

A stylized map of Europe is shown in the background, composed of thin, light gray contour lines. Two red dots are placed on the map: one in the western part of Europe (likely representing the UK) and another in the southern part (likely representing the Netherlands).

The Last of the New Towns

Milton Keynes and Almere

Parallels in 20th Century Policy and Planning

By James Burkhalter

Preface

Initial research into comparative academic discourse about the UK and The Netherlands’ post-WWII New Towns Programme (NTP), and specifically its culmination in the last of the New Towns, was found to be very limited. In isolation, Milton Keynes and Almere are often exaggerated and considered part of a unique chronology by scholars typically from these respective countries.

In response, *The Last of the New Towns* study was carried out as part of the AR2A011 Architecture History Thesis module of the TU Delft MSc Architecture course. It is hoped that the following publication is the start of a greater corpus of work on New Town planning by the author. Born in Hertfordshire, the neighbouring county to Milton Keynes (Buckinghamshire), and now an international student at TU Delft, the module provided a special opportunity to understand and learn about New Towns in the context of both British and Dutch policy and planning. Surprised by the many similarities between the two — starting from the Green Belt and the Groene Hart (Green Heart) and concluding with the polynuclear planning of Milton Keynes and Almere — this study positions the intersection of planning doctrine against each other from National to New Town scale.

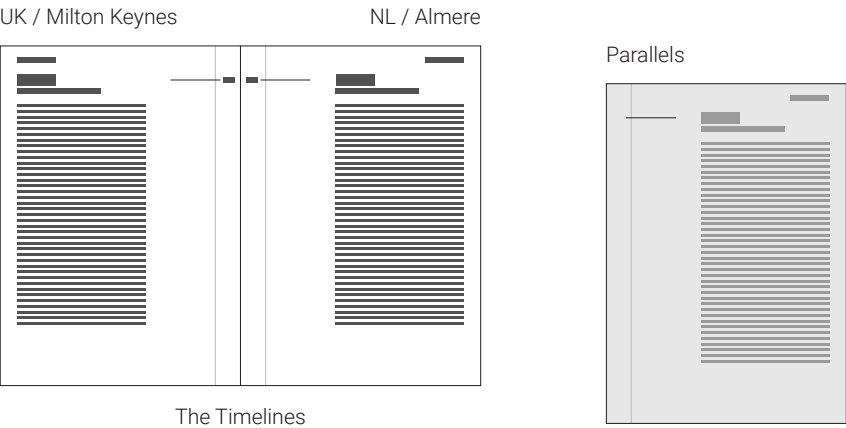
Overall, the following work can be considered a prologue to Ivan Nio’s (2016) *Modernity and Suburbanity in the New City*. In this, the history of the New Towns Programme in the United Kingdom and The Netherlands is mainly discussed as a product of post-1960s planning theory. Through the lens of ‘modernity’, Nio (2016) analysed the socio-cultural similarities and differences in Milton Keynes and Almere, from the New Town’s planning to the resident’s ‘everyday life’ in the 21st century (p.18).



James Burkhalter

How-to-Use

The Format
Read as two separate timelines, the following document organises 20th century policy and planning in the UK and The Netherlands alongside each other. Parallels, independent of these timelines, form intersections to the chronology — outlining specific similarities.



The Headings
Planning concepts are organised and explored through three forms:

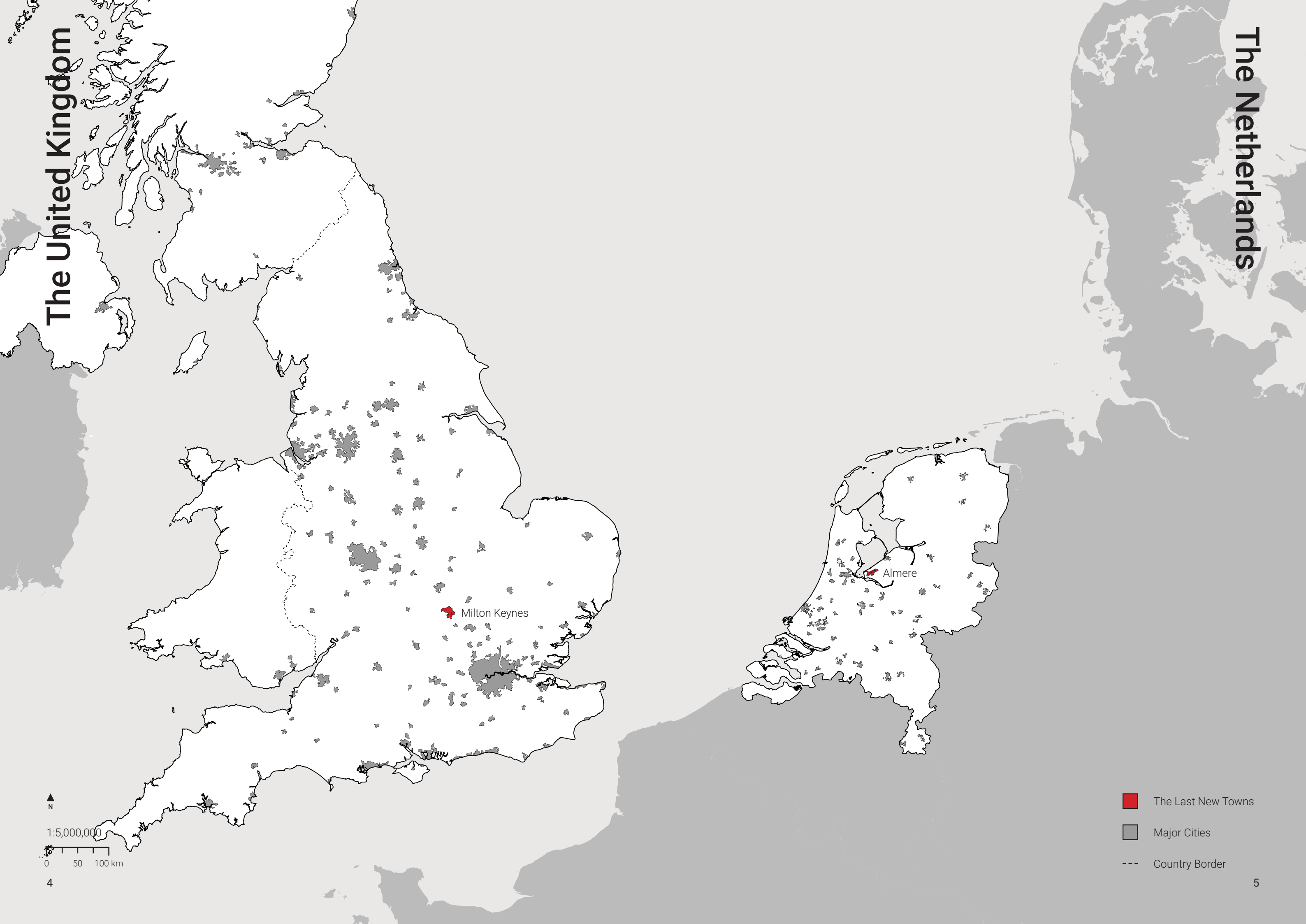
Principles
Introduction of the concept into governmental discourse.

Formalising
Planning concepts become policy.

Application
Use in the realisation of the New Towns.

The Contents

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Green Belt
(London and Home Counties) Act (1938)

Prominence

Considered the ‘first pillar of the [UK’s] planning system’, it defined the outer rural, agricultural ring through the Home Counties and encompassing London (Alexander, 2009, p. 24).

Containing Urban Sprawl

The Green Belt Act (1938) was introduced to prevent the unrestrained urban expansion (sprawl) from London¹ into and around the Home Counties by enabling councils to purchase this land for preservation. The Act would then protect these areas by ‘prohibit[ing] local authorities’ from selling it ‘without permission from the Ministry of Health’ (Amati & Yokohari, 2007, p. 315) and by ‘control[ling] development’ (Alexander, 2009, p. 24). The Act was formed from a series of “green girdle” proposals starting at the beginning of the 20th century and initiated by the London County Council in 1935 before becoming law.

1. Terminology for London’s extents varied over the 20th Century, this will be clarified throughout the study.

De Ontwikkeling van het Westen des Lands (1958)

The Development of the West of the Nation

Prominence

As the ‘first’ publication (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 191) on national planning doctrine, the Westen des Lands report, provided an outline for the policy and planning that proceeded — defining the two regions of the ‘Randstad’ (Edge City) and the ‘Groene Hart’ (Green Heart)².

Containing Urban Sprawl

The Randstad, an ‘economic core’ (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1994, p. 107) containing the densely populated Western conurbations (Amsterdam, Utrecht, and later Almere), was considered to be encompassing the Green Heart, a preserved area of rural agricultural land against the encroachment of its expanding cityscape.

Importantly, the national report recognised the significance of the on-going socio-economic changes post-WWII and their strong influence on the future planning landscape. Increased affluence, mobility and communication would lead to behavioural changes in the population, with ‘recreational migration’ and commuting at distance en masse creating new, increased demands on services (RNP 1958b, p. 128).

2. Groene Hart was often substituted for ‘centrale open ruimte’ (central open area) in following reports —until the Third Nota (1973 – 1983) where it regained prominence (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1997; VRO, 1974, p. 50).

The Report for the Royal Commission of the Distribution of the Industrial Plan (1940)

aka. The Barlow Report

Population Drift

Part of a growing number of policy recommendations, alongside the Scott (1942) and Uthwatt (1942) report³, that would form the foundation of the UK’s planning system⁴ and ‘culminate in the government’s post-WWII New Towns Programme’, the New Towns Act (1946) (Alexander, 2009, p. 68). The Barlow Report identified the ‘great drift of population’ migrating away from the declining industries of the North/West to London and the South-East (Home-Counties) as a matter of urgency and as being at the socio-economic ‘expense of the rest of the country’ (Barlow et al., 1940, p. 16).

Overspill Policy

In response to this growth, it ‘established the principles’ (Aldridge, 2019, p. 41) for the Concentration (‘Decentralisation’) and Deconcentration (‘Dispersal’)⁵ of industrial populations and industry from ‘overcrowded’ and ‘congested’ Donor Cities to Garden Cities (self-contained) and Satellite Towns (supporting an existing town) (Barlow et al., 1940).

Principles of Concentrated-Deconcentration

Concentration (‘Decentralisation’) was defined as the ‘spread of industry or population over a relatively limited area’, while Deconcentration (‘Dispersal’) was the ‘spread over a far wider area’ (Barlow et al., p.86).

Self-Contained New Towns

It was recommended that New Towns follow the model of the Garden City, introducing the ‘features of the country’ into the town to provide low-density living with access to lots of light and fresh air through the effective zoning of home (countryside) and work (industry) (Barlow et al., p.64). Overall aiming to provide diverse employment opportunities for most of the town’s inhabitants.

Principles of Bufferzones⁶

Although, located ‘off the main arterial roads’, it should have ‘good access’ e.g. for reaching the centre for ‘medical, educational and recreational facilities’, while a ‘belt of open country’ (a green Bufferzone) would protect it from merging with other towns (Barlow et al., p.133).

3. For brevity, these have not been included.

4. See, among many, Aldridge (2019), Osborn & Whittick (1977) and Faludi & van der Valk (1994).

5. Rephrased to match gebundelde-deconcentratie (Concentrated-Deconcentration), see p. X.

6. From this point, Bufferzones refer to the green area surrounding towns (and cities). The Green Belt, will refer to London’s specific Bufferzone.

The Development of the West of the Nation

Population Drift

In the last century, The Netherland’s population was unequally distributed following the socio-economic migration from the ‘predominantly poor countryside’ (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 85) to the horseshoe shaped industrial region now known as the Randstad. With a third of the country concentrated on a twentieth of the land (RNP 1958b, p. 26).

Overspill Policy

The Southern IJsselmeerpolders, markedly Southern Flevoland, would be essential in managing the outward expansion of the Randstad, with ‘Satellite Towns/villages’ (RNP 1958b, p. 71) accommodating dispersed ‘overloop’ (overspill) from Amsterdam. ‘Reversing’ migration to alleviate housing-demands, reduce congestion and improve quality of life (Wagenaar, 2011, p. 458). This would be planned based on the policy of Concentrated-Deconcentration, as set out in the Second Nota (1966, see p. 21).

Self-Contained New Towns

It called for these Satellite Towns to eventually become independent from their Donor Cities, a self-contained New Town (RNP 1958b). As illustrated on the document’s Ontwikkelingsschema (Development Scheme) map, a New Town for overspill would be located opposite Het Gooimeer on the not yet reclaimed Southern Flevoland, Almere.

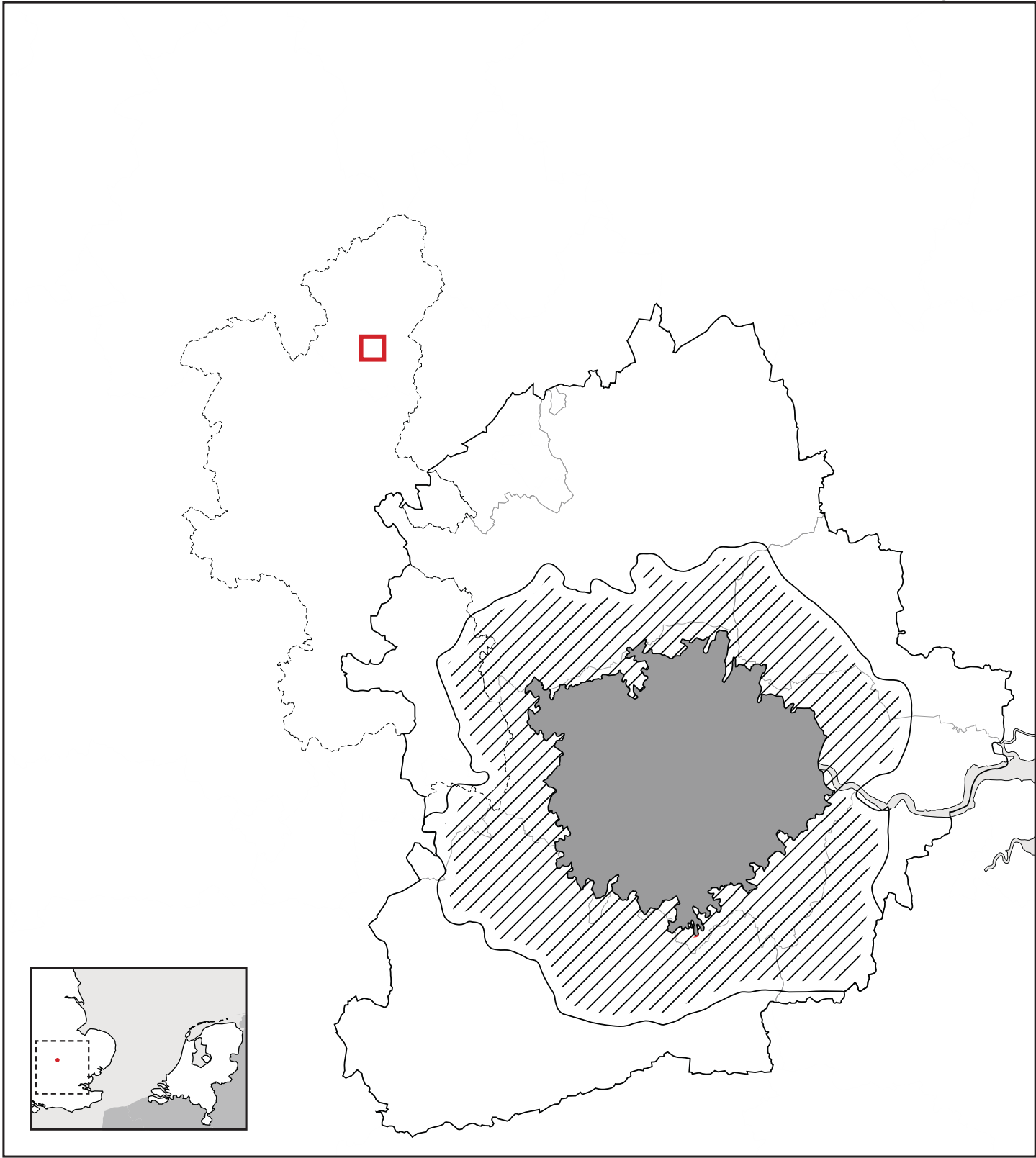
Principles of Bufferzones

Bufferzones⁷ were also introduced — green areas that differentiate between growing cities or agglomerations (mainly) within the Randstad, and are accessible to urban amenities and recreational facilities (RNP, 1958a).

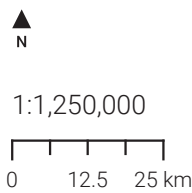
7. Or ‘bufferstroken’, buffer strips in RNP (1958a, p. 153).

Greater London Plan (1944)

1944



London-Green Belt
London consists of its inner-city and suburbs, as shown in the GLP (1944). The Outer Country Ring was selected for London's overspill population.



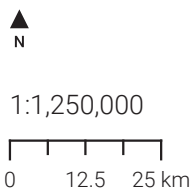
- Milton Keynes
- London
- Green Belt
- Buckinghamshire
- Home Counties
- Outer Country Ring

1958

The Development of the West of the Nation



Randstad-Green Heart
1980s Randstad projection based on the Westen des Lands report (RNP, 1958b). The Southern Flevoland would be reclaimed ten years later (1968).



