Barton-le-Clay
Neighbourhood Plan
2022 To 2035

Postcards of Barton-le-Clay

"Village is a place where you can find peace, unity, strength, inspiration and most importantly a natural and beautiful life".

— *Minahil Urfan*

Foreword

Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan

Barton-le-Clay Parish Council welcomes the opportunity for the people of the Village to have a meaningful say in the future growth and shape of their Village. Part of that process is the formal adoption of a Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan (BLCNP) which not only compliments the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP) but adds factors and housing design guides, particular to the Village.

Work on the BLCNP started in 2012, with the formation of the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (BLCNPSC), chaired by the late Councillor Lyndon Davison-Williams, but its completion was halted due to delays in the completion of the CBLP.
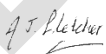
The CBLP was finally adopted in July 2021, and this provided the opportunity to build on the hard work of the original BLCNPSC and complete the BLCNP, and so a new Steering Committee was formed in February 2022 to complete the work.

From the outset, the BLCNPSC recognised that, despite the wealth of local knowledge within the Steering Committee, we needed expert advice and guidance from external agencies, and we have worked closely with the Neighbourhood Planning Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, the Greensand Trust and AECOM. All who have been very helpful and supportive in helping us achieve our goals.

From the original Village survey to exhibitions, workshops, site visits, numerous updates, discussions and meetings, every effort has been made to ensure that the Plan has taken all aspects into consideration in producing our vision for the future of the Village.

This NP is the result of an enormous amount of work by a small team of volunteer villagers and I would like to give a special mention to my husband, James Fletcher, who has spent many hours of his own time collating everything into this document.

It demonstrates that we welcome some small-scale development and new people to our community. However, the size and nature of any new development needs to be carefully managed and controlled not only to protect those who already live in this beautiful village but also to attract those who wish to share in the experience of living in a well-balanced, fully sustainable, historic and attractive community, whatever their circumstances.

Chair - Abigail Fletcher
Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee
January 2024

Acknowledgements

The Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan was commissioned by Barton-le-Clay Parish Council who appointed a Steering Group; the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (known hereafter as BLCNPSC) comprised entirely of residents and Parish Councillors.

The committee:

> Chair - Councillor Abigail Miller
> Vice-Chair - Gemma Widdowfield
> Lt Col (Retd) James Fletcher
> Councillor Nick Day
> Councillor Will Rudd
> Andy Knight
> Sue Waller
> Roger Taylor
> Richard Sheen
> Simon Oxley
> Tim Wall
> Joe Irwin

Special thanks go to Carolyn Callen – Clerk to Barton-le-Clay Parish Council – for keeping the BLCNPSC on course, and to local organisations and retailers, especially the Co-op who provided space in their premises for information days/events to enable the BLCNPSC to update villagers on the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan (known hereafter as BLCNP) process and progress and to canvas opinions on draft policies (as part of the consultation process).

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Introduction

1.   The Localism Act 2011 empowers local communities in England to take the lead in planning how their own neighbourhoods will develop. Many communities around the country have seized this opportunity to influence the future of their areas. The Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan will enable the local community to shape the future development of the village for the benefit of those that live there and those who wish to make Barton-le-Clay their home.

2.   The Neighbourhood Area is the area that is covered by the Neighbourhood Plan. The Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Area is the same as the area defined by the Barton-le-Clay Parish boundary and was designated by Central Bedfordshire Council in December 2016 see Map 1.

3.   Work started on the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan (BLCNP) in 2012, but its completion was delayed until Central Bedfordshire had completed their Local Plan. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP) was submitted to the Government on 30 April 2018 and after passing through the consultation phases and review by the Government Planning Inspectorate, was adopted in July 2021. Now that the CBLP has been adopted, work to complete the BLCNP restarted in January 2022.
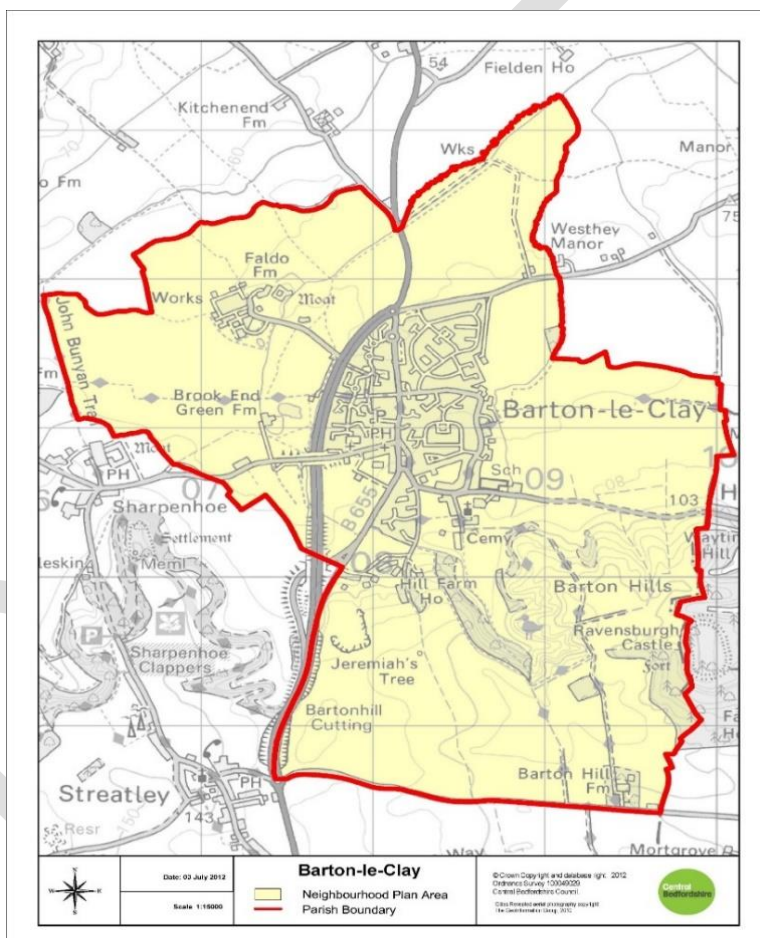
Map 1 - Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Area

4.   The CBLP (Part 8) identifies Barton-le-Clay as an 'Inset[1]' Green Belt settlement and excluded from the Green Belt and the inner Green Belt boundary that acts as a Settlement Envelope, Maps 2 & 3. This means that normal planning policy and Policy SP7[2] applies.

Maps 2 & 3 – Green Belt Land - Barton-le-Clay.

5.   To accommodate the growth required up to 2035 in a sustainable and controlled manner, the CBLP have identified packets of land in the Green Belt for potential small and medium allocations to 'Inset' Green Belt towns and villages. In Barton-le-Clay, three 'parcels' were identified (BC2, BC3 & BC4), Map 4, and assessed. Table 1 details the impact assessment of developing the 'parcels', on the Green Belt.
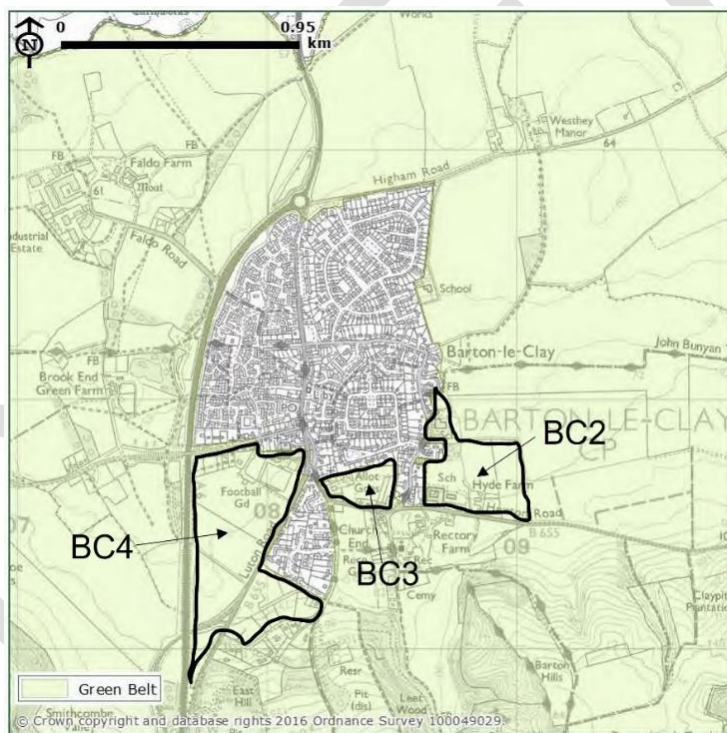
Map 4 – Developments on Green Belt Land.

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[1] 'Inset' i.e., falls outside the Green Belt, but is surrounded by it.
[2] Policy SP7: Development within Settlement Envelopes

Parcel	Contribution			
	Purpose 1 To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas	Purpose 2 To Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging into One Another	Purpose 3 To Assist in Safeguarding the Countryside from Encroachment	Purpose 4 To Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns
Barton-le-Clay				
BC2 Fields around school (Arnold Academy and Ramsey Manor Lower School) in SW corner of parcel	Weak/No contribution	Weak/No contribution	Strong contribution	Weak/No contribution
BC3 Area North of B655 (the allotments)	Weak/No contribution	Weak/No contribution	Moderate contribution	Weak/No contribution
BC4 Football and Sports pitches.	Weak/No contribution	Weak/No contribution	Relatively weak contribution	Weak/No contribution

Table 1 - Impact Assessments of developing the 'parcels', on the Green Belt.

6. Like many rural areas in England, Barton-le-Clay has been the subject of increasing pressures for development and indeed, the 'Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP) SP1 Growth Strategy' states that "a minimum of 39,350 homes, and approximately 24,000 new jobs will be delivered in Central Bedfordshire over the period 2015 to 2035". Although Barton-le-Clay has not been identified as an area for strategic growth, it has been identified as one of 19 areas for development to meet a 7350 shortfall in Strategic Growth housing plan – see Table 2.

Site Ref.	Site Name	Area	Parish	Approx. Density	Approx. Capacity	Site Area (ha)
HAS05	Land East of Barton- le-Clay 	South	Barton-le-Clay	30	498	27.80

Table 2 – HAS05 Land East of Barton-le-Clay.

7.   In addition to sites identified for potential development in the CBCLP, proposed new development projects come forward, sometimes not in the most suitable locations, that, potentially, will have a profound detrimental effect on the whole character of the area, for example, the proposed Greenwoods New Town[3] near Wrest Park. The proposal is for up to 3,750 new homes, a care home, schools, large solar park (up to 16 ha), along with retail, business hub and community spaces, potentially merging the villages of Barton-le-Clay, Silsoe, Higham Gobion and Lower Gravenhurst – see Map 5.

Map 5 – Proposed Greenwoods New Town

8.   Neighbourhood Plans are part of the statutory planning system. This means that when decisions are made on planning applications the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be considered by the Local Planning Authority, Central Bedfordshire Council.

9.   Neighbourhood Plans are a new type of statutory plan. Not only are they intended to be produced by local people for their own areas, but they also must be approved by a referendum of the people living in that area. Unlike national planning policy, which is approved by Parliament, or local planning policy, which is approved by the local authority, a Neighbourhood Plan can only be brought into force following a majority vote by residents of the Neighbourhood Area and a vigorous consultation process.

10.   After the BLCNP comes into force, the BLCNP will be a statutory planning policy document that will enable Barton-le-Clay Parish Council to have a greater, and more positive, influence on how the Village develops up to 2035.

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[3] CB/22/01804/OUT

11.   The Plan will be used by the Parish Council to:

   11.1 Guide comments on planning applications;

   11.2 Negotiate with landowners and stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for the community, based on our stated Purpose and Vision;

   11.3 Direct financial resources for the Parish in a structured way and lobby CBC to support villagers' wishes and aspirations.

12.   The Parish Council will monitor and report on the implementation of the BLCNP after a period of two years. Review to cover:

   12.1 Planning application approvals and rejections, at both Parish and County level, to ensure that the BLCNP is being considered when applications are presented;

   12.2 Review Planning Officer reports, as appropriate for the type of application decided, to ensure that the BLCNP is considered, particularly where an application is refused at Parish level, but approved at County level;

   12.3 What progress is being made on the implementation of the policies in the Plan;

   12.4 What financial contributions available to the community are being targeted towards identified plans and projects;

   12.5 The plan does not unnecessarily restrict growth;

   12.6 The Plan remains based on the most up-to-date information e.g., changes to the NPPF and/or the CBLP that would require modifications to the BLCNP.

13.   At the end of the review, the Parish Council will then decide whether the Plan should be formally reviewed and if so, will ensure that residents and stakeholders are involved in any update of that Plan.

14.   After the initial two-year review, the frequency of subsequent reviews will be determined by the Parish Council.

The Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan

15.   Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that Neighbourhood Development Plans must –

15.1 Have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);

15.2 Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and,

15.3 Be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the local plan for the area (Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015 – 2035).

Development of the Neighbourhood Plan

16.   The Neighbourhood Plan process is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. This document defines the main stages that a Neighbourhood Plan must go through before it is voted on at the referendum. Neighbourhood Plans that do not closely follow the Regulations in the way they are produced may be vulnerable to legal challenge later.

17.   A summary of the main stages in preparing the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan are shown in Figure 1 below.

The Plan
- Draft the 'Plan'
- Submit to CBC
- Independant Review
- Final version of Plan
- Referendum
- Review and Publish

BLCNP Ctte
- Designate Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- Approve BLCNP Ctte through Parish Council.
- Establish ToRs, Aims and Objectives

Evidence Gathering
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC) Housing Needs Survey (HNS).
- Greensand Trust Green Infrastructure Plan.

Community Engagement
- Workshops
- Household Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Specialist Consultations

Figure 1 - Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Main Stages of Preparation

18.   Neighbourhood Plans must be based on relevant evidence about the neighbourhood area (the Parish of Barton-le-Clay) and must reflect the views of the local community. The Parish Council has, therefore, been careful to gather the necessary evidence to inform the Neighbourhood Plan and to underpin the policies in it. In addition, the Parish Council has made community engagement a priority throughout the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan as detailed in the Community Involvement Strategy section.

19.   Barton-le-Clay Parish Council, as the qualifying body, is responsible for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for it's parish area and established an Advisory Steering Committee to work within a set of agreed Terms of Reference (ToR) – see Appendix 1, to consult villagers and external specialists to produce the BLCNP with recommendations, that are supportive to the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP) and meet the needs and aspirations of the Parish community.

Vision and Objectives

20.   The vision and objectives of this Neighbourhood Plan have been carefully developed by the Steering Group and have evolved to reflect the priorities of the community and, to guide planning decisions within Barton-le-Clay.

> *"Our Vision is to retain and enhance the existing character of the parish of Barton-le-Clay as a picturesque and historic rural village with its surrounding green spaces/farmland and maintain our strong sense of community where people of all ages and backgrounds feel proud to live, work and participate in the community. Small scale, sustainable, sensible growth that is in line with the traditional character and landscape of the parish and which will fulfil the needs and wishes of the community, will be supported."*

21.   From our vision, we have developed objectives which complement the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, whilst ensuring that our Neighbourhood Plan meet the needs of the Village, namely:

21.1 To safeguard the rural character and compact form of the Village, conserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the countryside, landscape, and biodiversity, and to ensure that any new development is sympathetic to the special character of the Village.

21.2 To ensure sustainable growth in line with the development principles and maintain the important countryside gaps between them.

21.3 To protect and enhance local distinctiveness/landscape by retaining hedgerows, trees, and key views.

21.4 To preserve the special historic character of the Village, including the Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and their settings and the historic landscape.

21.5 To support a mix of housing, in accordance with the Housing Needs Survey, based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community.

21.6 To ensure any developments are small scale, of the highest quality, positively contribute to or improve the local infrastructure, and have minimal impact on the character of the Parish.

21.7 To reduce the reliance on cars by improving walking and cycling access within and between the Village and local services and to improve both road and pedestrian safety throughout the Village.

21.8 To support proposals for reducing the speed, volume of traffic and congestion through improvements such as better parking.

21.9 To retain the existing public houses and community facilities and, where appropriate, designate Assets of Community Value.

21.10   To recognise the importance of accessible green spaces, enhancing the existing spaces and to designate new green spaces for residents to enjoy.

21.11   To ensure that the health needs of the community regarding mental health/dementia and disabilities are considered in medium to small housing developments[4].

22.   Our vision and our objectives have been the drivers used throughout our Neighbourhood Plan to develop our policies and external reviews e.g., the Design Guidelines & Codes and Green Infra-structure Plan.

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[4] Ranging in size from 12 up to 650 dwellings.

Community Involvement Strategy

23.   It is essential to involve the community in the Neighbourhood Plan process and ensure that everyone in the community has the opportunity to have their say. To achieve this the BLCNPSC produced a Neighbourhood Plan Engagement and Communications Strategy – see Appendix 2. In summary, throughout the BLCNP journey a wide range of communications channels have been used to update villagers on progress and to garner villager input at key stages of the plan development, e.g., Green Infra-structure. Communication channels included a leaflet drop to every household in the parish, setting up a website page Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan, sharing information via Facebook and holding Q&A events.

24.   The Steering Committee met monthly and has provided both a written and verbal update at each Parish Council meeting.

General Questionnaire - Community Aspirations, Ideas and Actions

25.   At the start of the current BLCNP journey, a General Questionnaire that included topics identified by the inaugural BLCNP Group in 2014, was hand delivered to all residents within the parish on 22nd March 2022, as well as the two schools, allotment holders and local businesses. The questionnaire was also made available online and advertised on both the Parish Council Facebook page and website. An Information Stand was set up outside of the Village Co-op store on 26th March 2022, for discussion with local villagers. The questionnaire was open from 22nd March 2022 to 25th April 2022. We received 62 responses.

26.   A copy of the General Questionnaire is at Addendum 2 to Appendix 2.

27.   To better understand the Community Aspirations, Ideas and Actions the Comments received have been grouped into four Key Areas:

27.1 **Environment**.

- Keep Village a village/don't let Barton get any bigger.
- More trees, particularly on verges, and ensure existing trees are maintained.
- Green spaces need to be protected, particularly including Arnold Recreation Ground, Norman Road play space, football pitches, etc.
- Improve pavement surfaces, many uneven and dangerous.
- Improve road drainage (clear more often to reduce flooding).
- Need more litter bins.
- Maintain amenity land and verges. Discourage parking on these areas with flowers and trees.
- Discourage dog fouling on verges.
- Stop people turning front gardens into car parking spaces.
- Improve the availability of parking in the Village, e.g., behind library.
- Don't develop Baileys Piece (Franklin Avenue).

27.2 **Facilities**.

- Need a bigger GP Practice (more GP's) so can get access to doctors' surgery / appointments.
- Need to maintain Village hub.
- More indoor sports facilities (a leisure centre).
- Don't let shops and businesses (The Bull) be turned into housing.
- Need to keep Post Office/need more ATM's.
- Library facility very important and needs to be preserved.
- Maintain all the community halls.
- Need more carparks in centre of Village and for people using the hills.
- More benches.
- Preserve Green belt.
- Need for charging points for electric vehicles.

27.3 **Traffic and Getting Around**.

- Issues with speeding on Bedford and Luton Road flagged - suggestions re making max 20mph/make all village roads 20mph limit at school times.
- More pedestrian crossings needed in Bedford Road and Hexton Road – Church Road and across Bypass to Faldo Road and Watermill.
- Need more cycle tracks – Hitchin to Harlington.
- More parking needed for people visiting the 'Barton Springs'.
- Speed humps needed on Windsor Road.
- Bus service needs improving. More frequent buses to Hitchin.
- Traffic / parking issues Manor Road. Suggest sign e.g., Dangerous Bend.
- Speed calming Grange Road (Road Hump by bend).

27.4 **Housing**.

- More facilities for elderly (assisted living).
- If we must have development, then should be Retirement village so elderly residents can stay in Village.
- More 2 bed bungalows.
- More luxury bungalows for retired people to move to.
- Smaller social Housing (not elderly).
- Need to stop bungalows being converted to houses.
- Housing for 18–24year-olds.
- Parking outside houses needs to be enough for current needs as most people have more cars and visitors.
- If new school built to replace Ramsey Manor, should use this site exclusively to build 2 bed bungalows.
- Expansion of Village inappropriate!

External Expert Support and Guidance

28.   To provide expert specialist advice to the BLCNP, several external agencies were contracted to examine specific areas. The respective reports are at Annexes A – C and have been summarised in this NP.

28.1 **Housing Needs Survey**. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) was commissioned to carry out a housing needs survey in March/April 2022 to identify the housing needs of local people over the next 10 years. We received 317 responses from around 2200 distributed, a return rate of around 14%. This is a good response rate for a housing needs survey (typical return rate is 20-25%). The final report from BRCC was published on the website.

28.2 **Barton-le-Clay Parish-wide Design Guidelines and Codes**. AECOM was commissioned in June 2023 to provide design support to BLCNP and Parish Council. The support is intended to provide design guidance and codes based on the character and local qualities of the parish to help ensure future development, particularly forthcoming housing, coheres with and enhances the village.

28.3 **Green Infrastructure Plan**.

28.3.1   The Greensand Trust was commissioned to prepare a Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan during late 2022/early 2023. The preparation of the Green Infrastructure Plan followed a tried and tested methodology, including several consultation events. Attendance at the consultation events was very good. The methodology is described further in the Green Infrastructure section and the Green Infrastructure Plan document itself.

28.3.2   A representative from the Greensand Trust attended several events in 2022/2023 to engage with the community to ensure the views of local people were considered when drafting the GI Plan – see Table 7 (page 60).

Consultation on Draft Aims

29.   On 8th May 2023 the BLCNPSC manned an information stall at the Coronation 'Big Help Out' Event, held in the Barton-le-Clay Village Hall. The event was attended by over 100 people. The event provided the opportunity to:

29.1 Update people on the progress of the BLCNP.

29.2 Share the draft GI Plan,

29.3 Share the results of the questionnaires, and,

29.4 To consult on the draft Policies which had been formulated based upon the evidence gathered to date.

30.   The draft Policies were very well supported with 100% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the draft Policies. A few improvements were suggested which resulted in some minor changes to the text of the final set of Policies which were subsequently approved by the Steering Committee.

31.   The demographic at the May event was notably the older population of the Village and it was decided to hold another information stand event, targeted specifically at the younger population, at the village Firework Display on 3rd November 2023. To incentivise completion of a short questionnaire, there was the chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher. A copy of the questionnaire and breakdown of responses is at Appendix 3.

Photo 1 – BLCNP Information Stand

Road to Adoption of BLCNP

32.   In consultation with the CBC Neighbourhood Planning Officer, the sequence of events to the final adoption of the BLCNP is:

32.1 Independent examination of draft BLCNP by BRCC.
32.2 Pre-Submission Consultation with the parish community (Regulation 14[5]) for six weeks.
32.3 Revise plan to produce final version.
32.4 Submission to CBC (Regulation 15[6]).
32.5 Submission Consultation (Regulation 16[7]).
32.6 Examination.
32.7 Referendum.
32.8 Adoption.
32.9 Delivery, Monitoring & Review through Parish Council.

