



Local Transport Plan 3

The Central Bedfordshire Council Transport Strategy

April 2011 to March 2026

Extract

9. Major Schemes

What major schemes will be delivered?

In addition to the broad areas of intervention previously set out and which will form the basis to the bulk of schemes delivered over the course of the Local Transport Plan, a series of 'major' schemes (those costing more than £5million) are also envisaged to be implemented.

These schemes are required to support the growth which is envisaged for Central Bedfordshire or to resolve existing problems on the transport network have been identified through a number of different processes including the Local Development Framework, Masterplanning, and the National Roads Programme.

The progress of each scheme is affected by a number of factors, not all of them within the control of Central Bedfordshire Council, and so it is essential that the authority forms strong partnerships with the promoters of the schemes such as the Highways Agency to facilitate their delivery.

The funding of the schemes varies from totally public (either local or Central) through to totally privately funded ventures. Each scheme does not necessarily stand on its own but may interlink with other schemes so that the combined benefits are greater than any benefits that could be obtained from one scheme on its own.

On 26 October 2010 the Secretary of State for Transport announced they could not at that point consider any new local major scheme for funding in the Spending Review period up to 2014/15 other than those previously submitted to the Department for Transport, and warned promoters of further schemes to think carefully before incurring any further development costs, which would be at their own risk.

However the Government's announcement also signposted that they would discuss with promoters of new proposals on how best to proceed, in light of progress in developing a new major schemes funding framework from 2014/15 in line with the move to greater localism.

As we are setting a strategy for the next 15 years however this chapter sets out a number of schemes which we consider are necessary to support the growth in our area.

Core Strategies and Masterplans

The Core Strategy developed for the southern part of the Council's area and Luton was approved for pre-submission in October 2010. The Strategy has been prepared by a Joint Committee representing both Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The Strategy calls for the construction of 22,500 houses in the area up to 2026 and it also identifies a number of transport schemes in and around Central Bedfordshire which are critical to the delivery of these dwellings.

A Masterplan for Dunstable Town Centre is being prepared and has identified how a number of major schemes will enable the centre of Dunstable to be improved. The A5-M1 Link, the Woodside Connection and the M1 Junction 10 to 13 improvements, should allow for the 'detrunking' of the A5 through the town centre. Such interventions should help reduce traffic flows



and congestion, in particular heavy goods vehicles, and allow for safer interaction between pedestrian and vehicles in the town centre. The following major schemes are identified in the Core Strategy:

Under Construction	Proposed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luton – Dunstable Busway • M1 Hard Shoulder Running (Junctions 10-13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass) • Woodside Connection • M1 Junction 10a improvements • Luton Northern Bypass • East of Leighton Distributor Road • Park & Ride – A5/A505 to the north of Dunstable & the A6 north of Luton • New parkway station in the vicinity of M1 Junction 11a

The Core Strategy for the northern half of Central Bedfordshire, what was Mid Bedfordshire, was adopted in 2009. Additional schemes to the above which are identified in that document are:

- Flitwick-Westoning Bypass
- Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road
- East-West Rail

