

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER OR OFFICER

This form can be used for any decision but **MUST** be used to record:

- any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Councillor
- a key decision taken by a Council Officer

In these circumstances the form must be completed and passed to the Head of Members' Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Head of Members' Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To approve the Draft Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 – 2021 for the purposes of public consultation

2. Date of decision

May 2012 14 June 2012

3. Reasons for decision

The Green Space Strategy is required to support Policy CP22 (Green Infrastructure) of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan, which states that: 'Both on site and off site provision/ enhancement will be made with regard to the priorities identified in the council's Green Space Strategy'. These investment priorities are articulated in the strategy's rolling action plan (appendix E) and associated appendices, C and D.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

A strategy solely for the Borough Council's landholdings was considered and rejected as being too narrow in scope given that there are other providers of publicly accessible green space in the Borough, including parish and town councils, local charities and private individuals.

5. How decision is to be funded

The consultation on the strategy will be covered from within existing budgets.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (if yes give details and date of dispensation)

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision [Signature]

Signed [Signature] Date 14/6/12

Name of Decision Taker ...Portfolio Holder for Community & Regulatory Services

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Head of Members' Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 18th June 2012

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 26th June 2012

For publication

Bedford Borough Council – Report to Sarah-Jayne Holland, Community and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder

Report by: Assistant Director, Environment and Communities

Date: 21 May 2012

Subject: Public Consultation Draft Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012-21

1. Executive Summary

Background

- 1.1 The Borough of Bedford is fortunate in having a rich supply of high quality publicly accessible green space, ranging from Victorian urban parks and gardens, Country Parks and nature reserves to its public recreation grounds, cemeteries, allotments and outdoor play areas.
- 1.2 Such publicly accessible green space is vital to the health and wellbeing of all sections of the community, from the very young to the very old. It enriches peoples' daily lives by providing a venue for leisure, sport and recreation; for relaxation and contact with nature; and for community celebrations and events. It contributes significantly to the identity and attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live, work and visit and to invest in.
- 1.3 The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy (as appended to this report) has been produced to provide a framework to guide the future planning, management and investment of high quality publicly accessible green space over the period 2012-2021. The Strategy is based around a proposed long term vision and a set of supporting aims and objectives for all publicly accessible green space, including that owned by the Council. The Strategy includes a summary analysis of the key national and local statutory and non-statutory plans and policies of relevance to publicly accessible green space. It also includes an assessment of the available publicly accessible green space resource, both in terms of its quantity and quality and fit with community needs; and a summary of the main associated recommendations for future provision standards and priority areas of investment.
- 1.4 The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy will be delivered through a rolling action plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually. A copy of the proposed initial action plan is included in

appendix E of the Strategy. Although this action plan is currently made up of only Council action commitments, following the forthcoming public consultation process and over time, it is hoped that other providers of publicly accessible green space will be able to endorse the Strategy and submit their own actions for inclusion in subsequent revisions of the rolling plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Portfolio Holder considers and, if satisfied, approves the Draft Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 – 2021 for the purposes of public consultation**

3. Reasons For Recommendation

- 3.1 The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy (GSS) is required to provide the Council and other green space providers with a shared long term vision and set of supporting aims and objectives for the provision of good quality, inspirational publicly accessible green space across the Borough over the period 2012-21
- 3.2 The Council, as the principal publicly accessible green space provider in the Borough, will use the strategy to guide how publicly accessible green space is planned, developed and managed to meet the community's needs, both now and in the future, and to identify the associated green space partnership opportunities and investment priorities. The Borough Council will invite other publicly accessible green space providers to adopt the strategy and to work as partners on its delivery.
- 3.3 The GSS is required to support Policy CP22 (Green Infrastructure) of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan, which states that: 'Both on site and off site provision/ enhancement will be made with regard to the priorities identified in the Council's Green Space Strategy'. These investment priorities are articulated in the Strategy's rolling action plan (appendix E) and associated appendices, C and D.

4. Key Implications

- 4.1 The Council is the principal provider of publicly accessible green space and the local planning authority for the Borough and so has the lead role in ensuring that its own publicly accessible green space and that of others meets the needs of the community both now and in the future.

Legal Issues

- 4.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF), which comprises a suite of documents for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area. The GSS provides the supporting technical evidence base for publicly accessible green space, including defining community need and investment priorities for the Bedford Development Framework (LDF).
- 4.3 The GSS also helps the Council fulfil its statutory duties in terms of defining priorities and delivery actions associated with protecting and enhancing the heritage value (wildlife and historic environment) and public health and safety requirements associated with its green space estate.

Policy Issues

- 4.4 A list of the key local policy documents of relevance to the GSS is included below:
- Bedford Borough Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-21
 - Bedford Borough Council Corporate Plan 2012-16
 - Bedford Development Framework 2001-21
 - Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Plan (2009)
 - Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement
 - Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan (2001)
 - Healthy Bedford Strategy (2010)
 - Forest of Marston Vale Forest Plan (2000)
 - Bedford Waterspace Study (2011)

Resource Implications

- 4.5 The cost of delivering the GSS will be met through existing Council operational budgets supplemented by opportunities arising from bids to external funding sources such as section 106 agreements, landfill tax and lottery programmes. An assessment of the resourcing needs of each individual action is included in the action plan, and where affordable these will be brought forward.

Risk Implications

- 4.7 Any failure to produce and adopt the GSS will leave the LDF with a gap in its supporting technical evidence base around defining the Borough's publicly accessible green space needs and investment priorities. This would make it more difficult for the Borough Council to secure the necessary developer contributions towards both on site and off site publicly accessible green space provision/ enhancement. It would also

weaken the Council's ability to use its green space estate to take forward other supporting plans/ proposals around green infrastructure, sustainable transport and public health and well being in a more strategic, joined up, resource efficient way.

Environmental Implications

- 4.8 The GSS will result in publicly accessible green space being managed more sustainably. It will deliver increased sustainable access (on foot, cycle) to attractive, high quality publicly accessible green spaces close to where people live, thereby reducing vehicle movements and associated carbon emissions. It will also deliver improvements in the environmental performance of the Council's parks, countryside and grounds maintenance services, including increased protection and enhancement of the nature conservation, historic environment and landscape value of publicly accessible green spaces.

Equalities Impact

- 4.10 An Equalities Impact Assessment to Level 1 will be undertaken to ensure that the GSS satisfies the legal obligations required of the Council. This Assessment will take into consideration both positive and negative impacts of the service delivery on the following 'protected characteristics' held with the Equality Act 2010.

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

5. Details

The following section outlines the proposed long term vision and supporting aims and objectives of the GSS and how this will be delivered through the rolling action plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.

5.1 Vision

'Bedford Borough Council will work in partnership with other green space providers, local residents and the wider community to plan, develop and manage a well connected network of high quality, safe and accessible publicly accessible green space which meet the social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough both now and in

the future. The Borough's publicly accessible green space will be cherished by local residents and the wider community as vital community assets and a major source of civic pride and identity.'

5.2 Aims and Objectives

5.2.1 Aim 1: **To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 1.1 Understand and address anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues associated with publicly accessible green space
- 1.2 Apply Secured by Design principles in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space in support of access for all and community cohesion
- 1.3 Develop and deliver high standards of signage, cleanliness, maintenance, accessibility and inclusivity in publicly accessible green space management

5.2.2 Aim 2: **To engage green space providers/ managers, local residents and the wider community in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 2.1 Monitor community satisfaction of publicly accessible green space sites and facilities and use results to inform future planning and management
- 2.2 Develop and support volunteering as a significant contributor to the sustainable management, development and maintenance of publicly accessible green spaces
- 2.3 Develop and implement a planned management approach for all publicly accessible green spaces
- 2.4 Provide publicly accessible green space skills training and work experience opportunities

5.2.3 Aim 3: **To protect publicly accessible green space from inappropriate development and ensure it meets the needs of the community both now and in the future**

Objectives:

- 3.1 Identify and designate publicly accessible green spaces through the Local Development Framework (LDF) and other legal mechanisms
- 3.2 Resist the incremental loss of publicly accessible green space through development and change of use in accordance with LDF policies.
- 3.3 Undertake a strategic review of publicly accessible green space provision to identify those sites considered to be redundant to need and agree a strategy for their disposal or alternative management arrangements

- 3.4 Develop, apply and review quantitative and qualitative standards of provision for publicly accessible green space and associated facilities in accordance with community need
- 3.5 Support rural communities to identify and address publicly accessible green space provision and need

5.2.4 **Aim 4: To encourage and support active and healthy life-styles associated with the use of publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 4.1 Maximise the capacity and use of outdoor sports facilities
- 4.2 Promote and support use of publicly accessible green space for informal outdoor sport, leisure, recreation and other health and well being activities for all ages and abilities
- 4.3 Provide high quality outdoor play opportunities for all age groups, from toddlers to adults

5.2.5 **Aim 5: To maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport links to/ from publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 5.1 Develop and promote increased use of the public rights of way network to access publicly accessible green space
- 5.2 Ensure that publicly accessible green space access issues are addressed in appropriate strategic transport plans.
- 5.3 Develop and implement strategic projects which promote improved pedestrian and cycle access to publicly accessible green spaces

5.2.6 **Aim 6: To protect and enhance the ecological, geological, historical and landscape value of publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 6.1 Protect and enhance local biodiversity with particular reference to relevant priority habitats and species associated with publicly accessible green spaces in accordance with Biodiversity Action Plan
- 6.2 Protect and enhance designated wildlife and geological sites associated with publicly accessible green spaces
- 6.3 Protect and enhance historical landscape and heritage features associated with publicly accessible green spaces
- 6.4 Protect and enhance landscape character features associated with publicly accessible green spaces
- 6.5 Contribute to the development, implementation and review of the Forest of Marston Vale's Forest Plan
- 6.6 Conserve and enhance public tree stock, including street/ highway trees

5.2.7 **Aim 7: To maximise community use, understanding and enjoyment of publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 7.1 Increase community use of publicly accessible green space for health, leisure and recreation needs
- 7.2 Increase education use of publicly accessible green spaces

5.2.8 **Aim 8: To develop and manage publicly accessible green space in a sustainable way that allows them to maximise their resilience to and ability to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate; and to minimise their impact on natural resources**

Objectives:

- 8.1 Consider the impacts of a changing climate on the design and management of publicly accessible green space
- 8.2 Plan and manage the collective contribution of the publicly accessible green space network to climate change and sustainability

5.2.9 **Aim 9: To maximise funding and investment opportunities associated with publicly accessible green space**

Objectives:

- 9.1 Develop a structured public green space infrastructure investment programme in accordance with community needs and external funding opportunities
- 9.2 Investigate and pursue complementary revenue generating opportunities associated with public green space assets.'

5.3 Delivery

5.3.1 The Council will use the GSS to guide its own resource allocation and financial investment and associated income generation/ fundraising activity. It will also encourage and, where resources allow, support other publicly accessible green space providers to do the same.

5.3.2 The GSS's rolling action plan identifies a programme of priority actions under each of the 9 strategy aims and for each one details the related strategy objectives, timetable for delivery and lead officer(s).

5.4 Public Consultation

5.4.1 Following Portfolio Holder approval of the Public Consultation Draft GSS, a two month period of public consultation will be undertaken to seek public and other stakeholder views. The methods of consultation will include direct mailing to key stakeholders, such as town, parish and urban community councils; other public, private and voluntary & community sector green space providers/ managers; Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum; friends groups and volunteers;

promotional displays staged in Council libraries and other public outlets; and use of internet and other electronic social media to share information and gather responses. Feedback and comments will be captured through the receipt of both online and hard copy responses.

- 5.3.2 All responses will be analysed and a summary document will be produced and made available on the Council website. On completion of the public consultation stage, the draft GSS will be reviewed and finalised. The resulting final GSS will be submitted for Council adoption in October 2012.

6. Summary Of Consultations And Outcome

- 6.1 The following parties have been consulted in the production of the GSS:
- Internal: Executive Director of Environment and Sustainable Communities, Assistant Director Environment and Communities, Parks and Countryside Manager, Grounds Maintenance Manager, Communities Manager, Head of Legal, Head of Financial Management, Senior Land and Property, Leisure Operations Manager, Head of Bereavement Services, Team Leader (Planning Policy)
 - External: The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, Marston Vale Trust

7. Ward Councillor Views

- 7.1 The GSS will be delivered across the Borough of Bedford.

Report Contact Officer:	Joel Carré, Head of Communities, tel: 01234 718322 (internal: 47322)
File Reference:	GSS/consultationdraft/210512
Minutes	N/A
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Public Consultation Draft Borough of Bedford Borough Green Space Strategy 2012-21

**BOROUGH OF BEDFORD
GREEN SPACE STRATEGY**

2012-2021

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT

21 May 2012

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FOREWORD

We are fortunate to live in a Borough which is blessed with a wonderful range of high quality parks and green spaces, from Victorian town parks, such as Bedford and Addison Howard, to tranquil Country Parks, such as Priory and Harrold-Odell; to nature reserves, such as Park Wood and Hill Rise; to local neighbourhood play areas and amenity spaces.

Our parks and green spaces are used by all sections of the community, from toddlers and children enjoying a play area, teenagers hanging out and enjoying a kick around, to older persons taking a stroll with friends. They serve as a venue for formal sports, such as football, cricket and tennis; leisure activities, such as walking and cycling; and community events and celebrations, such as ‘Chill in the Park’ and the Kite and River Festivals. The Borough’s residents have told us how much they value their local parks and green spaces and of the importance of continued investment in their ongoing management and development, as attractive and welcoming places to visit.

The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy sets out our proposed vision and associated aims and objectives for the provision and management of publicly accessible green space in the Borough up to 2021. It will be used to guide planning and investment priorities and to increase community engagement in the management and development of our parks and green spaces.

Although the Borough Council has taken the lead in producing the strategy, we hope that, over time, other green space providers, such as town and parish councils, will be able to endorse it and work with us on its delivery. By working together through this strategy, we can make best use of resources and continue to provide a wonderful range of high quality parks and green spaces which meet the needs of the community.

**Councillor Sarah-Jayne Holland, Portfolio Holder Communities and
Regulatory Services**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Borough of Bedford is endowed with many high quality parks and green spaces, ranging from Victorian urban parks and gardens, Country Parks and nature reserves, recreation grounds and outdoor play areas, to cemeteries and allotments.

The provision of high quality publicly accessible green space is critical to developing sustainable communities, in terms of the range of social, environmental and economic benefits it delivers for people. Socially, such green space helps to improve people's physical and mental health and well being, reduces health inequalities between rich and poor, breaks down social barriers and builds community cohesion. Environmentally, it improves water quality and supply and supports flood control, moderates extremes of temperature, raises air quality and provides contact with nature. Economically, it boosts tourism, leisure and cultural activities and associated visitor spend and makes areas more attractive for investment. Finally, it is developing an increasingly important role to play in helping communities mitigate for and adapt to the impact of climate change.

The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy has been produced by the Borough Council to provide a framework to guide future planning, management and investment in high quality publicly accessible green space over the period 2012-2021. The Strategy is based around a proposed long term vision and set of supporting aims and objectives (section 2) for all publicly accessible green space, including that owned by the Borough Council, town and parish councils and other public, voluntary & community and private sector providers.

In accordance with the Strategy vision, the Borough Council will work in partnership with other green space providers, local residents and the wider community to plan, develop and manage a well connected network of high quality, safe and accessible publicly accessible green space which meet the social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough both now and in the future. This green space resource will be cherished by local residents and the wider community as vital community assets and a major source of civic pride and identity. The Borough Council will deliver against the Strategy vision and supporting aims on its own estate and, where resources allow, will encourage and support other green space providers to do the same.

The Strategy includes a summary analysis (section 3) of the key national/ local statutory and non-statutory plans and policies of relevance to the provision and management of publicly accessible green space. It also includes a headline assessment (section 4) of the Borough's current publicly accessible green space

resource, in terms of its associated bio/ geo-diversity, landscape/ townscape and heritage interest and enhancement opportunities.

In 2005/6, the Borough Council undertook a borough-wide study of open space, sport and recreation provision, including sites and facilities owned and managed by other public sector bodies (such as town and parish councils), the voluntary & community sector (such as Marston Vale Trust) and private businesses and landowners. The study report was adopted by the Borough Council in 2007 and has been used to inform the development of quantitative and qualitative open space standards (section 5) and the consideration of both current and future community needs (section 6). The Strategy also includes a summary description of the current/ future publicly accessible green space facilities and projects and associated management resource (staff, volunteers and budget) by provider (section 5).

The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy will be delivered through a rolling action plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually. The initial action plan is included in appendix E of the Strategy and details a programme of time limited actions, with named lead officers, under each of the Strategy's 9 aims. Although the action plan is currently made up of only Borough Council actions, over time, it is hoped that other green space providers will endorse the wider Strategy and be able to submit their own actions for inclusion in the rolling plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Strategy

1.1.1 The following strategy has been produced by Bedford Borough Council to provide the Borough Council and other green space providers with a shared long term vision and set of supporting aims and objectives for the provision of good quality, inspirational publicly accessible green space across the Borough over the period 2012-21.

1.1.2 The Borough Council, as the principal publicly accessible green space provider in the Borough, will use the strategy to guide how publicly accessible green space is planned, developed and managed to meet the community's needs, both now and in the future, and to identify the associated green space partnership opportunities and investment priorities. The Borough Council invites other publicly accessible green space providers to adopt the strategy and to work as partners on its delivery.

1.1.3 The scope of the strategy is Borough wide and focuses on the following publicly accessible green space types in public, voluntary & community and private sector ownership (figure 1 below):

Figure 1: Publicly accessible green space types covered by strategy

Green space type	Characteristics
Parks and public gardens	Urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide accessible and high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Accessible natural green space	Sites managed primarily for wildlife, but

	which are also open to the public, including meadows, river floodplain, woodland, copse
Outdoor play provision	Equipped play areas for children (pre-teens) play, including natural play features and informal recreation provision for 13-17 year olds, such as skate parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).
Informal amenity green space	Spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out and or managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat.
Outdoor sports facilities	Variety of outdoor facilities, including synthetic turf pitches grass football and rugby pitches cricket fields tennis, and other courts, bowling greens and recreation grounds
Churchyards and cemeteries	Churchyards and cemeteries provide amenity green space for quiet contemplation and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features.
Allotments	Plots cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by grower and their family either defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statutory Allotment Sites (ie. under 1925 Allotments Act and require approval of Secretary of State for sale/ disposal of land); or - Temporary Allotment Sites (ie. sites not specifically acquired for allotment use and so not protected by 1925 legislation).