- Almere
- Agglomerations
- Green Heart
- Southern Flevoland
- Markerwaard
- Randstad

Parallel

National Image

Comparison

Contextually, Greater London is the closest equivalent to the Randstad in the controlled development of it as a conurbation (via the New Towns Programme). While London’s Green Belt was ‘invoked’ as an example to follow by the ‘spiritual founder’ of the Green Heart, Jasper Vink (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1997, p. 59). Furthermore, The Westen des Lands report (1958) overlaid an outline of London (Inner-City and Suburbs) onto the Green Heart, as if the Randstad and Green Heart were an inversion of London and its Green Belt (see RNP 1958b, p. 70). A comparison of the two is shown on pp. 10–11.

Metaphor

As policies, the Randstad and Green Heart, and Greater London and the Green Belt, both utilise ‘easy to grasp’ metaphors to manage the public appeal of national planning (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1994, p. 35; Dekker et al., 2012). Creating the image of historical, agricultural land amidst the distant skyline of a city. Faludi & van der Valk (1994) highlights the symbiotic relationship between these specific public-facing policies and planning principles. Principles in practice control the development of the policy and by extension its image. Policy justifies this practice.

The New Towns

Since the turn of the twentieth-century, Milton Keynes and Almere were planned through policy to maintain this national image of the city and the countryside. Dictating its size, location, orientation and so on. The success of the planning concepts that informed them — Concentrated-Deconcentration, City-Regions, Growth Centres — depend on the New Town’s role in protecting this image. For example, mitigating expansion into the Green Belt and Green Heart, regenerating Inner-City neighbourhoods and economic growth (Spoormans et al., 2019, p. 105; Faludi & van Der Valk, 1991).

National Image

Milton Keynes

For Milton Keynes, this began in ‘January 1962’ with Fred Pooley’s Department of Architecture at Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) publishing ‘The Overspill Problem in Bucks — A New city’ (in Ortolano, 2019, p. 93). The report identified that ‘London’s overspill [was] threat[ening]’ to encroach into South Buckinghamshire — which the Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) ‘pre-emptively declared a Green Belt’. A New Town was therefore needed to manage migration from the county, the capital, the rest of the country and the commonwealth.

However, this image would not be sustained in ‘print media’, with the Green Belt being selectively ‘omit[ted]’; Milton Keynes was ‘visual[ised] as swallow[ing]’ up the countryside just like London (Piko, 2020, p. 63). In reality, Milton Keyne’s location was partly chosen because of its distance from the Green Belt (see p. 24).

Almere

Continuing from the Westen des Lands report (1958), the Second and Third Nota frequently mentions ‘promot[ing]’ (VRO, 1974, p. 30), maintaining and protecting the ‘uitstraling (image)’ (VRO 1966, p. 42) of the Randstad at a national and international level — leading to The Netherland’s New Towns programme in the Flevoland. The Structuurplan Almere (1983) reiterates the New Town’s responsibility of ‘preserving’ and ‘maintaining’ the Randstad and the Groene Hart in its introduction (RIJP, 1983, pp. 3–5).

Greater London Plan

1944

Beginnings of a National Planning Policy

Following one year after the County of London Plan (1943), which outlined London’s post-WWII reconstruction, the Greater London Plan or GLP (1944), was the ‘first [regional plan] of its kind’ (Alexander, 2009, p. 19) in the UK. It brought together the concepts of the Green Belt, Concentration and Deconcentration, and New Towns into a ‘practical proposition’ (Osborn & Whittick, 1977, p. 50).

Formalising Concentrated-Deconcentration

Adopting the terminology of ‘Decentralisation’ (Concentration) and ‘Dispersal’ (Deconcentration) from the Barlow Report (1940) (Clapson, 1998, p. 38), Abercrombie (1944, p. 22) details the redistribution of people from the county of London. This would occur outwardly through the four ‘rings’, the ‘Inner Urban Ring’, the ‘Suburban Ring’, the ‘Green Belt Ring’, before primarily settling into New Towns located in the ‘Outer Country Ring’.

The ‘Outer Country Ring’ is mainly composed of small towns, villages and agricultural land. In addition to the expansion of Existing Towns, Abercombie proposed ten New Towns in this ring (30 – 50 km from Central London), with the task of persuading over 500,000 people to move out of the capital. These principles would continue into Milton Keynes through the locating of it in the South-East Study (1964, see p. 24) and its own planning (see p. 54).

Parallel

Population Distribution

Regional Imbalance

In both nations there was a significant maldistribution of population in one part of the country (South-East/London and the Randstad) following substantial internal migration from ‘peripheral areas’ (e.g. North-East and Limburg or Groningen) in the previous few decades (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 259). In reaction, the Barlow Report (1940, see p. 8) and the Westen des Lands Report (1958, see p. 7) were commissioned and published – beginning their nation’s Overspill Policy.

Overspill Policy

The post-WWII Overspill Policy in the UK and The Netherlands would be realised through the Concentrated-Deconcentration of New Towns and Existing Towns. Based on definitions given in the Barlow Report (1940) and the Second Nota (1966, see p. 21), balanced Decentralisation and Dispersal in UK policy is equivalent⁸ to Concentrated-Deconcentration in The Netherlands.

Overestimation

Unpredictable population growth from post-WWII baby booms, up until the introduction of contraception in the 1960s, led to both countries deriving policy from over-estimated projections for the 1980s. This directly informed, pressured and accelerated governmental policy and subsequently the planning of Milton Keynes (Aldridge, 2019) and Almere (Wagenaar, 2011) – with both targeting the highest population ever in their respective New Towns Programmes at 250,000. Regardless, Milton Keynes and Almere would be called-upon as Growth Centres to take on additional overspill from new Donors (South Buckinghamshire and Het Gooi).

New Tasks, New Concepts

British and Dutch governments later intended to use City-Regions and Growth Centres as a ‘complement of Concentrated-Deconcentration’ (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1994, p. 135) and a tool for spatial and economic planning. Overall aiming to balance the distribution of employment opportunities for a population over a prescribed area. Concentrated, diverse and attractive employment options in the New Towns of Milton Keynes and Almere would reduce commuting to a local scale within their City-Regions and subsequently support their additional tasks as Growth Centres for overspill from South Buckinghamshire and Het Gooi.

8. Faludi & van Der Valk (1994, p. 134) compared Concentrated-Deconcentration to the Expanded Towns Programme (1952) implemented by the 1950s Conservative government. No reason is given as to why this comparison doesn’t extend to the New Towns Programme.

New Towns Act (1946)

1946

First Generation New Towns

Proceeding from Abercrombie’s GLP (1944) and the New Towns Committee (1945 – 1946), the New Towns Act or NTA (1946) established in law the ability for ministers to designate land as New Town sites. In four years, this resulted in the official start of the New Towns Programme (NTP) and the First-Generation of New Towns (aka. Mark One) – eight were designated around London and six in the rest of the UK (see Alexander, 2009).

New Town Agencies

‘By order’ of the Act, a ‘Development Corporation’ – a new type of organisation, consisting of planning specialists, with its own legal responsibilities and ‘relatively high levels of independence from government’ (Alexander, 2009, p. 39) – would be formed to manage the total realisation of the New Town. Proposals from the Development Corporations would be approved by the Minister (New Towns Act, 1946, p. 1).

The act provided Development Corporations the power to ‘compulsory purchase’ and so hold any land in or adjacent to the designated area for the functioning (e.g. role and ‘services’) of the New Town (New Towns Act, 1946, p. 4). Funded by repayable loans from the Treasury (fixed-rate, 60-years), the purchase process was enabled by the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act (1944)⁹. Furthermore, the TCP Act (1944) outlined the process of ‘betterment’¹⁰, the increase and capturing of land value following planning approval on it, would become essential to the independence of Milton Keynes.

9. Colloquially known as “Blitz and Blight” Act for its role in the post-WWII reconstruction.

10. Based on the Uthwatt Report (1942).

Parallel

New Town Agencies

Power

While their proximity to government differed, the MKDC and RIJP are both agencies of it and with comparable powers – the MKDC was a ‘body corporate’ (New Towns Act, 1946, p. 2) and the RIJP was part of the V&W. Both had ‘ministerial mandate’ (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 194) to develop their New Towns, they ‘owned the land’ (Berg & Provoost, 2021, p. 253) and were responsible for the hiring and management of employees and consultants. To realise their Masterplans, they set-up various departments e.g. transport, architecture, etc. Almere had its own taskforce, Projektburo Almere (PBA)¹¹. Ontwikkelingsmaatschappijen (Development Corporations) – supposedly comparable¹² to their English equivalents (Nozeman, 1990, p. 151) – were later set-up to manage the Flevoland’s Growth Centres (Almere and Lelystad) so that they reached their new socio-economic targets.

Independence

While the UK and The Netherland’s ‘democratic governments [intended] to solve planning problems (...) politically [and] technically’ (Thomas et al., 1983, p. XIX) – beyond the enactment of policy – the MKDC’s and RIJP’s independence from government was pivotal in resisting the influence of fluctuating ideologies post-WWII. Helping to prevent planning from becoming a political tool to be used positively or negatively by opposing parties, with power stopping at the minister (see Constandse, 1980). The MKDC and RIJP were only ‘answerable’ (Brouwer, 1999) to them, i.e. Anthony Greenwood (1966–1970, MHLG, UK) and J.A. Bakker (V&W, NL).

11. RIJP is used throughout this study to encompass the total organisation, including the PBA.

12. How similar these are to the UK’s Development Corporations are not elaborated on by Nozeman (1990). The MKDC and RIJP’s role at the inception of the New Towns provides a greater grounding for comparison than their involvement in them as Growth Centres.

Town and Country Planning Act (1947)

1947

Prominence

The TCP Act (1947) is considered as ‘one the largest and most complex pieces of legislation ever passed by a British Parliament’ (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 77). Operating simultaneously with the New Towns Act (1946), it formed the ‘national town and country planning apparatus’ (Clapson, 2017, p. 94; Lock, 2020).

Betterment

Betterment was further elaborated upon from the previous Act (1944). It nationalised ‘the right to develop land [and] their associated values’ by controlling the use of it (Cullingworth et al., 2015, p. 26), as outlined in local plans by county councils (Town and Country Planning Act, 1947). Without it, the Overspill Policy — made up of the Green Belt(s), Abercrombie’s GLP (1944) and Concentrated-Deconcentration (i.e. Decentralisation-Dispersal) — would not be ‘enforceable’ as a way to manage population distribution and growth (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 77).

Development Corporations would be responsible for defining land use in the New Towns and any land purchased for it would not be subject to interest or development charges (these were abolished by the Conservative government in 1954).

Principles of the City-Region

Ways of defining a City-Region, prior to the Strategic Plan for the South-East (1970)¹³, varied according to the planning theory of Geddes and Fawcett throughout the beginning of the 20th Century (see Coombes, 2014). The TCP Act (1947), guided by the agency of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, was meant to concert the efforts of different counties within their overlapping City-Regions through the creation of regional plans. These plans would manage the Concentration and Deconcentration of population and employment. Although, this was soon ‘abandoned’ following the dissolution of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning (1951) into the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) by the returning Conservative government (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 83).

13. As quoted on p. 36, This is considered by the author as the most formalised description of the City-Region in a policy document concerning Milton Keynes’ development.

Parallel

Local Authority

Background

Local authorities in The UK/Netherlands are two-tier, corresponding to the Counties/Provinces and the Districts/Municipalities below them (Thomas et al., 1983, p. 9).

At the time of designation, Milton Keynes would have fallen under Buckinghamshire County Council. Almere, in a new land, had no local authority and instead a ‘temporary elected government’ (Constandse, 1980, p. 115), the Dagelijks Adviescollege Almere (Daily Advisory Board, DAC), ‘with limited powers’ headed by the landdrost (mayor) of the Openbaar Lichaam Zuidelijke IJsselmeerpolders (Public Body Southern IJsselmeerpolders, OL ZIJP). For context, the OL ZIJP was responsible for the ‘management, public order, security, and education’ in Almere (Berg & Provoost, 2021, p. 254).

Capabilities

Both governments recognised that local authorities were not capable of coordinating the creation of New Towns. Reasons for this included the management-ability, resources¹⁴, reliability, expertise, and the scale and duration expected for the project (Alexander, 2009; Constandse, 1980). As Constandse (1980, p. 115) describes, New Towns are embedded in national policy and so would depend on the cooperation of these autonomous local authorities, motivating the establishment of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) and the Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders (RIJP). In both countries, local authorities relying on ‘subsid[ies]’ and ‘subject[ed] to regulation and scrutiny’ (Thomas et al., 1983, p. 24), would only be in control of the expansion of their existing towns.

14. Buckinghamshire County Council’s ‘inability’ to fund Pooleyville (see p. X) was publicised as the reason for its rejection by the MHLG (Ortolano, 2019, p. 112). Instead, the New Town was designated (1967) and a Development Corporation (MKDC) was assigned to oversee its realisation.

Town Development Act (1952)

Expanded Towns

First tabled by the former Labour government to support New Towns (Potter, 1997), the Towns Development Act (1952) was adapted by the Conservatives as a ‘central tool rather than a subsidiary’ (Aldridge, 2019, p. 79) – moving ‘urban populations’ from cities to existing towns ‘suffering from declining economic prospects’ (Alexander, 2009, p. 40). Chosen as Expanded Towns, they were managed by their local authorities instead of Development Corporations, with the priority being to supply homes around these towns (Town Development Act, 1952). Motivated by the ‘falling birth rates of the early 1950s’, the government wanted to restrict ‘urban growth’ to these existing towns and through the creation of ‘Green Belts around the major conurbations’ (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 146).

The New and Expanded Towns Scheme (NETS, previously the Industrial Selection Scheme) oversaw the ‘relocation’ of Londoners to areas such as North Buckinghamshire¹⁵, the future home of Milton Keynes (Clapson, 2004, p. 70).

15. Buckinghamshire is colloquially known as Bucks.

1952

1966

Tweede Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening (1966)

Second National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

Beginnings of a National Planning Policy

The Second Nota is considered the ‘first truly comprehensive’ (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1994, p. 131) and the ‘best known’ (Wagenaar, 2011, p. 393) Dutch government policy on the regional planning of The Netherlands, and for some the closest to a National Plan (Needham & Dekker, 1988, p. 336; see Dekker et al., 2012).

Expanded Towns

Space shortage in the North of the Randstad was expected to be at 1 million people in 2000. As well as New Towns, many existing towns, e.g. Alkmaar and Dordrecht, would be expanded to accommodate this overspill.

Principles of Concentrated-Deconcentration

The Second Nota advocated the planning model of ‘gebundelde deconcentratie’ (Concentrated-Deconcentration¹⁶) in reaction to the Randstad’s expansion into the Green Heart (Spoormans et al., 2019). Implementation of Concentrated-Deconcentration is twofold. Firstly, the managed socio-economic migration from agglomerations (Northern Wing of the Randstad), comprising of Donor Cities (Amsterdam), to designated ‘Overspill Centres’ (Almere) within a City-Region (Het Gooi) (Faludi & van Der Valk, 1994, p. 135). Secondly, the controlled development (Concentration) and expansion (Deconcentration) of existing and New Towns in their planning¹⁷ (see VRO, 1966).

Concentrated-Deconcentration is described as providing ‘een maximum aan keuzemogelijkheid’ (a maximum of choice) and ‘groot mogelijke flexibiliteit’ (greatest possible flexibility) to account for the impact of socio-economic (funding, population, work-life balance/preferences) and technological (communication and mobility) change in the existing and New Towns (VRO, 1966, p. 86). More immediately, this aimed to reduce pressures to the people and infrastructure of the city: housing-shortages, overcrowding, congestion, pollution, etc., while improving well-being in/ around the cities by maintaining access to the green environments (e.g. countryside) that mitigate urban sprawl.

16. Some sources use the direct translation of gebundelde, bundled.

17. The term ‘spreiding (spread/distribution)’ is often used for this form of Concentrated-Deconcentration (see Structuurplan Almere by RIJP, 1983). They have been combined in this study to emphasise the use of a singular concept at two different scales – National and New Town.

New Towns Act (1959)

Second-Generation New Towns

Over the 1950s, cities continued to be overcrowded and began ‘running out of land’ for housing (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 151). Subsequently, a ‘vast majority’ of the population were housed in ‘privately built suburban estates’, beyond the Green Belt and into the Home Counties of the (outer) South-East. Not the New and Expanded Towns as hoped for in 1947. Combined with the UK population’s expected rise from 64 to 75 million people in the 1960s (the second-wave baby boom), the Conservative government had to abandon its programme of controlled growth. Seven Second-Generation New Towns (five after 1961) were designated and the government returned to using Development Corporations under the New Towns Act (1959) (Alexander, 2009, p. 29) — the same framework as originally set out in the first New Towns Act (1946).

Updating the New Town Agencies

The Conservative government also sought to clarify the process of dissolving Development Corporations, as first set out in section 15 of the New Towns Act (1946), once they had ‘(substantially) achieved the purposes for which it [was] established’ (New Towns Act, 1959, p. 1077). For example, ‘reach their target populations’ for overspill from their Donor City (Alexander, 2009, p. 138).

