

ENV Policies ENVIRONMENT



POLICY ENV1 BUCKINGHAM GREEN RING

A. The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the establishment of a Green Ring around the town, as shown on the Policies Map, comprising a variety of green infrastructure assets, including formal open space, a footpath/cycle network, and land of biodiversity value.

B. Development proposals that lie within the broad location of the Green Ring will be required to align their public open space requirements with its objectives, so that they contribute to its successful formation and maintenance. Proposals that will lead to the unnecessary loss of Green Ring land or features that will prejudice the completion of the Green Ring will not be supported.

1. Buckingham has identified as a historic market town with strong connections to the agricultural communities surrounding the settlement which provides key services. The

river running through the town has provided employment and leisure opportunities to the residents of the town over centuries.

2. In recognising the need for sustainable development, the residents of Buckingham through consultation have stressed the importance of open green space and the easy access to the surrounding countryside. This has perhaps been heightened since the BNDP 2015 as a result of lockdowns, where residents became much more aware of the possibilities for access and leisure surrounding their homes. As the town grows it is important to ensure that all residents retain so far as possible the benefits of living on the edge of the working countryside. However, with expansion of the town outwards, the distance to access such open spaces increases for many, and the temptation simply to get into a car and access countryside also increases.
3. The policy therefore establishes the principle of the Green Ring at Buckingham as a green infrastructure project and identifies its broad location on the Policies Map. It requires all development proposals within its broad location to make provision for its delivery and management and it resists the loss of any Green Ring land or associated features that cannot be justified.
4. The planning of green infrastructure is an increasingly important element of national policy. The NPPF acknowledges this type of infrastructure can serve many simultaneous purposes, from providing a local recreational asset with health and wellbeing benefits, to enhancing biodiversity, protecting visual amenity and adapting to climate change. Its two most important features, however, are in creating easier access around the town and in protecting existing and/or providing new amenity for existing residential areas.
5. In providing an inner and outer ring of open green space, connection to countryside and wildlife can be maintained; whether through

providing “green spokes” to the surrounding countryside, and/or a circular or semi-circular space within easy distance of developments, allowing exploration beyond the defined green space within developments. This would build on the existing Buckingham circular walk and the new Buckinghamshire Greenway

6. Wherever possible this will allow existing green space to be retained allowing for natural permeable drainage opportunities it provides as well as the preservation of flora and fauna and the green canopy.
7. Buckingham’s rapid development over the last 50 years has meant that developments have been placed on the outer edges of the town, but also that much infill has occurred within the town such as the Heartlands development. In order to ensure that further development does not prevent good access to semi-continuous green space, there are roughly two rings – an inner and an outer, connected by green spokes.
8. The policy will bring additional coherence to both the old and new designation of Local Green Spaces not only as standalone spaces but as part of a connected network retaining as much as possible the feeling of being “surrounded by green” wherever in the town you live and/or work.
9. The Plan has identified a significant amount of potential brownfield sites within the town centre that could come forward as development sites; therefore it is not felt that the allocation of Local Green Space will in anyway prevent sustainable development within Buckingham, but enhance the sense of place for such development.
10. The Green Ring will become a defining landscape feature of the settlement of Buckingham in years to come. It is accepted that its completion will take many years beyond the plan period and will rely upon future devel-

opment proposals and the support of relevant landowners. However, significant segments between the existing and proposed open space provisions will be delivered in the plan period through the completion of the new open space and redevelopment around the existing open space area.

Outer Ring

11. North East Corner – the allocations here are of Holloway Spinney; Land behind Watlow Gardens and Manor Road; Maids Moreton Avenue, and Land opposite Wharfside Place; this will provide a green corridor at the edge of the boundary between Maids Moreton and Buckingham, as well as a green corridor for those in Page Hill and Moreton Road residential areas to connect with Canalside area and on to Bourton Park’ Ouse Valley Way and the Circular Walk. The Land opposite Wharfside Place and Maids Moreton Avenue retains the partial greenframe around Page Hill, a development that did not provide any play facilities etc when it was built. It makes for a pleasant walk from Page Hill into the town centre. Maids Moreton Avenue provides a green corridor/spoke between the Moreton Road residential area and the town centre, or connecting to Bourton Park through Stratford Fields and the Ouse Valley Way. It also complements the Buckingham Sandpit, a site of geological note and designated as a Local Nature Reserve. It provides a green corridor to the pedestrian entrance to Buckingham Primary School.

