

Other site-specific policies (Point 5 of Policy D3)

- 2.110 There are waterfront sites within the Borough where marine employment uses are the Council's preferred option to grow and diversify Gosport's marine employment assets, however the Council recognises that in some cases other uses may be required to deliver a viable scheme and balanced mix of uses within a development. Where the Council considers these circumstances may apply, this is identified in the relevant site-specific policies.

Improving pedestrian and cycle access to Gosport's harbour frontage (Point 6 of Policy D3)

- 2.111 Where appropriate, opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle routes throughout Gosport's harbour frontage will be taken to maximise accessibility (see Policy LE4). It will be necessary to ensure that any access improvements are compatible with the operations of marine assets.

Policy D4: Green Infrastructure Network

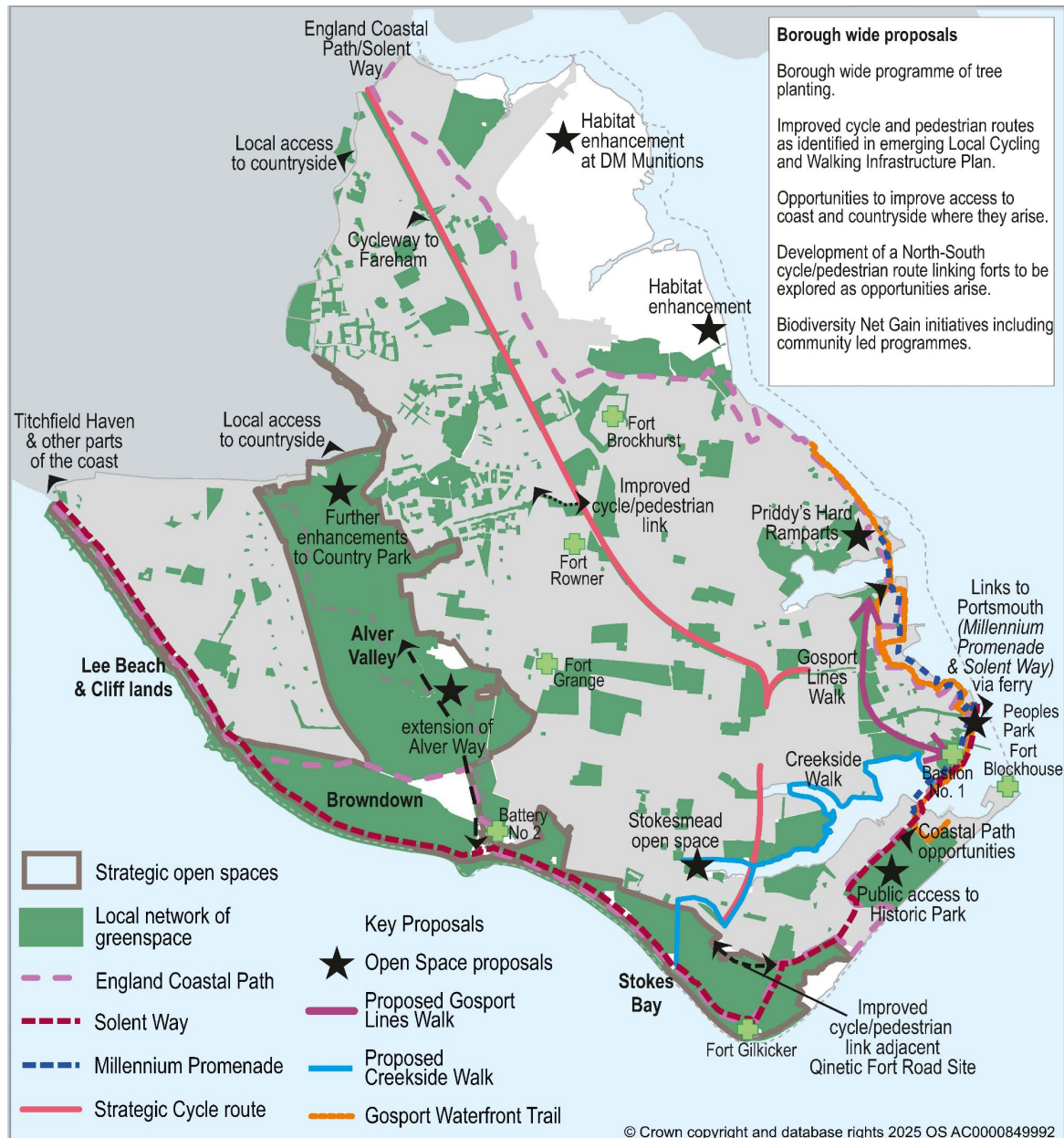
Introduction

- 2.112 Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset which can provide multifunctional benefits at a range of scales to help meet national, sub-regional and local objectives. According to national planning guidance⁵⁷ benefits include:
- 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.
- 2.113 The NPPF defines green infrastructure (GI) as 'a network of multifunctional 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'. Amongst other features this includes the Borough's parks and gardens, including private gardens, large areas of open space such as the Alver Valley and Stokes Bay, the River Alver, amenity green spaces, Public Rights of Way, green corridors and trees and hedgerows.
- 2.114 Increasing the provision of GI can provide multiple benefits including enhanced biodiversity, improved air and water quality, reduce flood risk (such as natural flood management/flood storage), enhancing heritage, alleviating noise, and helping to adapt to climate change. In addition,

⁵⁷ www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment

evidence shows that access to green space can help reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression⁵⁸. It also encourages physical activity, boosts the immune system and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as asthma.

Plan 5: Green Infrastructure Network



⁵⁸ Evidence Statement on the links between natural environments and human health, University of Exeter and Defra, 2017; Urban Green Spaces and Health, World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe, 2016, 9-10.

POLICY D4: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

