



Green Infrastructure Planning Obligations

Guidance notes and project proposal form for
Green Infrastructure projects



Guidance notes to accompany proposal form for Green Infrastructure Planning Obligations Fund

Introduction

Planning obligations are legal agreements between the planning authority, the developer and other interested parties. Central Bedfordshire Council has a planning obligations strategy which sets out what the council expects developers to provide.

One element of what the council expects from developers are planning obligations for green infrastructure. These generally take the form of financial contributions.

Central Bedfordshire Council collects these planning obligations. The authority recognises that there are a range of organisations able to deliver green infrastructure projects that both deliver improvements to the green infrastructure network required to support sustainable growth, and fit within the legal framework for planning obligations.

These notes provide guidance for organisations wishing to use planning obligations funding to deliver green infrastructure improvements.

Eligibility

Applications for green infrastructure planning obligations funding can be made by any members of the Bedfordshire and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium, and Town and Parish Councils for projects within Central Bedfordshire.

Central Bedfordshire Council is keen to work with Town and Parish Councils, delivering green infrastructure for communities. We would encourage Town and Parish Councils to work together with the organisations that have developed community level green infrastructure plans (Greensand Trust – Greensand Ridge, Flit Valley and part of Chalk Arc and Upper Lea River Valley area; BRCC – Lower Great Ouse and Ivel River Valleys area and part of Chalk Arc and Upper Lea River Valley area; and Marston Vale Trust, Marston Vale area) to identify suitable projects and submit develop project ideas through these organisations.

Applications can be made for capital funding only, and the funding should normally be spent within two years of an application being approved. Capital funding results in the acquisition, creation or modification of an identifiable capital asset. Examples of capital expenditure include: acquiring land, constructing buildings or roads or carrying out works to land, buildings or roads that significantly improve their life, value or usefulness. Revenue expenditure would relate to the ongoing management or maintenance of an asset, and would therefore not be eligible for this funding.

Timescale

Applications need to be sent to Rachael.brydges@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk by 12th March 2014. Applications will be assessed by a panel of environmental specialists and planners from Central Bedfordshire Council, and applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by 4th April 2014.

Scale of Projects

Planning obligations funding has been secured to deliver the strategic Green Infrastructure network. Projects therefore need to demonstrate how they deliver strategic level green infrastructure. We expect the total project value of funded projects to be at least £25,000.

The actual allocation of funding that Central Bedfordshire Council can make from this fund may be less than £25,000.

Location of Projects

Projects must be within Central Bedfordshire. Central Bedfordshire Council needs to be able to demonstrate that the funding is used on projects that are directly related to the development. Projects also need to deliver strategic level Green Infrastructure within Central Bedfordshire. To ensure that projects can both directly relate to development, and deliver strategic green infrastructure, Central Bedfordshire has been broken down into a number of areas. Funding derived from an area will be spent within this area. These areas have been derived from the strategic GI plan.

