Horsham District Council

Green Infrastructure Strategy and Guide

January 2024

Contents

1.0 Green Infrastructure Explained and Vision for Horsham District

1.1 Green Infrastructure – Definition

1.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework and Natural England in its Green Infrastructure Framework define Green Infrastructure (GI) as:

> **"A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health, and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity."**

1.2 What is included in Green Infrastructure?

1.2.1 Green Infrastructure includes all types of green and blue spaces and features, both private and public, such as parks and garden (formal and residential), allotments, cemeteries, natural and semi-natural green space (including designated nature conservation sites), road verges, rail corridors, woodlands, trees, hedgerows, sports areas, children play areas, amenity space, rivers, canals, other areas of water and wetlands, green roofs and living walls. It encompasses ecological networks (local, regional and national) which are landscapes with well connected habitats, existing and future, that species can move through easily allowing re-colonisation of areas after disturbance events, preventing local extinctions. Where the term linear green infrastructure is used it includes roadside verges, green bridges, field margins, rights of way, access routes and canals and rivers. Taken together these elements form 'green infrastructure assets'.



Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6: Examples of green infrastructure: River Arun, allotments / community food growing, green walls & roofs, playground, park / amenity greenspace, and street verge with young street trees.



1.3 Why is Green Infrastructure important?

1.3.1 Green Infrastructure assets, when appropriately designed, delivered and managed has the potential to deliver a wide range of cross cutting environmental, social and economic benefits. Figure 7 highlights the key benefits of green infrastructure.

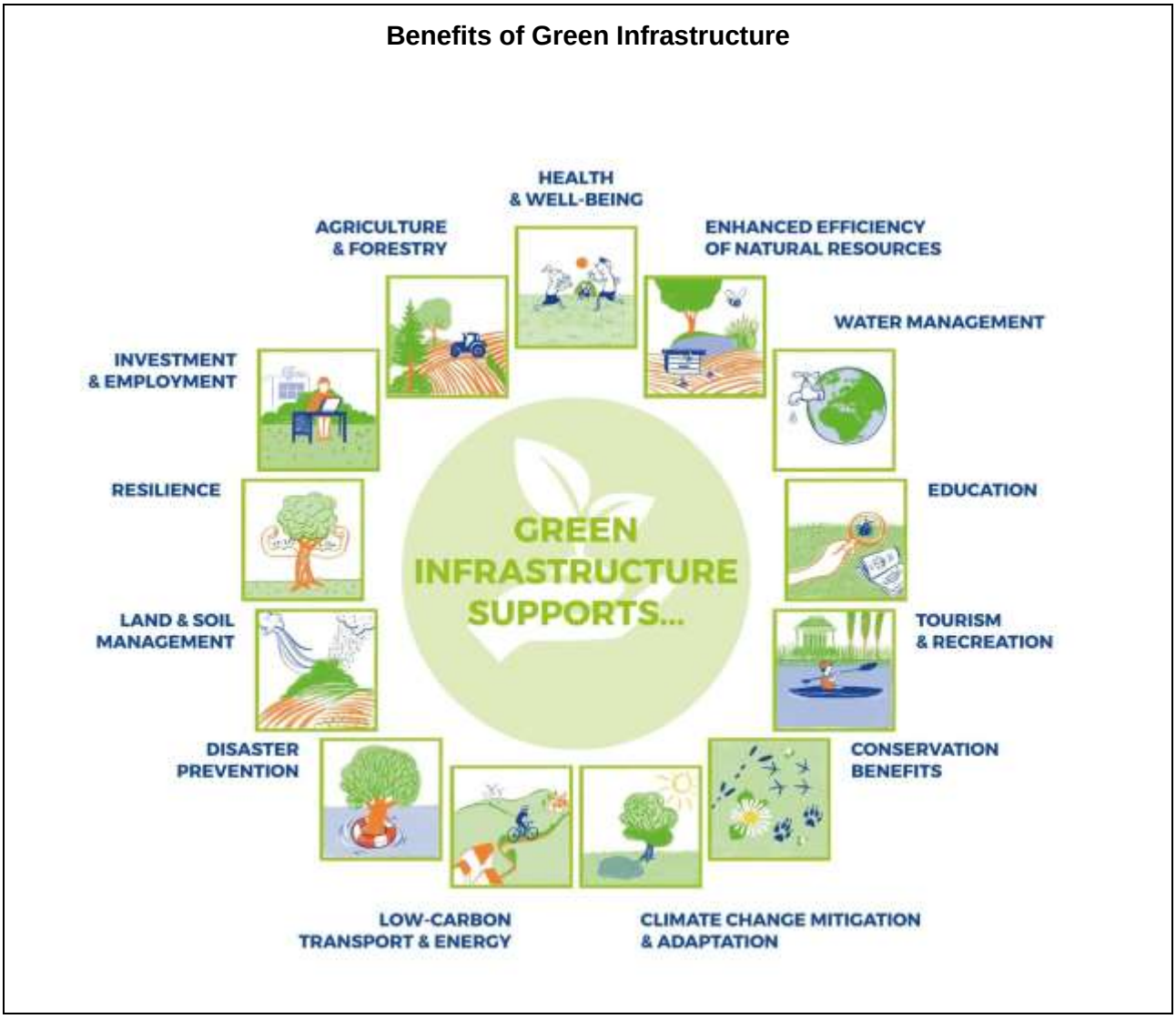

Figure 7: Benefits of Green Infrastructure. Source – OECD library

1.3.2 Green infrastructure is therefore a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For example, urban street trees add aesthetic quality, but they can also reduce airborne pollution, provide shade, reduce urban heat island effects, mitigate wind chill and turbulence, increase biodiversity, influence flood risk management, facilitate carbon sequestration and climate change adaption. Green infrastructure helps make our settlements more live-able and helps create distinctive places and attractive settings thereby encourages inward investment. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services (i.e. the benefits people and society get from the natural environment). Green infrastructure is also key to the provision of 'Nature-based Solutions' which are natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. Appendix 2 sets out some of the green infrastructure key features within Horsham District within three area profiles.

1.4 Green Infrastructure – Vision for Horsham District

1.4.1 The vision for Green Infrastructure is well established in Horsham District, and was developed in consultation with key stakeholders which included organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust, neighbouring authorities and relevant teams within the Council. This vision remains relevant today:

> **"A network of high quality multifunctional greenspaces and waterways that are protected and managed in partnership, and delivering environmental, social and economic benefits for businesses, communities and the environment of the District."**

Figure 8: Aerial photograph of Horsham Town showing the extent of green infrastructure including public parks and recreation facilities, private residential gardens, verges and street trees.

2.0 Purpose and Scope of Strategy

2.1 Purpose and scope of this strategy

2.1.1 The purpose of this strategy is to provide clear guidance on the Council's approach to green infrastructure. It updates the strategy adopted in 2014 including the Green Infrastructure Key Component Map included as Appendix 1. The geographical scope of this strategy is the District of Horsham but excluding land that falls with the South Downs National Park. This is because the South Downs National Park Authority is the Planning Authority for that area. Regard has however been given to what is happening beyond the area covered by this Strategy to help provide a connected cross boundary approach to green infrastructure. As green infrastructure networks span local authority boundaries, we will continue to work with neighbouring authorities and local stakeholder groups, including the Sussex Local Nature Partnership, Parish Councils and landowners to ensure effective and joined up delivery of Green Infrastructure. Further detail on cross boundary partners, plans and strategies are discussed further in section 4, paragraph 4.2.3.

2.1.2 The key purpose of this document is to provide planning guidance. It will be used to help inform development proposals and planning decisions to ensure that future development protects and wherever possible delivers, improves and enhances the green infrastructure network.

2.1.3 As such, the strategy supports Local Plan preparation and implementation. It will also assist the Council across many of its functions, including Leisure, Development Management and the response to the climate and biodiversity emergency.

2.1.4 This Strategy draws together the relevant evidence provided in the strategy adopted in 2014, the existing strong statutory and policy protections for statutory protected sites, protected species and irreplaceable habitats[1], open space, the District's draft nature recovery network, up-to-date national policy guidance including relevant ministerial statements and Natural England guidance. It seeks to align with the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code, Urban Design Group/Homes England's "Building for a Healthy Life", and Natural England's "Green Infrastructure Framework" and the 15 principles and 5 headline standards set out by Natural England, including the greening of our towns and connections with the surrounding landscape as part of the Nature Recovery Network.

2.1.5 The National Planning Practice Guidance makes clear green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stage of development proposals. This strategy therefore forms a material consideration that will be taken into account by decision makers when determining planning applications and also forms an adopted strategy relevant in the application of the Biodiversity Metric. **The key sections of particular relevance to planning applicants and project providers are provided in section 3.3 and 4.3 with primary guidance shown in blue shaded boxes**.

2.1.6 Land is finite and as the population increases so does the need for additional housing and employment, educational, health facilities etc. There is therefore an increasing need to ensure

[1] Protected sites are shown on the HDPF policies map (as at 2015) and the Sussex Wildlife Trust provide advice and links in its document titled Biodiversity and Planning in Sussex (2014).

space is used efficiently and effectively and that maximum benefits can be obtained for both people and nature from both buildings and the land around.

Figures 9 & 10: Pictures illustrating how efficient and effective use of buildings and the land around can deliver 'greening' in practice. Green wall on the multi-storey car park at Piries Place, Horsham Town, which also helps to provide a sense of place, and greening between and alongside the town's road carriageways (© Toby Phillips Photography).

3.0 National Policy and Guidance

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 There is a wide range of legislation, national policy and guidance that is directly or indirectly relevant to green infrastructure. Given the extent of documentation the following is an overview of the overarching key themes. Further details are provided in Appendices 3 and 4:

3.1.2 Appendix 3 - sets out international goals, legislation, national policy and guidance.

3.1.3 **Ap**pendix 4 - sets out current local policy and guidance.

3.1.4 The Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 includes a target and commitment that:

"Everyone should live within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space."

This is supported by:

- improvements in accessibility in national landscapes and improvements to the network of National Trails
- increasing national recognition given to the merits of 15 / 20 minute neighbourhoods (where residents have access to all key services and facilities within 15 to 20 minutes of their homes)
- National Planning Policy: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that green infrastructure is a strategic priority. The NPPF recognises its importance to the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment; the creation of healthy, inclusive and safe places; climate change mitigation; and air quality. National Planning Practice Guidance includes sections relating to green infrastructure.

3.1.5 By way of overarching themes, the significant decline in biodiversity is heralding a more ambitious approach. This is evidenced by the Environment Act's requirements for 10% biodiversity net gain in development schemes, Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and a national Nature Recovery Network (NRN), which are increasing the recognition of the importance of green infrastructure.

3.2 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework

3.2.1 Natural England has developed its Green Infrastructure Framework which fulfils a commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The Framework makes clear that green infrastructure is essential and integral to well-designed places and should not be regarded as an optional enhancement. It also makes clear that by incorporating green infrastructure in the planning and design of proposals from the outset can deliver the nature recovery that will unlock benefits for climate change adaption, net zero targets, well-being and prosperity that are urgently needed.

3.2.2 The Framework's Design Guide identifies how green infrastructure can contribute to the National Design Guide's ten characteristics of well-designed places. The aim is to green our towns and cities and improve existing green infrastructure. Biodiversity and nature recovery informs the Green Infrastructure Framework's first 'principle' and the framework recognises that having nature at the heart of place making helps create attractive, investable places that are good for people, climate and the economy.

3.2.3 Natural England highlights the importance of green infrastructure for carbon storage, shade, reductions in flood risk, provision of food, pollination, noise and air pollution buffers, and also the cost-effective recreational welfare value (£1 spent on parks in England generates c.£7 in additional value for health and wellbeing and the environment).

