



Barton-le-Clay GI Plan
Green Infrastructure Plan
(Final Consultation Version)
February 2024



Produced by the Greensand Trust on behalf of Barton-le-Clay Parish Council

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Executive Summary

This Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan has been developed to support the Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan, providing information on the environment of the parish and future aspirations. In doing this, it will help ensure that future development, facilities and services identified as important to the parish are located in the right places and are of a high quality.

A GI Plan seeks to identify the blueprint for developing a healthy and diverse environment for people and wildlife. It works on the basis of a multi-functional, inter-connected network of spaces, routes and corridors, both publicly accessible and private. The process of developing a GI Plan is a consultative one, providing opportunities for local people to help shape the Plan by providing information on what they value, how they use the local environment, what they feel the main problems and challenges are and what potential solutions might be.

This GI Plan is split into four themes, which are brought together to identify a GI 'Network' and Action Plan to facilitate future action and enhancement. The four themes are listed below with the headline findings and issues for each:

Landscape:

The landscape of Barton-le-Clay parish is dominated by the steep chalk escarpment of the North Chilterns chalk. It provides a backdrop to the village, valuable habitats and recreational opportunities. The village itself sits in the fatter clay vale at the foot of the escarpment.

The escarpment provides key viewpoints for stunning panoramic views across the village, clay vale and beyond. While the A6 dual carriageway cuts through the escarpment, it also provides dramatic views. People value these views highly, including views over the village itself. This landscape is recognised as being of national importance, with the escarpment and plateau to the south within the Chilterns 'National Landscape' (formerly known as 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty') and the vale providing important context.

The most popular 'key views' have been identified and described, illustrating what people see and value in the landscape, and where they are observed from. Policy recommendations for landscape have been developed to help protect these views, settlement identity and distinctiveness; the village 'feel' of Barton-le-Clay comes through strongly and is important to protect as it grows. Treatment of the 'urban' edge of the village is also critical to ensuring any future development protects this identity, the setting of the village against the Chiltern hills and within the wider vale (including the setting of Wrest Park to the north).

Biodiversity:

The chalk escarpment includes the Barton Hills National Nature Reserve (NNR), a nationally important site for its flower-rich chalk grassland and chalk springs. There are also several locally important 'County Wildlife Sites', with the majority of the biodiversity interest focused along the chalk escarpment. The chalk springs and associated streams are also very important. There are less than 300 chalk streams on the planet, of which just over 220 are in eastern and southern England. While the Barton Brook and other waterbodies are not currently officially recognised as chalk

streams, work is ongoing to do this, and their importance for the unique habitats they create is very high.

The main threats to biodiversity in the parish are the potential impacts of climate change (which it could be argued are already manifesting) and recreational impacts. Although the steep slopes of the Chilterns escarpment have an impact on the number of people able to access Barton Hills and other sites, there are still significant numbers of visitors creating impacts. Climate change has the potential to impact chalk streams and other habitats e.g. through increased temperatures in particular. In order to make habitats more resilient to these challenges, they need to be better connected and larger, allowing species to move more freely and providing more space to help manage recreational pressures. The opportunity to link up with the adjacent Hexton Estate to the east, now owned by Natural England, is a major opportunity to do this.

The distribution of places where people can visit to experience the natural world within the parish is also an important factor with the majority of interest focused on the slopes and plateaus of the Chiltern hills. While these are very close to the southern edge of the village, there is little of interest to the north. Creating new habitats across the whole of the parish, including on green spaces within the village, will be vital to ensuring 'nature recovery' is fully supported and local people's quality of life is further enhanced.

Policy recommendations for biodiversity focus on creating nature recovery 'networks' across the parish, providing more opportunities for engaging with nature in a sustainable way, and better recognising and protecting the parish's chalk streams.

Historic Environment:

With its open landscape and defensible high points, the parish has been settled by humans for millennia, from the Neolithic period through the Iron and Bronze Ages, Roman and medieval periods. The settlement itself is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and the medieval core of the village is a Conservation Area. Iron Age Hillforts were constructed just outside the parish at Sharpenhoe and Ravensburgh, and there is still evidence of ancient field systems in the landscape. Quarrying through the ages has also left its mark on the landscape, and the signs of watercress farming at the chalk springs are still evident.

Overall there is a rich tapestry of historic features across the whole of the parish, helping shape the landscape as we see it today, even if often unnoticed. Policy recommendations for the historic environment focus on ensuring this rich history is protected, and where possible brought to life through interpretation or other means to raise awareness.

Access, Open Space and Recreation:

The parish is a popular area for recreation amongst residents and visitors alike because of its setting and the access networks around Barton Hills in particular. However, the chalk escarpment with its steep gradients and footpaths of variable quality, mean that access to Barton Hills and Springs are not accessible to a lot of people. While there are other green spaces in the village many are small or lack interest. There is a lack of accessible green spaces to the north, west and east of the village. Public right of way networks are poor in the north and east, and while there is a reasonable network to the west access is significantly hampered by the A6 dual carriageway and a lack of safe crossing

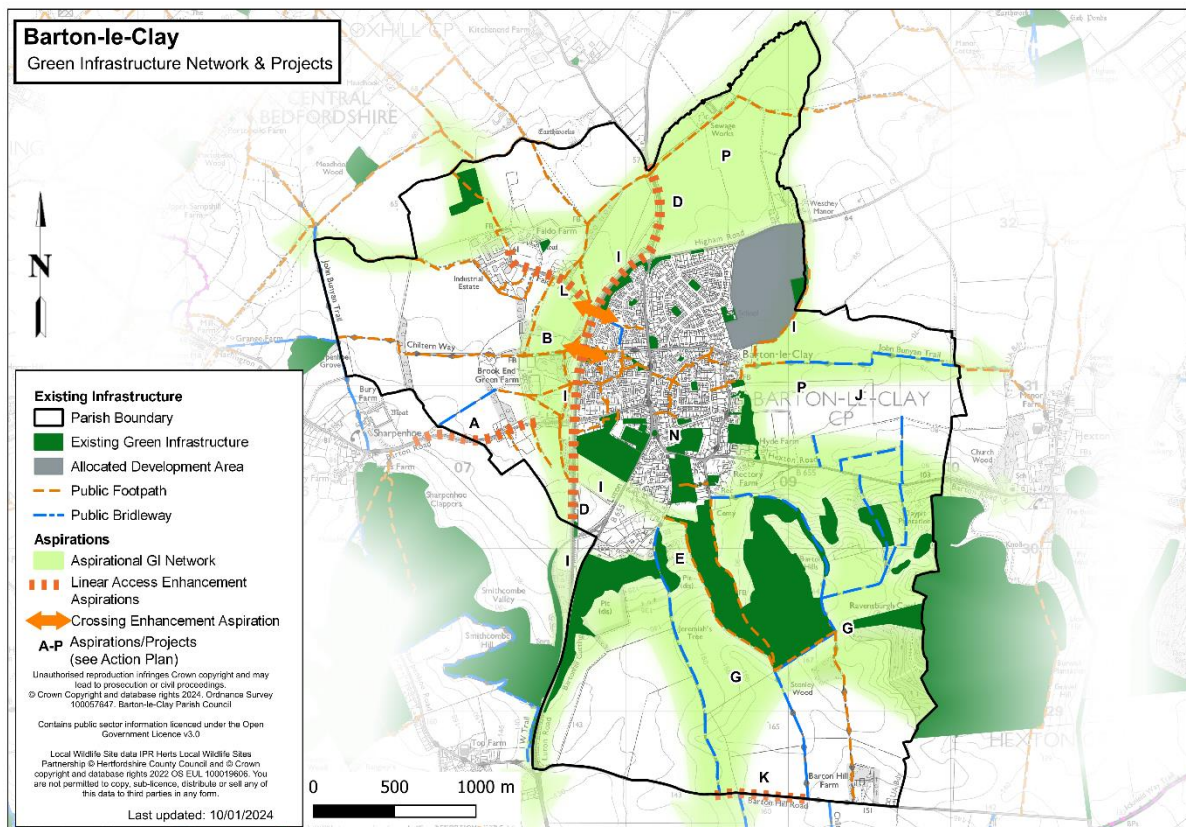
opportunities. Overall there is a deficit in terms of usable, accessible green spaces of sufficient size and interest, particularly within the village and serving people of all abilities.

‘Local Green Spaces’ can be designated through a Neighbourhood Plan, protecting sites that lack other forms of protection but are valued by local people. Thirty ‘Candidate Local Green Spaces’ have been recommended for this designation, following the application of an agreed methodology.

Policy recommendations for access, recreation and greenspace focus on the need to ensure that any future development addresses the existing deficits in terms of green spaces and access to them, ensuring that they are accessible to as wide a range of people as possible and provide sufficient interest to users, as well as contributing to nature’s recovery within the village and in the wider parish.

The Green Infrastructure Network:

A GI Network is identified by looking at the areas of deficit and opportunity across all of the themes and identifying those areas where the greatest level of benefit can be achieved. By taking a network-driven approach it will be important to develop GI across the parish – while the area to the south is of national importance, enhancing the GI network to the north, west and east is vital to ensure people across the parish have better access to high quality green spaces, the landscape is protected and enhanced and nature’s recovery is fully supported.



An accompanying Action Plan identifying projects to help deliver GI aspirations most important to local people has been created, with a combination of ‘quick win’ and longer-term, more strategic projects.

Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to thank Barton-le-Clay Parish Council (particularly the Clerk Carolyn Callen) and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for their support in creating this Green Infrastructure Plan.

The author would also like to thank Jenna Leigh-Thompson of the Barton-le-Clay Historical Society and Barton Conservation Volunteers and Holly Bilcock of Natural England for additional information, and Jackie Ulliyett of the Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre for mapping support.

Dedication:

This Green Infrastructure Plan is dedicated to the memory of Lyndon Williams, former Chairman of Barton-le-Clay Parish Council, whose energy, support and desire to engage everyone is sorely missed, and whose support in the early stages of developing this GI Plan was irreplaceable.

Endorsement and Adoption of the GI Plan:

It is expected that the final GI Plan will be endorsed and adopted by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Barton-le-Clay Parish Council as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Wording will be provided to this effect when this process takes place.

1. Introduction

The Greensand Trust was originally commissioned in early 2013 by Central Bedfordshire Council, in conjunction with Barton-le-Clay Parish Council and the associated Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, 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 considered to be both an ideal way of ensuring that the environment is adequately considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, but also an excellent opportunity for engaging people in the parish and introducing them to the wider process.

Following an extended hiatus, but now with a Local Plan adopted for Central Bedfordshire, work on the Neighbourhood Plan and GI plan recommenced.

1.1 Neighbourhood Plans and the wider context:

The Localism Act (2011) introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure they get the right types of development for their community. Using these new tools, communities are able to:

- choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built
- have their say on what those new buildings should look like
- grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead

Parish and town councils (or neighbourhood forums) lead the creation of neighbourhood plans, supported by the local planning authority (in this case Central Bedfordshire Council). Once written, the Neighbourhood Plan will be independently examined and put to a referendum of local people for approval.

The Neighbourhood Plan will need to demonstrate that it is in conformity with the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan 2015-2035 (Adopted 2022) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Revised July 2018).

The Green Infrastructure Plan will be available as a 'stand alone' document, and is also expected to be absorbed into the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan. It will also fit into the established hierarchy of Green Infrastructure Planning in Bedfordshire, with the Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022) and the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic GI Plan (2007).

1.2 What is 'Green Infrastructure'?

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:

- a healthy and diverse environment
- attractive places to live and visit
- a good quality of life
- a sustainable future

Green infrastructure assets include:

- Accessible Greenspace
- Country parks
- Green corridors
- 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
- Allotments
- Children's play space
- Formal sports facilities
- Cemeteries

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:

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

1.3 Natural England's GI Framework

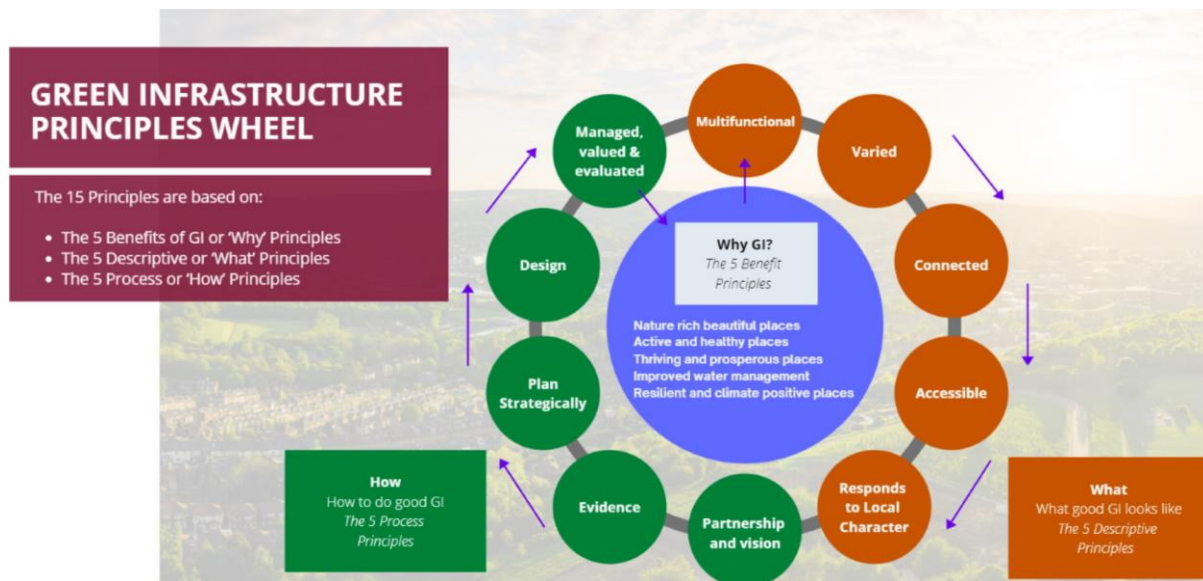
In late 2022 Natural England published its new Green Infrastructure Framework. This Framework includes 5 'Headline Standards' which should be used to undertake initial GI Planning exercises and develop a vision for the local environment, as well as set key targets for delivery which can be monitored and evaluated. While this role is felt to be that of local authorities at a higher level than parish councils, elements of this approach have been built into this Parish-level GI Plan.

The 5 'Headline Standards' are:

1. GI Strategy Standard – where local authorities work in partnership with stakeholders including local communities, assess and strategically plan their green infrastructure provision, for example as part of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. Plans set out how green infrastructure will help to create greener, beautiful, healthier and more prosperous neighbourhoods, with a thriving nature network that can reduce air and water pollution, support sustainable drainage and help places adapt to climate change.

In doing this, they apply the 15 Green Infrastructure Principles and the Green Infrastructure Standards locally (adapting them to local context where appropriate) and set green infrastructure policies, proposals and development requirements in development plans and local design codes.

NE GI Framework (2022) – 15 GI Principles



2. Accessible Greenspace Standard (AGS):

- Size and Proximity criteria: Everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing and contact with nature, to meet the AGS size and proximity criteria, with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.
- Capacity criteria: Local authorities have at least 3 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population
- Quality criteria: Accessible greenspace meets the Green Flag Award Criteria, (Ellicott, 2016) and best practice in accessibility for all (By All Reasonable Means: Least restrictive access to the outdoors, The Sensory Trust, 2020).

This Standard is considered by Theme 4 (Access, Open Space and Recreation) within this GI Plan.

3. Urban Nature Recovery Standard

In urban and urban fringe areas, the proportion of green infrastructure that is designed and managed for nature recovery is increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints. This includes the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats, which can contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery objectives. Local authorities in urban and urban fringe areas set targets for nature recovery through provision and sustainable management of Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites, to provide 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) per 1,000 population (for nature conservation and quiet enjoyment); and enhance existing and identify new areas that qualify as Local Wildlife Sites (for nature conservation).

