

Biggleswade Green Wheel

Greenspace Masterplan 2013



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This document has been prepared by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council and Biggleswade Town Council.



Central Bedfordshire Council
Working in partnership



Biggleswade
Town Council



1 FOREWORD

Welcome to the Biggleswade Green Wheel greenspace masterplan.

The plan has been produced by Central Bedfordshire Council, Biggleswade Town Council and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity who have worked together to create a vision for a 'green wheel' around Biggleswade. Creating a wildlife rich setting through attractive landscape corridors, the green wheel will provide walking and ultimately cycling access both around the urban fringe and into and out of the town.

Biggleswade is fortunate to have some great assets including the river Ivel and the common along with a good network of footpaths and bridleways which include the Kingfisher Way long distance walk and the Great North Cycleway. There are also a variety of tourist attractions in the surrounding area which the green wheel aims to make accessible for people from Biggleswade on foot or by bike.

This exciting initiative will greatly enhance public access and informal recreation opportunities within a range of attractive settings around the town. We believe that the Green Wheel can benefit the whole community, improving health and fitness and increasing enjoyment of the countryside around the town by people of all ages.

It is recognised that this is a long term plan and that it may be many years before a true green wheel can be created, due to the severance caused by the A1 and the mainline railway, but such a plan is vital to provide a vision that all parties can work towards.

Significant funding from developers has already been secured for the delivery of elements of the green wheel which will ensure that progress towards delivering the vision can be made now and in the coming years.

As part of the delivery of the plan, there will be opportunities for individuals to volunteer and gain a sense of involvement, generating pride and 'ownership' in local places by becoming involved in their creation, care and promotion.

We hope that it will inspire you to get out and enjoy the network of paths and greenspaces in and around Biggleswade.



Cllr Brian Spurr

CBC Executive Member – Sustainable Communities – Services



Cllr Ian Dalgarno

CBC Deputy Executive Member - Sustainable Communities - Services



2 INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

- 2.1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have commissioned Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) to produce this Biggleswade Green Wheel Masterplan. Working in partnership with Biggleswade Town Council, CBC and BRCC have identified the issues to be addressed and actions to be undertaken to implement a Green Wheel for Biggleswade.
- 2.1.2 The Green Wheel and this Masterplan focus on the principal elements of public access and green space forming a circuit around the town of Biggleswade, to connect people and their environment.
- 2.1.3 The wider scope of the Green Wheel and this Masterplan includes the other green infrastructure themes of biodiversity, heritage and landscape.
- 2.1.4 The plan will also seek to provide and promote connections into and out of the town including to businesses and tourist attractions in the surrounding area.

3 BIGGLESWADE GREEN WHEEL CONCEPT

- 3.1.1 The 'Biggleswade Green Wheel' is a long term vision for the linking of publicly accessible green spaces and routes around the town to create a 'rim' which is supported by 'spokes' of linear paths and corridors leading from the settlement out to the 'rim' and the wider surrounding countryside. Fig 1 shows the main routes forming the proposed Green Wheel.
- 3.1.2 The Wheel is considered 'green' due to both the natural and historic environment components forming it; and the promotion of recreational trips using healthy, non-motorised forms of sustainable 'transport'. The Wheel circles the town, creating a continuous accessible corridor.
- 3.1.3 The entire Green Wheel should ultimately be freely available to walkers and cyclists, while also providing appropriate links to the wider bridleway network for horse riders. In the short term, some sections may only cater for walkers, but the long term aim is to create a complete circuit available to cyclists, including the provision of links to the National Cycle Route (NCR) 12 which runs north-south through Biggleswade.
- 3.1.4 The Green Wheel will cater for a wide range of users, meeting recreation, commuting and other service needs.
- 3.1.5 Green spaces and associated features forming the Green Wheel may both be trip destinations in their own right; or may be corridors to other attractions further afield.
- 3.1.6 Although primarily delivering enhanced public access, the Green Wheel should also protect, manage, enhance, and promote other Green Infrastructure thematic assets, including biodiversity, landscape and heritage. Where possible, new habitats, landscape features and accessible green spaces should be created.
- 3.1.7 Existing features around Biggleswade which will contribute to such a Green Wheel include Biggleswade Common, the Kingfisher Way, the Great North Cycleway and a number of small accessible urban fringe sites.
- 3.1.8 The creation of new green and publicly accessible spaces and landscapes will enhance the Green Wheel. Planned or potential features include the King's Reach Linear Park, a Town and Country Park between the River Ivel and the A1 and enhanced access corridors to the south of town. The landscape quality and management of such new greenspaces should be challenged where appropriate to ensure that it provides the best environment and opportunities for nature, users and local residents.
- 3.1.9 It is also intended that this document will inspire the thinking of landowners and managers in the area to improve the visual appearance and ecological quality of land and historic environment features in their management, seeking to widen the provision of a high quality and attractive landscape to live and invest in.

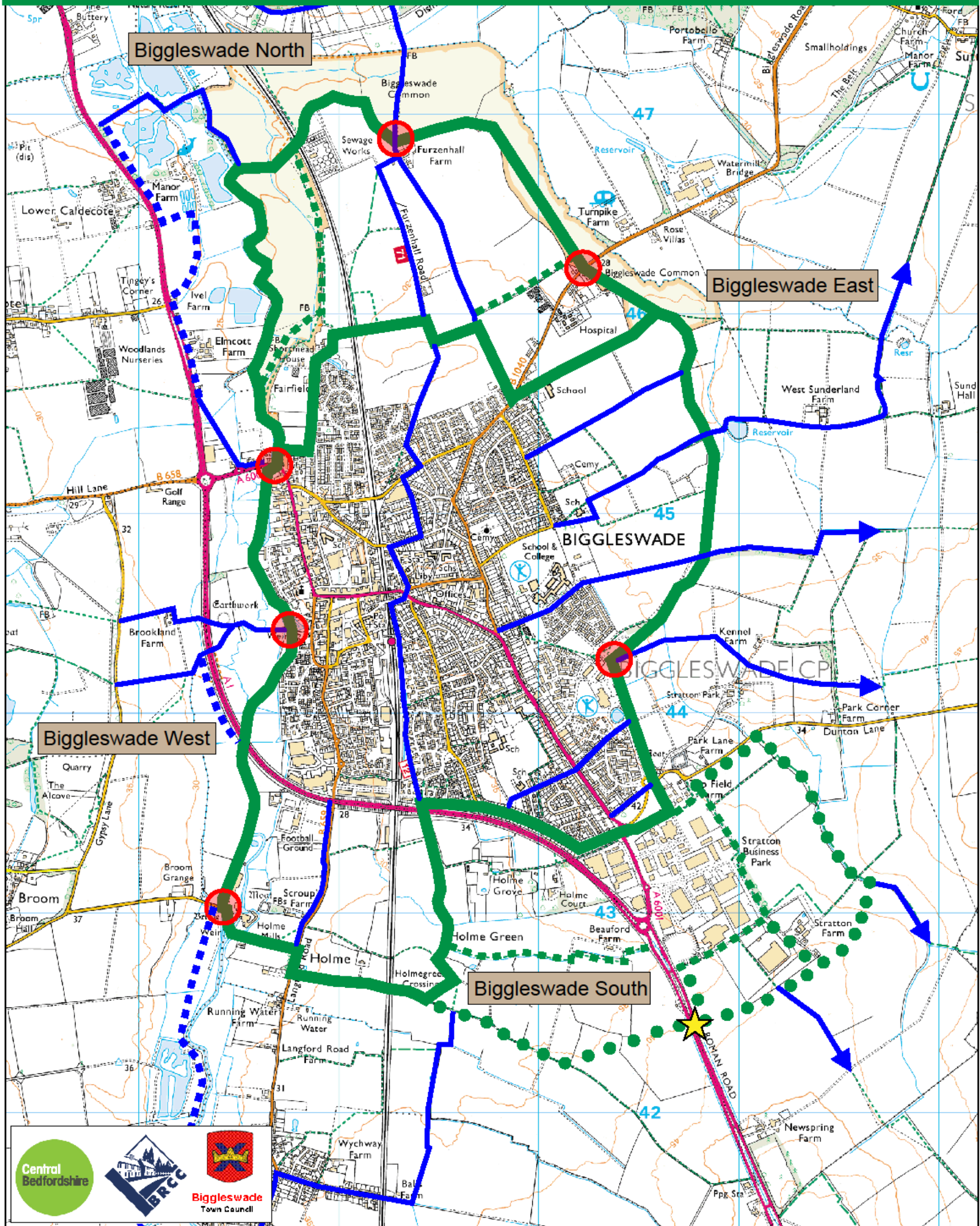


4 SUPPORT FOR THE BIGGLESWADE GREEN WHEEL

- 4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework provides the support for the development of Green Infrastructure (GI).
- 4.1.2 The first documented aspiration for the development of a Green Wheel for Biggleswade was in the Mid Bedfordshire GI Plan of 2008 (Project I.6).
- 4.1.3 More recently there have been further references to, and support for, the Biggleswade Green Wheel within the Biggleswade GI Plan (2010), the Biggleswade Town Plan (2010), the Biggleswade Town Centre Masterplan (2011) (which includes a desire to provide a new country park to the west of the town at Franklins Gardens) and the Ivel Valley Framework Vision (2011).
- 4.1.4 The Ivel Valley Framework Vision (2011) confirmed the potential for the Biggleswade Green Wheel and proposed the establishment of a 'Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership' to develop and deliver the Green Wheel. This Partnership will act as an umbrella body under which will sit more site-specific working groups.
- 4.1.5 Key partners on the Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership should be:
- ❖ Biggleswade Town Council
 - ❖ Biggleswade Town Plan steering group
 - ❖ BRCC
 - ❖ CBC Ward Councillors
 - ❖ CBC – Countryside Access Service
 - ❖ CBC Highways
 - ❖ CBC – Development Strategy Team
 - ❖ CBC – Archaeology Team, Development Management
- 4.1.6 Complementary to the Biggleswade Green Wheel, Central Bedfordshire Council's Sustainable Transport Team have produced a [Travel Choices Map for Biggleswade](#), identifying key walking and cycling routes in the town. This map is based on a previous Cycle Mapping Project and highlights the numbers of in-town links that exist in addition to the main Green Wheel links identified in this report.

Figure 1

BIGGLESWADE GREEN WHEEL ROUTES



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October 2012 amended 1/11/12 : 14/01/13 : 10/02/13

Green Wheel - Main 'rim' routes		Future/potential 'spoke' links	
Green Wheel - Alternative 'rim' routes		Key Access/ Information points	
Green Wheel - Future main 'rim' routes		A1 crossing required (indicative location)	
Existing 'spoke' links			



5 BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR THE CREATION OF THE BIGGLESWADE GREEN WHEEL:

5.1.1 Where possible, linear routes should:

- ❖ Be traffic free
- ❖ Be safe and inspire confidence in visitors
- ❖ Offer 'easy access' i.e. be reasonably easy to use for users with a wide range of mobility levels, including pushchairs and walking aids
- ❖ Have the potential for future upgrading to use by cyclists (where not already possible)
- ❖ Have designated, safe crossing points over motorised routes
- ❖ Provide connections between where people live and where they want to travel (for recreational or employment purposes)
- ❖ Be clearly signed and easy to follow
- ❖ Be well maintained
- ❖ Provide enhanced user enjoyment through the provision of information boards and benches in attractive locations
- ❖ Where possible provide access for horses, particularly links to existing bridleways
- ❖ Be protected from future development. Where future development does occur, any existing sections of the Green Wheel should remain as inner route options and new outer sections created.
- ❖ Cause no damage to archaeological sites and their setting.

5.1.2 Accessible green spaces should:

- ❖ Be safe spaces that inspire confidence in visitors
- ❖ Cater for a wide range of user-types (dog walkers, playing children, joggers, family groups, older people)
- ❖ Provide attractive landscapes
- ❖ Provide opportunities for wildlife, heritage conservation and interpretation
- ❖ Provide informal recreation opportunities (including playing, bird watching, etc)
- ❖ Provide interactive interpretation through information boards, play structures/ environments and art features to encourage more people and a wider audience into the countryside.

5.1.3 The wider landscape should:

- ❖ Protect, enhance and create aesthetically pleasing views
- ❖ Have well maintained hedges
- ❖ Enable interconnectivity of habitats
- ❖ Protect, manage and enhance the historic environment

6 STANDARDS

To support the creation of the route within the above basic principles, a series of standards based on national guidance are proposed below. Links to a range of national guidance references can be found in Appendix 1.

6.1 Widths

For an un-segregated, shared use path, guidance generally points towards a preferred minimum width of 3m, although a minimum width of 2m may be acceptable where usage is low, provided there are no side constraints (i.e., there should be space to the side of the path to use to allow passing). A greater width will provide an improved level of service.

	Standard	Minimum	Where width is physically restricted*
Shared use path	3m	2.5m	2m
Footpath links	2.5m	2m	1.5m

*Restricted access will usually be where all or part of the route is using a pre-existing alley way or where there are other significant structures which physically prevent the allocation of a greater width. Paths should conform to the general policy in as far as possible. Where there are localised intrusions and/or short lengths over which the path would be less than 2m wide this may be acceptable depending on the circumstances.

6.2 Surfacing standards for new paths:

6.2.1 It is anticipated that the Green Wheel routes will have a range of surfacing types. This range of surfacing will form a hierarchy of standards based on the level of expected use, landscape sensitivity and other factors. The optimum level of surface should always be sought for the expected level of use:

- ❖ Level 1: Bound surface – e.g. Bit Mac Tar/Mac
- ❖ Level 2: Unbound surface – e.g. road planings and granite dust blinding
- ❖ Level 3: a) Re-enforced grass
b) Well maintained farm track
- ❖ Level 4: Rolled/consolidated grass or compacted suitable ground

6.2.2 Routes which are more urban in setting and expected to have high levels of use should be Level 1 (Level 2 minimum). Routes which are more rural in setting and expected to have lower levels of use could be Levels 3 and 4.



6.3 Structures

- 6.3.1 Structures will be required at many locations for a range of purposes including, stock control, limiting unauthorised/ vehicular access and safety (to reduce speed at junctions with roads).
- 6.3.2 With the exceptions of highway safety, barriers, including motor cycle/ staggered/ kissing gates, should only be a last resort. They should only be used to address actual problems, not to alleviate fears of future potential problems. They should only be installed when other methods have been considered or trialled and been discounted, or have proved to be ineffective. Even when a barrier is installed, it should ideally only be in place for a limited period until the problem has stopped or considerably reduced.
- 6.3.3 Design solutions should minimise the obstacle to legitimate users as barriers which stop motorcyclists are likely to also exclude wheelchair / scooter users, parents with prams and pushchairs, some users with mobility impairments (for example, sticks and crutches) and some visually impaired people.

6.4 Gradients

- 6.4.1 Green Wheel routes should be designed to achieve a maximum gradient of 3% with the absolute maximum 5% for lengths up to 100m. On the approach to priority junctions this should not exceed 3%. Where steeper slopes are unavoidable the limiting gradient is 7% for lengths up to 30m.

6.5 Junctions and road crossings

- 6.5.1 Where Green Wheel routes meet or cross the public highway, extra consideration to safety must be given; and Road Safety Officers consulted. Clear signage must be provided, for both users of the Green Wheel and the public highway. Dependant upon sight lines, gradients and other local factors, structures may be required to reduce the speed of users of the Green Wheel on approaches to roads and pavements.
- 6.5.2 Dropped kerbs at road crossings should be used to improve ease of use and safety. Dropped kerbs will improve comfort for all users, especially cyclists and pushchair/ wheelchair users.

6.6 Signage, way marking and mapping

- 6.6.1 Signage for the Biggleswade Green Wheel should be clear, informative and consistent. A Biggleswade Green Wheel symbol/ logo and colour scheme will be utilised.
- 6.6.2 Signposts should be used at all junctions and access points to the 'rim' of the Green Wheel. Destinations and distances, both into town along key 'spokes' and around the 'rim' will be identified.
- 6.6.3 Waymarking should be used to supplement the main signage and should provide directional information. Waymarking should be undertaken in accordance with CBC's Countryside Access Waymarking Policy.
- 6.6.4 Additional information about the Green Wheel, including a map of the entire wheel, will be provided at key access points.
- 6.6.5 The issues of signage, waymarking and mapping, along with identity, marketing, promotion and information provision will be addressed more fully in a supporting document (to be produced once this document is adopted).

