

Green Networks

Planning Guidance Note

Introduction

High quality local Green Networks can make a significant contribution to:

- Making our towns more **prosperous and competitive** places to be. Knowledge-based businesses, and the people who work in them, are looking for attractive and distinctive environments. Ensuring that our towns are attractive and competitive business locations for an economy based on knowledge, skills and creativity is essential. In doing so negative perceptions of some areas will be addressed by promoting the region as a 'green' place to live and work.
- Promoting **health and well-being**. It is widely accepted that access to, and enjoyment of, good quality green space and nearby countryside can make a major contribution to physical and mental health, and to the well-being of communities. People of all ages will benefit from safe and attractive places to walk, sit, meet and get involved in sporting activities. Community growing and gardens provide physical exercise and encourage healthy eating.
- Fostering sustainable travel. Walking and cycling networks that link places people want to get to and from for both leisure and work can encourage sustainable travel;
- Ensuring that East Dunbartonshire remains and becomes an even more **attractive and distinctive** place to live, celebrating the local historic and cultural heritage will help to foster community pride and distinctiveness.
- Enhancing the **nature and landscapes** of East Dunbartonshire, and supporting the Government's objectives for a greener Scotland. The environmental benefits of green spaces and nearby countryside increase exponentially when they are linked together in a network.
- And at a National Scale, realise the vision of the Central Scotland Green Network and help deliver on Scotland's priorities to **mitigate and adapt to climate change**. Investing in green space and active travel will help us to move towards a low-carbon economy and to mitigate the effects of climate change such as an increase in winter rainfall.

What is the Green Network?

The Green Network is a concept based around the benefits outlined above. In thinking about the development of the Green Network, it is helpful to think of it as comprising a mixture of:

- **Green Network Cores/Hubs** – large areas of existing (or new) greenspace which already deliver a wide range of benefits associated with Green Networks. The aim should be to protect and expand these areas, to create

- **Green Network Corridors and Links** – continuous corridors of greenspace along rivers, disused railways, paths and cycleways and existing railways and roads which serve to connect Green Network Cores/Hubs. Many of these corridors are incomplete, or provide a limited number of functions, so a key aim is to increase the number, continuity, visual interaction and functionality of these corridors;
- **Green Network Stepping Stones** – it may not always be necessary or appropriate to create a continuous corridor of greenspace. Many plant and animal species, for example, are able to move short distances between areas of habitat. Many Victorian suburbs had regular public and private squares set amongst densely developed terraces. The development of Green Network Stepping Stones can provide incomplete corridors linking larger areas of greenspace. This could include the planting of street trees, improved roadside verges or garden improvement.

It is likely that there will always be some isolated greenspaces which are difficult to connect to the wider Green Network. While the functions of such spaces are likely to be more limited, they still have potential to provide considerable benefits to local communities.

This guidance note aims to inform the user of the benefits of including Green Network considerations in the development process, helping to create fit for purpose and high quality public places for the economy, community and biodiversity.

The Council offers a duty planner service Monday-Friday between the hours 10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm. We will be happy to answer any further questions that you may have.

Planning Framework

Scottish Planning Policy emphasises that Development Plans should highlight and promote Green Networks where this will add value to the provision, protection and enhancement and connectivity of open space and habitats.

The National Planning Framework 2 requires the delivery of a Central Scotland Green Network as a national priority. Central Scotland Green Network Partnership Board has since been created and states that its vision for Central Scotland is to create a high quality green network, which will enrich people's lives, promote economic prosperity, allow nature to flourish and help Scotland respond to the challenge of climate change. Furthermore, a central aim of the Central Scotland Green Network is *“to ensure that every home in Central Scotland is within 300m of an attractive, safe and well-maintained green space or accessible countryside”*.

Within the East Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2, Policy NE 3 – Promotion of Green Network highlights the Council's commitment to play its role in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership to protect and extend the existing Green Network in East Dunbartonshire through the production of this guidance note.