1.1.3 The strategy covers the period 2012-2021 and will be reviewed every 5 years to ensure it is kept current, in terms of changes in public policy, community need, development opportunity and available resources. The strategy will be delivered through a rolling action plan which will be reviewed and updated annually. Although the current set of proposed

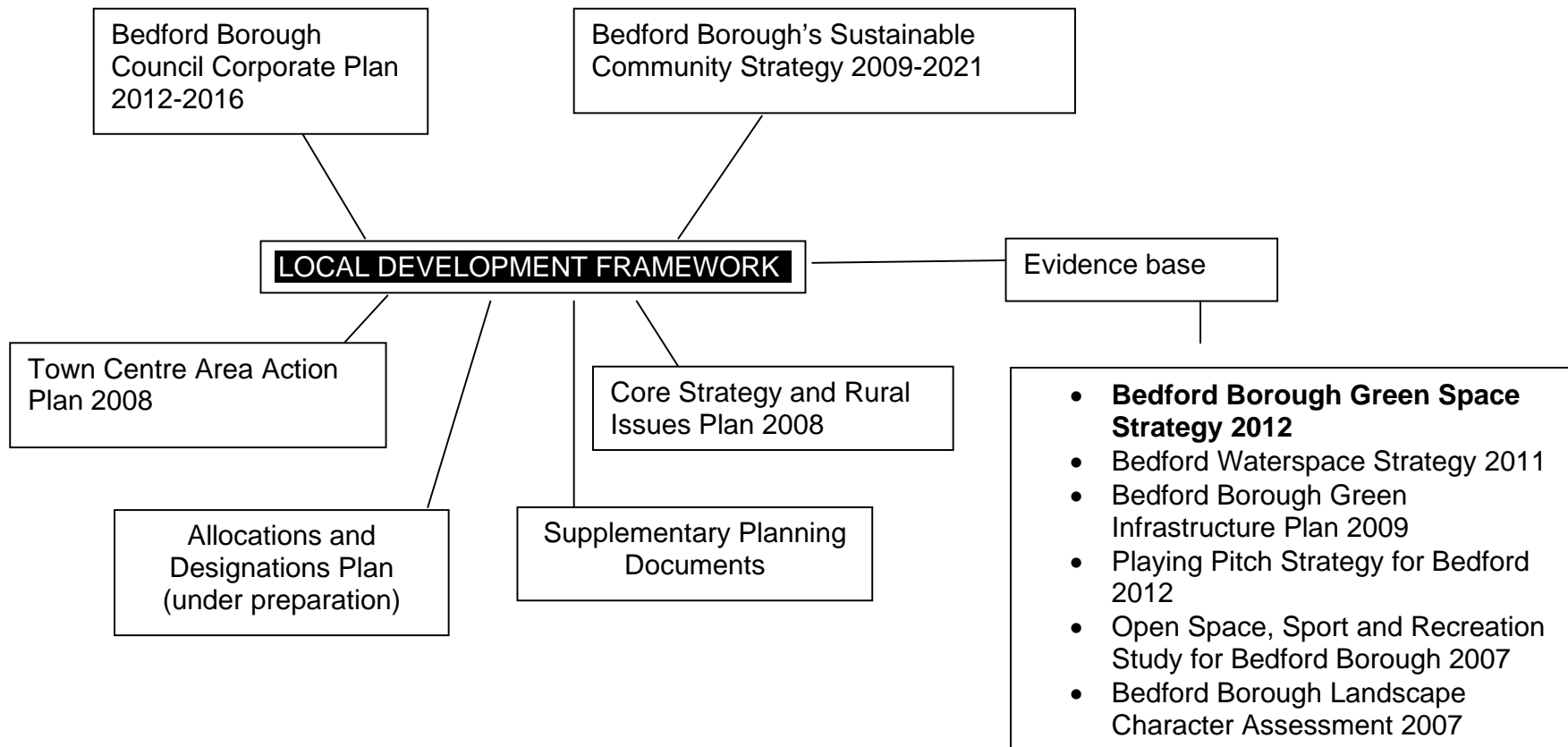
initial actions are Borough Council led, their delivery involves the support of other public, voluntary & community and private sector partners. In addition, the Borough Council hopes that, over time, other providers of publicly accessible green space will be able to submit actions for inclusion in the rolling plan.

1.1.4 The strategy forms part of a suite of Borough wide planning documents, including the Borough Green Infrastructure Plan, Playing Pitch Strategy and Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which will be used to inform and guide future green infrastructure¹ provision through the development planning process. Figure 2 below illustrates the inter-relationship between this green space strategy and other key local planning documents that collectively form the Bedford Development Framework (the Local Development Framework for Bedford Borough).

¹ *Green infrastructure is defined as: 'A strategically planned and managed network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which meet the needs of existing and new communities by providing:*

- an essential environmental foundation and support system*
- a healthy and diverse environment*
- attractive places to live and visit and a good quality of life*
- a sustainable future'*

Figure 2: Bedford Borough strategic planning framework



1.2 Why is green space important?

1.2.1 Good quality publicly accessible green space is critical to the well being of the community and delivers a considerable range of social, environmental and economic benefits as summarised below:

Social benefits:

- Delivers significant physical and mental health benefits.
- Reduces health inequalities between rich and poor
- Encourages social interaction between people, building community/ family cohesion and breaking down social barriers
- Provides a venue for cultural, social and community events and activities, including fairs, festivals and concerts
- Provides outdoor educational facilities, especially for children
- Improves physical and social inclusion, especially for young, disabled and older people
- Creates sense of place, belonging and local identity

Environmental benefits:

- Protects and enhances biodiversity
- Protects historic, cultural and archaeological heritage
- Improves water quality, supply and flood control
- Moderates extremes of temperature
- Absorbs pollutants and raises air quality
- Provides contact with nature
- Raises environmental awareness

Economic benefits:

- Provides eco-system services, such as flood storage, food, energy
- Delivers public health budget savings on NHS expenditure.
- Boosts tourism, leisure and cultural activities and associated spend
- Makes areas more attractive area for investment
- Assists urban regeneration

1.2.2 There is also a growing body of robust research, which identifies that good quality publicly accessible green space brings significant benefits to peoples' physical and mental health in particular in terms of reducing obesity, decreasing the risk of coronary heart disease and strokes and

improvements in mental health and wellbeing. Residents in areas with high levels of good quality, publicly accessible green space are 40% less likely to be overweight and obese than those in areas with low levels of such provision². If this effect was universal and the population of England had equitable access to such green space, it is estimated that the life-cost averted saving to the health service is around £2.1 billion per annum³. Therefore, investment in publicly accessible green space should be seen as an investment in public health.

1.2.3 High quality publicly accessible green space also has an important role to play in both the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. Publicly accessible green space acts as a 'carbon sink', removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it away, for example:

- 1 hectare of trees and shrubs can absorb 1 tonne of CO₂ – equivalent to 100 family cars – a single tree will produce enough oxygen for 10 people.⁴
- The evaporation from a large tree is estimated to produce the cooling effect of 10 room-sized air-conditioners.⁵
- Air under a tree's canopy can be as much as 5-10°C cooler compared to full sun.⁶
- The rate of run off for surfaces with trees and grass is estimated to be 10-20%, compared to 60-70% for hard landscaped urban areas.⁷

1.2.4 Finally, research has shown that communities will use their local green spaces more, have better relationships with their local councils and take

² Ellaway et al (2005) National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2008) *Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity*, Public Health Guidance 8. London.

³ Natural England (2009) Technical Information Note TIN055, *An estimate of the economic and health value and cost effectiveness of the expanded WHI scheme*

⁴ The Land Restoration Trust (no date), *Public Open Green Space Works*

⁵ Parks Victoria (2008), *The Value of Parks*

⁶ Barton, S. (2008), Adapted from the lecture "the healing garden: social research".

⁷ Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (2002), *Green Spaces, Better Places: Final report of The Urban Green Space Task Force*

pride in their local area if their public green spaces are high quality and well managed⁸. During times of economic hardship, such as now, the range of freely available activities and opportunities provided by high quality, well managed publicly accessible green spaces becomes particularly important, especially for less well off individuals and families.

2. OUR STRATEGY

2.1 Vision

Bedford Borough Council will work in partnership with other green space providers, local residents and the wider community to plan, develop and manage a well connected network of high quality, safe and accessible publicly accessible green space which meet the social, economic and environmental needs of the Borough both now and in the future. The Borough's publicly accessible green space will be cherished by local residents and the wider community as vital community assets and a major source of civic pride and identity.

2.2 Aims and objectives

The Borough Council will deliver against the following aims and objectives on its own publicly accessible green space and, where resources allow, will encourage and support other providers of publicly accessible green space to do the same.

⁸ GreenSpace (2011), Understanding the Contribution Parks and Green Spaces can make to Improving People's Lives: Full Report.

GSS1. To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 1.1 Understand and address anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues associated with publicly accessible green space
- 1.2 Apply Secured by Design principles in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space in support of access for all and community cohesion
- 1.3 Develop and deliver high standards of signage, cleanliness, maintenance, accessibility and inclusivity in publicly accessible green space management

GSS2. To engage green space providers/ managers, local residents and the wider community in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 2.1 Monitor community satisfaction of publicly accessible green space sites and facilities and use results to inform future planning and management
- 2.2 Develop and support volunteering as a significant contributor to the sustainable management, development and maintenance of publicly accessible green spaces
- 2.3 Develop and implement a planned management approach for all publicly accessible green spaces
- 2.4 Provide publicly accessible green space skills training and work experience opportunities

GSS3. To protect publicly accessible green space from inappropriate development and ensure it meets the needs of the community both now and in the future

Objectives:

- 3.1 Identify and designate publicly accessible green spaces through the Local Development Framework (LDF) and other legal mechanisms
- 3.2 Resist the incremental loss of publicly accessible green space through development and change of use in accordance with LDF policies.
- 3.3 Undertake a strategic review of publicly accessible green space provision to identify those sites considered to be redundant to need and agree a strategy for their disposal or alternative management arrangements
- 3.4 Develop, apply and review quantitative and qualitative standards of provision for publicly accessible green space and associated facilities in accordance with community need
- 3.5 Support rural communities to identify and address publicly accessible green space provision and need

GSS4. To encourage and support active and healthy life-styles associated with the use of publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 4.1 Maximise the capacity and use of outdoor sports facilities
- 4.2 Promote and support use of publicly accessible green space for informal outdoor sport, leisure, recreation and other health and well being activities for all ages and abilities

- 4.3 Provide high quality outdoor play opportunities for all age groups, from toddlers to adults

GSS5. To maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport links to/ from publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 5.1 Develop and promote increased use of the public rights of way network to access publicly accessible green space
- 5.2 Ensure that publicly accessible green space access issues are addressed in appropriate strategic transport plans.
- 5.3 Develop and implement strategic projects which promote improved pedestrian and cycle access to publicly accessible green spaces

GSS6. To protect and enhance the ecological, geological, historical and landscape value of publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 6.1 Protect and enhance local biodiversity with particular reference to relevant priority habitats and species associated with publicly accessible green spaces in accordance with Biodiversity Action Plan
- 6.2 Protect and enhance designated wildlife and geological sites associated with publicly accessible green spaces
- 6.3 Protect and enhance historical landscape and heritage features associated with publicly accessible green spaces
- 6.4 Protect and enhance landscape character features associated with publicly accessible green spaces

- 6.5 Contribute to the development, implementation and review of the Forest of Marston Vale's Forest Plan
- 6.6 Conserve and enhance public tree stock, including street/highway trees

GSS7. To maximise community use, understanding and enjoyment of publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 7.1 Increase community use of publicly accessible green space for health, leisure and recreation needs
- 7.2 Increase education use of publicly accessible green spaces

GSS8. To develop and manage publicly accessible green space in a sustainable way that allows them to maximise their resilience to and ability to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate; and to minimise their impact on natural resources

Objectives:

- 8.1 Consider the impacts of a changing climate on the design and management of publicly accessible green space
- 8.2 Plan and manage the collective contribution of the publicly accessible green space network to climate change and sustainability

GSS9. To maximise funding and investment opportunities associated with publicly accessible green space

Objectives:

- 9.1 Develop a structured public green space infrastructure investment programme in accordance with community needs and external funding opportunities
- 9.2 Investigate and pursue complementary revenue generating opportunities associated with public green space assets

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Statutory/ legal responsibilities

3.1.1 The following table (figure 3 below) identifies the key pieces of legislation and their associated statutory duties of relevance to publicly accessible green space.

Figure 3: Key legislation of relevance to green space

Legislation (in descending date order)	Duty
Localism Act 2011	Devolving centralised power to councils and communities , including communities right to buy council assets/ take on delivery of local services and determine planning issues
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010	The Regulations transpose the European habitats regulations into law, providing for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Under the Regulations, competent authorities ie. any Minister, government department, public body, or person holding public office, have a general duty, in the exercise of any of their functions, to have regard to the European Commission’s Habitats Directive 1992
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	Adopt and maintain approved Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems that serve more than

	one property in accordance with the National Standards and conditions set
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	General duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the proper exercise of their functions.
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	Requires local planning authorities (other than county councils) to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). This will comprise a folder of documents for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.
Environment Act 1995	Protection of important countryside hedgerows by controlling their removal (in whole or in part) through a system of notification
Environment Act 1995 (Hedgerow Regulations).	Protection of important countryside hedgerows by maintaining in line with wildlife legislation (nesting birds etc)
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Protect significant trees of amenity value. Consider impact on existing trees and provision of new trees associated with any development
Environmental Protection Act 1990	Keep public land and highways clear of litter, etc
Occupiers Liability Act 1984	Ensure land and facilities in Council ownership are managed with due regard for health & safety
Health and Safety at Work Act 1984	Ensure land and facilities in Council ownership are managed with due regard for health & safety
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	Protection of native species (especially those at threat), control of the release of non-native species, enhancement of the protection of SSSIs and development of rights of way duties as set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of

	wildlife in Great Britain.
Highways Act 1980	Ensure trees in Council ownership provide adequate clearance for pedestrians and road users and that these trees, in addition to privately owned trees are not a hazard to the highway
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979	Maintain any monument which is under that local authority's guardianship. Grant public access to any monument under the ownership or guardianship of the local authority

3.2 National plans/ strategies

3.2.1 A summary of the main national strategies and plans of relevance to publicly accessible green space is provided below:

- *National Planning Policy Framework, 2012*: sets out the national planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a planning framework within which local people and their local planning authorities can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.
- *The Natural Choice, Securing the Value of Nature (Natural Environment White Paper), 2011*: emphasises the opportunities for local people to take action to protect and improve green spaces which are important to them. Communities will have new rights, including the opportunity to identify important local green spaces and bid for them if they come up for sale or lease; and the right to draw up neighbourhood development plans.
- *Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, 2011*: this is the new biodiversity strategy for England and builds on the Natural Environment White Paper (see above). It sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade.
- *UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA), 2011*: assessed the social and economic benefits communities get from the natural environment. The NEA specifically highlights reductions in both the quality and quantity of public green space. In addition to setting out the risks

communities face if such declines are not tackled, the NEA also highlights the huge opportunities for improved health, wealth and happiness if communities take action now

- *Healthy Lives, Healthy People* White Paper: gives new duties and powers for local authorities to improve the health of local people and reducing health inequalities, based on an approach of empowering individuals to make healthy choices and giving communities the tools to address their own, particular needs.

3.2.2 At the heart of the new National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development based around a set of core land-use planning principles. Of these the most relevant to this strategy and publicly accessible green space provision are the need for planning to:

- ‘.. be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area;
- contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.;
-, .. encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.’⁹

⁹ Department of Communities and Local Government (2012), *National Planning Policy Framework*, paragraph 17

3.2.3 More specifically, the new framework explicitly recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Consequently, it states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. These assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

3.2.4 Planning policies should also protect and enhance public rights of way and access, with local authorities seeking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should also be able to identify, for special protection, green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

3.2.5 Finally, the new planning framework specifies that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity

3.3 Local plans/ strategies

A summary of the main local strategies and plans of relevance to publicly accessible green space is provided below:

3.3.1 *Bedford Borough Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), 2009*: this is the top level plan/ strategy for the Borough, which defines a vision for the Borough to 2021. This vision challenges the Borough Council and other public and voluntary sector partners to work together to make the Borough:

- 'Thriving – with a strong local economy delivering high levels of growth and employment for the benefit of the Borough's existing and future citizens.
- Greener – supporting a natural environment which is valued and enjoyed by all; which encourages biodiversity and contributes to the development of a low carbon community, capable of adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- Aspiring – where all the Borough's children and young people are able to lead safe, healthy and happy lives and are provided with opportunities to develop their self-esteem, maximise their life chances and realise their full potential.
- Healthy – where everybody has access to high-quality health and social care services when they need them and the help they need to lead healthy and independent lives.
- Safer – people live safer lives without the fear of crime.
- Inclusive – where people, whatever their background, feel part of the wider community and are proud to celebrate its rich diversity. Where inequalities are reduced and all people are able to participate in the sporting, artistic and civic life of the Borough.
- Sustainable – where the supply and quality of housing is capable of supporting the anticipated increase in the Borough's population; and where housing and economic growth are built on sustainable improvements in the related infrastructure, including transport.¹⁰

¹⁰ Bedford Borough Partnership (2009), *Bedford Borough Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2021*

In view of the range of social, economic and environmental benefits delivered by publicly accessible green space, this Green Space Strategy will help to deliver against each of the above vision themes.

3.3.2 *Bedford Borough Council's Corporate Plan, 2012*: identifies how the Borough Council will deliver against the SCS's vision by focusing on four distinct themes over the next four years, 2012-2016.

- 'Providing a Healthy Future - Providing safe, sound, supportive, cost effective services which promote independence, health, well-being and choice.
- Protecting and Preserving the Local Environment- Protecting and preserving the natural and built environment whilst enabling and supporting sustainable growth.
- Brighter Futures for Children - Improving outcomes and life chances for all children, particularly vulnerable children through early intervention.
- Serving Residents Effectively - Providing residents with helpful, efficient and cost effective customer services that meet their needs.'¹¹

Each theme is further divided into sub-themes and key objectives, of which the following are of direct relevance to publicly accessible green space and this strategy:

- 'Sub Theme 1B: Transforming Leisure Services
Objective: A modern, affordable and sustainable leisure service, with a focus on supporting improved health and well-being of the community.
- Sub Theme 2A: Managing the Borough's Environmental Assets
Objective: To enhance and develop the Borough's infrastructure, parks and open spaces. We will also seek to manage our highways through investment and by reducing congestion.'¹²

¹¹ Bedford Borough Council (2012), *Corporate Plan 2012-2016*

¹² Bedford Borough Council (2012), *Corporate Plan 2012-2016*

3.3.3 *Bedford Development Framework*: is the Local Development Framework for Bedford Borough. This represents a set of planning documents which sets out the spatial vision and high level and detailed planning policies to direct development and land use across the borough for the period 2001-2021 and will eventually replace the adopted Local Plan. The first two planning documents produced in the Framework – the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan and the Town Centre Area Action Plan - were adopted by the Borough Council in 2008.

3.3.4 The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan sets out the long term spatial vision for the borough and the spatial policies and objectives needed to deliver it. The spatial vision for the borough focuses development within the Bedford Growth Area which is made up of Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale. It is based on the principle of sustainable development and good design and includes the following spatial objectives:

- 'Protect and enhance the countryside, biodiversity and geodiversity, and the quality and connectivity of green infrastructure in the borough with particular emphasis on enhancing the Marston Vale.
- Provide a mechanism for the delivery of infrastructure (including health, education, transport, community, leisure and recreation facilities) in tandem with new development.
- Protect and enhance the Borough's built, cultural and community assets and the character of settlements and foster the development of the Borough as a destination for heritage and cultural tourism.'¹³

3.3.5 Policy CP22 (Green Infrastructure) of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan specifically states that: 'Both on site and off site provision/ enhancement will be made with regard to the priorities identified in the council's Green Space Strategy'¹⁴. These investment priorities are

¹³ Bedford Borough Council (2008), *Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan*

¹⁴ Op cit

articulated in the strategy's annual rolling action plan (appendix E) and associated appendices, C and D.

