

The Local Picture

- Gain an understanding of what is happening in Bedfordshire as a county
- Look at specific issues in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire & Luton (including the Ox-Cam Arc and East West Rail)



Bedfordshire – a few facts

- One of the smaller counties in England at just 477 sq miles
- Population just over 700,000 (2021 Census)
- There are three people for every football pitch-sized piece of land in England. This is the same in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough but Luton has 37 people for every football pitch-sized piece of land
- Bedfordshire has Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the south of the county but none in the north.
- All Local Authority areas have a Local Plan in place, some are currently under review.





Population Growth



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Census statistic 2021

- The overall increase for England was 6.6%
- The Eastern Region saw the largest population increase at 8.3%

Local Authority Area	% increase from 2011-2021	2021 population
Bedford Borough	17.17% increase	185,000
Central Bedfordshire	15.7% increase	294,000
Luton	10.9% increase	225,000
Total Population		704,000



Bedford Borough Council



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Bedford Borough Council Development Plans

- Council has a good track record of maintaining an up to date Local Plan
- Can generally be relied upon to enforce their planning policies and refuse applications which conflict with their Local Plans
- Also defend planning decisions against planning appeals
- Appears to be committed to supporting Neighbourhood Plans (16 adopted NDPs as at November 2022)



CPRE concerns about Bedford Council development history - past and present

- Over delivery on Local Plan targets
- Excessive growth target in 2040 plan, based on the standard method
- Privatisation of open spaces grass verges, landscaping, allotments, play areas etc.

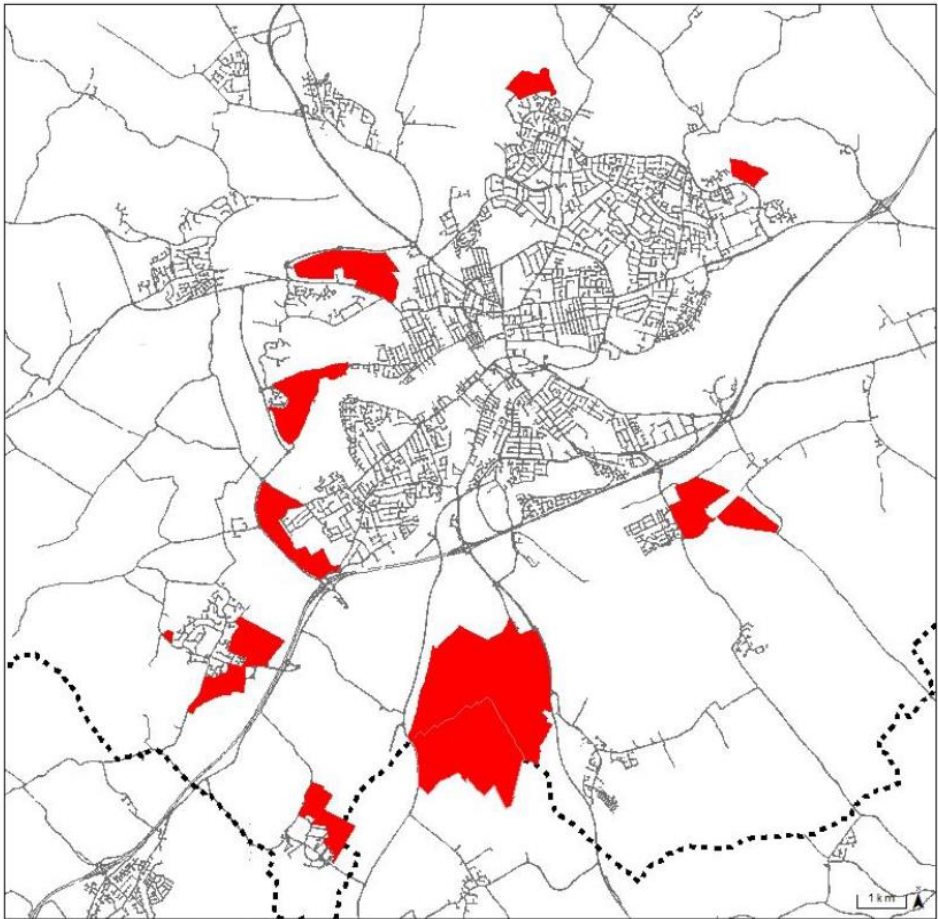


Recent development history – past 10 years pre 2030 plan

- Strategic scale development in a ‘growth area’ encompassing the urban area and the larger Marston Vale villages of Wootton and Stewartby
- With Central Bedfordshire Council creation of Wixams - cross-boundary new settlement with potential to accommodate 6,000 new homes



