

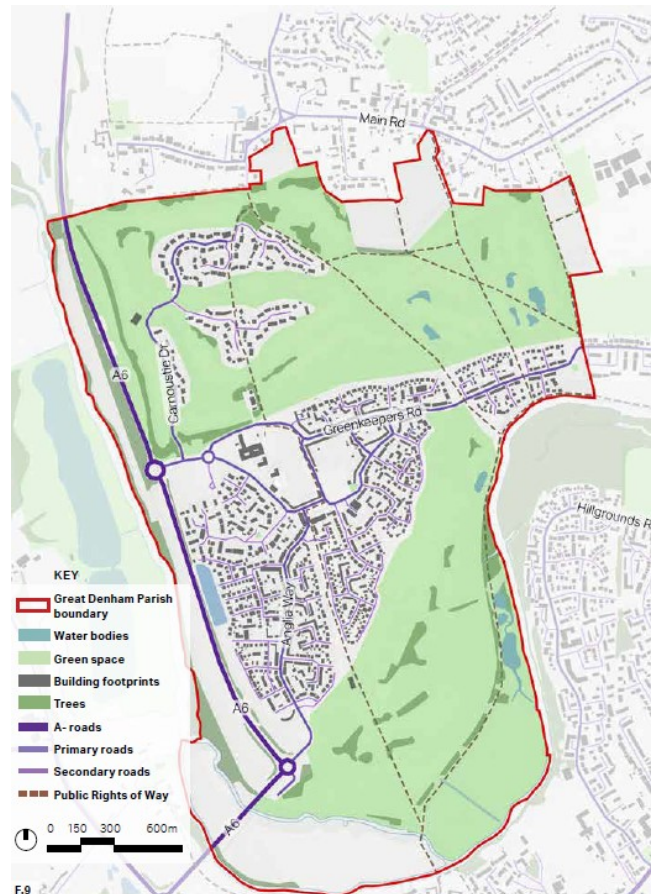
Great Denham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Published by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Taking Shape – Great Denham's Neighbourhood Development Plan

Our last newsletter was in March 2021 when we had just launched our Neighbourhood Plan work. Since then, a lot of work has taken place, so this is a timely update on what has been done, the work still to do, how you can get involved, and what will be happening over the next 6 months or so. Inside this issue you will find an update and more information on:

- The outline policies for our draft Neighbourhood Development Plan based on your feedback
- An update on the new Design Code for Great Denham, written and produced by the Steering Group with support from Locality and Aecom Consultants. This Code has a number of Design Principles for use in any future developments.
- An update on the Green Infrastructure Plan for Great Denham – covering the green spaces, footpath network, flora and fauna, and play and recreation facilities.
- What's the process for getting the plan completed? How can you get involved and what do you need to do?



A Neighbourhood Plan for Great Denham is a real opportunity for all of us to establish in planning policy how the area should develop, including influencing:

- the services and facilities there are, and to suggest any improvements needed;
- how any future development is done and how it integrates into the existing community;
- how future requirements of energy, technology and sustainability are embraced; and
- how we protect the environment, green spaces and the ecology and biodiversity of the area.

Great Denham will become one of a number of parishes with Neighbourhood Plans in place, including Wootton, Bromham, Oakley, Harrold, and Willington. Once supported by referendum and adopted a Neighbourhood Development Plan becomes a legally binding document for planning purposes and must be taken into consideration for any future building work that takes place – and affects any future funding we might get from any development that happens through the Community Infrastructure Levy, so very much worth our while.

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A good Neighbourhood Plan reflects the views of its residents

Firstly, we want to say THANK YOU to everyone who has taken the time and trouble to give their views and answers to the questions we asked in each of our two surveys:

- September 2020 – what you like about living in Great Denham , your issues and suggestions to inform the Plan and its planning policies. We've included a summary of these below.
- March 2021 – you gave us more detailed feedback on the emerging areas of the draft plan, including the vision and aims, shaping and design of future development, infrastructure and community facilities, green spaces, environment, ecology, geology and biodiversity. We've included a summary of the feedback received below.