Central Bedfordshire Schemes

Luton Dunstable Busway and possible extensions

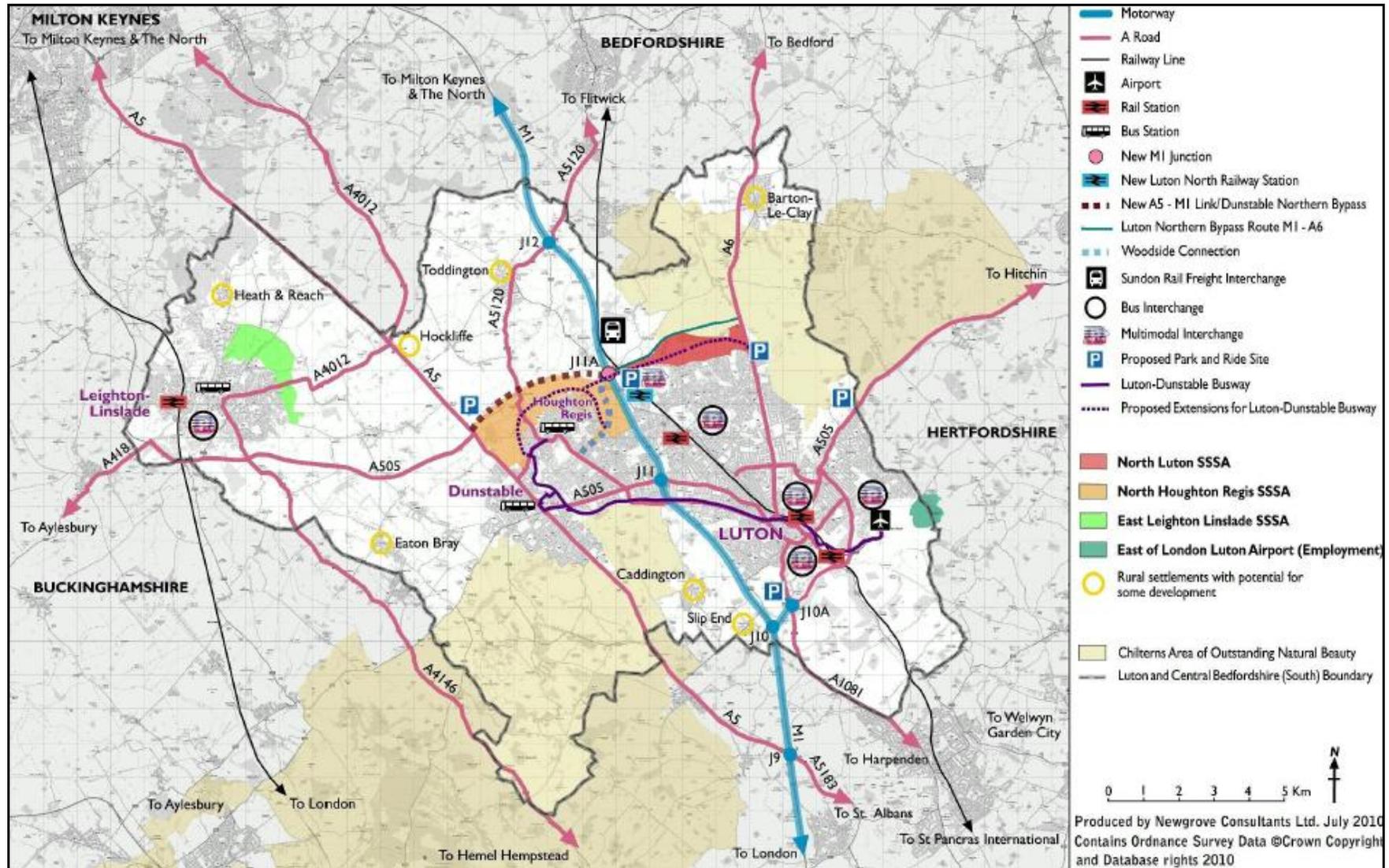
The £90m Luton Dunstable Busway is currently under construction and is on programme to open late 2012. The scheme is a joint venture between Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council. Dunstable and Houghton Regis will benefit from the scheme via the improved access between residential, commercial, educational and industrial areas.

Reliable and improved journey times along the core route which includes the town centres, Luton railway station and Luton London Airport via an on highway section will increase the attractiveness of the towns to new investors. Additionally residents will be able to access the busway from local on street stops equipped with real time passenger information providing the journey time reassurance of this quality system.

The route runs between Houghton Regis and Luton London Airport at its extremes, whilst it provides a number of access points along route allowing buses to make use of specific sections to minimise use of congested routes. Extensions to the busway would penetrate the new development areas North of Houghton Regis and Luton, and the details of these schemes will be developed via the Masterplanning process for the two areas.



Major Schemes in the Luton / Dunstable Area



Woodside Connection

The Woodside Connection will help promote and support growth north of Houghton Regis and provide improved and more appropriate transport links to the commercial and industrial areas of Dunstable and Houghton Regis. Construction is expected to start late in 2014/15 but is dependant on the Highways Agency A5-M1 Link Road for a connection to the proposed M1 junction 11a.

The growth, proposed north of Houghton Regis is for an urban extension of 6,950 homes and 83ha of employment land by 2026 with potential for a further 4,050 homes and 17ha employment land after that. In addition, further development is proposed within the existing urban area. The Woodside Connection serves this development with links to the local road network, the proposed A5-M1 Link road and the M1 motorway.

The road will also link the Woodside Industrial estate with the M1 removing the need for heavy goods vehicles to travel through Dunstable town centre thereby reducing the environmental impacts from noise and vehicle pollutants and help promote the local town centre businesses.

