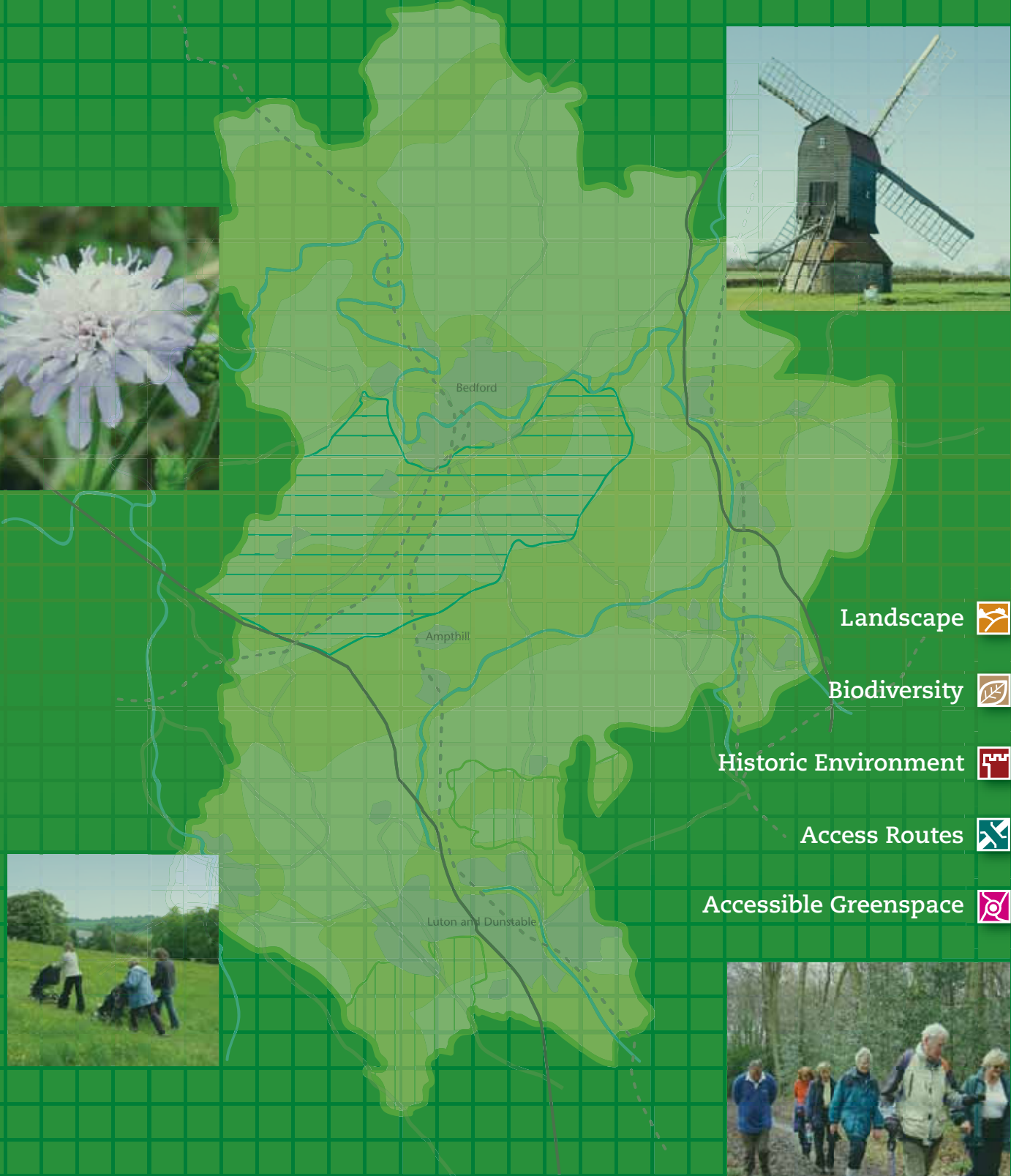




# Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan

Building sustainable communities



# Eleven corridors, creating a strategic green infrastructure network. These corridors highlight areas where investment and project delivery can make most impact in securing multi-functional GI.

