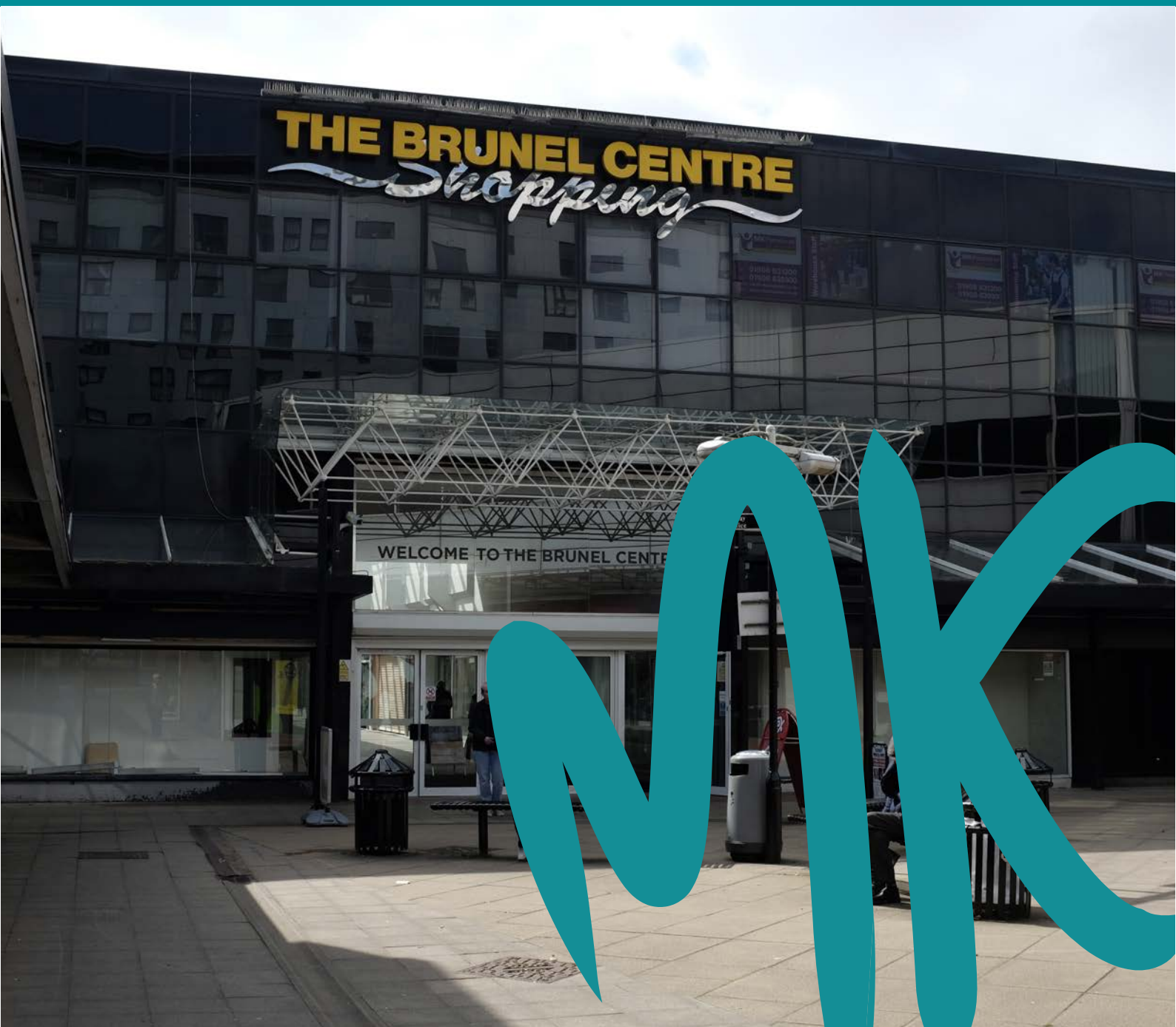


Brunel Centre, Bletchley  
Development Brief  
DRAFT

September 2023





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# **SECTION 1:**

## INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Development Brief concerns a strategically located site that serves as a gateway into Bletchley town centre (see figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The Brunel Centre, the former Sainsbury's car park and Wilko is owned by Milton Keynes Development Partnership, a company wholly owned by Milton Keynes City Council. The former Sainsbury's store is owned by Milton Keynes City Council. The land ownership is set out in Appendix A.

### **Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Deal**

- 1.1.3 Town deals form part of the Government's commitment to "levelling up" the regions. In November 2019 it launched a £3.6 billion national fund to support towns to build prosperous futures, known as the Towns Fund. An associated prospectus was published which invited 101 places, including Milton Keynes, to work with government to develop "innovative regeneration plans" and to bid for funding of up to £25 million per town.
- 1.1.4 The delivery of East West Rail and Bletchley's enhanced connectivity to the area between Oxford and Cambridge, the proposed development of South Central Institute of Technology at Milton Keynes (MK) College, transformation at Bletchley Park and a number of vacant sites with redevelopment potential located near to Bletchley Station all combine to provide a favourable context for a Towns Fund bid. Consequently, in December 2019, alongside a decision to approve publication of the Central Bletchley Prospectus, MKCC confirmed that Bletchley would be the focus of Milton Keynes' Towns Fund bid.

### **Vision Statement:**

Central Bletchley will be an attractive, vibrant, prosperous and well-designed place providing a good quality of life for new and existing residents, workers within Bletchley as well as being seen as a destination for visitors. It will offer sustainable lifestyle options and choices fit for the 21st century that is different from, but complementary to, much of the Milton Keynes offer.

This site will deliver an enhanced public realm, a range of town centre uses, improved pedestrian connectivity between the station and Queensway and an improved sense of arrival to the main shopping area.

- 1.1.5 Informed by an extensive stakeholder engagement process, the Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Investment Plan, seeking £25million to progress and deliver nine projects, was completed and submitted to government in October 2020. The Government's Town Fund investment offer was received in March 2021 and a Town Deal in the sum of £22.7 million was formally agreed the following month.
- 1.1.6 Working to the vision, themes and principles set out in the overarching Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD (adopted 2022), renewal interventions being progressed by the Milton Keynes: Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Deal Revolving Development Fund (RDF) project include acquisition and redevelopment of the strategically important Brunel Centre and the former Sainsbury's superstore sites.

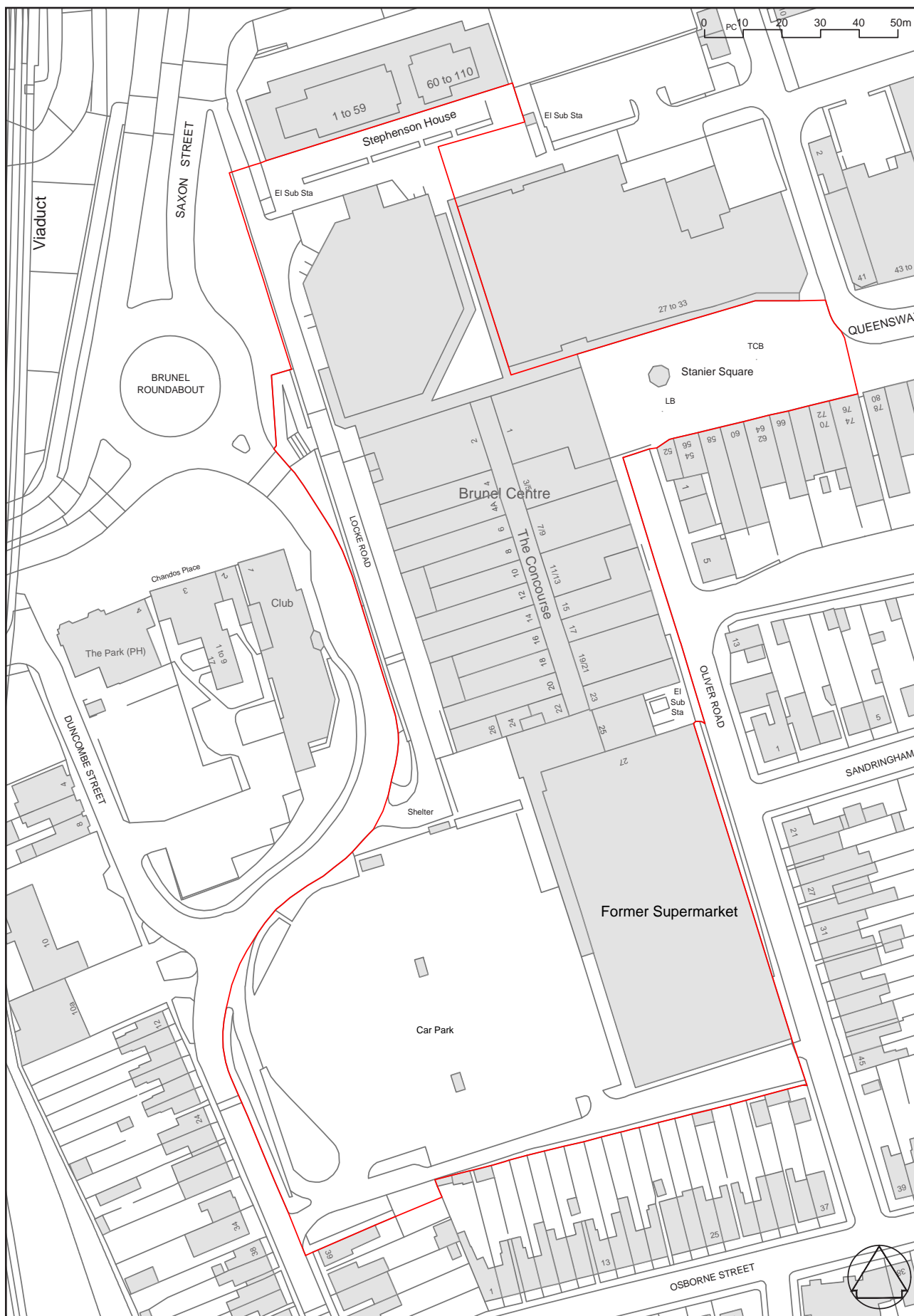


Figure 1: The Site

## 1.2 Bletchley

1.2.1 Bletchley is situated on the southern edge of Milton Keynes which is strategically located roughly halfway between Oxford and Cambridge, and between London and Birmingham (see figure 2).

1.2.2 Large parts of Bletchley will be undergoing significant change in the near future with investment by the public and private sector. An important driver behind this change is East West Rail, which will deliver new and improved services into the heart of Bletchley. The Bicester to Bletchley stage is currently under construction with trains due to run between Oxford and Milton Keynes by 2025, with the Bletchley service

potentially opening in 2024. Consultation and design work on the links to Bedford and Cambridge is currently underway. Bletchley Station will be revamped whilst there are also aspirations to provide a new station entrance on the eastern side of the railway, next to Saxon Street, in order to better connect with the town centre.

1.2.3 In addition to the Brunel Centre, MKDP has acquired the former Fire and Police Stations. There is also a growing level of private investment. Examples include Caspian View, an office to residential conversion to 112 apartments to, and Bletchley View, a new-build development of 184 dwellings just north of the Bus Station, which has recently commenced.

