10,000)	36 (145,040 / 4,000)	15 (59,208 / 4,000)
Over allocation (ha) (50% of net land requirement)	18 (36 x 50%)	8 (15 x 50%)
<b>Total Net Land Requirement (ha) (net land requirement + over allocation)</b>	<b>54 (36+18)</b>	<b>23 (8+15)</b>

Table 3.3 Estimated land requirements to meet target of 14,000 additional jobs (2001-2021) and 3,000 additional jobs (2021-2026)

Source: Stage One Employment Land Review Report, Former Mid Beds District Council, 2007

\* Note: Updated using percentage increase by sector up to 2021 based on Roger Tym and Partners B-use Employment Forecasts

- 3.19 In April 2008, some 43.73 ha of allocated employment land without planning permission existed in Central Bedfordshire (North).<sup>12</sup> The majority comprised two large allocations at Cranfield Technology Park (18.03 ha) and Stratton Business Park (17.22 ha). The Stage One Employment Land Review report comments that while these sites make an important economic contribution to

<sup>12</sup> Based on Central Bedfordshire Employment Land Monitoring database

the study area, their role serving specialist markets (technology-based firms at Cranfield and large scale B2/B8 at Stratton Park) means they are likely to make a limited contribution to meeting the job growth requirements of the area, and they do not provide the range of sites necessary to offer choice and variety in terms of location and size of business premises.<sup>13</sup> The Stage One report goes on to suggest that, if additional employment land is not provided, job creation could be restricted and out-commuting further intensified. For these reasons, it is our understanding that the Council has excluded the total supply of existing allocated employment land without planning permission when calculating the study area's 77 ha future land requirement.

- 3.20 In addition, other non allocated employment land with planning permission exists in the study area, recorded at 12.89 ha in 2007/08 based on Council monitoring data. We understand that these commitments have also not been included in the Council's calculated additional land requirement for reasons similar to those outlined above in relation to undeveloped employment allocations. There is a further 12 ha of land for employment uses which may be permitted as part of the NIRAH site in Marston Vale, subject to the successful conclusion of section 106 negotiations and the resolution of a legal dispute between NIRAH and the site's owners.<sup>14</sup> However, as this is currently not a firm commitment, the allocation of the site cannot count towards the 77ha land requirement.

### **Core Strategy**

- 3.21 The Stage One and Two Employment Land Review prepared by the former Mid Beds Council informed preparation of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document which has now been adopted.
- 3.22 Key employment land policies contained in the Core Strategy are:
- Policy CS9 "*Providing Jobs*" which establishes a minimum target of 17,000 net additional jobs in the study area for the period 2001-2026, to be supported by the allocation of 77 ha of net additional B1-B8 employment land through the Site Allocations DPD;
  - Policy CS10 "*Location of Employment Sites*" in broad terms distributes the 77 ha requirement across the main settlements and growth areas, reproduced in Table 11.
- 3.23 The distribution of land in Policy CS10 is intended to direct most new employment development to the settlements which will receive additional housing growth as set out in the Core Strategy's housing allocations.

---

<sup>13</sup> Stage One Employment Land Review, paras 4.29-4.30

<sup>14</sup> The planning application for the National Institute for Research into Aquatic Habitats (NIRAH) includes the provision of a 12 ha science research park

	New allocations indicative range (ha)
<b>Biggleswade</b>	10-15
<b>Sandy</b>	5-10
<b>Amphill / Flitwick</b>	8-15
<b>Northern Marston Vale</b>	10-20
<b>Arlesley / Stotfold / Fairfield</b>	10-15
<b>Cranfield</b>	5-10
<b>Potton</b>	1-2
<b>Shefford</b>	2-4
<b>Silsoe</b>	1-2

Table 3.4 Policy CS10 indicative employment allocations by location

Source: Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy

## Conclusions

- 3.24 The Stage One work to review the current stock of employment space conducted a broad assessment of 166 sites which has been supplemented by more detailed analysis of a short list of 50 sites in terms of their overall fitness for purpose to meet current and future needs. The occupier survey has collected important information about how firms perceive their current site and also about their future expansion needs. The SQW analysis has provided additional market insight by incorporating a property market review and consulting with commercial property agents, which validated the Council's own site assessment. Taken together, this approach appears to be reasonably robust for that phase of the study.
- 3.25 In terms of assessing future needs at Stage Two, the approach adopted by the Council is reliant on devising a number of scenarios that respond to the policy objective to achieve alignment with regional housing numbers implied for Central Bedfordshire (North) from the RSS. As noted earlier, there has been no testing of these job growth scenarios against actual forecasts of what economic growth in the study area might achieve over the period although as this is consistent with the approach taken by the RSS, it appears reasonable in this case.
- 3.26 By setting aside undeveloped allocated employment sites and existing commitments (totalling about 57 ha) in calculating the 77 ha future land requirement, this may have the effect of over-providing for employment land. However, this appears to be based on the Council's chosen approach regarding the need to bring forward a range of new sites to encourage employment growth if the draft Core Strategy job targets are to be achieved in line with planned housing growth, as well as to reduce the existing high levels of out-commuting from the study area.
- 3.27 This report now goes on to deal with market demand and requirements by different sectors which tests levels of demand set out in the Core Strategy indicative allocations by settlement, and so improve the robustness of any allocations. The following sections deal with these issues.

## 4.0 The Local Commercial Property Market

4.1 This section describes current property market conditions in the Central Bedfordshire (North) and the general area around it, including recent trends in demand for and supply of industrial and office premises, and the factors affecting these. These findings are based on discussions with a number of property agents and various economic development and business organisations active in the area, as well as analysis of commercial property availability databases.

### **Overview**

4.2 The study area commercial property market is fairly localised, and can broadly be distinguished by three separate sub-areas – the M1 corridor on the western side of the area extending to the settlements of Ampthill and Flitwick, the A1 corridor in the eastern part of the area corridor which passes through the market towns of Biggleswade and Sandy, and the largely rural areas in between. The study area is surrounded by larger centres – particularly Milton Keynes and Bedford to the north, and Luton, Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth to the south – which tend to be the main focus of commercial property market activity in this wider area.

4.3 The study area's main attractions for firms include its good transport accessibility and proximity to larger population centres. Potential drawbacks are a less attractive image as a business location compared with Milton Keynes and the northern fringes of Hertfordshire. The largest employment sectors in Central Bedfordshire (North) have traditionally been agriculture and manufacturing, particularly brick production. Both sectors have been in steady decline and the brickworks have now closed, but manufacturing is still strongly represented locally.

### **Industrial Supply / Demand**

4.4 Most current demand for employment space in the study area is for industrial premises (which includes both manufacturing and distribution uses) with steady demand reported in recent years. Agents reported that the strongest industrial demand is in the west of the study area, particularly around Ampthill and Flitwick. Established estates such as Ampthill Business Park are therefore popular, but agents reported that some firms had been forced to relocate out of the area in recent years due to expansion requirements that could not be met locally. By comparison, industrial demand on the eastern side of the study area has been steady, if not particularly high. In recent years, demand has been primarily for smaller-scale industrial and some distribution uses.

- 4.5 Across the study area, most demand tends to be for smaller industrial units, particularly up to 185 m<sup>2</sup> (2,000 sq. ft), but also reasonable demand for units up to 465 m<sup>2</sup> (5,000 sq. ft), and generally less demand above 930 m<sup>2</sup> (10,000 sq. ft). Demand is almost exclusively from local firms, with very few enquiries from outside of Central Bedfordshire (North). Vacancy tends to be focussed in older, larger industrial units although the case of Stratton Park highlights that where well located land suitable for large footprint development exists, there is significant demand from large-scale occupiers.
- 4.6 In terms of supply of industrial premises in the study area, existing industrial estates tend to be used for a mix of light industrial, storage and distribution and some trade counter uses. There is limited modern, good quality industrial space on the western side of the study area, with much of the stock being reasonably dated and very limited new industrial space being constructed since the 1980s. Consequently, some agents reported a general shortage of new industrial accommodation in the Ampthill and Flitwick areas where much of the area's industrial demand is focused. A clear view was that there would be continued demand for more small to medium sized industrial units, but some concern about the choice of sites readily available in the west of the area to meet this demand in the longer-term.
- 4.7 The industrial supply is greater on the eastern side of the study area, which includes older established estates such as Middlefield Industrial Estate (Sandy) and newer space completed at Stratton Business Park immediately adjoining the A1 at Biggleswade. This latter site was originally a greenfield allocation that, with lower demand in this area, took a number of years to come forward. However, the site is now established and is viewed as the premier employment site along the Central Bedfordshire (North) section of the A1. There is also a significant amount of industrial stock on various estates in Arlesey. However, demand for these units is constrained by the relatively poor road access which necessitates negotiating either narrow country lanes or residential areas in order to reach main roads.
- 4.8 The study area's main concentration of B8 warehousing space is at the Marston Gate development, close to Junction 13 of the M1. This provides modern, large-scale warehousing occupation, for occupiers such as Amazon and some national distribution firms. Although this location to some extent competes with other distribution sites close to motorway junctions along the M1, for example at Milton Keynes, in the longer-term, the market view was that demand would remain strong for large warehousing space. Some agents considered that the study area could capture a greater share of the distribution market if additional land in accessible locations was made available close to the M1.
- 4.9 A smaller concentration of warehousing space is located at Stratton Business Park alongside the A1, and where Gazeley has applied for permission to develop a 49,000 sq.m G.Park distribution facility. The existing premises are modern, and while the scale of activities is generally smaller-scale than along

the M1 corridor, makes use of the good strategic access provided by the A1. Older warehousing premises in more constrained locations, such as Crossway Park in Arlesey, are generally less popular and have higher vacancy rates as a result. However, in most cases these are regarded as adequate for meeting the study area's more localised needs.

### **Office Supply / Demand**

- 4.10 Central Bedfordshire (North) is not generally regarded as a significant centre for office development, and has very few large office occupiers. This primarily reflects the area's proximity to larger and more established office centres, such as Milton Keynes and Stevenage which have larger business parks and a wider range of facilities, as well as the study area's lack of modern office premises.
- 4.11 Reflecting these factors, the current supply of office space in Central Bedfordshire (North) is quite limited, generally comprising small-scale accommodation within Ampthill and Flitwick. Current supply largely consists of some small office buildings in the town centre built in the 1970/80s along with some conversions of older residential buildings and offices above shops. The most significant recent office completions were at Doolittle Mill and Doolittle Yard (Ampthill) comprising around 30 small office units in total, which let very successfully and are now occupied by a variety of public and private sector organisations. The former Mid Beds District Council offices in Ampthill ('The Limes') has also recently come onto the market, where planning permission exists to create about 900 m<sup>2</sup> of office space alongside a residential conversion.
- 4.12 Located on the study area's western boundary, Cranfield Technology Park is a joint development between Cranfield University and St.Modwen. The development is focused on technology-based firms, with occupiers including the Nissan Technology Centre and Trafficmaster, and includes an innovation centre and larger office units up to 3,000 m<sup>2</sup>. New speculative buildings have been recently completed on the site, although there were reports that some occupiers are seeking to sublet vacant space in existing buildings.
- 4.13 There has been very limited recent office development on the eastern side of the study area, with the only supply consisting of smaller office units above shops in Biggleswade and Sandy town centres. Low rental levels and uncertain demand were reported to limit the viability of new office development in this area.
- 4.14 The current level of demand for office space is hard to gauge given there has been very limited new supply in the study area in recent years. Demand is mainly from local businesses with no large relocations of office firms from elsewhere, other than to Cranfield. In the west of the study area, demand is generally for smaller premises up to 100 m<sup>2</sup>. There is occasional demand for larger units, often for firms seeking a location close to the M1, for which Cranfield is the only available supply in the area. Cranfield has also attracted

some office occupiers from Milton Keynes. Levels of office demand in the east are lower, and mainly for small town centre units in Biggleswade and Sandy.

### **Rental Levels**

- 4.15 Office rents are generally higher on the western side of the study area, varying from £10-14 per sq. ft in Ampthill, rising to £16 per sq. ft at Cranfield Technology Park. Doolittle Mill, a high quality development of small office units in Ampthill, reportedly achieved £17-18 at the height of the market. On the eastern side of the study area, rents are generally lower reflecting the more modest office accommodation available. The limited town centre office space in Biggleswade or Sandy achieves up to £10 per sq. ft. High quality rural conversions average around £13-15 per sq. ft, but there can be significant variation depending on the quality of the accommodation and location. Office rents in both Luton and Bedford are typically £12-14 per sq. ft, although Milton Keynes is higher, ranging between £12-18 per sq. ft, and the Capability Green Business Park close to Luton Airport averages £16-18 per sq. ft.
- 4.16 For industrial premises, rents on the western side of the study area are typically £6-7 per sq. ft, falling to £5-6 per sq. ft on the eastern side. Older industrial space would probably achieve £4-5 per sq. ft. These are comparable to nearby centres, for example Bedford which has an oversupply of older industrial space, with high vacancy levels, although slightly lower than Milton Keynes (£6-8).
- 4.17 Taken overall, these levels do not suggest any great cost advantage for Central Bedfordshire (North) over larger centres nearby. Agents were keen to emphasise that although rental levels are under significant pressure reflecting wider economic conditions, in the longer-term the relative differences in levels between the study area and adjoining areas would probably remain broadly the same.