Linden Village

12. The land at March Edge is already designated as Local Green Space, not only for the leisure use for residents of Linden Village but also because of the connectivity provided between this residential area and Bourton Park and the Ouse Valley Way/Bernwood Jubilee Way and the Circular Walk, providing not just wider open green space and recreational opportunities but also a green corridor for active trans-



port to the town centre and to the Canal-side area and beyond.

13. It also provides a green corridor route to Bourton Meadow School.

Canalside Area

14. This will provide greater access to the Buckingham Arm of the Grand Junction Canal and the Ouse Valley Way as it heads into more open countryside. It also will provide access to the Ouse Valley Way as it connects with the Bernwood Jubilee Way and bridle path, which crosses the A421 with a Pegasus Crossing and into the Lace Hill residential area.

Lace Hill

15. The bridle path follows the line of the A421/413 by pass and the SUDs on the Lace Hill development. The addition of the Land behind Bobbins Way would allow an alternative route leading more directly to the Lace Hill Academy and the Lace Hill Community Centre and the associated football pitch. This strip of land affords views over the surrounding countryside and is safe and free from traffic. It also affords residents of Lace Hill and attractive route to these facilities. It also provides a significant buffer between development and open countryside for wildlife.

Continuation of Bridle Path to Osier Way

16. From Lace Hill the A413 can be crossed via Pegasus Crossing and the bridle path followed behind the Wipac Factory, behind the Industrial Estate until reaching the new residential development at Osier Way.
17. There is a path from here to the new Mount Pleasant Campus of the University of Buckingham or the path can be followed and the by-pass crossed at the Mount Pleasant residential area and followed down to Lenborough Road with the existing Mount Pleasant Local Green Space to the left hand side; or

the Railway Walk can be access slightly further down the by-pass.

Railway Walk [new designation].

18. This is an important green corridor/spoke as well as being an important leisure and wildlife area. It will provide a green active transport route for University students from the new Mount Pleasant Campus to the Hunter Street campus, or via the circular walk behind the Royal Latin Playing Fields, the Verney Park campus.
 19. It provides a similar function for Mount Pleasant residents, and also going forward to the new residents on Osier Way development.
 20. It also stretches beyond access to the town centre and provides green connectivity to the new St Rumbold's Fields development, as well as all the residential areas of Tingewick Road. It is hoped that this will provide a green route for students for the Royal Latin School and also the Buckingham School secondary schools.
 21. It then continues as the Bernwood Jubilee Way linking Buckingham to the village of Radclive to the west.
- #### The North
22. The north is largely green agricultural area with the important green spoke of Stowe Avenue, the Ouse Valley Way path running alongside the road, but with a considerable green buffer. To the west of the start of Stowe Avenue, is the Buckingham cemetery, an important green space and of historic significance. To the right hand side, a strip of green land runs behind Adam Close, allowing residents of the Western Avenue residential areas, access to Stow Avenue.
 23. This area is protected by the proximity not only to Stowe Avenue but to Stowe Landscape Gardens and the Stowe School significant listed assets.
 24. The Avenue gives access to the village of

Chackmore.

Inner Ring

25. Stratford Fields, Bourton Park, Heartlands, Skateboard Park and Play Area and Chandos Park make up the core of an inner ring of green with additional benefit of providing access to the Great River Ouse running through the town; but in addition there are other significant green area encircling the town centre. Connected by the Circular Walk Bourton Park [which contains the community led Buckingham Edible Woodland] leads to Verney Park green space, providing significant recreational space for ball games, exercise and dog walking for residents of the St Bernardine's Way development as well as Badgers and homes on Bourton Road as well as the University students living at the Verney Park campus.
26. If the Circular Walk is followed it leads past the Royal Latin Playing Fields before joining with the Railway Walk green corridor.