6.7 Fencing and hedges

- 6.7.1 The route of the Green Wheel should be aesthetically pleasing, wherever possible maintaining a 'green' setting through appropriate planting and landscaping.
- 6.7.2 Planting and landscaping requirements will vary greatly around the Green Wheel, influenced primarily by available space and degree of rural/ urban setting.
- 6.7.3 All planting along the 'rim' and the more rural 'spokes' should be of native, locally distinctive species. Planting within more urban settings should be decided with robustness and maintenance as key factors.
- 6.7.4 Wherever possible, Green Wheel routes should not be 'fenced-in', with users having a feeling of being contained or funnelled. However, at certain access points and other areas, such as where stock is grazing or for safety, fencing will be required (although the route and adjacent land should provide a corridor feel).
- 6.7.5 Fencing specifications should be robust and in keeping with their immediate setting. In general, rural settings should have timber fencing which should be of a similar design to any adjacent existing fencing. Where no existing fencing is present, posts should measure a minimum 125mm x 75mm and rails 100 x 50mm.
- 6.7.6 Fencing specifications in more urban settings will be determined by primary function (safety, security, etc), but in all cases should be as attractive as possible and in-keeping with surrounding structures.



6.8 Greenspace standards

Greenspaces forming the Green Wheel will range from linear paths and corridors, through amenity greenspaces to natural and semi-natural open spaces in the wider countryside. All components of the Green Wheel should deliver multiple green infrastructure benefits – linking and maximising the quality and value of access, landscape, biodiversity and heritage. Sites forming the Green Wheel will:

- ❖ be clearly signposted to and from the Green Wheel and the wider network
- ❖ be welcoming and clean and safe.
- ❖ may incorporate public art (e.g. sculptures)
- ❖ will provide seating, in both sunny and shaded areas
- ❖ have a naturalistic appearance
- ❖ have attractive views out of or across the site
- ❖ make good use of topography, space and planting
- ❖ protect, manage and provide opportunities for interpreting the historic environment
- ❖ provide informal and engaging activities for people of all ages

6.9 Wider landscape

As part of this project we are seeking to increase the quality of the environment surrounding Biggleswade. It is critical that this masterplan acts as a challenge to all land managers to seek to maintain and develop the quality of the land they manage through the creation of interconnecting habitats, ponds, hedges and the planting of trees.

6.10 Maintenance

6.10.1 To guarantee maximum value, use and longevity of the Green Wheel once it is developed, it will need to be maintained to a proper standard to keep the width and to encourage people to use it. Ongoing maintenance work will have to include verge cutting and surface spraying for which revenue funding will be required.

6.10.2 Careful consideration should be given, when any planting or landscaping is proposed, to ensure that it will not become a problem in the future. Where appropriate, a sealed surface should be considered at the development stage to reduce maintenance liabilities in the future.

6.11 Impacts and Constraints

It is acknowledged that the implementation of any of these above standards have the potential to have a negative impact upon features of ecological, heritage or landscape value. Such features may be both assets and constraints on an individual site basis and the application of standards for the creation and maintenance of the Green Wheel infrastructure may need to be amended accordingly

7 LEGAL PROCESSES

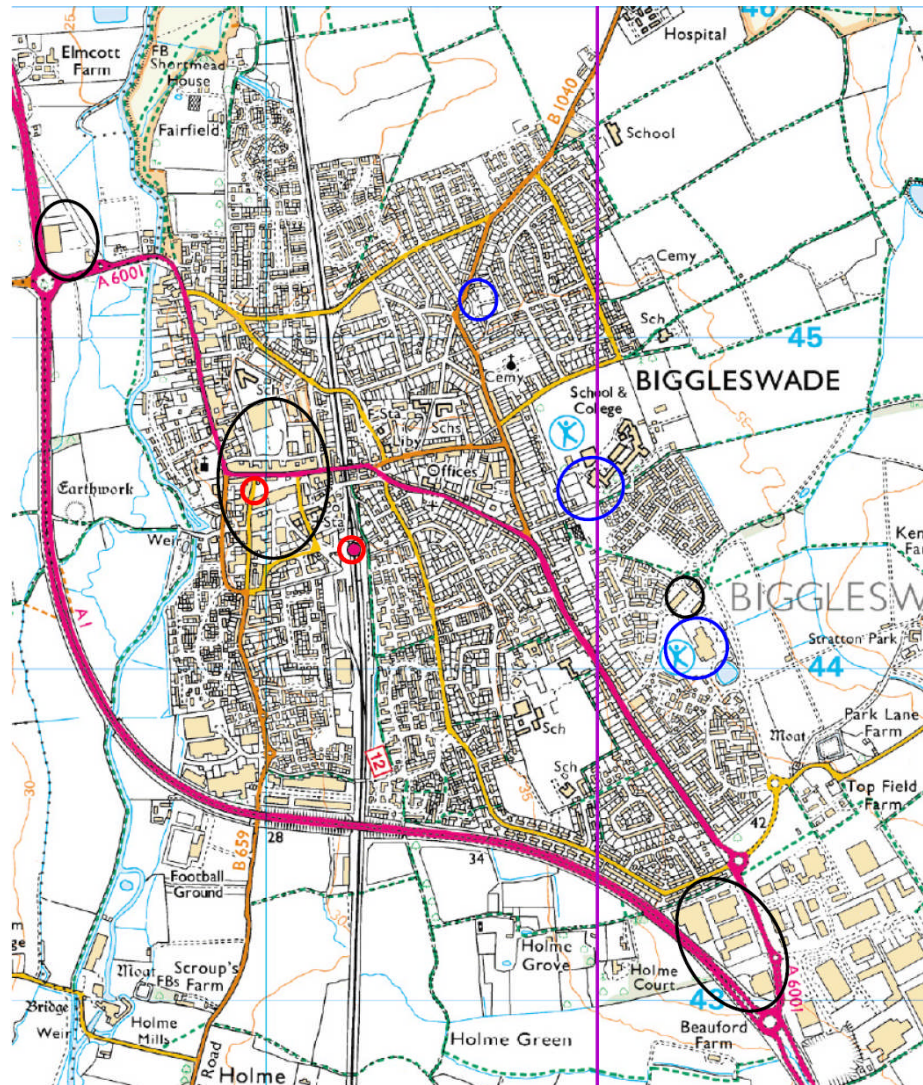
- 7.1.1 A number of the routes that have been identified for the Green Wheel do not currently have the appropriate legal status for the type of use envisaged. Where the proposed route uses a public footpath but is identified for future use by cyclists, the consent of the landowner for a permissive route or a legal order to change the status of the path – i.e. from footpath to bridleway or footpath to cycletrack will be required. In other locations, new routes have been identified which will require the creation of a footpath, bridleway or cycletrack, as appropriate. The Green Wheel Partnership will seek to ensure that the appropriate legal process is carried out in parallel with any physical construction works.
- 7.1.2 The urban centre of Biggleswade is currently excluded from the Definitive Map (DM), which is the legal record of public rights of way (RoW), due to a decision taken in the 1950s to opt out of the mapping process for the fully developed areas of the county. Changes in legislation, however, have necessitated that this area now be surveyed and any RoWs found to be added to a new Definitive Map for this area by means of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's). The process of surveying and undertaking historical research is likely to be outsourced with the results brought back to the Council so that the necessary legal orders can be made and advertised. The work of adding paths to the DM will be done in two phases: Phase 1 will target those routes that are currently usable or could easily be opened up for public use; Phase 2 will address those paths obstructed by development or which are considered unneeded/unnecessary. The timescales for making legal orders for Phases 1 and 2 are 2013 and 2016 respectively. Once any orders are made, they will be subject to public scrutiny and objection which could result in public inquiries and delay the implementation of any orders for a further 18 months or even result in paths remaining unrecorded.



8 CONTEXT MAPS

The following series of maps show a range of services, facilities and attractions in and around Biggleswade. The majority of these destinations are on, or very close to, one or more of the Green Wheel routes.

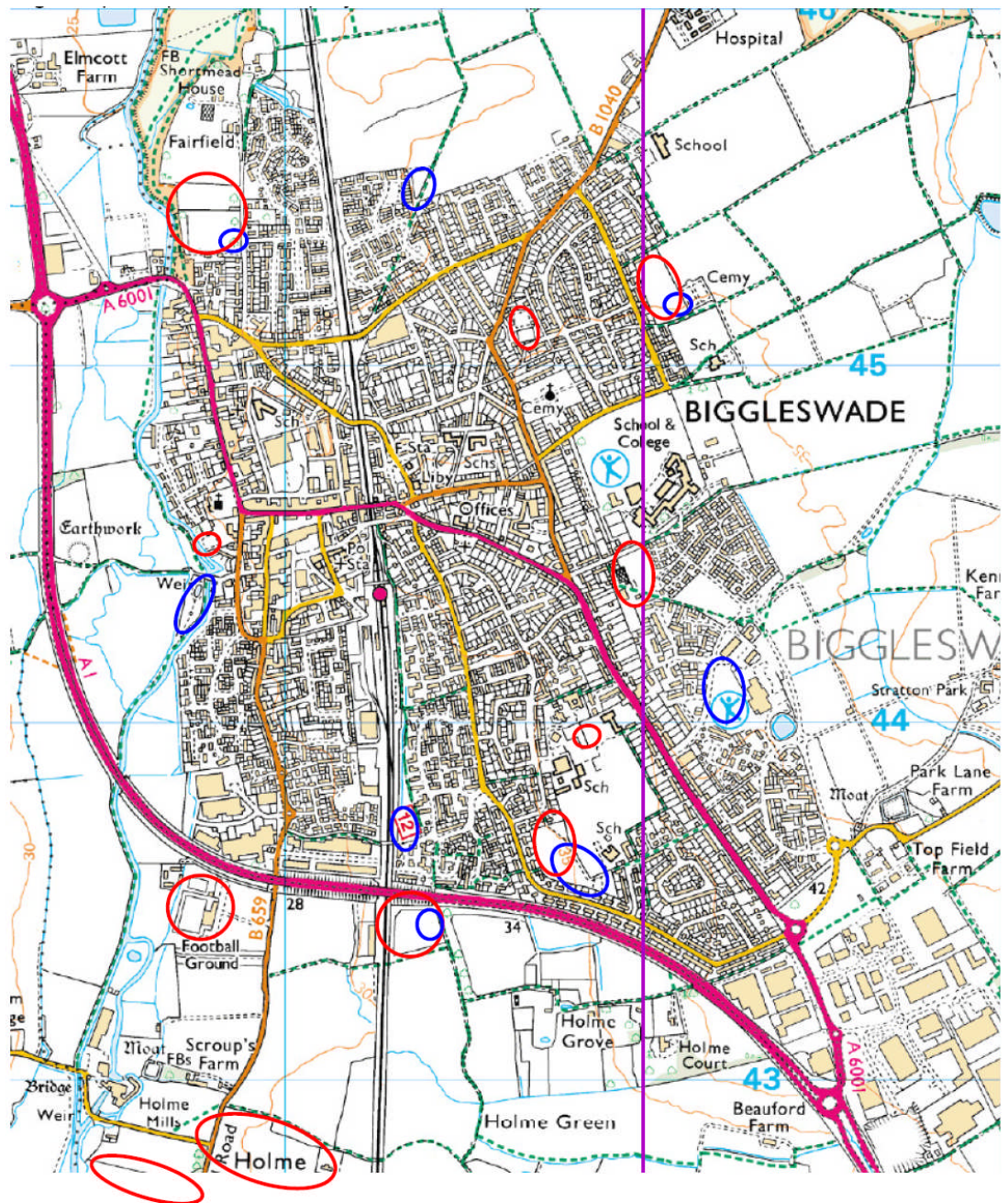
Fig 2: In town visitor hubs – leisure, retail and public transport



○	Leisure Hub
○	Retail Hub
○	Public Transport Hub

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Fig 3: Sports pitches and play areas



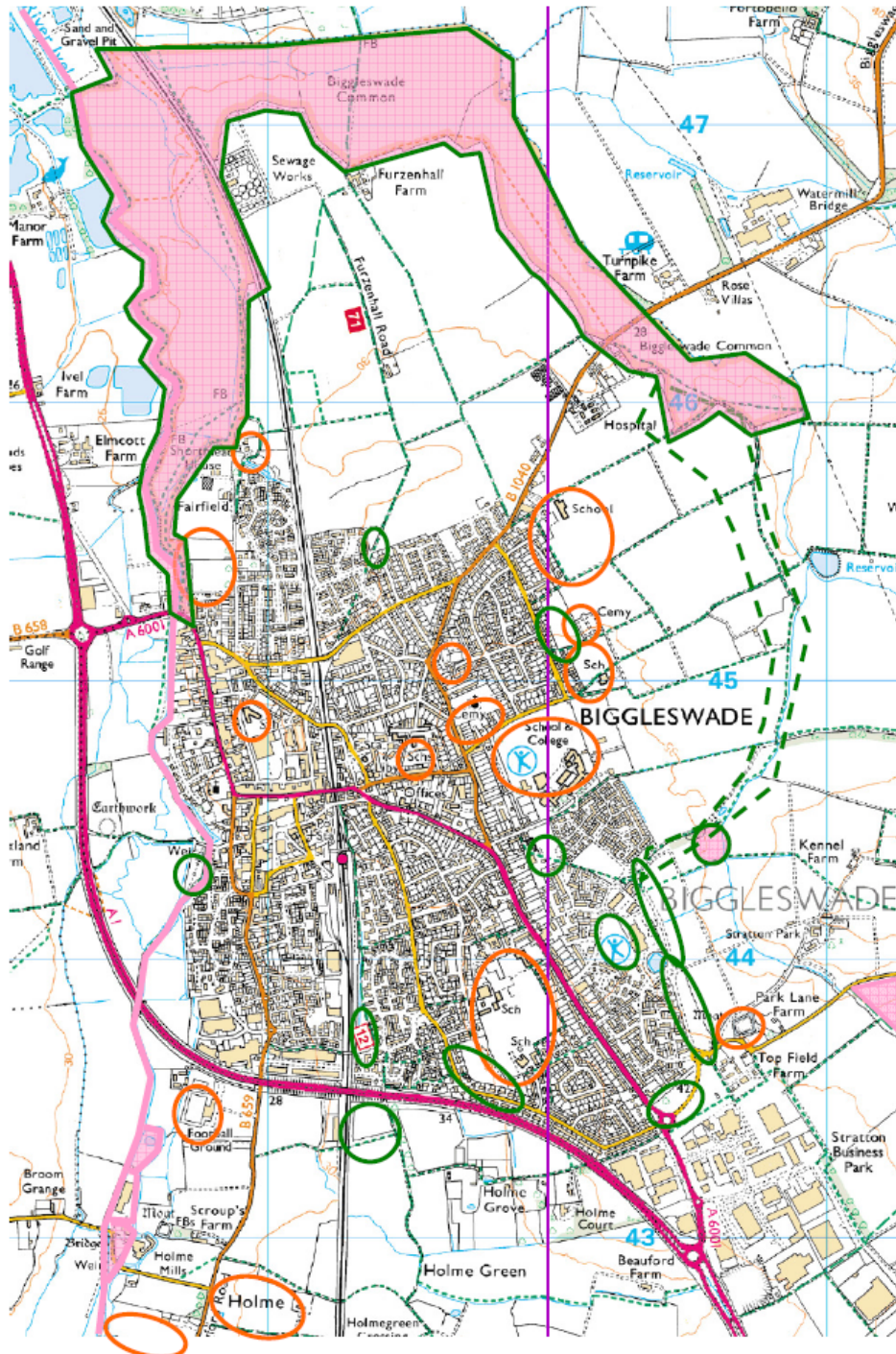
○	Play area
○	Sports pitch/ facility

Note: Sports pitches include tennis courts and MUGA's (Multi-Use games Areas).
Play areas do not include small play areas intended for local neighbourhood

