

**BEDFORD BOROUGH
PLANNING MONITORING REPORT
2023-2024**

NOVEMBER 2024

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1 Introduction

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Local planning authorities are required to produce and publish monitoring reports by [The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 \(as amended by the Localism Act 2011\)](#). The Bedford Borough Planning Monitoring Report has been prepared in accordance with legislation and National Planning Practice Guidance¹.
- 1.2 Monitoring is an essential part of the ongoing planning process, providing a mechanism to review the progress of development activity and to establish whether adopted policies are being effectively implemented and delivered. It also allows communities and interested parties to be aware of the progress local planning authorities are making towards delivering their vision and objectives, as set out in the development plan. Where it is found that policies are not achieving their intended outcomes, monitoring provides an opportunity to identify the reasons for this and the steps to be taken to improve their performance, including whether a full or partial review of the plan is necessary.
- 1.3 This Planning Monitoring Report covers the monitoring period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, and includes updates to the end of October 2024 where these are considered to be relevant.

Background

- 1.4 The Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 was adopted in January 2020 and sets out the overarching spatial strategy for the borough up to 2030. It identifies the scale of new development that is required and a strategy for accommodating this growth. The local plan allocates specific sites for particular types of development and includes detailed policies across several thematic areas to manage new development.
- 1.5 The Local Plan 2030 (chapter 13) states that the Council will monitor the policies of the local plan, along with other saved policies, to assess their effectiveness in achieving the plan's vision and objectives. It states that the principal method for doing this will be through its established programme of monitoring reports which are published regularly on the Council's

¹ PPG Paragraph 073; Reference ID: 61-073-20190315

website. The plan also states that targets and indicators to measure the effects of policies will be completed at regular intervals.

1.6 Minerals and waste matters are excluded as they are monitored separately by the Joint Minerals and Waste Team.

Structure of the Planning Monitoring Report

1.7 This report sets out:

- The current documents forming the statutory development plan for Bedford Borough and other relevant planning guidance (section 2).
- Progress in preparing the Borough Council's Local Plan 2040 and other planning policy documents against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (section 3).
- Progress made on neighbourhood planning (section 4).
- Key actions taken under the duty to co-operate (section 5).
- Progress on the implementation of all allocations in plans, including neighbourhood plans (section 6).
- Detailed monitoring results structured under the themes of natural environment, accessibility, delivering growth and placemaking (section 7).

2 The Development Plan for Bedford Borough

2.1 When determining planning applications, the decision shall be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan for Bedford Borough is currently made up of the following documents:

- Local Plan 2030 (adopted January 2020).
- Saved Local Plan 2002 policies (adopted October 2002).
- Saved Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2005 policies (adopted January 2005).
- Continuing policies in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan (adopted July 2013).
- The Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies (adopted January 2014).

2.2 The following Neighbourhood Development Plans were 'made' up to the end of the monitoring year, and therefore also form part of the statutory development plan for their designated area:

- Bletsoe (made June 2021).
- Bromham (made June 2021).
- Carlton and Chellington (made March 2020).
- Clapham (made July 2022).
- Felmersham and Radwell (made July 2022).
- Great Denham (made 13 September 2023).
- Great Barford (made January 2022).
- Harrold (made January 2022).
- Milton Ernest (made November 2021).
- Oakley (made March 2020).
- Odell (made September 2022).
- Ravensden (made March 2023).
- Sharnbrook (made November 2021).
- Stevington (made June 2021).
- Thurleigh (made June 2021).

- Turvey (made September 2021).
- Willington (made March 2022).
- Wilshamstead (made January 2023).
- Wootton (made March 2022).

2.3 Since April 2024, the following additional Neighbourhood Development Plan has also been made:

- Riseley (made 2 April 2024).

3 Implementation of the Local Development Scheme

- 3.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a rolling business plan for the preparation of key planning policy documents relevant to future planning decisions. The [LDS](#) that this document reports on was published in January 2022.

Progress on the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040

- 3.2 The Council adopted Local Plan 2030 in January 2020, which sets out the strategy and planning policies for the borough to 2030. As part of the adoption of the plan, a policy was inserted committing the Council to an immediate review. Policy 1 states: “The Council will undertake a review of the Local Plan 2030, which will be submitted for examination no later than three years after the date of adoption of the plan...”
- 3.3 In line with the Local Development Scheme, on 12 January 2023, the Review of the Bedford Local Plan ([Local Plan 2040](#)) was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The hearing sessions opened on Monday 12 June 2023 and were held in two blocks in June and September 2023.
- 3.4 The Inspector has agreed to a pause in the examination until at least January 2025 so that the Council can address the matters of concern raised by the Inspector in his post-hearings’ advice letter dated 27 November 2023. These related to the delivery of housing and the deliverability of strategic infrastructure, particularly improvements to the A421.
- 3.5 To ensure effective monitoring and openness about progress during the pause period, the Inspector asked the Council to provide monthly progress updates at the end of each calendar month, commencing with an update at the end of April 2024. These monthly updates are published on the [examination webpage](#).
- 3.6 Previous Issues and Options consultations were held between 14 July and 4 September 2020, and 29 June and 3 September 2021. The first of these consultations considered the scope of the local plan, a draft vision and key themes along with possible locations for development beyond 2030. A call for sites exercise was also undertaken. The second consultation narrowed the suitable development strategy options for the borough as well as included a number of draft policies for the town centre and retail, and development management issues. In June/July 2022, the Local Plan 2040 Plan for Submission was subject to a regulation 19 consultation.

Progress on Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.7 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide more detailed advice and guidance on the implementation and interpretation of planning policies set out in the local plan. Unlike local plans, SPDs are not required to be submitted for independent examination but are subject to public consultation and are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.8 The LDS (appendix 3) lists the SPDs that have been adopted by the Council and these are published on the [other planning policy documents webpage](#).
- 3.9 The SPDs the Council intends to prepare within the current LDS time period are listed in appendix 4 of the LDS². The progress that has been made during 2023/24 is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Supplementary Planning Document preparation

Supplementary Planning Document	Purpose	Status
Health Impact Assessments	To guide the scope and content of HIAs	No longer to be an SPD. Health Impact Assessments guidance has been produced and published on the Council’s website. Implementation is being progressed with the Development Management team

² Health Impact Assessments SPD is identified in the LDS, however the document is now to be adopted as guidance rather than an SPD.

Ford End Road planning brief and design code	To set out distribution of uses and guide development in support of Local Plan 2030 Policy 12.	This is behind timetable. Work on the development brief began in 2020 but was paused pending further clarity on the proposals for East West Rail. Following the Route Update Announcement the Council has restarted that work.
Land south of the river planning brief and design code	To set out distribution of uses, phase and guide development in support of Local Plan 2030 Policy 14.	This is behind timetable. Work on the development brief began in 2020 but was paused pending further clarity on the proposals for East West Rail. Following the Route Update Announcement the Council has restarted that work. It is anticipated that consultation on the draft document will take place in 2025.
Developing in the Forest of Marston Vale Design Guidance	<p>To provide guidance on how to achieve the requirements of Local Plan 2030 Policy 36S.</p> <p>The document was prepared in conjunction with Central Bedfordshire Council and the Forest of Marston Vale.</p>	The SPD was adopted on 25 January 2023.
Trees and Development	To provide guidance on the types of trees for inclusion as part of landscaping, installation and future maintenance that is suitable for particular types of development. The guidance supports Local Plan 2030 Policies 38, 39 and 40.	Consultation on a draft SPD was undertaken in December 2023 and January 2024 and the SPD was adopted on 11 June 2024.

Bedford Borough Design Guide: Settlements and Streets	To provide guidance on design matters for future development and support design policies in the development plan.	The SPD was adopted on 8 March 2023.
Design guidance to guide the development of small residential sites, infill development and extensions	To update and replace the Council's existing guidance "Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments" (RENSID) in support of Local Plan 2030 Policy 29.	No progress has been made since the publication of the LDS. To be prepared as resources allow.
Guidance for the design of shopfronts	To update and replace the Council's existing guidance "Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas" in support of Local Plan 2030 Policy 29.	No progress has been made since the publication of the LDS. To be prepared as resources allow.
Guidance on advertisements	To provide design guidance on advertisements in support of Local Plan 2030 Policy 34.	No progress has been made since the publication of the LDS. To be prepared as resources allow.

4 Duty to Co-operate

- 4.1 The Duty to Co-operate was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and is set out in [section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#). It places a legal duty on local planning authorities and county councils in England, and prescribed public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 provides for repealing the duty to cooperate and its replacement with a new “alignment” test.
- 4.2 During the monitoring year Bedford Borough Council has continued to work with neighbouring local authorities and other key partners to plan for strategic and cross boundary matters during the preparation of the Local Plan 2040. The [Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement \(September 2023\)](#) provides an overview of how the Council has fulfilled its duty and is supplemented by records of cooperation and outcomes.

5 Progress on Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. New powers were introduced that allowed qualifying bodies to produce neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders. Neighbourhood plans allow communities to set planning policies for their area. Once 'made' (adopted), neighbourhood plans become part of the development plan for their designated area.
- 5.2 The LDS does not include timescales for the preparation of new neighbourhood plans as these are led by Town and Parish Councils on behalf of their local communities; the timescales for their production or review are therefore set by the relevant Town or Parish Council.
- 5.3 During the monitoring year, the Council has not designated any additional Neighbourhood Areas. However, 16 Neighbourhood Areas remain designated, covering the parishes listed in Table 2. These are parishes where no neighbourhood plan has yet been made (in some instances plans are in production). More information on neighbourhood planning in the borough can be found on the [neighbourhood planning webpages](#).

Table 2 Designated neighbourhood plan areas

Neighbourhood Plan area	Designation date
Brickhill	8 September 2016
Cardington	8 June 2016
Colmworth	20 February 2015
Cople	30 July 2015
Cotton End	21 August 2019
Dean and Shelton	30 July 2015
Pavenham	20 June 2014

Neighbourhood Plan area	Designation date
Pertenhall and Swineshead	11 April 2017
Renhold	7 September 2020
Roxton	5 November 2014
Shortstown	18 September 2023
Stagsden	11 September 2015
Staploe	7 September 2020
Stewartby	26 November 2013
Wilden	14 November 2013
Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden	12 November 2014

5.4 During the monitoring year 2023/24, one Neighbourhood Plan was subject to referendum and subsequently made. This was:

- Great Denham (made September 2023).

5.5 Since the end of the monitoring year, one Neighbourhood Plan which had been subject to referendum was subsequently made. This was:

- Riseley (made April 2024).

6 Allocated Sites

- 6.1 This section of the monitoring report provides information on the implementation of all allocations in plans, including neighbourhood plans. Tables 3, 4 and 5 set out the status of all allocated sites in the Local Plan 2030, saved Local Plan 2002 policy allocations and saved Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 allocations at the end of the 2023/24 monitoring year.
- 6.2 During the monitoring year, progress continued on delivering allocated sites in the development plan.

Table 3 Status of Local Plan 2030 policy allocations at 31 March 2024

Local Plan 2030 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
8 Key development sites in St Paul's Square	<u>Bank building site, St Paul's Square</u> No planning permission. <u>Shire Hall, St Paul's Square</u> No planning permission.
9 Land at Duckmill Lane / Bedesman Lane, Bedford	No planning permission.
10 The station area, Ashburnham Rd, Bedford	No planning permission. Reliant on the East West Rail scheme.

<p>11 Greyfriars, Bedford</p>	<p>Outline planning application 20/00140/MAO for up to 105 dwellings at Greyfriars Police Station was granted in April 2023 and the site is being marketed. Discussions have commenced in association with redevelopment of land subject to Local Plan 2040 Policy HOU1 Greyfriars North.</p> <p>The southern part of the site does not have planning permission, but pre-application discussions continue with the landowner.</p>
<p>12 Land at Ford End Road, Bedford</p>	<p>No planning permission. Work on the development brief began in 2020 but was paused pending further clarity on the proposals for East West Rail. Following the Route Update Announcement the Council has restarted that work.</p> <p>Planning application 24/01244/MAF for 107 dwellings at Queens Works, Ford End Road is awaiting decision.</p>
<p>13 Land at Borough Hall, Bedford</p>	<p>No planning permission. Work on the design code was paused pending further clarity on the proposals for East West Rail. Following the Route Update Announcement the Council has restarted that work.</p> <p>A planning application for residential development on the Prebend Street land is expected in 2025.</p>

14 Land south of the river, Bedford	<p>No planning permission.</p> <p>Work on the development brief began in 2020 but was paused pending further clarity on the proposals for East West Rail. Following the Route Update Announcement the Council has restarted that work. It is anticipated that consultation on the draft document will take place in 2025.</p>
18 Land at Gold Lane, Biddenham	<p>Reserved matters for 119 dwellings in phase 1 (21/02820/M73) and 130 dwellings in phase 2 (21/03302/MAR) is secured and phase 1 has been completed. Construction has started on phase 2 of the development and 65 dwellings on this phase are complete.</p>
19 Land at 329 Bedford Road, Kempston	<p>No planning permission.</p>
20 Land at Mowbray Road, Bedford	<p>No planning permission.</p> <p>The Council has exchanged contracts for the sale of the land. The purchaser has drawn up plans for residential development of the site and is aiming to submit a planning application in 2025.</p>
21 Land north of Beverley Crescent, Bedford	<p>No planning permission.</p>
22 Land at Lodge Hill, Bedford	<p>No planning permission.</p> <p>The site has been marketed and Heads of Terms have been agreed for the purchase of the land from the Council.</p>

23 Land to the rear of Bromham Road, Biddenham	Outline planning application 19/01394/MAO for residential development was approved on 15 October 2020.
24 Land at Graze Hill, Bedford	Reserved matters application 21/01901/MAR for 163 dwellings was approved on 1 August 2022. A new roundabout has been provided on the B660 to provide entry / exit to the development. The site is under construction and 46 dwellings are complete.
25 Former Stewartby Brickworks	Outline planning application 18/03022/EIA for up to 1,000 dwellings was approved on 29 October 2021. The site has recently been purchased by a master developer.
27 Land north of School Lane, Roxton	Reserved matters application 21/03333/MAR for 50 dwellings was approved on 5 April 2023. The housebuilder is on site.
62 Kempston Hardwick Gypsy and Traveller site	Planning permission for two new day units with access, parking and associated works was granted in December 2018 (18/02566/DC3) and construction has started.

Table 4 Status of Local Plan 2002 policy allocations at 31 March 2024

Local Plan 2002 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
H2 Britannia Iron Works	Development completed.
H6 Biddenham Loop	Planning application 21/01592/MAF for 95 dwellings on land adjacent to Mercia Road was granted in December 2023 and the housebuilder is on site. This is land originally set aside for school use.

Local Plan 2002 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
H7 Land west of Kempston	Development completed.
H8 Land north of Bromham Road, Biddenham	<p>Outline planning permission was granted under 01/02199/OUT and multiple reserved matters have been approved.</p> <p>735 dwellings have been completed and 565 dwellings have extant planning permission but are not built.</p>
H9 Land at Shortstown	Development completed.
H11 Land south of Fields Road, Wootton	Development completed.
H12 Land north of Fields Road, Wootton	Development completed.
H13 Land off Rousebury Road, Stewartby	Development completed.
H14 and E10 Elstow Storage Depot and Elstow Brickworks	<p>The new settlement of Wixams lies partly within Bedford Borough and partly within Central Bedfordshire. It consists of four “villages”.</p> <p>Development of Wixams Village 1 comprising 988 dwellings is completed. A new primary school opened in September 2009 and a village hall opened in April 2013. A local centre within Village 1 has been completed.</p> <p>Development of Village 2 is under construction and 948 dwellings are complete.</p>

Local Plan 2002 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
	<p>The infrastructure and access points have been constructed within Village 3 and the site prepared as part of the strategic works carried out by the master developer. Reserved matters application 21/02615/MAR for 232 dwellings within parcel 3.4 was granted in December 2022. Development of this parcel is under construction and 7 dwellings are complete. Reserved matters application 21/01440/MAR for 180 dwellings within parcel 3.5 was granted in October 2022. Development of this parcel is under construction and 11 dwellings are complete. The remainder of Village 3 has extant outline planning permission.</p> <p>Development of Village 4 is under construction and 145 dwellings are complete. Reserved matters application 23/01008/MAR for 111 dwellings at parcel 4, on land formerly identified as a school site was granted in January 2024 and the housebuilder is on site.</p> <p>A purpose-built retirement village for the over 55s opened on a site adjacent to Village 1 in 2019 and a care home opened in 2021. Phase 2 consisting of a 62-unit extension to the retirement village has extant planning permission (18/03158/MAF). Revised reserved matters application 23/02015/MAF, reducing the phase 2 extension to 57 units is approved subject to S106. Development has not yet started.</p> <p>The construction of a regional distribution centre has been completed on a site north of Fisherswood Road. Reserved</p>

Local Plan 2002 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
	<p>matters approval for a regional distribution centre of 88,423 sqm on a site to the southwest (23/02566/MAR) was granted in June 2024.</p> <p>Three commercial units have been completed on a site north of Watson Road. A business park comprising of six units is completed on a site north of Fisherswood Road, adjacent to the care home.</p>
H23 Housing in second order villages	<p><u>Land south of Cople Road, Cardington</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land at West End Lane, Elstow</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land off Pavenham Road, Oakley</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land off Sandye Lane, Swineshead</u> No planning permission.</p> <p><u>Land off Keysoe Road, Riseley</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land to the north of School Lane, Roxton</u> Development completed</p> <p><u>'Village Green', Spring Lane, Stagsden</u> Development completed.</p>

Local Plan 2002 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
	<p><u>Newton Road, Turvey</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land adjoining the Old Pond House, Upper Dean</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Canons Close, Wootton</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Church Lane, Wymington</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land between High Road, Hall Way and Meeting Close, Cotton End</u> Development completed.</p> <p><u>Land south of Bedford Road, Willington</u> Development completed.</p>
E2 Land south of Cambridge Road	Development completed.
LR4 Rowing course	Planning permission for the watersports lake was granted in 2006 under BC/CM/2003/33 and a legal start has been made. The intention is that Local Plan 2040 Policy HOU11 Land at Bedford River Valley Park will deliver the watersports facility alongside development.

Table 5 Status of Allocations and Designations Plan 2013 policy allocations at 31 March 2024

Allocations and Designations Plan 2013 Policy	Status at 31 March 2024
AD3 Land at Hall End Road, Wootton	Development of 58 dwellings under planning permission 14/02939/MAF on the eastern part of the site is completed. The land reserved for education use, on the western part of the site has no planning permission.
AD4 Land at Old Ford End Road, Queens Park, Bedford	Development completed.
AD7 Land East of Eastcotts Road, Bedford	Development completed.
AD10 Lansdowne Road, Warwick Avenue and Dynevor Road, Bedford	Development completed.
AD11 Land at Medbury Farm, Elstow	No planning permission. It is proposed to replace Policy AD11 with emerging Local Plan 2040 Policy EMP5 Land at Pear Tree Farm.
AD12 Land at Bell Farm, Kempston	Development completed.

AD13 Marston Vale Innovation Park, Phase 2, Wootton	<p>The planning history of the site is extensive. A hybrid scheme (17/00666/MAO) permitted in May 2018 allowed for a mix of employment uses including leisure-based employment and associated infrastructure. This permission was subsequently amended by four non-material amendment applications. Three reserved matters applications have been approved of which 21/00322/M73 for the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of plots 4 and 5, providing approximately 24,000 sqm employment floorspace has been implemented. The construction of plot 6 (19/01176/NMA), providing a 37,626 sqm distribution warehouse has also been completed.</p> <p>A children's nursery school building on plot 1D (18/00644/DC3) was approved in June 2018 and the development is completed.</p> <p>The time limit for the submission of reserved matters under 17/00666/MAO expired in May 2021 and a new outline planning application (21/02077/MAO) to establish the principle of development of plots 1A to C (for Class E(b), C1 and sui generis uses) and plots 2 and 3 (for Class E(g) and ancillary B8 uses) was approved on 7 April 2022.</p>
AD15 Manton Lane Reservoir Site, Bedford	Development completed.
AD16 Land West of Manton Lane, Bedford	Was allocated as employment land but planning permission is now approved for a school (20/00488/MAR) which is under construction.
AD17 Land West of the B530, Kempston	No planning permission. A scheme is being prepared.

