

Plan 17: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas



- 12.53 At a neighbourhood scale important features include street trees, green roofs, communal gardens and allotments as well as incorporating habitats within existing facilities such as formal open spaces. The Borough Council will continue to safeguard and enhance important nature conservation interests and existing open spaces (see also policies LP35 and LP42-LP44).
- 12.54 In addition to the initiatives identified above the Borough Council considers that most proposals for new development should take the opportunities to maintain and enhance green infrastructure as set out in Policy LP41 below.

POLICY LP41: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Planning permission will be granted for development proposals provided that where appropriate they:
 - a) maintain and enhance the Borough's green infrastructure network including the provision of sufficient on-site green infrastructure and where necessary secure off-site green infrastructure;
 - b) secure a net gain of on-site biodiversity;
 - c) use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS); and
 - d) accord with the latest South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, Borough Council's strategies and evidence relating to green infrastructure issues.
2. Proposals will not be permitted that compromise the integrity of the overall green infrastructure network including internationally important sites and other habitats supporting important species (see policies LP42-LP44 for further details).

EXPLANATION OF POLICY LP41

Maintaining and enhancing the Borough's Green Infrastructure Network (Point 1 of policy LP41)

- 12.55 Development proposals will be required to incorporate measures which maintain and enhance the Borough's green infrastructure network including the provision of on-site infrastructure and where appropriate contributions towards off-site provision.
- 12.56 **On-site provision:** It will be necessary for schemes to indicate how the proposed development intends to protect and enhance the Borough's green infrastructure. On-site measures include:
- the use of sustainable drainage systems where appropriate (see also Policy LP39);
 - retaining natural features on-site;
 - creation of areas managed for wildlife within development;
 - planting of street trees and hedges of indigenous species;
 - use of green roofs and walls; and
 - taking opportunities to link new development to existing green infrastructure.
- 12.57 Such measures will need to be appropriately managed and maintained for a period of 25 years to be secured by a Section 106 Agreement. In the case of the sustainable drainage systems a longer term management scheme will be required as advised by the Environment Agency. It will be appropriate for some of these measures to be incorporated as part of the public open space standards outlined in Policy LP34 where it can be shown that the measures have recreational value to the residents of the development.
- 12.58 Green infrastructure measures should contribute to a net gain in biodiversity on the site and this should be demonstrated by the developer as part of any planning submission. The National Planning Practice Guidance recognises that there is a statutory basis for planning to seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible (as part of Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) and the NPPG is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes delivering a net gain for nature. The Borough Council considers that there is an opportunity to enhance biodiversity in most development. Any potential impact on nature conservation interests will be assessed in accordance with policies LP42-LP44 and the relevant national regulations where appropriate. There are a range of appropriate measures that should be incorporated into most forms of development in order to enhance local biodiversity.
- 12.59 Developers are advised to consider the NPPG as well as: Natural England's *Green Infrastructure Guidance*²²⁷; *Planning for a Healthy Environment* (TCPA 2012); and *Biodiversity by Design* (TCPA 2004). These include useful guidance to developers to achieve a net gain in biodiversity on development sites. This includes advice on on-site parks, green links, the street tree canopy, green roofs, private spaces and integrating nesting sites within buildings.

²²⁷ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>

12.60 Off-site provision: In some cases, particularly larger developments it may be necessary to contribute to the provision of off-site green infrastructure. The need for off-site provision will be informed by the latest evidence studies and/or advice from Natural England and the Environment Agency as part of the consultation of the planning proposal. Such provision may be necessary to mitigate the impact of the development. This includes:

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

12.61 Maintenance: As part of new developments it will be important that green infrastructure is appropriately managed and maintained. Such provision will need to be accompanied with a management plan where appropriate 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.

12.62 Evidence studies and strategies: The enhancement, restoration and creation of new green infrastructure and its management will need to be informed by the latest evidence and strategies including:

Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust et al 2010)	Hampshire Countryside Access Plan-County Overview & Solent Countryside and Access Plan (HCC 2008)
Gosport Borough Open Space Monitoring Report (GBC 2014) and supporting evidence	Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (HCC 2000-12) and any future local BAP
South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (PUSH June 2010)	Hampshire Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (HBIC)
Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project evidence studies (2013)	

Protecting the integrity of the GI network (Point 2 of policy LP41)

12.63 It is important that the integrity of the green infrastructure network 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 LP42 - LP44.

12.64 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 green infrastructure 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 a wider network. This includes assessing the following potential functions:

- Recreation and leisure;
- Access and movement (eg cycleway/pedestrian links/wildlife corridor);
- Landscape/townscape setting;
- Flood attenuation and water resource management;
- Climatic benefits (shade and shelter);
- Food and energy production; and
- Habitat provision and access to nature.

Further information:

Background Papers particularly Green Infrastructure including Open Space, and Biodiversity and Geological Conservation; www.gosport.gov.uk/localplan2029

Green infrastructure (Natural England 2009);
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx

Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan (HCC 2000-12);
<http://www.hampshirebiodiversity.org.uk/action.html>

Open Space Monitoring Report (GBC 2014); www.gosport.gov.uk/localplan2029

PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy (UE Associates 2010);
www.push.gov.uk/push_gi_strategy_adopted_june_10-3.pdf

Hampshire Countryside Access Plan- County Overview (HCC 2008);
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/countryside/access-plans.htm>

Solent Countryside and Access Plan (HCC 2008);
www.hants.gov.uk/rh/countryside/access/solent.pdf

Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (Hampshire & IoW Wildlife Trust et al 2010);

South Hampshire Strategy: A framework to guide sustainable development and change to 2026 (PUSH October 2012); and
http://www.push.gov.uk/work/housing-and-planning/south_hampshire_strategy.htm

Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project (2013).
[http://www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Natural_Environment_Group/Disturbance_and_Mitigation_P
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