



# **Green Space Means Health**

## **Final Report and Action Plan: Aylesbury**

17 October 2015

**Consultant:** People & Place Solutions

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by the Buckinghamshire and Milton-Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP), in accordance with the project brief included in appendix A.
- 1.2 The overall aim of the Buckinghamshire Green Space Means Health project is to inform the development of a programme of practical action to maximise community use of green spaces in areas of high multiple deprivation in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. The project takes forward high level aims and actions in the Buckinghamshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy<sup>1</sup> and Physical Activity Strategy<sup>2</sup> based around improving public health and reducing health inequalities, with a focus on building physical activity into everyday life.
- 1.3 This report covers the delivery of phases 1-3 of the four phase project. A summary of the delivery requirements of each of the four phases is included below:

**Phase 1:** To map the availability of green space greater than 0.25ha no further than 800m away from any deprived community, against areas of health deprivation focusing on the lowest quintile of deprivation as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, within High Wycombe, Chesham and Aylesbury. This was completed by Buckinghamshire County Council and the GIS mapping results made available under license for the delivery of Phase 2 of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/healthy-living/buckinghamshire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1932033/Physical-Activity-Strategy.pdf>

**Phase 2:** To undertake a high level review of relevant policies and plans and a detailed audit and analysis of issues and potential improvement actions relating to the mapped green spaces (from phase 1), with a particular focus on each of the three target town's most deprived communities and the use of green spaces to address their health and wellbeing needs. To undertake a high level consultation with community leaders, stakeholders and owners of the identified green spaces in order to understand their quality and community use. To apply the results of this research to identify target green spaces in each town to form the focus for phase 3. The phase 2 work was undertaken by consultants, People & Place Solutions, and a copy of their final report is included in appendix B.

**Phase 3:** To develop a local action plan to increase community access, awareness and use of each targeted green space from phase 2 to improve public health and well-being. To identify recommended evaluation measures in the plan in order to assess the impact of the proposed actions on community health and well-being. This phase was also undertaken by People & Place Solutions and a copy of the recommended local action plan for the target green space for Aylesbury – Aylesbury Riverside Walk - is included in appendix G. The associated recommended evaluation framework for this plan is included in section 8 of this report.

**Phase 4:** To disseminate best practice and information from the study. This phase will be undertaken by the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP).

## **2. Policy context**

- 2.1 This section provides a high level review of relevant national and local plans, strategies, research findings and outdoor physical activity initiatives, in order to provide the strategic context to the resulting action plan for Aylesbury.

- 2.2 Over the last decade there has been a shift in the health agenda towards promoting healthy lifestyle behaviours and choices. There has also been recognition of the role the environment can play in enhancing public health. Less active lifestyles have led to an increase in preventable diseases which are placing increasing pressures on the National Health Service, including a cost of £8.2 billion annually.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.3 Public green spaces make a contribution to all aspects of public health and well-being including increasing levels of physical activity which could alleviate pressures on the NHS. Simply being outside in a green space can promote mental well-being, relieve stress, overcome isolation, improve social cohesion and alleviate physical problems so that fewer working days are lost to ill health.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.4 Public green spaces are places where people can get fresh air, go for a walk, play sports, exercise or just enjoy the surroundings. Unfortunately those living in more deprived communities, who tend to have poorer health and suffer from the kind of illnesses that can be alleviated by regular exposure to green spaces, are also less likely to have good access to high quality parks and green spaces.

#### **a) National**

- 2.5 At the national level, the policy framework linking public health and the natural environment is well developed and being advocated strongly by Government through key policy documents, such as the *2010 Public Health White Paper*<sup>5</sup> and government agencies, such as Public Health England<sup>6</sup> and Natural England<sup>7</sup>. The contribution of green space to public health and wellbeing is now

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Health. (2004). At least five a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health

<sup>4</sup> CABI. (2009). Future Health: Sustainable places for health and well-being

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-public-health-white-paper-2010>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.noo.org.uk/LA/tackling/greenspace>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/health/default.aspx>

formally recognised in the new national public health outcomes framework<sup>8</sup> with the inclusion of *Indicator 1:16: Utilisation of green space for exercise/ health reasons*. This indicator is included in the framework grouping relating to wider determinants that affect health and wellbeing and health inequalities.

2.6 Listed below is a summary of key national research findings, which have informed the current national policy position and are directly relevant to the aim of the Buckinghamshire Green Space Means Health project:

*CABE Urban Green Nation 2010*<sup>9</sup>

- The quality of green spaces is directly linked to their perceived value, both to individuals and more generally. A small well designed and well-maintained space with diversity of facilities and landscape characters may have far greater value to local residents and to environmental services than a large, neglected, space that lacks cultural and environmental diversity.
- There is a strong correlation between the poor quality and quantity of green spaces in deprived areas, and the low levels of physical activity of residents.
- Some sectors of society use green space less than others, particularly older people (aged over 65), people with disabilities, women, black and minority ethnic people and children and young people aged 12-19.
- There is a strong link between people's satisfaction with their local parks and green spaces, and their satisfaction with their neighbourhood. This is particularly acute in the most deprived areas, where neighbourhood satisfaction is at its lowest.

*CABE Green Community 2010*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.phoutcomes.info/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/urban-green-nation>

<sup>10</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/community-green>

- People living in deprived urban areas view green space as a key service, alongside housing, health, education and policing – one of the essentials in making a neighbourhood liveable.
- There is a virtuous circle: where people perceive green space quality to be good, they are also more satisfied with their neighbourhood and have better health and wellbeing.
- When people value their local green space and feel safe in it, they use it more and are more physically active. Improving the quality of spaces will encourage more active use and exercise
- The provision of green space services must take into account the preferences and needs of local people. 'One size fits all' green space does not work: the community should be given the chance to make spaces fit for purpose.
- Greater variety and flexibility in green space provision is required as well as consistently higher quality in all areas. As the ethnic and age profile of the UK changes, green space managers need to understand the attitudes, needs and different reasons for green space use among local groups.
- Active marketing of sites; events and activities such as community fun days; guided walks; space for allotments; and considering alternative uses of specific areas will all bolster usage and result in a healthier and more satisfied community.

Natural England commissioned research 2012<sup>11</sup>

- People who perceive easy access to safe green spaces report higher green space use, more regular physical activity and lower risk of obesity. Therefore, access to safe and convenient green space is likely to be an important environmental factor in public health efforts aimed to promote physical activity and reduce obesity.
- Income-related inequality in health is affected by exposure to green space. The long-term conditions of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and dementia are much more prevalent in deprived communities which often have the least access to green space.
- Visiting green space is associated with less stress-related illness and has a positive effect on a persons' mental health.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/40017>



- Time spent in nature has a hugely positive impact on key social indicators. In particular, community open space can enhance social ties, provide a sense of community and can promote social integration within disadvantaged communities.
- Increasing access to the natural environment can play a vital role in efforts to increase activity and reduce obesity. The ability to access green settings has been demonstrated to encourage contact with nature and participation in physical activity, both of which encourage the adoption of other healthy lifestyle choices such as social engagement and consumption of healthy foods.
- Natural environments have a beneficial impact on mental wellbeing. Trees and vegetation reduce ambient noise, improve naturalness, provide calming views and convey a sense of place and belonging. Green space helps facilitate water, land and nature based hobbies.

2.7 Support for improving the availability of good quality green space and associated access routes for walking and cycling, ensuring that they are maintained to a high standard and safe, attractive and welcoming to all, is also endorsed by the Marmot Review<sup>12</sup>, with a particular focus on its role in addressing health inequalities; and by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) evidence based guidance on physical activity and the environment<sup>13</sup>.

2.8 Responding to this national policy framework and associated evidence base, there have been a number of national level pilots to trial and evaluate practical interventions to engage targeted communities in the use of green spaces for physical activity and wellbeing. The following table provides an outline of each initiative and their associated headline evaluation findings.

Initiative	Outline	Evaluation headlines
Natural England Green Exercise Programme (2008-11) <sup>14</sup>	Natural England funded eight, three year pilot projects through local partnerships in the regions. The aim was to test the	Key benefits received by participants: - Increased access to local green space, by showing them where they can go and giving them confidence to visit these places independently.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/Ph8>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/health/greenexercise/default.aspx>

	process of engaging hard to reach groups in green exercise activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive experiences of nature that can increase awareness of local environmental issues and encourage people to take positive action for the natural environment through conservation volunteering.</li> <li>- Opportunities for meeting new people and socialising in an informal and relaxed setting.</li> <li>- Opportunity to learn and develop new skills and knowledge which can broaden their horizons and are transferrable to home, work and school.</li> <li>- Ability to become more active outdoors and encourage them to try different kinds of physical activities.</li> <li>- Improved physical health and wellbeing in ways that are both accessible and enjoyable to participants in a relaxed environment.</li> </ul>
Birmingham Active Parks scheme 2013-date <sup>15</sup>	<p>Birmingham's Active Parks scheme was launched as a 5 site pilot in April 2013, as part of the City's award winning Be Active free physical activity programme. The Active Parks scheme offers local residents a diverse range of free, informal outdoor activities in parks and green spaces including Zumba, Tai Chi, rounders, hula-hooping and table tennis, along with guided walks and buggyfit.</p> <p>In May 2014, the Active Parks pilot was expanded to over 50 parks across Birmingham, as part of Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives programme. Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives programme is part of Coca-Cola Great Britain's commitment to invest £20m between now and 2020 in programmes to encourage and support people to be more physically active. In its first year, Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives will run in parks in Birmingham, Newcastle and London, with</p>	<p>Results from the early qualitative evaluation of Birmingham's Be Active programme demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Price is a barrier to participation</li> <li>- Access to free exercise increased people's likelihood to participate</li> <li>- Hard to reach groups including women and ethnic minority communities engaged with the scheme</li> <li>- Regular exercise increased participants self-reported sense of wellbeing</li> <li>- Participation on the scheme increased participant demand for other lifestyle information such as smoking cessation and alcohol advice.</li> </ul> <p>Initial evaluation of the Active Parks pilot showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While 61 per cent of Birmingham residents would like to spend more time being active outdoors, rather than staying at home (39 per cent) it is the perceived cost associated with being active (29 per cent) as well as a lack of time (26 per cent) that are the most significant deterrents to getting active outdoors.</li> <li>- Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) only visit their local park during the summer season, and just 12 per cent visiting their local park at the weekend.</li> <li>- More than half of Birmingham residents (56 per cent) cited that they if there were more organised activities on offer and if facilities and</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> <http://beactivebirmingham.co.uk/active-parks>

	<p>plans for more cities to join the programme in 2015 and beyond.</p> <p>All Birmingham Active Parks/ Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives sessions will be free and led by a trained session leader supported by local Friends of Parks volunteers.</p>	<p>equipment was provided then they would be more likely to visit their park more often.</p>
Dudley Healthy Towns project (2008-11) <sup>16</sup>	<p>One of the Government's Healthy Community Challenge Fund projects to support innovative interventions to reduce obesity. The Dudley project transformed five of the borough's parks and play areas into 'healthy hubs' in order to encourage families to make the most of outdoor areas.</p> <p>Each hub has an 'outdoor gym', a Healthy Towns building (accommodating community rooms, kitchen, ranger office, toilets etc), and a dedicated park ranger. Active travel corridors have also been created making it easier to cycle across the borough.</p>	<p>Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An increase in the proportion of local adult and child respondents meeting government physical activity guidelines: adults achieving recommended levels increased from 46% to 51% and children from 49% to 54%;</li> <li>- Walking remains the main activity of park users with cycling more limited in its representation - the increased levels of recreational physical activity (reported above) have not, as yet, been mirrored in more active commuter travel to work;</li> <li>- The installation of outdoor gyms is the single most popular improvement cited for the reported increases in physical activity.</li> </ul> <p>The success of the project to date has resulted in secured local funding for the project until 2014; however the evaluation results to date reflect the immediate impact of what must be viewed as a long term strategic physical activity, health and wellbeing investment</p>
Walking for Health <sup>17</sup>	<p>National initiative between Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support, which currently supports c600 local Walking for Health schemes across England to organise short, free walks led by friendly, trained walk leaders. 70,000 people currently participate regularly, with 3,400 weekly walks led by 10,000 volunteers</p>	<p>Getting involved in Walking for Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inspires people who don't exercise to move more. Almost half of walkers used to do less than half an hour of activity three days a week until they started walking.</li> <li>- People that walk with us take at least five walks every four months.</li> <li>- Helps people stay active. Not everyone can exercise as much as they used to. Walking lets everyone step down without giving up exercise altogether.</li> <li>- Is popular with women and the over-55s. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of walkers are over 55, the same amount are women.</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> <http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Dudley-Healthy-Towns-Executive-Summary1.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Walking%20works\\_summary\\_AW\\_Web.pdf](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Walking%20works_summary_AW_Web.pdf)

		Both these groups usually have lower than average levels of physical activity.
The Conservation Volunteers Green Gym® (2003-8) <sup>18</sup>	A programme (normally one session per week for 1-4 hours) where people volunteer to undertake practical conservation or gardening work to enhance their fitness and health while taking action to improve the outdoor environment. There are c52 Green Gym projects in UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruits diverse and vulnerable groups to Green Gym projects and integrating them with the wider community</li> <li>- Demonstrates that through the Green Gym concept, these more vulnerable groups are more likely to improve their scores on measures of physical and mental well-being and physical activity</li> <li>- Delivers practical site management benefits and associated personal conservation skills and awareness development</li> </ul>
Routes to Health, part of Reality Check community arts and health project), Cannock Chase (2003-6) <sup>19</sup>	<p>Routes to Health is a community arts and health trail, which has been developed to tackle local health inequalities. The trail has been created by local artists, students, schools and community groups. Unique art pieces are themed around health issues and are designed to generate interest and provide information on issues such as exercise, relaxation, mental health and a heart health. The artworks are placed on an accessible one mile trail, which acts as a catalyst for participants and their families to engage in the trail and absorb health information in an informal way.</p> <p>The programme targets those who don't typically access the forest environment: teenagers, people with mental health problems, people with disabilities, the elderly, young families from low income backgrounds and those who are sedentary.</p>	<p>It is estimated that before the walking trail was developed approximately 150 people used the route every month. Over the first 12 months of the Route to Health project 50,000 walkers have walked the trail, representing about 1,000 walks taken per week. This impressive figure has been sustained during the second year of the project.</p> <p>The art works played a role in supporting people to use the walking trail. 63% of people responding to the Route to Health Questionnaire agreed with the statement that "the artworks main purpose is to generate interest and provided a reason for walking the rest of the trail." 49% of people agreed with the statement that "the artworks are useful for showing the way around the trail"</p>
Lakeside Health Trails, Doncaster, 2014	An initiative between Doncaster Council and Doncaster Rovers Football Club to	No evaluation available as yet.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.tcv.org.uk/greengym>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/downloads/RealityCheck\\_Report\\_final.pdf](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/downloads/RealityCheck_Report_final.pdf)

	deliver series of trails around Lakeside green space using mobile device QR codes and embedded posts encouraging visitors to exercise, learn, relax and enjoy the space. Residents will be able to scan the QR codes and upload free data such as exercise videos, heritage information and facts on the surrounding natural environment. There will be a supporting website to host the trail information, a calendar of events, a diary of regular activities, and general information.	
Playing Out, Bristol <sup>20</sup>	<p>Resident led project to support parents to create a safe environment for their children to play out, focusing on temporary closure of residential streets to create safe and accessible outdoor play space close. Project now provides advice and support to communities to create street play space across the UK.</p> <p>Support is also available nationally from Play England through its Street Play campaign<sup>21</sup></p>	University of Bristol evaluation of the Playing Out project showed that children were outside approximately 70% of the time during the street closure monitoring period. This compares to less than 20% usually spent outdoors during this time period on an average school day by Bristol children of a similar age. <sup>22</sup>

2.9 In undertaking the Green Exercise Programme evaluation, Natural England identified a range of common enablers, which were found to support increased participation in such projects. These are outlined below for reference purposes, when developing and taking forward specific actions in the pilot action plan for Aylesbury (appendix G).

<sup>20</sup> <http://playingout.net/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.playengland.org.uk/streetplay>

<sup>22</sup> [http://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/playing-out-evaluation\\_Angie-Page.pdf](http://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/playing-out-evaluation_Angie-Page.pdf)

- Opportunity for social contact and companionship. Being around like-minded others, meeting new people and enjoying a shared experience.
- Knowing how to get to the green space, and/or having transport, where project activities are happening and feeling welcomed and accepted.
- Anonymity of health status, particularly for those with sensitive health conditions, ie. those suffering mental ill health really appreciate the fact that nobody asks about it, they just accept you.
- Informality of the group was important to people. They appreciated the fact that activities were relaxed and that there were no expectations. Participants aren't forced to do a fixed amount of activity.
- Known routes to participation are key in giving people confidence and encouraging them to participate in the intervention. For example, through GP or exercise referral, via an existing group/organisation or through word of mouth.
- Getting the publicity right/tailored to the target audience – rather than just blanket flyers/posters or adverts in the paper. People seemed to respond well to the personal touch, ie. having the project officer come and tell them about the project/activities. Hearing directly from people who had already experienced the project also seemed to be a very effective way of encouraging people to get involved.
- One-off taster sessions worked well enabling people to try the activity and see if they liked it before committing to a programme, but again it is important to get the publicity and communications right in order to attract specific audiences.
- For the set programmes small groups of 8-10 seemed about right in terms of ensuring everyone was getting involved and developing friendships in the groups, too large a group would have been daunting and off-putting for some participants and wouldn't have functioned so well in terms of developing cohesion/support networks.
- Branded free gifts are appealing and make participants feel appreciated and as though they belong to the project.

- 2.10 The NHS has also recently created, with the help of top fitness experts, an online directory of new ways and places to exercise for free for people to explore, including walking, trim trail, DIY boot camp and park games.<sup>23</sup>

**b) Local**

- 2.11 At the local level, the relevant policy framework is provided by both county and district level plans. The key county level plans are the Buckinghamshire Health and Well Being Strategy 2013-17<sup>24</sup>, Physical Activity Strategy 2014-17<sup>25</sup> and Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009)<sup>26</sup> and associated delivery plans. These high level policy documents provide the strategic framework within which to guide the development and delivery of district and other more local level plans.
- 2.12 The Green Space Means Health project has been developed in accordance the county strategic aim to improve health and reduce inequalities through building physical activity into everyday life. More specifically, the project delivers on the Buckinghamshire Physical Activity Strategy action commitment set out below:

Strategic aim	Headline action
Building activity into everyday life	Assess availability and use of green space for people living in the most deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. (to address links between poor health and access to green space: poor health and deprivation)
	Promote and enhance access to parks, play and leisure facilities and green space as great places to be active

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/free-fitness.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/healthy-living/buckinghamshire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1932033/Physical-Activity-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/environment/green-infrastructure/>

	Increase capacity among volunteers to provide community led physical activity opportunities, with focus on areas of deprivation and green space in each local authority area
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2.13 The Buckinghamshire Physical Activity Strategy also includes a range of recommended design principles to increase physical activity levels in the county:

- Adopt collaborative approach
- Identify and target inactive residents and evaluate and demonstrate outcomes
- Offer range of activities and sports opportunities – flexible and adaptable to needs of target audience
- Secure support of GPs and health professionals
- Refer to tailored programmes
- Pursue organisational action, both at workplace and community levels

2.14 The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy provides an assessment of GI provision, opportunity and deficiency based on ANGSt (Access to Natural Green Space Standards), a Natural England developed national quantitative green space standard<sup>27</sup>. This standard emphasises the importance of communities having access to different sizes of natural and semi-natural green space close to where people live, based on scale and catchment. By applying ANGSt and assessing existing provision against future need, the Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies three Priority Action Areas (1. North Aylesbury Vale; 2. Aylesbury Environs; and 3. Wycombe District South and South Bucks) where deficiencies of strategic GI have been identified. These three Priority Action Areas are taken forward and developed in the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>27</sup>[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east\\_of\\_england/ourwork/gi/accessiblenaturalgreenspacestandardangst.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east_of_england/ourwork/gi/accessiblenaturalgreenspacestandardangst.aspx)

<sup>28</sup>[http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1521901/5326-Bucks-GI-Delivery-Plan-FINAL-ISSUE\\_2013\\_08\\_07\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1521901/5326-Bucks-GI-Delivery-Plan-FINAL-ISSUE_2013_08_07_low_res.pdf)



2.15 The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan builds on the strategic green infrastructure (GI) planning framework which has been developed in the county since 2009, including Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy 2011-26<sup>29</sup>. The Delivery Plan identifies a suite of area specific green infrastructure (GI) proposals and projects within the strategic GI framework for the NEP and other key stakeholders to take forward. It also provides guidance on how these can be achieved, plus notes on synergies with other complementary projects, potential funding streams and governance models. Summarised below are the key proposals, projects and supporting evidence relating to Aylesbury, which form the basis of this review:

- Existing GI suffers from severance and few opportunities to create enhanced urban links and green space improvements
- Main GI opportunities relate to management of amenity green space, which currently delivers few functions, eg. biodiversity; and improved peri-urban links to key GI assets/ nodes on Aylesbury Linear Park
- Significant pockets of health deprivation within western parts of Aylesbury (eg. Quarrendon neighbourhood). Enhanced links to River Thames and associated GI network plus Linear Park (incl Quarrendon Leas) could help with access spurs to/ from Quarrendon.
- Aylesbury is within Bucks GI Strategy Priority Action Area 2
- Area specific proposal: Aylesbury Linear Park, including number of flagship GI projects: Aylesbury Linear Park east and west and Quarrendon Leas to the West and Grand Union Triangle, Wendover Woods and Regional Wetland Park to the east)
- Specific project proposals:
  - Extension of linear park, including link to River Thames
  - Wetland landscape enhancement to link Regional Wetland Park
  - Urban areas, 'greening the town' eg. tree planting, green roofs

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.aylesburyvalcdc.gov.uk/leisure-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/green-infastructure-strategy/>

- 2.16 Another key element of the strategic GI plan framework is the Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), which is a statutory document produced by the County Council as Highway Authority. The current RoWIP covers the period 2008-18 and includes the following strategic vision to “expand, manage and promote the network of routes and open spaces, recognising its historical and ecological significance whilst providing real economic benefits to the rural communities and health benefits to local people, to create safe and sustainable access provision for all<sup>30</sup>.” The commitment to deliver health benefits for users and residents is reflected in the plan’s strategic aims, which includes object/ives around working with communities to improve and create new access links, in areas where there are inadequate or limited public rights of way; and to focus on the county Health Walks programme development.
- 2.17 In addition to the county level strategic GI plan framework summarised above, Aylesbury Vale District Council has produced its own GI strategy, as outlined below.