M1 Junction 10a

This scheme, to construct a grade separated junction at M1 Junction 10A will improve access to Luton, Luton London Airport and surrounding villages, it is being promoted jointly by Luton Borough Council (LBC) and Central Bedfordshire Council with LBC as lead authority. The existing junction experiences severe congestion during the peak periods that needs to be addressed to cater for the proposed growth in Luton.

Funding has still to be identified with initial support from Growth Area funds and third party contributions. Further funding is required from both the private and the public sectors before this scheme can be constructed. A decision with regards to an application for Growth Area Funding is expected to be announced by April 2010.

East of Leighton Distributor Road

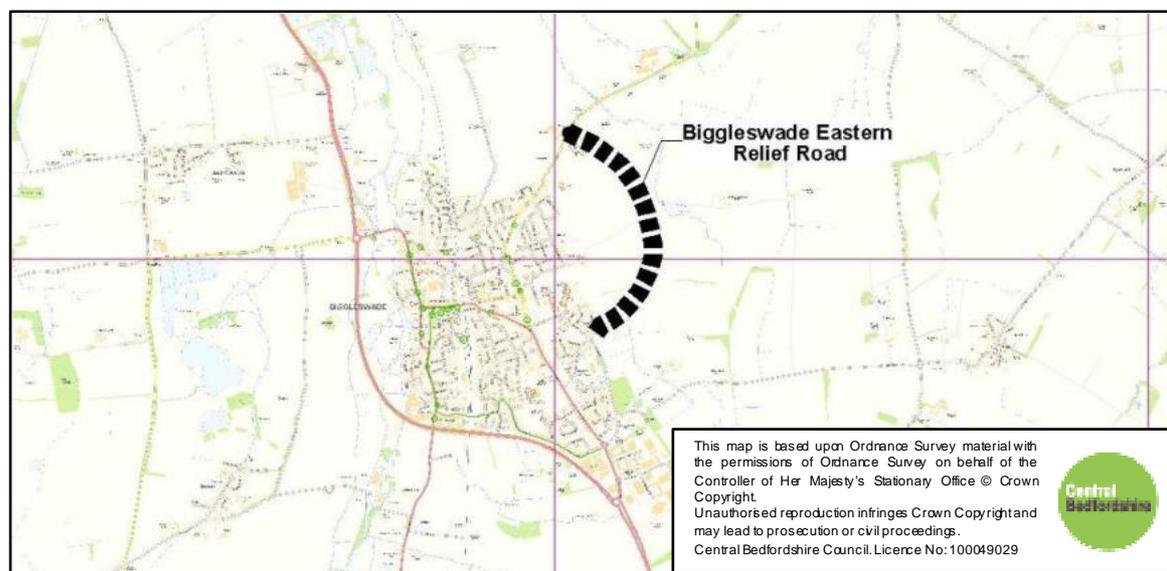
The Core Strategy identifies an urban extension to the east of Leighton Linlade with approximately 2,500 private and affordable homes to be delivered in the area. An Eastern Distributor Road will be provided through the development, between Heath Road and Stanbridge Road, so that it minimises impact on the existing road network. The potential benefits of this link include providing a link for traffic to avoid Leighton Buzzard town centre and providing a link that serves any proposed development, subject to planning considerations.

Full details of the transport strategy for the area, including this road, will be determined through the preparation of a Master Plan for the area which will also provide details of the proposed programme for the infrastructure. It is expected that the Distributor Road will be built by 2017 on a phased basis and will be wholly funded by the developer.



Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road

Considerable change will occur in Biggleswade over the LTP period with the eastern expansion of the town and which require new infrastructure to be provided locally. The new Biggleswade Eastern Relief Road will remove some through traffic from the town centre and will be accompanied by a reworked junction on the A1 south of the town.



Luton Northern Bypass

Between the M1 and A6 and North of Luton lies the North Luton Strategic Site Specific Allocation which is identified in the Core Strategy as having the capacity for approximately 1,800 private and affordable homes. The Masterplan for the area has not yet been developed and it will provide greater guidance about the scale and location of the infrastructure requirements but one of the key transport links in the area will be the Luton Northern Bypass (M1 to A6) which will link into Junction 11A of the M1 and thus into the A5-M1 link (Dunstable Northern Bypass).

The scheme between the M1 and A6 is wholly within Central Bedfordshire and we shall be fully involved in the development of the Masterplan for the area. This scheme will be constructed as part of the planned development north of Luton.

In March 2009 the results of public and stakeholder consultation were presented to the Joint committee. As a result the committee resolved to support an outer bypass subject to the outcome of further more detailed work.