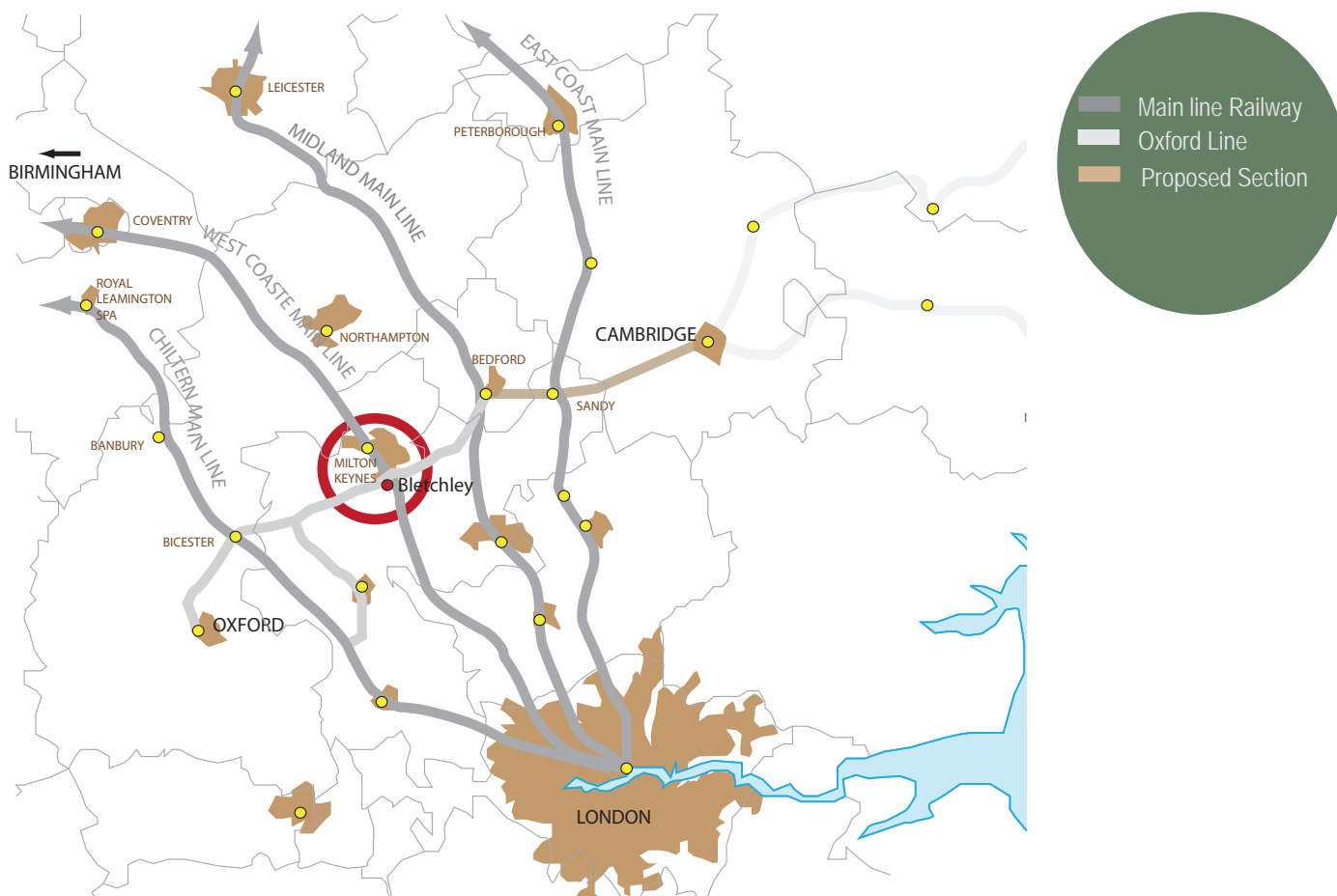


Figure 2: Bletchley location in relation to London, Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge

### 1.3 Purpose and Status of Development Brief

1.3.1 The purpose of this document is to provide planning guidance and design principles that should underpin any proposal. This will aid the development process by allowing developers to submit informed proposals for these sites that respond to MKDP, Council and other local stakeholder expectations for the sites.

1.3.2 A key role of the development brief is to provide a comprehensive, holistic and integrated framework against which individual planning applications can come forward and be determined at different times.

1.3.3 The Development Brief has been commissioned, not by the Planning Authority, but rather by the landowner and will not be subject to all the statutory requirements that a planning document would have to undergo. The Brief has however been prepared to accord with current national and local planning policy and will be subject to public consultation. In addition it will be submitted for approval by MKCC Cabinet and, if approved, will become a material consideration in helping determine planning applications albeit with limited planning weight.

1.3.4 Once approved by Milton Keynes Council Cabinet, the guidance contained within the Brief will assist with the marketing of the site by MKDP.



Figure 3: Site Location



## 1.4 Structure of the Development Brief

The Brief is divided into four sections:

Section 1 provides an introduction and outlines the purpose and status of the brief as well its location and land ownership information.

Section 2 describes the planning policy context of the site.

Section 3 provides a site analysis of the site itself and the surrounding area. A thorough understanding of this will have an important bearing on the key design principles and parameters.

Section 4 outlines the key design and development principles, that should inform any development proposals. The accompanying Design Principles Plan spatially illustrates these principles.



Figure 4: Site Boundary

# **SECTION 2:** POLICY CONTEXT

## 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The content of this Development Brief has been informed by national and local planning policy. The following is not exhaustive but serves to outline policy at a national and local level that has informed this Brief.

## 2.2 Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy

2.2.1 In January 2021, MKCC approved the 2050 Strategy for Milton Keynes as an Annex to the Council Plan, making it a Policy Framework document.

2.2.2 The Strategy for 2050 sets out how the sustainable growth ambition for Milton Keynes, a population of 410,000 people by 2050, will be delivered. It states that “Central Bletchley is poised for major regeneration and will be home to many more residents alongside wider investment as an important rail hub. Central Bletchley is also an opportunity for economic growth because of its location at the intersection of the West Coast Mainline and East West Rail.”

2.2.3 The Strategy states that “Bletchley has the flexibility to see an increase in a range of uses. This could include office-based employment space and new retail and leisure facilities to support existing and new residents and employees. There is scope to build new homes at higher densities and above shops and offices to create a more vibrant mix of uses and support local services.”

2.2.4 The Strategy aims to “transform Queensway to become a much stronger high street for Bletchley and improve pedestrian links from the station to the town centre.”

## 2.3 The Development Plan

2.3.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise (NPPF para 2).

2.3.2 The Development Plan for this site comprises the Council’s Local Plan (Plan:MK). There is no ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan covering this site. However, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council are in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area, which will include this site.

### Plan:MK

2.3.3 The Council’s Local Plan (Plan:MK) was adopted in March 2019. Key policies are set out below with a full list of relevant policies contained in Appendix B.

2.3.4 Policy SD16 (Central Bletchley Prospectus Area) provides the strategic policy for the area within which the site lies. Policy SD16 states:  
‘Development within the Central Bletchley Prospectus Area will be guided by the following principles:  
1. The density of residential development to be 150-250 dwellings per hectare.  
2. Improved pedestrian connections and legibility.  
3. Improved public realm.  
4. Refurbishment and/or redevelopment of key sites and buildings.  
5. Exploring options for the early redevelopment of the Police and Fire Station sites.  
6. Exploring the potential of existing infrastructure to help enable and unlock residential-led mixed use development opportunities.’

- 7. Further improve the quality of pedestrian routes to and from Bletchley Station.
- 8. Development should not preclude the delivery of an 'eastern entrance' to Bletchley railway station.
- 9. The development will provide green infrastructure in line with Policy NE4, providing wellbeing benefits through access to nature.'

- 2.3.5 There are a number of other Plan:MK policies, which have implications for the renewal and development of Central Bletchley, both in terms of informing the guidance contained within this Brief and future planning applications.
- 2.3.6 Policy DS1 (Settlement Hierarchy) states: 'The provision of new homes and jobs will take account of the settlement hierarchy set out in Table 4.2. The majority of development will be focussed on and adjacent to, the existing urban area of Milton Keynes at the locations specified in Table 4.2 and in the context of Central Bletchley from selective infill, brownfield, regeneration and redevelopment opportunities.'
- 2.3.7 Policy DS2 (Housing Strategy) states "Plan:MK will deliver a minimum of 26 500 net dwellings across the Borough of Milton Keynes over the period 2016-2031. The policy states that new housing development will be focused on, and adjacent to, the existing urban area of Milton Keynes as well as the three key settlements, and will be delivered by a range of interventions, including: "Regeneration opportunities around the centres of Wolverton and Bletchley."
- 2.3.8 Policy DS4 (Retail and Leisure Development Strategy), Part D refers to Milton Keynes City Council preparing a Central Bletchley Prospectus to facilitate and promote

mixed-use development around Bletchley Railway Station and the intensification of development at sustainable locations with good access to public transport hubs, building on the opportunities created by the development of East-West Rail and the work undertaken in the Bletchley 'Fixing the Links' project."

- 2.3.9 Policy HN1 (Housing Mix and Density), Part D refers to a net density of 150-250 dwellings per hectare in the area covered by the Central Bletchley Prospectus. Part E notes "where no or low levels of parking are proposed, to achieve densities that help realise wider strategic objectives, they will be required to demonstrate the site has good accessibility to frequent public transport services to public transport nodes, district/town/local centres, schools and employment areas.'
- 2.3.10 Policy HN2 (Affordable Housing) states 'Proposals for 11 or more homes should provide 31% of those homes as affordable housing. Proposals that provide greater than 31% of homes as affordable housing will be strongly supported.' (see full Policy in Plan:MK)
- 2.3.11 Policy CT10 (Parking Provision) states 'A. Development proposals should meet the following parking requirements: 1. All development should meet the Council's full parking standards, unless mitigating circumstance dictate otherwise. 2. On-site parking should not be reduced below the Council's full expectations if this would increase additional pressure in off-site parking that could not be resolved by on-street parking controls. 3. Parking areas should be well designed in terms of safety, circulation, appearance and assist access by pedestrians and cyclists. 4. All residential, retail and employment uses should provide

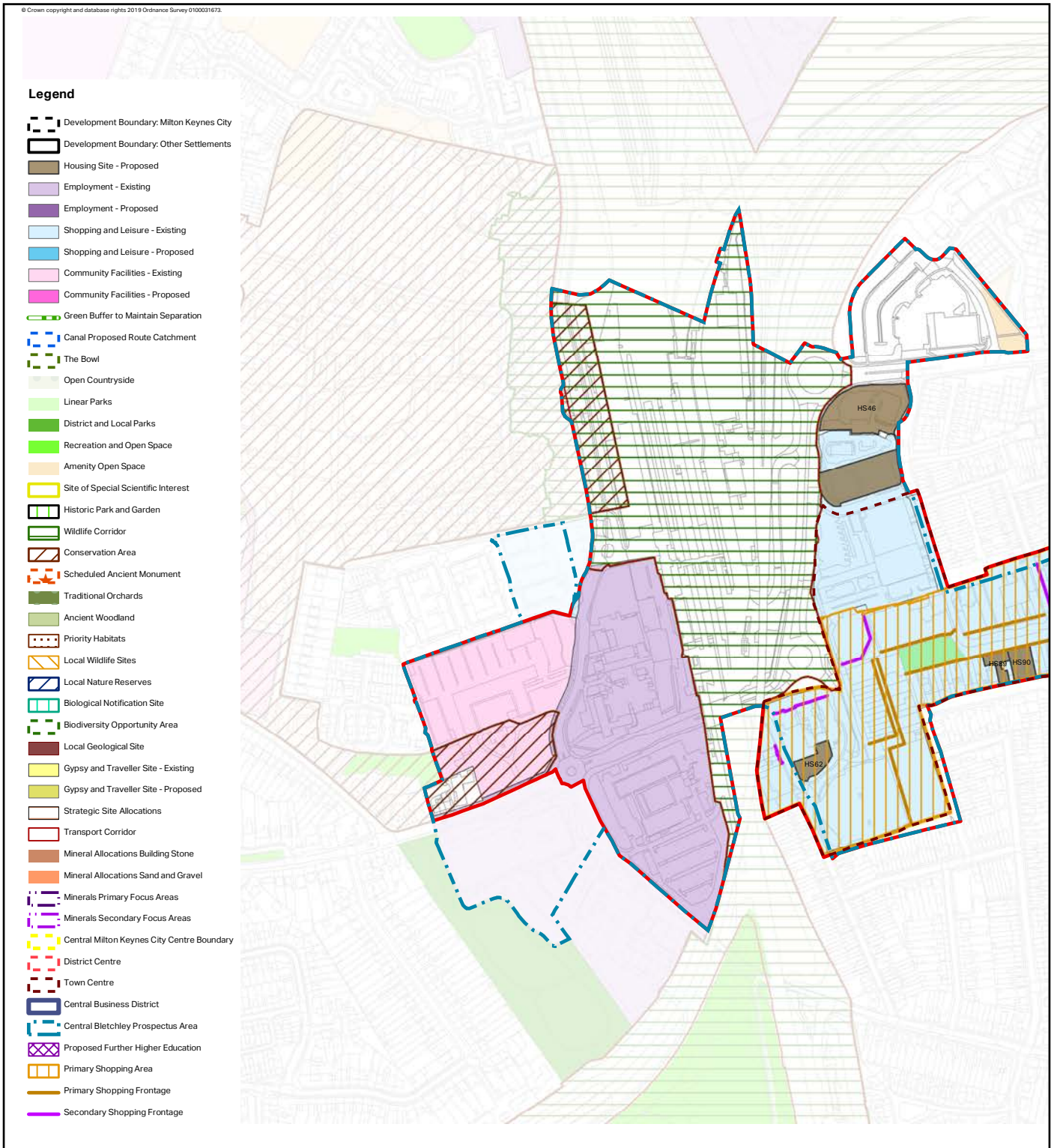


Figure 5: Policies Map - Bletchley Town Centre (Plan:MK)

electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) in accordance with the current Milton Keynes Parking Standards, and provide a forward thinking approach. For locations of rapid and fast charging points see policy CT6 D.’