The Covid lockdowns and restrictions have prevented us from doing some of the more traditional Neighbourhood Planning stuff, such as Open Days and Events, Exhibitions etc. So we have relied on on-line surveys (with paper copies for anyone that needed them). We were able to have a small display at the Great Denham Great Comeback event in September 2021, so could get some really valuable feedback for the consultants writing our Design Code, and also tested people's views on the Vision and Aims and outline policy areas.

September 2020 survey feedback

In September 2020 you gave us a great first steer on the shape of the plan.



"All the qualities of living in the countryside without being in the middle of nowhere"

What do you like about living in Great Denham?

- Good green areas and open spaces
- Good road connections
- Quiet village living and village feeling
- Sense of community
- Country Park, community hall and the events that take place there
- Closeness to the river
- Play areas for the children
- The facilities and services we have, e.g., shops at Retail centre
- Footpaths for walking and cycling



"Threat of further development and loss of green space, more recreational facilities"

What policy areas do you think we need to address the issues residents face?

- Protection of green spaces from further development, Provision of open spaces amongst housing
- Better Parking provision, Traffic and speed management and speed limits
- Restrictions on height of buildings and overall housing aspect
- Restrictions on numbers of Houses of Multiple Occupancy
- Provision of facilities linked to development that addresses any gaps, e.g., school expansion, other buildings, youth facilities
- Better signage and policies to encourage use of Country Park and community activities
- Walkways and Cycleways, and improved public transport access
- Facilities that meet the needs of all age groups

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March 2021 Survey Feedback

There was a lot of consistency in feedback which has fed directly into the shaping of the draft policies. Here are some of the comments received:



Shaping future development

- ✓ "Avoid new building in already existent resident areas."
- ✓ "Clearer adoption policies for Bedford borough. Road adoption seems to be taking forever, as does the pavilion and this ridiculous maintenance charge"
- ✓ "Improving safety, reducing crime and developing the community"
- ✓ "Promoting creation and maintained of safe foot -cycle paths and public paths, linking with neighbourhoods."
- ✓ "Improving road crossing safety within the village (specially around shop areas) and over bypass, to access Box End, Kempston and Bromham"



Infrastructure

- ✓ "Stronger, more reliable bus links into town, particularly to the train station"
- ✓ "Maintenance and enhancement of walking and cycling infrastructure for local travel and recreation."
- ✓ "Road markings giveaway markings at junctions and (double yellow lines on the main road the whole way through! People have parking spots but for convenience park on the main road! Busses and cars cannot get through at times) and the roads in general to be all tarmaced everywhere in the development"
- ✓ "More bridge links to Kempston as well as flood defences to protect the path into Bedford"
- ✓ "Parking in GD is atrocious, and in many areas an accident waiting to happen. Main roads are partially blocked, side roads are often made inaccessible to emergency vehicles, and parking on junctions is commonplace"



Future facilities

- ✓ "In future electric car charging facilities will be needed, some of which could be for public use"
- ✓ "There needs to be more sport/leisure for older children/teenagers. The Sandy park is great but once you're of secondary school age, I think you have outgrown it."
- ✓ "Local affordable Gym facilities specially for disable and retired community"
- ✓ "increased food and beverage offerings"
- ✓ "A social space like a pub or bar. Let's get the pavilion open so there are refreshments and toilets at the country park!"
- ✓ "I believe Great Denham is going to struggle to access suitable secondary schools in the area due to capacity. I believe we need to look at having a Secondary School which is a feed directly from the primary and follows a similar ethos. "



Environment and Biodiversity

- ✓ "Better flood protection for the park land"
- ✓ "Introduction of species into the river bank for wildlife diversity"
- ✓ "Wildlife tours and walks (led by the park ranger?) to encourage engagement - like dawn walks, bat walks, bird spotting etc"
- ✓ "I would like to see the wild habitats for insects, plants, animals and birds maintained and enhanced rather than depleted in the future."
- ✓ "Preservation and sustainability of flora and fauna, minimising air and noise pollution."
- ✓ "Community orchard , herb garden, recycling projects, flood management,"

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The draft plan and how it's shaping up

We've updated the Vision and Aims of the plan based on the feedback you gave us

Vision and Aims - How we have used your feedback



The chapters of our plan are forming and the policy areas to be included are developing well

The chapters of our draft plan reflect the feedback from residents; working with our planning

consultant has helped us to crystallise these and the policies which can be written so that we have the best chance of getting them adopted.