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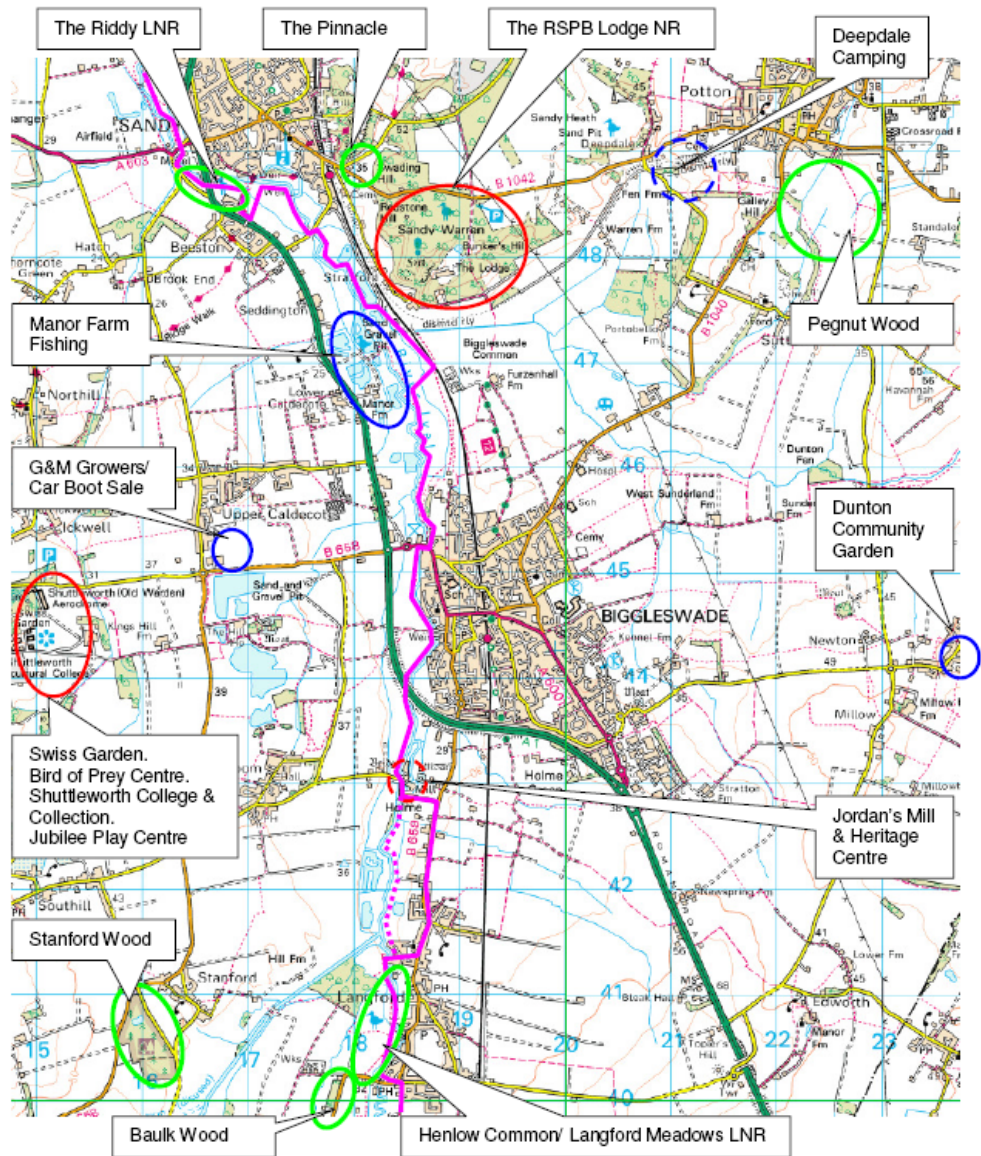
Fig 4: Green spaces







	Freely accessible, public green spaces – (Solid line: existing. Dashed line: planned/ currently being created)
	Other green spaces, including school grounds and sports pitches linked to clubs
	County Wildlife Sites (indicative boundary only)

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Fig 5: Out of town visitor attractions/ destination hubs

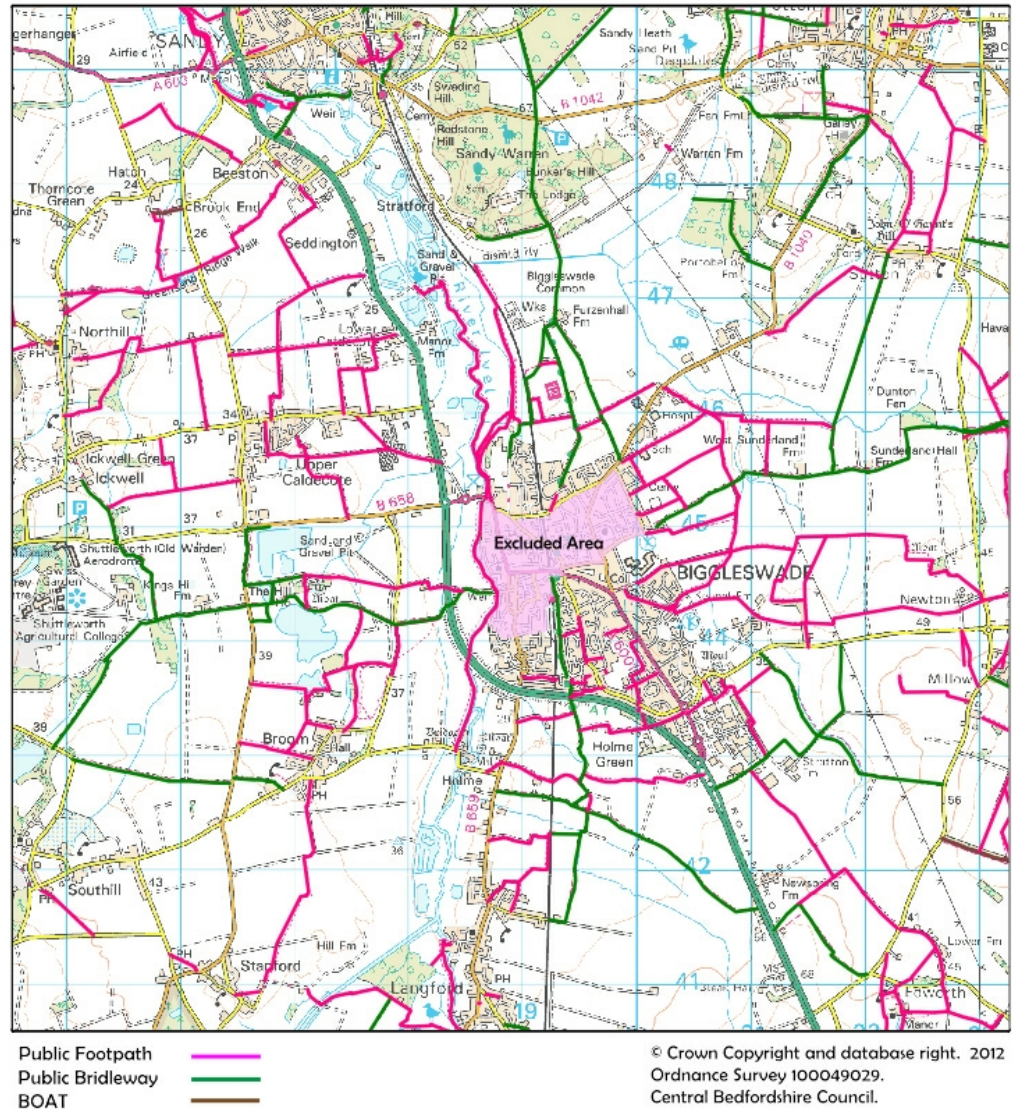


	Major visitor attraction (solid line: existing. Dashed line: planned/ currently being created)
	Minor visitor attraction (solid line: existing. Dashed line: planned/ currently being created)
	Publicly accessible countryside site
	Kingfisher Way (solid line: existing. Dotted line: potential new route)

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Fig 6: Existing Public Rights of Way Map



9 KEY COMPONENTS OF THE GREEN WHEEL

- 9.1.1 For the purposes of developing a coherent plan, the Green Wheel has been divided into 4 sections: North, East, South and West.
- 9.1.2 The GI provision in Biggleswade North is dominated by Biggleswade Common. As Bedfordshire's largest area of Common land, the Common arcs across the north of the town from The Dan Albone Car Park and Picnic Area in the northwest, to The Pastures, south of Potton Road in the East. It also provides GI connectivity to the RSPB nature reserve and national headquarters.
- 9.1.3 The GI provision in Biggleswade East is based on a new linear park currently being created as part of the King's Reach development of 2,100 homes. This linear park will link The Pastures section of Biggleswade Common in the north to a cluster of small green spaces further south and the landscape planting and public rights of way (PRoW) around the Stratton Business Park.
- 9.1.4 Biggleswade South is the section of the wheel with the least amount of existing accessible GI provision; and, with the presence of the A1(M) and Eastcoast mainline, the greatest access obstacles around the rim of the wheel. This proposed section of the wheel links the Stratton Business Park in the southeast to Holme Mills in the southwest.
- 9.1.5 The GI provision in Biggleswade West is based on The Kingfisher Way, linking Holme Mills in the south to the Dan Albone Car Park and Picnic Area in the north. This riverside access route passes beneath the A1(M), alongside Franklins Recreation Ground and through the Back Meadows.
- 9.1.6 As each section has different features and issues, it is proposed that a working group, reporting to the Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership, will be established for each section; north, east, south and west as appropriate.
- 9.1.7 The remaining sections of the report are to be read in parallel with two key chapters in the Ivel Valley Framework Vision:
- ❖ Zone 7 – Biggleswade Common
 - ❖ Zone 9 – Biggleswade East

These chapters are shown in Appendices 2 and 3.



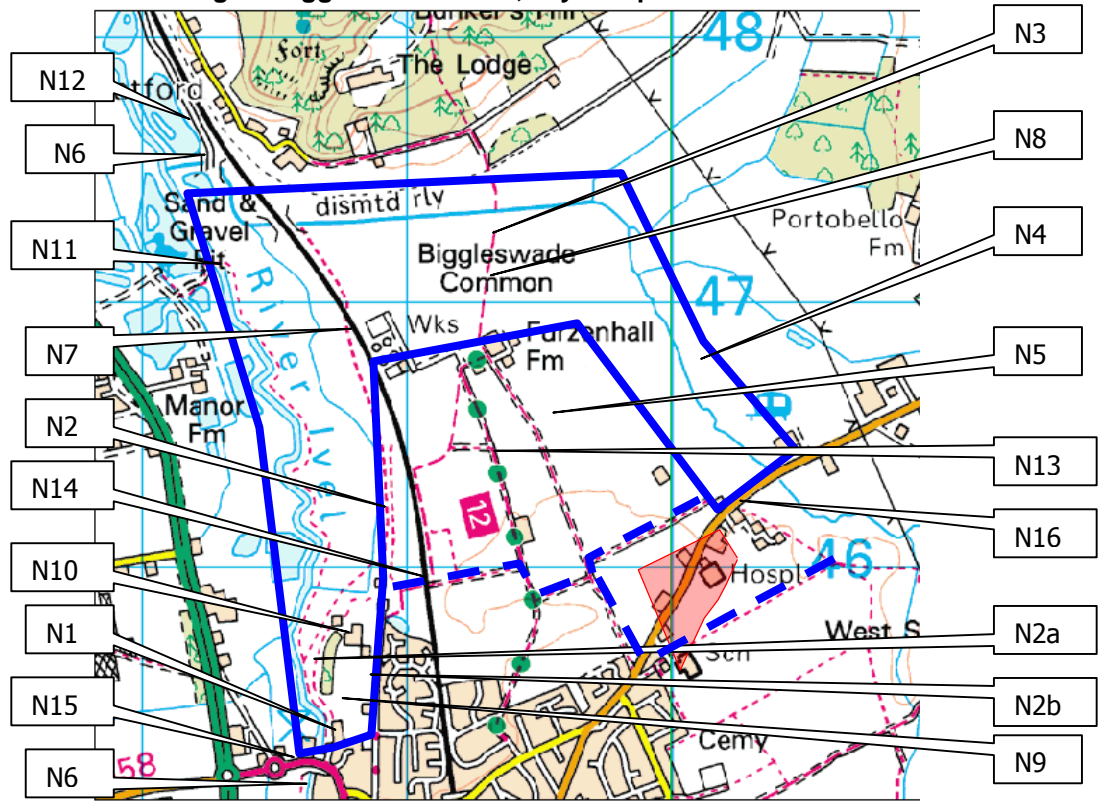
10 BIGGLESWADE NORTH

This area is bounded by Hill Lane in the west and Potton Road in the east.

Utilising the open access land of Biggleswade Common, this section of the Green Wheel measures approximately 4km. A shorter, 'internal' route using the Shortmead Level Crossing, measures approximately 2.4km.

Biggleswade Common is the largest area of Common Land in Bedfordshire. It is of great importance at a local/ county level for its landscape, amenity and biodiversity value (the latter evidenced by its status as a County Wildlife Site). Its archaeological heritage is considered to be of national importance. The Common contains the largest extent of well preserved archaeological earthworks in Bedfordshire, representing a palimpsest dating from the prehistoric and Roman periods through to the post-medieval and modern. Although none of these features are presently designated as Scheduled Monuments, it is believed the Common includes a number of nationally important sites and monuments and a Scheduling proposal is presently being considered by English Heritage.

Fig 7: Biggleswade North, key components



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N1	Dan Albone Car Park & Picnic Area	N8	BW 9
N2	Shortmead Common	N9	Fairfield Sports Pitches
N2a	West of Fairfield House option	N10	Shortmead House
N2b	East of Fairfield House option	N11	FP18/ 19
N3	Furzenhall Common	N12	Kingfisher Way (northern section)
N4	Potton Road Common	N13	Furzenhall Road
N5	Furzenhall Common Extension	N14	Shortmead Level Crossing
N6	Kingfisher Way (southern section)	N15	Hill Lane
N7	FP 17	N16	Potton Road

10.1 Existing green spaces within Biggleswade North

10.1.1 N1 - Dan Albone Car Park and Picnic Area

The Dan Albone Car Park and Picnic Area is owned by the Fen Reeves of Biggleswade Common (FRBC) and leased to Biggleswade Town Council (BTC). The car park provides 40 – 50 informal parking spaces and the picnic area consists of a few benches in an area of mown grass and trees. The car park is busy at weekends when used by the sports clubs using the Fairfield football and cricket pitches. During the week the car park is used primarily by dog walkers and other visitors to Biggleswade Common. The picnic area



borders the River Ivel and provides the main access onto Shortmead Common.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Formalise car park layout to maximise capacity.
- ❖ Screen pumping station to enhance the appearance and 'welcome' of the site.
- ❖ Enhance picnic facilities – more benches and bins.
- ❖ Provide 'information point' as this is a major access point to both Biggleswade Common and the wider Green Wheel
- ❖ Extend picnic area northwards into southern section of Shortmead Common.
- ❖ Enhance visual appearance of stock-pen; or in conjunction with extending picnic area, re-locate into Shortmead Common.
- ❖ Enhance amenity and biodiversity value of riverbank through improved fencing and appropriate management of bankside vegetation.
- ❖ Explore the feasibility of permitting cycle access onto Shortmead Common.

10.1.2 N2 - Shortmead Common

10.1.2.1 Shortmead Common, and particularly the southern section, is by far the most popular/ visited area of Biggleswade Common. It is owned in part by the FRBC and in part by the Lord of the Manor of Biggleswade (LMB); and is managed by the FRBC under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement. The area is grazed by cattle. See Appendix 2 for further details on Biggleswade Common from Ivel Valley Vision Statement extract.