2.3.12 Policy INF1 Delivering Infrastructure states “A. New development that generates a demand for infrastructure, facilities and resources will only be permitted if the necessary on and off-site infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impact of that development is either: 1. Already in place; or, 2. There is a reliable mechanism in place to ensure that infrastructure, facilities and resources will be delivered in the most appropriate places and at the earliest opportunity, to the required minimum high standards demanded by this Council and its partners. This might include improvements for highway schemes such as bus and rail provisions and enhancement for walking and cycling facilities, or the provision of improved and better connected green infrastructure, local health, shopping and recreational facilities.” (See full Policy in Plan:MK)

2.3.13 Policy CC1 (Public Art) states “A. The provision of public art and cultural activity can not only enhance the environment but also create a wide variety of other important benefits such as: 1. Improving the quality of life for local people. 2. Creating a local distinctiveness and a sense of place. 3. Enriching the cultural life of Milton Keynes and raise its profile. 4. Providing a focus and stimulus for tourism. B. A minimum of 0.5% of the gross development cost of proposals for 11 or more dwellings or non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more should, subject to viability, be allocated towards cultural wellbeing. This includes public art that enhances the cultural offer

and appearance of the development, its surroundings and Milton Keynes as a whole, and engaging local residents throughout.”

2.3.14 Policy ER9 (Character and Function of the Shopping Hierarchy) designates Bletchley as a town centre which will cater for the daily and weekly convenience and comparison shopping and service needs of its catchment population. As such Bletchley is a second-tier centre in the retail hierarchy of town centres within the Borough of Milton Keynes Planning permission will be granted for additional retail development within the primary shopping areas of existing ‘town centres’ as defined in national policy, and for other main town centre uses appropriate within town centres such as leisure and entertainment.

2.3.15 Policy ER16 (Hotel and Visitor Accommodation) states that new hotel and other purpose-built visitor accommodation will be allowed in CMK town and district centres, either as a single use or part of mixed use development opportunities.

2.3.16 Policy ER18 (Non-retail Uses on Ground Floors in Town Centres) identifies the interior of the Brunel Centre and the front of the former Sainsbury’s as a primary frontage. Within these primary frontages additional non-retail uses may be acceptable within a block of properties, subject to the frontages of all non-retail uses in that block not exceeding 45% of the total frontage of that block.

### **Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan**

2.3.17 The site lies within the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Area which was designated in May 2020.

2.3.18 The Town Council are currently gathering evidence for the neighbourhood plan.

## 2.4 National Planning Guidance

### National Planning Policy Framework

2.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021. The NPPF constitutes guidance and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

### Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

2.4.2 Para 60 states “To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”

### Ensuring the vitality of town centres

2.4.3 Para 86 states “Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.”

### Promoting Sustainable Transport

2.4.4 Para 105 states “Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.”

### Making effective use of land

2.4.5 Para 121 states “Local planning authorities, and other plan-making bodies, should take

a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs, including suitable sites on brownfield registers or held in public ownership, using the full range of powers available to them.”

### Achieving Appropriate Densities

2.4.6 Para 124 states “Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account: c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;”

### Achieving well-designed places

2.4.7 Para 130 states “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

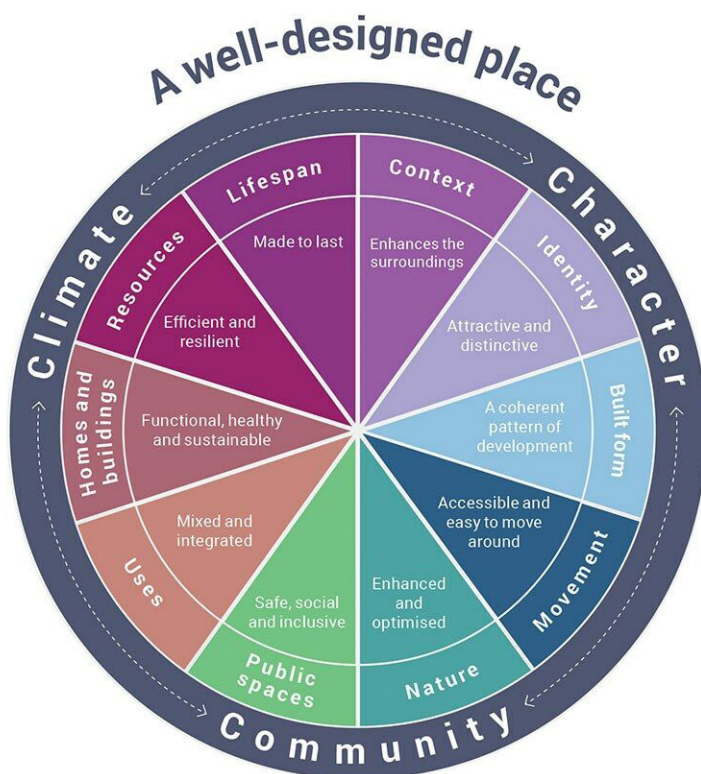
**Planning Practice Guidance**

2.4.8 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) adds further context to the NPPF, and is available to view online (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>). The guidance is a material consideration when taking decisions on planning applications.

**National Design Guide**

2.4.9 The National Design Guide (updated in January 2021) was created to ensure beautiful, enduring and successful places are delivered. It outlines 10 characteristics of well designed places:

1. Context - enhances the surroundings
2. Identity - attractive and distinctive
3. Built Form - a coherent pattern of development
4. Movement - accessible and easy to move around
5. Nature - enhanced and optimised
6. Public Spaces - safe, social and inclusive
7. Uses - mixed and integrated
8. Homes and Buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable
9. Resources - efficient and resilient
10. Lifespan - made to last



National Design Guide (January 2021)



2.4.10 Especially important in the context of this site is that it advocates compact forms of development that are walkable, public spaces that support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction, a mix of uses, streets with their edges defined by buildings, and memorable features or buildings that create a sense of place.

## 2.5 Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD

2.5.1 The Central Bletchley Urban Design Framework SPD was adopted in March 2022. The SPD will capitalise on the

significant opportunities flowing from the enhanced connectivity and accessibility, enabled by East-West Rail (EWR), through the provision of guidance which promotes holistic and inclusive renewal within Central Bletchley.

2.5.2 It will inform landowners and potential investors about the placemaking and development opportunities within Central Bletchley which will deliver on the agreed aspirations for the area. EWR will bring Oxford and Cambridge within a 40 minute train journey from Central Bletchley while London Euston is only 40 minutes away via the West Coast Mainline.

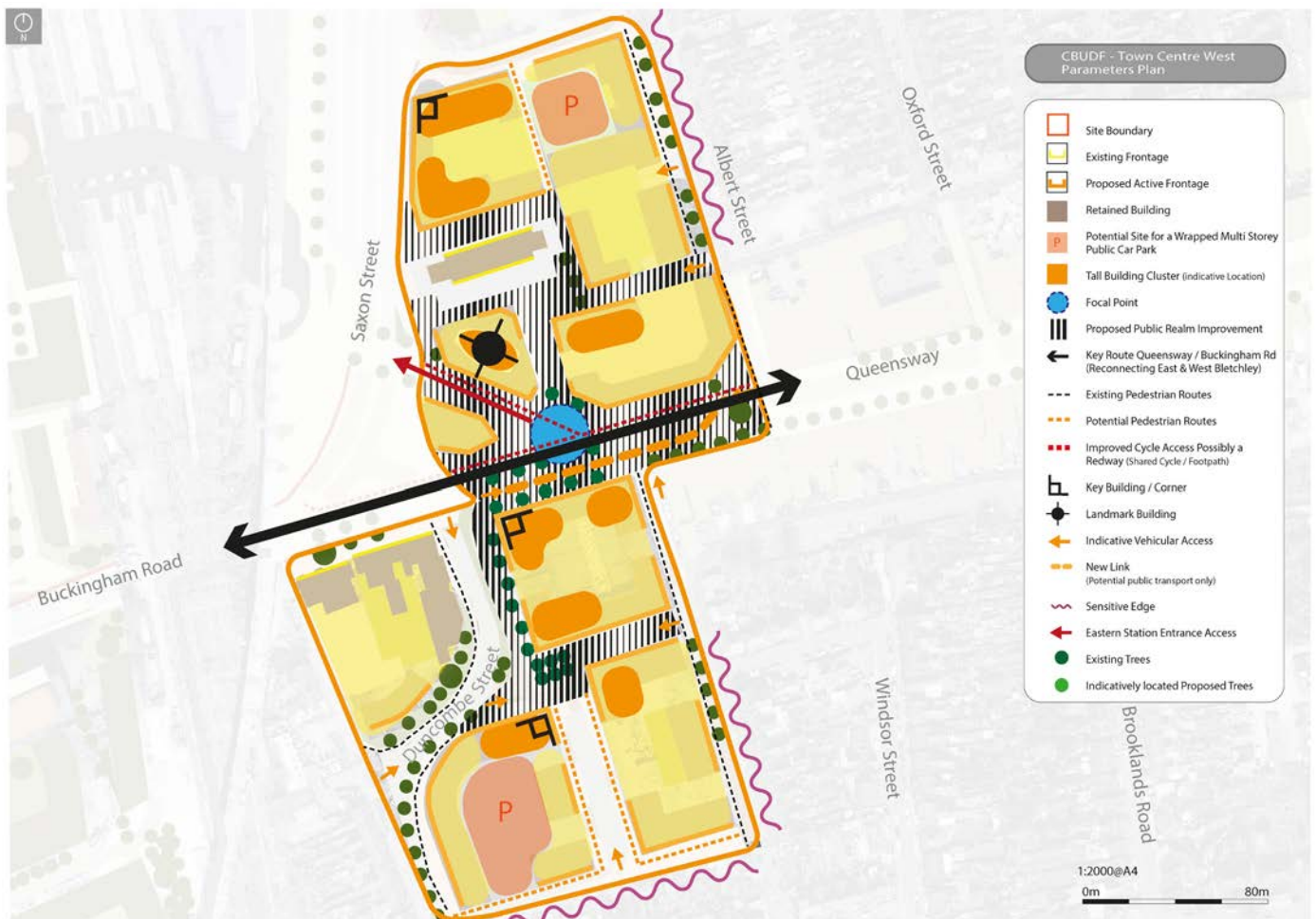
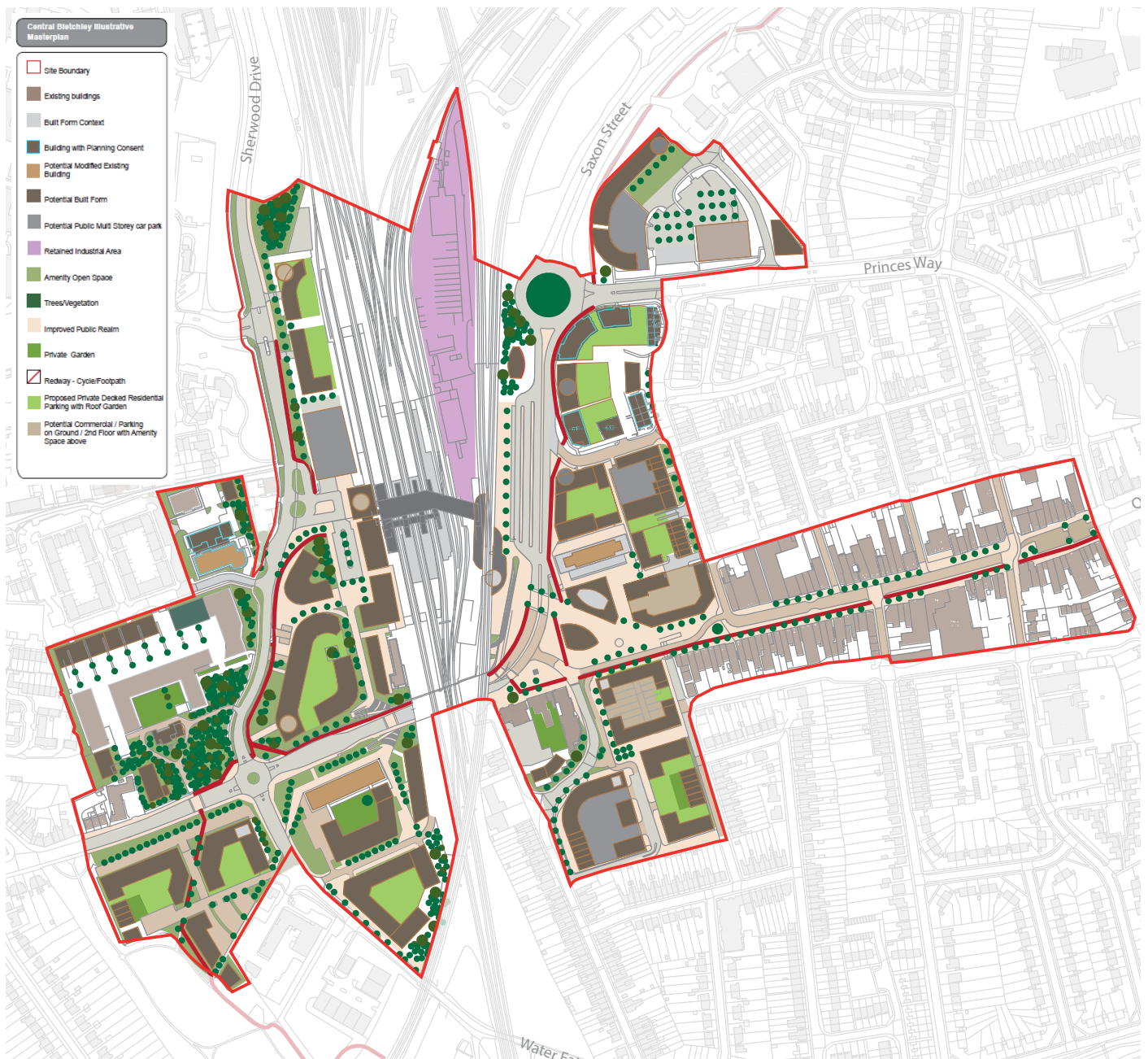