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[5] Regulation 14.
[6] Regulation 15.
[7] Regulation 16.

33.   To comply with Reg 14, the draft Neighbourhood Plan will be available electronically to everyone who lives, works, or runs a business in the area, plus Central Bedfordshire Council, the list of statutory consultees, adjacent town/parish councils and local authorities, landowners, local businesses, local organisations, and everyone who has previously been involved. Hard copies will also be made available for those requiring it. The publicity will include details of the proposed plan, where and when it could be viewed, how to make comments and by what date. This will be mainly carried out by email, Facebook and by door-to-door leaflet drop to all households within the parish.

34.   Individual letters will be sent to the registered landowners of the proposed Local Green Spaces and potentially affected landowners to notify them that their land may be affected by policies contained within the Draft Plan.

35.   The documents to be consulted upon as part of the Regulation 14 consultation will be:

35.1 Draft Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan.

35.2 Barton-le-Clay Design Codes (dated November 2023)

35.3 Barton-le-Clay Green Infrastructure Plan (dated January 2024)

35.4 A 'Regulation 14 BLCNP Consultation' website page is being developed and when launched will include all the documents being consulted upon, a link to the online survey, a copy of the paper feedback form, all the plans/maps and details of how to respond.

35.5 The consultation will be advertised on the Barton-le-Clay Village Today Facebook page, Parish Council Facebook page and Parish noticeboards and the Library, feedback forms were delivered to every house/business in Barton-le-Clay.

35.6 A number of drop-in sessions will be arranged, e.g., an information desk at the Village Co-op.

35.7 The Neighbourhood Plan document to be updated post Reg 14 feedback.

Barton-le-Clay - A Picturesque and Historic Village

36.   To produce a dynamic Neighbourhood Plan and achieve our vision, it is necessary to have a good understanding of both the neighbourhood area and the local community's views about what should be done to improve and protect it. This section of the Plan provides a brief history of Barton-le-Clay and an assessment of its rural anthropology character.

37.   The village of Barton-le-Clay is in the county of Bedfordshire, situated midway between Bedford and Luton on the A6 and between Hitchin and Harlington on the B665.

38.   Barton-Le-Clay, literally, Barton in the Clay, derives its name from its position being sited where the clay soil starts under Barton Hill. The overlordship was vested in the Crown at the date of the Domesday Survey[8], remaining so until the Dissolution when the manor was taken in hand by the King and annexed to the manor of Ampthill in 1542. The manor formerly belonged to the monks of Ramsey; it was given to the Ramsey Abbey, Huntingdonshire in 1044 by Eadnoth, bishop of Dorchester. The grant was confirmed by Edward the Confessor in 1066, by William the Conqueror in 1078 and again by Edward III in 1334. At the time of the Domesday in 1086 the manor was assessed at eleven hides worth ten pounds. Barton had many mills which took advantage of the numerous streams which rose in the hills.

39.   The original church of St Nicholas, first mentioned in 1178, consisted of an aisleless nave and small chancel. Little of this twelfth century building remains, the church being rebuilt in the thirteenth century with fourteenth century alterations and the addition of a fifteenth century tower. A free school was founded in 1807 by Edward Willes. The Village's population in 1801 was 448 rising to 915 by 1851, dropping to 816 in 1901. The twentieth century saw continued expansion, the population rising from 1,125 in 1951 to 3,447 in 1991.

Map 6 - Barton-le-Clay 1882-1899.

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[8]   Barton [-in-the-Clay] was a settlement in Domesday Book. It had a recorded population of 33 households in 1086.

40.   The nineteenth century saw an unusual industry develop in the area digging coprolites. This involved the extraction of phosphatised clay nodules for fertiliser. Once a thriving industry, especially in Cambridgeshire, the mining of coprolites declined in the late nineteenth century, stopping in the early years of the twentieth century.

41.   The above brief history goes some way to explain why maintaining Barton-le-Clay as an historic and picturesque village forms an integral part of our Vision.

42.   When planning to 2035, it's important to consider the past. By including our heritage, we can keep the uniqueness – sense of identity and individuality - and develop the best ways for Barton-le-Clay to grow by keeping this in mind. We can then hand it on - as a place to be proud of – to future generations. This is especially important as Barton-le-Clay has several highly graded, designated heritage assets in the parish, including:

> 42.1 Scheduled monuments. There are two War Memorials in Barton. One stands on the junction of The High Street with Luton Road and Hexton Road The other is in the Parish Church. Both Memorials have identical names on them. In addition, there is a Memorial window in the Parish Church.
>
> 42.2 Barton Hills NNR/AONB/SSSI and Recreation Park.
>
> 42.3 Listed Grade 1 & II buildings within Barton-le-Clay[9].
>
> ### Grade I
>
> Church of St Nicholas, Church Road. The Church of St Nicholas, built c1178, is notable as the only building constructed of stone, an excellent combination of rubble limestone with a tower constructed of flint and clunch[10] and limestone chequer-work. The churchyard is bounded by quality nineteenth century iron railings, listed, together with a lantern, at Grade II.

Photo 2 - Church of St Nicholas.

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[9] National Heritage List for England

[10] Clunch is a traditional building material of chalky limestone rock used mainly in eastern England and Normandy.

Grade II.

Address	Listing
7, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
10, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
16, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
18, Bedford Road (Tudor Cottage), Barton-Le-Clay,	II
20, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
69, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
71,73a and 73, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay (now no. 75),	II
125, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
The Rectory, Church Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
The Bury, Church Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Church End Cottage, Church Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
8 And 10, Church Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Railings And Lamp Post to West of Church of St Nicholas, Church Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Manor House, Manor Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
80, Manor Road (Manor Cottage), Barton-Le-Clay,	II
142, Manor Road (Walnut Tree Cottage), Barton-Le-Clay,	II
154, Manor Road (Plum Tree Cottage), Barton-Le-Clay,	II
162, Manor Road (Elm Tree Cottage), Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Barn About 30 Metres Southwest of Manor Farmhouse, Manor Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
50 And 52, Grange Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
32, Sharpenhoe Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
L Shape Range of Barns to North of Brook End Green Farmhouse, Sharpenhoe Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
The Royal Oak Inn, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
The Bull Inn, Bedford Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Barton Mill, Mill Lane, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Brook End Green Farmhouse, Sharpenhoe Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Gatebarn Approximately 30 Metres Northwest of Faldo Farmhouse, Faldo Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Grange Farmhouse, Faldo Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Faldo Farmhouse, Faldo Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II
Barns At Grange Farm, Faldo Road, Barton-Le-Clay,	II

Photographs of a selection of notable listed buildings are at Appendix 4.

Conservation Area

43.   The large conservation area comprises two parts. A rectangular area of land in the south is focused on Old Road, Hexton Road and Church Road including the hamlet surrounding the Church of St Nicholas and meadows. To the north is a long narrow area comprising the village centre on Bedford Road and houses on Sharpenhoe Road (see Map 7).

18
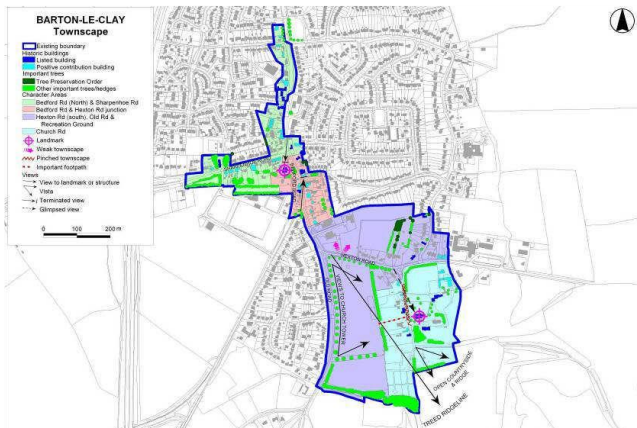
Map 7 – Barton-le-Clay Conservation Area.[11]

Non-Designated, Heritage Assets

44.   A trawl of the Historic England Research Records does not identify any non-designated, heritage assets[12] in the parish area. Examples of potential non-heritage assets include the War memorial[13,14], at the junction of Bedford Road, Hexton Road and Luton Road.

45.   This Neighbourhood Plan will seek to identify, register and protect non-designated, heritage assets.

Assets of Community Value

46.   An Asset of Community Value is a building or piece of land that is used to further the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. Examples of community assets include:

46.1 Village Shops.
46.2 Public Houses.
46.3 Community Centres.
46.4 Children's Centres.
46.5 Allotments.
46.6 Libraries.

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[11] Barton-Le-Clay Conservation Area Appraisal Draft December 2009
[12] Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets (as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF). These can include those identified by a local planning authority such as 'local interest' buildings.
[13] http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Bedfordshire/BartonRollofHonour.html
[14] https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/migrated_images/war-memorials-2_tcm3-14481.pdf

47. A building or piece of land is deemed to have community value if:

47.1 The use of the land or building currently, or in the recent past, furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. This includes cultural, recreational, or sporting interests.

47.2 The use of the building or land will continue to further the social wellbeing or interests of the local community.

47.3 Meeting the interests of the community must be the principal purpose of the land or building.

48. Through the BLCNP consultation process, the BLCNPSC will be open to nominations for consideration of Non-Designated, Heritage Asset and/or Asset of Community Value. N.B. The Village Post Office cannot be made an asset of Community Value as a Post Office service can be included in any suitable building in the Village. Likewise, The Bull Public House was considered but does not meet the necessary criteria as it is not the only public house in the Village. The Bull property is already protected by being a listed building.

Present Day Barton-le-Clay

49. Barton-Le-Clay lies at the foot of the northern slope of the Barton Hills on what was once the main Bedford to Luton Road. The land rises from north to south, the village situated on a strong clay soil with clay and chalk subsoil. The church, St Nicholas, stands to the southeast of the village centre and with the rectory and group of houses to the west and north, forms a hamlet known as Church End.

50. The hamlet of Church End to the southeast is located at the base of the Barton Hills. Its distance from the busy Bedford Road gives it an altogether different rural character with good views to the hills, woodlands, and surrounding fields. The hamlet comprises the parish church, hall, rectory, Rectory Farm, The Bury Farmhouse, and numerous timber-framed and brick cottages. Photos of a selection of listed building and key landmarks are at Annex D.

51. A bypass, opened in 1990, takes the A6 from Luton, 6 miles to the south, past the Village, to Bedford.

Landscape Character and Biodiversity

52. In addition to Barton-le-Clay's rich historic environment, Barton-le-Clay sits alongside the Chilterns AONB and the Barton Hills/SSSI. The outstanding natural landscape and biodiversity is covered in depth as part of the GI Plan (page 59). In summary:

52.1 The land outside surrounding the village, less the AONB and Barton Hills – see Photo 2, is characterised by agricultural land bordered by thin, gappy and short-flailed hedges that no longer create a strong landscape pattern. Although dominated by arable cropping, the vale contains some important areas of nature conservation value, e.g., the Barton Hills SSSI. Tributary streams from the River Flit and Campton Brook, plus seasonally wet drainage channels run through the landscape.

Photo 3 - Long open views down the valley from the higher ground of the Barton Hills, South of Barton-le-Clay.

52.2 Barton-le-Clay is an important area for biodiversity where the landscape surrounding the village, including designated sites, such as the Barton Hills SSSI, supports a rich and varied biodiversity. In particular, woodlands, ancient trees, downland, meadows, hedgerows, parklands, arable farmland, paddocks and streams. These areas have populations of birds and mammals which depend on the feeding and breeding opportunities presented by the whole landscape rather than discreet individual sites. These sensitive areas are our focus for achieving biodiversity action plan targets for habitat maintenance and restoration.

Barton Hills SSSI

53.   Barton Hills SSSI. This is steeply sloping chalk pasture, which has a wide variety of grasses and flowers. A chalk stream, the Barton Springs, along the valley floor adds wetland flora. Six orchid species have been recorded, including the fragrant orchid and bee orchid. Other notable plants are the pasqueflower (Photo 4), field fleawort and a dwarf form of hairy violet. Butterflies, including the restricted Duke of Burgundy and Chalk Hill Blue (Photo 5), can also be spotted. A large population of red kites (Photo 6) also resides within the parish boundaries.

	Photo 4 - The Barton Hills is the main site in Bedfordshire for the pasqueflower (Pulsatilla vulgaris), and in some years over a thousand flowers are present. It classified as a Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and as Vulnerable in Britain on the Red Data List.
	Photo 5 - The **Chalkhill Blue** (*Lysandra coridon*) is a small butterfly that can be found primarily in grasslands rich in chalk.
	Photo 6 - Red Kite. Barton-le-Clay has a large population of red kites. This magnificently graceful bird of prey is unmistakable with its reddish-brown body, angled wings, and deeply forked tail. It was saved from national extinction by one of the world's longest-running protection programmes. It has now been successfully re-introduced to England and Scotland. Red kites are listed under Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Recreation/Community Facilities

54.   The village has a wide range of amenities, and recreation grounds/open space that are maintained by the Parish Council.

54.1 The Arnold Recreation Ground which has an Under 16's play area, basketball court, gym equipment, two outside tennis courts, and a ping-pong table.

54.2 The Barton-le-Clay sports/playing fields on the Luton Road which has 3 full sized football pitches, two junior football pitches, two 9v9 football pitches and 2 mini football pitches with changing facilities.

54.3 Unity Hall. The hall provides the combined 'group' Headquarters for village Scout and Guide groups. The hall is also used for village events of up to 120 persons and has a large and well-equipped kitchen and parking.

54.4 Barton Village Hall on the B655 Hexton Road. The hall has three areas: the Main Hall, the Chiltern Room, and the Committee Room and is used throughout the year for a variety of village activities, ranging from amateur dramatics (the Barton Players) and carpet bowls to Country Music and Line Dancing. The hall has a fully fitted kitchen with oven, microwave, and dishwasher and a large car park.

54.5 There is one allotment site comprising of 95 active plots.

54.6 There are three Public Houses (PH): the Royal Oak, the Wagon and Horses and The Bull. The latter is currently closed and up for sale.   The two that remain open provide support for the local community by helping to run/provide functions throughout the year. Notably, both the Royal Oak and The Bull are Grade II listed buildings.

54.7 Places of worship are the Church of St Nicholas, a Grade I listed Church of England church, Barton Baptist Chapel and the Barton Methodist Church. The churches are well integrated into village life.

54.8 Barton Rovers Football Club have their ground in the Village and have a large social area, with bar, that is used extensively for various community and private functions.

Local Insight to Barton le Clay

55.   The following sections contains data from the Local Insight profile for 'Barton-le-Clay Parish' area LI - Central Bedfordshire Council dated 14 August 2023. Local Insight-Barton-le-Clay-Parish.

Education

56.   Barton-le-Clay maintains a three-tier education system, unlike several other areas in Central Bedfordshire. Ramsey Manor Academy Lower School providing education for pupils aged 4 to 9, rated 'requires improvement' by Ofsted in 2019. Arnold Academy Middle School providing education for pupils aged 9 to 13, rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2023. Harlington Upper School for pupils 13 to 18, rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2023. All three schools form part of 'The Pyramid Schools Trust' formed in 2020, along with Parkfields Middle School and Westoning Lower School. In addition there is Orchard School & Nursery, an independent school & nursery for children aged 0-9 and rated 'good'. The Village also has a pre-school for Under 4's and a Kids Club for afterschool and holiday club provision, both rated 'good' by Ofsted.

57.   The following charts show the education levels of pupils in Barton-le-Clay Parish, showing the examination results at Key Stage 1 (tests set at aged 7) Key Stage 2 (tests set at aged 11) and Key Stage 4 (GCSEs). The education levels of pupils are comparable with the UK average and above the level for Bedfordshire.

35
30   28.7   29.0   28.6
25
20 17.0 15.9 16.5
15
10
5
0
           Key Stage 1   Key Stage 2

Average Point Score

KS1 Average Point Score per pupil is made up from the Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science point scores where score of 27=level 4, 21=level 3, 15=level 2 (the expected level), 9=level 1, 3=below level 1. KS2 Average Point Score per pupil is made up from the Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science point scores where score of 33=level 5, 27=level 4 (the expected level), 21=level 3, 15=level 2.

■ Barton-le-Clay Parish   ■ England   ■ Central Bedfordshire

Chart 1 - Pupil attainment at Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2[15] -

450
400   407.5
350   366.3   370.0
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
              Key Stage 4

Average Point Score

KS4 Average Point Score is made up of all GCSE examinations sat, with a point score of 58=A*, 52=A, 46=B, 40=C, 34=D, 28=E, 22=F, 16=G.

■ Barton-le-Clay Parish   ■ England   ■ Central Bedfordshire
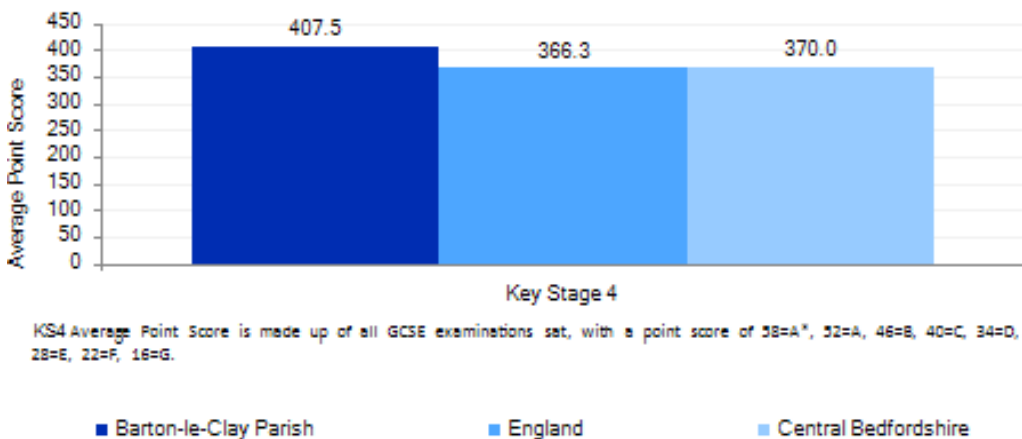
Chart 2 - Pupil attainment at Key Stage4[15].

Business & Employment

58.   There are a number of small businesses in the Parish with many operating from the owners' homes. There are also specific business areas, as follows:

58.1 **Faldo Road Industrial Estate**. The Faldo Road Industrial Estate is presently home for 35 businesses covering a wide range of different industries and retailers, some of which have a national presence.

58.2 **Faldo Farm Compost Facility**. The Faldo Farm Compost facility is a purpose-built green waste recycling site located at Faldo Road. It is permitted to receive 25,000 tonnes per annum of degradable household (Brown bins) and processes 10,000 tonnes of green waste (Green bins) per year, primarily

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[15] Department for Education (2013-14).

kerbside collected waste from Luton Council. The final product is sold as a soil improver.

58.3 **Olde Watermill**. Just off the A6 bypass is the Olde Watermill. The site dates to 1086 and is also mentioned in the Domesday book. The Watermill has been restored and now houses an eclectic mix of 20 small businesses and retail outlets.

Local Jobs

59.   The chart below shows the 'Jobs Density' (the number of jobs as a % of working age population) across Barton-le-Clay. The three largest industry groups for workforce jobs based in Barton-le-Clay Parish are Education 14.5% of all people in employment, Construction 11.9% of all people in employment and Manufacturing 14.5% of all people in employment. Although the Job Density in Barton-le-Clay is low, employment opportunities in the Central Bedfordshire and adjacent areas are good.
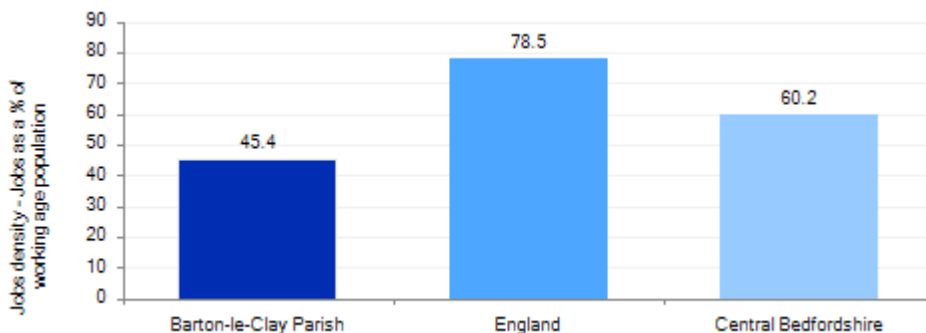
Chart 3 - Jobs Density (jobs as a % of working age population) (2021)[16]

Local Business Units

60.   'Local business units' are counts of businesses based on the location of an operational unit. Though larger businesses such as supermarket chains may have their head office in a large city, these figures measure all subsidiaries of that larger enterprise based on where subsidiaries are located. The figures cover all business eligible for VAT. The three largest Local Business Unit groups in Barton-le-Clay Parish are, Construction 26.4% of all local businesses, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services 11.6% of all local businesses and Retail 7.4% of all local businesses.

Population & Household Data

61.   In 2020[17] the Parish had an estimated population of 4972 of which 838 were aged 0-15 (16.9%), a working age population of 3029 (60.9%) and 1105 aged 65+ (22.2%). The village has a higher proportion of people aged 65+ than the England average of 18.5% and the Central Bedfordshire average of 17.9%.

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[16] Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).
[17] Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2020.

People on Low Incomes

62.   Barton-le-Clay has below the National average for those on low income or claiming JSA/UC claimants, notably within the aged 50+ cohort – Table 3.

Vulnerable Groups[18]	Barton-le-Clay	England
Unemployment Benefit (JSA and UC) claimants (Nov-22)	1.3% (40)	3.8%
Youth unemployment (JSA/UC) claimants aged 18-24) (Nov-22)	3.1% (10)	4.8%
Older unemployed (JSA/UC claimants aged 50+) (Nov-22)	0.4% (10)	24.2%
(IB) claimants (May-22)	1.8% (55)	4.0%

Table 3 - Villagers on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)/Universal Credit (UC) and Incapacity Benefit (IB)/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Health, Wellbeing and Life Expectancy

63.   The data in Chart 4 provides an indication[19] of the health profile of villagers based on two sources, the Local Insight profile for 'Barton-le-Clay Parish' area and House of Commons Library for Mid-Bedfordshire.

64.   Although the intent of the BLCNP is not to create policies to dictate lifestyle health choices, policies can be recommended to influence change, e.g., to provide better access to Green Spaces to improve fitness, and provide a better environment for those suffering e.g., dementia.

65.   The NP aims to see Barton-le-Clay develop as a Dementia-friendly community in line with PAS1365:where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and confident they can contribute to community life. In a dementia-friendly community people are aware of and understand dementia, and people with dementia feel included and involved, and have choice and control over their day-to-day lives.