Figures 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 pictures illustrating carbon storage, shade, flooding, pollination and pollution.

3.2.4 Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework sets out 15 Principles and 5 Headline Green Infrastructure Standards for England. The 5 Headline Green Infrastructure Standards for England are:

S1: Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard
S2: Accessible Greenspace Standard
S3: Urban Nature Recovery Standard
S4: Urban Greening Factor Standard
S5: Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

3.2.5 As an overarching headline standard the Framework reflects the target provided in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and sets the following:

> **"Everyone to have access to and benefit from good quality green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home."**



Figures 16, 17 and 18 illustration of some of the sectors of the community who should be able to access good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes of their home such as people in wheelchairs, elderly, children and families.

3.2.6 The 15 Principles in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework guidance are as follows:

'Why' Principles / Benefits of GI	'What' Principles / Descriptive	'How' Principles / Process
Nature rich beautiful places	Multifunctional	Partnership working and Vision
Active and healthy places	Varied	Evidence-based
Thriving and prosperous communities	Connected	Plan strategically
Improved water management	Accessible	Design
Resilient and climate positive places	Character	Managed, valued, monitored, and evaluated

3.3 Good Design in Relation to Green Infrastructure

3.3.1 National policy and guidance, including that from nationally recognised bodies, provide extensive guidance on the design of green infrastructure. Examples include the National Design Guide, National Model Design Code, Urban Design Group/Homes England's "Building for a Healthy Life", Landscape Institute's 'Green Infrastructure – An integrated approach to land use', Building with Nature – green infrastructure standards, TCPA Parks and Green Infrastructure resources, and Natural England's "Green Infrastructure Framework". They make clear which elements are key in delivering good design in relation to green infrastructure. The following summarises these key elements which it is expected will be taken into account as part of the design of schemes:

Key Green Infrastructure Design Principles:

1. Landscape design and green infrastructure principles must inform the design and layout of a proposal from the outset, and not left to be added in at the end.

2. Protect and enhance existing habitats, create new habitats, and deliver biodiversity net gain:

    - Connect existing and new habitats. Safeguard existing or create new movement corridors for wildlife.
    - Seek to reintroduce lost habitats and species within movement corridors. Examples include hedgehog highways, bird boxes, swift nesting bricks and bat bricks. These are not the only types of greening provision.
    - Use existing green infrastructure assets as anchor features, such as mature trees and other existing features.
    - Where retained avoid incorporating hedgerows into individual property boundaries. They should remain in the public realm, and their future retention and management safeguarded.
    - Take account of soil and optimise biodiversity – such as, appropriate habitats and types of space for the soil in situ taking account of nutrient levels, retention of historic soils for regeneration, impact of introduction of soil, appropriate enhancements, compaction during development and intensity of use.

3. Consider the function of new spaces and how they will be used and managed:

    - Consider the function and character of any public open space. Will it be woodland, allotments, wildflower meadows or species rich grassland? Make this clear in any proposal. This should be informed by existing soil, habitats and consequent appropriate use.
    - Open spaces should be connected and accessible with paths / routes into and through them. Green spaces and corridors should be capable of adoption (eg as public footpath / bridleway) and have potential to be extended / link to other routes in the future (eg extend up to the site edge).
    - Design public open spaces to have strong levels of natural surveillance. Play and other recreational areas should not be placed in hidden or out of the way places to encourage use and new and existing residents to come together and share spaces.
    - Provide places where people can meet, like public squares. Provide places to sit, chat and play in the street. Frequent benches allow those with mobility difficulties to walk more easily between places and different types of seating suit different sectors of the community.
    - Create ways to encourage physical activity and social interaction (eg create park run routes on larger developments).

- Create spaces attractive to all with multiple functions that seek to meet the needs of all sectors of the community.
- Long term management must be robust. It must ensure that legal obligations to maintain green infrastructure features are in place. The proposed long term maintenance should align with the design and provision.

4. Consider how landscaping will be used to develop the character of the area and deliver green infrastructure:
    - Provide structural landscaping so that it creates places with a memorable character and provide memorable spaces and building groupings.
    - Provide well-defined streets and spaces, using buildings, landscaping and / or water to enclose and define spaces. Buildings should appropriately front public spaces.
    - Enough space must be provided for tree lined streets, with above and below ground growing space and regard to utilities, and the provision of attractive pedestrian and cycle friendly routes, access for waste and emergency vehicles, and the capitalisation of features such as open views.
    - There should be defensible space and strong boundary treatment to clearly define private spaces and no 'left over' land with no clear public or private function.
    - Building orientations and designs must capitalize on features such as open views. Frame views of features on or beyond a site and reinforce legible features.
    - Create landscape layers that add sensory richness to a place – visual, scent and sound. Create navigable features for those with visual, mobility or other limitations.
5. For sustainable drainage systems:
    - Capture water as close as possible to where it falls. Avoid funnelling rainwater away in underground pipes as the default water management strategy.
    - Ensure water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity are considered. Be creative with rain gardens, permeable surfaces, ponds and swales, and avoid steeply sided or fenced holes in the ground.
    - Well-designed multi-functional sustainable drainage will incorporate play and recreational opportunities (enabling people to connect with water).
6. For housing proposals:
    - All dwellings, including apartments and maisonettes, should have access to their own planting / growing space. e.g in the form of a garden, balcony or terrace.
    - The space around apartment buildings etc should be used to best effect which could include such provision for growing, clothes drying, and seating – taking into account the aesthetics of the street scene.

- Provide interlocking back gardens between existing and new development (where existing back gardens adjoin a site boundary).
- Avoid unmanaged gaps between development, including unmanaged privacy buffers to existing residents, and provide clarity over land ownership and management.
- Design open space to respond to existing or anticipated desire lines between public transport stops and building entrances.
- Adhere to the user hierarchy set out in Manual for Streets.
- Use landscaping to help settle cars / car parking and cycle parking into the street and building setting, having regard to the provision of secure and overlooked cycle parking close to entrance points.

Figures 19 and 20: retention of existing trees with the planting of new / provision of street trees, and provision of seating. Dwellings front onto and overlook the open spaces offering natural / passive surveillance. (Highwood and Kilnwood Vale)

4.0 Horsham District - Green Infrastructure

4.1 What is the District's Green Infrastructure Network and how does it relate to new development?

4.1.1 Green infrastructure is all around us. The Council's aim is to develop a high quality, multi-functional, inclusive, integrated and connected network of green infrastructure across the District and beyond. The District's Green infrastructure encompasses and links with open space standards, biodiversity net gain (BNG), Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs), and the emerging Nature Recovery Network (NRN) introduced by the Environment Act 2021.

4.1.2 A key purpose of this strategy is the aim of connecting people and nature. Therefore, open countryside and farmland are not considered to form green infrastructure unless they are:

- Designated for nature conservation (including geodiversity),
- Provide a protected or notable habitat,
- Are covered by a tree preservation order,
- form a registered biodiversity net gain offsetting site, designated open access land, managed to meet ecological network initiatives within the District, and / or form accessible 'public' countryside that is covered by some form of protection or formal designation.
- open countryside within a rural settlement setting may also contribute to the character and should therefore be given consideration.
- The key components that contribute to the district wide green infrastructure network are mapped in Appendix 1. These are informed by a number of sources building on the District's 2014 District's Green Infrastructure Strategy, National Planning Practice Guidance and the Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework.

4.1.3 The components that contribute to the district wide green infrastructure network are mapped in Appendix 1. These are informed by a number of sources building on the District's 2014 District's Green Infrastructure Strategy, National Planning Practice Guidance and the Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework.

4.1.4 **The map included in this document is not to be taken as definitive.** This is because, green infrastructure includes both established and new green and blue spaces which means, as development takes place, the green infrastructure network will continue to evolve. It will evolve by taking account of the latest evidence and emerging proposals as agreed with the Council (including development and nature recovery proposals and strategies, and Neighbourhood Plans).

4.1.5 Every development should seek to thread green infrastructure through and around the site and connect it to the existing and proposed green infrastructure surrounding it in a way that suitably delivers biodiversity gain, nature recovery and open space needs within a holistic approach. It must therefore form an initial key element within a landscape led design approach to development necessary to accord with national policy and guidance. If there is no evident green infrastructure in an area development will be expected to provide appropriate elements so that over time the network becomes more connected and accessible to all, including wildlife.

Figures 21, 22 and 23: Pictures of sites within the District that help provide multi-functional, integrated and inclusive green infrastructure: Southwater Country Park, Horsham Park, and Abingworth Meadows, Thakeham.

4.2 Green Infrastructure Strategy – District Level

4.2.1 The starting point for the strategy is to retain existing Green Infrastructure with enhancement and / or adaption as appropriate to its location and development allocation requirements, and the provision of additional that complements and expands the network. The expansion with additional green infrastructure will be through the site level approach detailed below, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and also via initiatives, such as Weald to Waves, and Government granting funding or similar (existing and emerging).

4.2.2 The District's green infrastructure key component map provided as Appendix 1 sets out the high level components of green infrastructure. An interactive map, that can be more easily updated with amendments to strategies etc, to enable site and District level review is also available. The key sites that the District Council seek to be retained, enhanced and buffered / expanded in a complementary manner include the following (but not limited to):

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (with appropriate buffer)
- Local Wildlife Sites (with appropriate buffer)
- Ancient Woodland (with a minimum 15m buffer)[2]
- Watercourses (Rivers and Canals) (with appropriate buffer)
- Long Distance Trails
- The sites included in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review Study (2021)
- Protected, Priority and notable Habitats, and all those defined as Irreplaceable Habitats (with appropriate buffers)
- Veteran and Street Trees (with appropriate root protection buffer / tree pit)
- Green corridors, such as alongside railway lines, and verges / rain gardens

[2] Regard should also be given to Natural England and the Forestry Commission: Joint Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland, Ancient and Veteran Trees.

4.2.3 In addition to the above, regard should be given to identified biodiversity opportunities, relevant strategies and initiatives, the purposes and duty of designated landscapes, and also relevant work of key stakeholders; such as:

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas	Defined in 2008, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas were identified as areas that present 'best opportunity for enhancing biodiversity', often being buffers around existing reserves or linkages between existing sites (details of the process can be found on the Sussex Local Nature Partnerships website: https://sussexlnp.org.uk/boa/)
Wilder Horsham District Partnership	A 5 year partnership between Horsham District Council and Sussex Wildlife Trust in response to the urgent pressures on biodiversity. Its main objective is to initiate the creation and delivery of the Horsham District Nature Recovery Networks. (For more information please visit here: https://www.horsham.gov.uk/climate-and-environment/wilderhorshamdistrict/about-wilder-horsham-district)
Weald to Waves	An initiative led by a network of farmers, land managers, councils, researchers, wildlife charities, schools, gardeners and community groups to galvanise nature recovery across Sussex and reverse the biodiversity crisis. It seeks to establish a 100-mile nature recovery corridor from the High Weald to the coast and out to revived seas, encompassing over 10,000 hectares of contiguous habitat. (For more information please visit here: https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/)
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)[3]	The Environment Act 2021 introduced the requirement for Responsible Authorities to produce a LNRS. They are a mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature to plan, map, and help drive more coordinated, practical, focused action and investment in nature's recovery to build the national Nature Recovery Network. West Sussex County Council is responsible for producing / reviewing the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Supporting Authorities, such as Horsham District Council, and other stakeholders and landowners are involved in the process. (For more information please visit here: https://sussexlnp.org.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategies-for-sussex/)
South Downs National Park	The Southern most portion of Horsham District is located in the South Downs National Park. Although not the local planning authority for the park, Horsham District Council must have regard to the two statutory purposes of National Parks, which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks, and