Land off Mercia
Road (2 sites)

Land on Country Park

Once our plan is adopted, these policies will apply to any planning application received. Whilst there are currently only 2 sites identified for the Local Plan 2040 at this time (and a planning application has been received for the Mercia Road sites) we want to be in a strong position for any unexpected or currently unidentified sites should they arise in the future.

Each chapter in the plan has objectives – reflecting feedback from residents and other evidence of known issues or needs: from these policies suitable for planning purposes have been identified. This is what we are currently working on:

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Chapter: Environment: Built and Natural	
Objectives	Policies
New development will be of high quality, visually attractive and in harmony with its immediate setting and character. It will provide a pleasant and safe place for all residents to live.	• High quality design of development (appearance/setting/amenity) • Design Code (see below)
The gap between settlements will be maintained to retain the separate identity of Great Denham and the balance between built form and open green space.	• Settlement gap definition, (more detailed than that documented in the Local Plan)
Chapter: Community Facilities and Services	
New development will ensure that new residents have at least the same access to community facilities as existing residents and new developments will contribute to the facilities and services of the parish.	• Retain existing community facilities (explore extent of restriction of change of use of buildings) • Encourage development of new community facilities and services
Chapter: Recreation and Green Spaces	
Existing green spaces will be protected, enhanced where appropriate and new spaces will be provided. Wildlife and habitats will be protected and enhanced.	• Local Green Space designation (if criteria are met) • Protection of biodiversity, biodiversity net gain
The riverside, Country Park and ponds will be enhanced and promoted for enjoyment of residents and visitors.	• 'Blue' infrastructure to be protected and enhanced
Safe and attractive walking, riding and cycling will be provided through the provision of a complete and connected network of Public Rights of Way.	• Rights of way to be protected and enhanced (see Green Infrastructure Plan below)
Chapter: Traffic and Transport	
New development shall be planned and constructed to ensure that all residents have ready access to local facilities, services and transport networks by bicycle, public transport or private car and that pathways are provided for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility vehicles.	• Traffic flow and requirements for new development • Traffic calming/pedestrian crossing points/pavements
New developments should not exacerbate existing parking problems and shall ensure adequate and appropriate parking for new residents.	• Electric parking points, appropriate on-plot parking provision, parking for facilities
Chapter: Sustainable Development	
New development will incorporate sustainable building features and measures to provide high speed broadband.	• Broadband, renewable energy & rainwater harvesting & recycling (household)

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Chapter: Housing	
New housing developments should include a mix of housing types, sizes and affordability to create a framework in which a diverse community can grow and become established. Smaller units to provide for young people and the elderly will be encouraged.	• House types and mix • HMO's • Housing for ageing population
Chapter: Local Business	
Existing commercial buildings will be retained for business or community use. New small scale businesses and live work units will be encouraged.	• Retain commercial buildings • Encouragement of business that will involve community use (e.g. gyms, nurseries etc)

A new Design Code for Great Denham

As part of the grant funding, we have obtained we have had the assistance of 2 planning consultants from Aecom who have prepared a new Design Code for any future development. Great Denham Design Code (February 2022) will form part of our Neighbourhood Plan submission pack when the plan goes to consultation and adoption.

