## 3.1.14 Tone, texture and pattern

Tone describes the relative lightness or darkness of a colour or shade. In graphics practice, tones can be exploited to great effect, notably when it is necessary to use a single colour. When several colours are used, lighter and darker tones provide a means of differentiating graphically a hierarchy of values or relative degrees of intensity.

Textures can add depth and grain to areas on a plan where a more three-dimensional effect is required. They work particularly well in denoting areas such as woodland or rough terrain, distinguishing them from built form and surfaces which are expressed with smooth colour.

Patterns are generally used to delineate areas without definitive boundaries. Unlike textures, they do not create a depth or grain and can work well as an overlay to existing base information. Whether used as hatching, mesh or dotted areas, patterns can give an effective indication of proposed development, intended future phases or extension areas.

Used together, tone, texture and pattern add emphasis and energy to a plan, but it takes practice to combine them successfully and prevent the message being swamped by too many combinations.

Tone, texture and pattern working together illustrating west Milton Keynes transport corridor
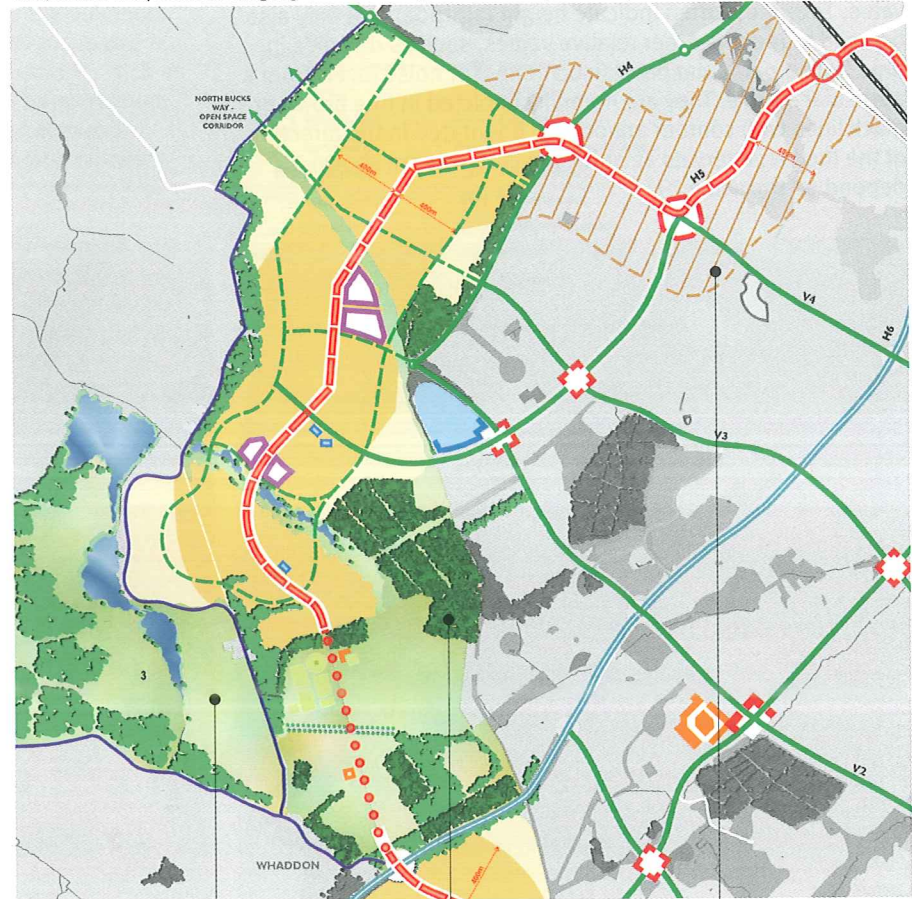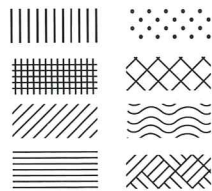

Green shade varying in tone illustrating open areas
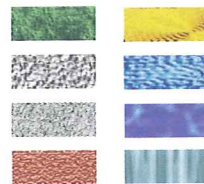
Textured area depicting trees and woodland

Pattern illustrating future development area/corridor

Patterns

Most monotone patterns should not obscure information layered below

Textures

Examples that express surface grain or texture

Watchpoints

- Use tone to delineate large continuous areas.

- Use textures to give an appearance of surface qualities e.g. woodland or rough terrain.

- Use patterns to delineate approximate areas that can be overlaid without obscuring information below.