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[18] Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), Universal Credit (UC) and Incapacity Benefit (IB).
[19] The estimates calculated are based on the number of people listed on GP registers in 2019/20, and the number of people recorded as having the relevant health conditions.
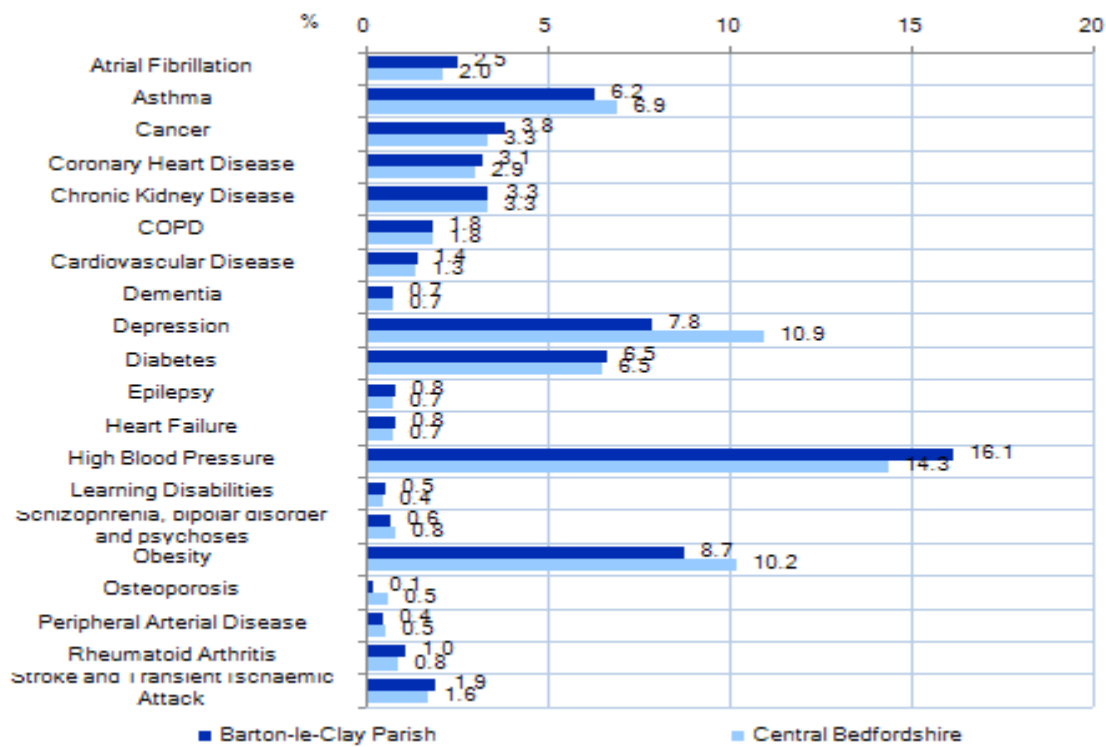
Chart 4 - % of Estimated Disease Prevalence.[20]

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[20] House of Commons Library (2019/20). The data from England's GP practices was published by NHS digital.

Strategic (BLCNP/SP) Policies

Strategic Policy BLCNP/SP-1

1.1   Small-scale new residential development in Barton-le-Clay that appears in keeping with its surroundings and contributes to local character will be supported.

Strategic Policy BLCNP/SP-2

2.1   The provision of retail, service (including healthcare) and/or community facilities will be supported. The loss of local shops, services and facilities will not be supported unless there is evidence, such as 12 months active open marketing, to demonstrate that such use is no longer viable.
2.2   New commercial development must respect local character, residential amenity, and highway safety.

Strategic Policy BLCNP/SP-3

3.1   In addition to the Design Guide Policies, new developments should ensure that environments are accessible and adaptable for people with physical and sensory needs, as well as being aware of how the sensory environment can affect people with dementia.

3.2   Public places and spaces should accommodate people with dementia and their carers and should be:
- easily accessible and approachable.
- navigated easily externally and internally, and have,
    - wide pathways/corridors and even surfaces without confusing patterns or reflections.
    - positive sights, sounds and smells without causing sensory stress or confusion;
    - available seating, shade and shelter from the weather
    - available and accessible activities; and
    - available and accessible receptions, toilets, restaurants, entertainment spaces, and workplaces.

Barton-le-Clay and its Heritage

66.   Building on the background of the previous chapter, Barton-le-Clay Parish is an attractive area and village that brings residents to live here for many different reasons. Barton-le-Clay Parish Council recognises the need to conserve and enhance all these important features, and this is embraced by our Vision for Barton-le-Clay.

67.   The NPPF sets national planning policy that requires planners to recognise and seek to sustain the significance of individual heritage assets. It defines the following terms as –

Historic Environment - All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Heritage Asset - A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Significance (for heritage policy) - The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical   presence, but also from its setting.

68.   Listing is the act of identifying the most important parts of our heritage, so they can be protected by law. In listing historic buildings or sites, we celebrate their significance and make sure that our history can be enjoyed by present and future generations.

69.   The aim of the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard the elements that contribute to the significance of these assets, including the setting in which they can be found.

70.   The Barton-le-Clay Village Design Statement sets out a guide for developers that focuses on high quality development that considers the historic nature and setting of Barton-le-Clay, so that developments in the area establish a strong sense of place and respond to local character and history by reflecting the local identity of the place through use of appropriate materials and attractive design. This has also created an objective for our policies to achieve.

71.   To guide our Historic Environment Policies, we have considered our Heritage assets and the two distinct parts of our Conservation Area:

71.1 Part 1 - The rectangular area of land in the south is focused on Old Road, Hexton Road and Church Road including the hamlet surrounding the Church of St Nicholas and meadows, and,

71.2 Part 2 - The long narrow area to the North comprising the village centre on Bedford Road and houses on Sharpenhoe Road,

72. According to Historic England - Historic England

"*Conservation area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for planning policies whose objective is to conserve all aspects of character or appearance, including landscape and public spaces, which define an area's special interest…. The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their buildings. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.*

Designation of a conservation area gives broader protection than the listing of individual buildings. All the features listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognised as part of its character. Conservation area designation is the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that planning decisions address the quality of the landscape in its broadest sense."

73.   As discussed in para 43, Barton-le-Clay has a large Conservation Area, and this NP aims to protects these conservation areas and their settings.

74.   This heritage highlights the unique character and strong sense of place and plays an important part in shaping how we perceive and experience it – therefore our Vision has focused on "maintaining our picturesque and historic village as a place where people aspire to live".

75.   Going beyond the Village Centre, the setting of Barton-le-Clay and its heritage assets also plays a big part in how it is perceived. In the National Character Area Profile #110 for The Chilterns (in which Barton-le-Clay lies), the area is noted for its rich geological and archaeological history e.g., Ravensburgh Castle (Hill Fort 400BC)) on the spur of the Barton Hills and the historic parklands/sites nearby e.g., Wrest Park, Cardington Airship Hangars, and brickfields to provide a strong sense of history in Bedfordshire as a whole.

76.   Our Green Infrastructure Plan that accompanies this Neighbourhood Plan goes into more detail on the environmental setting.

Historic Environment (BLCNP/HE) Policies

Historic Environment Policy BLCNP/HE-1

1.1   Harm to our heritage assets and conversation area caused either by development within them or by development in their setting, should be avoided. Where a development may cause harm, applicants must clearly demonstrate how the scheme has sought to avoid or minimise it. Where harm remains, it must be clearly and convincingly justified.

1.2   Development proposals that impact on the Barton Hills NNR/AONB/SSSI and Recreation Ground must be supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

1.3   Development proposals must consider assets of historic environment value, including Conservation areas and their settings.

Historic Environment Policy BLCNP/HE-2

2.1   Barton-le-Clay's Heritage assets are irreplaceable. Development must conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. All development in Barton-le-Clay will be expected to make a positive contribution to local character.

Historic Environment Policy BLCNP/HE-3

3.1   Development must consider the importance of mature trees, historical architectural features and structures made of traditional materials that add to Barton-le-Clay's character, distinctiveness, and biodiversity.
3.2   Conversely, ensure any tree/hedge planting does not negatively impact sites or features of archaeological interest.

Historic Environment Policy BLCNP/HE-4

4.1   Through the BLCNP consultation process, the BLCNPSC will be open to nominations for consideration of Non-Designated, Heritage Asset and/or Asset of Community Value.

Housing

Housing Needs Survey

77.   The Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC) were tasked to carryout out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) to identify the housing needs of local people over the next 10 years for social/rental housing, owner-occupier housing and housing for those with special needs.

78.   The BedsRCC HNS Report is at Annex A. A summary of the key findings, conclusion and recommendations made in the report are detailed in the following paragraphs, with supporting data from the latest OSCI Local Insight profile for 'Barton-le-Clay Parish' Area – dated 14 Aug 23.

Population and Demographics

79.   As of Aug 23, there were 1,937 households containing 4,941 residents in Barton-le-Clay. Compared to 2011, this represents a small decrease in residents (from 4,992) over the last decade. Analysis of the data (also discussed in the 'Review of Conclusions & Recommendations from HNS' section) shows that in terms of scale, there has been little house building in the Village with nearly all increases in bedrooms due to redevelopment of existing properties e.g., conversion of bungalows to two-story properties and the increasing '65 years old and above' demography - Chart 8. There has also been an increase in the '15 - 24-year-old' demography leaving the village – Chart 9 due to the lack of starter homes.
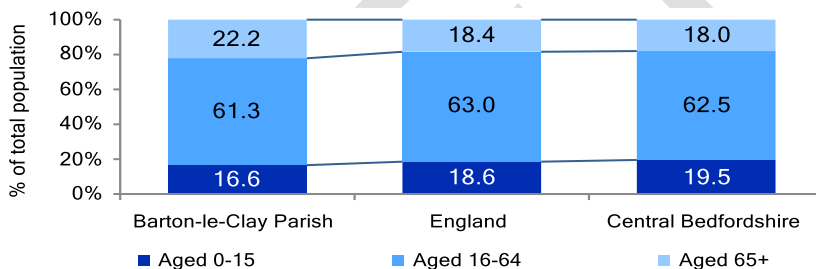
Chart 8 - Population by Age[21].
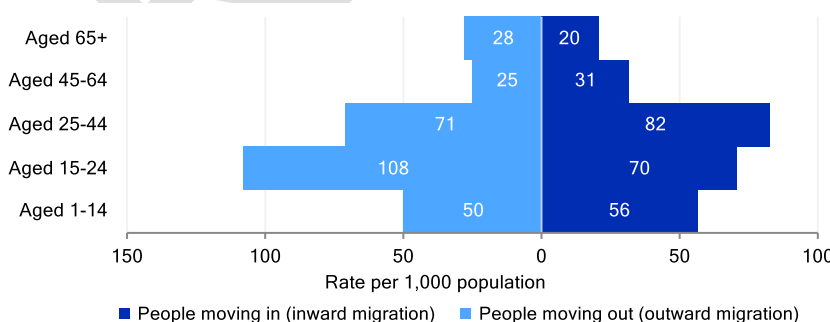
Chart 9 - Level of Inward and Outward Migration (by age)[22]

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[21] 2021 Census Data.
[22] Population Turnover Rates – Office for National Statistics (2010).

80.   The higher proportion of those Pensioner Households/65+ is also reflected in village Household Types/Composition – Chart 10.
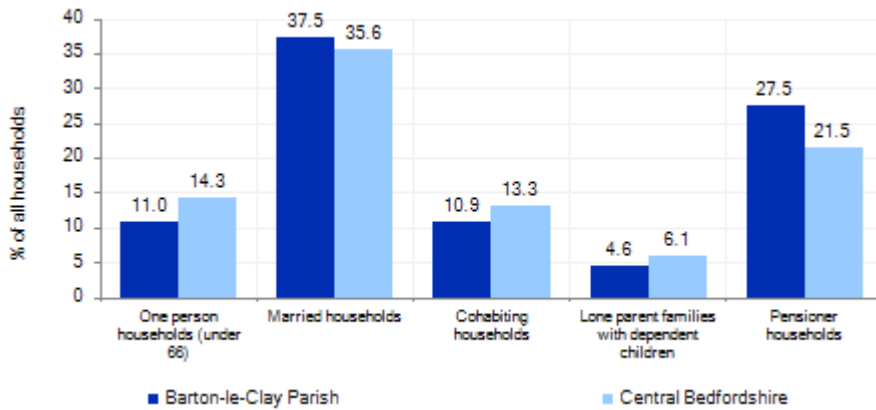
Chart 10 - Population by Household Composition.[23]

Housing Tenure

81.   Most households in Barton-le-Clay are owner occupiers, with higher levels of properties owned outright and higher levels of homes owned with a mortgage or loan compared to that of Central Bedfordshire/England. The levels of Local Authority and Private Rented properties (see also para 106) are lower than in Central Bedfordshire as a whole.
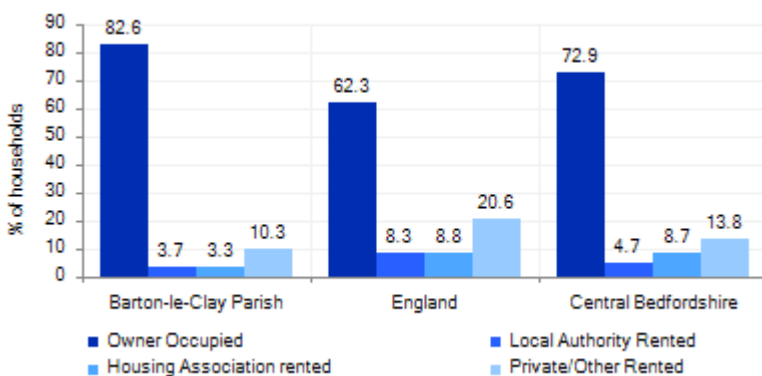
Chart 11 - Housing Tenure Breakdowns.[24]

Dwelling Types

81.   There are more detached and semi-detached properties in Barton-le-Clay compared to Central Bedfordshire/England averages with fewer terraced properties, flats, and other types of accommodation in the village – Chart 12. This has an impact on the cost of properties.

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[23] Source: Census 2021
[24] Source: Census 2021
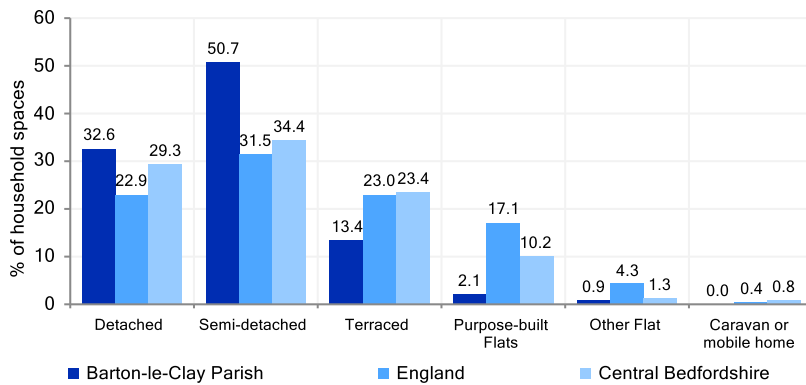
Chart 12 - Dwellings Type Breakdown.[25]

Housing in Poor Condition

82.   Barton-le-Clay has a low level of poor housing stock, e.g., a property that would not pass the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)). This is not unusual in rural communities due to the age of properties, some of which would not be suitable for e.g., central heating. Improving Energy Efficiency of properties is an area for improvement.

83.   Overcrowded housing can highlight areas with pressing needs for more affordable housing, and over-crowding counts as a housing need for households applying to join the Housing Register. In the Census 2021 there were 45 households identified as being overcrowded and 14 households identified as without central heating – Chart 13.
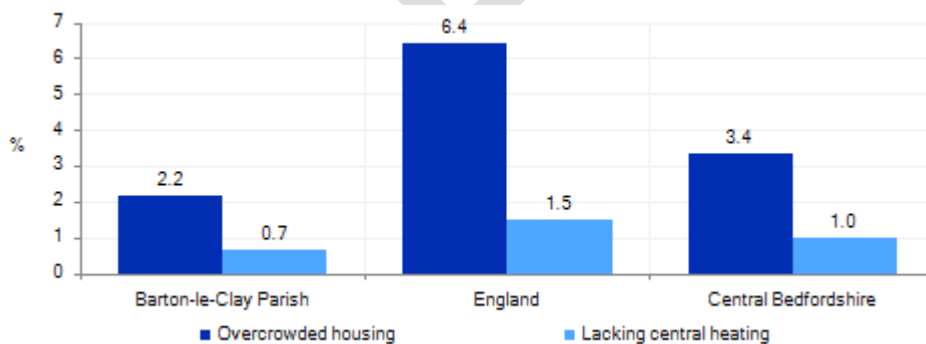
Chart 13 - Housing Environment.[26].

84.   Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are needed whenever a property is built, sold or rented. The EPC contains information about a property's energy use, typical energy costs, recommendations about how to reduce energy use and save money.

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[25] Census 2021.
[26] Census 2021.

34

85.   An EPC is an important metric as an indicator of the Village housing stock as low energy efficiency ratings are related to an aging housing stock. Ratings:

85.1 EPC rating A = 92-100 points (Green).
85.2 EPC rating B = 81-91 points (Green).
85.3 EPC rating C = 69-80 points (Green).
85.4 EPC rating D = 55-68 points (Yellow).
85.5 EPC rating E = 39-54 points (Amber).
85.6 EPC rating F = 21-38 points (Orange).
85.7 EPC rating G = 1-20 points (Red).

86.   The Village has a higher-than-average number of properties that are in the Band D-E – see Chart 14.

87.   The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the UK have been updated to require a minimum EPC rating of D for new tenancies and renewals. This means that landlords must ensure their properties have an EPC rating of D or above before they can let them to new tenants or renewals.

88.   Furthermore, from April 1, 2025, the MEES regulations will be updated again to require a minimum EPC rating of C for new tenancies and renewals. These requirements are likely to put further pressure on the village rental stock.
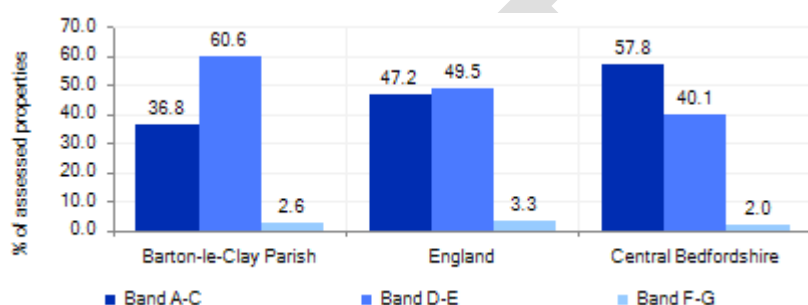
Chart 14 - Energy Efficiency Rated Buildings by Band.[27]

Housing Affordability Ratio

89.   The 'affordability ratio' (median house prices as a ratio of median household earnings) for Central Bedfordshire in 2021 (latest data available) was 10.8.[28]; houses on the market cost on average 10.8 times annual incomes.

Dwellings in Lower Council Tax Bands

90.   2.4% of dwellings in Barton-le-Clay are in Council Tax Band A, and 4.2% in Band B, compared to 8.4% and 19.3% for Central Bedfordshire as a whole. The lower level of Band A and B properties indicates a relative shortage of affordable housing for purchase in the village – Chart 15.

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[27] MHCLG. Data collected between Jan 2017- Dec 2021.
[28] Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2021
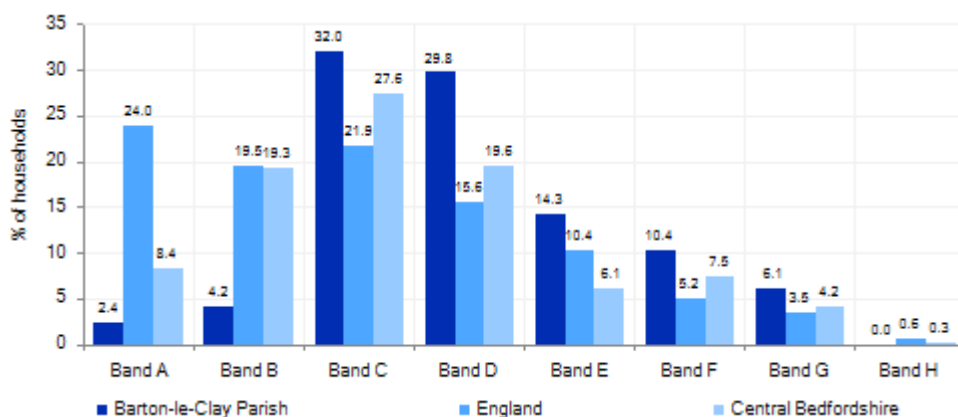
Chart 15 - Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band.[29] -

Current Property Availability for Sale in Barton-le-Clay

91. As of November 2023, there were 32 residential properties for sale in Barton-le-Clay parish.[30] - Table 4.

No. of bedrooms	Number	Asking price
4 bedrooms house	7	£800,000 - £600,001
3 bedrooms house	15	£600,000 - £400,001
2 bedrooms house/Bungalow	10	£400,000 - £300,000

Table 4 – Breakdown of Properties for Sale – Aug 23.

92. Only two properties could be considered as retirement / accessible properties. No properties were marketed as starter homes or shared ownership.

Property Sales over last 4 Years[31]

93. Property sales over the last 4 years in Barton-le-Clay parish (Table 5) are:

Price Range	2020	2021	2022	2023
£100,000 – 150,000				
£150,001 – 200,000	1	2	1	
£200,001 – 300,000	24	16	11	3
£300,001- 400,000	17	26	20	9
£400,000 - £600,000	19	14	23	4
£600,000+		6	6	
Total	**61**	**64**	**51**	**16**

Table 5 – Property Sales in the Village 2020-2023.

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[29] Valuation Office Agency (2022).
[30] Properties For Sale in Barton-Le-Clay | Rightmove
[31] Rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/Barton-Le-Clay

94. Summary of sales over last four years:

94.1 In 2023, properties in Barton-Le-Clay had an overall average price of £429,952.

94.2 The majority of sales were semi-detached properties, selling for an average price of £408,938.

94.3 Detached properties sold for an average of £555,556, with terraced properties fetching £297,583.

94.4 Overall, sold prices over the last year were 4% up on the previous year.

94.5 Out of 67 properties sold in the last 2 years, only 1 property, sold for under £200,000 (a flat was sold for £160,000).

Occupied and Availability of Rented Properties

95. As of November 2023, there were only two properties available for rent in the Village[32]. One 4-bed property @ £2850 per month and one 3-bed property @ £1250 per month.