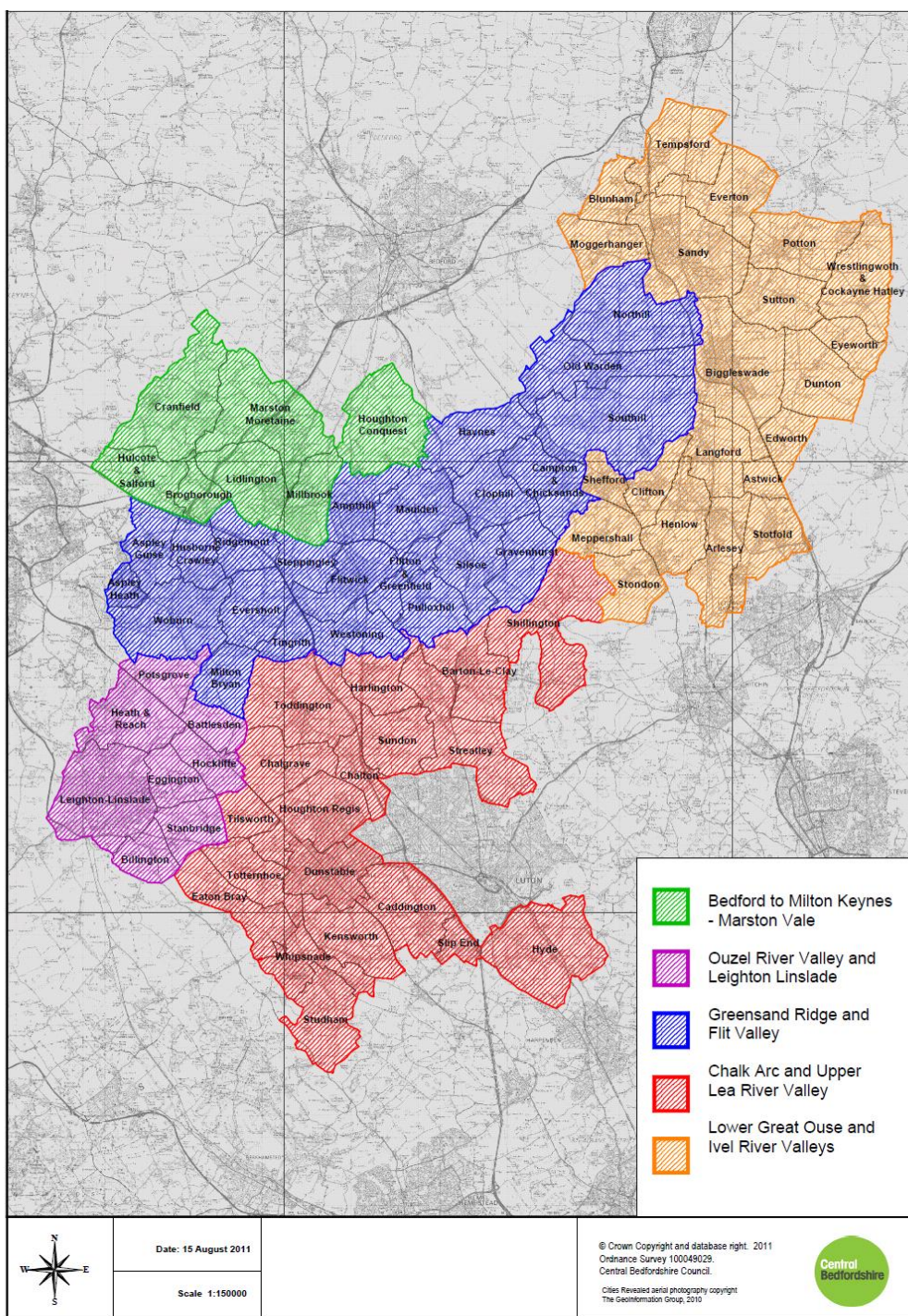


Figure 1 - Planning Obligations Funding Allocation Areas

The following funding is available:

Area	Funding available
Bedford to Milton Keynes – Marston Vale	£7,500
Greensand Ridge and Flit Valley	£110,500
Ouzel River Valley and Leighton Linlade	£9,750
Chalk Arc and Lea Valley	£27,500
Lower Great Ouse and Ivel River Valleys	£79,750

If your project is near the boundary of these areas, it may be possible to access funding from adjacent areas, depending on the location of development that the project best serves. The direct relationship between your project and new development is a key consideration. Do discuss this with us if you have any queries before applying.

As indicated earlier, this funding is available to support the delivery of strategic scale green infrastructure projects. As a guideline, we expect the value of projects supported to be £25,000 or more, although individual elements of the projects may be smaller. In the areas where there is less than £25,000 available for allocation, we are still able to allocate funding to projects, but these projects will need to secure the majority of their funding from other sources; we are only able to partially fund projects in these areas. In the other areas where there is £25,000 or more available, we would not expect to fully fund projects; the level of match funding will be part of the project evaluation process.

Link with development

Applicants also need to demonstrate how their project will deliver direct benefits to new communities and developments within the area. Information about proposed locations for growth can be found in the Central Bedfordshire (North) Site Allocation Plan, and the draft Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.