East of the A6 proposals for a link through to the A505 are for the longer term (post 2026).



Flitwick – Westoning Bypass

A bypass to the West of Flitwick and Westoning to remove through traffic on the A5120 from the residential areas has been under consideration for some time. There is already a considerable amount of traffic on the A5120 and the development of a Center Parc to the West of Ampthill on the A507 is also expected to increase traffic. Other measures, such as the introduction of hard shoulder running and the improvements to Junction 12 on the M1 may also impact on traffic in the area.

A scoping report was started by the old County Council and completed by Central Bedfordshire in 2009. Two main bypass routes were assessed in this scoping process, as follows:

- The Western Bypass route links the B530 south of Stewartby to Harlington Road (A5120) south of Westoning, passing to the west of Westoning, Flitwick and Ampthill. The report identifies this as the preferred alignment.
- The Eastern Bypass route links the B530 west of Snow Hill to Harlington Road (A5120) south of Westoning, passing to the east of Westoning, Flitwick and Ampthill. However, due to unfavourable environmental impacts, this option was discarded in the report.

Based purely on economic grounds, analysis undertaken in this study suggests that the case for a bypass of Ampthill, Flitwick and Westoning is weak and under the current economic environment, it is unlikely that the finance for the scheme can be found. However, the bypass remains an aspiration for the authority because of the benefits it could bring and, should opportunities arise or the financial climate change, the council will seek opportunities to develop this scheme further.

Luton North Station

The addition of a new railway station onto the Midland Mainline North of Luton to serve the Northern urban extensions is identified in the Core Strategy as an aspiration for future implementation. It would help to increase sustainable access to the urban extensions and would have a key local role in helping to ease the pressure of the future development on the local transport network. However, the cost of the station may have to be the closing of either Harlington or Leagrave stations as their proximity to the proposed new station would have operational impacts on the railway service provided.

East-West Rail and the Marston Vale Line

The East-West Rail project is being promoted by a consortium across East and South East England and proposes a continuous rail route between Oxford and Cambridge, with additional movements also included. The route has been divided into 3 sections and Central Bedfordshire is affected by the Western and Central section proposals.

The Western section which will deliver train services between Oxford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bedford utilises the railway line through the Marston Vale between Bletchley and Bedford and any pattern of services proposed for that section has to allow for the current use of the line to ensure that Central Bedfordshire residents do not lose out from a through route that does not serve them properly.

The business case and detailed engineering design work (known as GRIP 4) has been completed and has revealed an exceptionally strong case for the project. The business case shows a benefit-



cost ratio (BCR) of 5 which is exceptional for railway enhancement. Central Bedfordshire Council will continue to support the East-West Rail Consortium in developing and delivering the Western section.

The Central section, between Bedford and Cambridge, is more problematic – the old direct route between the two towns which would utilise the old railway line between Bedford and Sandy cannot be replicated owing to past and future development on the trackbed. This route would probably continue down the East Coast Main Line to Hitchin before turning North to Cambridge and would therefore benefit the towns of East Central Bedfordshire.

Further studies have proposed alternative routes, some of which would benefit Ampthill and Flitwick by the construction of a chord between the Marston Vale line and the Midland Mainline.

However no definite decisions have been made on where this Central section should go but the authority will continue to participate in the development of options to ensure that the best options for the residents of Central Bedfordshire are represented.

As part of re-signalling works at Bletchley station taking place in December 2011, the train operating company London Midland is exploring the possibility of extending the existing Marston Vale rail service from Bletchley to Milton Keynes Central. The authority supports the extension of the service, as it will provide a direct public transport link from Central Bedfordshire communities in the Marston Vale to employment and other activities in Milton Keynes. The authority will work with the train operating company to secure the extension to the service and other future service developments that benefit Central Bedfordshire residents, such as Sunday services.

Highways Agency Led Schemes

M1 Widening Junctions 10-13

Although it was originally proposed that the M1 between Junctions 10 and 13 would be widened by the addition of a fourth lane in each direction, the success of a hard shoulder running trial on the M42, and the reduced cost associated with such a scheme, led to an announcement in January 2009 that the scheme would be taken forward as a Hard Shoulder Running Scheme. Works have started and the scheme is due for completion in early 2013.

The original intention that a new junction (Junction 11A) on the M1 should be built at the same time as the M1 scheme, in either widening or hard shoulder running form, is looking increasingly unlikely to happen owing to the delays now inherent in the decision making process for the A5-M1 link, which utilises Junction 11A (see below).