Heartlands;

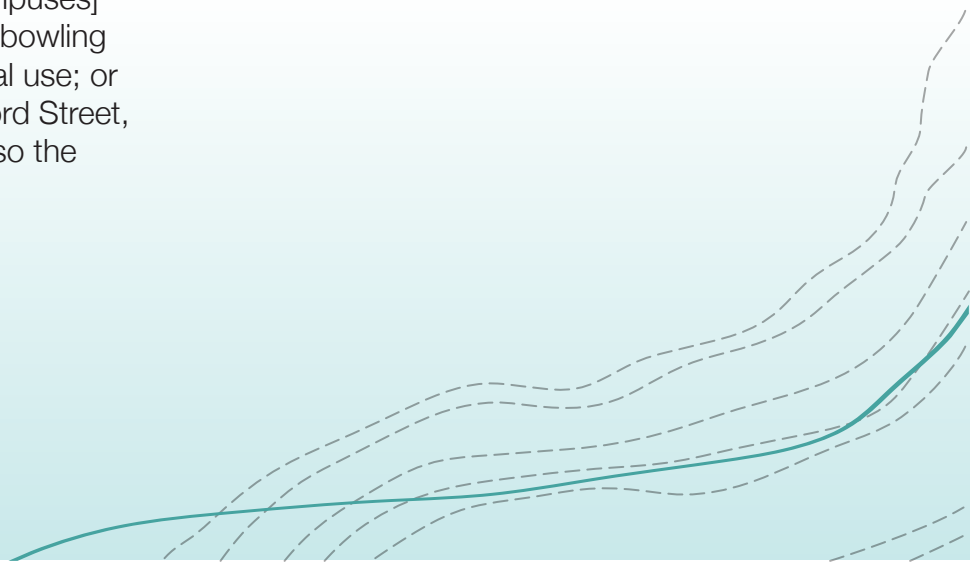
27. Skateboard Park and Play Area and the Verney Close Local Green Space provide a green active transport corridor to the town centre from London Road and the secondary schools, as well as Chandos park and the George Grenville Academy, as well as providing recreational and wildlife areas. In addition, the Heartlands is partially buffered by the Bourton Road Allotments, which provide a significant area of interesting green space very close to the town centre.

Chandos Park

28. Chandos Park can be accessed from Chandos Road [close to both George Grenville Academy and the Royal Latin School both of which have extensive green campuses] via the road beside the tennis and bowling clubs providing specific recreational use; or via the Chris Nicholls Walk from Ford Street, running alongside the River and also the

University Playing Fields at Ford Meadow – a significant green space and also a natural flood plain. Much of the permeable surfaces of the park provide natural drainage from river flooding at certain times of the year.

29. Chandos Park provides green connectivity to the University of Buckingham's Hunter Street campus; the Railway Walk and also to Berties' Walk which continues alongside the river to Bath Lane.
30. From the University campus, the old Graveyard can be assessed, with very notable trees as well as heritage assets providing a tranquil oasis; from there a short walk leads to the Church of St Peter and St Paul and the designated Village Green space. This is in the heart of the Conservation Area.
31. Western Residential Area
32. There are exiting designations for Overn Place Recreation Ground and also for the Land behind Castle House which provides significant tree canopy near the town centre but also a green corridor between the long-stay car park on Western Avenue and the new Summer Hill residential area [which as town centre housing does not have significant green space within development] as well as the Town Centre.