This Standard is considered within Theme 2 of this GI Plan (Biodiversity)

- Urban Greening Factor Standard - Urban greening is at least 40% average green cover in urban residential neighbourhoods where they do not already meet that standard.

This Standard is considered within Themes 1 (Landscape), 2 (Biodiversity) and 4 (Access, Open Space and Recreation) within this GI Plan.

5. Urban Tree Canopy Standard - Urban Tree Canopy Cover is increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints.

1.4 Aim of this Plan:

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. 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 and provide a multi-functional GI network.

1.5 Methodology and Statement of Community Involvement

A methodology for the production of Parish Green Infrastructure Plans was developed in 2007 and 2008 by a Parish Green Infrastructure Plan Working Group working under the auspices of the Beds & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, as noted above. This standard methodology was adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council in 2009. The methodology was subsequently updated in 2011, and has been further reviewed, in order to provide synergy with and a direct feed into the Neighbourhood Planning process. This has involved ongoing discussion with Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure the approach is considered sound and robust.

This methodology is based on a two-stage process:

Stage 1:

- Initial mapping of GI assets under each of four themes: Biodiversity, Landscape, Historic Environment and Access/Greenspace/Recreation;
- Initial analysis of this mapping;
- Initial community engagement;
- Liaison with Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- Production of draft GI Plan

Stage 2:

- Further stage of community engagement providing ratification of Stage 1 work and additional input;
- Liaison with Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group;
- Finalising the GI Plan to inform the Neighbourhood Plan and be part of the NP consultation process.

With the Barton-le-Clay GI Plan there was a significant hiatus between Stages 1 and 2. Work on the Neighbourhood Plan stopped as it was considered impossible to create a Neighbourhood Plan with the required level of 'conformity' with the Local Plan, when Central Bedfordshire did not have an adopted Local Plan in place. Areas of disagreement around proposed policy and allocations affecting the parish were significant, further impacting confidence that this conformity could be reached. These issues have now been resolved, and the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan was adopted in July 2021. The Neighbourhood Planning process then re-started, and upon resuming the GI Plan in 2022,

the need for further consultation and engagement was identified given the preceding interlude. This acted to refresh people’s memories and provide an opportunity engage those who had moved to the village more recently.

Below is a summary of the consultation and engagement activities across both stages of the GI Plan. Additional consultation was carried out as part of Stage 2, partly because of the gap between the stages.

Table 1. Community Involvement

Method of community involvement	Date	Details	Attendance/response
GI Plan Survey	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific questionnaire to local residents based on GI 	76 completions
St Nicholas Church Fete	June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stall with maps and opportunities to comment 	Attendance = 200+ (overall fete – good level of engagement on stall)
Stakeholder Workshop	Sept 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended by representatives of key groups and organisations • Reviewed community input and made own input. 	16 attendees
Landowners/ Farmers’ Workshop	July 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended by main local landowners/farmers • Introduction to GI Plan • Opportunity to understand their operations and aspirations 	3 landowners, BLCPC, GST
Christmas Lights Switch-on 2022	27 th November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	8 th May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand as part of large community event • Engagement on proposed policies and projects 	Attendance of event = several hundred. 37 directly engaged.

The initial consultation activities in 2013 resulted in very positive levels of engagement, but obviously levels of awareness around the GI Plan (and wider Neighbourhood Plan) dropped away in the intervening years. Therefore the activities carried out in 2022 replicated some of the early

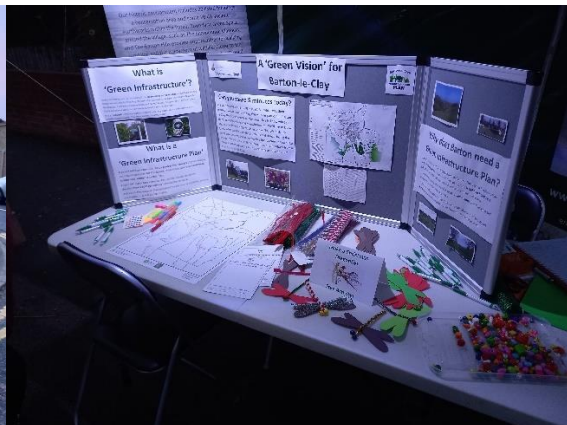
consultation activity, in order to ensure the approach was as inclusive as possible. Additional activity was also included, to provide two main opportunities within the second stage.

A full summary of all consultation activities is available in **Appendix 1**.

St Nicholas Church Fete, June 2013



Christmas Lights Switch-on – November 2022



Community Garden Launch/Coronation Event – May 2023



1.6 Thematic Structure:

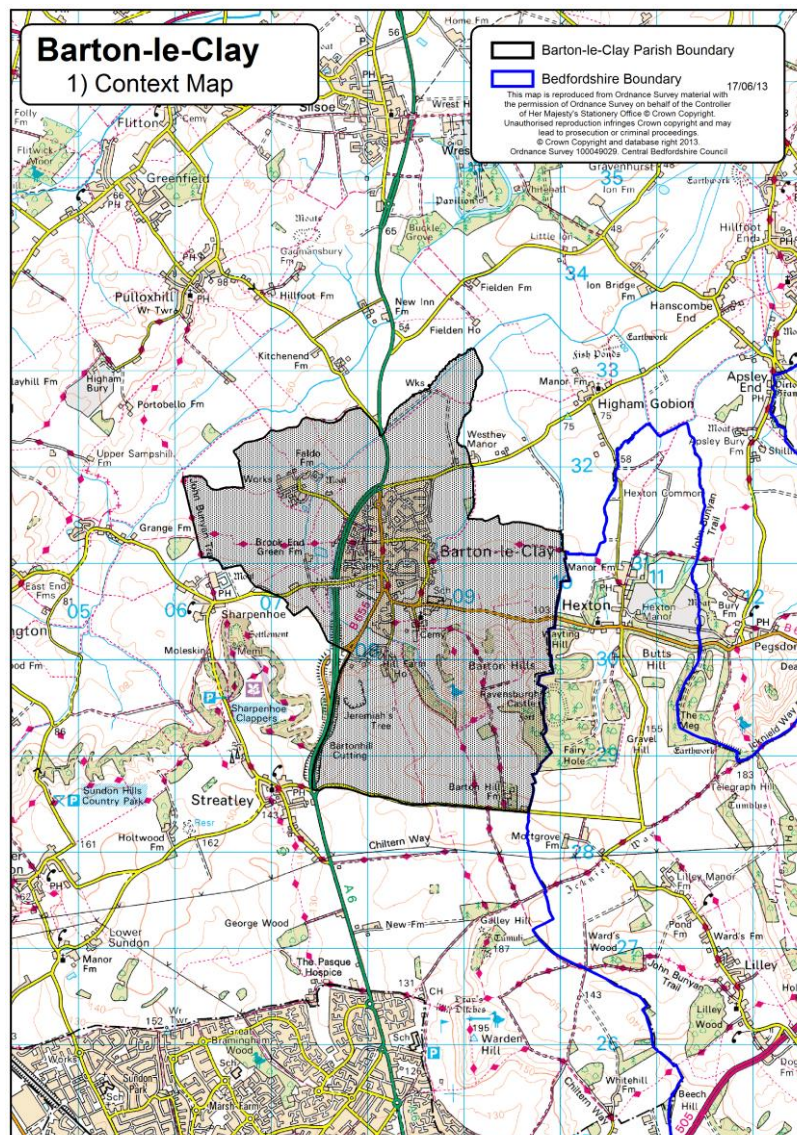
For the purpose of community –level GI planning, Green Infrastructure has been divided into four themes as noted above:

- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Historic Environment
- Access, open space and recreation.

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

1.7 Context:

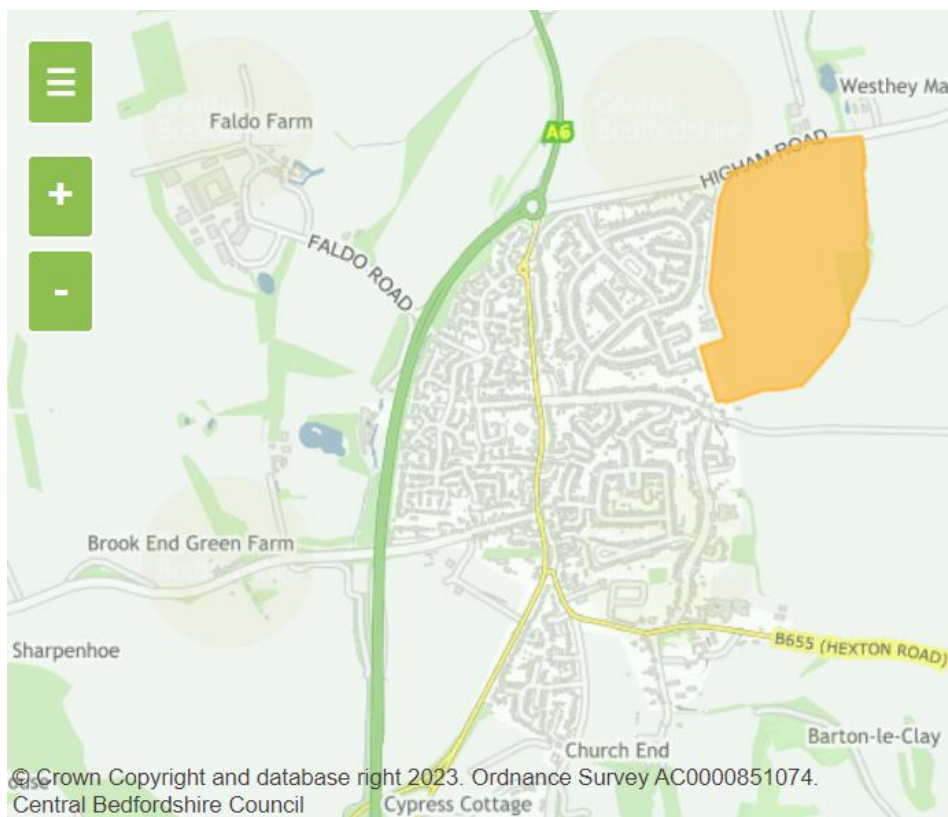
Figure 1 below shows the location and parish boundary of Barton-le-Clay. The settlement in the southern part of the map is Luton.



Barton-le-Clay is situated in Central Bedfordshire between Bedford and Luton, 32 miles (51 km) north of London. The A6 which runs from Luton (6 miles south of the village) through Bedford to the north and beyond, bypasses Barton to the west. The population of Barton-le-Clay (2021 Census figures) is 4,941.

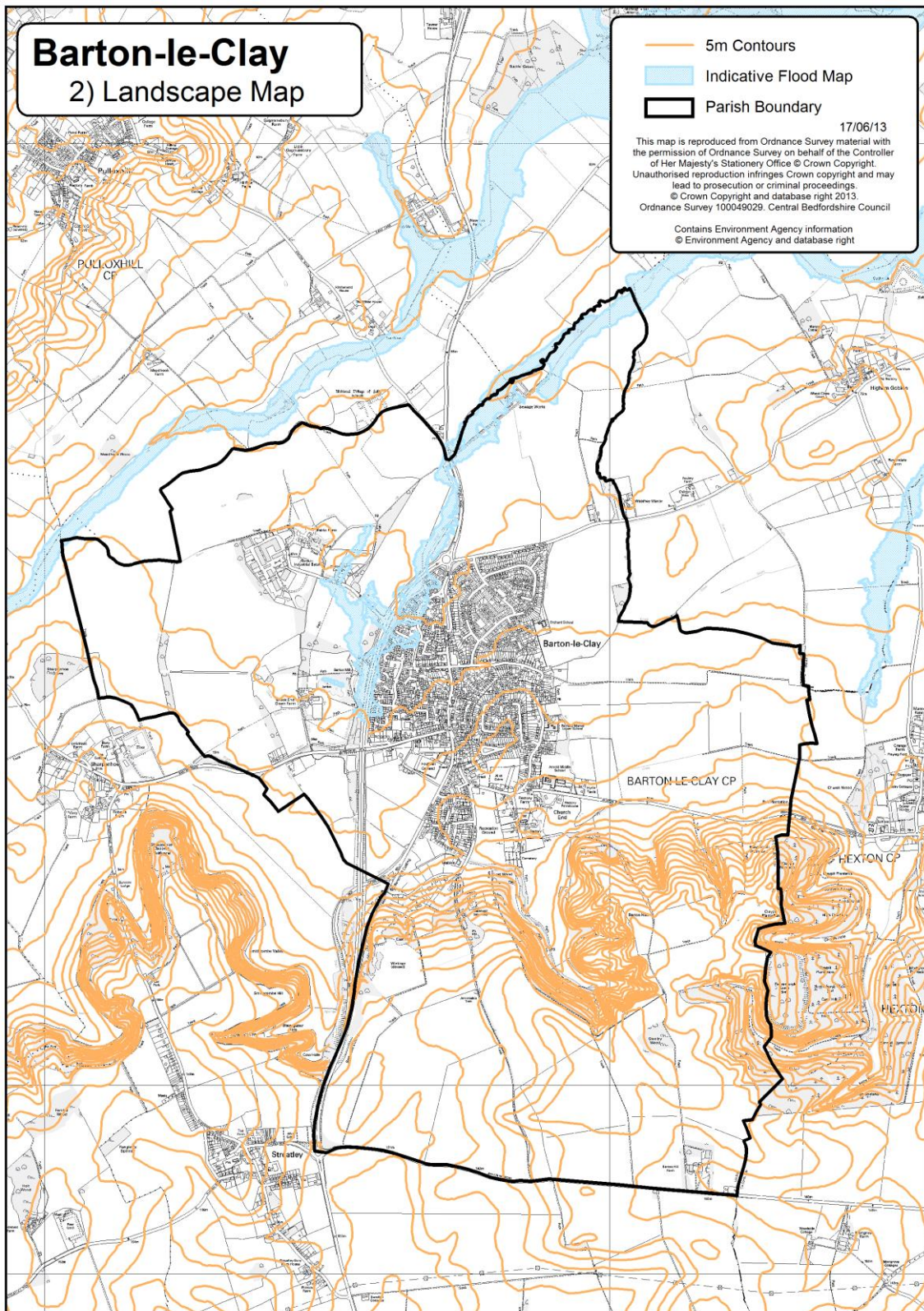
The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2015-2035) allocated a further area for housing development (HAS05), which has subsequently been granted planning permission for just under 500 homes. At the time of writing construction works had not begun. Ordnance Survey base maps have not been updated to incorporate this development, and will not be for some time. However, the impact of this development has been taken into account. **Figure 1a** below illustrates the area that has been allocated for development:

Figure 1a – Housing Allocation (HAS05)