Plan/ strategy	Key findings/ proposals
Aylesbury Vale GI Strategy 2011-26 <sup>31</sup>	<p>Based on ANGSt, Aylesbury doesn’t meet any of the minimum standards. The lack of larger site provision is especially notable.</p> <p>Nine strategic principles, including:</p> <p>5.4. The importance of linked up space and green routes for providing recreational opportunities that can enhance health and wellbeing should be recognised.</p> <p>8. GI should be designed to high standards of sustainability to deliver social and economic, as well as environmental benefits.</p> <p>Flagship projects: Vale Park, Aylesbury Linear Park</p>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/133563/BCC\\_RoWIP\\_2008\\_2018\\_Web.pdf](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/133563/BCC_RoWIP_2008_2018_Web.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/leisure-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/green-infastructure-strategy/>

### **3. Aylesbury area assessment**

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary assessment of the key issues relating to the access and use of green space to address public health and wellbeing needs in Aylesbury, with a particular focus on the town's most deprived communities. The assessment concludes with a set of corresponding recommended improvement actions and long and short list of sites for the phase 3 pilot intervention action planning work in Aylesbury. The assessment was informed by a combination of primary and secondary research undertaken by the consultants, People & Place Solutions.
- 3.2 Although the project brief specified an analysis of the Natural England Monitor of Engagement in the Natural Environment (MENE) dataset, this was discovered not to be feasible. On interrogating the raw MENE visit-based and respondent-based data, the data was either not available (eg. ref. 'E6: Perceived quality of named site') or meaningless due to the small respondent sample size and therefore, high margin of statistical error, at local, medium super output or district area levels. This was particularly an issue for the visit based data, eg. 'Q7: Name of local green space visited'; 'Q8: Distance travelled to visit the named site; or 'Q12: Reason for visit eg. health/ exercise; fresh air'. The data only became meaningful at higher spatial levels and so was not considered appropriate, even for contextual use, in this review. The same was true for Public Health England health profiles, which are only available down to district level; and for the new Public Health Outcomes Framework, Indicator 1:16: (Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons) down to upper tier authority level, which for Buckinghamshire is the county area. In addition, the County Health and Well Being Joint Strategic Needs Assessment only provides health and wellbeing data at the county level.
- 3.3 The local GI plan framework identifies Aylesbury town as failing to meet the minimum standard of provision for accessible green space in accordance with ANGSt. The town's existing GI suffers from physical severance and its urban form presents few opportunities to create enhanced urban links and green space improvements. The town also suffers from a lack of larger urban green spaces, with only 4 sites over 10ha and no sites over the 20ha threshold within 2km catchment radius. Despite a dense network of public footpaths and

bridleways, there is also a lack of multipurpose access links for walking, cycling and horse riding in the area. The 2014 public health profile for Aylesbury Vale district identifies a 7.5 year life expectancy gap for men and 3.3 year gap for women between the district's most and least deprived communities<sup>32</sup>.

- 3.5 The local GI plan framework identifies two GI flagship projects for Aylesbury town - Vale Park and Aylesbury Linear Park. The Vale Park project involves providing new seating, landscaping and historical feature restoration at Vale Park and access improvements to Bear Brook. The Aylesbury Linear Park project involves linking up existing and creating new green spaces around the town, including walking and cycling routes and formal and informal recreation provision. In addition, there are a number of smaller local projects or plans to improve the accessibility and quality of green space in Aylesbury within the next 2 years, as identified by stakeholder consultees in the table below.

Site name/ location	Project/ plan
Alfred Rose Park, Elmhurst	Access, footpath, and boundary improvements.
Riverside Walk, Quarrendon	Ongoing footpath repairs and access improvements (funding dependant)
The Paddock, Bedgrove	Install bridge over brook to improve access from adjacent housing
Vale Park, Aylesbury Central	Improvements to Park Street pedestrian access. Replace skate park. Installation of x2 5-a-side synthetic pitches. Removal of old railings along Lovers Walk
Walton Court Playing Fields	Access improvements for both vehicles and pedestrians
Whitehill Park, Aylesbury Central	Surfacing of footpaths (just complete)
Berryfields development <sup>33</sup>	3000 dwelling development, including new GI with equipped play space and access to newly created public open space
Canal towpath to town centre	Creation of new cycle route along the canal towpath between the ARLA dairy site (on the A41) and Aylesbury Town Centre. This is likely to be implemented within the next 2 years.
Various sites	Tree planting.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=105510>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.aylesburyvalcdc.gov.uk/planning-policy/publications-list/planning-brief-publications/berryfields-development-design-code/>

	Correction of any faults identified in annual Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) inspections
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3.6 In addition, the following table lists outdoor health activities currently being provided on green spaces within Aylesbury town.

Site name	Outdoor health activity
Riverside Walk	Parkrun (approx. 100 participants every Saturday morning, free of charge, see <a href="http://www.parkrun.org.uk">www.parkrun.org.uk</a> . Free of charge to use ball courts, play areas, grass sports pitches
Bedgrove Park	Simply Walk (Health Walks), free of charge to use ball courts, play areas, grass sports pitches, buggy jog
Fairford Leys	Regiment Fitness, play areas, grass sports pitches
Oakfield Road	Regiment Fitness. Free of charge to use ball courts, play areas, grass sports pitches
Vale Park	Basketball – This targets unengaged young people in the town through the summer and has proved popular in the past, skate parks, play areas, floodlit 3G synthetic pitches as of January 2015, Aqua Vale Leisure Centre, links to Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal, tennis.
All Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA)	MUGA project. Range of free sports activities for children and young people run for 6 weeks in May/June and also in the summer.

3.7 People & Place Solutions engaged stakeholder consultees in the area assessment, who identified the following issues, as impacting adversely on the ability of Aylesbury's deprived communities to maximise the use of the town's green spaces for health and well-being; and recommended the following corresponding actions to address them.

Issues	Actions
Safe cycling areas within the town are minimal and the few there are, are generally linear so not geared towards leisure cyclists and families. Only a couple of the parks have any paths and they are narrow so not conducive to multi-use.	Paths around the edge of parks such as Bedgrove, Walton Court/Edinburgh Playing Fields and a widening and raising of the paths on Riverside Walk, as well as extending the path network on the north side of the river Thames.
Allotments: Quantity	Planning – to be included as part of future developments if sufficient garden space is not provided e.g. apartments

3.8 The following table provides a list of sites in Aylesbury identified by stakeholder consultees for consideration for the phase 3 pilot intervention action planning work.

Site name	Rationale for putting forward
Aylesbury Riverside Walk, including Haydon Hill	One of the largest open spaces in Aylesbury that links new and existing housing developments. It sits between an old estate and two new ones currently under construction. Parts of it are a floodplain.
Alfred Rose Park	Well used site that is in need of updating and made more appealing and safer by improving views in and out of the Park.
Edinburgh Playing Fields/ Walton Court	Currently used for grass football pitches. Consider feasibility to use these sites for other activities and sports Within the town's biggest deprived community with regular anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues
Whitehill Park	Issues with drug and alcohol users at this site, which is putting local people off using the space.
Vale Park	Further access improvements and convert existing toilet building. Use site to promote links to other green spaces including round Aylesbury Walk. Convert bowls green (only used part of year) to 2 floodlit 3G 5-a-side pitches (underway for completion January 2015)
Bedgrove Park	Has the potential to be extended depending on future development in the area.
Somerville Way	Located in deprived area, work with partners to improve facilities. May be potential for a ball court/MUGA
Football pitches	Align supply of grass pitches with demand. Development business case to replace grass pitches at multiple sites with floodlit 3G pitches.

3.10 The following selection criteria was used to identify the target pilot sites in each of the three target towns:

- The need to identify at least one site, and no more than two, per target town
- The priority ranking of the site by stakeholder respondents
- The frequency of the site's selection in stakeholder responses
- The inclusion of the site in local development plans/ projects
- The physical scale of the site and its proximity to other local sites

- The proximity of the site to deprived communities
- The perceived opportunity to increase community use/ GI functionality of the site
- The existence of ASB and other management issues which may impact on site quality.
- The opportunity to build on existing community engagement work

3.10 By applying these criteria to the stakeholder consultation key site long lists for Aylesbury, the following ‘short list’ was identified for consideration for the phase 3 pilot work.

Site name	Supporting rationale
Aylesbury Riverside Walk, Aylesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic green space</li> <li>• Links new and existing housing developments.</li> <li>• Adjoins number of town’s most deprived communities</li> <li>• Part of strategic Aylesbury Linear Park project</li> <li>• On/ off site access improvement opportunities</li> <li>• Identified as priority site in 2 out of the 4 stakeholder responses</li> </ul>
Edinburgh/ Walton Court Playing Fields, Aylesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic green space cluster with opportunity to increase diversity of functions</li> <li>• Identified as priority site in 2 out of the 4 stakeholder responses</li> <li>• Suffers ASB issues</li> </ul>

3.11 By applying these criteria to the long list, the following short listed pilot site was identified for Aylesbury to be progressed in phase 3 – Aylesbury Riverside Walk.

3.12 Although the brief specified the community consultation to be targeted on the phase 3 pilot sites, to maximise the opportunity to design, develop and deliver effective pilot interventions in accordance with community needs, the action planning work was not restricted to the pilot sites alone. Instead, this sites formed the initial strategic focus of the community engagement work with the in-built flexibility to extend it to other local sites/ off site interventions as identified by the local community. The spatial area for wider local

site selection and community engagement was defined by ward area boundaries related to the ward area within which the target site was located.

## **4. Aylesbury Riverside Walk site overview**

- 4.1 Aylesbury Riverside Walk is an 18 hectare linear green space running along the northern urban edge of Aylesbury. The site is bounded to the south by housing (Quarrendon Ward), the east by the A413 road, the west by the railway line and the north by the River Thames. A further main road, the A41, bisects the site near its western boundary.
- 4.2 The site is served by regular pedestrian/ cycle access points from the adjoining residential areas along its southern boundary; and from the two main roads (A41 and A413). There is only one off-road pedestrian/ cycle access crossing of the River Thames into the site from the new urban extensions to the north. All these access points are un-gated. The majority of main site access points have ladder boards, either old timber routed (often in poor state of legibility due to discolouring/ mould); or new screen printed. All boards include 'welcome'; site name, Council name and contact number. New screen printed boards include site map and wildlife information, text and illustrations. With exception of several narrow alley access points between properties, all other access points afford good sight lines into the site.
- 4.3 The main access points into the site are sealed surfaced paths, which, with the exception of one (to the west of Meadowcroft public car park), are of a reasonable gradient. The main linear path network is a sealed surface, mainly concrete with some tarmac sections, which provide reasonable easy access to the entire site, with the exception of the most western end, which is served by only a mown grass path network. A c2m concrete surfaced path, open to walkers and cyclists, which runs east-west through the site between the A413 and A41. This path is linked by sealed surface cross-paths situated at intervals along its length. The old concrete sections of the main linear path are breaking down and being repaired/ replaced with tarmac surfacing. A mown informal grass path is maintained



along the riverbank of the River Thames through the site. There is no site signage at any of the access points or associated path waymarking, with the exception of occasional 'Round Aylesbury Walk' waymarkers.

- 4.4 The site provides formal grass pitches (football and cricket), informal kick-about areas and a floodlit ATP (artificial turf pitch), MUGA (multi-use games area) and teenage play area. There are four strategically located new childrens' play areas, one at either end and two in the middle of the site. Each of the four areas provide play equipment for children of all ages, including zip wires and climbing frames. There are also strategically located youth pod shelters and basket-ball hoops associated with the play areas. All formal play equipment, including ATP, MUGA appears to have been recently installed and are of high quality design.
- 4.5 Standards of grounds maintenance is high, with differential mowing frequencies, tree planting/ management and path edging. There is also evidence of ongoing work to repair/ resurface the concrete section of the strategic linear path through the site. There is little litter or dog fouling to speak and only some graffiti on structures and garden fly tips. There is a good level of dog and general litter bin provision throughout the site.

## **5. Green Flag assessment**

- 5.1 In November 2014, People & Place Solutions undertook a field based self-assessment of Aylesbury Riverside Walk in accordance with the Green Flag Award criteria<sup>34</sup>. The Green Flag Award scheme is a Government endorsed national quality standard for public parks and open spaces. The scheme is not specifically designed for assessment of woodland sites or public health facilities/ interventions.
- 5.2 The self-assessment methodology consists of 27 individual scoring criteria, each worth up to 10 points, based on the following scoring

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<sup>34</sup> 'Park and Green Space Self-Assessment Guide', February 2008, CABE Space, DCLG and Civic Trust

system: '0-1 Very Poor; 2-4 Poor; 5-6 Fair; 7 Good; 8 Very Good; 9 Excellent; 10'. The assessment was undertaken through a single, walk-over site visit. Although the visit attempted a reasonable assessment of the full site, not all areas of the site were walked/ covered. No contextual site information was obtained or used in the production of the assessment. The assessment results represent the consultant's professional opinion/ judgement.

5.3 In summary, the site achieved an overall assessment score of 69%, which, based on the scoring system, means it is at a 'Fair to Good' quality standard. Listed below are the key management issues, as identified by the consultant's self-assessment, which are considered to adversely affect the community's use and enjoyment of Aylesbury Riverside Walk.

- Poor quality public information boards at site entrances
- Low levels of path signage/ way-marking
- Limited bench provision and no picnic tables
- Site access points not very inviting/ welcoming

5.4 The full results of the Green Flag self-assessment are included in appendix C. These results were also used to inform the design and delivery of the stakeholder engagement work in phase 3 of the project.

## **6. Stakeholder engagement**

6.1 For the stakeholder engagement element of the action planning work, People & Place Solutions worked with the client to identify an initial list of organisational and individual stakeholder consultees, including Ward/ Town Councillors, community groups, GPs/ health

professionals, site managers and user groups, etc. The stakeholder engagement work was undertaken using three different methods as outlined below:

**a) Community survey**

6.2 In April/ May 2015, People & Place Solutions launched a community survey, using an online questionnaire, targeting residents of Quarrendon Ward. A total of 23 questionnaire responses were received by this date and have since been analysed. Of the 64 respondents, 85% (55) had visited Aylesbury Riverside Walk in the past 12 months, with 65% of these visiting the site at least once a week. The main reasons for visiting the site were walking (52%) and cycling (28%), with 31% citing 'being active/ exercising' as the main reason. Listed below are the key changes respondents would like to see made to Aylesbury Riverside Walk:

- more litter bins (56%)
- more picnic tables (49%)
- more community events, eg. picnics, outdoor theatre (46%)
- trim trail/ outdoor exercise equipment (41%)
- more dog bins (40%)
- more benches (33%)
- more path signage/ way-marking (21%)
- organised activity/ exercise sessions (21%)

**b) Community workshop**

6.3 In March/ April 2015, People & Place Solutions organised 6 stakeholder workshops targeting a range of different community groups and

organisations within Quarrendon Ward, as follows:

- Quarrendon & Meadowcroft Guides
- Thursday Morning Club (over 65s)
- St Peter's Community Café
- Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Action Partnership
- Thomas Hickman School (Year 5)
- Haydon Abbey School (Year 5/6)

6.4 A total of 87 individuals covering a range of ages and both genders, participated in the community workshops. Listed below are the Key management issues, as identified across the 6 workshops, which are considered to adversely affect the community's use and enjoyment of Aylesbury Riverside Walk:

- Insufficient signage/ information
- Entrance points not very welcoming
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fears of personal safety - a past murder on the site still preys on people's minds
- Litter and dog mess
- Flooding – making parts of site inaccessible

6.5 For a full report of the results of each of the 6 community workshops, please refer to appendix D.

**c) Action planning workshop**

6.6 The results from the Green Flag assessment, community survey and community workshops were used to develop a discussion paper, which was circulated to professional and community stakeholder invitees (appendix E) ahead of an action planning workshop. The discussion paper outlined the key management issues, which were considered to adversely affect the community's use and enjoyment of Aylesbury Riverside Walk. The paper concluded with a set of potential actions to address the identified issues and increase community access, awareness and use of the two target sites. These potential actions were listed as follows:

- a) Additional seating to give confidence to users that they can rest if needed
- b) Make site entrances more inviting/ welcoming with new signage/ site boards
- c) Increase on site path signage/ way-marking giving destination/ distances
- d) Create designated/ way-marked circular walking/ running routes (short/ medium/ long) with associated distance markers
- e) Picnic tables and additional seating
- f) Consider visitor attraction/ interpretation opportunities through public art, including sculptures, theatre, story-telling, interpretation trails
- g) Develop community events programme for the site to attract new visitors/ users
- h) Reduce levels of litter and dog mess
- i) Address ASB and public safety perception through Community Safety Partnership campaign targeting site
- j) Consider alternative path options for sections most frequently flooded (and/ or increase maintenance of river to reduce flooding)
- k) Outdoor fitness equipment and adventure/ natural play
- l) 'Simply Walk' programme from local pub
- m) Promote existing activities, eg. Park Run and Forces Fit
- n) Conservation volunteering, eg. Green Gym
- o) Additional new facilities/ activities/ interventions:
  - Café and toilets

- Fitness/ trim trail
- Additional formal sports: tennis, netball and cricket nets
- BMX/ skate park
- Climbing wall
- Cycle club
- OAP walk
- Dog agility course
- Motion controlled/ low level lighting
- Leaflet delivered to residents promoting local walks and parks

6.7 The action planning workshop was held on 25 June 2015. At the workshop, professional and community stakeholder participants were invited to consider the issues and actions identified in the discussion paper, in terms of their appropriateness and deliverability. Participants were also invited to consider additional issues and actions. A report detailing the output from the workshop is included in appendix F.

## **7. Action plan**

7.1 The results of the workshop were used to develop an action plan, which sets out a programme of proposed infrastructure improvements, interventions, activities and events to improve the local community's access, awareness and use of Aylesbury Riverside Walk site, with a focus on delivering public health and wellbeing outcomes. Following the workshop, the draft action plan was circulated to professional and community stakeholders (appendix E) for comment and for 'sign up'. The finalised plan, including key delivery partners/ lead partners and associated target delivery dates and resourcing requirements, is included in appendix G.

7.2 The delivery of the action plan needs to be considered in the context of wider site management plans and to be taken forward in an integrated, planned way with strong community engagement and support. The success of the plan is dependent on the ability of the lead partners to engage and work with the supporting delivery partners and to secure the necessary resources to take forward the specified actions. In designing and developing these actions, delivery partners are invited to consider the good practice guidance detailed in sections 2.9 and 2.13 above; and the NICE guidelines on 'Physical Activity and the Environment'<sup>35</sup> and 'Walking and Cycling'<sup>36</sup>:

## 8. Evaluation

8.1 Listed below are a set of recommended design principles<sup>37</sup> for delivery partners to use to assess the impact of their proposed action plan activities/ interventions.

- Participation - at each stage of evaluation those with an interest should be involved. These can include policy-makers, community members and organisations, health and other professionals. Make it a conversation – a search for meaningful narrative requires a dialogue

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<sup>35</sup> NICE Guidelines (2008) Physical activity and the environment - <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph8>

<sup>36</sup> NICE Guidelines (2012), Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation -.<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph41>

<sup>37</sup> Taken from following references:

- World Health Organization (1998) Health Promotion Evaluation - recommendations to policy-makers. Report of the WHO European working group on Health Promotion Evaluation.
- Heritage Lottery Fund (2012) Evaluation Good Practice Guidance

- Multiple methods - evaluations should draw on a variety of disciplines and employ a broad range of information gathering procedures
- Capacity building - evaluations should aim to enhance the capacity of individuals, communities, organisations etc
- Look beyond outputs – numbers alone do not tell the whole story. To evaluate change means looking at real differences, or 'outcomes', made by a project. Very often these happen at the level of the individual and so the methods must be sensitive enough to pick up whatever individual stories are hidden behind the numbers
- Choose indicators that matter – The indicators (or 'ways of knowing') that change is (or is not) happening can be a combination of numbers and descriptions of people's experience. They should be chosen, based on what people associated or benefitting from the project have identified as important to measure, and not just what is easiest to count.
- Appropriateness - evaluations should be designed to accommodate the complex nature of health promotion interventions and their long term impact

8.2 There is no single, correct way to evaluate an activity or intervention. The method that is most appropriate will depend on the aims and objectives of the proposed activity/ intervention, the types of information or data available, and the time and resources available. The questions to ask in the design and planning stage of an evaluation framework for an activity/ intervention are as follows:<sup>38</sup>

- What are the aims and objectives of the proposed activity/intervention?
- What is the evaluation to be used for, ie. demonstrating impact/ informing continuous improvement?
- Who are the main groups and individuals involved in the proposed activity/ intervention?
- Who is the evaluation for, ie. the audience?