## 1 Milton Keynes to Grafham Water

This corridor to the north connects to GI in adjoining counties and south up the Great Ouse (2). Assets include a concentration of ancient woodland and the Three Shires Way bridleway. Opportunities include new access routes and creation, enhancement and linkage of woodland, grassland and hedgerows.

## 2 Upper Great Ouse River Valley

An important transport corridor and an area of high landscape value, strategically linking to corridors 1,3 and 5. Assets include Biddenham Loop Country Park and Bromham Mill. Opportunities include landscape and historic environment enhancement and conservation.

## 3 Lower Great Ouse River Valley

Central Bedford's route to the countryside with links to corridors 5 and 6. Assets include Bedford Park and Priory Country Park and a rich historic archaeological landscape. Opportunities include creation of new GI to meet an accessible greenspace deficit near St Neots.

## 4 Ivel River Valley

Host to key historic routes and important habitats and wildlife sites. Opportunities include biodiversity enhancement work and the potential to address an accessible greenspace deficit along this corridor, which includes Biggleswade, Arlesey and Stotfold, all scheduled for housing growth.

## 5 Bedford to Milton Keynes

An east-west link between corridors. GI development is crucial here as this corridor is set to host major housing growth, including the Wixams development. The Forest of Marston Vale and a major waterways project are just two of a number of GI opportunities.

## 6 Greensand Ridge

At the heart of the county this prominent east-west ridge comprises extensive woodland, parkland and remnant heathland. Opportunities include proposals for the Greensand Ridge Cycle Route, creation of new accessible greenspace to serve Potton and Sandy and landscape conservation and protection.

## 7 Ouzel River Valley

This corridor, which hosts Stockgrove Country Park and the Ouzel flood plain, connects to 6 and 10 and forms part of a major housing growth area. Opportunities include use of restored quarries for recreation and enhancement of historic assets.

## 8 Flit Valley

Contains important historic sites and valuable wetlands, including Flitwick Moor. Opportunities include wetland and habitat linkages and transport route landscape enhancement.

## 9 The Chalk Arc

Extending around the north of the Luton conurbation and taking in large parts of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this links to corridors 8, 10 and 11. This area is likely to host major housing growth - detailed GI proposals are currently being developed by the Chalk Arc Initiative.

## 10 Leighton Linlade to Dunstable

This narrow corridor is focused on the disused railway line with its high quality chalk grassland habitats. An access route project will link to corridors 7 and 9.

## 11 Upper Lea River Valley

An important green corridor linking GI through the centre of Luton and towards Harpenden to the south. Assets include Luton Hoo, Wardown Park and the Lea Valley Way and opportunities include addressing accessible greenspace deficit and landscape and historic environment enhancement.

For details of corridor locations refer to main map.



# Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan – the vision



Our vision is to create a high quality green network across the county for people, places and wildlife. A number of organisations have joined forces to develop this Plan - which aims to deliver a comprehensive strategic network of multi-functional greenspace and linking corridors.

With the county's population set to grow significantly this Plan is part of Bedfordshire and Luton's effort to ensure our environment is protected and sustained for current and future generations to enjoy. This Plan will link with similar plans in adjacent counties and will help create sustainable communities, well served by greenspaces and green routes with access to the countryside on the doorstep.