Strategic Green Network

At a strategic level, the East Dunbartonshire green network includes the major attractors of the Campsie Fells and to a lesser extent the Kilpatrick Hills which provide a scenic backdrop and opportunities for access to relatively wild and natural land within a short distance of the towns. Even more easily accessed, the lower lying Lennox Forest area and Mugdock Park together with the Milngavie Reservoirs, complete a northern network of large open spaces. The West Highland Way and Strathkelvin Railway Walkway provide strategic links from the towns into these areas, following the Allander and Glazert Waters respectively. Linking from west to east across the area, the Forth and Clyde Canal and River Kelvin, with their rich biodiversity, complete the strategic network.

Green Networks in a Rural Setting

Habitat fragmentation is one of the biggest issues facing biodiversity loss in recent times. Removal of hedgerows, restructuring and canalising/culverting of rivers, loss of semi-improved grassland and planting of non-native species has resulted in a reduction of our overall natural habitat for local and migratory species. This can have profound impacts on foraging resource and ability to move around the landscape, especially in response to disturbance from development. Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) and wildlife corridors in rural areas (that is significant areas of native woodland, riparian corridors/watercourses, and biodiversity rich grasslands) are therefore critical in helping to sustain local wildlife populations.

It is vital that landowners and managers help to enhance the quality and quantity of such areas in order to help biodiversity. Grants are available from the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) that will help fund activities such as pond creation, hedgerow creation and management, grassland management, riparian planting and native woodland planting. Such activities will help strengthen the Green Network in East Dunbartonshire. Development on rural land that would have a negative impact on these key features i.e. will result in loss of landscape connectivity and diversity, would not be favoured.

The Future of the Green Network in East Dunbartonshire

The importance of the Green Network as a national priority and the role that East Dunbartonshire Council must play in protecting and enhancing the Green Network at both the local and regional scales is highlighted above. Using a similar approach to that taken by the Central Scotland Green Network, the Council has mapped for each of its towns and villages, green space, designed landscapes, wildlife areas, the core path network and accessible countryside. This shows at a glance the areas of well connected green network as well as the gaps in connectivity and the areas with good or relatively poor access to the network.

The development process can offer a means of improving both the quality of the existing network or filling gaps in connectivity and improving access for areas where it is currently relatively poor.

Where areas have poor access to attractive, safe and well-maintained green space or accessible countryside, or there are gaps in network connectivity, this is considered the aspirational Green Network. It is these connections that the Council wishes to create and gaps it is seeking to fill.