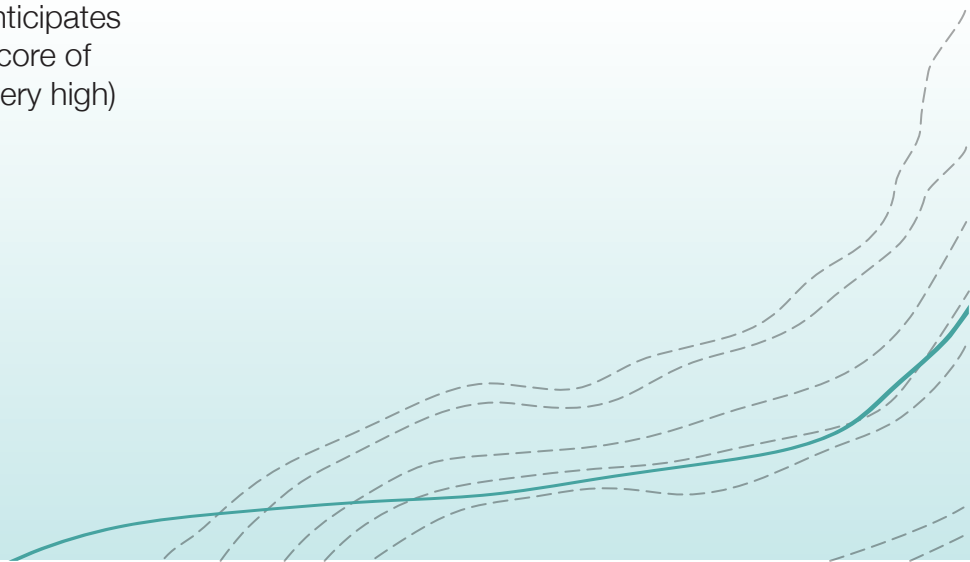
POLICY ENV2 GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. The neighbourhood area contains a variety of green and blue infrastructure that provides an environmental support system for the community and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan designates this as a Network, as shown on the Green Infrastructure Map, which comprises land with known biodiversity value, including a Local Nature Reserve, priority habitats, woodlands, significant hedgerows and lines of trees, streams and other water bodies, wildlife corridors, sections of the Buckinghamshire Greenway, the Buckingham Green Ring, as well as open amenity and Local Green space.**
- B. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required, where relevant, to have full regard to creating, maintaining and improving the Network, including delivering a minimum of 10% net gain to general biodiversity value and wildlife connectivity, in the design of their layouts, landscaping schemes and public open space and play provisions.**
- C. Proposals that will harm or lead to the loss of land, or existing features such as mature trees, hedgerows and other landscape elements worthy of retention, lying within the Network and that will undermine its integrity will not be supported. Development proposals that will lead to the extension of the Network will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.**
- D. Where relevant, proposals should provide a minimum 15m protection buffer around Local Wildlife Sites and Biodi-**

versity Notification Sites within which complementary habitat creation should be provided.

- E. The Policies Map shows those parts of the designated Network that are known or likely to have biodiversity value either as habitat areas; as hedgerows or lines of trees; or as streams and rivers. When calculating Biodiversity Net Gain requirements using DEFRA's latest metric, development proposals located within or adjoining that part of the Network should anticipate achieving at least a medium distinctiveness multiplier score.**
- F. Biodiversity should be provided on-site wherever possible. Off-site measures will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the mitigation hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable net gains on-site have been exhausted or where greater gains can be delivered off-site through maximising local place making and nature improvement opportunities.**

1. The policy refines adopted VALP Policy I1 on Green Infrastructure by identifying the Green Infrastructure Network of Buckingham. Green infrastructure can be broadly defined as a network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings. This includes parks, public open spaces, allotments, wildlife corridors, watercourses, play areas, playing fields as well as informal open land and associated features such as trees, hedgerows, ponds, green roofs and green walls. It also includes Railway Walk which forms part of the Buckinghamshire Greenway. The Policies Map shows the full extent of