### **Property Availability / Vacancy**

- 4.18 For industrial premises, the survey of sites, property websites and discussions with agents confirmed a low vacancy level, about 5-7% of the stock. The general view of local agents was that vacancy is generally lower on the western side of the study area reflecting the limited supply of industrial premises available. Vacancy rates are higher on the eastern side, where demand is generally lower and there is a greater stock of older industrial premises some of which are reported to be outdated for modern requirements. However, new development at Stratton Park has increased supply in the short-term, with potential for further development phases in future.
- 4.19 In terms of office space, vacancy based on marketed premises is also low at around 5% although much of this is accounted for by two larger office buildings (the former Council offices at Ampthill and the Howard Building at Wrest Park). This level reflects limited supply, with very little modern office space available

other than the small units provided by the Doolittle Mill scheme near Ampthill and Wrest Park at Silsoe.

### **Rural Provision**

- 4.20 The rural part of the study area is characterised by a number of small villages, set within attractive countryside. Agents reported that there have been a steady number of conversions of former farm and agricultural buildings in these areas over recent years. This particularly applies on the eastern side of the study area, where small office premises have been created. The quality and rental levels of these schemes vary significantly, but it was generally considered that this is a role that the study area performs well and could develop further in future with a reasonable level of demand likely. These could serve to meet the needs of rural businesses which operate in this area, but also could attract new start-up businesses or relocations from more constrained locations nearby. Combined with new housing growth in the Central Bedfordshire (North), there were some views that further development of this type could help reduce the currently high out-commuting levels from the area by encouraging residents to set up businesses locally. However, it was generally agreed that specific allocations of land are not needed in order to encourage such supply to come forward.
- 4.21 Some more significant employment space is also provided in the rural area at Wrest Park, located near Silsoe. This provides a range of small office and industrial units in the grounds of the stately home and gardens. Most of the buildings are older stock and therefore somewhat dated, but the range of different unit sizes available and the attractive setting mean that these units have proven relatively successful. Some modern office/laboratory space has also been constructed on the site. Wrest Park contributes to meeting rural needs, but to some extent the setting means that potentially the site also has a wider draw for occupiers beyond the local area.

### **Gaps in the Property Portfolio**

- 4.22 The general market view is that most forms of industrial and commercial property are catered for at some level in the study area, with few obvious gaps in types of provision based on the nature of inquiries received by agents. However, as noted earlier, there are understood to be instances of existing businesses not being able to find suitable industrial premises to expand or move into, particularly in Ampthill and Flitwick. The main gaps indicated were a need for more industrial land readily available for development, along with more, modern industrial premises. However, compared with a normal balanced portfolio of sites, there is an obvious shortage of office sites, although this was not identified as a gap by agents due to limited demand.

### **Quality of Current Provision**

- 4.23 It was widely recognised that some older industrial estates were approaching the end of their economic life or are unsuited to modern industrial needs and

may have potential for redevelopment to modern employment premises, and some to other uses. Examples include the Middlefield Industrial Estate in Sandy.

- 4.24 There is, however, some potential for older industrial buildings to be re-clad/refurbished or sub-divided for industrial use in a relatively inexpensive way, perhaps alongside some redevelopment of older individual units. Although rental levels are generally lower in Central Bedfordshire (North) than elsewhere in the sub-region, they are not considered to be so low as to preclude this type of upgrading occurring. Specifically, provision of new space at Stratton Park may have the effect of freeing-up some existing units on the eastern side of the study area, potentially making some renewal or replacement easier. If land supply remains constrained in future on the western side of the area, this may encourage more investment in the existing building stock, but with a risk of firms moving outside the local area altogether to meet their expansion needs.

### **Potential Future Growth**

- 4.25 In terms of a likely future economic role for Central Bedfordshire (North) and the scale of demand for commercial space in it, market views were broadly positive. There were strong views that the study area should focus on its existing strengths, such as the local industrial and small-scale distribution sectors, but at the same time strive to achieve a more diverse economic base.
- 4.26 Further growth of large scale distribution was considered very likely if new sites close to the M1 were made available. Some agents highlighted the dualling of the A421 linking Junction 13 to Bedford as increasing the attractiveness of this area, but is probably less important for large-scale distribution activities. Given the largely strategic nature of these activities, it was considered that they make limited contribution to meeting the employment space needs of the area's indigenous firms. The concentration of distribution activities at Marston Gate is, however, a potential source of employment for local residents although it is reported that many employees are currently transported to the site from Bedford and Milton Keynes.
- 4.27 Developing a greater and better quality stock of office space in the study area over the medium to long-term was considered to be important in retaining and encouraging the growth of local office-based firms. Some potential demand was identified from local businesses seeking larger or more modern accommodation, particularly within Ampthill and Flitwick town centres, although in general Central Bedfordshire (North) currently lacks a large base of existing office occupiers other than small scale financial and professional firms. There were some views that a general uplift in Flitwick town centre, with improved retail and leisure facilities, and taking advantage of its existing mainline rail connection, could in turn support more small scale, office-based firms if high quality premises were provided and readily available. Any new space developed would also have to offer rents similar to existing levels in the study area, as it would likely be too expensive for firms to upgrade, while availability of car

parking would also be important. In the absence of modern provision to meet the needs of small-scale local office occupiers, there is a risk that some of these and any emerging service sector firms relocate to larger centres nearby when they needed to expand.

- 4.28 The office market in the A1 corridor on the eastern side of the area is currently not well developed but there is perceived to be potential for an increased supply of premises. This could take the form of a dedicated office park or greater provision in edge-of-centre locations, particularly in Biggleswade, which are potentially more attractive due to their proximity to town centre services. If an office park were to be developed it is considered that it would need to be an entirely new “A1 corridor” product with dedicated site, access and branding rather than being an extension to an existing estate such as Stratton Business Park.
- 4.29 In view of the current recession and its impact on the commercial property market, some agents stressed that speculative development is likely to be more constrained in the future due to tighter credit conditions and the fact that smaller businesses (which predominate in the area) very rarely commit to pre-lets. As a result, in the short to medium term, extensions to established business locations where market demand is proven were considered by agents to be more likely to come forward.
- 4.30 Views on future development at Cranfield Technology Park were mixed. Some agents considered that the site’s poor accessibility and location remote of any local services would limit scope for continued growth in future. For these reasons, most considered that the site was unlikely to perform any wider business park function for Central Bedfordshire (North) as a whole. Ultimately, however, the site appears to meet wider sub-regional needs in this area, catering for firms seeking an M1 corridor location. Over time, this may have some spin-off benefits for the rest of the study area. The Park’s existing occupiers appear to be closely related to the University and focus on technology-related uses for which the Park is currently unique in the sub-region, and this role was broadly expected to continue in future.

## **Competition**

- 4.31 The study area’s role as an industrial / warehousing location was seen as continuing at a broadly similar level. However, this is very much reliant on new land being made available in the most popular locations around Ampthill and Flitwick. Surrounding centres outside Central Bedfordshire (North) have a much larger stock of office space, and Bedford in particular has a significant supply of older, vacant industrial space. Some potential was identified for industrial firms relocating from constrained sites in residential areas of Bedford to new sites within the study area, although there would probably be no significant cost advantage and these firms would probably prefer to locate close to the Bedford boundary to ensure a reasonable commuting distance for existing employees. Less potential was perceived for industrial firms moving northwards up the A1

corridor from more expensive parts of Hertfordshire. However, the consensus is that new premises and development plots at Stratton Park would be well placed to meet the demand that exists.

4.32 With its current very limited office role focused on local needs, it does not appear that Central Bedfordshire (North) really competes with any nearby areas for new office development at present. Cranfield Technology Park has been successful in attracting some office occupiers seeking an M1 or Milton Keynes location, but less clearly relates to the study area's own indigenous office needs. If seeking to develop a wider office role, the study area would have to compete with more established centres such as Milton Keynes and Stevenage (which already has a significant oversupply of vacant office floorspace). Town Centre Action Plan proposals in Bedford indicate efforts to revive that town centre's office market in future through new office development, particularly close to the mainline railway station, which could generate new competition for the study area in the future. It appears more likely that, in conjunction with the growth and general uplift of some of the study area's main centres, any expanded office market role would have to focus on a smaller scale, more local and complementary role rather than one competing with more established centres.

## **Conclusions**

4.33 With the exception of Cranfield Technology Park and the Marston Gate distribution location which are orientated to meeting wider sub-regional needs, the study area's commercial property market is fairly localised in nature. The study area is characterised by several distinct market sub-areas – the M1 corridor to the west, the A1 corridor to the east, and the rural parts of the rest of the area. Taking each of these areas in turn, a number of broad conclusions can be drawn:

4.34 The western area is characterised by:

- a significant shortage of industrial land and premises, notwithstanding that this is where most industrial demand is focused;
- a limited supply of office premises, but a reported need for further space in the longer term. In particular, a general uplift in Flitwick town centre through a number of development projects may help to stimulate a town centre office market;
- continued strong demand for larger-scale warehousing units along the M1 from regional/national distribution firms, and scope to attract further development if accessible sites are made available;

- a niche role performed by the Cranfield Technology Park which has been successful in attracting some technology-based firms to the study area. In property market terms, it tends to meet sub-regional needs rather than indigenous requirements of firms in the area.

4.35 The eastern area is characterised by:

- reasonable demand for industrial premises, but also greater supply of both older space on established industrial estates and new development at Stratton Park;
- limited demand for office space, but some potential to stimulate this market through increased supply of edge-of-centre office space in the main towns or through a new business park along the A1.

4.36 For the remaining rural parts of the study area:

- a reasonable level of demand exists for small-scale rural conversions, principally for office activities and generally located on the eastern part of the study area. Further growth potential was identified.

4.37 These broad property market characteristics will inform the analysis of future requirements and identification of a portfolio of new employment sites in Chapter 6.

## 5.0 Review of Potential Employment Sites

### Introduction

5.1 This section reviews the suitability of potential sites in Central Bedfordshire (North) for employment use. It takes as its starting point all sites that have been promoted for either employment or mixed use development within the study area through the 'call for sites' process, carried out as part of consultation for the Site Allocations DPD. Excluding duplications, this yielded a total of 99 sites which were carried forward into the assessment process.

5.2 At the request of the Council, the assessment process consisted of a three-stage sifting process. Stages 1 and 2 of this sift excluded less suitable candidates with important size, planning or environmental drawbacks. The remaining sites were assessed in more detail at Stage 3. The details of each sifting stage are outlined below:

5.3 **Stage 1** was a desktop exercise which examined the sites against eight criteria, namely:

- Is the proposed development contrary to the aims of the Core Strategy (with a focus on larger settlements, brownfield land and general sustainability)?
- Is the site within the Green Belt (the council is not undertaking a review of the greenbelt as part of its LDF process)?
- Is the site within the Open Countryside?
- Is the site less than 0.25 ha in size or is being promoted for less than 500 m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace?
- Is the site identified in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan or emerging LDF for other uses?
- Is the site wholly or predominantly within flood zone 3 (1 in 100 year risk)?
- Is the site likely to have a significant negative effect on a site of international or national biological or geological importance?
- Is the site likely to have a significant negative effect on a nationally important archaeological site or monument or a nationally or internationally important historical site?

5.4 If any site was judged to contravene any of these criteria, it was excluded from further consideration in this study. The 19 sites excluded at this stage and the reasons for their exclusion are set out in Table 5.1 below.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Reason for Exclusion
E03	Land at Brogborough Landfill Site	Conflict With Core Strategy - remote from any settlement, & within open countryside
E07	Land at Maulden Road, Flitwick	Within Green Belt
E19	Land adjacent to Little Park Farm & A507, Ampthill	Within Green Belt
E29	Little Pack Farm, Ampthill	Within Green Belt
E30	Land adjacent to Steppingley Road, Flitwick	Within Green Belt
E39	Bell's Brook, Biggleswade	Conflict With Core Strategy - remote from settlement, in open countryside, partly within flood zone 3
E47	Westmead Farm, Sheeptick End, Lidlington	Conflict With Core Strategy - remote from settlement, partly within flood zone 3
E51	Land west of the Midland Mainline Railway, Harlington	Within Green Belt
E58	Land adjacent to A1, Biggleswade	Within flood zone 3
E65	Land at Bells Brook, Biggleswade	Within flood zone 3
E72	Bridgeside Nurseries	Within Green Belt
E79	The Old Orchard, Water End Road, Maulden	Conflict With Core Strategy - remote from any settlement, partly within flood zone 3
E81	Hamlet End House & adjacent land	Within flood zone 3
E84	Silsoe Road, Maudlen	Conflict with Core Strategy - remote from settlement designated for employment growth & site exceeds local needs
E85	Water End Road, Maulden	Conflict with Core Strategy - remote from settlement designated for employment growth & site exceeds local needs
E88	Site D, Silsoe Road, Maulden	Conflict with Core Strategy - remote from settlement designated for employment growth & site exceeds local needs
H065	Asterby & Chalkcroft Nursery, The Ridgeway, Blunham	Conflict with Core Strategy - remote from any settlement, within open countryside
H122	Land to the east of Ampthill	Within Green Belt
H276	Station Road (New Road), Sandy	Within flood zone 3

Table 5.1: Sites Excluded at Stage 1

- 5.5 The remaining 80 sites were taken forward into further desktop-based sifting process - **Stage 2**. This stage tested each of the sites against seven criteria using a 'traffic light' system. Under each criterion, this process assigned a green, amber or red score to the site depending on the extent it complied with that particular criterion. The criteria used and the scoring thresholds applied under the traffic light system are shown in Table 5.2 below.
- 5.6 Following a review of the sites, it was considered that any sites which achieved red scores on four or more criteria should be excluded from further consideration. However, no site recorded four reds. While a number of sites recorded three 'reds', further examination of these indicated their deficiencies were, on balance, not sufficiently strong to justify exclusion. No further sites were therefore excluded at this stage. However, the sites were ranked on the Stage 2 scorings to identify those with greater or fewer constraints. This ranking is contained in Appendix 2.