The New Towns Act (1946) expected assets to be transferred to the ‘local authority’ (New Towns Act, 1946, p. 16) but at the time the mechanism for this ‘was not specified’ (Aldridge, 2019, p. 105). Introduced in the New Towns Act (1959) by the Conservative government, the Committee for the New Towns (CNT) was a ‘body corporate’ responsible for the ‘holding, managing and turning to account’ assets (land, residential, industrial and commercial) absorbed from dissolved Development Corporations. This ‘prevent[ed] the mass transfer of assets’ (Alexander, 2009, p. 144) from First-Generation Development Corporations to their, primarily labour-based, local authorities and signified what Aldridge (2019) describes as the first¹⁸ cross-party ‘divergence’ in the New Towns Programme and the ‘only major political confrontation’ around it (p. 86).

18. Although prioritised over New Towns, Expanded Towns, enabled by the Towns Development Act (1952), were considered part of the former Labour government’s ‘strategy towards [Deconcentration] and meeting housing needs’ and so not a point of contention (Aldridge, 2019, p. 79).

1959

1966

Second National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

Formalising Concentration and Deconcentration

An adjoining map, the Ruimtelijke Structuurschets Voor Nederland Omstreeks 2000 (Spatial Structure Outline for The Netherlands Circa 2000), contained The Cubes Map (Blokjeskaart). This colour-coded and ranked four distinct ‘spatial-units’¹⁹ (ruimtelijke eenheid) (VRO, 1966, p. 91), from village to city scale (A – D), across The Netherlands as a ‘blueprint’ for housing 20 million people by 2000 (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 182). Designation included their road typology, public transport, facilities and landscaping (VRO, 1966, p. 91). The distribution of these spatial-units would be applied through Concentrated-Deconcentration in the planning of the New Towns.

It was understood that the model lent itself to a ‘socially homogenous environment’ of the ‘eengezinshuis (single-family home)’, located between the city and the countryside — which in itself is prioritised in the Second Nota (VRO, 1966, p. 77). A variety of work and recreational environments within and between these City-Regions would be needed to provide this flexibility of choice.

Principles of the City-Region

The Second Nota introduced (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 186) the idea of the stadsgewest (‘City-Region’) — the composition of these spatial-units at two scales, the City and the Region, that when interconnected ‘form a single functional whole’ (VRO, 1966, p. 95). City-Regions would be detailed at a regional (economic) scale in Part 2 of the Third Nota (1976 – 1979, see p. 37).

19. The hierarchical relationship of these spatial-units is somewhat lost in translation throughout the English sources on Almere’s development. Cores or centres in some documentation is referred to as Nuclei here.

The South-East Study 1961–1981 (1964)

aka. The South-East Study

Managing Baby Booms

After a rapid post-WWII increase in fertility rates, the first-wave baby-boom generation were becoming adults in need of homes (Alexander, 2009 p. 41). Commissioned by the Conservative government, The South-East Study (1964) was published following the White Paper, London – Employment: Housing: Land (1963) which examined the ‘growth and movement of population in the South-East, including overspill from London’ and the ‘need for a Second-Generation²⁰ of New and [Expanded] towns’ (MHLG, 1964, p. 3). It examined how the population in South-East England will grow by 3.5 million by 1981, with 1.25 million needing to be accommodated in ‘New and Expanded Towns’ (MHLG, 1964, p. 105). A localised ‘natural increase [i.e.] excess of births over deaths’, not the colloquially known ‘drift to the South’, was considered the primary driver for this increase. However, with this rise being calculated from birth-rates and ‘current trends’ between 1955–1962, it immediately became obsolete following the contraceptive pill’s introduction in 1961 – the second-wave baby boom of the 1960s peaked that year.

Locating Milton Keynes

The study highlighted the Bletchley area for a ‘successful [New Town] development’ (MHLG, 1964, p. 74) due to its location between the West Midlands (Birmingham) and London, and its proximity to the existing ‘main lines of communication’ (MHLG, 1964, p. 73) between them, i.e. the newly-built M1 (1958) and soon electrified railway line (West Coast Main line). Milton Keynes was considered ‘well outside London’s commuter range’ (88 km) (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 152). Though the existing land was primarily agriculture of ‘high quality’, (MHLG, 1964, p. 90) it did not fall within the Green Belt boundary²¹ and so a New Town here would be highly ‘attractive to industrialists’ and employment.

‘There is plenty of room for building, and, in the very long term, a [New Town] of a quarter of a million might arise’...this New Town was later known as Milton Keynes (MHLG, 1964, p. 74).

20. Today, these towns are considered to be Third-Generation, differentiating them from the Second-Generation New Towns that were designated by the 1951 – 1964 Conservative Government and predominantly under the second New Towns Act (1959).
21. A whole chapter is dedicated to ‘The London Green Belt’, explaining the difficulty of selecting areas for growth in the South-East, an area permeated and ‘restrict[ed]’ by it (MHLG, 1964, p. 89).

1964

1966

Second National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

Formalising Bufferzones

Green ‘Bufferzones’ were revisited and expanded from the Westen des Lands report (1958) in line with the millenial targets, formalising its use as a regional-planning instrument to prevent the merging of city boundaries (notably within the Randstad, the ‘randeffect’) (VRO, 1966, pp. 88, 121). As Brouwer (1999) identifies in VRO (1966), the Bufferzones²² include what’s later termed in Almere’s planning, Buitenruimte (Internuclear Areas) – the area between differing urban developments, the spatial-units (A – D), industrial/harbour zones, etc.

Managing Baby Booms

National projections in 1960 expected ‘20 million inhabitants by the year 2000’; this ‘slogan’ was quickly adopted and ‘inspired’ proceeding governmental policy and planning (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 182). By the publication of the second Nota, the Central Bureau of Statistics’ (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, see CBS, 1965) approximations rose to 21 million (VRO, 1966, p. 37). This would prove to be a gross over-estimation succeeding the uptake of contraception after its introduction in 1963 (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 181).

Locating Almere

The Southern IJsselmeer polders were considered ‘to make a significant contribution to absorbing the ‘overspill of ½ to 1 million people’ from the Northern Wing of the Randstad. The government assigned Flevoland (the Southern IJsselmeer polders), to accommodate this overspill. Lelystad, a First-Generation New Town, would be available ‘in the short term’ (VRO, 1966, p. 37), while in 1975 – following the reclamation of the Southern Flevoland (1967) – the New Town of ‘IJmeersteden’ for 250,000 residents would be built opposite Het Gooi (VRO, p.62). Many of the planning policies that informed it were derived from the Second Nota. This New Town was later renamed Almere.

22. Following from this paragraph, Bufferzones will refer to The Netherland’s Green Belt-styled (see VRO, 1966, p.102, where ‘Green Belt’ is used to refer to this) zoning that exists around a city’s boundaries while the Green Grid and Internuclear Areas will be specific to Milton Keynes and Almere respectively.

The South-East Study

1964

Principles of Growth Centres

‘Consequences of growth’, not just the distribution of populations – which the South-East Study relates to the Barlow Report (1940) and the Greater London Plan (1944) – needed to be ‘planned for’ (MHLG, 1964, p. 7). While The South-East Study did recognise the inherent ‘time-lag between projections [and] development plans’, the MHLG (1964, p.10) believed ‘current plans’ were inadequate for expected growth – ‘signall[ing] the need for (...) the New Towns Programme to continue’ (Lock, 2020, p. 28).

‘Growth Centres’ would be expected to have a ‘wider [function]’ than accommodating ‘overspill’ like the ‘existing New and Expanded Towns’ (MHLG, 1964, p. 52). They would alleviate population ‘pressure’ from London, the Outer Metropolitan Area (OMA)²³ and their local county (MHLG, 1964, p. 53), while providing better job opportunities and an improved quality of life in line with the rest of the UK’s prosperity. The largest of these will become ‘alternative[s] to London’ and the ‘cities of the future’. Milton Keynes was a ‘deliberate’ New Town Growth Centre (MHLG, 1964, p. 53) for the proposed ‘City-Region’ of Milton Keynes-Northampton-Wellingborough, as set out in the Strategic Plan for the South-East (1970) (SEJPT, 1970, p. 92).

23. Abercrombie’s (1944, p. 22) ‘Suburban Ring’ around central London.

Parallel

Locating the New Towns

Beyond the Boundaries

The Greater London Plan (1944) and the Westen des Lands report (1958) wanted New Towns to be located outside the congested conurbations of Greater London and the Randstad (with their declining Inner-City neighbourhoods) and beyond the idyllic agricultural countryside of the Green Belt and Green Heart. These New Towns would then be orientated along the ‘transport axis’ of the railway lines that bisected them, towards their Donor Cities (Greater London and Amsterdam) (MKDC, 1970, p. 92; RIJP, 1983, p. 147).

Improving Infrastructure

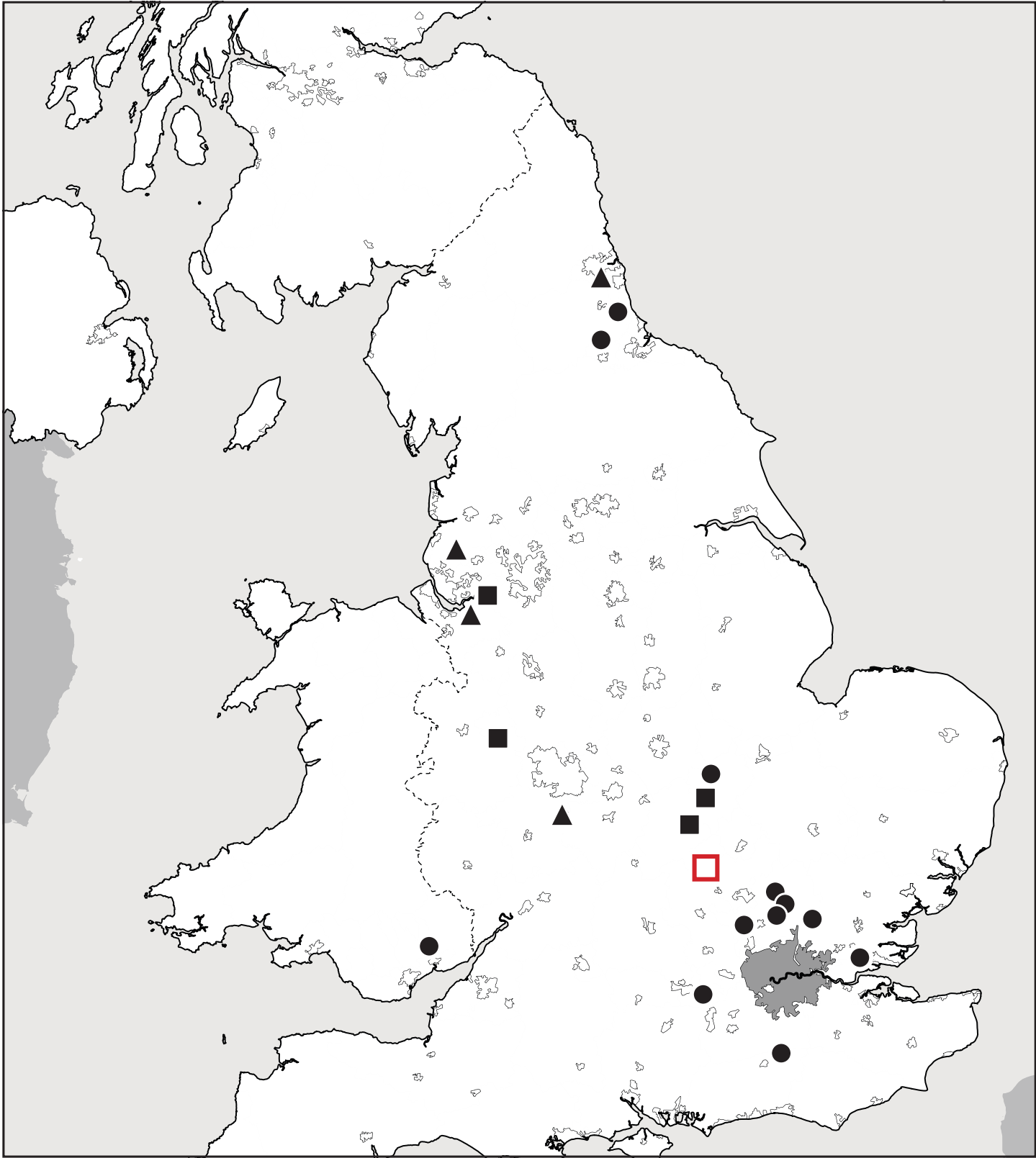
Nationally, Milton Keynes and Almere were seen as an opportunity to utilise and improve existing connections (road and rail) to their surrounding regions via their Donor Cities. This included the West Midlands (Birmingham) in the UK, and Flevoland (Lelystad) and the Northern-Wing of the Randstad (Het Gooi) in The Netherlands.

Controlling Commuting

The MKDC and RIJP understood that travel time between the New Towns, its City-Region and the Donor Cities needed to be planned to prevent the loss of the local labour force. Milton Keynes was located 88 km / 1 hour 30 minutes away from Greater London to discourage motorway commuting between the two (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 152). The Milton Keynes-London Euston railway commute is a ‘comfortable’ 35 – 45 minutes (Clapson, 2004, p. 12). Due to its spatially-restricted distance from Amsterdam at 32 km / 32 minutes, Almere would prioritise public transport (e.g. 20 minutes on the Almerelijn) within/between the City-Regions (RIJP, 1983, p. 22).

Balancing Growth

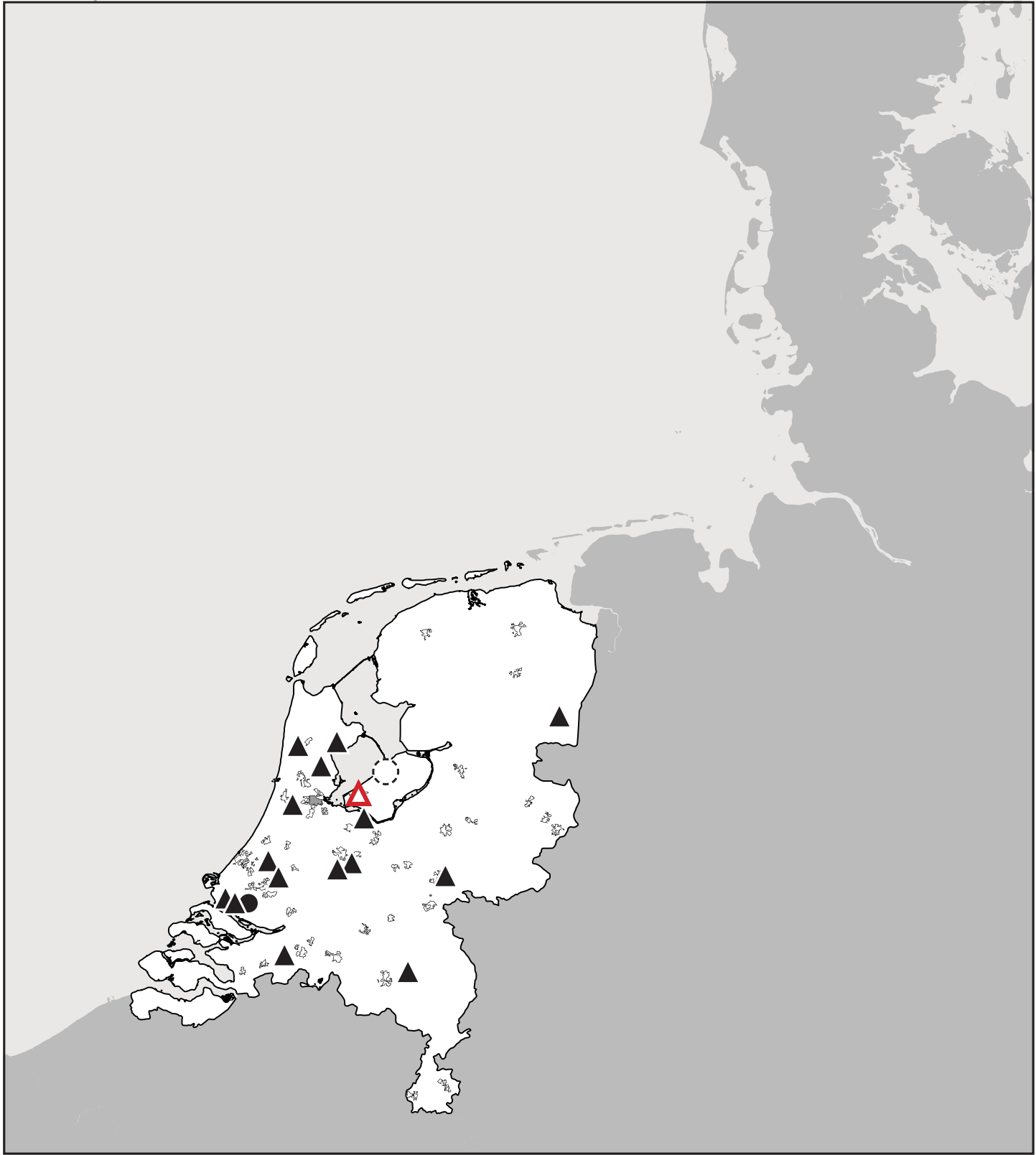
Part of the New Towns’ selection as Growth Centres came from its location within its City-Region(s). In Milton Keynes, this correlated to its remoteness from Greater London, location within North Buckinghamshire and its distance to surrounding Growth Centres (Northampton and Wellingborough) (SEJPT, 1970, p. 56). For Almere, the continuation of its Growth Centre task was from its closer proximity to the Donor Cities (Spoormans et al., 2019, p. 105). It was promoted for its ‘[highly feasible] spatial possibilities’ as a type C (‘Ring Variant’) with it ‘overlap[ping] on [key] traffic axes’ of the Randstad (VRO, 1983).