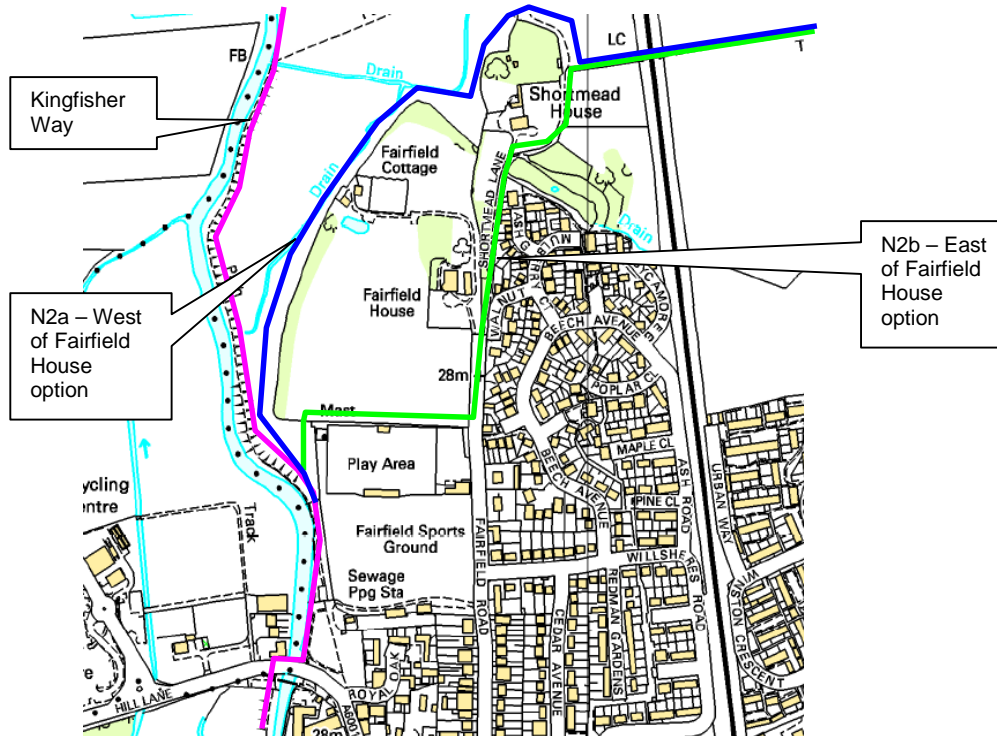
Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Enhance amenity and biodiversity value of riverbank at southern end.
- ❖ Extend picnic area northwards into southern section of Shortmead Common making southern-most section cattle-free.
- ❖ Enhance waymarking/ signposting of route options, including the Kingfisher Way
- ❖ Consider stock management options in relation to rotating provision of stock-free areas for walkers with appropriate signage.
- ❖ Provision of surfaced path to increase accessibility onto southern area of the Common and to link with the path to Fairfield Road.
- ❖ Improve access for FP17 at the 'cattle arch' beneath the Eastcoast Mainline linking Shortmead and Furzenhall Commons.
- ❖ Explore the feasibility of permitting cycle access on identified route(s) (either limited to creating a link the Shortmead crossing (see N14) or onto the wider Common).

10.1.2.2 Biggleswade Common provides excellent access opportunities but only caters for walkers. A long term aspiration is to enable cycle access routes

around the whole Common. In the shorter term and as shorter route options for the Green Wheel, the brideway passing over the railway at Shortmead Crossing offers two options: N2a and N2b.

Fig 8: Shortmead Route Options



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10.1.2.3 N2a - One option leads from the entrance of Shortmead Common to the west of Fairfield House/ Cottage and to the north of Shortmead House. This option uses grass/ earth paths and would require suitable surfacing and/ or drainage to ensure cycles do not erode the soft ground

10.1.2.4 N2b - A second option leads from the entrance of Shortmead Common to Fairfield Road using a soon to be created footpath. The Green Wheel could then utilise the Fairfield Road/ Bridleway track northwards to Shortmead Crossing. This second option would require only a short section of new surfacing at the entrance to Shortmead Common and minor surface improvements on the Fairfield Road Bridleway.

Proposal:

- ❖ The creation of this footpath should be re-visited to explore the potential for permitting cycle use



10.1.3 N3 - Furzenhall Common

Furzenhall Common is owned in part by the FRBC and in part by the Lord of the Manor of Biggleswade (LMB). It is managed by the FRBC under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement. It is generally under-used, except for the north-south bridleway (BW9) passing across it. This bridleway forms part of the Great North Cycleway (GNC) Route 12 of the National Cycle Network (NCN) and is a popular route for people travelling to and from the RSPB's Lodge Nature Reserve in Sandy. The area is grazed by cattle and horses.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Surface route of GNC to improve accessibility
- ❖ Improved waymarking/ signposting of route options as part of Information Point on Green Wheel/ Biggleswade Common.
- ❖ Explore the feasibility of permitting cycle access on an identified 'outer' route, to complement the 'inner' route using Shortmead Crossing,

10.1.4 N4 - Potton Road Common

Potton Road Common is owned in part by the FRBC and in part by the Lord of the Manor of Biggleswade (LMB). It is managed by the FRBC under a HLS agreement. Currently it is under-used, although it is anticipated that level of use will increase as the Kings Reach development becomes populated. The area is grazed by cattle and horses.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Enhance waymarking/ signposting of route options as part of Information Point on Green Wheel/ Biggleswade Common.
- ❖ Explore the feasibility of permitting cycle access on an identified route
- ❖ Explore feasibility of creating a small car park at the Potton Road entrance to the Common.

10.2 Potential new green spaces within Biggleswade North

10.2.1 N5 - Furzenhall Common Extension

Land east of Biggleswade Sewage Treatment works and fields south of Furzenhall Cottages/ Furzenhall Farm. Seek to buffer/ extend the Common southwards ahead of anticipated future northern expansion of Biggleswade. Parkland tree planting within wildflower grassland with occasional copses and scrub areas would be appropriate. The new land could also include more formal recreation opportunities (sports/ play/ picnic etc) and act as a gateway to the Common, the Green Wheel and the wider countryside. There is also potential for parking and visitor facilities to help establish Biggleswade Common as a Country Park.

10.3 Primary public access route(s) forming Green Wheel within Biggleswade North

Biggleswade Common is Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act, and as such is freely accessible to all visitors. A pre-CRoW Act network of PRow and Permissive Paths still exist, with associated access structures.

10.3.1 N6 - The Kingfisher Way

A 34km long walk along the Ivel valley passes through the Dan Albone Picnic Area and Shortmead Common, using Public Footpath (FP18) and Permissive Paths, before leaving the northern end of Shortmead Common, continuing northwards towards New Road, Sandy, on a Stewardship Permissive Path.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Formalise permissive routes as PRow, both on Biggleswade Common and between Shortmead Common and New Road, Sandy (see also N12).

10.3.2 N7 – Footpath 17

Footpath 17 utilises the cattle arch beneath the Eastcoast Mainline linking Shortmead and Furzenhall Commons.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Enhance access structures and path surfacing, while maximising headroom.

10.3.3 N8 – Bridleway 9

Bridleway 9 and it's associated access structures, provides the only north-south access across Furzenhall Common and is the most used public access link between the towns of Biggleswade and Sandy.

10.4 Other Green Wheel assets within Biggleswade North

10.4.1 N9 - Fairfield Sports Pitches

The Fairfield sports pitches are located between the southern end of Shortmead Common and Fairfield Road. Biggleswade Town Cricket Club play at The Cricket Ground and Biggleswade United FC play at the adjacent Second Meadow.

Neither grounds officially have open public access, although informal access is gained across the cricket pitch to link the Dan Albone Car Park and Fairfield Road.



10.4.2 N10 - Shortmead House

The house and grounds of Shortmead House are occasionally open to the public as a local heritage attraction. At other times the house and grounds are hired for private functions, including weddings.

10.5 Green Wheel linkages to / from Biggleswade North

Two pedestrian access routes currently lead from the northern end of Shortmead Common: to the Manor Farm Fishery and to New Road, Sandy.

10.5.1 N11 – Footpath 18/ 19

Footpath 18 and 19 leave the north west corner of the Common and cross the River Ivel to the seven lakes forming the Manor Farm Fishery. The fishery incorporates the former Warren Villas Nature Reserve and new access routes as a result of the restoration of land quarried for sand and gravel. Future development of the site may include visitor facilities such as a tea shop. A new route is currently being created through Permissive Path agreements and the extension of a PRoW, linking the pavement of the southbound A1 to the Manor Farm Fishery. Using these new routes together with pavements along Bells Brook and Hill Lane, and linking with the Kingfisher Way/ Shortmead Common, a circular walk option of approx 5km will exist.

10.5.2 N12 - The Kingfisher Way

The Kingfisher Way leaves the northern boundary of Furzenhall Common via a footbridge to join a HLS Permissive Path to New Road, Sandy. The current HLS agreement for this path is due to end in September 2013 with current Natural England policies indicating that access agreements will not be renewed.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ CBC to negotiate with landowner for the creation of a PRoW or a replacement Permissive Path agreement.
- ❖ Improve accessibility of footbridge by removing squeeze stiles; installing additional fencing/ gates if required.

10.5.3 N13 - Furzenhall Road

Furzenhall Road (also BW10 and the GNC) provides the main link to the Green Wheel from the northern residential area of the town. Continuing northwards from Furzenhall Common access is provided for walkers and cyclists both to the town of Sandy (using BW 33, 42 and Stratford Road) and to the RSPB's national headquarters and The Lodge Nature Reserve (using BW 33 and 32).

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Enhance Furzenhall Road/ GNC from the edge of town to the Common, to increase accessibility/ enjoyment of major 'spoke' of the Green Wheel.

10.5.4 N14 – Shortmead Crossing.

Although Biggleswade Common provides the obvious Green Wheel corridor around the north of the town, the remote setting of Furzenhall Common, calls for an alternative route option closer to the edge of the town. This 'inner tyre' would cater for users wanting a shorter, more direct route around the north of the town; and could be created using (west – east) BW11, FP14, FP13, FP12 and Potton Road Common. This route utilises a Level Crossing to the north east of Shortmead House. As one of only two crossings of the railway between Biggleswade and Sandy it is important to maintain and upgrade access provision at this location. Ideally, the level crossing should be replaced by a pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the railway line.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ An upgrade in status of these Public Footpaths to Public Bridleway or Cyclepath will be required to permit use of the route option by both walkers and cyclists.
- ❖ Surface improvements will be required on both upgraded and existing PRow.
- ❖ Replace Shortmead level crossing with a pedestrian/ cycle bridge.

10.6 **Missing links/ barriers to the Green Wheel within Biggleswade North**

Biggleswade Common forms the single largest component of the Green Wheel and as such Biggleswade North has few significant missing links or barriers for pedestrian access. However, access on Biggleswade Common, with the exception of BW9 / GNC crossing Furzenhall Common, is restricted to pedestrians. A significant change in the status of the access provision, structures and management would be required to permit cycle access around the main Green Wheel North corridor.

10.6.1 N15 - Hill Lane

Hill Lane is the main route into the north of the town from the A1 and as such is a busy road. To the north, FP18 follows the eastern bank of the River Ivel through the Dan Albone Picnic Area and onto Shortmead Common; to the south FP21 follows the western bank of the River Ivel towards Mill Lane and Franklins Mill. There are pavements on both the north and south sides of Hill Lane which aid safe crossing; although with the bend in the road as Hill Lane becomes Shortmead Street, care must be taken as sight lines are short.

10.6.2 N7 - Cattle Arch

FP17 linking Shortmead and Furzenhall Commons, utilises a cattle arch beneath the Eastcoast Mainline Railway. Currently, the footpath uses a



narrow, raised path to separate people from the lower, muddy area used by cattle. As one of only two crossings of the railway between Biggleswade and Sandy it is important to maintain and upgrade access provision at this location.

Proposed Improvement:

- ❖ Enhance access structures and path surfacing, while maximising headroom.

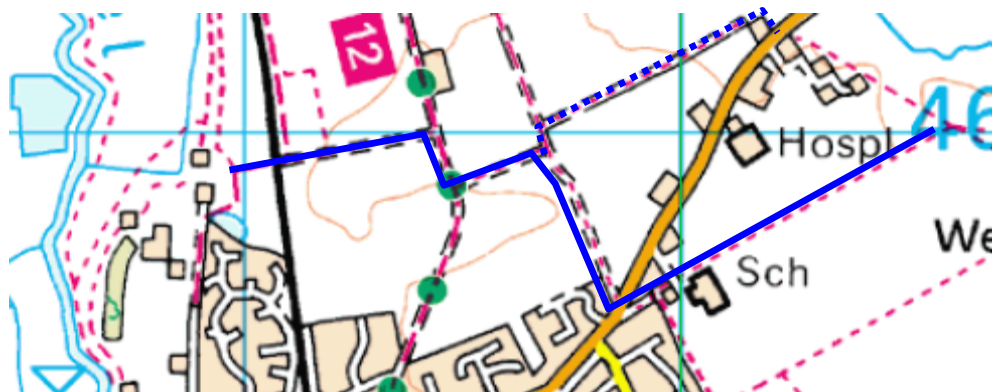
10.6.3 N14 - Shortmead Level Crossing Link

Although not utilised in the main Green Wheel corridor, an alternative shorter 'inner tyre' will require the use of the Level crossing to the north east of Shortmead House. As one of only two crossings of the railway between Biggleswade and Sandy it is important to maintain and upgrade access provision at this location. The crossing has good sight lines and lit warnings and as such is as safe as a level crossing can be, however, as per 9.5.4, the level crossing should be replaced by a pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the railway line. Should the level crossing ever be closed, a condition of closure must be the provision of such a bridge. To the east of the Level Crossing, existing PRow offer route options for linking to the Green Wheel corridor further east.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Replace Shortmead level crossing with a pedestrian/ cycle bridge.

Fig 9: Route options utilising Shortmead Crossing



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10.6.4 N16 - Potton Road

Potton Road separates Potton Road Common and The Pastures; and for the purposes of this report, the North and East sections of the Green Wheel. Potton Road is the main access route into Biggleswade from the north east and is a relatively busy road. Currently the road has a 40mph speed limit and good sight lines, enabling reasonably safe crossing of the road. The

creation of the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) for the Kings Reach Development will include a new roundabout on Potton Road, with provision for cycle and pedestrian access.

10.7 Green Wheel North - Delivery Issues

- 10.7.1 Currently none of the PRoW, Permissive Paths or 'used routes' on Biggleswade Common have any form of surfacing; with all paths being on grass/ bare earth. The open countryside nature and scale of the Common (118 ha with over 7.5km of well used routes) may suggest that formal surfacing of a Green Wheel Route is not feasible, or even appropriate.
- 10.7.2 Consideration could be given to surfacing selected paths in the most heavily used parts of the Common, namely the southern end of Shortmead Common. Surfacing a route from the Dan Albone Picnic Area to BW11 at Shortmead Crossing with an additional link in from Fairfield Road (permissive Path) would enable Shortmead Common to be more robust in catering for its large number of visitors. It would also enable more people, with a range of mobility levels, to access and enjoy at least part of the Green Wheel. Surfacing a link to the Shortmead Crossing would link with the tracks to the east of the railway in providing a good short cut/ alternative route to the longer Green Wheel.
- 10.7.3 Biggleswade Common is currently for the exclusive use of pedestrians with the one exception of BW9 (GNC) passing north-south through Furzenhall Common.
- 10.7.4 Given the presence of grazing cattle and horses across the Common, it is considered inappropriate to promote horseriding (other than on the line of BW9 of Furzenhall Common) due to the potential for conflict between animals. However, cycling has fewer risks and it might be possible to agree specific routes where cycling is permissible. The main issue is likely to be impact on the ground conditions with paths soon becoming very muddy if there is no treatment to path surface and/ or drainage.
- 10.7.5 Given the extent and importance of archaeological features on the Common, all significant works will need to be considered in relation to their impact upon the archaeology. Potentially negative impacts will need to be mitigated against and opportunities to manage and interpret valuable features should be identified.
- 10.7.6 Access structures should be appropriate to anticipated use (pedestrian/ cycles) and should enable access to be achieved as easily as possible while ensuring grazed areas remain stockproof.
- 10.7.7 It is considered that in addition to the members of the Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership, the key northern working group stakeholders would include:
- ❖ The Lord of the Manor of Biggleswade
 - ❖ The Fen Reeves of Biggleswade Common



Other working group stakeholders could include:

