



Date agreed	Committee	Minute number	Renewal date
24 th November 2025	Environment	406/25	November 2027

BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS ON COUNCIL-OWNED LAND POLICY

1. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline Buckingham Town Council's approach to managing unauthorised encampments on Town Council owned land. The Town Council is committed to safeguarding public spaces for community use and will act promptly to remove any unauthorised encampments that interfere with the public's lawful enjoyment of such land.

2. Definition

An *unauthorised encampment* is defined as the occupation of land without the landowner's permission, typically involving vehicles or temporary dwellings such as caravans or tents.

This policy applies only to land owned or managed by Buckingham Town Council. If encampments occur on land owned by other authorities (e.g., Buckinghamshire Council or private landowners), the Town Council will notify the appropriate landowner but holds no enforcement powers.

3. Policy Statement

Buckingham Town Council does not permit any unauthorised encampments on land under its ownership or management. Any encampment established without permission will be treated as unlawful, and the Council will seek immediate removal of the encampment through the appropriate legal channels.

The Council recognises its responsibilities to balance the rights of individuals with the rights of the wider community. However, where an encampment prevents public use, damages the land, or poses risks to health, safety, or public order, the Town Council will pursue eviction as a matter of urgency.

4. Guiding Principles

In managing illegal encampments, Buckingham Town Council will be guided by the following principles:

Prompt Action: The Council will seek immediate eviction where public use of land is interfered with.

Partnership: The Council will work closely with Buckinghamshire Council, Thames Valley Police and other agencies where appropriate.

Legal Compliance: Action will be taken in line with current legislation, including but not limited to:

- The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Relevant case law and guidance issued by the Government

Public Protection: The Council will prioritise the safety, access and enjoyment of public spaces for the community.

5. Procedures

Upon receiving a report of an illegal encampment on Council-owned land, the following steps will be taken:

Initial Assessment

A site visit will be conducted by the Town Clerk or authorised staff to assess the scale, nature, and impact of the encampment.

Photographic evidence and notes will be recorded.

Any damage, safety risks, or interference with public use will be documented.

Notification to Authorities

If appropriate, Buckinghamshire Council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Team will be notified immediately.

Thames Valley Police will be informed.

Commencement of Eviction Process

Where appropriate, the Town Council will issue a notice requiring the occupiers to vacate the land.

If the site is not vacated voluntarily, the Council will initiate legal proceedings for possession through the County Court or seek enforcement support from Buckinghamshire Council or Police under their powers.

Site Clearance and Restoration

Once vacated, the Town Council will arrange for the safe removal of any waste or hazardous materials.

The land will be restored for public use as soon as possible.

Following an unauthorised access, the Town Clerk will conduct a review of site access.

6. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if changes in legislation or local circumstances require it.

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