96. The breakdown of housing rental picture in the Village is detailed in Table 6.

Type of Rental	Barton le Clay	Central Bedfordshire Average
Social rented households	143/7%	13.3%
Rented from Council	76/3.7%	4.7%
Rented from Housing Association or Social Landlord	67/3.3%	8.7%
Rented from private landlord or letting agency	178/8.7%	11.9%
Other rented dwellings	33/1.6%	1.9%

Table 6 - Housing Tenure Breakdown.[33]

First Time Buyers

97. Buying a property for the first time has many moving parts, not least individual finances. The affordability of a property is driven by several factors:

97.1 The Housing Affordability Gap. This is an estimate of the gap between the cost of local houses (Average house price in Village is £340,000[36]) and the amount residents can borrow. Mortgage lenders are typically willing to lend 4 to 5 times annual salaries (Average annual earnings in Village is £32,084[34]). Higher figures represent more unaffordable houses. 4.5 times the average salary of £32,084 is £144,378 and the Housing Affordability Gap would be £195,622.

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[32] Rightmove.co.uk/property-to-rent

[33] Census 2021.

[34] ONS.Gov.uk.

97.2 The Savings Ratio. The ratio between 15% of the house price (an estimate of the savings required for a deposit) and monthly earnings. It can be interpreted as the number of months' worth of earnings required for a deposit (not accounting for inflation or changes in earnings or house prices) e.g., the deposit on the purchase of a £340,000 property would be £51,508 and based on the average wage of £32,084, the Savings Ratio would be 19 months.

97.3 Total Affordability Ratio. This is the ratio between the total house price and annual earnings. Based on the above average house price and average annual salary, the Total Affordability Ratio is over 10 years.
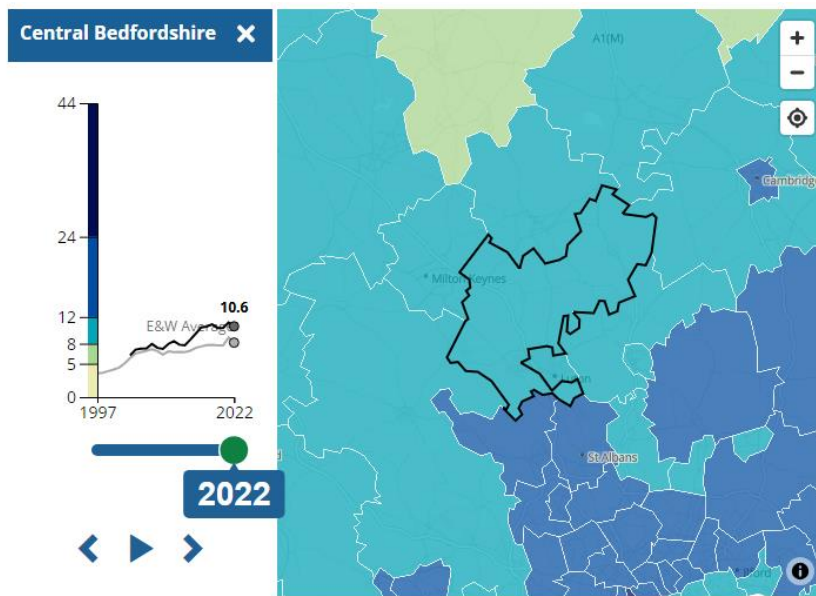
Fig 2 - Housing affordability ratio, earnings, and house prices - 2022.[35].

98.   The general rule of the affordability of renting is that the monthly rent should not exceed 30% of the gross monthly income. The average for East of England is currently 31.5%.[36]. For a household to be able to rent the cheapest property currently available for rent in the village (a 2-bedroom house at £1100 pcm), a household's gross income would need to be over £42,000.

Survey Process and Response – Affordable Housing

99.   To study the need for affordable housing in Barton-le-Clay, a survey form was delivered to all households in April 2022, together with a FREEPOST envelope to enable residents to return their completed survey to BedsRCC. The survey form gave contact details to request additional forms in the event of there being more than one case of housing need within the household. The survey was also available to complete online, with the link to the online survey being included in the covering letter which was also delivered to every household.

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[35] Housing affordability in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
[36] Rent Affordability Calculator UK

100. The survey form was in two parts. Section 1 was for completion by all residents and aimed to gain their views on overall housing needs in Barton-le-Clay (see chapter 5). Section 2 was for completion by or on behalf of any household member currently looking for different accommodation, or who would be looking within the next 10 years. The findings from this section are analysed in Chapters 6 and 7.

101. We received 317 responses from around 2200 distributed, a return rate of just over 14%. This is a slightly lower than average response rate for a housing needs survey (typical return rate is 20-25%), however we feel that 14% is still adequate to give us a representative sample of views.

Review of Conclusions & Recommendations from HNS

102. Analysis of the data considered in Chapter 6 of the HNS Report identified a need for affordable housing within Barton-le-Clay from household's resident in (or with strong links to) the parish, which is unlikely to be met by normal market provision. The need was predominantly from those wanting to move out of the family home, some into rented accommodation and some to get on the property ladder. There is also demand from those wanting to move out of rented accommodation into their own properties or move to a larger family home.

103. A number of affordable properties for people with a local connection in Barton-le-Clay could be provided through the development of a Rural Exception Site[37] which would provide affordable housing for which households with a local connection would take priority.

104. Based on data supplied by respondents, up to 25 households with a local connection would be suitable for housing within a rural exception site development. However, it must be recognised that this is a snapshot of current, self-assessed need: some respondents may withdraw, move, or be housed by other means during the planning and development of any future scheme. Based on the identified need, it is recommended that **12 units** (see also para 8.1 of HNS Report) of affordable housing[38] be provided for people with a local connection to the Village.

105. In making this assessment we consider a number of factors including household size and circumstances; the type and tenure being sought by respondents; and their financial means. Consideration is also given to properties available on the market within the parish, at the time of the report, there was a lack of smaller properties available within the Parish.

106. Analysis of the responses considered in Chapter 7 of the HNS Report, and other evidence considered in Chapters 2 and 3, show that there is a need for **2/3 bed houses and bungalows or retirement properties** (e.g., houses built to Lifetime Homes criteria), if Barton-le-Clay is to meet the identified current and future needs of existing owner occupier residents wishing to stay in the parish.

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[37] Rural Exception Sites.
[38] Affordable housing guidance note for Central Bedfordshire (south area)

107.   The evidence for this is (at the time of the HNS).

> 107.1.1   There were currently no bungalows or properties advertised as accessible for sale on the open market in the village.
>
> 107.1.2   The relative shortage of cheaper properties in the village, there are currently only 2 properties available for purchase on the open market in the parish priced under £425,000.
>
> 107.1.3   The 53 owner occupier respondents who would be looking for a more suitable property at some point over the next 10 years, with 20 of these looking for a property within the next 0-3 years.

108. If suitable accessible properties were more widely available, this would be likely to address under-occupation and free up houses for growing families to purchase as they work their way up the housing ladder.

109. It should be noted that there is no guarantee that housing sold on the open market will be bought by people with a local connection to the village. It is therefore not possible to stipulate how much new housing would meet the needs of the owner occupier respondents identified above. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the provision of up to 15 suitable accessible units would meet a reasonable proportion of the need while being in keeping with the size of the parish. These could be delivered separately or alongside a rural exception site, with some of the market housing cross- subsidising the affordable housing.

110. In support of the points made in the BedsRCC Housing Needs Survey, the Local Insight Plan for the Village (see para 77) details that of a population of 4,941 residents, 1073 are State pensionable. This is 21.7%, a fifth of the parish population and higher than the England average of 18.5%.

111. The CBC Local Plan (CBCLP) – 'Section 11.3 - Supporting an Ageing Population – Page 108' recognises that:

> Central Bedfordshire is showing an "*increase growth of people over 65+ and a further noticeable growth of the 85+. This rise becomes even more significant in the 85+ age range where the population of people is set to rise by over two- and-a-half times from 5,400 in 2015 to 13,700 by 2035. Besides the growth of the older population, residents of Central Bedfordshire have a longer life expectancy than the national average, ranging from 84 years for women and 81 years for men*".

112. Notably, the CBC Local Plan 11.3.7, states:

> "*There is a particular need to retain bungalows for older people, as this is one of the preferred accommodation types for people who are aging yet want to retain a high level of independence. However, there has been a noticeable loss of these units due to existing bungalows being converted into two storey family homes. This places an additional requirement on future new supply to compensate for the backlog of chronic under-delivery and loss of existing bungalows*".

113. Therefore, having a housing policy that supports an aging, older population, as well those with disability supports the CBCLP, particularly 'CBCLP H3 – Housing for Older People' and will help ensure that the BLCNP achieves its goal of providing housing that meets the needs of all its residents.

114. Further, the CBCLP Section 11.1.9 to 11, Page 104 – 'Housing Requirements' also recognises that there is a need for smaller, mainstream entry-level homes for young families and a mix of 1 and particularly 2 beds in the form of bungalows (for those aiming to downsize), mobility homes standards, flatted maisonettes, and other mainstream housing. This is supported by the age demographic in the parish where 3029/60.9% residents are of working age (16 - 64 years) and the Residents Survey noted the need for bungalows and small residences of 1-2 bedrooms, primarily for retired or affordable living.

Disability

115. It is difficult to assess the need for housing of those who are disabled and require help with personal care or have walking difficulties with disabilities. The OCSI report does show that PIP recipients in the village are lower than both those in Central Beds and England.
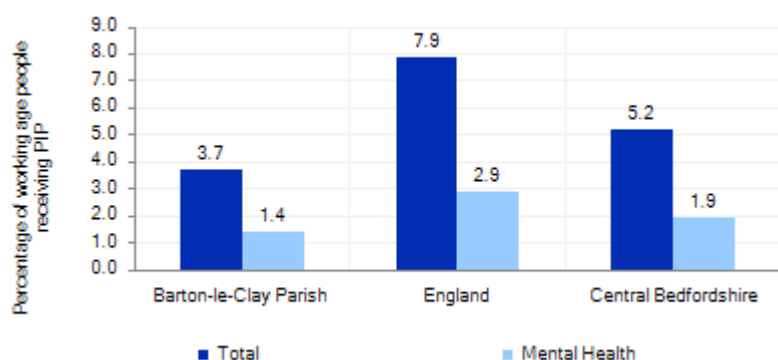
Chart 16 - Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Recipients.[39].

Vulnerable Groups – Those in Latter Life

116. Being vulnerable is defined as in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect[40]. It is acknowledged that pensioner groups may face greater risks and have different types of needs, for example, pensioners without access to transport, pensioner loneliness and pensioners in poverty.

116.1   Pensioners without access to transport are those with no access to a car or van. The dataset only includes pensioners living in private households. Pensioner households with no car or van (Census 2011) 151/17.5% England average 40.8%.

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[39] Source: Department for Work and Pensions (Apr 23)
[40] https://www.gov.uk

116.2   There are two indicators of pensioner loneliness. The census provides a measure of the proportion of pensioners living alone (defined as households of one pensioner and no other household members). In addition, Age Concern have developed a Loneliness Index (which predicts the prevalence of loneliness amongst people aged 65+) based on census data. Areas with a value closer to 0 predict a greater prevalence of loneliness amongst those aged 65 and over and living in households compared to areas with a value further away from 0.
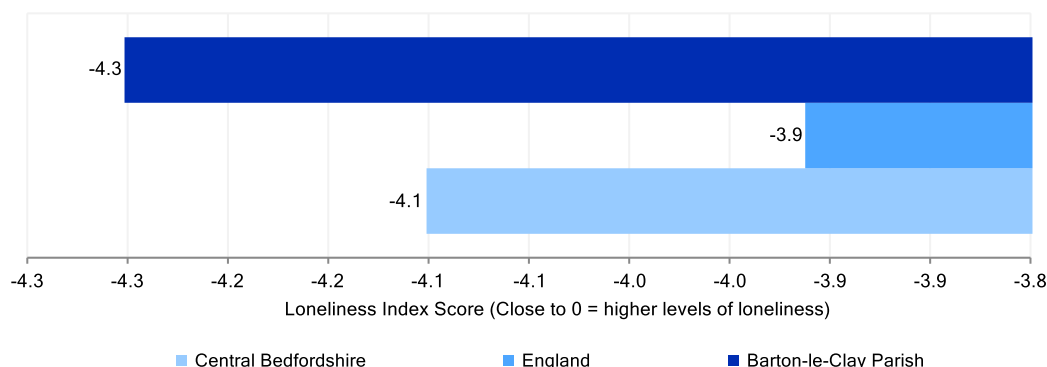
Chart 17 - Loneliness index (probability of loneliness for those aged 65 and over).[41].

116.3   Pensioners in poverty are those in receipt of Pension Credit. Pension Credit provides financial help for people aged 60 or over whose income is below a certain level set by the law. Pension credit claimant (DWP May-21) 80/7.2% England average 11.7%.

Other Vulnerable Groups

117. Other Vulnerable Groups can include, but not exclusive, single parent households and those with disabilities, and the BLCNP Housing Policies seek to address these core issues that have been shown to be important to residents.

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[41] Source: Age UK (2011)

Housing (BLCNP/HP) Policies

Housing Policy BLCNP/HP-1

1.1   All new residential development within Barton Le Clay must provide a quantity of affordable housing in line with the requirements contained within the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. Affordable homes should be well integrated with market housing. The provision and mixing of affordable units for new development must comply with the National Planning Practice Guidance on First Homes, which requires 25% of all affordable housing units to comprise of First Homes. The remaining tenure of affordable units should be in accordance with Policy H4: Affordable Housing of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, or its successor and should meet the specific needs of the Neighbourhood area.

Housing Policy BLCNP/HP-2

2.1   An application will be made to CBC Planning Department for an Article 4 Direction (The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015) to protect single storey bungalows in the (Housing North Character Area – see Annex B – Page 14) from being converted to two-storey homes, as a Class AA Development.

High Quality Design

Introduction

118. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Sept 23, Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (CBDG) (Aug 23).[42] and research, such as, the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (cabe).[43], has shown that good design of buildings and places can improve local business, health and well-being, increase civic pride and cultural activity, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce pollution.

119. The BLCNP recognises that well-designed buildings and places improve the quality of life and that it is a core planning principle to secure good design.[44]. The Neighbourhood Plan also aims to reflect community opinion and aspirations and add a local dimension to the assessment of proposals for any new development. The overall aim is to therefore encourage well-designed developments that:

> 119.1   Are contextual in terms of built and landscape context.

> 119.2   Are attractive, distinct, and legible;

> 119.3   Are compact, with well-defined streets and spaces, with a clear safe and accessible route hierarchy;

> 119.4   Integrate existing and new natural features, with public spaces that are accessible for all;

> 119.5   Accommodate a range of activities;

> 119.6   Provide a range of uses that support everyday activities including to live, work and play;

> 119.7   Conserve natural resources, including water, land, energy, and materials;

> 119.8   Do not negatively impact on the historic environment.

120. To guide the BLCNPSC, AECOM was commissioned to carry out a design review of Barton-le-Clay and produce a set of Parish-wide design guidelines and codes. AECOM are the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) appointed contractors to deliver a wide range of planning and environmental services to help communities across England develop their Neighbourhood Plans and shape development and growth in their locality.

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[42] Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (Aug 23)
[43] . The Value of Good Design - How Buildings & Spaces Create Economic and Social Value
[44] National-Planning-Policy-Framework - Para 126

121. The final report is at Annex B and contains four Chapters:

121.1 Chapter 1 sets the scene by explaining the importance of good design, followed by a brief summary of the scope of this report as well as the steps followed upon its completion.

121.2 Chapter 2 outlines the local context and key characteristics of Barton-le-Clay by exploring green infrastructure, built environment, streetscape, heritage, local vernacular, views, topography etc.

121.3 Chapter 3 sets out two sets of design guidelines. The first is a set of general design considerations that need be addressed by applicants and their design teams as appropriate for Barton-le-Clay's character. The second is a set of design guidelines and codes regarding key characteristics of Barton-le-Clay. Both sets have been informed and shaped by the local character analysis of the parish aiming to guide future development, of any scale, including infill development, house extensions or larger developments.

121.4 Chapter 4 explains why the code and guide are valuable tools in securing context-driven, high-quality development in Barton-le-Clay and offers recommendations how this document could be used by each actor in the planning and development process.

The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (CBDG)

122. The CBDG contains design guidelines and codes that are applied in Central Bedfordshire. The guidelines and codes, grouped into the sections below, are structured around the 10 themes of the National Design:

122.1 Context and Identity,
122.2 Built Form,
122.3 Movement,
122.4 Nature,
122.5 Public Spaces,
122.6 Uses, and,
122.7 Homes and Buildings.

AECOM Design Guidelines

123. The AECOM Design Guidelines have been developed from the CBDG, a tour of Barton le Clay on 21st March 23 and in consultation with the BLCNPSC. The AECOM guidelines cover the following areas (see Figure 2):

123.1 DG.1 Materials & Architectural Details
123.2 DG.2 Housing Mix
123.3 DG.3 Development in Close Proximity to Heritage Assets
123.4 DG.4 Patterns of Growth
123.5 DG.5 Development Edges in the Rural Landscape
123.6 DG.6 Infill Development
    123.6.1 DG6a – 'Backland' Development(s)
123.7 DG.7 Building Scale & Massing

CB Design Guide (Jan 23)

Context & Identity
- Landscape context
- Built form
- Historic context
- Heritage assets
- Building consent
- Conservation Areas
- Heritage statements

Built form
- Urban grain
- Enclosure and spaces
- Densities
- Elevation design
- Symmetry and balance
- Building features
- Heights

Movement
- Design principles
- Street design and hierarchy
- Surfacing
- Boundaries
- Drainage
- Street furniture
- Public art
- Accessibility

AECOM Design Guide

DG.1 Materials & architectural details
DG.2 Housing mix
DG.3 Development in close proximity to heritage assets

DG.4 Patterns of growth
DG.5 Development edges in the rural landscape
DG.6 Infill development
DG.7 Building scale & massing
DG.8 Views

DG.9 Car parking
DG.10 Lighting schemes

CB Design Guide (Jan 23)

Nature
- Green and blue infrastructure
- Landscape plans
- Management and maintenance
- Biodiversity
- Design considerations

Public spaces

Uses

Homes & buildings
- Internal and external environments
- Inclusive design
- Community safety
- Private amenity and communal spaces
- Waste, servicing and utilities
- Self-built plots
- Alterations and extensions
- Roofs and windows

AECOM Design Guide

DG.11 Promoting biodiversity in private properties

DG.12 Eco-design techniques for existing and future homes
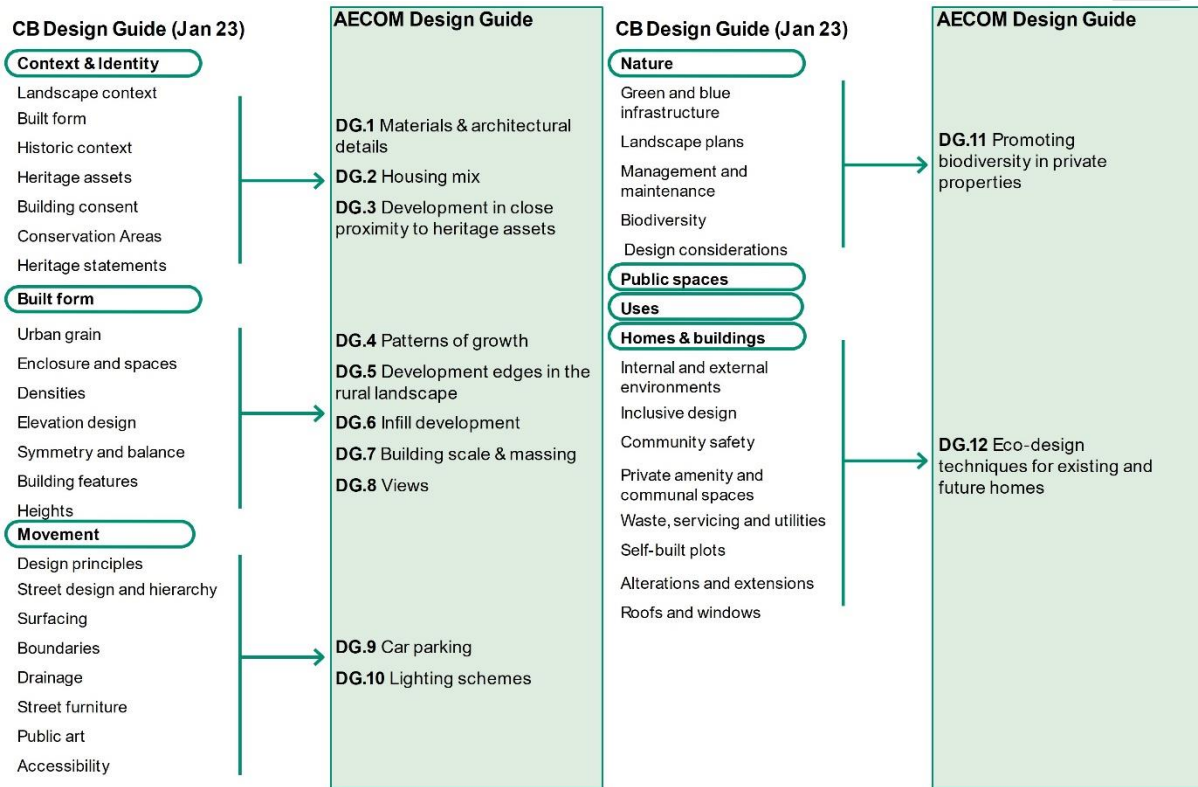
Figure 3: Adoption of CBC Design Guides into AECOM's Design Guides.

DG.1 Materials & Architectural Details

124. Barton-le-Clay Parish has a wide variety of architectural styles and details that can act as references for new developments and new developments need to be respectful of architectural styles and use of materials of surrounding housing, while ensuring that a mix of styles are provided that is in keeping with the Barton-le-Clay Parish style and colour palette. Design guidelines for new developments include:

124.1   Architectural design in new developments shall reflect the high-quality local design references in both the natural and built environment and make a valuable contribution to the character of the area;

124.2   Buildings should be finished with materials appropriate to the local context. Special consideration needs be given to materials particularly representative of Barton-le-Clay's vernacular: red hang tiles and yellow brick, limestone, render, tile and brick detailing, weatherboarding and timber frames with brick and render infills;

124.3   The choice of colour and finish of materials is an important design factor in reducing the impact of the buildings on the surrounding landscape. Large areas of intense strong colours do not blend well with the rural landscape. Muted and darker tones could be a better option;

124.4   The use of traditional, natural, and preferably locally sourced materials is generally more appropriate than man-made synthetic, pre-coloured materials, as these lack the variation in colour and texture found in natural materials; and

124.5   Architectural details appropriate to the local vernacular can be used, for example there are instances of pitched and hipped roof dormers on buildings across the parish, which add informality and interest to the roofline. Dormers need to be of an appropriate form, scale, and material. See DG.7 for more information on dormer design.