Criteria	Green	Amber	Red
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Above 60% PDL	30-60% PDL	Below 30% PDL
Sustainable Transport Accessibility to Housing	Within or adjacent to major settlement	Adjacent to minor settlement	Detached from settlements
Flooding	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Important gap or landscape area	Not within AGLV or gap	-	Within AGLV or gap
Site access	Adjacent to major A road or trunk road	Adjacent to minor A road or B road	Road access via minor road
Availability	Within single ownership	-	Multiple ownership
Loss of important land uses?	No loss of important uses	Part of site covered by important designation (e.g. County Wildlife Site)	Loss of important use (e.g. public open space)

Table 5.2 Stage 2 Criteria and 'traffic light' thresholds

5.7 Also excluded at this stage were several sites which although categorised as potential employment sites are actually being promoted wholly for non-B class uses. These are:

- **Home Farm, Old Warden Park, Biggleswade (E56)** which is being promoted for Hangar Space to be used for the Shuttleworth Collection of transport exhibits;
- **Rowney Warren Wood, Southill (E49)** which is being promoted for facilities ancillary to the leisure use of the wood including toilets, a restaurant, a shop and a car park;
- **Henlow Lakes, Arlesey Road, Henlow (E76a)** which is now being promoted for “rural style buildings suitable for leisure use” in association with fishing activities;
- **Land North East of Steppingley Road, Flitwick (E31)** and **Land at Allotment Site, Steppingley Road, Flitwick (E32)** which are both being promoted for the development of an indoor tennis centre;
- **Mount Pleasant Farm, Old Warden (E53)** which is being promoted for the development of additional farm buildings to provide for cattle and sheep and for teaching purposes; and
- **Silsoe Road, Maulden (E83)** which is a committed residential site

5.8 In addition, the employment element of proposed development at **Land at Steppingley Road and Froghall Road, Flitwick (H077)** was considered as site E62. Site H077 was therefore not considered separately.

5.9 The 70 remaining sites were assessed in more detail within Stage 3, which involved a site inspection and a qualitative assessment of the site against the following criteria to determine its suitability for different types of employment uses and likely attractiveness to the market. The criteria adopted at this Stage reflect those in Government guidance on Employment Land Reviews as well as found to be effective in previous employment land studies by the consultants. These criteria are:

- Strategic road access (proximity to a trunk road/motorway junction);
- Local road access (quality of existing access or ease of securing improved access);
- Accessibility to labour & services (proximity to residential areas, town centres and public transport);
- Site development constraints (topography, site size and shape);
- Proximity to incompatible uses; and
- Market attractiveness factors (potential demand from developers and occupiers)

- 5.10 Each site was assessed against these criteria and, for each factor, given a score between 1 (poor) and 5 (best). This information and scoring for each site, along with comments to explain the score achieved, can be found on sheets for each individual site contained in Appendix 3.
- 5.11 Overall scores for each site were then totalled and used to rank sites to identify the strongest and weakest candidates within each sub-area of the study area. In addition, the types of uses for which each site was considered most suitable, and any constraints on delivering them, were noted. For mixed-use sites, the land area recorded in the table is an estimation of the amount of land likely to be developed for employment use only.
- 5.12 Although these site rankings give a good indication of site quality and suitability, other considerations will also be taken into account in deciding on a portfolio of sites such as their potential for a particular type of use and deliverability/timescale factors.

### **Overview of Sites**

- 5.13 This section reviews each of the sites assessed at Stage 3 by sub-area of the study area. For each sub area, a table shows the sites assessed within that area, their score, area of land available for employment development and their potential use. The potential delivery timescale was also assessed as short, medium or long term depending on the size of the site, difficulties in securing new access and any other development constraints. Short term is taken to mean within the next 5 years, medium term within the next 10 years, and long term within the plan period (up to 2026). These delivery factors will then be taken forward into the selection of a recommended site portfolio in Chapter 6.

### **Biggleswade**

- 5.14 The Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of between 10 and 15 ha are made at Biggleswade while around 127 ha of land is being promoted here. Several of the sites being promoted are situated in close proximity to Stratton Business Park which is a large, existing employment area. These sites include:

- **Holme Green Farm, West of the A1 (E08)** - a large greenfield site which lies adjacent to the A1, although on the opposite site to Stratton Business Park and the rest of Biggleswade. This scores well because of the potential strategic accessibility, proximity to Biggleswade and lack of physical constraints.
- **Land at Newspring Farm, London Road (E33)** – a greenfield site immediately to the south of land allocated as an extension to Stratton Business Park. This site scores slightly less well as it could not take advantage of the existing access to Stratton Business Park and its high profile, as well as a potential difficulty in gaining a larger access on to the A1.
- **Land at Stratton Farm, Biggleswade (E67)** – land to the east of the existing Stratton Business Park which overlaps to a large extent with land known as **Stratton Business Park Phase V (E11)**. Both these sites score well due to their ability to form extensions to the existing Business Park.

5.15 Another site within close proximity to Stratton is **Newlands, Dunton Lane (E34)**. However, this scores lower than the sites adjacent to Stratton Business Park as it would have to achieve access off Dunton Lane and is detached from Biggleswade.

5.16 **Land at Dunton Lane (E69)** suffers from an irregular footprint and small size of the site, although it still scores relatively highly due to its location within Biggleswade and easy access to the A1.

5.17 A further site – **Land adjacent to A1, Biggleswade (E60)** – lies to the north-west of Biggleswade, adjacent to a roundabout on the A1, some 3 km to the north-east of Stratton Business Park albeit it may be difficult to fund adequate access for a relatively small employment scheme alone.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E67	Land at Stratton Farm	Industrial/Office	48.5	28	Medium
E11	Stratton Business Park Phase V	Industrial/Office	28.9	28	Medium
E08	Holme Green Farm, West of A1	Industrial/Office	27.1	26	Medium / Long
E33	Land at Newspring Farm, London Road	Industrial/Office	36.6	22	Medium / Long
E60	Land adjacent to A1	Industrial/Office	3.0	21	Short / Medium
E69	Land at Dunton Lane	B1 Light Industrial/Office	2.6	21	Short / Medium
E34	Newlands, Dunton Lane	Industrial/Office	9.1	20	Medium

Table 5.3 Biggleswade sites ranking

## Sandy

- 5.18 The Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of between 5 and 10 ha are made at Sandy and at least 32 ha of new employment land is being promoted. One promoted site – **(Meller Beauty Premises, H295)** – is an existing employment site and therefore cannot count towards this total.
- 5.19 Of the remaining five sites, **Land East of Middlefield Road (E38)** scores highest as it would represent a natural extension to the existing Middlefield Industrial Estate with its good road access and reasonable attractiveness to the market. **Stratford Road / Sandy Station (E78)** scores less highly due to its small size and poor access, a problem which is even more acute for **Cox's Hill (E70)**. The large potential urban extension site to the **East of the Railway Line (H304)** also suffers from the difficulties of securing suitable access to the site, as well as the fact that it is detached from Sandy by the railway line.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E38	Land East of Middlefield Road and North of Beamish Close	Industrial	17.7	26	Medium
H295	Meller Beauty Premises, Sunderland Road	Industrial/Office	Up to 2.1	25	Medium
E63	Ridgeway Business Park, The Ridgeway	Industrial	5.9	21	Short / Medium
E78	Stratford Road / Sandy Station, Potton Road	Industrial	0.7	20	Short / Medium
E70	Cox's Hill, Off Green Lane	Industrial	7.2	17	Medium
H304	Land East of Railway Line	Industrial	Up to 76.2	17	Long

Table 5.4: Ranking of sites in Sandy

## Amphill / Flitwick

- 5.20 The Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of between 8 and 15 ha are made at Amphill and Flitwick which are the major service centres in the west of the study area. However, only 1.6 ha of new employment land is being promoted for such a use here. **Reddings Wood, Amphill (E71)** is an existing key employment site and could therefore not count towards this total.
- 5.21 **Land off Steppingley Road (E62)** comprises the employment component of a wider urban extension proposal (H077). It therefore scores reasonably well because it could be appropriately masterplanned within the development and would have good access to the highway network and labour. The site is also close to the A507 offering rapid access east and west and is flat, developable land. However, the Froghall Road railway bridge constrains the main access to the A507 to smaller vehicles and thus this site may only be suitable for smaller-scale uses. The proportion of the site used for employment and

housing could potentially be altered in order to yield a greater amount of employment land, although proposals at present are for 0.6 ha of employment.

- 5.22 **Doolittle Mill Phases 1 and 2 (E68 and E64)** are proposals to extend the existing Doolittle Mill office development for further industrial and office use respectively. Both sites score well in terms of market attractiveness due to their proximity to the existing employment area and are well positioned to the A507. Their location between Ampthill and Flitwick is also beneficial in terms of access to services and labour. The sites suffer slightly from poor local access roads, but this is not a significant disadvantage for office use.
- 5.23 **Land at Flitwick Railway Station (H113)** is a town centre mixed-use development site which could comprise some office use and scores well due to its proximity to services and public transport. Potential remediation issues and multiple ownership could harm the deliverability of this scheme, although it is understood that some funding has been secured in order to bring forward the development.
- 5.24 At the request of the council, two further sites were considered here which are currently being promoted only for housing use. **Land off Flitwick Road, Ampthill (H052)** and **Land at Warren Farm, Abbey Lane, Ampthill (H083/H084)** comprise two adjacent parcels of safeguarded land to the south of the urban area of Ampthill. Both sites benefit from good access to labour, public transport and services, are within walking distance of the town centre and there is evidence of significant market demand for small industrial units in this location. The western parcel (H052) suffers from lying in between residential properties and a school, and from its narrow shape which may make it difficult to suitably masterplan industrial uses in a mixed-use development. The eastern parcel (H083/H084) scores higher due to its larger size (and thus greater potential to avoid conflicts between industrial and other uses) and lack of existing conflicting uses (it lies adjacent to a recycling centre). However, this site would have a lower profile.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E62	Land off Steppingley Road	Office/Industrial	0.6+	22	Long
E71	Reddings Wood, Ampthill	Office	23.6	21	n/a
H083/84	Land at Warren Farm, Abbey Lane, Ampthill	Industrial/Office	Up to 10.5	21	Medium
E68	Doolittle Mill, Phase 1	Industrial	5.2	21	Medium
E64	Doolittle Mill, Phase 2	Office	1.0	21	Short / Medium
H113	Land at Flitwick Railway Station	Office	2.9	21	Medium
H052	Land off Flitwick Road	Office/Industrial	Up to 7.8	20	Medium

Table 5.5 Ampthill and Flitwick sites ranking

### Northern Marston Vale

- 5.25 Development in this area is particularly being focused on the new settlement of Wixams which will be classified as a major service centre and Marston Moretaine which is a minor service centre. Around 43 ha of new employment land is being promoted here while the Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of between 10 and 20 ha are made in this area.
- 5.26 **Land at Moreteyne Farm (E09)** is a large, potentially mixed use site which lies between the old and new alignments of the A421. This gives it excellent local and strategic road access, a potentially high profile and the possibility of a wide range of uses. However, the existing A421 also separates the site from the existing village.
- 5.27 **Land south of The Wixams (H278)** forms a large area earmarked as an extension to the proposed new settlement. Around 5 ha of employment land is proposed as part of this and is likely to comprise smaller employment uses masterplanned into the residential development. The main problem with the site as an employment location is its poor strategic road access. This issue is also shared by the **NIRAH (E16)** site at Stewartby where a 12 ha Science Park is proposed as part of a planning application which benefits from a resolution to approve subject to successful conclusion of section 106 negotiations and a legal dispute. Because of these problems, the site cannot be regarded as a commitment. **Land at Lower Shelton Farm (E42)** is already committed by virtue of the fact that it has planning permission for live/work units.
- 5.28 Poor local road access hampers **Land at Stewartby Water Sports Club (E61)** where a large office development is proposed. It is not obvious that there is demand for such floorspace in this location although the site has better access to labour due to its proximity to Stewartby and its railway station.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E09	Land at Moreteyne Farm, Marston Moretaine	Industrial / Office	Up to 25.7	26	Medium
H278	Land south of The Wixams	Industrial / Office	c. 5.2	22	Long
E16	NIRAH, Stewartby	B1 Science Park	c. 12	19	Medium
E61	Land at Stewartby Water Sports Club, Stewartby	Office	c. 3.3	19	Medium
E42	Lower Shelton Farm, Lower Shelton	Small-scale office / industrial	1.1	14	Short

Table 5.6 Northern Marston Vale sites ranking

### Arlesey / Stotfold / Fairfield

- 5.29 The Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of between 10 and 15 ha are made in and around Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield. Approximately 124

ha of new land is being promoted for employment use in this area. **Land at Taylors Road, Stotfold (H262)** is already allocated as an employment site and therefore could not count towards this total.