- 1. The Borough aims to establish a comprehensive, high quality and multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) throughout Gosport and, where possible, link into the green infrastructure networks of neighbouring districts. The network will be formed from a wide variety of green and/or open features, including the countryside, parks, gardens, public spaces, coastal fringes, watercourses, green verges, hedgerows and woodland. The approach will take into account the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the area.**
- 2. The GIN has the following overarching objectives linked to the relevant Local Plan policies:**
 - a) contributing towards the mitigation of the local impacts of climate change (Policy D1);**
 - b) supporting the maintenance and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure (Policy D4);**
 - c) protection and enhancement of the Local Ecological Network (Policy D5);**
 - d) enhancing local biodiversity through providing habitats for plants and animals, and corridors for their movement (Policies D5, LE5, LE6, LE7, and LE8);**
 - e) mitigating the risks and impacts of flooding (Policy D7);**
 - f) providing high quality recreation and sporting facilities for all through a range of open spaces (Policies D6 and LE1); and**
 - g) improving pedestrian and cycle routes (Policies D12 and DE3) and facilitating access to the countryside and coast, specifically long-distance routes including the Millennium Promenade, Solent Way, King Charles III England Coast Path and the National Cycle Network (Policy LE4).**
- 3. The network will incorporate existing, enhanced and new green infrastructure. All developments should positively contribute, commensurate to their scale, to the improvement and expansion of the GIN by maximising as far as practicable:**
 - a) the amount of green infrastructure on the site, whilst having regard to the development needs of the Borough;**
 - b) the interconnectedness of green infrastructure within and around the site, and connections to the wider network, thereby helping to enhance key functions of the green infrastructure network;**
 - c) the multi-functionality of any green infrastructure, whilst ensuring it can properly fulfil its core functions;**

- d) the quality of any green infrastructure, to ensure it can meet its various functions as effectively as possible; and**
- e) the suitable protection, maintenance and monitoring of green infrastructure.**

4. Planning obligations or conservation covenants will be considered to secure green infrastructure and appropriate arrangements for long-term management and monitoring, as required.

5. Green infrastructure which is designed in accordance with 'Building with Nature' standards will be considered favourably.