2. Landscape:

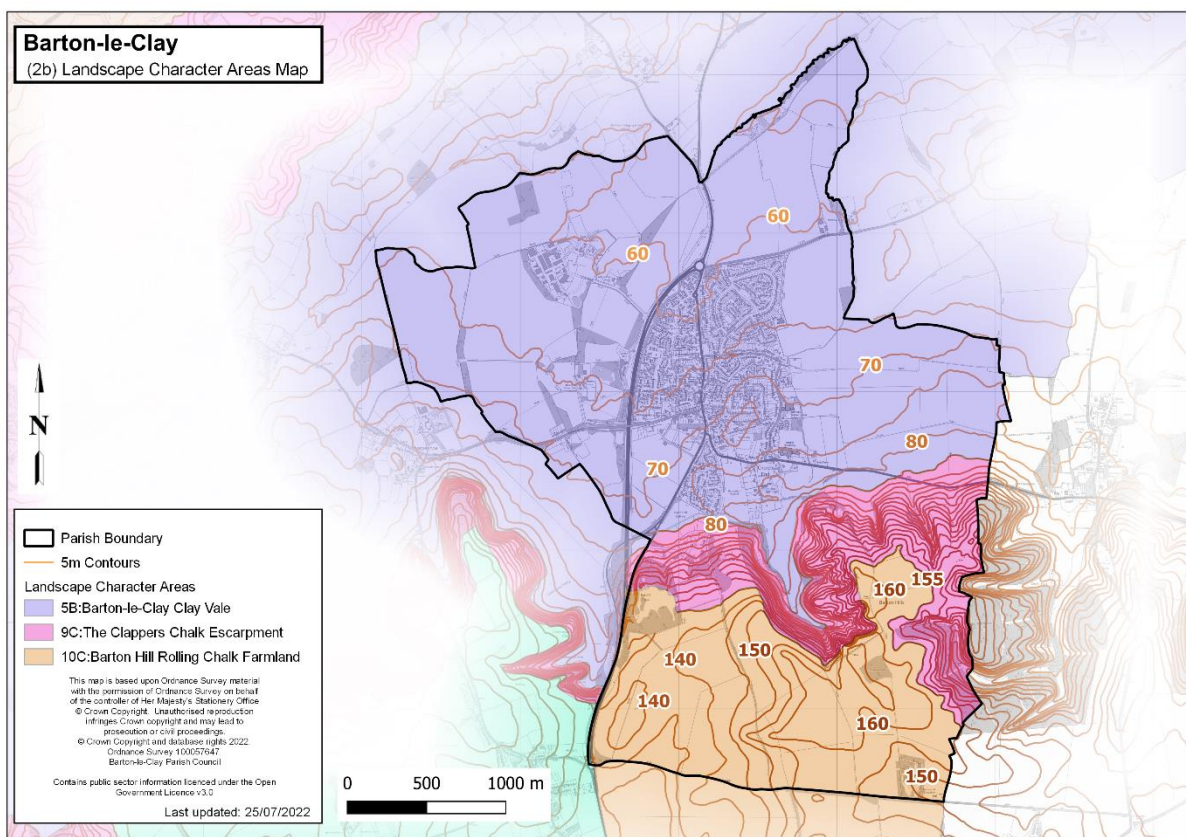
The landscape map below (**Figure 2a**) shows contour lines to illustrate the relief of the land. It also shows the floodplain, highlighting in blue the areas at risk from a 1 in a 100 chance of flooding.



The map above illustrates the marked contrasts in the local landscape, with the very steep escarpment of the North Chilterns Chalk being clearly illustrated by the compacted contour lines to the south of the village, separating a flatter plateau beyond this from the low lying valley to the north, within which the village sits.

Chalk springs emerge from the foot of the chalk escarpment, forming chalk streams that flow northwards, particularly to the west of the village as illustrated by the flood plains in the map above.

The Landscape Character Assessment approach allows similar landscapes to be allocated within typologies, and this was most recently carried out in Central Bedfordshire in 2015 – **Figure 2b** illustrates this very clearly, showing the ‘Clappers Chalk Escarpment Character Area’ bisecting the ‘Barton-le-Clay Clay Vale’ to the north, and the ‘Barton Hill Rolling Chalk Farmland’ to the south, also demonstrating the difference in elevation from 60m above sea level to 160m above sea level.



Barton is a parish of three different landscape character types, as noted by the Landscape Character Assessment for South Bedfordshire (Land Use Consultants, 2015). 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. The sticky grey Gault Clay deposits formed at the bottom of a deepening ocean during the Cretaceous period, creating the flat, featureless landscape of today. 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 chalk escarpment to the south. The village itself sits at the foot of the prominent chalk escarpment immediately to the south, within this vale. The Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment notes that the area along the High Street

contains remnants of the former village green, and this still contributes to a strong village feel, as do other greens within the 'urban' area. A strong historic core to the village also remains.

The chalk escarpment (LCA 9C – The Clappers Chalk Escarpment) has a dramatic convoluted form (note alignment of contours in Figure 2b) in contrast to straight-edged escarpment elsewhere (e.g. Dunstable downs). It provides a striking backdrop to the village and low-lying clay vale and long range views across to the chalk hills to the north. It formed later in the Cretaceous, as sea levels fell and when the forces that raised the Alps folded the chalk into a ridge. During the ice ages (between 2.6 million and ten thousand years ago) erosion caused by ice sheets sculpted the chalk ridge into the rounded hills, dry valley and coombs that exist today.

While the escarpment is generally well-wooded to the west in particular, the section within Barton parish includes Barton Hills which is more open with areas of chalk grassland, and is a popular recreational resource. The Icknield Way was an important prehistoric communication route, and is now a popular long-distance footpath. Ravensburgh Castle is just outside the parish boundary to the east, but occupies a prominent position in the landscape, overlooking the vale to the west and north.

Further to the south is the Barton Hills Rolling Chalk Farmland (LCA 10C), a medium to large-scale landscape with gently rolling arable farmland but also high, more plateau like areas. The chalk dip slope 'behind' the escarpment has a flatter, more elevated character, making it distinct from the adjacent chalk escarpment. It also retains more of its hedgerows than adjacent areas. While in many ways it is a more remote, rural landscape than those adjacent, views from the ridgeline to Luton to the south provide a reminder of the proximity of urban development.

The chalk escarpment has created a line of springs which feed into streams (often highlighted by trees alongside them) and marks an important watershed. Those streams flowing north eventually join the River Flit, and subsequently the Ivel and then Great Ouse, within the Ouse catchment – eventually flowing into the North Sea in the Wash. Those flowing south join the River Lea, itself a tributary of the Thames. These springs influenced settlement patterns in the area, with villages such as Barton growing around them.

Aside from the settlement of Barton-le-Clay, other human influences on the landscape include the A6 dual carriageway, cutting severely through the escarpment immediately to the south-west of the village (exposing the chalk geology and providing stunning views for motorists), former quarry sites (particularly to the immediate east of the A6 north of the village) and the historic Barton Watermill to the west of the village and the A6.

Part of the parish is included within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a nationally recognised landscape designation, as illustrated in **Figure 2c** below. **Figure 2b** illustrates the extensive coverage of the Green Belt (a planning designation restricting development) in the area.

Figure 2c

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

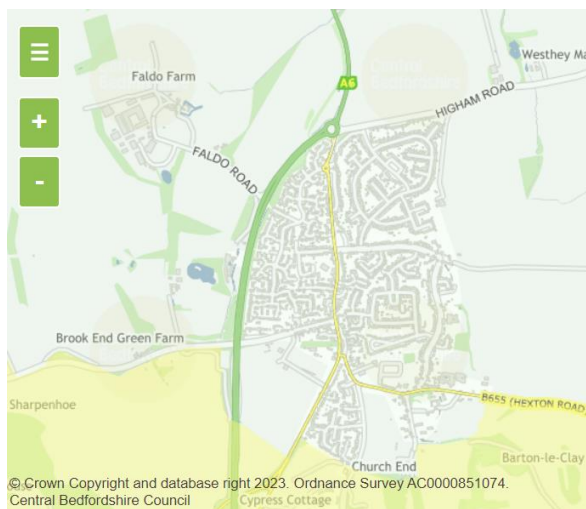
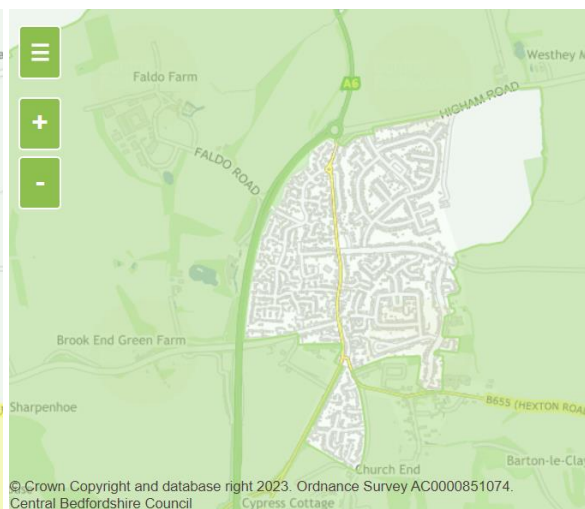


Figure 2d

Green Belt



2.1 Favourite Views

At the November 2022 consultation event people were asked to identify their ‘favourite views’, noting where it was viewed from and what made it special to them. These ‘Favourite Views’ were then compared to those identified in 2013. Although numbers identifying a ‘Favourite View’ in 2022 were relatively low, the consistency with feedback from 2014 was high, and the most popular locations/views expressed reinforced the Key Views identified in 2014. One additional ‘Key View’ has been added in addition to those identified in 2014 (views to the east over the area north of the Hexton Road), with strong correlation with ‘Favourite Walks’ in addition to the identified view.

It is important to note that several people valued views over the village as well as those that were more rural in nature.

Figure 2e illustrates these main ‘clusters’ of Favourite Views and Table 2 illustrates these in more detail.

Figure 2e – Key Views

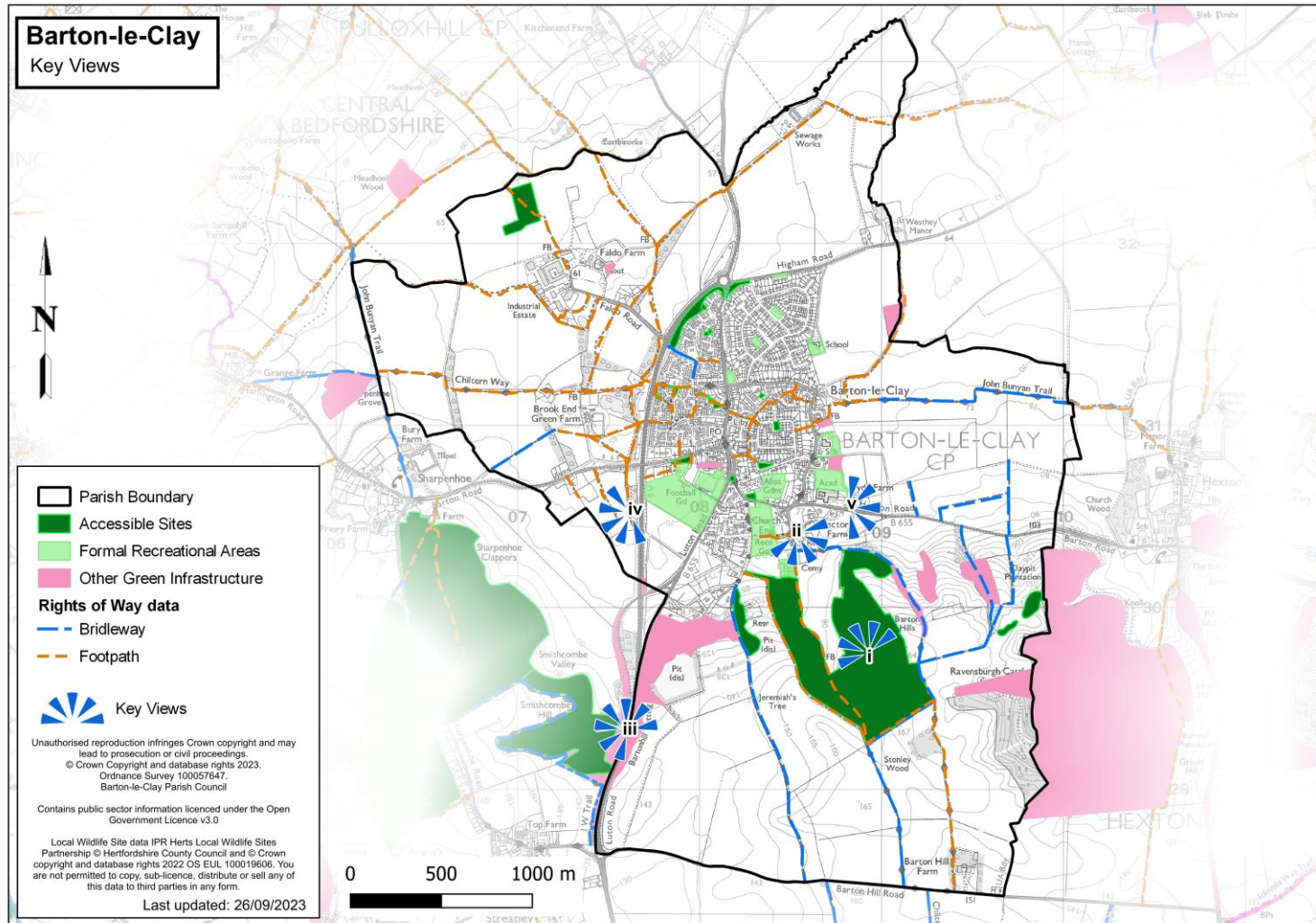


Table 2: Key Views

View	Description	Core components
i	From Barton Hills looking north/east/west over the site and village beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevation provides panoramic views to east, west and north; • Open downland with patches of woodland • View of the village spread out to the north, including the church. • Views of flat open vale between the village and the Greensand Ridge/clay hills to the north • Views of Clay Hills to north • Water tower at Pulloxhill • More subtle wooded outline of Greensand Ridge to the north beyond open farmland and Clay Hills.
ii	From footpaths/bridleways approaching Barton Hills looking south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suddenly rising hills in near distance • Open downland with patches of woodland
iii	From A6 and adjacent paths looking north and west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevation provides panoramic views to south and east; • Distinctive form of Chilterns escarpment and Sharpenhoe Clappers to west; • Open farmland with hedgerows
iv	From access routes to west of village, looking south-west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View of sinuous Chilterns escarpment to Sharpenhoe Clappers to west; • Open farmland with hedgerows
v	From eastern edge of village, north of Hexton Road, looking east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open farmland with hedgerows • Dramatically rising chalk escarpment to the south, with areas of woodland/scrub.

View (i): From Barton Hills looking north



View (ii): Looking south towards Barton Hills



View (iii): From A6 and adjacent paths, looking west and north



View (iv): From access routes to west of village, looking south and west



View (v): From Hexton Road, looking east



It is recommended that these views and the key components within them are taken into account in any relevant planning decisions.

2.2 Landscape Character

The LCA contains within it a 'Strategy' for each Landscape Character Area, plus a series of 'Landscape management guidelines'. These are summarized below:

Table 3 – Landscape Character Strategies and Management Recommendations

	5B Barton-le-Clay Vale	9C The Clappers Chalk Escarpment	10C Barton Hills Rolling Chalk Farmland
Strategy	<p>Enhancement/Renewal Enhancing condition of the landscape by restoring and repairing elements that have been lost or degraded.</p> <p>Scope for introducing new landscape elements such as woodland creation particularly aligning the main transport corridors.</p> <p>Conserve and enhance the setting of significant historic landscape assets such as Wrest Park.</p>	<p>Conserve/Enhance Conserve the dramatic landform and prominent views.</p>	<p>Enhance Enhance the character of the rural dipslope and landscape setting.</p>
Relevant Development Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland planting should ensure views across the flat, open vale are retained, and reflect the historic grain of the landscape, reinforcing former hedgerow lines and field patterns. • Conserve the rural character and tranquillity associated with the eastern part of the vale • Enhance the ecological value and visual presence of and access totributary streams crossing the vale. These areas are a priority for establishing areas of pasture • Conserve the open views to adjacent LCAs and areas of undeveloped land at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the open, sinuous character of the scarp through preventing the erection of visually impermeable field boundaries e.g. solid fencing. • Prevent further urbanisation of the roads • Conserve the clear views and visual relationship with the Barton-le-Clay Vale (5b) and beyond to the Clay Hills (8c) • Conserve the integrity of the chalk escarpment and dipslope transition which is a key feature of the Chilterns landscape. • Retain the distinction with the lower lying clay vales and ensure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the integrity of the chalk escarpment and dipslope transition • Conserve the integrity of the Green Lane (Icknield Way). • Consider opportunities for large scale woodland planting in association with any future development. Planting should respect key sensitivities such as the views to the escarpment.

