

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 adoption of the Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 – 2021 subject to the recommended amendments arising from the public consultation responses received, as set out in the supporting Consultation Report (January 2013)

2. Date of decision

15th February 2013

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 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 delivery of the strategy will be covered from within existing budgets; or, as otherwise stated, from external funding bids where successful.

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 
 Signed  Date 15/2/13
 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: 19th February 2013
 Date decision can be implemented if not called in: ... 27th February 2013

For publication

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

Report by: Assistant Director, Environment and Communities

Date: January 2013

Subject: 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 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 In July 2012, the Council published a Consultation Draft Green Space Strategy to provide a long-term vision and set of supporting aims, objectives and delivery actions for the provision of good quality, inspirational publicly accessible green space across the Borough over the period 2012-21. The draft Strategy was submitted for public consultation over a 10 week period, 1 August -14 October 2012. This report outlines the public consultation process followed, the representations received and the Council's proposed responses, including any recommended amendments to the Strategy, prior to its final adoption.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Portfolio Holder considers and, if satisfied, approves the adoption of the Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 – 2021 subject to the recommended amendments arising from the public consultation responses received, as set out in the supporting Consultation Report (January 2013)**

3. Reasons For Recommendations

The production of a Green Space Strategy (GSS) for the Borough is a requirement of 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 GSS’s rolling action plan (appendix E) and associated appendices, C and D. The consultation process for the draft Strategy is now complete and the Council needs to agree the necessary amendments prior to the document’s final adoption.

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 folder 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.
- 4.7 There are no legal issues arising from the recommended amendments to the GSS, as set out in appendix 2 of this report.

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)

4.4 There are no policy issues arising from the recommended amendments to the GSS, as set out in appendix 2 of this report.

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 GSS's rolling action plan.

4.6 There are **no additional resource implications** arising from the proposed amendments to the GSS, as set out in appendix 2 of this report.

Risk Implications

4.7 Any failure to produce and adopt the GSS will leave the current 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 Council to secure the necessary developer contributions towards both on 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 and 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, by cycle) to attractive, affordable, 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 associated nature conservation, historic environment and landscape value.

Equalities Impact

4.10 An Equalities Assessment (EA) to Level 1 has been undertaken to ensure that the GSS satisfies the legal obligations required of the

Council (Appendix 3). This Assessment considered 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

4.11 The EA concluded that the GSS is based on the inclusive principle of access for all and so has a positive impact on equality, in terms of all the 'protected groups'. The EA goes on to acknowledge that the Council's ability to follow the access for all principle in all cases will be constrained to varying degrees by issues of legislation, land ownership/ management practice, landscape suitability (ie. topography) and available resources.

5. Details

5.1 The following section outlines the public consultation process undertaken on the Consultation Draft GSS 2012-21 (appendix 1), summarises the responses received and, for each one, the Council's response and any associated recommended amendments. For further details of the recommended amendments to the Strategy arising from the public consultation process please refer to section 3 of the full report in appendix 2.

5.3 Public Consultation

5.3.1 Following Portfolio Holder approval of the Consultation Draft GSS in May 2012, the Council embarked on a 10 week period of public consultation to seek public and other stakeholder views between the period 1 August to 14 October 2012. The methods of consultation used included direct mailing to key stakeholders (e.g. other green space providers, user groups, government agencies, local town/ parish and urban community councils); promotional displays in Council libraries and other public outlets and use of social media to share information and gather responses. Translation and inclusive media were made available upon request [were there any requests – if so is it worth stating this?]. Feedback and comments were captured through the receipt of both online and hard copy response forms.

5.3.2 The consultation representations were analysed, in terms of their validity, and the results were used to inform the Council's response and any recommended amendments to the draft GSS. A copy of the

consultation report, detailing both the attributable (organisational only) and non-attributable (private individuals) consultee responses and the Council's response to each of these, including any recommended amendments is included in Appendix 2.

5.3.3 In summary, the consultation process generated a total of 58 responses, of which 45 came via the response form (30 online/ 15 hard copy) and 13 via email. Responses were received from individuals including, residents, park users and dog walkers and from the following organisations:

- Bedford and District Sunday Football League
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum
- Brickhill Parish Council
- Clapham Parish Council
- Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire
- Eastcotts Parish Council
- English Heritage
- Forestry Commission
- Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort
- Natural England
- Oakley Parish Council
- Pavenham Parish Council
- Sport England
- Wilshamstead Parish Council

5.3.4 The headline results from the consultation responses show that a very significant majority of respondents either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with each of the Strategy's 9 aims. The aim with by far the highest total of 'Strongly Agreed' responses was 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), which had a 76% response rate. The second highest total went to GSS1 (To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space) with 59%. The remaining 7 aims attracted between 34% and 48% response rates.

5.3.5 Based on the Council's response to all the consultation comments received, the only recommended amendments required to the draft GSS relate to a small number of relatively minor factual corrections. To aid referencing, these recommended amendments are shown in bold text in Appendix 2.

5.3.6 Subject to the approval of this report, the draft GSS will be amended as per the recommendations in appendix 2 and published as an adopted strategy. The adopted strategy, together with the supporting full consultation report (appendix 2), will be made publicly available as a '.pdf' document on the Council website and a limited number of printed

copies will also be produced, with hard copies available at Borough Hall Reception and all public libraries.

6. Summary Of Consultations And Outcome

6.1 The following parties were consulted on the Consultation Draft GSS 2012-21

- Internal: Borough Members, Director of Environment and Sustainable Communities, Assistant Director Environment and Communities, Head of Communities and Heads of Service, including Leisure and Culture, Adult, Children and Youth, Property, Planning, Highways and Economic Development
- External: Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum, Bedford Diversity Network, Bedford Group of Drainage Boards, Bedford Race Equality Centre, Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), Central Bedfordshire Council, English Heritage, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Highways Agency, Marston Vale Trust, Milton Keynes Council, Natural England, National Farmers Union (NFU), NHS Bedfordshire, parish/ town/ urban community councils, Sport England, Wildlife Trust

6.2 The outcome of these consultations, including that of the wider public, is detailed in the report in appendix 2.

7. Ward Councillor Views

7.1 The GSS will be delivered across Bedford Borough.

Report Contact Officer:	Joel Carré, Head of Communities, tel: 01234 718322 (internal: 47322)
File Reference:	GSS/030113
Minutes	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 - 2021 (Public Consultation Draft, July 2012) Appendix 2 – Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012 - 2021 (Public Consultation Draft, July 2012): Report on Public Consultation Results and Council Response (January 2013)

Appendix 3 - Borough of Bedford Green
Space Strategy 2012 – 2021: Level 1 EIA
and Action Plan

A copy of the Appendices are available on the Borough Council website
www.bedford.gov.uk

Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy

2012 - 2021



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The 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 publicly accessible green space which meets 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.

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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 children enjoying a play area, to teenagers having a kick around, to older persons taking a stroll with friends – there is something for everyone. They also serve as a venue for 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 this strategy, we hope that, over time, other green space providers, 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 our community both now and in the future.

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.

High quality publicly accessible green space delivers a range of important social, environmental and economic benefits to local communities. Socially, such green space 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 o 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

The following strategy has been produced by Bedford Borough Council to provide 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.

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.

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: 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).

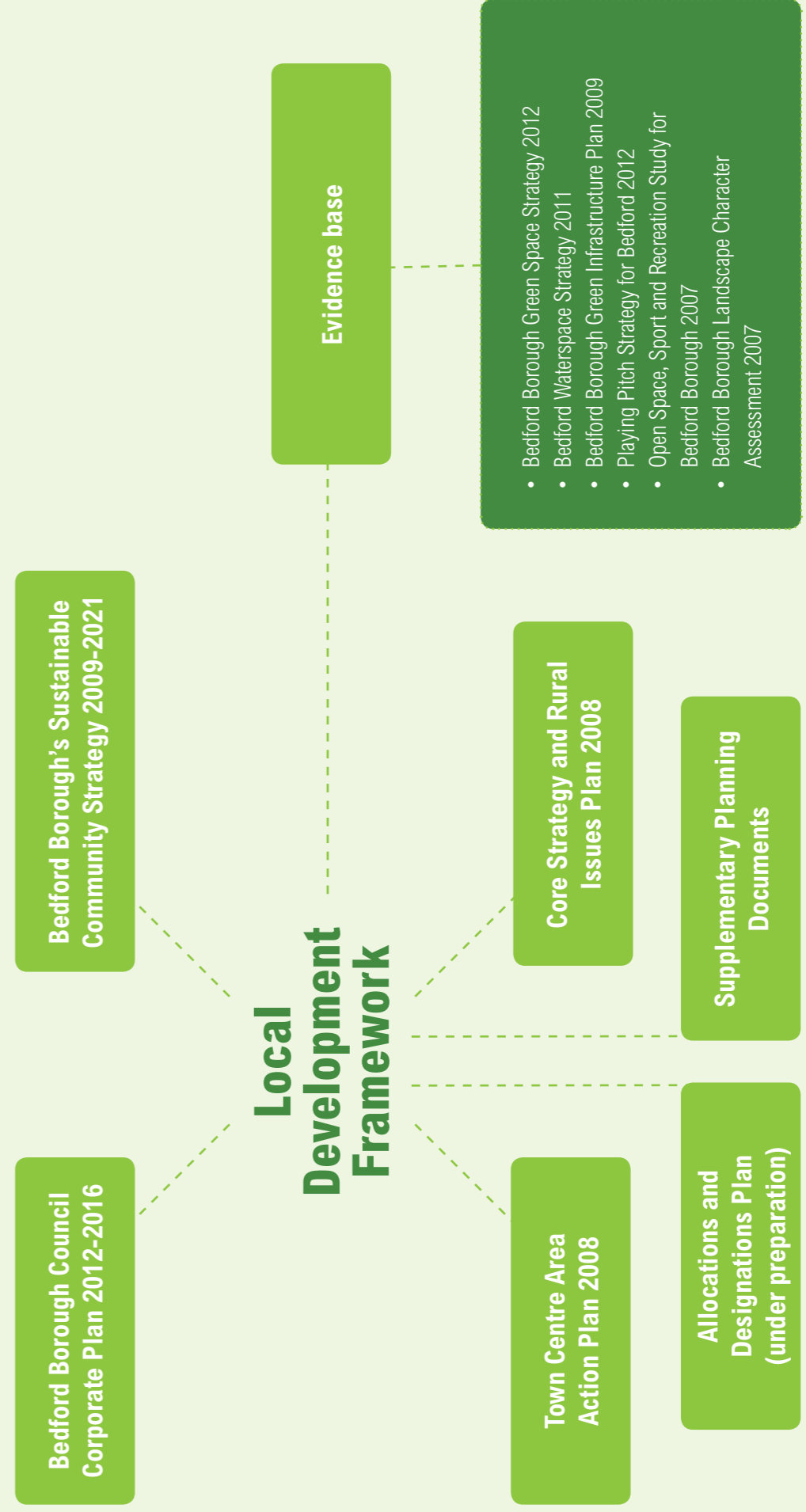


The strategy covers the period 2012-2021 and will be reviewed every 5 years to ensure it is kept current, in terms of changes in public policy, community need, development opportunity and available resources. The strategy will be delivered through a rolling action plan which will be reviewed and updated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

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 infrastructure 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).

Borough of Bedford **Green Space Strategy**

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

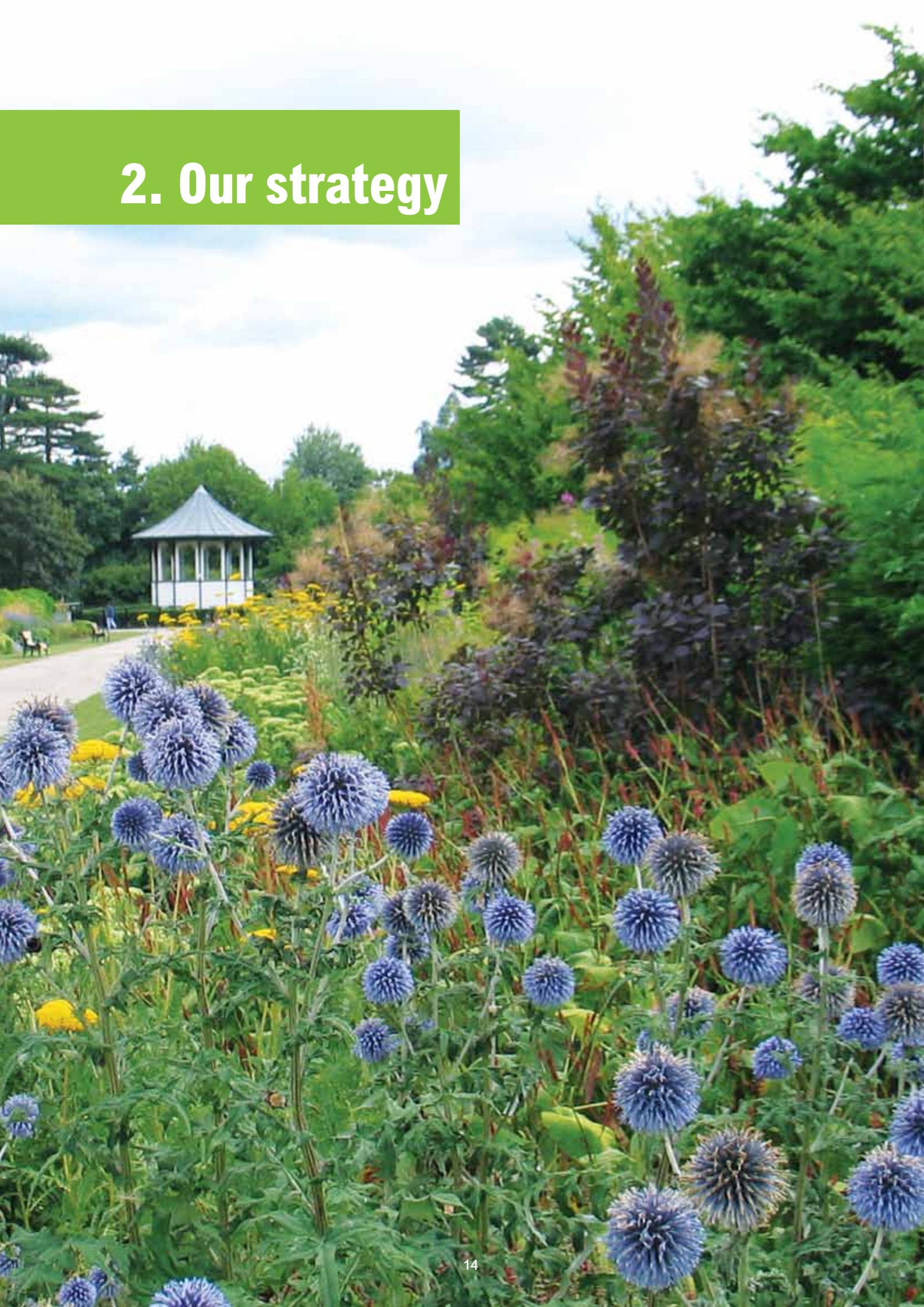
There is also a growing body of robust research, which identifies that good quality publicly accessible green space brings significant benefits to peoples' physical and mental health in particular in terms of reducing obesity, decreasing the risk of coronary heart disease and strokes and improvements 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 provision. 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 annum. 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.
- The evaporation from a large tree is estimated to produce the cooling effect of 10 room-sized air-conditioners.
- Air under a tree's canopy can be as much as 5-10°C cooler compared to full sun.
- 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.