AD18 Land North of the A6-A428 Link Road, Bedford	Planning permission was granted under 18/02231/MDC4 for the erection of a microbrewery with access road (Class B2) (detailed element) and outline proposals with all matters reserved except access and site clearance for mixed use development, to include employment B1, B2, B8, D2 leisure use, A3, A4 and hotel uses. Only the outline proposals (which have lapsed) are within the allocated site. Reserved matters application 19/00921/MAR for the construction of a leisure activities centre is awaiting decision.
AD19 Land at Manton Lane, Bedford	Outline planning application 23/01128/MDC3 for the provision of eight pitches for travelling showpeople was approved in March 2024.
AD20 Land at Bedford Road, Great Barford	Planning application 16/00873/MAF for the development of 54 dwellings and 1 acre area of land to provide a site for a Primary Care Facility has been approved and the dwellings are completed. Development of the Primary Care Facility has not started.
AD21 Land at Chawston Lake, Roxton Road, Wyboston	Full planning permission (17/00880/MAF) was granted in 2017 for use as a holiday village including 8 holiday chalets (including manager's chalet), 20 caravan plots, camping area, facilities buildings and associated landscaping and ancillary works. The development was not implemented and the permission has lapsed.
AD22 Land North of Ravensden Road, Salph End, Renhold	No planning permission.

<p>AD23 Bedford River Valley Park Enabling Development</p>	<p>Enabling development at Bedford River Valley Park has been allocated in the development plan for a number of years in order to finance the delivery of a watersports lake and other leisure opportunities. Whilst planning permission for the watersports lake has been granted and development legally commenced, the project has progressed no further. The enabling development hasn't happened, but the Council's aspiration to deliver the lake and leisure uses in support of wider growth in the borough remains a priority.</p> <p>A new scheme has been drawn up to take the project forward. Whilst the original enabling development envisaged employment, leisure and education uses on the site with the possibility of a continuing care retirement community, the refreshed scheme will deliver a mixed use development including residential units, an education facility, a care home, and watersports lake set in a well landscaped, multi-functional greenspace.</p> <p>It is proposed to replace Policy AD23 with Local Plan 2040 Policy HOU11 Land at Bedford River Valley Park.</p>
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6.3 Table 6 shows the estimated number of dwellings allocated in 'made' and emerging neighbourhood plans and the status of allocated sites at the end of the 2023/24 monitoring year.

Table 6 Status of Neighbourhood Plan policy allocations at 31 March 2024

Parish	Dwellings allocated	Status at 31 March 2024
Bromham	500	<p><u>BP - Beauchamp Park</u> Outline planning application 19/01904/MAO for 390 dwellings was granted in January 2024.</p> <p><u>SR - The Stagsden Rise Development</u> Reserved matters application 20/02520/MAR for 80 dwellings was granted in September 2021. The development is under construction and 59 dwellings are completed.</p> <p><u>OS - Old Stable Yard Development</u> Allocation for 30 dwellings. No planning permission.</p>
Clapham	500	<p><u>Policy HG2: Land at Milton Hill</u> Resolution to approve outline planning permission 21/00332/EIA for 500 dwellings subject to legal agreement.</p>
Great Barford	500	<p><u>Policy H1: Land at Great Barford West</u> Allocation for 500 dwellings. No planning permission. Neighbourhood Plan Policy H1 requires the preparation of a development brief before a planning application is submitted. Discussion with the site promoter on the preparation of a development brief is underway.</p>
Sharnbrook	500	<p><u>Policy S3 – Land at Hill Farm, Mill Road</u> Resolution to approve hybrid planning application 22/02193/MOF for full permission for 304 dwellings and outline permission for 196 dwellings subject to legal agreement.</p>

Bletsoe	11	<p><u>BNP Policy 2 Land behind Captains Close</u> Allocation for 8 dwellings. No planning permission.</p> <p><u>BNP Policy 3 Land north of the Old Rectory</u> Allocation for 3 dwellings. No planning permission.</p>
Carlton and Chellington	32	<p><u>Policy CC5 - Land at the Causeway</u> Planning application 21/02406/FUL for 9 dwellings was granted in March 2023. The development is under construction and 7 dwellings are completed.</p> <p><u>Policy CC6 - The Causeway</u> Development of 18 dwellings was completed in 2020/21.</p> <p><u>Policy CC7 - Land north of the Moor</u> Allocation for 4 dwellings. No planning permission.</p>
Felmersham and Radwell	13	<p><u>Policy FR3: Land at the Old Road, Felmersham</u> Allocation for 6 dwellings. No planning permission.</p> <p><u>Policy FR4: Perch Heights, Carlton Road, Felmersham</u> Allocation for 7 dwellings. No planning permission.</p>
Great Denham	None	
Harrold	25	<p><u>Policy HARROLD NDP2: Land at Odell Road</u> Allocation for 17 dwellings. No planning permission.</p> <p><u>Policy HARROLD NDP3: Land east of Orchard Lane</u> Allocation for 8 dwellings. No planning permission.</p>

Milton Ernest	25	<u>Policy ME H1: Rushden Road</u> Resolution to approve outline planning permission 23/02638/MAO for 25 dwellings subject to legal agreement.
Oakley	40	<u>ONP HG1: Land at Station Road</u> Outline planning application 21/02394/MAO for up to 40 dwellings was allowed on appeal in July 2023. <u>ONP HG1: Land to the rear of the High Street</u> Resolution to approve outline planning permission 23/02494/MAO for 10 dwellings subject to legal agreement.
Odell	None	
Ravensden	20	<u>Policy RNP3: Land adjoining Willow Farm, Butler Street</u> Allocation for 10-15 dwellings. No planning permission. <u>Policy RNP4: Former barns at Cleat Hill Farm</u> Allocation for up to 5 dwellings. No planning permission.
Riseley	None	
Stevington	None	

Thurleigh	30	<p><u>Policy HS2 – Land at The Beeches, High Street</u> Outline planning application 20/02155/MAO for 11 dwellings was granted in August 2021 and revised outline application 23/00386/M73 for amendments to biodiversity net gain requirements was granted in November 2023. Reserved matters application 24/01167/MAR is awaiting decision.</p> <p><u>Policy HS3 – Land at Hayle Field, High Street</u> Reserved matters application 22/00370/MAR for 20 dwellings was granted in November 2022 and the housebuilder is on site.</p>
Turvey	50	<p><u>Policy T1: Carlton Road</u> Resolution to approve outline planning permission 23/00019/MAO for 25 dwellings subject to legal agreement.</p> <p><u>Policy T1: Mill Rise</u> Resolution to approve planning permission 21/03304/MAF for 24 dwellings subject to legal agreement.</p>
Willington	50	<p><u>Policy W4 – Land off Sandy Road</u> Reserved matters application 23/01034/MAR for 50 dwellings was granted in May 2024 and the development is under construction.</p>
Wilshamstead	None	

Wootton	105	<p><u>Policy W3 – Land between Potters Cross and Wootton Road</u> Allocation for 50 dwellings. No planning permission. The landowner has appointed a developer for the site and submission of a planning application is expected by the end of 2024.</p> <p><u>Policy W4 – Land south of Keeley Lane</u> Planning application 23/01846/MAF for 20 dwellings is awaiting decision.</p> <p><u>Policy W5 – Land at Tinkers Corner, Keeley Lane</u> Allocation for 15 dwellings. No planning permission.</p> <p><u>Policy W6 – Land on south side of Keeley Lane</u> Outline planning application 22/01035/MAO for 20 dwellings was approved on 18 November 2022. Reserved matters application 23/02636/MAR for 20 dwellings was granted in June 2024.</p>
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7 Monitoring Indicators

- 7.1 This section reports on the implementation of local plan policies under the four themes of natural environment, accessibility, delivering growth and placemaking. Key objectives from the Local Plan 2030 are grouped at the start of each theme. For context, the relevant themes from the emerging Local Plan 2040 are also identified.
- 7.2 Data relating to the 2023/24 monitoring year is presented but as the plan period started in 2015, where possible, data for the monitoring indicators has been 'baselined' at 2015 to establish trends and to enable more effective analysis.

Theme 1: Natural environment

LP2030 Objective 1. Deliver high quality growth that will facilitate the development of more sustainable and inclusive places for local communities, which are equipped to respond to the impacts of climate and economic change and offer the opportunity to live more healthy lifestyles. Where it is viable and sustainable to do so, encourage the re-use of land that has been previously developed.

LP2030 Objective 8. Develop a strong and multifunctional urban and rural green infrastructure network through protecting, enhancing, extending and linking landscapes, woodland, biodiversity sites, heritage sites, green spaces and paths.

LP2030 Objective 9. Support and create a high quality, inclusive and safe built environment which values local landscape and settlement character and which conserves and enhances the historic environment and is enjoyed by all.

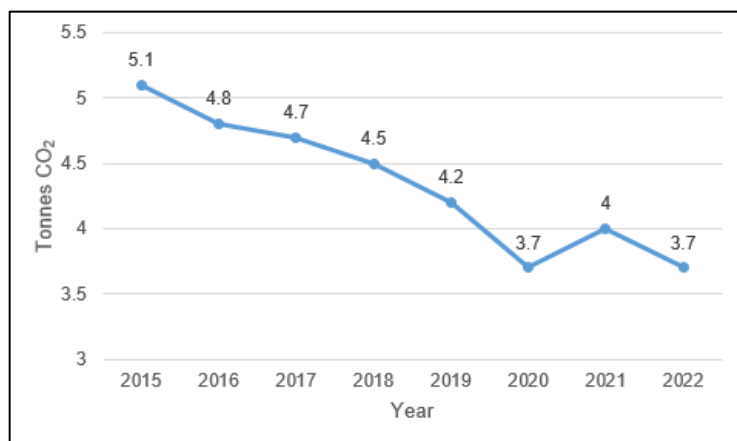
LP2030 Objective 10. Protect and enhance our natural resources including air, soil minerals and water to minimise the impacts of flooding, climate change and pollution.

This section broadly aligns with emerging Local Plan 2040 Theme 1: Greener.

Monitoring indicator 1 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
1a Reduction in carbon emissions	51S, 53, 55, 56, 57, 89	Carbon emissions in the borough per capita	2015 = 5.1 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2016 = 4.8 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2017 = 4.7 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2018 = 4.5 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2019 = 4.2 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2020 = 3.7 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2021 = 4.0 tonnes CO ₂ per capita 2022 = 3.7 tonnes CO ₂ per capita	DESNZ
1b Delivery of district heating networks	51S, 55	Information about the installation of district heating networks	District heating system capabilities are being developed at Rookery South Resource Recovery Facility near Stewartby	BBC
1c Delivery of renewable and low carbon energy generation schemes	51S, 53, 55, 56, 57	Number of renewable energy installations completed annually	Solar photovoltaics = 784 Onshore wind = 0 Landfill gas = 0 Sewage gas = 0 Municipal solid waste = 0 Plant biomass = 0 Animal biomass = 0 Anaerobic digestion = 0 Hydro = 0 Cofiring = 0	DESNZ
1d Planning permissions for renewable and low carbon energy generation schemes	51S, 53, 55, 56, 57	Number of permissions granted for renewable and low carbon energy generation	7 permissions	DESNZ

- 7.3 It is established that the leading cause of climate change is the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through human activity. Climate change is already evident in the form of increased extreme weather events, rising sea levels, longer droughts and heatwaves, and retreating polar ice and glaciers.
- 7.4 The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a statutory target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 and in 2019 the government adopted a legally binding target for the UK to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- 7.5 Local Plan 2030 Policy 51S requires development and the use of land and buildings to address climate change, adapting to anticipated future changes and mitigating against further change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 7.6 Data from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)³ presented in Figure 1 shows gradually decreasing trends for carbon dioxide emissions (tonnes) per capita between 2015 and 2020. Whilst a slight increase was recorded in 2021, the latest data for 2022 shows that borough emissions per capita have returned to 2020 levels.

Figure 1: Per capita CO₂ emissions in Bedford Borough 2015-2022



³ DESNZ (2024) UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005 to 2022. Table 1.2: Local authority territorial carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions estimates. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics>

- 7.7 Heat networks provide an opportunity in dense urban areas to use low-carbon heat sources to heat communities with a much greater overall efficiency than individual gas boiler systems. The Bedford Heat Mapping and Masterplanning Study 2019 mapped the heat demand of the urban area as well as the major anchor loads of the area. The [Rookery South Resource Recovery Facility](#) occupies a former clay extraction pit near Stewartby and started operating in January 2022. The facility processes around 550,000 tonnes of household, commercial and industrial (non-hazardous) waste every year – thus reducing landfill. The waste is combusted and the heat converts water into steam, which drives generators to produce electricity for the national grid. When at full capacity, the facility is capable of generating enough baseload electricity to power 112,500 homes and recovering resources and by-products for reuse. District heating system capabilities are being developed at the facility.
- 7.8 Existing renewable energy installations at local authority level are published annually by DESNZ. Most of the data relating to renewable energy technologies is based on records of installations that have been registered under an accreditation scheme. Technologies that are not supported by such schemes or that are not registered for some other reason are therefore likely to be underrepresented. The Regional Renewable Statistics reports the number of installations, capacity and annual electricity generation from a range of renewable energy technologies. The latest data⁴ shows that at the end of 2023 there were around 3,824 renewable energy installations in the borough, the vast majority being solar photovoltaics (around 3,800 installations). 15 onshore wind, two landfill gas, two plant biomass, one animal biomass, one sewage gas, one municipal solid waste, one anaerobic digestion, and one hydro installation were also recorded. The same dataset estimates that renewable electricity generation in the borough is 94.7 GWh per year which is 50.8 GWh less than last year's estimate. For comparison, annual electricity consumption in the borough was 679.2 GWh in 2022⁵, 23.3 GWh less than in 2021. Increasing renewable energy supply is therefore crucial to the Council achieving carbon neutrality in its operations by 2030 and for the UK to meet its commitments to climate change mitigation.
- 7.9 The Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD) tracks the progress of UK renewable electricity projects over 150kW through the planning system. It includes the dates of planning permission being granted or refused, when construction started, and when the project became operational. Small-scale technologies that do not require planning permission are not included in the dataset.

⁴ DESNZ (2024) Renewable electricity by local authority 2014-2023. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

⁵ DESNZ (2024) Subnational total final energy consumption. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/total-final-energy-consumption-at-sub-national-level>

- 7.10 The REPD⁶ shows that planning permission was granted for seven projects during 2023/24. The total includes 280 kWp roof mounted solar photovoltaics at Towers Health & Racquets Club, Clapham (23/00573/SPNJ), 245 kWp roof mounted solar photovoltaics at Unit 35 Kenneth Way, Wilstead (23/01535/SPNJ), 999 kWp roof mounted solar photovoltaics at Unit A Progress Park, Elstow (23/02362/SPNJ), and 999 kWp roof mounted solar photovoltaics at Unit B Progress Park, Elstow (23/02361/SPNJ). A 10.5 MW solar farm comprising an array of ground-mounted solar PV panels at Goosey Lodge Farm, Wymington (22/01520/MAF) and two battery energy storage systems adjacent to Twinwoods Business Park, Milton Ernest (23/01139/MAF) and south of Bushmead Road, Staploe (22/01828/MAF) were also granted planning permission in 2023/24. The REPD shows that no projects became operational during the monitoring year.
- 7.11 The latest data on renewable energy installations and renewable electricity generation will be reported in the next monitoring report. Analysis of this data will help to assess the extent to which the Council's planning policies relating to renewable energy generation are achieving their intended outcomes and helping to achieve the local plan vision and objectives in addition to the Council's carbon neutrality pledge and UK-wide targets relating to climate change mitigation.

Monitoring indicator 2 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
2a Development proposed and delivered in the riverside area of Bedford town centre	17	Number of planning permissions received and determined in the riverside area Whether proposals satisfied the policy tests	0 permissions	BBC

⁶ DESNZ (2023) Renewable Energy Planning Database. Available at <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/a5b0ed13-c960-49ce-b1f6-3a6bbe0db1b7/renewable-energy-planning-database-repd>

7.12 Planning applications for development proposals on land bordering the River Great Ouse in Bedford town centre are assessed against criteria set out in Local Plan 2030 Policy 17. There were no planning permissions for development in the riverside area of Bedford town centre during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 3 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
3a Green infrastructure created and lost on completed site allocations	35S, 36S, AD24, AD26, AD27	Amount of new green infrastructure created and existing green infrastructure lost on completed site allocations	<p>During the 2023/24 monitoring year, the following phases were completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new village green was created at Spring Lane, Stagsden (H23) alongside a new pedestrian access to the High Street and a variety of new soft landscaping. • New tree, shrub, bulb and grass planting; creation of a landscaped strip; street trees; and three new play areas were delivered at Land off Rousebury Road, Stewartby (H13). Footpaths and cycleways provide opportunities for active travel and links to the wider green infrastructure network outside the site. • Phase 1 of Land at Gold Lane, Biddenham (Policy 18) retains most existing trees and hedgerows. New tree, hedgerow and shrub planting along the main routes and residential frontages seek to soften the appearance of the development. A new area of open space is provided with two play areas. 	BBC

7.13 The Local Plan 2030 emphasises the importance of green infrastructure in the borough, citing its environmental and health benefits as well as its capacity to enhance and conserve the historic environment by improving the setting of infrastructure

assets, improve access to it and help contribute to the sense of place and a tangible link with local history. Local Plan 2030 Policy 35S relates to the provision, protection and enhancement of green infrastructure in the borough.

- 7.14 The Bedford Borough Green Infrastructure Plan 2009 identifies a strategic green infrastructure network which is divided into six separate Opportunity Zones. Saved Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 Policy AD24 provides further detail about the zones and the priorities for the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure within them.
- 7.15 Last year the Council reviewed the method of data collection to monitor delivery of local plan policy objectives to achieve a net gain in green infrastructure. It is considered that this is most effectively monitored by the loss / creation / enhancement of green infrastructure links on completed Local Plan allocated sites.
- 7.16 During 2023/24, Local Plan 2002 allocated sites 'Village Green', Spring Lane, Stagsden (H23) and Land at Rousebury Road, Stewartby (H13) were completed. The first phase of Local Plan 2030 site Land at Gold Lane, Biddenham (Policy 18) was also completed.
- 7.17 The development at Spring Lane, Stagsden (22/01932/REM) provides a new village green for the village, to be transferred to the Parish Council who will be taking on responsibility for the on-going maintenance of the facility. A footpath from the new village green provides pedestrian access to the High Street. The soft landscaping for the site includes 21 trees (hornbeam, ornamental pear and lime varieties), new native hedgerow and shrub planting, areas of wildflower meadow, and retained vegetation.
- 7.18 The first phase of development off Rousebury Road, Stewartby (planning application 14/03135/MAR) includes structural landscaping on and around the Broadmead Road roundabout and within the development. The primary access boulevard from the roundabout has a grassed central reservation incorporating new hornbeam tree planting. Two play areas containing a variety of play equipment (a locally equipped area of play and a super locally equipped area of play) are located immediately to the south of the primary access boulevard between Kiln Drive and Fletton Row. Landscaping within this area includes existing and new tree planting, hedgerows, grass, ornamental shrubs, and bulb planting. Phase 2 (planning application 17/02295/MAR) includes two super locally equipped areas of play – one situated within the landscaped strip that separates phase 1 and phase 2 between Oxford Blue Way and Sunset Red Meadow and the other within a crescent-shaped area of open space in the eastern part of the site.