Figure 6: Urban Design Framework Parameters Plan (Town Centre West)



**Figure 7: Urban Design Framework Illustrative Masterplan**

2.5.3 The SPD builds on the approved Central Bletchley Prospectus through the provision of further detailed land use and design guidance for opportunity areas which will provide greater clarity, certainty and speed for applicants when preparing planning applications.

2.5.4 The site lies within the Town Centre West Opportunity Area (see figure 6 - SPD parameters plan) which is identified as

being suitable for redevelopment for a variety of land uses.

2.5.5 Development within the brief area will need to take account of the adjoining Opportunity Areas of Saxon Street and Town Centre East. The Illustrative Masterplan from the Urban Design Framework (Figure 7 above) indicates how the site might fit into the wider context.

## 2.6 Other Planning Guidance

### Other Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)/Documents (SPDs)

2.6.1 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents (SPG/SPDs) should be considered as material considerations when preparing any planning applications:

- Sustainable Construction SPD (2021)
- Parking Standards SPD (2023)
- New Residential Development Design Guide SPD (2012)
- Affordable Housing SPD (2020)
- Health Impact Assessment SPD (2021)
- Biodiversity SPD (June 2021)
- Planning Obligations SPD (2021)
- Designing Dementia-friendly Neighbourhoods SPD (2022)
- Milton Keynes Drainage Strategy – Development and Flood Risk SPG (2004)

## 2.7 Planning Summary

2.7.1 The Council seeks to promote the development of under-utilised land and buildings and create a well-designed, mixed use, high density development with active ground floor uses on this site. Housing as part of a mixed use scheme is encouraged by planning policy. The redevelopment of this site will deliver a major investment within the town centre and with the Bletchley Town Deal be part of the transformational regeneration of Central Bletchley, taking advantage of the growing accessibility of Bletchley town centre to Oxford and Cambridge with the completion of relevant sections of the East-West railway line.

2.7.2 The site is within the primary shopping area of Bletchley town centre. Main town centre uses, which are defined in the Glossary to the NPPF, for the site could include retail development, offices, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreational uses including cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls, arts, culture and tourism development including hotels and conference facilities, as well as residential development.

## **SECTION 3:**

# CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 It is important to have a full understanding of the site and surrounding area as this helps inform and underpin the opportunities, design principles and associated development principles plan.

### 3.2 Surrounding Area

3.2.1 To the north of the site is Stephenson House and the bus station. To the west of the site is Saxon Street and the railway line. Further west is the railway station, Milton Keynes College and Bletchley Park.

3.2.2 To the south of the site is an area of predominantly Victorian/Edwardian era terraced housing. To the east of the site is the main shopping street of Queensway.

### 3.3 The Site

3.3.1 The site includes the Brunel Centre, the former Sainsbury's store, Wilko, and Stanier Square. The total site area is 2.6 hectares (6.4 acres).

3.3.2 In terms of heritage assets, there are no listed buildings on or next to the site.

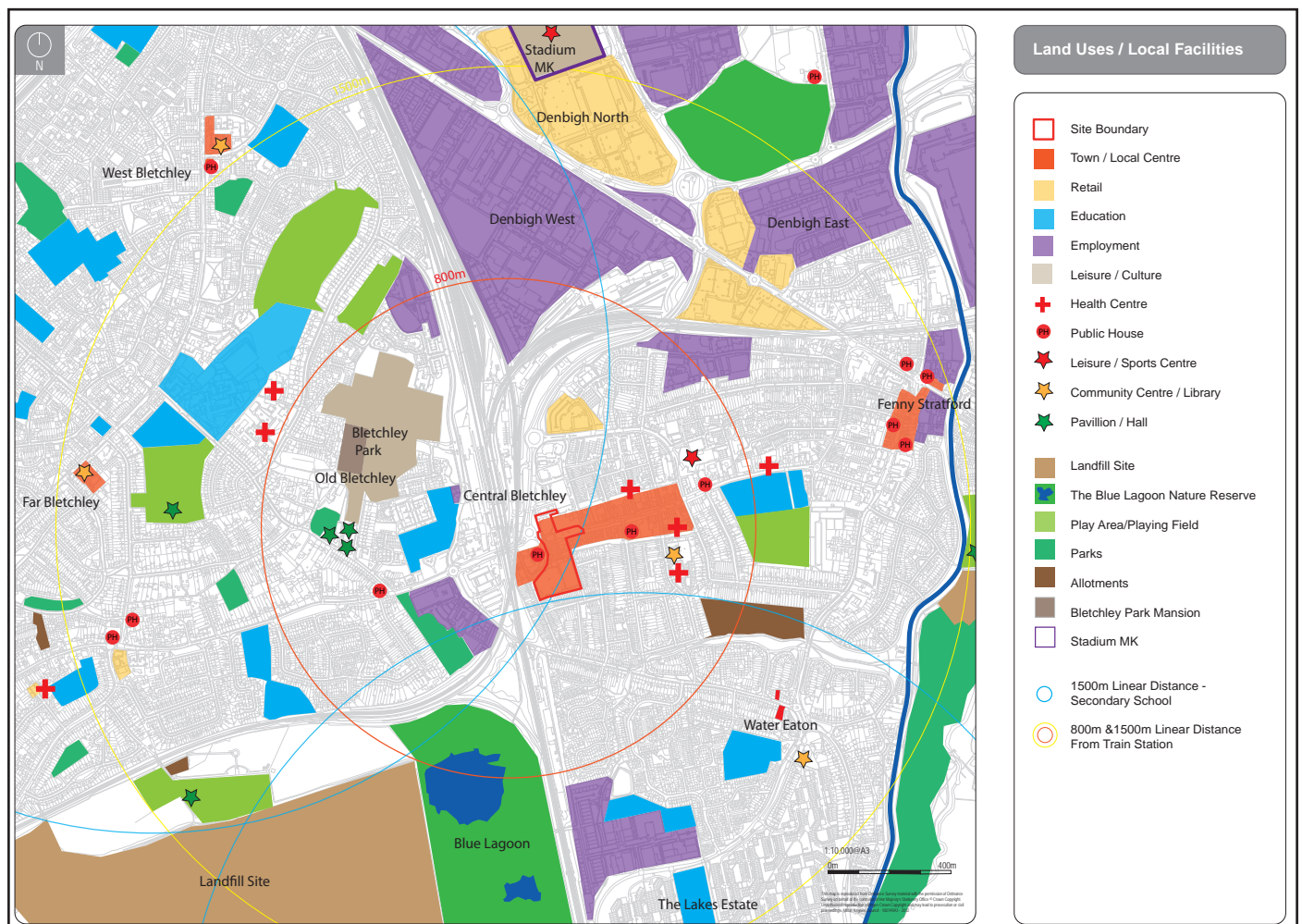


Figure 7: Existing Land Uses

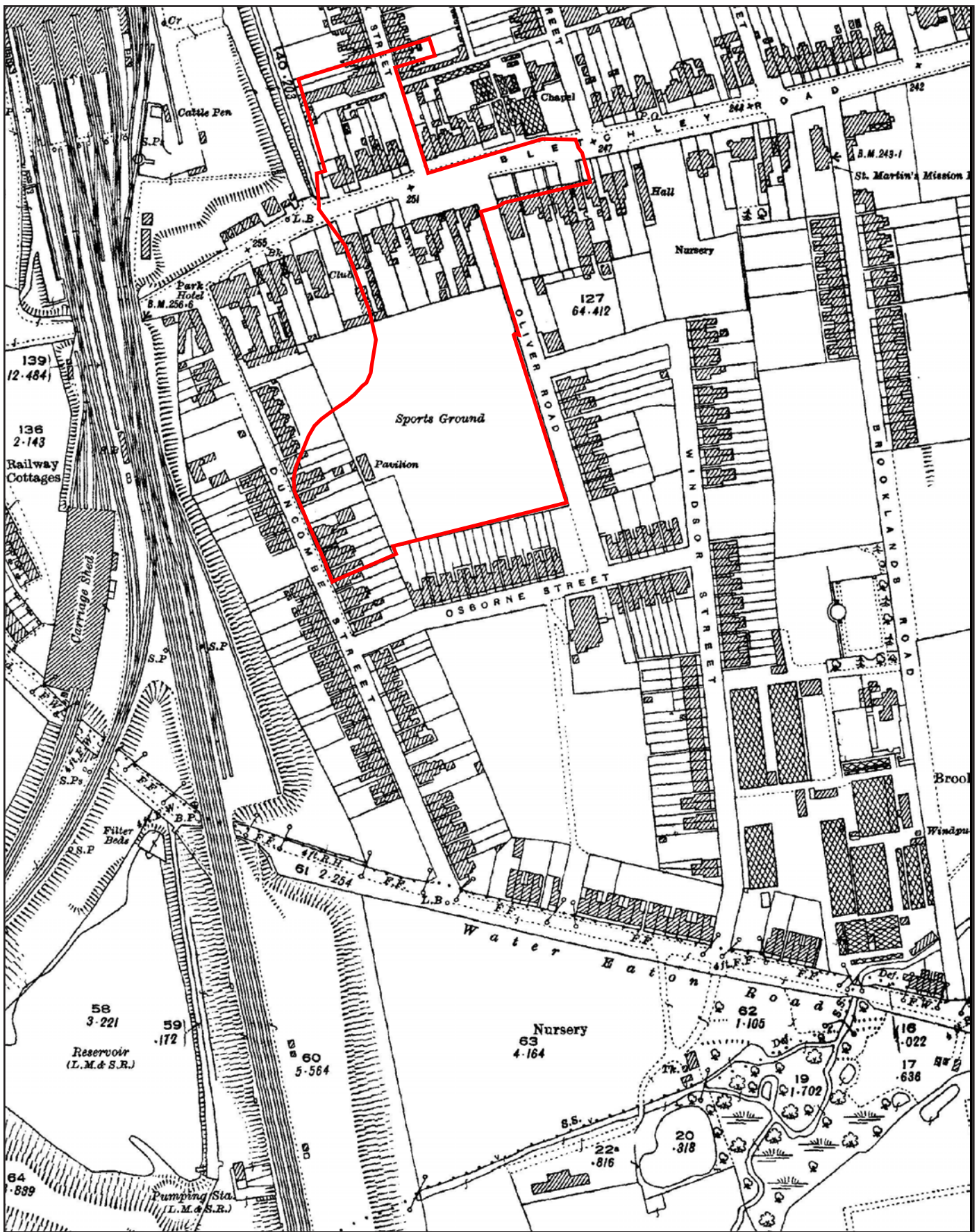


Figure 8: 1925 OS Map

## Brunel Centre

3.3.3 The Brunel Centre was built in the 1970s by Milton Keynes Development Corporation. The Brunel Centre provides a blank elevation to the street and lacks a landmark function. Pevsner states that “Derek Walker (MKDC’s Chief Architect) tried to impose the rigorous urban identity he was to realize more fully in Central MK. The result is not a great success; the very modest earlier buildings are drained of personality by the forbidding presence of the later ones. Instead of a light and airy shopping centre like Central MK’s, the Brunel Centre” forms with its “dark and sleekly gasketed glazing, an impenetrable backdrop to the specially-created Stanier Square at the head of Queensway.”