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 pride in their local area if their public green spaces are high quality and well managed. 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 The 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 publicly accessible green space which meets 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.

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 2010:** 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.’

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.’

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.’

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.’

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.’

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’ . These investment priorities are 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:** 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.

4. Spatial planning context



4.1 Population profile

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.

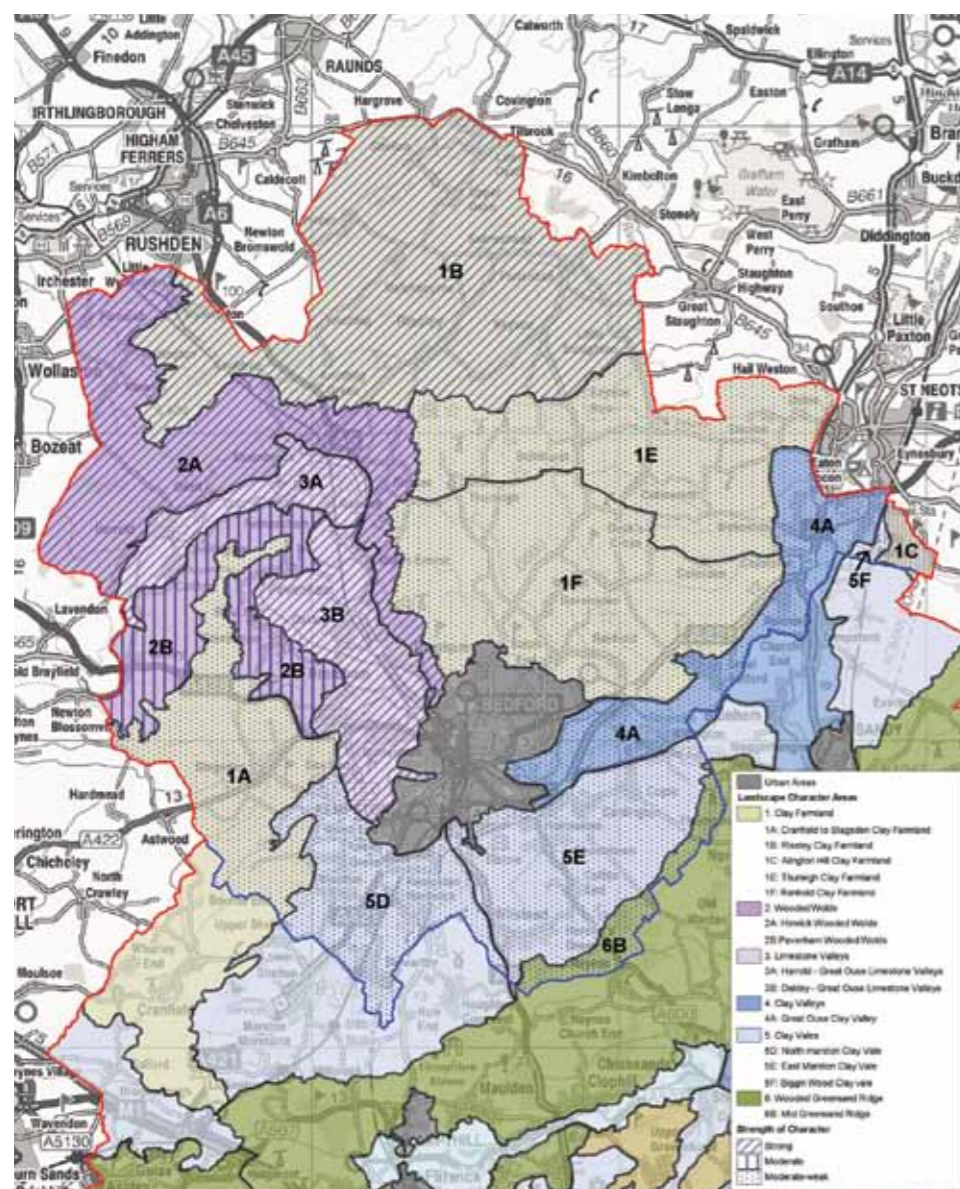
- Bedford is one of the most cosmopolitan boroughs in the country with residents from 80+ different countries living in the area
- Black and ethnic minority (BME) groups formed 19.2% of the Borough population compared to 13% nationally, however, Office of National Statistics estimates suggest this increased 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

A 'district' level Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was completed for Bedford Borough in 2007. This identified 14 distinctive landscape character areas (LCAs) within the framework of six broad generic landscape types described in the County Landscape Assessment, 2003. 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 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.

4.3.3 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.

4.3 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.

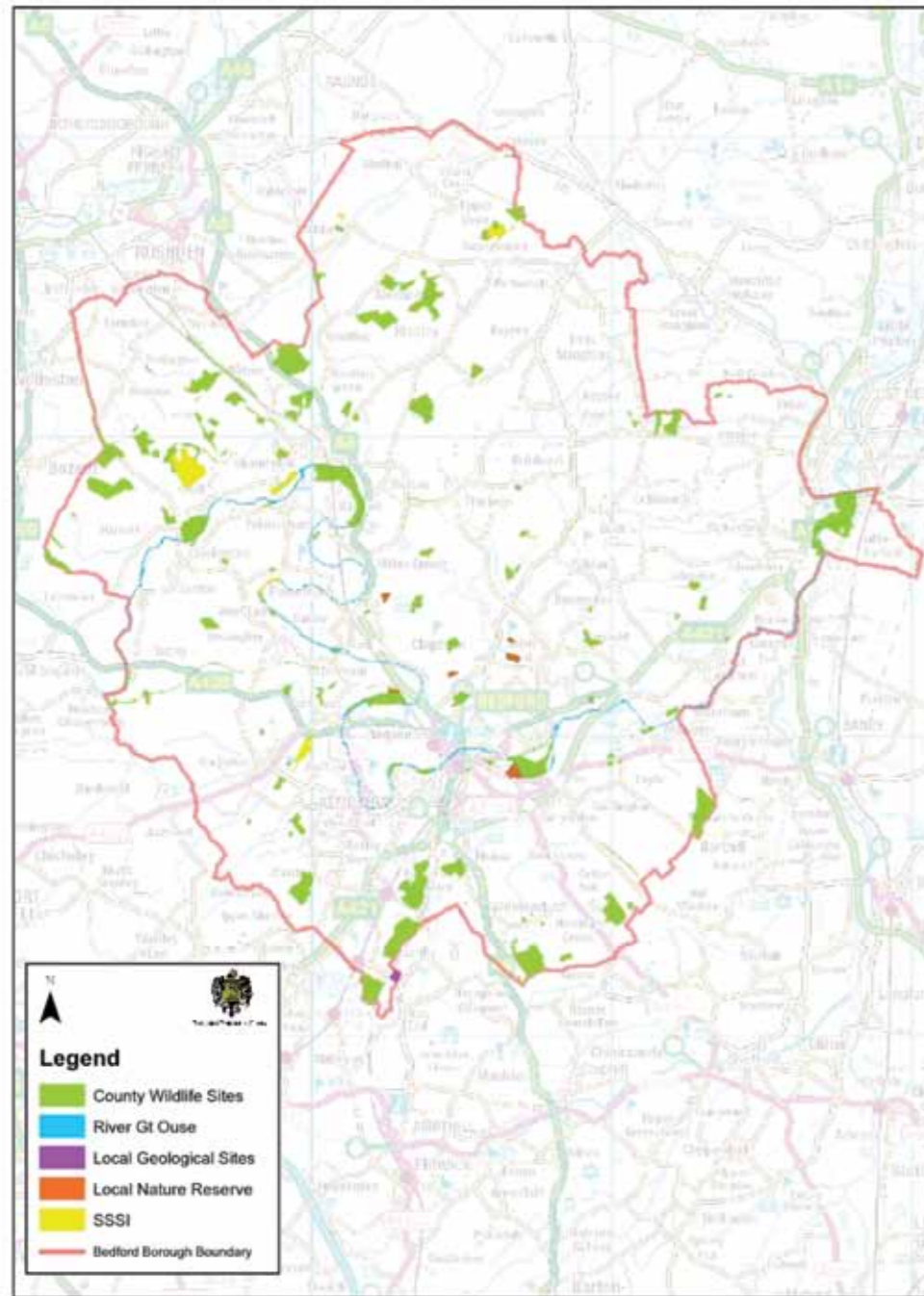
4.3.1 Although many of these sites include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens or are located within Conservation Areas, the importance of the historic environment extends beyond individual designated sites to their spatial context and inter-relationships. A more comprehensive 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.

4.4 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.

Figure 6: Designated ecological and geological sites

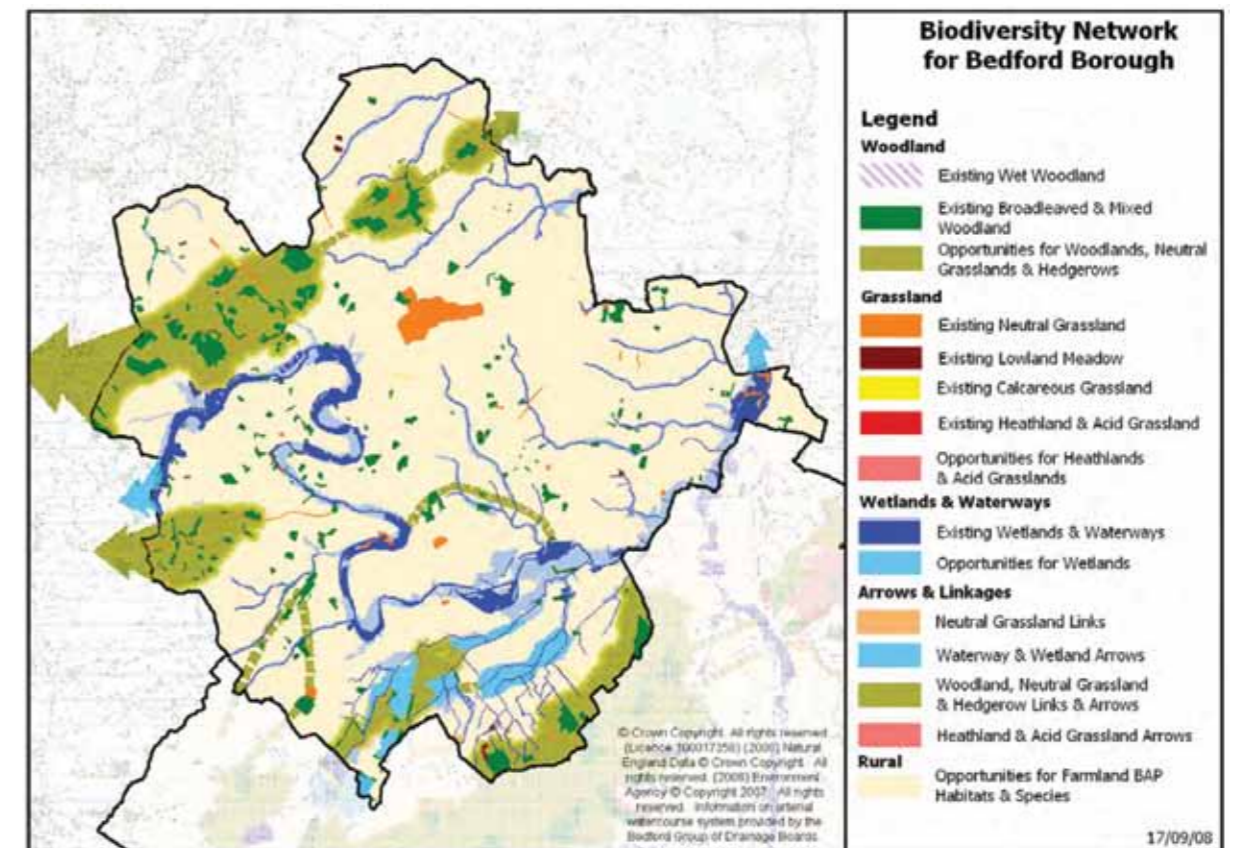


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4.4.2 In addition to site specific activity, there is a growing recognition that to maximise sustainability this needs to be done on a larger, more strategic landscape scale. In 2005/6 the Biodiversity Forum for Bedfordshire and Luton produced Rebuilding 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



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4.5 Ecosystem services

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

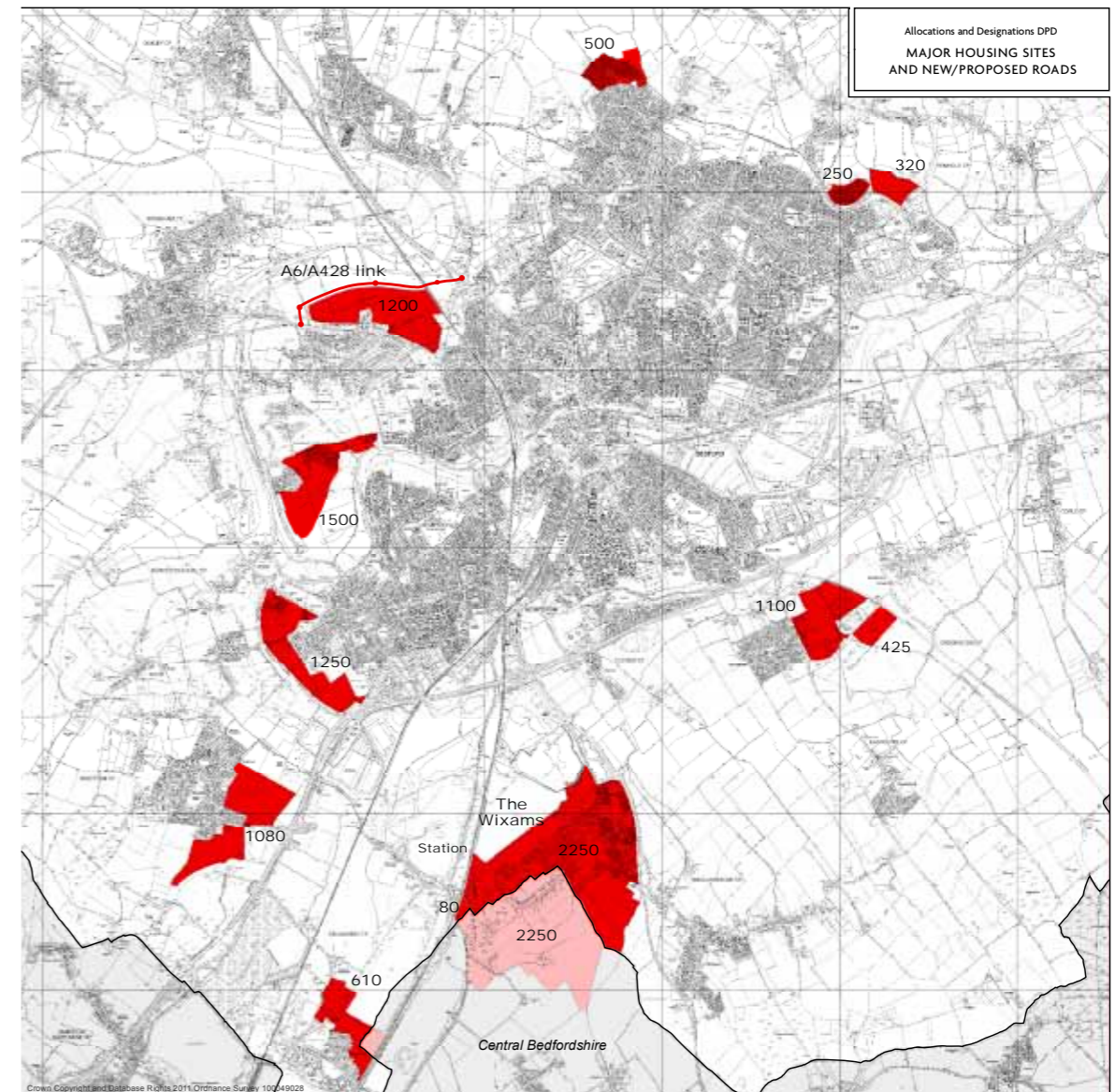
- Provisioning services: such as food, timber, energy crops and medicines.
- Regulating services: such as water purification, flood management, air quality maintenance and climate regulation.
- Cultural services: non-material benefits such as education, health and wellbeing.
- Supporting services: functions 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 eco system 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.