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<sup>38</sup> Adapted from Morgan A (2006) Evaluation of health promotion. In: Davies M & Macdowall W (Eds.) Health Promotion Theory: Understanding Public Health Series. Open University Press/McGraw Hill



8.3 It is critical to plan the evaluation as early as possible in the design of any activity/ intervention development process, in order to enable the identification and collection of any required baseline data. Listed below are some suggested outputs and outcomes for consideration in the design of appropriate evaluation frameworks for the proposed action plan activities/ interventions:

- Different activities/ interventions run and numbers/ demographic profile of people attending (ie. participants)
- Numbers/ demographic profile of volunteers involved in the project
- Numbers of visitors to each site (using estimates based on periodic manual counts at regular intervals during the year. To save on cost, this could be done by volunteers. Alternatively, if feasible, install automatic people counters at key entrance points)
- Re-assess each site using national Green Flag award scheme self-assessment methodology (To save on cost, this could be done by volunteers, though may raise issues of competency and consistency)
- Survey (talk to) project partners, staff and volunteers and intervention/ activity participants
- Use of individual participant testimonials/ case studies

8.4 In designing and undertaking any participant surveys, attention needs to be paid to sample size/ sampling methods and statistical confidence and avoiding bias. For further guidance on survey design, please refer to HLF evaluation guidance<sup>39</sup>.

8.5 Given the focus of some of the action plan activities/ interventions on increasing use of the target sites for exercise, the British Heart Foundation's toolkit for the design and evaluation of Exercise Referral Schemes is also recommended as a useful evaluation framework planning reference<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund (2012) Evaluation Good Practice Guidance

<sup>40</sup> British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health (2010), A Toolkit for the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Exercise Referral Schemes

## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: Project brief



**Green Space Means Health - An assessment of accessible green infrastructure in areas of highest health deprivation in Buckinghamshire – project brief**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council's PSD (policy, strategy and development) and Public Health teams, wishes to compile information on green infrastructure and its availability to the more health deprived communities in the county.

A project with recommendations ('the project') is required by the NEP to inform development of an action programme in priority communities delivering the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Physical Activity Strategy and Buckinghamshire GI Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Bucks & MK NEP is the commissioning body (or 'Client') for the study and will appoint a Project Manager. The Project Manager will be the Consultant's main contact for the study.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership covers the administrative areas of Buckinghamshire, including the 4 district councils; Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, South Bucks, and Chiltern, and Milton Keynes District Council. The NEP was recognised by the government in June 2012 as a prescribed body, as detailed in section 33A (1) of the Localism Act 2011. A detailed explanation of the role of such partnerships is provided by DEFRA. A shadow board was established in 2013 and the following partners have provided board members:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxford Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF)
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB)
- Chiltern District Council
- DEFRA agencies
- Health & Wellbeing/Clinical Commissioning Board (HWB)
- South Bucks District Council
- Wycombe District Council
- Higher Education sector

The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy (2007) provides an assessment of the county's accessible green infrastructure resource, where deficits lie and highlights priority areas for action. The Buckinghamshire GI Delivery Plan (2013) broadly identifies measures across the county where green infrastructure may be best targeted, including areas for health and wellbeing. These documents are at quite a strategic level.

The GI strategy did not however include information on where more deprived communities live and their access to green space. We know that people living in more deprived communities experience poorer health, we also know that green space is good for health both in physical and mental terms. Studies show that access to good quality urban parks was beneficial to public health those living in greener urban areas display fewer signs of depression and anxiety.<sup>41</sup>

The Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>42</sup> aims to improve health and reduce inequalities in Buckinghamshire and has a focus on physical activity. As a result a Buckinghamshire Physical activity strategy 2014-2017 has been produced which includes the following actions:

<b>Building Activity into everyday life - Built Environment / Green Spaces</b>	Assess availability and use of green space for people living in the most deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. (to address links between poor health and access to green space: poor health and deprivation)	Map access to green space for specific areas of deprivation in Bucks: Chesham, Wycombe and Aylesbury. Identify areas with no/limited access to good quality green space and assess feasibility of addressing this need with green infrastructure leads
		Audit the quality and the community use of spaces identified above and develop a plan to improve where required (cross reference Green Infrastructure delivery plan) Undertake consultation with local community
		Promote the use of the available local green space to the local community with specific events/initiatives (cross ref: 2.9)

Ian Alcock †, Mathew P. White \*†, Benedict W. Wheeler †, Lora E. Fleming †, and Michael H. Depledge *Environ. Sci. Technol.*, Article DOI: 10.1021/es403688w Accessed 14/1/2014 <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es403688w>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/healthy-living/buckinghamshire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>

## **PROJECT AIMS & METHODOLOGY:**

The project will comprise of the following elements, of which Phases 2 and 3 will be commissioned:

### **Phase 1**

- 1) To map quantity and availability of green space greater than 0.25ha no further than 800m away from any deprived community, against areas of health deprivation focusing on the lowest quintile of deprivation as measured by the IMD, within High Wycombe, Chesham and Aylesbury. This has been completed by BCC in-house and the GIS/mapping is available under license.

### **Phase 2**

- 2) Undertake analysis of data from the Natural England MENE dataset for the study areas, looking at communities who live in Buckinghamshire (rather than people who visit Buckinghamshire) to provide national context, and key indicators and information regarding use of green spaces in High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham (reference to Mid Beds study for background).
- 3) To identify key stakeholders/communities and owners of green spaces identified in phase 1. To undertake a high level consultation/audit with community leaders, stakeholders and owners of the identified green spaces in order to understand the quality and community use of the green spaces identified in 1. This will start with analysis of district open space studies/audits and assessments, but will identify any gaps for non-district owned/managed sites. This should reflect methodology and evidence from other similar studies and knowledge from outside Buckinghamshire where possible – there is a lot of similar work being undertaken across the country and we hope that this can be taken into account.
- 4) From the consultation and audit in 1 & 2, prepare an analysis of issues for each town, including potential future actions to improve access to and use of their green space to address health and wellbeing in these identified areas. Recommendations for key sites for a community consultation and interventions pilot will be made and the next phase of work defined.

### **Phase 3**

- 5) Undertake further consultation in 2 of the recommended key sites for an interventions pilot in order to produce a local action plan. This should be with the local community who use/could use the spaces. Detailed methodology to be agreed – but may include an event/interviews/local surveys/web survey monkey/engagement of school or healthy living centres. This phase of the project aims to:
- a) To define specific issues of use/ non-use e.g. maintenance, safety, ownership, health issues within community
  - b) To develop a local action plan to improve access, awareness and use of the green space targeted at addressing health issues and providing interventions e.g. this may need to include developing funding bids, community engagement, remedial works, new access, new spaces, alternatives, shared land, town centre greening etc
  - c) To build evaluation in to assess impact of actions/measures on health

#### **Phase 4**

- 5) Disseminate best practice and information from study accordingly.

#### **KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

- 1. Phase 1 is complete and BCC are able to support any additional modifications to GIS through liaison with the Project Manager in presentation of the final reports.
- 2. Phase 2 and 3 should be costed as separate elements, and the contract will be let in two stages subject to satisfactory completion of the Phase 2.
- 3. It should be noted that Phase 3 is considered to be the most important part of the project in terms of revealing issues and measures for public health and green infrastructure – the balance of time on the project should be weighted towards Phase 3.
- 4. The consultant should build in reasonable scope/flexibility for modifications to Phase 3, following the outcome of Phase 2. The project task group would be happy to receive guidance and direction for the detailed design of Phase 3 from the consultant for consideration.
- 5. Phase 4 is not required and will be undertaken by the NEP.
- 6. There is a Task & Finish Group overseeing this project, chaired by the Project Manager and incorporating all district council partners, the Chiltern Conservation Board and Natural England. There is an expectation that the consultant will report to this group and attend one meeting.
- 7. The consultant should allow for attending 1 or 2 community workshops/events in Phase 3.

## **OUTPUTS AND PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY**

The outputs should be presented as a report in 2 paper copies and provided as a digital copy. There will be a final report for the project as a whole and two specific local green space action plans.

## **CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS OF THE WORK**

The consultant will be required to produce a Proposal and Method Statement which will be agreed by the Project Manager. In particular the Proposal and Method Statement will be required to:

- outline the Consultant's understanding of the brief
- identify any assumptions or observations made by the Consultant
- set out how the Consultant intends to meet the aims of the project including identification of the key elements of and stages within the project, how the Consultant will interact with the Project Manager
- set out how interim and final outputs will be presented
- set out a timetable, including identifying progress report meetings and key milestones during the contract with the Project Manager
- set out the Consultant's fees and estimates for the delivery of the study

Methods, outputs and reporting will be as specified unless varied by written instruction issued by the Project Manager.

**Copyright:** the findings from the study will be the property of the Client. The use of this information by the Consultant for any purposes other than those specified in this document will require the written consent of the Client.

**Format and presentation of data:** key data for the study will be available in digital format. It is a requirement that data will be captured in digital format compatible with the NEP and BCC's systems. Digital data generated by the project must be compatible with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel and Access) and for GIS data Arc GIS version 9.3.1.

## **TIMETABLE**

Tender submissions received by Client	23 April 2014
Commencement of work	1 May 2014



Phase 2 complete – draft report to client	31 May 2014
Task Group Meeting	tbc June 2014
Commencement of Phase 3	By mid June 2014
Workshops	June/July 2014
Draft report	tbc July 2014
Final report and green space action plans	End of July 2014

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### **ENCLOSURES:**

1. PDF maps from Phase 1.
2. MENE analysis from Central Beds
3. Bucks GI Plans are available at: <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/environment/green-infrastructure/>

## **Appendix B: Stage 2 report**

People & Place Solutions

# **Green Space Means Health**

## **Phase 2: Strategic Review**

5 October 2014

### **Brief:**

Green Space Means Health: An assessment of accessible green infrastructure in areas of highest health deprivation in Buckinghamshire

### **Client:**

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by the Buckinghamshire and Milton-Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP), in accordance with the project brief included in appendix A.
- 1.2 The report represents phase 2 of a 4 phase project, where phases 1 and 4 will be undertaken by the client and phases 2 and 3 by an external consultant. The overall aim of the project is to inform the development of a programme of practical action to maximise the use of green space in areas of high multiple deprivation in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. The project takes forward high level aims and actions in the Buckinghamshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy<sup>43</sup> and Physical Activity Strategy<sup>44</sup> around improving public health and reducing inequalities in Buckinghamshire, with a focus on building physical activity into everyday life.
- 1.3 People & Place Solutions (PPS) won the tender to undertake phases 2 and 3 of the project and commenced work on phase 2 in July 2014, guided by a project task group, chaired by the client lead, and whose membership is included in appendix B.
- 1.4 This report represents the culmination of work on phase 2 and starts with a high level review of relevant policies and plans, before moving on to a more detailed audit and analysis of issues and potential improvement actions relating to green space provision and use in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe, with a particular focus on each of the town's most deprived communities. Maps showing the location of these communities (ie. 5th quintile of deprivation as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)), is included in appendix C. This report concludes with a set of recommendations, drawn from the analysis, which includes recommended areas for further consultation and pilot intervention to be taken forward in phase 3.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1 The following section outlines the methodology used in undertaking the phase 2 review, audit and analysis.
- 2.2 A list of relevant plans, strategies and published research to be included in the high level review was compiled from references supplied by key stakeholder consultees and the consultant's own literature review. In deciding what review information to include in the phase 2 report, the consultant sought guidance from the client lead, who agreed that the focus should be on review content which adds value to the project and associated client knowledge base. .

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/healthy-living/buckinghamshire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1932033/Physical-Activity-Strategy.pdf>

2.3 The list of phase 2 key stakeholder consultees was developed with input from members of the project task group and is included in appendix D. An accompanying questionnaire (appendix E) was produced and sent by email to each of these stakeholders. The aim of the questionnaire was to give key stakeholders the opportunity to input to the phase 2 review using their local knowledge and awareness of what was happening 'on the ground', in terms of community access to and use of local green spaces and associated issues and opportunities. Confirmation of which stakeholder consultees responded to the questionnaire is included in appendix D.

### **3. Policy context**

3.1 This section provides a high level review of relevant national and local plans, strategies, research findings and outdoor physical activity initiatives, which are considered to add value to the project.

3.2 Over the last decade there has been a shift in the health agenda towards promoting healthy lifestyle behaviour and choices. There has also been recognition of the role the environment can play in enhancing health. Less active lifestyles have led to an increase in preventable diseases which are placing increasing pressures on the National Health Service, including a cost of £8.2 billion annually.<sup>45</sup>

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3.3 Parks and green spaces contribute to all aspects of health and well-being including increasing levels of physical activity which could alleviate pressures on the NHS. Simply being outside in a green space can promote mental well-being, relieve stress, overcome isolation, improve social cohesion and alleviate physical problems so that fewer working days are lost to ill health.<sup>46</sup>

3.4 Parks provide spaces where people can get fresh air, go for a walk, play sports, exercise or just enjoy the surroundings. Unfortunately those living in more deprived communities, who tend to have poorer health and suffer from the kind of illnesses that can be alleviated by regular exposure to green spaces, are also less likely to have good access to high quality parks and green spaces.

#### **c) National**

3.5 At the national level, the policy framework linking public health and the natural environment is well developed and being advocated strongly by Government through key policy documents, such as the *2010 Public Health White Paper*<sup>47</sup> and government agencies, such as Public

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<sup>45</sup> Department of Health. (2004). At least five a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health

<sup>46</sup> CABE. (2009). Future Health: Sustainable places for health and well-being

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-public-health-white-paper-2010>

Health England<sup>48</sup> and Natural England<sup>49</sup>. The contribution of green space to health and wellbeing is now formally recognised in the new national public health outcomes framework<sup>50</sup> with the inclusion of *Indicator 1:16: Utilisation of green space for exercise/ health reasons*. This indicator is included in the framework grouping relating to wider determinants that affect health and wellbeing and health inequalities.

3.6 Listed below is a summary of key national research findings which have informed the current national policy position and are directly relevant to the aim of this project:

*CABE Urban Green Nation 2010*<sup>51</sup>

- The quality of green spaces is directly linked to their perceived value, both to individuals and more generally. A small well designed and well-maintained space with diversity of facilities and landscape characters may have far greater value to local residents and to environmental services than a large, neglected, space that lacks cultural and environmental diversity.
- There is a strong correlation between the poor quality and quantity of green spaces in deprived areas, and the low levels of physical activity of residents.
- Some sectors of society use green space less than others, particularly older people (aged over 65), people with disabilities, women, black and minority ethnic people and children and young people aged 12-19.
- There is a strong link between people's satisfaction with their local parks and green spaces, and their satisfaction with their neighbourhood. This is particularly acute in the most deprived areas, where neighbourhood satisfaction is at its lowest.

*CABE Green Community 2010*<sup>52</sup>

- People living in deprived urban areas view green space as a key service, alongside housing, health, education and policing – one of the essentials in making a neighbourhood liveable.
- There is a virtuous circle: where people perceive green space quality to be good, they are also more satisfied with their neighbourhood and have better health and wellbeing.
- When people value their local green space and feel safe in it, they use it more and are more physically active. Improving the quality of spaces will encourage more active use and exercise
- The provision of green space services must take into account the preferences and needs of local people. 'One size fits all' green space does not work: the community should be given the chance to make spaces fit for purpose.

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.noo.org.uk/LA/tackling/greenspace>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/health/default.aspx>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.phoutcomes.info/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/urban-green-nation>

<sup>52</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/community-green>

- Greater variety and flexibility in green space provision is required as well as consistently higher quality in all areas. As the ethnic and age profile of the UK changes, green space managers need to understand the attitudes, needs and different reasons for green space use among local groups.
- Active marketing of sites; events and activities such as community fun days; guided walks; space for allotments; and considering alternative uses of specific areas will all bolster usage and result in a healthier and more satisfied community.

Natural England commissioned research 2012<sup>53</sup>

- People who perceive easy access to safe green spaces report higher green space use, more regular physical activity and lower risk of obesity. Therefore, access to safe and convenient green space is likely to be an important environmental factor in public health efforts aimed to promote physical activity and reduce obesity.
- Income-related inequality in health is affected by exposure to green space. The long-term conditions of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and dementia are much more prevalent in deprived communities which often have the least access to green space.
- Visiting green space is associated with less stress-related illness and has a positive effect on a person's mental health.
- Time spent in nature has a hugely positive impact on key social indicators. In particular, community open space can enhance social ties, provide a sense of community and can promote social integration within disadvantaged communities.
- Increasing access to the natural environment can play a vital role in efforts to increase activity and reduce obesity. The ability to access green settings has been demonstrated to encourage contact with nature and participation in physical activity, both of which encourage the adoption of other healthy lifestyle choices such as social engagement and consumption of healthy foods.
- Natural environments have a beneficial impact on mental wellbeing. Trees and vegetation reduce ambient noise, improve naturalness, provide calming views and convey a sense of place and belonging. Green space helps facilitate water, land and nature based hobbies.

3.7 Support for improving the availability of good quality green space and associated access routes for walking and cycling, ensuring that they are maintained to a high standard and safe, attractive and welcoming to all, is also endorsed by the Marmot Review<sup>54</sup>, with a particular focus on its role in addressing health inequalities; and by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) evidence based guidance on physical activity and the environment<sup>55</sup>.

3.8 Responding to this national policy framework and associated evidence base, there have been a number of national level pilots to trial and evaluate practical interventions to engage targeted communities in the use of green spaces for physical activity and wellbeing. The following table provides an outline of each initiative and their associated headline evaluation findings.

<sup>53</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/40017>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/Ph8>

Initiative	Outline	Evaluation headlines
Natural England Green Exercise Programme (2008-11) <sup>56</sup>	Natural England funded eight, three year pilot projects through local partnerships in the regions. The aim was to test the process of engaging hard to reach groups in green exercise activity.	<p>Key benefits received by participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased access to local green space, by showing them where they can go and giving them confidence to visit these places independently.</li> <li>- Positive experiences of nature that can increase awareness of local environmental issues and encourage people to take positive action for the natural environment through conservation volunteering.</li> <li>- Opportunities for meeting new people and socialising in an informal and relaxed setting.</li> <li>- Opportunity to learn and develop new skills and knowledge which can broaden their horizons and are transferrable to home, work and school.</li> <li>- Ability to become more active outdoors and encourage them to try different kinds of physical activities.</li> <li>- Improved physical health and wellbeing in ways that are both accessible and enjoyable to participants in a relaxed environment.</li> </ul>
Birmingham Active Parks scheme 2013-date <sup>57</sup>	<p>Birmingham's Active Parks scheme was launched as a 5 site pilot in April 2013, as part of the City's award winning Be Active free physical activity programme. The Active Parks scheme offers local residents a diverse range of free, informal outdoor activities in parks and green spaces including Zumba, Tai Chi, rounders, hula-hooping and table tennis, along with guided walks and buggyfit.</p> <p>In May 2014, the Active Parks pilot was expanded to over 50 parks across Birmingham, as part of Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives programme. Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives programme is part of</p>	<p>Results from the early qualitative evaluation of Birmingham's Be Active programme demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Price is a barrier to participation</li> <li>- Access to free exercise increased people's likelihood to participate</li> <li>- Hard to reach groups including women and ethnic minority communities engaged with the scheme</li> <li>- Regular exercise increased participants self-reported sense of wellbeing</li> <li>- Participation on the scheme increased participant demand for other lifestyle information such as smoking cessation and alcohol advice.</li> </ul> <p>Initial evaluation of the Active Parks pilot showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While 61 per cent of Birmingham residents would like to spend more time being active outdoors, rather than staying at home (39 per cent) it is the perceived cost associated with being active (29 per cent) as well as a lack of time (26 per cent) that are the most significant deterrents to getting active outdoors.</li> <li>- Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) only visit their local park during the summer season, and just 12 per cent visiting their local park at the weekend.</li> </ul>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/health/greenexercise/default.aspx>

<sup>57</sup> <http://beactivebirmingham.co.uk/active-parks>

	<p>Coca-Cola Great Britain's commitment to invest £20m between now and 2020 in programmes to encourage and support people to be more physically active. In its first year, Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives will run in parks in Birmingham, Newcastle and London, with plans for more cities to join the programme in 2015 and beyond.</p> <p>All Birmingham Active Parks/ Coca-Cola Zero ParkLives sessions will be free and led by a trained session leader supported by local Friends of Parks volunteers.</p>	<p>- More than half of Birmingham residents (56 per cent) cited that they if there were more organised activities on offer and if facilities and equipment was provided then they would be more likely to visit their park more often.</p>
Dudley Healthy Towns project (2008-11) <sup>58</sup>	<p>One of the Government's Healthy Community Challenge Fund projects to support innovative interventions to reduce obesity. The Dudley project transformed five of the borough's parks and play areas into 'healthy hubs' in order to encourage families to make the most of outdoor areas.</p> <p>Each hub has an 'outdoor gym', a Healthy Towns building (accommodating community rooms, kitchen, ranger office, toilets etc), and a dedicated park ranger. Active travel corridors have also been created making it</p>	<p>Key findings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An increase in the proportion of local adult and child respondents meeting government physical activity guidelines: adults achieving recommended levels increased from 46% to 51% and children from 49% to 54%;</li> <li>- Walking remains the main activity of park users with cycling more limited in its representation - the increased levels of recreational physical activity (reported above) have not, as yet, been mirrored in more active commuter travel to work;</li> <li>- The installation of outdoor gyms is the single most popular improvement cited for the reported increases in physical activity.</li> </ul> <p>The success of the project to date has resulted in secured local funding for the project until 2014; however the evaluation results to date reflect the immediate impact of what must be viewed as a long term strategic physical activity, health and wellbeing investment</p>

<sup>58</sup> <http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Dudley-Healthy-Towns-Executive-Summary1.pdf>



	easier to cycle across the borough.	
Walking for Health <sup>59</sup>	National initiative between Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support, which currently supports c600 local Walking for Health schemes across England to organise short, free walks led by friendly, trained walk leaders. 70,000 people currently participate regularly, with 3,400 weekly walks led by 10,000 volunteers	Getting involved in Walking for Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inspires people who don't exercise to move more. Almost half of walkers used to do less than half an hour of activity three days a week until they started walking.</li> <li>- People that walk with us take at least five walks every four months.</li> <li>- Helps people stay active. Not everyone can exercise as much as they used to. Walking lets everyone step down without giving up exercise altogether.</li> <li>- Is popular with women and the over-55s. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of walkers are over 55, the same amount are women.</li> </ul> Both these groups usually have lower than average levels of physical activity.
The Conservation Volunteers Green Gym® (2003-8) <sup>60</sup>	A programme (normally one session per week for 1-4 hours) where people volunteer to undertake practical conservation or gardening work to enhance their fitness and health while taking action to improve the outdoor environment. There are c52 Green Gym projects in UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruits diverse and vulnerable groups to Green Gym projects and integrating them with the wider community</li> <li>- Demonstrates that through the Green Gym concept, these more vulnerable groups are more likely to improve their scores on measures of physical and mental well-being and physical activity</li> <li>- Delivers practical site management benefits and associated personal conservation skills and awareness development</li> </ul>
Routes to Health, part of Reality Check community arts and health	Routes to Health is a community arts and health trail, which has been developed to tackle local health inequalities. The trail has been created by local artists, students, schools and community	It is estimated that before the walking trail was developed approximately 150 people used the route every month. Over the first 12 months of the Route to Health project 50,000 walkers have walked the trail, representing about 1,000 walks taken per week. This impressive figure has been sustained during the second year of the project.