- 5.30 The three top performing sites in this area all benefit from immediate and excellent access to the A507 or A1. **Land to the East of Arlesey (E12a)** is a large potential urban extension site which could include a high profile employment area adjacent to the roundabout on the A507. **Land west of the A1, Stotfold (E05a)** is a potentially large, high profile dedicated industrial and/or distribution estate, adjacent to a junction on the A1. The **Henlow Aggregates (E75a)** site scores slightly less well due to the fact that it is detached from any settlement, but nonetheless has good access to labour and its own dedicated access onto the A507 with the potential for a good quality industrial estate. Only around half of this site is actually being promoted for development (that closest to the A507) and thus the employment land area would be approximately 5 ha if it were to be allocated. However, there may be some potential heritage constraints to development at this site associated with the nearby Henlow Grange.
- 5.31 **The Pig Development Unit (E25)** records a lower score than the above three sites as it does not have quite as good road access, is not adjacent to the A507, is slightly further away from local services and is detached from settlement. However, its status as previously developed land and proximity to Letchworth give it other advantages. This site was granted outline permission for B1/B2/B8 and five replacement dwellings in September 2008. This date was after the point at which the 77 ha requirement for Central Bedfordshire (North) was calculated, and therefore can count as new employment land for the purposes of meeting the requirement.
- 5.32 **Land at Common Road (E66)** and **Land South of Arlesey Road (H260)** lie on the edge of Arlesey but with difficult access through residential areas. However, neither site has any obvious constraints to development whilst the market attractiveness of Land at Common Road could benefit from the adjacent Fen End industrial Estate.
- 5.33 **Land off Malthouse Lane (E06)** and **Silverbirch Field (E77)** both lie to the north-east of Stotfold and score relatively poorly as they have difficult access down narrow country lanes, in particular the latter which currently has no access whatsoever.
- 5.34 **Land West of High Street (H227)** and **Land West of High Street and South of Chase Hill (H003)** are both potential mixed-use sites situated between Arlesey and the railway line. Whilst they therefore benefit from reasonable access to services and labour, they suffer from the poor road access through the village and very limited demand for office uses in this location whilst H003 has other planning and environmental constraints. **Land at Arlesey Landfill Site (E01)** has even poorer access, with vehicles having to negotiate a narrow bridge over the railway, although there is evidence of demand for premises here,

particularly from operators which tend to conflict with residential amenity. As a result, this site scores slightly higher.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E12a	Land to East of Arlesey	Offices / Industrial	Up to 60.0	26	Long
E05a	Land west of A1, Stotfold	Industrial / Distribution	18.0	25	Medium / Long
E75a	Henlow Aggregates, Arlesey Road	Industrial	Circa 5.0	24	Medium
H262	Land at Taylor's Road, Stotfold	Industrial	4.4	21	Short
H260	Land south of Arlesey Road, Stotfold	Offices / Industrial	Up to 1.0	21	Medium
E66	Land at Common Road, Stotfold	Industrial / Offices	1.8	20	Medium
E25	Pig Development Unit, Hitchin Road, Fairfield	Industrial	Approx 5	19	Short / Medium
E06	Land off Malthouse Lane, Stotfold	Industrial / Offices	10.0	18	Medium
E01	Land at Arlesey Landfill Site	Industrial	3.5	17	Short / Medium
E77	Silverbirch Field, Stotfold	Industrial / Offices	7.9	16	Medium / Long
H227	Land west of the High Street, Arlesey	Offices / Industrial	Up to 1.0	15	Long
H003	Land West of High Street and South of Chase Hill Road, Arlesey	Offices / Industrial	Approx 0.7	14	Medium

Table 5.7 Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield sites ranking

## Cranfield

- 5.35 The Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of between 5 and 10 ha are made in and around Cranfield while around 43 ha of land is being promoted. All four sites being promoted here are in close proximity to the University and Technology Park but lie some distance from the actual village of Cranfield. In general the location suffers from poor access to the strategic road access despite the relative success of the Technology Park.
- 5.36 **Land off University Way (E82)** scores the highest of the four sites due to its large, flat developable area, proximity to the Technology Park and reasonable local road access through the Park. It is also partially brownfield land. The **Glebe Land (E41)** also benefits from proximity to the technology park although it is a sloping site which would need to be accessed via very narrow rural roads and as a result it scores correspondingly lower.
- 5.37 **Stilliters Farm (E26)** is also adjacent to the technology park allocation but would not share an access with it and is somewhat detached from other built development. **Land at Wharley Farm (E02)** is the only site to be situated away from the Technology Park, to the north of the University Campus, and this

means that the accessibility of this site is much lower due to the narrowness of University Way which is further constrained by extensive on-street parking.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E82	Land off University Way, Wharley Way	Industrial / Offices	12.0	21	Medium / Long
E26	Stilliters Farm, Moulsoe	Offices	2.1	18	Medium
E41	Glebe Land, West of Cranfield Technology Park	Offices	8.1	18	Medium
E02	Land at Wharley Farm	Industrial / Offices	21.2	18	Medium

Table 5.8: Cranfield sites ranking

## Potton

- 5.38 This settlement is a minor service centre which has relatively poor strategic road access where the Core Strategy suggests that additional allocations of 1 to 2 ha are made. Land totalling 24 ha is being promoted here although a large proportion of this is for mixed use development and therefore the quantum of available employment land is much lower.
- 5.39 **Land to the South of Sandy Road (E80)** is being promoted for use as a haulage yard and scores reasonably due to its position closer to the A1 and on a classified road. It would also be broadly suitable for small-scale B1/B8 use.
- 5.40 The remaining three sites considered around Potton are being promoted for mixed-use development with an element of small-scale employment provision as part of this. **Jay Farm (H089)** scores the highest of these. **Land off Everton Road (H054)** and **Land to the South of Horne Lane (H075)** score slightly lower because of some constraints to their development including flooding issues and concerns over the deliverability of access.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E80	Land to the South of Sandy Road	Industrial / Distribution	2.2	18	Short / Medium
H089	Jay Farm, Myers Road	Light Industrial / Office	Up to 7.3	17	Medium
H054	Land off Everton Road	Light Industrial	Up to 9.6	15	Medium
H075	Land South of Horne Lane	Light Industrial / Office	Up to 5.3	15	Medium

Table 5.9 Potton sites ranking

## Shefford

5.41 Only two sites totalling approximately 16 ha have been promoted around Shefford where the Core Strategy apports between 2 and 4 hectares of new employment land.

5.42 **Bridge Farm (H171)** is a large potential urban extension site on the edge of Shefford which could accommodate a significant employment allocation in a high profile location adjacent to the A507. However, this does depend on the site's suitability for housing and being allocated as an urban extension.

5.43 In contrast, **Wren Park (E40)** is a small existing site with a narrow access road which is somewhat remote from the Shefford urban area, and as a result scores much more poorly.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
H171	Bridge Farm	Industrial / Offices	Up to 14.6	22	Medium / Long
E40	Wren Park	Industrial	1.1	18	Short

Table 5.10 Shefford sites ranking

## Silsoe

5.44 Silsoe is a larger village adjacent to the A6 in the centre of the study area. It has been apportioned a requirement of between 1 and 2 hectares of new employment land. 32 ha of land is being promoted here although this includes mixed-use sites and the actual quantum of employment land is therefore likely to be significantly lower. The three sites being promoted here are clustered to the south of the village, close to a roundabout on the A6 which offers good strategic road access.

5.45 The **Former Cranfield University Campus, Silsoe (H106)** is a major mixed-use redevelopment opportunity, with good existing access and the potential for an employment area to be appropriately masterplanned into the development. However, it is currently unclear what quantum of employment land is proposed as part of the scheme.

5.46 **Land west of A6 (E21)** has the potential to be a reasonably high profile employment location, adjacent to the A6 dual carriageway. However, it would need a new access and the long, narrow shape of the site is not ideal for high-quality development. **Land off Barton Road (E86)** would also require a new access but scores lower due to its lower profile location away from the A6 and proximity to a residential care home.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
H106	Former Cranfield University Campus	Industrial / Offices	Up to 24.7	23	Long
E21	Agricultural Lane West of A6	Industrial / Offices	6.3	21	Medium
E86	Land off Barton Road	Industrial / Offices	0.9	20	Medium

Table 5.11 Silsoe sites ranking

### M1 Junction 13

- 5.47 No allocations are proposed for this location in the Core Strategy. However, a number of sites totalling some 119 ha are being promoted for employment development here and there is significant market demand for distribution use. These sites have therefore been grouped together. In general, all of the sites benefit from the excellent strategic road access which proximity to the junction affords but they suffer from being relatively remote from settlements and thus labour and services.
- 5.48 **Station Road, Ridgemont (E28)** already benefits from planning permission for B1/8 workshop units and a haulage yard and therefore cannot count towards the study area land requirement.
- 5.49 **Land west of Junction 13 (H023)** could potentially accommodate a major south-east urban extension of Milton Keynes including a proposed technology park of around 40 ha. This could be in a high profile location adjacent to the junction and the site is large, flat and could be suitably masterplanned. As a result, it scores very highly. However, the allocation of this area of land is dependant upon the outcome of the RSS finalisation process which will decide on the precise quantum of development apportioned to Milton Keynes and Central Bedfordshire (North) areas.
- 5.50 **Land between the A421 and Marston Gate Distribution Park (E15)** would represent a logical extension to the existing distribution park which is very attractive to the market. As development between the A421 and the existing distribution park, it would not represent an incursion into the countryside. However, this is not the case for the two sites to the north-west of the A421 – **Winter Woods Farm (E10) and Highfield Farm (E74)** – which would protrude into the countryside and require new access from the realigned A421. As a result these sites score slightly lower.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
H023	Land west of M1 Junction 13	Technology Park / Industrial / Office	Circa 40	29	Long
E15	Land between A421 and Marston Gate Distribution Park	Distribution	11.4	26	Short / Medium
E28	Station Road, Ridgemont	Distribution / Industrial	2.8	23	Short
E10	Winter Woods Farm, Salford Road	Distribution / Industrial	36.2	22	Medium
E74	Land at Highfield Farm	Distribution / Industrial	28.1	22	Medium

Table 5.12 M1 Junction 13 sites ranking

### Other Areas

- 5.51 No other areas in the study area have been given an employment land requirement. However, 20 sites are being promoted in other areas of Central Bedfordshire (North).
- 5.52 **S.A.D. Reid Transport, Beadlow (H039)** is an existing employment location being promoted for redevelopment for mixed residential and employment use and therefore cannot be considered as a new allocation.
- 5.53 Five sites are being promoted by Shuttleworth College. The two sites at **Broom Quarry (E52 and E54)** are being promoted for the relocation/expansion of the College and some ancillary B-class uses, although the quantum of land proposed for this use is very unclear at present. In general, the sites are situated well to the A1 and close to Biggleswade despite being detached from it. The current **Shuttleworth College (E55)** site is also being promoted for very small-scale development of ancillary B1/2/8 facilities. However, this and the other two farm sites – **Laundry Farm (E59)** and **King’s Hill Farm (E57)** suffer from poor local road access and distance from labour and facilities.
- 5.54 **Millbrook Proving Ground (H144)** is a large existing vehicle testing facility with an associated technology park which appears to be attractive to firms in sectors which need access to the testing facilities. It is understood from discussions with Millbrook and the Council that the facility is a market leader in its sector and is regarded as a unique economic asset for the area. However, as a location for more general employment development the proving ground is remote from major settlement and services and is not particularly well located to the strategic road network.
- 5.55 It does not appear that any employment space is now being proposed as part of residential development at **Readshill Plantation, Clophill (H032)** although the site is broadly suitable for small-scale B1 use. No further employment development is being proposed at **Land off Clophill Road (H193)** where the

landowners intentions are to secure an employment allocation for the existing sawmill use.

- 5.56 **Land Adjacent to 29 Clophill Road, Maulden (E18)** is a logical extension to an existing small industrial estate which appears to be well occupied. However, the development requires improved access which would be implemented as part of the extant consent for a separate extension to the industrial area. This permission remains unimplemented, however.
- 5.57 Two relatively small mixed use proposals have been put forward in Lower Stondon - **Land at Bedford Road (H190)** and **Land at the Rear of Station Road (H079)** which are primarily residential but contain an element of employment space. Both proposals are well located to limited labour and services at Henlow Camp but would have generally poor road access. The small size of the sites also limits the range of uses possible as part of a mixed-use scheme and the settlement appears to be very well catered for in terms of industrial space already.
- 5.58 **Land west of Henlow (H146)** is a larger mixed-use urban extension site adjacent to the village of Henlow which gives it reasonable access to labour and services. However, the site is partially constrained by flooding and a large housing allocation in this location would be contrary to the Core Strategy. This is also the case at **Land to the Rear of Church Street, Langford (E04)** and **Land at Langford Road, Henlow (H367)** where some small-scale office uses are proposed.
- 5.59 **Land at LW Vass Ltd, Springfield Farm (H118)** is partially an existing site where further residential and small-scale B1 development is proposed. However, the site is accessed down narrow country lanes and is not well located for access to labour or the strategic road network.
- 5.60 **Copeman's Field, Bye Road Close, Lidlington (E46)** scores poorly due to its very difficult road access down a narrow lane and through residential areas, its small size and profile as well as the lack of services in Lidlington.
- 5.61 Land adjacent to **Ridgeway Business Park, Blunham (E63)** scores relatively highly due to its proximity to the existing successful business park and its lack of development constraints, although it is somewhat remote from any settlement and has a relatively poor access road.

Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Score	Delivery Timescale
E52	Broom Quarry, Broom	Office / Industrial	Up to 229.0	21	Long
E54	Processing Site, Broom Quarry	Office / Industrial	Up to 14.7	21	Long
E63	Ridgeway Business Park, The Ridgeway, Blunham	Industrial	5.9	21	Short / Medium
H144	Millbrook Proving Ground	Technology Park	Up to 261.8	20	Medium / Long
H032	Land at Readshill Plantation, Back Street, Clophill	Small-scale office / industrial	12.1	20	Medium
E18	Land adjacent to 29 Clophill Road, Maulden	Office / Industrial	1.8	19	Medium / Long
H190	Land at Bedford Road, Lower Stondon	Small-scale office / industrial	Circa 1.4	18	Medium
E04	Land to the Rear of Church Street, Langford	Small-scale office / industrial	1.9	18	Medium
H193	Land off Clophill Road, Hall End, Maulden	Existing Sawmill	c. 2	17	n/a
H146	Land to the west of Henlow	Office / Industrial	Up to 21.1	16	Medium / Long
H039	S.A.D. Reid Transport, Top Farm Haulage Depot, Beadlow	Small-scale office / industrial	Up to 2.0	16	Medium
H118	Land at LW Vass Ltd, Springfield Farm, Silsoe Road, Maulden	Small-scale office / industrial	Up to 6.0	16	Medium
E57	King's Hill Farm, Old Warden Park	Office / Industrial	0.8	16	Short / Medium
H079	Land at the rear of Station Road, Lower Stondon	Small-scale office / industrial	Up to 4.1	15	Medium
E55	Shuttleworth College, Old Warden Park	Office / Industrial	5.8	14	Short / Medium
E59	Laundry Farm, Old Warden	Small-scale office / industrial	0.4	13	Short / Medium
H367	Land at Langford Road, Henlow	Small-scale office / industrial	Up to 1.7	13	Medium
E46	Copeman's Field, Bye Road Close, Lidlington	Small-scale office / industrial	0.7	13	Short / Medium

Table 5.13 Other areas site ranking

## Conclusions

- 5.62 Land assessed and available for development amounts to over 1,000 ha although much of this comprises potential mixed-use sites where the actual quantum of employment land to be delivered is unclear. As a result, the total of available employment land is likely to be much lower than this in reality.
- 5.63 All the sub-areas which have been apportioned an employment land allocation in the Core Strategy have sufficient land being promoted in order to meet their

needs, with the exception of Ampthill/Flitwick. These towns are tightly constrained by the Green Belt (which excluded several potential employment sites in the Stage 1 sifting process) and some of their needs may therefore have to be found in other parts of the study area.

5.64

In the following chapter, the assessment of the quality of these locations as potential employment sites is combined with information on market demand in order to select a portfolio of sites.

## 6.0 **Planning for Future Employment Land Needs**

6.1 This chapter sets out recommendations on how Central Bedfordshire (North) should plan for its future employment land needs. The level of demand in each sub-area in different categories of employment space is set out, drawing together the property market review in Chapter 4 and the site assessment work in Chapter 5 to recommend sites for allocation and what particular type of employment accommodation they should provide.

### **Approach**

6.2 The assessment focuses on testing the relative distribution of new allocations across settlement areas having regard to the nature of the existing commercial property market, as well as the indicative requirement identified for Central Bedfordshire (North). In doing so, it considers three key questions:

- 1 Does the quantum of land indicated for each settlement seem broadly appropriate?
- 2 What types of employment space are likely to be in most demand there, both now and in the future?
- 3 Based on 1 and 2 above, which sites perform best to meet the identified requirements and would be suitable for future allocation?

6.3 Reflecting the Council's approach to calculating future requirements, it should be emphasised that the indicative employment allocations by location contained in the Core Strategy are essentially housing-led rather than market-driven. This means that in some areas with few established employment areas, such as Northern Marston Vale, new commercial property markets are effectively to be created which may not reflect current patterns of demand.

6.4 Recommendations are also made on the types of sites/premises which have a sub-regional or even national catchment and therefore do not relate to a particular sub-area. These include potential office parks, science/technology parks and large-scale distribution uses.

6.5 The aim is to ensure that sufficient land is identified so that each sub-area achieves at least the minimum employment land allocation in accordance with the range set out in the Core Strategy. This total allocation is then 'topped-up' in order to total 77 ha by allocating land for sub-regional uses and further land in areas where the assessment indicates that demand is stronger and land is available. Finally, the recommended site portfolio for the study area is set out, with expected delivery timescales.

6.6 Over 300 ha of potential employment land supply has been assessed in total, based on sites which have been promoted by landowners and developers. Where insufficient land or no suitable sites have been put forward, this is

highlighted in this report. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to identify alternative new sites.

6.7 Consistent with the Council's approach, existing commitments and allocations have not been taken into account when assessing future requirements. However, we have highlighted where existing commitments and allocations may substantially impact on supply in certain settlement areas and therefore reduce the need for further allocations.

6.8 A significant number of the sites assessed are being promoted for mixed-use development, predominantly residential-led with a smaller proportion of employment use. Where this is the case, the site has been assessed solely on its suitability for employment use but no judgement has been passed on the site's suitability for housing. However, in many cases the delivery of employment land is likely to be reliant on the site being allocated for housing and in order not to pre-judge the selection of housing sites, the commentary under each sub-area seeks to offer options and alternatives dependent on which sites are allocated for housing.

### Overall Land Requirement Distribution

6.9 It is understood that the distribution of employment land requirements by area in the Core Strategy broadly reflects the distribution of new housing in order to ensure a sustainable balance between population and jobs in each sub-area. This distribution is shown in the table below:

Sub-Area	New allocations indicative range (ha)
<b>Biggleswade</b>	10-15
<b>Sandy</b>	5-10
<b>Amphill / Flitwick</b>	8-15
<b>Northern Marston Vale</b>	10-20
<b>Arlesley / Stotfold / Fairfield</b>	10-15
<b>Cranfield</b>	5-10
<b>Potton</b>	1-2
<b>Shefford</b>	2-4
<b>Silsoe</b>	1-2

Table 6.1: Policy CS10 indicative employment allocations by location

Source: Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy, October 2008

6.10 However, it is also important that these requirements reflect the broad pattern of demand if allocations are to attract development. Key aspects of the property market noted in chapter 4 included:

- there is reasonable demand for industrial premises across the study area, albeit that demand is strongest in the western half; in recent years, demand has primarily been for smaller scale industrial uses;

- whilst industrial demand is strongest in the west, supply is greater in the east, both of older space on established sites and newer space at Stratton Business Park;
- office demand is generally limited across the study area (due in part to limited supply) but is generally higher in the west, particularly in town centre or edge-of-centre locations;
- there is continued strong demand for larger-scale warehousing units along the M1;
- Cranfield Technology Park offers a niche product unrelated to the local needs of the study area economy which has nevertheless been reasonably successful in attracting inward investment; and
- some potential exists to stimulate the office market through a new business park along the A1.

6.11

Another measure of demand in different locations is the take-up of employment land in recent years, as shown in Figure 4 below.

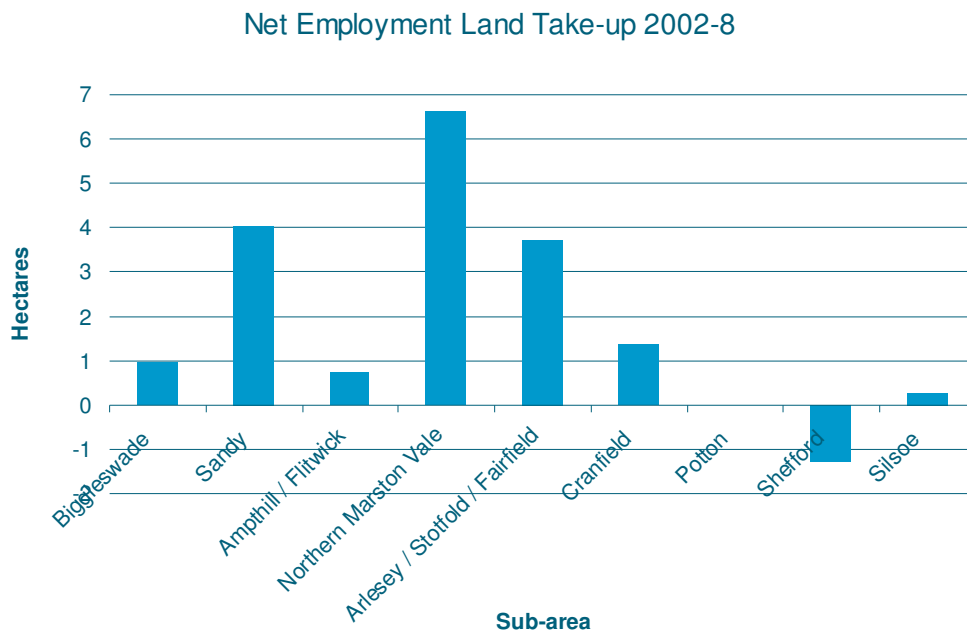


Figure 4: Net Employment Land Take-up by Sub-area 2002-8

Source: Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy

6.12

The annual average take-up rate implied by the Core Strategy allocations (assumed to be from 2010 to 2026) can also be compared with these past take-up rates to test whether the allocations are realistic in the light of past trends, as shown in Table 6.2.

Sub-Area	Minimum Allocation (ha p.a.)	Maximum Allocation (ha p.a.)	Take-up (2002-2008) (ha p.a.)
<b>Biggleswade</b>	0.63	0.94	0.16
<b>Sandy</b>	0.31	0.63	0.67
<b>Ampthill / Flitwick</b>	0.5	0.94	0.12
<b>Northern Marston Vale</b>	0.63	1.25	1.11
<b>Arlesley / Stotfold / Fairfield</b>	0.63	0.94	0.62
<b>Cranfield</b>	0.31	0.63	0.23
<b>Potton</b>	0.06	0.13	0
<b>Shefford</b>	0.13	0.25	-0.21
<b>Silsoe</b>	0.06	0.13	0.05

Table 6.2 Average annual take up compared with Core Strategy indicative allocations

- 6.13 However, these take-up figures are strongly affected by the available land supply. For example, although take-up in Ampthill / Flitwick was very low at just 0.74 ha p.a. between 2002 and 2008, this was in large part due to the reportedly constrained land supply in these towns, and does not reflect the high levels of demand here. Also, the approach of the Core Strategy is to allocate new employment land to match areas of planned housing growth and this could mean creating commercial property markets in places where none previously existed. This means that in this case, past take-up rates are only a limited guide to the distribution of demand across the study area.
- 6.14 However, the indicative land allocations were also considered in the light of consultation with commercial property agents. This aimed to assess at which end of the indicative range for employment land allocations set out in the Core Strategy was realistically deliverable in market terms, based on existing levels of demand, rather than whether a significantly higher or lower figure should be applied to each settlement area.
- 6.15 Within the framework laid down by the Core Strategy, the levels of land allocation **Biggleswade** (10 – 15 ha), **Sandy** (5 – 10 ha) and **Potton** (1 – 2 ha) appear broadly appropriate given the relative sizes of these settlements and the fact that Biggleswade is the only one of these centres which has any significant potential to develop an office market.
- 6.16 The land requirement for **Arlesley / Fairfield / Stotfold** (10 – 15 ha) is the same as that for Biggleswade. This appears to be quite high on the basis that there are no existing large-scale employment areas in these settlements and it may therefore be more difficult to attract speculative development. In addition, this area is unlikely to be as attractive for office development as Biggleswade due to the lack of services and a significant town centre in the area. However, this may change in future as a result of Core Strategy proposals for a greater level of service provision in Stotfold and Arlesley, in particular, for new retail facilities, which have the potential to increase the attractiveness of the area.
- 6.17 Given that **Cranfield** (5 – 10 ha) provides a niche offer (high-technology offices with little demand or need for industrial space) and given that there is nearly 25

ha of outstanding allocated land here, this allocation also appears to be relatively high.

- 6.18 The allocation for the **Northern Marston Vale** gives a wider range (10 – 20 ha) than for most other settlement areas. This appears justified reflecting that housing delivery in this area relies mainly on the Wixams new settlement where there is some uncertainty over delivery timescales. Delivery of this quantum of land is highly aspirational given that there are few established employment areas here at present and development is most likely to be speculative in nature. However, it may be the case that the high level of development and forecast population and housing growth in this area provides a significant boost to demand for employment space. The strategy of providing appropriate allocations will help ensure that new demand for space arising from population growth can be retained within the area. If the ‘soft commitment’ of the 12 ha Science Park at NIRAH is included as part of the 10 – 20 ha allocation, this quantum appears appropriate. However, the proposed science research park would most likely provide very specialist employment which would be drawn from a wide sub-regional or even regional catchment. On this basis it is unlikely to meet the local employment needs of the Northern Marston Vale and its delivery is highly uncertain, and it has therefore been considered separate to the strategic requirement for Central Bedfordshire (North) as a whole. On this basis, the level of allocation for the Northern Marston Vale appears to be too high given the lack of established market demand in the area, the significant employment land provision (16 ha) to be provided in Bedford Borough as part of the Wixams new settlement, other new strategic employment sites likely to be allocated by Bedford BC in the Northern Marston Vale and the committed 3 ha of land at Land East of Bedford Road, Marston Moretaine.
- 6.19 The quantum of land apportioned to **Amphill / Flitwick** (10 – 15 ha) is similar to that of Biggleswade and Arlesey / Stotfold / Fairfield despite the fact that agents report demand is strongest here, and land supply has been relatively constrained in the past. However, the delivery of significantly more land is likely to require Green Belt boundaries to be revised. If suitable sites exist, a higher allocation would be justified here.
- 6.20 The two remaining areas with allocations are **Shefford** (2 – 4 ha) and **Silsoe** (1 – 2 ha). Given that these are small, rural settlements with some existing employment provision, these broad quantum appear appropriate when compared to other areas.
- 6.21 The next section includes comments on the potential mix of the employment uses within the settlement areas.

