Plan:MK Open Space Assessment

Evidence Base towards Draft Qualitative Criteria
This document has been prepared by Milton Keynes Council's Urban Design and Landscape Architecture Team in collaboration with the Council’s Development Plans Team.

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Introduction

This evidence base has been prepared to help justify the draft qualitative criteria as part of new Open Space Policies in Plan:MK. This document includes an assessment of a range of case studies that are seen to provide benefits in terms of wider placemaking and for users. These key positive features of each type of open space can then be used to learn from and justify qualitative criteria that will be applied to relevant typologies of open space when they are delivered through the proposed growth and regeneration of Milton Keynes.

The evidence base has looked at 4 sample case studies each of 8 of the proposed typologies of open space (with the exception of District Parks where Milton Keynes currently has just one). These typologies are identified in the adjacent Contents. Other typologies of open space are proposed through Plan:MK, however it was felt less beneficial to produce an evidence base to justify the draft criteria outlined for them.

This evidence base uses the same format for each case study: an aerial photograph is included which outlines the relevant open space. It also includes some street names or other relevant locations to help readers familiarise themselves with the specific open space. Various photographs with captions of each open space are also included to help illustrate key features of each open space that assist in justifying the qualitative criteria. This is supplemented by a list of key features of each open space that the Council will see as important to be included when these new typologies of open space are delivered through the proposed growth and regeneration of Milton Keynes as outlined in the consultation version of Plan:MK.
District Park: Campbell Park

**KEY FEATURES**

- Multi-functional landscaped park offering sporting, passive leisure and cultural facilities
- Connected with existing linear park
- Well connected into surrounding pedestrian network
- Silbury and Avebury Boulevards are both bus routes therefore improving accessibility for all users
- Good quality and informative welcome and directional signs
- Significant amount of benches provided
- Attractively landscaped with mature landscaping
- Inclusion of public art
- High quality footpath network through site
- Street frontages offer opportunities for existing and future housing to overlook park
- Parking facilities provided
- Provision of shelter for social interaction

Attractively landscaped park with numerous high quality paths and seating opportunities
Public art, high quality wayfinding signage and a cricket ground included in the park

The multi-functionality of the park is extended to include an outdoor performance area

Park includes areas of ecological interest and shelters for social interaction

Park includes a memorial within a landscape design setting

Good pedestrian connections exist from CMK into the park

Some development overlooks the park - more will be included in the future
Local Park: Chepstow Local Park, Bletchley

KEY FEATURES

- Accessible and well connected to surrounding movement network (including direct redways)
- Chepstow Drive is a bus route therefore maximising access for all users
- Good welcome and information signs
- Significant variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for all age groups
- Attractively landscaped with mature landscaping
- Inclusion of community art and community garden
- High quality footpath network through site
- Degree of overlooking from houses to the north - makes local park feel safer
- Facilities provided for social interaction, including teenage shelter
Local Park: Brooklands

KEY FEATURES

• Part of wider open space network / green corridors within Eastern Expansion Area
• Very accessible and easy to find
• Good quality and overlooked /safe footpath links leading to park
• Very attractive landscape design
• Excellent footpath network through local park
• Facilities (benches) provided for social interaction
• Very well integrated into overall development and well overlooked by surrounding houses – feeling safe
• Limited range of facilities for active recreation

Provision of high quality play area overlooked by adjacent housing

Attractive landscape design with high quality footpaths

Provision of tables/benches for social interaction
Local Park: Grange Farm

**KEY FEATURES**

- Very accessible to catchment population
- Well connected by redways and easy to find
- Good quality and overlooked / safe footpath links leading to park
- Located on a bus route – Dunthorne Way, maximising access for all
- Well integrated into estate and overlooked by housing – feeling very safe
- Attractive landscape design
- Variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for all age groups
- Good network of high quality footpaths through local park

Provision of play area for younger children

Attractive landscaping

High quality footpaths and good overlooking from surrounding housing

Play provision for older children / teenagers
Local Park: Monkston

KEY FEATURES

- Integral feature of entire estate – very accessible and easy to find
- Good quality and overlooked /safe footpath links leading to park
- Attractive tree planting around edge of park (attractive boundary treatment)
- Well overlooked by surrounding housing – feeling very safe
- Significant variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for all age groups
- Includes formal playing fields and community centre
- Good quality lighting around outer redway
- Attractive entrances to local park

High quality footpaths and overlooking from adjacent housing as well as attractive boundary tree planting