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Walking%20works\\_summary\\_AW\\_Web.pdf](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Walking%20works_summary_AW_Web.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.tcv.org.uk/greengym>

project), Cannock Chase (2003-6) <sup>61</sup>	<p>groups. Unique art pieces are themed around health issues and are designed to generate interest and provide information on issues such as exercise, relaxation, mental health and a heart health. The artworks are placed on an accessible one mile trail, which acts as a catalyst for participants and their families to engage in the trail and absorb health information in an informal way.</p> <p>The programme targets those who don't typically access the forest environment: teenagers, people with mental health problems, people with disabilities, the elderly, young families from low income backgrounds and those who are sedentary.</p>	<p>The art works played a role in supporting people to use the walking trail. 63% of people responding to the Route to Health Questionnaire agreed with the statement that "the artworks main purpose is to generate interest and provided a reason for walking the rest of the trail." 49% of people agreed with the statement that "the artworks are useful for showing the way around the trail"</p>
Lakeside Health Trails, Doncaster, 2014	<p>An initiative between Doncaster Council and Doncaster Rovers Football Club to deliver series of trails around Lakeside green space using mobile device QR codes and embedded posts encouraging visitors to exercise, learn, relax and enjoy the space. Residents will be able to scan the QR codes and upload free data such as exercise videos, heritage information and facts on the surrounding natural environment. There will be a supporting website to host the trail information, a</p>	<p>No evaluation available as yet.</p>

<sup>61</sup> [http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/downloads/RealityCheck\\_Report\\_final.pdf](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/downloads/RealityCheck_Report_final.pdf)

	calendar of events, a diary of regular activities, and general information.	
Playing Out, Bristol <sup>62</sup>	<p>Resident led project to support parents to create a safe environment for their children to play out, focusing on temporary closure of residential streets to create safe and accessible outdoor play space close. Project now provides advice and support to communities to create street play space across the UK.</p> <p>Support is also available nationally from Play England through its Street Play campaign<sup>63</sup></p>	University of Bristol evaluation of the Playing Out project showed that children were outside approximately 70% of the time during the street closure monitoring period. This compares to less than 20% usually spent outdoors during this time period on an average school day by Bristol children of a similar age. <sup>64</sup>

3.9 In undertaking the Green Exercise Programme evaluation, Natural England has also identified a range of common enablers, which were found to support increased participation in such projects. These are outlined below for reference purposes, when considering the design of potential intervention pilots in the next phase (3) of this project.

- Opportunity for social contact and companionship. Being around like-minded others, meeting new people and enjoying a shared experience.
- Knowing how to get to the green space, and/or having transport, where project activities are happening and feeling welcomed and accepted.
- Anonymity of health status, particularly for those with sensitive health conditions, ie. those suffering mental ill health really appreciate the fact that nobody asks about it, they just accept you.
- Informality of the group was important to people. They appreciated the fact that activities were relaxed and that there were no expectations. Participants aren't forced to do a fixed amount of activity.

<sup>62</sup> <http://playingout.net/>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.playengland.org.uk/streetplay>

<sup>64</sup> [http://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/playing-out-evaluation\\_Angie-Page.pdf](http://playingout.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/playing-out-evaluation_Angie-Page.pdf)

- Known routes to participation are key in giving people confidence and encouraging them to participate in the intervention. For example, through GP or exercise referral, via an existing group/organisation or through word of mouth.
- Getting the publicity right/tailored to the target audience – rather than just blanket flyers/posters or adverts in the paper. People seemed to respond well to the personal touch, ie. having the project officer come and tell them about the project/activities. Hearing directly from people who had already experienced the project also seemed to be a very effective way of encouraging people to get involved.
- One-off taster sessions worked well enabling people to try the activity and see if they liked it before committing to a programme, but again it is important to get the publicity and communications right in order to attract specific audiences.
- For the set programmes small groups of 8-10 seemed about right in terms of ensuring everyone was getting involved and developing friendships in the groups, too large a group would have been daunting and off-putting for some participants and wouldn't have functioned so well in terms of developing cohesion/support networks.
- Branded free gifts are appealing and make participants feel appreciated and as though they belong to the project.

3.10 The NHS has also recently created, with the help of top fitness experts, an online directory of new ways and places to exercise for free for people to explore, including walking, trim trail, DIY boot camp and park games.<sup>65</sup>

#### **d) Local**

3.11 At the local level, the relevant policy framework is provided by both county and district level plans. The key county level plans are the Buckinghamshire Health and Well Being Strategy 2013-17<sup>66</sup>, Physical Activity Strategy 2014-17<sup>67</sup> and Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009)<sup>68</sup> and associated delivery plans. These high level policy documents provide the strategic framework within which to guide the development and delivery of district and other more local level plans.

3.12 The Green Space Means Health project has been developed in accordance the county strategic aim to improve health and reduce inequalities through building physical activity into everyday life. More specifically, the project delivers on the Buckinghamshire Physical Activity Strategy action commitment set out below:

Strategic aim	Headline action
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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/free-fitness.aspx>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/healthy-living/buckinghamshire-health-and-wellbeing-board/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy/>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1932033/Physical-Activity-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/environment/green-infrastructure/>

Building activity into everyday life	Assess availability and use of green space for people living in the most deprived areas of Buckinghamshire. (to address links between poor health and access to green space: poor health and deprivation)
	Promote and enhance access to parks, play and leisure facilities and green space as great places to be active
	Increase capacity among volunteers to provide community led physical activity opportunities, with focus on areas of deprivation and green space in each local authority area

3.13 The Buckinghamshire Physical Activity Strategy also includes a range of recommended design principles to increase physical activity levels in the county:

- Adopt collaborative approach
- Identify and target inactive residents and evaluate and demonstrate outcomes
- Offer range of activities and sports opportunities – flexible and adaptable to needs of target audience
- Secure support of GPs and health professionals
- Refer to tailored programmes
- Pursue organisational action, both at workplace and community levels

3.14 The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy provides an assessment of GI provision, opportunity and deficiency based on ANGSt (Access to Natural Green Space Standards), a Natural England developed national quantitative green space standard<sup>69</sup>. This standard emphasises the importance of communities having access to different sizes of natural and semi-natural green space close to where people live, based on scale and catchment. By applying ANGSt and assessing existing provision against future need, the Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies three Priority Action Areas (1. North Aylesbury Vale; 2. Aylesbury Environs; and 3. Wycombe District South and South Bucks) where deficiencies of strategic GI have been identified. These three Priority Action Areas are taken forward and developed in the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>70</sup>.

3.15 The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan builds on the strategic green infrastructure (GI) planning framework which has been developed in the county since 2009, including Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure

<sup>69</sup>[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east\\_of\\_england/ourwork/gi/accessiblenaturalgreenspacestandardangst.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east_of_england/ourwork/gi/accessiblenaturalgreenspacestandardangst.aspx)

<sup>70</sup>[http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1521901/5326-Bucks-GI-Delivery-Plan-FINAL-ISSUE\\_2013\\_08\\_07\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1521901/5326-Bucks-GI-Delivery-Plan-FINAL-ISSUE_2013_08_07_low_res.pdf)

Strategy 2011-26<sup>71</sup>. The Delivery Plan identifies a suite of area specific green infrastructure (GI) proposals and projects within the strategic GI framework for the NEP and other key stakeholders to take forward. It also provides guidance on how these can be achieved, plus notes on synergies with other complementary projects, potential funding streams and governance models. Summarised below are the key proposals, projects and supporting evidence relating to the three towns, which form the basis of this review:

#### Aylesbury

- Existing GI suffers from severance and few opportunities to create enhanced urban links and green space improvements
- Main GI opportunities relate to management of amenity green space, which currently delivers few functions, eg. biodiversity; and improved peri-urban links to key GI assets/ nodes on Aylesbury Linear Park
- Significant pockets of health deprivation within western parts of Aylesbury (eg. Quarrendon neighbourhood). Enhanced links to River Thames and associated GI network plus Linear Park (incl Quarrendon Leas) could help with access spurs to/ from Quarrendon.
- Aylesbury is within Bucks GI Strategy Priority Action Area 2
- Area specific proposal: Aylesbury Linear Park, including number of flagship GI projects: Aylesbury Linear Park east and west and Quarrendon Leas to the West and Grand Union Triangle, Wendover Woods and Regional Wetland Park to the east)
- Specific project proposals:
  - Extension of linear park, including link to River Thames
  - Wetland landscape enhancement to link Regional Wetland Park
  - Urban areas, 'greening the town' eg. tree planting, green roofs

#### Chesham

- Significant health deprivation issues exacerbated by settlement form and density and transport barriers to GI network access
- Main GI opportunities in relate to improved signage and promotion of existing routes, eg. from the tube station.
- Historically famous for orchards, including Carroon Cherry
- Chesham is not within any GI Strategy Priority Action Area
- Area specific proposals: Amersham-Chesham-Little Chalfont Corridor
- Specific project proposals:
  - Improve links from tube stations to valleys

#### High Wycombe

- Significant pockets of health deprivation in central area of town and Totteridge (near King's Wood)
- Main GI opportunities include disused railway strategic access link to Bourne End; access enhancements to King's Wood; and green space quality and urban habitat diversity enhancements, eg. The Rye and riparian green space along River Wye

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/leisure-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/green-infastructure-strategy/>

- A40 and railway line are key barriers to improved access in Lower Hughenden Valley and Gomm Valley
- High Wycombe is within GI Strategy Priority Action Area 3
- Area specific proposal: Wycombe
- Specific project proposals:
  - Improve strategic access links to woods in east of town, including King's Wood surfacing, interpretation and planting
  - Daw's Hill, retain and enhance existing link and wider countryside, including shared use routes
  - Urban areas, 'greening the town' eg. tree planting, green link improvements

3.16 Another key element of the strategic GI plan framework is the Buckinghamshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), which is a statutory document produced by the County Council as Highway Authority. The current RoWIP covers the period 2008-18 and includes the following strategic vision to "expand, manage and promote the network of routes and open spaces, recognising its historical and ecological significance whilst providing real economic benefits to the rural communities and health benefits to local people, to create safe and sustainable access provision for all<sup>72</sup>." The commitment to deliver health benefits for users and residents is reflected in the plan's strategic aims, which includes objectives around working with communities to improve and create new access links, in areas where there are inadequate or limited public rights of way; and to focus on the county Health Walks programme development.

3.17 In addition to the county level strategic GI plan framework summarised above, each of the three district councils has produced its own GI or green/ open space strategic plans. An outline of the relevant key extracts is included in the table below.

Plan/ strategy	Key findings/ proposals
Aylesbury Vale GI Strategy 2011-26 <sup>73</sup>	<p>Based on ANGSt, Aylesbury doesn't meet any of the minimum standards. The lack of larger site provision is especially notable.</p> <p>Nine strategic principles, including:</p> <p>5.4. The importance of linked up space and green routes for providing recreational opportunities that can enhance health and wellbeing should be recognised.</p> <p>8. GI should be designed to high standards of sustainability to deliver social and economic, as well as environmental benefits.</p> <p>Flagship projects: Vale Park, Aylesbury Linear Park</p>

<sup>72</sup> [http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/133563/BCC\\_RoWIP\\_2008\\_2018\\_Web.pdf](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/133563/BCC_RoWIP_2008_2018_Web.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/leisure-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/green-infastructure-strategy/>

<p>Chilterns Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2014-17 (Draft)<sup>74</sup></p>	<p>Three strategic aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To increase participation in recreational activities</li> <li>2. To achieve a joined up strategy with localised priorities to develop sustainable facilities that support increased participation</li> <li>3. To support community groups and others to access external funding</li> </ol> <p>Identified shortfalls in provision in Chesham:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asheridge Vale and New Town provision needs improving, especially play and youth facilities</li> <li>- Still areas with poor access to public open space, including outlying Green Belt area surrounding town</li> <li>- Redress balance between adult and youth grass pitch provision. Need more youth provision.</li> <li>- Allotments, pavilions and community centres have sufficient capacity to meet need but facilities old and need investment to make fully accessible/ fit for purpose</li> </ul>
<p>Wycombe Open Space Framework 2010<sup>75</sup></p>	<p>Vision/ objective: To ensure that open space facilities are welcoming, well maintained and clean</p> <p>Open space principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interpret local standards, eg. built-up area constraints</li> <li>2. Hierarchical approach, eg. strategic v local</li> <li>3. Play should be available locally</li> <li>4. Outdoor sport – greatest category shortfall</li> <li>5. Small spaces (in built up areas) – address deficiency through improvements in quality and accessibility</li> </ol> <p>High Wycombe has greatest shortfall in overall open space in district, especially outdoor sports pitches (football/cricket), parks, play and teen. Locally significant shortfalls in Desborough and Daws Hill.</p> <p>Council wishes to create high quality, open space network and endorses quality standard of litter free, tidy, enables good access and enhances biodiversity</p> <p>Proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create teen facility at Hughenden Park.(no longer being progressed following public consultation)</li> <li>- Improve walking/ cycle access to Hughenden Park across Hughenden Road (Community Infrastructure Levy funding being bid for)</li> <li>- Raise standards at Totteridge and Hughenden Recreation Grounds (completed)</li> <li>- Improve quality of Derehams Sports Ground, intensify sports use and introduce teen facilities (work completed)</li> <li>- Intensify use of Desborough Recreation Ground for outdoor sport (ie. changing rooms) (now completed)</li> </ul>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.chiltern.gov.uk/openspace>

<sup>75</sup> Wycombe District Council, *Wycombe Open Space Framework*, December 2010



	- Improve access to/ quality of Carrington Land, Tom Burt's Hill and Desborough Castle open space (some work completed)
Wycombe adopted Delivery and Site Allocations DPD Policy DM11 Green Networks & Infrastructure	The Green Infrastructure Network will be conserved and enhanced, paying special attention to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, recreation and non – motorised access
Policy DM12 Green Spaces	Development must not cause the loss of green space in certain areas.
DSA Policy HWTC1 and DM15 Protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors	HWTC1 sets out the vision for reopening the river and improving the river corridor, including access to it for recreational purposes. DM15 states that development should 'seek to conserve and enhance the biodiversity, landscape and recreational value of the watercourse'
DSA Policy DM16 Open Space in new development	New development is required to make provision for public open space to set standards.

#### 4. Area Assessment

- 4.1 The following section provides an outline assessment of issues relating to the access and use of green space to address health and wellbeing needs, especially for the most deprived communities, in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. For each town, the assessment concludes with a set of corresponding recommended improvement actions and long list of potential sites for consideration for the pilot intervention action planning work in phase 3. The assessments have been informed by a combination of primary and secondary research undertaken by PPS, including key stakeholder responses to the consultation questionnaire in appendix E. A list of those stakeholders who were consulted and who responded is included in appendix D.

- 4.2 Although the project brief specified an analysis of the Natural England Monitor of Engagement in the Natural Environment (MENE) dataset for each of the three towns, this was discovered not to be feasible. On interrogating the raw MENE visit-based and respondent-based data, the data was either not available (eg. ref. 'E6: Perceived quality of named site') or meaningless due to the small respondent sample size and therefore, high margin of statistical error, at local, medium super output or district area levels. This was particularly an issue for the visit based data, eg. 'Q7: Name of local green space visited'; 'Q8: Distance travelled to visit the named site'; or 'Q12: Reason for visit eg. health/ exercise; fresh air'. The data only became meaningful at higher spatial levels and so was not considered appropriate, even for contextual use, in this review. The same was true for Public Health England health profiles, which are only available down to district level; and for the new Public Health Outcomes Framework, Indicator 1:16: (Utilisation of outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons) is only available down to upper tier authority level, which for Buckinghamshire is the county area. In addition, the County Health and Well Being Joint Strategic Needs Assessment only provides health and wellbeing data at the county level.

#### **a) Aylesbury**

- 4.3 A map showing the provision of green space greater than 0.25ha within an 800m catchment radius of the town's most deprived communities, as identified by the IMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile of deprivation, is included in appendix F. The individual site identification references on the map correspond with those in the table in appendix G, which details the results of a green space audit for the town, including individual site names, sizes and types.
- 4.4 The local GI plan framework identifies Aylesbury town as failing to meet the minimum standard of provision for accessible green space in accordance with ANGSt. The town's existing GI suffers from physical severance and its urban form presents few opportunities to create enhanced urban links and green space improvements. The town also suffers from a lack of larger urban green spaces, with only 4 sites over 10ha and no sites over the 20ha threshold within 2km catchment radius. Despite a dense network of public footpaths and bridleways, there is also a lack of multipurpose access links for walking, cycling and horse riding in the area. The 2014 public health profile for Aylesbury Vale identifies a 7.5 year life expectancy gap for men and 3.3 year gap for women between the district's most and least deprived communities<sup>76</sup>.
- 4.5 The current local GI plan framework identifies two GI flagship projects for Aylesbury town - Vale Park and Aylesbury Linear Park. The Vale Park project involves providing new seating, landscaping and historical feature restoration at Vale Park and access improvements to Bear Brook. The Aylesbury Linear Park project involves linking up existing and creating new green spaces around the town, including walking and cycling routes and formal and informal recreation provision. In addition, there are a number of smaller local projects or plans to improve the accessibility and quality of green space in Aylesbury within the next 2 years, as identified by stakeholder consultees in the table below.

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<sup>76</sup> <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=105510>

Site name/ location	Project/ plan
Alfred Rose Park, Elmhurst	Access, footpath, and boundary improvements.
Riverside Walk, Quarrendon	Ongoing footpath repairs and access improvements (funding dependant)
The Paddock, Bedgrove	Install bridge over brook to improve access from adjacent housing
Vale Park, Aylesbury Central	Improvements to Park Street pedestrian access. Replace skate park. Installation of x2 5-a-side synthetic pitches. Removal of old railings along Lovers Walk
Walton Court Playing Fields	Access improvements for both vehicles and pedestrians
Whitehill Park, Aylesbury Central	Surfacing of footpaths (just complete)
Berryfields development <sup>77</sup>	3000 dwelling development, including new GI with equipped play space and access to newly created public open space
Canal towpath to town centre	Creation of new cycle route along the canal towpath between the ARLA dairy site (on the A41) and Aylesbury Town Centre. This is likely to be implemented within the next 2 years.
Various sites	Tree planting. Correction of any faults identified in annual Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) inspections

4.6 In addition, the following table lists outdoor health activities currently being provided on green spaces within Aylesbury town.

Site name	Outdoor health activity
Riverside Walk	Parkrun (approx. 100 participants every Saturday morning, free of charge, see <a href="http://www.parkrun.org.uk">www.parkrun.org.uk</a> . Free of charge to use ball courts, play areas, grass sports pitches
Bedgrove Park	Simply Walk (Health Walks), free of charge to use ball courts, play areas, grass sports pitches, buggy jog
Fairford Leys	Regiment Fitness, play areas, grass sports pitches
Oakfield Road	Regiment Fitness. Free of charge to use ball courts, play areas, grass sports pitches
Vale Park	Basketball – This targets unengaged young people in the town through the summer and has proved popular in the past, skate parks, play areas, floodlit 3G synthetic pitches as of January 2015, Aqua Vale Leisure Centre, links to Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal, tennis.
All Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA)	MUGA project. Range of free sports activities for children and young people run for 6 weeks in May/June and also in the summer.

4.7 Stakeholder consultees identified the following issues, as impacting adversely on

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.aylesburyvalcdc.gov.uk/planning-policy/publications-list/planning-brief-publications/berryfields-development-design-code/>

the ability of Aylesbury's deprived communities to maximise the use of the town's green spaces for health and well-being; and recommended the following corresponding actions to address them.

Issues	Actions
Safe cycling areas within the town are minimal and the few there are, are generally linear so not geared towards leisure cyclists and families. Only a couple of the parks have any paths and they are narrow so not conducive to multi-use.	Paths around the edge of parks such as Bedgrove, Walton Court/Edinburgh Playing Fields and a widening and raising of the paths on Riverside Walk, as well as extending the path network on the north side of the river Thames.
Allotments: Quantity	Planning – to be included as part of future developments if sufficient garden space is not provided e.g. apartments

4.8 The following table provides a list of sites in Aylesbury identified by stakeholder consultees for consideration for the phase 3 pilot intervention action planning work. Although not presented in priority order below, Aylesbury Riverside Walk was identified as the top priority site for consideration in two of the three consultation responses received.

Site name	Rationale for putting forward
Aylesbury Riverside Walk, including Haydon Hill	One of the largest open spaces in Aylesbury that links new and existing housing developments. It sits between an old estate and two new ones currently under construction. Parts of it are a floodplain.
Alfred Rose Park	Well used site that is in need of updating and made more appealing and safer by improving views in and out of the Park.
Edinburgh Playing Fields/ Walton Court	Currently used for grass football pitches. Consider feasibility to use these sites for other activities and sports Within the town's biggest deprived community with regular anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues
Whitehill Park	Issues with drug and alcohol users at this site, which is putting local people off using the space.
Vale Park	Further access improvements and convert existing toilet building. Use site to promote links to other green spaces including round Aylesbury Walk. Convert bowls green (only used part of year) to 2 floodlit 3G 5-a-side pitches (underway for completion January 2015)
Bedgrove Park	Has the potential to be extended depending on future development in the area.
Somerville Way	Located in deprived area, work with partners to improve facilities. May be potential for a ball court/MUGA
Football pitches	Align supply of grass pitches with demand. Development business case to replace grass pitches at multiple sites with floodlit 3G pitches.