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 report 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 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 space (for pre-teens) - Provision for young people (13-17 years)	0.25ha per 1000 people (divided as appropriate between the pre-teen age group and young people.)
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 programme; and in shaping the development of this green space strategy's initial rolling action plan (appendix E) and supporting appendices (C and D).

Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy

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	Bedford Borough Council: 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 Note: Marston Vale Millennium Country Park (250ha) in Marston Moretaine is just outside Bedford Borough, but is easily accessible by car for majority of local population.	240ha 1.12ha per 1000 people (With exception of the two Country Parks all sites located within Bedford/Kempston urban area)	'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. 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.	15 mins (1000 metres straight line for walking).	0.5ha per 1000 people	Areas of under-provision: Queens Park Kempston South Cauldwell wards. 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. With exception of the two Country Parks, this type of provision has always been in urban areas

Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy

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	Bedford Borough Council: Various including, Hillgrounds riverside, Putnoe Woods, Fenlake Meadows, Browns Wood, Dog Field, Berry Farm, Clapham Park Wood Marston Vale Trust: Various including Bedford's Green Gateway 'cluster', Shocott Spring, Grange Estate at Willington (c242ha) The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, 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 Woodland Trust: own and manage four woodland sites (67.5ha)	470ha 3.48ha per 1000 people	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. Access routes and recreational paces should be clearly marked with well maintained and appropriate facilities provided in an unobtrusive manner.'	5 mins (300 metres straight line for walking)	0.5 ha per 1000 people Ideally, principal sites should be at least 1 ha in size, and preferably linked or adjacent to other accessible natural green space.	Areas of under-provision: Putnoe Goldington De Parys Kempston South Newnham Brickhill Harpur Castle Cauldwell Kingsbrook Note. This doesn't reflect recent provision associated with Norse Road 2/ Woodlands Park developments

Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy

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).

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Green space type	Existing sites	Existing provision	Recommended qualitative standard	Recommended accessibility standard	Recommended quantitative standard	Green space provision issues arising from standards
Allotments	Statutory sites: Goldington Field, off Barkers Lane Haynes Field, off Barkers Lane Mile Road Temporary sites: Allen Park, off Old Ford End Road Newnham Avenue. Various town and parish councils provide sites for residents	47.68ha 0.32ha per 1000 people (35.47ha located in urban area of which 20.08ha managed by Borough Council). (0.36 ha per 1000 people)	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.	15 mins (1000 metres straight walk line)	0.35ha per 1000	Areas of under-provision: Putnoe Parts of Goldington Harpur/ Castle/ De Parys conjunction

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.

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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 international water sports lake, floodplain forest and network of recreational trails. The Borough Council is the principal landowner.		Enabling development being proposed as part of Allocation and Designations Plan to help fund provision of the water sports lake and associated BRVP infrastructure	Ongoing (as funds/ opportunities become available, incl enabling development)

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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-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.	Over 120 ha of green space with wildlife, sports, recreation and play interests. Notable features include an artificial turf sports facility, a network of water features and high quality play sites.	All on site facilities provided through s106 agreement. A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	Ongoing to early 2020's.

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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 new BGW link providing good access from the south and east. The latter will include a number of new sports pitches and play facilities.	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

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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 include further informal greenspaces, play facilities and landscape features	A commuted sum will be payable to the managing organisation.	Completion dates to be confirmed.

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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 their 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)
National Cycle Network route 51 (NCN51)	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.	N/A	Some on site s106 contributions to south west of Bedford e.g. Fields Road, Wootton	Ongoing (as funds/ opportunities become available)

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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 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"> Natural England: 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. Environment Agency: 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. Forestry Commission: 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: - Priory Country Park - Harrold-Odell Country Park - Bedford Park
	Pride in Bedford: - Rivercare - Bulb planting - Community litter picks
	Street Champions: - litter picks - reporting problems
	Other: - In Bloom - Dog Watch
Marston Vale Trust	Friends of the Forest of Marston Vale Forest Volunteers
Wildlife Trust BCNP	Volunteering activity 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

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
- 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 transport and machinery repairs	Financial accounts
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:

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Bedford MK41 9DJ



01234 364213

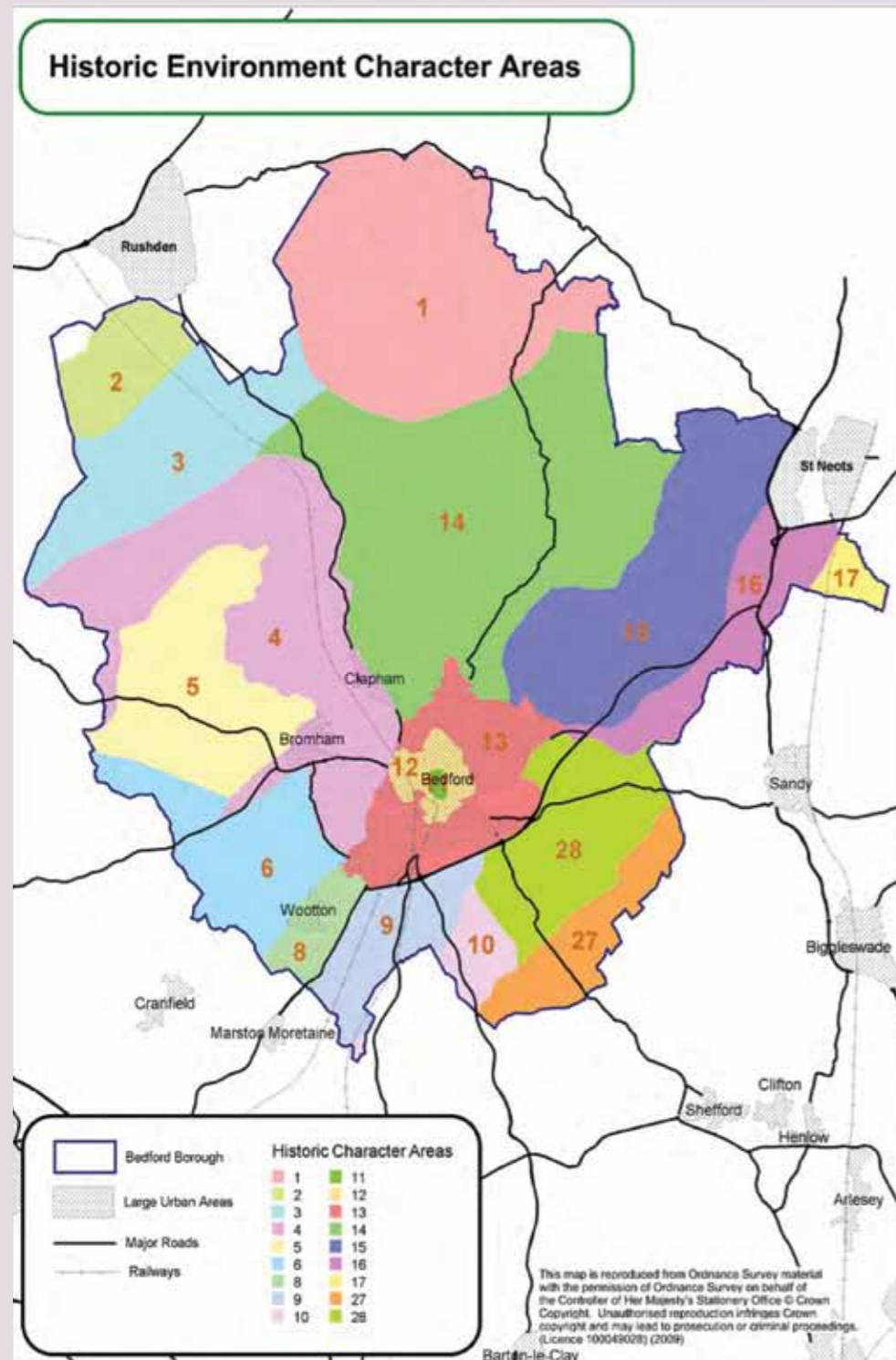


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Appendix A: Bedford Borough Historic Environment Character Areas

Figure 16: Historic Environment Character Areas

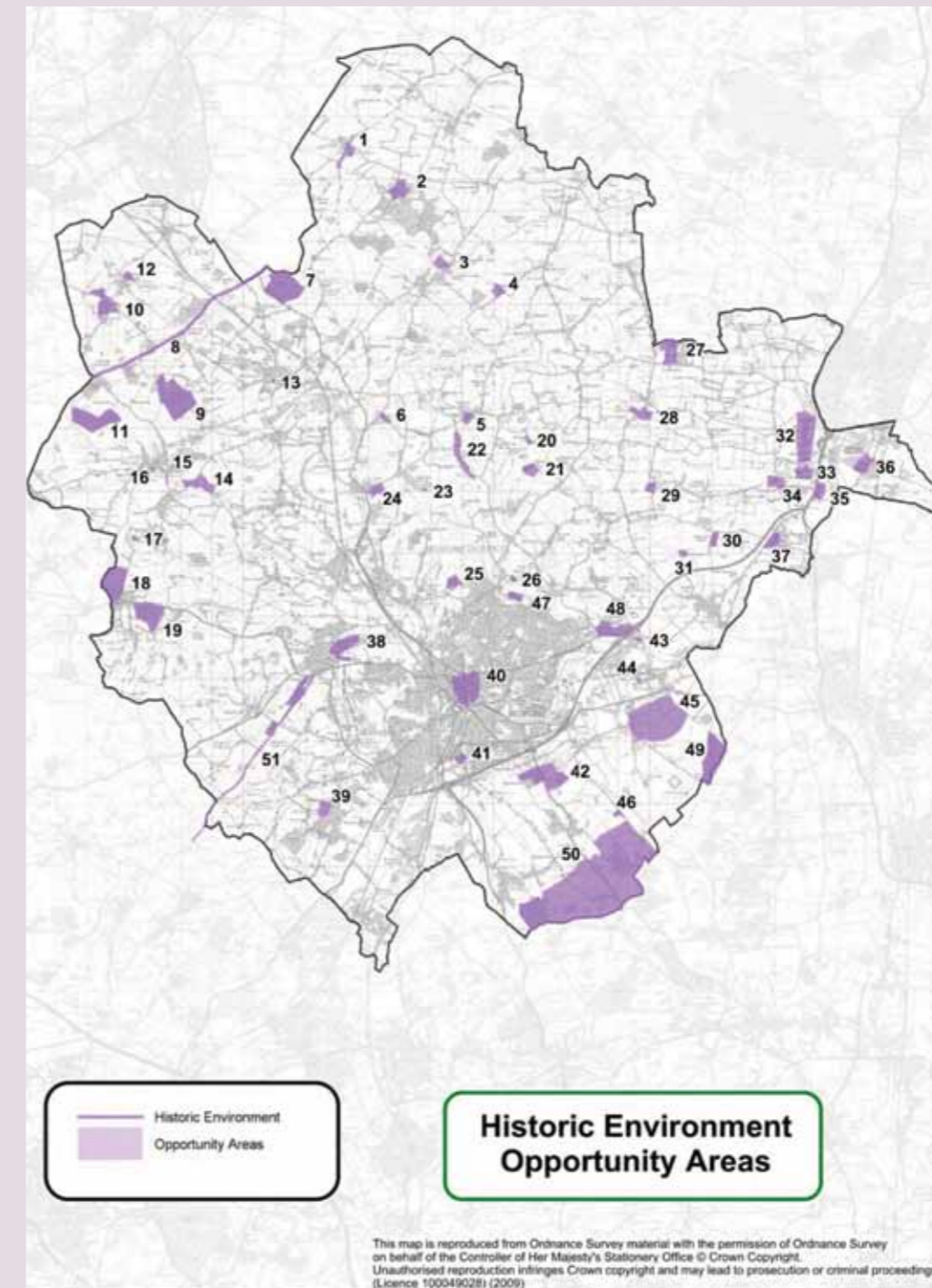


Ref.	HECA description
HECA 1	Valleys of the NE-flowing Til and Kym and land in between settlements of Yelden, Upper Dean, Melchbourne, Riseley, Pertenhall etc. Melchbourne Park. Mixture of brick, timber-framed and (some) clay lump buildings, a simple rural vernacular. Interspersed with woodland. Considerable 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.

Ref.	HECA description
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

Figure 17: Historic Environment Opportunity 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 • 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

Ref.	Recommendation	Location/ site
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. No provision for young people. The parish council is promoting young people's provision, including skateboarding and basketball facilities. 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"> Play area improved through Playbuilder programme 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 Young people's provision would be desirable. 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 clearly well used for informal recreation. The site could benefit from: <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. 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.
Blitsoe		
Bromham		

Borough of Bedford **Green Space Strategy**

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
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	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.	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 2010 and it is also accessed through one entrance of the main road although there are a further three pedestrian entrances. Improvements required could include: 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. 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	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.	Big lottery funds enabled new play area to be built in 2008.