A5 – M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass)

The busy A5 Trunk Road runs through Dunstable Town Centre as High Street North and High Street South resulting in excessive and inappropriate traffic using the town centre.

The Highways Agency have designed the A5-M1 link to act as a Northern Bypass of the town between the A5, close to its junction with the A505 Leighton Southern Bypass, and the M1 via a new Junction 11A on the motorway

The schemes traffic forecasting report has identified significant traffic reductions in and around Dunstable including up to 19% on High Street North, 12% on High Street South, 13% on the A505



Church Street and 30% on the A5120. The reduction of through traffic is forecast at between 15% and 22% of the traffic on the A5.

The alignment of the new road has been designed in sympathy with the Core Strategy to promote development between the new road and the urban area. The new M1 Junction 11A will cater for the M1 motorway, A5-M1 Link Road, the Woodside Connection and the Luton Northern Bypass, thus providing a link into the development areas and the industrial areas of Dunstable and Houghton Regis. There will be one intermediate junction on the road to allow traffic to move to and from the A5120 to Houghton Regis, Ampthill and Flitwick.

The delivery of the scheme was delayed when the Public Inquiry was postponed by the Coalition Government in June / July 2010. Following an announcement from the Secretary of State for Transport on 26 October 2010 the scheme will not now be built before 2015.

The Department for Transport reviewed the scheme following an offer of third party contribution resulting in a revised programme for start of construction in 2014/15. The scheme has provided the opportunity to work with Central Government to explore new ways of funding a scheme vital to the local economy and securing growth.

Rail Schemes

Thameslink Programme

Like many radial routes into London, services from Flitwick and Harlington on Thameslink services on the Midland Mainline and from Sandy, Biggleswade, and Arlesey on Great Northern services on the East Coast Mainline are often very busy. Many trains are overcrowded during the morning and evening peak periods, and there is little scope to increase capacity further within the limits of the existing infrastructure.

The Thameslink Programme aims to deliver additional capacity to tackle both the existing overcrowding and provide for future growth, whilst improving the quality and range of services on the affected routes. This is being delivered through an extensive programme of infrastructure works on the Thameslink and Great Northern routes, and a fleet of new trains.

The Thameslink Programme was given planning permission and formal legal powers on 13th December 2006. The Department for Transport confirmed that it was to fund the project on 24th July 2007. A further announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport on 25th November 2010 confirmed that there would be no cutbacks in funding for the project.

The delivery of the infrastructure elements of the scheme has been designed to be delivered in 3 separate phases:

- **Key Output Stage 0 (December 2009)**
This stage of the works introduced service changes that allow the major work to take place. For Central Bedfordshire, the key output from these works were changes on the Thameslink route, which saw changes to timetables, and new services to places like Rochester and Ashford. This has also seen the introduction of new rolling stock on the route.
- **Key Output Stage 1 (mid 2012)**
The major objective of this phase is to enable 12-carriage trains to be run on the Thameslink Route. This will consist of platform extensions at nearly all stations on the route, including Flitwick and Harlington, the rebuilding of Farringdon and Blackfriars



stations, and a new viaduct in the Borough Market area. Platform extensions have been programmed for Flitwick and Harlington during 2011.

- **Key Output Stage 2 (2012 to 2018)**

The main element of these works will be the rebuilding and remodelling of London Bridge station and the approaching lines. The link between the Thameslink Route and the Great Northern Route will also be opened up, increasing the number of destinations served both within and south of Central London from Biggleswade, Sandy, and Arlesey stations.

The Thameslink Programme also includes the £2bn purchase of new 12-carriage length trains for the route. The new carriages, 1100 in all, will have more spacious interiors, improved passenger information, air conditioned, and be more reliable than the existing trains.

The procurement of these trains is currently being led by the Department for Transport. The new trains are expected to enter service between 2015 and 2018.



The outcome of these works will be an extra 14,000 seats being made available on the Thameslink network during the peak hours, with a 50% increase in available capacity on trains. Central Bedfordshire residents will also be able to access a number of additional destinations within and south of London.

Central Bedfordshire Council supports the Thameslink Programme and its aims of increasing capacity, frequency, and range of destinations on both the Thameslink and Great Northern Routes. Whilst the scheme is a rail industry-led project, the authority will work in partnership with the rail industry to secure the best outcomes from this project for Central Bedfordshire residents and to mitigate the impacts of increased travel to and from our stations arising from this project.