Provision of bins and dog litter bins as well as community centre

High quality play area adjacent to playing fields and redway

Attractive entrances to local park
Pocket Park: Hannault Avenue, Giffard Park

KEY FEATURES

- Well integrated into surrounding development
- Helps break up urban character of Hannault Avenue
- Area for passive recreation and area with play area
- Attractive landscape design especially border planting
- Very accessible and easy to find (on redway and Hannault Avenue)
- Overlooked by housing on all sides – feels very safe!
- Facilities provided for social interaction
- Well used

Provision of play area at southern end of pocket park

Overlooking from surrounding housing

Attractive planting and area for passive recreation that includes provision of benches and informal footpaths

Attractive entrance to pocket park
Pocket Park: Faraday Drive, Shenley Lodge

**KEY FEATURES**

- Well integrated into surrounding development
- Attractive landscape design with retention of some historic planting
- Very accessible and easy to find (on bus route and redway)
- Provides facilities for social interaction
- Spaces for passive recreation and play areas for wide variety of age groups
- Well overlooked by housing – feels safe
- Well used

Attractive landscaping, creative play provision and good quality paths

Provision of play facilities for teenagers

Overlooking by adjacent housing, wide provision of play provision, good quality paths and provision of bins

Attractive edge planting and site located adjacent to bus stop
Pocket Park: Fishermead Boulevard

**KEY FEATURES**

- Well integrated into surrounding development
- Area for passive recreation and area with play area
- Attractive landscape design
- Very accessible and easy to find (on Fishermead Boulevard and adjacent to bus stop)
- Well overlooked by housing on all sides – feels very safe
- Facilities provided for social interaction
- Well used

Attractive entrance and boundary planting

Good quality paths and excellent overlooking from adjacent housing

Wide variety of play provision

Tables / benches provided for social interaction
Pocket Park: Downhead Park

KEY FEATURES

- Well integrated into the surrounding development
- While located on a redway, is less visible because lacks a street frontage
- Well landscaped space with attractive planting and includes elements of public art
- Includes facilities for social interaction
- Moderately overlooked by adjacent housing

Attractive landscaping and inclusion of public art

Adjacent to redway helps promote access and usage

Network of good quality paths

Well enclosed by surrounding housing and provision of benches and bins
Amenity Open Space: Hepburn Crescent, Oxley Park

**KEY FEATURES**

- Integrated element of overall layout of development
- Breaks up continuity of buildings along high street
- Visually attractive
- Very accessible to immediate community
- Well overlooked by housing – safe and well looked after
- Includes benches/tables for social interaction
- Provides opportunities for unallocated parking around edges

Small green open space breaks up continuity of buildings along ‘high street’ in Oxley Park

Amenity open space allows for opportunities for on street parking and also includes a bench/table

Amenity open space well overlooked by surrounding housing

Inclusion of picnic tables in this amenity open space and well framed by surrounding housing
Amenity Open Space: Poppy Avenue, Broughton Gate

KEY FEATURES

- Integrated element of overall layout of development
- Softens the built up area
- Visually attractive
- Very accessible to immediate community
- Well overlooked by housing – safe and well looked after
- Includes benches for social interaction
- Attractive landscaping
- Provides opportunities for parking around edges

Amenity open space allows for opportunities for on street parking and also includes a bench/table

Small green open space breaks up continuity of buildings along Poppy Avenue

Amenity open space well overlooked by surrounding housing
Amenity Open Space: Aldrich Drive, Willen

### KEY FEATURES

- Integrated element of overall layout of estate
- Very accessible to immediate community - well connected into redway network
- Well overlooked by surrounding housing
- Includes opportunities for on-street parking
- Attractive landscaping
- Further green the streetscape of Aldrich Drive

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Amenity open space is easily accessible by redway

Amenity open space allows for opportunities for unallocated on street parking

Amenity open space well overlooked by surrounding housing

Open space has attractive landscaping and allows a break in continuity of built form along Aldrich Drive
Amenity Open Space: Oriel Close, Wolverton

**KEY FEATURES**

- Open Space incorporated to include retention of 2 existing mature trees
- Integrated element of overall layout of development
- Well overlooked by surrounding housing
- Very accessible to immediate community
- Visually attractive

Amenity open space well overlooked by surrounding housing

Amenity open space located so as to incorporate existing trees

Visually attractive space

Amenity open space is easily accessible
Green Access Link: Common Lane, Heelands

**KEY FEATURES**

- Follows historic Common Lane
- Part of wider network of linked open space across Heelands
- Very direct and legible redway across Heelands to other destinations (connects Bradwell Common and Bradwell). Provides access to Heelands Community Centre and Heelands Local Centre
- Attractive historic landscaping along each side
- Contains significant biodiversity
- Well lit
- Multi-functional: includes bridlepath

Direct, well lit and legible green link that follows historic common lane. Includes an adjacent bridleway.