[3] The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 came into force on the 13th April 2023. Defra expressed a wish for LNRS's to be published by March 2025. Publication by Responsible Authorities may be later than this date given the process set and implications for timescales.

	to promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks. (For more information please visit here: https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/)
High Weald National Landscape / Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	The primary purpose of AONBs is to conserve and enhance natural beauty, and sets out responsibilities for their management and for the production of AONB Management Plans. A duty is placed on public bodies and statutory undertakers to 'have regard' to the 'purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty'. (For more information please visit here: https://highweald.org/)
Sussex Local Nature Partnership	A voluntary partnership of over 30 organisations covering the whole of Sussex. It works through partnership and collaboration to "protect and expand natural capital and everything it gives us". It has produced several documents and is involved in numerous projects. Of particular relevance to the Green Infrastructure Strategy are the Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Sussex 2019-2024, advice reports on mapping a nature recovery network at the district level, and the Woodland Opportunity Mapping for Sussex. (For more information please visit here: https://sussexlnp.org.uk/)
Other community groups	A wide range of work which links to green infrastructure provision is undertaken by parish councils and a range of community organisations. Whilst this may not be documented in formal publications, engagement with relevant groups can help inform local level understanding of Green Infrastructure provision. (Contact a Parish Council: https://www.horsham.gov.uk/council-democracy-and-elections/contact-your-parish-council) (To volunteer in a District Council greenspace please visit here: https://www.horsham.gov.uk/parks-and-countryside/volunteering-in-our-parks-and-open-spaces)

4.2.4 The Council's approach aligns as far as it can with the principle of the aims and objectives of the Natural England's area 'local authority' wide standards and guidance. Through partnership working this will aim as far as possible to provide a District wide planned, linked and funded network of green infrastructure provision and which fills identified gaps. Horsham District Council does seek to manage its land in a sustainable, wildlife and wellbeing friendly manner and operates in partnership with relevant stakeholders, such as Sussex Wildlife Trust via the Wilder Horsham District partnership, parishes and community groups.

4.2.5 Other than Horsham town, the District is predominantly rural with a number of small towns / villages and small settlements. Nearly all residents therefore have access to nature within a wide green open space via the urban parks and recreation fields, local nature reserves, country parks, public rights of way within the countryside (including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

and South Downs National Park), Open Access Land, Permissive Access routes and areas, and other schemes (for example, Steyning Downland Scheme within the Wiston Estate) that are available to the public.

4.2.6 Disability access requirements have also informed the provision and enhancement of public open space, and whilst there are some limitations on the opportunities for disabled access to the wider countryside there is relatively good accessibility within key District Council owned sites such as Southwater Country Park and Horsham Park, as well as the Downs Link which comprises large sections suitable for wheelchairs. When looked at holistically, it all helps to meet the aims of Natural England's greenspace standards.



Figures 24, 25 and 26: View of Steyning from the surrounding countryside, and the River Adur and Downs Link that lie close by, which help to illustrate that residents within the District's village and small towns are never far from the countryside and rural PROW. (© Toby Phillips Photography)

4.2.7 This strategy's approach to focus on future developments' ability to appropriately factor in green infrastructure aligns, in part, with the national move towards mandatory biodiversity net gain within development. The District's open space standards, as set out in the Local Plan and supporting documents, help to ensure that gaps in green infrastructure are not created and that the needs of a development's occupants can be met without putting extra pressure on existing open space.

4.2.8 On a wider scale, crossing the District's boundaries, the Local Nature Recovery Strategies (led by the County level authorities) provide a further important framework in respect of green infrastructure. Indeed, there is significant overlap between the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Green Infrastructure, especially in respect of the approach Natural England applies to green infrastructure. West Sussex and East Sussex County Councils, Brighton & Hove, and the Sussex Local Nature Partnership will continue to work together along with the Supporting Authorities (e.g. local planning authorities such as Horsham District Council) in respect of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs). The strategy includes the LNRS which follows a process that is considered to align with the Local Planning Authority 'Process Journey' within Natural England's Green Infrastructure guidance in respect of engagement and mapping component areas.

4.2.9 As part of the district wide green infrastructure strategy the following will be encouraged and form key objectives for the Council and will also form key aims within its landholdings. All future development will therefore be expected to have regard to this strategy, the Horsham District Nature Recovery Network Report, and other relevant strategies, guides and plans as applicable.

4.2.10 In addition, Horsham District Council will:

1	Develop appropriate strategies and increase biodiversity within the Council's landholdings, including managing public spaces for biodiversity as far as practicable, and encourage others to do the same, subject to 'right plant in the right place'. This will include but not be limited to the following: coppicing of woodland, reduction of mowing frequency or introduction of grazing, increasing use of pollinator friendly planting in parks.
2	Assist with parishes and community groups to facilitate the management and maintain community green infrastructure assets
3	Promote and facilitate 'greening' opportunities and the provision of environmentally sustainable green infrastructure that follows equality and diversity principles, including within development. Local plan policies will seek to ensure that development: • creates a sense of place, • increases biodiversity and climate mitigation, • delivers equity access to all types of open space (including sport and allotments), • making active travel an attractive option, and • provides for flood risk reduction and water management.
4	Collaborate with stakeholders and partners to help in the provision of effective engagement with each other to help in the delivery of Green Infrastructure, which includes appropriate joined up thinking in respect to biodiversity, nature recovery, water management, informal recreation and sport, and accessibility for all.
5	Explore funding and grant opportunities that may enable the Council to expand and enhance the District's Green Infrastructure. This could include opportunities to influence, manage and / or acquire important parcels of land especially areas indicated within the draft Horsham District NRN and land adjacent or close to existing council holdings.
6	Seek to address gaps and accessibility issues taking into account the area profiles set out in Appendix 2.
7	Maintain and increase tree canopy cover where appropriate, and deliver other habitat enhancements, (such as heathland restoration), particularly where these deliver other green infrastructure benefits including recreation opportunities, climate change mitigation and biodiversity net gain.

4.2.11 In respect of urban tree canopy cover, in Horsham District, it is considered the planting of at least one new street tree, or similar, per five dwellings / 1,000sqm commercial floorspace, especially in urban areas, should be encouraged subject to underground utilities and appropriate agreement

from the highway authority / relevant body (applying 35 dwellings per hectare as a respective baseline density).

4.3 Green Infrastructure Strategy - Site Level

4.3.1 **All planning proposals requiring the submission of a planning application will be expected to have regard to how they link to existing green infrastructure and how they may be able to provide enhancement** in accordance with the NPPF. It should be noted that all applicants will be expected to meet the mandatory biodiversity requirements or those set in the Local Plan where a threshold above the mandated BNG is set in policy.

4.3.2 The following provides a diagram of key elements that help provide good public realm which is relevant to the consideration of green infrastructure and **all proposals should seek to respect, and where appropriate should provide and / or enhance, these elements**:

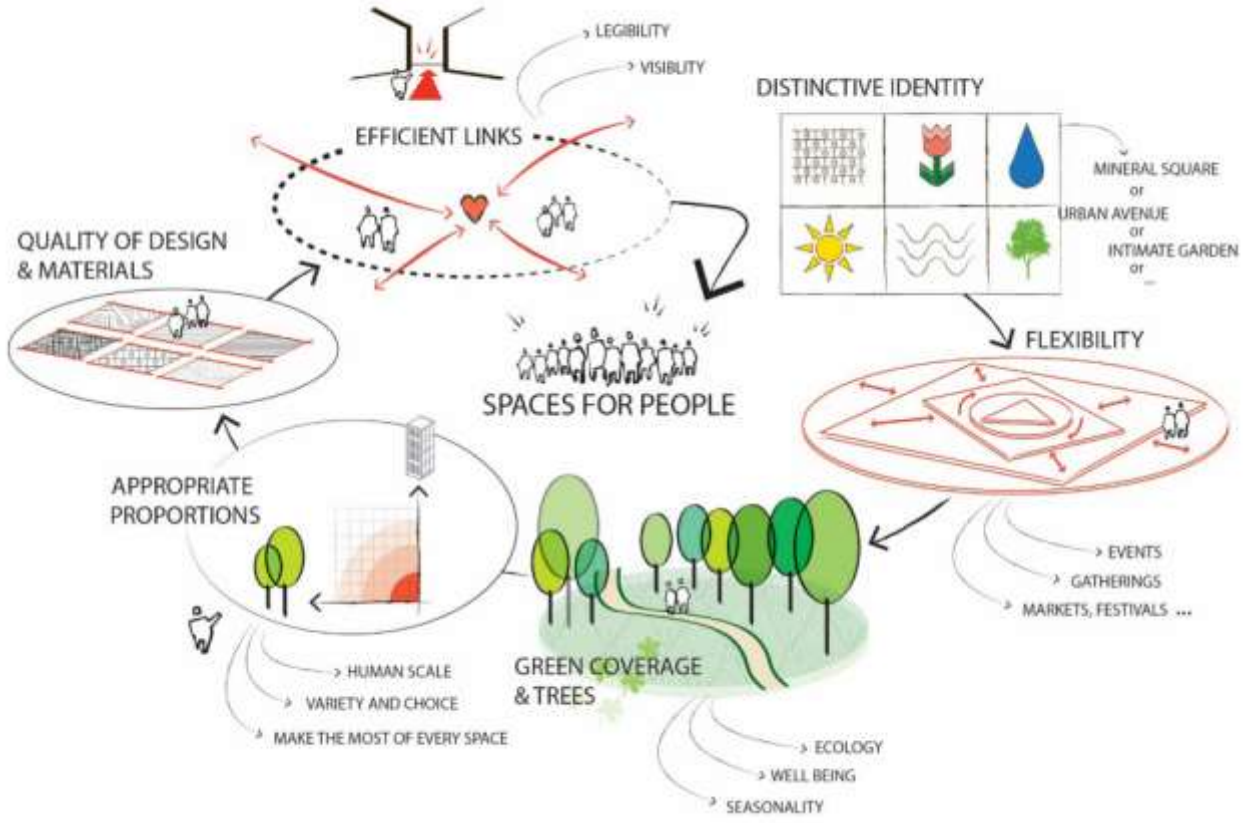

Figure 27: Source: Horsham Town Centre Public Realm Guide, Horsham Town Centre (May 2021) produced by BDP and Horsham District Council.

4.3.3 The advice in this strategy does not seek to introduce or set new 'Policy' requirements. It is divided into three sections. These are:

- General principles for all development
- Considerations for householders /small scale proposals
- Considerations for major developments

General Principles

4.3.4 **The advice below is for all development or as otherwise specified.**

4.3.5 The following bullets set out key elements which development proposals will be expected to incorporate.

Green Infrastructure: Site Level – All Development or as Specified:

1. Appropriate regard should be given respectively to the four National Character Areas (NCAs) found in Horsham District which are the: Low Weald (121. *Claylands*), High Weald (122. *Forests and parklands*), Wealden Greensand (120. *Sandstone hills and ridges*), and South Downs (125. Chalk wolds and downs); as well as the District's Landscape Character Assessment and maps.