DG.2 Housing Mix

125. The aspiration for the BLCNPSC and Parish Council is to ensure that there is a mix of housing types and supply of social and affordable housing to cater for the needs of a wider group of people. The current mixture of housing in the area includes bungalows, detached and semi-detached houses, converted farm buildings and flats.

126. Proposed new development(s) need to offer a range of building typologies and sizes to attract a wide group of people and boost the local economy. Design guidelines for new developments include:

126.1   New development(s) to propose a mix of housing to include a range of house types and sizes, both developer and self-built, to allow for a variety of options and bring balance to the population profile. The existing mix of housing in the Village should also be enhanced; and,

126.2   Affordable housing is a priority in new development and its quality and architectural design need to be of high standards to complement the local vernacular.

DG.3 Development Near Heritage Assets

127. There are a considerable number of heritage assets and non-designated buildings of historic significance in Barton-le-Clay that contribute to the local vernacular, as well as green assets such woodlands, hedgerows, hedges, and trees. It is very likely that proposed new developments will be in close proximity to those assets and for that reason, design guidelines are needed to ensure that any new design stimulates ways in which they could be further promoted and protected:

127.1   New developments near a heritage asset must respect its significance and demonstrate how local distinctiveness is reinforced. For example, the new development needs to allow for a generous setback from the asset and be of a massing and scale that is sensible to the neighbouring structure;

127.2	New development proposals are not to block key views to and from heritage assets. This is to be achieved through proposing appropriate density and design features including footpaths and green links;

127.3	New developments are to retain the existing open spaces, vegetation, and trees to preserve the historic form and pattern of development close to the asset; and,

127.4	New developments are to propose architectural details and materials that match the ones used in the surrounding heritage assets to preserve and respect the local vernacular.

DG.4 Patterns of Growth

128. There are 3 main patterns of growth within Barton-le-Clay; the linear layouts, permeable blocks, and cul-de-sac developments, with each one presenting different qualities in terms of street layout, buildings lines, plot sizes and widths. In addition, the close relationship with the countryside contributes to the character of these patterns. Thus, any new development needs to suggest design that matches the existing patterns of growth. Design guidelines for new developments include:

128.1	New developments must demonstrate a good understanding of the different patterns of growth, building orientation, building lines, and building setbacks of the surrounding built environment and propose design that is sensitive to the local context. For example, small-scale developments within the existing fabric need to show design that matches the neighbouring streets and neighbourhoods, while larger scale developments need to propose a mixture of all three patterns to reflect the character of the area;

128.2	New developments must demonstrate a good understanding of the scale and massing of the surrounding built environment and avoid proposing design that exceeds the surrounding roofline and creates unpleasant views to the existing properties;

128.3	The building densities of the new developments need to be sensitive to the surrounding area. In general, the average density in the area should be around 35 dph (dwellings per hectare). This density fits with the prevailing character of the settlement, but still seeks to maintain efficient use of land. In case of higher densities, for instance in the central core along the main road, density could go slightly higher to around 45 dph. Towards the edges, any design proposal should be around 25-30 dph to allow for a smooth transition into the countryside. In general, any proposal that would adversely affect the environment, or give rise to an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic, noise, or disturbance, must be avoided;

128.4	Building setbacks and building lines need to be slightly irregular to match the general character of the area. Long stretches of regular building lines must be avoided as they distract from the local context;

128.5   The size of plots and their patterns to be varied to reflect the character of the area;

128.6   The sizes of front and back gardens to be varied to reinforce the character of the area. Any developments along the edges needs to propose larger back gardens to allow for green buffers with the surroundings countryside;

128.7   Existing hedges, hedgerows, and trees to be integrated into design, while more planting and vegetation is encouraged to form part of the green network strategy; and,

128.8   Appropriate signage to be incorporated along the road to indicate the low-speed limits or provide navigation.

DG.5 Development Edges in the Rural Landscape

129. Barton-le-Clay is surrounded with natural landscape and open fields that offer long distance views to woodlands and other landmarks such as Barton Hills. The existing built environment treats the edges in two ways; either fronting the open countryside, for example along Higham Road, or backing it with green buffers to offer a smooth transition into it. Both approaches aim to protect the countryside and any future development needs to follow the same example. Design guidelines on how new development are to treat rural development edges include:

129.1   New developments to conserve existing native trees and shrubs along the lanes and within any potential development site and incorporate any green/ecological asset within design. Any unnecessary loss of flora to be avoided;

129.2   New developments that back the countryside to be bordered with rich vegetation, including native trees and hedgerows. Abrupt edges with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of the developments to be avoided;

129.3   New developments that front onto the open countryside to propose edge lanes that have a more informal, shared, character, while building lines to be slightly irregular to create a countryside feel;

129.4   Edges must be designed to link rather than segregate existing and new neighbourhoods. Therefore, green corridors to be proposed to provide additional pedestrian and cycle links that will improve connectivity between neighbourhoods and contribute to the successful integration of any new developments within the parish; and.

129.5   New developments adjoining public open spaces to face onto them to improve natural views and vistas.

DG.6 Infill Developments

130. There are many infill developments in the Parish area. In general, the design of smaller scale developments can be challenging as it needs to sit sensitively within the surrounding context. Design guidelines for infill sites include:

130.1   Infill developments to complement the street scene into which it will be inserted. It does not need to mimic the existing styles, but its scale, massing and layout need to be in general conformity with the existing. Infill developments are not to be located too close to existing buildings and are not be of a larger scale which dwarfs existing properties and/or presents overlooking issues;

130.2   The building to plot size ratio of infill developments to ensure a good amount of outdoor amenity space. There are varying sizes of front and back gardens in Barton-le-Clay, though in general most properties are set back to include both a front and back garden. At the edges of development where it is more rural, larger gardens are more common. Infill development to follow the existing context while also meeting national standards;

130.3   The building line of new development to be in conformity with the existing. Where there is an existing strong building line, for example with terraced or dense groupings of houses, the building line or infill to be similar to preserve the character of the street. In other cases where the building line is more informal, for example, in less dense areas, a more varied building line is acceptable;

130.4   The density of any new infill development to reflect its context and its location in the area. The optimal density will respond to surrounding densities while making efficient use of the land; and,

130.5   Where there are opportunities for infill development, proposals to include retaining existing views and vistas, between buildings and along view corridors, wherever possible.

DG6a - Backland Development

131. Backland Development (often referred to as tandem development) refers to the development of land set back behind existing properties (often existing houses). In the Parish area, this generally refers to the utilisation of garden land, often landlocked or with limited street frontage. This type of development shares similar challenges like the ones mentioned for infill developments. Other issues with forms of backland development arise from loss of privacy, daylight, and access, as well as parking problems. Therefore, Backland Development is generally discouraged.

132. Any proposals must consider the effect on wildlife, biodiversity, street scene, traffic, and amenity space of neighbouring properties.

133. Additional design guidelines, apart from the ones covered with infill developments, are:

133.1 Road safety for Backland Development to be ensured. New developments should not be accessed from main roads or at points in the roads with limited visibility, such as junctions;

133.2 Backland Development to be bordered with rich vegetation to avoid causing privacy issues to the surrounding properties;

133.3 Any proposed Backland or Infill Development must not cause an unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of adjacent residential properties;

133.4 Hedges and fences usually protect privacy at ground floor level, so any privacy issues tend to arise from upstairs windows either looking into neighbours' windows or down into their private garden space;

133.5 To avoid overlooking of habitable rooms and gardens, a minimum distance of 15m to be achieved between dwellings where a side elevation of one dwelling faces a rear elevation of another. Where a side elevation is windowless, the separation distance can be reduced to 12m. A minimum separation distance of 21m to be achieved between facing windowed rear elevations, and,

133.6 Where dwellings with facing elevations are positioned on different levels, the above separation distances should be increased by 2m for every 1m difference in level. Where there is a level difference and distances are increased, the lower dwelling should have the longer garden to compensate for any slopes or retaining structures.

134. Future housing developments need to design the spacing between dwellings to allow for retrospective introductions of garden and cycle storage as well sustainable measures such as air source heat pumps.

DG.7 Building Scale and Massing

135. The average building height in Barton-le-Clay's existing settlements is 2-storeys. Guidelines for new development include:

135.1   New buildings to be sympathetic in scale to the context of the site and its surroundings to preserve the character of the area. For example, if there are woodlands or backdrop vegetation, the massing of the new buildings are to be lower to allow for views towards those green assets;

135.2   The massing of new buildings must ensure a sufficient level of privacy and access to natural light for their occupants and avoid overshadowing existing buildings. New buildings must not significantly compromise existing property views of open and green spaces and big skies;

135.3   Subtle variations in height should be created by altering eaves and ridge heights to add visual interest. The bulk and pitch of roofs, however, must remain sympathetic to the tree canopy, the local vernacular, and the low-lying character of the area. Another way to achieve visual interest could be by varying frontage widths and plan forms; and,

135.4   Landmark buildings and focal points at junctions and corners could be of slightly larger scale compared to the rest of the development, however, those should not detract from the overall character of the area.

DG.8 Views

136. The location of the parish allows for extensive views to the surrounding countryside as well as rich backdrop vegetation and woodlands. In addition to this, there are several, short-distance, views towards local green spaces and buildings of historic importance. Views are discussed in detail, in the GI Plan.

137. Any new development needs to acknowledge the existence of all those elements and stimulate ways in which those assets could be further promoted and protected. Design guidelines include:

137.1   New development proposals to maintain open views towards the surrounding landscape, for example Barton Hill Nature Reserve. Development density to allow for spaces between buildings to preserve views of the countryside setting and maintain the perceived openness of Barton-le-Clay;

137.2   Scenic and tranquil views to the countryside to be retained and enhanced in future development. For example, footpaths bordered with rich vegetation can help protect views while improving walkability in the Village;

137.3   The roofline of any new development to be set lower than the backdrop vegetation, avoiding hard lines of the silhouette against the sky;

137.4   The rooflines of any new development are not to create unpleasant visual impacts on surrounding neighbourhoods.

137.5   Vegetation to be proposed to act as a buffer between existing and new developments; and,

137.6   Creating short-distance views broken by buildings or trees helps to create landmarks and memorable routes. New buildings are not to obstruct views that are framing the woodlands backdrop of the area, which are deemed important locally.

DG.9 Parking and Servicing

138. Although the aim to create a good network of walking and cycling routes within Barton-le-Clay parish is a priority, the demand for private cars remains high. Therefore, car parking must be carefully integrated into the design.

139. The car parking typologies found in the parish are mainly on-plot parking; however, there are also cases of on-plot garage parking, parking courts and on-street parking. Design guidelines for car parking typologies include:

139.1   Guidelines for on-Plot & Front Car Parking.

139.1.1   Parking to be well-integrated into the design so as not to dominate the public realm;

139.1.2   High-quality and well-designed soft landscaping, hedges, hedgerows, and trees to be used to increase the visual attractiveness of the parking and enhance the character of the parish; and,

139.1.3   Hardstands and driveways must be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off and to help mitigate potential flooding. If the surface to be covered is more than five square metres planning permission will be needed for laying traditional, impermeable driveways that do not provide for the water to run to a permeable area.

139.2   Guidelines for Parking Courts.

139.2.1   Parking courts to be acceptable for small building clusters and permeable paving should be used where possible;

139.2.2   Parking courts must be overlooked by properties to increase natural surveillance; and,

139.2.3   Planting and vegetation to be integrated into design to soften the presence of cars and preserve the rural character of the area.

139.3   Guidelines for On-Street, Car-Parking.

139.3.1   The streetscape is not to be dominated by continuous on-street parking spaces. Where possible, tree planting and grass areas can be incorporated between parking bays to improve aesthetics;

139.3.2   On-street parking can be parallel or perpendicular in relation with the traffic speed and the traffic volume;

139.3.3   On-street parking must be designed to avoid impeding the flow of pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles; and

139.3.4   On-street parking to be wired to allow each bay the ability to charge electric vehicles.

139.4   Guidelines for Garages:

139.4.1   The use of garages should be avoided, if possible;

139.4.2   Garages must not dominate the appearance of dwellings and must not reduce the amount of active frontage to the street; and

139.4.3   They should provide a minimum of 3mx7m internal space to park a car and provide space for storage to avoid the garage to be used for storage purposes only.

139.5   Cycle Parking.

139.5.1   Houses without Garages:

1.139.5.1.   For residential units, where there is no on-plot garage, covered and secured cycle parking should be provided within the domestic curtilage;

2.139.5.1.   Cycle storage must be provided at a convenient location with easy access;

3.139.5.1.   When provided within the footprint of the dwelling or as a free-standing shed, cycle parking should be accessed by means of a door at least 900mm and the structure should be at least 2m deep; and

4.139.5.1.   The use of planting and smaller trees alongside cycle parking can be used.

139.5.2   Houses with Garages

1.139.5.2.   The minimum garage size should be 7m x 3m to allow space for cycle storage;

2.139.5.2.   Where possible, cycle parking should be accessed from the front of the building, either in a specially constructed enclosure or easily accessible garage;

3.139.5.2.   The design of any enclosure should integrate well with the surroundings; and

4.139.5.2.   The bicycle must be removed easily without having to move the vehicle.

DG.10 Lighting Schemes

140. The incorporation of street lighting in any new development should be carefully considered and designed to preserve the rural character of Barton-le-Clay and minimise light pollution to benefit both people and wildlife.

141. To meet the need for adequate street lighting within residential areas, while also retaining dark skies and the rural character of the parish, low-level lighting solutions can be applied. This includes lighting schemes that could be turned off, when not needed ('part-night lighting'), as well as down looking lighting. Design guidelines for lighting include:

141.1 Up-lighting. Focused light and attention on an object or tree from a low fixed location.

141.2 Downlighting. Bullet type fixture placed well above eye level on an object or tree to e.g., illuminate the pathway.

141.3 Backlighting. Fixtures placed at the back of an object to create a 'glowing' effect e.g., backlighting used at the back of a bush to create a glowing effect.

141.4 Path lighting. Use of low fixtures which direct illumination downward and outward.

DG.11 Biodiversity

142. The area contains a rich variety of natural habitats of a local, National, and international importance and the biodiversity of the area must be protected and its protection a priority in any design – see GI Plan. Design guidelines to protect biodiversity include:

142.1 Development must protect and enhance the existing habitats, for example traditional orchards, woodlands, and hedgerows, as well as local species. Proposed development(s) need to help increase movement between isolated populations and provide escape cover from predators and shelter during bad weather;

142.2 A variety of measures to enhance biodiversity and movement of species by retrofitting, e.g., bird boxes, pollinator gardens, bat boxes, hedgehog houses or bug hotels, into existing front and rear gardens, to be pursued. These additions, apart from enhancing biodiversity, could improve the surrounding environment;

142.3 Development to respect the existing natural boundary treatments, while new ones to be designed to allow for the movement of wildlife and provide habitats for local species e.g., hedgehogs. For instance, trees, hedges, and hedgerows must be preserved;

142.4 Boundary treatments at properties to encourage the movement of species and avoid blocking it. For example, timber fencing should have gaps between the panels to allow for permeability;

142.5 The open landscape around Barton-le-Clay to be protected. In addition, footpath links need to be bordered with rich vegetation to allow for the movement of species; and,

142.6　　Blue assets can also contribute to biodiversity connectivity. Proposals for pond habitats and rain gardens could be implemented into existing open spaces and enhance biodiversity, while also improving the aesthetics of the environment.

DG.12 Implementing Eco-Design Principles into Homes

143. Figure 4 details a number of sustainable design features. The ones in purple are strongly encouraged to be implemented into existing homes, and those in orange detail additional features that new build homes and e.g., extensions, should incorporate from the onset.

Existing homes

1. **Insulation** in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
2. **Double or triple glazing with shading** (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
3. **Low-carbon heating** with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
4. **Draught proofing** of floors, windows and doors
5. **Highly energy-efficient appliances** (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
6. **Highly waste-efficient devices** with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
7. **Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)** to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
8. **Flood resilience and resistance** with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Additional features for new build homes

A. **High levels of airtightness**
B. **Triple glazed windows and external shading** especially on south and west faces
C. **Low-carbon heating** and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
D. **More fresh air** with mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
E. **Water management and cooling** more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs, rainwater harvesting and reflective walls
F. **Flood resilience and resistance** e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
G. **Construction and site planning** timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
H. **Solar panel**
I. **Electric car charging point**

Figure 4 - Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.

Design of New Developments Policy BLCNP /D/1

1.1   Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they are compliant with the CBC Design Guide August 23 and the BLCNP.

1.2   All new development must respect the character of the village in which it is located and, where appropriate:

   1.2.1   Relate to the existing development pattern in terms of enclosure and definition of streets/spaces,

   1.2.2   Be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting,

   1.2.3   New dwellings should not be more than 2 storeys in height,

   1.2.4   Use materials appropriate to the development's context,

   1.2.5   Be well integrated with the surroundings; reinforcing connections, taking opportunities to provide new ones,

   1.2.6   Provide convenient pedestrian/cyclist access to community services and facilities,

   1.2.7   Be of a design with a locally inspired or distinctive character,

   1.2.8   Take advantage of the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings and site orientation,

   1.2.9   Take advantage of views into/from the site to enable retention of rural character, easy access and navigation through where applicable,

   1.2.10   Integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street,

   1.2.11   Make provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, e.g. wherever more than five parking spaces are provided there should be at least one charging point for electric vehicles – see also CBC Electric Vehicle Charging-Technical Guidance for New Development-Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)-2022,

   1.2.12   Provide appropriate infrastructure such as drainage including the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems to manage surface water run-off and foul sewerage and make improvements where necessary.

   1.2.13   Sympathetically designed infrastructure to support high quality electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high-speed broadband, will be supported. Providers are strongly encouraged to consult on any such proposals as early as possible.

Green Infrastructure Plan

Introduction

144. The Greensand Trust was commissioned in early 2023 by the BLCNPSC to produce a 'Green Infrastructure Plan' (GI Plan) as part of the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan. A 'Parish Level GI Plan', using the methodology developed by the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, was an ideal way of ensuring that the environment is adequately considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process and an excellent way to engage people in the parish.

145. The GI Plan was presented to BLCNPSC in October 2023 and the full final report is at Annex C.

What is 'Green Infrastructure'?

146. As set out in the [Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan (2007)](#), Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which provide:

146.1   A healthy and diverse environment.
146.2   Attractive places to live and visit.
146.3   A good quality of life.
146.4   A sustainable future.

147. Green infrastructure assets include:

147.1   Accessible Greenspaces.
147.2   Country parks.
147.3   Green corridors.
147.4   Urban parks and gardens Habitats for wildlife including nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites. Historic parks and gardens and historic landscapes Scheduled Ancient Monuments Waterways and water bodies, including flooded quarries public rights of way and cycleways.
147.5   Allotments.
147.6   Children's play space.
147.7   Formal sports facilities.
147.8   Cemeteries.

148. It is important to plan the green infrastructure network in the same way that we plan other networks and facilities, so that we can safeguard and enhance the environment and meet the needs of a wide range of people, both now and in the future. Green infrastructure also provides social and economic benefits, including:

148.1   Places that can be used as a focus for community activity and events.
148.2   Opportunities to keep fit and healthy.
148.3   Helps support the local economy, including village shops and pubs.
148.4   Links between town and country helping people in rural areas access facilities.
148.5   Helps reduce the use of cars.

Aim of this Plan

149. The aim of the GI Plan is to identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspace, and rights of way and to plan new features that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.

150. It will help the local community to protect and where possible enhance the landscape, biodiversity, and the historic environment, improve access and links for people and wildlife.

Methodology and Statement of Community Involvement

151. The methodology to produce the Parish GI Plan is based on a two-stage process:

151.1   Stage 1. Initial mapping and analysis of GI Assets, initial consultations involving key stakeholders and villagers and development of a draft plan.

151.2   Stage 2. Further community engagement and finessing of draft plan before agreeing final plan by the BLCNPSC and its inclusion in this NP.

Consultations

152. As discussed in the Introduction to this NP, the NP process began in 2012 before stalling and restarting in 2022. The feedback/comments from early (2013/14) parish consultations on Neighbourhood Plans and, in particular, GI topics, have been reviewed by the Greenland Trust and the BLCNPSC, and remain extant, and are supported by recent parish consultations.

153. The events in Table 7 were attended by the Greensand Trust with the specific aim to gather information on GI issues that concern villagers. In addition, GI issues have been discussed at other Community Involvement Strategy events e.g., BLCNPSC Q&A stands outside of the Coop supermarket (see page 24). At these events there has been a concerted effort to engage a cross section of the community, particularly the younger cohorts. The community event on 8 May 2023 had colouring sheets to attract younger members of the community and the event on Bonfire night had a free raffle to attract the 'Gen Z[45]' cohort.

Venue	Date	Details	Attendance/ Response
GI Plan Survey	2013	Specific questionnaire to residents based on GI	76 completions
St Nicholas Church Fete	Jun 2013	Stall with maps and opportunities to comment.	Attendance = 200+ (overall fete – good level of engagement on stall)
Stakeholder Workshop	Sept 2013	Attended by representatives of key groups and organisations. Reviewed community input and made own input.	16 attendees

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[45] Born 1997-2012 (11-26 years old).

Venue	Date	Details	Attendance/ Response
Landowners/ Farmers' Workshop	Jul 2014	Attended by main local landowners and farmers. Introduction to GI Plan Opportunity to understand their operations and aspirations.	3 landowners, BLCPC, GST
Christmas Lights Switch-on 2022	27th Nov 2022	Stand alongside NP information. Engagement on what people value, issues and problems, projects and aspirations.	Attendance of event = several hundred. 35 visited stall. 26 directly engaged
Community Event	8th May 2023	Stand as part of large community event. Engagement on proposed policies and projects.	Attendance of event = several hundred. 37 directly engaged.

Table 7. Community Involvement – GI Plan.

154. Based on the feedback from consultations with villagers, GI planning and review has been divided into four themes:

    154.1   Landscape/Environment.
    154.2   Biodiversity.
    154.3   Historic Environment.
    154.4   Access, open space, and recreation.

155. This approach allows the different elements of green infrastructure to be considered individually, in detail, as well as part of the integrated GI 'network'.

Landscape/Environment

156. Barton is a parish of three different landscape character types, as detailed in the Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The northern part, covering almost two thirds of the area, is low-lying clay vale (Landscape Character Area 5B – Barton-le-Clay Clay Vale) defined by Gault Clay geology. Large open fields dominated by arable agriculture offer a significant contrast to the clay hills (and beyond these the Greensand Ridge) to the north, and the prominent chalk escarpment immediately to the south of the village (Landscape Character Area 10 Rolling Chalk Farmland). Part of the parish is included within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

157. The LCA contains within it a 'Strategy' for each LCA, plus a series of 'Landscape Management Guidelines'. These are summarized below:

    157.1   Strategy. To enhancement/renewal of the landscape. Enhancing the condition of the landscape by restoring and repairing elements that have been lost or degraded (such as the hedgerow network) could significantly strengthen the character of the vale.

