

The Campton & Chicksands GI Plan

Appendix 4: Extended Action Plan

This appendix extends the Action Plan contained within the Campton & Chicksands GI Plan (2019), providing more detailed information on taking the projects forward.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
1	Create a map of the parish showing rights of way, permissive routes and publicly accessible greenspaces (web and noticeboard format).	Campton and Chicksands P3	Parish Council Greensand Trust	Identify potential designer and costs.

This project is the result of many people expressing a desire to know more about what exists in their parish in terms of wildlife and green spaces/access routes. Good practice examples exist elsewhere, e.g. Aspley Guise and Leighton-Linslade. It would be a good project to reinvigorate the P3 group (see project 6 below).

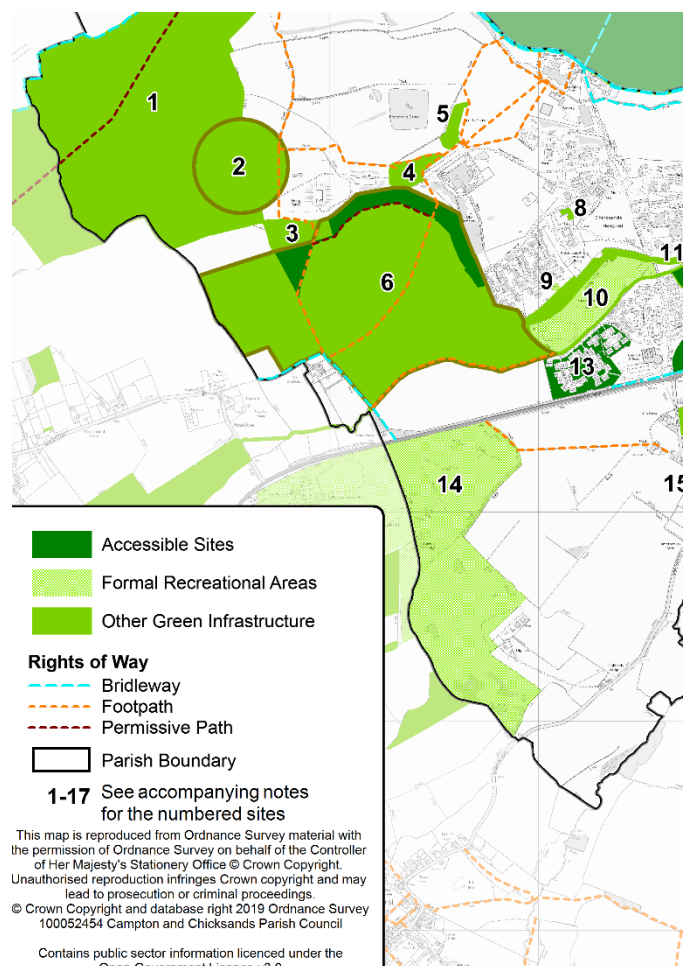
It is suggested that the following process is adopted:

1. Look at other examples and decide on a basic format/style.
2. Decide on whether want as web-only, leaflet and/or interpretation panels at key locations.
3. Approach graphic/interpretation design companies for quotes. The Greensand Trust can supply a list of those previously worked with/producing similar products. The Greenspaces map from the GI Plan can be used as a guide.
4. OS licensing will need to be confirmed. The parish council holds a Public Service Mapping Agreement which potentially covers such use.
5. Seek funding. Possible funders include:
 - a. Central Bedfordshire Council (P3 Co-ordinator – Steve Halton)
 - b. Local companies
 - c. Campton & Chicksands Parish Council
 - d. Landfill Communities Fund (need to determine if in eligible area)
 - e. National Lottery

It is recommended that once costs are known initial approaches are made to all of the above. The Greensand Trust will help write funding bids if required.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
2	Create safer, more attractive and more pleasant foot/cycle access to Sandy Smith Nature Reserve (whilst ensuring nature conservation interests are not harmed).	Campton & Chicksands P3	Parish Council CBC Highways Greensand Trust Landowners	Identify potential routes and liaise with CBC and landowners.