3.3.4 The Brunel Centre was built across the former Bletchley Road (see Figure 8: OS Map from 1925). It now creates a barrier which cuts off Queensway from Buckingham Road and the land to the west.

## Former Sainsbury’s Store

3.3.5 The store has been vacated by Sainsbury’s and remains unoccupied, although the adjoining car park is still in use. The site has been purchased by MKCC.

3.3.6 A survey undertaken by the Council has identified extensive asbestos-containing materials within the building. These materials have been disrupted by vandalism and break-ins. Demolition of the building is urgently required as repeated vandalism is causing a health and safety concern.



Brunel Centre from Chandos Place



Entrance to Brunel Centre from former Sainsbury’s store car park



View towards Brunel Centre from south with Stephenson House in background

### Stanier Square

3.3.7 Stanier Square is a pedestrianised area of public realm which is enclosed on three sides. There are a number of mature London Plane trees along its eastern and southern edges. The Square includes a variety of street furniture including a bandstand, seating, lighting and litter bins and information boards and signage. The Square is also used for specialist markets.



Stanier Square

### Wilko

3.3.8 The Wilko store was constructed in the early 2000s. The building is serviced off Locke Road, with the service yard fronting the parallel Saxon Street. Active frontages are only provided to the pedestrian routes on the southern and eastern edges of the building.



Pedestrian route to Stephenson House



Locke Road which is used for servicing provides a barrier to pedestrian movement



### 3.4 Access and Transport

#### Vehicular

3.4.1 The site is located at the junction of Buckingham Road and Sherwood Drive (see figure 9). The B4034 Buckingham Road is a busy main road running into and around Bletchley town centre.

#### Public Transport

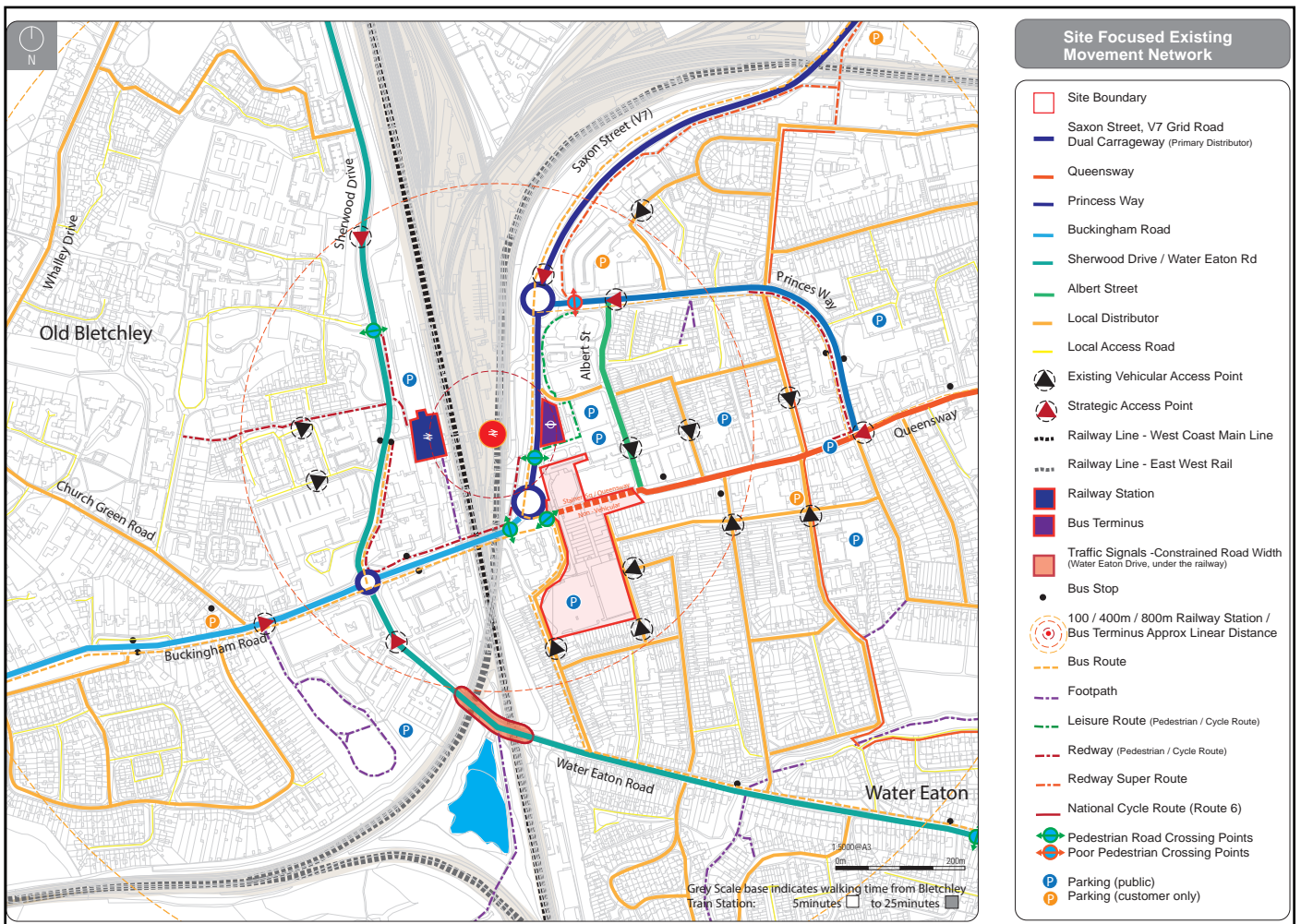
3.4.2 The site is well served by public transport. The town's bus station lies immediately to the north of the site. It is located a short walking distance from Bletchley Station which provides regular services to London Euston and Milton Keynes Central. The

new East West Rail service will add further destinations, including Oxford and Bedford.

#### Walking and Cycling

3.4.3 Pedestrian links are provided internally within the Brunel Centre. Links around the edges of the former Sainsbury's store, Wilko and Brunel Centre are unattractive and in places incomplete.

3.4.4 Locke Road, which is at a lower level than the Brunel Roundabout, currently acts as a service road for Wilko and the Brunel Centre. It provides a barrier for pedestrian movement and creates a poor frontage to the public realm.



**Figure 9: Existing Movement Network**



Figure 10: Contextual Analysis

3.4.4 There are areas of poor quality public realm such as the area in front of Stephenson House. Blank frontages and narrow or discontinuous pavements along Oliver Road and Duncombe Street provide a poor pedestrian environment.

3.4.5 There is a redway along the northern side of Buckingham Road and Saxon Street which terminates at the pedestrian crossing adjacent to Stephenson House.



Steps up from Brunel Centre towards Chandos Place



Oliver Road looking north



Area of poor quality public realm in front of Stephenson House

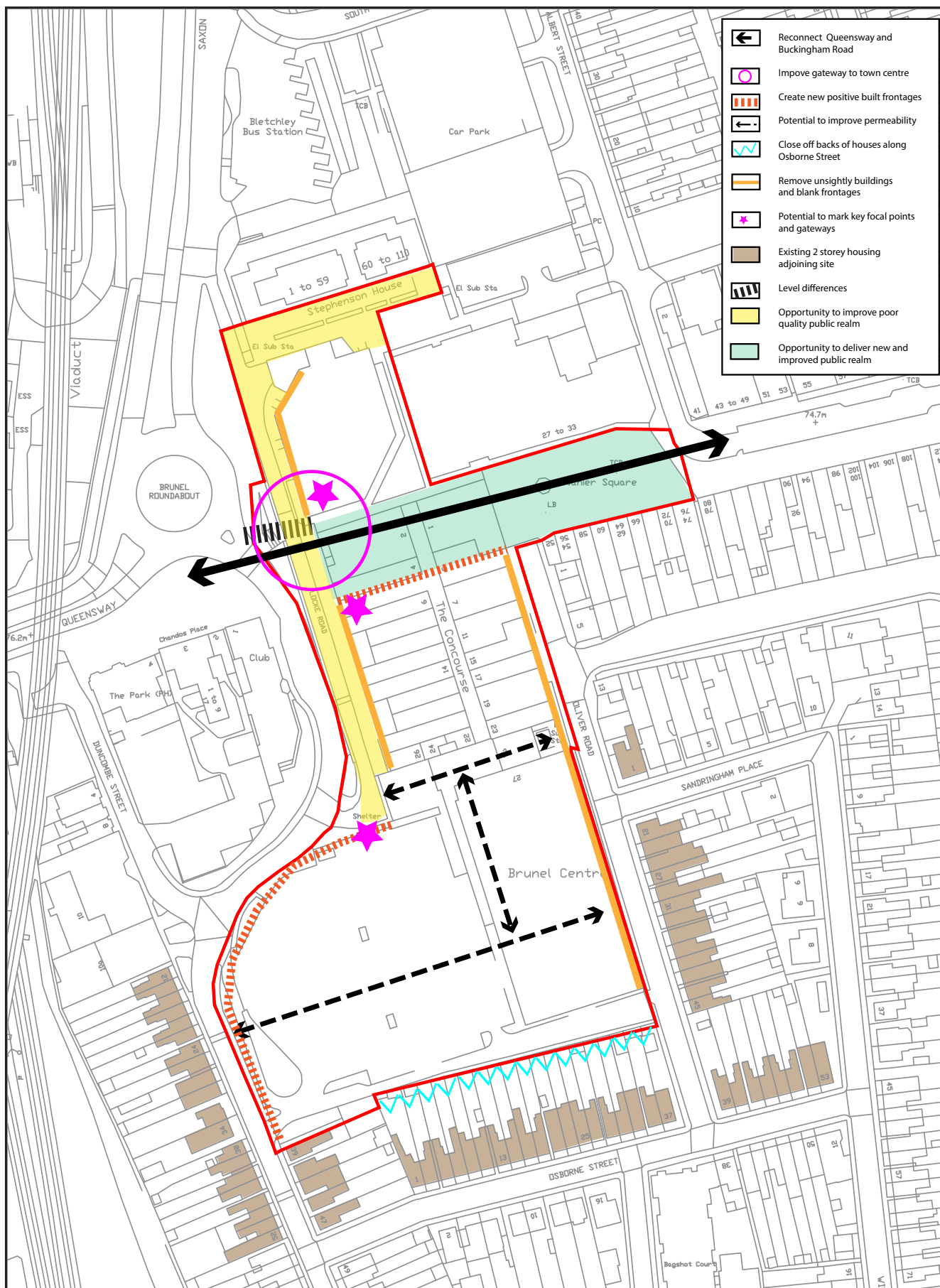


Figure 11: Opportunities and Constraints

### 3.5 Opportunities and Constraints

3.5.1 The key opportunities and constraints are set out in Figure 11 and summarised below:

#### Opportunities

- Reconnect Queensway and Buckingham Road for pedestrians and cyclists and deliver new area of high quality public realm
- Improve gateway to the town centre
- Create positive built frontages to the public realm
- Improve permeability and a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improve quality of existing public realm
- 'Close off' backs of houses along Osborne Street, improving their security
- Remove unsightly buildings and blank frontages
- Mark key focal points and gateways
- Rationalise roads and entrances

#### Constraints

- Parts of the site are fronted by 2 storey housing
- Level differences between Brunel Roundabout and the Brunel Centre
- Accommodating servicing

3.5.2 Developers will need to provide their own opportunities and constraints plan as part of the design process in order to demonstrate a good understanding of the site and its context.



The Concourse - internal street within the Brunel Centre



Pedestrian route from Chandos Place through to Stanier Square



Duncombe Street looking north to Brunel roundabout

# **SECTION 4:** DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Any proposals for the site should be informed by the following development principles. These principles have been informed by the current planning policy position, the contextual analysis, and the opportunities and constraints. The principles seek to capitalise on the site's outstanding location.
- 4.1.2 Where relevant, the principles are spatially represented by the accompanying Development Principles Plan (figure 12).
- 4.1.3 Development proposals should be based on a thorough appraisal of the site's context.