Includes additional redway intersections that maximises access to green link. Inclusion of seating as well.

Provides access to Heelands Community Centre and Heelands Local Centre.
Green Access Link: Great Linford

**KEY FEATURES**

- Follows historic open space corridor
- Lined by existing mature trees and hedges
- Contains significant biodiversity
- Provides direct and legible link across Great Linford and into Neath Hill
- Attractive and tranquil
- Some overlooking from adjacent properties
- Well lit

Mature hedgerows line direct route. Some limited surveillance from adjacent housing

Wil lit and direct link across Great Linford into Neath Hill

Attractive green and tranquil character to route
Green Access Link: Oakhill and Medbourne

**KEY FEATURES**

- Creates direct pedestrian link from North Bucks Way across Oakhill and Medbourne
- Attractive and tranquil green character lines either side of historic route
- Contains significant biodiversity
- Includes a bridleway along a large stretch
- Numerous pedestrian routes cross it so it is easy to access and this increases usage

Direct, well lit and legible green link that follows historic route. Includes an adjacent bridleway

Attractive and tranquil pedestrian route across Oakhill

Direct, well lit and legible green link that follows historic common lane. Includes an adjacent bridleway
Emerson Valley Green Access Link

KEY FEATURES

- Follows watercourse
- Less legible link than other case studies
- Contains significant biodiversity
- Attractive and tranquil
- Some overlooking from adjacent properties
- Provides direct link through Emerson Valley and into Furzton
- Numerous pedestrian route cross it so it is easy to access and this increases usage
- Displays more varying character than other sample studies. Includes widened grass areas on each side including a play area in 1 location along its length.

Includes some overlooking in places from adjacent properties

Green link follows attractive watercourse crossing back and forth along its length

Has a varying character along its length

Some wider green spaces in places help vary the character along route. Inclusion of dog bins
Sports Facilities: Emerson Valley

**KEY FEATURES**

- Part of a linked network of publicly accessible open spaces
- Easy to find and publicly accessible with good quality footpath network on and around playing fields
- Some housing overlooks playing fields benefitting from outlook
- Good visibility means the sports facilities add to green character of estate
- Provides sufficient parking
- Provides facilities building that also has social functions

Some overlooking exists from surrounding housing

Good quality tree-lined footpaths on and around playing fields improve access

Good quality playing fields part of wider public open space network

Good quality footpaths on and around playing fields improve public access
Sports Facilities: Tattenhoe

KEY FEATURES

- Part of a linked network of publicly accessible open spaces
- Easy to find and publicly accessible with good quality footpath network on and around playing fields
- Some housing overlooks playing fields benefitting from outlook
- Good visibility means the sports facilities add to green character of estate
- Provides sufficient parking
- Provides facilities building that also has social functions

Some overlooking exists from existing housing

Sufficient parking provided

Good quality footpaths on and around site improve public access

Provision of facilities building provides for multi functional uses
Sports Facilities: Medbourne

**KEY FEATURES**

- Part of a linked network of open spaces eg adjacent to Shenley Wood
- Easy to find and publicly accessible with good quality footpath network on and around playing fields
- Some housing overlooks playing fields benefitting from the outlook
- Good visibility means adds to green character of estate
- Provides sufficient parking
- Provides facilities building that also has social functions

**Provision of seating**

**Part of playing fields overlooked by surrounding housing**

**Good quality footpaths on and around playing fields improve public access. Part of wider open space network**

**Provision of multi-functional facilities building and sufficient car parking**
Sports Facilities: Westcroft

KEY FEATURES

- Easy to find and publicly accessible with good quality footpath network on and around playing fields
- Some housing overlooks playing fields benefitting from the outlook
- Good visibility adds to green character of estate
- Provides sufficient parking
- Facilities building provided (although not as good quality as other case studies)

Provision of bins, good network of footpaths around site and attractive landscape features

Playing fields are integral part of layout of Westcroft and include good overlooking from surrounding housing