## What is Green Infrastructure?

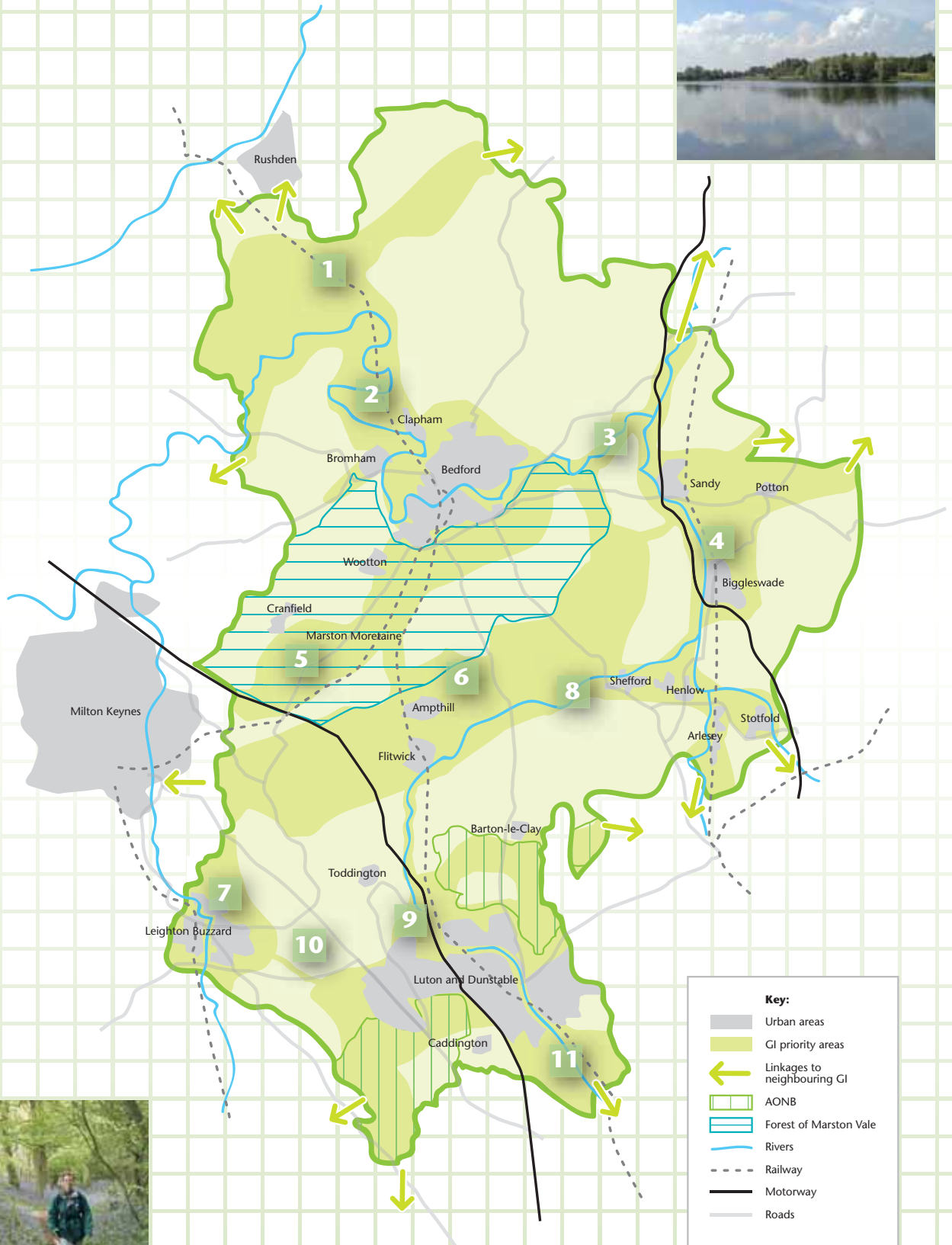
Though this is a fairly new term, it is nevertheless a relatively old idea – dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Green Infrastructure (GI) can be defined as a planned and managed network of multi-functional greenspace, which can provide a healthy and rich environment. The wide range of GI assets considered within this Plan include:

- ↔ urban and country parks
- ↔ green open recreation space
- ↔ commons and village greens
- ↔ woodland
- ↔ natural and semi-natural habitats for wildlife
- ↔ local nature reserves and county wildlife sites
- ↔ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- ↔ historic buildings, parks and landscapes
- ↔ waterways, waterbodies and wetland
- ↔ public rights of way, cycleways and other recreational routes
- ↔ green corridors, including hedgerows, ditches, disused railways and verges

**Well planned and managed GI will make Bedfordshire and Luton a better place to live, work and enjoy. Benefits include:**

- ↔ more areas for wildlife
- ↔ reducing the risk of flooding and better air and water quality
- ↔ helping to deal with the causes and impacts of climate change
- ↔ more public open spaces
- ↔ better health and well-being
- ↔ greater opportunities for enjoyment of our heritage
- ↔ economic gain