## 4.2 Land Use

- 4.2.1 Mixed use development with retail development at ground floor level will be encouraged. New active frontages created by the development should be predominantly retail uses (i.e. 55% of the total frontage of the block).
- 4.2.2 Retail development to serve the daily and weekly convenience and comparison shopping needs of the growing local population would be appropriate.
- 4.2.3 Residential development, of an appropriate density to reflect the ambition of achieving a more compact Central Bletchley which is centred around a regionally-significant public transport hub, will be encouraged.
- 4.2.4 Where residential development is proposed, affordable housing will need to be provided and is expected to meet or exceed current MKCC standards.
- 4.2.5 In addition to retail and residential development, a range of complementary "main town centre uses" (as defined

by NPPF) including evening economy, community/leisure and cultural will be supported.

- 4.2.6 MKCC is seeking to rationalise its property assets via a 'hub-and-spoke' approach to service delivery and this area is seen as an ideal location to accommodate a multi-use community hub, which might potentially house Bletchley Library. MKCC's Council Plan Delivery Plan 2023/24 promotes a new Health Hub in Bletchley as part of the regeneration of the town centre. Health facilities would be appropriate on this site.
- 4.2.6 The site's location near to the railway station, the major tourist attraction of Bletchley Park, home of the codebreakers in World War 2, the National Museum of Computing, and the South Central Institute of Technology would support office, business and hotel uses.

## 4.3 Layout

- 4.3.1 The redevelopment of the Brunel Centre will reconnect Queensway and Buckingham Road. It is envisaged this new 'street' will be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists in the form of an east-west redway and public realm. An option to link bus services through to Queensway is also being considered as part of the Mass Rapid Transit Study.
- 4.3.2 A new gateway to Queensway will be created as a result of the redevelopment of the Brunel Centre. This gateway should be marked by key buildings, or building elements, that stand out from their background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.
- 4.3.3 The existing Wilko store could be retained within development proposals. However, if



Example of residential above active ground floor frontage

the store were to be redeveloped, it should be replaced by a landmark building.

- 4.3.4 The Brunel Centre is an inward facing development with blank elevations fronting the public realm. New development must be outward facing with active ground floor frontages facing and framing the public realm.
- 4.3.5 In addition to the Brunel Centre, the former Sainsbury’s store provides a blank elevation to Oliver Road. The building is set back from Duncombe Street behind a large area of surface car parking. The redevelopment of the former Sainsbury’s store site should address both Duncombe Street and Oliver Road with active frontages. New streets should be inserted to increase permeability and create a more fine-grained block structure.
- 4.3.6 New streets created within the former Sainsbury’s store site will provide access to car parking and servicing. Although this requirement represents a constraint, active frontages should be maximised.

The creation of significant lengths of blank wall and wide service yards will not be permitted.

- 4.3.7 Servicing should be designed to be as discreet as possible to avoid any negative impact of the building frontage onto the surrounding streets.

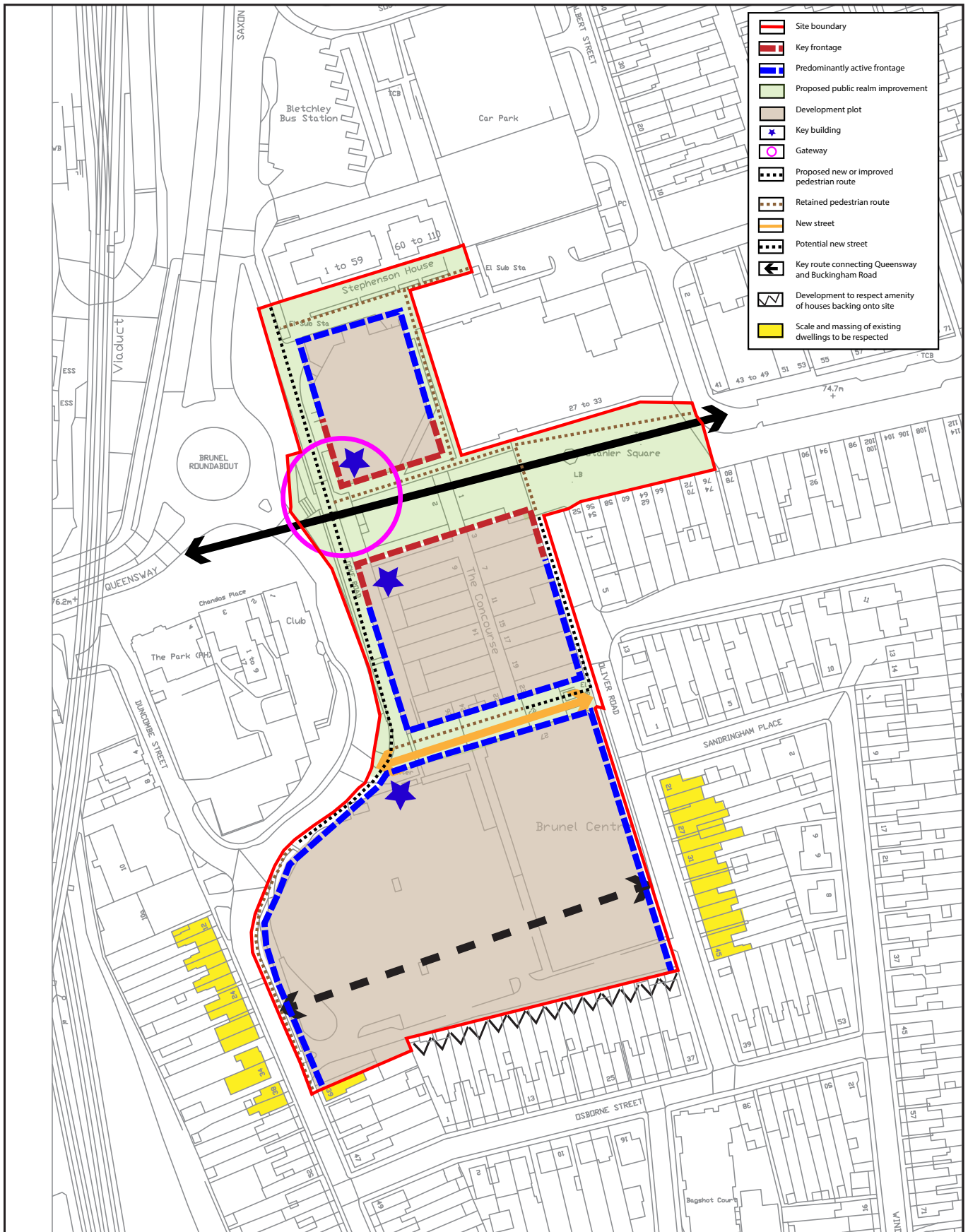
**4.4 Density and Building Heights**

- 4.4.1 Plan:MK states that net housing densities should be between 150-250 dwellings per hectare.
- 4.4.2 Taller buildings will be sought that capitalise on Central Bletchley’s sustainable location and build on the density policy within Plan:MK Policy SD16. Proposals should consider their impact on amenity in line with Policies D3 and D5 in Plan:MK. In particular, there is scope for taller elements to mark the gateway into Queensway.
- 4.4.3 The scale and massing of development will need to respect the existing two storey development along Duncombe Street, Oliver Road, and Osborne Street.

**4.5 Public Realm and Landscape**

- 4.5.1 A key new piece of human-scaled and pedestrian friendly public realm will be created through the re-connection of Queensway to Buckingham Road. The new area of public realm will be designed as a comprehensive scheme together with Stanier Square.
- 4.5.2 This area of public realm should be designed to accommodate a range of activities and events. Space could be provided for small kiosks, spillout areas from cafes, market stalls, as well as seating and pedestrian and cycle movement. High quality landscaping, both hard and soft,





**Figure 12: Development Principles Plan**

including tree planting, and the avoidance of street clutter will be sought.

4.5.3 Through the Town Deal a project is being taken forward to improve the existing public realm along Queensway. The design of the new area of public realm and improvements to Stanier Square should take account of proposals for Queensway.

4.5.4 Proposals should also fund improvements to the public realm around Stephenson House making it more legible, and pedestrian friendly.

4.5.5 Development proposals should make a positive contribution to the amenity of the area and the hard and soft landscape detailing will be an important factor in its success.

4.5.6 Development proposals should be accompanied by a plan illustrating indicative landscape principles for the site.

4.5.7 Opportunities to include green infrastructure as part of the proposed building, either in the form of a green roof, roof garden, growing spaces, green wall, terraces, balconies and/or planters, can provide amenity landscape at various levels of a building design.

#### 4.6 Architectural Approach

4.6.1 The architectural approach to development, should be informed by the contextual analysis. Development should complement and add to the character of Milton Keynes, but this should not constrain architectural creativity with a contemporary design sought.

4.6.2 All buildings should therefore be a high standard of design, should enhance their surroundings and be constructed from high quality, durable materials.



Integrated parking solution (Vizion Development, CMK) where the car park entrance is kept to a minimum and designed as part of building facade

#### 4.7 Residential Amenity

4.7.1 Residential development should provide for a good standard of amenity, in terms of privacy, sunlight and daylight.

4.7.2 Provision should be made for private amenity space in the form of private gardens for ground floor flats, balconies, roof gardens or terraces, or private shared gardens. Balconies should be designed as an integral part of the building and consider privacy, useable space, and climate.

#### 4.8 Access and Movement

##### Pedestrian and Cycle Movement

4.8.1 Apart from the Concourse, which is the internal street within the Brunel Centre, all existing pedestrian links should be retained. New streets created through the redevelopment of the former Sainsbury's store site will incorporate provision for pedestrians. The scheme should widen and improve the existing footway running along the western side of Oliver Road. Gaps in the footway along the eastern edge of Duncombe Street will be closed alongside the creation of a new built frontage to the street.

- 4.8.2 Improved cycle access should be provided between Queensway and Buckingham Road, possibly in the form of a redway.
- 4.8.3 Locke Road, which is at a lower level than the Brunel Roundabout, currently acts as a service road for Wilko and the Brunel Centre. It provides a barrier for pedestrian movement and creates a poor frontage to the public realm. Better pedestrian links should be provided as part of public realm improvements to Locke Road, including downgrading of its servicing function or possible closure and integration into the town centre public realm. Development should also remove the existing concrete panels and either regrade the land or replace with more attractive alternative.

#### **Vehicular Movement**

- 4.8.4 Vehicular access will be provided through new streets created as part of the redevelopment of the site.
- 4.8.5 Servicing of the southern portion of the site can be achieved through the new streets created within the former Sainsbury's site. The northern portion of the site would probably still need to be serviced from Locke Road.

#### **Car Parking**

- 4.8.6 The Council will be commissioning a parking strategy for Central Bletchley. The strategy will consider demands for parking in the town centre, appropriate future provision of parking in the town centre, the appropriate mix of bay types and lengths of stay and any potential future parking restrictions and enforcement. Development of the site will need to take account of the outcomes of this work.

- 4.8.7 Car parking for the residential uses should be provided in the form of integrated basement or undercroft parking.
- 4.8.8 Car and powered two wheelers parking requirements shall be in accordance with the parking standards in force at the time of planning submission. Electric vehicle parking points will be expected as part of the car parking provision.
- 4.8.9 A development's parking requirement will normally be provided within the development site, or where this is not possible, elsewhere in an agreed location at the developer's expense.

#### **Cycle Parking**

- 4.8.10 Provision shall be made for secure cycle parking and, within commercial development, facilities for cyclists (changing rooms, showers, lockers etc.) in order to encourage greater cycle usage. Proposals should provide, as a minimum, the cycle parking standards in force at the time of the planning submission.
- 4.8.11 The cycle parking should be well-lit, with a sense of personal safety and be included in any CCTV set up. Cycle parking within the public realm should be overlooked by dwellings and/or active frontages and should not be screened.

#### **4.9 Servicing and Utilities**

- 4.9.1 The layout and design of buildings shall accommodate requirements and access for servicing, waste storage and collection and utilities equipment. Methods of dealing with, and integrating servicing, waste storage and collection shall reflect the town centre location and form part of the building envelope, with no separate

enclosures. Service yards and parking entrances should be integrated into the design and should not dominate any elevation. Servicing and delivery vehicles should be able to enter the site and park clear of the highway with space provided to subsequently turn and exit the site.