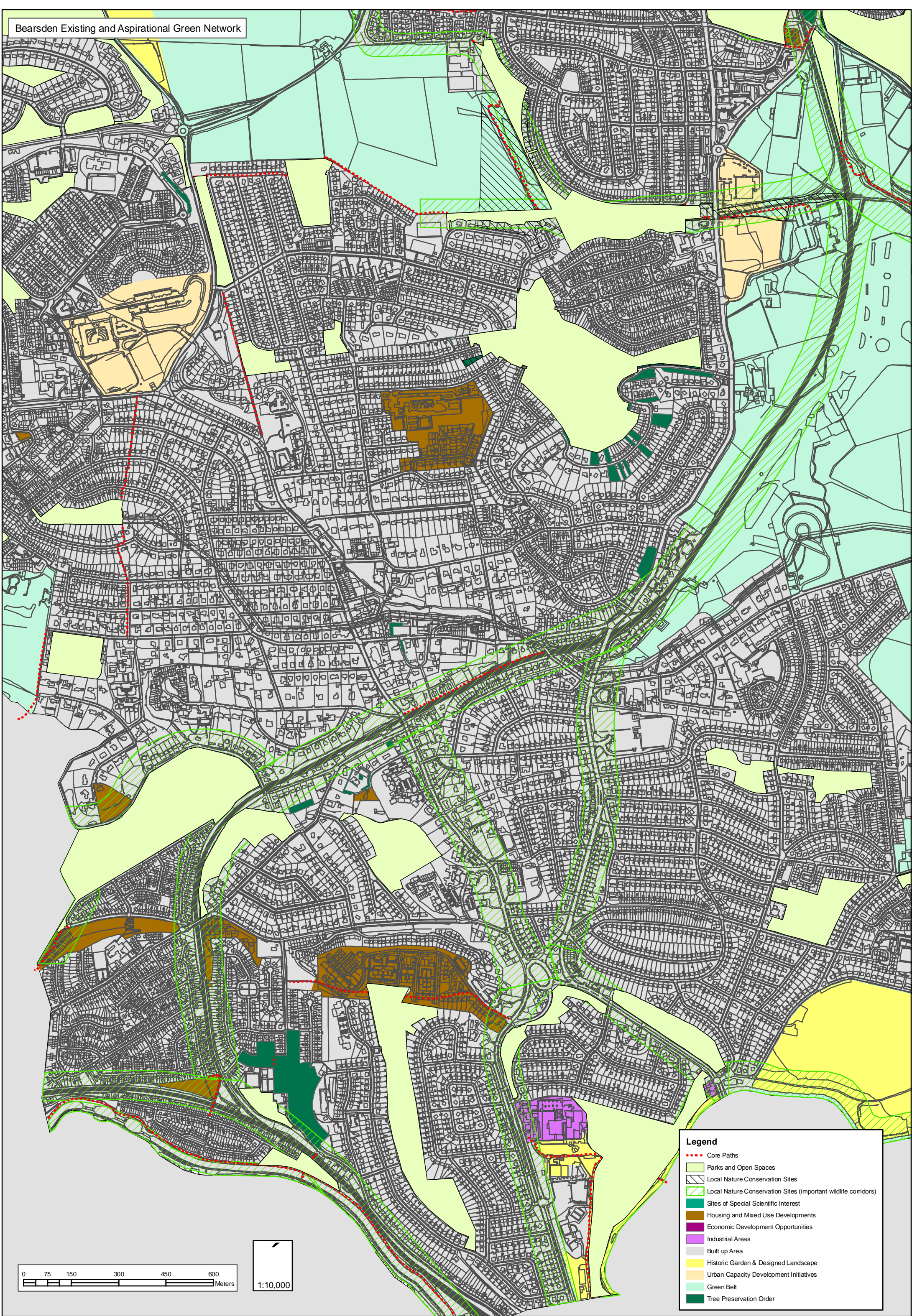
Prior to preparing a development proposal, applicants should consult these maps to ascertain if the proposal can make a contribution towards helping realise the Green Network. When necessary, such opportunities will be assessed by Planning Case Officers to identify potential extensions to support the existing Green Network or identify gaps in the emerging Green Network along core path routes and water courses.

Further Development Work

It is intended that the process of defining not only the green network, but also its quality and accessibility, will continue. Over the coming year it is anticipated that the Council will work with the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership to refine the mapping in this Guidance Note in order to further clarify the contributions that the development process can make to realising the Scottish Government's objectives for the Central Scotland Green Network.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Bearsden Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 2 - Bishopbriggs Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 3 - Kirkintilloch & Lenzie Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 4 - Lennoxtown Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 5 - Milngavie Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 6 - Milton of Campsie Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 7 - Torrance Existing and Aspirational Green Network
- Appendix 8 - Twechar Existing and Aspirational Green Network



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Meters

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Legend

Parks and Open Spaces

Core Paths

Local Nature Conservation Sites

Local Nature Conservation Sites (important wildlife corridors)