	<p>the base of adjacent slopes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain individual settlement identity and consider appropriate limits to expansion of Barton at the base of the scarp. 	<p>that expansion of scarp foot settlements such as Barton does not encroach onto the lower slopes.</p>	
Relevant Landscape Management Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore and improve the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries • Conserve historic landscape features such as medieval earthworks and moated sites and their intact landscape setting. • Conserve the landscape and setting of Wrest Park house and gardens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the unimproved chalk grassland sites and continue to manage through appropriate grazing regimes • Conserve the grassland cover of earthwork monuments • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the range of habitats, notably chalk grassland (SSSI) and consider opportunities for extending and linking habitats beyond existing sites. • Restore and improve the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries • Conserve the ancient woodland blocks

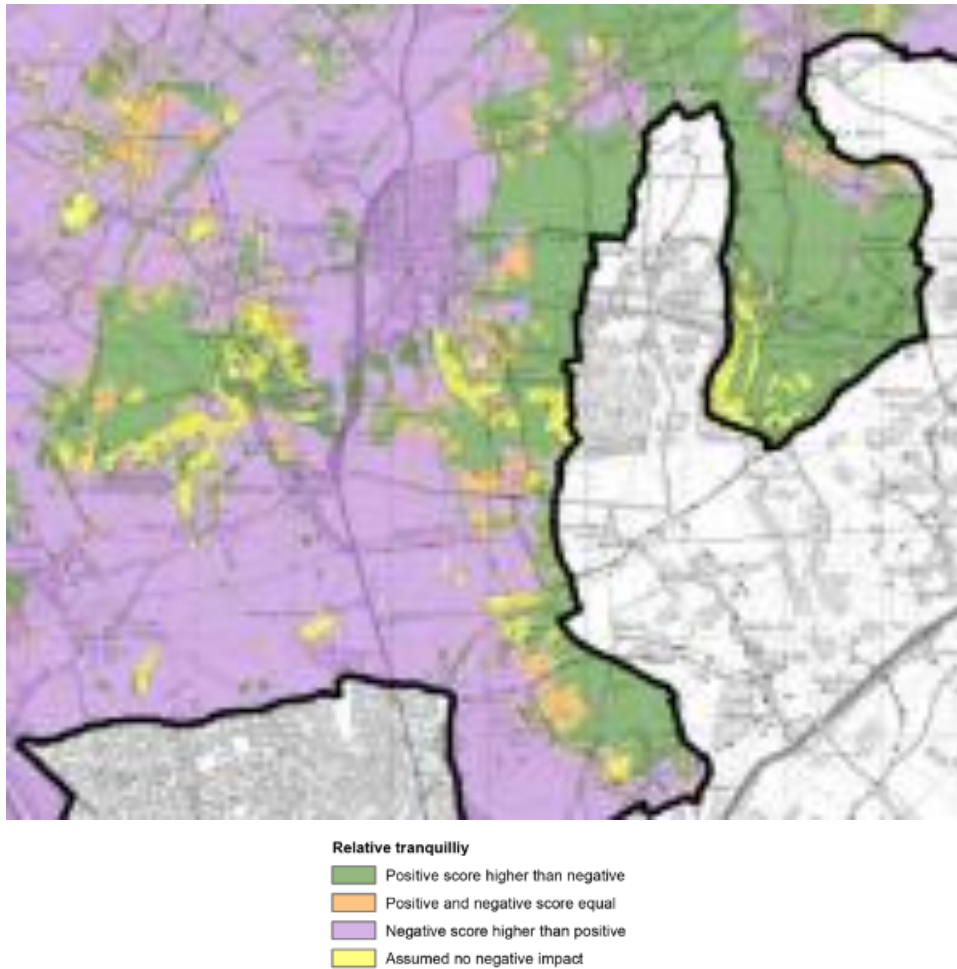
With tree and woodland planting becoming increasingly common as a measure to combat climate change through carbon sequestration, as well as help biodiversity, it is particularly important to ensure any woodland planting does not impact (and will not in future) views across the landscape valued by local people.

2.3 Tranquillity:

Central Bedfordshire Council commissioned a tranquillity mapping exercise (Central Bedfordshire Tranquillity Strategy – Supporting the Assessment of Relative tranquillity – LCA, 2022) which provides a very usual visual illustration of the scope of noise impacts.

Figure 2f above demonstrates that the built up part of the village and the A6 road lie in an area where relative tranquillity is low, which is not surprising, while the higher ground of the Chilterns escarpment has higher tranquillity, with some very tranquil areas highlighted in green. What is perhaps more surprising is the extent of the area of poorer tranquillity, illustrated by the purple, affecting significant areas of rural landscape. This will be in no small part due to the very flat, open nature of parts of this landscape, particularly to the north, but also illustrates the significant effect of the A6 through the Chilterns escarpment. The area to the east of the village is also relatively tranquil, but with further development consented in an area immediately east of the northern end of the village it is clear to see that an area of high relative tranquillity will be impacted. This highlights the importance of considering the impacts on tranquillity when considering development, and also on high quality, effective landscaping if it is going to be permitted.

Figure 2f – Relative Tranquillity



Taken from Central Bedfordshire Tranquillity Strategy – Supporting the Assessment of Relative tranquillity (LCA, 2022)

The **Natural England GI Framework (2022)** also provides guidance which is important and relevant to landscape. The ‘Urban Greening Factor’ is considered through the assessment of levels of:

- Semi-natural vegetation
- Street Trees
- Hedgerows
- Sustainable Urban Drainage
- Green Roofs and Walls

These have not been assessed quantitatively as part of this GI Plan, as this would require significant additional resources, and is suggested as an exercise that should be looked at across Central Bedfordshire. Broad, qualitative assessment through this Plan suggests that:

- Reasonable numbers of street trees in parts of the village, with some new planting on green spaces

- Limited remnants of hedgerows within the village, but complemented by garden hedgerows (and those around green spaces).
- No SUDs (Sustainable Urban Drainage) type features, and no green roofs or walls were noted.

It is recommended that the Design Code being developed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan takes urban greening and enhancement of the urban fringe into account.

2.4 Landscape Policy Recommendations:

The feedback from community consultation has been combined with the above information to develop the following **policy recommendations for the Neighbourhood Plan related to Landscape:**

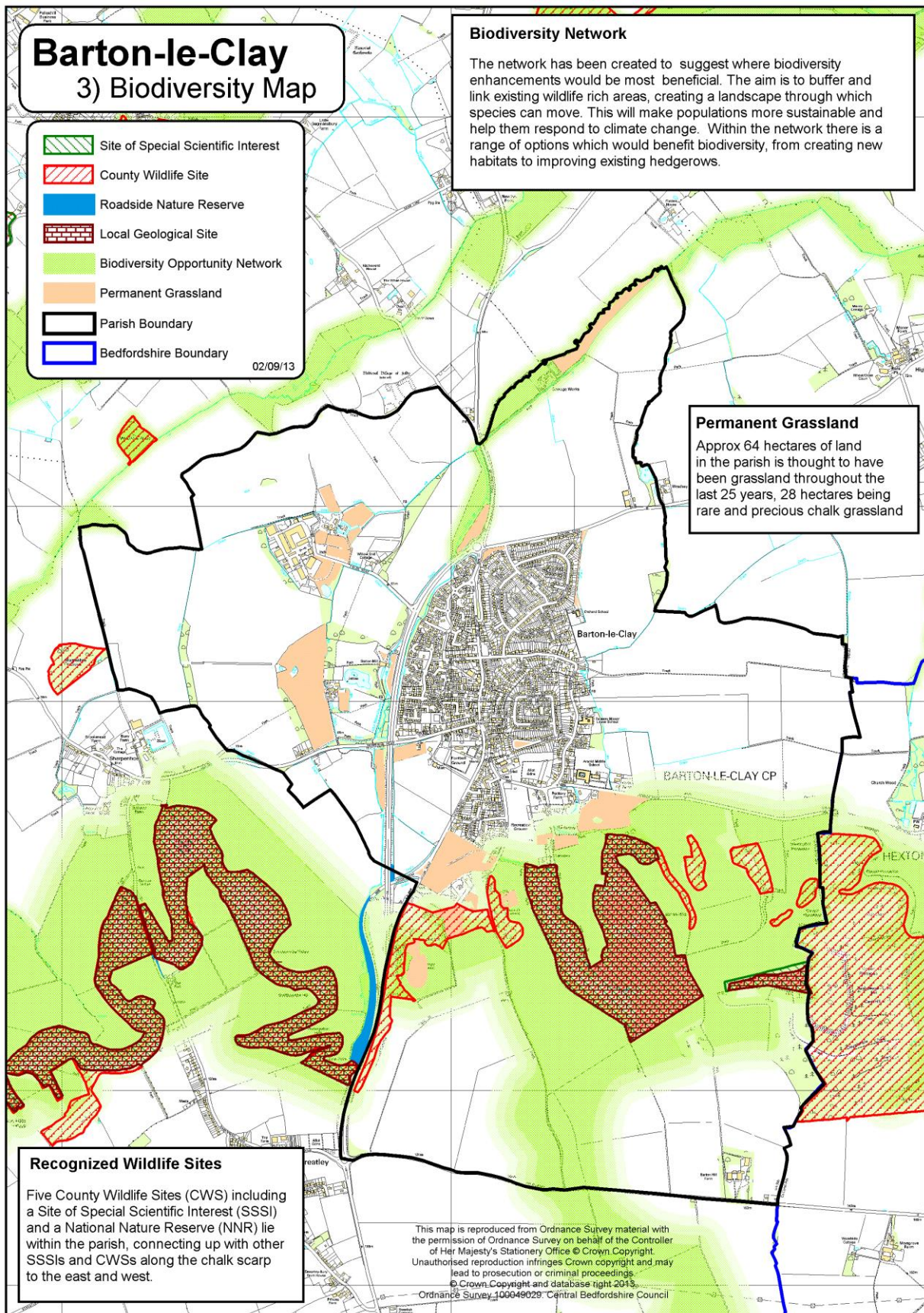
- *Ensure protection of settlement identity and distinctiveness, including the protection and enhancement of amenity green spaces within the village to protect and enhance the village 'feel'*
- *Protection of key views and core components within them (as set out in Table*
- *Seek to mitigate visual and audible intrusion of the A6 and improve relative tranquillity within the parish*
- *Protect and enhance the setting of the village at the foot of Barton Hills, avoiding any development that impacts this.*
- *Protect and enhance hedgerow networks, particularly with regard to restoring old field boundaries.*
- *Enhance the corridors of watercourses through the parish*
- *Avoid any development that might impact upon the setting and identity of Wrest Park (House and Gardens) to the north*
- *Ensure any future development enhances the urban edge in terms of visual amenity, access and nature recovery.*

3. Biodiversity:

The biodiversity map (**Figure 3**) shows the location of the National Nature Reserve, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, and Roadside Nature Reserves. County Wildlife Sites are recognized as important for wildlife when assessed against a set of criteria, which considers site size, diversity, rarity, fragility, typicalness and recorded history. National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest are the country's best wildlife and geological sites and are legally protected. Natural England must be consulted if anyone wishes to carry out work that may damage a SSSI. This requirement applies to operations within a SSSI, and to operations outside the SSSI that may affect the features of interest. Roadside Nature Reserves are designated where it is desirable and possible to protect and manage important wildlife interest without compromising road safety. They are usually adjacent to CWSs or SSSIs and support rare and protected species.

Barton Hills National Nature Reserve, which also has SSSI status, is a nationally significant site of 44ha. Mainly flower rich chalk grassland, typical of the North Chilterns, it also includes areas of scrub and woodland as well as a number springs. It is home to a large population of the nationally rare Pasque flower. Other rarities include greater pignut and field fleawort, and butterflies seen in summer include the chalkhill blue, marbled white and dark green fritillary. **Barton Quarry CWS** is a 12ha mosaic of calcareous grassland, scrub and secondary woodland, and contains interesting exposures of chalk faces. Its use by a 4-wheel drive club is thought to benefit structural diversity. **Barton Pit CWS**, also known locally as 'Lovers Walk', is largely mature semi-natural broadleaved woodland, and includes a disused chalk pit. It is this former use that lends it to mis-use by bikers, and has eroded the ground flora. It does however still contain a population of the rare green-flowered helleborine. Barton Hills and the area to the east are recorded as being of National Importance for arable plant assemblages according to a scoring system developed by Plantlife.

Figure 3 - Biodiversity



3.1 'Chalk Streams'

The streams that begin as springs at the foot of the chalk escarpment, and are fed by chalk-filtered groundwater, are unfortunately not classified as true 'chalk streams' – the strict definition is: “streams that derive 75% of their flow from chalk groundwater and flow over a chalk geology” (Index of Chalk Streams 2014). This is most likely because, despite emanating from the chalk aquifer, they very soon flow over non-chalk geology (gault clay).

However, the Chalk Streams Index notes that “firm definitions fail to capture a three-dimensional reality which varies greatly from one valley to the next. In reality we have what is more like a spectrum of chalk-streams and chalk-influenced streams, rivers which derive most of their flow from chalk-fed groundwater, and exhibit – in varying degrees depending on the particular geology of a given valley – the ‘classic’ chalk-stream characteristics of clear water and equable flows”. Streams in the Barton area do share many characteristics with ‘true’ chalk streams, and within the parish much of their flow is from chalk-fed groundwater. While these streams have been heavily modified, and are often overlooked or abused through littering/fly-tipping, they do exist. The Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (2022) recognises the importance of the streams that flow from the chalk in the southern part of Central Bedfordshire as an “important but vulnerable part of the biodiversity network”.

It is recommended that further work is undertaken, in conjunction with the Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership, to secure better recognition of the status of chalk-fed waterbodies within the parish.

3.2 Geodiversity

Figure 3 also includes the Barton Hills Local Geological Site, designated as such because of “an evocative scenery displaying excellent chalk landscape features including a dramatic coombe, dry valleys, soil creep, frost shattering, small natural exposures of Lower and Middle Chalk and a natural spring which forms a small stream from source” (LGS Designation Form, Bedfordshire and Luton Geology Group, 2009). See also:

https://www.bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk/uploads/1/3/2/1/132121510/blgg_barton_hills_chalk.pdf

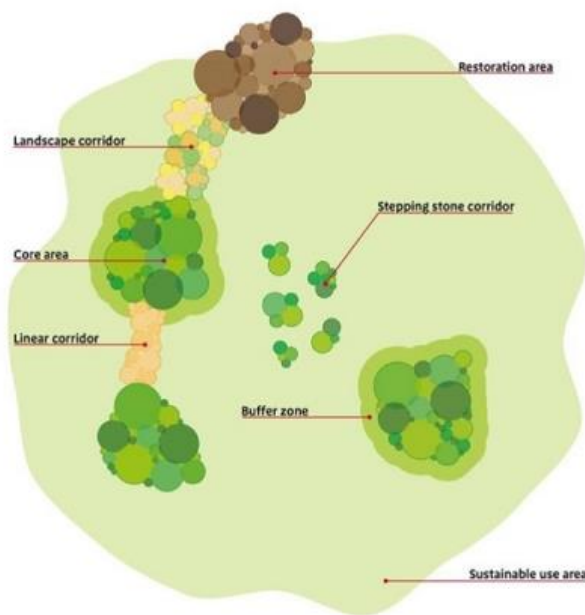
3.3 The Biodiversity Opportunity and Nature Recovery Networks:

Figure 3 above shows the ‘Biodiversity Opportunity Network’, where improvements to habitats (creation of new areas of habitat or the buffering, enhancement or connection of existing areas) would be most beneficial, creating a more joined up landscape through which species can move, helping them better deal with pressures such as climate change.