EXPLANATION OF POLICY D4

Overall approach (Point 1 of Policy D4)

- 2.115 The Council will seek to develop a strategic Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) making use of all available green assets, and where possible linking up with cross-boundary networks in Fareham and other surrounding areas. The Council will work with relevant partners and the wider community to facilitate the implementation of the county Local Nature Recovery Strategy⁵⁹ which is required by the Environment Act 2021.
- 2.116 The Council is also working with the PfSH to support and deliver a sub-regional green infrastructure network which is set out in the South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017-2034 (PfSH 2018)⁶⁰ and the South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan (PfSH 2019)⁶¹. The strategy promotes a variety of strategic projects including enhancements to the Alver Valley Country Park, water quality improvements and directing recreational pressure away from sensitive Protected Sites. The Council will support the delivery of these strategic GI assets, including through securing developer contributions where appropriate.

Overarching objectives and protecting its integrity (Point 2 of Policy D4)

- 2.117 The delivery of the GIN links with a number of other policies within the Local Plan and help to deliver its overarching objectives. Proposals should ensure they fully consider the requirements of these linked policies and take advantage of opportunities to achieve multifunctional benefits from green infrastructure enhancements, where it does not harm other core objectives such as nature conservation.

⁵⁹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/part/6/crossheading/local-nature-recovery-strategies/enacted

⁶⁰ www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/South-Hampshire-GI-Strategy-2017-2034-FINAL.pdf

⁶¹ www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/South-Hampshire-Green-Infrastructure-Implementation-Plan-June-2019-.pdf

- 2.118 It is important that the integrity of the GIN is retained. Development which harms the integrity of the network will not be permitted. Detailed development management policies relating to protecting important habitats and species are outlined in Policies LE5–LE7.
- 2.119 A planning application which may affect a green infrastructure asset must be accompanied with an assessment of the importance of the relevant feature in terms of the various benefits GI can provide and what appropriate mitigation measures are being proposed. Consideration will therefore need to be given to the relevant green infrastructure in terms of the site itself and its contribution to the wider network. This includes assessing the following potential functions:
- recreation and leisure;
 - access and movement (e.g. cycleway/pedestrian links/wildlife corridor) (this should include consideration of how the proposal can assist in delivering the improvements in the Gosport Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the Council's own 'Living List' of potential cycle and walking improvements);
 - landscape/townscape setting;
 - flood risk mitigation and water resource management;
 - climatic benefits (shade, shelter and climate change mitigation);
 - food and energy production; and
 - habitat provision and access to nature.

All developments should contribute towards the GIN (Point 3 of Policy D4)

- 2.120 Opportunities to maintain and enhance the Borough's GIN need to be considered at the earliest stages of development. They should form an integral part of a proposal and take into account existing natural assets as well as considering the most suitable locations and types of new provision.
- 2.121 Measures should be commensurate to the scale of development proposed, and should primarily be delivered through on-site infrastructure, however additional off-site provision may be appropriate in certain circumstances.
- 2.122 **On-site provision:** It will be necessary for schemes to indicate how the proposed development intends to protect and enhance the Borough's GIN. On-site measures could include:
- retaining existing natural features;
 - creation of areas managed for wildlife;
 - planting of street trees and hedges of indigenous species and those which will cope with changing conditions (see Policy LE7);
 - use of green roofs and walls;

- linking new development to existing and surrounding green infrastructure such as the Local Ecological Network (see Policy D5);
- enhancing the quality and multifunctionality of existing and surrounding green infrastructure; and
- the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems, where appropriate (see also Policy D7).

2.123 Such measures will need to be appropriately managed and maintained for a period of 30 years and be secured by the Council through an appropriate mechanism. In the case of Sustainable Drainage Systems, a longer term management scheme will be required as advised by Hampshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority. It will be appropriate for some of these measures to be incorporated as part of the public open space standards outlined in Policy LE1, where it can be shown the measures have recreational value to the residents of the development.