Location of strategic scale development pre 2030 Local Plan



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Bedford's over delivery

- Over the 6 year period 2016/17 to 2021/2022 BBC delivered 1,428 completions (20%) over target - an average of 238 pa.
- Additional development equivalent to nearly 3 times size of my village Turvey
- The Council are incentivised to build new homes by the New Homes Bonus

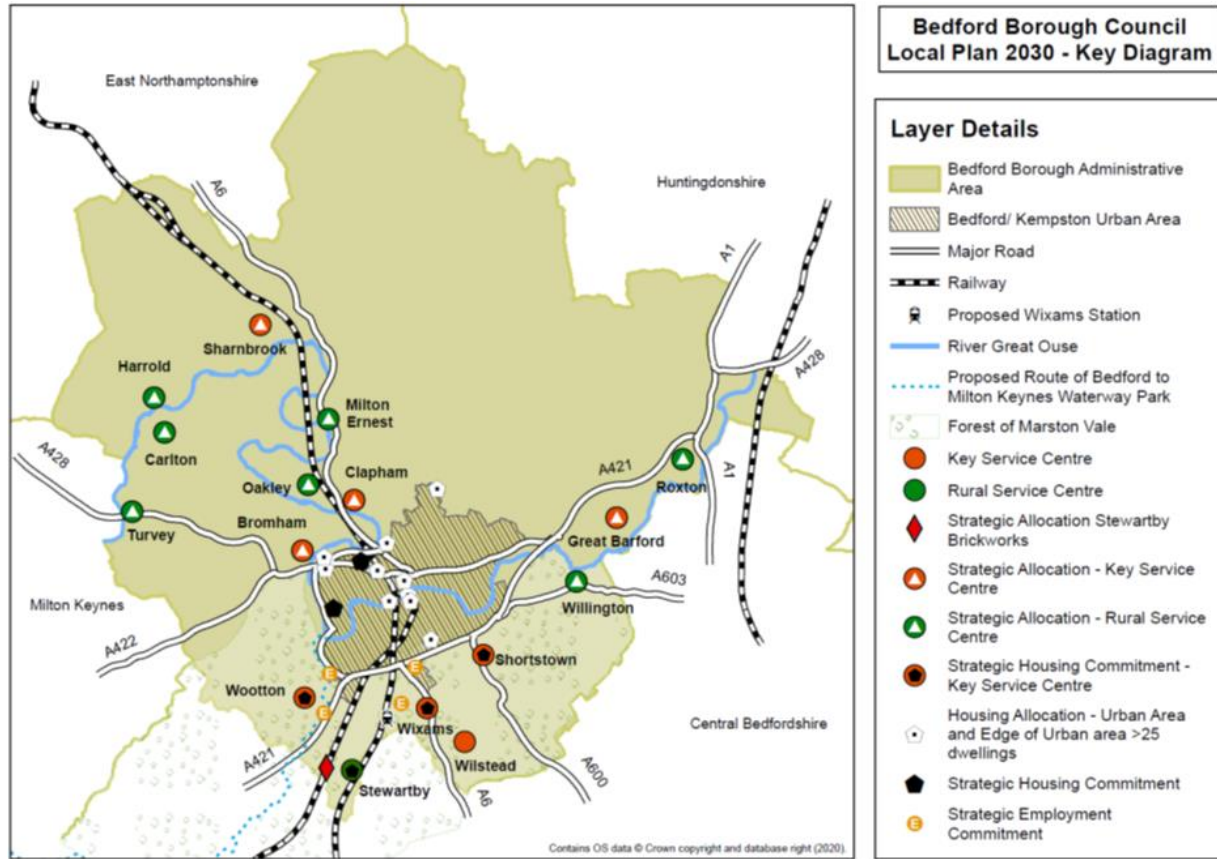


Local Plan 2030 – Strategic Allocations

- Growth target 3,169 new homes to achieve objectively assessed need for housing of 14,550 homes in the period 2015-30 (970 pa)
- Total target includes existing planning permissions, with previously allocated commitments, plus allowance for windfall
- Development strategy focusses on new housing in the urban area and land adjoining the urban area.
- A large brownfield site at the former Stewartby brickworks is also included
- Development in specified rural villages required to deliver over 2,000 homes



Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030



Local Plan 2040 – Housing Growth target (1)

- Bedford Council's Housing Needs Assessment, completed by an independent social research agency, concluded that Bedford's housing needs over the 20 year Plan period can be met by building 15,442 new homes
- ORS were obliged to apply the government's standard method and this results in a figure of 27,100 homes for the 2040 plan period (1,355 pa) - an increase of 40% from the original figure.
- The calculated housing requirement of 27,100 dwellings is equivalent to building nearly seven new towns the size of Ampthill (approx. 4,000 homes).