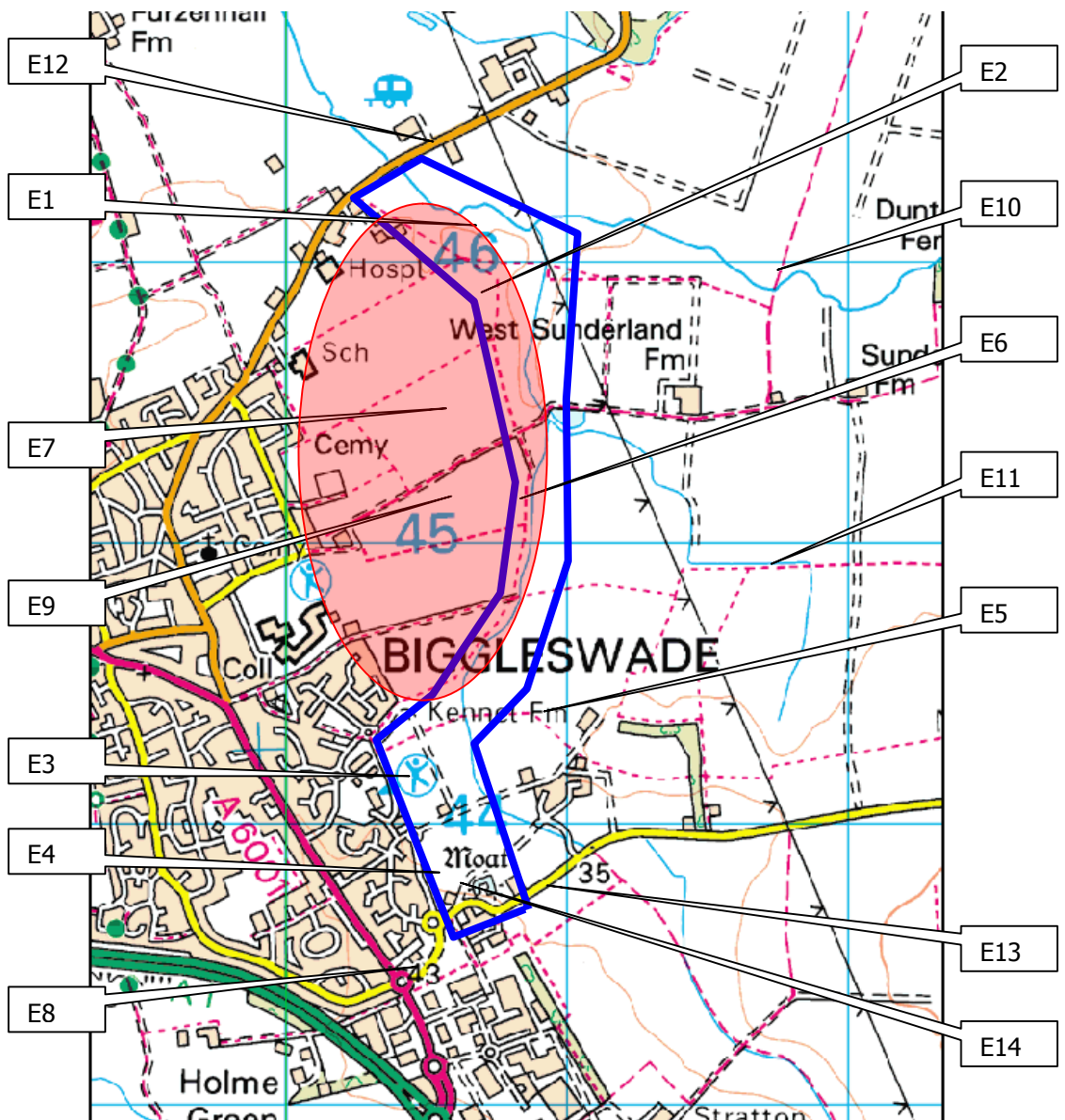
- ❖ Environment Agency & Beds and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
- ❖ Shortmead House / Friends of Shortmead House
- ❖ Biggleswade Town Plan steering group
- ❖ Biggleswade History Society
- ❖ Biggleswade P3 Group
- ❖ RSPB
- ❖ Natural England/ Defra (in respect of HLS agreement)
- ❖ Angling Club
- ❖ Sustrans
- ❖ The King's Reach Development Consortium
- ❖ Representatives of Graziers at The Pastures

11 BIGGLESWADE EAST

This area is bounded by Potton Road in the north and Dunton Lane in the south. Utilising The Pastures, the Kings Reach Linear Park and the new paths through the Linear Wood, this section of the Green Wheel measures approximately 3.1km.



Fig 10 – Biggleswade East, key components



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- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|
| E1 | The Pastures | E8 | Saxon Gate Pocket Park |
| E2 | Kings Reach Linear Park | E9 | Access routes to the Linear Park |
| E3 | Linear Wood North | E10 | Access routes to Sutton |
| E4 | Linear Wood South | E11 | Access routes to Dunton |
| E5 | Jubilee Wood | E12 | Potton Road |
| E6 | Access routes within the Linear Park | E13 | Dunton Lane |
| E7 | Kings Reach development | E14 | Stratton Moat |

11.1 Existing green spaces within Biggleswade East

11.1.1 E1 - The Pastures

The Pastures form the south east section of Biggleswade Common. Owned in part by the FRBC and in part by the Lord of the Manor of Biggleswade (LMB); the land is managed by the FRBC under a HLS agreement. Currently it is under-used, although it is anticipated that level of use will increase significantly as the immediately adjacent Kings Reach development becomes populated. The area is grazed by cattle and horses. As with the rest of Biggleswade Common, the Pastures are rich in archaeological interest. This interest acts both as a potential constraint to physical works and as an opportunity for management and interpretation.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Provide 'information point' as this is a major access point to both Biggleswade Common and the wider Green Wheel
- ❖ Improved waymarking/ signposting of route options, including the Kingfisher Way
- ❖ Enhance boundary hedges and fencing to improve appearance and 'welcome' of site

11.1.2 E2 - Kings Reach Linear Park

The Kings Reach Linear Park is a new site currently being created as part of the Kings Reach housing development of 2,100 homes. The Linear Park will consist of a tarmac surfaced cycleway to the west of the Baden Powel Way eastern relief road and a surface footpath through a landscaped corridor to the east.

11.1.3 E3 - Linear Wood North

This is an area of predominantly rough grassland measuring approx 380m x 35m. Trees were planted on this land in the early 2000's, but many failed due to drought and lack of aftercare. 100 more trees were planted in 2010 to mark the centenary of Biggleswade Scouts. A large pond was created at the southern end of the site in about 2001. A 2.5m wide surfaced path to link the Kings Reach Linear Park and Linear Wood South was created through Linear Wood North in spring 2012. A final link from the north of Linear Wood North to the surfaced path in the Linear Park is currently being planned.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Additional tree planting within corridor of land
- ❖ Hedge planting along Saxon Drive
- ❖ Install benches and informal natural play features to enhance visitor experience

11.1.4 E4 - Linear Wood South

An attractive area of mixed woodland measuring approx 300m x 50m, planted in the late 1980's. The route of an informal path, which has been



created by walkers over a number of years, was surfaced (2.5m wide) in spring 2012 to improve ease of access for a wider range of users.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Management of trees and ride to maximise biodiversity value
- ❖ Install benches and informal natural play features to enhance visitor experience

11.2 Potential new green spaces within Biggleswade East

11.2.1 E5 - Jubilee Wood

CBC's CAT has recently taken over the management of 7ha of former paddocks adjacent to Stratton Park Farm. It is proposed to secure an English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) grant for planting 6.5 ha native deciduous woodland in late 2013, to mark the Diamond Jubilee of HRH Queen Elizabeth II. A 0.5 ha Jubilee Community Orchard will also be planted within the woodland. It is also proposed that a new public access link will be created from the north west corner of the woodland to the Kings Reach Linear Park.

The proposed site of the Jubilee Wood contains archaeological remains. The process of characterising and understanding these remains will be completed in Spring 2013. Until it has been completed, detailed plans for the Wood cannot be finalised.

11.3 Primary public access routes forming the Green Wheel within Biggleswade East

11.3.1 E1 – The Pastures

In the north of this section, The Pastures have Public Footpaths (FP25 and 30) and are Open Access under the CRoW Act.

11.3.2 E6 – Access routes within the Linear Park

Two public access routes pass north-south through the Kings Reach Linear Park: a surfaced cycleway/ footpath on the west / 'inside' of the ERR and FP25 to the east / 'outside' of the ERR.

11.3.3 E3 & E4 – Linear Woods North and South

To the south, newly surfaced paths pass through Linear Wood North and Linear Wood South, linking the Kings Reach Linear Park to Dunton Lane. These paths are east of and parallel to Saxon Drive. To the west of, and parallel to, Saxon Drive is a surfaced shared cycleway/ footpath

11.3.4 The above paths link to provide two, almost entirely off-road, Green Wheel route options between Potton Road and Dunton Lane. On the west / 'inside' of the ERR/ Saxon Drive is a tarmac-surfaced shared cycleway/ footpath. On the east / 'outside' of the ERR/ Saxon Drive is a crushed-stone surfaced path. Currently, cyclists can only formally use the western / 'inside' route.

11.4 Other Green Wheel assets within Biggleswade East

11.4.1 E7 - The Kings Reach development

This will include a number of sports pitches, play areas and public green spaces.

11.4.2 E8 - Saxon Gate Pocket Park

This is a small (approx 0.9ha) community green space between London Road and the Dunton Lane roundabout. Measuring approx 170m x 50m the site incorporates small copses and young community orchard, benches and some informal natural play features.

11.4.3 E14 – Stratton Moat

Stratton Moat and its associated settlement earthworks to the east are recorded as a Scheduled Monument. Dating from medieval times and with links to the Stratton Park Manor to the north east, this is an important heritage and archaeological site. In recent years, significant scrub clearance and vegetation management has been undertaken within the moat to protect the archaeology. There is currently no public access to either the moat or the associated meadow, although discussions regarding the provision of limited access have occurred.

11.5 Green Wheel linkages to / from Biggleswade East

11.5.1 E9 – Access routes to the Linear park

Major public access corridors through the Kings Reach Development incorporating Public Footpaths and BW28 will link the centre of Biggleswade to the Kings Reach Linear Park

11.5.2 In addition there are PRoW east of Biggleswade to Sutton (BW28, FP30 and BW3) and Dunton (FP24, 27, Dunton FP8):

11.5.3 E10 – Access routes to Sutton

The route to Sutton caters for walkers and cyclists, following farm roads/tracks to the attractive village and its public house, the John O'Gaunt. From Sutton there are links for walkers to Potton through Pegnut Wood.



11.5.4 E11 – Access routes to Dunton

The route options to Dunton currently cater only for walkers, and utilise re-instated footpaths crossing arable fields. Dunton is home to the March Hare public house and the Dunton Community Garden, which is freely open to the public.

11.6 Missing links/ barriers to the Green Wheel within Biggleswade East

11.6.1 E12 - Potton Road

Potton Road separates Potton Road Common and The Pastures and for the purposes of this report, the North and East sections of the Green Wheel. Potton Road is the main access route into Biggleswade from the north east and is a relatively busy road. Currently the road has a 40mph speed limit and good sight lines, enabling reasonably safe crossing of the road. The creation of the ERR for the Kings Reach Development will include a new roundabout on Potton Road, with provision for cycle and pedestrian access.

11.6.2 E13 - Dunton Lane

Dunton Lane is the only access route into Biggleswade from the south east and is a reasonably busy road. The Green Wheel corridor crosses Dunton Lane immediately to the east of the Dunton Lane roundabout, using dropped kerbs and a refuge in the centre of the road. With a 30mph restriction, the presence of the roundabout to the west and a tight 'S bend' 100m to the east, traffic is relatively slow moving at this location. To the north, the newly surfaced paths through the linear Wood link to the Kings Reach Linear park; and to the south FP39 and BW58 take the Green Wheel around the edge of the Stratton Business Park to the A1.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Look to upgrade one of the footpaths to provide bridle/cycle link to the good PRow network to the south east, reducing pedestrian/ cycle use of Dunton Lane.

11.7 Green Wheel East - Delivery Issues

11.7.1 This section of the Green Wheel can be divided into the informal 'open countryside' setting of The Pastures part of Biggleswade Common; and the more formal Kings Reach Linear Park, linking with the Linear Woods.

11.7.2 However, with the immediate proximity of The Pastures to the 2,100 new homes in the Kings Reach development, the character of the area is likely to change considerably. Currently The Pastures are visited by only a few walkers but it is anticipated that levels of use, particularly by dog walkers, will increase significantly over the coming years as the Kings Reach development becomes populated. Consequently, consideration should be given to the levels of formality and 'robustness' of any surfacing and structure standards.

11.7.3 Within the Kings Reach Linear Park and the Linear Woods, access provision already exists or is planned.

11.7.4 Once the Kings Reach development is complete there will be two route options: a formal 3m wide surfaced cycleway/ footpath on the west / 'inside' of the ERR; and a crushed stone 1.8m Public Footpath (FP25) to the east / 'outside' of the ERR. The route of the Public Footpath will be the more obvious 'Green Wheel' route as it will pass through a quieter and more attractive setting; and will not have road junctions along its length. It is anticipated that this route will become popular with both walkers and leisure cyclists. However, due to both legal status and the width of the surfaced route, this path is not intended for cyclists.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Seek for the remaining length of FP25 yet to be surfaced, to be made 2.5m wide; and for the section already created at 1.8m wide, to be widened to 2.5m.

11.7.5 Newly surfaced paths pass through Linear Wood North and Linear Wood South, linking the Kings Reach Linear Park to Dunton Lane. These paths are east of and parallel to Saxon Drive. To the west of, and parallel to, Saxon Drive is a surfaced shared cycleway/ footpath. Works to create a direct link with the crushed stone footpath through the Kings Reach Linear Park will be undertaken in Spring 2013. The paths through the linear woods are 2.5m wide and surfaced in compacted road planings. Passing through publicly accessible green spaces, these paths are not formal Rights of Way and as such, do not dictate which types of use are permitted. Historically, only pedestrians have used the Linear Wood South and no real use has been made of Linear Wood North. However, since the creation of these paths it has been observed that they are popular with both walkers and cyclists.

11.7.6 Given the extent and importance of archaeological features on the Pastures area of Biggleswade Common, all significant works will need to be considered in relation to their impact upon the archaeology. Potentially negative impacts will need to be mitigated against and opportunities to manage and interpret valuable features should be identified.

11.7.7 It is considered that in addition to the members of the Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership, the key eastern working group stakeholders would include:

- ❖ The King's Reach Development Consortium
- ❖ Beds and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
- ❖ The Lord of the Manor of Biggleswade
- ❖ The Fen Reeves of Biggleswade Common
- ❖ 'Central Farms' (CBC)

Other working group stakeholders could include:

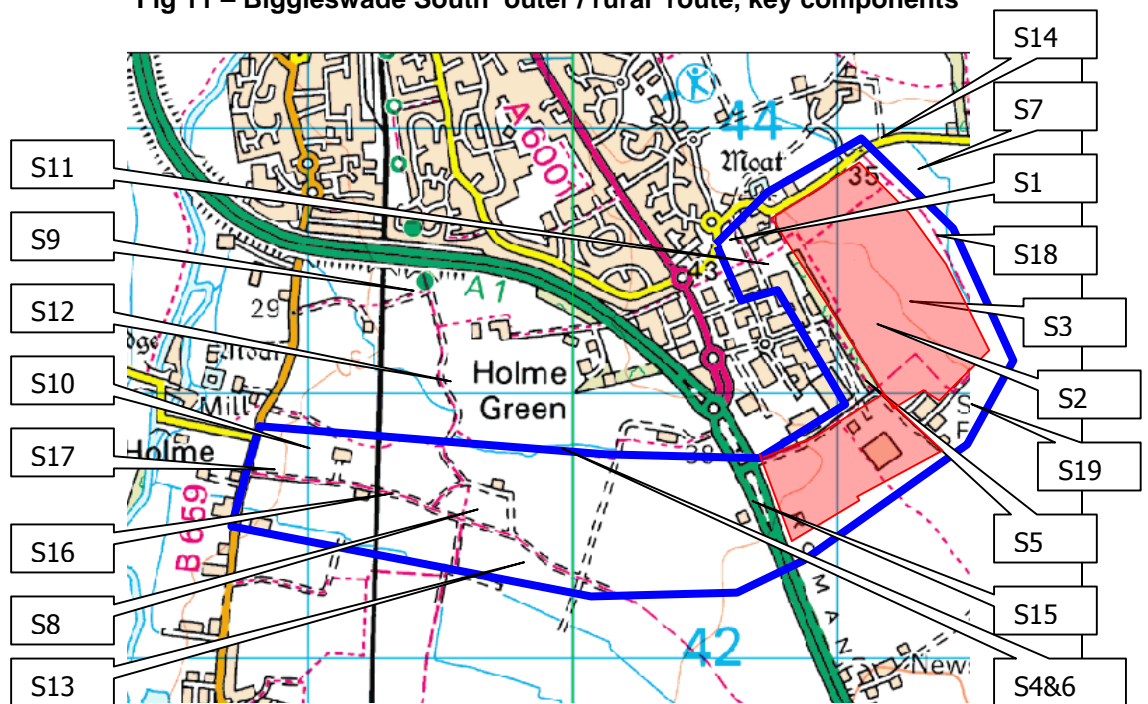


- ❖ Biggleswade Town Plan steering group
- ❖ Biggleswade History Society
- ❖ Biggleswade P3 Group
- ❖ Friends of Stratton Park Green Spaces
- ❖ Biggleswade Allotment Group
- ❖ Sustrans

12 BIGGLESWADE SOUTH

This area is bounded by Dunton Lane in the east and Langford Road in the west. Utilising the PRoW network, this section of the Green Wheel measures approximately 5.2km. However, the A1(M) presents a major obstacle to the Green Wheel in this section. A crossing of the Eastcoast Mainline is also required within this section. With the provision of level crossing at Holme Green, this is at least possible, although a bridge would be desirable. Given the obstacles to an outer 'rural' route for the Green Wheel around the south of the town, a more urban inner route is also identified. The outer 'rural' route itself has two options. One option uses the PRoW and landscaping adjacent to the current edge of the Stratton Business Park. A second outer-most option further east and south passes around the proposed extensions to the Stratton Business Park.