    157.2   Landscape Management Guidelines include:

        157.2.1   Conserve the rural character and tranquillity associated with the eastern part of the vale, which is less affected by the influences of transport corridors and housing development.

157.2.2   Enhance the ecological value and visual presence of and access to the New Inn Brook/Barton Brook (these Brooks are on the boundary of the parish but have tributaries crossing the parish).

157.2.3   Conserve the open views, e.g., to The Clappers Chalk Escarpment (9c) and The Barton Hills (5b and 10) and the areas of undeveloped land at the base of the adjacent slopes to retain the visual contrast between these landscapes.

157.2.4   Retain individual settlement identity and consider appropriate limits to expansion of Barton at the base of the scarp and seek to enhance integration of these settlements within the vale setting.

157.2.5   Ensure that conversion of farm buildings for business use does not result in large number of industrial estates located within the rural area.

157.2.6   Safeguard and enhance areas of old enclosure around surviving or shrunken/deserted historic settlements.

157.2.7   Conserve historic landscape features such as medieval earthworks and moated sites and their intact landscape setting.

157.3   The Strategy and Guidelines are consistent with the BLCNP GI aspirations.

158. The Natural England GI Framework (2022) also provides excellent Landscape data about the parish (see Map 8) and GI Planning and Design Guidance.
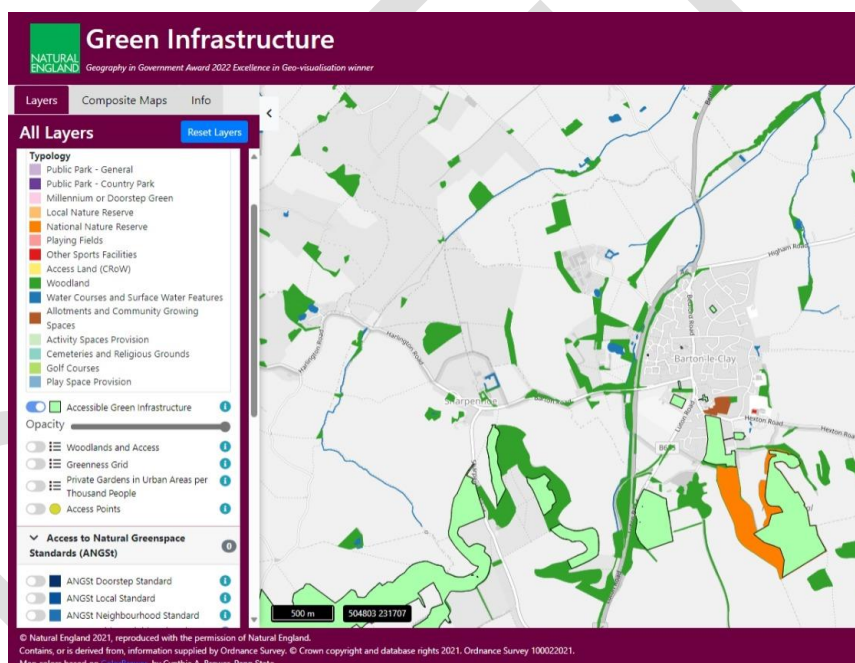
Map 8 – Screen shot showing 'Accessible Green Infrastructure' spaces within the parish boundaries.

Tree Preservation

159. Trees not only enhance biodiversity but also make a significant environmental contribution [The case for trees in Development and the Urban Environment](#). Trees in the parish Conservation Area and tree's elsewhere in parish that have a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) are protected. It is illegal to carry out works e.g., cutting down, pruning or activities that could damage the tree (including its roots), to a tree protected by a TPO or in the Conservation Area without permission and can result in a fine of up to £20,000. The parish council will pursue enforcement action for any unauthorised work on a tree with a TPO and/or in the Conservation Area.

Orchards

160. Although Bedfordshire was never a major fruit growing area, historically there have been a substantial number of traditional orchards in the parish. Unfortunately, these have reduced in numbers as the demands for residential land, the cost and time to maintain an orchard, and the dwindling number of people with knowledge of arboriculture husbandry, especially with fruit trees has meant that there is only one remaining 'orchard' in the village – BEDF0191 see Map 8.

161. In Bedfordshire, agricultural census data shows a decline in the orchard area of 95% since the peak decade of the 1950's - [Bedfordshire and Luton Habitat Action Plan - Traditional Orchards](#). Notwithstanding the challenges of maintaining 'orchards', it is incumbent on the this, and future, generations to retain legacy fruit trees and fruit varieties that might disappear, e.g., the Christmas Pippin.[46] .

162. Trees in Orchard BEDF0191 sits with the village Conservation Area which provides some protection. The feasibility of providing further protection to remaining fruit trees through TPOs will be explored.
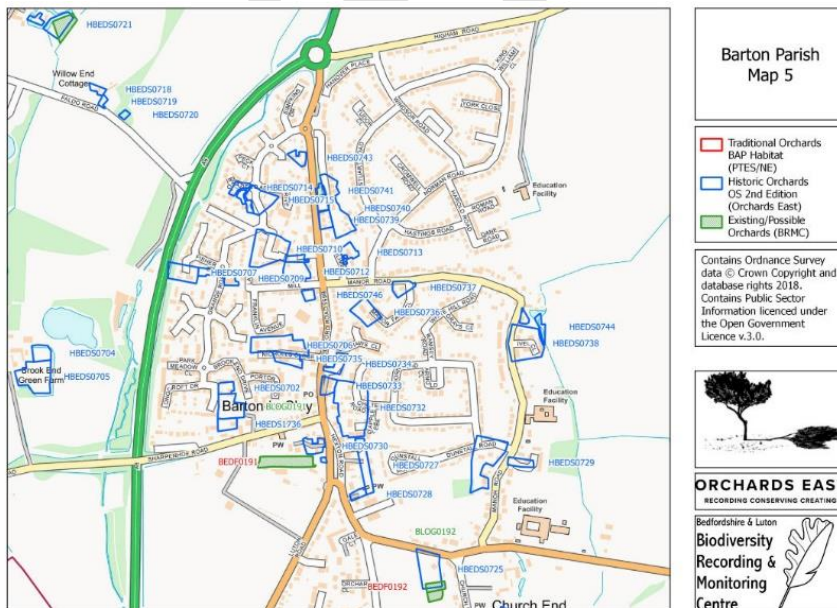
Map 9 – Orchard Map – Barton le Clay.

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[46] Discussion with Barton le Clay Historical Society.

Important Hedgerows

163. Barton-le-Clay and neighbouring villages have traditionally had hedgerows marking boundaries and over recent years many of these have been removed to allow new accesses and new development. Hedgerows are important features in the street scene, many have historic value, and they provide wildlife corridors which encourage biodiversity.

164. A Chalk Hills of Bedfordshire Local Hedgerow survey has been carried out and the remaining important hedgerows need to be protected, as far as possible, and where new accesses are required, a minimal amount of hedgerow should be removed and potentially replanted along vision splays where space allows.

165. New hedges and repairs to existing hedgerows will be encouraged, particularly to sustain and encourage wildlife such as small mammals e.g., the dormouse, butterflies and moths.

166. Where any deliberate damage or destruction of an ancient hedgerow occurs, Central Bedfordshire Council would be encouraged and supported to take the appropriate legal remedy.

Biodiversity[47]

167. The parish is rich in wildlife and diverse habitats, that include the Barton Hills National Nature Reserve (NNRs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), County Wildlife Sites (all NNRs and SSSI have been recognized as County Wildlife Sites) and Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR) – see Map 9.
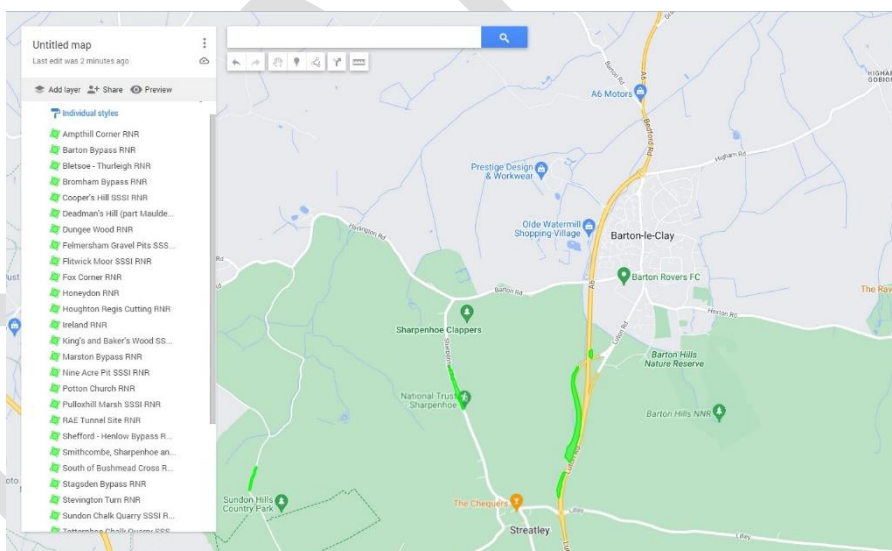
Map 10 – Barton Bypass RNR.

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[47] Biodiversity the different kinds of life in an area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems to maintain balance and support life. WWF definition.

168. The parish biodiversity also benefits from being part of the Chilterns AONB, the springs and a 'chalk stream' at the foot of the Barton Hills. Although the 'chalk stream' is not classified as a true 'chalk stream' and is not included as one of nine chalk streams in the Chilterns AONB, it does share many characteristics with 'true' chalk streams.

169. Protecting, maintaining, and developing the parishes rich biodiversity featured as a key aspiration during consultations with villagers.

Historic Environment

170. The long history of the parish is covered in page 15 of this NP.

Access, Open Space and Recreation

171. The map (Map 10) has been produced by the Greensand Trust and shows the positions of open spaces within the parish. Publicly accessible places are those shaded in dark green. The rights of way are marked on the map as they are key to providing access to open spaces as well as providing recreation opportunities. The A6 dual carriageway is a significant barrier to accessing the countryside to the west. There are pedestrian/footpath access point across the A6 to e.g., access the 'The Olde Mill' and Faldo Industrial Estate, but these are not controlled crossings and are extremely dangerous – see Photos 6 & 7.

172. There are a reasonable number of Greenspaces throughout the village, although many are small, within developments and irregular in shape, e.g., the stream corridor adjacent to A6. The accessibility and quality of Greenspaces are covered in detail in the main GI Plan at Annex C.

173. In summary, whilst the parish has some large, attractive, and accessible Greenspaces on its doorstep, overall provision is poor when size, accessibility, quality, and function are considered. It is therefore vital that new, attractive greenspaces are maintained/created to support the existing population. Combined with the need to create more 'natural' green spaces there is a very clear case for increasing provision within the parish. This will not only improve quality of life for more local people, but will contribute to wider objectives around nature recovery, climate change, tranquillity, and pollution mitigation.
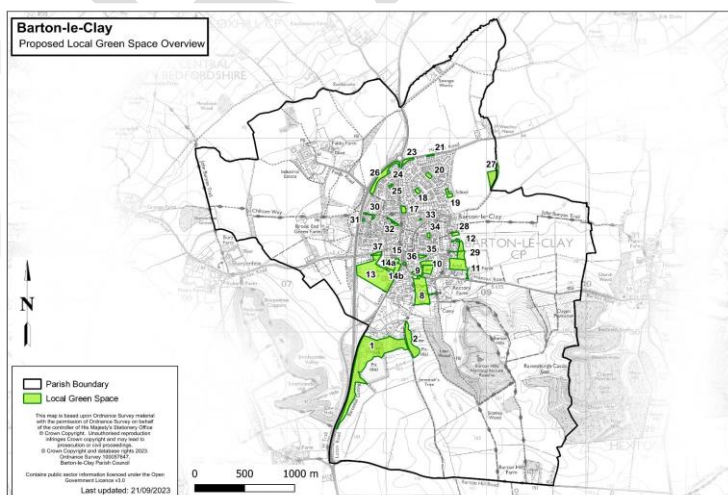
Map 11 – Access, Open Space & Recreation. Numbered sites named in table below.

Local Green Space Assessment

174. An assessment of all the green spaces identified within the parish has been carried out by the BLCNPSC and Green Sand Trust using the National Planning Policy Framework (Page 29) as a guide.

175. Based on the results of the assessment, see Annex C, and notwithstanding consultations with local landowners, the BLCNPSC recommends that the sites listed in Table 8 are designated as Local Green Spaces, examples of candidate Green Spaces are at Appendix 5.

Candidate Local Green Spaces Number	Name	Area (Hectares.[48])
1	Barton Quarry CWS	12.45
2	Barton Pit CWS	1.99
8	Arnold Recreation Ground and Tennis Courts	3.60
9	Community Garden	0.14
10	Barton-le-Clay Allotments	1.80
11	Arnold Middle School Playing Field	1.88
12	Ramsey Manor Lower School Playing Field	0.55
13	Luton Road Sports Field	7.41
14a	Barton Rovers Football Club	0.87
14b	Barton Rovers Football Club Training pitch	0.47
15	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club	0.15
17	Lime Close Amenity Space	0.29
18	Norman Road/Cromwell Avenue Play Area	0.19
19	Orchard School Playing Field	0.37
20	Saxon Crescent Amenity Space	0.23
21	Higham Gobion Road Greenspace	0.09
23	Hanover Place Greenspace	0.30
24	Simpkins Drive Greenspace	0.07
25	Greenspace between Burr Close & Ashby Dr	0.09
26	Stream corridor adjacent to A6	1.39
27	Beechener's Spinney	1.44
28	Pasture to North of Ramsey Manor School	0.23
29	Lively Land	0.57
30	Grange Close Greenspace and Green Corridor	0.14
32	Franklin Avenue Greenspace	0.20
33	Manor Farm Close Greenspace	0.05
34	Arnold Close Greenspace	
35	Dunstall Road Greenspace	0.17
36	War Memorial	0.07
37	Land adjacent to Sharpenhoe Road	0.23

Table 8 - Candidate Local Green Spaces.

Map 12 – Footpaths and Bridleways within Parish Boundary.

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[48] One hectare = 10000m^2

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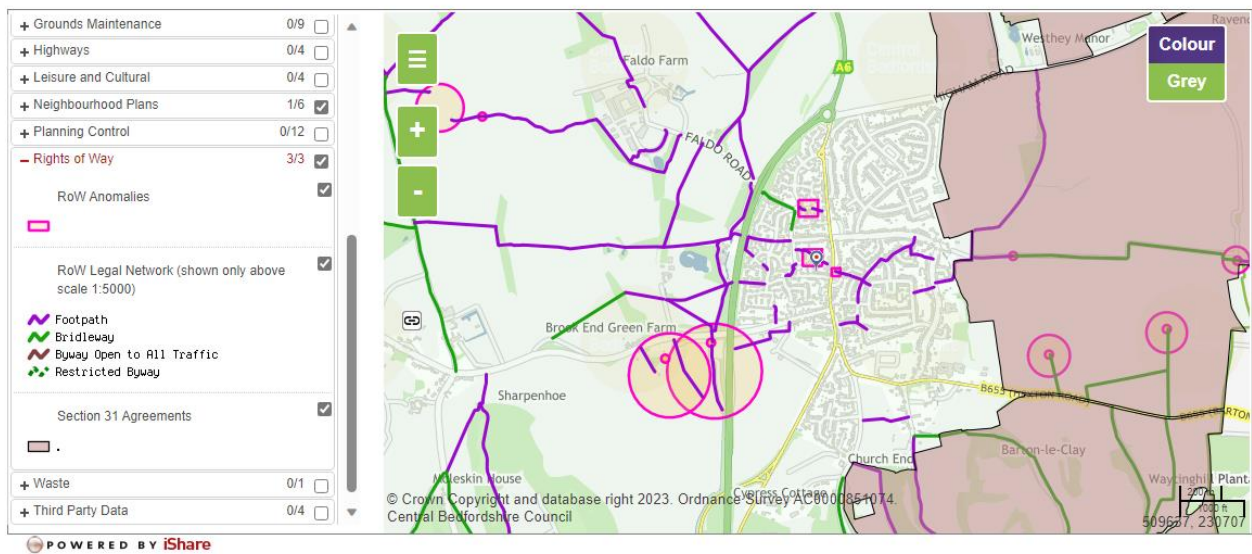
Access Routes

176. The parish has a reasonable coverage of Public Footpaths, but poorer coverage of Public Bridleways, for which the network is very fragmented My Central Bedfordshire CBC – see also Map 12. There are several areas where the status of a route changes, meaning that horse riders and cyclists cannot (legally) use a route in its entirety, while there are other bridleways (e.g., those north of Hexton Road) that end abruptly in the middle of the field.

177. Two Rights of Way (RoW) are 'severed' by the A6 dual carriageway (Map 12 and Photos 6 & 7) and one by the Hexton Road. Bridleways to the north end in dead ends.

Photo 7 – Bridleway at end of Grange Farm Close and continuing across A6 dual carriageway.

Photo 8 – Footpath off Grange Road and continuing across A6 dual carriageway to the Olde Mill.

178. In addition to the Public RoW network there are permissive routes; routes where a landowner permits access. While these form extremely valuable links in the network by helping to provide access where otherwise it isn't possible (and helping join up gaps in the existing network), these are informal and are not mapped. However, the good will of landowners in providing this access is to be noted and encouraged through dialogue with landowners.

179. The following Long-Distance Trails pass through the parish:

179.1   Icknield Way. The Icknield Way follows part of the Parish boundary below the Streatley Roundabout.

179.2   The John Bunyan Trail.

180. The Chiltern Cycleway follows the road along the northern edge of the parish, and links to public bridleways adjoining Barton Hills and Barton Pit.

Developing the GI Network

181. The Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue[49] Infrastructure Strategy 2022 sets out a vision for the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network for Central Bedfordshire. For the purposes of the BLCNP, GBI issues are covered by the generic term 'Green Infrastructure' GI Plans).

182. The parish sits in six of the 10 Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) in the CBI:

182.1   SOA1: Safeguarding the nature recovery network. A 'keystone' opportunity that influences all other Strategic Opportunity Areas, this seeks to build a 'bigger, better and more joined up' habitat across Central Bedfordshire as part of a strategic Nature Recovery Network. The extensive Bedfordshire publicly owned farm estate should be maximised to promote exemplar projects.

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[49] Green and Blue infrastructure (GBI) is a term used to describe the network of natural and semi-natural features (including the water environment) within and between urban and rural areas. GBI is not limited to traditional green spaces, e.g., parks, and can involve various interventions to thread nature into streetscapes or to increase connectivity between GBI assets.

182.2   SOA3: 20-Minute Neighbourhoods[50]. Maximising 'greening' features to support the move to more compact, walkable and wild local neighbourhoods which can both create healthier communities and more robust local economies.

182.3   SOA4: River Corridor Restoration. Restoration of Central Bedfordshire's major river corridors and associated tributaries as multi-functional, nature-rich blue-green corridors, also providing nature-based solutions to flood risk. Two focus areas are highlighted in the River Ouzel Valley and River Ivel Valley and localised catchment areas.

182.4   SOA7: Pollinator Corridors. Given that pollinators across the UK are in decline, this opportunity proposes a 'quick win' of turning over spare margins of land, including road verges, to wildflower by changing mowing regimes. The proposed priority corridors are focused on the 'B-lines' mapped by Buglife.

182.5   SOA8: New 'green lungs' for Central Bedfordshire. Growing recreational pressure on Central Bedfordshire's recreational spaces means that existing Country Parks are at capacity, which is putting pressure on nearby fragile habitats. This opportunity proposes that the creation of carefully planned strategic green space will be required in order to absorb this pressure, likely to be delivered alongside major developments.

182.6   SOA9: North Chilterns Chalklands. Growing recreational pressure on Central Bedfordshire's recreational spaces means that existing Country Parks are at capacity, which is putting pressure on nearby fragile habitats. This opportunity proposes that the creation of carefully planned strategic green space will be required to absorb this pressure, likely to be delivered alongside major developments.

183. Opportunities to support and develop the CBI Strategy/SOAs are covered in the main GI Plan at Annex C, in our GI Policies and further supported in our long-term GI aspirations in Table 9.

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[50] "20-minute neighbourhoods" are a way of describing a complete, compact and connected neighbourhood, where people can meet their everyday needs within a short walk or cycle.

Map Ref	Project	Next Steps	Priority (SOA = Strategic Opportunity Area)
A	Improve safety of walkers, cyclists, and horse riders along Sharpenhoe Road west of the village. Particularly where bridleway meets Sharpenhoe Road.	Further investigation required to identify options.	**High** Supported by community. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA3. Important strategic link between villages.
B	Improve cycle/walking access across A6/to Barton Mill.	Further investigation required to identify options.	**High** Supported by community. Link to key facility – important to local rural economy. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA3.
C	Improve wildlife value of amenity green spaces and roadside verges.	Site-level assessments to identify best options.	**Medium** Moderate support from community. Significant lack of natural spaces identified within village. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA7.
D	Improve cycle path along A6.	Further investigation required to identify options.	**High** Supported by community. Important link between Barton and Silsoe/Clophill Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA3.
E	Improvements to Barton Pit (Lovers' Walk) County Wildlife Site – protect flora, reduce illegal use.	Further discussion with Wildlife Trust.	**Medium** Moderate level of support from local community Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA1 and SOA9.
F	Restore/reinstate *pasque* flower highway markers.	Identify group/individual willing to take this on.	**Medium** Moderate level of community support.
G	Create wildlife corridors to link up key habitats along the chalk escarpment.	Wildlife Trust already working on implementation. Natural England purchase of Hexton Estate is a significant advance.	**High** Moderate level of community support Need demonstrated through various mapping projects. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA1 & SOA9.
H	Raise awareness of the importance of Chalk Streams.	Explore potential chalk stream 'status.' Guided walks/events.	**Medium** Moderate level of community support. Wider conservation importance. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA1, SOA4 and SOA 9.
I	Enhance / Restore Chalk Streams.	Survey waterbodies (River Habitat, Species surveys, water quality)	**High** High level of community support. Strong conservation case. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA1, SOA4 and SOA9.