This project arose from local community suggestions to improve access between Chicksands and Sandy Smith Nature Reserve, and to join up the dead-end footpath within SSNR:



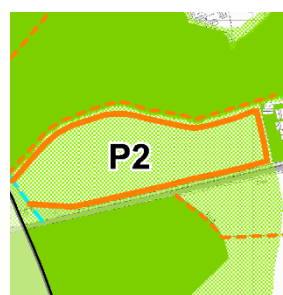
The existing route is a shared pedestrian/cycleway with a tarmac surface, and is flat and easy to access and use. However, it is also immediately adjacent to the fast (National Speed Limit) and busy A507:



Whilst sympathetic to the need for access to high quality green spaces, and including the engagement of people with nature within its objectives, the Greensand Trust (owner of SSNR) would not support any request to connect the dead-end footpath up, due to the likely significant impacts of opening up of easy access to large numbers of people within a short distance. SSNR is managed for, amongst other things, ground nesting birds and small mammals. Significantly increasing the numbers of people accessing the site, including with dogs, would have detrimental impacts and cannot be mitigated. The Trust already experiences issues around managing the impact of dogs on the site. Additionally, the area through which any access connection would be made includes the Victorian sluice system on the River Flit, with associated health and safety issues.

It is recognised that the experience using the existing route is not pleasant. There is nothing between the oncoming traffic and users other than a narrow (c0.5m) strip of grass. Good practice guidance from the Department of Transport suggests that there should be “Careful segregation from heavy traffic” where this is in excess of 2000 vehicles per day”. It goes on to state that “segregated paths adjacent to highways should always be separated by a grass or tree lined verges wide enough to dissipate the stress of traffic and to capture any detritus which otherwise might be flung off the highway into the cycling route”. The 0.5m grass strip does not fulfil this function.

An alternative route to SSNR does not need to utilise the dead-end footpath mentioned above. It could use the land adjacent to the A507, either the narrow belt of trees immediately adjacent to the existing cycleway or the land beyond this. A former rights of way officer has carried out a very brief initial assessment of the tree belt and has suggested that it may be capable of accommodating an access route. Two possible options were identified in the GI Plan, both covered by the map below (illustrated as one route but only part would be required):



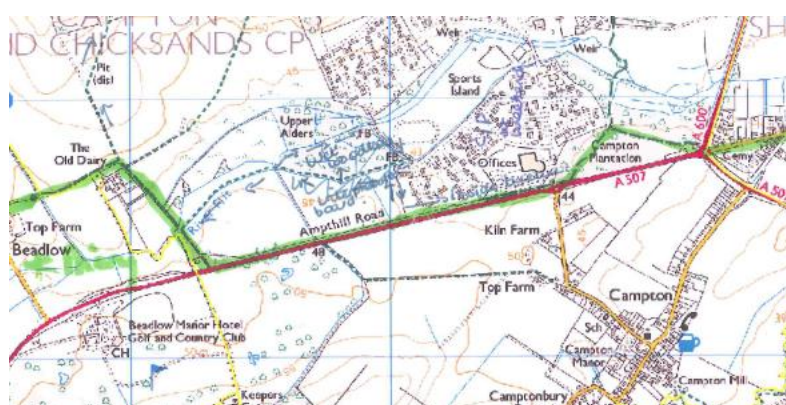
In addition to a 'southern' option following the line of the A507 (either within or inside the tree belt), another option could be to follow the northern edge of the field. Progressing either option is complicated by multiple land ownership in the area in question.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. The preferred alignment is identified;
2. Landowners are approached, via CBC Highways (Rights of Way)
3. Land ownership of the woodland belt is ascertained
4. Further discussions are held with CBC Highways

It is also noted that the current cycleway is identified as part of the proposed Flit Valley Walk, a new strategic promoted route along the River Flit being supported by the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership. Any alternative would also provide a better experience for users of this route in the future. The Development of the Flit Valley Walk is supported in policy terms in the GI Plan (and Neighbourhood Plan) – it is not included as a specific project as it is larger in scope and delivery requirements than a single parish can achieve. The Parish Council will be asked to formally support this project in June 2019, helping raise awareness of the rich heritage of the much overlooked River Flit and its valley.

Proposed Flit Valley Walk route through Campton and Chicksands Parish



It is quite likely that landowners will not be receptive to the creation of a route across their land. While Compulsory Creation Orders can be used by the local authority, this is rare. If this avenue were pursued, then demonstrating that the existing route does not meet current standards will be important. Another outcome might be that it is 'banked' as a project ready for when an appropriate opportunity arises, such as funding (including landowner compensation) as a result of development.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
3	Create strategy to address litter and fly tipping, supporting volunteer activity.	Parish Council	CBC Minerals & Waste/Biffa P3	Discussion with CBC M&W Research examples elsewhere/join up locally.