## Recommended Site Portfolio by Settlement Area

### Biggleswade

- 6.22 Existing demand for employment space in Biggleswade is overwhelmingly industrial in nature, and this is expected to remain the case in future. As a result, the substantial majority of the suggested 10 to 15 ha apportioned to the settlement should be for this use.
- 6.23 The office market in Biggleswade and indeed the whole of the A1 corridor is currently very limited and locally generated demand is not expected to grow significantly in the future. However, some office supply is important in allowing the growth of indigenous firms and diversifying the local economy. Also, as Biggleswade is the study area's largest town, it has the greatest potential, of all the settlements in the eastern half of the study area, to accommodate a larger office market. An allocation of up to about 2 ha for offices is therefore considered appropriate here.
- 6.24 The most attractive product for the market is likely to be purpose-built offices within walking distance of the train station and town centre. However, no sites currently being promoted for employment use have these characteristics. Commercial property agents report that offices provided as part of an industrial scheme, and accessed through it, are likely to be far less attractive to the market, particularly in a marginal office market location.
- 6.25 One option would be to allocate a separate office site in the town, which would also have the added advantage of potentially helping to improve the overall deliverability of employment land in Biggleswade as the supply would come from two separate sites. If this approach was taken, the site closest to the town centre, and the only one which is actually being promoted for office use which does not represent a major incursion into the countryside is Land at Dunton Lane (E69). The development being suggested by the promoter would be similar to the Doolittle Mill scheme in Ampthill. This site (2.6 ha) is a good candidate for allocation for offices despite the fact that it performs less well than some other sites in Biggleswade.
- 6.26 However, the emerging Biggleswade town centre strategy and masterplan may provide opportunities to identify sites for office development in the town centre which would likely be attractive to the market. As a result no office site has been recommended for allocation at this time.
- 6.27 For industrial sites, land at Stratton Farm (E67 and E11 – these sites overlap) is the highest performing of the potential industrial sites and represents a natural extension to the existing Stratton Park and would therefore benefit from its market profile and good road access. It is therefore recommended that some 15 ha of land is allocated here for industrial uses, leaving scope for further land to be added in this area through the identification of town centre

office sites without exceeding the Core Strategy allocation range. This parcel of land should allow for an extension of the existing Business Park via an extension of Pegasus Drive.

### **Sandy**

- 6.28 As with Biggleswade, Sandy's commercial property market is primarily industrial in nature with very limited office provision. This is reflected in the fact that no sites for office use were promoted here (other than those which were already employment sites). As Sandy is a smaller town, it also appears to have less potential to develop an office market than its larger neighbour, although similar encouragement should be given to the provision of small-scale town centre space, perhaps within mixed use schemes. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that all of Sandy's 5 to 10 ha requirement should be met through industrial development. The highest scoring site here is Land East of Middlefield Road and North of Beamish Close (E38). Whilst it would be preferable in delivery terms to allocate more than one site here, all other potential sites scored significantly lower. It is therefore recommended that an allocation of approximately 8 ha at site E38 is made. This quantum is in the middle of the indicated range and reflects the need to meet the overall 77 ha requirement across Central Bedfordshire (North) and the fact that Sandy has a relatively buoyant employment land and premises market in comparison to other sub-areas with available land which were apportioned a quantum of land at the bottom of their suggested range (Northern Marston Vale, Arlesey/Stotfold/Fairfield, Cranfield, Potton, Shefford). The suggested allocation would comprise the land closest to the existing industrial estate and would be for general B-class development.

### **Amphill / Flitwick**

- 6.29 In this settlement area, not enough land reached the Stage 3 assessment process to meet the minimum allocation made in the Core Strategy, which identifies a level of 8 to 15 ha. This was, in part, due to the significant amount of land being promoted here that falls within the Green Belt and was therefore excluded at Stage 1 as no review of the Green Belt boundaries is proposed. Two further sites to the south of Amphill (H052 and H083/084) which are currently being promoted for housing were assessed for their potential as employment sites. However, it is now understood that these sites are likely to be allocated for housing and as a result are no longer being considered for employment use by the Council.
- 6.30 As a result, all of the potential employment sites should be considered for allocation, comprising phases 1 and 2 of Doolittle Mill (E68 and E64) and 0.6 ha of land as part of a potential urban extension at Land off Steppingley Road (E62).

- 6.31 Demand for both offices and small/medium-sized industrial premises is high in this area and agents report that the shortage of good quality industrial units is particularly acute, in part reflecting the constrained land supply in recent years. As a result, provision should ideally be made for both types of use, but with the majority being for industrial. Doolittle Mill Phase 1 (E64) (1 ha) is being promoted for offices and scores reasonably well and would therefore be suitable for allocation.
- 6.32 The allocation of Doolittle Mill Phase 2 (E62) could be subject to a more open B1/2/8 allocation in order to allow flexibility, particularly given that the delivery of this site is likely to be over a longer time-scale, reflecting that it forms part of a large-scale urban extension scheme (H077). However, the Froghall Road railway bridge which spans the site's main access to the A507 could constrain the site's uses to small-scale B1. One option for increasing land supply at Ampthill / Flitwick is to explore the possibility of a higher proportion of this urban extension site being used for employment use. However, this is reliant on H077 being allocated for a mainly housing led urban extension of Flitwick.
- 6.33 Land at Flitwick Railway station (H113) was also assessed, despite the fact that it is an existing employment location. The site scores reasonably well and provides valuable lower-cost industrial space. Its potential partial loss to other non-B class uses (such as housing and retail), as is proposed, is likely to cause a further shortage of employment land in this sub-area. However, as noted earlier, this site and the wider town centre redevelopment proposals have the potential to deliver some office provision.
- 6.34 Due to the shortage of potential employment land within the settlement area, a potential solution is to look at land beyond the confines of Ampthill / Flitwick in order to meet its needs. One possibility is the village of Maulden which lies in close proximity to Ampthill / Flitwick and where there are several sites being promoted for employment use. However, the market view is that Ampthill / Flitwick is a significantly preferable industrial location to Maulden. This is primarily due to the importance of labour accessibility to industrial occupiers, many of whose workers either walk or cycle to work. Despite its relative proximity to Ampthill / Flitwick, Maulden is perceived to be a rural settlement with poor public transport accessibility and without access to a significant labour force. Nonetheless, some small-scale increase in provision here could be beneficial in attracting occupiers less concerned with the factors noted above.
- 6.35 The highest scoring site within Maulden is Land Adjacent to 29 Clophill Road (E18) which extends to 1.8 ha and is adjacent to an established industrial area. This site is therefore recommended for allocation, counting towards the Ampthill / Flitwick allocation.

### **Northern Marston Vale**

- 6.36 This area contains two rather unique sites – NIRAH and Millbrook Proving Ground – which have highly specialised uses, namely a science research park into aquatic habitats and a vehicle and component testing-based Technology Park. Both are important to generating employment but given their highly specialised nature are likely to attract inward investment rather than predominantly catering for indigenous firms. As a result these sites are dealt with further below in the strategic sites section.
- 6.37 As regards local employment needs met by more generic B-class development, the allocation of a further 10 to 20 ha in this settlement area is likely to lead to a large oversupply of employment land given the scale of existing commitments, likely future commitments in Bedford Borough and the lack of established market demand. However, if the Council decides to proceed with an allocation of this scale to meet the Core Strategy requirements, the highest scoring site by some margin is Land at Moreteyne Farm, Marston Moretaine (E09a) which occupies a particularly strategic position adjacent to the new alignment of the dualled A421. In the order of 10 ha of land could be provided here, either as a stand-alone employment site to accommodate office, industrial and some small-scale distribution uses or as part of a wider mixed-use allocation. At the present time, it appears unlikely that levels of market of demand would justify any further allocations in this area.

### **Arlesey / Stotfold / Fairfield**

- 6.38 The commercial property market in this area is currently small-scale and industrial in nature, predominantly comprising a number of smaller industrial estates. However, due to the proposed scale of housing growth, the Core Strategy allocates between 10 and 15 ha of land requirement here. The development of an office market should be encouraged here but is only likely to be small-scale in nature with the rest of the land being used for industrial.
- 6.39 Site E25 (Pig Development Unit, Fairfield, 4 ha) was granted planning permission in for B-class development in September 2008, after the calculation of the 77 ha overall requirement for Central Bedfordshire (North) had been made. As a result, this site can count towards the requirement, and realistically must form part of the recommended site portfolio as it has extant consent. Taking this into account, there is a remaining 6 to 11 ha of land to be allocated in this area.
- 6.40 The highest scoring site in the area is E12a (Land to the East of Arlesey). This large urban extension site offers the prospect of a large, high profile employment development with excellent road access, and in close proximity to a train station. There would appear to be some advantages to focussing potential new employment development on a single site where a sufficient critical mass and high market profile can be achieved. However, it should be noted that due to the site's size and need for new infrastructure, its

development is likely to be a long-term process but this is not necessarily problematic due to low levels of existing demand in the area.

- 6.41 As a result it is recommended that a 6 ha allocation should be made as part of the urban extension at E12a. This would have potential for a mix of offices and light industry, but is reliant on the site being allocated as a residential-led urban extension to Arlesey as it would function less well as a stand-alone employment site.
- 6.42 Potential has also been identified to provide an allocation for a strategic sub-regional 'A1 corridor' office park which would fall within this area. This would not meet local needs *per se*, but would have the effect of adding a further 5ha to the allocated range for this settlement area. This is considered in more detail at paragraph 6.57 below.

### **Cranfield**

- 6.43 Demand at Cranfield is overwhelmingly for offices due to the nature of the type of space (primarily Cranfield University Technology Park) and the fact that its proximity to Milton Keynes means that the site caters for some over-spill general office demand. As mentioned previously, the large amount of outstanding allocated land at the Technology Park means that it seems more appropriate to allocate land here at the lower end of the 5 – 10 ha range indicated in the Core Strategy.
- 6.44 The highest scoring site at Cranfield is E82 (Land off University Way) and could accommodate a 5 ha allocation, either as a stand-alone site or as part of the wider 12 ha mixed-use scheme currently being proposed by the site's owners.

### **Potton**

- 6.45 The commercial property market in Potton is extremely limited at present, although the great majority of demand is for industrial premises. As this is a marginal employment land location, the allocation of 1 – 2 ha should be for B-class development generally to provide greater flexibility.
- 6.46 The highest performing site (E80 – Land to the South of Sandy Road) is being promoted for a haulage yard. This suggests limited potential of this site to deliver a range of B-class development. The remaining three sites are all being promoted for mixed-use development and therefore their allocation for employment relies upon their suitability for housing, which has not yet been assessed. This would have the potential to affect their scoring.
- 6.47 The next highest scoring site is H089 (Jay Farm, Myers Road). However, the allocation of this site would set a precedent for development north of Everton Road and would significantly extend the settlement boundary northwards and therefore would appear to be less desirable for allocation.

- 6.48 The northern portion of H054 is perhaps the most deliverable site in the area, as its promoters have worked-up a potential industrial scheme which is unlikely to rely on the delivery of associated housing. It would however be detached from the existing village. H075 offers an alternative and achieves the same score. However, this relies upon this site being combined with the site adjacent to it to the west (currently being promoted for housing) so that appropriate access can be provided. On balance, either site would be an appropriate allocation which could provide a quantum of land to satisfy Potton's employment land requirements. Given the small scale of the requirements (1 – 2 ha) the allocation should be focussed on one or other of these sites.

### **Shefford**

- 6.49 Shefford's commercial property market is also primarily industrial although as this is a marginal location for employment development, allocations should be for open B-class development to enhance their viability and deliverability. The Core Strategy suggests an allocation of 2 – 4 ha here.
- 6.50 The only significant site being promoted here which could meet the requirement is H171 (Bridge Farm) which would be a mixed-use urban extension. Thus, whilst this site scores highly, employment provision depends on the site being allocated for housing. If this site is not allocated, then there is insufficient land being promoted in Shefford for it to meet the Core Strategy requirement. On this basis, 2 ha of land should be provisionally allocated as part of this urban extension.

### **Silsoe**

- 6.51 The existing commercial property stock in Silsoe is a mixture of office and light industrial provision, primarily at Wrest Park. Agents report that part of the attraction for office occupiers here is the unique heritage offer of Wrest Park and that any residual demand is likely to be primarily industrial in nature.
- 6.52 The highest scoring site in Silsoe is H106 (the former Cranfield University Campus) and, given that support has been given to a mixed-use redevelopment of the site in the draft Core Strategy, this is the best option for an employment allocation at the village. This should comprise 1 to 2 ha of land as part of the redevelopment and is likely to be primarily industrial in nature, although the designation should be left as open B-class so as not to hinder delivery of some development.