## b) Chesham

4.9 A map showing the provision of existing green space greater than 0.25ha and within

an 800m catchment radius of the town's most deprived communities, of deprivation, is included in appendix H. The individual site identification references on the map correspond with those in the table in appendix I, which details the results of a green space audit for the town, including individual site names, sizes and types.

4.10 The local GI plan framework identifies the settlement form and density of Chesham as a significant barrier to GI network access, with the main GI opportunities relating to improved signage and promotion of existing routes, especially from the tube station. In addition, the current Consultation Draft Chilterns Recreational and Open Space Strategy identifies the following specific shortfalls in green space provision in Chesham:

- Asheridge Vale and New Town provision needs improving, especially play and youth facilities
- Still areas within the town with poor access to public open space, including outlying Green Belt area surrounding town
- Redress balance between adult and youth grass pitch provision. Need more youth provision.
- Allotments, pavilions and community centres have sufficient capacity to meet need but facilities old and need investment to make fully accessible/ fit for purpose

4.11 The 2014 public health profile for Chilterns District identifies a 7 year life expectancy gap for men and 5.2 year gap for women between the district's most and least deprived communities

4.12 The following table lists a number of local projects or plans to improve the accessibility and quality of green space in Chesham within the next 2 years, as identified by stakeholder consultees. In addition, Simply Walks health walk activities are currently provided at The Waterside.

Site name	Project/ plan
Windsor Road Recreation Ground ('Pond Park')	Community hall, including bar, meeting rooms, changing facility. Working with current lessee The Belmont Club to support greater/ wider community use of building

4.13 Stakeholder consultees identified the following issues, as impacting adversely on the ability of Chesham's deprived communities to maximise the use of the town's green spaces for health and well-being; and recommended the following corresponding actions to address them.

Issues	Actions
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Windsor Road Recreation Ground ('Pond Park'): - Under-used - Pitches not marked out - Occasional ASB – vandalism, drugs - Belmont Club's current use of community hall inhibits wider community use of this community facility - Lack of community engagement in events	None identified by consultee
Awareness	Use school sites for Grow & Cook type stuff

4.14 The following table provides a list of sites in Chesham identified by stakeholder consultees for consideration for the phase 3 pilot intervention action planning work. Although not presented in priority order below, Windsor Road Recreation Ground/ 'Pond Park' was identified as the top priority site for consideration in two of the three consultation responses received.

Site name	Rationale for putting forward
Windsor Road Recreation Ground, Pond Park	Only main site in Pond Park
Marston Fields, Pond Park	Area of deprivation
Bachelors Way, Pond Park	Area of deprivation
The Moor, Waterside	Area of deprivation
The Beeches, Ashridge, Chesham	Area of deprivation
'West Chesham' Recreation Ground (b/t Ashridge Road and Chapman's Crescent)	Area of deprivation
Berkhampstead Field	Good community nature reserve with opportunities for public engagement. Good links to local natural history society.
Hawridge and Cholesbury Common	Close to Chesham town, good site to take people to maintain local feel and have positive impact on biodiversity.

### c) High Wycombe

4.15 A map showing the provision of existing green space greater than 0.25ha and within an 800m catchment radius of the town's most deprived communities, as identified by of deprivation, is included in appendix J. The individual site identification references on the map correspond with those in the Excel spreadsheet in appendix K, which details the results of a green space audit for the town, including individual site names, sizes and types. .

4.16 The local GI plan framework identifies significant pockets of health deprivation in central High Wycombe and in Totteridge, with the A40 and railway line highlighted as key barriers to improved GI access in the Lower Hughenden and Gomm Valleys. The main GI

opportunities identified include the disused railway strategic access link to Bourne End; strategic access enhancements to woods in the east of town, including King's Wood; and green space quality and urban habitat diversity enhancements, eg. The Rye and riparian green space along River Wye. The 2014 public health profile for Wycombe District identifies a 7.4 year life expectancy gap for men and 3.5 year gap for women between the district's most and least deprived communities.

4.17 The following table lists a number of local projects or plans to improve the accessibility and quality of green space in High Wycombe within the next 2 years, as identified by stakeholder consultees.

Site name	Project/ plan
High Wycombe Town Centre	<i>High Wycombe Town Centre Masterplan:</i> Vision for the town centre aimed at greening the town centre through downgrading Abbey Barn flyover, opening up the river and creating a green corridor in the Hughenden area. Community Infrastructure Levy being sought to green the route between the Town Centre and Hughenden Park to link with the river corridor walking route through the Compair development.
Micklefield and Marsh Wards	Two adjoining wards have been allocated c£1m from BIG Local to support community led projects/ plans over a 10 year period, which benefit the local community. A local partnership of residents and community representatives is managing the programme, facilitated by Bucks Community Foundation.
Desborough area, High Wycombe	<i>Delivery and Site Allocations Plan – Desborough Delivery and Design Framework (HW1); Delivering Regeneration, New Open Space and River Corridor Improvements in Desborough (HW2):</i> Policy approach to open up the river and create new quality open spaces in the Desborough area through redevelopment of existing sites in the area.
The Rye, Kingsmead Recreation Ground and Desborough Recreation Ground	Improvement to cycle route/footpath.
Globe Park & Cressex Industrial Parks Workplace walks	Developing pilot Workplace Walks Sept 2014 using a new Measured Mile. Based on take up will progress to other business parks and promote short walks there
Adult Gym	Currently looking at feasibility on possible location
Parkour	Currently looking at feasibility on possible location
Various Locations	Create more 'Workplace Walks' which facilitate the use of local public footpaths and green spaces adjacent to business parks and 'Measured Mile' walks around the district to encourage use of green spaces

4.18 In addition, the following table lists outdoor health activities currently being provided on green spaces within High Wycombe town, as identified by stakeholder consultees.

Site name	Activity
The Rye	Park run

Various parks	Informal boot camps and similar but not organised by Wycombe District Council
Simply Walk	<a href="http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1848072/simply-walk-programme.pdf">http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1848072/simply-walk-programme.pdf</a>
Cressex, Globe Park, Kings Mead, Wooburn Park, Bourne End	Workplace Walks being developed as Measured miles
Town centre	Heritage walks in High Wycombe
The Rye	Handy Cross Runners use The Rye on Saturday morning after park run to get people up and running via their "From couch to park run" beginner's running group.
Hughenden Park	Wycombe Phoenix Harriers use occasionally for training sessions on Sunday mornings. Hughenden Ladies Running Group use Hughenden Park for training on Thursday mornings.
Booker Recreation Ground and Holmers Farm Recreation Ground	Handy Cross Runners use these recreation grounds for training on Tuesday evenings during the summer months.
The Rye	GoTri – entry level triathlon training and events (running, cycling and swimming) (Starting January 2015)
Wades Park	GoTri – entry level triathlon training and events (running, cycling and swimming) (Starting January 2015)
Adult Gym	Currently looking at feasibility on possible location
Parkour	Currently looking at feasibility on possible location
Chilterns Ranger sites: - AXA Kings Wood - Carver Hill Wood - Chairborough Local Nature Reserve (LNR) - Castlefield & Rowcliffe Wood - Desborough Castle - Funges Meadow - Gomm's Wood LNR - Highfield & Hangingcroft Woods - Iain Rennie Memorial Wood, Plomer Hill Keep Hill Wood - Round Wood - Tom Burt's Hill	Chilterns Rangers run a wide range of activities which benefit physical and mental health & well-being (eco-therapy) at these sites and approx.12 other sites all within 10 miles of High Wycombe and most within 5 miles. These include traditional woodland management and conservation activities such as coppicing, scrub managements, thinning, dead hedging, hedge laying, planting, clearing invasive species such as laurel, rhododendron, ragwort and more. Chilterns Rangers also undertake a range of work in other habitats mostly chalk grassland but also heathland, ponds & chalk streams (River Wye); and access improvements to enable the widest range of people in the community to enjoy and explore these sites. Tasks include: step building, path widening and revetment, wood-chipping paths, way-marking, installing rustic benches from local timber and interpretation boards to inform, guide and educate communities. Subject to funding, Chilterns Rangers would be able to deliver guided walks, as have done this in the past.



4.19 Stakeholder consultees identified the following issues, as impacting adversely on the ability of High Wycombe's deprived communities to maximise the use of the town's green spaces for health and well-being; and recommended the following corresponding actions to address them.

Issues	Actions
Chairborough LNR	Overgrown public paths leading to the LNR
Adult Gym	Need to find a suitable location for an adult gym within High Wycombe
Parkour	Need to find a suitable location for a Parkour course within High Wycombe
Engaging hard to reach groups.	Partnership working with other community groups, eg. 'Out of the Dark' who the Chilterns Rangers is working with to engage young people, who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in local woodland projects. This can be replicated and repeated.
Transport to sites/ activities	Funding dependent if transport to be supplied by activity provider
Minimum numbers to make activity work, eg. practical conservation tasks optimal group size is 6 persons	Improved promotion
Confidence	Deliver locally to where people live, using experienced leaders, so helping to remove barriers and instil confidence.
Ease of access	Need clear, easy signposting via health service, social services, local press, social media, etc to services/ activities, which are free at point of delivery.

4.20 The list of sites and supporting rationale for consideration for the phase 3 pilot intervention action planning work did not overlap as the Stakeholders only put forward sites they operated. This means, there was no commonality.

Site name	Rationale for putting forward
Castlefield & Rowcliffe Wood	Ideal location to engage a deprived area and its community. Plenty of scope and capacity for a range of tasks. Lots to do also site suffers vandalism so positive use may help turn that around and reduce future costs. Engagement and ownership is the key to better future for these sites
Chairborough LNR	Good opportunity to engage local business and communities in the same location, build cohesion and links. Close to Castlefield, Cressex and Sands.
Gomm's Wood LNR	Good site many activities to undertake adjoins Lance Way and Micklefield. Some engagement work started, scope for expansion, medium sized car park as well.
Highfield Wood	Also in Micklefield next to community centre or library as a base from where you can run sessions
Round Wood	Close again to deprived areas, lots of scope for projects.
The Rye	River bank enhancements have been carried out on the Rye including the creation of a 'beach' at the bottom of the waterfall for recreation. This is a large open space centrally located, with a Green Flag Award and with potential to hold a variety of activities and seek attendance from across the town.

Desborough Recreation Ground	Works have been completed to de-canalise the river in Desborough Recreation Ground and create a natural 'meander' to enhance the quality and attractiveness of the park and accessibility to the river. Changing rooms for sports use are now near completion. However work is required to promote and market the local opportunities particularly to those living in Castlefield and Sands.
Kingsmead Recreation Ground	Another large park which has a number of facilities and activities and needs marketing/promoting to the Micklefield and Loudwater areas of the town

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The following section sets out the key conclusions to be drawn from the strategic review findings.
- 5.2 Nationally, the link between health and wellbeing and the natural environment is well established in key policy documents and is being strongly advocated by central government and its agencies, including most notably Natural England and Public Health England. There are also a number of national outdoor physical activity initiatives, including Health Walks, Green Gym, Street Play and green exercise programmes, which have been piloted and evaluated and the learning and good practice made publicly available.
- 5.3 Locally, the strategic policy framework is also well established with county health and wellbeing, GI and rights of way plans and district level GI/ recreation/ open space plans. Although the county health and wellbeing/ physical activity strategy acknowledges the link between health and wellbeing and natural environment, the supporting evidence base relating to the significance of the natural environment as a wider determinant factor could be strengthened. Given that the Public Health England and Natural England MENE datasets are only available at district level and above, any insight of the health issues facing the most deprived communities in each of the three target towns can only be as an extrapolation from the higher level pictures. The national evidence base highlights accessibility, quality and safety as the key issues affecting use of green space in deprived communities. It also highlights the need to engage all sections of the community, especially women, BME and young people, in the planning and development of green spaces to ensure they are 'fit for purpose' and valued.
- 5.4 The key generic local issue facing each of the three towns is one of urban form and transport corridors creating access barriers to urban green space and the surrounding countryside. Suggested actions to address this include improving the signage of existing routes, traffic calming measures and new strategic access route development to encourage greater walking and cycling. In addition, given these physical access issues, initiatives such as Play Streets should also be considered to enable younger children to be able to enjoy regular, safe play on the streets outside their homes. Although no quality issues were raised, in terms of the general condition and maintenance of green space in any of the three towns, each assessment has highlighted a generic improvement opportunity to increase the multi-functionality of green space for the benefit of both people and wildlife. At some sites, ASB was identified by stakeholder respondents as an occasional issue, which may adversely impact on community perceptions of site safety/ attractiveness and thereby usage levels.

5.5 The stakeholder responses provided a 'long list' of key sites, for each of the three target towns, from which the phase 3 pilot sites should be selected. . As the project brief specifies that the pilot work should be undertaken in 2 of the recommended key sites, the following key site selection criteria has been developed:

- The need to provide at least one site, and no more than two, per target town
- The priority ranking of the site by stakeholder respondents
- The frequency of the site's selection in stakeholder responses
- The inclusion of the site in local development plans/ projects
- The physical scale of the site and its proximity to other local sites
- The proximity of the site to deprived communities
- The perceived opportunity to increase community use/ GI functionality of the site
- The existence of ASB and other management issues which may impact on site quality.
- The opportunity to build on existing community engagement work

By applying these criteria to the stakeholder consultation key site long lists, the following 'short list' for consideration for the phase 3 pilot work has been developed.

Site id. [1]	Site name	Supporting rationale
71, 74	Aylesbury Riverside Walk, Aylesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic green space</li> <li>• Links new and existing housing developments.</li> <li>• Adjoins number of town's most deprived communities</li> <li>• Part of strategic Aylesbury Linear Park project</li> <li>• On/ off site access improvement opportunities</li> <li>• Identified as priority site in 2 out of the 4 stakeholder responses</li> </ul>
26, 34	Edinburgh/ Walton Court Playing Fields, Aylesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic green space cluster with opportunity to increase diversity of functions</li> <li>• Identified as priority site in 2 out of the 4 stakeholder responses</li> <li>• Suffers ASB issues</li> </ul>
83	Windsor Road Recreation Ground/ 'Pond Park', Chesham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only green space in 'Pond Park' area</li> <li>• Under-utilised by community</li> <li>• Occasional ASB issues</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to increase community use of community centre facilities</li> <li>• Identified as priority site in 2 out of the 3 stakeholder responses</li> </ul>
134	Castlefield & Rowcliffe Wood, High Wycombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic green space within deprived area</li> <li>• Occasional vandalism issue</li> <li>• Opportunity to link with adjoining Booker Lane and Desborough Castle open spaces (165, 135)</li> <li>• Builds on community engagement work being undertaken by Chiltern Rangers</li> </ul>
63	Highfield Wood and Gomm's Wood LNR, High Wycombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic green spaces within deprived area, with opportunity to link with King's Wood (185)</li> <li>• Located within Micklefield and Marsh BIG Local Partnership area and so opportunity to fit with BIG Local Plan and associated funding</li> <li>• Highfield Wood adjoins Community Centre</li> <li>• Builds on community engagement work being undertaken by Chiltern Rangers</li> </ul>

Note:

[1] Numbers correspond with the town green space map site identification (SID) references in appendix G, I and K respectively

- 5.6 Public health stakeholder responses recommended the two target sites for the phase 3 action planning work to be allocated one to Aylesbury and one to High Wycombe, as these two communities have the highest levels of deprivation in Buckinghamshire. Based on this recommendation and by re-applying the selection criteria to the short listed sites in 5.4 above, Aylesbury Riverside Walk in Quarrendon Ward is identified as the key Aylesbury target site; and Highfield Wood and Gomm's Wood LNR in Micklefield and Totteridge Wards the key High Wycombe site. Should additional budget be secured for a Chesham target site for the phase 3 action planning work, Windsor Road Recreation Ground/ 'Pond Park' in Ridgeway/ Vale wards is identified as the recommended key target site.
- 5.7 Although the brief proposes the community consultation to be targeted on the two selected phase 3 pilot sites, to maximise the opportunity to design, develop and deliver effective pilot interventions in accordance with community needs, the action planning work should not be restricted to these sites alone. Instead, these sites should form the initial strategic focus of the community engagement work with the in-built flexibility to extend it to other local sites/ off site interventions as identified by the local community. The spatial

area for wider local site selection and community engagement should be defined by ward area boundaries related to the ward area within which each of the two target sites is located.

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 To use the national evidence base provided in this review to strengthen the significance of the natural environment as a wider determinant for public health and well-being in the Buckinghamshire Health and Well Being Strategy and its supporting local assessments/ plans, including the Strategic Needs Assessment.
- 6.2 To consider opportunities to pilot the introduction of national and/ or good practice outdoor physical activity interventions, such as Green Gym, Street Play and other such evaluated green exercise programmes, with targeted communities in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe.
- 6.3 To ensure key professional stakeholder partners, including public health and adult and youth service providers and commissioners and green space and sports service providers, are engaged from the outset in the design and development of strategic green space plans and projects and associated interventions.
- 6.4 To ensure all sections of the community, especially women, BME and children and young people, are sufficiently engaged in the design and development of local green space, including management plans, and associated access improvement projects and health and wellbeing interventions.
- 6.5 To consider taking forward the following specific actions to improve access to and use of green space to address community health and wellbeing needs in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe towns. This recommendation is subject to partners being able to secure the necessary capital and revenue funding.

Ref.	Proposed future actions
<b>Aylesbury</b>	
A1	Improve and promote safe pedestrian/ cycleway links to/ within strategic green spaces, prioritising peri-urban areas, eg. River Thame and Linear Park

A2	Increase multi-functionality of strategic green spaces, including for range of outdoor physical activity uses and biodiversity
A3	Pursue opportunities to increase urban tree planting
A4	Update and improve Alfred Rose Park to make more appealing and safer, such as by improving views in and out of the site.
<b>Chesham</b>	
C1	Improve and promote safe pedestrian/ cycleway links to/ within strategic green spaces, including signage from tube station and access to peri urban/ wider countryside sites
C2	Consider opportunity to develop and deliver orchard themed local heritage project, including creation of community orchards and related food growing projects
C3	Improve play and youth facility provision in Asheridge Vale and New Town wards
C4	Review demand/ need for adult and youth football pitch provision and address any imbalance
C5	Review allotment, pavilion and community centre provision and agree asset investment/ management plan to ensure facilities are fit for purpose
/C6	Work with the local community and other stakeholders to develop a plan to increase community use of Windsor Road Recreation Ground ('Pond Park') and associated facilities
<b>High Wycombe</b>	
HW1	Improve and promote safe pedestrian/ cycleway links to/ within strategic green spaces, including woodland sites in east of town and across Hughenden Road to Hughenden Park
HW2	Improve cycleways in the following The Rye, Kingsmead and Desborough Recreation Grounds
HW3	Develop more Measured Miles and Workplace Walks
HW4	Complete the site assessment, consultation and installation of an adult gym and parkour within High Wycombe
HW5	Assess feasibility of converting disused railway line between High Wycombe and Bourne End as strategic walking/ cycling route
HW6	Review reported ASB issues at Castlefield & Rowcliffe Wood and agree remedial action plan
HW7	Pursue opportunities to increase urban tree planting

6.6 To undertake the phase 3 pilot action planning work in the following target sites/ areas in accordance with the delivery framework in the 'Proposal and Method Statement'<sup>78</sup>:

- Aylesbury Riverside Walk and Quarrendon Ward in Aylesbury;
- Highfield Wood and Gomm's Wood LNR and Micklefield and Totteridge Wards in High Wycombe; and
- Subject to available additional budget, Windsor Road Recreation Ground/ 'Pond Park' in Ridgeway/ Vale wards in Chesham

## **Appendix A: Project Brief**

*Not included*

## **Appendix B: Project Task Group Membership**

Vicky Wetherell	Bucks and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership
Emma Green	Buckinghamshire County Council
Tom Burton	Public Health Buckinghamshire
Piers Simey	Public Health Buckinghamshire
David Waker	Chilterns District Council
Richard Garnett	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Lesley Stoner	Wycombe District Council

## **Appendix C: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 5<sup>th</sup> Quintile Maps for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe**

*Not included*

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<sup>78</sup> Joel Carré, 'Proposal and Method Statement', 19 April 2014

## Appendix D: Key Stakeholder Consultees and Respondents

### Aylesbury:

Name	Organisation	Consultation respondent Y/N
Gareth Bird	Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC)	Y
Kay Aitken	AVDC	N
Andy Kirkham	AVDC	N
Tamsin Ireland	AVDC	N
Andy Inchley	AVDC	Y
Natalie Donhou-Morley	AVDC	N
Deborah Bottomley	AVDC	N
Richard Garnett	AVDC	Y
Keith Gray	Aylesbury Town Council	N
Cameron Finney	VAHT	N
Karen Fisher	Buckinghamshire County Council	Y

### Chesham:

Name	Organisation	Consultation respondent Y/N
David Stowe	Chilterns District Council (CDC)	Y
Katie Galvin	CDC	N
Graham Winwright	CDC	N
David Waker	CDC	N
Gerogina O'Dell	CDC	Y
David Gardner	CDC	N
Paul Nanji	CDC	N
Jackie Wesley	CDC	N



Bill Richards	Chesham Town Council	N
Liam Dawson	Paradigm Housing Association	N
John Shaw	Chiltern Rangers	Y

#### High Wycombe:

Name	Organisation	Consultation respondent Y/N
Sarah Randall	Wycombe District Council (WDC)	Y
James Cavalier	WDC	Y
Sheila Bees	WDC	Y
Julia Adey	WDC	N
Tony Green	WDC	N
Andy Sherwood	WDC	Y
Jackie Pinney	WDC	Y
David Dewar	WDC	Y
Gilian Stimpson	WDC	N
Lesley Stoner	WDC	Y
Madeleine Howe	Buckinghamshire County Council	Y
David Mullins	Red Kite Housing Association	N
John Shaw	Chiltern Rangers	Y
Chris Gregory	LEAP	N

#### Buckinghamshire:

Name	Organisation	Consultation respondent Y/N
Stephen Chainani	Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC)	N
Steven Goldensmith	BCC	Y
Emma Green	BCC	N

Ian Thornhill	BCC	N
Paul Hodson	BCC	N
Julia Carey	BCC	N
Jon Clark	BCC	N
Becca Dengler	BCC	N
Fiona Broadbent	BCC	N
Vicky Wetherell	Bucks and MK Natural Environment Partnership	N
Tom Burton	Public Health Buckinghamshire	Y

## Appendix E: Stakeholder Questionnaire

### Green Space Means Health – An assessment of accessible green infrastructure in areas of highest health deprivation in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe

**Brief:** To undertake a strategic review of relevant plans, policies and supporting evidence and use the results to identify the key green space availability/quality issues for deprived communities in towns of Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe, including recommended actions to improve community access to and use of green space to address health and well-being needs of these deprived communities in each town. For further details, see attached brief.