Fig 11 – Biggleswade South 'outer / rural' route, key components

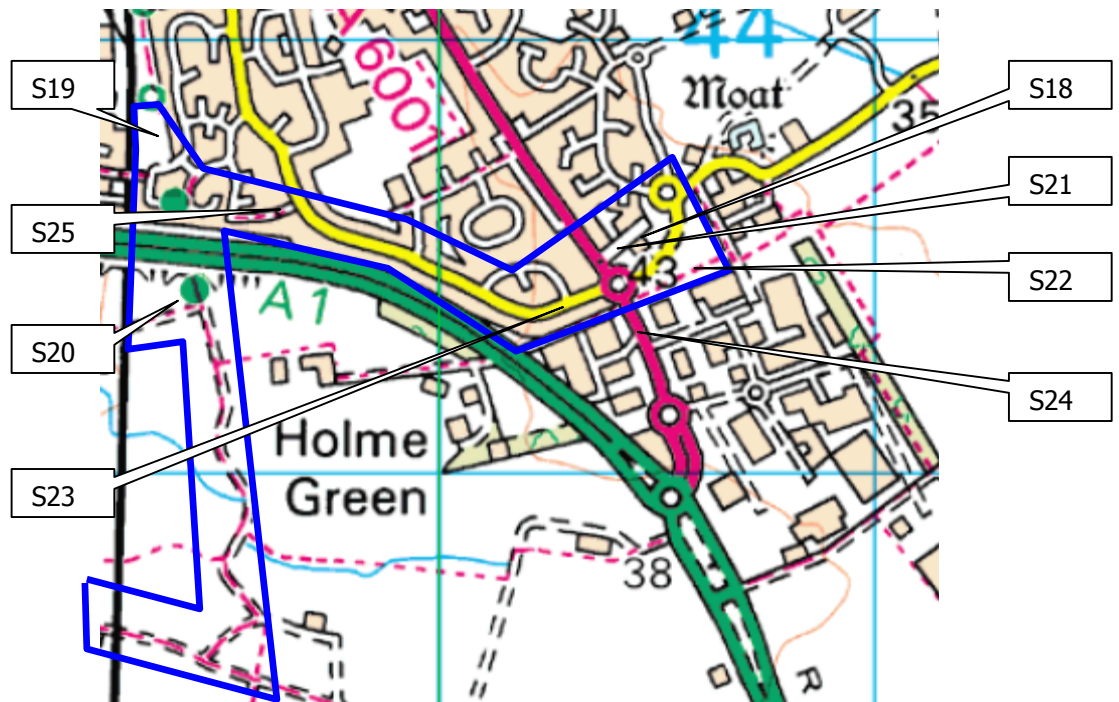


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S1	Linear Wood South Extension	S11	FP61/ 39
S2	Stratton Business Park landscaping	S12	Great North Cycleway
S3	Stratton Business Park expansion	S13	Langford Wind Farm access provision
S4	BW49	S14	Dunton Lane
S5	FP39 & BW48	S15	A1(M)
S6	FP49 & BW52	S16	Eastcoast Mainline / Holmegreen Level Crossing
S7	Dunton Lane Balancing Reservoir	S17	Langford Road
S8	Holme Green Woodland	S18	BW 57
S9	The Lakes Recreation Ground	S19	Stratton Business Park extension landscaping
S10	Biggleswade Rugby Club		



Fig 12 – Biggleswade South ‘inner / urban’ route, key components



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S18	Saxon Gate Pocket Park	S22	FP61
S19	Grassmere Road Recreation	S23	Holmecourt Avenue
	Ground		
S20	The Lakes Recreation Ground	S24	London Road
S21	'Old' Dunton Lane	S25	FP45

12.1 Existing green spaces within Biggleswade South

12.1.1 S1 - Linear Wood South Extension

This small parcel of land (approx 0.5 ha) bordering Dunton Lane is currently 'derelict' and has no public access, although FP39 passes along its eastern boundary

Proposal:

- ❖ Planting this parcel of land with trees will link the existing trees of the Linear woods to the north with the shelter belt planting around the north, east and south sides of the Stratton Business Park.

12.1.2 S2 - Stratton Business Park Landscaping

12.1.2.1 A landscaped shelter belt of trees provides a measure of screening of the existing Stratton Business Park from the north, east and south. Planted in the early 1990's the screening effect will continue to develop as the trees mature. Averaging 20m wide, the entire tree belt measures over 2km in

length. The Green Wheel corridor could utilise FP39 which passes along/ through approx 800m of the eastern side of the tree belt. FP61/ 39 pass alongside the northern section of the tree belt for approx 400m and will form a link into the Green Wheel.

12.1.2.2 The LDF Site Allocations documents show significant expansion of the Stratton Business Park between Dunton Lane and the A1(M). Such expansion will impact upon the route of the Green Wheel corridor, embedding it within the Business Park, and / or requiring it to be diverted further east and south, around the Business Park. Whichever option is pursued, contributions toward the enhancement/ creation of the Green Wheel in the area should be funded from the development.

Proposed Improvements:

- ❖ Ensure an under-storey of shrubs etc develops within the existing planting to maintain the screening effect.
- ❖ Seek opportunities to widen the existing tree belts to maximise wildlife and amenity benefits.
- ❖ Ensure landscaping and S106 funding from local development make a significant contribution to the creation/ enhancement of the Green Wheel

12.1.3 S19 – Stratton Business Park Extension Landscaping

In anticipation of the expansion of the Stratton Business Park to the south and east, further tree belts have been planted. A block of trees measuring approx 400m x 100m was planted to the south and east of Stratton Farm in approx 2005. A narrower belt of trees measuring approx 400m x 30m was planted parallel to BW57 at the same time. A further belt of trees between Stratton Farm and the A1 measuring 700m with an average width of 50m, was planted in the mid – late 1990's.

Proposed Improvements:

- ❖ Seek to embed the outer-most/ rural rim of the Green Wheel within or alongside the tree belts.
- ❖ Seek opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of the tree belts through appropriate management.
- ❖ Ensure landscaping and S106 funding from local development make a significant contribution to the creation/ enhancement of the Green Wheel

12.1.4 S18 – Saxon Gate Pocket Park

Saxon Gate Pocket Park is a small publicly accessible greenspace located between the 'old' and 'new' Dunton Lanes. It caters for informal recreation including natural play and is popular with dog walkers. Currently it is a 'dead-end' site with a single access point.

Proposed Improvements:



- ❖ Repair/ replace existing damaged infrastructure, including fencing, kissing gate and picnic tables.
- ❖ Seek Highways consent to provide a new access point in SW corner of the site, to create a pedestrian route option for the 'inner' Green Wheel

12.1.5 S19 – Grassmere Road Recreation Ground

This equipped play area is located in a large balancing pond. Although dry for much of the year, and well used by families, it does flood and become muddy in winter. The whole area is mown as amenity grassland.

12.1.6 S20 – The Lakes Recreation Ground

The Lakes recreation ground is dominated by two football pitches which are used by youth league teams. A small amount of play equipment is provided. The majority of the area is mown as amenity grassland with the exception of the corners, which have some tree planting and longer grass. The recreation ground is surrounded by a tall wire fence.

Proposed Improvements:

- ❖ Undertake additional tree/ shrub planting in corners and along edges of recreation ground.
- ❖ Provide cycle stands to promote increased use of the both the Recreation Ground and the Green wheel.

12.2 Potential new green spaces within Biggleswade South

12.2.1 S3 – Stratton Business Park expansion

Secure extended/ additional accessible landscaping around Stratton Business Park expansion

12.2.2 S4 – Bridleway 49

Between the A1(M) and the 'Holme Green Woodland' the Green Wheel corridor follows an east-west PRow along the northern bank of a watercourse. Buffering this watercourse against the surrounding intensively farmed arable fields would benefit wildlife and water quality; and also public amenity. Current excavation works in the north eastern part of this area have created a corridor approximately 10-15m wide along the northern bank of the watercourse. To extend this 'buffer' further west, and also onto the southern side of the watercourse would have significant landscape, wildlife and amenity benefits.

12.3 Primary public access route(s) forming Green Wheel within Biggleswade South

12.3.1 S5 – Footpath 39 and Bridleway 58

These PRoW take the Green Wheel access corridor from Dunton Lane, around the edge of the existing Stratton Business Park to the A1. This route, although currently being the obvious 'outer' option, may be incorporated in access provision within an expanded Business Park. While this route and associated links will be a benefit to employees of the Business Park who live locally, recreational users will require a more rural route around the extended development.

12.3.2 S18 – Bridleway 57

Bridleway 57 could be utilised to create a further 'outer route' to pass to the east of the anticipated future expansion of Stratton Business Park. This option will require the creation of new PRoW both in the north (adjacent to Dunton Lane, linking the Linear Woods to BW57) and in the south (linking BW57 to the A1).

12.3.3 S6 - FP49 then BW40 and BW52

The PRoW provide the Green Wheel access corridor from the A1 in the east, across the Eastcoast Mainline to Langford Road in the west.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Upgrade FP49 to Bridleway or Cycleway status.

12.3.4 S21 – 'Old' Dunton Lane

An 'inner' route option linking Linear Wood South to London Road.

12.3.5 S22 – Footpath 61

An alternative 'inner' route option linking Dunton Lane to London Road/ Holmecourt Avenue.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Upgrade FP61 to Bridleway or Cycleway status.
- ❖ Undertake scrub clearance to maintain access corridor; and improve path surface.

12.3.6 S23 – Holmecourt Avenue

This wide residential road has been identified as an in-town cycle route and consequently has recently has cycleway road markings painted onto the carriageway. Pavements are also present on both sides of the road.

12.3.7 S25 – Footpath 45

This path links Holmecourt Avenue to BW40 at Windermere Drive via Derwent Avenue.



Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Upgrade FP45 to Bridleway or Cycleway status.

12.4 Other Green Wheel assets within Biggleswade South

12.4.1 S7 - Dunton Lane Balancing Reservoir

The primary function of the pit is a flood balancing pond designed to take run-off water from surrounding land and Stratton Park Business Park. The site was designed and planted to benefit wildlife and features include trees and shrubs, grasses and wildflowers, aquatic and marginal wetland plants. It is an important site for wintering wildfowl and rare breeding birds. Subsequent management has steered habitat development to maximise biodiversity, without compromising its primary function. Archaeological investigation in advance of construction of the reservoir revealed the remains of prehistoric and Roman settlements.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ The construction of a gravel beach to improve the breeding habitat for Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers, whilst not compromising the flood retention function of the site (a corresponding volume could be excavated out of the permanently wet part).
- ❖ Appropriate management and successional extension of surrounding tree planting to improve diversity and structure.
- ❖ Consider whether Public Bridleway access should continue along used route, or be directed onto actual route of PRow, closer to the balancing pond.
- ❖ Consider opportunities for interpretation of the historic environment

12.4.2 S8 - 'Holme Green Woodland'

This woodland, estimated to have been planted in the 1980s measures approx 4 ha. Although there is no public access within the woodland, key Green Wheel PRows, BW40 and FP49, pass along its western and northern boundaries. In addition to the north west of the woodland is an area of grassland measuring approx 0.75ha which is currently used informally by walkers and motorbikes.

Proposed Improvements:

- ❖ Consideration should be given to the appropriate use and management of this area. Options include extending the woodland, managing the grassland for wildflowers or formalising recreational use

12.4.3 S9 - The Lakes Recreation Ground

The Lakes Recreation Ground comprises of x2 football pitches and a small area of children's play provision. The football pitches are used by youth teams at weekends, but are freely available to the wider public at other times.

12.4.4 S10 - Biggleswade Rugby Club

Biggleswade Rugby Club is based on the western side of Langford Road, with 3 pitches and a club house. In recent years, additional pitches have been used on land to the east of Langford Road, immediately to the north of BW52.

12.5 Green Wheel linkages to / from Biggleswade South

12.5.1 S11 – Footpath 61/39

These PRow pass alongside the northern section of the tree belt, creating a link to London Road, Stratton Business Park and the Retail Park (currently subject to a Planning Application for major redevelopment)

12.5.2 S12 – Great North Cycleway (GNC)

The GNC (NCN Route 12) passes north-south through the Biggleswade South Section of the Green Wheel. Northwards, the GNC uses BW40 to lead into Biggleswade Town Centre. This Bridleway, between Holme Green Crossing and the A1(M) will undergo surfacing improvements as part of the access improvement planning conditions associated with the Langford Wind Farm. Southwards, the route of the GNC uses BW40/ 9 to lead to Langford and Henlow.

12.5.3 S13 - Langford Wind Farm Access Provision

In addition to the surfacing improvements to BW40, access provision associated with the Wind Farm include a new Bridleway from Edworth Road to link with BW52; and a permissive Bridleway / Canter Track circuit to the south east of the Holme Green Woodland, linking with the Green Wheel corridor and BW40 at its western end. This permissive route is open for all users – pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

12.5.4 S18 – BW 57 (and BW39 and wider PRow network)

The wider PRow network to the east and south provides opportunities for access into the more rural countryside of East Beds. In particular, the Bridleways provide opportunities for horseriders which do not exist to the west of Biggleswade due to the barriers created by the River Ivel and the road and rail links.



12.6 Missing links/ barriers to the Green Wheel within Biggleswade South

12.6.1 S14 - Dunton Lane

Dunton Lane is the only access route into Biggleswade from the south east and is a reasonably busy road. The Green Wheel corridor crosses Dunton Lane immediately to the east of the Dunton Lane roundabout, using dropped kerbs and a refuge in the centre of the road. With a 30mph restriction, the presence of the roundabout to the west and a tight 'S bend' 100m to the east, traffic is relatively slow moving at this location. To the north, the newly surfaced paths though the linear Wood link to the Kings Reach Linear park and to the south FP39 and BW58 take the Green Wheel around the edge of the Stratton Business Park to the A1.

The provision of an outer-most rim to the east of the proposed extension to the Stratton Business Park will require the creation of a new access link parallel to and south of Dunton Lane, to link FP39 and BW57.

12.6.2 BW57 – A1

A new PRow linking BW57 in the east and the A1 in the west will be required, passing through or adjacent to the woodland belts (S19) that have planted to accommodate the expansion of the Stratton Business Park.

12.6.3 S15 - A1(M)

The A1(M) forms the single greatest obstacle to the entire Green Wheel corridor. A major Trunk Road, it is busy and fast. On the southbound eastern side of the dual carriageway, BW58 meets the highway 240m south of the Biggleswade South (Homebase) roundabout; and terminates at the hard shoulder. On the northbound western side of the dual carriageway, FP49 meets the highway 80m south of the Biggleswade South roundabout; and terminates in the central reservation.

Proposed Improvement:

- ❖ Work on a new roundabout was due to commence in autumn 2012, but the current design does not allow for any pedestrian/ cycle access. In the longer term, seek for pedestrian and cycle access to be incorporated within junction enhancement works; either at grade or with a new bridge.

12.6.4 A1 – Holmegreen

A crossing of the A1 south of the Apple Green filling station to align with the new PRow required to link BW57 to the A1, will also require a new PRow link on the western side of the A1. Linking with the existing PRow network further to the west of the A1, this new PRow would link the A1 crossing to the Green Wheel and the Great North Cycleway at Holme Green Wood.