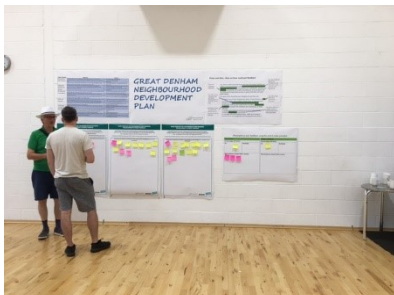
A copy is available on the Parish Council website:

<https://greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk/draft-plan-and-other-documents/>

Once our NDP has been adopted this Design Guide will replace the 2008 Great Denham Design Guide which outlined the original design guide for the development (Phase 2)



How did they know what residents wanted?



The Steering Group shared all the feedback from the resident surveys with Aecom, and held a couple of briefing sessions with the consultants over Zoom. The 2 consultants who wrote the Design Guide then did a site visit, where they spent several hours walking around Great Denham and documenting and photographing lots of different aspects in terms of road layouts, existing house designs, the issues raised by residents and in our briefings. We also used our stand at the Great Denham Big Comeback event to get feedback on 3 questions the Aecom consultants had asked.

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How should the design of new development build on village identity? What does this mean in practice?

- Adequate Parking needs to be provided. Parking areas should provide ground soak areas
- Houses should not be built on flood plain. Houses on edge need to be built/modified to withstand limited flooding
- Local Amenities must be put in place, i.e. new Primary School or expand present facilities
- It's a new development with many young families. I would like to see provision/thought for the young people as they get grow into teenagers
- Any new houses must mirror exterior style of existing houses. All new homes should have gardens. Garages to be built. 2 assigned on-road Parking spaces if not garages
- the pedestrian-friendly layout should be kept. Easy access to green space <3 min walk should be incorporated. Density around main transport routes should be maintained(??) to discourage car use. Pedestrian and cycle routes to school and other POIs should be included

Having had the experience of living in it, how would you have designed your own home differently?

- Fibre Broadband should be run to every new property and existing properties
- Solar Electricity panels on all usable roof spaces to be installed in build stage. Cleaner energy
- Wheelie Bin storage and an on-pavement site for collection days
- On road parking should not be an afterthought but integral as people need gardens
- I would have provided underfloor heating downstairs. Allowed for greater cooling/airflow on the top floor in summer. USB connections as standard wall sockets. Allowing for greater electricity use. Provision for renewable heating in the future (Hydrogen??)
- Better more responsive contracts with service companies following build, Agree service level agreements and penalties (i.e. no more contracts in Bedfordshire)
- Ensure maximum space of bedrooms in town houses take up wasted space on landing over stairwells
- Hedgehog highway! Fences prevent wildlife and divide neighbours. Could we have hedging or an occasional hole in the bottom of the fences?
- Definitely more storage, Be allowed to design own kitchen, Upgrade more, Better plumbing!, Smoke alarms that don't go off when it's hot

Having had the experience of living in it, how would you have designed your neighbourhood differently?

- Pedestrian crossing outside school (next to old golf course). Restaurant/more takeaway provision. Library. Mobile phone reception is dreadful - do we need a mast to cater for the needs of the estate?
- provided a secondary school
- provided a pub/restaurant within walking distance
- Green space in the village centre
- Shops and routes to POIs that encourage walking/cycling
- Village centre that you want to stop and stay in rather than a car park
- A library or regular mobile library
- Youth group
- Bakers
- Courtyard parking - it is not clear to owner-occupiers there who is responsible for the maintenance of the spaces - this is creating difficulties for people selling and buying properties with parking spaces. More green spaces in housing area
- Parking area to have greenery and soak areas

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Great Denham Green Infrastructure Plan

Many parishes find it useful to include an outline plan for the green space in their parish as a separate document to their Neighbourhood Plan. You told us in the surveys that protecting and enhancing our green space and facilities was a very important part of living in Great Denham, so the Steering Group is preparing a Green Infrastructure Plan which will be submitted as part of our Neighbourhood Development Plan submission.

What is a Green Infrastructure Plan?

Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of multi-functional green spaces required to meet a community's needs. It consists of both public and private land, with and without public access, in urban and rural locations.