- 7.19 Existing woodland to the north and east of the site is retained and thinned. Several ponds created within this area are planted with marginal and aquatic plant mix and the existing ditch has been widened. To the east of the site, new planting provides a shelterbelt between the residential development and a former clay pit – Coronation Pit – located to the north east of the site. The development incorporates a number of footpath and cycleways and provide opportunities for active travel with links onto Broadmead Road and Coronation Pit and the wider green infrastructure network outside the site. Additional native planting has been introduced within the site to reinforce the existing green infrastructure and provide further opportunities for biodiversity. Landscaping to the front of dwellings comprises lawns and low-level shrub planting. Deeper frontages accommodate ornamental tree planting and fruit tree planting in some rear gardens.
- 7.20 Phase 1 of Land at Gold Lane, Biddenham provides a soft edge to Biddenham and includes a grassed area and new tree planting along the eastern boundary of the development. Pockets of open space and areas of planting including tree planting along the main routes seek to soften the appearance of the development. Residential frontages are marked by new evergreen hedgerow and shrub planting. The layout protects most existing trees and hedgerows, with only three small areas of hedge removed to facilitate the access road. A new area of open space containing two play areas retains two large existing oak trees. Further green infrastructure is being provided in Phase 2 of the development which is under construction.

Monitoring indicator 4 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
4a Woodland creation in the Forest of Marston Vale	36S	Amount of new woodland planted (ha)	219 hectares of new woodland area was created in and around the Forest of Marston Vale during 2023/24. Of the total, 176 hectares of new woodland area was created within Bedford Borough	The Forest of Marston Vale Trust
4b Planning contributions secured towards the delivery of the Forest of Marston Vale	36S	Financial contributions secured as a result of planning permissions granted (through S106)	No financial contributions were secured	BBC

4c Progress in the delivery of Bedford River Valley Park and Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park	AD26, AD27	Information relating to the delivery of these two strategic green infrastructure projects	On 19 June 2024 the Council's Executive considered a report that provided an update on the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park and the intention to set up a Special Purpose Vehicle to take the project forward. On 11 July 2024, the project's delivery phase was launched which will focus on constructing sections of the waterway as part of a flexible and strategic approach as funding opportunities become available.	BBC
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- 7.21 Strategic green infrastructure projects within the borough are the Forest of Marston Vale, Bedford River Valley Park and the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park.
- 7.22 The [Forest of Marston Vale](#) is one of England's nationally designated community forests covering 61 square miles of land between Bedford and Milton Keynes. Over 800ha of green and blue infrastructure in the east of Bedford will be delivered by the Borough Council and partners to form [Bedford River Valley Park](#). The [Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Park](#) scheme consists of a 26km canal connecting Milton Keynes to the head of navigation of the River Great Ouse at Kempston. The project is led by the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust.
- 7.23 In order to meet the target for 30% tree cover in the Forest of Marston Vale as a whole, Local Plan 2030 Policy 36S sets out a requirement to provide tree cover at 30% within new developments or provide an off-site financial contribution, secured through a S106 agreement.
- 7.24 In the monitoring year 2023/24, a further 219 hectares of new woodland area was created in and around the Forest of Marston Vale, all under the Defra sponsored [Trees for Climate](#) programme. Within Bedford Borough, a total of 176 hectares of new woodland planting was delivered across 18 projects. These projects involved the planting of over 310,000 trees and over 1.7km of new hedgerow and involved the engagement of around 1,300 people.
- 7.25 Planting activity generally extends across Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council administrative areas, with the 61 square mile designated Forest of Marston Vale area spanning the boundary. The Trees for Climate programme

enables planting activity to radiate out into a surrounding ‘halo’ of up to 10 miles beyond the core Forest area, bringing wider areas into scope (including Milton Keynes). During this monitoring year, 176ha of planting occurred within Bedford Borough, 39ha in Central Bedfordshire, and 4ha in Milton Keynes.

- 7.26 The national data portal used to track performance of the Trees for Climate programme across all of England’s Community Forests shows that out of all local authority areas covered by Community Forests, Bedford Borough had the second highest amount of new planting in 2023/24. This is a noteworthy statistic given that the Forest of Marston Vale is the smallest of England’s Community Forests.
- 7.27 No financial contributions were secured towards the Forest during the monitoring year, which is less than the amount secured last year (£21,295.72) and in 2021/22 (£28,770.36), but equal to the amount secured in 2020/21 (£0). This reflects the preference for planting on site (monitoring indicator 4a) and only seeking financial contributions where this cannot be achieved.

Monitoring indicator 5 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
5a Progress in preparing the Developing in the Forest of Marston Vale SPD	36S	Details of preparation in accordance with milestones in the LDS	The SPD was adopted on 25 January 2023	BBC

- 7.28 The supporting text to Policy 36S states that a supplementary planning document will be produced jointly with Central Bedfordshire Council to inform development within the Forest area. Consultation on a draft document was undertaken in June and July 2022 and the SPD was adopted on 25 January 2023.

Monitoring indicator 6 What is being measured	Related policies	Target	Result	Data source
6a Progress in preparing the Trees and Development SPD	37, 38, 39, 40	Details of preparation in accordance with milestones in the LDS	Consultation on a draft SPD was undertaken in December 2023 and January 2024 and the SPD was adopted on 11 June 2024	BBC

7.29 The supporting text to Local Plan 2030 Policy 38 states that a supplementary planning document will be produced to provide guidance on the types of trees for inclusion as part of landscaping installation and future maintenance that is suitable for particular types of development. Consultation on a draft document was undertaken in December 2023 and January 2024 and the SPD was adopted on 11 June 2024.

Monitoring indicator 7 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
7a Extent of areas of biodiversity and geodiversity importance	42S, 43	Details of any net loss / net gain in areas of biodiversity and geodiversity importance	<p>Eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering 166.7ha. No change from previous year</p> <p>Eight Local Nature Reserves covering 126.54ha. An increase of 11.99ha from previous year</p>	Natural England

7.30 Local Plan 2030 Policies 42S and 43 set out objectives for the biodiversity and geodiversity of the borough to be protected and enhanced where appropriate.

7.31 Sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) are nationally important sites designated by Natural England and contain the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, geological or geophysical features. [Natural England's designated sites system](#) shows that in August 2024 there are eight sites of special scientific interest in the borough (see Table 7) covering 166.7 hectares of

land. The largest SSSI in the borough is Odell Great Wood (85.94ha). There has been no change to the area of SSSI land in the borough during 2023/24.

Table 7 Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Bedford Borough, 2024

SSSI site	Main habitat	Area (hectares)
Biddenham Pit	Earth heritage	0.42
Felmersham Gravel Pits	Standing open water and canals	21.52
Hanger Wood	Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland – lowland	23.95
Odell Great Wood	Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland – lowland	85.94
Stevington Marsh	Neutral grassland – lowland / Calcareous grassland – lowland	7.62
Swineshead Wood	Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland – lowland	21.87
Tilwick Meadow	Natural grassland - lowland	2.54
Yelden Meadows	Natural grassland - lowland	2.84
Total	-	166.7

7.32 Local nature reserves (LNR) are sites that are in the control of and have been suggested by a local authority, but they are designated by Natural England. They are of local importance and have wildlife or geological interest. The sites are publicly accessible and have a management plan in place to ensure their biodiversity or geodiversity is maintained and the wildlife is not damaged as a result of public access. [Natural England's designated sites system](#) shows that in August 2024 there are eight local nature reserves in Bedford Borough (see Table 8) covering 126.54 hectares of land. There has been a 11.99ha expansion of Browns Wood LNR from 6.03ha to 18.02ha during 2023/24 owing to new tree planting around the year 2000 to mark the millennium. The new wood is being developed with ongoing winter works to thin the trees and widen the rides to encourage wildflowers and butterflies.

Table 8 Local Nature Reserves in Bedford Borough, 2024

LNR site	Type	Area (hectares)
Bromham Lake	Biological	10.89
Browns Wood	Biological	18.02
Fenlake Meadows	Biological	19.15
Harrold Odell Country Park	Biological	59.31
Hill Rise	Biological	0.85
Mowsbury Hill	Biological	2.77
Park Wood	Biological	5.2
Putnoe Wood	Biological	10.35
Total	-	126.54

7.33 The condition of SSSI land in England is assessed by Natural England using categories agreed through the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. There are six reportable condition categories: favourable, unfavourable recovering, unfavourable no change, unfavourable declining, part destroyed, and destroyed. Natural England's objective is to achieve 'favourable condition' status for all SSSIs. Favourable condition means that the SSSI's habitats and features are in a healthy state and are being conserved by appropriate management. Assessments of SSSIs are conducted on a six-year cycle.

Monitoring indicator 8 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
8a Condition of SSSIs in the borough with a view to 100% being in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition	42S, 43	% of SSSI units in favourable, unfavourable recovering, unfavourable no change, unfavourable declining, part destroyed, destroyed	Favourable = 51.33ha (30.8%) Unfavourable recovering = 115.08ha (69.0%) Unfavourable no change = 0ha (0%) Unfavourable declining = 0.3ha (0.2%) Part destroyed = 0ha (0%) Destroyed = 0ha (0%)	No change apart from unfavourable recovering which went up and unfavourable no change which went down	Natural England

7.34 According to data published on [Natural England's designated sites system](#), the proportion of SSSI site area assessed to be in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition is 99.8%. Overall, the majority of SSSI land is deemed to be in unfavourable recovering condition (69.0%) with the next highest proportion in favourable condition (30.8%). Just 0.3ha of SSSI land in the borough is assessed to be in unfavourable declining condition.

Monitoring indicator 9 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
9a Condition of locally important sites (county wildlife sites, roadside nature reserves and local geological sites)	42S, 43	Percentage of locally important sites in positive conservation management	2015/16 = 50.4% 2016/17 = 52.8% 2017/18 = 54.0% 2018/19 = 54.0% 2019/20 = 52.8% 2020/22 = 57.6%	Up	Defra The Wildlife Trust

- 7.35 Locally important sites are non-statutory and are known in Bedford Borough as county wildlife sites, roadside nature reserves and local geological sites.
- 7.36 The Single Data List 160-00 (SDL160) aims to measure the performance of local authorities at protecting their local biodiversity and geodiversity, by assessing the implementation of positive conservation management on local sites. The implementation of positive conservation management, defined as management which contributes to maintaining or enhancing the features of interest for which a site has been selected, is widely used for assessing improvements in biodiversity and geodiversity. The status of every site that counts towards the biodiversity indicator is reviewed every five years to assess whether they are still considered to be in positive conservation management.
- 7.37 For a variety of reasons, information for the year 2020/21 was not collected and the most recent data available for the borough therefore incorporates the years 2020/21 and 2021/22. Data from The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire for 2020/22 shows that 72 local sites are in positive conservation management in Bedford Borough, this represents 57.6% of the total number of sites. Aside from a decline recorded in 2019/20, historical data⁷ shows a gradual increase in the proportion of local sites in positive conservation management in the borough.

Monitoring indicator 10 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
10a Impact of development on the River Great Ouse and its environs	44	Number of and details of planning permissions for development on or connected to the River Great Ouse	2 permissions	BBC
10b Impact of development on the River Great Ouse and its environs	44	Completed new development on or connected to the River Great Ouse	Completion of five floating homes at Priory Marina, Bedford	BBC

⁷ Defra (2023) Nature conservation: Local sites in positive conservation management in England. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env10-local-sites-in-positive-conservation-management>

- 7.38 The River Great Ouse within Bedford Borough is a focal point for formal and informal recreation and sport and supports a range of diversity. Local Plan 2030 Policy 44 requires development proposals along and adjoining the River Great Ouse to improve access to the river including canoe portage areas and related facilities; deliver improvements to facilities having regard to the [Bedford Waterspace Study 2011](#); ensure that new river moorings have pedestrian and vehicle access to an adopted road; ensure that new marinas have access to an adopted road and provide adequate car parking; and ensure that any new development or activities do not lead to adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites downstream of Bedford, including as a result of increased flooding or because of pollution.
- 7.39 During 2023/24, two planning permissions were granted for development on or adjoining the River Great Ouse, which is the same as last year. The application details and the reasons for granting planning permission are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9 Planning permissions granted for development on or connected to the River Great Ouse during 2023/24 and the reasons for granting permission

Application reference	Site	Description of development	Reasons for granting planning permission
22/02658/MAF	Bromham Mill, Bridge End, Bromham	Redevelopment including change of use of front barn to a café, change of use of Mill House to a wellbeing hub and offices, change of use of stables and workshop to form six retail units. Erection of six office units, and a welfare and facilities building	A condition requires submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan which is to include measures to prevent pollution into the River Great Ouse directly or through dust, chemical spills and other construction impacts.

22/02313/FUL	161-163 Box End Road, Bromham	Demolition of two existing dwellings and the erection of a single self-build dwelling	Whilst the main development footprint is not immediately adjacent to the River Great Ouse, a condition requires submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan to detail measures by which the proposed works will minimise disturbance and prevent pollution to the river.
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7.40 A development of five floating homes at Priory Marina, Bedford (22/01588/FUL) was completed in 2023/24.

Monitoring indicator 11 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
11a Status of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	32, 47S, 88	Nitrogen dioxide levels in the Bedford town centre AQMA	One exceedance of the annual mean NO ₂ objective of 40 µg/m ³ within the Bedford town centre AQMA	BBC

- 7.41 There is one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Bedford town centre where the annual mean level of nitrogen dioxide exceeds national air quality standards, mainly due to the large number of road vehicles. The [Air Quality Annual Status Report 2024](#) identifies that in 2023 there was one exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective of 40 µg/m³ after bias adjustment and annualisation. This is at the same location (Prebend Street) as historically has been above the limit for a number of years. There was one diffusion tube result within 10% of the 40 µg/m³ limit situated on St Peters Street within the AQMA (37.9 µg/m³). There were no exceedances of the hourly objective for the seventh year running.
- 7.42 The 2023 monitoring results were higher than the number of exceedances in 2022 which was zero, however 2022 used the national rather than local bias adjustment factor applied to 2023 data. Had the national bias adjustment been applied this year all diffusion tube monitoring locations would have seen a reduction from 2022 results.
- 7.43 The Air Quality Annual Status Report 2024 goes on to say that the results from 2023 and the previous five years have been reviewed and provide some evidence to support considerations for reducing the current size of the AQMA. The only data within 10% of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide has been in the centre of the AQMA and the areas to the east, north and south have not been within 10% for a number of years. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on air quality

data during 2020 and 2021 it will be necessary to continue gathering data during 2024 with a view to further considering options through the Annual Status Report process.

Monitoring indicator 12 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
12a Water quality	32, 47S, 50S	Proportion of watercourses classified as good or very good biological or chemical quality	Ecological class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good = 0 watercourses • Good = 2 watercourses • Moderate = 16 watercourses • Bad = 1 watercourse Chemical class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All waterbodies fail 	No change for ecological class. Historical data on chemical class is not comparable	Environment Agency
12b Compliance with Environment Agency advice on water quality	32, 47S, 50S	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on water quality grounds	1 permission	Up	Environment Agency
12c Compliance with Environment Agency advice on flooding	92, 93	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding grounds	0 permissions	No change	Environment Agency

7.44 The Water Framework Directive is the primary piece of legislation regulating water quality in the borough. Its objectives are to prevent deterioration of waterbodies and to improve them such that they meet the required status for that given waterbody (rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal and groundwaters).

7.45 Bedford falls within the Ouse Upper and Bedford management catchment, although this itself is split into five separate operational catchments and Bedford Borough falls largely within the Great Ouse Bedford catchment and the Great Ouse Lower catchment. A small portion of land to the south of the borough falls within the Ivel catchment. The Great Ouse Bedford operational catchment contains 13 water bodies and the Great Ouse Lower operational catchment contains 20 water bodies. The latest water quality readings (2022 cycle 3) are published on the [Environment Agency Catchment Data Explorer](#). The status for watercourses in Bedford Borough, and watercourses with part of their catchment in the borough are shown in Table 10. The survey in 2022 found that two waterbodies achieved good ecological status whilst 16 achieved moderate ecological status and one achieved bad ecological status. There has been no change in the ecological status of any waterbodies in Bedford Borough from the previous survey (2019 cycle 3); however, historical survey data shows that the ecological status of Begwary Brook has worsened since 2016 whilst the ecological status of Colmworth Brook has improved from poor to moderate status.

Table 10 Water quality in water bodies in Bedford Borough in 2022

Operational catchment	Water body name	Type	Hydro-morphological designation	Ecological status	Chemical status
Great Ouse Bedford	Brogborough Lake	Lake	Artificial	Good	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Bromham Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Cople Brook	River	Heavily modified	Good	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Elstow Brook (DS Shortstown)	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Elstow Brook (US Shortstown)	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Felmersham Gravel Pits	Lake	Artificial	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Harrowden Brook	River	Heavily modified	Bad	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Ouse (Newport Pagnell to Roxton)	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Renhold Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Sharn Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Bedford	Stewartby Lake	Lake	Artificial	Moderate	Fail

Operational catchment	Water body name	Type	Hydro-morphological designation	Ecological status	Chemical status
Great Ouse Lower	Begwary Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Colmworth Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Duloe Brook	River	Not designated artificial or heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Kym	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Kym (and Til)	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Ouse (Roxton to Earith)	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Pertenhall Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail
Great Ouse Lower	Stone Brook	River	Heavily modified	Moderate	Fail

- 7.46 [Guidance](#) published by the Environment Agency on how to use the online Catchment Data Explorer should be considered when interpreting the chemical classification data: For the 2019 assessment of chemical status, the Environment Agency changed some methods and increased their evidence base. Due to these changes all water bodies in England now fail chemical status and this assessment is not comparable to previous year's assessments. Chemical status was not surveyed as part of the latest assessment in 2022 cycle 3.
- 7.47 The Environment Agency publishes a list of applications it has lodged objections to on flood risk and water quality grounds to assist local authorities and to meet their reporting obligations to government⁸. The information indicates that during 2023/24, the Environment Agency lodged objections on flood risk grounds to 13 planning applications that were submitted for development proposals in Bedford Borough. Of these, eight applications were refused, two were withdrawn, two were permitted, and one application is not yet determined (as of October 2024). Application 23/01015/MAF for use of land west of Carlton Road, Harrold as a dog walking field was granted following the submission of further information by the applicant to resolve the initial Environment Agency objection. Subsequent feedback from the Environment Agency resulted in their previous objection being withdrawn. The applicant for application 23/00231/FUL for land rear of Long Haydons, Rushden Road, Bletsoe submitted amended plans re-locating the proposed agricultural barn from Flood Zone 3 into Flood Zone 1,

⁸ Environment Agency objections to planning on the basis of flood risk and water quality 2016/2017 to 2023/2024. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-objections-to-planning-on-the-basis-of-flood-risk>

thereby negating the requirement for submission of a flood risk assessment. No permissions were granted with unresolved objections from the Environment Agency during the monitoring year.

7.48 Information published by the Environment Agency indicates it made objections to three planning applications in the borough on grounds of water quality in 2023/24. Of these, one application was refused, one was withdrawn, and one was granted permission. The officer assessment for application 23/01008/MAR for the erection of 111 dwellings at Wixams Village 4, Parcel 4 sets out the reasons why planning permission was granted. It states that in response to the Environment Agency’s objection, the applicant provided evidence of correspondence with Anglian Water indicating that the impact of the development on the capacity of the Bedford Water Recycling Centre would be minimal and that the additional flow into the Water Recycling Centre will be monitored and if a risk is identified, then appropriate action will be taken to address this. Comments received from Anglian Water confirm that necessary steps will be taken to ensure that there is sufficient treatment capacity should the local planning authority be minded to grant permission. The Water Industry Act gives the right to connect for all development with planning permission and as such Anglian Water have no objection. Notwithstanding this, the Environment Agency maintained their objection and request for a foul water strategy setting out how potential pollution to the receiving watercourse will be prevented and an appropriate phasing strategy in their latest comments. The officer assessment sets out that Anglian Water are obligated to accept flows from development with planning permission and issues relating to the Water Recycling Centre would need to be addressed by the Environment Agency and Anglian Water outside of the planning process. The application is a reserved matters approval to agree the details of the development only. Further, the local planning Authority would not be supportive of a phased approach to bringing forward the development which could result in significant build delays whilst the matter is resolved. It was concluded that the foul water impacts of the development are considered acceptable.