Urban Capacity Development Initiatives

Sites Of Special Scientific Interest

Housing and Mixed Use Developments

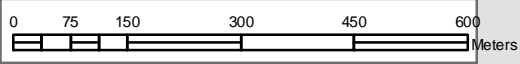
Economic Development Opportunities

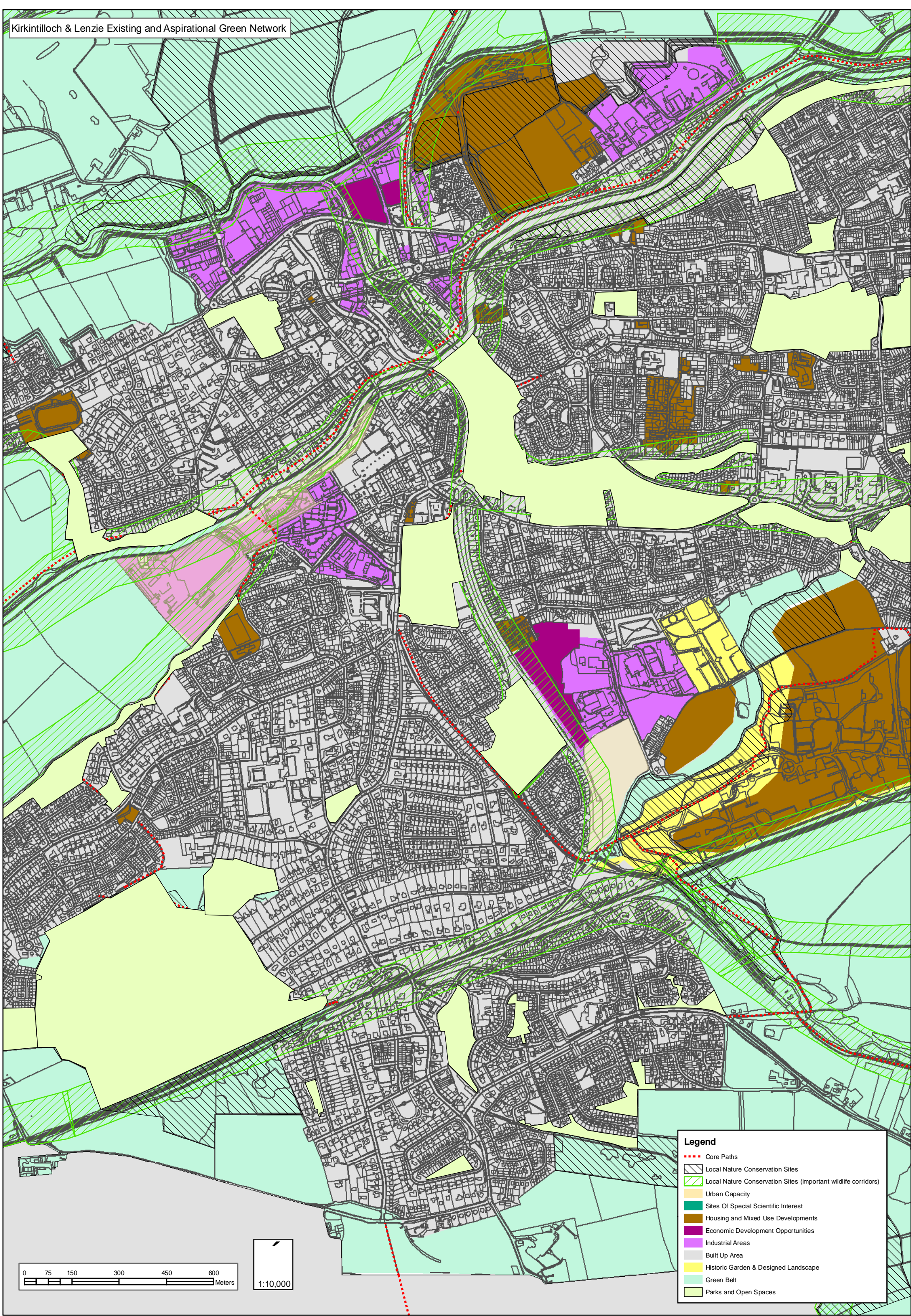
Existing Business Areas

Built up Area

Historic Garden & Designed Landscape

Green Belt





Legend

- Core Paths
- Local Nature Conservation Sites
- Local Nature Conservation Sites (important wildlife corridors)
- Urban Capacity
- Sites Of Special Scientific Interest
- Housing and Mixed Use Developments
- Economic Development Opportunities
- Industrial Areas
- Built Up Area
- Historic Garden & Designed Landscape
- Green Belt
- Parks and Open Spaces