Litter and fly-tipping have been common issues raised in parish-level GI Plan consultations across the area over recent years. Whilst there is no single solution, creating a strategy for local voluntary action is welcomed.

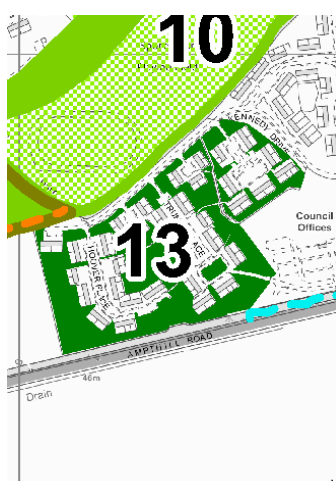
The Greensand Trust has had initial discussions with CBC Minerals and Waste, who are looking to produce guidance for how they could work with local communities and volunteers.

Therefore the next step will be to liaise with CBC (Alexandra.foreman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) to ensure that this guidance is received as soon as it is published and can be used to help generate local strategy and implementation.

Again this could be an area of activity that falls under the P3 'umbrella'.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
4	Create a play area on Chicksands Private Estate	Campton & Chicksands PC	CBC Leisure Annington Housing Local residents	Investigate further with CBC. Collect specific evidence of community support and location and type of facility desired.

The Chicksands Private Estate is a good example of integrating greenspace and housing in many respects, as the map below shows:



However, while the quantity and distribution of green space around the housing is good, it has relatively low functionality – there are no play facilities, trails, public art features or other elements that would engage people better. The estate is home to many families with young

children, but the nearest accessible play facilities are in Campton village (at the Recreation Ground) over the A507 and more than walking distance away for many.

Consultation feedback through the Neighbourhood and GI Plans highlighted the need for play facilities serving this estate.



The Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy (Recreation & Open Space chapter) identifies a distance of 480m (equating to a 10 minute walk) as being the maximum distance residents should have to travel to access play facilities, and provides a quantity guide of 0.11ha per 1000 population. Play England guidance recommends that everyone should have a LAP (Local Area for Play – a ‘doorstep’ facility) within 100m and a LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play – larger facility) within 400m.

Provision in Campton and Chicksands (0.05ha) falls short of the quantity standard set in the Leisure Strategy, and the Chicksands Private Estate also falls outside the distance thresholds and accessibility standards. Measured in a direct line, the nearest facility (Campton Recreation Ground) is well outside at approximately 750m away, but when the actual route to it is measured it is over 1km away (1.05km). The Priory Gate Play Area in Shefford is also over 1km (1.02km) away. **A strong case can therefore be made for provision.**

Next steps:

It is recommended that initial contact is made with CBC:
(lisa.white@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

It would be helpful if further community input is sought to identify the preferred type and location of any proposed facility. Play England’s “Design for Play – A guide to creating successful play spaces” (2008) provides 10 ‘key principles’ that should be taken into account, and these are cited in the Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy. It is recommended that they are followed in this instance:

1. Bespoke – fits with surroundings and enhances the local environment

This is important here because any new provision would need to be created within established green space.

2. Well-located – achieving a balance between seclusion and surveillance
3. Make use of natural elements – including planting, logs etc.

Again this is especially important here for the same reasons as identified in (1) above, as well as the desire to encourage natural play and create opportunities for wildlife.

4. Providing a wide range of play experiences

This will be important as it is unlikely that more than one play space can be created, so ensuring that any facility can cater for a range of ages will be important. See (6) below as well.

5. Accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
6. Allow children of different ages to play together.
7. Build in opportunities to explore risk and challenge
8. Sustainable and appropriately maintained
9. Allow for change and evolution

Allowing some 'slack space' in any design provides an area for future additions, but can be used for children's own imaginative play in the interim.