Local Plan 2040 – Housing Growth target (2)

- These huge numbers are based on outdated 2014 housing data from the ONS (Office for National Statistics) and the government’s Standard Method”
- The government have insisted that these additional 11,658 new homes are included to encourage required inward migration into the Borough.



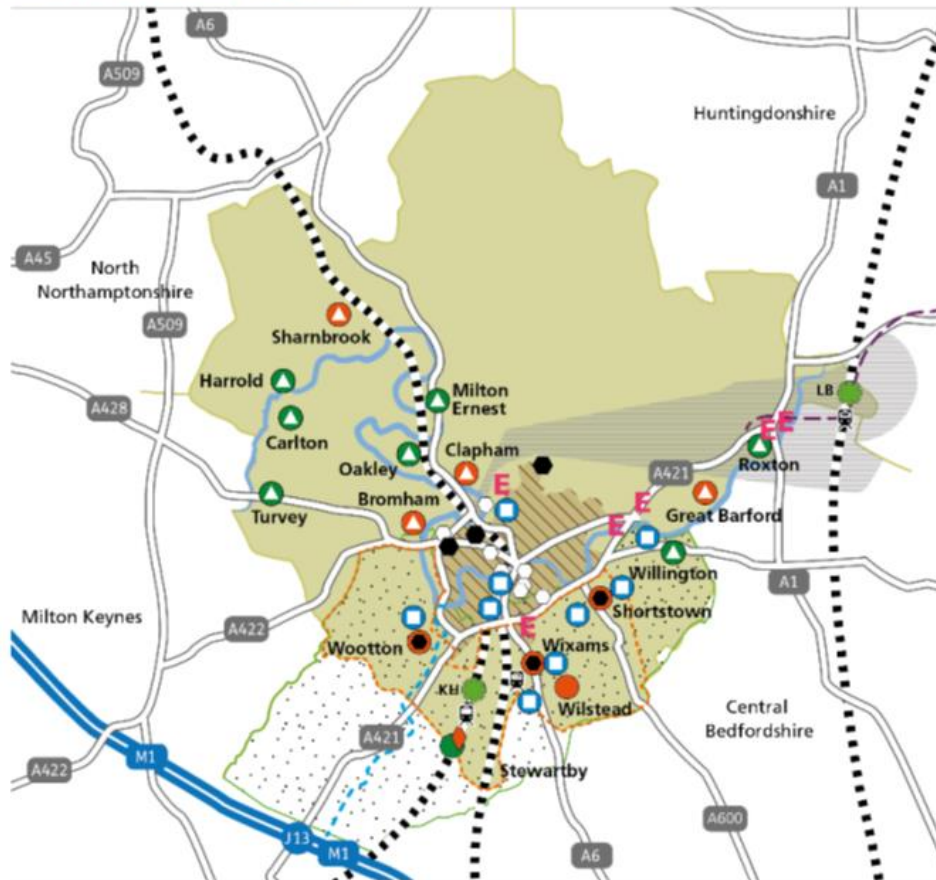
Growth Locations proposed for 2040 Local Plan

- Within the urban area
- At strategic locations adjacent to the urban area which contribute to the delivery of key green infrastructure projects
- At new growth locations focussed on the EWR / A421 transport corridor with the potential for rail based growth, particularly in the south of Bedford area and new settlements at Little Barford (3,800 houses) and Kempston Hardwick (4,000 homes)



Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2040

Local Plan 2040 key diagram



Key details

- Bedford Borough Administrative Area
- Bedford / Kempston Urban Area
- Major Road
- Railway
- Proposed Stations
- River Great Ouse
- Proposed Route of Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park
- Forest of Marston Vale
- Key Service Centre
- Rural Service Centre
- Strategic Allocation Stewartby Brickworks
- Strategic Allocation - Key Service Centre
- Strategic Allocation - Rural Service Centre
- Strategic Housing Commitment - Key Service Centre
- Strategic Housing Commitment
- Housing Allocation - Urban area and edge of urban area >25 dwellings

Proposed Key details

- Strategic Housing
- Strategic Employment
- New Settlement (Kempston Hardwick, Little Barford)
- South of Bedford Policy Area
- A428 Black Cat Caxton Route
- Corridor for EWR



Privatisation of open spaces grass verges, landscaping, allotments, play areas etc.

- Historically Parish Councils have taken responsibility for maintaining these common areas
- In recent years Bedford Council has adopted the practice of attaching conditions to planning applications which require the developer to take this on resulting in costs falling on residents
- CPRE Bedfordshire believe these tasks should remain with Parish Councils - we are engaging with the Council to raise this issue



Oxford to Cambridge Arc – implications for Bedfordshire

Overall aim – ‘transformational growth’ providing jobs and prosperity for all!!