New Town Generations
Location of British New Towns, as defined by Peiser & Forsyth (2021, p. 233).

▲
N
1:5,000,000
0 50 100 km

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| — Milton Keynes | ● First-generation |
| ■ London | ▲ Second-generation |
| □ Major Cities | ■ Third-generation |



New Town Generations
Location of Dutch New Towns, as defined by Peiser & Forsyth (2021, p. 233).

▲
N
1:5,000,000
0 50 100 km

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| — Almere | ● First-generation |
| ■ Amsterdam | ▲ Second-generation |
| □ Major Cities | --- Lelystad |

The South-East Study

First-Generation New Towns Act (1946)	Second-Generation New Towns Act (1959)	Third-Generation New Towns Act (1964)
Basildon	Redditch	Milton Keynes
Bracknell	Runcorn	Northampton
Corby	Skelmersdale	Peterborough
Crawley	Washington	Warrington
Cwmbran		Telford
Harlow		
Hatfield		
Hemel Hempstead		
Newton Aycliffe		
Peterlee		
Stevenage		
Welwyn Garden City		

Table of The UK's New Town Generations
New Town definition and corresponding table based on Peiser & Forsyth (2021, p. 233).

Second National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

First-Generation 1950s	Second-Generation 1960s and 1970s	
Hoogvliet	Alkmaar	Nieuwegein
Lelystad	Almere	Purmerend
	Capelle aan de IJssel	Spijkenisse
	Duiven-Westervoort	Zoetermeer
	Emmen	
	Etten-Leur	
	Haarlemmermeer	
	Hellevoetsluis	
	Helmond	
	Hoorn	
	Houten	
	Huizen	

Table of The Netherlands' New Town Generations
New Town definition and corresponding table based on Peiser & Forsyth (2021, p. 233).

New Towns Act (1965)

1965

Third-Generation New Towns

The New Towns Act (1965) retained the ‘framework’ of the 1946 Act, while ‘updat[ing] [its] legislation’ and ‘consolidat[ing]’ the 1959 amendments (Aldridge, 2019, p. 57). As the third version of the Act, it would usher in the third (and final) generation of the New Towns Programme.

Pooleyville

In response to the rapidly growing population, economic prosperity and the ‘shift towards the car’, from ‘January 1962 Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) [began to publish] the first in a series of reports’ for the realisation of a New Town in North Buckinghamshire (Ortolano, 2019, pp. 100–101). Fred Pooley, BCC’s Chief Architect, designed a New Town composed of ‘high-density housing clusters’ served by ‘four [free] monorail circuits’ (Clapson, 2014, p. 5; Ortolano, 2019, p. 85). Around each circuit, these clusters (‘townships’ or ‘villages’) would overlook the ‘parks, schools, and sports arenas’ that filled them, while a singular, Concentrated and ‘pedestrianised city centre [for shopping and entertainment]’ was located in between (Ortolano, 2019, p. 85). This proposal would come to be known as Pooleyville.

After being ‘approved by BCC in [May] 1964’, Pooley ‘present[ed]’ his New City for North Bucks to the MHLG as a call for a New Town ‘around Bletchley’ for 250,000 (Piko, 2020, p. 33). Richard Crossman (Minister of the MHLG, 1964 – 1966) endorsed the scheme in ‘January 1965’ but in the ‘next five months’ retracted in what Ortolano (2019) relates to the ‘Labour Government’s [reluctance] to grant so much authority to Tory Buckinghamshire’, and that by being a ‘local initiative’ and not a ‘centralised project’ BCC was unable to ‘fund [it] alone’ (p. 112). In ‘May 1965’, the North Bucks New City was ‘shelved’ (Ortolano, 2019, p. 88).

Milton Keynes’ Designation

The New Town was ‘formally designated’ by Richard Crossman’s successor – Anthony Greenwood – in ‘January 1967’ under the New Towns Act’s (1965). It was expected to demonstrate ‘new principles of structures and design [that emphasise] balance and dispersal’ – no longer the inflexible ‘radial pattern’ of the ‘traditional form of town’ (Palmer and MHLG, 1966 in Ortolano, 2019, pp. 152, 172). Greenwood named the New Town Milton Keynes after the ‘small village in the designated area’ (MKDC, 2014, p. 43) and planners Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker & Bor (LDWFWB) Consultants were commissioned to create The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970) on behalf of the MKDC.

24. Nio (2016, p. 11) does not make any reference to Pooleyville; only relating Milton Keynes to the ‘modernist continuation of the [First-Generation] New towns in post-[WWII] England’. This is evidently not the case, with the realisation of Milton Keynes being a rejection of Pooleyville – a quintessential ‘compact modern [city]’ of the CIAM and Corbusien variety (Clapson, 2004, p. 24; Ortolano, 2019, p. 116; Piko, 2020, p. 35). The hybridity and pluralism of Milton Keynes is specifically explored by Nio in Modernity and Suburbanity in the New City, and so to consider it a continuation is both a gross exaggeration and a contradiction.

Parallel

A New Generation

As the last of the New Towns, Milton Keynes and Almere could react to and ‘learn lessons from the previous generation[s]’ (Clapson, 2004, p. 27) of New and Expanded Towns. For example:

Rejecting High-Rise

Milton Keynes and Almere’s low-rise, suburban, single-family homes were ‘counterparts’ (Gé Huismans et al., 2008, p. 33; Nio, 2016, p. 11; Rutte & Abrahamse, 2016, p. 20) and ‘rejections’ to the modern high-rise developments that preceded and ‘loom[ed]’ (Clapson, 2004, pp. 33, 52; Piko, 2020, p. 43) over them across their planning horizon, Pooleyville¹ (unbuilt) and the Bijlmermeer (1968) in Amsterdam. As Piko (2020) inferred, the UK government had first ‘reject[ed]’ the high-rises of Pooleyville through Milton Keynes’ designation (1967) with the ‘highest population target’ (250,000) for the ‘largest [area]’ (8,850 hectares) ever for a new Town (p. 34). A low-density, low-rise living that Pooleyville would be unable to accommodate. Comparatively, in reaction to the Biljmermeer (1968) and continuing from Lelystad (1967), the RIJP’s planners ‘ignored’ and ‘contradicted’ planning advice to create an ‘urban environment [through hard-edged] high(er) rise apartments’ (Van der Wal, 1997, pp. 195, 197). Its director’s, Van Duin and Otto, saw very little benefit in high-density living – starting with the first Nuclei, Almere-Haven (1976).

Convergence

Generations of the New Towns Programmes were conceived as an expression of post-WWII socio-economic change in the application of national policy and planning concepts. By the turn of the 1960s, British and Dutch society would converge through international developments in: technology, population, welfare, communication, mobility and prosperity (see Nio, 2016) – resulting in numerous parallels between Milton Keynes and Almere. This coincided with the return of ‘leftist’ ideologies in the election of the Labour Government (1964 – 1970) and Den Uyl’s Cabinet (1973 – 1977), and their subsequent revision of the NTP’s status quo (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 231; Clapson, 2004, pp. 26 – 27) in the form of the (third) New Towns Act (1965) and the SPSE (1970), and the Third Nota (1973 – 1983). Furthermore, as stated in The Plan for MK (Vol. 1), ‘growing demands for space in and around the home (...) reflec[ted]’ (MKDC, 2014, p. 71) the improving incomes of ‘predominantly’ (Clapson, 2014, p. 19) young, middle-class families. Moving from ‘high-density’ living in the Donor City to post-WWII New Towns that overlook the countryside from their garden (SEJPT, 1970, p. 21). This is exemplified in the low-rise, low-density housing of the New Towns – with their average residential density being ‘25 people per hectare’ (MKDC, 2014, p. 71; RIJP, 1983, p. 38).

Strategic Plan for the South-East (1970)

Prominence

Initially created by the returning Labour government (1964) to advise on the economic development of The National Plan (1965), regional economic planning councils and boards became ‘immersed’ in the ‘[strategic] spatial planning [of] City-Regions’ (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 155). This led to the publication of the Strategy for the South-East (1967) by the South-East Economic Planning Council (SEEPC). However, the Standing Conference on London and South-East Regional Planning (SCLSERP), i.e. the local authorities’ representative (MKDC, 2014, p. 44), believed their autonomy was being ‘undermined’ by an ‘advisory [body]’ (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 156). As a result, the government formed an ‘ad hoc’ team, now constituting both the central government and local authorities, and commissioned them to develop the Strategic Plan for the South-East in March 1968.

Developed from previous studies on the area²⁵, the plan was considered at the time the ‘most important document on regional planning in Britain since Abercrombie[’s] Greater London Plan (1944) (Keeble, 1971, p. 69). This was because of the comprehensive and detailed suggestions outlined by its multi-disciplinary authors, the South-East Joint Planning Team (SEJPT). While The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970) had already begun in December 1967, the SEJPT ‘kept the [MKDC] informed [during its] preparation’ (MKDC, 2014, p. 44). The Strategic Plan for the South-East’s publication was later ‘accepted as the basis for further planning’ in the area (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 157).

25. The South-East Study (1964), the Strategy for the South-East (1967) and the ‘planning work of the Standing Conference’ (Keeble, 1971, p. 69).

Derde Nota over de
Ruimtelijke Ordening (1973 – 1983)
Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

Prominence

The Third Nota is composed of three parts over a total ten-year period, Part 1: Oriënteringsnota (Orientation Report, 1973 – 1975), Part 2: Verstedelijkingsnota (Urbanisation Report, 1976 – 1979) and Part 3: Nota landelijke gebieden (Report on Rural Areas, 1977 – 1983). Several addendums and partial revisions were made to these parts between 1973 – 1983.

Principles of Growth Centres

First introduced in the Nota Volkshuisvesting (Public Housing Nota, 1972), the regional planning tool of Groeikernen (Growth Centres) were defined in Part 1 (1973 – 1975) as ‘centres designated by the government to accommodate population overspill from both wings of the Randstad and where, as a result, strong growth in the number of inhabitants can be expected in the short term’ (VRO, 1974, p. 113, see VRO, 1972). Growth Centres were considered as ‘instruments’ to Concentrated-Deconcentration, the foundation for the government’s ‘urban development (stedelijk inrichtingsbeleid) policy’ that targeted: reducing suburbanisation and excessive commuting, protecting the Green Heart, Bufferzones and Internuclear Areas, and preventing socio-economic inequality in developments within and between adjacent cities (VRO, 1974, pp. 58, 104). In accordance with guidance set out in the Public Housing Nota (1972), Concentration was gaining favour over Deconcentration to control Inner-City suburbanisation through concerted housebuilding within the Growth Centres (VRO, 1974, p. 91). New Towns, previously selected for overspill, would now become designated Growth Centres to account for further housing demand up until 2000.

Strategic Plan for the South-East

1970

1973

Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

Form(alising)²⁶ City-Regions

City-Regions returned to the discussion of government policy as part of their involvement in regional economic development. In the Strategic Plan for the South-East (1970), they are defined as: ‘an urban complex together [with] smaller settlements and countryside [that] have strong relationships with [one or more] major centre[s] of activity’. The ‘self-contained City-Region’ of Milton Keynes-Northampton-Wellingborough (MKNW, aka. Planning area 30) was given ‘priority for general development for both population and employment’ (SEJPT, 1970, p. 85) and was expected to receive ‘0.8 million’ people from London and Buckinghamshire (SEJPT, 1970, pp. 109, 82).

The SPSE (1970) identified that ‘Concentrat[ed growth]’ and ‘flexibility’ would result in concurrent ‘major developments’ within a City-Region that were equally dependent on socio-economic change — possibly leading to them not ‘reaching[ing] maturity’ (SEJPT, 1970, p. 84). ‘Phasing’ of either the City-Regions or their ‘cells’/‘centres’ (SEJPT, 1970, p. 85) would be required to create a hierarchy between the different developments, minimising any ‘restriction on freedom of choice’ for leisure, retail, housing and employment (SEJPT, 1970, p. 84). Hall & Tewdwr-Jones (2020, p. 156) regards this as a ‘significant change in British planning philosophy’ from First-Generation New Towns for 60,000, to Third-Generation New Towns/Growth Centres for ‘250,000’ (i.e. Milton Keynes) and now polycentric regions for up to ‘1.5 million people’ (800,000 in the MKNW region).

26. Coombes (2014, p. 2430) explains how City-Regions were ‘never adopted’ as national doctrine and only ‘considered [in] sub-national governance’ i.e. Milton Keynes’s ‘Sub-Region’, see p. 62 (Clapson, 2004, p. 69). Parallels can be made based on the respective government’s/local authorities’ intent.

Formalising City-Regions

Since the Second Nota, City-Regions became part of the economic planning doctrine of The Netherlands in the balanced distribution of employment (and population) between different cities, towns and villages (VRO, 1976, p. 79). Formalised alongside the Economische Structuurnota²⁷ (Economic Structure Note, 1976), ‘spatial and economic policies [were] coordinated as closely as possible’ (VRO, 1976, p. 24). Concentrated-Deconcentration within the City-Regions began to focus more on the greater Concentration and ‘milieudifferentiatie (environmental differentiation)’ of housing and employment around both new and existing public transport as a way to ‘stimulate[growth]’ (VRO, 1976, pp. 152 – 153, 231).

Managing congestion from commuting between Donor Cities and Growth Centres within the City-Regions of the Randstad was to become a ‘cornerstone of national spatial planning for the next 25 years’ (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 233). This motivated the Third Nota’s push to implement and promote better public transport opportunities on the basis that the home to work commute was limited to ‘30 to 40 minutes per journey’. Beyond this time, people were expected to be more inclined to use their car and so a new railway line to Almere was proposed, the Almerelijn — today’s Flevoline, terminating at Lelystad. Almere’s ‘short distance’ to Amsterdam and Het Gooi would provide ‘good opportunities [for] development of employment’ (VRO, 1976, p. 187) through ‘two-way commuting’ between these regions (VRO, 1976, p. 156). The boundaries of The Netherland’s City-Regions were mapped out based on this travel time (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 234).

27. aka. De Nota inzake de Selectieve Groei, Note on Selective Growth.

Strategic Plan for the South-East

Formalising Growth Centres

The Strategic Plan for the South-East (1970) positions Milton Keynes as a '[principal and] major Growth Centre' for the Outer South-East (OSE)²⁸, and alongside its wider City-Region (MKNW) it was to act as a 'counter-attraction' or '-magnet'²⁹ for population and employment away from the capital and Buckinghamshire. As a Growth Centre, the task of the selected New Towns were no-longer 'static target-populations'³⁰ (Keeble, 1971, p. 70). Their 'plans' were expected to be 'flexible', providing a short-term ('a few years') response to 'unforeseen changes' in growth and distribution 'design figures' (SEJPT, 1970, p. 18). This was a lesson learnt from the 'impracticability' of The South-East Study's (1964) overestimated, long-term forecasts of the national population (SEJPT, 1970, p. 65).

28. Part of Abercrombie's (1944, p. 22) 'Outer Country Ring' which surrounds the Green Belt.
29. The South-East Study (MHLG, 1964, p. 99) described the New Town's role as 'counter-attractions' and A Strategy for the South-East (SEEPc, 1967, p. 1) referred to City-Regions as 'counter-magnets'.
30. Milton Keynes was 250,000, later reduced to '200,000 by 1992' (Clapson, 2004, p. 1)

1970

1973

Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

Formalising Growth Centres

By Part 2, the 'Growth Centre concept had been refined' (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 206) and Almere became one of ten designated Growth Centres (including Lelystad) with a 'new or increased task' (VRO, 1976, p. 191) – housing overspill from within its new City-Region of Het Gooi over the next two decades.