Monitoring indicator 13 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
13a Water stress	50S, 52	Water stress classification of the Anglian Water company area	Serious water stress for the region within which Bedford Borough sits	No change	Environment Agency
13b Water consumption	50S, 52	Average household water consumption	132.0 litres per person per day (metered and unmetered)	Down	Anglian Water

- 7.49 The Environment Agency has developed a methodology for identifying and classifying relative levels of water stress in England. The East of England, which includes the Anglian Water supply region in which Bedford lies was considered an area of serious water stress in 2013 when the classification was revised. The latest determination in 2021⁹ confirms that the Anglian Water supply region remains an area of serious water stress.
- 7.50 Anglian Water Services Limited's [Annual Integrated Report 2024](#) shows that the average household water consumption (metered and unmetered) in the Anglian Water area in 2023/24 was 132.0 litres per person per day. This is a reduction of more than 6 litres per person per day compared to 2022/23 (138.4 litres). The report goes on to state that this reduction is underpinned by the large-scale roll out of smart meters.

Monitoring indicator 14 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
14a Waste reuse / recycling / composting	47S, 48, 49	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	2015/16 = 37.5% 2016/17 = 40.7% 2017/18 = 44.5% 2018/19 = 42.9% 2019/10 = 42.7% 2020/21 = 40.0% 2021/22 = 37.0% 2022/23 = 35.7%	Down	Defra

- 7.51 The Joint Minerals and Waste Team are responsible for the determination of minerals and waste planning applications for Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council. The shared service also monitors minerals and waste sites in Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton Borough and publishes results annually in the [Minerals and Waste Monitoring Report](#). The most recent monitoring report covers the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

⁹ Environment Agency (2021) Water stressed areas – final classification 2021. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification>

7.52 Data on household waste recycling rates is not included in the Minerals and Waste Monitoring Report. Data published by Defra¹⁰ shows that the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion in 2022/23 was 35.7%, this is a reduction from the amount recorded in 2021/22 (37.0%). The decline in recycling rate may be attributed to the dry weather conditions which affected the amount of green garden waste collected in that year and the ongoing adjustments in waste management practices and variations in waste generation patterns post Covid-19.

Monitoring indicator 15 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
15a Development on designated Village Open Spaces	AD40	Number of planning permissions for development resulting in the loss of all or part of a Village Open Space Reasons why permission was granted	0 permissions	BBC
15b Development on designated Urban Open Spaces	AD43	Number of planning permissions for development resulting in the loss of all or part of an Urban Open Space Reasons why permission was granted	0 permissions	BBC
15c Development on designated Local Green Spaces	45	Number of planning permissions for development resulting in the loss of all or part of a Local Green Space Reasons why permission was granted	0 permissions	BBC

7.53 The Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 affords protection to Village Open Spaces and Urban Open Spaces through policies AD40 and AD43 respectively. Local Green Spaces were introduced in the NPPF and provide a higher tier of protection for open spaces. Local Green Spaces are designated on the Policies Map and have been determined as demonstrably special to the communities they serve. Local Plan 2030 Policy 45 acknowledges that development proposals

¹⁰ Defra (2024) Local authority collected waste management – annual results. Available at https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=46&mod-period=15&mod-area=E06000055&mod-group=AllUnitaryLalnCountry_England&mod-type=comparisonGroupType&mod-groupType=namedComparisonGroup

which result in the loss of part or all of a Local Green Space or would have a negative impact on the features that make it locally significant will not be permitted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

- 7.54 During 2023/24, no planning permissions were granted for development resulting in the loss of all or part of an Urban Open Space or a Village Open Space. This is six less than last year. No planning permissions were granted for development resulting in the loss of all or part of a Local Green Space during the monitoring year.

Monitoring Indicator 16 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
16a Development in designated local gaps	AD42	Number of planning permissions for development in local gaps Reasons why permission was granted	1 permission	BBC

- 7.55 Saved Allocations and Designations Local 2013 Policy AD42 seeks to prevent the coalescence of settlements between nearby rural settlements, particularly with the urban area. Policy AD42 restricts development which would diminish a local gap unless suitable justification can be given. The areas where the local gaps policy applies are shown on the Policies Map.
- 7.56 One planning application for development within a local gap was granted during 2023/24, this is the same as last year. The application details and the reasons for granting planning permission is summarised in Table 11.

Table 11 Planning permissions granted for development within a local gap during 2023/24 and the reasons for granting permission

Application reference	Site	Description of development	Reasons for granting planning permission
23/01685/FUL	Twin Lakes Fishery, Great Spur, Biddenham	Formation of two stock ponds with fencing	Given the site was previously acceptable for the creation of the fishery business, the development of two additional ponds and fencing would continue to retain the rural character of the designated gap.

Theme 2: Accessibility

LP2030 Objective 7. Improve the borough's transport infrastructure in order to support growth in the local economy and to make the borough more attractive as a place to live and do business. Reduce congestion in the borough, particularly into and around the town centre and by making journeys by public transport, walking and cycling more attractive to encourage an increase in more sustainable and healthy modes of transport.

LP2030 Objective 6. Deliver existing and future infrastructure needs to support growth in both urban and rural areas of the borough through the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy and other means.

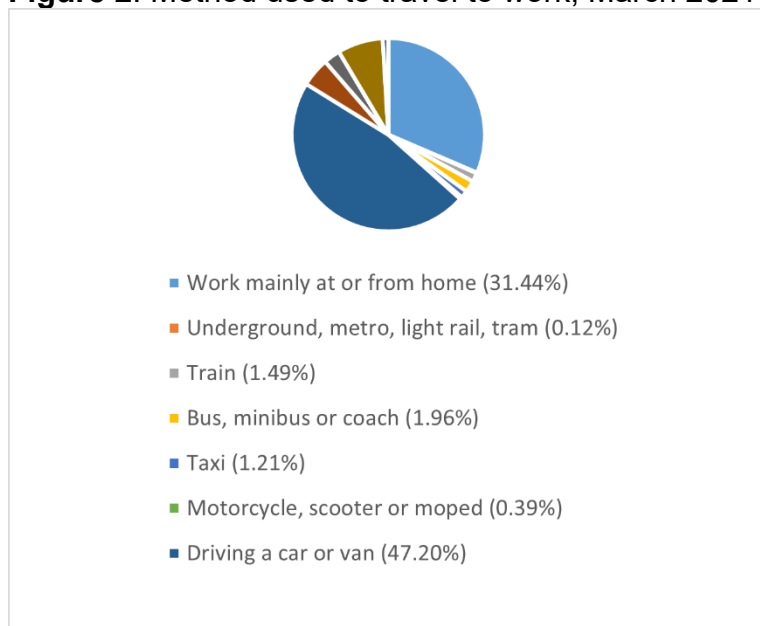
This section broadly aligns with emerging Local Plan 2040 Theme 2: More accessible.

Monitoring indicator 17 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
17a Walking activity	AD36	Percentage of adults who walk for any purpose	At least once per month = 82.2% At least once per week = 75.1% At least 3 times per week = 45.4% At least 5 times per week = 34.6%	Up	Department for Transport
17b Cycling activity	AD39	Percentage of adults who cycle for any purpose	At least once per month = 19.7% At least once per week = 15.2%	Up	Department for Transport

17c Delivery of new cycle and footways	91, AD36, AD39	Amount of newly adopted footway and cycleway delivered annually	0 metres carriageway footway and 0 metres offstreet footway was adopted during 2023/24	Down	BBC
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7.57 Information on method of travel to work from the 2021 Census has now been published. The results for Bedford Borough are illustrated in Figure 2¹¹ and shows that 62,297 usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment were commuting to work outside their home. Of these, 5.2% used public transport, 77.7% were in a car or van and 15.2%% were cycling or on foot. The data also shows that 31.4% of people aged 16 years and over in employment in Bedford Borough work mainly at or from home.

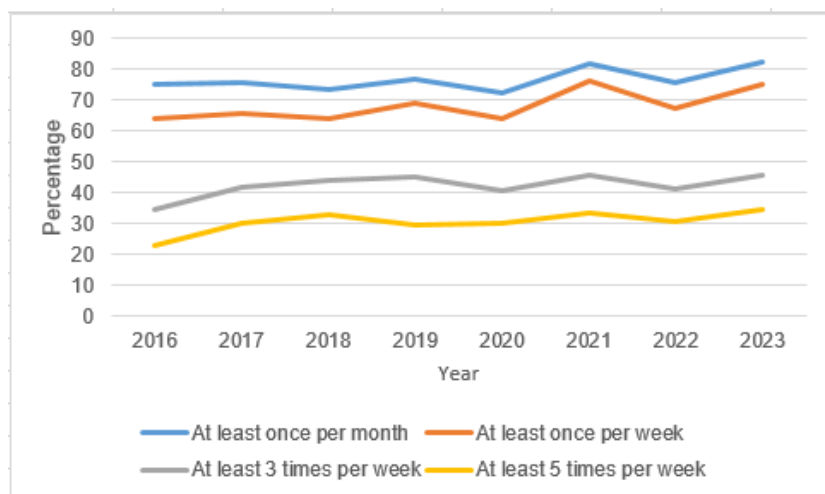
Figure 2: Method used to travel to work, March 2021



¹¹ ONS (2023) Method used to travel to work by local authority. Table TS061-2021-4. Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS061/editions/2021/versions/4>

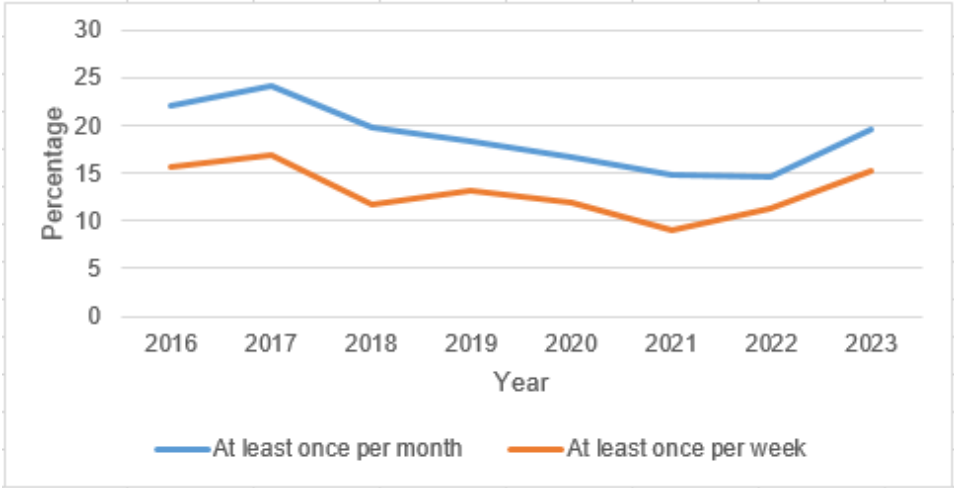
- 7.58 Sustainable transport modes as defined in the NPPF includes “any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport”.
- 7.59 Participation in walking and cycling at local authority level is compiled from the National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey¹². The data in Figure 3 generally shows a gradual increase in walking in Bedford Borough between 2016 and 2021. Whilst there was a slight decline as a result of the changes in lifestyle necessitated by the implementation of a national lockdown at the beginning of 2020 to curb the spread of Covid-19, an increase in walking was observed between 2020 and 2021. The latest data shows increases in all frequencies of walking between 2022 and 2023. In comparison, the cycling data in Figure 4 generally shows a gradual decline in cycling activity in the borough between 2017 and 2021 although the latest data shows increases in all frequencies of cycling. Cycling frequencies of at least three times per week and at least five times per week, which were reported in the last monitoring report have been removed from the published data due to the low frequencies recorded in the sample.

Figure 3: Percentage of adults who walk for any purpose by frequency 2016-2023



¹² DfT (2023) Proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for any purpose, by frequency and local authority: England. Table CW0302 and CW0303. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/walking-and-cycling-statistics-cw>

Figure 4: Percentage of adults who cycle for any purpose by frequency 2016-2023



- 7.60 During the monitoring year, the Council adopted no carriageway footway or off-street footway. This is less than the amount that was adopted in 2022/23 (1,207 metres).
- 7.61 Future planned walking and cycling provision in the borough will be set out in the Council’s forthcoming Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

Monitoring indicator 18 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
18a Availability of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points	51S, 89	Total number of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points available	186 publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points available in Bedford Borough	Department for Transport

- 7.62 The Council aims to maximise the use of sustainable transport in developments and support low carbon public and personal transport such as electric cars, bikes and buses. Data published by the Department for Transport¹³ shows that on 1 April 2024 there were 186 publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points in Bedford Borough which is an increase from 115 in July 2023. The latest data shows that within Bedford Borough there are 100.1 charging devices per 100,000 population.
- 7.63 On 16 October 2024 the Council adopted an [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2024-2027](#) with a three year delivery plan. It sets out the likely areas where new electric vehicle charging points will be installed in the borough. These areas include the urban area and larger villages.
- 7.64 As part of the Government's commitment to meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050, it made changes to the Building Regulations relating to the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Approved Document S, which came into force on 15 June 2022, applies to new residential and non-residential buildings as well as to those undergoing major renovation, requiring them to install electric vehicle chargers as part of the works being undertaken. The introduction of these requirements through the building regulations will help to boost the installation of new electric vehicle charging points nationally.
- 7.65 In 2021, the Council published a bus strategy for the borough: the [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#). The strategy sets out the gaps in the present network and in response includes a number of projects and ambitions relating to future provision. The majority of this future provision does not relate to physical infrastructure changes, rather initiatives including encouraging the digitalisation of ticketing and improving timetabling information.

¹³ DfT (2024) Publicly available electric vehicle charging devices by local authority, 1 July 2023. Available at <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/index.html>

Monitoring indicator 19 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
19a Delivery of transport infrastructure and network improvements	90S	Details relating to progress made in delivering the transport infrastructure and network improvements identified in Policy 90S	<p>During the monitoring year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May 2023 the East West Rail Company published a Route Update Announcement which shows the preferred route for the section of railway between Bedford and Cambridge. In May 2023, after considering the Outline Business Case submitted by the Council; the Secretary of State for Transport agreed that construction of Wixams railway station should proceed. Works to improve the Black Cat roundabout began in December 2023. Between February and April 2024, the garage, hotel and commercial building on the southbound side of the A1 between the Great North Road and Black Cat roundabout were demolished, enabling work to start on building the new road link. 	BBC National Highways East West Rail

7.66 A number of strategic infrastructure projects, which have implications for transport and the highways network within the borough, are identified in Local Plan 2030 Policy 90S. The policy states that the Council will work with its partners, agencies and developers to deliver reduced congestion around the town centre and key strategic routes while promoting sustainable transport modes. The safeguarded routes are shown on the Policies Map.

7.67 Progress on each project at the end of the monitoring year is presented in Table 12 and where possible, a more up to date position is provided.

Table 12 Status of transport schemes identified in Local Plan 2030 Policy 90S

Scheme	Description	Status at 31/03/2024
<p>i. Redevelopment of Bedford Rail Station and additional car parking provision</p>	<p>The Bedford Town Investment Plan emphasises the need to develop an attractive road corridor along Midland Road, between the station and the town centre. Separately from the Towns Fund bid, but supported by it, it is also anticipated that Bedford Midland Station will be redeveloped as part of East West Rail.</p>	<p>East West Rail company undertook a consultation on its options for the route its railway will take through Bedford Borough including proposals for the redevelopment of Bedford station in spring 2021.</p> <p>The Bedford Area Strategic Advice document (August 2022) produced by Network Rail recommends a new London-bound fast line platform (also known as up-fast) be built at Bedford station. The preferred option is to realign the down-fast line and extend the current platform 4 out over the alignment of the current down-fast to create an island platform. The document recommends that improvements are made to station facilities and gate line capacity as part of the planned East West Rail redevelopment of the station.</p> <p>A Route Update Announcement published in May 2023 by the East West Rail Company confirms the proposals which will be taken forward for further development. The Government’s commitment to the delivery of East West Rail to Bedford and Cambridge was endorsed in the 2024 Autumn Budget Statement.</p>

Scheme	Description	Status at 31/03/2024
ii. Development opportunities around Ford End Road and Prebend Street		A bid for Housing Infrastructure Fund resources to construct the Prebend Street Relief Road has been submitted, and the Council is working with Homes England to develop this further.
iii. Wixams railway station	A new station at Wixams on the Midland Main line south of Bedford will deliver connectivity to residents of the strategic housing site of Wixams and the station is considered to have potential to act as an enabler for wider growth across the sub-region.	<p>Detailed planning permission for the station (22/01933/MAR) was secured in February 2023; and, in May 2023, after considering the Outline Business Case submitted by the Council; the Secretary of State for Transport agreed that construction should proceed. Planning application 24/01889/MAR for amendments to the design of the station building and car park is currently awaiting decision.</p> <p>In July 2024, the Council signed the formal contract with Network Rail to start work on the station. Enabling works are anticipated to begin in autumn 2024. Trains are programmed to be using the station late in 2026.</p>

<p>iv. East-West rail scheme</p>	<p>The exact route and stations along East West Rail connection stage 2 (Bletchley to Bedford) have yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>The redevelopment of Bedford Midland and Bedford St. Johns stations are expected as part of, or coinciding with, East West Rail. Connection stage 2 (Bletchley to Bedford) which is projected to open in 2030.</p> <p>Connection Stage 3 (Bedford to Cambridge) is currently proposed to open in the mid-2030s.</p>	<p>East West Rail Oxford to Bicester is complete and the section between Bicester and Bletchley has recently been completed and following testing and training over the coming months is on course to begin passenger services in 2025.</p> <p>The section between Bletchley and Bedford is currently progressing through detailed design.</p> <p>The Government's commitment to the delivery of East West Rail was confirmed in the 2024 Autumn Budget Statement. It states that work on the Marston Vale Line would be 'accelerated' with services running by 2030.</p> <p>A final non-statutory consultation on East West Rail is currently underway and runs to January 2025. A statutory consultation is expected to take place in Winter 2025/26.</p>
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v. Schemes identified in the Bedford Town Centre Strategy (Transporting Bedford 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britannia Road improvements • Bromham Road / Shakespeare Road / Ashburnham Road junction • Bedford High Street • Clapham Road / A6 / superstore (northbound) and Clapham Road / Manton Lane / Shakespeare Road • Ampthill Road corridor • Cauldwell Street / Britannia Road junction 	Works completed
vi. Marsh Leys Junction Improvements	Improvements to junctions	Works completed
vii. A6 / A421 junction improvements	Resurfacing and junction improvements	Works completed
viii. Dualling of the Bedford Western Bypass	The A6-A421 link	The Council has commissioned consultants to prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case for submission to the Department for Transport to gain Programme Entry to the Major Road Network programme. The scheme is an agreed priority for the England's Economic Heartlands SNTB in the 2025-2030 period.
x. Improvements on Highway England's ¹⁴ strategic road network	A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet – upgrade to a new 10-mile dual carriageway with a number of junction improvements	Work to build the new A421 dual carriageway started in April 2024. The road is scheduled to open to traffic in spring 2027.

¹⁴ Highways England is now National Highways

	<p>A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon – outside of Bedford Borough but could influence the borough</p> <p>A45 / A6 Chowns Mill roundabout improvement – outside of Bedford Borough but it provides an important strategic connection in the region</p> <p>M1 J13-J16 smart motorways programme – outside of Bedford Borough but it could influence the borough</p>	<p>Works have been completed on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon</p> <p>Works have been completed on the A45 / A6 Chowns Mill roundabout improvement, and</p> <p>Works have been completed on the M1 J13-J16 smart motorways programme.</p>
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Monitoring indicator 20 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
20a Financial contributions towards the delivery of infrastructure	58S, 86S, 87, 90	Details of planning contributions secured towards new and expansion of existing infrastructure and the most up to date Infrastructure Delivery Plan	<p>During the 2022/23 monitoring year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £6,039,065 in Community Infrastructure Levy contributions have been collected. • The Council spent £3,086,378 on improvements to Brookside Care Home, Bedford Western Bypass (phase 2), Transporting Bedford 2020, Northern Gateway, Bromham Road cycle bridge, improvements at Allhallows and Paula Radcliffe Way and public open spaces' footbridges. • 16 new s106 agreements were signed and the funding secured through these agreements equates to £444,697 at present. • The Council received £5,555,843 in s106 contributions. • The Council spent £1,952,774 of s106 contributions across projects in highways, education, rights of way and green space. <p>Information for the 2023/24 monitoring year will be published in Bedford Borough Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-2024</p>	BBC

7.68 The Council has prepared, in consultation with service providers, an Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out strategic and local infrastructure requirements to support planned new development in Bedford Borough over the local plan period.