These documents can be found here;

[Draft Development Strategy](#)

[Site Allocations Plan](#)

Project content

The strategic GI plan and the Planning Obligations Strategies identify five ‘themes’ of green infrastructure; Accessible Green Space, Access Routes, Historic Environment, Biodiversity and Landscape. Your project should cover one or more of these areas, though the more themes a project addresses the greater its chances of being funded.

The Planning Obligations Strategy evidence base means that there is variety in how the funding is secured across these themes. Central Bedfordshire Council wishes to broadly mirror how the evidence base enables funding to be secured with how funding is spent over the course of the programme. Therefore every project does not have to follow this

breakdown rigorously, but applicants should be mindful of the evidence base and how the funding is secured.

The evidence base enables us to secure funding as below;

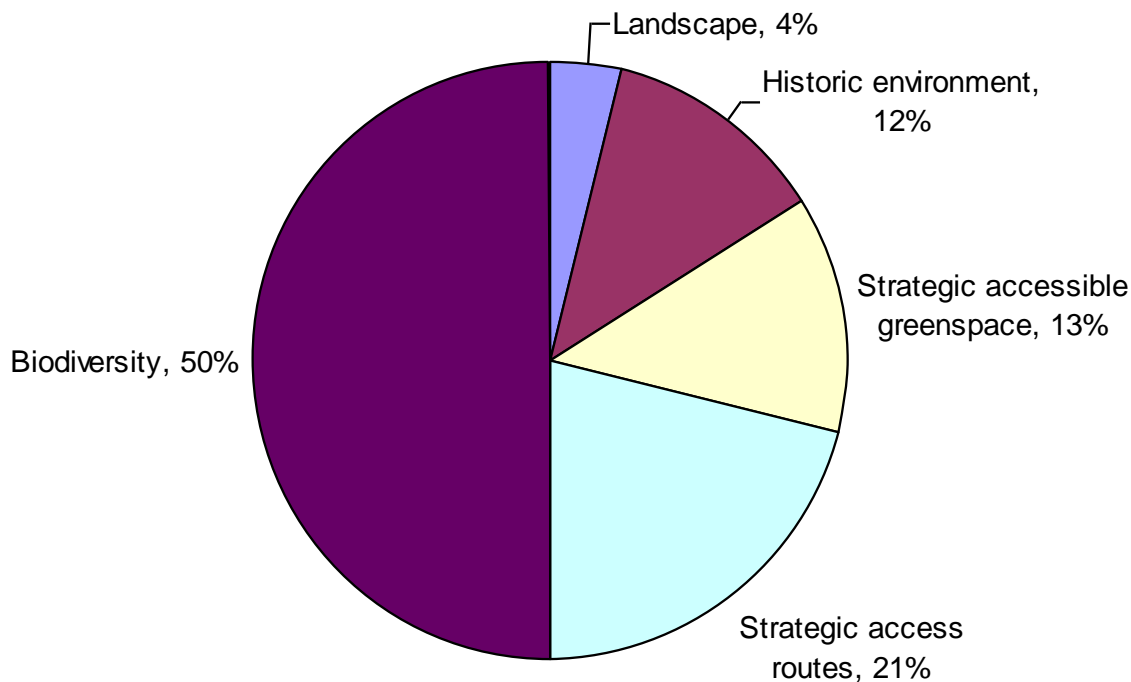


Figure 2 - 'Themes' of Green Infrastructure and how funding is secured

Projects need to identify how the project will deliver against the 'themes' of green infrastructure, including how much of the amount requested will be spent on each theme. Details of eligible project activities are outlined below:

Strategic Accessible Green Space

These sites are typically country park type provision with a larger than local catchment. For more information, see the Greenspace chapters of the GI plans. Eligible projects are;

- Provision of new sites
- Upgrading of existing, smaller sites to strategic scale provision
- Adding capacity to existing strategic sites
- Facilitating the development of a linear green park along the route of the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway.