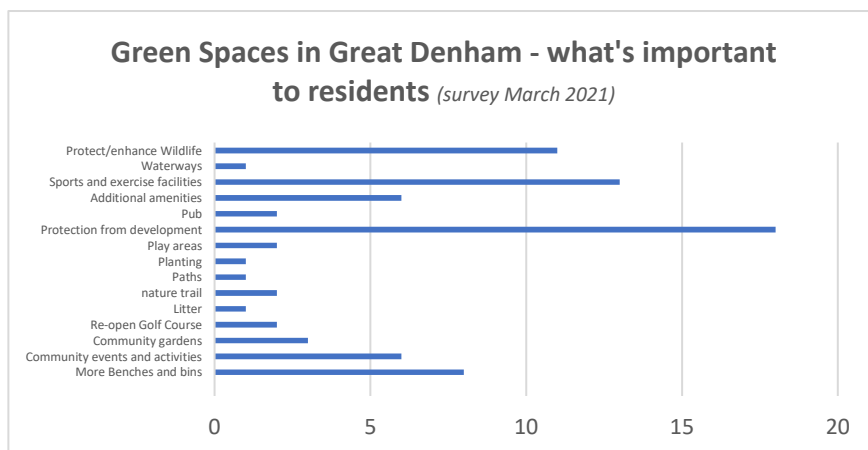
“A strategically planned and managed network of green spaces, access routes, wildlife habitats, landscapes and historic features which meet the needs of existing and new communities by providing:

- an essential environmental foundation and support system
- a healthy and diverse environment
- attractive places to live and visit and a good quality of life
- a sustainable future”

For Great Denham the Green Infrastructure assets include:

- Accessible green space (former golf course land)
- Country parks
- Green corridors
- Habitats for wildlife including nature reserves
- Sites of Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Waterways and water bodies – the Great Ouse
- Public rights of way and cycleways
- Children's play space
- Formal sports facilities

We have used the feedback from the surveys to inform our Green Infrastructure Plan

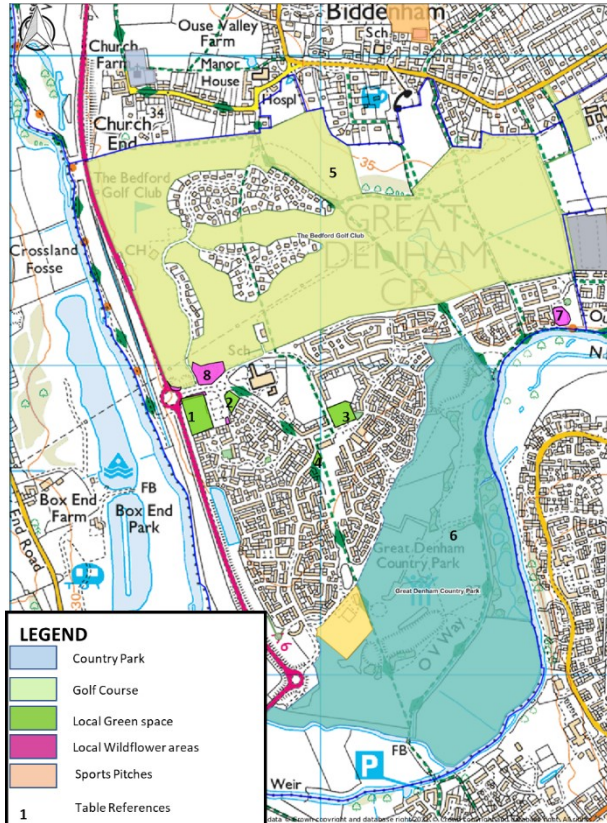


The maps on the following page show

- the areas identified as green spaces
- the public footpaths and rights of way network in Great Denham
- The play areas and facilities