The Government set out its vision for ‘nature’s recovery’ in its 25 Year Environment Plan (2018), which seeks to reverse habitat losses over the last 50 years by developing a ‘Nature Recovery Network’ (NRN) at a national scale, complementing and connecting our best wildlife sites, and providing opportunities for species conservation and the reintroduction of native species. **Figure 3a** below illustrates the components of a ‘Nature Recovery Network’, which include:

- **Core Areas:** Existing places of high nature conservation value, from which the NRN can develop. These include nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites (as illustrated in Figure 3 above);
- **Buffer Zones:** Areas immediately surrounding Core Areas, where appropriate habitat creation and land management can help protect the Core Areas from the impacts of agriculture (e.g. spray drift from pesticides and fertilisers) and urban development, which would otherwise harm the ecological interest;
- **Restoration Areas:** Areas where habitat can be restored (having previously existed here) to create new Core Areas for the future;
- **Stepping Stones:** Smaller ‘islands’ of habitat created between Core Areas, providing opportunities for species migration and re-colonisation;
- **Corridors:** Connecting corridors of habitat, allowing species dispersal and linking up isolated Core Areas and Stepping Stones. These can be ‘linear’ (e.g. hedgerows), or wider, landscape features;
- **Sustainable Use Area:** Sensitive and appropriate land management across the wider countryside, reducing negative environmental impacts on the network and connecting through field-scale measures such as buffer strips and headlands.

Figure 3a: Conceptual Nature Recovery Network (Making Space for Nature, 2010)



3.4 Local Nature Recovery Networks:

‘Local Nature Recovery Strategies’ will be produced across the whole of England by the end of 2024, and will set out how nature recovery will be achieved locally. Each will highlight existing areas of importance for nature, future opportunities and the biodiversity priorities for its area. They will also highlight the wider environmental benefits that can be created, including tackling climate change and improving mental and physical wellbeing. The Bedfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy covers the Barton-le-Clay area (with a Hertfordshire LNRS adjacent).

The Biodiversity Opportunity Area work mentioned above was taken a step further with the “Nature Recovery Network mapping project in the North Chilterns” (Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants, 2021), which provides a very useful source of more detailed aspirations to both this GI Plan and the forthcoming Bedfordshire LNRS.

This map-based project involved desk-based analysis alongside field visits across an 1874ha area covering the chalk escarpment and surrounds through Barton parish, including the area to the south covering Warden and Galley Hills on the northern edge of Luton. The methodology also included contact with key landowners to help understand the potential constraints they face, and opportunities that might exist to deliver a ‘Local Nature Recovery Network’. Key habitats identified as forming this network include not only chalk grassland but also chalk scrub, ancient woodland, arable margins and headlands.

The project creates a ‘Landscape Vision of Connectivity’, illustrating core sites (e.g. Barton Hills NNR) along with key ‘stepping stone’ sites and extensions to existing sites (which would better protect them and improve their overall quality). These are to the east and west of Barton Hills. They are not illustrated (the source map contains sensitive, confidential information) but have been taken into account when considering the GI network below.

Since this mapping project was carried out, Natural England have purchased the Hexton Estate, ensuring that a key opportunity to create a Local Nature Recovery Network is put in place immediately to the west of the parish.

While not included as specific policy, this Plan recommends continued dialogue with, and involvement of, local farmers and landowners in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Bedfordshire, and in local implementation of nature recovery networks across the parish.

3.5 Nature and People

The Natural England GI Framework (2022) includes an ‘Urban Nature Recovery Standard’ which can be used to make a particularly pertinent point with regard to Barton-le-Clay. Although close to areas considered to be rich in biodiversity, these are largely confined to the Chilterns downland, which can be difficult to access with steep terrain. It was noted that many older residents commented through the various consultations that they no longer access Barton Hills (for example) because it was no longer possible for them to climb the steep paths.

The Urban Nature Recovery Standard looks at the proportion of green infrastructure that is designed and managed for nature recovery in urban and urban fringe areas. It also advocates that, recognising more general deficits, this is increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints. This includes the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats, which can contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery objectives. Local authorities in urban and urban fringe areas set targets for nature recovery through provision and sustainable management of Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites, to provide 1 hectare (100m x 100m) of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) per 1,000 population (for nature conservation and quiet enjoyment); and enhance existing and identify new areas that qualify as Local Wildlife Sites (for nature conservation).

In Barton parish, the proportion of GI within urban/fringe areas designed and managed for Nature Recovery is low. The only areas considered to meet this description are:

- Barton Pit (Lovers' Walk) CWS (2ha)
- Part of Barton Hills NNR (closest to urban edge – estimated at 4ha to be considered alongside Barton Pit)

These sites (or part-sites) are the only ones that can be considered to meet the criteria, and to be within the urban fringe (no sites within the urban area are considered to be designed or managed for nature recovery). The majority of Barton Hills cannot be considered urban fringe as it extends into the very rural area to the south. Barton Quarry CWS is not managed for nature conservation, these benefits are a by-product of its use as a 4x4 area.

The population of Barton-le-Clay is 4,941 (2021 Census) so the expectation would be that approximately 4.9ha of Local Nature Reserve should exist. The estimate above suggests that 6ha of land managed for nature conservation exist in the parish, so on the surface it appears that Barton is well catered for. However, when the point regarding accessibility is taken into account, this figure would drop considerably. Additionally, Barton Pit CWS is heavily impacted by recreational uses, and this reduces its value for wildlife. If the point of the standard is to drive up the amount of land designed or managed for nature recovery, it is important that such land is distributed across the parish (including within the urban area), ensuring it is close to and can be appreciated by a larger number of people. This has been fed into the Policy Recommendations below.

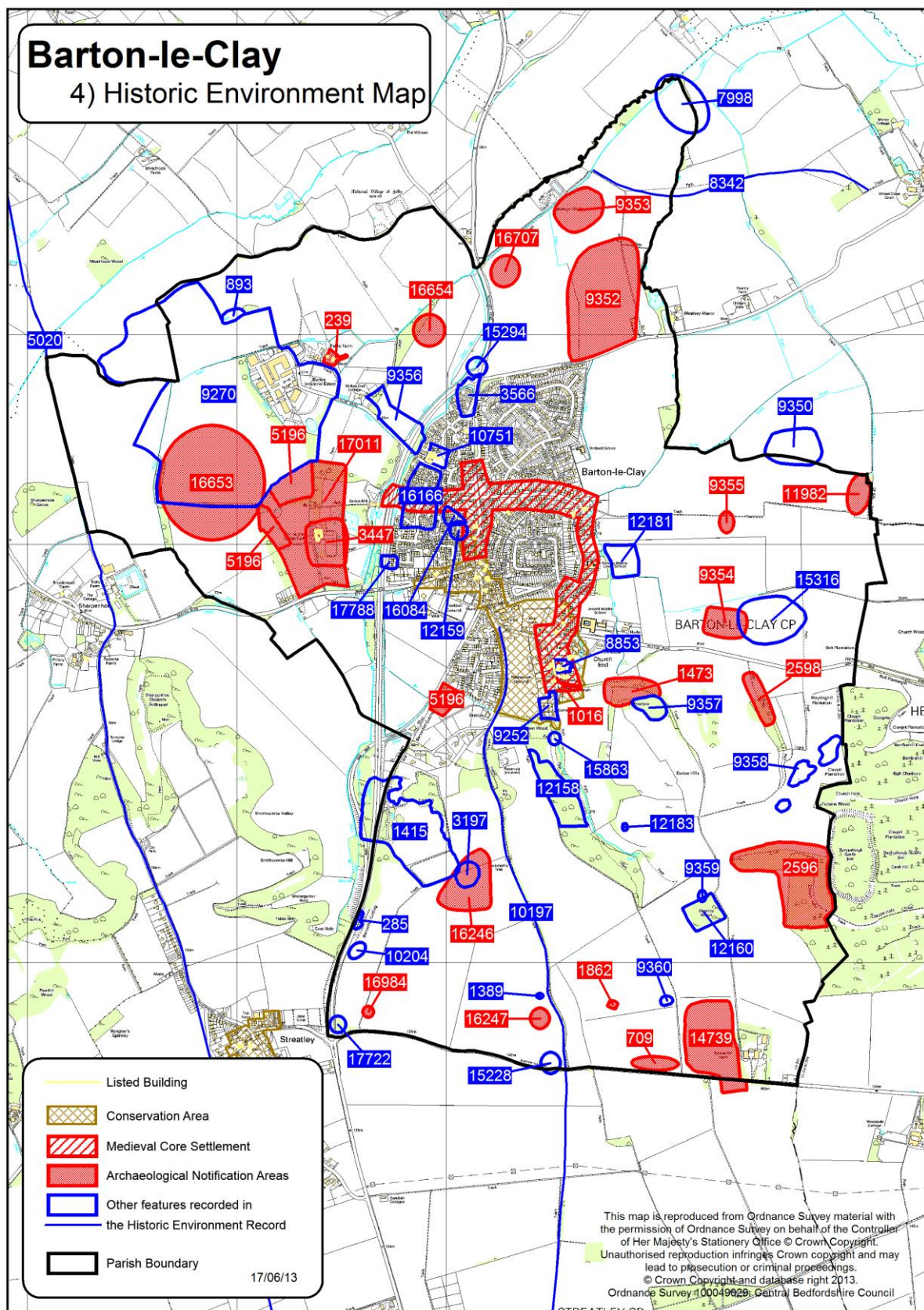
3.6 Biodiversity Policy Recommendations:

The feedback from community consultation has been combined with the above information to develop the following **policy recommendations for the Neighbourhood Plan related to Biodiversity:**

- *Development of Local Nature Recovery Networks to support Nature Recovery within Bedfordshire and beyond (particularly into Hertfordshire), including:*
 - *The corridor of the chalk escarpment*
 - *'Chalk Streams' and their corridors*
- *New tree planting and hedgerow networks, ensuring not restricting views or where not optimal – right tree right place – linking and buffering existing woodlands*
- *Creation of spaces specifically for 'Nature Recovery' within the urban area and urban fringe, (including for example wildflower areas, hedgerows, ponds and small areas of trees/woodland), especially within any new development.*
- *Improvements to green spaces within the village to enhance their biodiversity value, including managing areas for wild flowers, including amenity spaces and roadside verges (achieved through seeding/planting and changes in management regime – including 'cut and collect' management of wildflower areas).*
- *Raise awareness of chalk streams and their unique value.*

4. Historic Environment:

Figure 4 illustrates the evidence of Barton-le-Clay's long and rich history as a settlement.



The key to **Figure 4** is in **Table 4** below:

Number	Feature	Number	Feature
239	MOAT Faldo Farm	9358	CHALK PITS
285	QUARRY	9359	CHALK PIT
709	CROPMARKS W of Bartonhill Farm	9360	CHALK PIT
893	HOLWORTH'S FARM (site of)	10197	TURNPIKE ROAD old course
1016	EARTHWORKS Church End	10204	CROPMARKS NE of Streatley
1389	CHALK PIT E of Streatley	10751	MOAT Grange Farm
1415	LIME & CEMENT WORKS & QUARRY Barton Hill Cutting	11982	ROMAN OCCUPATION Han Furlong
1473	LYNCHETS	12158	LEET(E) WOOD
1862	CROPMARKS	12159	GATEHOUSE CLOSES
2596	LYNCHETS Ravensburgh Castle	12160	STONELEY WOOD
2598	LYNCHETS	12181	WATERCRESS BEDS
3197	BARTON MILL	12183	ENCLOSURE
3447	MEDIEVAL 'VILLAGE' Brookendgreen	14739	NEO/BA FLINTS.barton Hill Farm
3566	EARTHWORKS N of Grange Farm	15228	POLISHED STONE AXE
5020	'ROMAN ROAD', Viatores no. 170b	15294	MED & PMED ACTIVITY, NW of Barton-Le-Clay
5196	RIDGE & FURROW	15316	CROPMARKS, E. of Barton-le-clay
5196	RIDGE & FURROW	15863	MEDIEVAL POTTERY, S of Barton Cemetery
5196	RIDGE & FURROW	16084	MED POT + PMED FINDS, Allotments, Mill Lane
7998	IRON AGE POTTERY	16166	MED + PMED FINDS, Grange Farm Barton
8342	ROAD from New Inn to Higham	16246	NEOLITHIC/BRONZE AGE FLINT SCATTER, S of Barton village
8853	ST NICHOLAS' PARISH CHURCHYARD	16247	NEOLITHIC/BRONZE AGE FLINT SCATTER, N of Lilley Road
9252	EXTENSION TO ST NICHOLAS' CHURCHYARD	16653	CROPMARKS, NW of Brook End Green Farm
9270	BARTON-IN-THE-CLAY AIRFIELD	16654	CROPMARK, NE of Faldo Farm
9350	IRON AGE POTTERY	16707	CROPMARKS, N of Barton village
9352	IRON AGE & ROMAN OCCUPATION	16984	RING DITCH, E of Streatley
9353	IRON AGE POTTERY & QUERN	17011	BROOK END GREEN MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT
9354	IRON AGE/ROMAN/SAXON POTTERY	17012	BARTON MEDIEVAL VILLAGE
9355	IRON AGE OCCUPATION	17722	NEOLITHIC/BRONZE AGE/ROMAN FINDS, East of Top Farm
9356	MEDIEVAL OCCUPATION NW of Grange Farm	17788	IA, RB, MED, PMED FINDS, N of Sharpenhoe Road
9357	CHALK PIT		

Figure 4 demonstrates human settlement and use in Barton-le-Clay parish dating far back into pre-history. Neolithic (10,000BC-4,500BC) and Bronze Age (3,300BC-1,200BC) finds occur on the plateau at the top of the chalk escarpment in the south of the parish, as do numerous scattered chalk pits and quarries.

The light soils of the chalk downland areas were cleared for agriculture during the Neolithic period. The prominent open landscape of the chalk escarpment became a favoured location for the construction of burial mounds in the later Neolithic and Bronze Age, highly visible on the crest of the scarp. A good example of this is at Knocking Hoe, east of Pegsdon. The Ickniel Way was an important prehistoric communication route (and now an important modern recreational route). It forms the county boundary along the southern edge of Shillington parish.

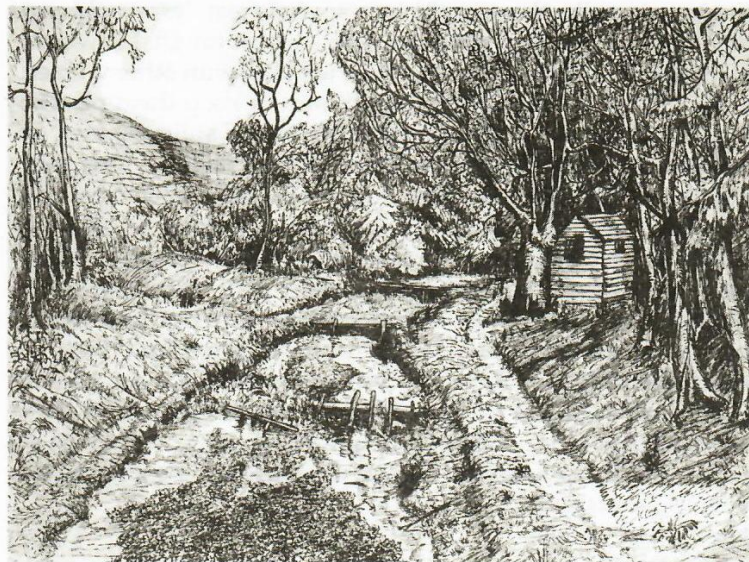
During the Iron Age, hillforts were also constructed - Sharpenhoe Clappers (a scheduled monument) defends the promontory south of Sharpenhoe village, while Ravensburgh Castle, though just beyond the county boundary in Hertfordshire, occupies a prominent position within the visible landscape, commanding the scarp slopes south-east of Barton. Barton Hills also has an open chalk pit, the result of quarrying and exposing the geology of the reserve which is integral to its varied habitats and species. Various other pits remain where chalk was quarried across this part of the landscape.