Strategic Access Routes

- Delivering a network of strategic access connections to enable residents to travel between urban areas and between town and country
- Improving connectivity in strategic locations
- Enhancing major access routes, e.g. the Greensand Ridge Walk and Ouse Valley Way.

Historic Environment

- Opening up access to and preserving historic and archaeological sites, buildings and structures, focussing on sites or buildings which contribute to the delivery of

multifunctional green infrastructure, e.g. preservation and interpretation of archaeological sites, scheduled monuments, historic footbridges, historic parks and gardens, dovecotes and bothies.

Biodiversity

- Conservation of key sites
- Buffering or expansion of key sites
- Creation of new linking areas of habitat
- Improvement to the quality and function of natural systems which underpin the natural environment.
- Promoting physical and intellectual access to biodiversity.
- A priority is delivering BAP targets for the restoration of existing habitat and the creation of new habitat.

Landscape

- Maintaining the sense of place, using local distinctiveness to guide design and reinforcing local character and distinctiveness.
- Strengthening the fabric of the countryside.
- Enhancing visual amenity and tranquillity.

General note

The funding is expected to fund improvement to the physical green infrastructure network. While we recognise that supporting infrastructure (interpretation and information material, car and cycle parking, visitor facilities) support the green infrastructure network, and are included in the eligibility criteria above, we would not expect the funding allocated to this supporting infrastructure to exceed 20% of the total funding allocated.

Project Proposal Form

Central Bedfordshire Council		
Green Infrastructure Planning Obligations Fund		
Project Proposal Form		
1.	Applicant: <i>Name of Organisation</i>	
2.	Name of Representative:	
3.	Address: Post Code	
4.	Telephone	
5.	Email	
6.	Name of Project	
7.	Address of Project Site: <i>Please include a map or site plan</i>	
8.	Who owns the project site?	
9.	Which allocation area is your project in? <i>See guidance notes</i>	
10.	Description of Project: <i>Please give a brief description of the project</i>	
11.	Total Cost of Project: <i>Please provide a total of what the project will cost</i>	£
12.	Application Amount: <i>How much are you requesting from the Green Infrastructure Planning Obligations Fund?</i>	£
13.	Other Sources of Funding <i>Please give details of other sources of funding for this project. The total cost of the project must be met by the funds identified in parts 11&12. Please also set out for each source of funding whether the funding is secured, applied for, etc.</i>	£

14.	<p>Relevance of the project to planning obligations funding:</p> <p><i>Explain how your project will benefit new communities or residents.</i></p>	
15.	<p>Adding value</p> <p><i>Explain what the funding would enable, e.g. if it extending an existing project, or how it complements existing projects.</i></p>	
16.	<p>Status of the project:</p> <p><i>Please set out any consents that will be required to carry out the project, stating whether consent has been secured, applied for etc, with the approximate timescale for securing consents if they have not yet been secured.</i></p>	
17.	<p>Project timeline:</p> <p><i>Please set out a timeline for completing the project, including key milestones.</i></p>	
18.	<p>Long term sustainability:</p> <p><i>Please provide details of how the project will be funded in the long term, citing where relevant any management plans or agreements.</i></p>	
19.	<p>Project delivery:</p> <p><i>Please provide information about your organisation's track record of delivering GI projects.</i></p>	
20.	<p>Location of the project within the GI network:</p> <p><i>Explain where your project is located in relation to the identified priority GI networks, and explain how your project will complement other GI assets nearby.</i></p>	

21.	<p>Full Description of Project:</p> <p><i>Give full details of the proposed scheme. Please set out how the project will deliver against the following 'themes' of green infrastructure, including how much of the amount requested will be spent on each theme. Details of eligible project activities are found in the guidance notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic Accessible Green Space ● Strategic Access Routes ● Historic Environment ● Biodiversity ● Landscape 	
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If you have any questions, get in touch...

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Email: rachael.brydges@central.bedfordshire.gov.uk

Laura Kitson, Green Infrastructure Co-ordinator, Central Bedfordshire Council

Phone: 0300 300 6585

Email: laura.kitson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

On the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