12.6.5 S16 - Eastcoast Mainline/ Holmegreen Level Crossing

Using BW52 the Green Wheel corridor crosses the Eastcoast Mainline at the Holmegreen Level Crossing. This crossing has good sight lines and lit warnings and as such is as safe as a level crossing can be. Ideally, the level crossing should be replaced by a pedestrian/ cycle bridge over the railway line.

Proposed Improvement:

- ❖ Replace Holmegreen level crossing with a pedestrian/ cycle bridge.

12.6.6 S17 - Langford Road

The Sheepwalk (BW52) meets Langford Road opposite the entrance to Biggleswade Rugby Club and Squash Club; approx 125m south of the Southill Road turning to Holme Mills. Langford Road has a 60mph speed limit at this location, but sight lines are reasonable. A narrow pavement is present along the western side of Langford Road to the Southill Road turning, but no pavements exist along Southill Road until the tight bends at Holme Mills.

12.6.7 S24 – London Road

12.6.7.1 The 'inner' route of the Green Wheel in Biggleswade South requires the crossing of London Road, either north of the Dunton Lane roundabout if using the 'Old Dunton Lane' access option; or south of the Dunton Lane roundabout if using the FP61 option.

12.6.7.2 North of the roundabout, London Road is single carriage way but there is no dedicated crossing point. Crossing of the road would be undertaken near the boundary of the 40mph/ 30mph areas.

12.6.7.3 South of the roundabout, there is a traffic lit crossing of London Road. This section of London Road has a 40mph limit and is due to be upgraded to dual carriageway as part of the redevelopment of the adjacent retail park (likely to be in 2013).

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Ensure that a traffic lit crossing of the new dual carriage way, for use by users of the Green Wheel, is incorporated into design of the new road.

12.7 Delivery Issues – Biggleswade South



12.7.1 The severance issues caused by the presence of the A1(M) make the implementation of the 'outer' route option for Biggleswade South difficult in the short term. The lack of existing funding and the already advanced plans for the redevelopment of the A1(M) Biggleswade South roundabout (which does not allow for pedestrian/ cycle access) require the implementation of the 'inner' route option. However, opportunities should continue to be sought for the provision of a safe crossing of the A1(M) to enable the full, 'outer' route of the Green Wheel to be created.

12.7.2 In responding to current and future opportunities and in providing for both urban fringe/ commuter and rural/ recreational users, it is considered appropriate to pursue both the inner and outer route options.

12.7.2.1 The provision of the inner route between Dunton Lane and BW40 at Windermere Drive will primarily require signage and upgrading of Footpaths to Bridleways or Cycleways.

12.7.2.2 The provision of the outer route options between Dunton Lane and the A1(M) will be achieved in partnership with the promoters of the Stratton Business Park extensions. To the west of the A1, a new PRow linking to the Green Wheel and existing PRow network will need to be created on CBC owned tenanted farmland. To complete the southern section of the Green Wheel a bridge is required over the A1 to safely link these new southern routes for which significant funding will be required. Contributions should be sought from the developers of Stratton Business Park to enable this to happen.

12.7.3 It is considered that in addition to the members of the Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership, the key southern working group stakeholders would include:

- ❖ Beds and River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
- ❖ Representatives of Stratton Business Park
- ❖ London Road Retail Park consortium (LSB Retail Properties PLC and WYG Planning)
- ❖ Highways Agency
- ❖ Network Rail
- ❖ 'Central Farms' (CBC)
- ❖ Private Landowners

Other working group stakeholders could include:

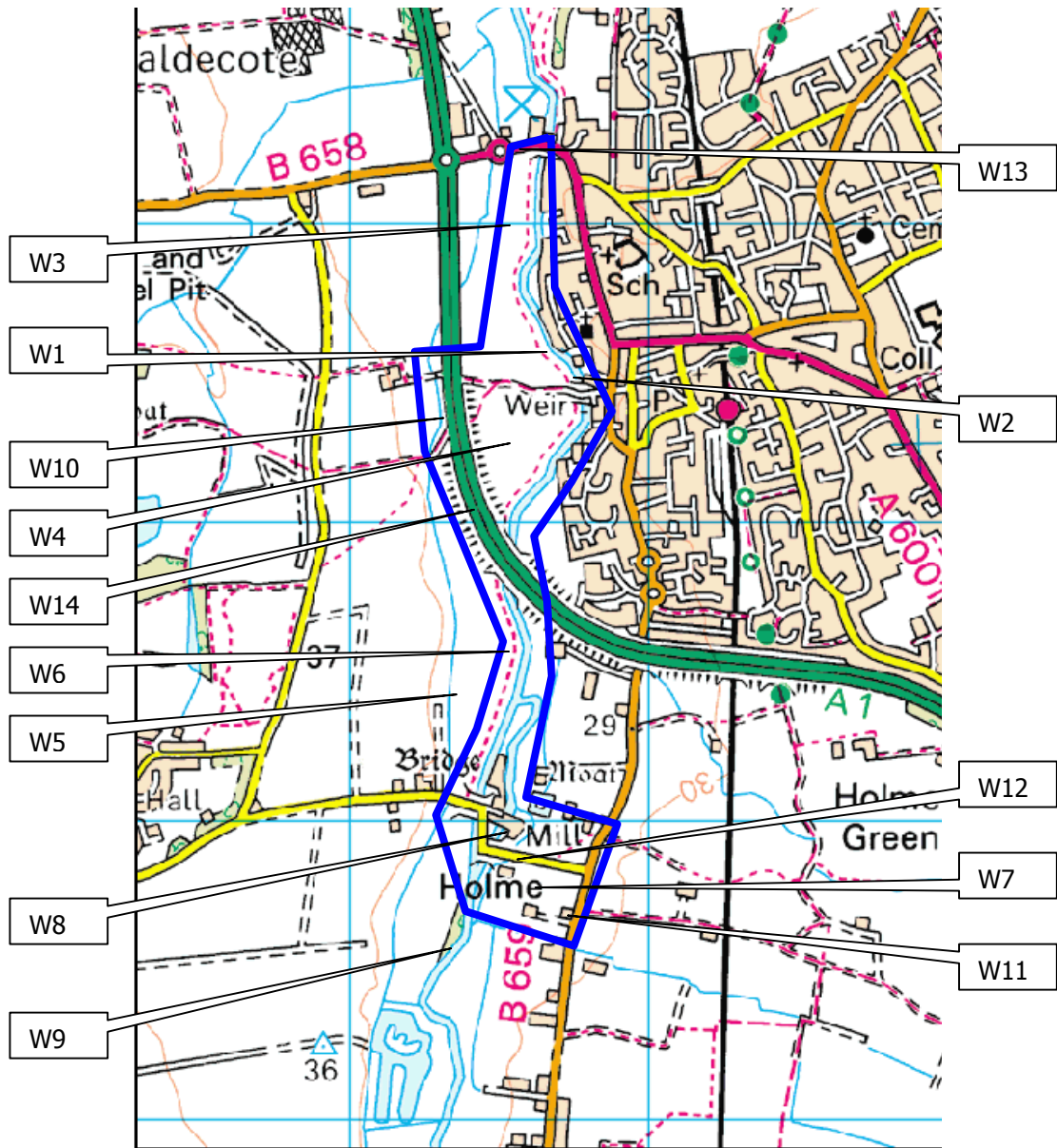
- ❖ The Jordans Ryvita company
- ❖ Biggleswade Town FC
- ❖ Biggleswade RFC
- ❖ Sustrans

13 BIGGLESWADE WEST

This area is bounded by Langford Road in the south and Hill Lane in the north. Utilising the route of the Kingfisher Way (KFW), this section of the Green Wheel measures approximately 2.7km.



Fig 13 – Biggleswade West, key components



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- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| W1 | Franklins Recreation Ground | W8 | Holme Mills Heritage Centre |
| W2 | Biggleswade TC riverside land | W9 | Southward to Langford GI Assets |
| W3 | Back Meadows | W10 | West of A1(M) |
| W4 | Land between River Ivel and A1(M) | W11 | Langford Road |
| W5 | Land west of Holme Mills | W12 | Southill Road |
| W6 | FP21 / KFW Improvement | W13 | Hill Lane |
| W7 | Holme Mills Ridge & Furrow Meadow | W14 | A1(M) |

13.1 Existing green spaces within Biggleswade West

13.1.1 W1 - Franklins Recreation Ground

13.1.1.1 Franklins Recreation Ground is located at the end of Mill Lane, on the western side of the River Ivel. The area measures approx 0.8ha and comprises play equipment for young children and teenagers, surfaced paths and amenity grass within a setting of mature trees. Although close to the River Ivel, they are separated by a concrete flood defence wall and a hedge/fence boundary. FP21 (the KFW) passes between these features. Associated with Franklins Recreation Ground is a small area of amenity grass on the east of the river and to the north of Mill Lane.

13.1.1.2 Together, these are the closest green spaces to Biggleswade town centre (300m away) and could form the basis of a 'Town and Country Park' as well as acting as a major access and information point to the Green Wheel.

13.1.1.3 The Biggleswade Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan (July 2011) identifies the Franklins recreation Ground/ River Ivel area as 'Key Area 5'. The Masterplan identifies a number of proposed improvements for accessing the area from the town centre; and also highlights the integration of the site into the Green Wheel.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Seek to enhance the 'parkland' feel of the recreation ground with additional specimen tree planting
- ❖ Provide additional seating and picnic benches
- ❖ Seek to extend existing park to south, west and north to make a 'Town and Country Park'.
- ❖ Install an Information Point and improve signage for accessing the site and riverside path from the town centre.
- ❖ Consider segregating cycling and pedestrian access, with creation of new cycle route around the western boundary of Franklins Recreation Ground and the Harris Fairground site.

13.1.2 W2 – Biggleswade Town Council owned riverside land

BTC own a narrow strip of land on the western bank of the River Ivel. This land has been subject to minor tree planting and carries the surfaced route of the KFW (FP21).

13.1.3 W3 - Back Meadows

The Back Meadows are owned and managed by the FRBC, but do not form part of Biggleswade Common. FP21/ KFW has been surfaced in recent years, to complete the surfacing of a pedestrian route from Hill Lane south to Holme Mills. Although the Back Meadows do not have any other rights of access, their location, landscape value and management as a riverside grazing meadow make them an asset to the Green Wheel. An easy access path compliments the short flight of steps which link the Hill Lane pavement to the kissing gate entrance to the Back Meadows.



13.2 Potential new green spaces within Biggleswade West

13.2.1 W4 - Land units between the River Ivel and the A1(M).

A number of small units of land lie between the western edge of Biggleswade and the A1(M). In addition to Franklins Recreation Ground and the Harris' Fairground compound there are 13 fields; some managed as arable farmland, some as grazing pastures and some are currently set-aside or unmanaged. The extension of the existing Franklins Recreation Ground into some or all of these fields would enable the creation of a 'Town and Country Park' as well as acting as a major access and information point to the Green Wheel.

This area also contains a medieval ringwork and bailey Scheduled Monument as well as remains of earlier settlement which extend beyond the designated site.

13.2.2 W5 - Land west of Holme Mills

To the west of the River Ivel, between Holme Mills and the A1(M) lie two arable fields. These fields have the potential to contribute to the Biggleswade Green Wheel through the creation of a linear public access route along their eastern boundary, running parallel to the existing KFW/FP21 on the opposite side of the boundary hedge. This route could be either a new cycleway to compliment the existing FP21 or a bridleway replacing FP21 which is becoming narrow through erosion of the riverbank.

Further west, the restoration of the Broom Quarry Extension will deliver public access (pedestrian) along a shallow valley landform with a stream and series of ponds running north to south through marshy grassland with floristic grassland margins; and a linear belt of broadleaf woodland planting along the western, southern and northern boundaries.

13.3 Primary public access route(s) forming Green Wheel within Biggleswade West

13.3.1 W6 - FP21 / KFW Improvement

13.3.1.1 The Kingfisher Way follows the riverside footpath from Holme Mills to Hill Lane. The southern-most section, from Holme Mills to the A1(M) was surfaced with crushed stone in the 1990's. With erosion of the riverbank and encroachment of the hedge/ vegetation, this path has become very narrow. The path is very popular, both with walkers and cyclists (although this use is unauthorised) and will become even more popular with the opening of the Holme Mills Heritage Centre.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Upgrade the status of the path to allow cycle access
- ❖ Widening of path, or creation of a parallel path to the west of the existing path/ hedge line

13.3.1.2 Between the A1(M) and Mill Lane, the path is surfaced in various materials (from grass to crushed stone to tarmac). Immediately north of the A1(M) the path is narrow, but widens towards Mill Lane.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Upgrade the status and width of the path to allow cycle access

13.3.1.3 North of Mill Lane the path follows the riverbank on sections of crushed stone and tarmac surfacing. Passing the Fairground storage site the path is narrow between the river and a tall fence, before widening as the path heads northwards toward the grazed Back Meadows and Hill Lane.

Proposed improvements:

- ❖ Upgrade the status and width of the path to allow cycle access

13.4 Other Green Wheel assets within Biggleswade West

13.4.1 W7 - Holme Mills Ridge and Furrow Meadow

The field to the south of Southill Road is a Ridge and Furrow field which is grazed and managed as a wildflower meadow. Although not publicly accessible, it adds to the landscape, archaeology and wildlife value of the Green Wheel corridor.

13.4.2 W8 – Holme Mills Heritage Centre

A visitor centre is being built adjacent to the mill building, made famous by its appearance on Jordans cereal packets. The Mill and its grounds are being restored and developed as an educational facility to preserve and exhibit the unique 19th century roller mill. The Heritage Centre aims to become one of the leading rural visitor attractions in Bedfordshire, and to re-connect consumers with how their food is produced.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Provide 'information point' as this is a major access point to the Green Wheel

13.5 Green Wheel linkages to / from Biggleswade West

13.5.1 W9 - South to Langford GI assets; link with Broom Quarry South

13.5.1.1 To the south of Holme Mills, the official route of the Kingfisher Way is along Southill Road, Langford Road and Mill Lane Langford. However, most walkers use an unofficial path along the eastern bank of the River Ivel. As part of the Broom Quarry South permission, a legal agreement exists to provide a Public Footpath along the western bank of the River Ivel and the northern bank of the River Ivel Navigation Channel, linking Holme Mills and Stanford Lock. The creation of this new footpath is linked to the phased quarrying at Broom South. It is currently anticipated that the path should be in place sometime in 2015. In addition to this footpath, a footbridge over the



River Ivel onto the land to the north of Mill Meadow, Langford, is to be provided. This parcel of land, currently known as 'Langford Riverside' is owned by CBC and is to be managed for public benefit. To facilitate the provision of this bridge, the status of the access path between this land and Mill Lane is to be determined and formalised if required. The Broom Quarry South legal agreement secures further rights of way enhancements across Broom South that will link Stanford and Broom villages to the River Ivel footpath and Green Wheel.

13.5.1.2 To the south of Mill Lane, and on the western side of the River Ivel is a corridor of publicly accessible GI assets, including Langford Meadows and Henlow Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Baulk Wood.

Proposed Improvements:

- ❖ Ensure Broom Quarry South planning conditions relating to access provision are implemented.
- ❖ Secure necessary consents to enable provision of footbridge over the River Ivel at 'Langford Riverside'.
- ❖ Seek to purchase additional land between Henlow Common and the River Ivel to extend and enhance the accessible green space corridor
- ❖ Seek to enhance off-road pedestrian links from Broom to Holme Mills/ new Public Footpath

13.5.2 W10 - West – over A1

13.5.2.1 To the west of Franklins Recreation Ground are a number of fields (W4) which are bounded by the A1(M) on the west and the River Ivel/ built edge of the town on the east. Two options currently exist to provide access to the west of the A1(M):

- ❖ FP23/ FP1, an at-grade crossing of the dual carriageway;
- ❖ BW22/ BW3, an at-grade crossing of the dual carriageway

13.5.2.2 At present, neither of these routes are ideal. To the west of the A1(M) the local RoW network provide access to the restored lakes of Broom Quarry and further west, the range of attractions and facilities at Shuttleworth, including the Shuttleworth Collection, Bird of Prey Centre, Swiss Garden, Jubilee Play Centre and Shuttleworth College.

13.5.2.3 In recent times, a permissive path utilised flood tunnels beneath the A1 to provide east – west access, but use of these is no longer encouraged due to safety issues.