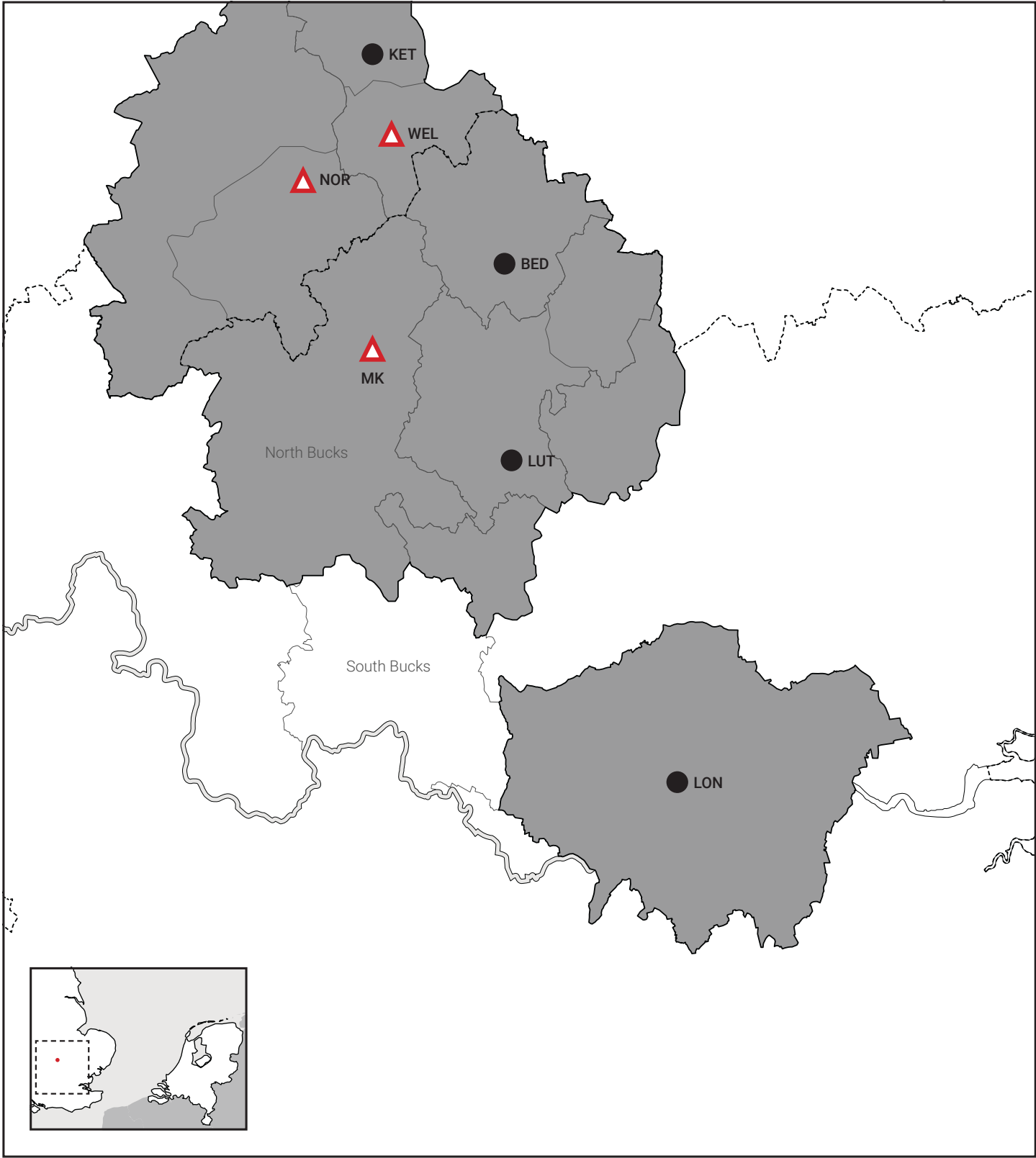
Growth Centres, unlike overspill-designated New Towns, would 'experience urban growth'³¹ that is stronger than the needs of the [New Town, city or region] itself' (VRO, 1976, p. 191). One-year prior, Almere had started the construction of its first Nuclei, Almere-Haven (1975). As a Growth Centre, Almere would not be restricted to Almere-Haven and two more Nuclei (Almere-Stad, 1980 and Almere-Buiten, 1984) would be expected to be built in phases over this period to help in the task of 50,000 additional homes between 1980 – 1990 (VRO, 1976, p. 187).

In a 1983 revision to the Urbanisation Report (VRO, 1983), it was described that after supplying the required housing demand (30,000) for Amsterdam (its Donor City), Lelystad would lose its Growth Centre status and be expected to develop as an independent centre. Almere, on the other hand, would be resourced for growth up until 2000, targeting up to 24,000 homes between 1990 – 1999 in Almere-Stad and Almere-Buiten. Receiving residents from Almere and Het Gooi, albeit in a more 'limited' overspill role in the follow-up to 2000.

31. Terms like urban growth are mentioned frequently throughout the different policy documents, this can be equated to the development of housing, employment and activities (amenities and facilities).

Strategic Plan for the South-East

1970

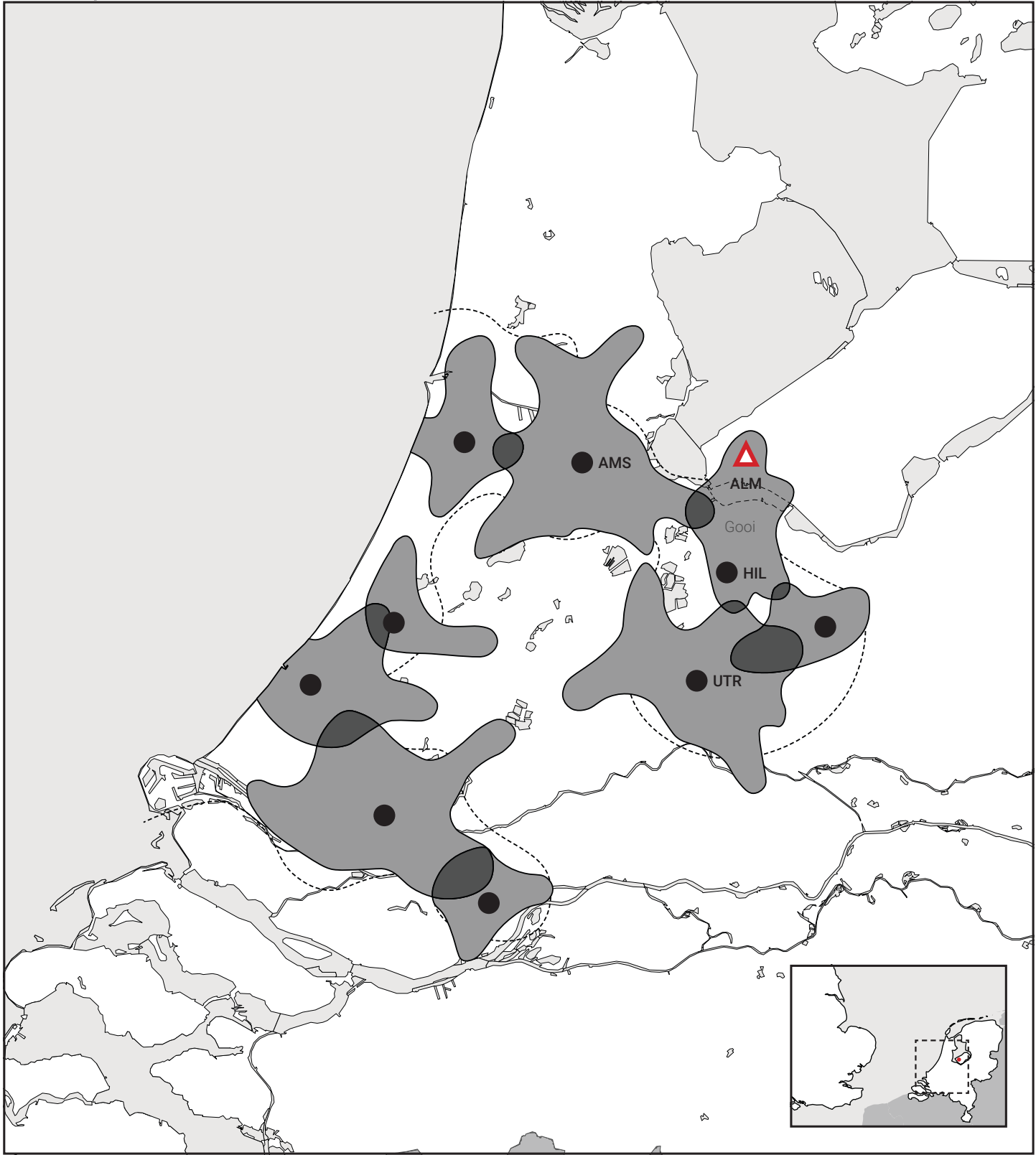


Outer South-East Region
A simplified, combined map of the SPSE's (1970) and The Plan for MK's (1970) City Regions and Growth Centres.

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ▲ N | △ Growth Centre | ■ City-Region |
| 1:1,250,000 | | — Counties |
| 0 12.5 25 km | ● Major Centres | --- Outer South-East |

Third National Policy Document on Spatial Planning

1973



Randstad Region
From an urbanised edge to a series of overlapping City-Regions 'composed of urban and (sub)urban green areas' (VRO, 1976, p. 245).

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ▲ N | △ Growth Centre | ■ City-Region |
| 1:1,250,000 | | ■ Overlap |
| 0 12.5 25 km | ● Major Centres | --- Randstad |

The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970)

Volume I & II

Prominence

The Plan for Milton Keynes³² (1970) was prepared by the architecture and planning firm of Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker & Bor Consultants on behalf of the MKDC. It followed on from the Interim Report (1969) and was organised in two volumes:

Volume I

A ‘summar[ised] submission’ to the Minister of Housing and Local Government (Anthony Greenwood, 1966 – 1970) of the MKDC’s (2014, p. 37) proposal for a New Town for 250,000 in North Buckinghamshire. Providing rationale from the New Town’s designation to the implementation of the Strategic Plan over the first ten years in order to achieve its six ‘broad’ goals (MKDC, 2014, p. 13).

Volume II

An expanded, more ‘detail[ed]’ compilation of ‘evidence’ consisting of alternative plans, illustrations of growth scenarios and academic studies in support of Volume I (MKDC, 2014, p. VI).

Six Goals for Milton Keynes

1. Opportunity and freedom of choice.
2. Easy movement and access, and good communications.
3. Balance and variety.
4. An attractive city.
5. Public awareness and participation.
6. Efficient and imaginative use of resources.

(MKDC, 2014, p. 13)

32. Mentions of The Plan relate to both Volumes, I & II, unless otherwise stated.

1970

1983

Structuurplan Almere (1983)

Structural Plan Almere

Prominence

Following from a series of Ontwerp (Draft) Structural Plans on the different Nuclei of Almere (-Haven, -Stad, -Buiten), the moving-in of its residents and the conclusion of the Third Nota (1973 – 1983), the Structuurplan Almere (1983) is a culmination of post-WWII policy and planning in the Southern Flevoland. Published in ‘December 1983’, it would act as a ‘broad outline [and] framework [for] future development’ after it became a municipality in 1984 (RIJP 1983, p. 3; Van der Wal, 1997, p. 205).

Six Goals for Almere

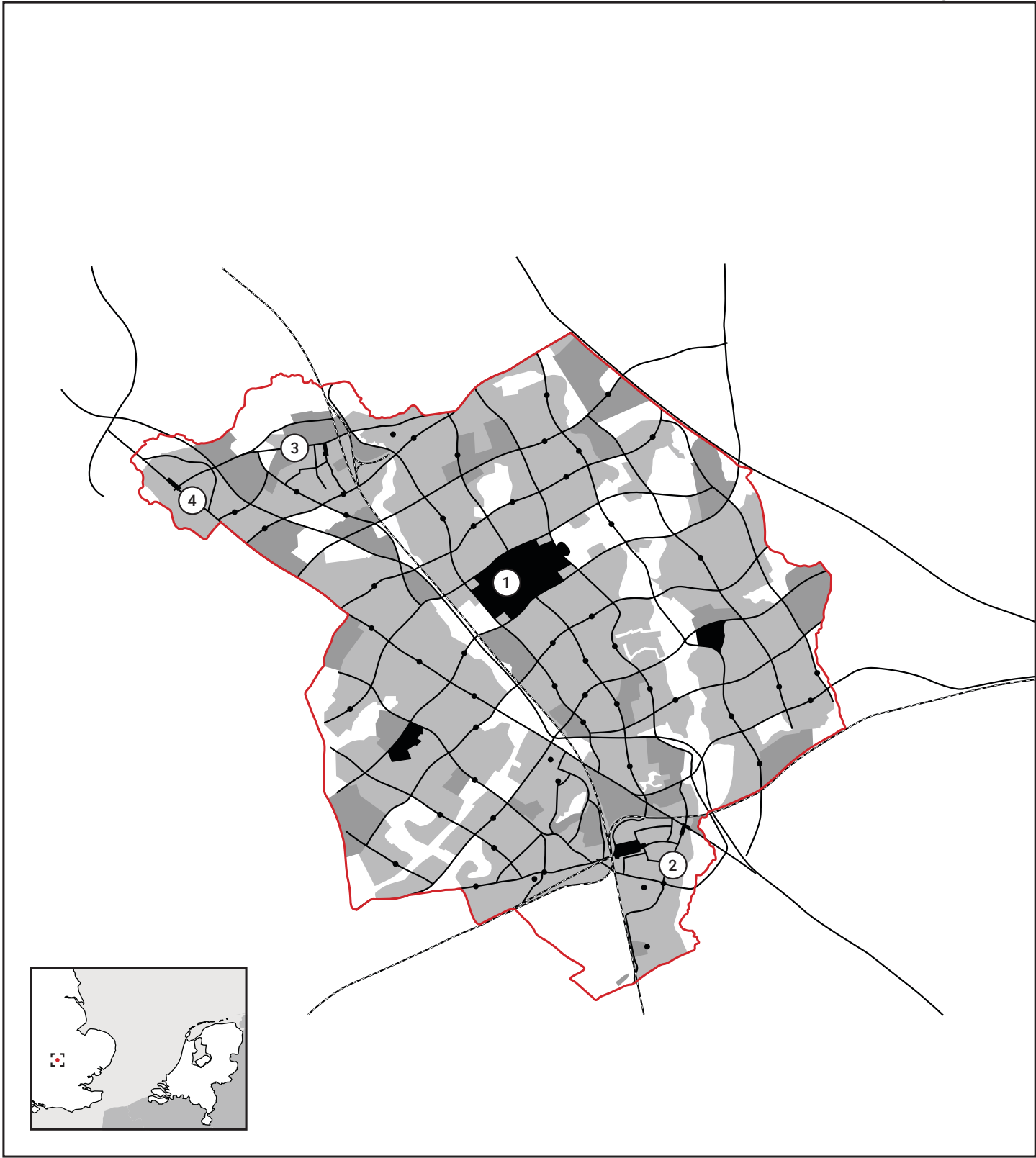
The six goals, first outlined in Almere 1985 (RIJP, 1974, pp. 7–9), continued into The Structuurplan Almere (1983).

1. Solving the regional problems of today.
2. Possibilities open for tomorrow.
3. Must accommodate everyone.
4. Stimulate the individual development of those who reside there.
5. Creation and preservation of a healthy living environment.
6. Preservation and further development of an urban culture.

(RIJP, 1983, p. 11)

The Plan for Milton Keynes

1970



Stain Plan
1. Central Milton Keynes
2. Bletchley
3. Wolverton
4. Stony Stratford

▲
N

1:100,000

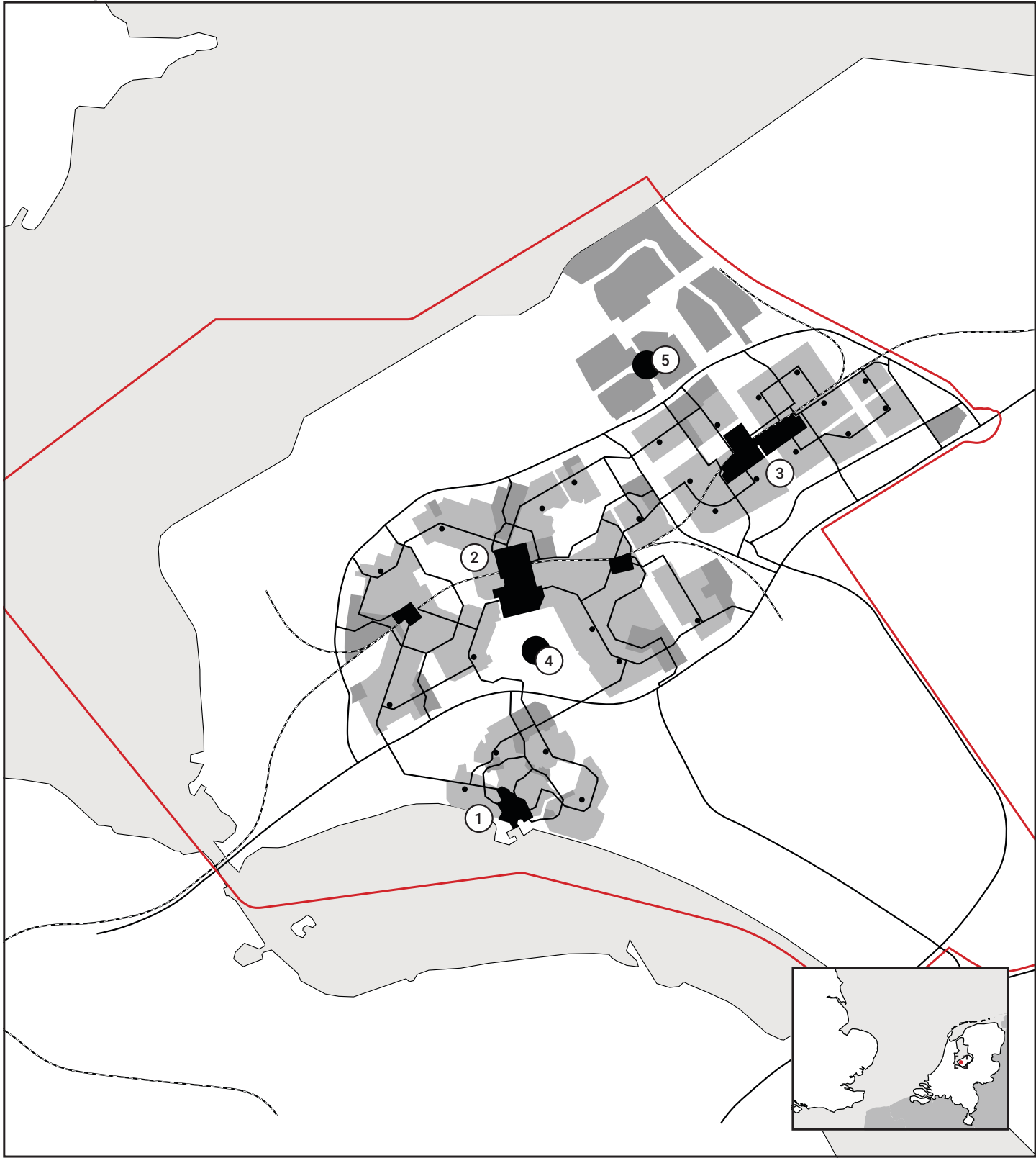
0 1 2 km

— Designated Area
— Roads
- - - Railway
● Nuclei

■ Housing
■ Employment
□ Open Space
Including reserved sites

Structural Plan Almere

1983



Vlekkenplan
1. Almere-Haven
2. Almere-Stad
3. Almere-Buiten
4. De Vaart
5. Centrale Buitenruimte

▲
N

1:100,000

0 1 2 km

— Designated Area
— Roads
- - - Railway
● Nuclei

■ Housing
■ Employment
□ Open Space
Including reserved sites

Parallel

The Planning Process

Blueprints

Masterplans after³³ the enactment of the Town and Country Planning Act (1947) in the UK, and the Wet Op de Ruimtelijk Ordening (WRO, The Law on Spatial Planning, 1966) and Second Nota (1966) in The Netherlands, were the ‘epitome of the prevailing Blueprint Planning [era]’. Blueprints are exemplified by their top-down, large-scale, fixed plans of the ‘future end-state of the city (or the region)’. In national policy, this is illustrated in The Greater London Plan (1944) and the Blokjeskaart (Cubes Map) (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 185; Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 309). Although Abercrombie’s GLP (1944) came before the Town and Country Planning Act (1947), Hall & Tewdwr-Jones (2020, p. 310) relates it to Blueprint planning through the ‘production of plans [that detail the fixed] future end state’ of an area. The TCPA (1947) set out in policy the ‘review [of] plans every five years’, but the ‘philosophy’ was still of the ‘fixed Masterplan’ i.e. Blueprint.