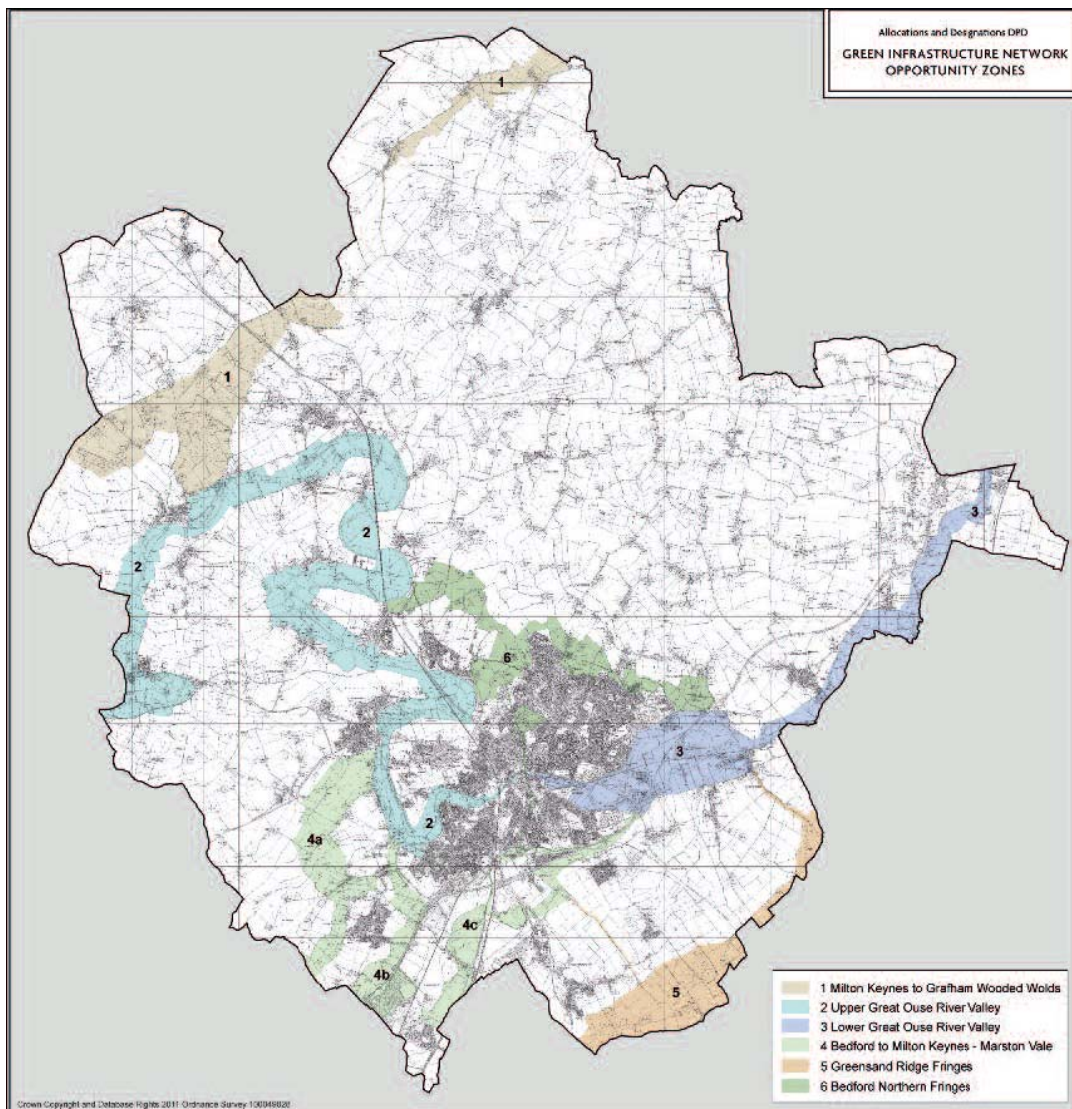
- 3.3.6 The Borough Council is currently working on an Allocations and Designations Plan (to be adopted early 2013), which, as well as identifying new sites for development, will designate areas where specific protection policies are needed; for example to protect gaps between settlements and safeguard the network of important open space in urban and rural areas. The Plan also sets out the open space (including public green space) policy and associated standards to be provided for in new developments. Where possible, the Plan identifies that open space provision should be made on-site. Where this is not possible, practical or preferred, a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision will be required. Unless such contributions are being collected through a community infrastructure levy (CIL), they will be secured through planning obligations and will fund improvements to existing facilities or the provision of new facilities. Such provision should include a contribution towards the cost of future management and maintenance.
- 3.3.7 The Green Space Strategy will be used as a Technical Document to support and guide delivery of the Development Framework and associated plan policies, including on site and off site publicly accessible green space provision and enhancement. For further details of the Framework and associated planning documents visit: www.bedford.gov.uk/planning.
- 3.3.8 *Bedford Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, 2007*: undertaken by consultants in accordance with the PPG17 requirements, the study has been used to develop the local standards for open space (including public green space) provision as referred to in 3.3.5 above.

3.3.9 *Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Plan, 2007*: is a strategic-level document that focuses on green infrastructure assets and opportunities of strategic county-wide significance. It sets out how these assets might be enhanced and identifies where creation of new green infrastructure assets could be most valuable. Initially driven by the need to plan and promote green infrastructure in the county's growth areas, the Plan now provides an overview and aspirations for strategic green infrastructure provision across the county.

3.3.10 *Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Plan, 2009*: this document complements the strategic countywide green infrastructure plan referred to in 3.3.7 above. It takes the strategic plan and identifies more detailed spatial priorities for the borough, based on an assessment of assets and opportunities associated with the following six network areas (see figure 4 below):

- Milton Keynes to Grafham – Wooded Wolds
- Upper Great Ouse River Valley
- Lower Great Ouse River Valley
- Bedford to Milton Keynes – Marston Vale
- Greensand Ridge fringes
- Bedford northern fringes

Figure 4: Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Network Opportunity Zones



3.3.11 *Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement Plan*: this statutory plan sets out the Borough Council's proposed aims, objectives and practical actions for increasing public use and enjoyment of the Borough's public rights of way network over the next five years, 2011-2016.

3.3.12 The Borough's public rights of way network is a valuable community asset, which requires ongoing protection, improvement and promotion. At over 900kms in length, it provides a vital leisure resource for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and others wishing to enjoy the great outdoors. Public rights of way are an important part of the Borough's cultural heritage and enable young and old alike to explore the local countryside and experience its rich and diverse history, wildlife and landscape. Public rights of way are also an important means of helping people access and enjoy the Borough's publicly accessible green spaces on foot, cycle or horse.

3.3.13 *Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), 2001*: this non-statutory document, which has been endorsed by the Borough Council, takes national biodiversity priorities, merges them with local priorities and sets shared objectives and targets for the conservation and enhancement of key habitats and species.

3.3.14 *Healthy Bedford Strategy, 2010*: this joint strategy between Bedfordshire NHS and Borough Council sets out the health and wellbeing priorities for Bedford Borough and provides a broad overview of the strategic direction in order to impact on, and improve, the health and well-being of the local community. As a freely available public leisure and recreational resource, publicly accessible green spaces have an important role to play in the

delivery of the Healthy Bedford Strategy, both for peoples' physical and mental health and well being.

3.3.15 *A Plan for Play: A Play Strategy for North Bedfordshire, 2007*: this local strategy sets out the objectives and actions for improving play provision across the Borough.

3.3.16 *Forest of Marston Vale Forest Plan, 2000*: this non-statutory document provides a strategic framework for action to create one of England's Community Forests, using trees and woodlands to regenerate an industrially scarred landscape of 61 square miles (part of which is outside the borough) and stimulate economic and social regeneration. The plan enshrines the Government target of achieving 30% tree cover in Community Forests by 2031 and is endorsed by a wide range of national, regional and local organisations, including the Borough Council. The Plan covers all or part of the parishes of Stewartby, Wootton, Kempston Rural, Elstow, Eastcotts, Wilstead, Cardington, Cople and Willington.

3.3.17 *Bedford Waterspace Study, 2011*¹⁵: this jointly commissioned study by the Borough Council and Environment Agency provides a framework for promoting river related projects, which could help to stimulate the long term regeneration of the river corridor in Bedford town.

¹⁵ Richard Glenn Associates, 2011, *Bedford Waterspace: Economic Impact & Opportunities Study*

4. SPATIAL PLANNING CONTEXT

4.1 Population profile

4.1.1 Bedford Borough is within the East of England region but also adjoining the East Midlands and the South East regions. The Borough covers an area of 476 square kilometres and is home to 160,800 people (2010 figure). Almost two-thirds of the population (64.2%) live in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, and 35.8% in the surrounding rural area which is made up of 45 parishes.

4.1.2 Listed below are headline population statistics drawn from the 2001 census (2011 Census data not available until July 2012) of relevance to this Green Space Strategy:

- Current population forecast to rise to c173,000 by 2021 due to significant new residential development planned in the Borough, primarily in areas adjacent the existing urban area
- 22.2% of the population is under 18 years of age and 15.5% are 65 years and over.
- Bedford Borough has a slightly younger age profile than either the East of England or England with an average age of 39.2 years, compared to 40.7 in the region and 39.5 in England. The proportion of older people is also lower with 15.5% of the Borough's population aged 65+ in 2010, compared to 17.5% in the region and 16.5% in England:
- The number of older people is forecast to grow at a much higher rate than the 7.6% increase forecast for the total population between 2010 and 2021, with 65-74 year olds increasing by 29%, 75-84 year olds by 22% and those aged 85+ rising by 46%. This will represent a significant ageing of the Borough population.
- Bedford is one of the most cosmopolitan boroughs in the country with residents from 80+ different countries living in the area
- Black and ethnic minority (BME) groups formed 19.2% of the Borough population compared to 13% nationally, however, Office

of National Statistics estimates suggest this increased to 22.5% by 2010.

- BME population is largely concentrated in the urban area of Bedford and Kempston with particularly large BME communities in Queens Park (57.8%) and Cauldwell (43.6%) wards.
- The Borough has received a large number of new migrants since 2001, particularly from the countries which joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007, including significant numbers from Poland. More recently, several new migrant communities, such as those from Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, have also developed in the Borough.
- 4 areas in Bedford town (parts of Castle, Cauldwell and Harpur wards) are among the 10% most deprived in England.
- The Borough has a similar average life expectancy to England, both at birth and at the age of 65 years, but is slightly below regional averages.
- Most deprived areas of the Borough experience significantly lower life expectancy, with a difference of up to 12 years in life expectancy at birth between the most deprived and least deprived wards.
- Approximately 16% of people have a limiting long term illness or disability.
- 21.9% have no access to a car or van – this figure rises in some urban areas.

4.2 Landscape/ townscape resource

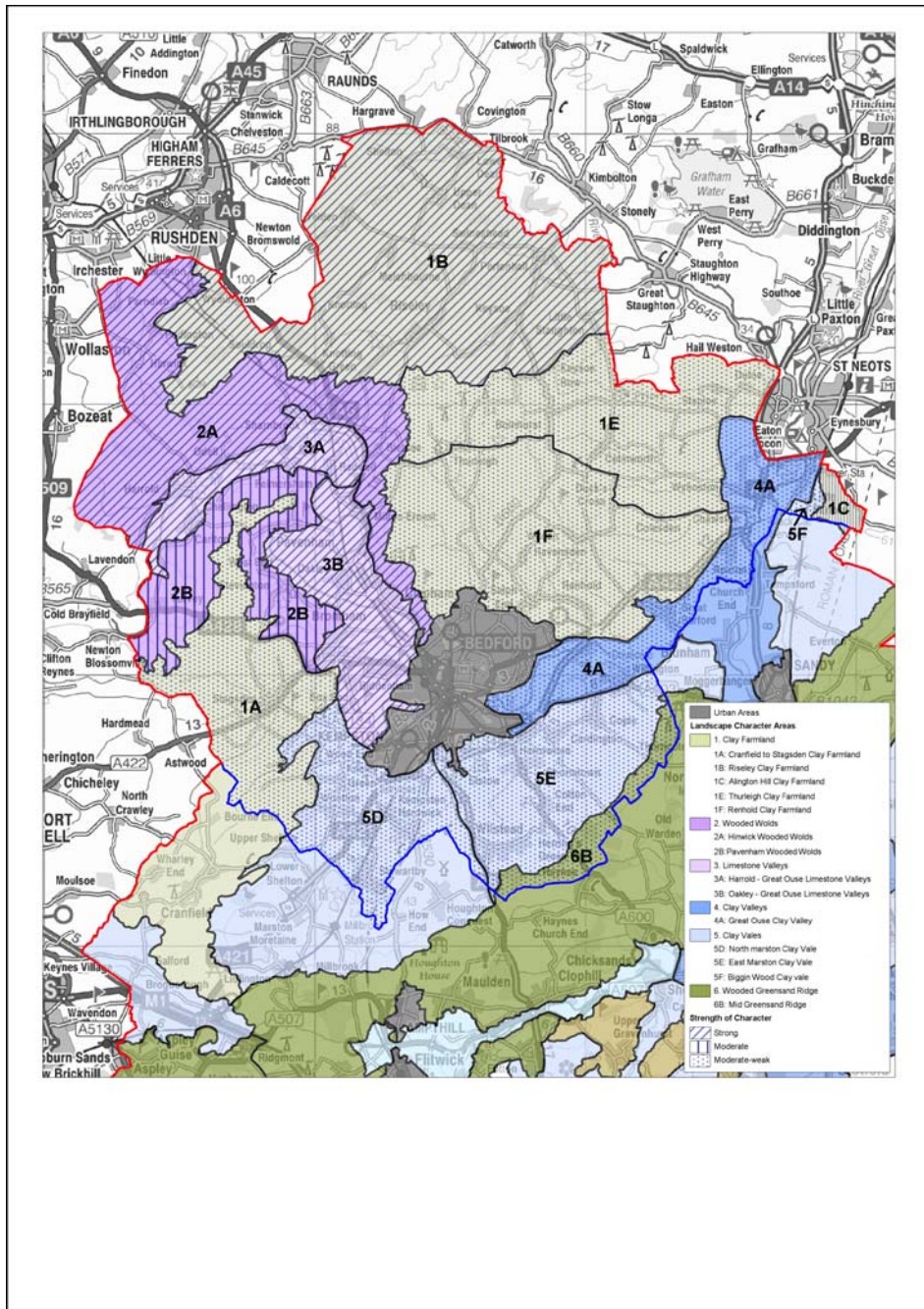
4.2.1 A 'district' level Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was completed for Bedford Borough in 2007¹⁶. This identified 14 distinctive landscape character areas (LCAs) within the framework of six broad generic landscape types described in the County Landscape Assessment, 2003¹⁷. These 14 LCAs are illustrated in figure 5 below, overlain with hatching depicting the strength of landscape character. Only from an understanding of the landscape can new development be designed to ensure they do not detract from what is valued or characteristic, ie. are

¹⁶ LUC (2007), *Bedford Borough Landscape Character Assessment*

¹⁷ LUC (2000), *County Landscape Character Assessment*

sympathetic to landscape character. This principle applies to the planning and development of new and existing green spaces.

Figure 5: Bedford Borough Landscape Character Areas



4.2.2 In townscape terms, it is worth highlighting the particular value public green space and associated natural features, such as trees, can contribute to the overall quality of the built form. An appropriate balance and harmony between green space and buildings can instil unique character into an area; provide a sense of place and local identity; and contribute to the overall quality of the built environment and add local economic value.

4.3 Historical environment resource

4.3.1 The historic environment of Bedford Borough contains 26 Conservation Areas, 1,363 Listed Buildings, 69 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 4 Historic Parks and Gardens.

4.3.1 Although many of these sites include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens or are located within Conservation Areas, the importance of the historic environment extends beyond individual designated sites to their spatial context and inter-relationships. A more comprehensive approach than simply concentrating on specific locations is given by characterisation, which identifies areas of distinct historic environment character.

4.3.2 The Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan identified 48 Historic Environment Character Areas (HECA) across the whole of the county. Of these, 18 are wholly or partly within Bedford Borough and these are mapped and described in appendix A.

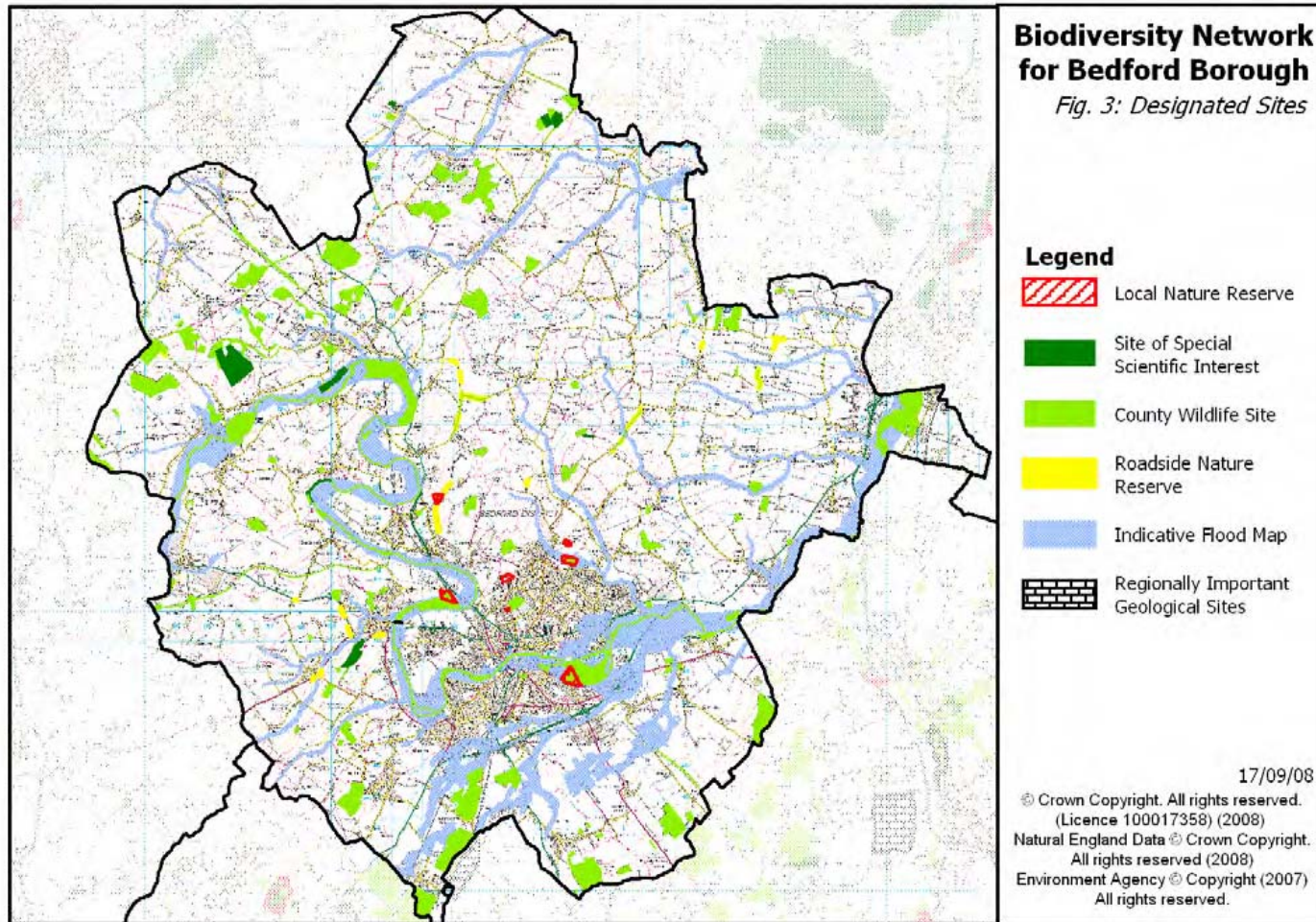
4.3.3 As with LCAs, HECA provide a spatial framework for understanding and managing the Borough's historic environment assets – including the built

heritage, archaeology and historic landscape. The Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Plan has used the HECA and Historic Environment Record for Bedfordshire and Luton to identify 51 historic environment opportunity areas for Bedford Borough. These chiefly include prime examples of the most typical sites or features found across the Borough or those which make a significant contribution to the landscape and those possessing or having the potential for good public access. These opportunity areas are mapped and described in Appendix B.