Moving forward in time, there is evidence of use and occupation from the Iron Age (1,200BC-600BC), Roman (27BC-476AD) and Medieval (500-1500AD) periods, which tends to occur on the flatter land to the north of the foot of the escarpment.

As well as the castle earthworks, Ravensburgh has associated strip lynchets (an ancient field system forming terraces to create flatter areas and maximise land for agriculture). Part of this site is now a County Wildlife Site due to the chalk grassland species which grow here, having survived because the historic environment protection has helped ensure suitable conditions remain. This illustrates perfectly the importance of the historic environment to GI in addition to the protection of these remains for their own sake.

The settlement itself is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086), and therefore has existed since at least 1066 (when land was recorded). The village formed around a historic core, including the Manor, which has an east-west axis focused on Manor Road and the High Street, meeting a north-south section focused on Manor Road. Would have been focused on mill, church and the fresh water coming from the chalk springs. St Nicholas' Church was constructed in the 13th Century, and subsequently modified through the 14th and 15th centuries and beyond. Moated sites are a feature of the clay vale, existing at both Faldo Farm and Grange Farm.

The area around the Barton Springs also includes the remnants of a water supply system which used to feed a series of watercress beds, once an important local enterprise. The Historic Environment Record records evidence of watercress beds adjacent to the stream on the eastern side of the village (it does not record evidence of the former beds at Barton springs, but these have been documented elsewhere and it is still possible to make out their form). The illustration below (taken from '*Gleanings Revisited*', O'Dell, 1976) shows the watercress beds and associated infrastructure in the locality of the springs.



Water Cress Beds, Barton Springs.

Agricultural land to the north and south of the escarpment was mostly in open field cultivation, enclosed by regular boundaries in the late 18th/early 19th century. Ordnance Survey maps show the location of 'Jeremiah's Tree' adjacent to Bridleway 25 in the south of the parish. The dead remains of a single Elm tree were thought to have been at this location in the 1980s. This tree was struck by

lightning on several occasions before succumbing at some point in the 19th Century. Bridleway 25 was formerly a Turnpike Trust road of 1726-1832, and the tree was thought to be pre-Turnpike and over 200 years old (Barton-le-Clay History Society, personal communication). The location is also the former boundary between Barton and Streatley parishes, and the Enclosure Map of 1828 has a corresponding reference to “Jeremy’s Acre”.

4.1 Historic Environment Policy Recommendations

- *Ensure any development located on or affecting sites identified in the Historic Environment Record ensure these assets are conserved and where appropriate interpreted/access provided to raise awareness of the parish’s rich historic heritage*
- *Ensure any tree/hedge planting does not negatively impact sites or features of archaeological interest.*

5. Access, Open Space and Recreation:

The map (**Figure 5**) 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 (and utility) opportunities in their own right. The A6 dual carriageway is a significant barrier to access, largely cutting the village off from the countryside to the west, with the exception of a small number of crossing points (noting that one of these is an 'at grade' crossing of the road with no traffic control/crossing and within the National Speed Limit).

5.1 Quantity of Greenspace

As **Figure 5 illustrates**, there is a reasonable number of greenspaces across the village, many of which are accessible. However, the proportion of these that is of what could be considered a 'usable' size is small, with many being very small grass areas within developments with little to engage people – performing an important function for the visible aesthetic at times, but not meeting access needs. As **Table 5** below shows, **only 7 out of 23** accessible greenspaces are **above 0.5ha** and would be considered under Natural England's 'ANGSt' standard (see below). Of these, only 3 are above 2ha in size.

Additionally, there is very little accessible greenspace to the north, west and east of the village, and the impact of this on access to greenspace is explored below.

The Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy (2014) contains a chapter on 'Recreation and Open Space' which looks at provision across a typology, from the largest (Countryside Recreation Sites) to much smaller ones. **Table 6** below summarises the Leisure Strategy analysis of green spaces within the parish.

Figure 5 – Access, Open Space & Recreation

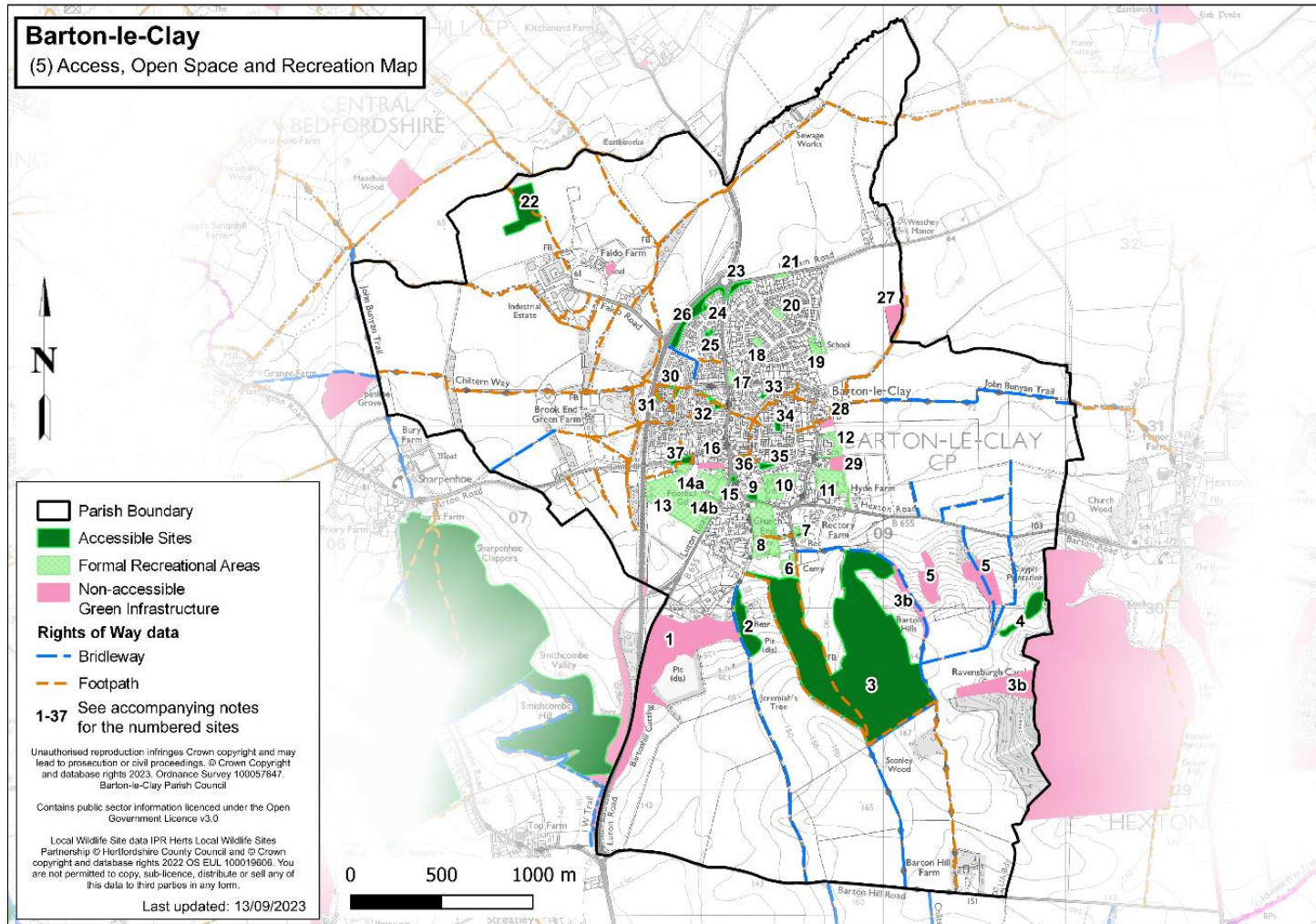


Table 5 – Open Spaces

Number	Name	Publicly accessible?	Area (Hectares)
1	Barton Quarry CWS	No	12.45
2	Barton Pit CWS	Yes	1.99
3	Barton Hills SSSI	Yes	44.18
3b	Barton Hills CWS (areas 3 plus 3b)	No	48.26
4	Barton Gravel Pits CWS	Yes	1.37
5	Barton Scrubby Grasslands CWS	No	4.79
6	Barton-le-Clay Burial Ground	Yes	0.88
7	St Nicholas Church Cemetery	Yes	0.27
8	Arnold Recreation Ground and Tennis Courts	Yes	3.60
9	Community Garden	Yes	0.14
10	Barton-le-Clay Allotments	No	1.80
11	Arnold Middle School Playing Field	No	1.88
12	Ramsey Manor Lower School Playing Field	No	0.55
13	Luton Road Sports Field	No	7.41
14a	Barton Rovers Football Club	No	0.87
14b	Barton Rovers Football Club Training pitch	No	0.47
15	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club	No	0.15
16	Former Orchard	No	0.36
17	Lime Close Amenity Space	Yes	0.29
18	Norman Road/Cromwell Avenue Play Area	Yes	0.19
19	Orchard School Playing Field	No	0.37
20	Saxon Crescent Amenity Space	Yes	0.23
21	Higham Gobion Road Greenspace	Yes	0.09
22	Woodland north of Faldo Farm (Higgins Wood)	Yes	3.04
23	Hanover Place Greenspace	Yes	0.30
24	Simpkins Drive Greenspace	Yes	0.07
25	Greenspace between Burr Close and Ashby Drive	Yes	0.09
26	Stream corridor adjacent to A6	Yes	1.39
27	Beechener's Spinney	No (Public footpath adjacent)	1.44
28	Pasture to North of Ramsey Manor School	No (Public footpath along edge)	0.23
29	Lively Land	No	0.57
30	Grange Close Greenspace and Green Corridor	Yes	0.14
31	Meadhook Drive Greenspace	Yes	0.04
32	Franklin Avenue Greenspace	Yes	0.20
33	Manor Farm Close Greenspace	Yes	0.05
34	Arnold Close Greenspace	Yes	0.14
35	Dunstall Road Greenspace	Yes	0.17
36	War Memorial	Yes	0.07
37	Land adjacent to Sharpenhoe Road	No	0.23

Table 6 – CBC Leisure Strategy analysis of greenspaces in Barton Parish

Typology Element	Provision	Notes
Countryside Recreation Sites	Sufficient provision	Catered for by Sundon Hills CP
Urban Parks	No existing provision	
Large Formal Recreation Areas	Some deficiencies	Gaps in provision to north and south. Existing site above the quality standard.
Large Informal Recreation Areas	Some deficiencies	Informal recreation areas serve residents in the west and the east.
Small Amenity Spaces	Plenty in central, west and east Barton	Recreation Ground makes up for some of the deficits
Play Areas	Good distribution	
Allotments	One small but well tended site	Existing site higher than quality standard. Low waiting list (at time of study).

5.2 Natural England (NE) Capacity Standard:

NE recommend a minimum of **3ha of accessible green space per 1000 population**. The population of Barton-le-Clay is 4,941 (2021 Census) and therefore **14.8ha is required**.

58.93ha of accessible green space is estimated to exist in the parish as a whole.

However, **49.21ha** of this total is outside of the village envelope. Although parts of sites such as Barton Hills and Barton Pit are in close proximity to the urban area, the former especially has significant gradients and uneven surfaces making access difficult for many people. It is also important to recognise the impacts of recreational activity on sites that are ecologically sensitive, and the Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (2022) highlights the need to balance recreational use with biodiversity.

This leaves just **9.72ha** of accessible greenspace within the village ‘envelope, **over 5ha short** of this target.

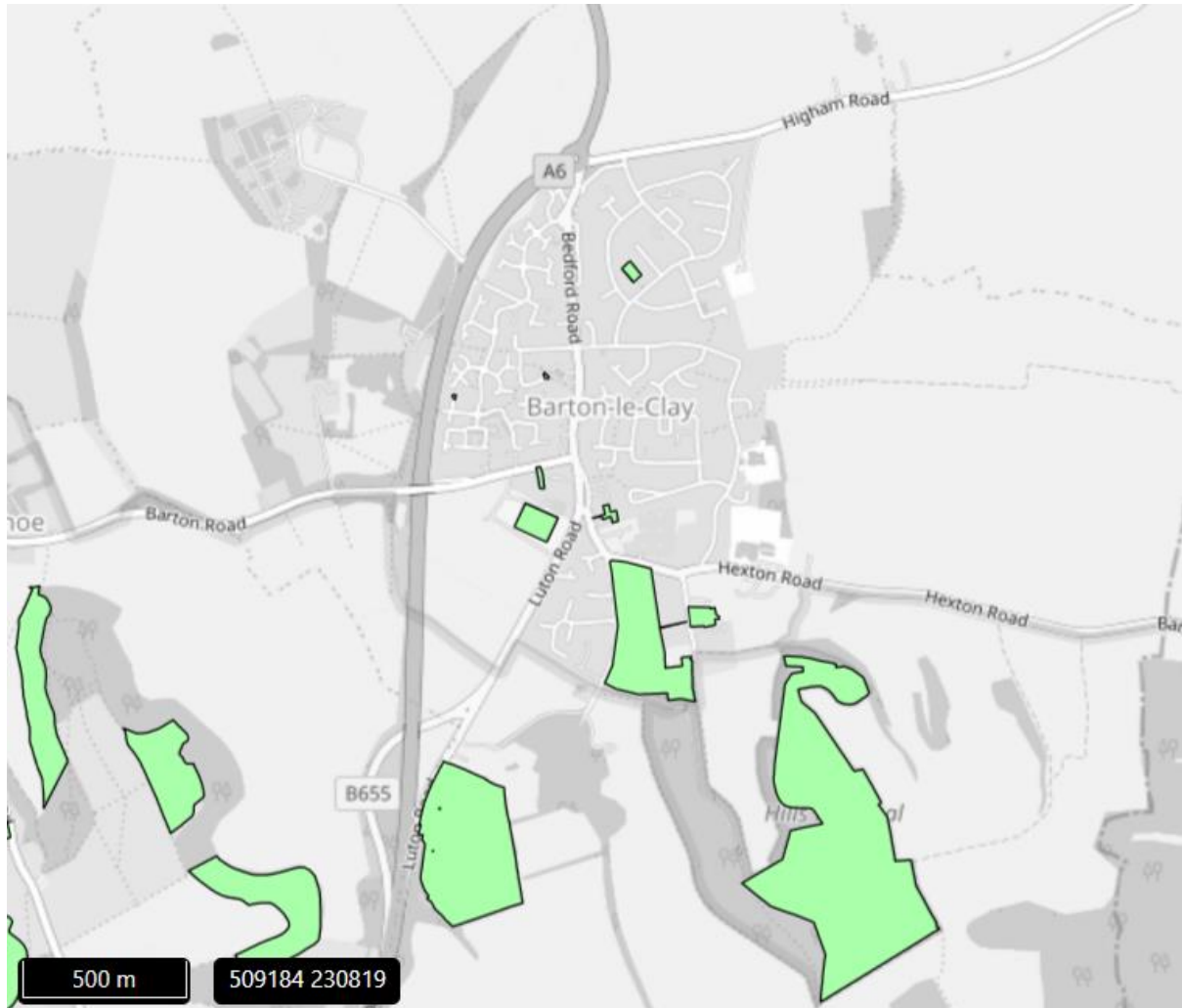
5.3 Accessibility of Greenspace

The methodology for assessing accessibility of green spaces within a parish-level GI plan has recently been updated to utilise accessibility mapping from the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (mapping tool launched in 2023) which provides a more sophisticated mechanism for assessing the provision of accessible green spaces in any one area, but also allows this to be carried out alongside an assessment of Public Right of Way provision.