Spatial Planning

Over the 1960s, arising from the study of ‘cybernetics’, Blueprints were refined into a sociological, process-orientated approach known as either ‘Systems’, ‘Strategic’ or ‘Spatial Planning’ (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020, p. 310; Dekker et al., 2012, pp. 210–211). Planners would focus on ‘objectives [and outcomes] of the plan’ as a way of ‘tracing the possible [socio-economic] consequences of alternative policies’ and planning on the user — Brian McLoughlin’s (1969) publication of Urban & Regional Planning: A Systems Approach was seen as a key influence in this change to British and Dutch³⁴ planning.

Phased Planning

‘Procedural mistakes’ (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 194) in the planning of Pooleyville (unbuilt) and Lelystad (1967) — with their ‘classical [mono-] centralisation of urban amenities surrounded by residential areas’ — made it difficult to plan for future growth outwardly from its urban centre (Piko, 2020, p. 43; Brouwer, 1999). Post-WWII population booms/ overestimations, increased affluence and mobility, and improvements in technology, emphasised the need for flexible future planning to the MKDC and RIJP (MKDC, 2014, p. 51; RIJP, 1983, p. 10).

Anthony Greenwood (1966–1970), minister of the MHLG, was quoted as saying that Milton Keynes ‘must avoid dependence on a single centre, which is at the root of so many of the problems of existing towns’ (in Piko, 2020, p.43). Polynuclear, phased planning would be the solution for both New Towns, see pp. 48–51.

33. Parallels in the greater history of Town Planning is beyond the scope of this study and has been limited. Examples of some notable overlaps in the British and Dutch canon includes the 'International Town Planning Conference in Amsterdam' (1924) (Wagenaar, 2011, p. 406).
34. An 'early form [of] McLoughlin's (1969) (...) cybernetic planning' was used in the 'calculated' arrangement of the 'Southern [and Eastern] Flevoland polders' (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 209).

The Planning Process

The Masterplans

While in form, the Masterplans of The Plan for Milton Keynes Volume I (1970) and The Structural Plan Almere (1983) ‘resemble’ (Aldridge, 2019, p. 59) the Blueprints or ‘Vlekkenplans (Stain Plans)’ (Wagenaar, 2011, p. 464) first introduced by the TCPA (1947) and the WRO (1966), their rationalisation is founded in this ‘systematic’, ‘framework’ approach (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 235; MKDC, 2014, p. 37). Accompanied by explanations, justifications and numerous supporting studies and diagrams, these ‘flexible Masterplans’ were ‘no longer [the] unambiguous blueprints and final images [of] modernist high-rise districts’ (Nio, 2016, p. 34) such as the Bijlmermeer (Brouwer & Verlaan, 2013, p. 51) and Pooleyville³⁵. Instead, they could be adjusted to meet contemporary and future demands in policy and planning. Notable examples of supporting, systematic, documents are Volume II of The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970) and the Verkenningen (1970).

Regional Economic Planning

Following the National Plan (1965) in the UK and the Economische Structuurnota³⁶ (Economic Structure Note, 1976) in The Netherlands, economic policy in the 1970s began to influence planning doctrine in the form of City-Regions and their Growth Centres. Regional economic policy took on the spatial task of distributing overspill populations and promoting employment to the New Towns. Milton Keynes’ and Almere’s size and composition, from National to New Town scale, and the New Town’s plans to Concentrate and quickly grow employment opportunities at its borders (in competition with its wider City-Region) exemplifies the influence of this change in policy approach.

Scales of Planning

Many of the planning concepts outlined in this study can be interpreted and implemented at more than one scale. City-Regions (and Growth Centres), Polynuclear planning and Concentrated-Deconcentration are all used to the same effect from the perspective of National, Regional and New Town organisation. Milton Keynes³⁷ and Almere³⁸ with their many differently scaled, hierarchical and Concentrated-Deconcentrated Nuclei are themselves Polynuclear City-Regions within the wider National and Regional planning of the same concepts. Overall exemplifying the role of policy in the consequential use of doctrine, from National to New Town, in Milton Keynes and Almere’s total realisation.

35. pp. 20, 30 in Bendixson & Platt (1992) show these drawings. The original Masterplan was not accessible during this study.

36. aka. De Nota inzake de Selectieve Groei, Note on Selective Growth.
37. Although Milton Keynes never terms itself a City-Region, its planning as a Concentrated-Deconcentrated, Polynuclear City — combined with the definition and example of the polycentric region in the SPSE (1970, see p. 36) — can be inferred as a City (CMK) within a region of smaller settlements (e.g. the existing towns).
38. It was the view of the RIJP (1938) that if the Regional- and City- scale targets were met, it could be achieved at a ‘microscale’ (microscale, i.e. neighbourhoods) (p. 59).

The Plan for Milton Keynes

Applying the Polynuclear Concept

Designed as a Polynuclear³⁹ New Town, The Plan outlined Milton Keynes as a series of ‘hierarch[ical]’ Nuclei⁴⁰ differing in their functions and scales (large-small) (MKDC, 2014, pp. 107, 109):

New City Centre

In the geographical centre of the New Town, the New City Centre will be the ‘main focus of city activity’ (MKDC, 2014, pp. 71–81). Fundamentally a District Nuclei — aka. Central Milton Keynes (CMK) — it is comprised of a new station, housing and employment, as well as a centre for ‘shopping, cultural and leisure facilities’, the Centre:MK (C:MK).

District Nuclei

‘Lower [in] hierarchy’ to the New City Centre, District Nuclei would provide for ‘routine shopping’ and a greater variety of ‘choice’ than the Local Nuclei in the ‘larger catchment’ of its surrounding grid-squares (MKDC, 2014, p. 107). The existing town of Bletchley’s Highstreet (Queensway) would be one of four district Nuclei. Today, these consist of ‘massive retail and warehouse [parks]’ (Clapson, 2014, p. 21).

Other Nuclei

This includes grounds for Higher Education (e.g. Colleges and a University), Health (hospitals, dentistry, elderly, etc.), Industry and Commercial Improvements. Wolverton and Stony Stratford, towns to the North of Milton Keynes, would be provided with new education facilities. Stony Stratford, an ‘historic and attractive High Street’ would be ‘preserved’ to provide ‘specialised commercial opportunities’ (MKDC, 2014, pp. 69, 99–101).

Local Nuclei

Centres positioned along the edge of each 1 km grid-square that contain a mix of activities: shops, school(s), bus stops, ‘employment opportunities’, a library, social hubs and religious buildings (MKDC, 2014, pp. 75–78). All within ‘500 m walking distance [of the home]’ (MKDC, 1970, pp. 54, 76). As Walter Bor (1969 in Clapson 2014, p. 10) describes, Local Nuclei replaced the ‘interlocking neighbourhood [units]’ of the ‘old New Towns’.

39. Although not referred to as polynuclear or polycentric, The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970) lays out the New Town as a number of dispersed centres across the flexible framework of the 1 km grid and its services (MKDC, 2014, p. 51).
40. Originally called Centres in The Plan (i.e. ‘District Centres’, ‘Other Centres’ and ‘Activity Centres’), Nuclei was used to align it with Almere’s policy and planning terminology and to differentiate it from City Centres (MKDC, 2014, p. 69).

1970

1983

Structural Plan Almere

Applying the Polynuclear Concept

The ‘hierarchical structure’ of Nuclei that make up Almere are ordered by their functions and scales (RIJP, 1983, p. 110). From the New City Centre (‘hoofdkern’), to its ‘smaller Nuclei (District, Local) of varying sizes orientated towards it’.

New City Centre

In the geographical ‘heart’ of Almere’s designated area, Almere-Stad (City) is the main District Nuclei and the ‘centre of gravity’ for its activity (RIJP, 1983, pp. 148, 164). Its train and bus stations serve the other Nuclei of Almere and is bordered by offices and neighbourhoods made up of the highest-rise and density housing available. Each of these residential areas are expected to grow out ‘radial[ly]’ (RIJP, 1983, pp. 252–254). At its centre is the later known Almere-Centrum, the ‘hoofdwinkelcentrum (main shopping centre)’, and many different cultural and leisure facilities (‘galleries’, ‘swimming pool’, etc.) (RIJP, 1983, pp. 164, 168).

District Nuclei

Beyond Almere-Stad, Almere in 1983 was made up of two other ‘Stadsdeelcentrum (District Centres)’ or District Nuclei — Almere-Haven (Harbour) and Almere-Buiten (Outer) (RIJP, 1983, p. 166). Almere-Haven was built first (1976) as a small tourist town on the Gooimer, then Almere-Stad (1980) and lastly (in the first phase), Almere-Buiten (1984) represented the agricultural landscape that it was based in (RIJP, 1983, p. 165). Each District Nuclei has its own centre comprised of different activities that reflect their identity, as well as housing and employment beyond it.

Parallel

Polynuclear Planning

Phasing

Phasing of Milton Keynes’ and Almere’s Nuclei would ensure that it became a ‘balanced city’ throughout its development, with ‘area[s] surrounding [it] remain[ing] attractive’ to prospective residents (MKDC, 1970, p. 96; see RIJP, 1970, p. 111). This included the ‘withdrawal of agriculture’, building of health services and adapting to changes in demand such as ‘schools’ (MKDC, 1970, pp. 333, 226, 216; see Van der Wal, 1997). The first phase of the New Towns focused on connecting to existing settlements and infrastructure. The ‘First Ten Years’ plan for Milton Keynes would link together Stony Stratford, Wolverton, New Bradwell and Bletchley ‘linear[ly]’ from South–North through the new City Centre (MKDC 1970, pp. 295–296). In Almere, its ‘phasing’ worked along an ‘urbanisation axes’ based on the railway and motorways that bisect the New Town — starting from Almere-Haven (1976) to the Centrale Buitenruimte, Almere-Stad (1980), Almere-Buiten (1984) and then De Vaart (RIJP, 1983, p. 147).

Identity and Character

The New Towns’ phased construction would leave the Nuclei ‘relatively open [to] change[s] in character’ according to contemporary socio-economic influences (population, employment, technology and so on) (MKDC, 2014, p. 51). Therefore, each of Milton Keynes’ and Almere’s different Nuclei would have its own identity defined by the functions, form, scale and location of them over time. Varying in activity from the bustling ‘City Centre[s]’ of CMK and Almere-Stad, to the quaint townscapes of Bletchley and Almere-Haven, and finally the ‘quiet [in-between] areas’ e.g. parks, courtyards, etc. (RIJP, 1983, p. 80; MKDC, 2014, p. 17). Each Nuclei would ultimately differ along a scale of city and countryside (city – city in countryside – countryside).

A Centre among Centres

Both Milton Keynes’ and Almere’s future City Centres were located in the middle of their designated boundary. This was motivated by the need to minimise travel time between the Nuclei and within the wider City-Region, and so improving accessibility to the commercial hub of the New Towns (MKDC, 1970, p. 312; RIJP, 1983, p. 40). Containing the main railway station for the New Town, visitors are brought straight into the greatest Concentration of activity while also facilitating the surrounding neighbourhoods and Nuclei. In addition, the City Centres are higher in elevation, rise and density to the surrounding Nuclei — providing a visual connection to the image and so identity of the New Town. ‘Advantage[ous] Deconcentration’ such as this would help to create a ‘special character’ (RIJP, 1983, p. 312).

1983

Structural Plan Almere

Other Nuclei

De Vaart is a large-scale ‘business park’ that is positioned away⁴¹ from the District Nuclei and towards the North of Almere-Buiten; it is mainly occupied by industrial companies (RIJP, 1983, pp. 155, 157). Additionally, there is the Centrale Buitenruimte (Central Outdoor Space) ‘located between the first two [Nuclei]’ of Almere-Haven and Almere-Stad (RIJP, 1983, p. 145). The Centrale Buitenruimte acts as a large, recreational, Bufferzone landscaped by the Weerwater lake, trees and various planting that connect Almere-Haven and Almere-Stad together.

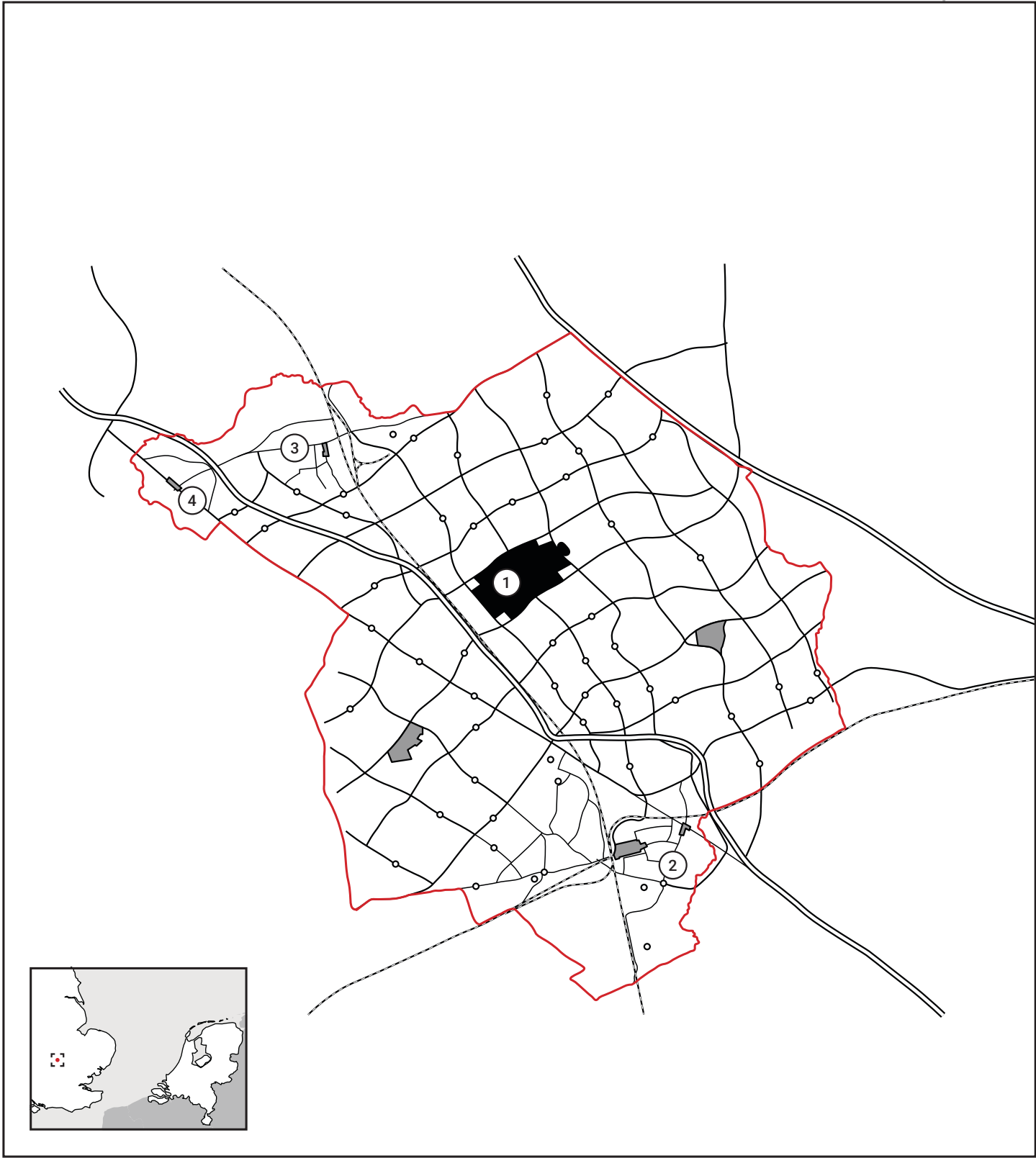
Local Nuclei

Known as a ‘Buurtcentrum (Neighbourhood Centres)’⁴², Local Nuclei are made up of ‘shops or supermarkets (...) within walking distance (up to 500 m)’ and ‘community centres’ to serve the immediate needs of the many different residents (RIJP, 1983, pp. 166–167, 179).