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Cople	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.	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	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 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.	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 improving, and a management plan would be beneficial
Duloe and Staploe	None	None

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Eastcotts	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.	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	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 facility off Romsey Way in 2011.	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

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Felmersham	<p>The playing field site is of reasonable quality, but with out of date facilities and equipment.</p> <p>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)</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>There is an urgent need for children's and young people's facilities in Radwell</p>
Great Barford	<p>There is no provision for young people in the village.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>New developer provided play facilities and a site funded by the Big Lottery programme were provided between 2008 – 2010 (dates need confirmation)</p>	<p>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</p>
Harrold	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Kempston Rural	<p>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.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to additional local children's play provision</p>
Keysoe Row	<p>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).</p>	<p>In such isolated communities much might be achieved through pursuing a shared use policy with the support of the school.</p>
Knottling and Souldrop	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Little Staughton	<p>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.</p>	<p>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).</p> <p>Provision should be made for young people.</p>
Milton Ernest	<p>None identified</p>	<p>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.</p>
Oakley	<p>There are no allotments</p> <p>There is little dedicated provision for young people.</p> <p>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>	<p>The main green space site would benefit from re-design. The site would benefit from a community consultation process to engage local people in the future of the site. Consideration should be given to: improving facilities for young people, integrating all facilities into a designed landscape with trees, shrub planting, footpaths, signage etc. (Improvements have been made to this site since the original survey was undertaken)</p>

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
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	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.	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	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	Green End does not appear to have any children's play facilities although there is a play area in nearby Top End. 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.	Salph End: there is potential to create a Village Green with children's play facility. Further work would be required to determine a suitable location for this, as much of the land appears to be in private ownership. 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.

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Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Riseley	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.	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	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. (Improvements have been made to the recreation ground since the original survey was undertaken.	The outdoor sports facility is in need of improvement, and offers the best opportunity for any new provision for children and young people.
Sharnbrook	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. A Playbuilder funded facility was built in 2010.	The focus on providing good facilities at outdoor sports facility should continue, perhaps with the provision of a facility for young people.
Stagsden	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 part of the village. There is no provision for young people. The village has recently received funding for an upgraded village hall.	Best achieved through the housing/ Village Green development. It may be desirable to consider relocating an improved children's play facility at this site, and perhaps also some form of young people's facility.

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Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Stewartby	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.	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: - 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	The existing play area is not well located to serve the eastern half of the village, and there is no provision for young people.	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. 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.	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

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Turvey	The existing children's play facility is not easily accessed from the southern half of the village. There is no provision for young people.	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	There is no recreation ground, children's or young people's space.	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	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.	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.

Community (in alphabetical order)	Deficiencies	Recommendations
Wootton	<p>There does not appear to be dedicated young people's provision (although the small synthetic pitch will obviously be used by this age group.)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The parish council has identified various problems including insufficient playing pitch space; issues with the maintenance, requirements for a refurbished village hall, and improved play facilities.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Dedicated provision for young people should be considered.</p> <p>Additional children's play provision to better serve the northern half of the existing Village should be considered.</p> <p>New space and facilities within the major housing sites should be fully planned and coordinated with existing provision.</p>
Wymington	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>There is no acknowledged playing field with outdoor sports provision.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>There is a need for children's play provision to better meet the needs of the northern part of the village.</p>
Yielden (incl Melchbourne)	<p>There is no young people's space.</p>	<p>Improved provision for children and young people.</p>

Appendix E: Rolling Action Plan

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 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

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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/ Joel Carré
11.	Meet with other publicly accessible green space providers and managers to explore scope of them adopting the strategic vision, aims and objectives and working with the Borough Council in taking them forward through shared actions	2.3	2012/13	N	Joel Carré
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

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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

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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 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
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	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

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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: Addison Howard Park 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
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

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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	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	2013-15 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



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Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012-21 Public Consultation Draft (July 2012)

Report on Public Consultation Results and Council Response (January 2013)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy (GSS) has been produced by Bedford Borough Council to provide a 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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:
 - Parks and public gardens
 - Accessible natural green space
 - Outdoor play provision
 - Informal amenity green space
 - Outdoor sports facilities
 - Churchyards and cemeteries
 - Allotments
- 1.4 The strategy 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.

2. Public consultation

- 2.1 The Council approved the draft GSS for public consultation in May 2012. The period of public consultation opened on 1 August 2012 and closed on 14 October 2012.
- 2.2 The draft plan and a response form were published both in paper form and online on a dedicated website (www.bedford.gov.uk/greenspace). A copy of the response form is included in appendix A. Respondents were also given the option of responding via telephone, letter (via freepost) or email. A variety of stakeholders were written to about the consultation including:
 - Bedford Borough Council Members
 - Bedford Borough Council Officers
 - Bedford Borough Council Parks' Friends Groups
 - Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum

- Bedford Diversity Network
- Bedford Group of Drainage Boards
- Bedford Race Equality Centre
- Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Community Tree Trust
- Country Landowners Association (CLA)
- Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Highways Agency
- Marston Vale Trust
- Milton Keynes Council
- Natural England
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- NHS Bedfordshire
- Parish/ town/ urban community councils
- Sport England
- Team Beds and Luton
- The Conservation Volunteers (previously BTCV)
- Wildlife Trust

2.3 The consultation was also promoted via the following methods:

- Website
- Twitter
- Paper documents placed at all Borough Libraries and Town Hall and Borough Hall Receptions
- News release carried in local press

3. Consultation responses

3.1 In total, 58 responses were received to the consultation. 45 responses came via the response form (30 completed online, 16 via paper form) and 13 via email. Responses were received from several individuals including, residents, park users and dog walkers and from the following organisations:

- Bedford and District Sunday Football League
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum
- Brickhill Parish Council
- Clapham Parish Council
- Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire
- Eastcotts Parish Council
- English Heritage
- Forestry Commission
- Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort
- Natural England
- Oakley Parish Council
- Pavenham Parish Council
- Sport England
- Wilshamstead Parish Council

3.2 A summary of the response form results is included in appendix B. These show that a very significant majority of respondents either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with each of the Strategy's 9 aims. Of those 'strongly agreed' totals for each aim, the aim with by far the highest total was 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), which had 76% response rate. The second highest total went to GSS1 (To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space) with 59%. The remaining 7 aims attracted between 34% and 48% response rates.

Appendix A: Response form questionnaire

DRAFT GREEN SPACE STRATEGY

To what extent do you agree that the following aims should be a priority for the Council?
(please tick one box per row)

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
GSS1. To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GSS2. To engage green space providers/ managers, local residents and the wider community in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GSS4. To encourage and support active and healthy life-styles associated with the use of publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GSS5. To maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport links to/ from publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GSS6. To protect and enhance the ecological, geological, historical and landscape value of publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GSS7. To maximise community use, understanding and enjoyment of publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GSS9. To maximise funding and investment opportunities associated with publicly accessible green space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please list any additional priority aims which you feel should be included in the strategy.

Please list any additional actions that you feel should be included in the strategy action plan (ref 7.4/ Appendix E)

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments you have on the proposed strategy. Where possible please refer to paragraph numbers.

PARKS & GREEN SPACES

We are interested to hear your views on parks and other green spaces in the borough more generally.

How important is it for you to have local parks/ green space near to where you live?
(please tick one box only)

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Very important</i> | <i>Fairly important</i> | <i>Not very important</i> | <i>Not important at all</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What do you consider to be the THREE most important management issues in relation to your local parks/ green spaces? (please tick up to three boxes only)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>There should be good footpath and cycleway links to and between them</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>They should have good signposting and information about what's available</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>There should be control of noise and anti-social behaviour</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>They should be safe and secure for those using them</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>There should be adequate control of dogs and be free from dog fouling</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>They should be vibrant, stimulating places</i> |

Appendix B: Response form results

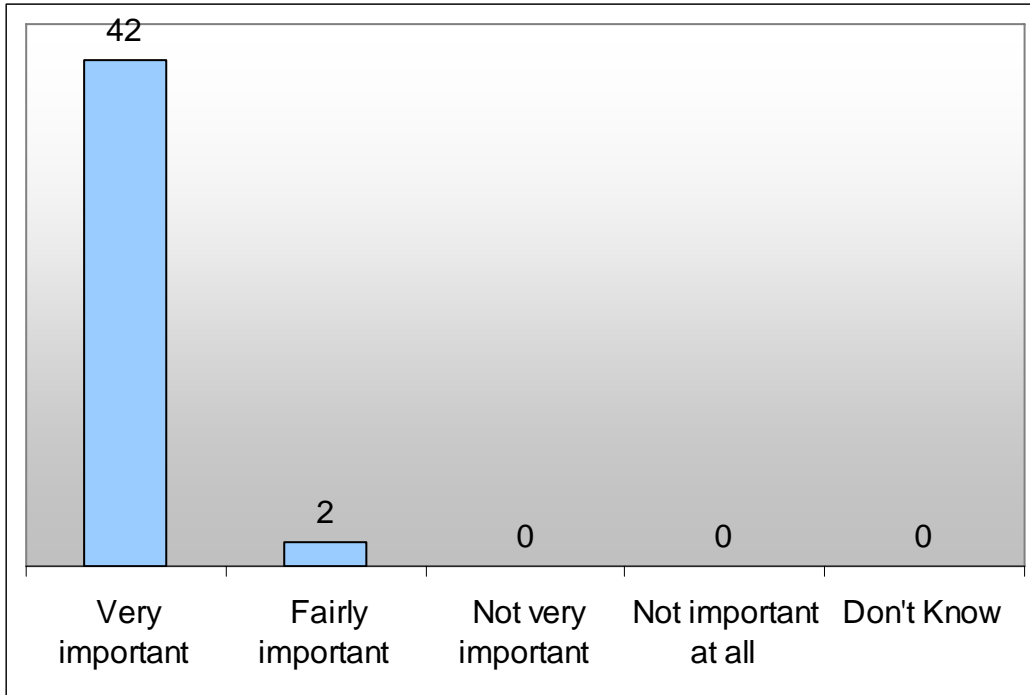
Note: The data below represents the 45 response forms received. Distribution numbers are given rather than percentages due to the low number of response received. Caution should also be given to using the results due to the low response.

Q1. To what extent do you agree that the following aims should be a priority for the Council?

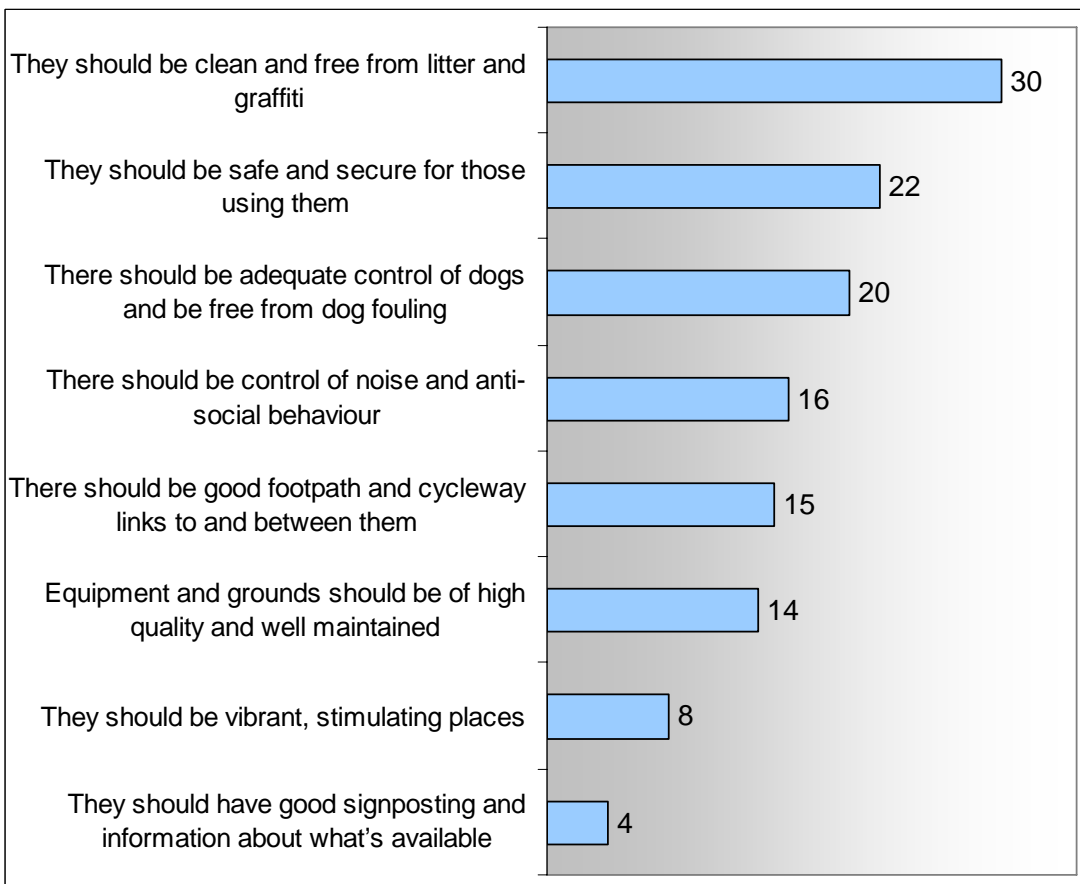
The table below shows the numbers of respondents for each question.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
GSS1. To make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space	34	10	1	0	0	45
GSS2. To engage green space providers/managers, local residents and the wider community in the planning, development and management of publicly accessible green space	20	24	1	0	0	45
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	44	1	0	0	0	45
GSS4. To encourage and support active and healthy life-styles associated with the use of publicly accessible green space	25	16	4	0	0	45
GSS5. To maintain, improve and promote sustainable transport links to/ from publicly accessible green space	28	9	6	1	1	45
GSS6. To protect and enhance the ecological, geological, historical and landscape value of publicly accessible green space	28	13	4	0	0	45
GSS7. To maximise community use, understanding and enjoyment of publicly accessible green space	24	16	3	2	0	45
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	27	13	4	1	0	45
GSS9. To maximise funding and investment opportunities associated with publicly accessible green space	23	14	5	1	1	44

How important is it for you to have local parks/ green space near to where you live?



What do you consider to be the THREE most important management issues in relation to your local parks/ green spaces?



Please list any additional priority aims which you feel should be included in the strategy.

Note: [1] – Council’s response includes any recommended amendments to the draft strategy. Recommended amendments are shown in bold text.