- 4.9.2 Servicing arrangements should minimise any adverse impact upon the street scene or residential amenity.
- 4.9.3 Where Anglian Water requires the diversion of, or any other works to, adopted sewers within the site, the developer is responsible for all works and costs incurred in meeting their requirements. The sewers shall be constructed in accordance with the current edition of 'Sewers for Adoption' irrespective of their future adoption status.
- 4.9.4 All new developments should be encouraged to provide superfast broadband. Larger developments of 30 or more homes can have the infrastructure installed for free if they start the application process very early in the life cycle of their developments. All the necessary information for developers is on the Openreach website.
- 4.9.5 Appendix C provides details of the locations of utilities within the brief area.

#### 4.10 Sustainable Construction & Energy Efficiency

- 4.10.1 Milton Keynes has a history of pioneering approaches to sustainable design new technologies and aspires to be the greenest city in the world. Plan:MK commits to continue the city's dedication to high environmental standards, green urban landscapes and being 'different by design'.



- 4.10.2 Alongside this are the Council's objectives of being carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050. Therefore, proposals for the site should look to meet or surpass the sustainable standards laid out in Policy SC1 of Plan:MK and the subsequent Sustainable Construction SPD. As such development should be aiming for a BREEAM rating of Outstanding (>85%) level of certification which requires implementing innovation across all aspects of the project.

#### 4.11 Ecology

- 4.11.1 Local Plan Policy NE3 on Biodiversity Enhancement has the objective of achieving positive gains for biodiversity in the design of new development. All new development exceeding 5 dwellings (in the case of residential development) or incorporating gross floorspace in excess of 1000m<sup>2</sup> (in the case of other development) will be required to incorporate proposals to enhance biodiversity.
- 4.11.2 New buildings provide many opportunities for wildlife with benefits for biodiversity and the building occupiers. Specialist boxes

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or spaces are available (for example bird/bat bricks, swallow nest cups and sparrow terraces). Elements such as climbing plants can create habitat and enhance the visual appearance of buildings, as well as providing cooling, insulation and microclimate moderation.

## **4.12 Flooding and Drainage**

4.12.1 When making planning applications it is essential that, to get the best results, the integration of water and SuDS options are considered early in the site evaluation and planning process, not just at the detailed design stage. Full consideration of SuDS at the pre-application and outline stage is important to ensuring surface water management is fully integrated into the development, leading to an effective drainage design, providing multiple benefits and with costs considered from the outset.

4.12.2 Further guidance and information can be found in the “Milton Keynes Council Surface Water Drainage; Local Guidance for Planning Applications”, which is available on the Council’s website.

## **4.13 Public Art**

4.13.1 Milton Keynes has a long tradition of successfully integrating public art into all major developments, and has an international reputation both for its public artworks and the use of planning policy in relation to public art.

4.13.2 Public art on sites covered by this brief will be delivered in line with Council Policy and could be built into the development.

# **APPENDIX A:** LAND OWNERSHIP



- Milton Keynes Development Partnership
- Milton Keynes City Council
- Adopted Highway

Scale  
1:1250@A4

# **APPENDIX B:** PLAN:MK POLICIES



The following is a list of relevant Plan:MK Policies:

### **Homes and Neighbourhoods:**

- DS1 Settlement Hierarchy
- DS2 Housing Strategy
- DS4 Retail and Leisure Development Strategy

### **Strategic Site Allocations:**

- SD1 Placemaking Principles for Development
- SD16 Central Bletchley Prospectus

### **Economy and Retail:**

- ER9 Character and Function of the Shopping Hierarchy
- ER16 Hotel and Visitor Accommodation
- ER17 Tourism, Visitor and Cultural Destinations
- ER18 Non-retail Uses on Ground Floors in Town Centres

### **Homes and Neighbourhoods:**

- HN1 Housing Mix and Density
- HN2 Affordable Housing
- HN3 Supported and Specialist Housing
- HN4 Amenity, Accessibility and Accessibility of Homes

### **Transport and Connectivity:**

- CT1 Sustainable Transport Network
- CT2 Movement and Access
- CT3 Walking and Cycling
- CT5 Public Transport
- CT6 Low Emission Vehicles
- CT9 Digital Communications
- CT10 Parking Provision

### **Education and Health:**

- EH5 Health Facilities
- EH6 Delivery of Health Facilities in New Development
- EH7 Promoting Healthy Communities

### **Delivering Infrastructure:**

- INF1 Delivering Infrastructure

### **Managing and Reducing Flood Risk:**

- FR1 Managing Flood Risk
- FR2 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) And Integrated Flood Risk Management

### **Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity:**

- NE3 Biodiversity And Geological Enhancement
- NE4 Green Infrastructure
- NE6 Environmental Pollution

### **Public Open Space, Leisure and Recreation:**

- L4 Public Open Space in New Estates

### **Design:**

- D1 Designing A High Quality Place
- D2 Creating A Positive Character
- D3 Design Of Buildings
- D4 Innovative Design And Construction
- D5 Amenity And Street Scene

### **Culture and Community:**

- CC1 Public Art
- CC2 Location of Community Facilities
- CC3 Protection of Community Facilities
- CC4 New Community Facilities

### **Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy:**

- SC1 Sustainable Construction
- SC2 Community Energy Networks And Large Scale Renewable Energy Schemes
- SC3 Low Carbon And Renewable Energy Generation

# APPENDIX C:

## UTILITIES



**Contact Us**  
 SGW Safety Admin Team:  
 0800 912 1722  
 Email:  
 plantlocation@sgn.co.uk

Date Requested: 20/04/2023  
 Job Reference: 20231712  
 Site Location: 487073 233529  
 Requested by: Mr Grant Gibson  
 Your Scheme/Reference: Brunel Centre

Scale: 1:2050 (When plotted at A3)

This plan shows the location of those pipes owned by Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) by virtue of being a licensed Gas Transporter (GT). Gas pipes owned by other GTs or third parties may also be present in this area but are not shown on this plan. Information with regard to such pipes should be obtained from the relevant owners. No warranties are given with regard to the accuracy of the information shown on this plan. Service pipes, valves, siphons, sub-connections etc, are not shown but their presence should be anticipated. You should be aware that a small percentage of our pipes/assets may be undergoing review and will temporarily be highlighted in yellow. If your proposed works are close to one of these pipes, you should contact the SGN Safety Admin Team on 0800 912 1722 for advice. No liability of any kind whatsoever is accepted by SGN or its agents, servants or sub-contractors for any error or omission contained herein. Safe digging practices, in accordance with HS (GM)7, must be used to verify and establish the actual position of mains, pipes, services and other apparatus on site before any mechanical plant is used. It is your responsibility to ensure that plant location information is provided to all persons (whether direct labour or sub-contractors) working for you on or near gas apparatus. Information included on this plan should not be referred to beyond a period of 28 days from the date of issue.

**Report damage immediately – KEEP EVERYONE AWAY FROM THE AREA**  
 0800 111 999

**Low Pressure Mains** (Red solid line)  
**Medium Pressure Mains** (Blue dashed line)  
**Intermediate Pressure Mains** (Green dotted line)  
**High Pressure Mains** (Yellow dash-dot line)

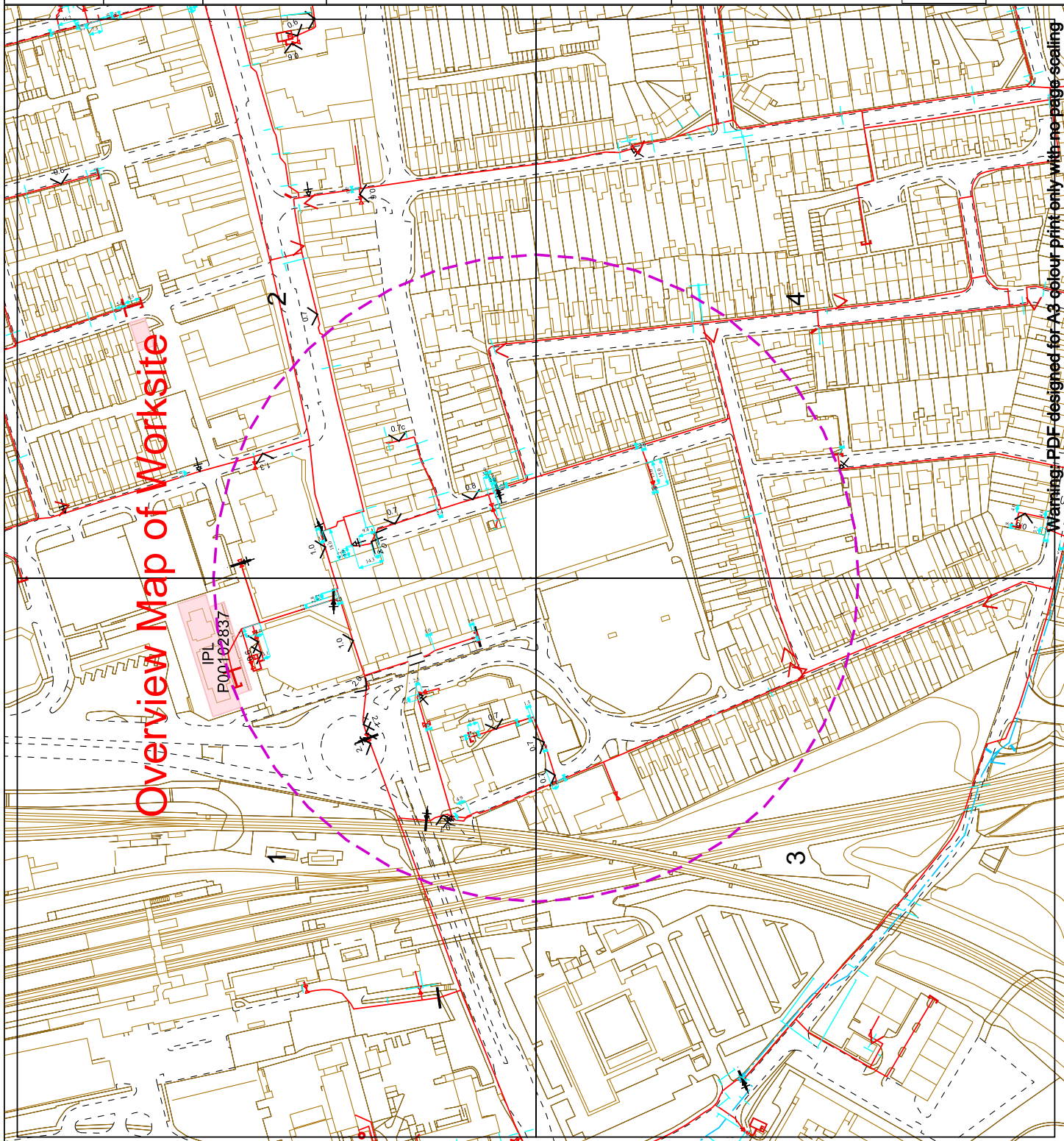
**LAs** (Pink rectangle)  
**GTS** (Green rectangle)

**Some Examples Of Plant Items**  
 Valve (Symbol with 'X')  
 Siphon (Circle with 'S')  
 Depth of Cover (Symbol with 'V')  
 Diameter Change (Symbol with 'D')  
 Material Change (Symbol with 'M')