41. Due to ‘environmental pollution’, De Vaart was also zoned into three different areas based on its severity, increasing towards the Oostvaardersdiep (RIJP, 1983, p. 157).
42. As carried out for The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970), terminology has been renamed to better align to each other and the intention of the design, e.g. Neighbourhood Centre has become Local Nuclei.

The Plan for Milton Keynes

1970



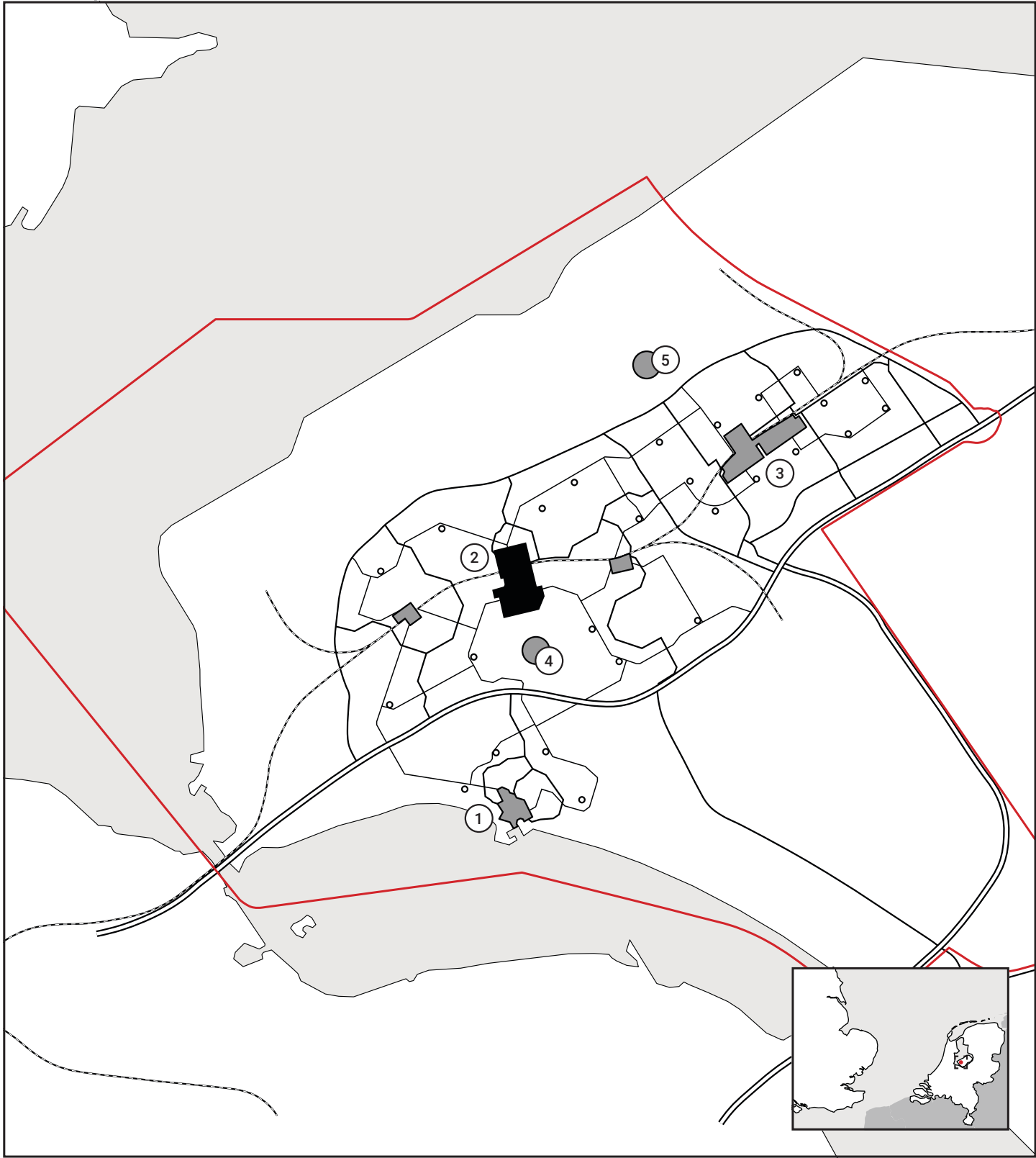
The Nuclei
1. Central Milton Keynes
2. Bletchley
3. Wolverton
4. Stony Stratford

▲
N
1:100,000
0 1 2 km

— Designated Area
== Motorway
— Main Road
— Local Road
--- Railway
■ New City Centre
■ District/Other Nuclei
○ Local Nuclei

Structural Plan Almere

1983



The Nuclei
1. Almere-Haven
2. Almere-Stad
3. Almere-Buiten
4. De Vaart
5. Centrale Buitenruimte

▲
N
1:100,000
0 1 2 km

— Designated Area
== Motorway
— Main Road
— Local Road
--- Railway
■ New City Centre
■ District/Other Nuclei
○ Local Nuclei

The Plan for Milton Keynes

Applying Concentrated-Deconcentration

This can be divided into three categories:

Housing

The MKDC (2014) recognised the difficulty in trying to avoid the complete Concentration of monocultural neighbourhoods (i.e. ‘young families’, same ‘socio-economic status’, etc.), with it being ‘contrary to individual preferences’ and so ‘unrealistic’ (pp. 55–56). Different housing typologies (owner-occupied, rental, elderly, etc.) would be Deconcentrated within these grid-squares, with Local Nuclei positioned at their boundary to ensure equal access to its services.

Employment

Employment would be Deconcentrated outwards from the New City Centre (CMK) and the other District Nuclei; Concentrating mainly at the perimeter of Milton Keynes’ designated area. By Deconcentrating employment, there would be a ‘greater distribution of workplace opportunities’, minimised routine congestion and so improved ‘accessibility’ for cars and public transport, and better integration with existing District Centres (Bletchley, Wolverton, Stony Stratford) (MKDC, 1970, pp. 267, 280, 284, 292).

Activity

There would be a ‘balance’ of Concentrated activities between the City Centre (in the New City Nuclei) and the surrounding Nuclei to the ‘benefit’ of their ‘expan[sion]’, ‘function’ and ‘proximity’ (MKDC, 1970, p. 312). Central Milton Keynes would have the greatest Concentration and variety of activities (department stores, museums, galleries, theatres). District Nuclei would provide for the weekly food shop and a mix of retail units (furniture, sports equipment, etc.). While these Other Nuclei would form their own communities around the health and educational campuses. Local Nuclei are at the ‘heart of the social life of Milton Keynes’ (Clapson, 2014, p. 8), with its Concentrated mix of bus stops, schools, shops and community buildings bordering the residential grid-squares.

1970

1983

Structural Plan Almere

Applying Concentrated-Deconcentration

This can be divided into three categories:

Housing

Each District Nuclei would form part of the New Town’s ‘Woonconcentraties (Residential Concentrations)’ (RIJP, 1983, pp. 31, 37). Smaller District Nuclei (Almere-Haven) would have less Concentrated (‘lower-density’) low-rise housing on average than the larger District Nuclei (e.g. Almere-Stad) and in the early phases of the New Town, more Concentrated (‘higher density’) housing would be needed around Nuclei with ‘regional public transport stops’ to correspond to the outward migration of employment (RIJP, 1983, pp. 147, 149). The ‘distribution’ of Concentrated-Deconcentration (i.e. these densities) should be ‘fairly consistent’ across the New Town but vary in typology and form within the District Nuclei (RIJP, 1983, p. S7). Overall, with the aim of ‘interweaving small-scale, homogenous residential areas in terms of lifestyle into a socially differentiated residential environment’ of ‘Concentrated suburban and urban living’ (RIJP, 1983, pp. 11, 110).

Employment

Balancing the Concentration and Deconcentration of employment across the Nuclei was considered to be very dependent on the conditions of each Nuclei, their Internuclear Areas and the roads, railways and canals that serviced them. ‘Differentiated’ and Deconcentrated within/between the Nuclei’ and around the New Town’s ‘peripher[y]’, businesses would become more Concentrated over time and their locations curated to attract different employers — while hoping to minimise any socio-economic divide in the planning of adjacent residential areas (RIJP, 1983, pp. 31, 57 – 59, 232). This ‘proportional’ distribution would provide a ‘regional freedom of choice (keuzevrijheid)’ and help manage congestion between the Nuclei, as well as the wider City-Region of Amsterdam and Het Gooi.

The Plan for Milton Keynes

1970



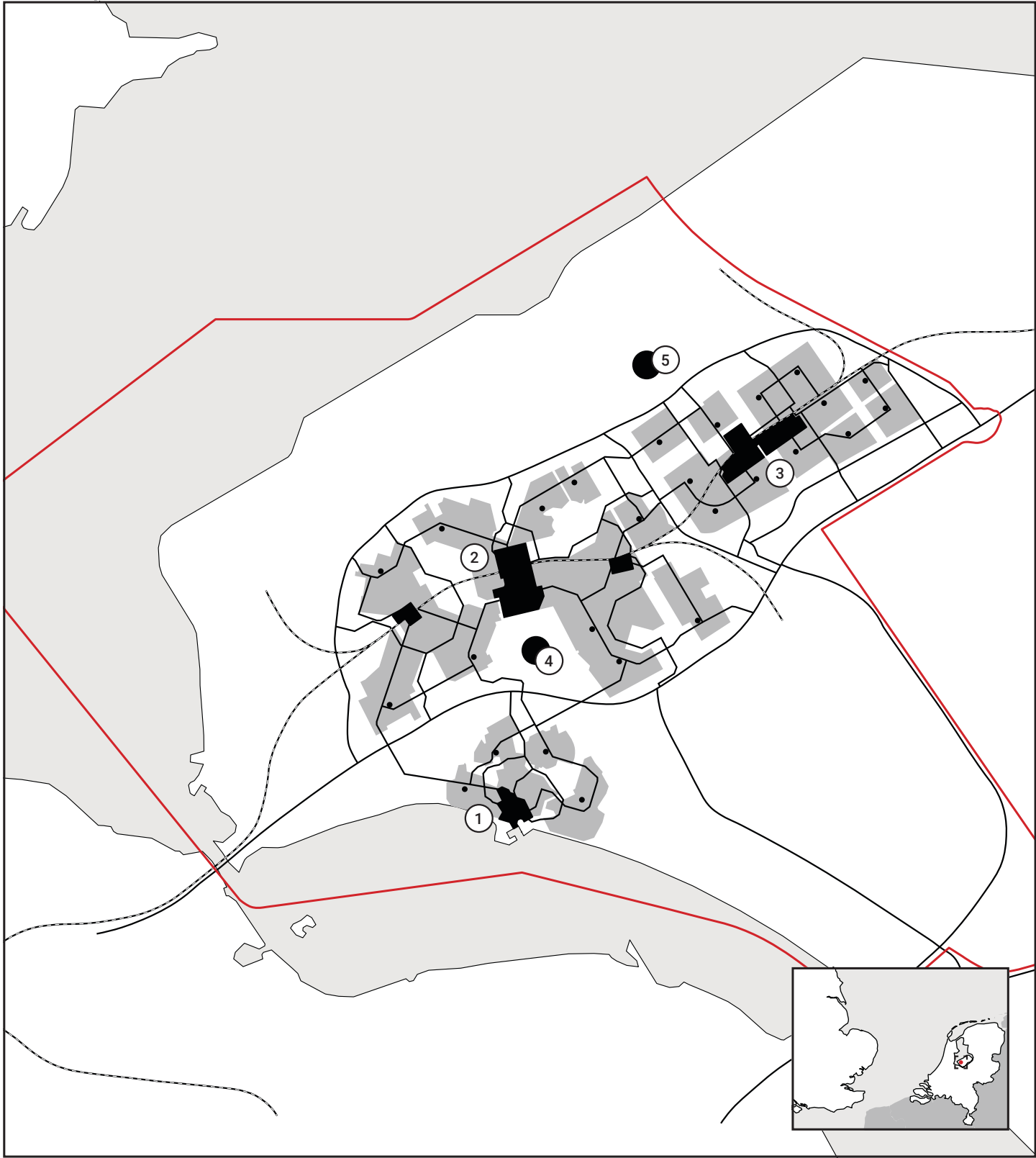
- Housing**
- 1. Central Milton Keynes
 - 2. Bletchley
 - 3. Wolverton
 - 4. Stony Stratford

▲
N
1:100,000
0 1 2 km

- Designated Area
- Roads
- - - Railway
- Nuclei
- Housing
- Other

Structural Plan Almere

1983



- Housing**
- 1. Almere-Haven
 - 2. Almere-Stad
 - 3. Almere-Buiten
 - 4. De Vaart
 - 5. Centrale Buitenruimte

▲
N
1:100,000
0 1 2 km

- Designated Area
- Roads
- - - Railway
- Nuclei
- Housing
- Other

Parallel

(De)concentration

Collage City

In the New Towns, Concentrated-Deconcentration is used as a suburbanity-leaning intermediary (Wagenaar, 2011, p. 464) between the city and the countryside, or ‘clustered suburbanisation’ (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 184; see Spoormans et al., 2019). Nio (2016) compares this Concentration and Deconcentration of housing, employment and activities around the Nuclei to a ‘Collage City’ — with the ‘grid roads’ of Milton Keynes and the railway, motorway and ‘free bus lane[s]’ of Almere providing ‘structur[e]’ for future ‘development’ (p.79).

Structuring the New Towns

The Plan for Milton Keynes’ (1970) network of railways, motorways and roads more immediately resembles the origins of The Structuurplan Almere (1983). In the two explorative studies, the Verkenningen (1970) and Verkenningen II⁴³ (1972), Nuclei are also Concentrated and Deconcentrated within a 1 km grid of transport routes. A ‘directional grid’ of ordered routes, based on their function (e.g. internal and external traffic), would be ‘modified’ to reflect the site’s forces (location, features, etc.) and the role of the Nuclei (RIJP, 1970, p. 156). Continuing in a non-gridded form in the 1983 plan, the role of these routes in structuring Almere is illustrated by the encircling and dividing railways and motorways, and its relationship with the different zones (see p. 45).

Housing, Employment and Activity

Housing distribution around the District Nuclei is fairly comparable, with Local Nuclei becoming these Concentrated-Deconcentrated anchors for the different neighbourhoods to congregate around. Similarly, Deconcentrated employment throughout Milton Keynes and Almere⁴⁴ gravitates around each District Nuclei before becoming more Concentrated at its periphery for specific industries (Research and Development, Engineering, etc.). Activity, predominantly in the form of shopping (malls, retail outlets, conveniencestores), is a key differentiation between each Nuclei’s typology, hierarchy and location within the New Town — and therefore how they were Deconcentrated across them.

Distance as Deconcentration

From the CMK and Almere-Stad at the geographical centre of the New Town to the Local Nuclei being within 500 m to residential areas, the proximity⁴⁵ of the Nuclei (to each other and these zones) was an important mechanism in achieving a balanced distribution of Concentration and Deconcentration. In combination with improved mobility, the car would then be used as a tool for Concentrated-Deconcentration over longer distances within the New Town and the City-Region (see RIJP, 1983, p. 115).

43. Unpublished, see Van der Wal (1997, p.200).
44. ‘English New Towns’ were used as a precedent for the distribution of businesses in The Structuurplan Almere (1983, pp. 53, 55).
45. Nio (2016, p. 75) incorrectly states that the planning of Milton Keynes is less ‘focused on proximity’ than Almere-Buiten. Notably, Nio (2016) sometimes compares Milton Keynes to a District Nuclei of Almere and not as its total composition.