### **Rural Areas**

- 6.53 No allocations have been made in the draft Core Strategy for the rural areas of the study area outside of the settlement areas. However, agents report that demand in the area is relatively high, particularly for more affordable industrial and office space in converted agricultural buildings. Continued support (similar

to that provided by the former Mid Beds Local Plan policies CS10 and CS15) should therefore be given to allow small-scale conversions of rural buildings to provide new premises, but no specific allocations are needed.

- 6.54 As mentioned above, there is some limited potential for the amount of land allocated at Maulden to be increased in order to cater for the (primarily industrial) land needs of Ampthill and Flitwick which have constrained land supplies. The highest scoring site in Maulden is Land adjacent to 29 Clophill Road (E18) which would comprise an extension to an existing successful industrial estate extending to almost 2 ha, and it is recommended that this site is therefore allocated.

### **Sub-regional site/property requirements**

- 6.55 These requirements arise from types of property/sites which have wider sub-regional market catchments. They have been identified as either gaps in existing provision which could contribute to economic development or types of space for which there is particular demand within the area. Unlike the allocations by sub-areas which are primarily designed to meet local business and employment needs, these types of site meet a wider demand and to be successful need to be located in an appropriate location which is able to serve a wider catchment.

### **NIRAH**

- 6.56 The NIRAH aquatic research site could potentially make a unique contribution to the economy of the study area and region as a whole due to its research-intensive specialist use. However, a legal dispute between the site's owners and NIRAH mean that the site's deliverability is currently highly uncertain. As a result, it would be inappropriate to count the site towards the 77 ha requirement and thus it has been left as a reserve/specialist site to be considered if the dispute is resolved in favour of NIRAH. However, it should be noted that the site does not score particularly highly for general employment use and thus if NIRAH does not come forward, the site should not be considered as a general employment allocation.

### **Millbrook Proving Ground**

- 6.57 As mentioned in the previous chapter, we understand that the proving ground (H144) is a unique economic asset within Central Bedfordshire (North) and is an attractive location for firms who are involved in designing and developing vehicles and their components. This makes it an important site for national and international inward investment in these specialist sectors and Millbrook advise that there is some evidence of excess demand for space at the site. Further development and expansion of the technology park should be encouraged and supported. However, as a site for more general employment development the site does not score well in comparison with its peers. As the site was formerly

classified as a key employment site in the Mid Beds Local Plan, no further allocation is likely to be necessary here.

### **A1 Corridor Business Park**

- 6.58 As highlighted in chapter 4, the potential for an office park in the “A1 corridor” has been identified through consultation with agents as part of this study and earlier work on the ELR. It should be emphasised that such an allocation is an aspirational policy choice. There is no proven demand for such a product and encouraging speculative development to it may be difficult. However, its attraction lies in its potential to attract inward investment and bring a number of highly-skilled jobs to the area. In order to be successful such a development would require a dedicated site, access and branding rather than being an extension to an existing mainly industrial estate such as Stratton Business Park. This is because it would require a high profile to stimulate investor and occupier interest.
- 6.59 It is considered that a site of around 5 ha would be appropriate for this use which, assuming a plot ratio of up to 0.4, would yield up to 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace. This would be a modest sized business park, but a large quantum of floorspace in the context of the existing stock of commercial office space in Central Bedfordshire (North) as a whole, which currently stands at around 80,000 m<sup>2</sup>. However, this would allow flexibility for any medium to large-scale office relocations as well as some on-site facilities and potentially complementary uses such as a hotel/catering.
- 6.60 Three sites in the A1 corridor were considered to have sufficient size, profile, road access and access to labour in order to accommodate such a use, namely E08 (Land at Holme Green Farm, Biggleswade), E05a (Land West of A1, Stotfold) and E12a (Land to the East of Arlesey). All three sites score relatively highly but have some key differences and disadvantages. E08 would be separated from Biggleswade by the A1, and could represent a precedent for further development to the west of the A1. Furthermore, it may be difficult to defend a 5 ha allocation here against further expansion, once allocated. E05a does not have these disadvantages but would have relatively poor access with a ‘left-in, left-out’ arrangement onto the A507, and the site would be slightly detached from the urban area of Stotfold. In addition, both of these sites have relatively poor access to public transport.
- 6.61 E12a however, is within walking distance of Arlesey train station with a good service to London and this is likely to be an important factor for some potential occupiers. The site would also be integrated into the urban form of Arlesey if the wider site were to be allocated for an urban extension. Despite the fact that it lies on the A507 rather than the A1, it could potentially have good profile and visibility if it was located adjacent to the road. These factors make E12a the preferred location for a 5 ha business park allocation, if one is to be made. In addition, there may be benefits in combining the allocation of the business park

with a more general employment area to provide critical mass and increase market profile, with appropriate masterplanning and design standards to ensure the two types of employment use complement each other. Providing for a strategic business park development at site E12a could thereby combine with the 10ha general employment allocation already proposed at this location, and fall within the 15ha upper employment land requirement for identified for the Stotfield / Arlesey / Fairfield sub-area.

### **Large-scale Distribution Uses**

- 6.62 Agents report strong demand for distribution uses close to M1 Junction 13, which is now an established location for large-scale warehousing. However, the location is removed from major settlements and the draft Core Strategy makes no allocation here. There is the potential to attract inward investment and if the Council were to consider making an allocation here, the highest scoring site (E15 – Land between A421 and Marston Gate Distribution Park) could provide an extension to the existing fully occupied Marston Gate Distribution Park. However, it should be emphasized that the allocation of land for strategic distribution uses is a policy choice which will depend on the Council's economic development strategy and aspirations as well as the level of potential development competition from allocations in Luton and South Bedfordshire.
- 6.63 The Marston Gate site lies between the existing Distribution Park and the A421, and so would not represent an incursion into the countryside. The allocation of this 11.4 ha site would therefore mean that Central Bedfordshire (North) could attract a further share of the warehousing market which would provide a number of jobs within close proximity to areas of housing growth such as the Northern Marston Vale, Ampthill / Flitwick (where there is insufficient land in any case) and the potential urban extension to the south-east of Milton Keynes. In view of the type and scale of employment use proposed for the site, it is likely that the full site area would be required and is therefore recommended for allocation. In addition, a tradition of strong demand for distribution uses in the area near the M1 and the lack of constraints on this site should make it highly deliverable to meet any arising demand in the short to medium term.

### **Expansion of Milton Keynes**

- 6.64 Proposed changes to the South East Plan indicate that provision should be made within the Milton Keynes Growth Area for an additional 49,950 dwellings over the period 2006-2026. In total 10,400 dwellings are proposed for the urban extension south-east of the city with at least 4,800 within Milton Keynes' administrative area. This would leave 5,600 dwellings to be found in Mid Bedfordshire subject to the inclusion of this provision in the revision to the East of England Plan (RSS14). However, development here goes beyond the scope of the South East Plan and cannot contribute towards the target for housing in the South East as it is outside the region. The Core Strategy identifies 2,000

dwellings in Central Bedfordshire (North) as part of the Milton Keynes South East Strategic Development Area. As a result, the status of site H023/E45, which would accommodate this urban extension, is currently unclear in policy terms.

- 6.65 However, if a major urban extension were to be created on this site the scale of housing growth is likely to be such that some employment provision would be highly desirable. The proposals put forward by the consortium promoting the land include approximately 40 ha of employment land, primarily intended to be a science / technology park. The view of commercial property market agents is that, if this were to be situated close to Junction 13 of the M1 at the eastern end of the site, it could be a highly desirable location for these uses. However, such a development would clearly compete strongly with Cranfield Technology Park and is likely to significantly reduce demand for space there due to the much better road accessibility of site H023.
- 6.66 Given the uncertainty surrounding this site, it would be inappropriate to include it in the portfolio of sites at this stage, especially as the quantum of employment land is likely to be heavily influenced by the scale of housing development in the location.

### **Conclusions**

- 6.67 The overall recommended portfolio of sites to meet future needs, along with expected delivery timescales is set out in Table 6.3 below.
- 6.68 In total 77 ha of land is proposed for allocation of which broadly 16 ha is estimated to be deliverable in a short/medium timescale (up to 10 years), 39 ha is medium-term (circa 10 years), 14 ha medium/long (up to 15 years) and 8 ha long-term (up to 20 years).

Core Strategy allocation (ha)	Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Delivery Timescale
<b>Biggleswade</b>					
10 - 15	E67/E11	Land at Stratton Farm, Biggleswade	Industrial	15.0	Medium
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Sandy</b>					
5 - 10	E38	Land east of Middlefield Road and north of Beamish Close, Sandy	Industrial	8.0	Medium
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8.0</b>
<b>Amphill / Flitwick</b>					
8 - 15	E62 *	Land off Steppingley Road	Office / Industrial	0.6	Long
	E64	Doolittle Mill, Phase 2	Office	1.0	Short / Medium
	E68	Doolittle Mill Phase 1	Office / Industrial	4.7	Medium
	E18	Land adjacent to 29 Clophill Road	Industrial	1.8	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>Northern Marston Vale</b>					
10 - 20	E09a	Land at Moreteyne Farm, Marston Moretaine	Office / Industrial / Distribution	10.0	Medium
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Arlesey / Stotfold / Fairfield</b>					
10 - 15	E12a *	Land to East of Arlesey	Offices / Industrial	6.0	Long
	E25	Pig Development Unit	Office / Industrial	4.0	Short
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Cranfield</b>					
5 - 10	E82	Land off University Way, Cranfield	Offices / industrial	5.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Potton</b>					
1 - 2	H089 *	Jay Farm, Myers Road	Offices / Industrial	1.6	Medium
	or				
	H075	Land South of Horne Lane	Office / Industrial	1.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1.0 or 1.6</b>
<b>Shefford</b>					
2 - 4	H171 *	Bridge Farm, Shefford	Offices / Industrial	2.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Silsoe</b>					
1 - 2	H106 *	Cranfield University, Silsoe	Offices / Industrial	1.6	Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Strategic</b>					
n/a	E15	Land between A421 & Marston Gate Distribution Park, Brogborough	Distribution	11.4	Short / Medium
	E12a *	Land to East of Arlesey	Office Park	5.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>16.4</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>77 ha</b>	
<b>Specialist/Reserve Site</b>					
	E16	NIRAH	Science Research Park	12.0	Medium

Table 6.3 Proposed Employment Site Portfolio \* Note: part of mixed-use developments

## 7.0 Additional Sites

7.1 This chapter reviews a number of existing and allocated sites within Central Bedfordshire (North) which have been assessed at the request of the Council. The chapter forms a 'stand-alone' piece of work which does not affect the outcomes of the stage 3 ELR process. It therefore does not seek to compare the sites assessed here with other potential options for development covered in the other chapters.

7.2 However, it does provide evidence on the relative quality of a number of existing, partially developed and undeveloped sites which were not previously assessed by SQW, thus completing the evidence base on sites.

7.3 In total 13 sites have been assessed as part of this process, namely:

- Land at Arlesey Brickworks, Arlesey;
- Phases 1,2 & 3, Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade;
- Phase 4, Stratton Park, Biggleswade;
- Cranfield Technology Park (Developed Area);
- Cranfield Technology Park (Undeveloped Area);
- Robinson's Depot and Land of Steppingley Road, Flitwick;
- Doolittle Mill, Flitwick;
- Doolittle Yard, Flitwick;
- Prologis Park, Brogborough;
- Land east of Bedford Road, Marston Moretaine;
- ARC Progress / Beckerings Park, Ridgemont;
- ARC Progress / Bury Farm, Mill Lane, Stotfold; and
- Land South of Stotfold, Stotfold;

7.4 An assessment was made on each site's suitability for employment use, against the same criteria used for the stage 3 assessments of potential future employment sites. These can be found in chapter 5 of the main report and reflect those in the ODPM Guidance on Employment Land Reviews.

7.5 It should be noted however, that the scoring process in itself does not necessarily provide a complete picture of a site's role within the local economy and a broader commentary is therefore provided below for each site, in order to supplement the formal scoring exercise. A table summarising site score and developable area is contained at the end of summary in Table 28.

### Site assessments

7.6 **Land at Arlesey Brickworks** (2.0 ha) is a large area of open storage with some small light industrial units and is currently fully utilised. It suffers from difficult road access, although its location away from any conflicting uses means that it is likely to remain attractive for storage and bad-neighbour uses. The site itself could easily be intensified for further industrial use, but given access

constraints its continued use for storage may be the most suitable in both planning and market terms. Overall, this site scores relatively poorly but is suitable for continued storage and bad-neighbour uses.