**Client:** Buckingham and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership

**Consultee:** *[Respondent to insert their name]*

**Consultant:** Joel Carré, People & Place Solutions

Please provide the following information, as requested below, and return it to me, at [joel\\_carre@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:joel_carre@hotmail.co.uk), by **5pm, Wednesday, 16 July**, if at all possible? I appreciate this is very short notice, but unfortunately, we are having to work to a very tight deadline in order to complete the report for this

stage of the study by end August. Please expand or shrink the space provided below as necessary. Alternatively, if you'd prefer to talk your consultation response through instead, please call me on 01234 402905. Thank you in anticipation for your valuable input.

**Q1. Please list below any local green space or public health studies, audits, assessments, which you feel would be of relevance to this brief?**

**Q2. Please identify any health and well-being activities, such as health walks, forces fit and horti-therapy, which are provided, either now or are in the pipeline for this year, in green spaces in any of the three target towns? Please list by site name using the table below.**

Site name	Activity

**Q3. Please identify any current projects or plans to improve the accessibility and quality of green spaces in any of the three target towns, either now or in the next 2 years? Please list by site name using the table below.**

Site name	Project/ plan

**Q4. Please list below those issues (eg. quality, quantity, accessibility, environmental, social, economic, etc) which you feel impact on the ability of deprived communities, in each of the tree target towns, to maximise the use of the town's green spaces for their health and well-being; and any**

corresponding actions, which you feel would help to address these issues? Please use the table below and be as specific as possible, in terms of the issues and actions, including giving specific locations.


**Q5. Please list up to 5 green space sites in each of the three target towns, which you feel should be considered for the next phase of this study (ie. interventions pilot and action plan), in order to improve deprived community access, awareness and use of the site for public health and well-being. Please list sites in priority order for each town using table below, with 1<sup>st</sup> being highest priority; and for each, briefly explain your reason for putting it forward.**

<b>Aylesbury</b>		
	Site name	Reason for putting it forward
1 <sup>st</sup>		
2 <sup>nd</sup>		
3 <sup>rd</sup>		
4 <sup>th</sup>		
5 <sup>th</sup>		

<b>Chesham</b>		
	Site name	Reason for putting it forward
1 <sup>st</sup>		
2 <sup>nd</sup>		
3 <sup>rd</sup>		
4 <sup>th</sup>		
5 <sup>th</sup>		

High Wycombe		
	Site name	Reason for putting it forward
1st		
2 <sup>nd</sup>		
3 <sup>rd</sup>		
4 <sup>th</sup>		
5 <sup>th</sup>		

**Q6. Should you wish to provide any additional information, which you feel may be of relevance to this study, please include it below?**

## **Appendix F-K**

*Not included*

## Appendix C: Green Flag site assessment

### People & Place Solutions

Site name: **Aylesbury Riverside Walk, Aylesbury**

Assessor's name: Joel Carré, People & Place Solutions

Assessment date: 13 November 2014


The following site assessment has been undertaken as part of the Green Space Means Health (GSMH) project, a joint initiative working under the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership, involving Chiltern DC, Wycombe DC, Aylesbury Vale DC, Public Health Buckinghamshire and Natural England. The first two phases of the project involved mapping all the public green spaces in relation to the most deprived communities in three towns - Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe - and for each town identifying what existing health related activities were already taking place. This work was completed in summer 2014 and resulted in a target green space/ community being selected in each of the three towns to go forward to phase 3 of the project. This third phase involves the development of an action plan for each of the three target sites/ communities to increase public use of the target sites (and potentially other neighbouring sites) for physical and mental health and well-being. These action plans will be used to inform the management of these green space(s), target existing and new public health interventions, support community led action and provide an evidence of need to support future funding bids, such as to the Lottery and Public Health Buckinghamshire.



Aylesbury Riverside Walk and associated Quarrendon community, was selected as the target green space site/ community for High Wycombe. The following report provides the results of a field assessment undertaken for Aylesbury Riverside Walk in accordance with the Green Flag Award criteria<sup>79</sup>. The Green Flag Award scheme is a Government endorsed national quality standard for all public parks and open spaces. The field assessment was undertaken through a single, walk-over site visit. Although the visit attempted a reasonable assessment of the full site, not all areas of the site were walked/ covered.

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<sup>79</sup> 'Park and Green Space Self-Assessment Guide', February 2008, CABE Space, DCLG and Civic Trust

No contextual site information was obtained or used in the production of the assessment. The scoring system is the Green Flag Award field research scoring guide as follows: '0-1 Very Poor; 2-4 Poor; 5-6 Fair; 7 Good; 8 Very Good; 9 Excellent; 10 Exceptional'. Where an individual criterion was not able to be assessed (due to lack of available information) or not considered appropriate (given the nature of the site), no score was given. The recommendations at the end of the report are based on the assessment's key findings and submitted for the site manager's consideration, in the context of other site management objectives and resource availability. The assessment results and recommendations will also be used to help inform the production of the GSMH action plan for the Aylesbury Riverside Walk and associated Quarrendon community.

Criteria	Assessment notes	Supporting photos	Score
Appraisal criterion 1: A welcoming place			
Sub-criterion 1: Welcoming	<p>Aylesbury Riverside Walk is an 18 hectare linear green space running along the northern urban edge of Aylesbury. The site is bounded to the south by housing (Quarrendon Ward), the east by the A413 road, the west by the railway line and the north by the River Thames. A further main road, the A41, bisects the site near its western boundary.</p> <p>The site is served by regular pedestrian/ cycle access points from the adjoining residential areas along its southern boundary; and from the two main roads (A41 and A413). There is only one off-road pedestrian/ cycle access crossing of the River Thames into the site from the new urban extensions to the north. All these access points are un-gated.</p>		7


	<p>The majority of main site access points have ladder boards, either old timber routed (often in poor state of legibility due to discolouring/ mould); or new screen printed. All boards include 'welcome'; site name, Council name and contact number. New screen printed boards include site map and wildlife information, text and illustrations.</p> <p>With exception of several narrow alley access points between properties, all other access points afford good sight lines into the site. The site is served by a strategic linear c2m concrete surfaced path, open to walkers and cyclists, which runs east-west through the site between the A413 and A41. This path is linked by sealed surface cross-paths situated at intervals along its length. The old concrete sections of the main linear path are breaking down and being repaired/ replaced with tarmac surfacing. A mown informal grass path is maintained along the riverbank of the River Thames through the site. There is no site signage at any of the access points or associated path waymarking, with the exception of occasional 'Round Aylesbury Walk' waymarkers.</p> <p>Standards of grounds maintenance is high, with differential mowing frequencies, tree planting/ management and path edging. There is also evidence of ongoing work to repair/ resurface the concrete section of the strategic linear path through the site. There was no litter or dog fouling to speak and only some graffiti on structures and garden fly tips. There is a good level of dog and general litter bin provision throughout site.</p>	 	
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<p>Sub-criterion 2: Good and safe access</p>	<p>Although the site is bisected at its eastern end by A431 and western end by A41, the sight lines at these road crossings are good with dropped kerb access.</p> <p>There are bus stops situated close to all the main site access points. The site is served by only one public car park, which is situated at the mid-point of the site's southern boundary. This car park serves the site's main public sport pitch provision (Meadowcroft), including a new all-terrain pitch (ATP) and multi-use games area (MUGA), and associated changing rooms. On street parking exists in the adjoining residential areas along the site's southern boundary, with regular alley access points between properties to the site. Some are narrow and uninviting to use, with evidence of fly tipping. The site is not signed from any of these access points.</p> <p>A sealed surfaced (concrete and tarmac) shared cycle/ pedestrian path runs the entire length of the site and is bisected at intervals by sealed surfaced paths from the adjoining residential areas along its southern boundary. At the western end of the site, a strategic access path (Emerald Way) with associated signage (giving destination/ travel time), links the site to the town centre. The Round Aylesbury Walk is waymarked through the site, though the waymarking is limited.</p>		<p>7</p>
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<p>Sub-criterion 3: Signage</p>	<p>The main site access points have ladder boards, mainly timber routed (often in poor state of legibility due to routed lettering not being picked out in white paint and moss accumulation); with a couple points also having new screen printed interpretative panels. The timber routed boards provide 'Welcome'; site name ('Riverside Walk'), Council name and contact telephone number (01296 585165). In one location, the two boards are sited together. The poor quality of timber routed boards detracts from the overall general quality of the site.</p> <p>The two screen printed interpretative panels include site name ('Riverside Walk') detailed and contextual ('You Are Here') site maps and river/ wildlife information text and supporting photographic illustrations, contact details (01296 427972 (District Council Biodiversity Team) and Riverside Walk BTCV Volunteers 01296 330033)) . These panels are of reasonable quality, although there is some evidence of graffiti.</p> <p>The public access points from the main road/ public car park are not signposted. The main linear surfaced path through the site is waymarked using plastic discs at key locations (ie. from road crossings) as 'Round Aylesbury Walk'. The wider surfaced/ maintained grass path network through the site is not signposted/ waymarked. The surfaced path network only provides linear access, ie. not circular.</p>		<p>4</p>
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<p>Sub-criterion 4: Equal access for all</p>	<p>The site provides formal grass pitches (football and cricket), informal kick around areas and a floodlit ATP, MUGA and teenage play area. There are four strategically located new childrens' play areas, one at either end and two in the middle of the site. Each of the four areas provide play equipment for children of all ages, including zip wires and climbing frames. There are also strategically located youth pod shelters and basket-ball hoops associated with the play areas. All formal play equipment, including ATP, MUGA appears to have been recently installed and are of high quality design.</p> <p>The site supports a diversity of accessible spaces, both formal and informal in character, though the latter is limited in scale. The informal areas tend to be associated with either established or recently created wildlife habitat (woodland/ scrub/ rough grassland) in a strip along the riverbank. There are also several remnant hedgerows which bisect the site. The majority of the site is managed as formal, close mown amenity grass.</p> <p>The topography is flat, with the exception of an artificially raised platform in the middle of the site, which supports the Meadowcroft public sports pitch provision/ ATP/ MUGA.</p> <p>The main access points into the site are sealed surfaced paths, which with the exception of one (to the west of Meadowcroft public car park), are of a reasonable gradient. The main linear path network is a sealed surface, mainly concrete with some tarmac sections, which provide reasonable easy access to the entire site, with the exception of the most western end, which is served by only a mown grass path network. A section of the main surfaced path in the western half of the site was flooded at the time of visit. The new play areas are accessed from the main linear surfaced path network by rolled stone/ hoggin style access paths. The entire site is available for dog access, including play areas, which in the main are not fenced against dogs. The majority of benches are of a basic design/ construction and are located at regular intervals/ key viewpoints along the</p>	 <p>The top photograph shows a wide grassy area with a small blue shelter on the left and a fenced-in area in the background. The middle photograph shows a playground with several tall wooden posts connected by ropes. The bottom photograph shows a paved path running alongside a grassy area with some trees in the background.</p>	<p>8</p>
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	<p>main linear surfaced path and informal grass riverside path. There are no picnic benches.</p> <p>The new screen printed information panels are not able to be easily viewed by wheelchair bound visitors.</p>		
Appraisal criterion 2: Healthy, safe and secure			



<p>Sub-criterion 5: Safe equipment and facilities</p>	<p>The site is well maintained and feels safe. There is good level of dog and general waste bin provision, with only one general waste bin visibly overflowing. The bins are strategically sited, including near benches, main site access points and in play areas/ MUGA. There was very little evidence of litter or dog fouling. The access point ladder boards provide contact details, though with different telephone numbers and no emergency specific details.</p> <p>The surfaced access path network is in reasonable condition, although the main linear concrete surfaced path through the site is beginning to break up, with affected sections being repaired/ resurfaced in tarmac.</p> <p>The mature trees appear to be being maintained in a safe condition, with evidence of pollarding of riverside willows.</p> <p>The road crossings to/ within the site have good sight lines and dropped kerbs, though no central refuges on A41/ A413 road crossings.</p> <p>There appears to be no toilet facilities, which given the linear nature of the site and its predominantly local usage, is not considered an issue.</p>	 	<p>8</p>
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	<p>Despite the site's riverside setting, there is no evidence of any life rings/ throw lines sited along the mown grass riverside path. That said, the river is relatively narrow, slow flowing with gentle shallow margins.</p> <p>The children's play areas are all new, with a good range of high quality, age appropriate equipment. Health and safety signs, including no dog fouling, glass and age range of the equipment, is provided at the entrance to each area. Some of the play areas included a 'no smoking in the play area' children designed poster.</p>		
<p>Sub-criterion 6: Personal security in park</p>	<p>The sight lines into/ within the site are reasonable to good, though both the formal and informal riverside paths have sections which are hidden by trees/ scrub/ landform (ie. raised sports pitch area). The westernmost section of the site is newly planted area of wet woodland, informal in character and not overlooked, so visitors may feel isolated.</p> <p>A dog walker, spoken with during the site assessment, reported that she had been flashed at when visiting the site on three separate occasions in the past 2 years. She reported the incidents to the Police, but didn't believe any convictions had resulted. She also reported on a murder of a woman on the site in broad daylight, c3 years ago. The murderer apparently had a psychotic condition and the incident could have happened anywhere.</p> <p>Although the site has no street lighting, the ATP/ MUGA, public car park are all lit. The linear surfaced path network is suitable for push-chairs and wheelchairs, though it doesn't provide circular routes and has sections which are enclosed in woodland belts close to the path. There is no waymarked trails with the exception of the main linear surfaced path which forms part of the Round Aylesbury Walk.</p>	 	8



	<p>The children and youth play areas are all highly visible, with surfaced paths leading to them. The youth pod shelters are also in highly visible locations, near age appropriate equipment and facilities, including MUGA, basketball hoops.</p> <p>Although there was no evidence of ranger/ warden patrols, the Council's grounds maintenance and path surfacing contractors were visible on site at the time of the visit, with one contractor talking to a dog walker.</p>		
Sub-criterion 7: Dog fouling	<p>There is a good level of dog bin provision, with evidence of an asset management system in place (ie. unique bin identification stickers). The bins are strategically sited, including at main site access points and path junctions. There was little evidence of dog fouling or used dog waste bags being hung up on tree/ shrub branches.</p> <p>There is no apparent 'dog free'/'dogs on lead' zoning, even in play areas, which are unfenced and have standard signage warning users to 'pick up' after their dogs. The fenced off MUGA/ ATP appear to be dog exclusion zones, judging by the standard signage.</p>	 	8



<p>Sub-criterion 8: Appropriate provision of facilities</p>	<p>The site provides a good range of sports/ play facilities, including formal grass pitches (football and cricket), informal kick around areas and a floodlit ATP, MUGA and teenage play areas. There are four strategically located new play areas, one at either end and two in the middle of the site. Each of the four areas provide play equipment for children/ young people of all ages, including zip wires and climbing frames. There are also strategically located youth pod shelters and basket-ball hoops associated with the play areas. All the formal play equipment, including ATP, MUGA appear to have been recently installed and are of high quality design. The site also accommodates the grounds of Aylesbury Town FC.</p> <p>The site is served by an extensive surfaced linear path network providing good access for cyclists, walkers and pushchair/ wheelchair users. In addition there is a maintained grass path along the riverbank. Benches are provided at regular intervals along both paths. There are no waymarked circular routes and no picnic facilities. According to the Community Centre manager, a health walk programme used to run from the Centre but ended due to poor support. The Council is carrying out ongoing repairs to the concrete sections of the main linear path surface.</p>	  	<p>8</p>
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<p>Sub-criterion 9: Quality of facilities</p>	<p>The timber routed ladder boards at key site access points are in poor condition and detract visually from the overall good quality of the site and associated new play/ sports facilities.</p> <p>The concrete path surface has begun to deteriorate and been patched in sections with tarmac, which creates a visually poor, disjointed appearance and quality.</p> <p>The build quality, appearance and condition of the new play areas, youth pod shelters, MUGA and ATP appears good, though the functionality of the some of the static youth play/ fitness equipment is unclear. Also one of the youth pods is sited next to a high voltage pylon.</p>	 <p>The top photograph shows a wooden ladder board, which is a type of play equipment, in a state of poor condition with visible decay and moss. The middle photograph shows a concrete path that has been patched with tarmac, creating a visually disjointed appearance. The bottom photograph shows a blue youth pod shelter, which is a static play structure, situated next to a high voltage pylon.</p>	<p>7</p>
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Appraisal criterion 3: Clean and well maintained			
Sub-criterion 10: Litter and waste management	<p>The level of general litter and dog waste bin provision is good, with both bins sited at strategic access points, including seating (general litter bins) and path junctions. The general litter bins carry promotional environmental/ health signage and the dog bins are asset tagged. Both bin types appear to be cleansed regularly, with only one found to be overflowing at time of visit. There is no recycled waste bin provision. The new play areas/ MUGA are served by new attractive general waste bins.</p> <p>There is no evidence of on-site waste storage areas.</p> <p>The level of litter and dog fouling on site at the time of visit was low. There was some evidence of fly tipping along alley access points, from adjoining gardens and on the area of concrete hard standing to the east of Meadowcroft sports area.</p> <p>Litter/dog fouling fine warning signs were integrated with play area site signage.</p>	 	6

<p>Sub-criterion 11: Grounds maintenance and horticulture</p>	<p>The level of grounds maintenance is generally very high across the site. Grass areas are close mown, with evidence that access paths and a surfaced path margins are maintained on more frequent mowing cycle. Rough grass habitat margins are maintained along river riverbank. A mown grass path is maintained along the riverbank.</p> <p>At the time of visit, Council contractors were edging surfaced paths. Only one short section of surfaced path was found to be encroached by grass and moss.</p> <p>The contractors undertaking the surfacing repairs had erected temporary hazard barriers to warn path users that sections of path were closed/ under construction, although these appeared to be no supported by temporary warning notices.</p> <p>There is evidence of new woodland belt planting at intervals along the river and cyclical willow pollarding and hedgerow management. Specimen half standard trees had been planted beside the new play areas, using stakes and ties.</p> <p>There was no evidence of litter or dog fouling.</p> <p>According to the new interpretative panel, BTCV run a volunteer conservation group to assist with maintenance of Aylesbury Riverside Walk. There was no other evidence of community engagement in site management observed at the time of the site visit. The site's grounds maintenance is undertaken by an external contractor on behalf of the District Council.</p>	 <p>The top photograph shows a paved path curving through a green field. The middle photograph shows a gravel path in a grassy area. The bottom photograph shows a dirt path with a red and white hazard barrier.</p>	<p>8</p>
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<p>Sub-criterion 12: Building and infrastructure maintenance</p>	<p>A number of the main entrance ladder boards have become moss encrusted/ faded, making it difficult to pick out the worded information. One board had some of its lettering crudely picked out in what appeared to be white paint, making it look visually even poorer. There was also graffiti on several structures, including benches. However, levels of graffiti was generally low and there was no evidence of flyposting.</p> <p>Routine maintenance, including bin cleansing appears good, with high levels of both dog and general waste bins, with only one general waste bin over-flowing. There was evidence of asset tagging system on dog bins, but not other items of furniture. There was little general litter or evidence of dog fouling. There was some evidence of historic fly tipping of garden trimmings from gardens adjoining the site and some furniture in vegetation along site access alleys. Environmental enforcement warning signage was erected on bins and at main gateways to play areas, though such signage at entrances was not highly evident.</p> <p>Surfaced path maintenance is good with, at the time of visit, Council contractors undertaking path edging. Only one short section of surfaced path was found to be encroached by grass and moss. There was evidence of ongoing tarmac repairs to the concrete sections of the main path through the site with, at the time of visit, contractors replacing a significant section of original concrete surface.</p> <p>The majority of the play infrastructure is new and the changing rooms were locked at the time of visit.</p>	  	<p>6</p>
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Sub-criterion 13: Equipment maintenance	<p>The play equipment, including MUGA and ATP, appears to be new and of a high quality, with no evidence of damage or neglect, or associated health and safety issues. It was not possible, from the site visit, to assess inspection frequencies, routine/ programmed maintenance and repair standards or anti-social behaviour (ASB) target response times. With the exception of several examples of graffiti on structures and garden flytips, there was no evidence of other ASB issues such as dog mess, needles or flyposting.</p>		8
Appraisal criterion 4: Sustainability			
Sub-criterion 14: Environmental sustainability – energy and natural resource	<p>The majority of the site is maintained as formal close mown amenity grass, with the exception of a few remnant hedgerows and a relatively narrow strip of rough grass/ scrub/ woodland habitat between the mown informal riverside path and the site's main linear concrete/ tarmac path. This habitat strip contains blocks of new broadleaf planting. There is also a more informal area of newly planted wet woodland at the westernmost end of the site, with informal mown grass paths maintained through it.</p> <p>There is little evidence of additional habitat creation/ management or provision for wildlife, such as bird or bat boxes, across the site. The level of formal, close mown grass provision is considered excessive and unnecessary. There is scope to create extensive areas of rough grass to buffer existing habitat features, such as trees and hedges and to undertake strategic tree/ shrub/ hedge planting to help strengthen the site's southern boundary with the adjoining residential areas.</p> <p>There was no recycled waste bin provision.</p> <p>With the exception of the lighting of the Meadowcroft MUGA and ATP and associated public car park, there is no other lighting columns on the site.</p>	 	6