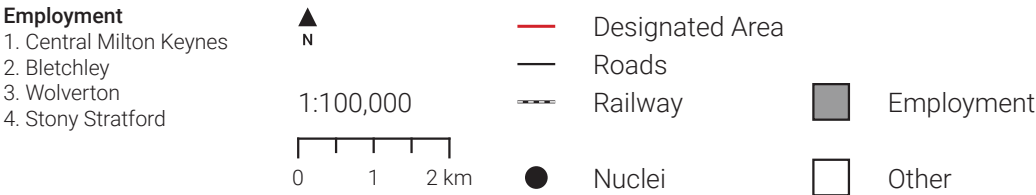
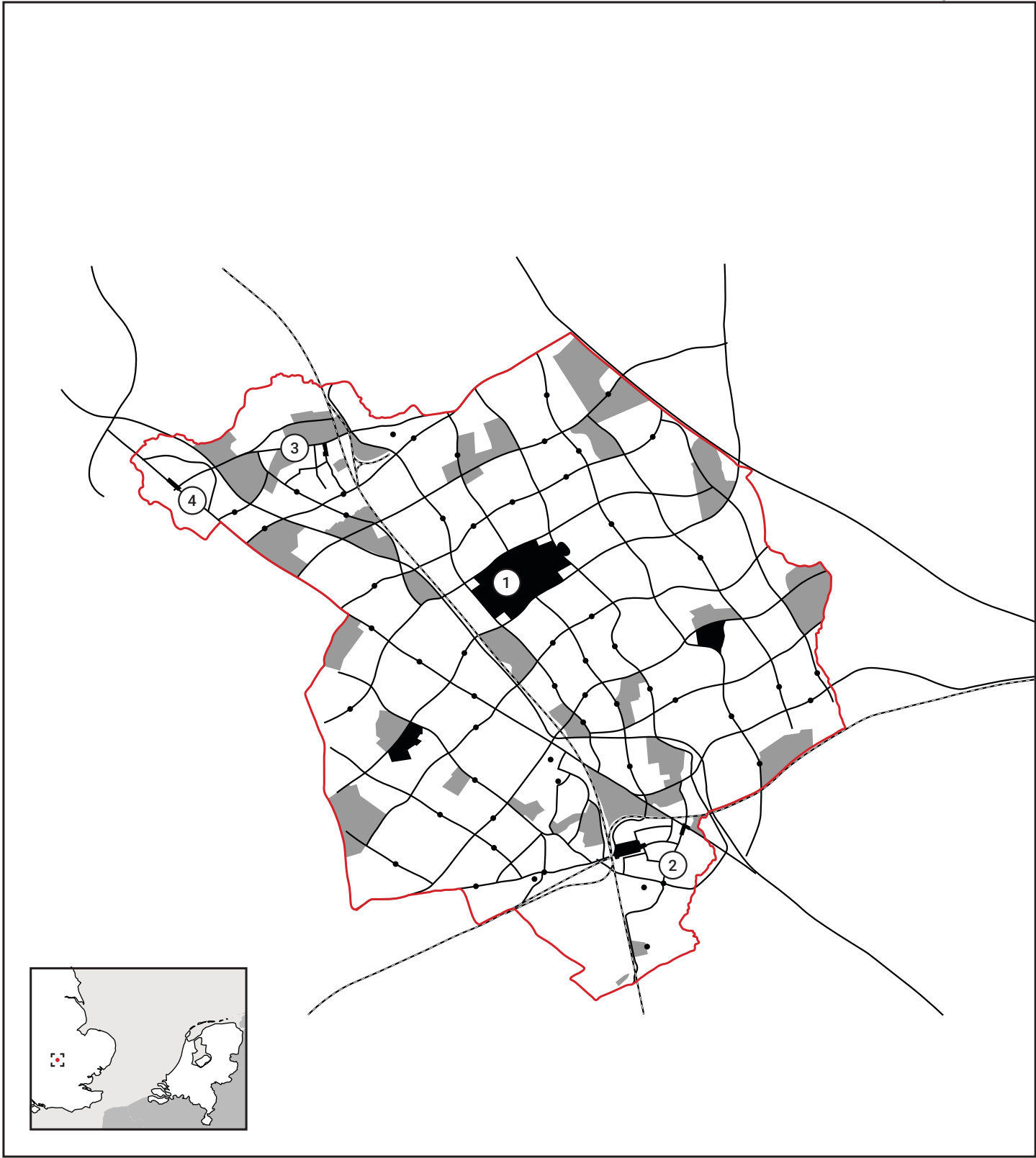
Structural Plan Almere

Activity

‘Understood here as a City-Region and not as a city’, similar activities (e.g. recreation, transport, industry) are ‘Concentrat[ed] together [to] attract large numbers of people’ and are balanced between the City Centre and other Nuclei to relieve ‘pressure (...) from Almere and from the old country’ (RIJP, 1983, pp. 12, 67, 103). As a ‘major visitor attraction’, the City-Centre would have the main shopping centre, Almere-Centrum, and a Concentration of ‘one-off [activities]’ not available in the District Nuclei (RIJP, 1983, p. 119). Other Nuclei such as the Centrale Buitenruimte were treated as ‘recreational concentration points (recreatieve concentratiespunten)’ (RIJP, 1983, p. 67), while De Vaart specialised in industrial activities. Local Nuclei would be Concentrated around each of the District Nuclei’s neighbourhoods, providing readily available shopping and community facilities (RIJP, 1983, p. 167).

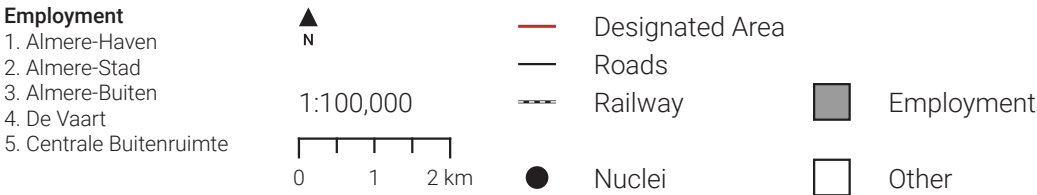
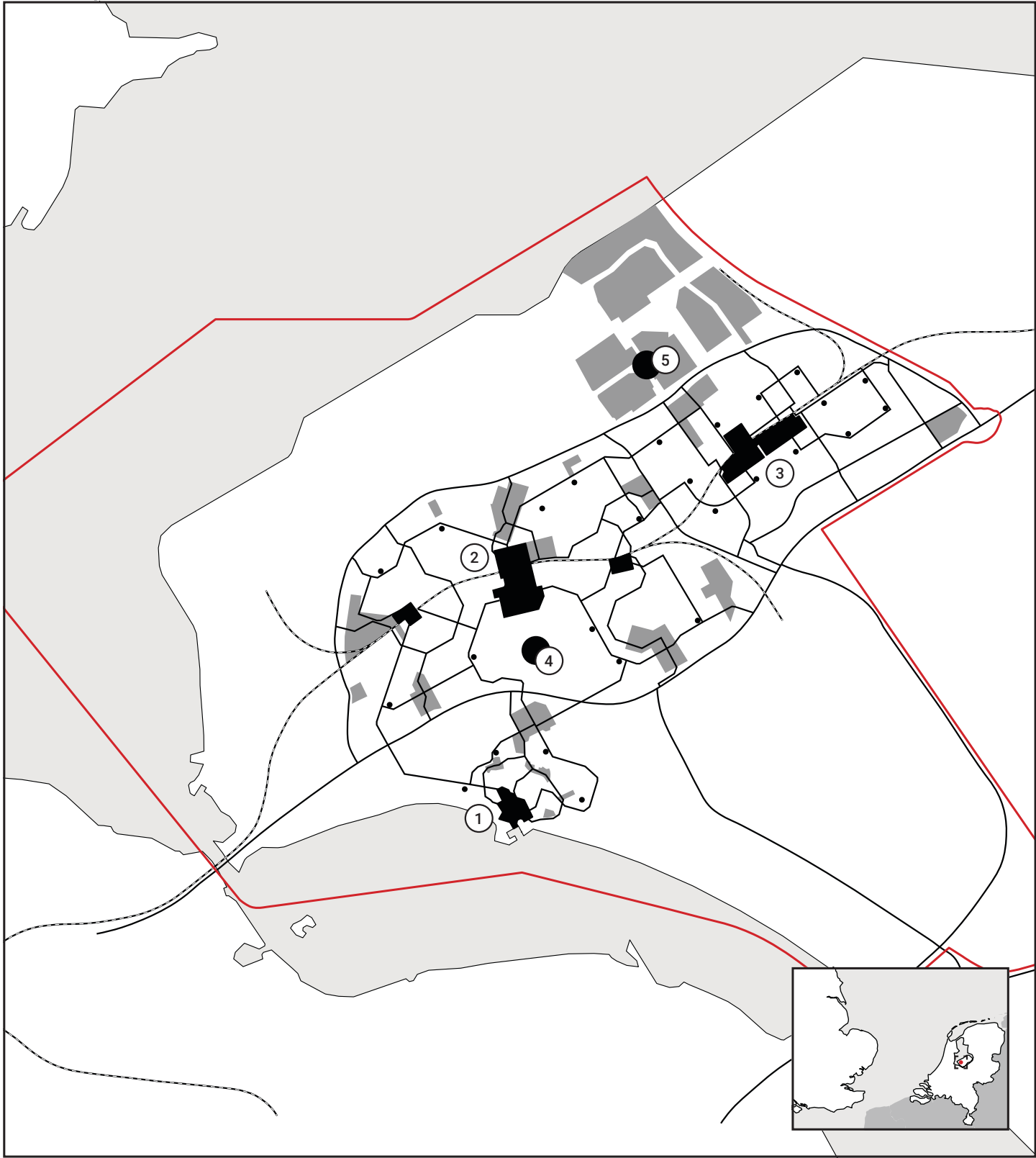
The Plan for Milton Keynes

1970



Structural Plan Almere

1983



The Plan for Milton Keynes

Applying City Regions

The City-Region or ‘Sub-Region’⁴⁶ of Milton Keynes is discussed in Volume I and II of The Plan as an ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ radial zones that overlap with its surrounding counties (Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) (MKDC 1970, p. 155). Its inner area would include the City-Region of Milton Keynes-Northampton-Wellingborough – as set out in the Strategic Plan for the South-East (1970) – and further encompasses the ‘major employment centres’ of Bedford and Luton. Its outer area is West Hertfordshire and the ‘remainder of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire’. Through this City-Regional framework, Milton Keynes is effectively in competition for population and employment with the neighbouring towns via the ‘sub-regional’ roads that connect them (MKDC 2014, p. 33).

Applying Growth Centres

Volume II of The Plan makes Milton Keynes’ ‘primary purpose’ very clear – ‘to provide homes and jobs’ for ‘overspill’ from ‘Greater London’ and ‘South Buckinghamshire’ as a ‘major Growth [Centre]’⁴⁷ of the South-East over the next 25 years’ (MKDC, 1970, p. 159). Its ‘balanced growth of employment and industry’ would need to compete with the wider City-Region in order to prevent commuting back to the Donor City (‘Greater London’) or South Buckinghamshire (MKDC, 1970, p. 147). Furthermore, as a Growth Centre, by targeting ‘[planned] rapid growth’ it would make Milton Keynes more attractive and provide a ‘wide choice of locations’ for businesses and employees (MKDC, 1970, p. 148).

46. Sub-Regions are interchangeable with City-Regions in how they are used and defined (see p. X) in national reports as socio-economic ‘spheres of influence’ for managing the distribution of leisure, retail, housing and employment (MKDC 1970, p. 94).
47. The term ‘Growth Areas’ is briefly used in The Plan in reference to the South-East studies (MKDC 1970, p. 159). Beyond this example, mentions of growth are inherent to the New Town’s task and not titled by its policy like in The Structuurplan Almere (1983).

1970

1983

Structural Plan Almere

Applying City Regions

The requirements and mapping of its designated City-Regions (Amsterdam and Het Gooi), as set out in the Urbanisation Report (Third Nota, 1976 – 1979), were included and considered.

However, a distinction⁴⁸ is made between the ‘Stadsgewest (City-Region) Almere’ and the wider (City-)Region of Amsterdam and Het Gooi that encompasses it (RIJP, 1983, pp. 44, 58 – 59). Through its Polynuclear planning, Almere’s development was considered to be comparable to the formation of City-Regions with it encompassing a major urban centre (Almere-Stad) and a series of different, smaller settlements (Almere-Haven,-Buiten).

Applying Growth Centres

Acknowledging the increased task for the Flevoland New Towns, as set out in Third Nota (Part 2, 1976 –1979) and the Economic Nota⁴⁹ (1976), the Growth Centre of Almere was responsible for balancing the ‘population and employment’ relative to the wider City-Region of Amsterdam and Het Gooi (RIJP, 1983, p. 48). Commuting out of the Growth Centre could be minimised and inward migration encouraged by ‘stimula[ting]’ the settlements of businesses and so providing greater employment opportunities for New Town and wider City-Region residents (RIJP, 1983, p. 20). The construction of the Almerelijn, as recommended in the Third Nota (Part 2, 1976 –1979), would also help reduce congestion and travel time on the motorways between Almere and its City-Region – public transport such as the railway was seen as ‘inseparable’ to the government’s ‘Overspill Policy’ (RIJP, 1983, p. 22).

48. Throughout this study, City-Regions in reference to Almere relate to the conurbation of Amsterdam and Het Gooi – as opposed to the Polynuclear conurbation of the New Town.
49. aka. De Nota inzake de Selectieve Groei, Note on Selective Growth.

Parallel

The Design Teams

A Unique Outcome

Developments in post-WWII town planning in the UK and The Netherlands were greatly influenced by the new makeup of the governmental departments and organisations that created the policy and planning documents (studies, proposals, etc.) and so informed the New Towns. This included (physical) planners, planologists⁵⁰, sociologists, architects and more. As Thomas et al. (1983, p. 242) describes, ‘in both countries the efforts and initiative of individuals were (...) a key factor’. Though the formality of professional practice generally differed in both countries (Thomas et al., 1983, p. 241), an argument could be made for similarities in the involvement of architects and sociologists (i.e. the Centre for Environmental Studies, CES) with Milton Keynes’s development, and ‘architecturally-orientated urban designers (stedebouwers)’ and ‘research-orientated planners (planologen)’ in Almere. Clapson’s (2004) assessment of Milton Keynes as a ‘unique outcome’, because of the MKDC’s composition, is therefore brought into question (p. 32).

Sociological Research

Results of respective 1950 and 60s sociological research in the UK (see Clapson, 2017) and The Netherlands⁵¹ (see Dekker et al., 2012) pointed towards the same residential typology for the New Towns, a single-family, low-rise home. This corresponded to the ‘status’ (Dekker et al., 2012, p. 171) brought from the population’s improved ‘mobility, sociability and leisure’ at the time (Clapson, 2017, p. 103). Planners were effectively taking a “path of least resistance” or a ‘boerenverstand (common sense)’ solution (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 195) to encourage overspill populations to move in. This can be perceived as a more ‘populist’ form of Town Planning (Clapson, 2004, p. 9; Van der Wal, 1997, p. 195).

The City in the Countryside

Milton Keynes and Almere were both designed as a polynuclear Garden City in the Countryside for 250,000 inhabitants...or were they (see Howard, 2001)? As the ‘most influential concept in 20th Century urban planning’ (Berg & Provoost, 2021), the degree to which elements of the Garden City Movement have been used proactively or manipulated by the MKDC and RIJP planners to ‘legitim[ise]’ the conception of these New Towns needs further consideration beyond the scope of this study (Aldridge, 2019, p. 42; Faludi & van Der Valk, 1994, p. 106). Some examples could include its use as: a continuation or nostalgia of pre-war planning, an exaggerated use of the planning canon or a tool against uncontrollable urban growth. Overall, both New Towns are often considered as ‘hybrids’ of the Garden City and the post-WWII Modern Movement, ‘suburbanity’ and ‘urbanity’ (Alexander, 2009, p. 23; Nio, 2016, p. 292).

50. Native to The Netherlands, planologists were concerned with the social science of spatial planning (Casseres, 2015) as opposed to the physical planner in its application in the built environment (stedebouwers).
51. This is referring to the 1963 survey by the NIPO (Nederlands Instituut voor Publieke Opinie, The Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion) that ‘80 to 90% of Dutch people preferred a single-family dwelling’ (in Dekker et al., 2012, p. 171). The RIJP proposed that 90% of housing in Almere will be low-rise single-family homes, 10% multi-family (RIJP, 1970, p. 76).

The Planning Process

Describing the New Towns

The Planners

Identified by Aldridge (2019, p. 149) in reference to the UK’s New Towns Programme and Van der Wal (1997, p. 227) in the development of Almere-Stad and -Centrum, two ‘watchwords’ are utilised repeatedly throughout the national policy and planning that realised Milton Keynes and Almere: flexibility and choice.

Translations and variations of this would be (English / Dutch):

flexibility / flexibiliteit
freedom of choice / Keuzevrijheid
a maximum of choice / een maximum aan keuzemogelijkheid
variety / verscheidenheid

The Media

‘Substantial media attention’ (Piko, 2020, p. 43) of these developments and the previous forms of the New Towns (Lelystad and Pooleyville) would subject Milton Keynes and Almere to ridicule through comparison before planning even began (Brouwer & Verlaan, 2013; Van der Wal, 1997, p. 194). There is one standout parallel to these criticisms, positioned against Pooleyville and Bijlmermeer, the New Towns were considered ‘anti-urban’⁵². ‘Compact modern cities’ (Clapson, 2004, p. 54) were believed to have been replaced by low-density sprawl spreading throughout the countryside and with them the middle-class suburban lifestyle.

Similarities in the media’s commentary on Milton Keynes and Almere at the time is exemplified by the matching publications of Little Los Angeles in Bucks in the Architects Journal⁵³ (Mars, 1992) and Planning “Los Almeres?” in Stedebouw & Volkshuisvesting⁵⁴ (de Bruijn, 1971).

52. Almere was seen as a ‘continuation of the anti-urban approach’ taken at Lelystad by the RIJP (Van der Wal, 1997, p. 195) and a continuation from the Garden City Movement in Milton Keynes (Aldridge, 2019, p. 26).
53. A subscription-based architecture magazine in the UK.
54. Magazine by the Nederlands Instituut voor Ruimtelijke Ordening en Volkshuisvesting (Netherlands Institute for Spatial Planning and Housing).

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Randstad-Green Heart

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Randstad Regions

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