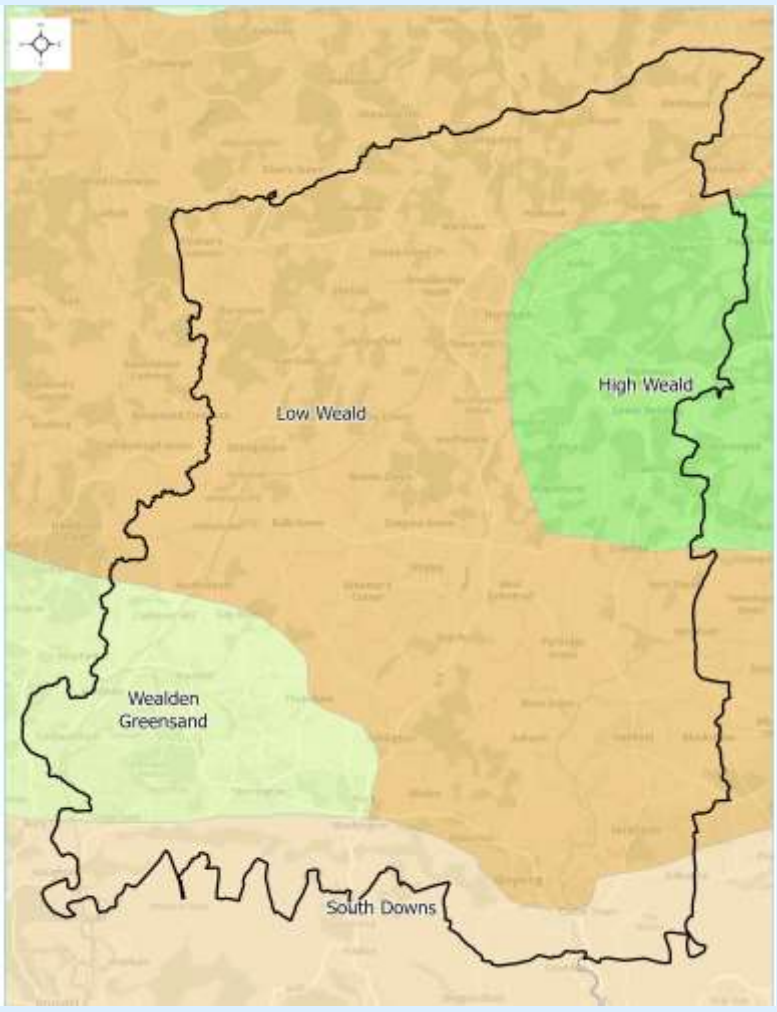

Figure 28: NCAs in in Horsham District (© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 AC0000820204. Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions. © Natural England copyright)

2. All development proposals should accord with national and local policy. They should reflect the key components of good design in relation to green infrastructure provided by national and nationally recognised bodies (see Appendix 3) summarised in Section 3 above, relevant Design Statements, Design Guides and Design Codes, Conservation Area

and Heritage Appraisals, and Cycling / Wheeling / Walking / Active Travel plans and strategies for the respective location.

3. All development proposals should reflect the aims and objectives of the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and, in respect of sites close to the Surrey border, the Surrey LNRS. The green infrastructure key components map shown in Appendix 1 along with relevant projects by key stakeholders (paragraph 4.2.3) should also be reflected and strategic opportunities beyond the core routes should be taken into account. Appropriate buffers must be provided around: designated sites, irreplaceable and protected / priority habitats, registered biodiversity gain sites, sites necessary for the operation of the Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme, and similar.

4. The design process for all development proposals should integrate green infrastructure from concept stage onwards so it is not left to the margins or 'left over spaces' and avoids green infrastructure features being considered in isolation. This should include regard to utilities within and / or near the site.

5. All development proposals will be expected to apply a no net loss approach to accessible green space, minimise environmental impacts[4] (during construction and use) and to consider how on-site green infrastructure (existing and new) can be delivered in a non-fragmented way (or as effective functional stepping stones) and maximise multiple benefits (such as biodiversity, health, prosperity, water management, air quality and climate change). Developments should retain existing habitats, geological, archaeological and heritage features and should use existing assets as anchor features, such as mature trees and other existing features. Appropriate regard to soil[5] should be given - the use of imported, manufactured topsoil should be minimised and soil compaction and disturbance avoided within the green infrastructure.

6. All development should optimise:

    - Additional planting and the creation of new habitats. These must be appropriate to their location and include as wide a range of species (particularly locally 'native and sourced' ones) to increase biodiversity and resilience to climate change, pests and disease. Successor planting should be factored in with respect to existing mature trees. Wildlife and soil friendly maintenance regimes should be planned for and adopted (including minimal use of pesticides and fertilisers).

    - the opportunities to facilitate and enhance links within the wider area and through the site. Layout and design should integrate sustainable and active travel with green infrastructure.

    - greenspace design for equality of access for all sectors of the community from the outset.

[4] Environmental impacts include the impacts on wildlife / species, habitats, landscape, existing green infrastructure assets and functions, ground and soil condition etc. The minimisation of environmental impacts means harmful impacts should be avoided and best practice techniques and standards applied including appropriate timing of construction and protection during construction, and use of appropriate planting (both in terms of species and timing) etc.

[5] This includes regard to be given to National PPG ' Natural Environment' and Defra's 'Code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'. The use of artificial turf and other inorganic / plastic based materials should be avoided unless meeting identified needs for formal sport.

7. New dwellings: To reflect the national Green Infrastructure Framework and Government target, new dwellings should be located within a 15 minute walk from public, accessible, good quality multi-functional green or blue space. Where this is not possible and the generated open space needs fall below the minimum areas specified in the Council's latest open space study, there will be an expectation, for sites that are considered in all other respects to be sustainable, that some form of appropriate useable green infrastructure will be provided on-site taking into account the provision of biodiversity net gain, crime and safety, accessibility for all[6] as well as nature, and the need to meet the open space standards (for individual dwellings this may include the provision of balconies, space for informal recreation, space for food growing, planting and measures to enhance biodiversity etc).

8. Urban / brownfield: Development proposals in settlements, urban areas and brownfield sites will be expected to apply a no net loss approach to green cover. Opportunities for increasing urban tree canopy cover and green infrastructure should be taken. Consideration should be given to the provision of a new tree per every 5 dwellings / 1,000sqm commercial floorspace, and proposals are encouraged to aim for an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) in accordance with Natural England's Green Infrastructure UGF Standard guidance (eg 0.3 for predominantly commercial and 0.4 for predominantly residential development) or aim for a target of at least 60% of the site area to be permeable (including green / biosolar green roofs).

9. Greenfield: Development on greenfield sites should be planned to include multi-functional and biodiverse green infrastructure and sustainable drainage ideally prior to, or at least at the same time as, consideration of roads and buildings. Predominantly residential development within greenfield sites should aim for an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) in accordance with Natural England's Green Infrastructure UGF Standard guidance (eg 0.5) or aim for a target of at least 60% of the site area to be permeable (including green / biosolar green roofs).

10. AQMA: Development within or relating to Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) will be expected to consider how they can contribute to green infrastructure in a way that helps reduce air pollution and improves air quality (in conjunction with design and proposed use.

11. Development for two or more buildings should take into account the major development guidance provided below as appropriate to the scale of the proposal.

[6] Accessibility for all, for the purposes of this strategy, means everyone should have equal access to a diverse range of green infrastructure that aims to meet all the various needs. It includes regard to deprivation as well as the 9 protected characteristics covered by the discrimination law Equality Act: age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. Regard should be given to relevant guidance, such as Making space for Girls and the Sensory Trust.

Householder / Small Scale proposals:

4.3.6 Every effort should be made to protect and enhance green infrastructure, including the benefits it offers, especially that which supports biodiversity in the longer term. By way of small measures within householder proposals, this may be through the provision of the following:

 Wildlife and hedgehog highways / gaps through boundaries	 Bird boxes / Bat Boxes	 Plants attractive to pollinators
  Specialist 'wildlife' bricks (eg swift, sparrow terrace and Bee Bricks)	 Bug Hotels / Houses	 Living green walls / roofs
 Ponds / water features	 Appropriate lighting (e.g. either no lighting or dim, orangey / red lighting. Capped to avoid sky glow)	 Planting of native trees, shrubs and plants / wildlife 'meadow' area
 Removal of artificial and impermeable surfaces	 Reduced, or no, use of artificial pesticides and fertilisers	 Planted troughs and window boxes

Additional sources of information for householder schemes:

4.3.7 Further information on the smaller green infrastructure biodiverse measures which can be incorporated is provided by a number of nationally recognised bodies, such as:

- Natural England's Wildlife Gardening Forum: Booklets on Wildlife Gardening
- The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) – Wildlife Gardening and Garden lighting: effects on wildlife
- The Wildlife Trust – Simple things to help wildlife
- The RSPB – Birds and Wildlife Advice; and joint guidance on Swift Bricks
- The Woodland Trust – How to attract wildlife to your garden: 5 top tips
- The European Federation of Green Roofs and Walls
- Natural History Museum – Seven simple ways to create a wildlife friendly garden

Figures 29 and 30: Pictures showing the contribution properties can make to green infrastructure even where space is limited. Storrington, and Bramber (© Toby Phillips Photography).

Major Applications:

4.3.8 All major development must seek to optimise green infrastructure, this will require regard to the following and the submission of appropriate information to demonstrate how each has been taken into account:

Green Infrastructure – Major Development:

Major development applications are expected to take the following into account:

1. ***Green Infrastructure Plan:***

   Major development applications are expected to submit a "Green Infrastructure Plan" (which may be part of a Design and Access Statement) setting out how the development will meet the objectives of this strategy including those set out in section 3, Natural

England's Green Infrastructure Framework's Principles and Standards. This should include how the proposal has taken into account and addressed bullets 2 to 8 and where applicable 9 and 10 below, as proportionate to the size of the proposal, and also the provision of:

a. a "**context plan / map**" showing the site in the context of the wider area within which it is set. This should:

   i. Extend to a distance of at least 600m around the proposed development site and show the location and type of all existing greenspaces (including forestry and wooded areas, wetland, rivers, sport and recreation facilities and other community greenspaces). Recognition should be included in respect of the sites beyond 600m that accord with Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards;

   ii. show all the walking and cycling routes within the site and surrounding area that residents of the proposed development are likely to use, taking into account desire lines (see also bullet 4 below); and

   iii. flood zones (to identify opportunities for Sustainable Drainage Systems [SuDS] or river restoration). This should be informed by and include an overlay or plan showing the relevant layers from the Natural England's green infrastructure mapping database as well as local data.

b. a "**green infrastructure plan / map"** showing the proposed green infrastructure approach within the site. This should include the existing green infrastructure to be protected and the new habitats and green infrastructure to be created – this should also be included, with appropriate measures to manage risks to the environment, in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);

c. a "**soil survey and investigation report**" and demonstrate how this has fed into the Green Infrastructure Plan. Compaction of the soil is to be avoided, at least within the green infrastructure and during construction.

2. Consultation:

Major development applications should evidence how regard has been given to proportionate consultation with the existing community to establish what will give new green infrastructure provision a sense of place, uniqueness and equality of access – in order to provide for the developments generated needs in a way that helps fulfill a desired provision within the existing community to facilitate integration and assimilation. Such consultation should actively seek out and engage with all genders, ages, disability groups and individuals, races / ethnicities in the locality etc as well as local residents, workers, and walking / running / cycling / outdoor sports groups in the locality. Upon first occupation a point of contact for users of the green infrastructure should be provided to quickly overcome issues facilitating the building of pride in the place.

3. Biodiversity, Habitats and wider benefits:

Major development applications should evidence how regard has been given to habitats (which may form part of the biodiversity net gain information) including:

a. clarity over the consideration given to the retention and provision of mosaics of habitats and how the scheme's green infrastructure contributes to the Lawton principles of 'Bigger, Better, More and Joined Up Networks' for biodiversity[7], as appropriate to the site;

b. how the scheme will use and incorporate locally appropriate and locally sourced materials / plants, and pollinators (native and non-native may be appropriate in urban areas otherwise native species should predominate whilst taking into account climate resilience).

c. when using the Biodiversity Metric for the calculation of biodiversity baseline and net gain, applicants should also use the Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool which provides a means of enabling wider benefits for people and nature from biodiversity net gain. It uses a habitat-based approach to provide a common and consistent means of considering the direct impact of land use change across 18 ecosystem service services.

d. see also the section titled 'open space standards' below for the overlap between biodiversity net gain (BNG) and the natural semi-natural standard.