Map Ref	Project	Next Steps	Priority (SOA = Strategic Opportunity Area)
J	Improve bridleway connectivity north side of Hexton Road.	Discuss with CBC Rights of Way Officer	**Low** Low level of community support. Supports CB GBI Strategy SOA3.
K	Improve safety for cyclists along the Lilley Road.	Discuss with relevant cycling/walking officers	**Low** Low level of community support. Part of Chilterns Cycleway route.
L	Create cycle route to Industrial Estate	Discuss with relevant cycling/walking officers. Need more direct engagement with people who work on the estate/employers.	**Low** Low level of community support. Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3.
M	Create map/leaflet illustrating all green spaces and how to access them	Identify potential lead	**High** High level of community support. Deficits in provision – short-term solution is better information regarding existing spaces & access Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3
N	Develop the Coronation Garden into an attractive, accessible, biodiverse resource for the whole community	Ongoing	**High** High level of community support. Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA7
O	Plant a new oak tree at the location of the 'Jeremiah Tree'	Ongoing (Barton Countryside Conservation Volunteers)	**Medium** Suggested after consultation events, but would have 'sense of place' value
P	Create new accessible greenspace to north &/or east of the village to address major deficits	Discuss with CBC – Leisure and Planning	**High** Suggested after consultation events, but need identified through access mapping. Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA8
Q	Improve knowledge of remaining orchards and potential sites for restoration.	Collate all available existing information from BRMC, Orchards East & other sources	**High** Suggested after consultation events, but 'sense of place' value; Longer such activity is left the more likely is knowledge will be lost, remaining areas may deteriorate

Table 9 – Potential Projects based on Feedback from events, questionnaires, and meetings.

184. In addition to the projects proposed in Table 9, there was a strong response from people wishing to protect the integrity and setting of the village by restricting any further development outside of the existing urban boundary. As the whole of the rural part of the parish is in the Green Belt, there is no additional protection that this GI Plan can provide that is stronger than the existing Green Belt designation (and AONB where appropriate).

185. There was also a strong response from people wishing to protect Barton Hills NNR. Given its NNR status, it is also protected. The recommendations and aspiration in this GI Plan will help improve management of the sites.

Green Infrastructure (BLCNP/GIP) Policies

Green Infrastructure Policy BLCNP /GIP/1 - General

1.1   To support the development of the Green Infrastructure (GI) Network for Barton-le-Clay and ensure it is not compromised by built development.

1.2   Any development that is permitted in the parish should result in a 'net environmental gain' i.e. any GI lost should be replaced with a larger amount of better-quality GI, any connections between GI assets severed should result in more and better connections nearby. Any proposals for development in the parish should recognise and seek to protect and enhance the historic and natural landscape and local character of the parish.

Green Infrastructure Policy BLCNP /GIP/2 - Landscape

2.1   Ensure protection of settlement identity and distinctiveness, including the protection and enhancement of amenity green spaces within the village to protect and enhance the village 'feel'.

2.2   Protection of key views and core components set out in GI Plan.

2.3   Seek to mitigate visual and audible intrusion of the A6 and improve relative tranquillity within the parish.

2.4   Protect and enhance the setting of the village at the foot of Barton Hills, avoiding any development that impacts this.

2.5   Protect the visual amenity and biodiversity that trees provide. Felling works to existing semi-mature or mature indigenous trees are opposed, unless there is a specific reason for doing so, such as disease or damage to property. Where trees that are subject to TPO's are felled, without appropriate permissions, we require them to be reinstated with trees of equivalent maturity and where reasonably practical, in their original location.

2.6   Protect and enhance hedgerow networks, particularly, restoring old field boundaries.

2.7   Enhance the corridors of watercourses through the parish.

2.8   Avoid any development that might impact upon the setting and identity of Wrest Park (House and Gardens) to the north.

2.9   Ensure any future development enhances the urban edge in terms of visual amenity, access, and nature recovery.

Green Infrastructure Policy BLCNP /GIP/3 - Biodiversity

3.1   Development of Local Nature Recovery Networks to support Nature Recovery within Bedfordshire and   beyond (particularly into Hertfordshire), including:
     3.1.1   The corridor of the chalk escarpment.
     3.1.2   'Chalk Streams' and their corridors.

3.2   New tree planting and hedgerow networks, ensuring not restricting views or where not optimal – right tree right place – linking and buffering existing woodlands.

3.3   Creation of spaces specifically for 'Nature Recovery' within the urban area and urban fringe, and especially within any new development.

3.4   Improvements to green spaces within the village to enhance their biodiversity value, including managing areas for wildflowers, including amenity spaces and roadside verges (achieved through seeding/planting and changes in management regime – including 'cut and collect' management of wildflower areas).

3.5   Raise awareness of chalk streams and their unique value.

Green Infrastructure Policy BLCNP /GIP/4 - Nature Conservation

4.1   New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites, enhance biodiversity and support the biodiversity network and aspirations identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan. All development should provide, as a minimum, a net biodiversity gain of 10% as set out in the current Environment Bill (or as superseded).

4.2   Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required, including, for example, swift bricks, bat and owl boxes and the incorporation of native species into landscaping schemes.

4.3   Opportunities should also be taken by developers and landowners to create new and link areas of existing biodiversity value to create more robust networks, especially woodlands, grasslands and hedgerows.

4.4   link sustainable drainage solutions in new development to complement nature conservation objectives.

Green Infrastructure Policy BLCNP /GIP/5 - Access, Recreation and Open Space

5.1   All development must help improve multi-user access networks and provide accessible multi-functional green spaces where they are needed, including within/adjacent to the village – development should not be permitted where it does not do this.

5.2   A proportion of green space should be 'natural', with nature recovery being considered within its design and management, to help meet standards set out by Natural England.

5.3   Any new development to be connected to existing walking and cycling networks with high quality, dedicated walking and cycling routes.

5.4   Avoid any further severance of the Rights of Way (RoW) network and enhance bridleway connectivity for use by horse riders, cyclists, and pedestrians, where this does not cause negative impacts on areas managed for nature conservation/recovery or quiet recreation. This could be through formally dedicated or permissive routes.

5.5   Improve cycling routes where these connect to adjacent settlements or promoted leisure routes.

5.6   Improve safety of RoW network users, especially in terms of crossing the A6 and Hexton Road

5.7   Improve quality of existing green spaces, especially to improve their value for wildlife and use by a wider range of people.

5.8   Conserve the integrity of the Green Lane (Icknield Way) as a landscape feature, access, and ecological corridor.

5.9   Designate Local Green Spaces as per the recommendations in the BLCNP and GI Plan.

Employment & Economy

Introduction

186. Barton-le-Clay Parish has a thriving commercial community, centred on the south end of Bedford Road and Windsor Road with a wide range of shops and services, the Faldo Industrial Estate with 30 units and The Olde Watermill Shopping Village; home to over 20 unique and individual shops.

187. The location is ideal for businesses as it is easily accessible from the A6 and B655, with good links to the M1 and A1(M) via these routes. Harlington train station is the closest rail link (3.7miles) with Flitwick train station 5 miles away. London Luton Airport is the closest airport.

188. The Village has several eateries and convenience stores, two estate agents, three Public Houses, hairdressing and beauty salons, a post office, and numerous self-employed residents working from home.

189. The Barton Hills NNR has also been used as a film location. 'Horrible Histories: The Movie – Rotten Romans' filmed in 2019 was mostly shot on location in the UK home counties with the Barton Hills standing in for Watling Street.

Business Owner Survey

190. However, there were some key points made by business owners that came from our survey and conversations:

    190.1   Barton-le-Clay is growing but the infrastructure e.g., doctors and NHS dentists is falling behind,

    190.2   Sort traffic out and potholes.

    190.3   Parking in and around the Recreation Ground for those wishing to visit the Springs or shops along the Bedford Road,

    190.4   Better access to fibre internet,

    190.5   Speed Watches are good,

    190.6   Hotel/B&B accommodation,

    190.7   Better bus service to/from Luton and Bedford,

    190.8   Public transport for visitors or potential employees is hopeless,

    190.9   Business rate is way too high for a business that currently makes little profit.

191. This shows that some of the issues recognised by residents, are echoed by business in Barton-le-Clay – namely,

    191.1   Better connectivity – fibre broadband.

191.2   Traffic and transport issues.

191.3   Better access to GP Services and NHS Dental Practice.

192. By resolving these issues for residents and businesses located in Barton-le-Clay alike, we draw closer to achieving our Vision taking us towards 2035.

Employment Economy (BLCNP/EE) Policies

Employment & Economy Policy BLCNP/EE-1

1.1   New commercial development must respect local character and residential amenity.

1.2   It must not result in severe residual cumulative impacts in respect of traffic movements and parking.

1.3   It should not result in harm to highway safety and should seek to minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians.

Employment & Economy Policy BLCNP/EE-2

2.1   The development of tourism and leisure development (with appropriate amenities and infrastructure) in Barton-le-Clay which respects local character will be supported. The loss of Barton-le-Clay's public houses will not be supported, whereas development that supports their sustainability whilst demonstrating regard for local character and residential amenity, will be supported.

Transport

193. Ideally situated, between Bedford and Luton with road good connections to/from the M1 and A1(M) and a direct line rail into London via the nearby Harlington and Flitwick stations, the Village offers businesses and commuters an ideal position to be based.

194. Connecting businesses and residents to services in and around Central Bedfordshire is important and offering alternatives to commuting by car will be key to a sustainable future.

195. From consultations with villagers, it is clear that, despite the A6 bypass that diverts traffic travelling between Luton and Bedford around the village, traffic in and out of the village, causes residents significant issues. For example:

> 195.1   84.6% of responses to the resident's survey stated that traffic was their key concern and 26% said that they have serious concerns over the traffic in the village, e.g., vehicle volume, particularly lorries, transiting through the village between the M1 and A1(M) and congestion at the roundabout near the Royal Oak (a root cause of this is illegal parking outside of the post office which is located between the Royal Oak roundabout and pedestrian crossing).

> 195.2   In addition to the comments above, better transportation "to grow business" was also mentioned in the business survey.

196. The CBCLP highlights three main transport concerns which affect Central Bedfordshire. These also affect the Village and have guided the BLCNP Transport Policies:

> 196.1   Capacity. There is a concern that the current road network in the Village does not have the capacity to cope with the commercial, leisure and business traffic going to and from the M1 to the A1(M). This has been exacerbated with the opening of Junction 11A on the M1 – 'Dunstable (N)' which has caused an increase in commuting traffic between the M1 and A1(M).

> 196.2   Connectivity. In common with many Central Bedfordshire communities and despite the recent trend of Working from Home (WFH), many village residents travel significant distances to work and for shopping. Sustainable transport e.g., bus services and cycle paths, are limited and paths, bridleways, and footpath provision are often in a poor condition. Links to other villages and service centres could be better.

> 196.3   Communities. Transiting traffic, particularly HGVs, through the historic centre of the Village (the Royal Oak roundabout) is causing wide-scale concern around safety, speeding and congestion. Particularly at peak times as traffic transits past Arnold Academy on the B655 Hexton Road, as well as concerns over poor air quality. There is reliance on car use by residents due to lack of appropriate alternatives, as mentioned above.

197.   The CBCLP is supported by the 'Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan (LATP)' sets out the key transport issues in the area and a programme of measures through which they will be addressed. It forms part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Central Bedfordshire and covers the period between April 2011 and March 2026.

198.   The LATP recognises that the area is characterised by high levels of out-commuting, with a large number of residents commuting to Luton and into major towns in Hertfordshire such as Hitchin. Over 80% of these commuting trips are undertaken by private car. This is reflected in the car ownership of the area, with around 50% of households owning 2 cars or more.

Pedestrian Priority

199.   There is only one managed pedestrian crossing point across the Village main road, the Bedford Road, and this is located at the bottom of the Village close to the Royal Oak roundabout. There are several other crossing points, particularly to link the many footpaths in the village, many of these are unmanaged.

Photo 9 – Pedestrian Crossing.

200.   Pavement widths in the Village centre are generally adequate, enabling two pedestrians to pass in most places. However, there are locations where pavements are narrow, notably near the junction between Bedford Road and Hexton Road.

201.   Traffic speeds on other roads are generally low, with some safety issues for parents and children wishing to cross close to schools around school start and leaving times.

Rural Match Fund

202.   The CBC Rural Match Fund helps local town and parish councils to fund small highway improvement schemes in their area, with matched funding from CBC. The Rural Match Fund aims to deliver a broad range of schemes to improve health, safety and wellbeing, enhance sustainability and the overall environment.

203.   In 2022, the Parish Council applied to the CBC Rural Match Fund to fund Vehicle-Activated Signs[51] (VAS) and/or Speed Indicator Devices[52] (SID) and as part of the application process, a traffic speed survey was carried out in two locations, both sides of the road – see Map 13. The results of the traffic surveys, detailed in Appendix 6 show that only westbound traffic, leaving the village, along Sharpenhoe Road, is driving above speed tolerances. North and south bound traffic along the Bedford Road were below the minimum criteria for a SID (above 35mph).

204. CBC agreed to install a SID device on Sharpenhoe Road in March 2023, funded by a grant from the Police & Crime Commissioner's Road Safety Fund. This is situated facing the eastbound traffic entering the Village but can be changed to occasionally capture traffic westbound, to discourage speeding.
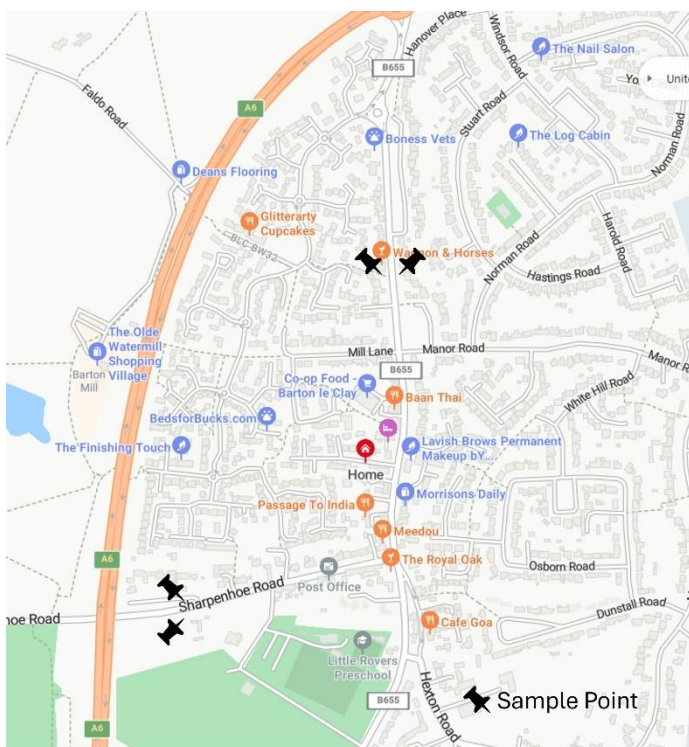
Map 13 – Traffic Speed Survey Points.

Cycling

205.   The Chilterns Cycleway, a 170-mile cycle route running the length of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, passes through Barton-le-Clay. This Cycleway, provided entirely on road in this area, links the two villages to Harlington, Sundon, Higham Gobion, and into Hertfordshire. Whilst this route is well-signed throughout, its purpose is primarily leisure, and therefore provides no links from these villages to key employment and service centres. This route is also provided on fast, rural roads, many of which are heavily trafficked.

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[51] Vehicle-Activated Signs (VASs) are an electronic sign which only become visible when approaching motor vehicles are exceeding a certain speed.
[52] A Speed Indicator Device (SID) has a LED display that will show the exact speed of oncoming vehicles, along with e.g., a 'SLOW DOWN' message or a happy / sad face.

206.   A cycle route is also provided along the A6 through this area, running via Barton-le-Clay. Whilst the cycle route is provided on a segregated facility for the majority of the route, this facility is generally of a poor width, is poorly lit, and in some places is of a poor surface quality. Whilst access to the cycle route heading towards Luton is via the relatively quiet Sharpenhoe Road, to access Barton-le-Clay requires cycling along the narrow and busy Church Road.

Bus Services

207.   Within Barton-le-Clay, local bus services provide the main strategic sustainable transport links in the Village.

208.   The bus service to the main shopping hubs is fragmented with only one regular service between Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes, and an ad-hoc service provided by Wanderbus [53] and Flittabus[54] to e.g., Hitchin.

209.   Bus routes:

209.1   Stagecoach MK1 - Bedford - Clophill - Barton (the Bull hourly) - Luton Bus station - Luton Airport - Milton Keynes Stagecoach East.

209.2   Grant Palmer 79 – Shefford – Meppershall – Shillington – Barton (Windsor Parade & The Bull daily) – Streatley – Luton.

209.3   Wanderbus W5 Every Friday - Barton (Waggon & Horses PH 0935hrs) - Shillington - Meppershall - Biggleswade. Return departs Biggleswade 1210hrs, stops on request.

209.4   Wanderbus W8A 1st Wednesday of each month - Meppershall - Upper Stondon - Lower Stondon - Shillington - Barton ((Waggon & Horses PH 0910hrs) - St Albans. Return departs St Albans 1400hrs, stops on request.

209.5   Wanderbus W12/12B Every Tuesday - Meppershall - Campton - Upper Gravenhurst - Barton (Waggon & Horses PH 0936hrs) - Hexton - Pegsdon - Hitchin. Return departs Hitchin 1210hrs, stops on request.

209.6   Flittabus FL4 Fourth Tues of the Month - Maulden - Barton (Opp the Pharmacy 0855hrs) - Silsoe - Flitwick - Milton Keynes. Return departs Milton Keynes 1300hrs, stops on request.

210.   It is worth noting that it would take 1hr38mins for someone travelling on MK1, from the village, to arrive at the shopping centre in Milton Keynes. A return journey of over 3 hours.

211.   The W12/W12B does provide bus transport for villagers to visit the weekly Tuesday Market in Hitchin, but there are no buses to visit the Hitchin Craft &

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[53] Wanderbus is a 'not for profit' organisation that provides weekday scheduled bus services for the general public in and around the villages centred on Shefford, taking them to/from local and regional town centres & shopping centres. It operates two 16-seater buses.
[54] Flittabus Community Transport Ltd.; is also a non-profit organisation providing scheduled local services in Central Bedfordshire six days a week. It operates three Minibuses.

Farmers Market (last Saturday of every month), the Saturday General Market, the Sunday Market & Car Boot or the Friday Antiques, Collectables & General Market.

Rail Services

212.   Harlington station benefits from a high frequency rail service, operated by Thameslink. Services operate at a 15-minute frequency, linking Harlington to Bedford, Flitwick, Luton (including the Airport), London, Gatwick and Brighton. Reflecting the flow of commuters to and from London, additional services operate from Harlington to London during weekday morning peak hours, and from London during weekday evening peak hours.

213.   Residents of Barton-le-Clay, Streatley, and Sundon also use Luton station, with services operated by Thameslink and East Midlands Trains. Up to 9 trains per hour operate in both directions to Bedford, Flitwick, London, Brighton, and Leicester among other places. Some residents also access Leagrave station, where trains from Thameslink operate every 15 minutes serve Bedford, Flitwick, Luton, London and Brighton.

Priorities in Barton-le-Clay[55]

214.   The Villages' sustainable transport links to other areas are areas that have been identified in the LATP as requiring improvements. The walking and cycling routes to nearby villages, particularly the A6 and Sharpenhoe Road, are felt to be particularly poor, with routes often lacking, and of poor quality where they are provided. The Village benefits from an hourly commercial bus service, but the limited types of stops and poor service reliability means the service does not reach its potential.

215.   Within the Village, the general good variety of walking routes e.g., pavements and the footpath network mean that walking is an attractive option for local trips.

216.   Conflicts with through-traffic in the centre of the village make for an intimidating cycling environment, but the development of off-road routes and the compact nature of the village also mean that cycling has real potential as a mode of local transport.

217.   Some concerns were raised about the safety and speed of traffic outside both schools in Barton-le-Clay. Whilst speed reduction measures have recently been made outside Arnold Academy, and the traffic speeds outside Ramsey Manor Lower School are low, conflicts between vehicles and children walking to school creates a perceptual safety issue.

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[55] Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

Poor quality crossing points of A6 for walkers and cyclists

Car parking in the village centre hampers access to bus stops for buses.

School gate congestion and perception of traffic speeds impeding access by foot and cycle outside schools

Through traffic creates an environment that is poor for pedestrians.

Concerns of speed of traffic outside Arnold Academy

Walking and cycling route from Streatley narrow and adjacent to a high-speed main road

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Map 14 – LATP Areas of Concern.

M1 to A6 Link Road

218.   A new strategic road is planned to create a northern Luton bypass running from the A6 road to junction 11a of the M1, connecting with the A5 to M1 Link Road.

219.   The new M1 to A6 link road will be 2.75 mile (4.4km) long with a dual carriageway to a new planned rail freight interchange at Sundon Park, and then single carriageway connecting to the A6 – see Map 15.

220.   In terms of benefits to village, the bypass is likely to have limited effect on the volume of traffic transiting to the A1M either through the village to the B655 Hexton Road/Hitchen/A1M or onto the Barton Hill/Lilley Road to Hexton/ Hitchen/A1M at the Streatley Roundabout.

Map 15 – Route of Proposed Link Road.

Transport (BLCNP/TP) Policies

Transport Policy BLCNP/TP-1

1.1   Liaise with CBC to ensure that recommendations in the Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan are actioned.

Transport Policy BLCNP/TP-2

2.1   Seating and shelter should be provided at bus stops.

2.2   Look to improve bus routes and frequency, e.g. a weekend service to Hitchin.

2.3   Supporting technology 'Real Time Displays' should be provided with appropriate audio-visual announcements of stops and bus times.

2.4   Signage should be clearly visible and understandable.

Transport Policy BLCNP/TP-3

3.1 Identify and establish additional managed crossing points in the village, particularly regarding joining up cycle routes/pathways in the village.

3.2 Maintain village pathways and ensure that paths do not become overgrown. This will include contact with homeowners whose garden plants spread onto/into pathways.

3.3 Reconsider application for Rural Match Fund grant for Vehicle-Activated Signs (VAS)/Speed Indicator Devices (SID) along Bedford Road in response to increased traffic through new developments.

3.4 Set 20mph maximum speed limit on roads in key areas around the Village, particularly near schools and on routes with narrow roads that are frequently used by pedestrians.

Glossary & Abbreviations

Term	Meaning & Definition
Affordable Housing	Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the housing market. Generally provided by housing associations, working in partnership with CBC.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - an outstanding landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is designated to safeguard it in the national interest, protected under the 1949 National Parks and Access to Countryside Act. Its protection is further enhanced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
Asset of Community Value	An asset of community value is land or property of importance to a local community which is subject to additional protection from development under the Localism Act 2011.
BLCNP	Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan.
BLCNPSC	Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee.
BLCPC	Barton-le-Clay Parish Council.
Brownfield Site	Abandoned, closed or under-used industrial or commercial facilities.
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council, the relevant Local Authority responsible for all planning matters.
CBCLP	Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan.
Conservation Area	An area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
CWS	County Wildlife Site.
Development	In planning terminology, development means any new building, any alteration to a building, or change of use of land or building.
Dwelling	A house, flat, or other place of residence
GI Plan	Green Infrastructure Plan – Barton-le-Clay has a new updated one (2023) to accompany the BLCNP.
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency.
HE Policies	Historic Environment Policies.
Heritage Asset	An NPPF definition - *a building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).*
Historic England - HE	Formally English Heritage.