The actions taken will be in accordance with the strategic direction and objectives of this LTP, and appropriate interventions will need to be considered in the most affected areas through the Local Area Transport Plans.

The Wixams Station

The Wixams Station will be a new 4-platform station that is planned to be located between Flitwick and Bedford. As well as the station building and platforms themselves, plans for the station area also include a 571 space car park, a station forecourt, a public square and ancillary shops and services. It is estimated that the station will be used by roughly 900 passengers per day. This scheme is being funded and delivered by a partnership of Network Rail, First Capital Connect, and Gallagher Estates.

The primary role of this station will be to serve the new settlement of The Wixams, a 4500 home development taking place on the Elstow Storage Depot Site on the border of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council. The station forms a key part of the sustainable transport plans of this new development, playing a particularly important role in encouraging the residents of The Wixams to travel to Bedford, Luton, St Albans, and London by public transport. The new station will also provide a new transport interchange for people living in the Northern Marston Vale area.



The planned location of the station is within the Bedford Borough Council area, close to the border with Central Bedfordshire. It is likely that the plans for the station will have a significant impact upon Central Bedfordshire communities in this area, and part of the access to the station will be in the Central Bedfordshire area. Planning permission has yet to be granted for the station, although construction is planned to be completed by 2014.

Central Bedfordshire Council supports the principle of the new station as part of developing a sustainable community at The Wixams, and improving access to public transport to residents in the Northern Marston Vale area. The authority is keen to work with Gallaghers Estate, Network Rail, First Capital Connect, and Bedford Borough Council to deliver an effective station interchange that will benefit current and future residents, whilst minimising its impact on existing communities.

Central Bedfordshire Council is also keen to provide a level of rail service at the station that will make rail travel to and from The Wixams station an attractive proposition. The authority will work with the rail industry to ensure that a good level of rail service is provided at the station.

Accessing The Wixams railway station will need to be considered when the Local Area Transport Plan is developed, in partnership with Bedford Borough Council, as part of this Local Transport Plan. In developing the Local Area Transport Plan, the authority will consider the impacts and requirements of the station, and potential schemes that will improve access to the station by non-car modes of transport.

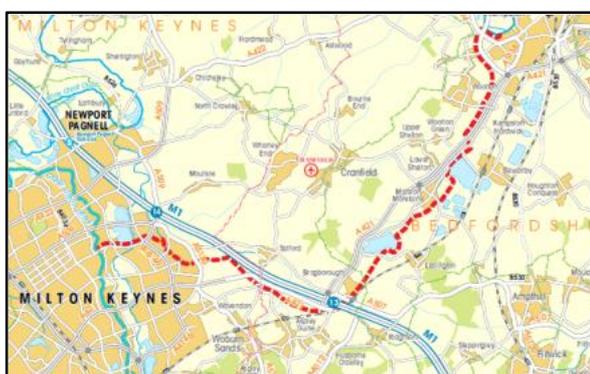
Midland Mainline Electrification

As part of the long term plans for the Midland Mainline, as outline in the East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (February 2010), Network Rail intends to electrify the Midland Mainline north of Bedford. This scheme may be brought forward as part of Network Rail's programme of works for Control Period 5 (April 2014 to March 2019).

Whilst the infrastructure works are taking place outside of the authority area, Central Bedfordshire could potentially benefit through increases in capacity on the Midland Mainline and further development of local rail services (e.g. through extension to towns north of Bedford). The authority will work with Network Rail to ensure that Central Bedfordshire residents benefit from any future electrification scheme.

Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway

The Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway is a 20 mile water, walking, and cycling link connecting the River Great Ouse near Bedford to the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes. The vision for the link is to provide a green corridor through the heart of the Northern Marston Vale Growth Area, providing a green link between communities as well as a strategic water link between the Fenland Waterways and the canal network via the River Great Ouse.



*Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Route Map.
Provided courtesy of Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway
Trust - map originally supplied by heron Maps Ltd, based
on an extract from Milton Keynes Official City Atlas*



The Waterway is being promoted by the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Trust, of which Central Bedfordshire Council is a partner. The waterway currently has planning permission secured for 25% of its length, and provision for the Waterway has been included in the Local Development Framework for the North Area and the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan.

As a partner in the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Trust, the authority supports the development of the Waterway. The impacts of the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway will need to be considered as part of the Local Area Transport Plan for the Marston Vale, as well as potential schemes that can help to facilitate the delivery of, and access to, the Waterway.