4.4 Ecological/ geological resource

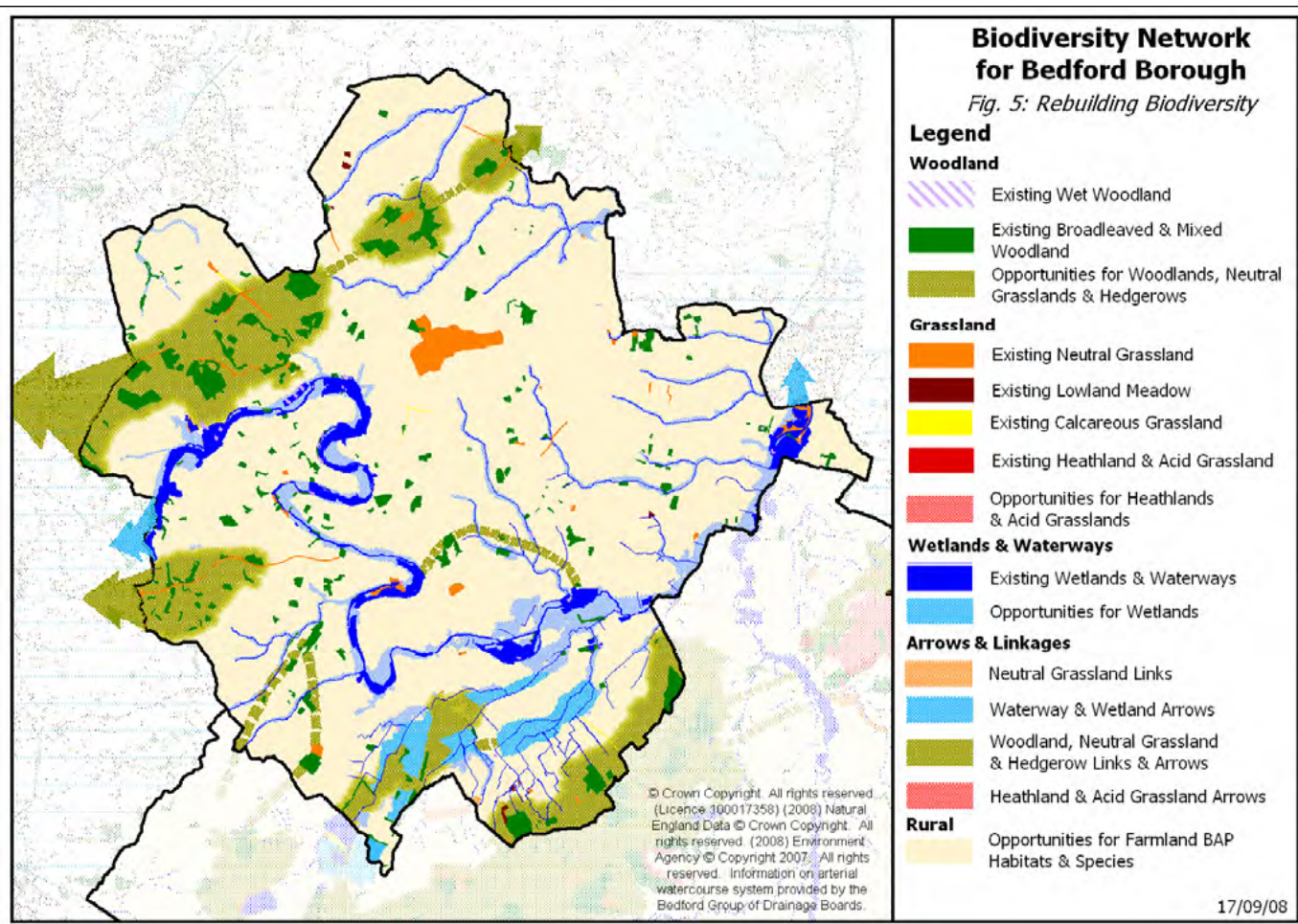
4.4.1 In terms of designated sites, Bedford Borough has 8 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), of which 1 is designated for its geological importance; 130 locally designated County Wildlife Sites (CWS); 7 designated Local Nature Reserves, and 2 designated Local Geological Sites. A plan showing the location of these designated sites is included in figure 6 below. These sites are included in this strategy, as a large number are also accessible to the public.

Fig 6: Designated ecological and geological sites



4.4.2 In addition to site specific activity, there is a growing recognition that to maximise sustainability this needs to be done on a larger, more strategic landscape scale. In 2005/6 the Biodiversity Forum for Bedfordshire and Luton produced *Rebuilding Biodiversity* a biodiversity opportunity map which translated the regional map to a more local, but still relatively strategic, scale. Analysis of the biodiversity characterisation and mapping work identified areas with significant priority habitats, species and designated sites. These areas, if restored, conserved, expanded, linked and buffered against adverse influences could form important ecological networks. The opportunity map gives strategic importance to the areas with the greatest potential to achieve a coherent network of wildlife rich habitat which could form a more robust and resilient ecologically functional landscape. The map formed the biodiversity layer of the countywide strategic green infrastructure plan and is included in figure 7 below for the networks within Bedford Borough.

Figure 7: Bedford Borough biodiversity opportunity areas



4.5 Ecosystem services

4.5.1 'Ecosystem services' are defined as services provided by the natural environment that benefit people¹⁸. While there is no single system for categorising all ecosystem services, the recently published Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) framework¹⁹ is widely accepted and is a useful starting point. The MEA identifies four broad categories of ecosystem service as follows:

- Provisioning services: such as food, timber, energy crops and medicines.
- Regulating services: such as water purification, flood management, air quality maintenance and climate regulation.
- Cultural services: non-material benefits such as education, health and wellbeing.
- Supporting services: functions that are necessary for the production of other ecosystem services, such as soil formation and nutrient cycling.

4.5.2 Collectively, the Borough's publicly accessible green spaces deliver a range of ecosystem services, including food production, timber, flood management, while individually many of the larger spaces often deliver multiple benefits from across the four service categories above. Recognising and understanding these services and their resulting benefits is central to ensuring that the Borough's publicly accessible green spaces and their associated natural processes are properly valued (in economic terms), protected and enhanced to maximise their public benefit.

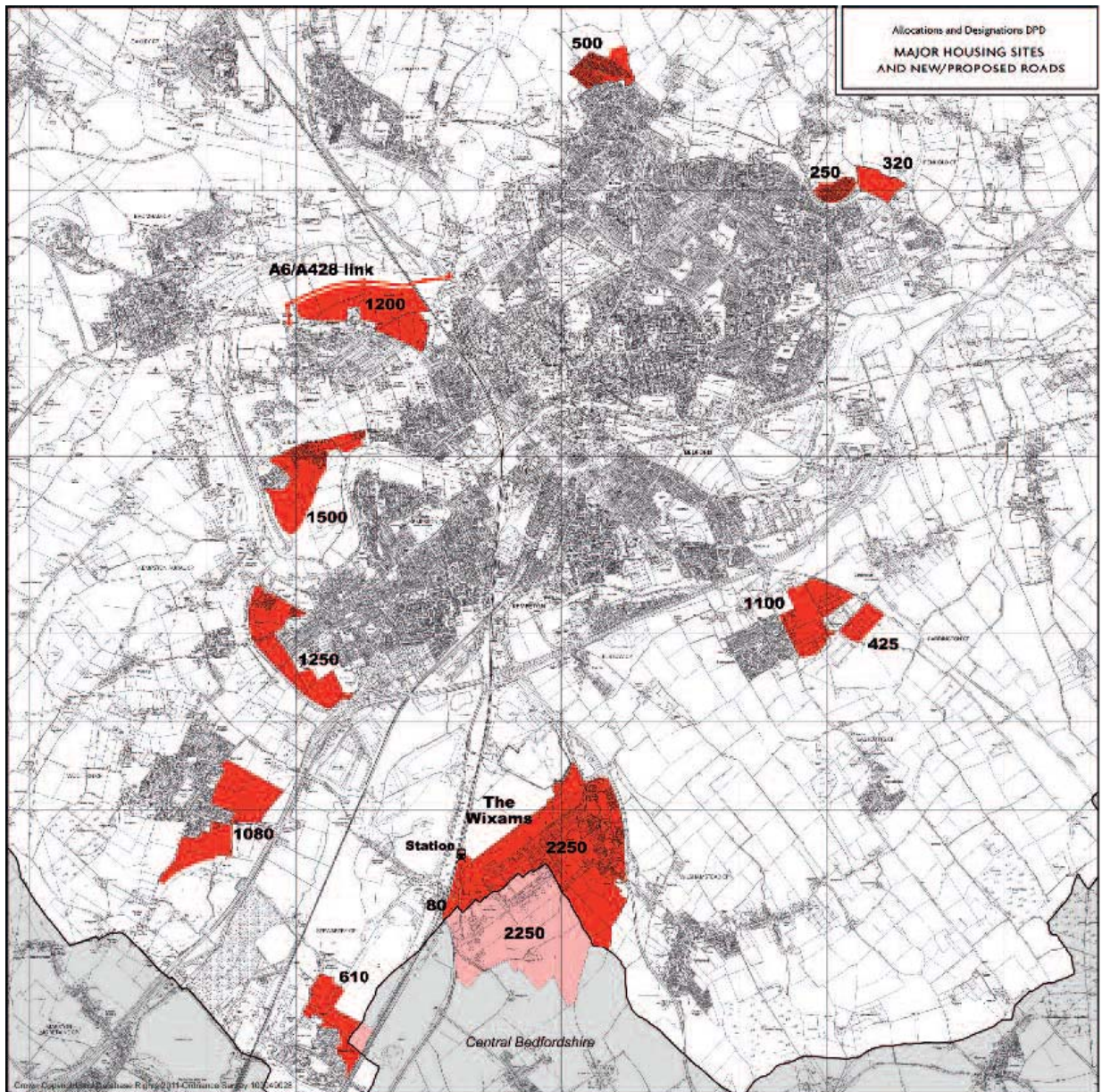
¹⁸ Defra (2010), 'What nature can do for you'

¹⁹ The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011): *Understanding Nature's Value to Society*

4.6 Future planned growth

4.6.1 The Bedford Development Framework's spatial planning vision for Bedford Borough is to focus growth on the Bedford Growth Area (Bedford, Kempston, Northern Marston Vale and associated key service centres of Wixams, Stewartby and Wootton); to revitalise the town centre and to support development of sustainable rural communities. Over the period 2001 to 2021, 16,270 new houses and 16,000 net additional new jobs are to be delivered within the Borough focused on planned sites in the Bedford Growth Area. The map in figure 8 below shows the main strategic housing sites which were identified in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002 and through planning permissions which will contribute to meeting the target.

Figure 8: Major Housing Sites and New/Proposed roads.



4.6.2 In terms of the provision of publicly accessible green space, there is planning policy support for all new development to meet a set of defined quality standards (Core Strategy Policy CP21), to protect existing local

and strategic green infrastructure and provide new green infrastructure in accordance with adopted standards (Core Strategy Policy CP22); and to protect and enhance the Borough's heritage, landscape and bio/ geo-diversity value (Core Strategy Policy CP23, 24 and 25). These policies and associated standards should be used by all publicly accessible green space providers when reviewing existing and planning new publicly accessible green space sites and facilities.

5. PUBLIC GREEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 Quantity and quality

5.1.1 In 2005, Bedford Borough Council undertook a borough-wide study of Open Space, Sport and Recreation in accordance with the requirements of PPG17 (now superseded by National Planning Policy Framework 2012). The final study report²⁰ was adopted by the Borough Council in 2007 and has since been used to provide:

- An indication of existing open space and recreation needs within the Borough
- A framework of guidance to inform the future planned development of the Borough, including the Bedford Development Framework.
- A means to help determine future decision making and investment decisions by the Council and relevant partners with regard to the improvement of local recreation and open space opportunities.
- An articulation of the views of local residents and interest groups through drawing upon the results of consultation exercises.
- Assistance in helping to draw together all other relevant policies and strategies having a bearing upon open space and recreation

²⁰ Bedford Borough Council (2007), *Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for Bedford Borough*, Part 1: Main Report and Part 2: Village Profiles

opportunities to enable better joined up planning and decision making.

5.1.2 The study looked at all publicly accessible green space provision, both within and adjoining the Borough, including sites and facilities owned and managed by other public sector bodies (such as town and parish councils), the voluntary & community sector (such as Marston Vale Trust and The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough (Wildlife Trust BCNP)) and private businesses and landowners.

5.1.3 Based on an assessment of existing provision against community need, the study identified a set of recommended minimum open space standards as detailed in figure 9 below. These have now been included in the Bedford Development Framework's Allocations and Designations Plan (for submission for adoption 2013) to guide publicly accessible green space provision associated with future development schemes.

Figure 9: Publicly accessible green space provision standards

Green space type	Recommended minimum standard
Parks and gardens	0.5ha per 1000 people
Accessible natural green space	0.5ha per 1000 people Ideally, principal sites should be at least 1ha in size, and preferably linked or adjacent to other accessible natural green space.
Outdoor play provision: - Equipped children's	0.25ha per 1000 people (divided as appropriate between the pre-teen age group and young people.)

space (for pre-teens) - Provision for young people (13-17 years)	
Green space type	Recommended minimum standard
Informal amenity green space	0.5ha per 1000 people
Outdoor sports facilities	Synthetic turf pitches: 0.052ha per 1000 people Grass pitches: 1.016ha per 1000 people Tennis and bowls: 0.017ha per 1000 people for bowls; and 0.035ha per 1000 people for tennis.
Allotments	0.35ha per 1000 people

5.1.4 The study applied these minimum standards against existing provision, as at 2005, for each of the publicly accessible green space types, which led to the identification of areas of deficiency (see summary of results in Figure 10 below) and associated recommendations (appendix C). Due to the limitations of applying these standards in the Borough's smaller dispersed rural communities, a supplementary review of rural open space, sport and recreation provision and need was undertaken in consultation with parish councils in 2007. A summary of the results of this supplementary rural study and associated recommendations is included in appendix D.

5.1.5 The results of the study have been used to inform the Council's public green space investment decisions over the past 5 years, including the recent £805k Government funded Playbuilder programme²¹; and in shaping the development of this green space strategy's initial rolling action plan (appendix E) and supporting appendices (C and D).

²¹ Borough Council secured this funding and used it to deliver a programme of play provision improvements at the following locations: Biddenham; Cotton End; Odell; Stevington; Bedford Park; Russell Park; Westbourne Gardens (Queens Park); Addison Howard Park; Clapham; Elstow; Podington; Priory Country Park; Wildstead; Sharnbrook; Stewartby, Willington; Milton Ernest; Waveney Ave (Brickhill); Commercial Road; 'Green Gateway' sites (west of Kempston)

Figure 10: Summary findings of *Bedford Borough Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, 2007*

Green space type	Existing sites	Existing provision	Recommended qualitative standard	Recommended accessibility standard	Recommended quantitative standard	Green space provision issues arising from standards
Parks and gardens	<p>Bedford Borough Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embankment and riverside Mowsbury Park Addison Howard Park Castle Mound Goldington Green Southfields Russell Park Bedford Park Jubilee Park Priory Country Park Harrold-Odell Country Park <p>Note: Marston Vale Millennium Country Park (250ha) in Marston Moretaine is just outside</p>	<p>240ha</p> <p>1.12ha per 1000 people</p> <p>(With exception of the two Country Parks all sites located within Bedford/ Kempston urban area)</p>	<p>'Parks and gardens should be welcoming, safe, clean and litter free They should provide a range of leisure, recreational and play opportunities for all ages and varied and well kept vegetation including flowers, trees and shrubs.</p> <p>This should be combined with natural areas and appropriate ancillary accommodation (including toilets, benches and litter bins). Good access provision and signage both to and within the park should be ensured and a warden presence at larger sites should be considered' High quality design, buildings and works of public art can help to improve a park's identity and larger sites will be suitable for different types of events.</p>	15 mins (1000 metres straight line for walking).	0.5ha per 1000 people	<p>Areas of under-provision: Queens Park Kempston South Cauldwell wards.</p> <p>In terms of the lack of provision in majority of rural areas, local consultation has shown the value and importance attached to major parks means that residents will often travel from beyond the urban area to use them.</p> <p>With exception of the two Country Parks, this type of provision has always been in urban areas</p>

	Bedford Borough, but is easily accessible by car for majority of local population.					
Green space type	Existing sites	Existing provision	Recommended qualitative standard	Recommended accessibility standard	Recommended quantitative standard	Green space provision issues arising from standards
Accessible natural green space	<p>Bedford Borough Council: Various including, Hillgrounds riverside, Putnoe Woods, Fenlake Meadows, Browns Wood, Dog Field, Berry Farm, Clapham Park Wood</p> <p>Marston Vale Trust: Various including Bedford's Green Gateway 'cluster', Shocott Spring, Grange Estate at Willington (c242ha)</p> <p>The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough (Wildlife Trust BCNP): own and manage a number of smaller nature reserves which are open to the public including: Felmersham Pits and Cople Pits</p>	<p>470ha</p> <p>3.48ha per 1000 people</p>	<p>Natural and semi-natural green spaces should be clean and free from litter, dog fouling, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. They should be managed to a high conservation standard, providing an appropriate diversity of wildlife habitats and natural features such as ponds, watercourses and veteran trees.</p> <p>Access routes and recreational paces should be clearly marked with well maintained and appropriate facilities provided in an unobtrusive manner.'</p>	5 mins (300 metres straight line for walking)	<p>0.5 ha per 1000 people</p> <p>Ideally, principal sites should be at least 1 ha in size, and preferably linked or adjacent to other accessible natural green space.</p>	<p>Areas of under-provision: Putnoe Goldington De Parys Kempston South Newnham Brickhill Harpur Castle Cauldwell Kingsbrook</p> <p>Note. This doesn't reflect recent provision associated with Norse Road 2/ Woodlands Park developments</p>

	Woodland Trust: own and manage four woodland sites (67.5ha)					
Green space type	Existing sites	Existing provision	Recommended qualitative standard	Recommended accessibility standard	Recommended quantitative standard	Green space provision issues arising from standards
Outdoor play provision: -Equipped children's space (for pre-teens) - Provision for young people (13-17 years)	Various (with Bedford Borough Council managing over 80 play sites)	N/A	Facilities for children and young people should be free from dog fouling, vandalism, litter and anti social behaviour. The layout and design must meet 'Play Safe' standards and sites should be well maintained, appropriately planted and equipped to provide range of activities to suit varied interests and age groups.'	5 mins (300 metres straight line walk) for pre-teens 15 mins (1000 metres straight line walk) for young people	0.25 ha per 1000 people (divided as appropriate between the pre-teen age group and young people.)	Areas of pre-teen under-provision: Putnoe Brickhill Harpur Castle Kingsbrook Areas of young people under-provision: Newnham Putnoe Brickhill Castle Kempston South Note. This doesn't reflect recent provision associated with Norse Road 2/ Woodlands Park developments and £0.8m+ Playbuilder

						programme
Green space type	Existing sites	Existing provision	Recommended qualitative standard	Recommended accessibility standard	Recommended quantitative standard	Green space provision issues arising from standards
Informal amenity green space	122 informal amenity green spaces	145ha 0.98ha per 1000 people		1-2 mins (100 metres straight line walk)	0.5 ha per 1000 people	Areas of under-provision: North Rural (Central) and Bedford (West) and Kempston)
Outdoor sports facilities	59 adult football pitches 11 junior football pitches 11 mini-soccer pitches 39 cricket pitches 7 rugby pitches 30 tennis courts at 7 locations 7 bowling greens 1 putting green Note: Supplemented by private and education facilities some of which do offer some public access. This includes 10 synthetic turf pitches.	N/A	Provision should reflect advice given by the governing bodies, Sport England or other established sources where appropriate.	Synthetic turf pitches 20 mins travel time. Grass pitches 15 mins travel time. Tennis and bowls 15 mins travel time	Synthetic turf pitches: 0.052ha per 1000 people Grass pitches: 1.016ha per 1000 people Tennis and bowls: 0.017 ha per 1000 people for bowls; and 0.035ha per 1000 people for tennis.	Although shows a very large shortfall against the standard across Borough, this illustrates the dependence on school pitches, and probable over playing of many pitches and space sharing' between sports generally played in different seasons (especially on Borough Council parks and recreation grounds).