# The result, the Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Network



## How has the Plan been developed?

The Bedfordshire and Luton Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan sets out five core components of GI, namely:

-  Landscape
-  Biodiversity
-  Historic environment
-  Access routes
-  Accessible greenspace

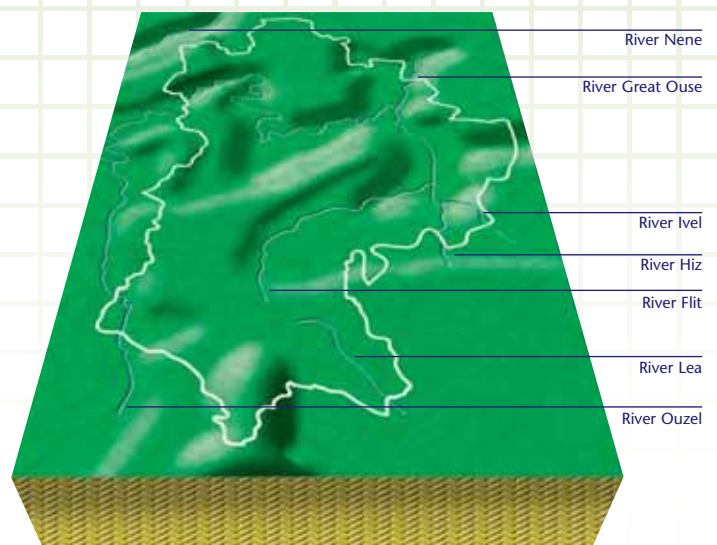


The Plan details the county's existing green assets and access routes. It also sets out how these assets might be enhanced and identifies where creation of new green assets and routes could be most valuable. Further, it seeks to ensure the quality of strategic links between individual components are strengthened.

In addition key areas of accessible greenspace deficiency are addressed and areas where provision of new accessible greenspace can best be targeted are identified.

As a strategic-level document the Plan focuses on assets and opportunities of strategic county-wide significance. Local-level GI plans at the district and parish level are currently being developed in selected areas. These will dovetail with this plan and help inform overall GI delivery.

The Plan should help shape the county's future, alongside and integrated with aspirations for housing, transport, employment and economic growth. It is intended to review the plan every 5 years.



**The county's distinctive topography is demonstrated with its central ridge, chalk hills and claylands, plus five significant river valleys.**

A wide range of opportunities for action are identified within the Plan throughout the eleven corridors which make up the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.

Including as follows:

**Landscape** – conservation and enhancement of important landscapes

**Biodiversity** – new habitat creation alongside enhancement and better linkages for wildlife

**Historic environment** – improved management, public access and interpretation of heritage assets

**Access routes** – improved connections across the county for walkers, cyclists and horseriders

**Accessible greenspace** – enhancement of key sites and greenspace creation in areas of deficit



## The Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium

### National & Regional Local Authorities

Chilterns Conservation Board	Bedfordshire County Council
Communities and Local Government	Bedford Borough Council
Environment Agency	Luton Borough Council
Forestry Commission	Mid Bedfordshire District Council
Go-East	South Bedfordshire District Council
Natural England	

### Voluntary Sector

BRCC  
 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers  
 Campaign to Protect Rural England  
 Greensand Trust  
 Groundwork  
 Marston Vale Trust  
 National Trust  
 RSPB  
 Sustrans  
 Wildlife Trust

### How can I find out more?

You can obtain more information about green infrastructure across Bedfordshire and Luton by visiting:

[www.bedsandlutongreeninfrastructure.org.uk](http://www.bedsandlutongreeninfrastructure.org.uk)

A full plan can be downloaded.

Alternatively you can contact:

David Hopkins, Green Infrastructure Officer on **01234 276335**, or email: [David.Hopkins@bedscc.gov.uk](mailto:David.Hopkins@bedscc.gov.uk)



This leaflet has been financially supported by:



**Bedfordshire**  
county council



**Forestry Commission**  
England



Photo credits: Bedfordshire County Council, Chilterns AONB, Natural England

Printed on recycled paper. March 2007.

Design and production: [www.dynamiccreative.co.uk](http://www.dynamiccreative.co.uk) 01353 661997