	<p>It has not been possible from the site visit to assess what energy/ water conservation management practices may be being used in the changing rooms.</p> <p>The Meadowcroft MUGA/ ATP and associated sport pitches are on artificially raised ground, which apparently was formed when the land was restored from being a tip. There was no evidence whether this former use of the site has resulted in land contamination and associated environmental pollution risks.</p>		
Sub-criterion 15: Pesticides	It has not been possible from the site visit to assess this. However, the nature of the site, with extensive formal close mown grass areas and the lack of any ornamental bedding/ shrub planting would appear to eliminate the need for pesticide usage.		N/A
Sub-criterion 16: Peat use	It has not been possible from the site visit to assess this. However, the nature of the site, with extensive formal close mown grass areas and the lack of any ornamental bedding/ shrub planting would appear eliminate the need for any compost usage.		N/A
Sub-criterion 17: Waste minimisation	<p>It has not been possible from the site visit to fully assess this. There is no recycled waste bin provision. The new play areas equipment is predominantly timber structures on grass surface, with the exception of the MUGA/ ATP/ youth pods, which are metal structures on artificial surface. The site furniture is a mixture of timber, metal and plastic. It has not been possible to assess whether the timber is from certified sustainable sources or the metal/ plastic is from recycled sources.</p> <p>There was no evidence of how green waste, including grass mowing and tree/ shrub pruning, is disposed of and/ or recycled.</p> <p>There was no public information on site promoting/ educating about waste minimisation.</p>		N/A



<p>Sub-criterion 18: Arboriculture and woodland management</p>	<p>With the exception of some limited new formal tree planting, which is with half standards, all other new planting appears to be with whip stock. The new formal planting uses ties and stakes. With the exception of one specimen, which appears to have had its main stem snapped, all other new tree stock is in good condition, with no evidence of strimmer damage.</p> <p>There is evidence that the riverside willows are being maintained as pollards. In terms of the new informal tree planting, an area of native wet woodland is being established in the westernmost section of the site. There is also a rough grass/ scrub habitat strip, including mature riverside willow/ alder and blocks of new native broadleaf planting being maintained between the main linear concrete path and river. No standing dead wood habitat or log piles were recorded during the site visit. The site contains a limited number of large mature trees and these tend to be in single species formal clusters.</p> <p>There was evidence of health and safety arboriculture work being undertaken to a belt of trees within a hedge beneath high voltage electricity lines.</p> <p>There is scope to increase the tree cover on the site, through both strategic formal and informal planting.</p>	 <p>The top photograph shows a close-up of a tree trunk with a black tie or strap wrapped around it. The middle photograph shows a wooden bench in a grassy field with trees in the background. The bottom photograph shows a path through a wooded area with trees and grass.</p>	<p>7</p>
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Appraisal criterion 5: Conservation and heritage			
Sub-criterion 19: Conservation of natural features, wild fauna and flora	<p>The main nature conservation features of the site are the river and associated narrow habitat strip, incorporating native tree planting, established pollard willows/ alders and rough grass/ scrub. There are also several remnant hedgerow and scrub features.</p> <p>With the exception of the block of new wet woodland planting in the westernmost end of the site, the other tree/ shrub habitat features are narrow with hard edges, ie. close mown grass right up to the feature, and have no shrub/ field layers. There is also very little evidence of standing dead wood habitat, log piles or nest/ bat box provision.</p> <p>The bulk of the site area is maintained as formal, close mown amenity grassland, including a wet/ marshy area to the east of the Meadowcroft play and sports facilities. There are no meadow areas.</p> <p>The river is relatively narrow, shallow and slow flowing and meanders along the site's northern boundary. An informal riverside grass path is maintained through the site. The river contains both emergent and marginal vegetation and has semi-mature willows and alder trees at intervals along its length. The riparian floodplain land on the opposite bank to the site has been left as rough wet grassland habitat, with very limited formal public access and associated disturbance.</p> <p>There are several strategically located site interpretation panels which provide both text and illustrations of typical fauna, which can be viewed on the site including kingfisher and reed bunting. The boards include both a detailed and site context map and written summary description of the River Thames.</p>	  	6



<p>Sub-criterion 20: Conservation of landscape features</p>	<p>It has not been possible from the site visit to assess historic landscape conservation standards, as the landscape character of the site has been dramatically altered due to the extensive areas of formal close mown amenity grass and the artificially raised landform which accommodates the Meadowcroft play and sports facilities. Indeed, the predominantly formal amenity character of the site is in stark contrast to the open, rough wetland character of the riparian land on the opposite bank of the river. That said, there are occasional mature landscape features associated with the site, including remnant hedgerows and pollard willows and alders at intervals along the river bank.</p> <p>With the exception of the naturally meandering river, there are no water bodies associated with the site. Only the westernmost block of recently planted wet woodland provides a more natural landscape character.</p> <p>There is no evidence of any formal historic landscape feature or design quality associated with the site.</p> <p>The residential properties bordering the site's southern boundary are highly visible along the entire length of the site. The western half of the site is dominated by the Aylesbury Town Football Club's facilities and associated security fencing and a high voltage power-line and associated pylons.</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<p>Sub-criterion 21: Conservation of buildings and structures</p>	<p>It has not been possible from the site visit to assess conservation standards, as there are no buildings or structures of obvious heritage conservation value associated with the site. The western boundary of the site includes a Victorian cattle creep through the railway embankment. Modern residential properties border the site's southern boundary, while the central western half of the site is dominated by the Meadowcroft play and sports facilities, Aylesbury Town Football Club's facilities and the high</p>		<p>N/A</p>

	voltage power-line and associated pylons. These modern features have no architectural or conservation merits.		
Appraisal criterion 6: Community involvement			
Sub-criterion 22: Community involvement in management and development	<p>It has not been possible from the site visit to assess knowledge of visitors/ use, though the use of formal sports facilities would obviously be available from associated booking details.</p> <p>According to new interpretation panel, BTCV run a volunteer conservation group to assist with maintenance of Aylesbury Riverside Walk. There was no other evidence of volunteer or wider community engagement in site management. There was also no evidence of any community development, nor outreach work. Grounds maintenance is undertaken by an external contractor, working for the Council.</p> <p>Although there is evidence through the new play areas and information panels that partners have come together to plan, develop and secure funding for these facilities, there was no evidence to suggest that these partnerships were supporting ongoing site management.</p>		N/A
Sub-criterion 23: Appropriate provision for the community	The site provides a good level of appropriate facilities for all sections of the community, including formal grass pitches (football and cricket), informal kick around areas and a floodlit ATP, MUGA and teenage play area. There are four strategically located new play areas, one at either end and two in the middle of the site. Each of the four areas provide play equipment for children/ young people of all ages, including zip wires and climbing frames. There are also strategically located youth pod shelters and basket-ball		8



hoops associated with the play areas. All the formal play equipment, including ATP, MUGA appear to have been recently installed and are of high quality design and both rich and stimulating.

The site supports a diversity of accessible spaces, both formal and informal in character, though the latter is limited in scale. The bulk of the site is maintained as formal amenity open space. The level of general waste and dog bin provision is good.


The topography is flat, with reasonable hard surfaced paths available for cycling and easy access (mobility impaired, wheelchair and pushchair), though the surfaced network does not provide for circular routes to be followed. There are basic wooden benches at strategic points along the main surfaced access path and informal mown riverside path, but no picnic bench provision.

The signage and waymarking is poor. There are several strategically sited new interpretative panels giving information on the site's history and wildlife, but no evidence of any other environmental educational provision, such as guided walks and events or outdoor classroom use.



Appraisal criterion 7: Marketing			
Sub-criterion 24: Marketing and promotion	It has not been possible from the site visit to assess the marketing and promotion activity. There is no evidence of any on site events programme.		N/A
Sub-criterion 25: Provision of appropriate information	It has not been possible from the site visit to assess the provision of appropriate information, both in terms of format and quality. There is no on site public information boards or webpage content.		N/A
Sub-criterion 26: Provision of appropriate educational interpretation/ information	<p>The main site access points have timber routed ladder boards, which are in generally poor state of legibility due to routed lettering not being picked out in white paint and moss accumulation. These timber routed boards provide 'Welcome'; site name ('Riverside Walk'), Council name and contact telephone number (01296 585165). The poor quality of these boards detracts from overall good site quality.</p> <p>The two screen printed interpretative panels include site name ('Riverside Walk') detailed and contextual ('You Are Here') site maps and river/ wildlife information text and supporting photographic illustrations, contact details (01296 427972 (District Council Biodiversity Team) and Riverside Walk BTCV Volunteers 01296 330033). These boards are of reasonable quality, although there is some evidence of graffiti.</p> <p>Several play areas include children designed 'no smoking' posters. Also one of the play areas includes local wildlife themed installations, eg. barn owl.</p> <p>No other educational/ interpretation or information material was evident from the site visit, including use of public art such as sculptures, theatre, story-telling, interpretation trails.</p>	 	4



			
Appraisal criterion 8: Management plan			
Sub-criterion 27: Implementation of management plan	No management plan was available to enable assessment of this sub-criterion.		N/A
	Total		124
	Average (Total divided by 18, as 9 sub-criteria were N/A)		6.90
	OUT OF 100 (Average x 10)		69%

**Key management recommendations arising from site assessment:**

1. Provide new ladder boards, welcoming visitors to the site at each of the main site access points
2. Provide increased signage/ waymarking of path network (formal/ informal), including from adjoining roads/ down alleys and designated circular routes (short/medium/ long)
3. Provide additional benches at strategic points, including picnic tables
4. Provide additional interpretation/ map boards at strategic locations showing path network, wildlife and historical features, management arrangements
5. Consider visitor attraction/ interpretation opportunities through public art, including sculptures, theatre, story-telling, interpretation trails

6. Provide recycled waste bins next to general litter bins
7. Extend asset management system used for dog bins to all bins and other associated path infrastructure
8. Enhance wildlife habitat/ visual amenity, by creating extensive areas of rough grass to buffer existing habitat features, such as trees and hedges and undertaking strategic tree/ shrub/ hedge planting to help strengthen the site's southern boundary with the adjoining residential areas and existing planted areas
9. Consider visitor attraction/ interpretation opportunities through public art, including sculptures, theatre, story-telling, interpretation trail, events programme
10. Improve appearance/ openness of alley access points to site, ie. make more inviting
11. Erect bird/ bat boxes throughout site
12. Produce management plan, including audience development plan component, for site, if no such plan exists

People & Place Solutions  
10 January 2015

## Appendix D: Community Workshop output report

### Overview:

X 6 community groups involving x87 individuals consulted

### Headline conclusions:

The site is not well used because:

- Insufficient signage / information
- Fears about personal safety

Improvements that would lead to more use / greater levels of health & fitness:

- Outdoor gym equipment / adventure play
- Provision of seating to give confidence to users that they can rest if needed

Main management issues:

- Reduce levels of litter and dog mess
- Tackle anti-social behaviour issues
- Make entrance points more welcoming
- *Consider alternative path options for sections(s) most frequently flooded (or increase maintenance of river to reduce flooding)*

### Additional Information:

During the consultation activities it was reported that:

- The Aylesbury parkrun uses the surfaced paths of the Riverside Walk area for a 5km timed-run every Saturday morning at 9.00am. The run is attended by approx. <http://www.parkrun.org.uk/aylesbury/>
- An occasional 'Boot Camp' uses the site for its fitness activities

The following pages contain detailed summaries of each of the consultation activities. Original notes, forms, post-its and maps have been retained.

Cliff Andrews  
BRCC, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015



**Event:** Quarrendon & Meadowcroft Guides

**Date & Time:** 5<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2015; 7.30pm

**Venue:** Quarrendon & Meadowcroft Community Association

**Facilitator:** Cliff Andrews, BRCC

**Attendance:** x12 10-14yr olds, plus x3 adults; all female

**Summary of main Discussion / Mapping Exercise comments**

to be viewed alongside original responses

<p><b>1 Is Aylesbury Riverside Walk (and other green spaces) well used by the local community?</b> (Do you use the site personally? How often?)</p> <p>Mixed views. Some use it for formal sport activities, 1 uses it daily; others do not use it.</p>
<p><b>2 If yes, what sort of activities are undertaken; and who uses the sites?</b> (old, young, families, etc)</p> <p>Dog walking.</p> <p>Sports.</p> <p>Young families use the park / play area</p> <p>The Guide pack has occasionally used the site for a walk, but not for badge work or events</p>
<p><b>3 If no, what are the reasons the sites are not well used?</b> (Are the sites known about, is it obvious and easy how to get to them, are they welcoming?)</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about the site.</p> <p>Safety fears – ‘dangerous people’.</p> <p>Motorbike use is noisy and intimidating.</p>

<p><b>4 Are there any specific improvements to the physical nature of the site that you think would help the sites be better used and encourage more people to get active?</b> <i>For any site-specific ideas (such as 'install an information board / bench' etc at a given location); please write your ideas down on the post-it notes and stick them at the appropriate location on the map. Please also mark on the map any problems with the sites.</i></p> <p>Advertise the site to make it better known</p> <p>Provide maps</p> <p>Outside gym</p> <p>Adventure play / more play areas 'parks' (climbing walls, stepping stones etc)</p> <p>Benches</p> <p>Wildlife &amp; habitats – more wildlife will attract more people</p>
<p><b>5 Do you have ideas for activities that could be encouraged on this site, which would lead to more people using the site and improving their health?</b></p> <p>May be activities that individual residents / groups could do on their own; or that would need organisations to lead.</p> <p>Have a cycle club</p> <p>Social Club</p>
<p><b>6 Do you have any comments about the way in which the sites are managed and maintained; and how that may affect people's use of the sites?</b></p> <p>Stop motorbikes</p> <p>Stop gangs.</p> <p>Less dog mess</p>
<p>If you have any other comments, or need more space to write answers to the above, please use the back of this sheet.</p>

**Event/ Group:** Thursday Morning Club

**Date & Time:** 5<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2015; 10.00am

**Venue:** Quarrendon & Meadowcroft Community Assoc

**Facilitator:** Cliff Andrews, BRCC

**Attendance:** x22 Over 65's (14 females, 8 males)



**Summary of main Discussion / Mapping Exercise comments**

to be viewed alongside original responses

**1 Is Aylesbury Riverside Walk (and other green spaces) well used by the local community? (Do you use the site personally? How often?)**

Some of the group use it personally; others have younger family members who walk dogs or visit the play area. Others felt the site was not well used by the community as a whole.

**2 If yes, what sort of activities are undertaken; and who uses the sites? (old, young, families, etc)**

Dog walking.

Young families use the park / play area and cycle

Reference was made to an OAP Walk, but no further information was found

**3 If no, what are the reasons the sites are not well used? (Are the sites known about, is it obvious and easy how to get to them, are they welcoming?)**

Safety fears – a past murder in the site still preys on people's minds. 1 resident using a walker would like to use the site for exercise but is frightened of being there alone.

The site is often flooded, making in inaccessible.

Lack of seating
<p><b>4 Are there any specific improvements to the physical nature of the site that you think would help the sites be better used and encourage more people to get active?</b> <i>For any site-specific ideas (such as 'install an information board / bench' etc at a given location); please write your ideas down on the post-it notes and stick them at the appropriate location on the map. Please also mark on the map any problems with the sites.</i></p> <p>Provide more seating          Provide lighting          Provide more information boards          Provide more dog bins – especially at Hayward's Filed 'Dick's way'</p>
<p><b>5 Do you have ideas for activities that could be encouraged on this site, which would lead to more people using the site and improving their health?</b>          May be activities that individual residents / groups could do on their own; or that would need organisations to lead.          There was a strong consensus that the River Thame needed better and more regular maintenance, both to improve wildlife and reduce flooding. This view was strongly expressed and residents are frustrated that their previous attempts to raise the issue have not led to any action.</p>
<p><b>6 Do you have any comments about the way in which the sites are managed and maintained; and how that may affect people's use of the sites?</b>          A leaflet showing walks and parks in the area, delivered to all local houses</p>
If you have any other comments, or need more space to write answers to the above, please use the back of this sheet.

**Event/ Group:** St Peter's Community Café

**Date & Time:** 5<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2015; 11.00am

**Venue:** St Peter's Church Hall,

**Facilitator:** Cliff Andrews, BRCC

**Attendance:** x13; of which x3 40-50 yr olds; x10 over 65's (10 female, 3 male)



### Summary of main Discussion / Mapping Exercise comments

to be viewed alongside original responses

<b>1 Is Aylesbury Riverside Walk (and other green spaces) well used by the local community?</b> (Do you use the site personally? How often?) Site not well-known or used.
<b>2 If yes, what sort of activities are undertaken; and who uses the sites?</b> (old, young, families, etc) It was known that a couple of normal attendees walk their dogs their regularly; but other than that, nothing was known of the site.
<b>3 If no, what are the reasons the sites are not well used?</b> (Are the sites known about, is it obvious and easy how to get to them, are they welcoming?) Lack of signage Flooded for several months each year Anti-social behaviour (drug abuse) Feeling of isolation when on site alone.
<b>4 Are there any specific improvements to the physical nature of the site that you think would help the sites be better used and encourage more people to get active?</b> <i>For any site-specific ideas (such as 'install an information board / bench' etc at a given location); please write your ideas down on the post-it notes and stick them at the appropriate location on the map. Please also mark on the map any problems with the sites.</i> Motion-activated lighting Seating, including covered seating

The provision of public toilets, associated with a café, was mentioned by a number of people.  
Public parking needs to be provided nearby; along with banning parking along the verges as this is dangerous/ inconvenient and churns up the ground.  
A Trim Trail (like at 'Watermead').

**5 Do you have ideas for activities that could be encouraged on this site, which would lead to more people using the site and improving their health? *May be activities that individual residents / groups could do on their own; or that would need organisations to lead.***

Walks, including 'Simply Walks' health walks using the site, starting and finishing at a new café or the Horse & Jockey pub.

Motion-activated, low-level lighting – enough for safety but not to disturb neighbours to the site.

Summertime exercise classes.

More activities for girls – such as netball & hockey areas.

A warden to undertake litter clearance and provide a presence on site to increase safety.

More information on wildlife should be provided.

The site should more regularly be maintained – even if just the edges of paths are mown; as currently the site looks neglected and this puts people off.

Re-sculpture the landscape to make more interesting and create a nature reserve – such as at Broughton Pastures.

**6 Do you have any comments about the way in which the sites are managed and maintained; and how that may affect people's use of the sites?**

If you have any other comments, or need more space to write answers to the above, please use the back of this sheet.

**Event/ Group:** Q&M Community Action Partnership

**Date & Time:** 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2015; 7.00pm

**Venue:** Quarrendon & Meadowcroft Community Association

**Facilitator:** Cliff Andrews, BRCC

**Attendance:** x12: x2 male x10 female; (estimate 4 35-60yr old; 8 over 60)

**Summary of main Discussion / Mapping Exercise comments**

to be viewed alongside original responses

<b>1 Is Aylesbury Riverside Walk (and other green spaces) well used by the local community?</b> (Do you use the site personally? How often?) There were mixed views as to whether the site was well-used by the local community.
<b>2 If yes, what sort of activities are undertaken; and who uses the sites?</b> (old, young, families, etc) Dog walking; football, running, children on the play areas
<b>3 If no, what are the reasons the sites are not well used?</b> (Are the sites known about, is it obvious and easy how to get to them, are they welcoming?) Insufficient information / signage – no one who has not yet used the site would choose to as it isn't known / advertised. Insufficient seating. Fears of personal safety – 'too overgrown'
<b>4 Are there any specific improvements to the physical nature of the site that you think would help the sites be better used and encourage more people to get active?</b> <i>For any site-specific ideas (such as 'install an information board / bench' etc at a given location); please write your ideas down on the post-it notes and stick them at the appropriate location on the map. Please also mark on the map any problems with the sites.</i> More seating Signposts (showing how to get to site) and sculpture trail / waymarking within site More litter bins, especially near the football pitches Steps and ramp are needed to enable people to move safely from the higher to lower areas. Install additional bridge over the river, roughly in line with all-weather sports pitch; to enable easier access and circular walks.