Allotments	<p>Statutory sites: Goldington Field, off Barkers Lane</p> <p>Haynes Field, off Barkers Lane</p> <p>Mile Road</p> <p>Temporary sites: Allen Park, off Old Ford</p> <p>End Road</p> <p>Newnham Avenue.</p> <p>Various town and parish councils provide sites for residents</p>	<p>47.68ha</p> <p>0.32ha per 1000 people</p> <p>(35.47ha located in urban area of which 20.08ha managed by Borough Council).</p> <p>(0.36 ha per 1000 people)</p>	<p>Allotments should be clean and maintained areas with defined and secure boundaries. Where appropriate, access routes, storage, water supply, toilets and signage should be provided and well maintained. Natural features and vegetation should be encouraged as part of the sustainable management of sites.</p>	<p>15 mins (1000 metres straight walk line)</p>	<p>0.35ha per 1000</p>	<p>Areas of under-provision: Putnoe Parts of Goldington Harpur/ Castle/ De Parys conjunction</p>
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5.2. Strategic green space developments

5.2.1 Figure 11 below provides a summary of the current key strategic development projects/ schemes which are either under development or represent an approved planning commitment and will deliver significant new publicly accessible green space. A number of these future schemes are linked to major housing developments associated with the Borough Development Framework and will carry Section 106 and/ or commuted sum contributions to cover their adoption/ ongoing maintenance by the Borough Council in accordance with an agreed schedule of rate.

Figure 11: Strategic development projects/ schemes of importance to publicly accessible green space provision

Project/ site	Summary description	Green spaces provided	S106/ commuted sum contribution	Completion date
Forest of Marston Vale	The designated Forest covers an area of 61 square miles and contains some 240 kms of rights of way network. As 1 of 12 English Community Forests, it has set out to repair and regenerate the damaged landscape of the old brickfields in the Borough/ Central Bedfordshire by providing new woodlands, seeking new opportunities for public access to the countryside and stimulating economic and social regeneration. The development of the Community Forest is guided by a Forest Plan.	Green Gateway sites; Shocott Spring; Bedford River Valley Park sites	N/A	Ongoing (including target of 30% tree cover by 2031)
Bedford–Milton Keynes Waterway Park	This strategic waterway project was first proposed by the local business community in 1810 to complete a missing link in the national waterway network between the River Great Ouse and the Grand Union Canal and bring trade and prosperity to the area. In 2010 the Mayor of Bedford saw the Bedford Waterway Park as an important means to help regenerate the Bedford/ Kempston/ Marston Vale area economically and to provide a nationally important recreational resource. The project is currently being progressed in stages as opportunities and funds become available. The project aims to incorporate walking and cycle access into its infrastructure as well as accommodate parts of the NCN 51 cycleway west of Bedford through new housing areas (see below).	Linear features in Wootton and Stewartby provided to safeguard final canal construction.	N/A	Ongoing (as funds/ opportunities become available)
Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP)	A major regeneration project to create a new 868ha country park between Bedford and Willington. Situated within the flood plain of the River Great Ouse, the project is guided by a Framework document focused around an		Enabling development being proposed as part of Allocation and	Ongoing (as funds/ opportunities become

	international water sports lake, floodplain forest and network of recreational trails. The Borough Council is the principal landowner.		Designations Plan to help fund provision of the water sports lake and associated BRVP infrastructure	available, incl enabling development)
Project/ site	Summary description	Green spaces provided	S106/ commuted sum contribution	Completion date
Woodlands Park	Development site of c.500 dwellings to north of Brickhill. The green space and access provision will be an important contribution to the Council's public urban fringe green spaces to the northwest of Bedford.	30 ha country park and informal green spaces and green corridors. Facilities include 3 sports pitches, changing pavilion, play areas and new access routes.	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	2012/13
Norse Road	Following the residential development at Asgard Drive, the 2 further phases of development at Norse Road will provide some 570 houses. The three sites provide a number of green space types and facilities and the BGW provides an important link to the established sites north of Bedford and the BRVP and Priory CP to the south	Norse Road (Maskell Drive) includes 12.5 ha of natural green space with plays sites and a MUGA. Norse Road 3 will include a football pitch, play facilities and some natural green space. Final details and management arrangements to be confirmed.	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	Norse Road 2 – 2010 Norse Road 3 - 2014
Wixams	The largest new development in the Borough straddles the Borough boundary and is based on a network of multi-	Over 120 ha of green space with wildlife,	All on site facilities provided through	Ongoing to early 2020's.

	functional greenways defining separate 'village' settlements. On completion there will be some 4500 new dwellings and a range of civic, commercial and transport facilities including cycle links to Elstow and south Bedford.	sports, recreation and play interests. Notable features include an artificial turf sports facility, a network of water features and high quality play sites.	s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	
Project/ site	Summary description	Green spaces provided	S106/ commuted sum contribution	Completion date
Biddenham Loop/ Land West of Kempston (LWOK)	Known as Biddenham Vale, up to 2760 new homes and related infrastructure are to be built across the two sites. The green infrastructure provision will be a valuable and diverse extension to Bedford's river corridor to the west.	A 54 ha country park with pitches, wildlife areas, play facilities and quality access provision will be the principal green space site. In addition there will be a town park in the LWOK site and a significant number of minor informal green spaces and corridors accommodating access links and some play sites	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation. An annual levy to be charged to the new homes will contribute to the management of all greenspaces other than the country park.	Most greenspaces and facilities to be completed by 2015.
Land north of Bromham Road	With some 1200 new dwellings and related infrastructure, this new development will sit to the south of the western bypass-northern section. Its riverside location will add to the accessible riparian land enjoyed by the public.	A mix of riverside country park and more formal provision is planned. The former includes a Country Wildlife Site and will provide a mixture of habitat types with a	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	Development to follow completion of western bypass

		new BGW link providing good access from the south and east. The latter will include a number of new sports pitches and play facilities.		
Project/ site	Summary description	Green spaces provided	S106/ commuted sum contribution	Completion date
Shortstown	This development known as New Cardington, will provide up to 970 new homes to the east of the existing Shortstown settlement. A further separate development of up to 650 houses is proposed for land adjacent to the airship sheds.	The first development will provide a mix of sports, play, recreation and landscape features at greenspace sites and links across the site. The final detail of greenspace and facilities provision for the second area is to be confirmed during 2012.	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation. Any offsite contributions are to be confirmed in 2012.	
Stewartby Park	Originally Stewartby 2000, the Stewartby Park development will include up to 610 new dwellings between the village and Coronation Pit. A small area is in Central Beds. In 2011 there were some preliminary discussions about redeveloping the old brickworks site and further detail should emerge during the period of this strategy.	The main greenspace provision will be through extensive improvements to the existing recreation / sports ground. A bowls green, sports pitches plus pavilion, play facilities and improved landscaping are all proposed. The development will also	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	Completion dates to be confirmed.

		include further informal greenspaces, play facilities and landscape features		
Project/ site	Summary description	Green spaces provided	S106/ commuted sum contribution	Completion date
Wootton	The two developments either side of Fields Road could provide up to 1100 new houses. Plans for Fields Road south (owned by Bedford BC) were originated a number of years ago. Construction at the Fields Road north site started in early 2012. Both sites will enjoy access to the nearby Berry Farm woodlands owned and managed by the Council.	The sites will provide a mix of sports facilities, play sites and landscaped greenspaces served by a network of cycling / walking routes. Notable features could include a corridor set aside for the creation of the Bedford to Milton Keynes waterway and easy access to the realigned National Cycle Network route 51.	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	Completion dates to be confirmed.
Bedford Green Wheel (BGW):	Major strategic access project to improve and extend the existing network of traffic free paths and quiet routes for cyclists and walkers around the Bedford/ Kempston conurbation linking parks, nature reserves, countryside and homes. Starting in 2009, the Green Wheel network will unfold over a number of years as opportunities and funding become available	Improved green corridors where space and land ownership permit improvements.	S106 on and off site contributions are enabling BGW in a number of locations e.g. Woodlands Park.	Ongoing (as funds/ opportunities become available)

<p>National Cycle Network route 51 (NCN51)</p>	<p>Long distance cycle route running broadly east-west connecting Colchester and the port of Harwich to Oxford via Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge with the Borough of Bedford right at its heart. The route forms part of the National Cycle Network, developed by Sustrans and locally provides a strategically important link (ie. Green Wheel 'spoke') through Bedford/ Kempston west to Marston Vale, Forest Centre and Milton Keynes; and east through the emerging Bedford River Valley Park to Willington and Sandy – linking other public green spaces along its route.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Some on site s106 contributions to south west of Bedford e.g. Fields Road, Wootton</p>	<p>Ongoing (as funds/ opportunities become available</p>
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5.3 Green space management

5.4.1 Publicly accessible green space is delivered by a range of different organisations and individuals across the Borough, with the Borough Council being the principal provider in terms of the scale of resource involved. A summary of the main publicly accessible green space providers and support bodies and their respective resource availability is included in figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Publicly accessible green space providers and support bodies

Providers	Resources
Bedford Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public green space including formal urban parks, Country Parks, nature reserves, playing pitches, play areas and allotments • Rangers and parks officers • Grounds maintenance service (internal and external) • Arboricultural service • Rights of Way service • Landscape design service • Community safety service • Volunteers (green space/ rights of way) and 'Friends of' groups • Sustainable land management expertise • Woodland creation/ management expertise • Project development/ management • Carbon reduction/ sustainability
Town/ parish/ urban community councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public green space, including playing pitches/ recreation grounds, play areas and allotments
Marston Vale Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly accessible green space, including community woodlands, nature reserves and Country Park • Forest team delivering Forest Plan • Forest Volunteers • Sustainable land management/ forestry expertise • Social enterprise expertise • Community engagement expertise • Woodland creation/ management expertise • Project development/ management

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising expertise • Access to charitable funding sources • Private sector partnerships
Providers	Resources
Wildlife Trust BCNP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature reserves (accessible to the public) • Budget generated through subscriptions etc • Ability to bid for grants etc • Ecological/ education expertise • Countryside management expertise • Conservation/ education volunteers • Fundraising expertise • Access to charitable funding sources
Woodland Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly accessible green space • Community woodland development/ management • Access to charitable funding sources • Sustainable land management/ forestry expertise
BRCC (Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community development/ engagement expertise • Parish/ neighbourhood planning • Sustainable land management expertise • Conservation volunteers • Project development/ management • Fundraising expertise • Access charitable funding sources • Social enterprise expertise
BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and gardening skills training • Conservation volunteers • Access charitable funding sources
Groundwork Luton and Bedfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project development/ management • Community consultation/ neighbourhood planning • Landscape design • Fundraising expertise • Access charitable funding sources • Social enterprise expertise • Carbon reduction and climate change • Environmental education and food growing • Vocational training and skills development
Voluntary and community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer time/ skills/ expertise • Ability to bid for grants, etc

Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land, plans and contractors for provision of new publicly accessible green spaces • Commuted sums/ section 106 contributions
Providers	Resources
Private landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly accessible green space, predominantly on fixed term agreement basis, eg. Environmental Stewardship, Woodland Grant Scheme • Donating or leasing land for facilities such as playing fields. • Farmers through diversification branching out into others areas of commercial activity, which may include developing various recreation facilities.
Government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Natural England:</i> Natural England brings together English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service. Its overall aim is to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the well-being and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. • <i>Environment Agency:</i> Amongst other things the Environment Agency has an important responsibility for providing recreation opportunities in and around the river environment, especially with regard to navigation (with British Waterways – soon to be Canal and Waterways Trust) and fishing. • <i>Forestry Commission:</i> The Forestry Commission for England is the Government Department responsible for forestry policy throughout England. The mission of the Forestry Commission is to protect and expand Britain's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment. The Commission has its own strategy and mission, but has also helped develop a Regional Woodland Strategy for the East of England. Public forests, woodlands and other land is managed by the Forest Enterprise agency. The Commission's Active Woods campaign promotes woodland as places for exercise such as walking, running and cycling in a tranquil environment with attendant benefits in terms enhanced health of stress reduction. Forestry Enterprise manages several woodlands in the Borough, including Wilstead Wood and Knotting and Souldrop Wood.

5.4.2 Given the range of organisations involved in publicly accessible green space provision, management and support across the Borough, there is

value to be gained from improved coordination, collaboration and sharing of good practice. As many of these organisations are represented on the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, this may provide the right forum for fulfilling this need, however, if not, support for an alternative forum will be investigated.

5.4.3 In terms of publicly accessible green space management benchmarking, the following sites in Bedford Borough have achieved the national Green Flag or Community Green Flag (formerly Green Pennant) award standard in at least the past year.

- Harrold-Odell Country Park
- Priory Country Park
- Bedford Park
- Addison Howard Park
- Hill Rise Local Nature Reserve

These five sites are all managed by the Borough Council with support from volunteers and in the case of Harrold-Odell Country Park and Hill Rise Local Nature Reserves, active Friends Groups.

5.5 Staff and financial resource

5.5.1 Given the Borough Council's position as the Borough's principal publicly accessible green space provider, the following section focuses on the staff and financial resource which the Borough Council has available for public green space provision and management.

5.5.2 Figure 13 below provides a breakdown of the Borough Council's main operational teams associated with the provision and management of its public green space estate. These teams, in turn, are supported by a

number of other Council service areas including Planning and Heritage, Leisure and Culture, Highways, Land and Property and Legal Services.

Figure 13: Borough Council public green space operational teams

Operational team	Service outline
Grounds maintenance	Urban park building management, grass mowing, shrub management, tree/ shrub planting, ornamental bedding, marking out sports pitches
Country park rangers	Countryside site building management (associated with country parks), grass mowing, user management, conservation management, ranger/ warden, education/ promotion (including events), management planning, community/ volunteer engagement
Operational team	Service outline
Parks officers	Urban park education/ promotion (including events), community/ volunteer engagement, management planning, play provision/ inspection
Arboriculture	Amenity and street tree surveys, inspections and management (via contractors), tree planting
Rights of way	Protecting, managing and promoting public use of footpath, bridleway and byway network
Events	Planning, organising and managing Council and community led events and activities within green spaces
Project development	Identifying and managing development and delivery of projects in green spaces, consulting technical specialists and external stakeholders (including local community/ users), securing necessary funding and letting and supervising contracts
Community rangers	Responding to reported community safety issues in green spaces and undertaking targeted enviro-

	crime education and enforcement
Community partnerships	Coordinating recruitment, management and promotion of volunteering opportunities in green spaces, under Pride in Bedford brand.

5.5.2 In addition to the staffing resource associated with Figure 13 above, the Borough Council provides an annual operational budget for public green space maintenance and small scale infrastructure improvements. This budget is supported by external income secured from a range of revenue sources including catering and ice cream concessions, pitch bookings and angling and boating licences.

5.5.3 There is no capital budget provision for public green space investment within the Borough Council's current capital programme, 2012-16. Consequently, any future capital investment needs arising within this period will need to be found from either within the Borough Council's annual green space operational budget (5.5.2 above) and/ or from external funding sources.

5.6 Local Access Forum

5.6.1 The Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum was created in May 2009 (its predecessor was a countywide Joint Local Access Forum) and is an independent advisory group made up of local volunteers from a variety of backgrounds which include both user groups and landowners. The role is to provide advice and opinion on all forms of countryside recreation and access to the Borough Council and a wide range of other statutory organisations.

5.6.2 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires all Highway Authorities to support and maintain a Local Access Forum for their area and to treat them as a statutory consultee.

5.6.3 With its diversity of experience and interests, the Forum is able to provide practical advice and help to balance improvements to outdoor access for different types of user whilst taking account land management interests and needs.

5.7 Volunteers

5.7.1 A number of publicly accessible green space providers invest in recruiting and managing volunteers to support them in the provision and management of their green space estate, including such activities as fundraising, wildlife survey/ monitoring, wardening, conservation tasks and helping with public events. A breakdown of the main areas of volunteering activity by provider is included in figure 14 below.

Figure 14: Volunteering activity by green space provider

Organisation	Volunteering activity
Bedford Borough Council	Friends Groups: - Harrold-Odell Country Park - Putnoe Woods and Mowsbury Hill Fort - Park Wood Local Nature Reserve - Hill Rise Local Nature Reserve - Foster Hill Cemetery
	Monthly/ weekly conservation volunteer task programmes: - Priors Country Park - Harrold-Odell Country Park - Bedford Park
	Pride in Bedford:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rivercare - Bulb planting - Community litter picks
	<p>Street Champions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - litter picks - reporting problems
	<p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Bloom - Dog Watch
Marston Vale Trust	Friends of the Forest of Marston Vale Forest Volunteers
Organisation	Volunteering activity
Wildlife Trust BCNP	Conservation volunteer task programme Volunteer wardens and educational visit leaders
BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)	Conservation volunteer task programme (mid week/ weekend)
Town/ parish/ urban community councils and community groups	Various associated with recreation grounds, play areas, wildlife/ heritage sites, allotments, etc

6. MEETING CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

6.1 Current needs

6.1.1 The Bedford Borough Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study adopted by the Council in 2007, included an assessment of public use of and views on various types of publicly accessible green space across the Borough. The study drew upon a range of questionnaire and focus group consultation techniques and engaged with a wide cross section of the Borough community as follows:

- Citizens' Panel (ie. cross section of community)
- Local town/ parish/ urban community councils
- Voluntary and community groups/ organisations
- Park staff/ officers
- Sports clubs/ groups
- Friends of parks groups
- Diversity Network
- Councillors/ senior officers
- Young people

A general analysis of need for outdoor pitches (football in particular) was also conducted using a method endorsed by Sport England.