4. Active Travel, Landscape and Use:

Major development applications should evidence how regard has been given to existing landscape and how the green infrastructure is to be used, including:

a. how routes through will respond to terrain and landscape type(s), and will deliver or complement green infrastructure;

b. how the majority of the green infrastructure provided will be public and accessible without restricted access, subject to natural surveillance, and incorporates inclusive design so as to provide safe and welcoming open spaces for all;

c. information on how the green infrastructure has been made attractive to use, and how it links multifunctional green spaces and connects into the movement network so that people naturally pass through it as they move around, especially via active travel. It should appeal to different groups by offering a range of activities, and appropriate uses should be provided at its edges to deliver mutual benefits and safety;

d. how it will encourage social interaction, promote health and well-being and does not exacerbate inequalities (taking into account the local context and deprivation). This includes regard to not just traditional types of provision but also to what is welcoming to all groups including minority groups, women[8], LGBTQIA+ groups, people with disabilities, children and the elderly. Provision must not act as a barrier but seek to facilitate integration and inclusion in a manner that helps to drive out crime, which includes regard to natural surveillance and the provision of sight lines with good visibility;

[7] The draft Horsham District Nature Recovery Network report provides advice in respect of the District.
[8] See Appendix 4 section relating to 'Making Space for Girls' for suggestions on making space more inclusive for teenager and young women which is considered to be more inclusive for all.

e. how any proposed car parking seeks to include shrubs, trees, swales, rain gardens, and minimises sealed surfaces and optimises the use of free-draining vegetated surfaces designed to take vehicular traffic;

f. the regard given to the optimisation of the provision of green roofs including provision over bin stores, car storage such as car ports, cycle parking, which should be secure and safely but readily located to facilitate cycling, and other subsidiary outbuildings/structures.

5. Climate change:

Major development applications should clearly evidence how climate change has been taken into account and informed by predicted changes in weather patterns (such as longer drier periods / periods of heavy rain / increases in storms), for example within the design and layout, habitats and species, management etc.

6. Stewardship:

Major development applications should clearly evidence how the management, maintenance and monitoring will be funded and undertaken for a minimum of 30 years, or as agreed with the Council, with clarity over what falls within biodiversity net gain requirements. Private residential gardens, green roofs and green walls (not artificial but including biosolar green roofs) may form an element of the green infrastructure provision, but they should not form the majority key part where their future management and maintenance falls outside the control of any collective stewardship to be adopted.

7. Sustainable drainage systems:

Major development applications should evidence how regard has been given to the appropriate provision of sustainable drainage systems including:

a. how sustainable watering systems will be included to ensure soils do not dry out during dry periods / drought thereby helping to provide urban cooling and planting longevity;

b. how nature-based solutions form part of the sustainable drainage system and avoids a reliance on tanks or detention basins alone.

8. Innovative types of provision:

It is important to create a sense of place and appeal as well as regard to sustainability, this includes the exploration of the provision of the following on-site or as appropriate:

a. all-age inclusive play areas (toddler through to elderly), urban forest schools, interactive art installations etc. to encourage everyone, young and old, to move more playfully and also making the area more interesting to walk, wheel or cycle through.

b. the planting of locally native fruit and nut trees and shrubs with produce free to all to encourage people through the space and help provide access to healthy food.

(To the right: Figure 31 – Steyning Community Orchard within Steyning Memorial Playing Field which also offers children's play space, a memorial garden, cricket pitch with nets and club facilities, tennis courts with club facilities, basketball hoops, football and an adjacent Bowling Club)

c. the planting of locally native scented plants and plants attractive to pollinators and birds to make the space reach all senses, and to enhance the experience for those without sight or hearing.

d. consideration given to the inclusion of ground source and water source heat pumps within the area of green infrastructure appropriately taking into account noise impacts and the installation requirements of other mechanical and electrical equipment, and purpose of greenspace. Regard also given to the collection of green waste for use in the production of renewable energy.

e. the integration of rainwater harvesting schemes within the green infrastructure plans, both in terms of irrigation and also water features that might be used to store water.

f. minimising the provision of sealed and impervious / impermeable surfaces and aiming for a target of at least 60% of the site area to be permeable (including green / biosolar green roofs).

g. enhancing the attractiveness of streets via greening, especially in a way that connect wildlife and habitats in the area and minimise fragmentation of habitats. Such as through the provision of street trees (in large tree pits), rain gardens and green walls. The provision of a 2 year watering contract, together with the recruitment of local volunteers to water newly planted street trees during drought for the first 3 years, should be considered. Provide good natural surveillance over the green infrastructure. Street verges should be provided that either retain and encapsulate original countryside soils or be sown to be species rich as appropriate for local wildlife and pollinators subject to highway safety impacts.

(To the right: Figure 32 – picture of a West Sussex County Council Notable Verge for Wildlife marker)

h. the provision of measures to overcome wildlife barriers through the use of green bridges, underpasses, and ducts. Ensuring appropriate buffers to roads, railways, and watercourses.

9. Open Space Standards:

Major housing applications and major development applications comprising open space should clearly evidence how the scheme is meeting the open space standards within the green infrastructure offer. These spaces should inform the design of the scheme to ensure

they function well within the whole scheme and the wider area. They should not be made up of the left-over space after road and building locations have been set.

The mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) and any increased target that may be set within the Development Plan[9] will contribute towards, and may therefore be discounted from, the 'natural and semi-natural greenspace' open space 'quantity' standard requirement. All the other open space typologies should seek to optimise biodiversity but will need to be met separate to the BNG requirements to ensure appropriate flexibility in delivery, maintenance and future typological use. In respect of the areas for BNG, the risk of and impacts of predation and activity (including lighting) should be identified and addressed so that the BNG areas are appropriately located and buffered.

The following sets out various elements that should be considered, this is not an exhaustive list:

a. the standards applied in accordance with planning policy and background guidance provided in the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review 2021, which is précised in the Non-Technical Summary Paper, and any subsequent updates including a need to have regard to 'Making Space for Girls'.

b. the provision of diversity and variety that complements what already exists in the area and connects physically and functionally with other green infrastructure as part of a network. This includes regard to different sizes and types of greenspaces and parks as befitting the size of the development, including regard to pocket parks and doorstep green / natural spaces.

c. in large / strategic schemes it is expected that the majority of the generated demand for multi-functional greenspace[10] will be located in one main space as this provides greater flexibility in use and diversity in landscape (including, amenity grass, meadows, sports, exotic and native trees / shrubs / flowers, woodland, ponds / lakes / water features / detention basins / wetlands, community orchards, natural play areas etc) rather than lots of pocket parks or similar with limited provision or diversity.

d. in respect of on-site sport provision, the location must take into account all relevant factors such as the need for level well drained ground, margins within which grass pitch boundaries can be redrawn to minimise goal damage, lighting, and appropriate orientation of pitches and courts (eg approximately north / south, between 325 degrees and 20 degrees – with 345 degrees being best for all sports, to avoid low afternoon / evening sunshine into a players face subject to the time of year and time of day the site will predominately be used, prevailing wind, soil type, and drainage).

10. Urban extensions:

Urban extensions will be expected to deliver public open space for informal / formal recreation to at least meet their generated demand but ideally should consider providing

[9] Such as the adopted Local Plan and/or a made Neighbourhood Plan.

[10] Multi-functional greenspace is one of the typologies within the open space standards as detailed in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review (June 2021)(PDF File,2.8MB) it includes three categories of open space: Amenity Greenspace; Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace; and Parks and Gardens (within which an allowance is made for space for sport).

extra capacity as part of their green infrastructure to take into account ongoing population increase, as a continual reliance on what exists is not sustainable. For example, Natural England recommend 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population urban nature recovery standard). In addition to this, urban extensions will be expected to show consideration has been given to the potential need for future urban extensions beyond their boundary to ensure connected communities are created both now and in future, this means adoption of recreational and green links right up to site boundaries should be planned for. Barriers to the creation of future links must be avoided and routes up to the boundary should be included even if it is not currently possible to connect to links within the countryside.

5.0 Overarching Factors and Conclusion

5.1 Overarching Factors

5.1.1 As recognised both nationally and locally, including the District's Nature Recovery Network report, nature is in dramatic decline. To reverse this decline better and more connected habitats are needed. In addition to this, in 2019, Horsham District Council formally recognised the global environmental crisis and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and in June 2023 the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency for the district. The declaration enabled the Council to move forward with the carbon neutral target for 2030 and the Horsham District carbon neutral target for 2050. It also added robust support to respective planning policies including those seeking better connected habitats and more green spaces to improve the environment and help residents and businesses adapt to climate change.

5.1.2 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, makes clear in its climate change reports that the scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human well-being and the health of the planet. Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming. It advises that any further delay in concerted global action will miss the brief, rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future. (IPPC, 2018-2023 Reports)

5.1.3 The IPCC 2023 and earlier reports recognise that healthy ecosystems are more resilient to climate change and provide life-critical services such as food and clean water. By restoring degraded ecosystems and conserving 30 to 50 per cent of Earth's land, freshwater and ocean habitats, society can benefit from nature's capacity to absorb and store carbon.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 This clearly indicates that humans are inextricably linked to the environment in which we live, both locally and globally, and that human interventions have wide ranging impacts including unintended consequences. This strategy therefore tries to help minimise those impacts and the unintended consequences by setting out clear aims and expectations for the Council and those it can influence, including developers, in respect of green infrastructure.

5.2.2 It is recognised that the majority of the land within the District is countryside where farmers are a key custodian. This strategy may not have a direct influence on such land. Nevertheless, by having regard to projects like Weald to Waves and working with rural landowners through projects like the Wilder Horsham District partnership, this strategy can help to ensure a joined up approach can be taken in respect of green infrastructure and the ecosystem services and benefits to nature it can deliver.

Appendix 1

Horsham District: Green Infrastructure Key Components Map

(NB: The provision of an interactive map, that can be updated with amendments to national designations and local strategies etc, that enables site and District level review is also to be made available on the Council's website.)

KEY:

Horsham District Council

Horsham District Council - Green Infrastructure Map

Reference:	Scale: 1:90,000 (at A4)
Date: 21/12/2023	Revision:

Horsham District Council, Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1RL.
Telephone: 01403 215100 (calls may be recorded) www.horsham.gov.uk Chief Executive: Jane Eaton

Appendix 2

Area Profiles

A2.1 For the purpose of profiling the District has been split into three areas: North, Mid, and South. On this basis, a descriptive account of the overarching green infrastructure in the District is set out below. The overview has been arranged to show the existing strengths and weaknesses, followed by potential opportunity areas for enhancement.

North of District

A2.2 This area broadly covers the northern 1/3 of the District and includes the settlements of Horsham, Broadbridge Heath, Slinfold, Rudgwick, Rusper and Mannings Heath.

Existing Strengths

A2.3 The northern area of Horsham District has a particularly strong provision of green infrastructure. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) adjoins the built up area boundary of Horsham and is also in close proximity to a number of other villages (e.g. Mannings Heath). Horsham town also has a number of other Green Infrastructure features including Chesworth Farm, Horsham Park, Rookwood and Warnham Nature Reserve. Within the wider area there are also a number of routes and leisure sites that are of strategic importance to the District. The key features include:

- High Weald AONB;
- High Weald Landscape Trail linking to the centre of Horsham town into the AONB;
- Sussex Border Path runs across northern border of the District;
- The Down's Link passes through Slinfold and Rudgwick, linking the settlements to Guildford and the south coast;
- Relatively good Public Rights of Way network;
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA's) adjoining east and south and just north of Horsham town;
- Good existing links from Horsham town to rural outskirts and recreational areas such as Chesworth Farm and St Leonards Forest;
- A number of SSSIs and Local Wildlife Site's across the north of the District;
- Horsham Park is an important green lung within the main town in the District;
- The river Arun is an important resource for flood attenuation, biodiversity and recreation;
- The north of the District has large areas of Ancient Woodland;
- All the main settlements have reasonable if not good parks and gardens provision.