<p>'Natural Play' area where children can build dens, use rope swings and be encouraged in imaginative play.</p> <p>Sculpture trail / waymarking</p> <p>Provide opportunities to enjoy the wildlife, especially by the river; including planting more flowers.</p> <p>Entrance to site off Jackson Road (by bend in road) in unkempt, overgrown and uninviting – needs improving</p>
<p><b>5 Do you have ideas for activities that could be encouraged on this site, which would lead to more people using the site and improving their health? <i>May be activities that individual residents / groups could do on their own; or that would need organisations to lead.</i></b></p> <p>Dog agility – training and 'structures' – to promote better dog care and reduce dog-related problems.</p> <p>Fitness trail with gym equipment</p> <p>Provide for other sports – incl tennis &amp; netball</p> <p>Cricket nets – large numbers of Asian males play cricket informally on the site in the summer – but insufficient room for a formal wicket / pitch.</p> <p>Encourage groups to hold activities in the site – walks, picnics etc, to increase general awareness and people then can return on their own.</p>
<p><b>6 Do you have any comments about the way in which the sites are managed and maintained; and how that may affect people's use of the sites?</b></p> <p>Litter is a big problem, along with Dog fouling.</p> <p>The site has an unkempt feeling.</p> <p>A ranger / groundsman should be present on site more – to look after site and increase confidence of users.</p>
<p>If you have any other comments, or need more space to write answers to the above, please use the back of this sheet.</p>



**Event/ Group:** Thomas Hickman School, Year 5's

**Date & Time:** 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**Venue:** Thomas Hickman School

**Facilitator:** Mike Fayers, BRCC

**Attendance:** 7 boys, 5 girls, 1 adult (teacher)

**Summary of main Discussion / Mapping Exercise comments**

to be viewed alongside original responses

<p><b>1 Is Aylesbury Riverside Walk (and other green spaces) well used by the local community?</b> (Do you use the site personally? How often?)</p> <p>Of those pupils who knew the park – around 50% of them - most felt that it was not well used by the local community.</p>
<p><b>2 If yes, what sort of activities are undertaken; and who uses the sites?</b> (old, young, families, etc)</p> <p>Dog walking, families walking with small children, and children playing football were all noted as activities undertaken in the park.</p>
<p><b>3 If no, what are the reasons the sites are not well used?</b> (Are the sites known about, is it obvious and easy how to get to them, are they welcoming?)</p> <p>The pupils – even those who lived close to the site - felt that the area was not well known. Also, a number of the access points were not sign posted (or even obvious)</p>
<p><b>4 Are there any specific improvements to the physical nature of the site that you think would help the sites be better used and encourage more people to get active?</b> <i>For any site-specific ideas (such as 'install an information board / bench' etc at a given location); please write your ideas down on the post-it notes and stick them at the appropriate location on the map. Please also mark on the map any problems with the sites.</i></p> <p>A wide range of improvements / additions to the site were noted – the most popular of these ideas are noted below:</p> <p><b>Health &amp; Play:</b> outdoor gym; climbing frame, giant treehouse, BMX track, skateboard park, swing logs / tyre swings, look-out tower, beach area/ water park</p>

<p><b>Nature:</b> more trees/ woodland areas for wildlife (especially fruiting trees and shrubs), more flowers, bird feeders, duck pond, nature trail</p> <p><b>Facilities, furniture:</b> more benches (especially along river), toilets, café, information signs, welcome signs</p>
<p><b>5 Do you have ideas for activities that could be encouraged on this site, which would lead to more people using the site and improving their health? <i>May be activities that individual residents / groups could do on their own; or that would need organisations to lead.</i></b></p> <p>Most of the responses to this question relate back to the play aspect – football games and play equipment – though proposed attractions / activities included a regular organised fun run and an occasional visiting funfair to raise the profile of the site</p>
<p><b>6 Do you have any comments about the way in which the sites are managed and maintained; and how that may affect people's use of the sites?</b></p> <p>There were no comments on the management or maintenance of this or any other local parks.</p>
<p>If you have any other comments, or need more space to write answers to the above, please use the back of this sheet.</p>

**Event/ Group:** Haydon Abbey School

**Date & Time:** 5<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2015; 1.30am

**Venue:** Haydon Abbey School

**Facilitator:** Cliff Andrews, BRCC

**Attendance:** x13 (x6 yr 5's & x6 year 6's, 1 teacher) (6 males, 7 females)

**Summary of main Discussion / Mapping Exercise comments**

to be viewed alongside original responses

The activity undertaken with the children was based more around the map and 'visioning' what they would like to be able to do at the site.

Of the 12 children, approximately half had used the site, but only a couple knew it well (1 walks dog, the other visits the play area).

The teacher acknowledged that it was a shame the school currently made no use of the site given its proximity (500m from the school grounds).

The children feel that the main reasons people don't use the site more are:

-Not feeling safe. (It was interesting that the year 5s all felt their parents would not let them visit the site without an adult, whereas many of the Year 6s felt they would be allowed, but some of them wouldn't want to, due to older kids hanging about).

-Don't know about the site or what you can do there.

On being asked about what things they felt should be changed to make more people get active and visit the site, the children were very enthusiastic and imaginative with their ideas! Filtering out the more extreme ideas (ie, a zoo); the suggestions could be broadly grouped as:

- Adventure Play (including climbing walls, zip wire, a 'sling shot'?!)

- Water Park

- Outside Gym equipment

- Golf / crazy golf

- More play areas

- The provision of seats

- Public Toilets

- Running trail

Ideas for organised activities that would encourage them and the wider community to visit the site:

- Pond dipping was a well-supported suggestion; along with bird & cloud watching

- Camping was also a common suggestion, but with significant safety fears

- School visits for nature walks etc

## Appendix E: Action plan stakeholder list

### Stakeholder contacts

#### District Council officers:

	Forename	Surname
Green space site manager	Gareth	Bird
Community safety/ ASB	Kay	Aitken
Planning policy	Andy	Kirkham
Policy and performance	Tamsin	Ireland
Public health - physical activity/ mental health	Andy	Inchley
Sports development	Natalie	Donhou-Morley
Health improvement	Deborah	Bottomley

#### County Council officers

NEP	Vicky	Wetherell
NEP	David	Kent
Public Health	Tom	Burton
Localities Manager	Paul	Hodson
Public Health Lead Practitioner - Adult Mental Health	Sophy	Forman-Lynch
Public Health Principal - Lifestyles	Sarah	Mills
Localities Manager	Paul	Hodson
Rights of Way	Rosie	Taylor
Transport Strategy Lead Officer	Becca	Dengler
Simply Walks	Fiona	Broadbent
Community Links Officer (Prevention Matters)	Cindy	McReary

Quarrendon Ward Councillors:

Andy	Huxley
Chris	Adams
Nick	Lewis

Local County Cllrs:

Andy	Huxley
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County/District Portfolio Holder

Howard	Mordue
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Aylesbury Town Council

Keith	Gray
-------	------

Registered Social Landlords

Cameron	Finnie
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Community group contacts:

Q&M Community Association	Steve	Mason
Quarrendon Guides	Karen	Howlett
Q&M Community Action Partnership	Ray	Ghent
Thomas Hickman School	Sarah	Brew
Berryfields Residents Association	Samantha	North
Community Café Facilitator, St Peters Church Hall	Kate	Lawton
Haydon Abbey School	Judith	Edjowski
Active Bucks	Karl	White
	Chris	Gregory

## Appendix F: Action planning workshop output report

Green Space Means Health

### Action Planning Workshop – Aylesbury

24 June 2015

#### Attendees:

##### Name

Chris Ashton  
Adam Cheyo  
Andy Inchley  
Cllr Andy Huxley  
  
Judith Heberer  
Rebecca Dengler  
Paul Hodson  
Sarah Mills  
Jane Richards  
Jonathan Clark  
Sarah Simmons

##### Organisation

Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC)  
AVDC  
AVDC  
AVDC, Aylesbury Town Council, Bucks County  
Council (BCC)  
Aylesbury Town Council  
BCC  
BCC  
BCC  
VAHT  
BCC  
LEAP (Bucks Sports Partnership)

#### 1. Workshop 1: Issues analysis

The following tables show the flipchart transcript content for each of the 3 workshop groups. The prioritisation was done by giving each participant 3 sticky dots to use as votes to identify their priority issues. Participants were free to use more than 1 of their 3 sticky dots per issue.

**Group 1:** (5 participants)

Issue	Priority rating (number of votes)
Concern that residents think of it in sections – therefore if they live by an uninviting section, they automatically don't use it or think negatively of it	0
It is not a designated cycle route (through the park) .... People don't know whether they can/ can't cycle and it's not promoted (could be added to Gemstone Cycle Network; could have a longer circular route along new cycle route through Berryfields and Buckingham Park)	2
Need to sign the entire park (with walking/ cycling minute markers)	4
Need welcoming entrances	2
Bridge crossing to the scheduled monument – positive extension to the park to allow for a larger circular walk	1
Information on where people can walk, ie. map various walking routes	0
An extra childrens play area needed at locations where currently none? Include play areas on the map?	0
Organised activities in the park, ie. to bring families in (summer holidays)/ event to promote what's there	4
'Memory Bench' scheme	1
School projects to design areas of the park/ planting/ eco-lessons, etc	0
Funding needed for picnic tables	1
Green gym/ trim trail?!	0
Flooding - need to ensure signage reflects this. Awareness raising	0
Mapping – highlights pubs/shops/etc .... so people use park as a route to a destination	0
Community orchard?!	0
Should it be a whole park OR section it off and give local residents responsibility for each?! .... AGREED to focus on a whole park	
NAME – 'Riverside Park' (not 'Walk')- shows it has more use than just walking	

**Group 2:** (6 participants)

Issue	Priority (Number of votes)
Removal of vegetation	7
Signage – can salvage some of current	5



Events/ activities	3
Access points more inviting - flowers	2
Picnic area – designated	1
More bins – dog/ litter	0
Benches	0

## 2. Workshop 2: Actions analysis

The following tables show the flipchart transcript content for each of the 3 workshop groups. The prioritisation was done by giving each participant 3 sticky dots to use as votes to identify their priority actions. Participants were free to use more than 1 of their 3 sticky dots per action.

### Groups 1 & 2 - combined: (11 participants)

Action	Lead	Partners	Funding	Timeline
Seating (4.1a))	AVDC	ATC (redirecting cemetery requests)	Memorial bench (Trees?! Orchard)/ AVDC	Now
Inviting entrances (4.1b), c), d))	AVDC	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling/	AVDC (some) BCC (cycling signs)/ External	Organise working group
Picnic tables (next to play areas) (4.1e))	AVDC		AVDC/ External	
Visitor attractions (4.1f))	AVDC	Community groups (ie. Queen's Park) – links into Berryfields development/ Bucks Conservation Trust	s106 Berryfields	
Events (4.1g))	ATC	AVDC/ VAHT/ BCC?	ATC – move some town centre events out	
Litter and dog mess (4.1h))	AVDC	Residents Association	ATC	Education needed
ASB (4.1i))	AVDC	Community Safety Partnership (CSP) – open up dark spaces	AVDC/ CSP	Campaign
Alternative path options (4.1j))	AVDC (EA/ BCC	Environment Agency (EA) [1]/ BCC Rights of Way/ Cycling/ Flooding	External	Working group needed on paths/

	Flooding )			flooding/ wildlife impacts [2]
Fitness equipment (4.1k))	AVDC	LEAP	External (could continue from Watermead signage)	Would it be used?
Simply Walk (4.1l))	BCC	VAHT, AVDC, etc	BCC, sponsorship	Will be investigated in next few months
Promote existing activity (4.1m))	LEAP	AVDC (Park Run), VAHT, ATC	LEAP, AVDC, income from bootcamps	Ongoing
Conservation volunteering (4.1n)) – Green Gym	AVDC	Vale Countryside Volunteers		
Dog Gym – heavily used by dog walkers – more use		AVA student project?		
Lighting – main route over bridge to AVA – link from Buckingham Park to Jonathan Page				
Leaflet – add to existing publications (VAHT residents newsletter; ATC Aylesbury Matters; Haydon Hill Community Association)				
Surfacing footpaths	AVDC			Summer 2015

Notes: [1] Jeanette Wooster, EA Catchment Coordinator; [2] Andrew Callender, Freshwater Habitats Trust (River Thame habitats)

#### Additional information:

- Community Sport Activation Fund - AVDC bid for £s (will include waymarkers in parks, etc)
- Grant funding from ATC up to £2k for community projects (match funding)/ fostering community groups, etc)

## Appendix G: Action plan

People & Place Solutions

### Green Space Means Health: Aylesbury Riverside Walk

#### ACTION PLAN

6 September 2015

ACTION PLAN					
<b>Aim</b>	To improve community access, awareness and use of the site in order to address local public health issues				
<b>Objectives</b>	To make the site more inviting and welcoming to local community To make it easier for local residents to locate/ access the site and orientate themselves within it To increase community awareness and raise profile of the site as an inviting, high quality and safe place for all				
Ref.	Activity	Target	Lead	Partners	Resources
Strategic planning					
1.	Produce management plan incorporating existing and new riverside open space for the Park and adjoining heritage visitor attraction north of river, for Green Flag application	Sept 2017	AVDC (Community Spaces Team)	AVDC (Community Development Team BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Local heritage trust (owners of heritage visitor attraction) Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council	Funding bids: Active Bucks, Local Area Fora  Berryfields Consortium (developers)

<b>Infrastructure</b>					
2.	Provide seating at strategic locations across the site	Dec 2016	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Green Space) Aylesbury Town Council Vale Countryside Volunteers Berryfields Parish Council Aylesbury Vale Housing Trust (AVHT) Rented social Landlords (RSL's) Grounds Maintenance Contractor – John O'Connor	AVDC memorial bench scheme (to be developed) AVDC Community Spaces Team) Vale Countryside Volunteers (labour)  Memorial scheme to include maintenance costs
3.	Erect new 'welcome boards' at strategic site entrances, giving site name (see also activity ref. below), positive welcome message encouraging public access and promoting what facilities are available (eg. play area, outdoor gym, dog-walking, cycling, picnic, etc) and organisation contact details.  Note. Consider opportunity to incorporate mobile technology, such as NFC (Near Field Communication) points to tap phones on and information immediately pops up on phone	March 2016	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Green Space) Vale Countryside Volunteers Berryfields Parish Council Aylesbury Town Council Grounds Maintenance Contractor – John O'Connor	AVDC (Community Spaces Team ) Local community organisations and schools Private businesses  Funding needed for 'welcome boards' and installation and maintenance costs
4.	Erect off site signage at strategic points in adjoining residential areas promoting site and denoting pedestrian/ cycle access as appropriate (eg. at start of paths which lead to site down blind alleys between properties)	March 2016	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Green Space) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) RSL's	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Sustrans via BCC <a href="http://www.aylesburycc.org/">http://www.aylesburycc.org/</a>

	and including distance/ time to access site via walking/ cycling				Funding needed for signs and installation and maintenance costs
5.	Erect signage (including destination/ distance info as appropriate) and waymarking of cycle/ pedestrian path network (rights of way/ amenity), including '3-2-1' circular routes	Dec 2016	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Community spaces Team, Community Development) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Run England/ Leap	AVDC (Community Development) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Run England Leap  Funding needed for signs/ waymarking and installation and maintenance costs  Funding bids: Community Sport Activation Fund; Active Bucks, Local Area For a
6.	Erect picnic tables at strategic locations across the site, including next to play areas	May 2016	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Berryfields Parish Council Aylesbury Town Council Grounds Maintenance Contractor – John O'Connor	AVDC (Community Spaces Team ) Local community organisations and schools Private businesses  Funding needed for picnic tables and installation and maintenance costs
7.	Improve path surfacing	Summer 2017 (then ongoing as resources allow)	AVDC (Community Spaces Team & Engineers )	AVDC (Community Spaces Team ) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Berryfields Parish Council	AVDC (Community Spaces Team , s106- development) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling)

				Aylesbury Town Council	Funding needed
8.	Develop strategic path link (for walkers/ cyclists), including new river crossing, from site to Berryfields riverside open space and adjoining heritage visitor attraction north of river  (Link to 1 above)	March 2016: develop plan/ secure landowner consents Mar 2017 – deliver (subject to funding)	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling/highways)	AVDC (Community Spaces Team ) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Local heritage trust (owners of heritage visitor attraction) RSL's	AVDC (Community Spaces Team , s106) BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling)  Funding needed
9.	Assess demand for/ feasibility of outdoor fitness and adventure/ natural play equipment	March 2017	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Community Spaces Team / Community Development) BCC (Public Health) Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)	Funding bids: s106, Active Bucks, ATC Community Grant, WREN
10.	Enhance the value of the sites for wildlife, recognising that a rich diversity and abundance of wildlife plays a key role in the therapeutic benefits of green spaces for mental health, as well as making the setting more likely to attract people for physical exercise. Enhancement works would depend very much upon local circumstance but could include: creation of wildflower meadow areas, creation of colourful annual wild plants plots (e.g. poppy, cornflower, corn chamomile etc), wetland management, woodland management, bird/bat boxes etc.	Winter 2016	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Aylesbury Town Council BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Local heritage trust (owners of heritage visitor attraction) RSL's Environment Agency Wildlife Trust Queen's Park Residents Association Aylesbury Town FC Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Aylesbury Town Council Local heritage trust (owners of heritage visitor attraction) RSL's Environment Agency Wildlife Trust  Funding needed for wildlife conservation works  Funding bids: Active Bucks, Local Area Fora, ATC

				VAHT BCC Bucks Conservation Trust Haydon Hill Community Association  Berryfields Parish Council Grounds Maintenance Contractor – John O'Connor	
<b>Community safety</b>					
11.	Education campaign with local community to address littering and dog fouling	Spring 2016	AVDC (Community Development Team ) & Environmental Health officers	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Action Partnership/ Haydon Hill Community Association Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council PCSO's	AVDC (Community Development Team & Marketing Team) Schools and local organisations e.g. resident associations/groups
12.	Cut back/ thin vegetation to improve visibility into site at entrance points; and within site along paths so make access more inviting to community	Winter 2015	AVDC (Community Spaces Team)	AVDC (Community Development Team)	AVDC (Community Development Team) Resident associations/groups
13.	Campaign with local residents to address perception/ fear of crime associated with site, including ongoing legacy of murder case  (Link with action 15)	Spring 2016	AVDC (Community Development Team)	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Action Partnership/ Haydon Hill Community Association	Community Safety Partnership Schools and local organisations e.g. resident associations/groups

				Community Safety Partnership including PCSO's Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council RSL's Berryfields Consortium (developers)	Funding needed for campaign material
14.	Assess and, if acceptable, deliver lighting and ongoing maintenance costs on main cycle/ pedestrian path (linking Aylesbury Vale Academy) between Buckingham Park and Jonathan Page	Mar 2016: Complete assessment	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling)	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Aylesbury Vale Academy Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council RSL's(VAHT) Community Safety Partnership incl. PCSO's	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling)  Subject to outcome of assessment, funding needed for route lighting and maintenance
<b>Promotion/ animation</b>					
15.	Develop and market programme of community events/ activities to help address community perception issues with site, introduce new audiences and generally attract greater ongoing regular community use. Suggested events/ activities to include: summer fair, community carnival/ picnic, outdoor theatre/ concerts, family fun days, bonfire night, wildlife explorer activities (eg. as appropriate bug hunts, guided walks, survey events, bird box building, etc), Simply Walks, boot camps, conservation volunteering, lunchtime walk groups, run	Winter 2015 - Develop programme  Spring 2016 - Launch programme	AVDC (Community Development Team)	AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Action Partnership/ Haydon Hill Community Association Queen's Park Residents Association Aylesbury Town FC Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council VAHT Leap	AVDC (Community Development, s106) ATC (Move some events from town centre to site) BCC Leap Haydon Hill Community Association  Funding needed for marketing material



	<p>groups, youth/ school groups, bush-craft/ survival skills. Suggested outlets for event/ activity promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctor surgeries – take info to refer/ reception/ TV screen</li> <li>• Libraries - reception/ TV screen</li> <li>• App/ Facebook page for sites/ Quarrendon</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Action Group – publicity on public safety and awareness raising</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Pubs</li> <li>• Shops/ food outlets</li> <li>• VAHT residents newsletter</li> <li>• ATC Aylesbury Matters</li> <li>• Haydon Hill Community Association</li> <li>• Community Centres –Quarrendon &amp; Meadowcroft and Haydn Hill</li> <li>• Jonathan Page Play Centre – leaflets to parents attending</li> </ul>			<p>BCC Bucks Conservation Trust Haydon Hill Community Association Community Safety Partnership including PCSO's Jonathan Page Play Centre – after school club and playscheme Quarrendon Youth Centre Schools/ Learning SVS Clinical Commissioning Group GPs</p>	<p>Funding bids: ATC Community Grants; Active Bucks, Local Area Forum, Berryfields Consortium (developers) VAHT</p>
16.	<p>Rebrand site through online community vote on proposed options, eg. "Aylesbury Riverside Park"; "River Thame Park", "Quarrendon Park", etc., as existing brand - 'Aylesbury Riverside Walk' – is weak and doesn't sufficiently market the site and its associated offer</p>	Dec 2015	AVDC (Community Development Team)	<p>AVDC (Community Spaces Team) Mix 96 RSL's Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council</p>	AVDC (Marketing Team)

17.	Support the social marketing of existing/ new health based activities to develop/ increase community use of site, eg. Park Run, Simply Walks, conservation volunteering, school x-countries, boot camps, lunchtime walk groups, run groups, youth/ school groups, outdoor exercise classes (Tai Chi/ Zumba), Breeze cycle, ping-pong, outdoor badminton, rounders, family orienteering routes	Start: Winter 2015	BCC (Public Health)	AVDC ( Community Development Team & Community Spaces Team) VAHT Vale Conservation Volunteers Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council Haydon's Hill Community Association Leap BCC (Public Health)	Leap VAHT Clinical Commissioning Group GPs School BCC (Public Health)  Funding bids: Active Bucks, Local Area Fora
18.	Assess support for establishing Simply Walk programme and respond to findings	Oct 2015	BCC (Simply Walks)	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling/ Public Health) AVDC (Community Spaces Team and Community Development Team) RSL's e.g. VAHT Clinical Commissioning Group	BCC (Rights of Way/ Cycling) Vale Conservation Volunteers  Funding bids: Active Bucks, Local Area Fora
19.	Promote and support increased volunteering opportunities to help with site management/ development (eg. delivery of this action plan), including practical tasks involving habitat management and enhancement / promotion and marketing/ litter picking/ 'eyes and ears', etc; and leading to establishment of constituted 'Friends Group' for sites	Start: Winter 2015	AVDC (Community Spaces Team )	AVDC (Community Development Team) Aylesbury Town Council Berryfields Parish Council Vale Conservation Volunteers	Funding bids: Active Bucks, Local Area Fora

**Key:** AVDC –Aylesbury Vale District Council; BCC – Buckinghamshire County Council; ATC – Aylesbury Town Council; EA – Environment Agency; VAHT – Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust; Leap – County Sports Partnership