6.1.2 The results of this consultation activity were used to inform the proposed publicly accessible green space standards as included in the Allocations and Designations Plan and section 5.1.4 above and the identification of priority issues and actions, which have been used to shape this strategy's action plan (appendix E) and supporting appendices (C and D). A general summary of the key consultation findings from the study activity is provided below.

- General appreciation of the generally high quality of parks and gardens, and natural environments and informal recreation opportunities.
- Informal green space/ facilities (ie. riverside walks, parks and recreation grounds) attracted the highest usage levels in comparison with formal sports facilities. The latter tend to be used by a smaller percentage of the population on a regular basis.
- Standard of maintenance (ie. cleanliness, security) and an appropriate range/ diversity of facilities and opportunities were highlighted as a key factor influencing levels of satisfaction/ use
- General desire to have good quality local spaces, offering a variety of informal recreation and play opportunities within walking distance
- General indication that people were prepared to walk further and longer for larger spaces with a wider range of leisure/ recreational opportunities.

- The most popular Borough Council owned green space sites were identified as follows (in descending order):
 - The Embankment (22%)
 - Bedford Park (16%)
 - Mowbsury Park (8%)
 - Russell Park (8%)
 - Priory Country Park (8%)
 - Harrold-Odell Country Park (6%)
 - Addison Howard Park (5%)
- The top 3 most popular green space sites for visitors outside of the Borough (in descending order) were:
 - Forest Centre and Millennium Country Park, Marston Vale (just outside Borough)
 - Grafham Water
 - Willen Lake, Milton Keynes
- Unlike dedicated sports facilities (where the reason for visit is usually obvious) people identified various reasons for using outdoor spaces as follows (in descending order of priority):

Reason for visit	% of respondents
To walk	69%
To enjoy the natural environment and wildlife	50%
To sit and relax, picnic etc	33%
To socialise/ meet with family or friends	27%
To visit a children's play area	23%
To jog./take some exercise	21%
To walk the dog	19%
To use as a through route/short cut	18%
To cycle	18%
To attend events and festivals	18%
To play informally	16%
To look at floral displays/planting	14%
To use outdoor sports facilities	8%
Other:	8%
- To take part in other sports/leisure	6%
- To spend my lunchtime break there	2%

- The most important green space maintenance/ management issues identified by respondents were as follows (in descending order of priority):

- Clean and free from litter and graffiti (62%)
 - Safe and secure (57%)
 - Easy to get to (34%)
 - Range of facilities, including cafes and toilets (25%)
 - Easy to get around (24%)
 - High quality and well maintained equipment (23%)
 - Control of ASB and noise (22%)
 - Good footpath/ cycleway links (19%)
 - Adequate provision for dog walking/ free from dog fouling (19%)
 - Good signposting and information (9%)
 - Well supervised with on-site staff (6%)
- Breakdown of respondents' reoccurring comments/ themes (not in any order of priority) relating to the Borough's public green spaces:

Good points	Areas for improvement
Attractive parks and spaces	Lack of provision in certain areas (including open space and play provision)
A well balanced variety of spaces	Vandalism and abuse (litter, dog fouling, etc)
Natural spaces	Financial pressures leading to issues of long term continued provision, maintenance and servicing of all kinds of facility
River and water	Provision for young people/ youth
Recreation routes	Improved cycle routes and links to the wider network)
Political support for leisure and its open spaces	Poor access from rural areas to major facilities
Many attractive and well maintained facilities (for children's play and outdoor sport)	More shared use of schools (especially in rural areas)
Country parks	More activities should be promoted in spaces.
	Ancillary facilities (toilets, parking, bins, lighting)
	General safe access and safe use concerns

6.1.3 In 2011, a Citizen's Panel survey was undertaken which showed that 90% of respondents were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the quality of the Borough Council owned publicly accessible green spaces.

6.2 Current non-users

6.2.1 Little research has been undertaken locally to determine the demographic profile of users and, in particular, non users of publicly accessible green space. The 2011 Citizens Panel survey identified that 9% of respondents had not visited any of the Borough Council's green spaces in the past 12 months. Publicly accessible green spaces are assets for all sections of the community to freely access and enjoy. It is therefore important to understand why some people do and don't use them and whether there are any common characteristic to these people (ie. age or ethnicity) or the reasons given (ie. don't feel safe or welcome). This information gap will be plugged in future annual surveys using Citizen's Panel and as part of any site development/ management plan community consultation/ engagement activity.

6.4 Future needs/ trends

6.4.1 There are many new outdoor activities emerging which make use of publicly accessible green spaces and their associated facilities. These include military style fitness training (Forces Fit), health walks, Green Gym, 'park runs', outdoor multi-gyms, dog obstacle courses, cross-country skateboarding, bushcraft/ survival skills and parkour/ free running.

6.4.2 A number of these are already provided for in the Borough's publicly accessible green spaces. The Borough Council will continue to explore, trial and, where there is sufficient demand and the use/ activity can be accommodated sustainably, provide for new activities in its green spaces, especially where these activities increase use by under-represented groups/ sections of the community.

7. DELIVERY

7.1 Funding and resources

7.1.1 The Borough Council will use this green space strategy to guide its own resource allocation and financial investment, where affordable, and associated income generation/ fundraising activity. It will also encourage and, where resources allow, support other publicly accessible green space providers to do the same.

7.1.2 Responding to the current economic climate and associated reduction in available public funding, the Borough Council has had to find significant cost savings across all service areas including its parks and green space service in order to balance its budget. The Council's current medium term financial strategy (2012-2016) identifies a 20% reduction (c£36 million) in the authority's net revenue budget.

7.1.3 Despite the challenging economic and public finance climate, the Borough Council remains fully committed to pursuing this green space strategy, in terms of realising its strategic vision and aims; and maintaining the high standards of current provision. The Council will aim to achieve this by adopting the following approach:

- To continue to secure both commuted sum and section 106 agreement contributions from developers for the provision and maintenance of on/ off-site public green space infrastructure associated with various development schemes.
- To increase its in house capacity to secure external funding for public green space projects, activities and facilities from sources such as lottery, landfill tax, etc
- To work with external partners, where they have the necessary capacity, to develop and deliver joint green space projects and secure external funding and support, including from sources the Council is unable to apply directly to

- To increase operational delivery capacity through engaging voluntary and community sector partners and individual volunteers in the provision and management of green spaces
- To pursue revenue generational opportunities associated with green space sites and facilities
- To continue to maximise the existing capacity and productivity of its staff, through combination of restructuring of duties and responsibilities and re-prioritisation of activities
- Where feasible, to introduce low maintenance designs and specifications in public green space development and management projects and plans

7.1.4 This strategy and its delivery arrangements will need to be reviewed in light of any financial impacts arising from subsequent reviews of the Council's medium term financial strategy.

7.2 Delivering the strategy

7.2.1 The strategy will be delivered through a rolling action plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.

7.2.2 This rolling action plan will be developed by the Borough Council and its partners based on what needs to be and can be realistically achieved given available and/ or anticipated resources. It will be used to help to identify priorities for publicly accessible green space investment and direct the allocation of resources, including officer time. A lead officer will be identified for each action together with an indicative timescale for its delivery.

7.3 Monitoring and performance management

7.3.1 The full strategy will be reviewed every five years, to identify whether any change needs to be made to its strategic vision, aims and objectives and

associated delivery arrangements. While the action plan will be reviewed on a rolling annual basis.

7.3.2 Progress on the plan will be monitored by the Borough Council, with annual monitoring reports presented to senior management, Borough Council Members, Bedford Borough Local Access Forum and Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium.

7.3.3 In addition to monitoring delivery of the action plan, the Borough Council has also identified a list of performance indicators for publicly accessible green space which it will monitor (see figure 15 below). Although the Council will focus its monitoring activity on its own estate, it will seek to encourage and, where resources allow, support other publicly accessible green space providers (eg. Marston Vale Trust, Wildlife Trust BCNP) to report on these indicators for their own holdings and submit the results to the Council for collation to provide amore complete picture of Borough wide public green space performance.

Figure 15: Publicly accessible green space performance indicators

Ref.	Description	Collection methodology
1.	Percentage of residents satisfied with publicly accessible green spaces	Citizens' Panel surveys carried out for corporate monitoring purposes.
2.	Number of reported graffiti/ vandalism/ other ASB incidents associated with publicly accessible green spaces	Collation of reported incidents.
3.	Number of volunteer hours spent working on publicly accessible green spaces and related issues.	Record keeping by Friends groups, BTCV, Rangers and others.
4.	Maintenance cost per hectare of Borough Council owned green spaces, including	Financial accounts

	transport and machinery repairs	
5.	Proportion of Local Sites (County Wildlife Sites (CWS) where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented, broken down between Borough Council owned and all CWS	Performance is calculated as a % of all Local Sites (County Wildlife Sites) where positive conservation management has taken place up to 5 years prior to the reporting date (31 March).
6.	Amount of external funding and donations secured for publicly accessible green space work.	From project and other records.

7.3.4 The number and selection of performance indicators will be kept under review to ensure they are of value. Where appropriate and feasible, the Borough Council will seek to use its performance results to benchmark its parks and green space services against other comparator providers.

7.4 Action Plan

7.4.1 This strategy's rolling annual action plan is included in appendix E below. All the specified actions in the plan have been agreed by the Borough Council and relate to Borough Council owned green spaces unless specified otherwise. Although there is a designated lead officer for each action, the actual delivery is dependent on the support of others, including Council service areas and other public, private and voluntary & community sector partners.

7.4.2 The Council hopes that, over time, other publicly accessible green space providers will be able to include actions of their own in the rolling action plan as part of the annual review and forward planning process.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

On this **strategy** and **Bedford Borough Council's** green space planning, development and management, including associated volunteering opportunities, please contact:

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On **Marston Vale Trust's** green space planning, development and management and on the Forest of Marston Vale, including associated volunteering opportunities, please contact:

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On **The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough's** green space planning, development and management, including associated volunteering opportunities, please contact:

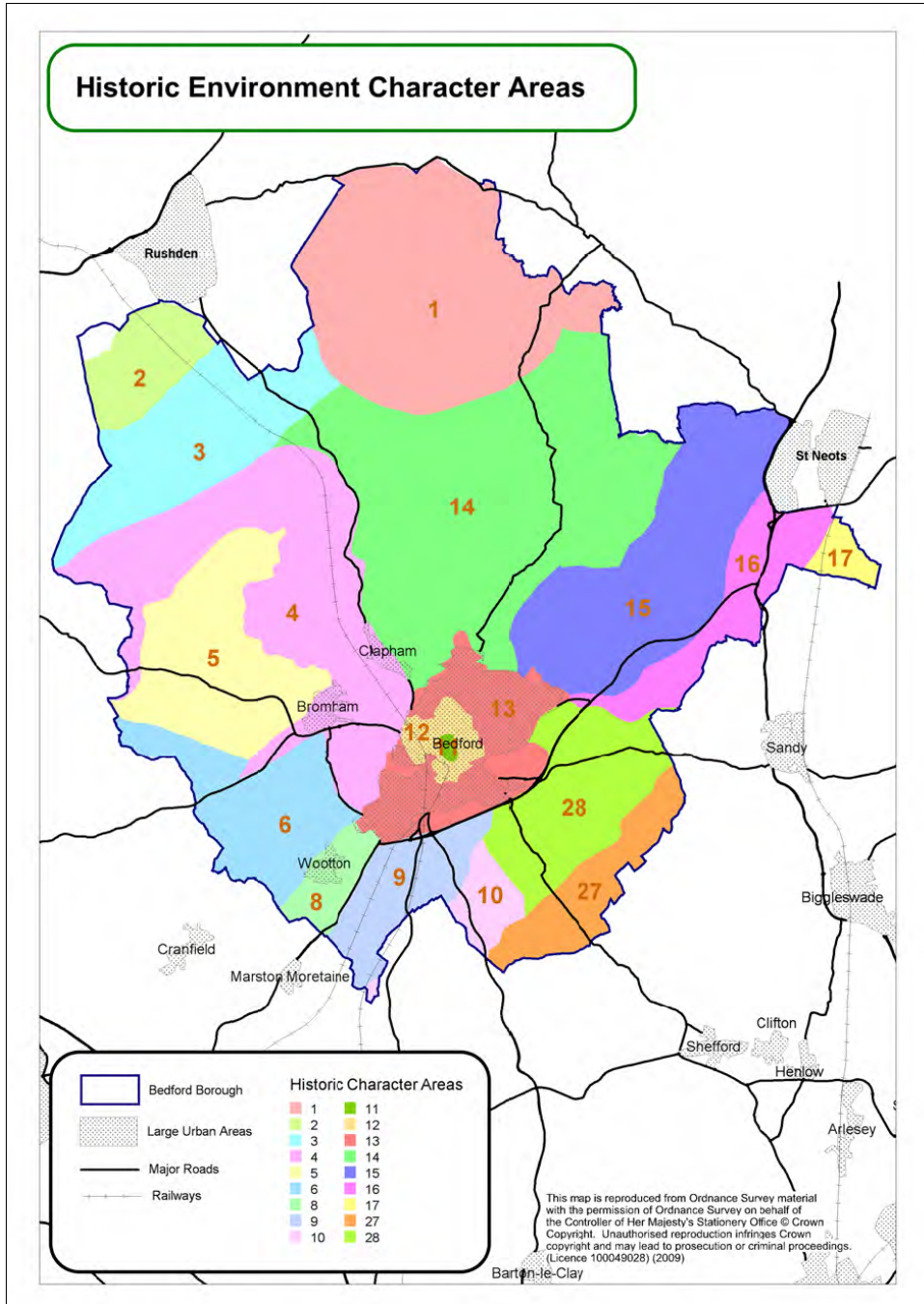
John Comont
Conservation Manager

The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire
Priory Country Park
Barkers Lane
Bedford MK41 9DJ

t: 01234 364213

e: john.comont@wildlifebcn.org

Appendix A: Bedford Borough Historic Environment Character Areas

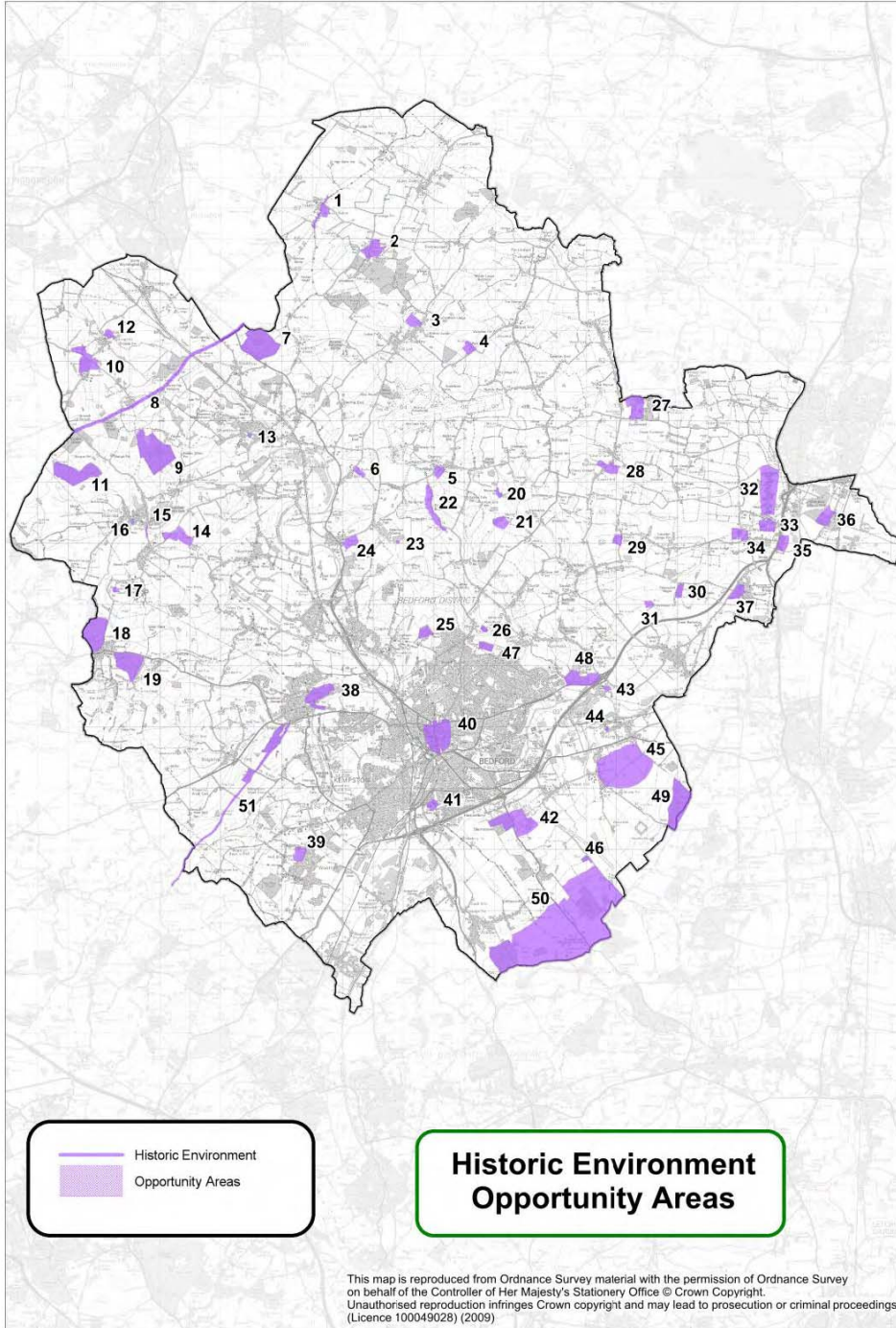


Ref.	HECA description
HECA 1	Valleys of the NE-flowing Til and Kym and land in between settlements of Yelden, Upper Dean, Melchbourne, Riseley, Pertenhall etc. Melchbourne Park. Mixture of brick, timber-framed and (some) clay lump buildings, a simple rural vernacular. Interspersed with woodland. Considerable archaeological potential. Extensive cropmark evidence; presumed to be late prehistoric / Roman but few have been tested by fieldwork. Good survival of medieval earthworks, e.g. Yelden motte and bailey castle, Melchbourne magnate enclosure. Some medieval shrinkage and shift.
HECA 2	Valleys of the north-flowing Knuston Brook, minor tributary of the River Nene. Settlements of Podington and Wymington. Predominantly limestone buildings. Farm buildings tend to be in centre of villages, rather than outlying. Hinwick House and Hinwick Hall. Podington motte and bailey castle.
HECA 3	Block of clay upland to the north of Harrold and Sharnbrook. Former boundary line between Mercia and kingdoms of southern England. Very high percentage of ancient woodland: Great Odell Wood, West Wood. Boundaries reflect medieval assarting. Woodland earthworks and some ridge and furrow. Late prehistoric and Roman cropmarks. Settlement of Souldrop. Industrial archaeology – ancient iron smelting.
HECA 4	Long-settled and farmed river valley from Turvey to Bromham. Outcropping limestone. Some seasonally flooded meadow. Nucleated settlements of Harrold, Odell, Sharnbrook, Felmersham, Stevington, Milton Ernest, and Oakley. In the past, some of the villages were small-scale, self-contained commercial centres. Limestone-built. Churches often close to river, away from centre of modern settlements. Mills, weirs and historic bridges. Former leather working industry in Harrold and Odell. Long history of gravel extraction, which has provided evidence of settlement from early prehistoric onwards. [Includes Stagsden and its tributary stream.
HECA 5	Area of clay upland to north of A428, enclosed by course of River Great Ouse between Turvey and Stagsden, formerly more wooded than at present. Late prehistoric / Roman cropmarks.
HECA 6	Western Bedfordshire clay ridge, centred on Cranfield. Includes area of high ground to south of Turvey and east of Stagsden. As far as the ridge of Boulder Clay to the north of Brogborough. At 113mOD – highest point in the county north of the Greensand Ridge. Arable agriculture. Limestone building tradition giving way to brick and timber framing. Cranfield Airfield, which preserves 1930s neo-Georgian airfield buildings. Village ends. Moated sites. Late prehistoric / Roman cropmarks evidence dense former settlement (c.f. settlement remains of this date on housing development at Home Farm Cranfield.)