- 7.69 The Council did not report details of planning contributions secured towards new and expansion of existing infrastructure last year as at that time the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022-2023 had not been published and therefore information relating to 2022/23 is presented in this monitoring report. Bedford Borough Council's [Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022-2023](#) highlights that over the reported year, £6,039,065 in Community Infrastructure Levy contributions were collected. The Council spent £3,086,378 on improvements to Brookside Care Home, Bedford Western Bypass (phase 2), Transporting Bedford 2020, Northern Gateway, Bromham Road cycle bridge, improvements at Allhallows and Paula Radcliffe Way and public open spaces' footbridges. This is more than the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy contributions that were collected in the previous year (£4,021,119).
- 7.70 During 2022/23, 16 new s106 agreements were signed and the funding secured through these agreements equates to £444,697 at present. The Council received £5,555,843 in s106 contributions and spent £1,952,774 across projects in highways, education, rights of way and green space. This is more than the amount of s106 contributions received (£1,885,056) and spent (£1,237,635) in the previous year.
- 7.71 Bedford Borough Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2023-2024 has not yet been published. When it has been completed it will be available to view on the Council's [Community Infrastructure Levy web page](#) and key headlines will be reported in the next monitoring report.

Monitoring indicator 21 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
21a Telecommunications infrastructure	95, 96	Number of planning permissions granted for telecommunications infrastructure	0 applications for domestic equipment permitted 3 applications for communications infrastructure permitted	BBC

- 7.72 Policy 94 of the Local Plan 2030 sets out the requirements expected from new development to provide on-site infrastructure to support the installation of, and allow the future upgrade and maintenance of, fibre optic broadband. The policy states that appropriate open access fibre optic infrastructure to enable high speed and reliable broadband connection should be in accordance with national and local objectives to increase coverage.

- 7.73 The national government objective for the provision of superfast broadband to 95% of UK premises by 2020 has been achieved. Coverage stands at 98.6% (≥ 30 Mbps) across the borough with superfast speeds
- 7.74 The government target now is to provide up to 85% of UK premises with gigabit capabilities by 2025. Data published by [Think Broadband](#) shows that 82.85% of properties in Bedford have access to gigabit speeds. This is down from 92.65% last year.
- 7.75 The Openreach Full Fibre investment programme has the objective of providing 20 million premises throughout the UK with ultrafast full fibre broadband by 2026 and the [deployment map](#) shows that Openreach has started its Full Fibre upgrade in Bedford Borough. Openreach intend to continue building past 2026 to reach as many as 30 million premises by the end of the decade assuming the conditions for investment are still supportive. This investment by Openreach includes the Fibre First programme which means new development will be planned with a full fibre solution. Similar to Openreach, [Virgin Media announced in December 2021](#) that they have completed Project Lightning which has upgraded their network to offer gigabit broadband.
- 7.76 The development of telecommunications infrastructure is mostly covered under permitted development. Where planning permission is required, Local Plan 2030 Policy 95 is used to assess proposals for domestic equipment and Policy 96 relates to the consideration of telecommunication equipment. During 2023/24, no planning applications for domestic equipment were permitted and three applications for communications infrastructure were permitted. Six applications for communications infrastructure were refused due to the proposals being visually prominent in the street scene.

Theme 3: Delivering growth

LP2030 Objective 1. Deliver high quality growth that will facilitate the development of more sustainable and inclusive places for local communities, which are equipped to respond to the impacts of climate and economic change and offer the opportunity to live more healthy lifestyles. Where it is viable and sustainable to do so, encourage the re-use of land that has been previously developed.

LP2030 Objective 3. Support a stronger local economy delivering economic growth, broadening employment opportunities, and attracting and enabling high value businesses to prosper for the benefit of the borough’s existing and future residents.

LP2030 Objective 4. Create a distinctive, attractive and multi-functional town centre for the future with a particularly strong focus on leisure and visitor economy activities.

This section broadly aligns with emerging Local Plan 2040 Theme 3: More prosperous.

Monitoring indicator 22 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
22a Progress in meeting the number of net additional jobs required to 2030	69S	Information about the number of net additional jobs created.	7,000 jobs created between 2015 and 2022	BRES

7.77 The Bedford Economy and Employment Land Study 2015 and the Employment Land Needs Addendum 2018 estimates a requirement for 6,900 additional jobs in the borough between 2015 and 2030. This requirement is outlined in Local Plan

2030 Policy 69S. The policy states that the main focus for jobs growth will be the urban area and on the employment sites that are already allocated in the development plan.

- 7.78 According to the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)¹⁵, in 2015 there were approximately 73,000 jobs in Bedford Borough and the latest data shows that in 2022 there were approximately 80,000 jobs in the borough. In the period 2015 to 2022 an additional 7,000 jobs were recorded which exceeds the total number of additional jobs required by Policy 69S to 2030.
- 7.79 BRES data shows that in the period 2015 to 2022, the “property” broad industrial group experienced the largest proportional increase, followed by the “construction” broad industrial group. With regard to actual increases in employment, the “transportation and storage”, “accommodation and food service”, and “health and social work” broad industrial groups each exhibited an increase of approximately 2,000 jobs between 2015 and 2022. In terms of job losses, the “other service activities” broad industrial group experienced both the largest proportional and actual decrease from approximately 3,000 jobs in 2015 to 1,250 jobs in 2022, representing a fall of 58%.

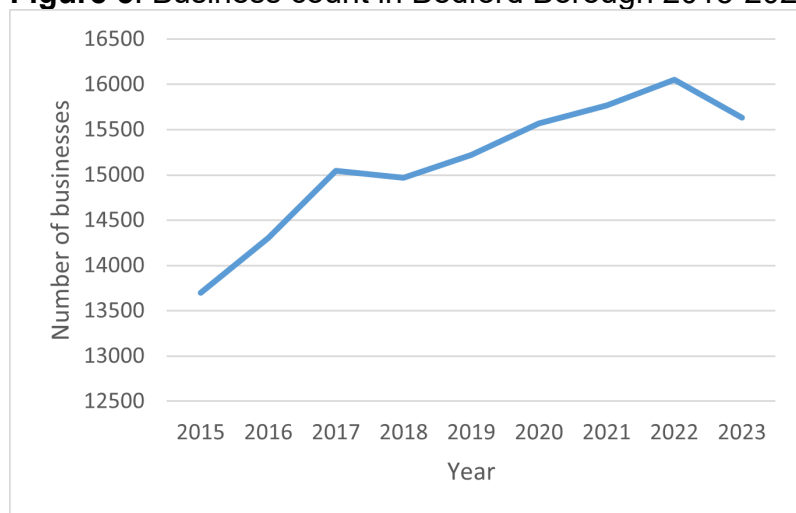
Monitoring indicator 23 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
23a Business creation	69S, 70, 71, 72S, 74, 75	Number of new businesses created (net)	A gain of 1,935 businesses between 2015 and 2023	IDBR

- 7.80 Data from the Inter-Departmental Business Register¹⁶ presented in Figure 5 shows a reduction of 420 businesses for Bedford Borough between 2022 and 2023 following a peak in 2022. However, there has been a notable increase of 14% in the number of businesses in the borough since 2015.

¹⁵ ONS (via NOMIS), Labour market profile (2023) Available at nomisweb.co.uk

¹⁶ ONS (2023) UK business counts from the Inter Departmental Business Register. Available at: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157199/subreports/idbr_time_series/report.aspx?

Figure 5: Business count in Bedford Borough 2015-2023



Monitoring indicator 24 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
24a Preparation of Employment and Skills Plans in accordance with Policy 74	74	Number of applications requiring an Employment and Skills Plan to be prepared / number of Employment and Skills Plans prepared	0 permissions	BBC

7.81 It is important for the workforce to have relevant skills for the borough’s future economy. A highly skilled and employable workforce, with access to training and work opportunities, is essential to support the borough’s growth agenda by helping to attract inward investment and enabling local businesses to expand. The local plan aims to assist delivery of the job opportunities needed to achieve this ambition including education and training opportunities. To facilitate this, Local Plan 2030 Policy 74 requires that an employment and skills plan is provided for development over 200 dwellings or 5 hectares of ‘B’ class uses.

7.82 During the monitoring year, no planning applications were eligible to submit an employment and skills plan, which is the same as the previous year.

7.83 'Employment generating uses' are traditionally known as 'B' Class uses (offices, industrial, warehousing and distribution). The Use Classes Order was updated on 1 September 2020. Class B1 Business was revoked and replaced by Class E(g). Class E – Commercial Business and Service is broken down into 11 parts. Class E(g) uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity are as follows:

- E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions.
- E(g)(ii) Research and development of products and processes.
- E(g)(iii) Industrial processes.

Use Class B2 General Industry and B8 Storage and Distribution are retained.

7.84 Bedford Borough Council carries out employment monitoring on sites where more than 100 sqm of employment floorspace is proposed.

7.85 Table 13 summarises the total amount of employment floorspace (Use Classes B1, B2, B8 and E(g)) completed in the borough for each year from 1 April 2015.

Table 13 Summary of B1, B2, B8 and E(g) floorspace losses and completions in Bedford Borough 2015/16-2023/24

Year	Gross internal floorspace loss (sqm)	Gross internal floorspace gain (sqm)	Net internal floorspace total (sqm)
2015/16	40,897	24,225	-16,672
2016/17	12,917	25,355	12,438
2017/18	29,314	14,049	-15,265
2018/19	3,463	66,818	63,355
2019/20	13,033	129,357	116,324
2020/21	207	93,399	93,192
2021/22	2,264	204,104	201,840
2022/23	3,294	44,332	41,038
2023/24	544	1,648	1,104

- 7.86 Local Plan 2030 does not plan for an increase in the existing employment land supply figure as supporting evidence suggested that existing supply, allocated in previous plans, was sufficient to meet future needs to 2030.
- 7.87 The local plan categorises existing employment sites into four groups to reflect recommended future action: protect and maintain, protect and enhance, protect and develop, and monitor and manage. Sites classified as monitor and manage are those that may not continue to meet the needs of businesses in the future as they are likely to reach the end of their functional life within the plan period. Redevelopment of such sites to non-class B employment uses will normally be supported by the Council (Policy 71). Sites within the remaining categories, collectively known as key employment sites, will be expected to remain primarily in class B employment use (Policy 70).
- 7.88 Progress with delivery of employment policy allocations carried forward from the Local Plan 2002 and Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 is reported in the Allocated Sites section of this monitoring report.

Monitoring indicator 25 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
25a Net additional employment floorspace delivered	69S, 70, 71, 72S, 74, 75	Annual net gain / loss of B2/B8 and E(g) employment floorspace	E(g)(i) = -404 sqm E(g)(ii) = 0 sqm E(g)(iii) = 500 sqm E(g) unspecified = 0 sqm B2 = 809 sqm B8 = 199 sqm E(g) / B2 / B8 mixed = 0 sqm Total = 1,104 sqm	BBC

7.89 For the 2023/24 monitoring year, 1,104 sqm net additional employment floorspace has been completed in the borough. Whilst this is significantly lower when compared to previous monitoring years, it follows a considerable gain in net additional employment floorspace in 2021/22 (201,840 sqm). Most new employment floorspace completed during the monitoring year was in B2 general industrial and E(g)(iii) light industrial uses. The total includes the erection of a 600 sqm industrial canopy at H E Payne Transport Ltd, Wyboston (23/00340/S73A); a 209 sqm extension to Kempston Ltd, Brunel Road, Bedford (22/00448/FUL); and change of use of a grain store to a 500 sqm light industrial workshop in Pavenham (21/01062/FUL).

Monitoring indicator 26 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
26a Loss of employment floorspace	71	Annual development completions resulting in a loss of employment floorspace to non-employment use Reasons why permission was granted	E(g)(i) loss = 544 sqm E(g)(ii) loss = 0 sqm E(g)(iii) loss = 0 sqm E(g) unspecified loss = 0 sqm B2 loss = 0 sqm B8 loss = 0 sqm E(g) / B2 / B8 mixed loss = 0 sqm Total loss = 544 sqm	BBC

7.90 During the monitoring year, no employment floorspace was lost through redevelopment for employment uses. 544 sqm employment floorspace was lost through change of use to non-employment uses, this is down from 2,517 sqm last year. Losses were focused within the Bedford urban area. The reasons for granting planning permission are given in Table 14.

Table 14 Development completions resulting in a loss of employment floorspace to non-employment use during 2023/24 and the reasons for granting permission

Application reference	Site	Description of development	Reasons for granting planning permission
21/02487/FUL	115 and 118 Bedford Heights, Brickhill Drive, Bedford	Change of use from office to driving test centre	The proposed use is considered to be compatible with the wider employment site and would have no unacceptable impact upon visual amenity, neighbouring amenity and highway safety. The development would also provide a community facility for the local population to take their driving test.

7.91 In 2023/24, 304 sqm office floorspace was lost through permitted development rights for the change of use of offices to dwellings at 113 High Street, Bedford (22/00956/CPNMA), this is down from 2,284 sqm last year.

Monitoring indicator 27 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
27a Employment land supply	69S, 70, 71, 72S, 74, 75	Outstanding supply of B2 / B8 and E(g) net employment floorspace with planning permission	E(g)(i) = -2,739 sqm E(g)(ii) = -167 sqm E(g)(iii) = 2,340 sqm E(g) unspecified = 38,907 sqm B2 = 1,825 sqm B8 = 8,437 sqm E(g) / B2 / B8 mixed = 602 sqm Total = 49,205 sqm	BBC

- 7.92 At 31 March 2024 there was employment floorspace (net) to be implemented equating to 49,205 sqm. This included sites which have extant planning permissions. The majority of this floorspace is within unspecified E(g) offices / research and development / light industrial uses. B8 storage and distribution uses also represent a high proportion of these permissions. Most outstanding floorspace is located at existing employment sites in the Bedford and Kempston urban area, established businesses in the rural area, and at saved Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 allocation AD13 (Marston Vale Innovation Park, Wootton). Outline planning permission for a business park development with up to 23,400 sqm floorspace at Wyboston Lakes (22/01774/MAO) was allowed on appeal during the monitoring year and also provides a contribution.
- 7.93 The amount of outstanding employment floorspace (net) to be implemented at 31/03/2024 is more than at the end of the previous monitoring year (31,800 sqm).

Monitoring indicator 28 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
28a Amount of new build employment floorspace permitted in the countryside	75	Annual B2/B8 and E(g) new build employment floorspace permitted in the countryside	E(g)(i) = 772 sqm E(g)(ii) = 0 sqm E(g)(iii) = 1,200 sqm E(g) unspecified = 1,615 sqm B2 = 1,811 sqm B8 = 1,481 sqm E(g) / B2 / B8 mixed = 0 sqm Total = 6,879 sqm	BBC
28b Amount of new build employment floorspace completed in the countryside	75	Annual B2/B8 and E(g) new build employment floorspace completed in the countryside	E(g)(i) = 0 sqm E(g)(ii) = 0 sqm E(g)(iii) = 0 sqm E(g) unspecified = 0 sqm B2 = 600 sqm B8 = 0 sqm E(g) / B2 / B8 mixed = 0 sqm Total = 600 sqm	BBC

- 7.94 Local Plan 2030 Policy 75 encourages new employment development that needs to be in the countryside in order to support the rural economy, providing certain criteria can be satisfied. During 2023/24, several agricultural storage barns to support farming and other rural activities such as commercial equestrian-related developments were granted. A total of 6,879 sqm new build employment floorspace was granted in the countryside, comprising a 1,024 sqm storage building in Wilden (22/02694/MAF), 938 sqm industrial units with offices in Bolnhurst (22/01534/FUL), 1,200 sqm light industrial units in Stagsden (23/01809/MAF), and a 149 sqm office building in Kempston Rural (23/01968/S73). The total also includes six office units of 262 sqm as part of the redevelopment of Bromham Mill (22/02658/MAF), mixed E(g) / B8 buildings in Colesden (23/01022/MAR), and a 510 sqm industrial extension in Sharnbrook (23/02468/MAF). 1,064 sqm Class E(g) use employment floorspace was granted under permitted development rights through the Class R (agricultural buildings to a flexible commercial use) prior notification process during the monitoring year. The total amount of new build employment floorspace granted in the countryside during 2023/24 is significantly more than last year (982sqm Class B2 general industrial uses).
- 7.95 During 2023/24, 600 sqm new build employment floorspace was completed in the countryside. This new floorspace is for Class B2 general industrial uses in Wyboston. The amount of new employment floorspace completed in the countryside is less than last year when 4,038 sqm for Class B2 general industrial and unspecified E(g) offices / research and development / light industrial uses was completed.
- 7.96 Government guidance in the NPPF requires a ‘town centres first’ approach to the location of new retail, office and leisure uses defined as ‘main town centre uses’ (known as the sequential test). It requires planning policies to promote the long term vitality and viability of town centres, meeting anticipated needs for town centre uses in or on the edge of centres where sites are available or otherwise in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre. The main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF are summarised below:
- Retail (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres).
 - Leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls).
 - Offices.
 - Arts, culture and tourism (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

- 7.97 The Bedford Retail Study 2015 (updated 2018) looked at the need for additional retail floorspace over the plan period. The study showed that, if existing commitments are taken up, there will be additional capacity for 11,790 sqm net floorspace for comparison goods and 2,980 sqm for convenience goods. By the end of the plan period at 2030 this is forecast to increase to 34,210 sqm net floorspace for comparison goods and 4,330 sqm net floorspace for convenience goods.
- 7.98 The Commercial Leisure Needs Study 2018 concludes that for most commercial leisure categories there is adequate provision. However, over the plan period there may be a requirement for additional restaurants and cafes, and qualitative changes may result in a need emerging for more health and fitness centres.
- 7.99 The hierarchy of town centres in Bedford Borough is set out in Local Plan 2030 Policy 77S. This policy defines a four tier hierarchy of 1) Strategic Centre (Bedford), 2) District Centre (Kempston), 3) Local Centres (including 5 'urban centres' and 8 'key service centres'), and 4) Neighbourhood Centres.
- 7.100 Bedford Borough Council carries out town centre use monitoring on sites where more than 100 sqm of employment floorspace is proposed.

Monitoring indicator 29 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
29a Potential creation / loss of floorspace for town centre uses within defined centres	15, 77S, 78, 79, 80, 81	Planning permissions for town centre uses within defined centres. Details of floorspace created / lost	Retail = -259 sqm Leisure and entertainment = 221 sqm Offices = -2,912 sqm Arts, culture and tourism = 0 sqm Unspecified town centre uses = 850 sqm Total = -2,100 sqm	BBC
29b Potential creation / loss of floorspace for town centre uses outside defined centres	15, 77S, 78, 79, 80, 81	Planning permissions for town centre uses outside defined centres. Details of floorspace created / lost	Retail = 105 sqm Leisure and entertainment = 653 sqm Offices = 54 sqm Arts, culture and tourism = 0 sqm Total = 812 sqm	BBC

7.101 During 2023/24, planning permissions resulting in a loss of 2,100 sqm town centre use floorspace within defined centres in the borough were granted. Table 15 shows the net amount of floorspace that was permitted for town centre uses within the borough's defined centres during the monitoring year.