Facilities building provided

Sufficient car parking provided
Area of Wildlife Interest: Linford Wood

KEY FEATURES

- Publicly accessible with good network of paved footpaths on and around site for walking, running, cycling
- Includes parking areas
- Good signage
- High visibility from surrounding grid road network - with frontage onto V7 and H4 thus allows the site to add to the green character of MK
- Provides facilities for social interaction
- Visually attractive
- Peaceful and tranquil

Good quality and welcoming signage

Good quality network of paved footpaths within and around edge of site

Provision of dedicated parking areas

Provision of picnic tables to facilitate usage of Linford Wood and social interaction
Area of Wildlife Interest: Thirlby Lane, Shenley Church End

**KEY FEATURES**

- Follows watercourse
- Very little public accessibility through the area but street frontages provide excellent visibility of site which allows the site to add to the green character of Shenley Church End
- Attractive setting for up-market housing
- Visually attractive

Wildlife site provides attractive setting for housing to overlook it

Highly publicly visible location of wildlife site helps accentuate green character of Shenley Church End

Very prominently visible due to street frontage

Attractive landscaping and the single public pedestrian route across wildlife site
Area of Wildlife Interest: Portland Drive, Willen

**KEY FEATURES**

- Integrated element of overall layout of Willen Grid Square
- No pedestrian routes across site
- Connects to wider open space network across Willen
- Street frontage around wildlife site provides excellent visibility of site which adds to green character of Willen
- In very prominent location visually – provides attractive outlook for surrounding housing
- Provides additional opportunities for unallocated parking around edges of site
- Visually attractive

Inclusion of redway around entire site maximises visibility of site hence adding to green character of estate

Includes provision of seating around wildlife site

Provides attractive setting for housing to overlook open space

Provides opportunities for provision of unallocated on street parking to serve adjacent housing
Area of Wildlife Interest: Paxton Crescent, Shenley Lodge

**KEY FEATURES**

- Publicly accessible and well located relative to population of Shenley Lodge
- Street frontage (Paxton Crescent) provide excellent visibility of site which allows the site to add to green character of Shenley Lodge
- Includes facilities for social interaction and attractive setting for pub which all add to the interest and usage of the open space
- Visually attractive
- Peaceful and tranquil

Inclusion of pedestrian footpaths around site - improves public accessibility of open space

Provides attractive setting for housing to overlook open space

Inclusion of ponds, decking and seating add to the public interest and usage of site

Street frontage around northern edge of open space maximises public visibility and access to site
Civic Space: The Square, Wolverton

KEY FEATURES

• Active frontages around most sides helps enliven the Square
• Allows for additional on street parking opportunities
• Attractive and varied design
• Can be used flexibly / accommodate a variety of activities
• Includes accommodation of memorial
• Includes seating for social interaction
• Well lit
• Includes information signs

Provision of active frontages around civic space

Highly accessible and visible place is a good location for a memorial

Variety of seating for social interaction as well as opportunities for on street parking

Highly accessible and visible place is a good location for a Town Council noticeboard
Civic Space: Oakgrove Local Centre

KEY FEATURES

- Centrally located on key desire line and hence very accessible
- Space is well framed / enclosed by surroundings giving it a comfortable human scale feel to it
- Has active frontages framing 2 key sides that help enliven and animate the space
- High quality paving materials
- Includes seating for social interaction
- Well lit

Active frontages provided by Waitrose help enliven and animate the square

Good lighting and high quality paving

Space is on a key desire line within Oakgrove

Space is well framed by surrounding buildings giving it a human scale and comfortable feel
Civic Space: Olney High Street

KEY FEATURES

- Active frontages around all sides helps animate and enliven the space
- Abuts High Street so highly visible and therefore very accessible
- Includes seating for social interaction
- Well lit
- Can be used flexibly / accommodate a variety of activities
- Includes information boards, public art and memorial
- Includes parking and toilets for town centre usage

Includes seating for social interaction as well as an element of grass to soften the space

Includes toilet facilities

Visually prominent location is ideal place for memorial, public art and formal planter beds

Accommodates parking for town centre usage. Includes active frontages around entire space
Civic Space: Two Mile Ash

**KEY FEATURES**

- Centrally located on high street, adjacent to local centre, so very visible accessible
- Allows for additional on street parking opportunities that assist with the unallocated provision for adjacent housing
- Includes seating for social interaction
- Greater level of landscape design means space is less flexible to accommodate a variety of activities
- Has a very green character
- Has street frontage along 2 key sides which increases accessibility and visibility of space

Space well defined by housing on each side. Attractive landscaping

Variety of seating opportunities for social interaction

Street frontage on 2 sides increases visibility and accessibility of space. Allows for on street parking
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