2.124 **Off-site provision:** In some cases and particularly with larger developments, in addition to suitable on-site measures, it may be necessary to secure contributions towards the provision of off-site green infrastructure. The need for off-site provision will be informed by the latest evidence studies, DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric and/or advice from Natural England and the Environment Agency as part of the planning process. Such provision may be necessary to mitigate the impact of the development and could include:

- avoidance and mitigation measures in relation to an identified effect on internationally/nationally important habitats;
- ameliorating the impacts of climate change;
- securing a measureable biodiversity net gain;
- flood risk mitigation measures (for example, land associated with a balancing pond).

2.125 Developer contributions may be sought towards improving the Borough's Local Ecological Network and the delivery of other strategic green infrastructure projects, such as those listed within the latest PfSH strategies and other relevant strategies and evidence (included in the Further Information Box at the end of this section). The enhancement, restoration and creation of new green infrastructure and its management will need to be informed by the latest evidence and strategies.

2.126 **Maintenance:** As part of new developments it will be important that green infrastructure is appropriately managed and maintained. Such provision will need to be considered at an early stage and factored into the design and implementation, balancing the costs with the benefits. Engagement with the local community can assist with management plans and tailoring provision to local needs. Proposals should be accompanied with a suitable management plan and arrangements secured by legal agreement. In most

cases the funding will need to be secured by a Section 106 rather than the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Planning obligations and conservation covenants (Point 4 of Policy D4)

- 2.127 To ensure new green infrastructure is constructed and maintained at the required high standard, conditions, planning obligations and/or conservation covenants will be applied. Conservation covenants will need to be made between the landowner and a suitable 'responsible body', have a conservation purpose, and be for the public good⁶². Arrangements for the management and monitoring of the green infrastructure will need to be included.

Use of good practice guidance and standards (Point 5 of Policy D4)

- 2.128 Proposals that apply good practice guidance and suitable standards in the design of new green infrastructure will be considerably favourably. Accredited Building with Nature⁶³ proposals would satisfy this requirement, as an approved standard, however equivalents will also be considered.

Further information

South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2017-2034 (PfSH, 2018)
www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/South-Hampshire-GI-Strategy-2017-2034-FINAL.pdf

South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan (PfSH, 2019)
www.push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/South-Hampshire-Green-Infrastructure-Implementation-Plan-June-2019-.pdf

Hampshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)
www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/hampshire-strategy

Gosport Biodiversity Duty Plan (2026)
www.gosport.gov.uk/GBLP2042

Mapping the Hampshire Ecological Network (HBIC, 2020)
<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/MappingtheHampshireEcologicalNetworkFinalReport.pdf>

Hampshire Countryside Access Plan 2015-2025 and its future replacement (HCC, 2015)
www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/countryside/accessplan

Countryside Access Plan for the Solent 2008-2013 (HCC, 2008)

⁶² www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-and-using-a-conservation-covenant-agreement

⁶³ www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/

www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/countryside/accessplan

Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust et al 2020)

<https://solentwbgs.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/solent-waders-brent-goose-strategy-2020.pdf>

Building with Nature: Standards Framework 2.0 (BwN, 2021)

www.buildingwithnature.org.uk

Open Space Monitoring Report (2026) and supporting evidence

www.gosport.gov.uk/GBLP2042

Policy D5: Internationally and Nationally Important Sites and the Local Ecological Network

Introduction

- 2.129 This section relates to the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's Local Ecological Network including its biodiversity (see Box 4) and habitats. Policy D5 relates specifically to protected habitats and species as well as other important nature conservation features. It should be read in conjunction with Policy D4 which sets out the multiple benefits of green infrastructure.

Box 4: What is biodiversity and its benefits?

Biodiversity is the variety of life, including all plants, animals and their habitats. The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is a key factor in the achievement of sustainable development by safeguarding the natural systems that underpin human life.

Natural processes that support biodiversity can assist with flood mitigation, help to filter waste water, clean pollutants from the air and mitigate noise and the visual intrusion of development. Biodiversity helps to mitigate the effects of climate change through locking-up carbon, increasing water storage capacity and providing shade within urban areas. It also contributes to our physical and mental health by providing relaxation, enjoyment and recreation opportunities. Nature conservation measures to protect biodiversity can be an important education resource which encourages respect for the environment.