HECA 8	Western side of Oxford Clay vale of Marston. Line of settlements between clay plateau and Elstow Brook: Kempston, Wootton, Marston Moretaine. Wootton House. Historic woodland on lower slopes of clay upland. Arable farmland (old enclosure). Iron Age and Roman settlement is more extensive than previously thought (land south of Fields Road, Wootton; Beancroft Road, Marston Moretaine). Medieval ridge and furrow, settlement earthworks, moats. Artificial hills at Brogborough landfill site.
HECA 9	Central third of Oxford Clay vale of Marston, encompassing the upper reaches of the Elstow Brook. Late prehistoric and Roman cropmarks (e.g. Marsh Leys Farm, land east of Bedford Road Marston Moretaine). Dominated by formerly more extensive clay quarrying and brick making. Industrial archaeology (although above ground physical remains are fast disappearing). Central to this area is the little altered, planned settlement of Stewartby. WW2 Elstow Storage Depot, shortly to be redeveloped as The Wixams.
HECA 10	Eastern side of Oxford Clay vale of Marston. Series of spring line settlements between Elstow Brook and Greensand Ridge: Lidlington, Houghton Conquest, and Wilstead. Woodland on the lower slopes. Arable farmland, mainly parliamentary enclosures. Vehicle proving ground next to Millbrook Station.
HECA 11	Historic core of Bedford, north and south of the Great Ouse. Above ground evidence confined to castle, churches, street pattern, King's Ditch, occasional medieval vernacular building but, more commonly, Georgian architecture. Administrative centre with typical range of municipal buildings. Valuable below ground Saxon and medieval archaeological deposits.
HECA 12	Edwardian and Victorian Bedford. Domestic architecture and industrial housing. Municipal parks and embankment leisure facilities. Railway hub. Engineering developments: Allens and Britannia ironworks. Expansion of Harpur Trust schools. Influence and stimulus of Anglo-Indian community and other migrant communities.
HECA 13	Post-Victorian expansion of Bedford. Subsuming much of former Bedford's rural hinterland, e.g. Goldington village, Kempston, sites of former religious establishments, former Roman and earlier settlement sites.
HECA 14	Extensive Boulder Clay uplands to north of Bedford. N-S running grain to the landscape. Late prehistoric / Roman cropmarks. Mowsbury Park Iron Age hillfort. Medieval settlement ends of Thurleigh and Bolnhurst; historic squatter settlement. Bushmead Priory. Mix of brick and timber-framed buildings with some cob. Twinwoods and Thurleigh Airfields (small part of Little Staughton Airfield on Cambs. Border).

HECA 15	Settlements on the south-facing slopes of the clay upland. More open landscape than HECA 14, with E-W running grain. Streams draining south-eastwards and eastwards into the Great Ouse. Relatively narrow, steeply cut valleys. Villages of Renhold, Ravensden, Wilden, Colesden. Scatter of moats. Settlement shrinkage. Howbury Hall. Considerable archaeological resource (Iron Age to medieval) demonstrated during construction of Great Barford Bypass.
HECA 16	Great Ouse and Ivel valleys downstream of Great Barford and Sandy. Riverside settlements of Blunham, Great Barford, Tempsford, Roxton, Wyboston etc. Historic bridges. Roxton Park, former Little Barford Park. Extensive arable landscape, given an historical dimension by Land Settlement Association smallholdings at Wyboston and Chawston. Until 1689 Great Barford was the head of the Great Ouse navigation, after it had been extended from St Neots. Rich archaeological landscape, early prehistoric sites likely to be sealed by alluvium.
HECA 17	Small spur of the extensive Huntingdonshire / Cambridgeshire claylands, sandwiched between the Great Ouse valley and the Greensand escarpment. Parliamentary enclosure. Late prehistoric / Roman cropmarks. Bisected by part of Sandy to Godmanchester Roman road. Tempsford Park. Tempsford WW2 airfield.
HECA 27	Large block of Greensand upland to north of River Flit. Attractive landscape of marginal heathland, formerly extensive monastic estates. Characterised by ancient woodland, extant (and former) parkland/estates and country houses. Moggerhanger Park, Shuttleworth, Southill Park, Chicksands Priory, Haynes Park. Some arable land amongst the woodland. Complex network of minor roads. Varied settlement pattern; Ickwell Green; much evidence for medieval assarting. Buildings of a variety of ages. Main building stone is ironstone. Limited archaeological fieldwork but where undertaken (e.g. Haynes Park) has revealed settlement from late prehistoric onwards.
HECA 28	Southern side of Great Ouse Valley between Vale of Marston and Great Barford. Includes lower reaches of Elstow Brook. Valley bottom settlements Harrowden, Cardington, Cople, Willington. Group of churches (and a dovecote at Willington). Parishes aligned north-south, while main routes run east-west. Planned settlement at Shortstown (analogous to Stewartby) and airship hangers. Extensive gravel extraction has revealed rich prehistoric and Roman landscape (ritual and settlement).

Appendix B: Bedford Borough Historic Environment Opportunities Areas



Key:

1. Yielden motte and bailey castle, associated water management and manorial earthworks adjoining narrow unenclosed village green.
2. Melchbourne magnate enclosure, medieval settlement and Preceptory earthworks.
3. Riseley medieval moat and associated enclosure, fishpond and trackway earthworks.
4. Keysoe Hardwick End medieval moat and deserted settlement earthworks.
5. Thurleigh Bury Farm motte and bailey castle.
6. Bletsoe Castle medieval moat and associated enclosures.
7. Knotting West and Sheeprack Woods.
8. Forty Foot Lane.
9. Odell Great Wood.
10. Hinwick House and Hinwick Hall landscaped grounds
11. Harrold Park Wood
12. Podington Manor Farm medieval motte and bailey castle earthworks
13. Sharnbrook Castle Close medieval moat earthworks
14. Chellington isolated church and deserted medieval settlement earthworks
15. Harrold Bridge and Causeway
16. Harrold Green with market house and lock up and watermill
17. Carlton Hall medieval moat earthworks
18. Turvey House Park
19. Turvey Abbey Park with ridge and furrow earthworks
20. Bolnhurst Mavourn Farm medieval moat and associated enclosure and settlement earthworks
21. Ravensden Tilwick Wood and earthworks of Tilwick deserted medieval settlement
22. Thurleigh Scald End medieval settlement earthworks overlying ridge and furrow
23. Milton Ernest Yarlswood medieval moated grange earthworks
24. Milton Ernest deserted medieval settlement earthworks
25. Clapham Park Wood and earthworks
26. Ravensden Mowsbury Hill Iron Age hillfort and medieval moat site earthworks
27. Bushmead Priory and earthworks of The Camps medieval moated complex
28. Colmworth medieval dam, nesting island and fishponds earthworks and remains of medieval moated manor house and deserted settlement
29. Colmworth Channels End former WWII Prisoner of War Camp
30. Roxton Palaceyard Wood medieval moat and associated enclosure and woodland earthworks
31. Great Barford Birchfield Farm medieval moat earthworks
32. Wyboston Land Settlement Association smallholdings north
33. Wyboston Land Settlement Association smallholdings south and earthworks of medieval moat
34. Chawston Land Settlement Association smallholdings west and earthworks of medieval moat
35. Chawston Land Settlement Association smallholdings east

36. Little Barford church and deserted medieval settlement earthworks
37. Roxton Park landscaped grounds and Congregational Chapel
38. Bromham Mill, Bridge, Causeway and Park
39. Wootton ridge and furrow south of Keeley Lane
40. Bedford Saxon and medieval town centre
41. Elstow Abbey earthworks, Hillersdon mansion remains, Moot Hall, green and historic village core
42. Shortstown planned industrial village and RAF Cardington incl airship hangars
43. Renhold Howbury medieval ringwork
44. Willington dovecote and stables
45. Cople and Willington buried multiperiod landscape
46. Cardington Manor medieval moat earthworks
47. Bedford Putnoe Wood
48. Renhold Howbury Park
49. Willington Sheerhatch Wood
50. Cardington, Eastcotts and Wilstead assart landscape including Exeter, St. Macute's and Wilstead Woods
51. Cranfield to Bromham Ridgeway and Astey and Hanger Woods, Stagsden

**Appendix C:
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study recommendations supported by
this strategy**

The following recommendations has been extracted from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for Bedford Borough - Part One: Main Report (November 2007) and used to inform the strategy and associated actions in the rolling action plan.

Ref.	Recommendation	Location/ site
1.	Produce management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russell Park / Embankment • Mowsbury Park • Putnoe Wood • Browns Wood • Foster Hill Cemetery (integrate with Bedford Park plan) • Hillgrounds and Queen's Park riverside area • Berry Farm

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jubilee Park
2.	Develop and improve pedestrian and cycle access to public green space, such as Green Wheel and National Cycle Network projects, including provision of signage, cycle racks, cycle lanes, safe crossing points and disabled access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West/ north Bedford (linking Biddenham and Clapham and associated green spaces) • Great Ouse corridor links from north/ south Bedford • Link to Harrowden and Shortstown • Marston Vale growth area and associated green spaces, including Millennium Country Park link
3.	Improve access/ gateways and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Road Bridge • Jubilee Park • Chiltern Avenue • Putnoe Park
4.	Create wildflower areas and copses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putnoe Park • Queen's Drive
5.	Investigate variable mowing regimes across all parks and green spaces as part of the management plan/ schedule development process	All
6.	Provide facilities for young people in new developments, involving children and young people in process where possible. The planning needs to consider the optimal location within the development to avoid unreasonable disturbance to residents.	New developments
7.	Review identified children's play area deficiencies and potential to provide through existing informal open spaces and development opportunities	

8.	Review identified youth facility deficiencies and potential to provide through targeted informal open spaces	
9.	Investigate combining informal green spaces near Abbey Middle School, incl Mowbray Road with accessible green space to serve Cauldwell, Elstow and Abbeyfields area with multi-functional park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Cauldwell / Elstow
10.	Improve/ upgrade targeted parks which have scope to provide additional facilities (should demand arise), e.g.. play and informal sport	
11.	Assess latent demand for allotment space to address deficiency	North Bedford town
12.	Verify allotment provision/ needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mile Road • North Bedford town • All rural communities
13.	Consider local deficiencies when reviewing and planning green space provision through development planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cauldwell Ward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - former Camford work's site - derelict/ unused railway land between Ampthill and London Roads • Harpur Ward • Queen's Park (northern area)

Appendix D:

Publicly accessible green space deficiencies and recommendations relating to rural communities

The following information has been summarised from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for Bedford Borough - Part Two: Village Profiles (May 2007). Information shown in *italics* is where the Borough Council is aware of subsequent action, which has been taken to address an identified deficiency/ recommendation.

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Biddenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to children's play facilities in the eastern side of the village although there is access to the playing fields associated with Biddenham Upper and St Gregory's Middle schools. • No allotment provision, although there are allotments in the urban area which are within convenient distance. • There is no young people's space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Play area improved through Playbuilder programme</i> • Provision of young people's space is desirable. • Children's play provision should be considered on the eastern side of the village. New play facilities in Great Denham will be accessible for parts of the village.
Bletsoe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No provision for young people. The parish council is promoting young people's provision, including skateboarding and basketball facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people's provision would be desirable.
Bromham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from the new children's playground under construction there is only one other playground in the north of the main village, and there is limited access to such facilities from the south of the village, as well as the northern edge. • Outdoor provision specifically for young people is limited to the MUGA and other facilities on the village playing field. • There is limited access to natural green space. • For a large village the settlement lacks allotments. • Perceived need for new or improved cricket and bowls facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing informal green space in the south of the village could be examined to establish the desirability of providing a playground in this part of the village. • In the north, Vicarage Green and The Paddock offer potential for the location of an equipped play area. This site would also benefit from improved access, through creating a footpath around the site, and improving the entrances. • Bromham Park is privately owned, so it may be more difficult to influence change here. However, the park is the only large area of natural green space within the Parish, and is

		<p>clearly well used for informal recreation. The site could benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved entrance ways, with information about the park; - waymarking within the park; - construction of footpaths following key desire lines (using natural stone); - interpretation about the park, including the church. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school playing fields could provide opportunity for local people to participate in active sports and recreation. At the moment, the playing fields look inaccessible to the public. This would require negotiation with the school. The parish council suggests there is already a level of community use of the school. • The woodlands owned by the Scouts and Guides are the only significant areas of woodland in the Parish. They are totally fenced off, and no public access to what look like very interesting sites.
Cardington	There is very limited children's provision and no dedicated space for young people. During site visits there was obvious demand as several school children were playing football on the green.	Better children's play facilities and young people's space could be provided on the Village Green
Carlton	None identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing amenity space would benefit from improved access. • If there were demand for sport, there would be potential to gain public access to the school playing fields.
Clapham	There is no identified accessible natural green space in the settlement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King George V playing field: whilst this is a good provision, it is still a bit of a backland site, with all of the housing backing on to it. Playbuilder grant enabled improvements in

		<p>2010 and it is also accessed through one entrance of the main road although there are a further three pedestrian entrances.</p> <p>Improvements required could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved signage from main road: there is one existing sign on the main road; - Welcome signage at entrance; - Better links to community centre; and, - Hedgerow and shrub planting to break up the open landscape, and perhaps to provide for a more natural setting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New park development: this is an excellent facility, and no doubt the park will develop with time. Consideration should be given to providing signage at key entrances and screen planting at the boundary with the bypass.
Colmworth	<p>Provision for children and young people Note; Publically accessible 5.8 ha natural green spaces (Colmworth Country Park) developed by local community in 2009/10.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big lottery funds enabled new play area to be built in 2008.
Cople	<p>For its size, the village is well provided for in terms of green space, and improvements to the current publicly accessible site could be made, although there is no provision for young people. There is however such provision in the neighbouring village of Willington.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the current recreation space rather than seek new provision. However, the space does currently have a good mixture of facility provision for the community. • Provision for young people might be considered at the main recreation ground
Dean and Shelton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within close proximity to the housing in the Village there is no publicly accessible open space, however Dalton Village Hall and playing field space is within easy reach of the Village. • There is no provision for young people. • The existing children's play space at the recreation ground needs improvement and is not well related to the major part of the Village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recreation ground at Dalton Village Hall is in need of improved maintenance and investment, particularly the children's play facility. • If available, the private spaces in the main part of the Village would be better located to offer play provision convenient to most of the Village. • Maintenance of the recreation ground needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parish council identified a need for storage and disabled access to be improved at Dalton Hall. The local school is also keen to establish after school clubs if it can raise finance for staffing. 	improving, and a management plan would be beneficial
Duloe and Staploe	None	None
Eastcotts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the size of the villages, the recreation grounds would seem to serve the needs of the community, (although see below comments.) There appears to be no allotment space. Youth provision in Cotton End would be desirable although a Playbuilder funded facility was built in 2010. Existing pitches are of poor quality and that there is still insufficient provision for children and young people. The development phases of 'New Cardington' will provide a greater range of facilities that will be available to Shortstown residents as well as those moving into the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future investment in green space should focus on improving the current provision at the recreation grounds, which would benefit from improved children's play and entrances/information board. There should be consideration of a youth facility in Cotton End.
Elstow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community is well served with green space, with a range of types within short distance of the housing. However, there appears to be no provision for young people, or allotment space. Development on the south side of the bypass is also not within easy reach of children's play facilities. The village is reasonably well placed to take advantage of proximity to larger parks and spaces within the urban area and emerging sites in the Wixams. The parish council worked with Borough Council staff to provide a Playbuilder funded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The playing fields and village hall offer a good facility, with little improvement required. The amenity space, small park and garden would benefit from improved play and young people's facilities and improved access and entrances. Consideration should be given to providing children's play facilities on the southern side of the bypass Consideration should be given to providing allotment space

	facility off Romsey Way in 2011.	
Felmersham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The playing field site is of reasonable quality, but with out of date facilities and equipment. There is no children's equipped play provision in Radwell or the west of the village, and there is no young people's space. (The parish council have suggested that there is insufficient provision for young people in terms of a MUGA, and that there are plans to create a new playing field, with pavilion and play area) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus should be on improving the playing field site, and an overall management plan is required, with particular need to improve the provision of information, upgrade playing pitches, play facilities, young people's provision and access into and within the sites. Provision of children's and young people's facilities at the playing field site would be well located to meet the needs of those living in the west of the village. There is an urgent need for children's and young people's facilities in Radwell
Great Barford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no provision for young people in the village. The existing play facilities at the recreation ground are not well located in relation to the large larger part of the village (to the south east). New developer provided play facilities and a site funded by the Big Lottery programme were provided between 2008 – 2010 (<i>dates need confirmation</i>) 	Possible improvements to young people's provision. Young people's provision could be located at the recreation ground. New children's facilities to better serve the majority of housing in the village could be located at the informal green space at south-eastern end of village
Harrold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no accessible natural green space within the village but the Harrold-Odell Country Park lies adjacent, and there are good links to the surrounding countryside via rights of way. Developer provided play sites have been built off Harewelle Way which helps to offset the previous deficiency in the east of the village. There is no dedicated space for young people although some facilities are available in the Country Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With such an excellent range of provision, the Village should focus on retaining its green space, ensuring maintenance is high and that facilities can be upgraded over time. This is particularly relevant with the new housing in the village, which will inevitably place extra demand on the existing green space. Consideration could be given to providing for the needs of young people. Playing field/ recreation ground could be a suitable venue for

		achieving these goals.
Kempston Rural	The settlements are reasonably well placed to take advantage of proximity to larger parks and spaces within the urban area, as well as Wootton to the south of Keeley Green. However, locally there appears to be a lack of children's play provision although some natural play facilities were created in the Community Forest Green Gateway sites in 2009.	Consideration should be given to additional local children's play provision
Keysoe Row	Although the new play area and recreation space will meet some of the local needs in this remote parish, there is no local playing field (as the school playing field is unavailable for community use).	In such isolated communities much might be achieved through pursuing a shared use policy with the support of the school.
Knotting and Souldrop	There is no play provision. The parish council would welcome the provision of some form of recreation ground and play facilities as there are currently none.	Play provision is required and outdoor sports provision should be kept under review taking into account the overall parish population, and limited opportunities in this part of the Borough.
Little Staughton	There is no provision for young people. The parish council has identified the need to improve young children's equipment and this will be addressed as soon as funding allows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any improvements to green space within the village should focus on the recreation ground, which would particularly benefit from improved children's play, entrances, and signage (past requests for signage have been refused by the county council and the parish councils intends to re-apply). Provision should be made for young people.
Milton Ernest	None identified	The centrally placed Church Green and the recreation ground offer the best opportunity for improving provision, where these are identified. Some improvements were carried out in 2010 as part of the Borough's Playbuilder programme.
Oakley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no allotments There is little dedicated provision for young 	The main green space site would benefit from re-design. The site would benefit from a community