Lennoxtown Existing and Aspirational Green Network

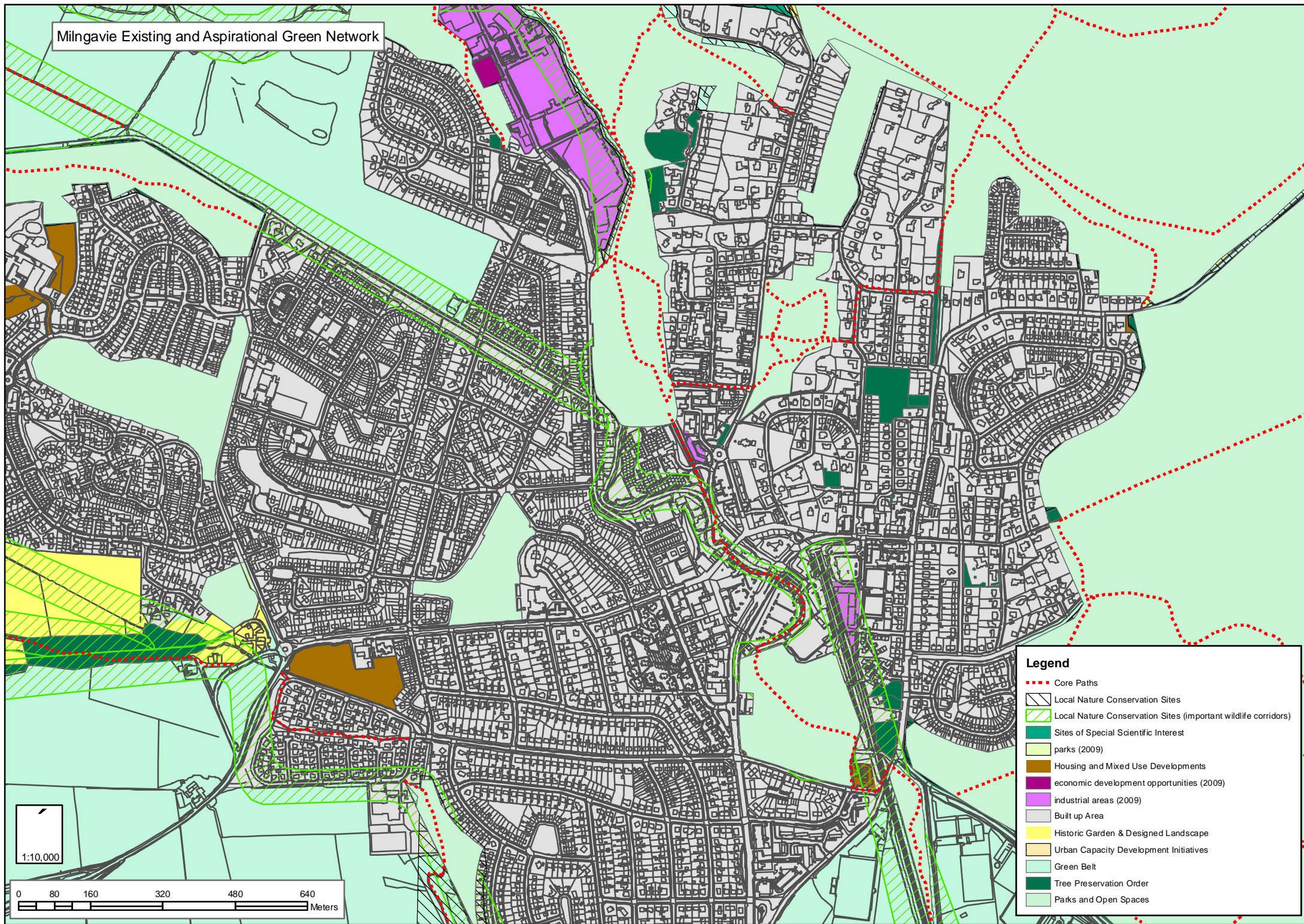
Legend

- Core Paths
- Local Nature Conservation Sites
- Local Nature Conservation Sites (important wildlife corridors)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Housing and Mixed Use Developments
- Economic Development Opportunities
- Existing Business Areas
- Historic Garden & Designed Landscape
- Built up Area
- Urban Capacity Development Initiatives
- Green Belt
- Tree Preservation Order
- Parks and Open Spaces

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Milngavie Existing and Aspirational Green Network



Milton Of Campsie Existing and Aspirational Green Network

Legend

- Core Paths
- Local Nature Conservation Sites
- Local Nature Conservation Sites (important wildlife corridors)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Housing and Mixed Use Developments
- Economic Development Opportunities
- Existing Business Areas
- Historic Garden & Designed Landscape
- Built up Area
- Urban Capacity Development Initiatives
- Green Belt
- Tree Preservation Order
- Parks and Open Spaces

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Torrance Existing and Aspirational Green Network

Legend

- Core Paths
- Local Nature Conservation Sites
- Local Nature Conservation Sites (important wildlife corridors)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Housing and Mixed Use Developments
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