Table 15 Net amount of floorspace for town centre uses within defined centres granted planning permission during 2023/24

Centre	Retail (sqm)	Leisure and entertainment (sqm)	Offices (sqm)	Arts, culture and tourism (sqm)	Unspecified town centre uses (sqm)
Town centre	-426	221	-2745	0	850
District centre	0	0	0	0	0
Local centres	167	0	-167	0	0
Neighbourhood centres	0	0	0	0	0

7.102 The loss of 2,745 sqm office floorspace from within Bedford town centre results from a grant of prior approval for change of use from office to residential. Permission for change of use of 107 High Street, Bedford (21/01818/FUL) from retail to restaurant and residential results in the loss of 426 sqm retail floorspace and the gain of 221 sqm leisure and entertainment floorspace within the town centre. The gain of 850 sqm unspecified commercial, business and service floorspace within the town centre results from outline permission for redevelopment of Greyfriars Police Station, 32 Greyfriars, Bedford (20/00140/MAO).

7.103 Within the local centres, permission for change of use of 1 Brereton Road, Bedford (23/01275/COU) results in the loss of 167 sqm office floorspace to retail use.

7.104 During 2023/24, planning permissions resulting in a net gain of 812 sqm town centre use floorspace outside defined centres in the borough were granted. The application details and the reasons for granting planning permission are summarised in Table 16.

Table 16 Planning permissions granted for town centre uses outside defined centres during 2023/24 and the reasons for granting permission

Application reference	Site	Description of development	Reasons for granting planning permission
22/02658/MAF	Bromham Mill, Bridge End, Bromham	Redevelopment including change of use of front barn to a 119 sqm café, change of use of Mill House to a wellbeing hub (200 sqm) and offices (80 sqm), change of use of stables and workshop to form six retail units of 105 sqm in total. Erection of six office units of 144 sqm in total.	The proposal would result in the continuation of existing uses within the site, including a café, shop and museum / gallery. As these are established uses with planning permission, they are acceptable in principle. The modest scale of the retail facilities indicate that they are intended to serve local needs. It is therefore appropriate that they should be located in Bromham rather than a higher level town centre such as Bedford or Kempston.
22/02755/FUL	Land at Bedford Link Logistics Park, The Branston Way, Kempston	Construction of a drive-thru coffee shop measuring 167 sqm	The sequential assessment demonstrates that the site is the most sequentially preferable to accommodate the proposed use.
23/02413/FUL	Land at B&M Home Store, Riverfield Drive, Bedford	Construction of a drive-thru coffee shop measuring 167 sqm	The sequential assessment demonstrates that no suitable sequentially preferred sites are available to accommodate the proposed use.

Monitoring indicator 30 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
30a Delivery of floorspace for town centre uses within defined centres	77S, 78, 79, 81	Amount of development completed for town centre uses within defined centres	Retail = -577 sqm Leisure and entertainment = 37 sqm Offices = 0 sqm Arts, culture and tourism = 418 sqm Total = -122 sqm	BBC
30b Delivery of floorspace for town centre uses outside defined centres	77S, 78, 79, 81	Amount of development completed for town centre uses outside defined centres	Retail = 240 sqm Leisure and entertainment = 119 sqm Offices = 0 sqm Arts, culture and tourism = 0 sqm Total = 359 sqm	BBC

7.105 During 2023/24, developments resulting in a net loss of 122 sqm town centre use floorspace within defined centres in the borough were completed. Table 17 shows the net amount of floorspace for town centre uses that was completed within the borough's defined centres during 2023/24.

Table 17 Net amount of floorspace for town centre uses completed within defined centres during 2023/24

Centre	Retail (sqm)	Leisure and entertainment (sqm)	Offices (sqm)	Arts, culture and tourism (sqm)
Town centre	-577	37	0	418
District centre	0	0	0	0
Local centres	0	0	0	0
Neighbourhood centres	0	0	0	0

7.106 During 2023/24, 577 sqm retail floorspace was lost in Bedford town centre through the change of use of 2 Allhallows to an adult gaming centre (22/01168/COU) and the change of use of the upper floors of 113 High Street to serviced apartments

(22/02537/FUL). 418 sqm arts, culture and tourism floorspace was completed in Bedford town centre through the extension and change of use of the upper floors of 113 High Street to serviced apartments (22/02537/FUL). A net gain of 37 sqm leisure and entertainment floorspace in the town centre resulted from the completion of a 159 sqm adult gaming centre at 2 Allhallows (22/01168/COU) and the change of use of 21 Harpur Street from a 122 sqm café to a hot food takeaway (22/02497/FUL). No additional floorspace for town centre uses was completed in Kempston district centre or the borough's local centres and neighbourhood centres during the monitoring year.

7.107 Developments resulting in a net gain of 359 sqm town centre use floorspace outside defined centres in the borough were completed during 2023/24, which is more than last year. A 240 sqm farm shop was completed at Homefield, Balls Lane, Willington (21/02684/COU) and a 350 sqm drive-thru restaurant was completed at Fairhill, Bedford (21/03288/FUL). Demolition of The Chequers Inn, Yelden (22/01747/FUL) resulted in a loss of 231 sqm leisure and entertainment floorspace.

Monitoring indicator 31 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
31a Preparation of impact assessments in accordance with Policy 78	77S, 78, 79, 81	Number of applications requiring an impact assessment to be prepared / number of impact assessments prepared for retail and leisure development proposals outside of defined centres.	0 impact assessments	BBC

7.108 Local Plan 2030 Policy 78 sets local thresholds for retail and leisure proposals to be subject to an impact assessment if they are to be located outside of Bedford town centre, Kempston district centre and the local centres. For leisure development the threshold is 2,500 sqm gross floorspace. For retail development: i. if the nearest centre to the proposed development is Bedford town centre or Kempston district centre, the threshold is 500 sqm net floorspace; ii. if the nearest centre to the proposed development is a local centre, the threshold is 200 sqm net floorspace.

7.109 During 2023/24, no planning permissions for development exceeding the local threshold for retail or leisure use were granted. This is the same as last year.

7.110 A test of policy for main town centre uses is its impact on the vitality and viability of a retail centre. National Planning Practice Guidance¹⁷ offers a set of indicators that may be monitored to assess the health of a centre and its performance over time: diversity of land uses, vacancy levels, pedestrian flows (footfall), retailer representation, customer perceptions, commercial rents and yields, crime, accessibility and environmental quality. Information on town centre vacancies and pedestrian flows (footfall) is monitored annually by the Council. Furthermore, data on the diversity of uses in Bedford town centre was collated during the health check completed by Nexus in June 2020 to inform the [Bedford Town Centre Study](#). Perceptions of safety, consideration of accessibility, environmental quality and retailer representation for each retail centre was informed by the Nexus site visits and the findings are published in the Town Centre Study. Regular updating of the indicators over time will help to assess the overall success of local plan policies in this regard.

Monitoring indicator 32 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
32a Pedestrian footfall in Bedford town centre	77S, 78, 79, 81	Activity from counters in Bedford town centre locations	2015/16 = 14,073,911 2016/17 = 14,637,699 2017/18 = 14,629,509 2018/19 = 13,862,826 2019/20 = 12,468,422 2020/21 = 6,966,412 2021/22 = 8,501,206 2022/23 = 30,980,000 2023/24 = 36,025,620	BBC

¹⁷ PPG Paragraph 006; Reference ID: 2b-006-20190722

32b Occupancy rates	77S, 78, 79, 81	Vacancies (by unit count) in Bedford town centre	2015 = 13.0% 2016 = 12.6% 2017 = 11.7% 2018 = 10.9% 2019 = 13.0% 2020 = 14.0% 2021 = 13.0% 2022 = 13.0% 2023 = 17.0%	BBC
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- 7.111 Pedestrian footfall in Bedford town centre has been provided by two Springboard counters, one located on Silver Street and one on Midland Road since 2011. Through the Town Deal, funding has been provided for 11 new cameras to be installed across the town centre and these have now been in situ since April 2022. These cameras are different to the Springboard counters and are provided by O2 using their spatial insights and micro location technologies, meaning the data provided is more in depth and will allow for a better understanding of Bedford town centre. There is some disparity between the new cameras and the Springboard counters meaning that monthly comparisons since April 2022 are available but the new data is not comparable to previous year's data.
- 7.112 Historical data shows that pedestrian footfall in Bedford town centre increased between 2015/16 and 2016/17 but fell between 2016/17 and 2020/21. The data for 2021/22 shows an increase in footfall above that recorded in the previous year however the footfall in 2020/21 and 2021/22 is significantly lower than previous years as a result of the Covid-19 government enforced lockdowns and restrictions, and the reluctance of people to visit crowded areas. For 2023/24, the total pedestrian footfall, using the data provided by the O2 cameras was approximately 36 million, which is more than last year (30.98 million). Annual footfall data collected by the new O2 cameras will be presented in future monitoring reports which will enable comparison to the 2022/23 monitoring year, when the O2 cameras were installed.
- 7.113 A high concentration of vacant properties within a retail centre can detract from its vitality and viability by reducing the centre's attractiveness for shoppers. This is because when many of the shop units are not in active use, there is less reason for visiting the centre, as there will often be a smaller number of retail and leisure attractions. However, it is important to acknowledge that a degree of vacancy is inevitable and indeed desirable. Some 'churn' is expected in the market as units alter and change, as new businesses come in, and others leave. In this context, vacant units can be found in even the strongest of town centres.

- 7.114 Bedford town centre experienced reducing vacancy rates (by unit count) between 2015 and 2018, before a peak of 14% in 2020. Vacancy rates for 2021 and 2022 reduced from 2020 levels to 13% but have since risen to 17% in 2023. In terms of unit numbers, the peak of 17% in 2023 accounted for 97 units being vacant which is higher than the number of units vacant in 2022 (78), 2021 (77) and 2022 (75). In 2023, most vacant units were in mixed Class E/F.2 and Class E uses. The 2023 vacancy rate for Bedford town centre at 17% is higher than the national average of 14%.
- 7.115 Projects and developments to improve the town centre environment and drive economic growth are ongoing and are being progressed through initiatives including the recently completed High Street Heritage Action Zone, Towns Fund, and One Public Estate programme.
- 7.116 Following the successful submission of the [Town Investment Plan](#), Bedford was awarded £22.6m to deliver [seven key regeneration, transport and skills-led projects](#). The regeneration of the Station Quarter and Midland Road will bring investment to these spaces as key gateways to the town centre and will see investment in walking and cycling infrastructure. The suggested public realm improvements to St Paul's Square will enhance the experience for both shoppers and visitors, increasing the vibrancy of the centre. The proposed investment in roads, pedestrian and cycling network will promote greater accessibility and mobility, while relieving pinch points across the town centre, reducing congestion and creating a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians. The funding also includes a scheme for funding investment in health, science and digital skills through expanding the current offer from Bedford College.
- 7.117 In September 2023, the Council's Executive approved the Town Centres' Vision. Stakeholder engagement undertaken between September 2023 and February 2024 informed the emerging proposals and enabled the Vision to be developed into a range of projects. In June 2024, the Executive approved the [Bedford and Kempston Town Centres' Delivery Programme](#) which includes project proposals to be delivered by the Council and delivery partners to support the regeneration and revitalisation of Bedford and Kempston town centres.

Monitoring indicator 33 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
33a Development activity on Bedford High Street	16, 34	Number of planning permissions or advertisement consents in the High Street	1 permission and 4 advertisement consents	BBC

33b Development activity on Bedford High Street	16	Amount of completed new development in Bedford High Street	418 sqm Class C1 floorspace for use as serviced apartments	BBC
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- 7.118 Local Plan 2030 Policy 16 acknowledges that in considering planning applications in Bedford High Street, weight will be given to a closed list of criteria. Given the central location of the High Street in Bedford town centre, its visual prominence and historical significance, Local Plan 2030 Policy 16 prevents any further changes of use at ground floor level to restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways or nightclubs.
- 7.119 During 2023/24, one planning permission for development proposals in Bedford High Street was granted and three applications were refused. This is down from two permissions and seven refusals last year. Four advertisement consents in Bedford High Street were granted during 2023/24 which is up from two consents last year.
- 7.120 Planning application 21/01818/FUL for change of use of ground floor from shop to restaurant and change of use of first and second floors to two flats and the erection of a two storey rear extension was granted at 107 High Street during the monitoring year. Advertisement consent for a non-illuminated fascia sign at 62 High Street (23/01182/ADV), two externally illuminated fascia signs at 90 High Street (23/00469/ADV), and two non-illuminated fascia and projecting signs at 113 High Street (23/01445/ADV) were granted during the monitoring year. Externally illuminated fascia and hanging signs, a non-illuminated fascia sign, an internally illuminated menu case and lighting at 92 High Street (23/02164/ADV) was also granted during 2023/24.
- 7.121 During the monitoring year, 418 sqm Class C1 floorspace for use as serviced apartments was completed in Bedford High Street through the change of use of 418 sqm retail floorspace over the upper floors at 113 High Street (22/02537/FUL). The existing retail floorspace on the ground floor is retained.

Monitoring indicator 34 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
34a Activity in the visitor economy	76	Number of planning permissions for improvement and provision of new visitor accommodation	2 permissions	BBC

- 7.122 The Council's [Visitor Accommodation Review 2015](#) advises that the visitor market in Bedford is growing steadily. Although evidence shows that there is presently no unmet need for visitor accommodation in the borough, there may be opportunities to improve the visitor accommodation offer in some locations. Local Plan 2030 Policy 76 lists criteria for considering proposals which relate to the improvement and provision of new visitor accommodation.
- 7.123 During 2023/24, planning permission was granted for two schemes involving improvement or provision of new visitor accommodation, this is up from none last year. A two storey extension providing 25 rooms at Bedford Swan, High Street, Bedford (23/00213/MAF) and a single storey rear extension and alterations to outbuilding to provide seven guest rooms at The Fordham Arms, Templars Way, Sharnbrook (23/01169/FUL) were granted during the monitoring year.
- 7.124 Five planning applications for improvement and provision of new visitor accommodation were refused during the monitoring year due to the nature of the proposed development and its adverse environmental impacts not being in accordance with the principles set out in Local Plan 2030 Policy 76. In the Council's view, the proposals would establish new visitor accommodation in the countryside which would not integrate well with the existing pattern of development.

Theme 4: Placemaking

LP2030 Objective 2. Provide appropriate amounts and types of housing to meet the needs of the borough's urban and rural communities over the lifetime of the Plan.

LP2030 Objective 5. Achieve a borough where everybody has appropriate access to high quality health and social care as well as everyday essential services and community facilities. Where social and cultural wellbeing is supported, enabling all residents to lead healthy and independent lives.

LP2030 Objective 9. Support and create a high quality, inclusive and safe built environment which values local landscape and settlement character and which conserves and enhances the historic environment and is enjoyed by all.

This section broadly aligns with emerging Local Plan 2040 Theme 4: Better places.

Monitoring indicator 35 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
35a Delivery of the housing requirement over the plan period	4S	Annual and cumulative dwelling completions	2015/16 = 964 completions 2016/17 = 1,255 completions 2017/18 = 1,350 completions 2018/19 = 1,359 completions 2019/20 = 1,026 completions 2020/21 = 1,199 completions 2021/22 = 1,019 completions 2022/23 = 1,465 completions 2023/24 = 689 completions Total = 10,326 net completions	BBC

- 7.125 Local Plan 2030 Policy 3S provides the overarching strategic framework, in response to the plan’s vision and objectives, for ensuring that the local plan delivers sufficient new development in sustainable locations to meet identified needs. It supports the overall provision of new homes and jobs to meet the assessed needs of the borough up to 2030 along with supporting infrastructure and services.
- 7.126 Existing planning permissions for residential development, together with previously allocated commitments and an allowance for windfall mean that the local plan allocates a minimum 3,169 new dwellings to ensure that the objectively assessed need for housing of 14,550 homes over the plan period will be met. This equates to an average of 970 dwellings per annum and is based on evidence in the Bedford Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Updates of 2016 and 2018. Policy 4S sets out how a minimum 3,169 new dwellings will be allocated and distributed.
- 7.127 The number of net additional dwellings completed in 2023/24 was 689. Whilst this is lower than the number completed in previous years, it follows a period when annual delivery rates exceeded the annualised minimum housing figure of 970 net additional dwellings per annum in seven of the first eight years of the plan period. A total of 10,326 net dwelling completions have been delivered between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2024. This rate of delivery is not expected to be maintained. The Local Plan 2030 housing trajectory showed completions lower than the annual average in later years.

- 7.128 Of the 689 net additional dwellings completed in 2023/24, new build homes accounted for 666 of the total, or 94.2% of gross completions. The 28 homes that came from change of use from non-residential to residential accounted for 3.96% of the total gross completions. 13 new dwellings were created through conversion of existing residential properties. These additional dwellings were offset by 18 dwellings that were lost through demolitions, conversion or change of use. Further information is presented in the [Housing Monitoring Report](#).
- 7.129 Most housing completions in 2023/24 were delivered at saved Local Plan 2002 policy allocations including Land north of Bromham Road, Biddenham (29 completions); Wixams (former Elstow Storage Depot) (199 completions) and at Local Plan 2030 policy allocations including Land at Gold Lane, Biddenham (78 completions); and Land at Graze Hill, Ravensden (46 completions). There were also 96 net additional dwellings delivered in the Bedford and Kempston urban area during 2023/24.
- 7.130 The progress of the delivery of housing policy allocations is reported in the Allocated sites section of this monitoring report.
- 7.131 Local Plan 2030 Policy 4S sets out the amount and distribution of housing development, seeking to direct new housing development to locations that are sustainable or can be made sustainable. The Local Plan primarily allocates housing land in the Bedford and Kempston urban area, the urban edge, former Stewartby brickworks and Roxton. Neighbourhood Plans have identified sites for residential development in the Key Service Centres of Bromham, Clapham, Great Barford, Sharnbrook and a range of smaller Rural Service Centres.

Monitoring indicator 36 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
36a Supply of dwellings with planning permission	4S	The number of dwellings with extant planning permission	2015/16 = 8,574 dwellings 2016/17 = 8,341 dwellings 2017/18 = 7,259 dwellings 2018/19 = 6,347 dwellings 2019/20 = 5,979 dwellings 2020/21 = 4,864 dwellings 2021/22 = 6,040 dwellings 2022/23 = 4,793 dwellings 2023/24 = 4,706 dwellings	BBC

7.132 Whilst the number of outstanding permissions at the end of the 2023/24 monitoring year is slightly lower than the previous year, the number of dwellings with outstanding planning permission has been retained at a high level during the first nine years of the Local Plan 2030 period.

Monitoring indicator 37 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
37a Progress in delivering housing opportunity sites	26	Details of applications and permissions relating to identified opportunity sites	1 permission	BBC

7.133 Local Plan 2030 Policy 26 identifies three housing opportunity sites at Dallas Road, Kempston; Bedford Blues Rugby Club, Bedford; and Amptill Road (former Camford Works), Bedford. The sites are included in the Plan as they are considered suitable for development, but are also known to have particular constraints which may prevent them from coming forward in the plan period. As a result, they are not subject to allocations.

7.134 Of the three sites identified, Dallas Road has been granted planning permission for the development of 341 dwellings (19/02247/MAF) in August 2021. Revised application 23/01975/M73 for changes to roofs, materials, and addition of balconies was granted in March 2024.

7.135 Planning application 22/01899/EIA for 508 dwellings, 96 bedroom care home, two storey advance technology building, drive-thru coffee shop and associated works at the site of the former Camford Works, Bedford was refused in February 2024. Emerging Local Plan 2040 Policy HOU3 allocates the site for a mix of residential and business uses.

7.136 There have been no planning applications received or determined for development of the site at Bedford Blues Rugby Club, Bedford. Informal discussions regarding the future of the site continue.

7.137 Policy 26 is proposed to be replaced by emerging Local Plan 2040 Policy DS6.

Monitoring indicator 38 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
38a Development outside settlement boundaries	5S, 6, 7S, AD41	Details of planning permissions granted for dwellings on sites that fall outside the urban area boundary or settlement policy area boundaries	35 new dwellings were permitted outside the urban and settlement policy area boundaries in 2023/24	BBC

7.138 In order to protect the character of Bedford and Kempston and to protect the countryside from inappropriate development, the extent of the urban area is defined in saved Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 Policy AD41. Local Plan 2030 Policies 5S, 6 and 7S together distinguish between the open countryside and settlements within it by identifying village Settlement Policy Areas and the type and location of development which will be acceptable. The boundaries are shown on the Policies Map.