Proposed Improvements:

- ❖ Provision of safer access over the A1(M) (see W14)

13.6 Missing links/ barriers to the Green Wheel within Biggleswade West

13.6.1 W11 - Langford Road

The Sheepwalk (BW52) meets Langford Road opposite the entrance to Biggleswade Rugby Club and Squash Club; approx 125m south of the Southill Road turning to Holme Mills. Langford Road has a 60mph speed limit at this location, but sight lines are reasonable. A narrow pavement is present along the western side of Langford Road to the Southill Road turning, but no pavements exist along Southill Road until the tight bends at Holme Mills.

13.6.2 W12 – Southill Road

No pavements exist along Southill Road from its junction with Langford Road until the tight bends at Holme Mills.

Linked to the development of the Holme Mills Heritage Centre, pedestrian access from the bus stop on Langford Road to Holme Mills is being enhanced. It is believed that the Public Footpath is being realigned and extended to follow the field-edge from Langford Road to the existing pavement by the weir.

Proposed improvement:

- ❖ Investigate provision of cycle access along grass verge on south side of Southill Road.

13.6.3 W13 - Hill Lane

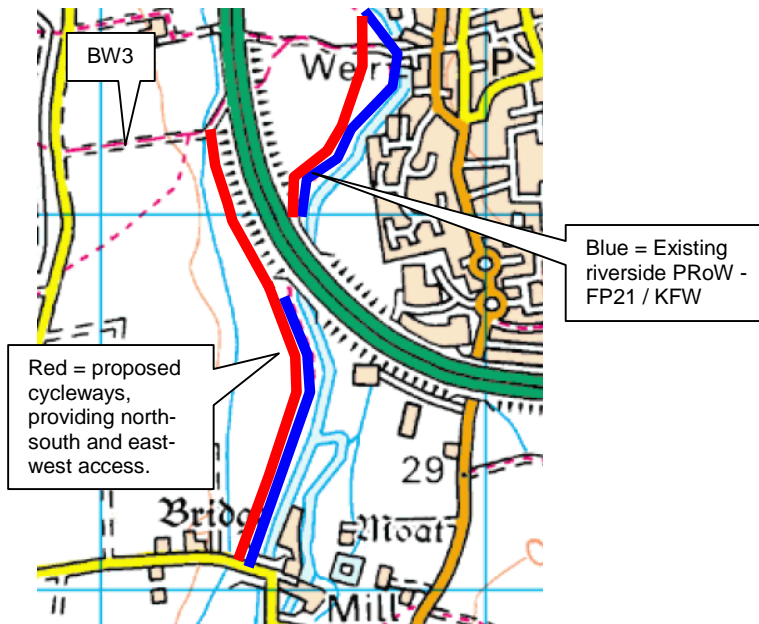
Hill Lane is the main route into the north of the town from the A1 and as such is a busy road. To the north, FP18 follows the eastern bank of the River Ivel through the Dan Albone Picnic Area and onto Shortmead Common; to the south FP21 follows the western bank of the River Ivel towards Mill Lane and Franklins Mill. There are pavements on both the north and south sides of Hill Lane which aid safe crossing; although with the bend in the road as Hill Lane becomes Shortmead Street, care must be taken as sight lines are short.

13.6.4 W14 – A1(M)

Although FP21 (KFW) passes beneath the A1(M) on the riverside path, this only currently allows for pedestrians. Although already popular with cyclists, there is insufficient width, either south or north of the A1(M) to upgrade the footpath to bridleway or cycleway. Consequently, consideration is to be given to creating a new bridleway or cycleway. Fig 14 below identifies potential route alignments which would enable the western section of the Green Wheel to cater for cyclists as well as pedestrians. In addition, an additional spur around the south west bank of the A1(M) would create a link between the riverside path and BW3. Although not a direct route, this would at least provide a safe link west from Biggleswade, removing the need to cross the A1(M).



Fig 14: Holme Mills to Mill Lane proposed cycle provision.



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13.7 Delivery Issues – Biggleswade West

13.7.1 This section of the Green Wheel already exists for pedestrians. To cater for cyclists, significant works are required to create new paths and upgrade existing paths. The required works are dominated by the need to provide safe cycle access between Holme Mills and Mill Lane and will entail landowner negotiations, legal processes to create access paths and securing funding.

13.7.2 It is considered that in addition to the members of the Biggleswade Green Wheel Partnership, the key western working group stakeholders would include:

- ❖ The Jordans Ryvita Company
- ❖ Environment Agency
- ❖ Shuttleworth Estate
- ❖ Southill Estate
- ❖ Private Landowners
- ❖ Fen Reeves of Biggleswade Common (Back Meadows)

Other working group stakeholders could include:

- ❖ Angling Club
- ❖ Sustrans

14 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MILESTONES

It should be noted that the years provided in the table below are indicative target dates only. Timescales for individual items may be brought forward or put back as opportunities or delivery issues arise.

It should also be acknowledged that additional and / or alternative opportunities may arise to enable the delivery of the Green Wheel. Consequently, the table below will be periodically updated to reflect these changes.

	2013	2014 & 2015	2016 +
A. Legal Issues and associated physical works. [1]	<p>A.1 Seek to create a Cycleway parallel to existing Kingfisher Way footpath from Holme Mills to Mill Lane. To include a link to BW3 west of the A1(M).</p> <p>A.2 Kings Reach footpath to the east of the Eastern Relief Road – seek to amend S106 agreement to ensure the remaining length of path yet to be created is widened to 2.5m; and if possible, to wider the section already created.</p> <p>A.3 Upgrade status of footpaths on ‘inner rim’ from Dan Albone Car Park – Shortmead Crossing – Potton Road to bridleway or cycle path.</p> <p>A.4 Seek to create Bridleway/ Cycleway from entrance of Shortmead Common to Fairfield Road.</p> <p>A.5 CBC to negotiate with landowner for creation of a PRoW or replacement permissive path for Kingfisher Way from Shortmead Common to New Road Sandy.</p> <p>A.6 Determine and formalise the status of the ‘Langford Riverside’ path</p>	<p>A.13 Create new public access link from the north west corner of the Jubilee Wood to the Kings Reach Linear Park.</p> <p>A.14 Seek to upgrade FP21 from Mill Lane to Hill Lane to allow cycle access</p> <p>A.15 Explore feasibility of permitting cycle access on an ‘outer’ route on Biggleswade Common</p> <p>A.16 Ensure Broom Quarry South legal agreement conditions relating to access provision are implemented.</p> <p>A.17 Seek to upgrade FP49 between the A1(M) and Eastcoast Mainline to allow cycle use.</p> <p>A.18 Seek upgrade of FP61 (Dunton Lane to London Rd to bridleway/ cycleway.</p>	<p>A.20 Explore feasibility of creating a small car park at the Potton Road entrance to the Common</p> <p>A.21 Dunton Lane – look to upgrade a public footpath to provide bridle/ cycle link to the PRoW network to the south east</p> <p>A.22 Legal Orders for Phase 2 of excluded area definitive map.</p>



	<p>and secure necessary consents to enable provision of footbridge over the River Ivel by Tarmac.</p> <p>A.7 Seek to create cycleway on diverted Footpath between Langford Road and Holme Mills. If not possible, investigate provision of cycle access along grass verge on south side of Southill Road.</p> <p>A.8 Saxon Gate Pocket Park – seek Highways consent to create a new access point in SW corner of the site to create a pedestrian route option for the ‘inner’ Green Wheel.</p> <p>A.9 Ensure Broom Quarry Extension legal agreement conditions relating to access provision are implemented.</p> <p>A.10 Legal Orders for Phase 1 of excluded area definitive map.</p>	<p>A.19 Seek upgrade of FP45 – Holmecourt Ave to BW40 at Hawesmere Drive to bridleway/ cycleway</p>	
	<p>A.11 Continually lobby for safe east-west access over A1(M) to south of Biggleswade.</p> <p>A.12 Continually lobby for bridges to replace level crossings at Shortmead and Holme Green crossings.</p>		
<p>B. Access Improvements (not requiring legal consents) [2]</p>	<p>B.1 Create surfaced link from the north of Linear Wood North to the surfaced path in the Linear Park.</p> <p>B.2 London Road – ensure that a traffic lit crossing, for users of the green wheel’ is included in the design of the new dual carriageway – ideally at end of FP61.</p> <p>B.3 Enhance FP61 between Dunton Lane</p>	<p>B.5 Kingfisher Way - Improve accessibility of Kingfisher Way footbridge from north end of Shortmead Common. Remove squeeze stiles & install additional fencing/ gates if reqd.</p> <p>B.6 FP17 (cattle arch beneath Eastcoast</p>	<p>B.10 Surface route of GNC across Shortmead Common to improve accessibility</p>

	<p>and London Road by improving path surface and undertaking scrub clearance to maintain access corridor.</p> <p>B.4 Install Green Wheel signage on completed sections.</p>	<p>mainline): Enhance access structures and path surfacing whilst maximising headroom</p> <p>B.7 Franklins Recreation Ground – improve signage for accessing the site and riverside path from the town centre.</p> <p>B.8 Franklins Recreation Ground – consider segregating cycling and pedestrian access, with creation of new cycle route around the western boundary of the recreation ground and the Harris Fairground site.</p> <p>B.9 Dan Albone car park – formalise layout to maximise capacity and enhance landscaping.</p>	
C. Identity and Promotion [3]	<p>C.1 Create Green Wheel identity and branding</p> <p>C.2 Develop web information for CBC, Town Council and Lets Go websites</p>	<p>C.3 Install information points at Dan Albone car park, Holme Mills Heritage Centre and junction of Linear Wood North/ Kings Reach Linear Park.</p> <p>C.4 Improve Kingfisher Way waymarking</p>	<p>C.5 Install information points in Potton Road Common, Furzenhall Common and the Pastures</p>
D. Landscape Improvements [4]	<p>D.1 Creation of a Jubilee Wood adjacent to Stratton Park Farm; planting of a 6.5ha deciduous woodland and a 0.5ha Jubilee Community Orchard</p>	<p>D.7 Franklins Recreation Ground – enhance ‘parkland feel’ with additional specimen tree planting and provide additional</p>	<p>D.13 Holme Green Woodland – consider appropriate use and management of the area; extend woodland, manage grassland for</p>



	<p>D.2 Linear Woods north and south – install benches and informal natural play features</p> <p>D.3 Linear Wood north – additional tree and hedge planting within corridor of land</p> <p>D.4 Linear Wood south – management of trees and ride to maximise biodiversity value</p> <p>D.5 Linear Wood South extension – plant this parcel of land with trees to link the existing trees of the Linear Woods with the shelter belt planting around Stratton Business Park</p> <p>D.6 The Lakes Recreation Ground – provide cycle stands to promote increased use.</p>	<p>seating and picnic benches.</p> <p>D.8 Franklins Recreation Ground - seek to extend existing park to south, west and north to make a 'Town and Country Park'</p> <p>D.9 The Pastures – enhance boundary hedges and fencing to improve appearance and 'welcome' of the site.</p> <p>D.10 Stratton Business Park – seek opportunities to widen existing tree belts and develop an understorey to maximise wildlife and amenity benefits.</p> <p>D.11 The Lakes Recreation Ground – undertake additional tree/shrub planting in corners and along edges.</p> <p>D.12 Dunton Lane Balancing Reservoir – construction of a gravel beach to improve the breeding habitat for Ringed and Little Ringed Plovers.</p>	<p>wildflowers or formalise recreation use.</p> <p>D.14 Seek to extend Furzenhall Common to east of sewage works and south of Furzenhall cottages.</p>
	<p>Stratton Business Park - ensure landscaping and s106 funding from future expansion make a significant contribution to the creation/enhancement of the Green Wheel.</p>		

[1] – to include landowner negotiations and path creation/ diversion/ upgrade etc.

[2] – to include structures, signage and surfacing.

[3] – to include creation of Green Wheel branding, information points and web presence.

[4] – to include recreation, wildlife and landscape enhancements to green spaces around the Green Wheel.

14.1 Achievements to date

- First phase of Kings Reach Linear Park under construction, including the provision of a cycleway and surfacing 630m of FP25.
- Surfacing of 300m path through Linear Wood South.
- Creation and surfacing of 400m path through Linear Wood North.

14.2 Quick wins

The following elements of the Green Wheel are considered achievable within 2013:

- Create surfaced link from the north of Linear Wood North to the surfaced path in the Linear Park
- Seek to create a Cycleway parallel to existing Kingfisher Way footpath from Holme Mills to Mill Lane. To include a link to BW3 west of the A1(M).
- Creation of a Jubilee Wood adjacent to Stratton Park Farm; planting of a 6.5ha deciduous woodland and a 0.5ha Jubilee Community Orchard.
- Linear Woods north and south – install benches and informal natural play features
- Linear Wood north – additional tree and hedge planting within corridor of land



15 FUNDING STATEMENT

This masterplan provides a long term vision for the development of the Biggleswade Green Wheel which will require funding to deliver. Biggleswade Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) are committed to working together to seek opportunities for funding to enable the delivery of the Biggleswade Green Wheel. Those familiar with fundraising will appreciate that it is an ever changing environment, but the following categories have been identified as potential funding opportunities in addition to CBC Capital funds:

15.1 Developer contributions/Section 106/CIL

15.1.1 s106 funds (developer contributions) have already been secured which will be used to deliver some of the priorities identified in the recommendations table in section 14. In addition, the surfacing of the paths in the linear woods to the east of Biggleswade has already been delivered from s106 contributions secured in previous years.

15.1.2 In future, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be applied to new developments within the authority area to fund Green Infrastructure projects. Contributions from this will be sought to continue the delivery of the Green Wheel.

15.2 Local Transport Plan and Local Area Transport Plan

15.2.1 The Local Area Transport Plan for Sandy and Biggleswade has £200k of funding available for spend across the area on transport initiatives in 2014/15. The document is currently being refreshed. Key schemes identified within this Green Wheel masterplan will be submitted for consideration for funding from the LAMP funds.

15.3 External Grants

15.3.1 External grants provide excellent opportunities for the delivery of some aspects of the Green Wheel.

15.3.2 A current potential funding source is 'Paths for Communities (P4C)' which is a funding scheme set up to develop and enhance the network of Public Rights of Way (PROW) in England in order to deliver benefits to predominantly rural areas. Local community partnerships are eligible to bid to the Path for Communities scheme.

15.3.3 The aim of the scheme is to encourage and support local communities to work with land owners to make improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way. In all cases projects must include some element of new Public Right of Way creation. In most cases projects will include an element of new Bridleway creation but projects that include Footpath creation alone will also be considered where community and economic benefit can be demonstrated.

15.3.4 The Paths for Communities scheme is operating over a two year period, ending in May 2014.

16 STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

The draft Biggleswade Green Wheel (BGW) Greenspace Masterplan was subject to public consultation from 16 November 2012 to 28 December 2012. During this time, two consultation events were held (at Biggleswade Library and Saxon Pool & Leisure Centre, with 20 and 7 people attending respectively) and 40 on-line responses were received.

In total 67 people provided their views on the draft Biggleswade Green Wheel Greenspace Masterplan. Of these 58 people (87%) of people strongly agreed or agreed with the long term vision for the BGW. 4 people (6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, 3 people neither agreed nor disagreed and 2 people did not answer. The main reason for disagreeing with the vision was that CBC should be spending their money on more important issues e.g. roads and parking issues.

11 people asked to be sent details of volunteer activities. These people have already been contacted and at least one has already participated in a volunteer task. In addition, 7 of these would like to be part of a user group.

When site specific comments are removed, the vast majority of the other comments fall into the following three areas:

- *A request for greater provision for horse riding – both on the Green Wheel itself and the wider network.* Consideration will be given to the establishment of a horse riding group for the East of the area to identify and progress bridleway connectivity improvements
- *A desire for path segregation for different users – walkers, cyclists and horseriders.* Unfortunately in the majority of cases, the physical space and the budget available are insufficient to enable this to happen. Signage will be used where required to encourage considerate behaviour.
- *Providing sufficient and appropriate information through printed materials and on-site signage and interpretation.* This will be provided as part of the Green Wheel delivery.

Additional responses to the consultation were received from:

- CBC Property Assets, Denison Investments Ltd & Gazeley UK Ltd
- RSPB Sandy

The Biggleswade Green Wheel Greenspace Masterplan has been updated to reflect the comments received during the consultation process. In addition, comments which fall into the remit of Biggleswade Town Council or CBC Rights of Way have been passed to the Town Clerk or the CBC Rights of Way Officer for their consideration/action.

End of Report