Weaknesses

A2.4 This is the most densely populated and developed area in the District and pressure for further development here is much stronger than in any other area of the District. This may lead to pressure for the loss of some existing areas of GI. However, this also offers opportunities to enhance and secure appropriate maintenance for green infrastructure and biodiversity.

A2.5 Gatwick Airport also lies to the north of the District which impacts upon green infrastructure due to the need to minimise bird strike.

A2.6 The Horsham District Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review has assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in the District. It indicates current gaps and, based on population projections, that by 2037 the area will have an open space deficiency unless more is provided alongside development.

Mid District

A2.7 This area broadly covers the middle 1/3 of the District and includes the settlements of Billingshurst, Southwater, Cowfold and Partridge Green.

Existing Strengths

A2.8 The central area of the District has strong green infrastructure provision in the north east due to the presence of the High Weald AONB, but provision is more limited elsewhere. Southwater also has reasonable Green Infrastructure provision with a Country park (also a Local Wildlife Site) and the Downs link. Key features to note are:

- The High Weald AONB, located close to the north east of Cowfold;
- The Arun and Adur River valleys in the west and east respectively. These areas are important for flood attenuation, biodiversity including the Upper Arun SSSI, and recreation;
- A number of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) including the Knepp Castle estate to the south of Southwater;
- The Down's Link which passes through Partridge Green and Southwater linking the settlements to Guildford and the South coast;
- Relatively good Public Rights of Way network;
- Wey South Path and the Wey and Arun Canal located on the western boundary of the District and provides an important recreational resource offering canal trips and walking opportunities. The canal is also of importance from a biodiversity perspective;
- Southwater Country Park;
- All the main settlements have reasonable if not good parks and gardens provision.

Weaknesses

A2.9 Appendix 1 indicates a gap in green infrastructure provision in the triangular area between Pulborough, Ashington and Billingshurst. The ability of the residents of Partridge Green and Cowfold to easily access the wider countryside may also be limited (notwithstanding both have good access to

the Downs Link). Residents in the Cowfold area also have limited accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace.

A2.10 The Horsham District Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review has assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in the District. It indicates current gaps and, based on population projections, that by 2037 some settlements would have an open space deficiency unless more is provided alongside development and that even where the overarching open space standard would be met there would still need to be additional provision to meet certain typologies.

South of District

A2.11 This area covers the southern 1/3 of the District and includes the settlements of Pulborough, West Chiltington, Storrington & Sullington, Ashington, Henfield, Steyning, Bramber & Upper Beeding.

Existing Strengths

A2.12 The southernmost part of the District generally already has a good green Infrastructure network. Most residents have good access to Green Infrastructure, particularly in the South Downs National Park. Many settlements also have a range of parks, leisure centres and allotments. The key features include:

- South Downs National Park – this nationally important landscape contains a number of key components of green infrastructure. Its main land use is agriculture, but it is also of importance for biodiversity (including a number of SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites) and recreation, including the South Downs way and Monarch Way; part of the National Park area south east of Steyning also falls within the designated Unesco Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve.
- Arun and Adur river valleys – important for flood attenuation, biodiversity and also for recreation. They also provide a GI link beyond the District towards the coast;
- Amberley Wildbrooks and Pulborough Brooks – part of the Arun valley these floodplains are sites of international importance for biodiversity. Pulborough Brooks is owned by the RSPB and has a visitor centre;
- Beeding and Bramber Brooks. Locally important floodplains with importance for biodiversity. There is also some access for informal recreation depending on the ground conditions.
- The Downs Link passes through, Henfield, Steyning and Bramber before linking the settlements to Guildford and the south coast;
- Relatively good Public Rights of Way network;
- Woods Mill a key educational site for the Sussex Wildlife Trust is located in the District to the south of Henfield;
- Sullington Warren, Monkmead Woods, Heath Common and Washington Common are all important sites for local residents and biodiversity;
- Steyning Downland Scheme, a registered charity, provides access to downland within Wiston Estate to the west of Steyning including a mountain bike track within woodland;
- All the main settlements have reasonable if not good parks and gardens provision.

Weaknesses

A2.13 Appendix 1 indicates a gap in green infrastructure provision in the triangular area between Pulborough, Ashington and Billingshurst. Land in the Ashington area appears to have limited publicly accessible green infrastructure especially natural and semi-natural greenspace due to the fact that the A24 acts as a barrier and there is a poor footpath network in this area, notwithstanding the footbridge.

A2.14 The Horsham District Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review has assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in the District. It indicates current gaps and, based on population projections, that by 2037 the area will have an open space deficiency unless more is provided alongside development and in respect of Storrington and Sullington where the overarching open space standard would be met there would still need to be additional provision to meet certain typologies.

Appendix 3

International Goals, Legislation, National Policy and Guidance

A3.1 There is a wide range of legislation, national policy and guidance that is directly or indirectly relevant to green infrastructure. These are set out below with brief narrative to highlight the relevance in relation to green infrastructure:

Convention on Biological Diversity – 2010 Biodiversity Target (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010)

A3.2 In April 2002, the Parties to the Convention committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.

A3.3 This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations General Assembly and was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals.

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015)

A3.4 The United Nations (UN) has set out 17 sustainable development goals or Global Goals. They are a collection of 17 interlinked objectives designed to serve as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. It is a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and into the future. They are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing. The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) are:

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 5: Gender Equality
- Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduce Inequality
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- Goal 13: Climate Action

- Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land
- Goal 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
- Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Environmental Improvement Plan (2023)

A3.5 The Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) is the first revision of the 25 Year Environmental Plan (25 YEP) which set out the framework and vision. It builds on both the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021. It is a delivery plan and sets out the actions that must be taken to help restore nature, tackle environmental pollution, and increase the prosperity of the county. It sets a new and ambitious commitment that everyone should live within 15 minutes walk of a green or blue space, such as, woodlands, wetlands, parks and rivers. It also indicates investment in active travel will be made, with a vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030. It makes clear that 30% of the country's land and sea is to be protected for nature through the Nature Recovery Network. It makes clear a Land Use Framework is to be published in 2023 setting out how multiple demands on land including climate mitigation and adaption will be balanced. It also sets out that a baseline map of soil health for England will be published by 2028 and at least 40% of England's agricultural soil will be brought into sustainable management by 2028. The goals and targets will support progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals internationally. The 10 goals set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan form the basis of the document. Published alongside the EIP is an Outcome Indicator Framework which describes environmental change that relates to the 10 goals. The 10 goals are as follows:

- Goal 1: Thriving plants and wildlife
- Goal 2: Clean air
- Goal 3: Clean and plentiful water
- Goal 4: Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Goal 5: Maximise our resources, minimize our waste
- Goal 6: Using resources from nature sustainably
- Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Goal 8: Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Goal 9: Enhancing biosecurity
- Goal 10: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment.

Environment Act 2021

A3.6 The significant decline in biodiversity is heralding a more ambitious approach, as evidenced by the Environment Act's requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and a deliverable national Nature Recovery Network (NRN). The Act seeks to put the environment at the centre of policy making and to make sure that the Country is cleaner, greener and more resilient for the next generation. It includes details on: creating a new governance framework for the environment; a new direction for resources and waste management; improving air quality; securing water services; enhancing green spaces; and updating laws on chemicals. The Act requires at least one 'long-term'

target is set in each of 4 priority areas: air, water, biodiversity, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. It also requires targets to be set for species abundance. It states that a target is 'long-term' if the specified date is no less than 15 years after the date on which the target is initially set.

A3.7 It sets out that the Secretary of State must prepare an environmental improvement plan and that the "A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (January 2018)" is to be treated as such. The Act commits the Government to refresh the Environmental Improvement Plan every 5 years.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Environmental Plan (25 YEP) (January 2018, updated May 2019)(HM Government, Defra)

A3.8 This sets out Defra's goals for improving the environment, within a generation, and leaving it in a better state than current generations found it. It details how government will work with communities and businesses to do this and what it will be doing over the next 25 years. It's a vision for a quarter of a century of action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. When it was published it sat alongside two other government strategies: the Industrial Strategy and the Clean Growth Strategy. To achieve the vision, 10 goals are set out, and the Nature Recovery Network forms a major commitment within the plan. A number of progress reports have been published which sets out the progress made in improving the environment through the 25 Year Environment Plan indicator framework.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (NERC Act) (as amended[11])

A3.9 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (NERC Act) places a Duty on public bodies and statutory undertakers to have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity as part of their policy and decision making. This duty is set out in Section 40 and Section 41 refers to a published list of living organisms and types of habitats which are of principle importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity in England.

National Planning Policy Framework

A3.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec, 2023) expects strategic policies to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for *"conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation."* It seeks to ensure planning decisions aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. It expects, through the planning of green infrastructure, that development avoids increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate and also appropriately improves air quality and mitigates the development's impact on air quality.

A3.11 The NPPF also makes clear that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. It makes clear

[11] The Environment Act 2021 amended the original Duty of 'conserving' to 'conserving and enhancing' biodiversity. In also introduced more explicit requirements for public authorities to assess how they can take action to conserve and enhance biodiversity, then to take these action, and how to abide by the revised Duty including the publication of Biodiversity Reports. The first of which is to cover a period of up to three years, and then subsequent reports a period of up to five years.

existing open space should not be built on unless it has been assessed to clearly show it is surplus to requirements or it is replaced elsewhere, or lost to development for alternative sports and recreation provision where the benefits clearly outweigh the loss of the open space.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment

A3.12 National planning practice guidance (PPG) on Natural Environment explains there are a number of planning goals that green infrastructure can help achieve, these are "*Building a strong, competitive economy; Achieving well-designed places; Promoting healthy and safe communities; Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change; and Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*." In respect of healthy and safe communities, it notes that 'Outdoor Recreation Value (ORVal)' is a useful online tool that can be used to quantify the recreational values provided by greenspace.

A3.13 It recognises that green infrastructure can help create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors, and that it exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beauty. It advises that green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales, which are also known as ecosystem services, such as enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation, biodiversity, food and energy production, urban cooling and flood risk management.

A3.14 It advises that Natural England are a statutory consultee before granting planning permission for large-scale non agricultural development on best and most versatile land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification) that is not in accord with the development plan. It notes soil is an essential natural capital asset that provides important ecosystem services. It also notes brownfield land can be of high environmental value and suggests that Natural England's 'Open Mosaic Habitat Inventory' can be used as the starting point for detailed assessments.

A3.15 It advises on how a strategic approach to green infrastructure can be taken and indicates green infrastructure frameworks or strategies should be evidence-based and include assessments of the quality of current green infrastructure and any gaps in provision. Relevant types of evidence for identifying and mapping local ecological networks is provided. It makes clear that given the scope and use of green infrastructure strategies that collaboration with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders such as Local Nature Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards should be taken

A3.16 It makes clear green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision. The importance of sustainable management and maintenance is noted and the need to identify funding arrangements at an early stage and factored into the design and implementation, balancing the costs with the benefits.

A3.17 Local community engagement can assist with management and tailoring provision to local needs. The opportunities that individual development proposals provide to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, and contribute to habitat connectivity in the wider area should be considered.