7.139 During 2023/24, 35 new dwellings were permitted outside the urban and settlement policy area boundaries. The total includes 12 dwellings granted under permitted development rights through the Class Q (agricultural buildings to dwelling houses) process, nine barn conversions, and six replacement dwellings in the countryside.

Monitoring indicator 39 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
39a Compliance with policies for replacement dwellings in the countryside	7S, 66	Details of planning permissions for replacement dwellings in the countryside	Permission granted for six replacement dwellings	BBC
39b Scale of replacement dwelling activity	7S, 66	Number of completed replacement dwellings in the countryside	Three replacement dwellings were completed	BBC

7.140 Local Plan 2030 Policy 66 sets out the Council’s approach to the replacement and extension of dwellings in the countryside. During 2023/24 planning permission was granted in accordance with policy for six replacement dwellings in the countryside, this is the same as last year. Three replacement dwellings in the countryside were completed during 2023/24; which is down from eight last year.

Monitoring indicator 40 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
40a Progress made in planning affordable housing schemes for local people	7S, 67	Number of affordable dwellings permitted through rural exception schemes	Eight affordable dwellings were permitted through rural exception schemes	BBC
40b Delivery of affordable housing schemes for local people	7S, 67	Number of affordable dwellings completed through rural exception schemes	No affordable dwellings were completed through rural exception schemes	BBC

7.141 To facilitate the provision of affordable housing specifically for local needs the Council will support rural exception sites. Such sites can be located in areas where housing development would not normally be encouraged on the basis that development proposals meet identified need for ‘qualifying persons’. Local Plan 2030 Policy 67 allows for planning permission to be granted as an exception to policy where there are identified local needs in the rural area and a number of other requirements are met. During 2023/24 reserved matters planning permission was granted for a development of 13 dwellings, including eight affordable dwellings to meet local needs in the rural area at 124 Rushden Road and land to the rear of Rushden Road, Wymington (23/01287/MAR). No dwellings were completed under the rural exception scheme during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 41 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
41a Supporting new homes for rural workers in accordance with Policy 68	7S, 68	Details of planning permissions granted for rural worker dwellings	Two rural worker dwellings were permitted	BBC

41b Number of completed rural worker dwellings	7S, 68	Number of rural worker dwellings completed	No rural worker dwellings were completed	BBC
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7.142 There may be instances where it is necessary for a new dwelling to be built in the countryside to meet the need for a worker to be accommodated on site, such as for an agricultural, forestry, horse breeding and training, livery or equivalent use. Planning permission for new rural worker accommodation in the countryside will be granted if it is in accordance with Local Plan 2030 Policy 68. During 2023/24, planning permissions were granted for rural worker dwellings at Hill Farm, Sunderland Hill, Ravensden (18/02095/REM) and at Westwood Farm, Odell Road, Odell (23/01970/FUL). Three planning applications for rural workers' dwellings were refused on the basis that they would be contrary to the aims of Policies 7S and 68. No rural worker dwellings were completed during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 42 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
42a Five year housing land supply	4S	Details of sites likely to be delivered in the next five years. Assessment carried out in accordance with government policy and guidance	6.93 year housing land supply for the five year period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028	BBC

7.143 Paragraph 74 of the NPPF requires all local planning authorities to identify and update annually a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites against their housing requirement. The Council's five-year supply of deliverable housing sites is updated annually and the latest position is published on the Council's [monitoring webpage](#). It demonstrates that the Council presently has a 6.93 year housing land supply for the five year period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028.

Monitoring indicator 43 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result and Housing Delivery Test consequence	Data source
43a Performance against the national Housing Delivery Test (HDT)	4S	Annual published HDT results	2018 = 129% no consequences 2019 = 125% no consequences 2020 = 133% no consequences 2021 = 144% no consequences 2022 = 130% no consequences	MHCLG DLUHC

7.144 The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) is a government annual measurement of housing delivery in the area of the relevant plan-making authorities. The HDT is a percentage measurement of the number of net homes delivered against the number of homes required, as set out in the relevant strategic policies for the area, over a rolling three-year period. The HDT results are published annually by the government and the NPPF outlines a range of planning policy consequences for authorities who do not achieve set percentage results each year.

7.145 Bedford Borough has consistently achieved a HDT score over 100% and as a result, faces no consequences.

Monitoring indicator 44 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
44a Delivery of affordable housing in accordance with Policy 58S	58S	Number of affordable dwellings permitted on qualifying sites	804 new dwellings were permitted on sites subject to affordable housing provision. Of these, 168 dwellings were affordable, equating to 20.9%. Four further planning permissions were granted on sites for 100% affordable housing equating to a total of 10 dwellings	BBC

44b Delivery of affordable housing in accordance with Policy 58S	58S	Affordable dwelling completions	2015/16 = 178 (17.7%) 2016/17 = 234 (18.0%) 2017/18 = 252 (18.4%) 2018/19 = 284 (20.7%) 2019/20 = 342 (32.9%) 2020/21 = 192 (16.0%) 2021/22 = 220 (21.2%) 2022/23 = 331 (21.9%) 2023/24 = 137 (19.4%) Total = 2,170 (21.0%)	BBC
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- 7.146 The Council's [Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and addendum \(August 2018\)](#) establishes an objectively assessed need for affordable housing of 4,188 dwellings for the period 2015-2030. Whilst an annualised requirement of affordable housing to be delivered is not set, this is equivalent to an average of 279 dwellings for each year of the plan period. Local Plan 2030 Policy 58S sets out the Council's requirements in relation to affordable housing.
- 7.147 In 2023/24, 804 new dwellings were permitted on sites subject to affordable housing provision. Of these, 168 dwellings were affordable, equating to 20.9%. Four further planning permissions were granted on sites for 100% affordable housing equating to a total of 10 dwellings. This is lower than last year when 1,217 new dwellings were permitted on sites subject to affordable housing provision, 293 (24.1%) of these were affordable.
- 7.148 There were 137 affordable housing completions in 2023/24 and this accounts for 19.4% of the total housing completions within the borough for the year. Annual delivery rates of affordable housing have varied over the first nine years of the plan period and the number of affordable dwellings delivered in only two years (2019/20 and 2022/23) during the plan period has achieved the amount that would be expected if the requirement were annualised. It should however be noted that this indicator only measures affordable housing achieved through the planning system; other affordable dwellings may be provided by Registered Providers acquiring properties in the housing market.
- 7.149 The Council's [Housing Strategy 2021-2026](#) sets out the Council's commitments to support the delivery of affordable housing to meet identified needs.

Monitoring indicator 45 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
45a Housing mix	59S	Gross dwelling completions by number of bedrooms	1 bedroom = 62 (8.8%) 2 bedroom = 203 (28.7%) 3 bedroom = 229 (32.4%) 4 and 4+ bedrooms = 213 (30.1%)	BBC
45b Housing mix	59S	Gross dwelling completions by type	Flats, apartments or maisonettes = 141 (19.9%) Houses or bungalows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached = 303 (42.9%) • Semi-detached = 180 (25.5%) • Terraced = 83 (11.7%) 	BBC

7.150 Local Plan 2030 Policy 59S seeks to provide a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. The SHMA (Figure 102) presents the breakdown of need for different size homes in the period 2015-2035. Whilst this timeframe exceeds the adopted Local Plan period, the figures give an indication of the size homes of greatest need in the borough. The SHMA identifies that most of the market need is for three bedroom houses whilst most of the need for affordable housing is also for three bedroom houses with a need for two bedroom houses and one bedroom flats also identified.

7.151 More three bedroom dwellings were completed than any other size in 2023/24. Two and four or more bedroom dwellings also represented a high proportion of completions in the monitoring year. Flats, apartments or maisonettes accounted for 19.9% of total gross completions whilst houses or bungalows accounted for 80.1%. More detached houses or bungalows were completed than any other type in 2023/24.

7.152 There are however several factors that should be appreciated when comparing the housing mix data currently being delivered against the mix of housing as recommended by the SHMA, which forms the most recent needs assessment for the borough. The SHMA provides only a snapshot in time and as such the needs outlined in it may not be the same as are required now. Secondly, it should be noted that the majority of housing currently being delivered was granted permission prior to the adoption of the Local Plan 2030 and, as such, their applications were assessed and approved against different policies. In light of this, analysis of completions alone at this stage does not provide a full picture of how Policy 59S is performing in this regard. Furthermore, even if the mix of housing permitted during the monitoring year were to be reviewed,

the results may be skewed due to a number of these being reserved matters approvals for which the housing mix was approved under the outline permission, which was assessed against policies pre-dating the Local Plan 2030.

7.153 Therefore, to truly assess the performance of Policy 59S in helping to achieve the Local Plan 2030 objective to deliver appropriate types of housing to meet the needs of the borough, monitoring over a longer period of time will be required as will continuously updating evidence of housing need and market demand.

Monitoring indicator 46 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
46a Housing mix	59S	Percentage of dwellings permitted that are accessible and adaptable (category 2)	48.9% of eligible dwellings	BBC
46b Housing mix	59S	Percentage of dwellings permitted that are wheelchair accessible (category 3)	5.0% of eligible market dwellings 7.5% of eligible affordable dwellings	BBC

7.154 In response to the projected increase in the elderly population of the borough during the plan period, and evidence in the SHMA, Local Plan 2030 Policy 59S sets requirements relating to adaptations and wheelchair accessible homes. The policy stipulates that on sites of 3 or more dwellings, 49% of all new residential development should meet the accessible and adaptable requirements of the building regulations, and on sites of 20 or more dwellings a minimum of 5% of all market housing and 7% of affordable housing should meet the wheelchair accessible homes requirements of the building regulations. The local plan supporting text clarifies that wheelchair accessible homes will only be required where the Council is responsible for nominating a person to live in the dwelling.

7.155 During 2023/24, 18 planning permissions were eligible to provide a percentage of dwellings that meet the accessible and adaptable homes requirements of the building regulations (category 2). These permissions provided 873 dwellings in total. 436 dwellings should have been secured to meet the accessible and adaptable homes policy requirements however 427

dwellings meeting the requirements were actually granted permission. This represents 48.9% of the total number of eligible dwellings, which is slightly below the number required by Policy 59S.

- 7.156 During 2023/24, seven planning permissions were eligible to provide a percentage of dwellings that meet the wheelchair accessible homes requirements of the building regulations (category 3). These permissions provided 655 market and 160 affordable dwellings in total. 47 dwellings should have been secured to meet the wheelchair accessible homes policy requirements (35 market and 12 affordable) however 45 dwellings (33 market and 12 affordable) meeting the requirements were actually granted permission. This represents 5.0% of the total number of eligible market dwellings and 7.5% of the total number of eligible affordable dwellings, which is slightly below the number required by Policy 59S for market dwellings but equal to the policy requirement for affordable dwellings.
- 7.157 Analysis of last year's results showed that Local Plan 2030 Policy 59S requirements relating to adaptations and wheelchair accessible homes were being applied inconsistently through the development management process. Some eligible planning permissions secured compliance via a planning condition whilst some eligible permissions did not secure any dwellings to meet the requirements. Further to this, the Council reviewed how it applied Policy 59S to planning applications in order to ensure a consistent approach and maximise the delivery of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings in accordance with policy requirements. Monitoring results for 2023/24 show a marked improvement with close to policy complaint numbers of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings being secured.
- 7.158 Whilst some eligible planning permissions did not provide any dwellings to meet the policy requirements relating to adaptations and wheelchair accessible homes some permissions included more than the policy requirement. For example, the application for the erection of 24 replacements flats following damage from fire / explosion at 254-300 Redwood Grove, Bedford (23/00708/MAF) did not secure any mobility housing as it was not considered reasonable to impose a condition which the applicant is unable to fully comply with due to site constraints – the confined plot, restricted by the footprint of the former building, and number of units necessary to rehouse residents of the former development. The officer assessment stated that in terms of building regulation Document M requirements, the scheme will provide betterment when compared to the previous development. The approved plans for a development of 95 dwellings at Land adjacent to Mercia Road, Great Denham (21/01582/MAF) show a provision of four accessible and adaptable dwellings above the number required by Policy 59S. Similarly, the approved plans for a development of 50 dwellings at Land north of School Lane, Roxton (21/03333/MAR) show a provision of eight accessible and adaptable dwellings above the policy requirement.

7.159 One further planning permission was granted on Land east of 33-39 Carlisle Road, Bedford (22/00680/FUL) for 100% affordable housing providing two dwellings that will be built to meet the wheelchair accessible homes requirements of the building regulations.

Monitoring indicator 47 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
47a Housing mix	60	Number of new self-contained specialist housing schemes (class C3) by type, permitted and completed	Permission for 0 Class C3 use self-contained specialist housing bed spaces 60 Class C3 use self-contained specialist housing bed spaces were completed	BBC
47b Housing mix	60	Number of new care home bed spaces (class C2) by type, permitted and completed	Permission for 42 Class C2 use care home bed spaces 72 Class C2 use care home bed spaces were completed	BBC

7.160 Local Plan 2030 Policy 60 relates to the provision of specialist housing, which includes care homes and extra care schemes, in line with the need to provide sufficient housing for all sectors of the community. The supporting text sets out the differences between class C2 care schemes and class C3 self-contained extra care schemes.

7.161 During 2023/24, no planning permissions were granted for Class C3 use self-contained specialist housing bed spaces. This is down from last year when 62 Class C3 use self-contained specialist housing bed spaces were granted. During 2023/24, planning permission was granted for 42 Class C2 use care home bed spaces, this is down from last year when 64 Class C2 use care home bed spaces were granted. All 42 new Class C2 use bed spaces permitted during the monitoring year were created for use by children and were mostly located within the Bedford and Kempston urban area.

7.162 A total of 60 Class C3 use self-contained specialist housing bed spaces and 72 Class C2 use care home bed spaces were completed during the monitoring year. This includes the development of specialist Class C2 use housing accommodation for the elderly at the site of the former Lidl supermarket, Bedford Road, Kempston (20/00021/MAF), a 60 bedroom nursing

home at Land north of Bromham Road, Biddenham (19/00973/MAF), and the change of use of several residential dwellings to use as a children’s care home within the urban area.

Monitoring indicator 48 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
48a Housing mix	59S, 60	Number of specialist homes for older people permitted that are wheelchair accessible	No eligible units	BBC

7.163 Local Plan Policy 59S stipulates that all specialist housing for older people meet the wheelchair accessible homes requirements of the building regulations. During the monitoring year, no planning permissions were eligible to achieve this standard, which is down from 62 eligible bed spaces last year.

Monitoring indicator 49 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
49a Operation of an up to date Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register	59S	The number of entries on the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register	2015/16 = 50 individuals, 0 groups 2016/17 = 137 individuals, 1 group 2017/18 = 172 individuals, 1 group 2018/19 = 110 individuals, 0 groups 2019/20 = 169 individuals, 0 groups 2020/21 = 90 individuals, 0 groups 2021/22 = 107 individuals, 0 groups 2022/23 = 120 individuals, 0 groups 2023/24 = 122 individuals, 0 groups	DLUHC

49b Compliance with the self build duty	59S	The number of plots permitted suitable for self and custom housebuilding	2015/16 = N/A 2016/17 = 56 2017/18 = 60 2018/19 = 21 2019/20 = 30 2020/21 = 12 2021/22 = 13 2022/23 = 13 2023/24 = 29 As of 30 October 2024 (which falls outside the monitoring year but is the latest base period reported to MHCLG), the borough has a deficit of 20 plots when measured against the number of entries on part 1 of the Council's register.	BBC
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- 7.164 Support for self build and custom build housing developments, in line with national guidance, is set out in Local Plan 2030 Policy 59S v) and in the supporting text. The Council has included a self-build and custom housebuilding policy in its emerging Local Plan 2040.
- 7.165 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 was amended by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The amendments relating to self build and custom build mean that instead of counting any plot that would be suitable for self-build or custom housebuilding, plots must now explicitly be for this purpose. The relevant regulations enforcing these amendments came into force on 31 January 2024.
- 7.166 The Council's register became operational in April 2016. On 5 January 2021, the Council divided the register into two parts with only those with a defined local connection included on Part 1 and other individuals or groups that have an interest in self-build plots in the borough but who do not have the required local connection to the area included on Part 2. The requirement to provide enough serviced plots to meet the demand shown on the register only applies to Part 1, but both Part 1 and 2 are used to assess the general level of demand.

7.167 Data compiled from the annual self-build returns submitted to government¹⁸ shows that at October 2024 (which falls within the 2023/24 self build and custom build monitoring year) there were 122 entries on the register, which were all individuals. Table 18 shows how many people have entered the register each year since its creation and the number of entries on the register in total at the end of each base period.

Table 18 Number of new entries on the self-build register in each base period and the number of entries on the register in total at the end of each base period 2015/16-2023/24

Year (October to October)	Number of new individual entrants	Number of individuals removed from the register	Individuals on the register in total (net)	Number of new group entrants	Groups on the register in total
2015/16	50		50	0	0
2016/17	87		137	1	1
2017/18	35		172	0	1
2018/19	40	-102	110	0	1
2019/20	60	-1	169	-1	0
2020/21	28	-107	90	0	0
2021/22	17	0	107	0	0
2022/23	15	-2	120	0	0
2023/24	14	-12	122	0	0

7.168 The first base period covered seven months, running from 1 April 2016 to 30 October 2016. Each subsequent base period covers 12 months and runs from 31 October to 30 October the following year. The Council has three years from the end of each base period within which to grant the required number of development permissions. Data cleansing exercises took place in August 2019 and August 2021 and August – September 2024 (outside the monitoring year) which resulted in reductions in the numbers of individuals on the register. Registrants were asked to confirm that they wished to stay on the register.

¹⁸ DLUHC and MHCLG (2023) Right to build registers monitoring: data for 2016 to 2021-22. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding-data-2016-2016-17-2017-18-and-2018-19>

7.169 Table 19 shows the supply of serviced plots by way of the number of new plots granted planning permissions in each base period.

Table 19 Planning permissions for plots suitable for self and custom build granted in each base period 2016/17-2023/24

Year (October to October)	Number of suitable single planning permissions granted	Cumulative number of suitable planning permissions granted since October 2016
2015/16	N/A	N/A
2016/17	56	56
2017/18	60	116
2018/19	21	137
2019/20	30	167
2020/21	12	179
2021/22	13	192
2022/23	13	205
2023/24	29	234

7.170 As a result of amendments to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, for base period 5 (31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020) onwards, rather than counting all single plot permissions towards meeting the demand shown on the register, the Council counted plots where the developer applied for the Community Infrastructure Levy exemption for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (CIL form 7 part 1). This method was further updated for base period 6, where as well as the exemption, all permissions that were explicitly for self build and custom build plots were also counted.

7.171 As of 30 October 2024 (which falls outside the monitoring year but is the latest base period reported to MHCLG), the borough has a deficit of 20 self build and custom build plots when measured against the number of entries on part 1 of the Council's register.

Monitoring indicator 50 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
50a Progress delivering Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	61, 62, 63, 64	Details of permissions granted for new Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	0 permissions	BBC
50b Progress delivering Travelling Showpeople plots	61, 63, AD19	Details of permissions granted for Travelling Showpeople plots	1 permission	BBC

7.172 Local Plan 2030 Policy 61 states that there is a need for two additional permanent gypsy and traveller pitches to 2030 and five additional travelling showpeople plots to 2030, reflecting the findings of the [Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2017](#). Policy 62 requires that the two additional gypsy and traveller pitches are provided on the existing site at Kempston Hardwick. Planning permission for this was granted in December 2018 (18/02566/DC3) and the pitches are currently under construction. A site at Manton Lane, Bedford is already allocated under Policy AD19 in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 to make provision for the travelling showpeople plots. Outline planning permission for the provision of eight new plots for travelling showpeople (23/01128/MDC3) at this site was approved in March 2024.