The NE GI Framework maps all sites considered ‘accessible’ of at least 0.5ha (sites below this size are considered too small to be functionally useful) and assesses them against a typology within the ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard’ or ‘ANGSt’.

The Framework does not account for gradients, nor for other potential barriers to accessibility such as a lack of suitable road crossings or safe routes. More detailed analysis would be required to further explore the situation.

Fig 5a Accessible Green Infrastructure as mapped by Natural England



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Map colors based on ColorBrewer, by Cynthia A. Brewer, Penn State

It should be noted that this mapping is still in its infancy and utilises 'Open Source' data. Therefore some sites are not mapped by NE but have been mapped by the BRMC as accessible in Figure 5 (Barton Pit/Lovers Walk, other woodland, several smaller sites in north of village, sports pitches) while others have been mapped by NE as 'accessible' when they are not (e.g. chalk pit, football ground). Further analysis suggests that the impacts on 'catchment' mapping are not significant, and the maps still provide a good illustration of general accessibility.

A series of maps are produced illustrating various 'catchments' around these sites, demonstrating their 'accessibility' as a measure of physical proximity. It should be noted that this does not take into account how easy it is to cover this distance, possible physical barriers (e.g. roads, railways) nor

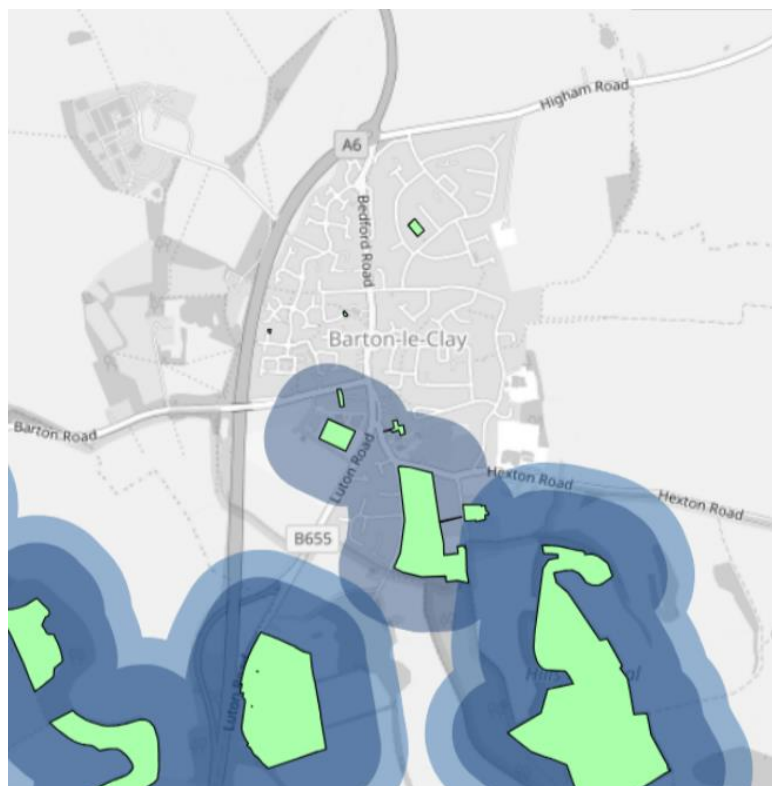
gradients. These are all relevant in the context of Barton parish. The different ‘catchments’ relate to the different tiers in Natural England’s ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard’ (ANGSt) as set out in **Table 7** below:

Level	Standard (maximum distance anyone should be living from a green space of stated size)
Doorstep	Within 200m of a 0.5ha green space
Local	Within 300m of a 2ha green space
Neighbourhood	Within 1km of a 10ha green space
Wider Neighbourhood	Within 2km of a 20ha green space
District	Within 5km of a 100ha green space
Sub-Regional	Within 10km of a 500ha green space

Note not all levels are possible to deliver within a single parish, higher levels are intended to guide strategic greenspace provision by district/unitary authorities. Therefore the CBC Leisure Strategy also needs to be taken into account. For the purpose of this GI Plan, the ‘Doorstep’ and ‘Local’ levels have been considered as these are most appropriate to a village setting, and to ensure consistency between this GI Plan and others carried out at the parish level in Central Bedfordshire (where a 300m radius has been used as a measure of baseline accessibility). Assessment against the other levels is included in **Appendix 2**.

Figure 5b is a composite map illustrating coverage at the Doorstep and Local Level combined.

Figure 5b – ANGSt Doorstep Standard (0.5ha within 200m) and Local Standard (2ha within 300m)



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As **Figure 5b** shows, only a small proportion of the village's population is within easy reach of the smallest sites (up to 2ha) considered under the Framework. The areas to the north, east and west are all lacking in accessible natural greenspace. This effect will be compounded by the fact that those spaces on the chalk escarpment (e.g. Barton Hills) and are not easy to access for anyone with any form of mobility impairment, or those with pushchairs.

It should also be highlighted that Barton Hills is a National Nature Reserve/SSSI, and while access is permitted, large numbers cannot be absorbed without a detrimental effect on the flora and fauna.

As noted above, accessibility should be considered more broadly than just through distances and site 'catchments'. The coverage and quality of the Public Rights of Way Network (PRoW) should also be considered.

It is therefore concluded that while Barton-le-Clay has some large, attractive and accessible greenspaces on its doorstep, overall provision is poor when size, accessibility, quality and function are taken into account. **It is therefore vital that new, attractive greenspaces are created to support the existing population.** Combined with the need to create more 'natural' green spaces, as identified in the Biodiversity chapter, there is a very clear case for increasing provision in Barton parish. This would not only improve quality of life for more local people, but would contribute to wider objectives around nature recovery, climate change, tranquillity and pollution mitigation / amelioration. This is also consistent with the Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan 'Strategic Opportunity Area 3: 20 Minute Neighbourhoods' which aims to support more compact, walkable and wild neighbourhoods.

5.4 Quality of Green Spaces

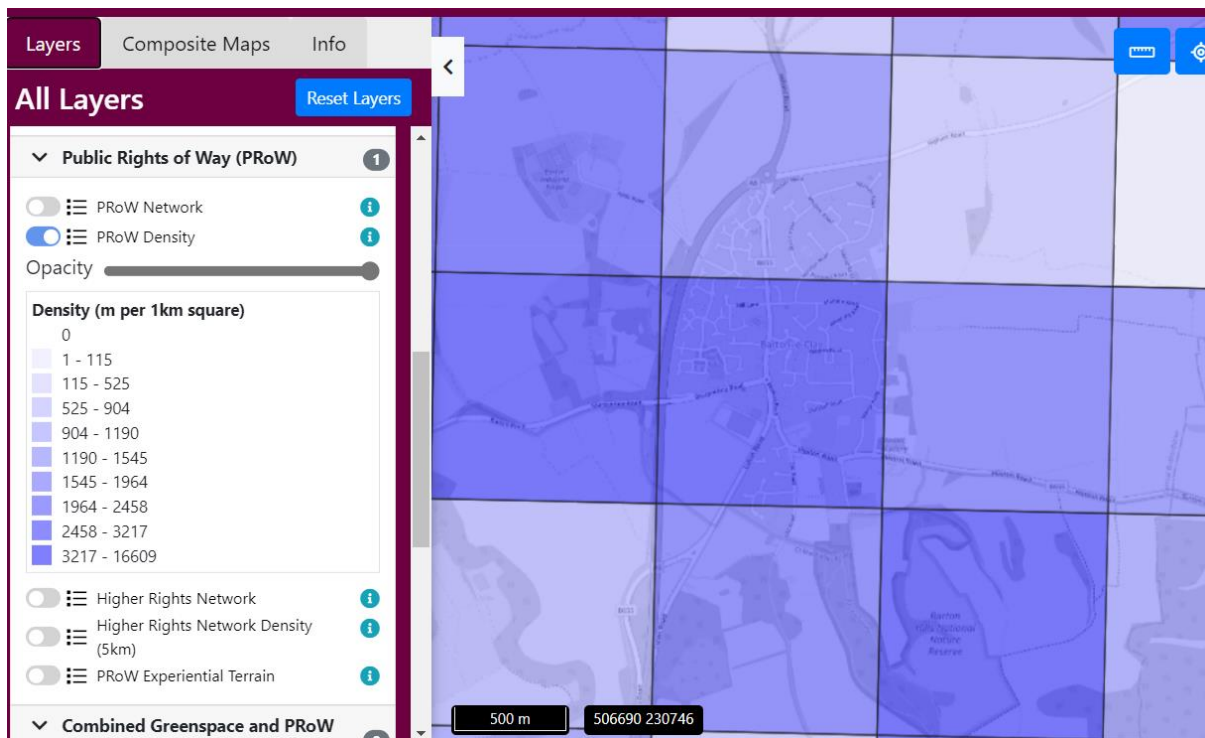
A specific assessment of quality of green spaces has not been carried out as part of this Plan. This would be a significant undertaking in its own right. The NE GI Framework recommends using the Green Flag criteria alongside best practice in accessibility standards (By All Reasonable Means). **It is recommended that an additional Greenspace Quality Assessment is carried out.**

5.5 Access Routes

The parish has a reasonable coverage of Public Footpaths, but poorer coverage of Public Bridleways, for which the network is very fragmented. There are several areas where the status of a route changes, therefore 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 stop in the middle of nowhere.

Natural England's GI Mapping also includes Public Right of Way Density Mapping:

Figure 5c – Rights of Way Density Mapping



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Areas in the north-east and south-west of the parish have the lowest density. The areas of highest density are in the south-east of the parish (dominated by Barton Hills and the chalk escarpment, so including routes with very steep gradients), the village itself and to the west/north-west. This is consistent with the rights of way illustrated in **Figure 5**.

While RoW density is a useful general measure it does not take severance into account. In Barton parish severance is caused primarily by the A6, which can only be safely and confidently crossed by the majority of people using the Sharpenhoe Road 'flyover'. Other 'at grade' crossing points exist, but the A6 is a dual carriageway with National Speed Limit and therefore an extremely daunting road to cross for many. This not only restricts access to the wider RoW network and green spaces to the west, but also means that it is safest and easiest for residents to access the Olde Mill Shopping Village by car, when actual distances involved are achievable for many by bicycle or on foot.

The Hexton Road also creates severance in the network, although the fact that any bridleways to the north are dead ends means that this is less of an issue currently.

In addition to the Public Rights of Way network are permissive routes, where a landowner permits access in addition to the RoW network. Agreements can be with the local authority or more informal, and while these form extremely valuable links in the network, helping provide access where otherwise it isn't possible (and helping join up gaps in the existing network) these are not mapped as many can (in theory) be withdrawn at any point. However, the good will of land owners in providing this access is to be noted, and where possible encouraged further.

The following Long-Distance Trails pass through the parish:

- **Icknield Way Path** – 110 mile trail following ancient trackways between the Ridgeway at Ivinghoe Beacon and the Peddars Way near Thetford in Norfolk.
- **The John Bunyan Trail** – 86 mile circular route through Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, dedicated to the memory of John Bunyan, author of ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’.

The Chiltern Cycleway is a 170 mile circular route and passes through the parish twice, with one part of the route utilising SHarpenhoe Road, the High Street and the Higham Gobion Road, while another follows the Lilley Road along the northern edge of the parish, and links to public bridleways adjoining Barton Hills and Barton Pit. There is also a cycleway adjacent to the A6, but this route is narrow and does not meet current standards. Part of it is utilised by the ‘Greensand-Chiltern Link’, which forms a link between the Greensand Cycleway and the Chiltern Cycleway.

5.6 Considering access routes and green spaces together

Figure 5d Combined Greenspace and Public Right of Way Inequalities

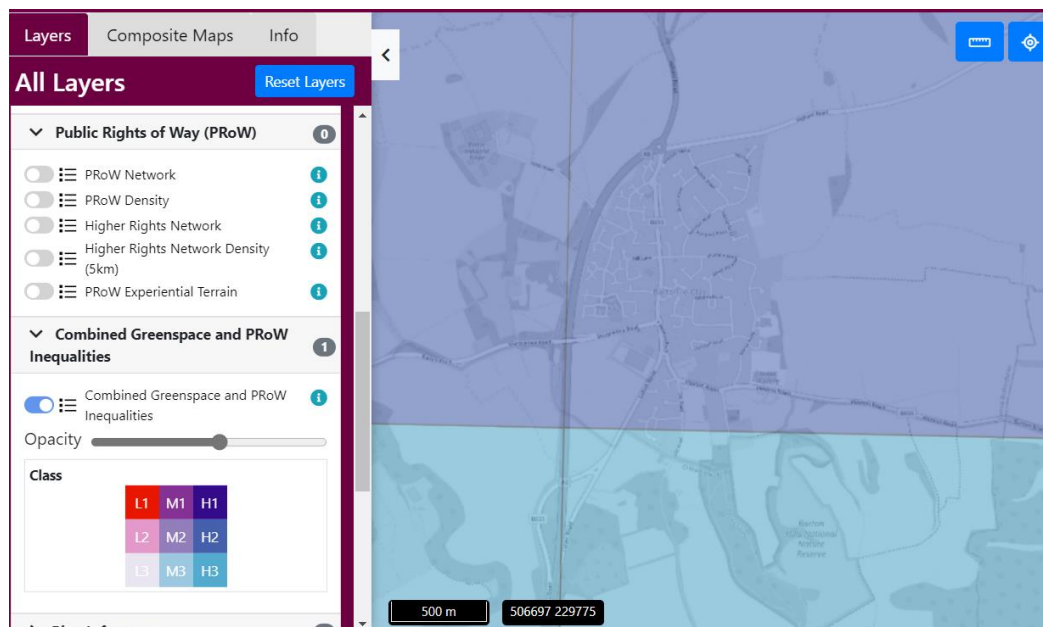


Figure 5d illustrates combined effect of greenspace accessibility alongside rights of way network density, and reinforces conclusions above – the southern part of the parish is well provided for, but the northern part (including the vast majority of the village) is not.