Term	Meaning & Definition
Historic Environment	An NPPF definition - *all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.*
Listed Building	A building that has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest
Local Community Space	Space valued by the local community, both for the environmental and social benefits it brings.
Local Green Space	Designating areas as Local Green Space is a way to provide special protection for green areas of particular importance to local communities.
NA	Neighbourhood Area. This is the area that is covered by the Neighbourhood Plan. The Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Area, which is the same as the area defined by the Barton-le-Clay Parish boundary, was designated by Central Bedfordshire Council in December 2016.
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NP	Neighbourhood Plan.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework. The Central Government over-arching planning policy document which includes topic-based policies, with which the Neighbourhood Plan must comply.
NPSC	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee. For the Barton-le-Clay NP, the Steering Committee comprised a group of Parish Councillors, volunteers and specialists who came together under the Parish Council, to produce the NP.
Settlement Boundary	Settlement boundaries are an essential tool for the management of development, principally to prevent the encroachment of development into the countryside.
Significance (for heritage policy)	NPPF definition - *The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*
SP	Standard Policies.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	SSSI is a conservation designation denoting a protected area extremely valuable for its flora, fauna, physiological and geological features and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	All land use plans likely to have affects upon the environment are required to undergo this process to comply with European Directive 2001/42/EC concerning Strategic Environmental Assessment. A "scoping" report is initially produced followed by a full report which is produced alongside the Plan. The Local Planning Authority can decide that this is not required and can provide the NP with a decision as to why.
Strategic Gap	The space between settlements which protects individual settlements' unique identity.

Term	Meaning & Definition
Sustainable Development	The NP must deliver sustainable development. A definition of sustainable development is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
Tree Preservation Order - TPO	A TPO is made by a Local Planning Authority to protect specific trees or an area, group or woodland from deliberate damage and destruction. TPOs can prevent the felling, lopping, topping, uprooting or otherwise wilful damaging of trees without the permission of the Local Planning Authority.
Vernacular	Is a category of architecture based on local needs, construction materials and reflecting local traditions?
Village Centre	The Village Centre in Barton-le-Clay is classed as the Conservation areas clustered around the High Street – as illustrated in Map 6.
Villager	A person who lives in a village (Barton-Le-Clay).
Windfall	Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

BARTON-LE-CLAY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011, whereby communities can shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Local Plan and the policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications. However, policies produced cannot block development that is already part of the Local Plan. What they can do is shape where that development will go and what it will look like.

Definition of a Neighbourhood Plan[56]:

"Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to have a say in the future of the places where they live and work. It gives the [Parish] power to produce a plan with real legal weight that directs development in the [Parish] local area. It helps the [Parish]:
- *choose where new homes, shops and offices built,*
- *have influence on what those new buildings should look like,*
- *grant planning permission for the new buildings you want to see go ahead.*

Neighbourhood Planning therefore provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they protect the character of the village and get the right types of development for their community.

Purpose of the Committee:

Barton-le-Clay Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for its Parish area. It has established a Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (known hereafter as BLCNPSC) to work within these Terms of Reference (ToR) to make recommendations to produce the NP, with the assistance of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and in compliance with CBC's Core Strategy, National legislation.

Constituency:

- The Steering Committee will consist of a maximum of 10 members comprising:
    - A minimum of 3 Parish Councillors.
    - Up to a maximum of 7 residents from the Parish.

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[56] https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/make-a-neighbourhood-plan

Terms:
- The BLCNPSC will appoint its own Chairman from one of the Parish Councillors, annually, or as circumstance dictates.
- The BLCNPSC has no delegated authority from the Parish Council. Its purpose is to make recommendations to the Parish Council, to produce a Neighbourhood Plan.
- All Committee members have voting rights within the BLCNPSC
- The quorum for the BLCNPSC is 3.
- The BLCNPSC will aim to meet monthly on a Tuesday at 7.30pm, either online, or in the Village Hall.
- All Meetings are open to the general public.
- Agendas must be published 3 clear days ahead of the meeting (a clear day does not include the date of publishing, date of the meeting or Sundays), and be made available on the Parish Council website and noticeboards.
- Minutes are to be taken at the meeting and published on the Parish Council website and noticeboards once ratified at the following meeting.
- All monies received, and payments made will occur through the Parish Council accounts and be monitored by the Clerk. All transactions will comply with the existing Financial Regulations of the Parish Council.
- The BLCNPSC will report to the Parish Council monthly, through a standing item on the Parish Council agenda.
- The BLCNPSC must keep CBC informed of progress at significant Milestones (see Timeline).
- The BLCNPSC will remain active until the NP has been approved by an independent examiner.

Funding:
- Funding is available to support the production of Neighbourhood Plans by applying online through the relevant bodies.

Timeline:
- TBC
- Referendum held in the village to agree the plan - TBC

Members of the BLCNPSC:
- Must be aware of their obligation to declare any direct personal interests that may be perceived as relevant to any decisions or recommendations made by the BLCNPSC.
- Must ensure that there is no discrimination in the NP making process and that it is inclusive, open and transparent.
- Must ensure that in all activities, they uphold the Seven Principles of Standards in Public Life (Appendix 1: Nolan Principles).
- Should liaise with neighbouring Parish Councils, where applicable.

Main Responsibilities:
- Produce the NP with the assistance of CBC and the community, and approval by the Parish Council.
- Engage as many members of the community and key stakeholders as possible in the process, by encouraging participation and the submission of views and ideas. Public participation will be primarily via a programme of events and consultation exercises.
- Utilise the Parish Council website to share information on the NP.

- Respond to questions raised about the plan process. Questions relating to the plan raised by members of the community will need to be put in writing if seeking a formal response and will be responded to in person if required, and/or answers posted on the Parish Council website and in the Parish Council Newsletter – see Appendix 6 - Green Spaces.

Appendix 1: Nolan Principles

1. **Selflessness**
   Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. **Integrity**
   Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. **Objectivity**
   Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. **Accountability**
   Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness**
   Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty**
   Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. **Leadership**
   Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Engagement and Communications Strategy

Introduction

1.   This Engagement and Communications Strategy Document (ECSD) sets out the methods to communicate the work of the BLCNPSC, promote village wide community engagement and inform the community of the outcomes of this engagement.

2.   This strategy covers all external communication options with villagers, voluntary and community sectors and statutory organisations (stakeholders).

3.   In any community led planning exercise, communication and publicity with the wider community is vital, from an early stage and throughout the process, and we are conscious that the under 18's and ethnic minorities were underrepresented in previous 2014 survey results and will take steps to reach these key demographics in the community.

4.   People are more likely to engage if they are kept informed. In the case of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, where the support of the community at the referendum stage is crucial to its adoption, the need to keep information flowing takes on an even greater significance. Key components include:

- •This is when decisions are made the community, stakeholder groups and the parish council. The people involved in making these decisions also take part in carrying them out.

Acting Together

Information

- •Supports all types of community engagement and keeps people informed and involved about such things as decisions and local engagement events.

Deciding Together

Consultation

- •Involving local people when deciding which options to choose. Ultimately, the Parish Council will take forward the recoomendations in the final NP.

- •Consultation when there is a decision to make about something or when there are a number of choices about the details i.e. – Vision Objectives

Aims

5. The BLCNPSC identified the following aims:

   5.1 Raising awareness/background information about Neighbourhood Plans,
   5.2 Promotion of events and the opportunities to get involved,
   5.3 Feedback on information gathered,
   5.4 General updates on progress, and,
   5.5 Circulation of documents for comment.

Guiding Principles

6. Communication and engagement are linked and the first step to properly engage with people is to communicate with them in a way that they identify with and at the appropriate level. Similarly, without firstly engaging with a person it is difficult to communicate your 'message' and get feedback.

7. The underlying principles of all our methods of communication(s) is that they will be:

   7.1 **Open and Honest.** Straightforward and transparent.
   7.2 **Timely.** All communications are delivered in a timely and accurate manner, when and where they are needed.
   7.3 **Accessible**. Clear, inclusive, suitable for their audiences and written in plain English and jargon-free.
   7.4 **Appropriate**. The right information delivered in the right way by the most appropriate means.
   7.5 **Two-way.** Allowing for full involvement with feedback channels.
   7.6 **Equalities Sensitive**. All communications meet equal opportunities requirements.

Communication Channels

8. There are a wide range of media formats/channels that can be used and that will appeal to different demographics, and it is particularly important to take account that the village has a high proportion of elderly residents who may not have access to e.g., social media. Potential communication channels that can be utilised include:

   8.1 Talking to community groups and individuals – Focus Groups.
   8.2 Interactive workshops and 'drop-in' sessions.
   8.3 Exhibitions & Presentations.
   8.4 Putting up posters and banners.
   8.5 Delivering leaflets.
   8.6 Magazine articles and newsletters.
   8.7 Use of I.T. – Parish Websites, social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter/X).
   8.8 Email groups using our contact database.
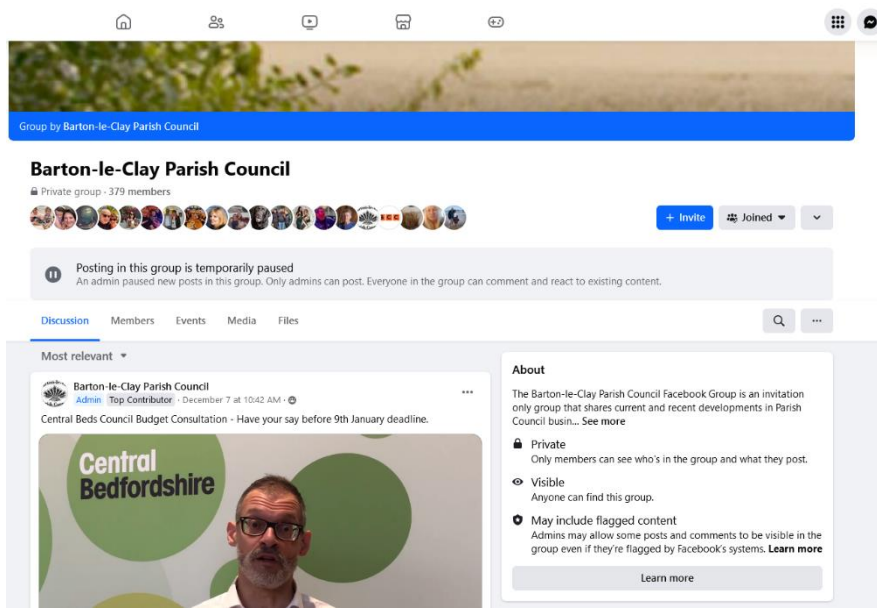
9.   The key communication channel will be the Parish Council website and NP webpage Neighbourhood Plan – Barton-le-Clay Parish Council – see addendum 1, where villagers have easy access to copies of previous minutes, documents etc.

10.   In support of the Parish Council NP webpage and to ensure villagers who not use or have access to the internet, a periodic Newssheet will be included in the Parish Council leaflet drop, to all villagers. See addendum 2.

11.   Direct/face-to-face consultation with villagers is an essential part of the communication strategy and details of events and feedback is discussed at page 11 of the NP.

Neighbourhood Plan "Corporate Identity"

12.   **Logo.** To be used on all communication channels/means.

13. **Font Typography**. Verdana 11pt to be used for all documentation that forms the BLCNP. Headings in blue. Paragraph numbering as below:

    13.1
       13.1.1
           1.13.1.1.

Consultees

14. The BLCNPSC has identified a wide range of groups/stakeholders that can be engaged to help deliver the objectives identified in the Neighbourhood Plan – see addendum 1.

Barton-le-Clay Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan

Welcome to the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan pages. Here you will find up to date information about the Plan and the progress towards it being adopted.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Put simply, a neighbourhood plan is a set of planning policies, determined and adopted by local people, that add detail to the planning policies set at national, regional and district level. It has mandatory status and must be followed when planning applications are considered by the planning authority – Central Bedfordshire Council is the planning authority for Barton-le-Clay.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

The 2011 Localism Act gave local communities the opportunity to have a say in how they would like their local environment to look in the future. By creating a Neighbourhood Plan, a community can ensure that their views will be listened to.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. A neighbourhood plan is about the use and development of land and may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development. It may deal with a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues (such as housing, employment, heritage and transport) or it may focus on one or two issues only.

A Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan for the area, if successful at referendum. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans far more weight than some other local documents, such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with national legislation and must have appropriate regard to national policy and be in general conformity with existing strategic local planning policy. It should not promote less development than that identified in the development plan for the local area (such as new housing allocations). It can allow greater growth levels. Also, it can specify policies and guidance on how new development should be designed, orientated and located. Neighbourhood Plans can be a powerful tool in shaping the development of a neighbourhood. The timeframe for the Neighbourhood Plan is for communities to decide, for example whether it is a 5, 10, 15 or 20-year plan

Once a Neighbourhood plan has been completed, it will have to be submitted to the local authority and then be subjected to an independent examination. This will make sure that the proper legal process has been followed and that the plan meets the basic conditions, including general conformity with strategic local policy. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to a public referendum.

Home   Parish Council ⌄   Neighbourhood Plan   News   Diary   The Parish ⌄   Contact

important legal requirements, it is necessary to gain a more than 50% 'yes' vote of those voting in a public referendum in order to bring them into force.

Neighbourhood Plans carry legal weight in the planning system and once adopted, they form part of the Local Plan.

Who draws up a Neighbourhood Plan?

Usually a Neighbourhood Plan Committee is established with representation from the area covered by the plan. Barton-le-Clay Parish has been designated a Neighbourhood Plan Area; a Neighbourhood Plan Committee, comprising volunteers and parish councillors, was set up in 2012 and started to gather all the necessary evidence and to test thoughts and ideas in the wider community. The Plan was put on hold in 2014/15, pending the completion of the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan. Now that this has been adopted, the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan Committee are re-launching in 2022 to develop the plan for the Village future.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Newsletter March 2022

Background

Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities like ours to have a say in the future of the places where we live, work and socialise. It gives us the power to produce a plan: the 'Neighbourhood Plan', that has real legal weight to direct development(s) in our local area. It helps us:

- choose where we want new homes, shops and offices to be built;
- have our say on what those new buildings should look like, and;
- have greater control on planning permission applications for the new buildings/developments we want to see go ahead.

Work on the 'Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan' (The Plan) started back in 2011. Unfortunately, it was halted due to the launch of Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan, which was finally adopted in 2021.

We have now restarted work on 'The Plan' and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. We are, therefore, consulting you to ensure we reflect your views and build on the work carried out previously.

The Environment

The key message from a survey in 2014 was that you wanted Barton to remain a village, in size and feel, with Bedford Road, the historic Village centre, remaining at its heart.

You said Green Spaces were important to you, with Lime Close being singled out. We believe there are other green spaces that should be preserved, like Arnold Recreation Ground, and various greens around the Village, e.g., Nicholls Close, Arnold Close, Franklin Avenue, Simpkins Drive, Burr Close and Windsor Parade.

Throughout the Village, there are pieces of land/grass verges that are Amenity Land. Some of these areas are maintained by the householder(s) who adjoin it, but it is not for their sole use, and should not be misappropriated. The misappropriation of Amenity Land should be challenged so it remains available for everyone to enjoy.

We live in an area of outstanding natural beauty, full of wonderful fauna and flora, e.g., the Pasque Flower, and wildlife like the Red Kite and chalk-down Blue Butterfly. The Springs have proved particularly popular over the Covid Pandemic and walking around the Village, via its many footpaths, has been an important part of maintaining personal wellbeing.

Trees and hedgerows are important, and we are pleased to say that more have been planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Platinum Jubilee and the Local Authority Treescapes Fund Projects.

'Garden Grabbing', where houses and other buildings are squeezed into gardens, needs to be discouraged.

It is vital we maintain these habitats and green spaces and, in addition, ensure that the Greenbelt surrounding our Village, including the allotments, school playing fields and football pitches, are not further eroded.

Flooding was identified as an area of concern and parts of the Village are identified on the 'Local Flood Map for Planning'. It is important that water can drain away naturally so, for example, front gardens should not be concreted over for parking, and water courses should be maintained.

HAVE YOUR SAY - WE WILL BE OUTSIDE THE CO-OP ON SATURDAY 26th MARCH – COME AND TALK TO US

Getting around and Transport links

The previous work on the Plan highlighted that public transport links are extremely poor – bus services are infrequent and do not go to Harlington Railway Station. The service only goes North/South to Bedford and Luton and once a week to Hitchin.

The Village is currently well served by footpaths, linking to the village centre and it's important that any new developments incorporate similar connections.

The need for additional crossing points on Bedford Road and Hexton Road were identified, and a safer crossing to the Water Mill and Faldo Road Estate.

The need for better access to the railway station and Harlington Upper School, via footpaths/cycleways, was identified, but it is recognised this would not be easy to achieve.

Housing

The previous surveys suggested that there was a need for more affordable and social housing, together with a need for more retirement bungalows, and smaller properties for local people wishing to downsize, which would in turn release larger properties back onto the market.

Please help us by completing a new **Housing Needs Survey** which will be delivered to every household in the coming weeks. This will help us understand if these needs have changed significantly.

Shops / Amenities

The Village has a good selection of shops and restaurants. Since the previous survey, we have also had the introduction of several cafes – something highlighted as a need – but we have lost the Bank (and its ATM), and the Post Office has been under threat.

The previous survey highlighted the importance of these facilities and emphasised the need for them to be retained.

Doctors and Dentists

It is important that any future development recognises that we already have a stretched service, and any plans must take this into account.

Schools

Village schools form Part of the Harlington Pyramid. Any increase in housing would need to be supported by an increase in local school places, either through expansion of existing schools, or the development of new ones.

Leisure facilities

The Parish Council's new Leisure Strategy (link: https://bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk/barton-le-clay-leisure-strategy-2021-2026/) covers this in detail. 'The Plan' would support this.

YOUR POSTCODE:

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE VIEWS THAT HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTED?   YES/NO

IS THERE ANYTHING / ANYWHERE WE HAVE MISSED, SHOULD WE TAKE ANYTHING OUT AND IF SO, WHY?

You can drop this back to the **Parish Office** at **1 Windsor Parade,** respond via email to: **np@bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk** or pop and see us when we are outside the Co-op on Saturday 26th March 10am – 2pm

Potential Community Group Stakeholders

Sports:

Football Clubs	Badminton Club
Tennis Club	Bowls Club

Leisure:

Conservation Group	Rambling Group
Women's Institute	Rotary Club
Scouts	Guides
Over 60's Club	Wine Guild
Whiskey Club	Photographic Club

Faith Groups:

St Nicholas Church	Methodist Church
Baptist Church	Noah's Ark
Sunday School	

Environmental:

Green Waste Recycling	Farmers
English Nature	Conservation Group
Greening Group	

Educational:

Ramsey Manor	Arnold Academy
Harlington Upper	Orchard School
Playgroup	

Medical:

Doctors	Dentists
Pharmacy	Opticians
Vets	

Businesses:

Industrial Estate	The Mill
High Street Retail	Home Workers

Questionnaire and Analysis – Bonfire Night 2023

Barton-le-Clay
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. Do you have any intentions to move away from Barton for work or any other purpose?

   YES   /   NO

   If so, is Barton a village you would like to return to someday?

   YES   /   NO

2. Would you like to see more rental options in the village?

   YES   /   NO

3. How often do you use our 'Green Spaces' in or around Barton?

4. What Community Amenity is your favourite?

Name:	Contact Mobile/Email:
Please provide an indication of your Age: **Under 18** **18 – 30 years** **31 – 45 years** **46 – 60 years** **61+ years**	**Male / Female**

Barton-le-Clay NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. Do you have any intentions to move away from Barton for work or any other purpose?

YES	7
NO	77

If so, is Barton a village you would like to return to someday?

YES	45
NO	5

2. Would you like to see more rental options in the village?

YES	51
NO	30

3. How often do you use our green spaces in or around Barton?

Daily	28
Weekly	22
Fortnightly	2
Monthly	4
Lots	6
Occasionally	12
Never	7

4. What Community Amenity is your favourite?

Parks/Rec	35
Restaurants	3
Library	6
Hills/Springs	11
Village Hall	4
Football Pitches	7
Barton Rovers Club	10
Shops	5
Tennis/Table Tennis	3
Pubs	7
Doctors	1
Sunday Market	1
Community	1

Age:		Male 28
Under 18	17	
18 – 30 years	21	Female 51
31 – 45 years	24	
46 – 60 years	9	
61+ years	7	Undisclosed 6
Undisclosed	7	

	The Cottages, Bedford Road
	No. 162, Manor Road
	No 3 Mill Lane
	No. 8 Church Road. A good example of timber-framing with colour washed rough cast and thatched roof.

	No. 154, Manor Road/Plumtree Cottage built 1609 with thatched roof and good example of eyebrow window.
	No 18 Church Road. A good example of timber-framing with brick inserts
	No. 52, Hexton Road. A good example of a Victorian Butterfly Plan style property.

Examples of Proposed Local Green Spaces

17 - Lime Close Green

32 - Franklin Avenue

Nicholls Close

35 - Dunstall Road

20 - Saxon Crescent Green

10 - The Allotments

Traffic Survey Analysis Results - Rural Match Fund

Report ID	Site	Direction	Start Date	End Date	Posted Speed Limit (PSL)	Total Vehicles	Mean Speed	85%ile Speed	(24 Hour) 5 Day Ave	(12 Hour) 7 Day Ave	(24 Hour) 7 Day Ave	%age HGVs
Site	Site 3 Bedford Road (outside no 107), Barton-le-Clay	Northbound	Fri 17 Jun 2022	Thu 23 Jun 2022	30mph	23471	28.8	33.3	3687	2775	3353	0.26%
Site	Site 3 Bedford Road (outside no 107), Barton-le-Clay	Southbound	Fri 17 Jun 2022	Thu 23 Jun 2022	30mph	22769	29.5	34.1	3538	2698	3253	0.20%

Report ID	Site	Direction	Start Date	End Date	Posted Speed Limit (PSL)	Total Vehicles	Mean Speed	85%ile Speed	(24 Hour) 5 Day Ave	(12 Hour) 7 Day Ave	(24 Hour) 7 Day Ave	%age HGVs
Site	Site 4 Sharpenhoe Road (existing VAS), Barton-le-Clay	Eastbound	Fri 17 Jun 2022	Thu 23 Jun 2022	30mph	16075	27.4	33.0	2540	1898	2296	0.27%
Site	Site 4 Sharpenhoe Road (existing VAS), Barton-le-Clay	Westbound	Fri 17 Jun 2022	Thu 23 Jun 2022	30mph	14827	34.3	39.9	2318	1753	2118	0.24%