- 7.7 **Phase 1, 2 & 3 Stratton Business Park** (34.9 ha) comprises the vast majority of the existing purpose-built Business Park and is fully developed except for two vacant plots, one of which has extant planning permission. Although it is somewhat removed from local services, the location has excellent road access, being adjacent to the A1, and is clearly attractive to the industrial and distribution market with relatively low levels of vacancy. As an almost fully developed allocated key employment site, with limited potential for intensification, future development is likely to focus on the redevelopment and sub-division of larger industrial units. Overall, this is an excellent employment location which scores highly against the criteria.
- 7.8 **Phase 4 Stratton Business Park** (20.0 ha) comprises an extension to the existing park, of which one plot has now been developed for a distribution centre. When fully developed the site will benefit from similarly good road access and is likely to be attractive to the market in similar sectors to the main park – primarily factories, industrial units and distribution warehouses. As with the previous site, this is an excellent employment location which scores highly against the criteria.
- 7.9 **Cranfield Technology Park** (35.2 ha in total) comprises a completed area including a number of office premises, a Nissan research centre and a Cranfield Technology Innovation centre, and a large undeveloped area which is currently part of the airfield. In general the technology park suffers from being relatively remote, both from services and the strategic road network, although its association with the University does enhance its market attractiveness. Levels of vacancy are currently relatively low, although it is concentrated in newer units which could indicate that the market for space in this location is approaching saturation, which clearly has implications for the development of further space. Overall, both parts of the site are reasonably good quality employment sites, albeit that the undeveloped portion scores lower due to uncertainty over there being sufficient market demand and the future operational requirements of the airfield affecting deliverability.
- 7.10 **Robinson's Depot and Land of Steppingley Road, Flitwick** (1.7 ha) lies adjacent to the town's railway station and is a fully developed site comprising industrial premises and surface car parking. The entire area is proposed for redevelopment in the Local Plan, although it is likely that the only employment component would be the provision of some office premises. Road access to the site is currently difficult due to its town centre location but its public transport accessibility and access to labour and services would make it a good location for offices. However, it is understood that deliverability of the site could be made more difficult by multiple land ownerships. Overall, this is a reasonable employment location which is significantly more suited to office rather than industrial use.

- 7.11 **Doolittle Mill** (1.3 ha) and **Doolittle Yard** (0.7 ha) are similar small office developments which lie between Ampthill and Flitwick and benefit from reasonable road access via the A507 and good access to labour. There are few services in the vicinity, although both Ampthill and Flitwick town centres are within 2-3 km. Occupancy levels are very high on both sites and the units are attractive to the market. Both sites are good quality employment sites which score reasonably highly against the criteria, although Doolittle Yard achieves a slightly higher score on account of its higher level of parking provision. There is little potential for further development / intensification on either of the sites.
- 7.12 **Prologis Park, Brogborough** (31 ha) is a large distribution warehouse site adjacent to the M1. Despite its excellent road access, the site suffers slightly from its remoteness from services and labour, albeit that these are less important considerations for this type of use. The units are fully occupied and agents report that there is continued demand for this type of space, even in the current recessionary economic climate. Overall, this is a good quality employment site.
- 7.13 **Land East of Bedford Road, Marston Moretaine** is a large urban extension site allocated for 380 houses and 3 ha of employment land, the delivery of which is subject to a section 106 agreement. Road access is not ideal for industrial uses as it is necessary to navigate narrow urban roads through the village in order to reach the A421. It will therefore be most suitable for small-scale B1 uses and will benefit from good access to labour and to a limited range of services in Marston Moretaine. Market demand is highly uncertain given the untested nature of the location for commercial property and as a result the site only scores moderately against the site assessment criteria.
- 7.14 Central Bedfordshire Council runs two small office facilities known as ARC Progress, one at **Beckerings Park** in the M1 corridor and another at **Bury Farm, Mill Lane, Stotfold** in the A1 corridor. Both offer high quality premises in converted agricultural or mill buildings and appear to be fully occupied and attractive to the market. The Beckerings Park site suffers slightly due to its remoteness from any settlement or services whereas the Stotfold site lies within the town and consequently has much better access to labour and public transport. As a result both are good quality employment sites which score reasonably well against the site assessment criteria, although the Stotfold premises are considered to be a slightly better location overall.
- 7.15 **Land South of Stotfold** is another large urban extension with an employment component of approximately 2.3 ha. Construction has recently commenced on the housing element of the scheme. It has excellent road access due to the proximity of the A1 and its location adjacent to the village means that it will have good access to labour, a range of public transport and a limited range of other services. Overall this is a good quality site which scores very well against the site assessment criteria although its residential setting means that the employment area is only likely to be suitable for smaller-scale B1 premises.

Site Name	Ref.	Developed Area (ha)	Area with extant permission (ha)	Allocated area without permission (ha)	Site Score
Land at Arlesey Brickworks	K1	2.0	-	-	18
Phase 1, 2 & 3, Stratton Business Park	K2	33.5	0.4	1.0	26
Phase 4 Stratton Business Park	K3	3.0	-	17.2	26
Cranfield Technology Park (developed)	K4	14.3	2.9	-	23
Cranfield Technology Park (undeveloped)	K5	-	-	18.0	20
Robinson's Depot and Land off Steppingley Road, Flitwick	K6	1.7	-	-	21
Doolittle Mill, Flitwick	K7	1.3	-	-	22
Doolittle Yard, Flitwick	K8	0.7	-	-	23
Prologis Park, Brogborough	K9	31.0	-	-	26
Land East of Bedford Road, Marston Moretaine	K10	-	-	3.0	20
ARC Progress / Beckerings Park, Ridgemont	K11	0.6	-	-	20
ARC Progress / Bury Farm, Mill Lane, Stotfold	K12	0.5	-	-	23
Land South of Stotfold	K13	-	2.3	-	27

Table 7.1 Site Assessment Summary

## Conclusions

7.16

This chapter has assessed a number of developed and undeveloped key employment sites which have not been covered elsewhere in the ELR evidence base. Amongst the sites assessed here there is about 6 ha of undeveloped land with extant planning permission and 39 ha which is allocated but without permission, most of which is located at Cranfield Technology Park and Stratton Business Park, Phase 4. Overall, all of the sites are assessed are of at least average quality and most are good or excellent quality employment sites.

## 8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 This report represents the completion of the Employment Land Review for Central Bedfordshire (North) as the third part of a three stage process. It builds upon the previously completed stage one work which comprised a broad assessment of 166 sites and more detailed analysis of 50 of those sites by SQW which included analysis of the commercial property market. The Council's Stage Two work quantified future employment land needs by devising a number of scenarios that respond to the policy objective to achieve alignment with regional housing numbers implied for the Central Bedfordshire (North) area. This process set aside undeveloped allocated employment sites and existing commitments (totalling about 57 ha) in calculating the 77 ha future land requirement in order to encourage employment growth if the Core Strategy job targets are to be achieved in line with planned housing growth, as well as to reduce the existing high levels of out-commuting from the area. This 77 ha requirement is broken down by settlement area in the Core Strategy, and this study has sought to work within both these overall and settlement area requirement figures.
- 8.2 A high-level review of the existing stock of employment space and recent development trends in Central Bedfordshire (North) was undertaken as part of this study and found that the study area currently has a relatively low level of employment space compared to nearby districts and to its population size. The stock of office space is particularly small, being well below the level of all adjoining districts and industrial uses predominate. In recent years, the study area has experienced a reasonable net gain in employment floorspace, with modest increases in office space, larger increases in factory space and a particularly sizeable increase in warehousing. Vacancy levels of commercial premises remain similar to surrounding districts and regional/national averages.
- 8.3 There is a reasonable amount of permitted floorspace in the development pipeline, the vast majority of which is B1 space and equivalent to 2.5 years supply at recent take-up rates. The major sources of this space are Cranfield Airfield, Cranfield Technology Park and Hitchin Road Industrial Estate, Arlesey. There are also large allocated sites with potential to provide significant new employment space, notably at Cranfield Technology Park and Stratton Business Park. The study area contains a reasonable range of industrial sites and areas and the stock of premises is generally fairly modern, particularly amongst warehousing. However, the small stock of offices is relatively dated.
- 8.4 There has been a moderate level of new employment space completed over the last 4 years, averaging around 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> annually in gross terms and 15,700 m<sup>2</sup> in net terms. In terms of hectarage, the net development rate has been 2.5 ha per annum. Just over 20% of completed space was accounted for by offices with the remainder being for industrial uses (B1c/B2/B8).

- 8.5 The prospects for the study area to capture demand from other nearby districts appear to be relatively limited. However, there are a number of development proposals in adjoining districts which have some potential to compete with the area for future employment development. In particular, the potential designation of one of two strategic sites for high-tech uses within Bedford Borough in the Northern Marston Vale is likely to provide intense competition for these uses, particularly in the north of the study area. In addition, the growth agenda in Milton Keynes, which has a number of developing 'flagship' employment sites, the improving office provision in Bedford and Milton Keynes, and the possible allocation of a strategic employment site in Central Bedfordshire (South) mean that competition, particularly along the M1 corridor is likely to intensify in the years to come. These developments have the potential to attract or divert some businesses from the study area. The high-profile office developments in and around Cambridge also offer limited competition for this type of space, although this applies much more to the A1 corridor than the M1. In the A1 corridor, Stevenage contains a significant quantity of available larger office premises and would be competitor to any aspirations for significant new office sites in this part of the area. In addition, the higher than average levels of vacant space in North Herts may already be resulting in lower levels of demand in the south-east of the study area.
- 8.6 Further investigation of the property market through consultation with commercial agents was undertaken, which sought to test levels of demand and the appropriateness of the draft Core Strategy indicative allocations by settlement.
- 8.7 With the exception of Cranfield Technology Park and the Marston Gate distribution location which are orientated to meeting wider sub-regional needs, the study area commercial property market is fairly localised in nature. Central Bedfordshire (North) is characterised by several distinct market sub-areas – the M1 corridor to the west, the A1 corridor to the east, and the rural parts of the rest of the study area. Taking each of these areas in turn, a number of broad conclusions can be drawn:
- 8.8 The western area is characterised by:
- a significant shortage of industrial land and premises, notwithstanding that this is where most industrial demand is focused;
  - a limited supply of office premises, but a reported need for further space in the longer term. In particular, a general uplift in Flitwick town centre through a number of development projects may help to stimulate a town centre office market;
  - continued strong demand for larger-scale warehousing units along the M1 from regional/national distribution firms, and scope to attract further development if accessible sites are made available;

- a niche role performed by the Cranfield Technology Park which has been successful in attracting some technology-based firms to the study area. In property market terms, it tends to meet sub-regional needs rather than indigenous requirements of firms in Central Bedfordshire (North).

8.9 The eastern area is characterised by:

- reasonable demand for industrial premises, but also greater supply of both older space on established industrial estates and new development at Stratton Park;
- limited demand for office space, but some potential to stimulate this market through increased supply of edge-of-centre office space in the main towns or through a new business park along the A1.

8.10 For the remaining rural parts of the study area:

- a reasonable level of demand exists for small-scale rural conversions, principally for office activities and generally located in the east of the area. Further growth potential was identified.

8.11 Over 1,000 ha of potential employment land is currently being promoted within Central Bedfordshire (North) although much of this comprises potential mixed-use sites where the actual quantum of employment land to be delivered is unclear. As a result, the total of available employment land is likely to be much lower than this in reality. The sites were sifted in a three stage process in order to exclude unviable sites, such as those in the greenbelt, and detailed site visits and appraisal were undertaken on a total of 72 potential sites.

8.12 All the sub-areas which have been apportioned an employment land allocation in the Core Strategy have sufficient land being promoted in order to meet their needs, with the exception of Ampthill/Flitwick. These towns are tightly constrained by the Green Belt (which excluded several potential employment sites in the Stage 1 sifting process).

8.13 The assessment of the quality of these locations as potential employment sites was combined with information on market demand in order to select a recommended portfolio of sites to meet future needs. This portfolio is set out in the table below and it is suggested that they are carried forward into the site allocations DPD currently being prepared by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Core Strategy allocation (ha)	Site Ref.	Site Address	Potential Use	Size (ha)	Delivery Timescale
<b>Biggleswade</b>					
10 - 15	E67/E11	Land at Stratton Farm, Biggleswade	Industrial	15.0	Medium
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Sandy</b>					
5 - 10	E38	Land east of Middlefield Road and north of Beamish Close, Sandy	Industrial	8.0	Medium
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8.0</b>
<b>Amphill / Flitwick</b>					
8 - 15	E62 *	Land off Steppingley Road	Office / Industrial	0.6	Long
	E64	Doolittle Mill, Phase 2	Office	1.0	Short / Medium
	E68	Doolittle Mill Phase 1	Office / Industrial	4.7	Medium
	E18	Land adjacent to 29 Clophill Road	Industrial	1.8	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>Northern Marston Vale</b>					
10 - 20	E09a	Land at Moreteyne Farm, Marston Moretaine	Office / Industrial / Distribution	10.0	Medium
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Arlesey / Stotfold / Fairfield</b>					
10 - 15	E12a *	Land to East of Arlesey	Offices / Industrial	6.0	Long
	E25	Pig Development Unit	Office / Industrial	4.0	Short
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Cranfield</b>					
5 - 10	E82	Land off University Way, Cranfield	Offices / industrial	5.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Potton</b>					
1 - 2	H089 *	Jay Farm, Myers Road	Offices / Industrial	1.6	Medium
	or				
	H075	Land South of Horne Lane	Office / Industrial	1.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1.0 or 1.6</b>
<b>Shefford</b>					
2 - 4	H171 *	Bridge Farm, Shefford	Offices / Industrial	2.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Silsoe</b>					
1 - 2	H106 *	Cranfield University, Silsoe	Offices / Industrial	1.6	Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>Strategic</b>					
n/a	E15	Land between A421 & Marston Gate Distribution Park, Brogborough	Distribution	11.4	Short / Medium
	E12a *	Land to East of Arlesey	Office Park	5.0	Medium / Long
				<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>16.4</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>77 ha</b>	
<b>Specialist/Reserve Site</b>					
	E16	NIRAH	Science Research Park	12.0	Medium

Table 8.1 Proposed Employment Site Portfolio \* Note: part of mixed-use developments