10. Meets community needs – early and ongoing engagement.

Whilst the need for community engagement is highlighted above, it is recommended that the initial contact is made with CBC (by the parish council) before progressing further. This will define the route forwards. The information collected from the community so far should suffice for these discussions.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
5	Create new greenspace with picnic benches, amenity and wildflower grassland adjacent to River Hit.	Parish Council	P3 Group Greensand Trust	Create outline design Engage landowner Seek funding

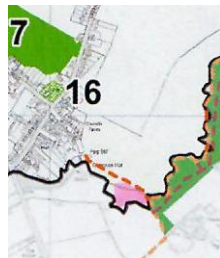
Campton village is relatively short on accessible green spaces. The Recreation Ground is the only one south of the A507, and has to cater for a range of uses, including sports, dog walking and play. Because the village is relatively compact and the Rec relatively central, simple accessibility assessment has not highlighted a need for additional accessible green space. The Central Bedfordshire Leisure Strategy does not identify a deficit in quantity because Campton Plantation and part of Chicksands Wood are in the parish, but the latter is at a distant extreme and the former is still some distance from parts of Campton village (it is 850m from the church in the centre of the village). Natural England's ANGSt (Accessible Natural Green Space) Standard recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home. The majority of Campton residents do not have this.

The provision of a new greenspace adjacent to the River Hit, accessible via the footpath from Mill Lane, would not fully meet this need, but would go some way towards helping. It has been advocated by local residents through the Neighbourhood Plan and GI Plan consultation, and can also be linked to another proposed project to 'Move Curly's Bench to the opposite side of the river'. Curly was a former gamekeeper and popular local character

in Campton. A bench dedicated to his memory now sits in a precipitous position on the opposite (Meppershall parish!) bank of the Hit adjacent to an eroding bank:



A potential location for a small 'picnic area' has been identified, see map and photograph below. An adjacent area of farmland has also been identified for a potential waterside meadow. It is acknowledged that both areas are privately owned and the larger area is under agricultural management.



Potential picnic area and wildflower meadow sites



Next steps:

- Ascertain who the landowner is and enter into dialogue, particularly around the potential picnic area, with a view to it potentially being passed to the parish council.
- Carry out a site survey and safety assessment of the trees in this area to identify potential works required before encouraging public access, options for increasing habitat value (limited by size) and ongoing management requirements.
- Identify potential funding streams, including planning obligations/s106 and external grant funding.
- Identify potential volunteers to help look after the site, including through P3.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
6	Recruit new volunteers to the P3 group and give them a boost	P3	Parish Council CBC Countryside Access Greensand Trust Council for Voluntary Services	Hold event to gauge potential interest, provide information and engage potential new members.

The parish has an existing 'P3' (People, Projects, Partnerships) group, but membership is low. P3 groups historically helped look after the rights of way network in a parish (originally it was the 'People Paths Partnership') but their remit in Central Bedfordshire expanded to cover projects and sites.

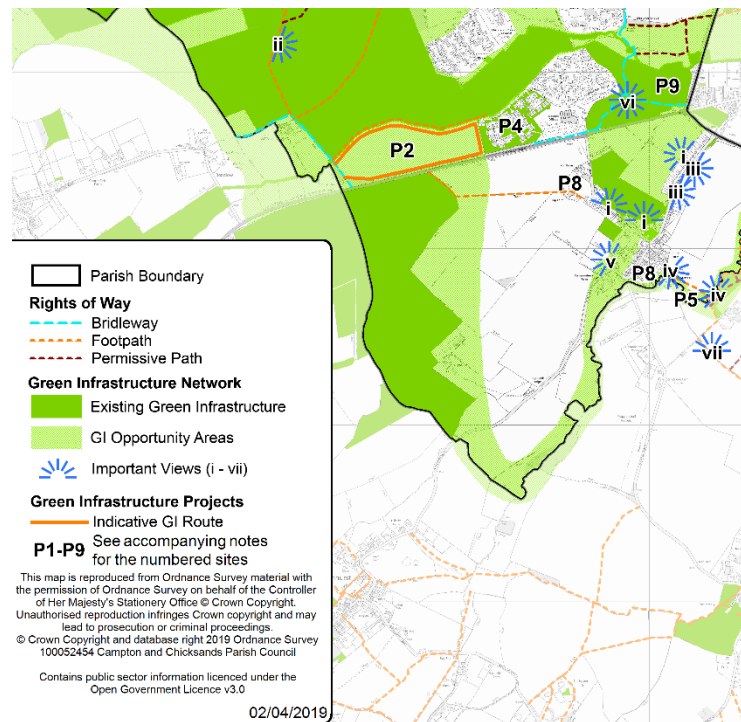
Neighbourhood and GI Plan consultation suggests there is a potential appetite for increasing local voluntary action in the environment in the parish, but translating this into action will still be a challenge.