7.173 A more recent [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment](#) was completed in November 2021 to support the Local Plan 2040.

Monitoring indicator 51 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
51a Meeting the needs for Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots in accordance with Policy 63	63, 64	Number of planning permissions for new Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites on unallocated land in the countryside	0 permissions	BBC

7.174 Local Plan 2030 Policy 63 is a criteria based policy relating to the provision of traveller sites on unallocated land in the countryside. No planning permissions for traveller sites on unallocated land in the countryside were granted during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 52 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
52a Health Impact Assessments carried out in accordance with Policy 2S for policy documents	2S	Number of Health Impact Assessments prepared to support planning policy documents	A Health Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Local Plan 2030 and the SPDs adopted during the monitoring year provide guidance to policies in the Local Plan 2030	BBC

7.175 A key objective of the planning system is to help support people in living healthy lives and this is reflected in section 8 of the NPPF 'Promoting healthy and safe communities'. Health and wellbeing is an underlying theme for the local plan and health features directly and indirectly in the Local Plan 2030 vision and objectives and across the local plan policies.

7.176 A Health Impact Assessment is a method of considering the positive and negative impacts of development on the health of different groups in the population, in order to enhance the benefits and minimise any risks to health.

7.177 Local Plan 2030 Policy 2S seeks to reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles by requiring development to promote health, safety and active living for all age groups and encouraging physically active lifestyles through the provision of sustainable modes of transport. The policy seeks to ensure that development enhances health and wellbeing and does not have a negative impact on it by setting a threshold for providing Health Impact Assessments.

7.178 Policy 2S i) requires the Council to carry out Health Impact Assessments, which may be incorporated into sustainability appraisals, on all planning policy documents. A Health Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Local Plan 2030 and the SPDs adopted during the monitoring year – Trees and Development SPD, the Developing in the Forest of Marston Vale SPD and the Bedford Borough Design Guide – provide guidance to policies in the Local Plan 2030.

Monitoring indicator 53 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
53a Progress in preparing the Health Impact Assessments guidance	2S	Progress in accordance with milestones in the Local Development Scheme	The Health Impact Assessments guidance has been produced and published on the Council's website. Final implementation is being progressed with the Development Management team	BBC

7.179 The supporting text to Policy 2S states that “a guidance note will be provided which will include further advice in relation to where a Health Impact Assessment is required, what it should contain and the health outcomes the development should seek to achieve.” The guidance document was completed during the monitoring year and final implementation is being progressed with the Development Management team.

Monitoring indicator 54 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
54a Health Impact Assessments carried out in accordance with Policy 2S for planning applications	2S	Details of planning applications where HIAs have been prepared in accordance with policy.	0 planning applications	BBC

7.180 Policy 2S ii) sets out that planning applications for all residential and mixed-use sites of 50 homes or more, employment sites of 5ha (gross) or more, retail developments over 500 sqm (gross internal area), or any other sites as requested by the local planning authority are required to submit a Health Impact Assessment. In 2023/24, whilst four planning applications exceeded the policy thresholds and were required to submit a Health Impact Assessment, no Health Impact Assessments were prepared during the monitoring year. The recent publication of the [Health Impact Assessments guidance](#) on the Council's website and implementation with Development Management colleagues will help to ensure that all eligible planning applications submit a Health Impact Assessment at the validation stage. In addition, the need for a Health Impact

Assessment for types or scales of development not explicitly mentioned in Policy 2S will be considered at the pre-application stage (if service engaged) or when a planning application is submitted or at EIA screening / scoping.

Monitoring indicator 55 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
55a Progress in preparing a Bedford Borough Design Guide	28S, 29, 30	Details of progress in accordance with milestones in the Local Development Scheme	The Bedford Borough Design Guide was adopted on 8 March 2023	BBC
55b Progress in preparing updated design guidance on advertisements	28S, 29, 30, 34	Details of progress in accordance with milestones in the Local Development Scheme	No progress has been made on updating the guidance on advertisements. The LDS currently makes no commitment for the production of this document. It will be updated when resources allow	BBC

- 7.181 Government policy identifies good design as a key aspect of sustainable development and explains that it is indivisible from good planning. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF requires that local plans contain comprehensive and robust policies that set out the expectations regarding the quality of development. Local Plan 2030 contains a suite of policies in this regard.
- 7.182 The Council will, where appropriate, work with developers to prepare development briefs, codes and design guidance for major development sites allocated in the local plan. Preparation of new and updated design guidance will appear in the Local Development Scheme. The Bedford Borough Design Guide was adopted on 8 March 2023.
- 7.183 The supporting text to Local Plan 2030 Policy 34 states that the Council will publish updated design guidance on advertisements. No progress has been made on updating the guidance during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 56 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
56a Production of design codes in accordance with Policy 29 when required by the policy	28S, 29, 30	Details of permissions where design codes are required / have been produced	0 design codes were approved in 2023/24	BBC

7.184 Local Plan 2030 Policy 29 sets thresholds for planning applications to be guided by a design code to be agreed with the Council as part of the application process. No design codes were approved in 2023/24.

Monitoring indicator 57 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
57a Permissions granted in the former Land Settlement Association Area	AD44	Details of planning permissions granted in accordance with specific policy requirements	4 permissions	BBC

7.185 The former Land Settlement Association area of smallholdings within Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden parish was created during the 1930s and supported decades of agricultural and horticultural activity. Saved Policy AD44 of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 is applicable to development proposals within the former Land Settlement Association area and sets out that permission will only be granted where applications:

- i. Maintain the distinctive spatial pattern, layout and scale of plots.
- ii. Respect the style, scale, appearance and orientation of the original dwellings and separation between them.
- iii. Protect residential amenity from inappropriate disturbance.
- iv. Do not result in unacceptable levels of traffic generation.

7.186 During 2023/24, four permissions were granted for development within the former Land Settlement Association Area, this is one less than last year. Planning permission was granted for a stable block at 9 Rookery Road, Wyboston (23/02480/MAF), an office/store for the party equipment business at 24 Northfield Road, Wyboston (22/02280/FUL), and a single storey

extension at 19 Spinney Road, Chawston (23/01594/FUL). Change of use from an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse was granted under permitted development rights through the Class Q process at 13 Rookery Road, Wyboston (22/01270/CPNQ).

Monitoring indicator 58 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
58a Permissions granted at Wyboston Lakes	73	Details of planning permissions granted in accordance with specific policy requirements	1 permission	BBC

7.187 Wyboston Lakes lies close to the A428 and A1 to the east of Bedford Borough. It is close to the urban area of St Neots which is in Huntingdonshire district. The site is partially developed for recreation, leisure and hotel, conference and training uses providing a wide range of employment uses in a low density landscaped setting. Planning permission has also been granted for former B1 business uses. Policy 73 supports development at Wyboston Lakes subject to specific criteria which reflect the location and character of the site. Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access for a business park development with up to 23,400 sqm of floorspace (22/01774/MAO) was allowed on appeal during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 59 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Direction of change	Data source
59a Number of heritage assets 'at risk'	41S	Entries on the National Heritage At Risk Register	10 entries (4 listed buildings, 5 scheduled monuments and 1 conservation area)	Up	BBC

7.188 Bedford Borough has a rich and distinctive historic environment and the borough contains a variety of designated and non-designated heritage assets. The [National Heritage List for England](#) shows that within Bedford Borough currently (June 2024) there are 1,333 listed buildings and 29 conservation areas. There are also 69 scheduled monuments and 9 historic parks and gardens. Of the 29 conservation areas in the borough, seven have a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. These are Bedford, Biddenham, Bletsoe, Elstow, Hinwick, Little Barford and Stewartby. Conservation Area Appraisals

highlight a number of buildings which, while not listed on the National Heritage List, are considered important local buildings of positive townscape merit. There are over ten thousand archaeological sites, historic buildings, landscapes, find-spots, place names and parks and gardens recorded on the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record, many of which could be considered to be non-designated heritage assets.

- 7.189 Local Plan 2030 Policy 41S requires development to preserve, and where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and minimise impacts on the historic environment. This is in line with the requirement in the NPPF to conserve heritage assets so they can be enjoyed by future generations.
- 7.190 Four listed buildings, five scheduled monuments and one conservation area are identified as being ‘at risk’ by Historic England as a result of neglect, decay, or inappropriate development and appear on the [National Heritage at Risk Register](#). These assets are listed in Table 20 and show that since the previous monitoring report, one listed building (Parish Church of All Saints, High Street, Great Barford) has been added to the National Heritage At Risk Register. No assets have been removed from the National Heritage At Risk Register since last year.

Table 20 Heritage assets listed on the National Heritage at Risk Register, July 2024

Asset name and location	Designation
Church St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Keysoe, Bolnhurst and Keysoe	Listed Building grade I
Parish Church of St Denys, Church Road, Church End, Colmworth	Listed Building grade I
Parish Church of All Saints, High Street, Great Barford	Listed Building grade II
Church of St Martin, Clapham Road, Bedford	Listed Building grade II
Settlement site north of Chapel End Farm, Cardington	Scheduled Monument
Bury Hill Camp, a motte and bailey castle with three fishponds, Thurleigh	Scheduled Monument
Yarl’s Wood hermitage and moated site, Milton Ernest	Scheduled Monument
Palaceyard Wood medieval moated enclosure and associated enclosures, woodland bank and cultivation earthworks, Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden / Great Barford	Scheduled Monument
Manor Farm Iron Age univallate hillfort and medieval moated enclosure, Bolnhurst and Keysoe	Scheduled Monument
Bedford	Conservation Area

- 7.191 In partnership with BedfordBID and SEMLEP, the Council was awarded funding from Historic England as part of their High Street Heritage Action Zone project. The High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) is a nationwide initiative designed to secure improvements to buildings and the public realm.
- 7.192 Bedford's HSHAZ programme completed in March 2024. A programme of restorative building works saw the transformation of six prominent shopfronts – All Ears, The Blue Monk, Sundae's Gelato, the former Goldings building, The Medic Centre, and the Salvation Army – in the town centre, preserving and enhancing Bedford's rich architectural history. The façade of the Corn Exchange was also improved and maintenance and de-branding work is underway at the former Debenhams building. The HSHAZ programme also funded improvement works to the public realm: re-paving Silver Street (around The Faces) and widening the High Street pavement. A variety of community and cultural events were organised around the town centre, featuring walking tours, residents' stories, videos, and community activities such as the 'Colour Your High Street' project.
- 7.193 Through the work of the HSHAZ, Bedford Shire Hall was upgraded to Grade II* listing, Bedford Corn Exchange was listed at Grade II and new information was added to the list entries throughout the HSHAZ to better explain the building's history and the reasons why it is listed.

Monitoring indicator 60 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
60a Residential development on previously developed land	46S	Percentage of new dwelling completions (including conversions) on previously developed land	2015/16 = 39.4% 2016/17 = 45.0% 2017/18 = 41.5% 2018/19 = 26.5% 2019/20 = 27.0% 2020/21 = 48.0% 2021/22 = 32.2% 2022/23 = 25.8% 2023/24 = 44.7%	BBC
60b Non-residential development on previously developed land	46S, 65	Percentage of non-residential floorspace completions on previously developed land	2021/22 = 81.9% 2022/23 = 85.4% 2023/24 = 69.7%	BBC

- 7.194 Local Plan 2030 Policy 46S seeks to maximise the delivery of development through the reuse of suitably located previously developed land provided that it is not of high environmental or biodiversity value. The policy requires that poorer quality land should be used in preference to the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1-3a). It is therefore appropriate that the plan seeks to maximise the delivery of development on brownfield sites whilst recognising that greenfield development may be necessary.
- 7.195 No target is set for the proportion of new development on previously developed land however in line with national policy the Local Plan 2030 spatial strategy seeks to maximise opportunities for the reuse of specific brownfield sites within the urban area and at the former brickworks at Stewartby which is identified as a large scale brownfield site for future development. In addition, the Council is required to maintain a brownfield land register which provides up-to-date and consistent information on sites considered to be appropriate for residential development.
- 7.196 Government land use change statistics in England 2021-22¹⁹ identify that 54% of new residential addresses in England were created on previously developed land. Whilst the percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land in the borough in 2023/24 is lower than the national average, the proportion has varied during the first nine years of the plan period.
- 7.197 In 2023/24, there were 96 brownfield land completions in the Bedford and Kempston urban area, created mostly through the change of use of office space to residential and through the conversion of existing dwellings. Dwelling completions at Wixams new settlement also provided a large contribution.
- 7.198 The percentage of new non-residential floorspace completions on previously developed land in 2023/24 was 69.7% which is lower than last year (85.4%). This was largely a result of the redevelopment of existing employment sites within the Bedford and Kempston urban area.

¹⁹ DLUHC (2022) Land use change statistics 2021 to 2022. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2021-to-2022>

Monitoring indicator 61 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
61a Delivery of new community space	98, 99	Number of planning permissions for new community facilities or extensions to existing facilities	5 permissions	BBC
61b Delivery of sports pitches in accordance with Policy AD28	97, 99, AD28	Number of planning permissions for sports and recreation facilities To address deficiencies in existing provision identified in the Bedford Borough Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy	2 permissions	BBC
61c Delivery of open space in accordance with Policy AD28	AD28	Amount of open space provided in association with new development	10,856 sqm	BBC
61d Payments in lieu of on-site provision of open space and community facilities.	97, 98, AD28	Financial contributions secured in lieu of on-site provision	£12,106 secured towards off-site outdoor sports space and off-site equipped / natural play space	BBC

7.199 Community facilities are an important feature in settlements as they help to meet local needs and can provide opportunities for social and cultural interaction. Community facilities can include parish halls, places of worship, cemeteries, community centres, schools and colleges, health facilities, libraries, and leisure, arts and cultural facilities.

7.200 During 2023/24, five planning permissions were granted for new community facilities or extensions to existing facilities, this is one more than last year. Planning permission was granted for infill extensions and alterations to the Cricket Pavilion, Foster Hill Road, Bedford (22/02685/DC3), change of use of 12 Foster Hill Road, Bedford from a counselling and training

centre to a community meeting place (23/00529/FUL), change the surface of the main playing pitch at Bedford Town Football Club, Meadow Lane, Bedford from grass to an artificial turf pitch (23/01814/FUL), and erection of a covered stand for 100 spectators for Real Bedford Football Club (23/02503/FUL) who utilise the pitch located to the south west of Bedford Town Football Club. In addition, planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of Bromham Mill, Bridge End, Bromham which includes business and community uses (22/02658/MAF). The permission will help to achieve one of the objectives for Bromham Mill as set out in the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan which is to use the buildings for small community-based businesses and local groups and relocate the parish office to the site.

- 7.201 Sports pitches, sports facilities, parks and open space contribute to the quality of life in and around settlements and it is important to ensure that the stock and range of facilities is adequate to serve the needs of both the existing and the future population of the area.
- 7.202 The Council commissioned a [Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy](#) to assess the existing provision of, and future demand for, outdoor sports facilities. The study found that demand is broadly being met for all sports except for football and rugby league. Demand for all remaining sports can generally be met or be resolved in the future through quality improvements and the restoration of sites which are currently underutilised. There are shortfalls identified for 3G pitches which cannot be alleviated unless new provision is created. An increase in 3G pitch provision could also help reduce grass pitch shortfalls through the transfer of play, thus reducing overplay, which in turn can aid pitch quality improvements. As there are identified shortfalls on grass pitches, there is a need to protect both playing pitch provision currently in use and pitches that are no longer in use due to the potential that they may offer for meeting current and future needs.
- 7.203 During 2023/24, planning permission was granted to replace the main grass playing pitch at Bedford Town Football Club, Meadow Lane, Bedford with artificial turf (23/01814/FUL) to allow year-round use. The preparation of a community use agreement to ensure community access to the facility was secured by a planning condition. Planning permission was also granted for a new primary school within Wixams Village 3 (23/00201/MAR) which includes provision of two sports pitches, an area for a forest school and three multi-use games areas. A community use agreement is not required as there are sufficient sports, recreation and play facilities secured within the wider Wixams area to cater for the quantum of development approved with the outline permissions.
- 7.204 The NPPF defines open space as being of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

- 7.205 The [Bedfordshire Natural Capital Assessment](#) published in May 2021 includes an assessment of open space in the borough against Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). It shows that 68.1% of Bedford Borough residents did not have access to natural greenspace within 300m of their home. However, the borough performed more strongly in the provision of larger natural greenspaces, with 81.8% and 84.0% of residents living within 2km of a 20ha site and within 5km of a 100ha site respectively.
- 7.206 Saved Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 Policy AD28 requires provision of open space and built facilities in association with new development in accordance with local standards. The policy goes on to state that where possible, provision should be made on-site. Where this is not possible, practical or preferred, a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision will be required.
- 7.207 Four planning permissions providing open space and built facilities in association with new development were granted during the monitoring year. This includes 130 sqm informal and amenity green space provided as part of the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a block of nine flats at 2 Spring Road, Kempston (23/01120/FUL). Development of 50 dwellings at Land north of School Lane, Roxton (21/03333/MAR) includes a 400 sqm locally equipped area of play and 3,961 sqm of open greenspace. This provision exceeds the policy requirements (351 sqm equipped / natural play space and 703 sqm open greenspace). Development of 95 dwellings at Land adjacent to Mercia Road, Great Denham (21/01582/MAF) includes a 1,465 sqm area of open space in the south east of the site. The area would be slightly below the policy requirements for equipped / natural play space (507 sqm) and informal and amenity open greenspace (1,013 sqm). Reserved matters approval for strategic landscaping works for the provision of a 4,900 sqm public amenity area and leisure path to the west of Brooklands Avenue and north of Southern Cross within Wixams Village 1 (21/02000/REM) was also granted during the monitoring year.
- 7.208 In addition, outline planning application 19/01904/MAO for Bromham Neighbourhood Plan allocation BP-Beauchamp Park was granted during the monitoring year. The illustrative masterplan and land use parameter plan show the provision of approximately 6.17 ha of open space in support of the development of up to 390 dwellings. The open space within the site includes water attenuation, 4.08 ha public open space, and 0.72 ha formal sports and play spaces including multi-use games area. Play spaces will be accommodated throughout the development in the form of informal local areas of play and locally equipped areas of play located close to residential areas. In the southern land parcel, there will be a multi-use games area for use all year round, two junior grass pitches and a running track. Full details will be submitted as part of the reserved matters applications and will be reported in future monitoring reports as reserved matters applications are approved.

7.209 Financial contributions of £12,106 towards off-site equipped / natural play space and off-site outdoor sports space was secured through the S106 agreement for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of a block of nine flats at 2 Spring Road, Kempston (23/01120/FUL) which was signed during the monitoring year.

Monitoring indicator 62 What is being measured?	Related policies	Information gathered	Result	Data source
62a Loss of sports and community facilities	97, 98, 99, AD28	Number of planning permissions allowing the loss of an existing sports or community facility through demolition, conversion or redevelopment	1 permission	BBC

7.210 Safeguarding existing leisure, sports and community facilities is important to ensure that facilities are not lost to other types of development and that appropriate provision is made for the community to access these facilities. Local Plan 2030 Policy 99 sets out that the loss of existing sports and community facilities will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to existing and future needs or the facility is to be relocated and is of a similar scale to the current facility, is of an equivalent standard and able to serve the same community.

7.211 During 2023/24, one planning permission was granted for the loss of leisure, sports or community facilities, this is down from four permissions last year. The application details and the reasons for granting permission during 2023/24 are summarised in Table 21.

Table 21 Planning permissions granted for the loss of leisure, sports or community facilities during 2023/24 and the reasons for granting permission

Application reference	Site	Description of development	Reasons for granting planning permission
23/01537/FUL	170 Bower Street, Bedford	Change of use from social club to residential dwelling including a two storey front extension	The building's location and close relationship with adjoining residential properties and dilapidated state render the building undesirable for its existing use where noise and parking issues could arise. There are numerous other community uses within Bedford and the loss of this small facility is not considered harmful to the overall offer to people in Bedford.