**Digsite:** Line (Dashed purple line)  
 Area (Dotted purple area)



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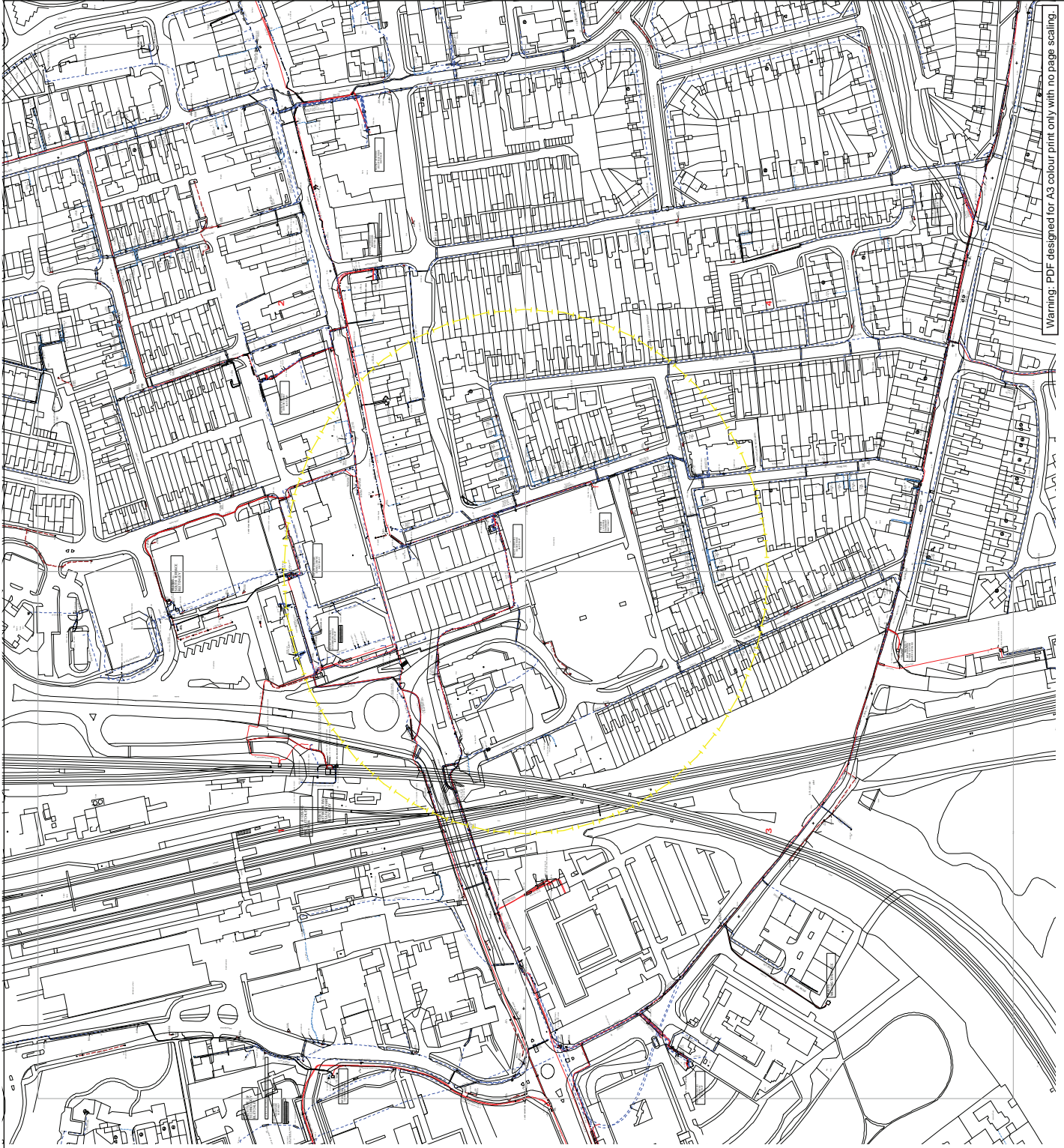
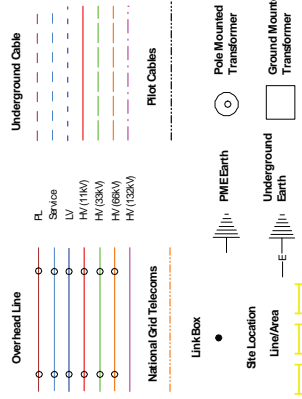


**Overview Map of Worksite**

**Warning: PDF designed for A3 colour print only with no page-sealing**

Report damage immediately - KEEP EVERYONE AWAY FROM THE AREA  
0800 6783 105

Date Requested: 20/04/2023  
Job Reference: 29231712  
Site Location: 497072.233528  
Requested by: Mr Grant Gibson  
Your Scheme/Reference: Brunel Centre



Warning: PDF designed for A3 colour print only with no page scaling.

# LEGEND

- EXISTING PLANT
- EXISTING PLANT

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Head Office  
CityFibre Holdings Ltd  
15 Bedford Street,  
London,  
W1C2 9HE  
Tel: 0845 293 0774  
Web: www.cityfibre.com

Asset Office  
CityFibre Holdings Ltd,  
Rutherford House,  
Birchwood,  
Warrington,  
WA3 6ZH  
Email: asset.team@cityfibre.com

### Disclaimer:

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Project

Plant Enquiry

Drawing

Existing Plant

Drawn by:

smallworld

Date: 20/04/2023

Drawing No.

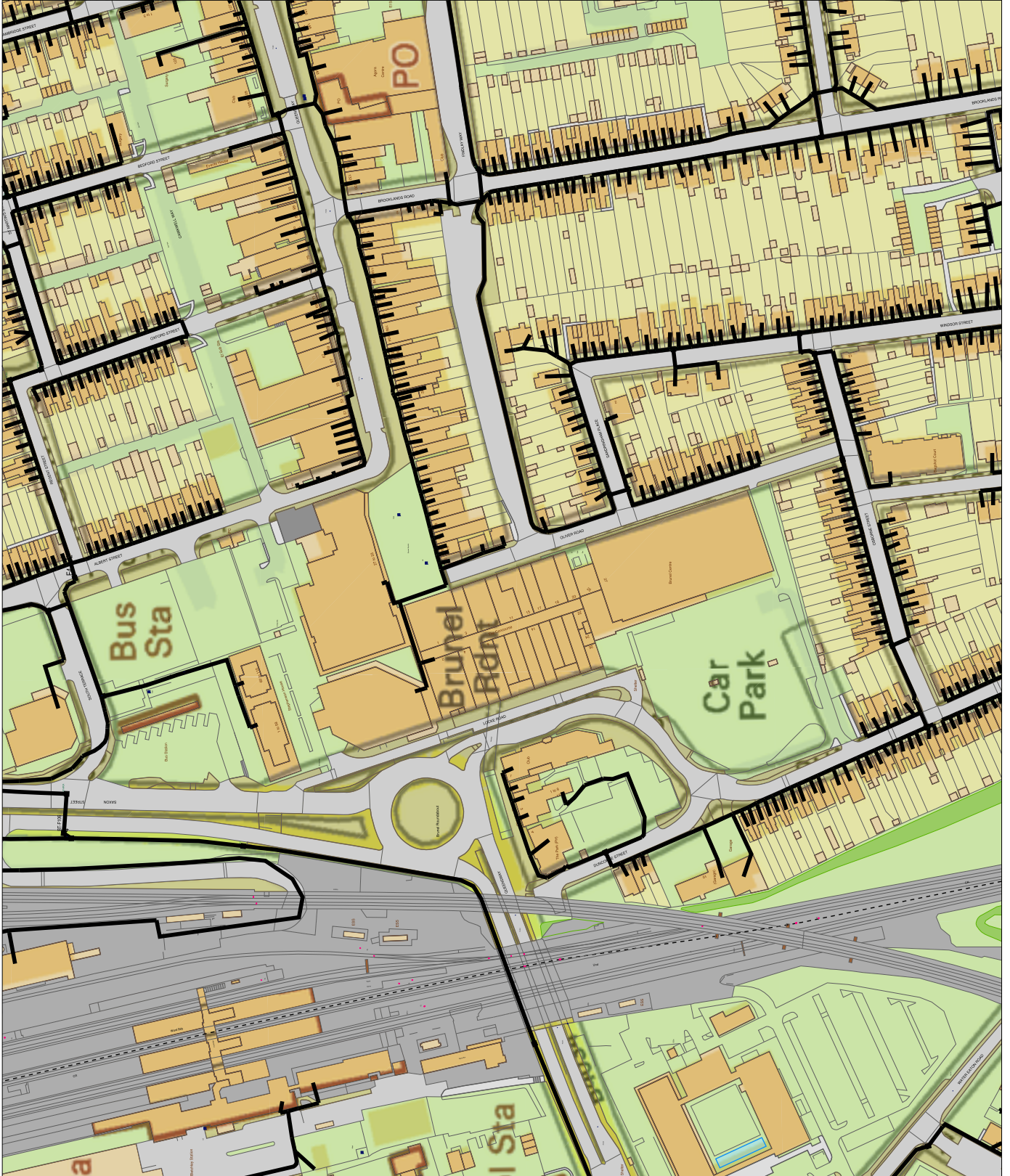
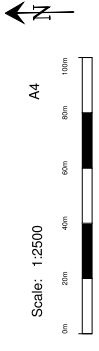
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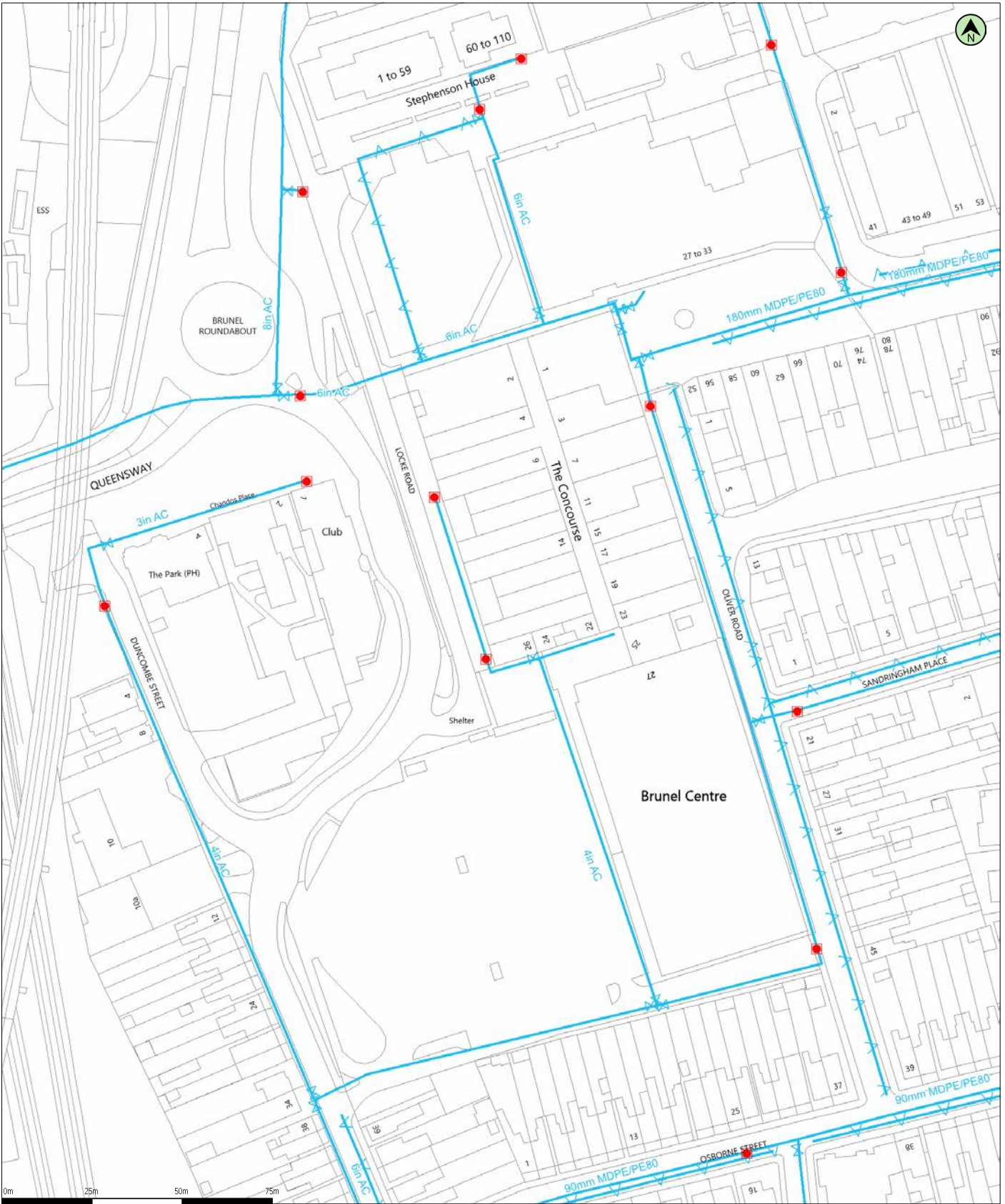
Revision

001

Scale: 1:2500

A4





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Data updated: 31/03/23

Scale: 1:1000  
Map Centre: 487052.233559  
Date: 20/04/23

Clean Water Plan A3  
Powered by digdat

Potable Water		Fitting	
Raw Water		Hydrant	
Decommissioned Water			

Please note: Not all fittings are shown on the map

grant.gibson@milton-keynes.gov.uk
Brunel Centre



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Scale: 1:1000  
 Date: 20/04/23  
 Map Centre: 487052,233559

Wastewater Plan A3  
 Powered by digdat

Foul Sewer		Outfall*		Sewage Treatment Works	
Surface Sewer		Inlet*		Public Pumping Station	
Combined Sewer		Manhole*		Decommissioned Pumping Station	
Final Effluent					
Rising Main*					
Private Sewer*					
Decommissioned Sewer*					

\* (Colour denotes effluent type)

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Brunel Centre



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