Central Bedfordshire Council employs an officer whose remit includes the support of P3 groups (steve.halton@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) so the suggested next steps are:

- Contacted Steve Halton for ideas and support
- Identify an event or activity that could bring P3 to a wider audience and encourage participation
- Identify key individuals to help organise meetings and activities
- Liaise with nearby P3 groups (e.g. Haynes) to identify potential activities and projects.

Project No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
7	Place benches where there are attractive views & landscape	Parish Council	P3 Greensand Trust	Key views already identified – good starting point. Investigate funding – grants and donations. Could make one project with a theme – build on sculptural themes in Campton Plantation.

As the GI Plan initially identified, the 'Favourite Views' in the parish have already been identified:



- i. Views across the Glebe Fields
- ii. Views at Sandy Smith Nature Reserve
- iii. Views from Campton looking south-east across open farmland towards the clay hills
- iv. Views from/down Mill Lane
- v. Views west from Priory Road across open fields
- vi. Views within Campton Plantation
- vii. Views from area south of parish overlooking Campton

This list is an excellent start point but doesn't have to be considered exclusive.

A decision would need to be taken early on as to the scope of this project – widening it to create a theme, perhaps incorporating public art/interpretation of the landscape could make it into a broader based, more engaging project with greater appeal to potential funders and supporters. The sculptures project in Campton Plantation sets a good precedent.

Again, this could be an excellent project for a reinvigorated P3 group (although care must be taken not to overwhelm it!).

Next steps:

- Scope out the project
- Identify key locations and engage landowners and CBC Highways
- Cost project and seek funding.

Proj. No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
8	More dog waste bins – e.g. top of Mill Lane, Top End Farm	Parish Council	CBC	Contact CBC

In addition to community ‘demand’ expressed through the Neighbourhood Plan and GI Plan consultation, it will be important to collect evidence to support these proposals. ‘Counts’ of dog mess/discarded bags at specific locations (popular dog walking routes close to the village) over a period of months with photographs will help demonstrate the need.

Discarded dog waste bags adjacent to Mill lane footpath



Such evidence can also be used to encourage other action, such as patrols by a dog warden. Resources for this are extremely limited, so evidence is crucial. If waste bins are to be provided it may be necessary for the parish to contribute to costs.

The next step once evidence is collected should be for the Parish Council to formally contact Central Bedfordshire Council.

Proj. No.	Project	Potential Project Lead	Potential Project Partners	Suggested Next Steps
9	Create a Forest School area in Campton Plantation	P3	CBC Countryside Access Local schools/pre-school (adjacent) Greensand Trust	Discuss principle with CBC Identify preferred location through consultation with schools/pre-school.

According to the Forest Schools Association, a “Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees”. For further information see: <https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>

In many ways Campton Plantation is an excellent location for a Forest School site. There is a lower school and pre-school located on its doorstep, and other schools nearby in Shefford (although needing to cross the busy A507). It has a good network of paths and is large enough to accommodate a Forest School area easily. At the Walking Workshop in March 2019 possible locations were looked at.

Potential Forest School locations:

Old quarry close to Pre-school



Natural clearing



It will be necessary to get professional input on the design criteria for a Forest School area (e.g. via the Forest School Association) but looking at examples locally will be useful – e.g. Ampthill Park Forest School Area created through its HLF Parks for People project. The Greensand Trust has also created bespoke areas for educational use at Rushmere Country Park – although not specifically for ‘Forest School’ branded activities these areas share many of the same features (Erika.pratt@greensandtrust.org).

There will be ongoing resourcing requirements, but if a project is supported by key volunteers locally at least some of these can be overcome.

Before taking this project further there are two key steps to take:

1. Confirm that there is enough local demand to warrant the creation of a bespoke Forest School area. Discuss with Chicksands Lower School and adjacent pre-school;
2. Discuss with CBC Countryside Access Team – the land owner and manager - (claire.wardle@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) highlighting the broad range of objectives such an initiative would help meet (e.g. Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2031).

If either of these steps does not meet with the support required then a re-think will be needed. However, unless specific and valid reasons are presented to the contrary, the wider use of Campton Plantation for learning and engagement should be pursued.