Consultee’s response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
<p>I feel that not enough is organised for the average person in Bedford Borough. I end up going to Milton Keynes for anything that I enjoy. I find that Bedford Borough does not cater for my tastes in any way except for the river festival. I loved the Milton Keynes fire gardens, their music festival along side the canal and many other events that they put on in Campbell Park. The last music event that I enjoyed in Bedford was Status Quo in Bedford Park many years ago. Since then the Borough has taken over organisation and only classical music is catered for. Very laudable but not for the average citizen. Nothing seems to be arranged or organised like Milton Keynes in dreary drab Bedford.</p>	Individual		Park user and gentle walker	<p>These types of events are privately organised concerts. The Council does work with private event organisers on its own land but is reliant on such organisers themselves coming forward with plans for such events, which in turn is dependent on them seeing a viable market opportunity.</p>
<p>We need the peace and quiet, away from noisy crowds; places we know will meet these requirements where no noisy polluting, vehicle - parts will be seen thrown/discarded in ditches 'burnt out cars' etc. and level even grassland which the council have made thus. Vehicles now have prevented walkers from going</p>	Individual		<p>All my life (from 3-4 years of age until now, I'm in my 60's) the last 5 years have shown the deterioration of</p>	<p>Unsure which Green Lane is being referred to, as there are a number across the Borough. The Council has a duty to manage different rights of way to standard that is fit for their legally permitted users. Any issues can be reported to the rights of way team. A route’s public right of way status does not impact on private vehicular rights and subsequent damage can be a problem. Abandoned cars and fly tipping matters should be reported to the Council on 01234 718060.</p>

<p>there without skidding in all the mud, destroying council-work, and endangering the public who could break their ankle leaving deep mud-ruts.</p>			<p>Green Lane. It is extremely upsetting.</p>	
<p>Consultee's response</p>	<p>Individual / Organisation</p>	<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Individual - Capacity</p>	<p>Council response [1]</p>
<p>Perhaps as has been recently done to Bedford Park remove of some of the over-zealous yellow lining as this seem a way to discourage the use of the park for not always is it practical or cost effective to use public transport and the cycle ways on this road are plain daft, as I have 2 children whom I encourage to cycle and can't now use Bedford Park as can't safely transport or park near by</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Park user (but probably no longer Bedford Park) with young children</p>	<p>The Park Avenue scheme provides continuous cycle lanes in both directions along this road coupled with the implementation of the Controlled Parking Zone restrictions. The new arrangement has been welcomed by the local cycling organisation and the lanes outside the parked cars replace the previous design where the cycle lanes were often unusable as they were blocked by parked cars.</p> <p>Whilst Park Avenue generally has the capacity to accommodate both cycle lane and maintain parking spaces, there are sections of road where both features could not be achieved and parking restrictions were introduced to reduce obstruction of the cycle lane and improve road safety.</p> <p>More generally the Borough is in the process of identifying and designating a town-wide cycle network to help meet the needs of all residents to get to the town centre and local green spaces. As far as possible, the network will meet the needs of both commuter or confident cyclists (willing to share with traffic on main roads) and more vulnerable or less confident cyclists, using quiet roads, cycle tracks and paths through parks. The path through Bedford Park offers a quieter alternative to the cycle lanes along Park Avenue.</p>
<p>Action 21, p85 - What is meant by 'redundant'? No green area should be sold off for example for new housing</p>	<p>Individual</p>			<p>Action 21 relates to aim GSS3, which seeks to protect publicly accessible green space from inappropriate development. The action calls for a strategic review of green space to be undertaken in 2013/14. The review will be undertaken in accordance with a methodology for assessing whether or not green space sites are needed. The future use/ disposal of any site identified as no longer</p>

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
None	Organisation	Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire		Noted
Low cost accessible parking	Individual			Noted
To keep on street parking next to public parks free. Not to allow streets such as Pemberley Ave., Bedford, to become CPZ when the residents have adequate off street parking on their own properties	Individual			<p>Reviews of CPZ areas were agreed as part of the Councils service modernisation policy options, discussed by Exec on 7 Dec 2011. (Policy Options ESC15 and 17).As and when reviews of parking schemes are considered consultation is carried out to allow issues such as this to be considered.</p> <p>(Link to papers on the intranet is http://bbmgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=116&MId=2862&Ver=4)</p>
Keep green spaces in the ownership of the Borough. Use community service orders and these hours to collect rubbish off the landscape. Provide normal bins where dog bins and recycling bins are!	Individual		Walker, hiking club, city user/residence	<p>Noted. Council already using community service orders to undertake range of green space and public realm maintenance services, including litter picks.</p> <p>Council policy is to reduce landfill and increase recycling rates, so aim to phase in increased recycling bins in parks</p>
More cycle facilities and cycle lanes.	Individual		Bedford resident, park user, walker, and cyclist	Noted – Aim GSS5/ Objective 5.3 supports this.

Very loaded questions, almost impossible to answer anything other than agree. 1 - more cycle routes 2 - more control of dangerous dogs and irresponsible owners	Individual			Noted 1. Aim GSS5/ Objective 5.3 supports this 2. This is addressed by the Council's recently adopted Dog Control Order policy, which is now being implemented
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Stop selling of schools and their playing fields to housing developers. The boroughs population is rising not falling, and we should try and address the problem at source rather than ruining the borough for its current inhabitants.	Individual		Park user	School playing fields fall outside of the scope of this strategy. Future use/ disposal of school sites will be governed by Council policy, including planning and community right to bid/ asset transfer
Plant more trees/wooded areas. Less playgrounds, more natural open areas.	Individual		Park, open space, walker and cyclist	Future public tree stock covered by aim GSS6/ Objective 6.6 and action 37. Outdoor play and accessible natural green space provision is governed by a set of standards, ref. p36/ Fig 9 of Green Space Strategy. These are adopted in the Council's planning policy.
Love the wild flowers in Jubilee. Grandchildren love play-parks.	Individual			Noted

Please list any additional actions that you feel should be included in the strategy action plan (ref 7.4/ Appendix E).

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Stop dog pooh. Dogs on leads or muzzled.	Individual		Park user	Council's Why Would You? enviro-crime campaign adopts policy of zero

				<p>tolerance for crimes of dog mess. Ranger service patrols green spaces and educates/enforces on this policy.</p> <p>The issue of dogs on leads/under control is addressed by the Council's recently adopted Dog Control Order policy, which is now being implemented</p>
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Let's have more events in open spaces. Like the Status Quo in Bedford Park many years ago. All we get now is stuffy classics or easy listening. What about a fire garden for Bedford?	Individual		Park user and gentle walker	These types of events are privately organised concerts. The Council does work with private event organisers on its own land but is reliant on such organisers themselves coming forward with plans for such events, which in turn is dependent on them seeing a viable market opportunity.
Gates should remain locked to restore level grassland, and to ensure council work for nature is not constantly destroyed, and hedgerows should be maintained for wildlife and the general beauty, away from the maddening crowd of 'Santa-pod' users/abusers, the selfish individuals who neither respect nor care about peace or beauty.	Individual		All my life (from 3-4 years of age until now, I'm in my 60's) the last 5 years have shown the deterioration of Green Lane. It is extremely upsetting.	Unable to respond as unsure what comment relates to

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Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]	
Sensible uses of white lining and better forward planning			Individual		Park user (but probably no longer Bedford Park) with young children Noted
I have not been provided with SAP			Individual		Walker, cyclist, park user Unable to respond as unsure what comment relates to
To support the easy adoption of new development green space by local councils. To ensure new developments have clear green space provision and that developers are forced and held to account to provide such provision.			Individual		Park user, walker & Parish Councillor Existing saved Local Plan 2002 policies provide details of green space provision. The Allocations and Designations Plan (yet to be adopted) Policy AD28 outlines what open space provision for new developments.
What will happen to green areas not currently used as much as others? Has any land already been identified as ready to be sold off?			Individual		Action 21 calls for a strategic review of green space to be undertaken in 2013/14. The review will be undertaken in accordance with a methodology for assessing whether or not green space sites are needed. The future use/ disposal of any site identified as no longer required (and therefore 'redundant'), will be governed by Council policy, including

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Agree with action plan cited	Organisation	Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire		Noted
Provide a cycle track outside Bedford Park on the green verge in Park Ave	Individual			Off road cycle/ walking track runs inside Bedford Park parallel with Park Avenue. Also Park Avenue includes yellow lined cycle lane.
Plenty of large dual bins for rubbish and more importantly recycling. Have a community herb garden/children's garden. Cull the increasing goose swan population, as there are less and less ducks. Turn part of the large parks into allotments.	Individual			<p>Adopted policy of phasing in dual bins at appropriate locations, with aim of increasing recycling rates.</p> <p>Site management planning processes linked to Action 15 will provide opportunity for considering range of community uses/ facilities provided in parks.</p> <p>Impact of local geese/ swan population on duck levels is unclear/ proven. Council will monitor environmental impact and take necessary action if found to be an issue.</p>

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
<p>In addition, we request that the outer hillside meadow which lies to the West and adjacent to Mowsbury Hillfort should be considered an integral part of the Hillfort. The meadow is an important part of the Hillfort's biodiversity and supports a wide diversity of plants and wild life including the bee orchid, deer, hares, buzzards and red kites just to name a few, as well as being a recognised and well used recreational area.</p>	<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort.</p>		<p>The hillside meadow is under management of Council's Leisure and Culture (L&C) service. Senior Countryside Officer to approach L&C with request to transfer its management to Parks and Countryside, so it can form integral part of Hill Fort management plan.</p>
<p>Promoting cycle facilities and cycle lanes.</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Bedford resident, park user, walker, and cyclist</p>	<p>Aim GSS5/ Objective 5.3 and Actions 32 and 33 support this.</p>
<p>1 - more incentives for cyclist; 2 - ban all free plastic bags in stores</p>	<p>Individual</p>			<p>1. The Borough is in the process of identifying and designating a town-wide cycle network to help meet the needs of all residents to get to the town centre and local green spaces. As far as possible, the network will meet the needs of both commuter or confident cyclists (willing to share with traffic on main roads) and more vulnerable or less</p>

			<p>confident cyclists, using quiet roads, cycle tracks and paths through parks.</p> <p>2. It is a business's decision whether or not to offer free plastic bags to the public – currently the Council would only be able to work in partnership with businesses to encourage them to reduce the number of free single-use bags they give out. Bedford Borough Council does encourage the public to reuse bags or have a 'bag for life' through sustainability themed events and as part of reuse advice given by the Waste Services Team and included on the Council's website.</p> <p>However, the Coalition Government has stated that the issue will be considered as part of the Review of Waste Policy and that a decision would be made in 2012. The Welsh Government put a charge on single use plastic bags in October 2011, and the results of this levy scheme and the European Union's consultation (detailing a number of possible options for reducing</p>
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				the use of plastic carrier bags) will be taken into account when the Government makes their decision - which is expected to be made soon.
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
The Council could organise regular voluntary clean-ups of parks/open spaces and advertise them well. Once a month at least.	Individual		Park, open space, walker and cyclist	Council already doing this through Pride in Bedford litter picks and park volunteer programmes (eg. Priory Country Park); and has plans to expand
The Borough Council should make it a priority to ensure that greenspaces are developed as part of S106 agreements are transferred into public ownership and neither left in the hands of developers nor transferred to privately run management companies due to a failure to agree a commuted sum. Without this action listing certain greenspaces as part of the council's greenspace assets is fairly irrelevant.	Organisation	Eastcotts Parish Council		Council seeks to ensure that future management arrangements are secured for greenspaces provided through S106 agreements so that responsibility is taken on by an appropriate management entity with resources for future maintenance, which may include the appropriate council (parish, town or borough) if an adequate commuted sum is provided. The council cannot insist on transfer to the appropriate council if the developer provides for future maintenance by alternative arrangements.

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Please use the space below to provide any additional comments you have on the proposed strategy. Where possible please refer to paragraph numbers.

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
There has been a lot of grass roots talk about foraging and food. Projects like the community herb garden at Castle Road have been successful. Could growing food and developing foraging skills play a part in the strategy?	Individual			Yes – aim GSS4, objective 4.2 promotes and supports use of green space for 'health and well being activities', which would include food growing/ foraging. This is further supported by action 29, which calls for production of plan to address areas of need for community food growing/ allotment provision.
I have scored 2 strategy aims neutrally as I feel it is sufficient for the council to facilitate wide use of green spaces. It is not also necessary to maximise particular uses. That's up to the users, who might have different aims. I have also down-voted the question on investment. Green spaces are an investment in the wellbeing and health of the community. Financial questions should be on the level of 'how much can we afford?', not 'will this make money ?'.	Individual		User, especially walker	GSS identifies publicly accessible green space as vital community assets, delivering environmental as well as social and economic benefits. The Council, in pursuing this strategy, will seek to ensure a balance is achieved between each of these three elements of sustainable development.
Stop dog pooh. Dogs on leads or muzzled. It's not all about walking dogs and	Individual		Park user	Council's Why Would You?

places like Priory Country Park are no go areas for kids				<p>enviro-crime campaign adopts policy of zero tolerance for crimes of dog mess. Ranger service patrols green spaces and educates/enforces on this policy.</p> <p>The issue of dogs on leads/ under control is addressed by the Council's recently adopted Dog Control Order policy, which is now being implemented</p>
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Allotments - Oakley now has allotments, you have stated they do not. Bromham also now has allotments. No pictures of allotments included?	Individual			Will amend parish entries in appendix D to reflect these developments.
I feel this questionnaire is essential for cyclists, walkers, ramblers and horse riders as well as for those who value the natural wildlife and the many wildflowers and meadows we once had. I myself have encouraged other walkers by writing a poetry book and giving information of the many species of wildflower which once adorned this country lane (over 100 species, in fact)! Why have motor-morons destroyed so many?	Individual		All my life (from 3-4 years of age until now, I'm in my 60's) the last 5 years have shown the deterioration of Green Lane. It is extremely upsetting.	Noted. The GSS consultation included representatives from cycling, walking and horse-riding groups, as well as the Wildlife Trust and Beds Natural History Society.
It's all very well having these good intentions listed in the strategy, but they are meaningless unless developers are held to account to provide such space. In Eastcotts, I believe we have experienced green space issues with all our	Individual		Park User, Walker & Parish Councillor	The GSS recognises that a significant proportion of green space provision will be made

<p>recent developments such as 1. Developers not meeting their obligations because their responsibilities are too vague and difficult to clearly bench mark against. 2. The lack of management and enforcement by the local planning department. 3. Difficulties in adopting green space (lack of funds and support from the local council). 4. Green space provision being disjointed and therefore not accessible for public enjoyment. For example developers could widen the grass verges rather than provide larger much needed open space, and include this in their provision. I notice that the strategy intends to put the responsibility for future provision in the hands of the developers. This is a very bad idea!</p>				<p>through the development process, with schemes such as Wixams and Great Denham. The Council, as planning authority, will work with developers to ensure that associated green space provision is high quality; meets adopted policies and standards; and includes ongoing maintenance commitment.</p> <p>Where open spaces are to be adopted by the local authority or parish council, a commuted sum is payable to cover the future management and maintenance costs. In conjunction with Policy AD28 in the Allocations and Designations Plan, an Open Space Supplementary Planning Document will provide more guidance on the design of open spaces and adoption standards.</p>
<p>Consultee's response</p>	<p>Individual / Organisation</p>	<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Individual - Capacity</p>	<p>Council response [1]</p>
<p>Green space actually needs to be expanded if the proposed 16,000 plus new homes are actually built, with yet more to come.</p>	<p>Individual</p>			<p>Green space facilities will be provided in accordance with the minimum standards set out in the GSS, ref. p36/ Fig 9. These standards are adopted in the Council's planning policy</p>