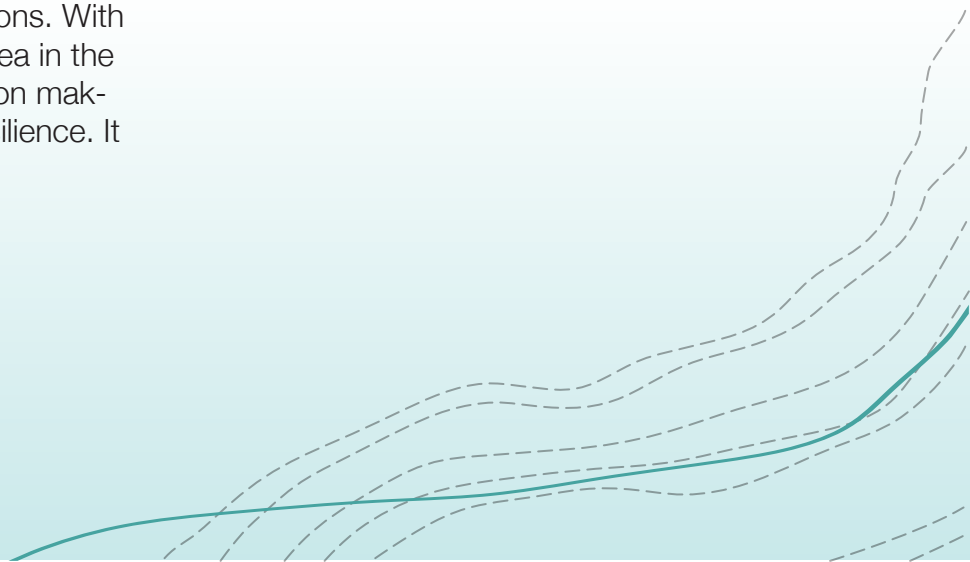
- the Network, which allows applications to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. These assets are highly valued by local residents consistently evidenced during consultation of the project.
2. The policy requires that all development proposals that lie within the network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. This may mean that development layouts are designed to contribute to the network's effectiveness.
 3. Clauses D and E respond to the biodiversity net gain (BNG) provisions of the Environment Act 2021, which became a statutory part of plan making and development management in February 2024 and April 2024 for small sites. The BNG Metric will provide the means for applicants to calculate the baseline biodiversity value of the application site in determining the net gain requirement of their proposals. The Policies Map makes a distinction between those parts of the Network that have, or are likely to have, existing biodiversity value, based on published mapped data and observation, and those that do not. Green infrastructure is multi-functional but some features – for example amenity and formal recreational land – may have less biodiversity value than the rest of the Network or will be suited to improving that value by the nature of their use. The areas identified as 'amenity open space' consist of open spaces with recreational or social value.
 4. Clause D relates to those parts of the Network of biodiversity value. Given it includes all defined Priority Habitats and semi-natural habitats, native hedgerows and trees and natural water bodies, the clause anticipates that the distinctiveness multiplier score of the BNG Metric (from very low to very high) will be at least medium.
 5. Finally, the policy sets out how the loss of biodiversity value will be addressed through a sequential approach. The new biodiversity net gain requirement of at least 10% (as set out by the Environment Act 2021) should be delivered either onsite or within or adjoining the Network so that the benefits of development are accrued as close as possible. However, it is accepted that the Network in the neighbourhood area may not be suited to delivering every type of required off-site gain. In such cases Clause E allows for the gain to be delivered in adjoining neighbourhood areas to Buckingham or, as a final resort, on land elsewhere further afield with preference remaining to land which lies in closest proximity to the neighbourhood area.
 6. For proposals seeking to deliver biodiversity net gain within the neighbourhood area, as per Clauses F in the policy, the Design Code indicates several areas which are suited in principle for achieving these improvements.
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POLICY ENV3 URBAN GREENING

A. All proposals for major development should contribute to the greening of Buckingham by including urban greening measures in the design of the buildings, hard surfacing and landscape schemes. Housing proposals or mixed use proposals that are housing-led should meet or exceed a Buckingham Urban Greening Factor of 0.4. All other major commercial development or buildings in other uses should meet or exceed a Buckingham Urban Greening Factor of 0.3. Other development proposals are encouraged to maximise opportunities to contribute to the greening of Buckingham and can use the Urban Greening Factor measure to demonstrate this.

is therefore reasonable to adopt a these UGF targets and, given land values and the positive approach taken to enabling new development, there is no reason to believe that the target will undermine the viability of new developments. In addition, developments of any scale are encouraged to consider incorporating greening measures in the design of their schemes and can use the model proposed here to guide decisions.