A3.18 The PPG also advises on biodiversity, geodiversity, ecosystems and landscape. It advises it is useful to consider how to secure net gains for biodiversity as part of green infrastructure provision and opportunities to work strategically in order to streamline development decisions: for example, by establishing a 'zone of influence' around protected sites. It lists the type of evidence that may help identify and map local ecological networks.

National Design Guide

A3.19 The national design guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It forms part of the government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance and design process and tools. The first section sets out the purpose of the National Design Guide. The second section sets out the ten characteristics of a well-designed place. It states "well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical **Character**. The ten characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of **Community**. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting **Climate**. They all contribute towards to cross-cutting themes of good design set out in the NPPF". It also states that "in a well-designed place, an integrated design process brings the ten characteristics together in a mutually supporting way". The ten characteristics are:

- Context – enhances the surroundings
- Identity – attractive and distinctive
- Built form – coherent pattern of development
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around
- Nature – enhanced and optimised
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive
- Uses – mixed and integrated
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable
- Resources – efficient and resilient
- Lifespan – made to last

National Model Design Code Part 1 and Part 2

A3.20 The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design codes and guides should provide a framework for creating high-quality places. In respect of green infrastructure it includes the following key points.

A3.21 **Part 1**: this covers the coding process, it also includes guidance on 'Area Types'. It makes clear that the all housing schemes over 15 dwellings should include a Local Area of Play (LAP), all schemes over 200 dwellings should include a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) within 400m, and all schemes over 500 dwellings should include a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Plan (NEAP) within 1,000m (page 31). It indicates schemes in a waterside location should make the most of their location by facing onto the water and should retain public access to the water's edge. Sustainable drainage systems should be integrated into the early stages of design to reduce flood risk and improve water quality, biodiversity and amenity.

A3.22 All schemes should seek to achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity and all new streets should include street trees to improve streets' popularity and walkability, reduce air pollution and

mitigate noise. It includes an illustrative figure (Figure 32) setting out privacy distances and indicates there should be a distance of 15m-20m between the rear of two dwellings and 10m between the rear of a dwelling and a blank flank wall of another. Public spaces should encourage activity and social interaction and all schemes should aim to create a sage and secure environment and provide a sense of security for all users.

A3.23 **Part 2:** provides guidance notes. It includes a section on 'Nature' and makes clear development should enhance the natural as well as the built environment. It also makes clear that the Government is committed in the 25 Year Environment Plan to embed a 'net environmental gain' principle for development to deliver environmental improvements locally and nationally and to green out towns and cities by creating and improving green infrastructure. It gives reference to Urban Greening Factor tools, Natural England's National Framework for Green Infrastructure, and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Home Zones are referenced in respect of multi-functional streets, and Secured by Design is also referenced raising that all publicly accessible spaces should be overlooked / subject to natural surveillance and routes should be safe, and as straight as possible, wide, well lit, without hiding places and well-maintained. In respect of open space design it sets out 9 key areas to have regard to which are as follows:

i. Boundary
ii. Entrances
iii. Surveillance
iv. Activity
v. Maintenance
vi. Ecology
vii. Access
viii. Lighting
ix. Allotments and community growing

A3.24 It covers sustainable drainage and states that SuDS need to be considered early in the design process to ensure ease of access for maintenance and efficient use of land by integrating them with other aspects of design such as public open space, biodiversity provision, and highways. It lists a number of types of SuDS including green roofs and walls, street trees, rain gardens, basins and ponds, an reedbeds and wetlands. In respect of biodiversity net gain it recognises that this may include the incorporation of trees, wildflowers, ponds, bat and bird boxes, bee and bird bricks and hedgehog highways.

National Guidance from Recognised Bodies

Natural England – Green Infrastructure Framework

A3.25 The Green Infrastructure Framework provides online guidance and a mapping tool. In addition to the mapping tool and its user guide the Framework includes: 15 Principles of Green Infrastructure, Green Infrastructure Standards, Green Infrastructure Design Guide, Green Infrastructure Process Journeys, and Case Studies, as well as a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Further information is to be provided in due course including accompanying indicators for the standards that can be measured using the Green Infrastructure Mapping Tool and other readily available datasets and resources. The Framework, including the Standards are voluntary but are designed to help meet national and local planning policy and are referenced in the National Model Design Code Part 2 Guidance Notes (page 21) (DLUHC, 2021a). They also help support the delivery of the UNs Sustainable Development Goals.

A3.26 The Framework makes clear that green infrastructure is essential and integral to well-designed places and should not be regarded as an optional enhancement. The aim is to green our towns and cities and improve existing green infrastructure. Biodiversity and nature recovery informs the Green Infrastructure Framework's first 'principle'. Natural England highlights that now more than ever we need to ensure that nature is at the heart of place-making to regenerate towns and cities and create attractive, investable places that are good for people, climate and the economy.

A3.27 The Framework sets out 5 Headline Green Infrastructure Standards for England which will be subject to further detail via a Menu of GI Standards and a Signposting Table that aims to be a comprehensive and open resource of green infrastructure standards. The Signposting Table will enable users to identify the most appropriate standards, benchmarks and indicators for their purpose. The Framework sets the following overarching standard / target:

> "Everyone to have access to and benefit from good quality green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home."

A3.28 Natural England advise that this could be defined in terms of the Accessible Greenspace Standards as the following:

> Either a Doorstep OR Local Accessible Greenspace AND a Neighbourhood Accessible Natural Greenspace,

A3.29 The five Headline Green Infrastructure Standards are:

- **S1: Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard** - this supports the National Planning Policy Framework's policy that local authorities should develop strategic policies for green infrastructure.
- **S2: Accessible Greenspace Standard** – the aim is to promote access to good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes' walk from home. A "green mapping tool" is included that helps to identify places where green space is needed most.
- **S3: Urban Nature Recovery Standard** – the aim is to boost nature recovery, create and restore rich wildlife habitats and build resilience to climate change. This involves incorporating nature-based solutions, including trees and wildflowers, into the design of towns and cities to help increase carbon capture, prevent flooding and reduce temperatures during heatwaves.
- **S4: Urban Greening Factor Standard** (UGF) for England - this is described as a "planning tool" that "improves the provision of green infrastructure and increases the level of greening in urban environments". It involves a government target of approximately 40 per cent of residential developments to have green and blue spaces, green roofs or green walls. The UGF is already being applied by the Greater London Authority where it includes a wide range of options including street trees, green roofs, green walls, and rain gardens.
- **S5: Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard** - this promotes an increase in tree canopy cover in urban environments. The aim is for major residential and commercial development to be designed to meet locally agreed targets.

A3.30 The 15 Principles are equally split into 'Why', 'What', and 'How' principles and are as follows:

'Why' Principles / Benefits of GI	'What' Principles / Descriptive	'How' Principles / Process
Nature rich beautiful places	Multifunctional	Partnership working and Vision
Active and healthy places	Varied	Evidence-based
Thriving and prosperous communities	Connected	Plan strategically
Improved water management	Accessible	Design
Resilient and climate positive places	Character	Managed, valued, monitored, and evaluated

Public Health England – Improving access to greenspace. A new review for 2020

A3.31 This reflects that there is increasingly compelling evidence showing that access to greenspaces really matters for our health. This report highlights new evidence and actions to help local areas consider how good-quality greenspace can support the delivery of health, social, environmental and economic priorities, at a relatively low cost. Maintaining quality greenspaces ultimately helps to improve the wellbeing of local communities and helps to reduce health inequalities. The report makes the case that we must not lose sight of our growing population's need for local accessible greenspace. It sets out three policies:

- Consider local green (and blue) space to be critical assets for maintaining and supporting health and wellbeing in local communities.
- Ensure that local policies and strategies are informed by evidence of need for sufficient access to greenspace.
- Prioritise improving access to greenspace and creating greener communities especially in areas of deprivation or where there is poor or unequal access.

Urban Design Group (in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement) – Building for a Healthy Life

A3.32 In June 2020 the latest edition of Building for Life 12, with an updated name of Building for a Healthy Life, was published. The new name reflects changes in legislation as well as refinements to the 12 considerations in response to good practice and user feedback. It is written in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement. It is a design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature. It provides a 12 point structure with underlying principles under 3 headings: Integrated Neighbourhoods; Distinctive Places; and Streets for All. 7 of the 12 considerations are particularly relevant and seek natural connections, making the most of what's there, a memorable character, well defined streets and spaces, easy to find your way around, healthy streets, and green and blue infrastructure respectively.

Landscape Institute – Green Infrastructure – An integrated approach to land use

A3.33 This sets out why green infrastructure is crucial to a sustainable future, the benefits of a green infrastructure approach and the key mechanisms for delivering green infrastructure on the ground. It

highlights collaboration is key to delivering multifunctional landscapes and the importance of involving landscape professionals in proposals.

Make Space for Girls – Better design suggestions for parks, Annual Report 2021, and 'Case Studies; and 'What does better look like' webpage

A3.34 Making Space for Girls campaigns for facilities and public spaces for teenage girls. It recognises that such spaces that work better for many other groups and sets out the approach to be taken to creating spaces in our parks that are more inclusive for all and creating social value. It recognises that skate parks, pitches and multi-use games areas (MUGAs) are important but serve only a proportion of young people and therefore seek a wider range of facilities. They provide a range of resources and evidence but make clear local engagement is at the heart of more inclusive space and that local girls should be consulted / engaged in what should be provided.

A3.35 Some of the findings from projects across England highlight the importance of the following: making spaces including traditional types of provision feel and be safer for girls to be within or pass by, well located naturally surveyed areas away from little children for social seating / swings / hammocks (some sheltered and also accessible) enabling groups of teenage girls and young women and mixed groups to chat in a circle or across picnic benches, provision of performance space for dance or playing acting potentially with tree log stools around which can also be used for community fitness classes, hang around space for teenage girls to hang from / swing round / lean against that are not tall enough for men to do chin ups, provision of up high hang out space suitable for teenagers (could have scramble nets for access), gym equipment arranged so groups can exercise and chat at the same time.

Building with Nature – Green Infrastructure Standards

A3.36 Building with Nature seeks to ensure high-quality green infrastructure is integral to placemaking in the UK and in doing so put nature at the heart of development in a way that is good for people and for wildlife. It does this through the provision of 12 green infrastructure standards for the UK built-environment sector, which provides a green infrastructure benchmark that defines 'what good looks like' with a simple, easy-to-use framework that is free to download. Accreditation and awards are also offered.

Sensory Trust

A3.37 The Sensory Trust provides information on its website in respect of inclusive greenspace highlight key principles for making these spaces more inclusive. They also provide an access chain tool to help plan any changes to access.

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) - Parks and Green Infrastructure

A3.38 The TCPA has been promoting the inclusion of green spaces in urban areas for over 100 years, as a core principle of the original Garden City movement. It now manages the Green Infrastructure Partnership which is a network of over 2,000 members which shares information about the latest green infrastructure policies and projects across the UK. It also provides links to helpful green infrastructure resources.

Appendix 4

Local Policy and Guidance

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and future Local Plans:

A4.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy supports Local Plan preparation and implementation of adopted Local Plan policies. In January 2024 the adopted Local Plan was the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the Local Plan review was at Regulation 19 Proposed Submission stage. The HDPF was adopted in 2015 and comprises policies that seek to ensure development contributes to the multi-functional network of green spaces known as 'Green Infrastructure'. Policy 43 'Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation' of the HDPF relates in part to the retention and provision of open space, and in conjunction with Strategic Policy 39 'Infrastructure Provision', is a key vehicle for the delivery of green infrastructure. By virtue of these policies, development is required to accord with the open space standards set out in the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review 2021 (the key elements in respect of future development requirements is provided in its Non-Technical Summary) or any subsequent update.