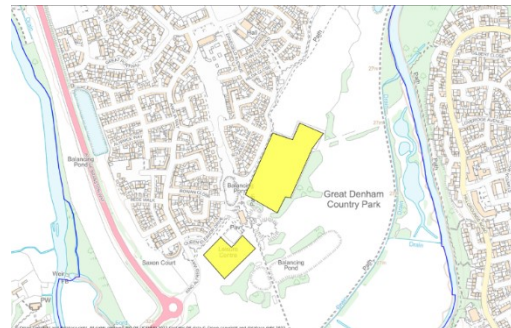
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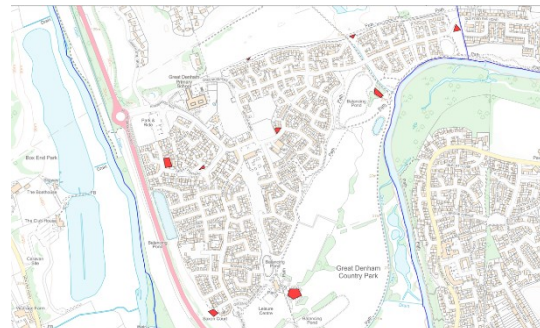


Location	Description
1	Land behind Park and Ride
2	Community Garden
3	Kickabout
4	Meaningful Meeting Place
5	Former golf course land
6	Country Park
7	Wildflower area – Greenkeepers Rd (non-native species)
8	Wildflower area – Kingswood Way (native species)

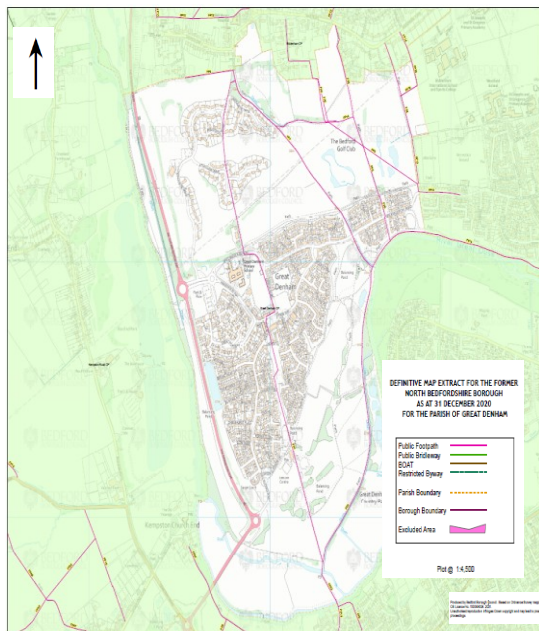
Green space areas and designations



Sports Facilities



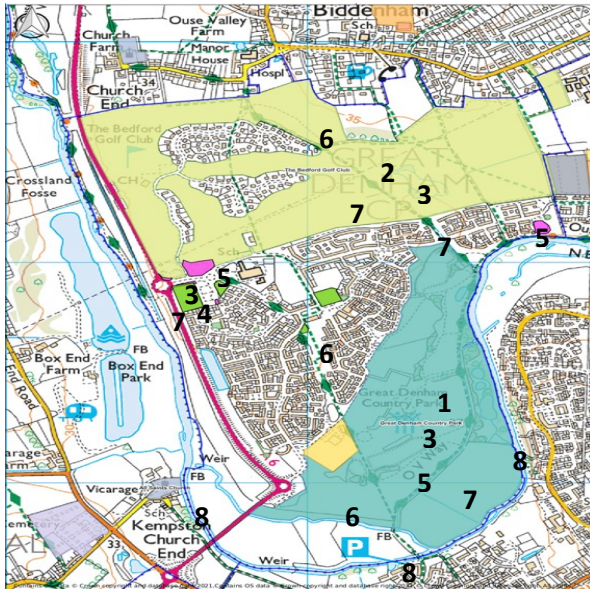
Play spaces



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Aspirations for our Green Infrastructure



A Green Infrastructure Plan outlines the aspirations of the Community for each of the elements of the plan. We have started to draft a set of aspirations for the elements of our GI Plan. Whilst these will not be formally adopted under planning regulations, they do provide a direction for the community groups, including the Parish Council, on projects important for Great Denham.