1. This policy is inspired by the London Plan principle of an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) to encourage more and better urban greening as the prime means of increasing climate resilience. Buckingham is an urban area and therefore with the same need and potential for this approach to help the town adapt to climate change.
2. The model assists in determining the appropriate provision of urban greening for new developments and is explained in detail in Appendix E. Urban greening should be a fundamental and integral element of site and building design in the future incorporating measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage.
3. The policy sets targets for new residential (a factor of 0.4) and commercial (0.3) uses and only applies to major applications. With the intensification in parts of the area in the coming years, there is a premium on making a step change in its climate resilience. It



POLICY ENV4 PRIVATE OUTDOOR SPACE

A. Development proposals will be supported provided they supply good quality private outdoor space, which will provide an area where people can spend quality time and enjoy their surroundings. In order to achieve a good living standard for future users of proposed development and its neighbours, it should be demonstrated that amenity has been considered and appropriate solutions have been incorporated into schemes.

1. This policy retains the made neighbourhood plan policy provision which seeks to secure development where private external space is demonstrated which could be used for a combination of activities, e.g. the cultivation of plants and vegetables; children to play; washing to be dried and hobbies to be pursued as well as providing an attractive setting for a dwelling and contributing to the overall green space of the area. In respect of proposed family dwellings the Town Council would generally expect to see the provision of private garden space (normally at the rear), of at least 11 metres in length; plot shape may allow for alternative distribution of equivalent amount of private space as illustrated in the Buckingham Design Code.
2. Gardens should be of appropriate quality i.e. lawned and landscaped to provide a pleasant view and have regard to topography, shadowing and privacy.
3. Where there is an existing tree within a proposed plot the type, size and age of the tree should be taken into account in the garden provision and made a feature of the garden.
4. In respect of proposals relating to flats, provision can be provided in the form of a communal outdoor space and/or in providing other areas for example balconies.

POLICY ENV5 LOCAL GREEN SPACES

A. The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Policies Map:

- A. Land behind Watlow Gardens**
- B. Holloway Spinney**
- C. Maids Moreton Avenue**
- D. Bridge Street Skate Park and adjacent play area**
- E. Railway Walk & Scenic Walk**
- F. St Rumbold's Field (site of St Rumbold's Well)**
- G. Chandos Park**
- H. Bourton Park**
- I. Recreational strip of land behind Bobbins Way on Lace Hill**
- J. Verney Park, Bernadine's Way**
- K. Heartlands Park**
- L. Land south of Page Hill Avenue**
- M. Overn Avenue greenspace**
- N. Land behind Castle House**
- O. Land behind Verney Close**
- P. Mount Pleasant (Embleton) playing field**
- Q. Stratford Fields**
- R. March Edge**
- S. Riverside Walk**

B. Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will only be supported in very special circumstances.

1. The policy retains the local green space designations of the made neighbourhood plan and designates a series of additional Local Green Spaces in accordance with §105 - 107 of the NPPF and VALP Policy NE6, as demonstrated in Appendix E. A designation has the policy effect of the equivalence of the Green Belt in terms of the definition of 'inappropriate development' consistent with §107 and 152 of the NPPF and of the 'very special circumstances' tests in the NPPF when determining planning applications located within a designated Local Green Space.
1. A review of all open land within the neighbourhood area has been completed, informed by the qualifying criteria in the NPPF. The land is considered to meet those criteria and is therefore worthy of designation as illustrated and justified in the Local Green Space report in the evidence base. In the Town Council's judgement, each designation is capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period having regard to NPPF §105. The owners of these sites are currently being notified of the proposed Local Green Space designations and comments will be taken into consideration in readiness for the final list of designations to be presented in the Submission Plan.

