



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL



ENVIRONMENT QUALITY AND OPEN SPACE REPORT 2015-16

Indicator E1: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds

Local Plan 2002 Target: Number and scale of planning permissions gained against advice of utilities companies and other agencies

	Flooding	Water Quality	Total
E1	0	0	0

The Environment Agency was consulted on 78 applications in the monitoring period. Applications where potential objections were raised were the subject of conditions that addressed those concerns.

Core Indicator E2: Change in areas of biodiversity importance (NI197)

Local Target: Biodiversity Action Plan targets

Progress:

Date of Change	Site Change Occurred	Type of Change	Comment	Area of change
November 2015	Quest Pit CWS	New site	A new site was designated due to its importance as the last active brick pit in Bedfordshire.	688000 sqm

Bedford Borough has 126 Local Sites (local wildlife sites and local geological sites) in the borough. These are non-statutory sites that are locally designated for their significant nature conservation value. 63 of these sites are in positive management, which equates to 50%.

Year	Number of Local Sites	% in positive management
2009/10	124	51

2010/11	122	57
2011/12	123	57
2012/13	124	58.06
2013/14	125	56.8
2014/15	125	53.2
2015/16	126	50

Source: Beds and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre on behalf of the County Wildlife Site Panel.

Indicator E3: Percentage of land in nationally important wildlife sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) which are in favourable condition

Progress:

Land designated SSSI – 166.73 hectares

SSSI in:

- Favourable condition – 51.64ha (30.97%)
- Unfavourable recovering – 115.09ha (69.03%)

All SSSI designated land in the borough assessed as being in unfavourable condition, is considered to be recovering. According to the Natural England website, assessments of SSSIs are conducted on a 6 year cycle. The latest assessment was conducted at Yelden Meadows in May 2014 (outside the monitoring period). Information on the other SSSIs in the borough dates from 2008 to 2012.

SSSI site	Main habitat	Size (hectares)	Condition
Biddenham Pit	Earth heritage	0.13 + 0.30	100% favourable (last checked 08/09)
Felmersham Gravel Pits	Standing open water and canals	21.52	100% unfavourable recovering (last checked 08/09)
Hanger Wood	Broadleaved, mixed	21.31 + 2.63	100% favourable

	and yew woodland-lowland		(last checked 2012)
Odell Great Wood	Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland-lowland	18.72 + 13.68 + 31.49 + 22.06	100% unfavourable recovering (last checked 09/10)
Stevington Marsh	Neutral grassland-lowland	4.68 + 2.94	100% unfavourable recovering (last checked 2011)
Swineshead Wood	Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland-lowland	9.01 + 12.85	100% favourable (last checked 2011)
Tilwick Meadow	Neutral grassland-lowland	2.57	100% favourable (last checked 2011)
Yelden Meadows	Neutral grassland-lowland	2.84	100% favourable (last checked 2014)

(Source: Natural England website <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk>, 2015)

Indicator E4: Increase in areas of woodland in the Growth Area

Forest Plan Target: Increase woodland cover in Forest of the Marston Vale Community Forest to 30% by 2030

Progress:

In the monitoring period (2015/16), a further 7ha of new community woodland was created in the Forest of Marston Vale. This saw the planting of a new site at Green End, Kempston Rural, which links to and expands on other woodlands planted in this area, collectively known as Bedford's Green Gateway. With the additional 7ha of planting at Green End, the total area of accessible woodland in the 'Gateway' is around 70ha, together providing an important and strategic 'green wedge' between Wootton and the urban fringe of Kempston.

A total of around 8,000 native trees and shrubs were planted, with around 1,000 people involved in a series of public, school and corporate tree planting events.

Planting activity generally alternates between Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council administrative areas, with the designated Forest of Marston Vale area spanning the boundary lines. During this monitoring period, most activity took place in Bedford Borough, as indicated by the statement above.

(Source: Forest of Marston Vale)

Indicator E5: Securing local standards for open space provision

National Target: Local Authorities must set robust local space standards

Progress:

Under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 Part IV Section 83(1) an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) was declared in Bedford town's centre on 6th November 2009. The order also revoked AQMA 1 for sulphur dioxide (SO₂) following the closure of Stewartby brickworks in February 2008.

The AQMA (known as AQMA 5) covers most of the town centre where the annual mean Objective for NO₂ is widely exceeded. In September 2015 the council fulfilled its part in the Local Air Quality Management Process (LAQM) by submitting an Annual Status Report. The Report indicates that there may be exceedances of the National annual mean for NO₂ in the areas along Ampthill Road due to development that is currently taking place in that area.

To date the proposed development is only part completed, and monitoring indicates that at present the levels of NO₂ do not exceed the permitted annual mean. The council will continue to collect data to establish the levels of NO₂ along Ampthill Road, then the council can identify potential action if required as the development continues. The council will also revise its Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan which will link closely with Local Transport Plan 3 and other council policies to detail the measures the council and its stakeholders are taking to improve air quality within the town centre AQMA.

The air quality monitoring stations continue to run and provide continuous accurate data on levels of NO₂ within the town centre. This data is used to inform modelling and future work carried out within the borough.

No other areas out of the AQMA were found to exceed Government objectives and therefore the council will produce a further Annual Status Report in April 2017.

(Source: Bedford Borough Council)

Indicator E6: Designated air quality management areas

National Target: Meet national air quality targets for 13 different pollutants

Local Target: Monitor air quality against national targets for NO₂ and SO₂ in the relevant AQMAs

Progress:

Under the provisions of the Environment Act 1995 Part IV Section 83(1) an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) was declared in Bedford town's centre on 6th November 2009. The order also revoked AQMA 1 for sulphur dioxide (SO₂) following the closure of Stewartby brickworks in February 2008.

The AQMA (known as AQMA 5) covers most of the town centre where the annual mean Objective for NO₂ is widely exceeded. In April 2015 the council fulfilled its part in the Local Air Quality Management Process (LAQM) by submitting an Updating Screening Assessment Report. The Report indicated that there may be areas along Ampthill road where in the fullness of time the Government's annual mean objective for NO₂ may not be met.

To date the proposed development is only part completed, and monitoring indicates that at present the levels of NO₂ do not exceed the permitted annual mean. The council will continue to collect data to establish the levels of NO₂ along Ampthill Road, then the council can identify potential action if required as the development continues. The council will also revise its Air Quality Action Plan which will link closely with Local Transport Plan 3 and other council policies to detail the measures the council and its stakeholders are taking to improve air quality within the town centre AQMA.

The air quality monitoring stations continue to run and provide continuous accurate data on levels of NO₂ within the town centre. This data is used to inform modelling and future work carried out within the borough.

There is one other area outside the AQMA that was found to exceed Governmental objectives, the location is on the A1 northbound at Wyboston however, there is no relevant exposure at this location. Therefore the council will produce a further Progress Report in April 2016.

(Source: Bedford Borough Council)

Indicator E7: Household and commercial waste recycling

Draft Target: Recover 70% Municipal Solid Waste by 2015

Bedford Borough Council Minerals and Waste Service is run jointly with, and hosted by Central Bedford Council. The Minerals and Waste Team produce their own reports to monitor the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and other documents.

Information on Minerals and Waste can be found in the Minerals and Waste Monitoring Report.