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Agree with proposed strategy	Organisation	Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire		Noted
Less to be spent on annual pretty flowers - use ones that are permanent and suitable to climate change so need less water and work. Make your own compost, fertiliser and woodchip. Ask companies to sponsor and maintain flower beds/play equipment/roundabouts/children's garden/herb garden	Individual			<p>Council has adopted policy of using annual pictorial meadow seed mix, unless site specific case for using perennial. Annual are floristically more diverse. Where annuals are used, will introduce perennial mixes in subsequent years, as annual mix strength decline.</p> <p>Council sends its green waste to external commercial composting provider and buys it back at discounted price.</p> <p>Council chips its own material and uses it on site for mulch, etc</p> <p>Council already secured sponsors for roundabouts; and has a corporate working group looking at other opportunities. Will include those as suggested.</p>

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
<p>Although the Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort fully support the Boroughs Draft Green Space Strategy initiative and its aims to enhance and protect our green areas, flora, fauna, wildlife and recreational use, we do have serious concerns over the long term sustainable funding and manning of such a project. The Draft Strategy encourages community participation and the formation of Friends groups but unfortunately we have to the question whether the Boroughs staffing levels are adequate to support these enterprises. We would welcome the opportunity to learn more about the long term funding and staffing of this project.</p>	Organisation	Friends of Putnoe Wood and Mowsbury Hillfort.		<p>Council's Communities service is committed to recruiting and management volunteers to assist it with promoting/ managing Council green spaces, rights of way and street environment. The service is structuring its staff and financial resources to enable it do this on a sustainable basis.</p>
<p>The publicly accessible greenspace provision standards in fig 9 of para 5.13 should be backdated where possible to ensure all developments still in negotiation adhere to these standards. Recommendation in appendix D for Eastcotts are out of date in that youth facilities in Cotton End has been made by the Parish Council. Current provision is Shortstown is inadequate and there is uncertainty that development phases in 'New Cardington' will provide the facilities required. Therefore greater support should be given to improving existing publicly owned greenspace.</p>	Organisation	Eastcotts Parish Council		<p>The open space provisions outlined in Figure 9 are included in the Allocations and Designations Plan which is yet to be adopted so therefore this cannot be backdated for current planning applications.</p> <p>Will amend parish entry in appendix D to reflect that youth provision has now been made.</p>
<p>GSS 2.8 An annual survey of community satisfaction - is this every green space on an annual basis? If so too onerous and the public I believe (although should be consulted with where appropriate) would value a park maintained to</p>	Organisation	Bedford Borough Council P&C		<p>No, it's an annual survey of general satisfaction rates with parks and green space,</p>

<p>a high standard with limited staff resources allocated to this rather than on constant reviews/surveys with no time to respond to outcomes. GSS 2.15 what is the relevance of timescales per greenspace site? Should this be a rolling programme for the duration of the Strategy instead to enable parks to respond to available funding and other related development projects.</p>				<p>conducted through the Citizen's Panel.</p> <p>Programming of which sites to produce management plans for and when is not rigid. So can adjust as opportunities/ need arise.</p>
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Please give any other comments you may have on how your local parks and green spaces could be improved.

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
<p>I like to jog in Bedford Park after work (like many people). It would be great to feel safe to do this all year round, but at the moment I find the park too dark during the winter. Improved lighting and staff would make me feel safer. I would pay for this service... Perhaps there could be a scheduled running or exercising time when lights would be on and park rangers would be around.</p>	<p>Individual</p>			<p>Lighting Bedford Park in this way would be prohibitively expensive and the Council has discontinued its Park Ranger service so does not have the staff capacity to support scheduled sessions. More positively, the respondent may wish to consider joining a local running club such as the Bedford Harriers. All levels are catered for and the clubs enable safe, after dark running.</p>
<p>'Vibrant, stimulating places?' - yes, but only because they are healthily maintained, well-kept, attractive. Not because they have additional stimuli added. I see green places as essentially calming with sufficient space to ensure they can be used by many people without conflict. There are plenty of</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>user, especially walker</p>	<p>Noted</p>

other sources of artificial stimulation.				
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Spaces for dogs or people?	Individual		Park user	Spaces for both, with use of Dog Control Orders to define areas where dogs are kept under control/ on lead; or are excluded (eg. play areas)
Requiring dogs to be on a lead at all times (or banning dogs not on a lead)	Individual		Walker	The issue of dogs on leads/ under control/ excluded is addressed by the Council's recently adopted Dog Control Order policy, which is now being implemented
I have lovely safe walk near me along the side of Marsh Leys off Manor Road BUT I have to brave a vey busy, muddy, main road without a footpath with 12 wheel bulk carriers and skip lorries speeding along for quarter of a mile to reach it. The first gate access is not even at the nearest point. I have to walk down the outside of the green space for quite a distance along this busy road before the first gate can be accessed. A gate and access path at the nearest point would not eliminate the total problem but would cut a third of the distance off. Someone has pushed through the fence at a suitable point for access but I am not that good on my legs these days and rough walking is a bit out of my league.	Individual		Park user and gentle walker	If the respondent would like contact the area rights of way officer (01234 228599), they will look into the matter further to see if improvements can be made

<p>Would the parish council help? By planting wild flowers to help restore these peaceful natural habitats to the way they originally were. Nothing should prevent this. All motorised vehicles should be strictly prohibited.</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>All my life (from 3-4 years of age until now, I'm in my 60's) the last 5 years have shown the deterioration of Green Lane. It is extremely upsetting.</p>	<p>Borough Council is able to provide technical advise and support to parish councils to establish pictorial meadows; and undertakes community bulb planting under Pride in Bedford programme</p>
<p>Consultee's response</p>	<p>Individual / Organisation</p>	<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Individual - Capacity</p>	<p>Council response [1]</p>
<p>Better parking and better thought to allowing safe cycling to them</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Park user (but probably no longer Bedford Park) with young children</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Plant and maintain until established more trees</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Walker, cyclist, park user</p>	<p>Aim GSS6/ objective 6.6 – Council committed to conserving and enhancing public tree stock</p>
<p>Picnic tables (with bins nearby) in Russell Park, Bedford Park and the grassy areas around the river. Areas of meadow with wildflowers in all of the above would encourage insects and other wildlife.</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Park user and walker and care coordinator in my church</p>	<p>Picnic tables are considered for some sites but take up has been limited due to associated problems with litter (despite proximity of bins), vandalism etc. Management plans are being produced for the Embankment area and Russell Park and improving</p>

				<p>site furniture will be considered.</p> <p>Council has adopted programme of leaving areas of long grass within these areas.</p> <p>Will consider opportunities to establish pictorial meadows, using both native and non-native flowers in these areas in 2014.</p>
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
All issues cited are important	Organisation	Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire		Noted
Re-open cafe in Bedford Park & allow it to sell ice-cream	Individual			<p>Council has invited expressions of interest to re-open Bedford Park café on two occasions, but failed to receive any viable proposals.</p> <p>Council has secured a licence with mobile ice cream supplier for Bedford Park with exclusive sales rights. There is scope, if secure a café supplier, for them to tender for Bedford Park ice cream concession.</p>

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
More cycle facilities and cycle lanes.	Individual		Bedford resident, park user, walker, and cyclist	Noted
Get rid of all swings with bearings, as they simply don't swing very well.	Individual		Park user	Insufficient detail to be able to respond.
Goldington Green, for example, too much grassed area, need more biodiversity, shrubs, trees, pond etc.	Individual		Park, open space, walker and cyclist	Council aims to increase biodiversity interest of its parks and green spaces, including allowing longer grass/ pictorial meadows/ tree and shrub planting. However, this aim needs to be balanced with public recreation/ amenity/ leisure use of such sites. Issue and opportunities will be addressed through site management planning process, which includes community consultation.
Dog fouling in Duchess Road, Wildflower Way. Play-parks there need attention?	Individual			Noted – will share this dog fouling intelligence with Community Rangers for targeted enforcement patrols. Play areas are inspected weekly for health and safety/ site maintenance issues. Will forward comment to Play

				Inspectors for information.
Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council response [1]
Ensuring they are transferred from developers to the community once development is complete.	Organisation	Eastcotts Parish Council.		Borough Council has no powers to force developers to transfer the land to the community. It is encouraged, but with the adequate commuted sum to cover future management and maintenance costs.
To ensure sufficient financial and staff resources are allocated to each existing park to maintain the current standards and meet requirements of those that have achieved award before striving to develop new areas	Organisation	Bedford Borough Council P&C		Noted

As a public body we have a duty to ensure that what we do does not discriminate against people with protected characteristics. These are: gender; age; ethnicity; disability; faith / religion; sexual preference; gender reassignment; and pregnancy. Please tell us if you believe that any of the proposed actions in the strategy would have an adverse impact on any of these groups, or if you feel we could do anything more to ensure discrimination does not take place.

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council's response [1]
As an older person I now find access a problem. Your strategy sounds OK but it often is not reflected in practice - like my access to the walk off Manor Road along side Marsh Leys. This has not been thought out with the first gate way down from the start. The last gate is at the end of the road and links to a footpath just fine but the first one by the rail crossing is way down from the crossing and not at the start of the green space	Individual		Park user and gentle walker	If the respondent would like contact the area rights of way officer (01234 228599), they will look into the matter further to see if improvements can be made

Consultee's response	Individual / Organisation	Organisation	Individual - Capacity	Council's response [1]
<p>Walks should be accessible for those with disability of any kind. At present, all the council do to make these areas beautiful and the ground grass - covered and level, is being destroyed by noisy vehicles i.e. cars/motorbikes/joyriders.</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>All my life (from 3-4 years of age until now, I'm in my 60's) the last 5 years have shown the deterioration of 'Green Lane'. It is extremely upsetting.</p>	<p>Council has adopted policy of seeking to minimise the number of structures erected on the rights of way network, consistent with legislation, good livestock husbandry and public safety. The least restrictive option (inclusive access, ie. gaps/ gates/ stiles) available will always be the priority.</p>
<p>Don't feel there will be any adverse affects</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Park user, runner, parent</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>At present I am not sure if any of the bridges over the river are suitable for lone wheelchair users.</p>	<p>Individual</p>		<p>Park user and walker and care coordinator in my church</p>	<p>With exception of the stepped 'engineer's bridge' leading on to Mill Meadows from The Embankment, all other bridges are accessible to wheelchair users.</p>

Non response form based responses (in alphabetical order by organisation)

Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Bedford and District Sunday Football League	
Where does taking away ground-staff at weekends on public park pitches fit into the 'benefits' of what's planned for the 2013/14 season?	Comments are not relevant to GSS. They relate to a cost saving proposal (ref: ESC31), which was consulted upon in November 2011 and subsequently adopted by the Council in February 2012.
Local clubs have enough to do getting players to matches, getting kits, etc, fetching and carrying - how can 'one man and his dog' be expected to undertake all this work normally carried out by ground-staff on the day?	See above.
Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)	
1.2.2 - Number is missing	Noted – will add missing number
3.3.1 - We note a very close match between the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy & BRCC's own aims; demonstrating a good rationale for joint working.	Noted
5.4.1 - Fig 12 - additional bullet points for BRCC; Please include: Green Infrastructure Planning; Community Food growing/ education; countryside management expertise (check numbering of sections/ paragraphs in document at this point as there are some anomalies)	Noted – will amend as specified
7.1.3 - We would like BRCC to be a key partner in delivering this Strategy, but require some income to cover initial project development/ grant application costs . We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how this could be achieved.	Noted
8 - We would welcome the inclusion of BRCC alongside FMV & WT re contact points for Green Space and related topics	Noted – will add contact details as specified
Appendix D - Elstow - would be nice for BRCCs input into the Playbuilder provision to be acknowledged; same for Odell, Sharnbrook, Stewartby, Eastcotts, Stevington, Podington, Pavenham	Noted – will acknowledge BRCC in the specified parish entries

Appendix E Action Plan; specific actions which BRCC (particularly GIT) could assist in delivering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSS1 - 3 • GSS2 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 (particularly community consultation/ Spaceshaper; and ecological elements), 16, 17, 18 & 19 through other BRCC colleagues • GSS3 - 23 • GSS4 - 29 We feel that there should also be a specific action re Healthwalks • GSS5 - 31, 33 • GSS6 - 34, 35, • GSS7 - 39 (could incl Healthwalks), 40 (Design service) • GSS9 - 43 (leading funding bids not open to LA) 	Noted
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Borough of Bedford Local Access Forum (LAF)	
General	
What budget is needed to implement this strategy? Can the strategy be realistically implemented with the current and probable future budgets?	Budgetary requirements to implement strategy are as set out in 'Resources' column in Appendix A. Strategy is realistic and deliverable, as majority of proposed actions either have no budgetary implications or can be delivered within existing resource
There seems to be no mention of working with neighbouring authorities in order to promote greenspace and access to it, especially where that greenspace is adjacent to the authority boundaries eg Rowney Warren & Wilstead Wood.	Noted. The Council is a member of the Beds and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium (proposed Local Nature Partnership) and is committed to working with neighbouring authorities where appropriate to achieve its strategic aims.
Section 5 lists the greenspace assets but it shows only a part of these assets. If it doesn't already the Borough as part of its Strategy should set up and maintain a complete register of greenspace assets in the Borough, including Parish and other owned greenspace.	Borough Council already has a GIS layer from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study that has been partly updated. Would think it is possible to provide a register of Council owned greenspace but it is more difficult with privately owned land.
Section 1. Introduction	

<p>1.1 Fig 1. Should Open Access land and Common land be in the list of accessible natural greenspace or informal amenity green space? Should public Rights of Way be considered linear greenspace and included in the table? The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is not shown in the figure but is in the text.</p>	<p>Open Access and Common Land fall within Accessible Natural Green Space type.</p> <p>Rights of Way are a legal definition/ status, not a green space type. Not appropriate to include RoWIP in this Figure.</p>
<p>Consultee's response</p>	<p>Council's response [1]</p>
<p>Section 2. Our Strategy.</p>	
<p>There are many objectives but less on what specific activities are needed to achieve them and less about how progress towards each of these objectives will be measured. There doesn't seem to be any targets set against which progress can be demonstrated. GSS4 4.3 What are high quality play equipment for adults?</p>	<p>The delivery actions, of which there are 45, are listed by aim in Appendix E: Rolling Action Plan.</p> <p>Progress will be monitored and reported on annually and the plan's actions updated and rolled forward accordingly. Although there are no specific targets, the strategy includes a number of key performance indicators, ref: Figure 15, p61.</p>
<p>Section 4. Spatial Planning Context</p>	
<p>Include info from the 2011 census rather than census info which is 10 years older.</p>	<p>At time of production, the 2011 Census data wasn't available. Now that it has been published will seek to update where data available.</p>
<p>Section 5. Public Green Space Assets.</p>	
<p>No mention of Rights of Way volunteers.</p>	<p>Will amend Figure 14, p53 to include rights of way volunteers in list of activities under the Borough Council</p>
<p>Section 7. Delivery</p>	
<p>Table shows Performance Indicators. Targets should be set so that performance can really be judged. Will the results be published?</p>	<p>Targets will be set, where appropriate, following establishment of baseline performance figures for each indicator. Results will be published in annual monitoring report, which LAF will receive, as well as being posted on website.</p>