5.7 Local Green Space Assessment

An assessment of all the green spaces identified within the parish was carried out as part of the GI Plan. In Central Bedfordshire, Neighbourhood Plans are the key mechanism for designating sites as Local Green Space, a designation introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework (revised 2018) as “a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities”. The designation should only be used:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a
- particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance,

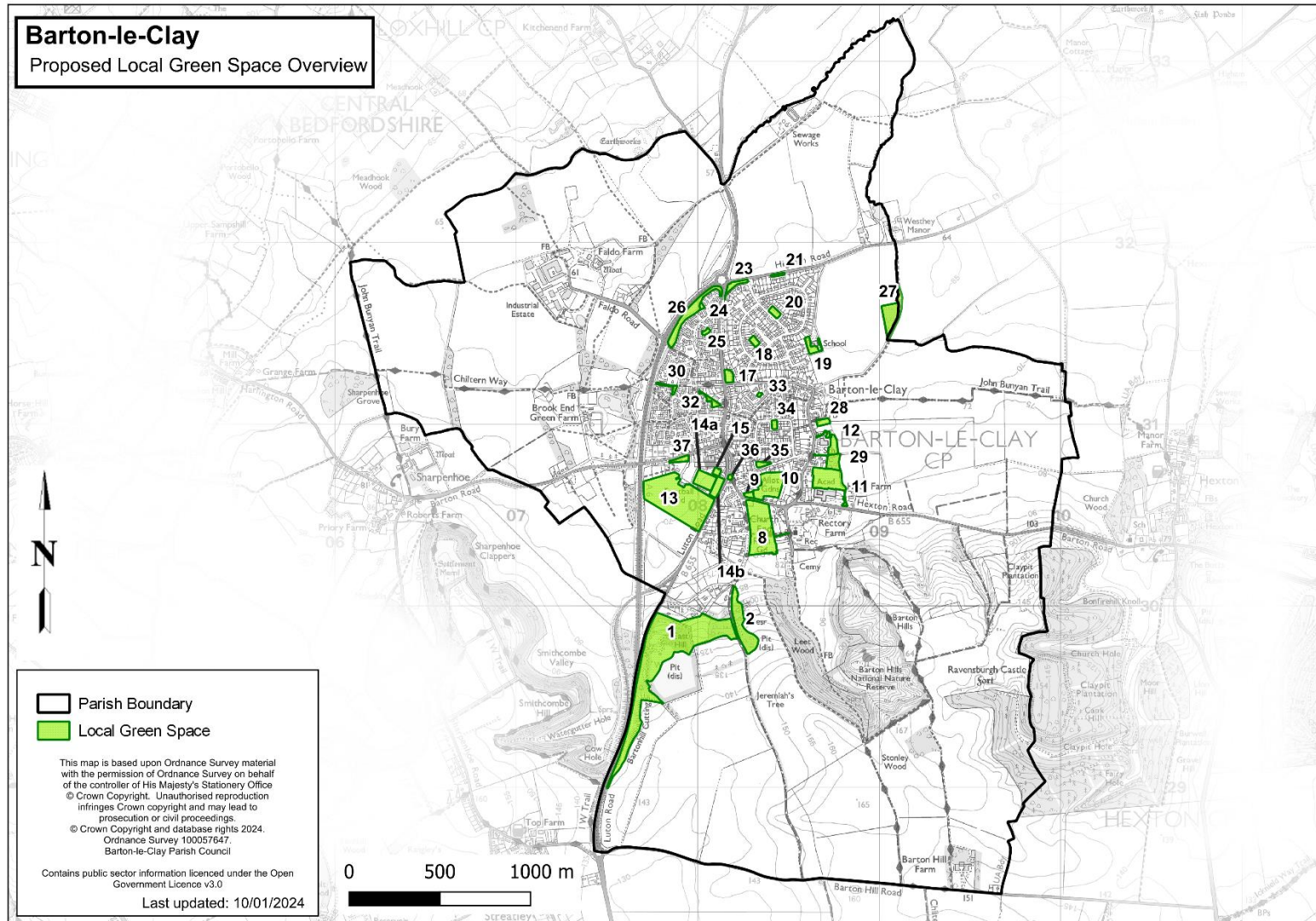
- recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Therefore the GI Plan **recommends** sites for this designation following this assessment process, which follows a methodology developed by local organisations with Central Bedfordshire Council, and is based on the Government criteria. It provides the Neighbourhood Plan with full details and justification for these recommendations. This is contained in **Appendix 3**. It should be noted that landowners have not been consulted at this stage, but it is recommended that they are engaged before the candidate sites are taken forward within the Neighbourhood Plan. The sites recommended as potential candidates for the Local Green Space designation through the Neighbourhood Plan are listed in **Table 8** and illustrated in **Figure 5e** below:

Table 8: Candidate Local Green Spaces

Number	Name
1	Barton Quarry CWS
2	Barton Pit CWS
8	Arnold Recreation Ground and Tennis Courts
9	Community Garden
10	Barton-le-Clay Allotments
11	Arnold Middle School Playing Field
12	Ramsey Manor Lower School Playing Field
13	Luton Road Sports Field
14a	Barton Rovers Football Club
14b	Barton Rovers Football Club Training pitch
15	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club
17	Lime Close Amenity Space
18	Norman Road/Cromwell Avenue Play Area
19	Orchard School Playing Field
20	Saxon Crescent Amenity Space
21	Higham Gobion Road Greenspace
23	Hanover Place Greenspace
24	Simpkins Drive Greenspace
25	Greenspace between Burr Close and Ashby Drive
26	Stream corridor adjacent to A6
27	Beechener's Spinney
28	Pasture to North of Ramsey Manor School
29	Lively Land
30	Grange Close Greenspace and Green Corridor
32	Franklin Avenue Greenspace
33	Manor Farm Close Greenspace
34	Arnold Close Greenspace
35	Dunstall Road Greenspace
36	War Memorial
37	Land adjacent to Sharpenhoe Road

Figure 5e – Candidate Local Green Spaces



It is recommended that there is early dialogue with the owners of proposed Local Green Spaces to help them understand the process and any implications of designation, and to allow them to highlight any concerns or objections they might have.

It should be noted that there is no change in the accessibility status of any site that is subsequently designated a Local Green Space. LGS status does not create any form of access rights that do not already exist. Neither does it restrict changes in land use that do not involve development.

5.8 Access, Open Space and Recreation Policy Recommendations:

- *All development must help improve 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.*
- *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.*
- *Any new development to be connected to existing walking and cycling networks with high quality, dedicated walking and cycling routes.*
- *Avoid any further severance of the 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.*
- *Improve cycling routes where these connect to adjacent settlements or promoted leisure routes.*
- *Improve safety of RoW network users, especially in terms of crossing the A6 and Hexton Road*
- *Improve quality and of existing green spaces, especially with regard to improving their value for wildlife and use by a wider range of people.*
- *Conserve the integrity of the Green Lane (Icknield Way) as a landscape feature, access and ecological corridor.*
- *Designate Local Green Spaces as per the recommendations in this GI Plan*

6. Developing the GI Network

Green Infrastructure networks are based on the principles of multi-functionality, identifying what exists now and where the best opportunities exist to expand and connect the GI network in the future. The existing GI assets from the themes above combine to form the core of the existing GI network (existing GI in **Figure 6** below), while opportunity areas (e.g. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas) and areas of greatest need (e.g. in access provision) are combined to identify those areas where multiple opportunities or needs can be addressed, maximising the benefits of investment in the GI network. GI networks from adjacent parishes are also taken into account, in order to support development of networks at a greater scale.

The Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (2022) sets out a vision for the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network for Central Bedfordshire ('Blue Infrastructure' refers to rivers, streams, canals, lakes and ponds – these are all covered by the term 'Green Infrastructure' in parish-level GI Plans). This vision includes:

1. Creating **Resilient** Spaces – mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change;
2. Creating **Wild** Spaces – coherent ecological corridors
3. Creating **Healthy** Spaces – supporting improved health outcomes

These have all been taken into account when developing the aspirational GI network for Barton-le-Clay. The Blue and Green Infrastructure Plan also places special emphasis on chalk streams, noting their importance within the blue infrastructure network but also highlighting their vulnerability. It also notes the balance that needs to be struck on ecologically sensitive sites where access is permitted. It is important to note that while a GI network should be 'multi-functional', catering for a range of needs, individual spaces do not have to be.

The G&B Infrastructure Plan bases its approach around 5 themes:

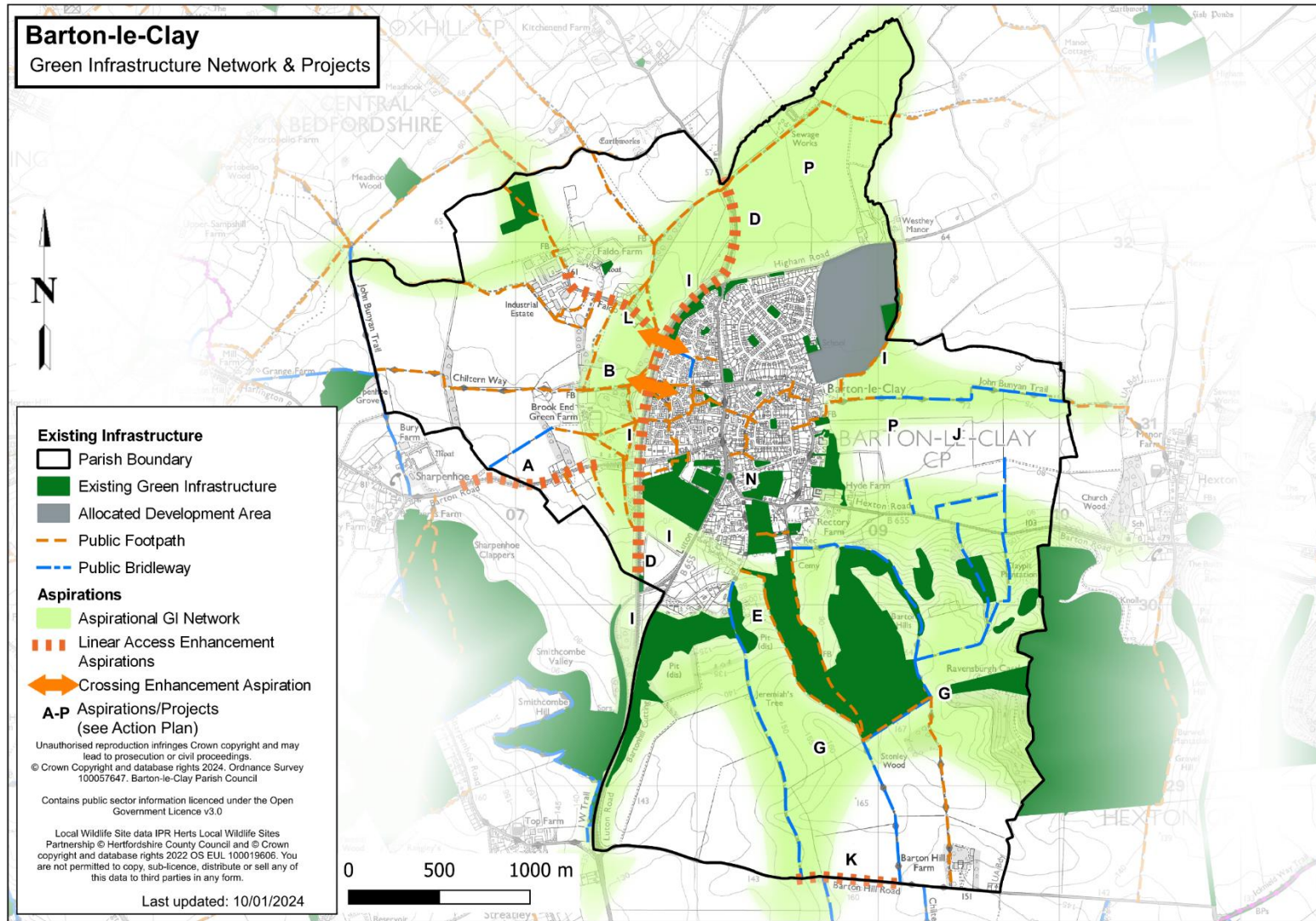
- A Resilient Landscape
- The Water Environment
- History and Sense of Place
- Nature Recovery
- Health & Wellbeing

There is a strong correlation between these themes and the Parish GI Plan themes used here, with again additional emphasis placed on the 'blue' infrastructure network – in the case of Barton-le-Clay this applies to the various 'chalk streams' flowing from the escarpment through the parish.

The Barton-le-Clay GI Network therefore reflects the drivers and themes from the Central Bedfordshire G&B Infrastructure Plan as well as those identified within this specific study.

It is important to note that the GI Network is indicative, illustrating broad corridors and areas of opportunity. It does not seek to stop development in these areas (much of which are in the Green Belt anyway), but rather informs where investment in the GI Network would be most beneficial.

Figure 6: The Barton-le-Clay GI Network



6.1 General GI Policy Recommendations:

In addition to the thematic policies above, the following general GI policies are recommended to cover the protection and development of the GI network:

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

6.2 Project Proposals:

Table 9 lists those projects that have been put forward to support the delivery of the GI Network, and/or local people's access to and use of it, throughout the process of developing this GI Plan. They are also illustrated on **Figure 6**. The original list from the 2013 consultation and engagement exercises has been reviewed as part of this process.

A priority has been assigned to each project, based on:

- Level of support from the local community, expressed via engagement exercises;
- Importance identified within the Theme work, based on existing deficits.
- Fit with the Central Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan 'Strategic Opportunity Areas'

This table forms the basis of an 'action plan' and should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Table 9 – Project Proposals & Action Plan

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	Further investigation required to identify options.	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by community. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3 (20 Minute Neighbourhoods). • Important strategic link between villages.
B	Improve cycle/walking access across A6/to Barton Mill	Further investigation required to identify options.	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by community. • Link to key facility – important to local rural economy. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3 (20 Minute Neighbourhoods).
C	Improve wildlife value of amenity green spaces and roadside verges	Site-level assessments to identify best options.	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate support from community. • Significant lack of natural spaces identified within village. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA7 (Pollinator Corridors).
D	Improve cycle path along A6	Further investigation required to identify options.	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by community. • Important link between Barton and Silsoe/Clophill • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3 (20 Minute Neighbourhoods).
E	Improvements to Barton Pit (Lovers’ Walk) County Wildlife Site – protect flora, reduce illegal use	Further discussion with Wildlife Trust.	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate level of support from local community • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA1 (Safeguarding the Nature Recovery Network) and SOA9 (North Chilterns Chalklands)
F	Restore/reinstate pasque flower highway markers	Identify group/individual willing to take this on.	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate level of community support • Need demonstrated through various mapping projects. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA1 (Safeguarding the Nature Recovery Network) and SOA9 (North Chilterns Chalklands)
H	Raise awareness of the importance of Chalk Streams	Explore potential chalk stream 'status'. Guided walks/events.	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate level of community support. • Wider conservation importance. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA4 (River Corridor Restoration)
I	Enhance / Restore Chalk Streams	Survey waterbodies (River Habitat, Species surveys, water quality)	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of community support. • Strong conservation case. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA4 (River Corridor Restoration), SOA1 (Safeguarding the Nature Recovery Network) and SOA9 (North Chilterns Chalklands).
J	Improve bridleway connectivity north of Hexton Road	Discuss with CBC Rights of Way Officer	Low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of community support. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3 (20 Minute Neighbourhoods).
K	Improve safety for cyclists along the Lilley Road	Discuss with relevant cycling/walking officers	Low <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of community support. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3 (20 Minute Neighbourhoods).

M	Create map/leaflet illustrating all green spaces and how to access them	Identify potential lead	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of community support. • Deficits in provision – short-term solution is better information regarding existing spaces and access to them. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA3 (20 Minute Neighbourhoods).
N	Develop the Coronation Garden into an attractive, accessible, biodiverse resource for the whole community.	Ongoing	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of community support. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA7 (Pollinator Corridors).
O	Plant a new oak tree at the location of the 'Jeremiah Tree'	Ongoing (Barton Countryside Conservation Volunteers)	Medium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested after consultation events, but would have 'sense of place' value.
P	Create new accessible greenspace to north and/or east of the village to address major deficits	Discuss with CBC – Leisure and Planning	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested after consultation events, but need identified through access mapping. • Supports CB G&B Infrastructure Plan SOA8 (New Green Lungs for Central Bedfordshire)
Q	Improve knowledge of remaining orchards and potential sites for restoration.	Collate all available existing information from BRMC, Orchards East and other sources	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

In addition to these specific projects there was a strong response from people wishing to protect the integrity and setting of Barton through 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 could provide that would be stronger than the existing Green Belt designation (and AONB where appropriate).

There was also a strong response from people wishing to protect Barton Hills NNR. With no specific or immediate threat, and given its NNR status, this is not listed as a specific project, but projects such as (3) above could help improve management of the site.

References:

Natural England GI Framework (2022)

Central Bedfordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035

Chalk Streams Index (2014)

Bedfordshire and Luton Geology Group: Barton Hills Leaflet

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consultation Summary (Separate Document)

Appendix 2 – Full summary of Assessment against Natural England’s GI Framework

Appendix 3 - Local Green Space Assessment