	<p>people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parish council feel there is a need for a teenage MUGA facility. A sports hall is to be built at the school which will be available for the community to use. These comments are also made in the Oakley Parish Plan. 	<p>consultation process to engage local people in the future of the site. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving facilities for young people, integrating all facilities into a designed landscape with trees, shrub planting, footpaths, signage etc. <p><i>(Improvements have been made to this site since the original survey was undertaken)</i></p>
Odell	The parish council worked with Borough Council staff in 2010 to construct a play site in Harrold Odell Country Park as part of the Playbuilder programme.	
Pavenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing children's play space was improved using Playbuilder funding in 2010. Located on the eastern extremity of the village, is not convenient by foot for children living in parts of the village. There is no provision for young people. The parish council would like to see improved storage space at the village hall, and better changing accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional play provision in the main part of the village would meet the needs of those who cannot easily reach the recreation ground. Provision for young people could be made, and the recreation ground could be a suitable venue.
Podington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The village is only small, so the facility offered at the Cricket club is good. There is limited provision for young people. 	Access to natural green space could be created
Ravensden	The village is only small, with easy access to facilities within Bedford, so it is unlikely there is a great demand for significant local provision. However, there is no children's play provision within the village, and there is no provision for young people.	A location for children's play provision and young people should be found, perhaps on the recreation ground in the village.
Renhold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green End does not appear to have any children's play facilities although there is a play area in nearby Top End. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salph End: there is potential to create a Village Green with children's play facility. Further work would be required to determine a suitable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salph End has no recreation ground although this may not be a major issue due to close proximity to the Town Centre. • Facilities in the second and third phase Norse Road developments are / will be accessible to many village residents. 	<p>location for this, as much of the land appears to be in private ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green End: play space is required but should be well located for the majority of houses. The playing field would be a suitable location for young people's space.
Riseley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no provision for young adults. • The children's play area is centrally located and not easy to reach from the northern part of the Village. • Space on the existing playing field is limited. As the village expands, additional space will be required for sports pitches and other recreation. • Need to make more use of facilities at both schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional playing field space could be pursued on a community use basis at the schools. This would require the cooperation of the school and education authority. • Additional children's play space / green to be provided as part of any appropriate housing development. • A management plan for the playing field to guide future investment and use. • Improvement / extension to the village hall or construction of an additional community facility.
Roxton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The village does not appear to have children's play or young people's provision. • The quality of the ancillary accommodation on the recreation ground is not good and could be improved. <p><i>(Improvements have been made to the recreation ground since the original survey was undertaken.)</i></p>	<p>The outdoor sports facility is in need of improvement, and offers the best opportunity for any new provision for children and young people.</p>
Sharnbrook	<p>There is limited equipped provision for young people in the village though there are very active junior sections for the tennis (100 youngsters), football and cricket clubs.</p> <p>A Playbuilder funded facility was built in 2010.</p>	<p>The focus on providing good facilities at outdoor sports facility should continue, perhaps with the provision of a facility for young people.</p>
Stagsden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only current provision for children is a small play area on the southern extremity of the village. This is not well located for the northern 	<p>Best achieved through the housing/ Village Green development. It may be desirable to consider relocating an improved children's play facility at this</p>

	<p>part of the village.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no provision for young people. • The village has recently received funding for an upgraded village hall. 	<p>site, and perhaps also some form of young people's facility.</p>
Stewartby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively the sites offer a range of facilities in Stewartby, but at the time of the survey they were all rather run down and in real need of updating and improving. The outdoor sports facility lacks facilities, and the children's play area is old and run down (note – since replaced by Playbuilder funded facility).. There is a large central area of amenity open space. There is no young people's space. • There is a lack of natural space within the Village, although Marston Vale Millennium Country Park is within easy reach to the south. 	<p>With the considerable amount of new housing planned for the village there will be considerable additional pressure and demands placed on the existing open spaces. The housing offers a good opportunity to gain funding to improve the open spaces. The priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the outdoor sports facility. There are opportunities for improved changing, hard surfaced sports areas, facilities for young people, etc. A comprehensive master plan to improve and update the sports field is being developed as part of the Stewartby Park plans.. - The central informal green space site is quite open in nature and is located in a prominent position in the village. The site could have more of a Village Green feel. A Playbuilder funded play area was provided in 2011 but there may still be potential for features such as improved habitat for wildlife, trees shrubs, etc.
Stevington	<p>The existing play area is not well located to serve the eastern half of the village, and there is no provision for young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus should be on maintaining and upgrading the current playing field facility. The parish council worked with Borough Council staff in 2010 to provide improved play facilities as part of the Playbuilder programme. It would be an appropriate location for young people's provision. This site would benefit from a management plan to guide future management and provision.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to provide a children's play facility to meet the needs of the eastern half of the Village should be explored.
Swineshead	Children's and young people's space	There is a need for children's and young people's space in this isolated settlement.
Thurleigh	For the size of the village, the playing field would seem to offer adequate provision for the community, although there is no young people's provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus should be on maintaining and upgrading the current playing field facility. This site would benefit from a management plan to guide future management and provision. • Young people's space would be desirable. The Parish Council has noted (April 07) that a shelter for older children is being planned and will be located in the playing field
Turvey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing children's play facility is not easily accessed from the southern half of the village. • There is no provision for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision should be made for young people, and the best location for this might be the recreation ground. • Additional children's play facilities should be provided to better meet the needs of the southern half of the village.
Wilden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no recreation ground, children's or young people's space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is demand for provision of recreational facilities, consideration should be given to creating a small playing field/ village green, with a small children's play facility. • Provision should also be made for young people.
Willington	For the size of the village, there is as good mix of open spaces, the main gap would be facilities for young people.	The focus should be on improving the village recreation ground, which would benefit from a management plan. Key issues are entrances, provision of information, internal access and management of scrubland. The parish council worked with Borough Council staff in 2011 to provide improved play facilities as part of the Playbuilder

		programme but there is still limited provision for young people. In 2012 the parish council is planning to have a multi use games area built.
Wilstead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilities within the village are somewhat disjointed with a range of recently added facilities in the south-west part of the village, a low key playing field on one site and a low key children's play area on another site. Neither of the latter facilities offers anything other than a single purpose use, with limited audience. • The existing children's playgrounds or in the south west of the village are not easy to reach from the eastern strand of the village. • The parish council feels that the Jubilee Playing Field could provide for facilities other than football. It also considered that there should be scope to make better use of the lower school's facilities and these were improved as part of the Borough's Playbuilder programme in 2011. • The village residents are well placed to access the emerging greenspaces and facilities at the Wixams. These could include a new woodland site in the Duck End area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the village warrants the provision of a larger park, offering a range of facilities and experiences for a wider clientele. The current location of the football pitch and play facilities don't really offer enough space, so there is potential to create a new park in a new location. The recent development on the western edge of the village is not the best location to serve the entire village in terms of children's play provision. • Improvements to the young people's provision are desirable and have been partly addressed by the provision of a MUGA in the south west corner of the village. The existing playing field would be a good location for further improvements (linked to the shelter). • Consideration should be given to providing children's play facilities better serving the eastern part of the village.
Wootton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There does not appear to be dedicated young people's provision (although the small synthetic pitch will obviously be used by this age group.) • At the time of the survey the large facility at the playing field/ recreation ground was rather run down. There is also a large area of land allocated for housing, and new sports provision is included in the masterplans for both areas of this allocation. • The parish council has identified various problems including insufficient playing pitch space; issues with the maintenance, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outdoor sports facility is in need of improved maintenance and management, although there are a good range of facilities, they are poorly laid out within the site and poorly maintained. This site would benefit from the development of a management plan to guide future investment. Contributions from the housing development should be directed towards this site if appropriate. • Dedicated provision for young people should be considered. • Additional children's play provision to better

	requirements for a refurbished village hall, and improved play facilities.	<p>serve the northern half of the existing Village should be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New space and facilities within the major housing sites should be fully planned and coordinated with existing provision.
Wymington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no provision for young people within the village. This is the reason behind the wish to see greater use of the school playing field. • The (linear) northern part of the village which connects Wymington to neighbouring Rushden (outside the Borough), is not well served by children's play provision in the village. • There is no acknowledged playing field with outdoor sports provision. • The parish council has identified a need for a proper recreation ground with a football pitch. It also desires some provision for young people. It would like to see the local school made more available for community use. 	There is a need for children's play provision to better meet the needs of the northern part of the village.
Yielden (incl Melchbourne)	There is no young people's space.	Improved provision for children and young people.

**Appendix E:
Rolling Action Plan (May 2012)**

NB: Unless specified to the contrary, the actions listed below will be led by the Borough Council and focused on the Council's own green space assets

Key:

N – No operational budget resource implications (excluding staff time)

A – Available resources from within existing operational budgets

Ex – Requires extra budget resource to be secured from external funding sources (eg. Section 106 Agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy, Landfill Tax, Lottery, Sport England, town and parish councils and business sponsorship)

[1] References relate to the corresponding Green Space Strategy objective(s) reference which the action helps to deliver against.

Ref.	Actions	Objectives [1]	Timescale	Resources	Lead officer(s)
GSS 1.	To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space				
1.	Monitor Anti-social Behaviour reports relating to publicly accessible green space and use evidence to target remedial action	1.1	Quarterly	N	Sally Flint
2.	Undertake programme of enviro-crime education and enforcement activity on targeted publicly accessible green spaces	1.1	Quarterly	A	Sally Flint

3.	Undertake rolling programme of green space audits using CABE Space methodology ²² to inform management priorities, plans and schedules (actions 13 and 14 below) on following sites: a) Bedford, Addison Howard and Russell (Longholme Lake and Mill Meadows) Parks, Elstow Brook linear park, Priory and Harrold-Odell Country Parks, Hillgrounds b) Allen, Mowsbury and Jubilee Parks and St Mary's Gardens c) Putnoe Parks, Southfields, Goldington Green and Chiltern Avenue Green	1.2, 1.3	2012/13 2013/14 2014/15	N	Ed Burnett/ Jacky Fraser
4.	Review litter picking/ waste bin emptying service standards and adopt improvements in service efficiency/ effectiveness	1.3	2012/13	N	Clive Betts
5.	Install and monitor use of dual waste bins in following parks: Bedford, Addison Howard, Jubilee, Russell (Longholme Lake and Mill Meadows), Mowsbury, Goldington Green, Hillgrounds and Priory and Harrold-Odell Country Parks	1.3	2012/13	A	Jacky Fraser/ Ed Burnett
6.	Retain Green Flag award for following green spaces: Bedford and Addison Howard Park and Priory and Harrold-Odell Country Parks	1.3	Annual	A	Simon Fisher/ Clive Betts
7.	Secure Green Flag award for Russell Park (incl Longholme Lake and Mill Meadows)	1.3	2013/14	A	Simon Fisher/ Clive Betts
GSS 2.	To engage green space providers/ managers, local residents and the wider community in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space				
8.	Undertake annual survey of community satisfaction of publicly accessible green space and use results to inform future planning and management	2.1	Annual	N	Simon Fisher
9.	Support establishment of 'Friends Groups' for following sites: Putnoe Woods and Mowsbury Hill Fort, Bedford Park, Browns Wood and Priory Country Park	2.2	2012-2014	N	Jacky Fraser/ Ed Burnett
10.	Organise, promote and deliver volunteer task programme across range of publicly accessible green spaces	2.2	Annual	A	Jacky Fraser/ Ed Burnett/
11.	Meet with other publicly accessible green space providers and managers to explore scope of them adopting the strategic vision, aims	2.3	2012/13	N	Joel Carré

²² CABE (2006), *Green Space Strategies: A Good Practice Guide, Annex 2, p35*

	and objectives and working with the Borough Council in taking them forward through shared actions				
12.	Investigate interest in establishing a publicly accessible green space manager's network for sharing information, good practice and mutual support and maximising efficiencies/ economies	2.3	2012/13	N	Joel Carré
14.	Review and implement management plans (including priority projects/ recommendations) for following sites: Bedford and Addison Howard Park and Priory and Harrold-Odell Country Parks	2.3, 4.2, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 8.1, 8.2	2012/13	Planning: N Delivery: A/ Ex	Jacky Fraser/ Ed Burnett
15.	Develop and implement management plans (including priority projects/ recommendations) for following sites: a) Russell Park (including Longholme Lake and Mill Meadows) and Hillgrounds (including Queen's Park riverside) b) Allen and Jubilee Parks and St Mary's Gardens c) Mowsbury Park and Goldington Green d) Putnoe Park and Southfields e) Foster Hill Road Cemetery (linked with Bedford Park and Hill Rise) and Berry Farm	2.3, 4.2, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 8.1, 8.2	2012/13 2013/14 2014/15 2015/16 2016/17	Planning: N Delivery: A/ Ex	Simon Fisher/ Clive Betts Mike Day (Foster Hill Cemetery)/ Nigel Faircloth (Berry Farm)
16.	Develop and implement management schedules (including priority projects/ recommendations) for all other Borough Council green spaces not covered by a management plan	2.3, 4.2, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 8.1, 8.2	2012/13	N	Simon Fisher/ Clive Betts
17.	Develop and implement management plans (including priority projects/ recommendations) for following publicly accessible woodlands: Brown's Wood, Yelnow New Wood, Clapham Park Wood, Judges Spinney and Putnoe Wood.	2.3, 4.2, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 8.1, 8.2	2012-14	A	Ed Burnett
18.	Establish grounds maintenance/ parks management apprenticeship scheme	2.4	2013/14	A	Clive Betts/ Simon Fisher
19.	Include programme of practical skills development training courses within wider volunteering programme (2.2)	2.4	2013/14	N	Clive Betts/ Simon Fisher
20.	Develop Bedford River Valley Park masterplan and commence delivery of recommendations/ priority projects	2.3, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 8.1, 8.2	2012/13 2012-2015	Planning: Ex Delivery: A/ Ex	Joel Carré Simon Fisher
GSS 3.	To protect publicly accessible green space from inappropriate development and ensure it meets the needs of the community both now and in the future				

21.	Undertake a strategic review of Borough Council green spaces to identify those sites considered to be redundant to need and agree a strategy for their disposal or alternative management arrangements	3.3	2013/14	N	Joel Carré
22.	Adopt the publicly accessible green space standards derived from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for Bedford Borough as part of Local Development Framework	3.4	2013	N	Gill Cowie
23.	Review areas of deficiency/ recommended actions identified in Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study: Part 2 – Village Profiles (2007) (see appendix D above) and agree updated actions in consultation with parish councils for inclusion in this Green Space Strategy rolling action plan	3.5	2013/14	N	Simon Fisher/ Sonia Gallaher
GSS 4.	To encourage and support active and healthy life-styles associated with the use of publicly accessible green space				
24.	Develop and implement Bedford Borough Playing Pitch Strategy ²³ and associated priority projects/ recommendations	4.1	2012/13	Planning: N Delivery: A/ Ex	Simon Fisher/ Sonia Gallaher
25.	Identify Borough Council green space facilities which are under-performing in terms of cost v benefit analysis and develop and pursue strategies to address this	4.1, 4.2	2013/14	N	Joel Carré
26.	Research and trial innovative activities, equipment and facilities, including adult outdoor multi-gym and Tai Chi, at key green space locations	4.2, 4.3	2012-14	A/ Ex	Simon Fisher
27.	Assess provision/ need for skate/ BMX/ MUGA facilities at key green space locations and implement recommendations	4.2, 4.3	2012-14	A/ Ex	Simon Fisher
28.	Assess demand for sand sport facility and associated location options and implement recommendations	4.2, 4.3	2013/14	A	Simon Fisher
29.	Review community food growing/ allotment provision and develop plans to address identified areas of need as part of Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	4.2	2012/13	A/ Ex	Sonia Gallaher/ Alan Dennis
30.	Review Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) provision to identify schedule of costed facility improvements	4.2	2012/13	N	Simon Fisher

²³ Bedford Borough Council (2012), *Bedford Borough Playing Pitch Strategy*

GSS 5.	To maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport links to/ from publicly accessible green spaces				
31.	Develop and implement the Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement Plan ²⁴	5.1, 5.2, 5.3	2012/13	Planning: N Delivery: A/ Ex	Phill Fox
32.	Pursue opportunities to develop realigned route for National Cycle Network Route 51 between Bedford and Marston Moretaine Millennium Country Park	5.1, 5.3	2012-2015	Ex	Joel Carré
33.	Pursue opportunities to develop and promote Bedford Green Wheel	5.1, 5.3	2012-2015	Ex	Simon Fisher
GSS 6.	To protect and enhance the ecological, geological, historical and landscape value of public green spaces				
34.	Initiate survey/ monitoring programme for biodiversity interest associated with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/ County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Roadside Verge Nature Reserves	2.3, 6.1, 6.2	2012/13	N	Ed Burnett
35.	Identify and implement low cost or cost saving measures which deliver a net gain in biodiversity, including mowing regimes, pictorial meadows, native species use	2.3, 6.1, 6.2, 8.2	2012/13	A	Simon Fisher/ Clive Betts
36.	Develop and implement heritage restoration projects for: a) Addison Howard Park b) Bedford Park	2.3, 6.3	2012-14 2012-14	A/ Ex	Simon Fisher
37.	Develop a public tree strategy and associated planting plan	2.3, 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6	2013/14	N	Ajay Joshi
GSS 7.	To maximise community use, understanding and enjoyment of publicly accessible green space				
38.	Develop a marketing plan for parks and green spaces, encompassing both generic and site specific actions	7.1, 7.2	2012/13	N	Joel Carré
39.	Develop and promote a coordinated programme of events and activities in accordance with marketing strategy (36.)	7.1, 7.2	2013/14	A	Simon Fisher

²⁴ Bedford Borough Council (2012), *Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2012-17*

40.	Develop and implement a consistent approach to public green space signage, information and interpretation	7.1, 7.2	2013/14	A/ Ex	Simon Fisher
GSS 8.	To develop and manage publicly accessible green spaces in a sustainable way that allows them to maximise their resilience to and ability to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate; and to minimise their impact on the use of natural resources				
41.	Develop and implement an environmental management system (EMS) for continuous improvement in environmental performance of parks and green space service	8.1, 8.2	2013/14	A	Clive Betts/ Simon Fisher
42.	Research and develop rainwater harvesting facilities associated with green space estate	8.1, 8.2	2012/13	A/ Ex	Clive Betts/ Ed Burnett
GSS 9.	To maximise funding and investment opportunities associated with publicly accessible green space				
43.	Develop and commence implementation of an affordable rolling annual green space investment programme	2.3, 3.3, 9.1	2012/13 2013-15	Planning: N Delivery: A/ Ex	Joel Carré
44.	Develop robust policy on developer contributions for publicly accessible green space provision and management within Open Space SPD	9.1	2012/13	N	Simon Fisher/ Sonia Gallaher
45.	Investigate and review alternative models for funding development and management of Borough Council parks and green spaces	9.2	2013/14	N	Joel Carré