Brickhill Parish Council	
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Our planning committee met at the end of last week to discuss a number of planning applications and also reviewed the Borough Green Space strategy. The committee group asked me to contact you to make a few of observations about the strategy:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no mention of any of the green spaces in the Brickhill area at all (Waveney Green/ Allotments etc) 	Appendix D summarises the results of the 'Village Profiles' produced as part of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2007. As Brickhill Parish forms part of the urban area of Bedford, it wasn't included in the Village Profiles Study and so is not included in Appendix D.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brickhill was not listed amongst the other parishes list 	See above response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern over the sustainability of the strategy long term, particularly with the planned cuts to services and limited funding available 	<p>Budgetary requirements to implement strategy are as set out in 'Resources' column in Appendix A. Strategy is realistic and deliverable, as majority of proposed actions either have no budgetary implications or can be delivered within existing resource.</p> <p>The high public use/ support for parks and green spaces, coupled with their multiple benefits (ie. social, economic and environmental) put the service in a strong position in terms of value for money</p>
Clapham Parish Council	
Fully support paragraph 3.2.4 (p21) - Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.	Noted
Management Plans (p70) should include Oakley Little Wood, Clapham Park Wood and Twinwood, the latter two being designated Borough wildlife sites	These sites were not included in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2007 recommendations, from which the extracted list in Appendix C/ p70 are

	taken. Therefore, unable to include them here.
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
In addition to the 3 woods, details of natural green space sites in Clapham (p73) should include the field in Milton Road adjacent to Browns Wood, used as an amenity area; the Millennium Park, an environmentally friendly public open space including an orchard of Bedfordshire fruit trees on the allotment site and Riverside Gardens in the High Street, the majority of which is laid to grass. Sports pitches on the Playing Field would preclude breaking up the area with planting as suggested in the survey. Council will consider replacing the sign at the entrance to the Village Hall to include the Playing Field and the sign at the entrance to the allotments to include the Millennium Park in the 2013/14 budget. Council considers that the hedge between the bypass and The Glebe open space is sufficient and the suggested screen planting is unnecessary.	Will amend Appendix D 'entry for Clapham to include the field in Milton Road adjacent to Browns Wood, used as an amenity area; the Millennium Park, an environmentally friendly public open space including an orchard of Bedfordshire fruit trees on the allotment site and Riverside Gardens in the High Street
English Heritage	
We welcome the reference to the historic environment as an environmental benefit (paragraph 1.2.1) and its inclusion as an objective for the strategy (6.3). The historic environment information provided in the context section (4.3) is also welcomed.	Noted
In terms of strategic green space developments (Section 5.2), it is not clear which developments in Shortstown are being referred to in Figure 11. Reference to a proposed development for 650 homes adjacent to the listed airship sheds needs to be clarified, as we are currently opposing proposals for development to the east and south of the sheds.	Further clarification can be provided but there is planning permission for approximately 450 houses to the north east of the sheds. There are also other planning applications currently being considered to the south east of the sheds.
Finally, in Figure 12, we would like to see English Heritage mentioned as a government agency, who can support green space management, given our role in advising on heritage assets including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered parks & gardens.	Will include as specified
Forestry Commission	
In terms of credibility and robustness, we begin with paragraphs 1.2.3 page 13, there are some interesting bullet points here which are clearly designed to highlight the benefits of trees, we would suggest that these need to be a bit more robust as statements which are open to challenge can leave an otherwise good document	Amend to read: '1.2.3 High quality publicly accessible green space adaptation to climate change, including: • Absorbing pollutants,

diminished in credibility. The points would be more robust with some elaboration for example the statement needs to be within a context or a timeframe, or you could have questions around, what is an average family car? what does room size really mean? what sized people and over what time?	<p>including greenhouse gases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing rainwater run off • Providing shade and cooling air temperatures.'
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Biodiversity opportunities related to Figure 7	
There is a considerable amount of the Borough which lies within flood risk areas, the Forestry Commission is currently giving grants for woodland creation which will meet key Water Framework Directives such as reducing run off for water quality and slowing down the flow of water to reduce flooding. It is quite possible that there are opportunities to fulfil a number of objectives related to biodiversity, linking up networks while encouraging landowners to plant trees to meet the WFD objectives.	Noted
Financing	
Whilst the document mentions CIL and Section 106 as potential funding mechanisms the experience of North Northamptonshire in unlocking private funding for woodland creation could provide a useful case study. This relates to the creation of woodland under the Carbon Code whereby investing in woodland creation provides companies and individuals with a tangible way to demonstrate how they are reducing their carbon footprint. Under the Governments Greenhouse Gas reporting Guidelines, all companies have the opportunity to report the benefits of their investment in carbon sequestration through Woodland Carbon Code-certified projects. In June 2012, the UK coalition government announced the introduction of mandatory carbon reporting, requiring around 1,100 of the UK's largest listed companies to report their greenhouse gas emissions every year. The UK Government published the draft Regulation for mandatory greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting in Directors' Reports on 25 July 2012. The draft Regulation and accompanying consultation document are available on the Defra website . This move to report on carbon emissions may offer an alternative funding route to landowners to invest in woodland. Attached is a report recently commissioned by the Forestry Commission on Carbon Sink Forestry and produced by the River Nene Regional Park which you may find of interest.	Noted
In terms of accuracy of the document we need to point out that on page 50 the information on the Forestry Commission appears to suggest that Forest Enterprise is	Amend to read: 'The Forestry Commission Public forests,

a separate body from the Forestry Commission. Forest Enterprise (not agency) is the part of the Forestry Commission which looks after the public forest estate, whilst other parts of the Forestry Commission are concerned with research, plant health, partnerships, grants and regulation in order to protect, improve and expand woodland.	woodlands and other land is managed by Forest Enterprise, an operational arm of the Commission. Forest Enterprise manages Souldrop Wood.'
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
You might find the publication a Case For trees useful - www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/eng-casefortrees.pdf/	Noted
Natural England	
Overall, we welcome your vision for the Borough of Bedford, particularly in terms of your commitment to develop and manage a coherent network of good quality green spaces for the benefit of the environment and local community, and the desire to work with green space providers and other stakeholders to make the best use of resources. We have a few specific recommendations below regarding your aims and objectives.	Noted
GSS3	
We welcome this objective and hope that the local authority will take the opportunity to encourage the local community to identify sites for local green space designation, in accordance with the NPPF.	Noted
We note that it is your intention to provide at least 0.5ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 people. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our own Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt), which advocate that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Every home to be within 300m/ 5 minutes walk of a natural greenspace site of at least 2 ha</i> • <i>Every home to be within 2km of >10ha natural greenspace site</i> • <i>Every home to be within 5km of a >100ha natural greenspace site</i> • <i>Every home to be within 10km of a >500ha natural greenspace site.</i> We would recommend that these standards are reflected in the Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy wherever feasible. Please see our publication Nature Nearby for further details.	Noted. Policy AD28 states that Accessible Natural Greenspace is to be within 5 minutes walk from the development, however, there is no details about the size of the site. This could be incorporated into the document as/ when designing new natural greenspace that it is at least 2 ha in size. The open space standards in Policy AD28 were devised as a result of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.
GSS5	
We encourage measures such as reinstating existing footpaths together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways. Links to other green networks and, where	Noted

appropriate, urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of wider green infrastructure.	
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Whilst we welcome increased rights of way for walkers and cyclists across publicly accessible green spaces, new routes should not result in a loss of biodiversity. Where new rights of way affect local wildlife sites or known bat commuting routes we recommend that the Wildlife Trust be consulted.	Noted
GSS6/GSS8	
<p>We would like to see more emphasis on protecting and enhancing accessible <i>natural</i> green space, and establishing 'coherent ecological networks' as outlined in the NPPF. Your authority should look at ways to improve connectivity between the 100+ locally designated sites where feasible to prevent the Borough of Bedford's wildlife being limited to small pockets of habitat. This is very much the current thinking following the Lawton report, Making Space for Nature (2010) and the subsequent white paper, The Natural Choice, and is reflected in Policy 109 of the NPPF below, which informs that:</p> <p><i>'The planning system should contribute to and enhance the local environment by: minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;'</i></p>	This is addressed in the Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Plan, 2009. Policy AD24 (Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zones) in the Allocations and Designations Plan looks at the areas where there are opportunities for enhancement, creation and/or protection of green infrastructure.
GSS9	
We consider that green space should form an integral part of any community due to its importance to health, wellbeing, landscape and the environment and therefore welcome your commitment to maximise funding and investment opportunities.	Noted
Oakley Parish Council and Councillor Pat Olney (Ward Member)	
p.16 3.3 – how is it decided that accessible green space is redundant?	Objective 3.3 calls for a strategic review of green space to be undertaken in 2013/14. The review will be undertaken in accordance with a methodology for assessing whether or not green space sites are needed. The future use/

	disposal of any site identified as no longer required (and therefore 'redundant'), will be governed by Council policy, including planning and community right to bid/ asset transfer.
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
P21 3.2.4 – I support this wholeheartedly.	Noted
P37 Parks and Gardens – There is only one country park outside the urban area in the rural area. Comment section – a) that most people will travel to a Park. This is not a reason for not to providing a Country Park in the Rural Area. Surely nowadays we should be cutting down travel by car and provision of another Rural Country Park would aid that; b) Marston Vale is also accessible by train. Please note that in the document.	a) Noted b) Amend to read: 'Note: Marston Vale, but easily accessible bypopulation. It is also accessible by train on the Bedford-Bletchley line.'
P39 Comment section Pre-teen provision. All these areas are in the urban area. There are many pre teen areas in the rural area. The large villages have them e.g. Wilstead, Bromham, Riseley, Harrold, Oakley, Stevington, Pavenham, etc. Please note and check all villages if they are to be named or recognition of the larger villages and a comment about smaller villages.	Amend entry under 'Existing sites' column on p39 to read: 'Various (with ... over 80 play sites, predominantly in the urban area; and majority of parish councils managing individual village sites)'
P40 Outdoor Sports Facilities. Comment – No villages mentioned that have publically maintained Sports pitches. e.g Bromham, Oakley, Clapham, Wilstead, Sharnbrook., Pavenham, Stevington, etc. Plus school fields. Please acknowledge village provision. This will add tennis, cricket and football pitches and bowling greens etc. Perhaps asking villages about their sport provision might be helpful.	Amend entry under 'Existing sites' column on p40 to read: 'Note: 1. A number of the larger parish villages provide sports pitches, including football, cricket, tennis and bowls. 2. The Borough public sector provision is supplemented by private.....'
P41 – Allotments: Again no mention of Rural villages. Clapham, Oakley and other villages have allotments or aspire to them eg. Stevington.	Table already includes reference to 'Various town and parish councils provide sites for residents'
P50 – Private Landowners: Permissive footpaths and also statutory footpaths.	Amend to include as specified

<p>P57 – Poor Access to urban areas. Please also include poor access to rural areas from the urban area. We have a beautiful rural area criss-crossed by footpaths, bridleways, accessible woods and meadows and access to the River Ouse.</p>	<p>The areas for improvement on p57 are taken from results of consultation undertaken on Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2007. The issue wasn't highlighted as an 'Area for improvement' and so cannot be added.</p>
<p>Consultee's response</p>	<p>Council's response [1]</p>
<p>P65 – HECA4 Please include rush making at Pavenham and lacemaking in all the villages. Ancient woods Browns Wood, Judges Spinney, Little Oakley Wood, Odell wood etc.</p>	<p>Amend to include as specified</p>
<p>P69 Please include Stevington Holy Well and Church and, the cross, Baptist Chapel Stevington. Oakley twin bridges, church and Oakley House, Felmersham Church, Odell Church</p>	<p>The key of Historic Environment Opportunity Areas on pp69-70 relate to Figure 17, p67, which was taken from the adopted Borough of Bedford Green Infrastructure Plan, 2009. These features weren't included in this Plan and so cannot be added.to this figure/ key.</p>
<p>P70 - a) Management Plans to include Browns Wood, Judges Spinney, Pavenham Bury and other woods we own in the Rural area. b) Biddenham Clapham linking Green spaces via Oakley. i.e. Biddenham, Oakley, Clapham.</p>	<p>The recommendations on p70 are taken from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2007. As these sites didn't feature in the recommended list, they cannot be added now. Actions 15 and 17, p85 of the Strategy identify those sites which the Borough Council will produce and implement management plans for, including such as rural sites as Browns Wood and Judges Spinney..</p>
<p>P71- Allotment needs for villages e.g. Stevington, other villages?</p>	<p>Action 29, p86 of the Strategy identifies the need to undertake a review of community food growing provision and production of plan to address identified areas of need. The needs of villages will be picked up in this process.</p>

P73 – Clapham Meadow and part woodland south of Browns Wood. This is open ground and well used by the public and considered by everyone as part of Browns Wood extension.	Noted – unclear what is being sought by comment
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
<p>P77 – Oakley: Please include Allotments and Community Orchard, Play area on the green for 0 to 13 years, Sports Hall at Lincroft open to the community, Sports Field – cricket, tennis, netball and football and upgraded changing rooms. Meadows by the river at the twin bridges, Linch Furlong with picnic benches by Stafford Bridge School Sports Fields used Saturdays and Sundays.</p> <p>Browns wood and Judges Spinney need a borough management plan.</p> <p>MUGA - Lincroft is applying for funds for this. Map is included.</p>	Will amend Oakley entries as specified
P78 – Pavenham a borough management plan is needed for The Bury.	<p>The recommendations on p70 are taken from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2007. As these sites didn't feature in the recommended list, they cannot be added now.</p> <p>Action 17, p85 details those woodland sites, which are considered a priority for production of management plans, given their scale and social/ environmental value. The Bury will be considered for inclusion in subsequent reviews of this action, once plans have been completed for the main priority sites.</p>
P85 – 17 Please include The Bury Pavenham	<p>Action 17, p85 details those woodland sites, which are considered a priority for production of management plans, given their scale and social/ environmental value. The Bury will be considered for inclusion in subsequent reviews of this action, once plans have been completed for the main priority sites.</p>

p87 – 36 Include Bromham Mill	Action 36, p87 relates to priority green space heritage projects to be developed and implemented 2012-14. Will consider need/ opportunity to include Bromham Mill in future annual reviews of this action.
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Sport England	
We welcome the holistic approach to providing and protecting green spaces within the Borough, including outdoor places for sport including playing fields, artificial grass pitches, multi-use games areas, tennis courts and bowling greens as the delivery of sport in the local area relies on the provision of high quality accessible sports facilities.	Noted
<p>Our main concern with regards to the methodology employed in developing this strategy is that for outdoor sport it relies on audit work carried out in 2007 for the production of the Bedford Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Sport England advocate that playing pitch assessments should be carried out or reviewed within a period of three years in order to ensure that the study is based on up to date and reliable data. Within a period of five years (i.e. since the last audit of outdoor facilities/pitches for sport) there will be changes not only to supply (pitches lost, new pitches created, pitches changed from one sport to another, management changes to pitches etc.), but also to demand (changes in participation rates, demographic changes etc.). We made similar comments with regard to the consultation on the draft Playing Pitch Strategy for Bedford (March 2012), in our response dated 4 May 2012, and I enclose a copy of those comments for your information.</p> <p>Sport England would therefore strongly recommend that Bedford Borough Council carry out a full Playing Pitch Strategy as soon as possible in order to ensure that the evidence base which underpins the Green Spaces Strategy is as up to date and therefore robust. I enclose a link to the Sport England website guidance on 'Protecting Playing Fields' which includes a link to the 'Towards a Level Playing Field' guidance which sets out the methodology for producing a Playing Pitch Strategy. This guidance was published in 2003 and is currently in the process of being revised: http://www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/putting_policy_into_practice/playing_fields.aspx</p>	The Playing Pitch Strategy included consultation with football and cricket leagues and the Football Association and Bedfordshire Cricket Association. While it was not a full audit, it is anticipated that a full study will be carried out in the future.

Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Wilshamstead Parish Council	
What budget is needed to implement this strategy? Can the strategy be realistically implemented with the current and probable future budgets?	Budgetary requirements to implement strategy are as set out in 'Resources' column in Appendix A. Strategy is realistic and deliverable, as majority of proposed actions either have no budgetary implications or can be delivered within existing resource
There seems to be no mention of working with neighbouring authorities in order to promote greenspace and access to it, especially where that greenspace is adjacent to the authority boundaries, eg. Rowney Warren & Wilstead Wood.	Noted. The Council is a member of the Beds and Luton Local Nature Partnership (previously Green Infrastructure Consortium) and is committed to working with neighbouring authorities where appropriate to achieve its strategic aims.
Section 5 lists the greenspace assets but it shows only a part of these assets, if it does not already the Borough as part of its Strategy should set up and maintain a complete register of greenspace assets in the Borough, including parish and other owned greenspace.	Borough Council already has a GIS layer from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study that has been partly updated. Would think it is possible to provide a register of Council owned greenspace but it is more difficult with privately owned land.
Section 1. Introduction	
Page 9. 1.1 Fig 1. Should Open Access land and Common land be in the list of accessible natural greenspace or informal amenity green space?	Open Access and Common Land fall within Accessible Natural Green Space type.
Should public Rights of Way be considered linear greenspace and included in the table? Page 11.	Assuming this comment relates to the table Figure 1, p9, then 'no', as rights of Way are a legal definition/status, not a green space type.
The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is not shown in the figure but is in the text on page 10.	Noted, will include plan in list under 'Evidence base' in Figure 2, p11
Section 2. Our Strategy.	
There are many objectives but less on what specific activities are needed to achieve them and less about how	The delivery actions, of which there are 45, are listed

progress towards each of these objectives will be measured. There doesn't seem to be any targets set against which progress can be demonstrated.	by aim in Appendix E: Rolling Action Plan. Progress will be monitored and reported on annually and the plan's actions updated and rolled forward accordingly. Although there are no specific targets, the strategy includes a number of key performance indicators, ref: Figure 15, p61.
Consultee's response	Council's response [1]
Page 16. What are high quality play equipment for adults?	High quality play equipment for adults relates, includes such basic exercise apparatus as used on trim trails (ie. pull up bars/ step up blocks/ etc) or more sophisticated outdoor gym apparatus (eg. cross trainers).
Section 3. Policy Context	
Page 25 3.3.16 The parish Wilstead is in Wilshamstead.	Noted
Section 4. Spatial Planning Context	
Page 26. Include info from the 2011 census rather than census info which is 10 years older.	At time of production, the 2011 Census data wasn't available. Now that it has been published will seek to update where data available
Section 5. Public Green Space Assets.	
Page 53. No mention of Rights of Way volunteers.	Noted, amend Figure 14, p53 to include rights of way volunteers in list of activities under the Borough Council
Page 44. Wixams. No mention of the planned Landscape Enhancement Area also called Wilstead Community Woodland, section 106 funded, and access to it.	Noted, amend entry under 'Green spaces provided' to read: 'Notable featuresand high quality play sites; and Wilstead Community Woodland Landscape Enhancement Area.'
Section 7. Delivery	
Page 61. Table shows Performance Indicators. Targets	Targets will be set, where

<p>should be set so that performance can really be judged. Will the results be published?</p>	<p>appropriate, following establishment of baseline performance figures for each indicator. Results will be published in annual monitoring report, which LAF will receive, as well as being posted on website.</p>
<p>Consultee's response</p>	<p>Council's response [1]</p>
<p>Appendix D Wilstead. 'There is potential to create a new park in a new location' in the east of the village' Where is this?</p>	<p>This very provisional recommendation was made by independent greenspace auditors with an acknowledgement that there was not a comprehensive understanding of relevant opportunities.</p>
<p>Have Parish Council's been asked if this 2007 info is still correct and up to date?</p>	<p>No, action 23, p86 identifies need to review all deficiencies/ recommendations in Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study: Village Profiles 2007 to be undertaken in 2013/14</p>

Equality Analysis

Title of activity: Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy 2012-21
<p>Summary of activity: The Borough of Bedford Green Space Strategy (GSS) has been produced by Bedford Borough Council to provide a 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.</p> <p>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 environmental, economic and social 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 in its delivery.</p>
Lead officer: Joel Carré, Head of Communities
<p>Equality analysis team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clive Betts (Grounds Maintenance Manager) • Simon Fisher (Parks and Countryside Manager)

Relevance	
An equality analysis of this activity is required.	X

Level 1 Equality Analysis

Scope of equality analysis
<p>Impacted by activity: The scope of GSS is Borough wide and focuses on the following publicly accessible green space types in public, voluntary & community and private sector ownership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and public gardens • Accessible natural green space • Outdoor play provision • Informal amenity green space • Outdoor sports facilities • Churchyards and cemeteries • Allotments <p>The main stakeholder groups impacted on by the Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current and future users/ non users of the above green space types. - Borough Council services, including Leisure and Culture, Parks and

Countryside, Grounds Maintenance, Property, Children and Youth and Adult and Bereavement

- Other publicly accessible green space providers in public, voluntary and community and private sectors; and notably Marston Vale Trust, Wildlife Trust, town, parish and urban community councils
- Bedford Borough NHS
- Government agencies, including Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Natural England, English Heritage and Sport England

The GSS provides the supporting technical evidence base for publicly accessible green space for the Bedford Development Framework (LDF), including defining community need and investment priorities. The Borough Council has a statutory duty under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to prepare an LDF for the Borough, which comprises a folder of documents for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.

Protected equality groups:

The GSS is relevant to **all** protected equality groups, as it is underpinned by the principle of providing publicly accessible green space for all sections of the community, irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc.

The outcomes of the plan are a range of green space actions (both strategic and operational; and practical and promotional) which meet the environmental, social and economic needs of the community, both now and in the future.

Despite the intention of the GSS to provide access for all, it will always be constrained to varying degrees by issues of legislation, land ownership rights, land management practice and landscape suitability (eg. topography/ geology) and available resources.

General Equality Duties:

The GSS is intended to be fully inclusive, making it easier for all sections of the community to access and enjoy the Borough's publicly accessible green space through improved green space planning, design, physical infrastructure (ie. signage/ bins and benches); engagement of volunteers/ communities in its management and better information on its availability in a variety of formats. Wider benefits delivered by the Strategy include improvements in public health through increased physical activity and mental well-being; and greater social inclusion and biodiversity.

Evidence

What relevant evidence is there about the activity?

The GSS's initial rolling action plan focuses on actions which relate to Borough Council green space holdings. Over time, the Borough Council hopes that other green space providers will be able to submit additional delivery actions for the plan.

The following green space user/ non user evidence base has been used to inform the GSS's production and is of relevance to this equality assessment:

- IPSOS Mori Social Value of Green Space, Oct 2012
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for Bedford Borough - Parts One and Two, 2007
- Natural England, Defra and Forestry Commission, Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey, 2010/ 11
- Countryside Agency, Research Note (CRN94), What About Us?, July 2005 – Diversity Review Parts 1 and 2
- Bedford Borough Citizens Panel Summer 2011 Survey
- Anecdotal evidence from recorded Borough Council parks and countryside service complaints/ requests
- Census 2011

What does this evidence tell you about the different protected groups?

Outlined below is a summary of the 2011 Census headline results:

- Ageing Population – Bedford Borough's total population rose by 9,600 or 6.7% between 2001 and 2011, but people aged 65+ rose 13% and 85+ by 28%
- The Borough's 65+ and 85+ populations both increased at a faster rate than the England averages.
- The non-White British population increased by 16,400 to 28.5% of the population (2001 – 19.2%)
- The White British population declined by 6,900 to 71.5% of the population (2001 – 80.8%)
- Bedford Borough ranks 48th highest of 348 local authorities in the % non-White British population
- The Borough has an extremely diverse minority ethnic composition and ranks in the Top 100 local authorities in the % of all 17 ethnic minority categories - with the exceptions of Gypsy/Irish Traveller (207th) and Chinese (101st)
- People with a limiting long term illness or disability rose from 22,740 (15.4%) in 2001 to 25,200 (16.0%) in 2011. This includes 11,540 aged 16-64 (10.9% of the 16-64 population)

In 2011, 91% of the 502 respondents to the Bedford Borough Citizen's Panel Summer Survey reported they had visited a park or green space in the last 12 months. The recorded levels of satisfaction for the quality of the parks and green spaces was very high (35% very satisfied & 55% fairly satisfied). The most visited and satisfied park/green space in the Borough in the preceding 12 months was The Embankment.

There is very little direct green space user evidence relating to Protected Groups, as neither the national or local datasets are Protected Group specific. Anecdotally, based on the national countryside visitor survey data, the lowest number of countryside green space visits came from the oldest age groups,

BME groups and members of the DE socio-economic group categories. National research also shows that those aged 65+/ under 16 years and BME and disabled groups are all under represented in terms of countryside use levels. These national countryside user trends can be assumed to be reflected locally. Anecdotally the use of the Borough's urban green spaces would appear to be more representative of the local population profile, though once again these is no empirical evidence to support this.

What further research or data do you need to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the activity?

There appears to be no explicit research/ data needs to fill gaps at the strategic level, in terms of the Strategy's proposed vision, aims and objectives. However, when these strategic elements are translated into site/ facility/ activity specific delivery actions, further audience development work is needed to increase understanding of both green space user and non user groups, in terms of their respective reasons for use/ non-use of specific sites and how their respective needs could be met through changes in the sites' design, management and promotion. This information should be obtained through user/ non-user questionnaire surveys, as part of the rolling site management planning and review process. In conducting these surveys, particular focus should be given to establishing the views of Protected Groups where these can be reasonably obtained.

Have you thought about commissioning new data or research?

Yes, as above, subject to available resources.

Adverse affect on equality

The GSS has **no** adverse affect on equality

Positive affect on equality

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The GSS has a specific aim (ref: GSS1) and set of supporting objectives and delivery actions to make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space

2. Advance equality of opportunity

Access for all is a key principle underpinning the GSS, both in terms of current and future users. The GSS has a specific aim (ref: GSS2) and set of supporting objectives and delivery actions, such as moving to a more plan led approach based on stakeholder engagement, which will result in improvements to the accessibility and use of green spaces by all sections of the community and especially by under-represented groups (where these are able to be identified).

3. Foster good relations (including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between different protected groups)

The GSS has a specific aim (ref: GSS1) and set of supporting objectives and delivery actions to make all sections of the Borough community feel welcome, safe and secure when using publicly accessible green space. Objective 1.1 is to understand and address anti-social behaviour issues associated with the Borough's green spaces, while objective 1.3 is to develop and deliver high standards of inclusivity in the site's management. Objective 4.2 seeks to promote and support use of green space for a range of health and well being activities for all ages and abilities.

The GSS has a second aim (ref. GSS2) and set of supporting objectives and delivery actions to engage green space providers, local residents and wider community in the planning, development and management of green space.

By adopting the principle of access for all/ inclusivity in the implementation of these aims and objectives both through the planning, design and management of green spaces and their use for community activities and events, the strategy will help to foster good community relations between different sections of the community, including those from Protected Groups.

4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

By adopting an open and inclusive approach in the planning, design and management of green spaces, disabled people will have the opportunity to engage positively with other stakeholder groups in all stages of the process.

5. Take account of disabled people's disabilities

By engaging disabled people, as stakeholders, in the planning, design and management of green spaces, their needs can be better understood and provided for.

Summary of analysis

The GSS is based on the principle of fostering and supporting inclusivity, so that the Borough's green spaces can be accessed and enjoyed by all sections of the community and meet their environmental, social and economic needs both now and in the future.

The analysis shows that the GSS has no identified adverse equality impact on any of the Protected Groups and contributes positively to each of the 5 positive equality objectives.

The analysis identifies the need to carry out further audience development work associated with site/ facility/ activity specific actions in the GSS's annual rolling action plan. This research is needed in order to gain a better understanding of the views of users and non users, including those from

Protected Groups and to use the findings to influence future site planning, development, management and promotion.

Despite the intention of the GSS to provide 'access for all', it will always be constrained to varying degrees by issues of legislation, land ownership rights, land management practice and landscape suitability (eg. topography/ geology) and available resources.

No further equality analysis work is required.

Analysis Findings

Analysis findings

Positive impact

The above analysis shows that the GSS is based on an inclusive principle of 'access for all' and will have a positive impact on equality, in terms of all Protected Groups. The proposed actions in the equality action plan at the end of this assessment will help to maximise the positive impacts of the Strategy.

Monitoring and review

The action plan will be reviewed and updated annually by the Parks and Countryside Managers, with progress reported annually to the Head of Communities.

Action plan

Issues	Actions	Target date	Lead	Resources required
Adverse impact				
Opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations				
Engagement and involvement	<p>1. When conducting user/ non user surveys for specific green space sites, use reasonable steps to record whether respondent is from a Protected Group.</p> <p>2. When undertaking specific green space audits as part of site management planning/ project development processes, seek to engage disabled group involvement.</p> <p>3. Seek to ensure Protected Group are reasonably represented in the planning, development and</p>	Ongoing as opportunity/ need arises	Simon Fisher, Parks and Countryside Manager	<p>Time allocation in staff work programme</p> <p>Trained volunteers to assist staff with user/ non user surveys/ audits</p>

	management of green space plans and projects			
Dissemination of analysis				
Equality information, data and evidence				

Sign off
Name of Executive or Assistant Director: Stewart Briggs or Steve Tomlin
Date: 31 January 2013
Review date: 31 January 2014