A4.2 Green Infrastructure comprises more than the open space types covered by standards. Strategic Policy 25 'District Character and the Natural Environment' of the HDPF therefore seeks to ensure development maintains and enhances Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District. Policy 31 'Green infrastructure and Biodiversity' of the HDPF recognises biodiversity forms part of the Green Infrastructure network it also resists the loss of existing green infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for the loss and ensure that the ecosystem services of the area are retained. Strategic Policy 35 of the HDPF expects development to use green infrastructure to help absorb heat, assist habitat migration, reduce surface water runoff and provide flood storage capacity. Strategic Policy 38 expects consideration to be given to green infrastructure in detailed assessments in respect of SuDS taking into account flooding, water quality and biodiversity. In addition to the policies detailed above, green infrastructure is mentioned either in the supporting text or policy of policies 6, SD5, SD6, SD10, and 27 of the HDPF. Any future Local Plan will reflect national policy and therefore strengthen the regard to green infrastructure and biodiversity.

Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review 2021

A4.3 Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review 2021 recognises the role of open space provision as a resource to the local area. It helps to inform direction of future provision of accessible, high quality, sustainable provision of open spaces in Horsham District and sets out appropriate standards. The key elements in respect of future development requirements is provided in its Non-Technical Summary.

Horsham District Nature Recovery Network Version 1 (July 2021)

A4.4 The significant decline in biodiversity is heralding a more ambitious approach, as evidenced by the Environment Act's requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and a deliverable national Nature Recovery Network (NRN).

A4.5 On this basis, the Wilder Horsham District (WHD) partnership between Horsham District Council and Sussex Wildlife Trust has produced a draft Horsham District NRN (Version 1, July 2021). From a planning perspective, the document or any updates, should be seen as highlighting opportunities and should not be read as a 'constraints' map. The draft NRN has been informed by ecologists and informed by the Sussex Local Nature Partnership's Natural Capital Investment Strategy (2019). It is

considered to set out an approach for enhancing and linking ecological networks and biodiversity, the achievability of which is being explored by the WHD partnership. The work helps to inform the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) that covers the District and potentially the consequent national NRN[12].

A4.6 The draft Horsham District NRN therefore identifies, alongside statutorily and policy protected sites[13], areas of 'opportunity' for biodiversity enhancement (such as, areas with very high or high habitat potential, buffer zones, potential corridors and 'stepping stones' for wildlife movements). These 'opportunity' areas should be taken into account within any development proposal when it considers the opportunities for delivering BNG presented by the development of the site. The draft Horsham District NRN assists in the consideration of the wider ecological network and therefore how a proposal can contribute to the overarching objectives of the Environment Act 2021 and the Lawton principles of: Bigger, Better, More and Joined Up[14]. Of particular importance is the identified importance of hedgerows, woodland, freshwater and floodplain habitats, and pollinating insects.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

A4.7 The Environment Act 2021 introduced the requirement for the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) by Responsible Authorities appointed by the Secretary of State. They are a mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature to plan, map, and help drive more coordinated, practical, focused action and investment in nature's recovery to build the national Nature Recovery Network. These strategies must work together to restore, create and connect habitats across England. The Responsible Authorities are all County and above level bodies. The Environment Act 2021 also established two mechanisms that support the delivery of the LNRS: mandatory BNG and strengthened biodiversity duty on public bodies.

A4.8 Statutory LNRS guidance and the Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 were published on 23 March 2023 and came into force on the 13th April 2023. These set out the role of the 'Responsible Authority' and the rules to be followed when preparing a LNRS. The guidance gives a clear steer that LNRSs should be deliverable on the ground and not a 'wish list' of things authorities / stakeholders would like to see happen. LNRSs set out both a 'statement of biodiversity priorities' and a 'local habitat map'. All LNRSs are to be reviewed at the same time as directed by the Secretary of State, which will be 3 – 10 years from publication of the LNRS in place.

A4.9 West Sussex County Council is the 'Responsible Authority' (appointed on the 26th June 2023) for the preparation of the LNRS for the West Sussex LNRS area, which covers Horsham District. Supporting Authorities, which are second tier local authorities such as Horsham District Council, as well as the Sussex Local Nature Partnership and other stakeholders and landowners are involved in the process.

[12] Further information on the NRN can be found in the Defra / Natural England: Policy Paper – Nature Recovery Network

[13] Statutorily and policy protected sites include SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Ancient Woodland, and also SPA, SAC which lie in the District but within the planning area of the South Downs National Park (NB: this should not be read as an exhaustive list).

[14] The Lawton principles are reflected in the Government document titled A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018 (often called the 25 Year Environment Plan / 25 Year Plan) which preceded the Environment Act 2021.

Appendix 5

Links to Documentation Detailed and links provided in the Strategy:

National:

- British Standard: BS42020 Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development
- British Standard: BS42021 Integral nest boxes: selection and installation for new developments - Specifications
- British Standard: BS8683 Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain – specification
- Building with Nature – Green Infrastructure Standards
- CIEEM/CIRIA/IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development *A practical guide* and Clarification and errata and Case Studies
- CIEEM/CIRIA/IEMA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain – Good practice principles for development
- Convention on Biological Diversity – 2010 Biodiversity Target
- Defra: A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment 2018 (often called the 25 Year Environment Plan / 25 Year Plan)
- Defra: Environmental Improvement Plan (2023)
- Defra: Local Nature Recovery Strategy Statutory Guidance
- Defra / Natural England: Policy Paper – Nature Recovery Network
- Defra: The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England (2014)
- The Environment Act 2021
- The European Federation Green Roofs and Walls
- Homes England (in partnership with NHS England): Building for a Healthy Life
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change website (including links to its reports)
- Landscape Institute's Policy Briefing on Biodiversity Net Gain for Landscape Professionals
- Landscape Institute: Green Infrastructure – An integrated approach to land use (2013) (PDF, 1.7MB)
- Living Roofs: Biosolar Green Roofs
- Making Space for Girls website: https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/
- Manual for Streets
- The National Design Guide
- National Model Design Code Part 1 and Part 2

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning practice guidance (PPG) on Natural Environment
- Natural England's Green Infrastructure principles and guidance and Mapping Tool
- Natural England: Biodiversity Net Gain Brochure
- Natural England and the Forestry Commission: Joint Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland, Ancient and Veteran Trees.
- Natural England's Wildlife Gardening Forum Booklets on Wildlife Gardening
- Natural England's: Open Mosaic Habitat Inventory
- Natural England - National Character Areas
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and Biodiversity Duty
- Natural History Museum – Seven simple ways to create a wildlife friendly garden
- Public Health England – Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020
- The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) – Wildlife Gardening and Garden lighting: effects on wildlife
- The RSPB – Birds and Wildlife Advice; and joint guidance on Swift Bricks
- The Wildlife Trust – Simple things to help wildlife
- The Woodland Trust – How to attract wildlife to your garden: 5 top tips
- Town and Country Planning Association – Parks and Green Infrastructure and TCPA link to funding sources for Land Managers and farmers, local authorities and public bodies, communities, and not-for-profit organisations, and Link to TCPA long-term stewardship toolkit
- The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation – Green and Blue Infrastructure: A transport sector perspective
- United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

Local:

- The Horsham District Planning Framework 2015 (HDPF) and link to Policies Map
- Horsham District Council approved Design Statements / Guides:
    - Horsham Town Centre – Public Realm Strategy & Design Guide, Town Centre Vision, Town Plan
    - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
    - Parish / Village Design Statements
    - Billingshurst Village Centre Supplementary Planning Document

    - Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Planning Advice Note

- Horsham District's: Landscape Character Assessment and maps
- Horsham District's Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review 2021 and its Non-Technical Summary
- Horsham District Council greenspace volunteer webpage: https://www.horsham.gov.uk/parks-and-countryside/volunteering-in-our-parks-and-open-spaces
- Horsham District Great Crested Newt District Licensing Scheme
- Parish Councils in Horsham District: https://www.horsham.gov.uk/council-democracy-and-elections/contact-your-parish-council
- South Downs National Park: https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/
- South East Biodiversity Forum – Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- Sussex Local Nature Partnership – Website link to work / documents and projects
- Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategies- link to website: https://sussexlnp.org.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategies-for-sussex/
- Sussex Local Nature Partnership's Natural Capital Investment Strategy (2019)
- The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre
- The Sussex Wildlife Trust - document titled 'Biodiversity and Planning in Sussex' (2014)
- Weald to Waves - link to wesbite: https://www.wealdtowaves.co.uk/
- West Sussex County Council – West Sussex Walking and Cycling Strategy
- West Sussex County Council – Rights of Way Management Plan
- The Wilder Horsham District (WHD) partnership and the draft Horsham District NRN (Version 1, July 2021)

Appendix 6

Glossary

Air quality management areas - Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Ancient or veteran tree - A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient woodland - An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Biosolar green roofs – These combine solar panels and green roofs. True biosolar green roofs are where green roof and solar technologies are integrated in a seamless fashion and designed to maximise biodiversity especially on extensive green roofs.

Climate change adaptation - Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation - Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Ecological Networks (local, regional and national) - Ecological networks are the basic, joined up infrastructure of existing and future habitat needed to allow populations of species and habitats to survive in fluctuating conditions. They comprise landscape with well connected habitats that species can move through easily allowing re-colonisation of areas after disturbance events, preventing local extinctions. They help to maintain genetic diversity and allow species' populations to adapt to future changes in environmental conditions, including climate change. The broad aim for the identification of ecological networks is to maintain the integrity of ecological processes over landscapes. The Horsham District Nature Recovery Network helps to depict a District level ecological network, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) depicts a County level network and the formally recognised Nature Recovery Network (NRN) depicts the national level network (NB. as at January 2024 the LNRS and national NRN are still emerging with finalisation expected 2025).

Ecosystem Services - The components of nature that are directly and indirectly enjoyed, consumed, or used in order to maintain or enhance human well-being. They are the benefits we get from the natural world that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. They are grouped into four broad categories: 'provisioning', such as the production of food, water and raw materials; 'regulating', such as the control of climate and disease; 'supporting', such as nutrient cycles and crop pollination; and 'cultural', such as spiritual and recreational benefits.

Environmental net gain - Means improving all aspects of environmental quality through a scheme or project. The Government promised to embed this as a principle for development in the 25 Year Environment Plan. It is very broad in scope, taking in carbon emissions, air, soil, water quality etc. It includes biodiversity net gain, which is that element which concerns natural flora and fauna, and particularly the quality of habitats for wildlife.

Geodiversity – The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity - All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Irreplaceable habitat - Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.

Local Nature Partnership - A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

National trails - Long distance routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.

Natural Capital – This is the world's stock of natural assets which include geology, soil, water and all living things. Humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, from natural capital which make human life possible.

Natural Surveillance – This is an urban design, architecture and landscaping technique that seeks to deter crime with social and highly visible spaces.

Nature Recovery Network - An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Net zero targets – net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance. The UK is committed to reaching net zero by 2050. The aim is to limit global warming and resultant climate change.

Notable habitats and species – either nationally or locally scarce, including those listed on the Sussex Rare Species Inventory (held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre).

Open space - All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

People with disabilities - People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

Pocket Park - Small green areas of public space, mostly seen in urban settings.

Priority habitats and species - Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Public Realm - All parts of the built environment where the public has free access. It encompasses all streets, squares, and other rights of way, and are the everyday spaces that are used by people to socialise, play, work, shop, traverse and use for a range of activities.

Sight Line – A hypothetical line extending from an observer's eye to a viewed area / object.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

Stepping stones - Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

Wildlife corridor - Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.