- Business development/employment supported through infrastructure investment; roads, rail, housing
- Ox-Cam Expressway
- East West Rail
- Ambition for additional 1 million houses by 2050



Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

- In Bedfordshire, the A421 and A428 will provide an expressway standard dual carriageway from Milton Keynes to Cambridge when the Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet section is complete
- The Milton Keynes to Oxford section has been scrapped



East West Rail

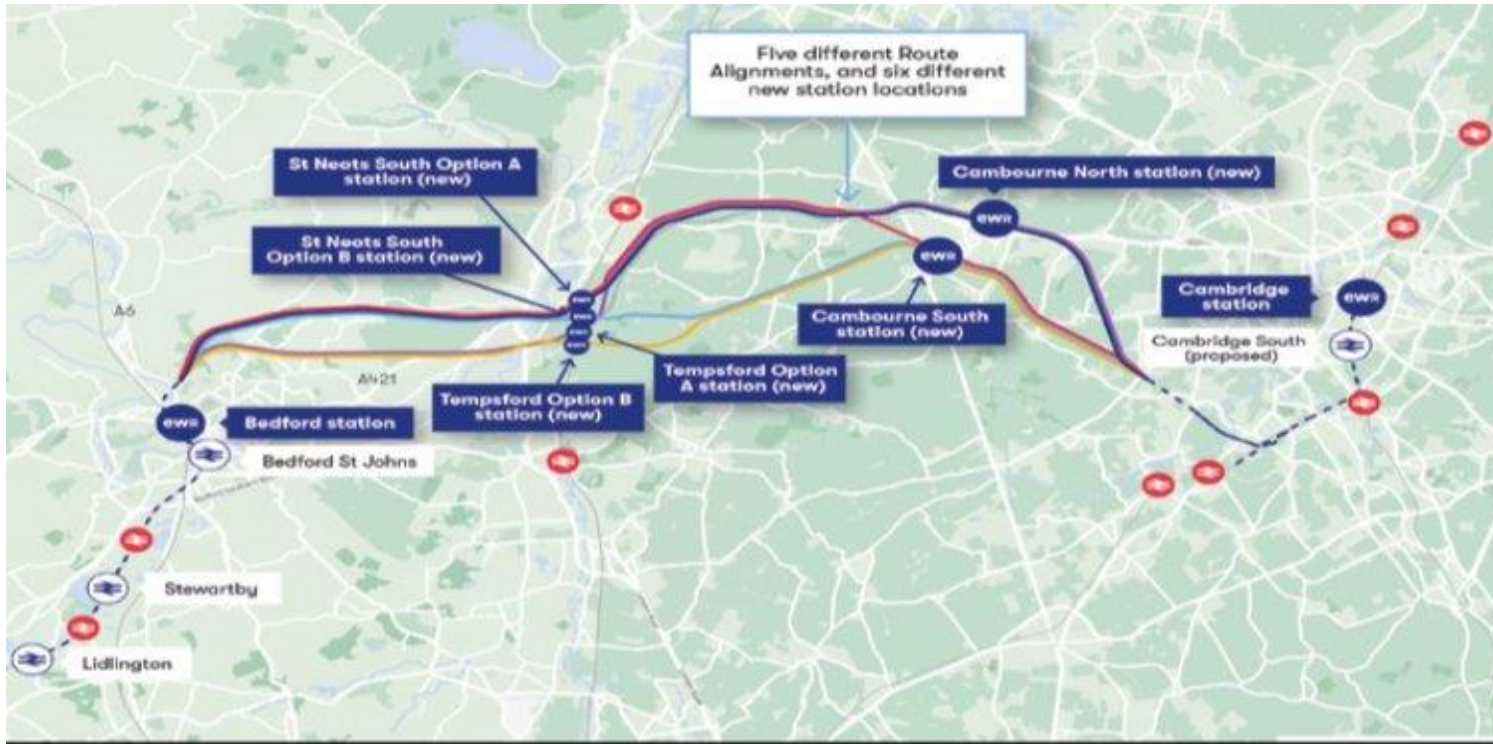
- The line from Oxford to Bedford will be completed through an upgrade of the existing line
- Bletchley and Marston Vale Line 2 options subject to consultation
 - existing service to all Marston Vale Line stations, with new EWR service calling at two stations – Woburn Sands and Ridgmont
 - five new merged stations on the Marston Vale Line – all five benefit from EWR services
- Bedford to Cambridge – completely new railway line. 2 alignment options for Bedford section being consulted upon



East West Rail (1)



East West Rail (2)



Ox-Cam associated housing

- Ambition for 1 million additional homes across the Arc
 - No clarity about how scale and location of housing to be determined
 - Government say local authority lead
 - If the Arc is supported there will be massive housing pressures