Delivery of each area often requires the help, support and co-operation of other bodies or organisations, and where possible these have been identified.

Aspiration	Location	Partners
1. Protection of the Country Park as a green space, and development of its facilities for recreation	Great Denham Country Park Public Rights of Way network	Bedford Borough Council
2. Protection from development for housing of the former golf course land, and continued open access to residents for recreation.	Former Golf Course land	Old Ford End Trust, Bedford Borough Council
3. To continue to provide a habitat for wildlife, including native and migrant birds, foxes, deer and badgers	All green spaces	Bedford Borough Council, BMK Waterways Trust, Environment Agency
4. The creation of a community orchard as part of the development of the land behind the Park and Ride	Land behind Park and Ride	Woodland Trust, Bedford Borough Council
5. Protection of existing local wildflower species and development of wildflower planting throughout Great Denham	Various sites through Great Denham	Bedford Borough Council
6. Development of the pedestrian and cycle access points and routes across Great Denham, linking the community with nearby villages	Public Rights of Way network	Bedford Borough Council, Council Archives, Ramblers Association, Old Ford End Trust

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Aspiration	Location	Partners
7. To protect planted trees and hedgerows, and to increase planting where possible, as part of a “green canopy” against the effects of climate change.	Great Denham Country Park Former Golf Course land Land behind Park and Ride	
8. Protection of the waterways and development of amenities for the benefit of residents, including improving flood protection	Great Denham Country Park	BMK Waterways Trust, Environment Agency, Bedford Borough Council

Putting everything together – what are we getting ready to submit

There are a number of documents that have to be pulled together to ensure we get the best possible outcome when our plan goes forward for examination and adoption – these are what we are working on at the moment, although there are some dependencies which are noted below.

- ❖ The draft local plan, ready for submission
- ❖ Basic Conditions statement - this is a statutory document and is done once the draft plan is ready
- ❖ A Strategic Environment Assessment – this is a statutory document and is done once the draft plan is ready
- ❖ A Habitats Regulation Assessment – this is a statutory document and is done once the draft plan is ready
- ❖ A consultation statement – this is done after the Regulation 14 consultation (see below)
- ❖ Aecom Design Guide
- ❖ Great Denham Green Infrastructure Plan

The draft plan will come out to all residents for comment before submission to the Borough Council – this is known as Regulation 14 Consultation so please look out for it when it drops through your letterbox; it will also be promoted on social media and the Parish Council website.

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What happens next – The Neighbourhood Planning process

Just to give you some idea of the stages of the process once the plan is drafted, and the dates the Steering Group is working towards. These may be subject to change as they will be dependent on Bedford Borough Council as well.

Current stage	Collecting information and evidence, sharing ideas and using this to write a draft plan	We are here
Next stage	The draft plan will be published and residents will be asked for their feedback. This is called Regulation 14 and must be done by law as part of the process to submission and adoption of our plan. Please look out for this on the PC website and social media channels – you will have 6 weeks to respond.	We hope to do this by the Summer
Submission to Bedford Borough Council and Referendum	This stage is known as Regulation 15 – submission. The Council then runs a referendum on our plan – this will take 6 weeks and is the final stage before examination for review, comment and (hopefully) recommendation. This referendum stage is Regulation 16 . The plan will only pass to the Examiner if it is supported by a majority of residents who vote in the referendum.	Later in the year
Examination, Recommendation and Adoption	Once examined and recommended for adoption, the plan is then formally adopted by Executive Decision of Bedford Borough Council. When this stage is complete our plan will be applied in all future planning applications received. The Parish Council will also receive 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy made on qualifying planning applications to use for the benefit of Great Denham residents.	We hope to do this within 12 months

Want to get involved?

We know that in our community we have a rich variety of experience, expertise, interests, hobbies or useful contacts. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is open to anyone who wants to help us shape this plan. If you are interested in helping please contact us on ndp@greatdenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk.

If you can help with delivering newsletters and other info to Great Denham residents please get in touch.