

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

PRIMER: INTRODUCING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



Everyone should read this document before
reading other parts of the Green Infrastructure Strategy

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Welcome to Epping Forest District Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy

Epping Forest District has an extraordinary network of landscapes, including the renowned ancient woodland, Epping Forest.

But the Forest is under threat, from rising levels of vehicle emissions and increased human activity. The planned growth and development in the District would add to this pressure so we need to have positive strategies in place to address this.

This Green Infrastructure Strategy seeks to protect the Forest and other remarkable ecological sites, by ensuring that new and existing communities have better access to high-quality and local green and blue spaces.

Well-designed and multifunctional greenspaces can make people happier, healthier and bring communities together.

Great Green and Blue Infrastructure is also key to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises, providing long-term benefits for people, wildlife and ecology.

So by 2026 we want to make sure that 56% of the high quality Green Infrastructure projects in this Strategy have been delivered. And by 2033 we want 100% delivered with more green and blue spaces planned for the future.

We thank you for your input last year – despite the challenges Covid-19 presented, we held an exciting programme of workshop events online with groups across the District, and we received 175 written responses to our survey.

We are also looking to kick-start the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy with some of our District-Wide Projects found in Part 1 - Implementation: Enhancing Our Existing Network, and we want you to be involved.

We will be starting with our 'Tree Planting – A Call For Sites' project and we need District residents to get in touch with places they think would benefit from more tree planting. These could be greenspaces, school grounds, verges, public spaces and rural sites.

Keep an eye on our [website](#) and [Twitter](#) for more information in coming months.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Purpose of the Strategy and Parts

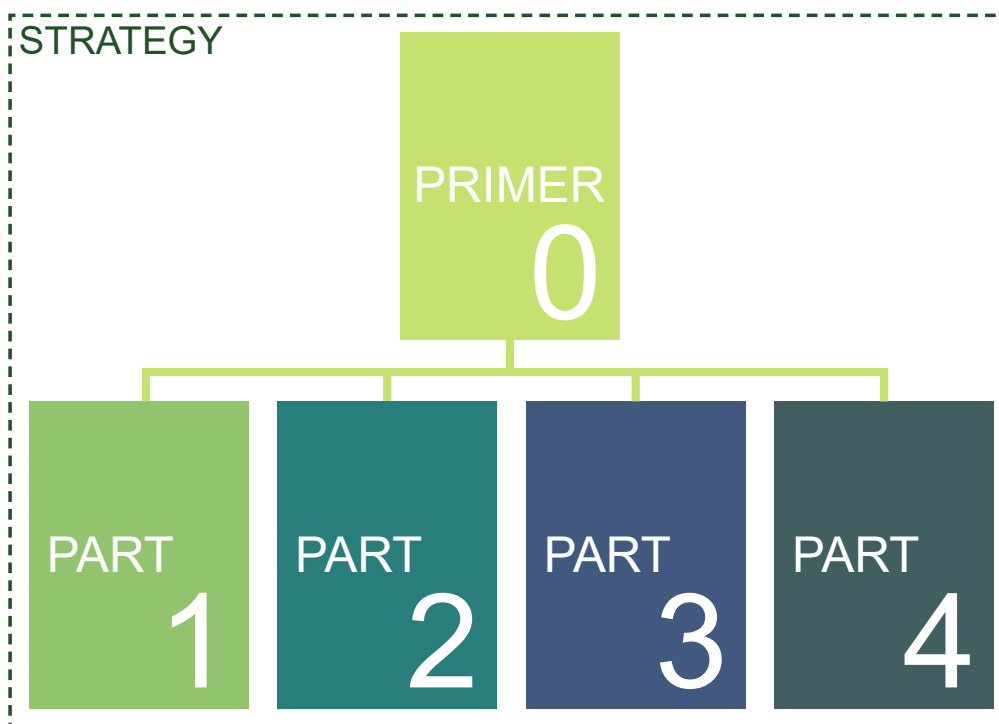
The purpose of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (“the Strategy”) is to ensure a strategic and holistic approach is taken to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecology, landscape and heritage in the District.

This Primer document provides:

- An introduction to what green and blue infrastructure is - its definition and value;
- An understanding of the existing green and blue assets in the District - their location, importance, quantity and quality;
- The Vision and Objectives of the Strategy - that opportunities and projects will need to follow

The other parts of the Strategy are to be read in conjunction with this Primer. These are:

1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network
2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design
3. Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations
4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Who is the Strategy and Primer for?

The Strategy consists of five Parts which set out the requirements for landscape-led development and mitigation and identify local projects which align with its objectives. Anyone interested in the Strategy and the associated guidance and projects should read the Primer first, to familiarise themselves with the purpose, context and vision of the Strategy.

This includes local residents, community groups including town and parish councils, planning applicants, designers, local authority officers, policy makers and elected members. The different parts of the strategy (1,2, 3and 4) each have a particular focus, which may be more relevant to different readers, depending on their interest.

When to use the Primer?

The Primer should be read before the start of any green and/or blue infrastructure project, to ensure that projects and proposals account for the existing context and assets and align with the Vision and Objectives of the Strategy.

Status of the Strategy

The Strategy has been endorsed as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, masterplans/concept frameworks and to guide design and implementation processes.

Relationship to the Council's emerging Local Plan

Whilst not its sole purpose, and important part of the Strategy is to support key [emerging Local Plan policies](#) on high-quality place making and site specific guidance, particularly in masterplan areas, alongside the Council's commitment and legal obligation to ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of ecologically important sites, such as the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Reviewing and Monitoring

Identified projects for the provision of green and blue infrastructure will require long term management and maintenance arrangements to be put in place where appropriate. The intention is that, where appropriate, these projects will be included in the Council's [Infrastructure Delivery Plan \(IDP\)](#), which is a 'live' document that will be monitored and updated regularly.

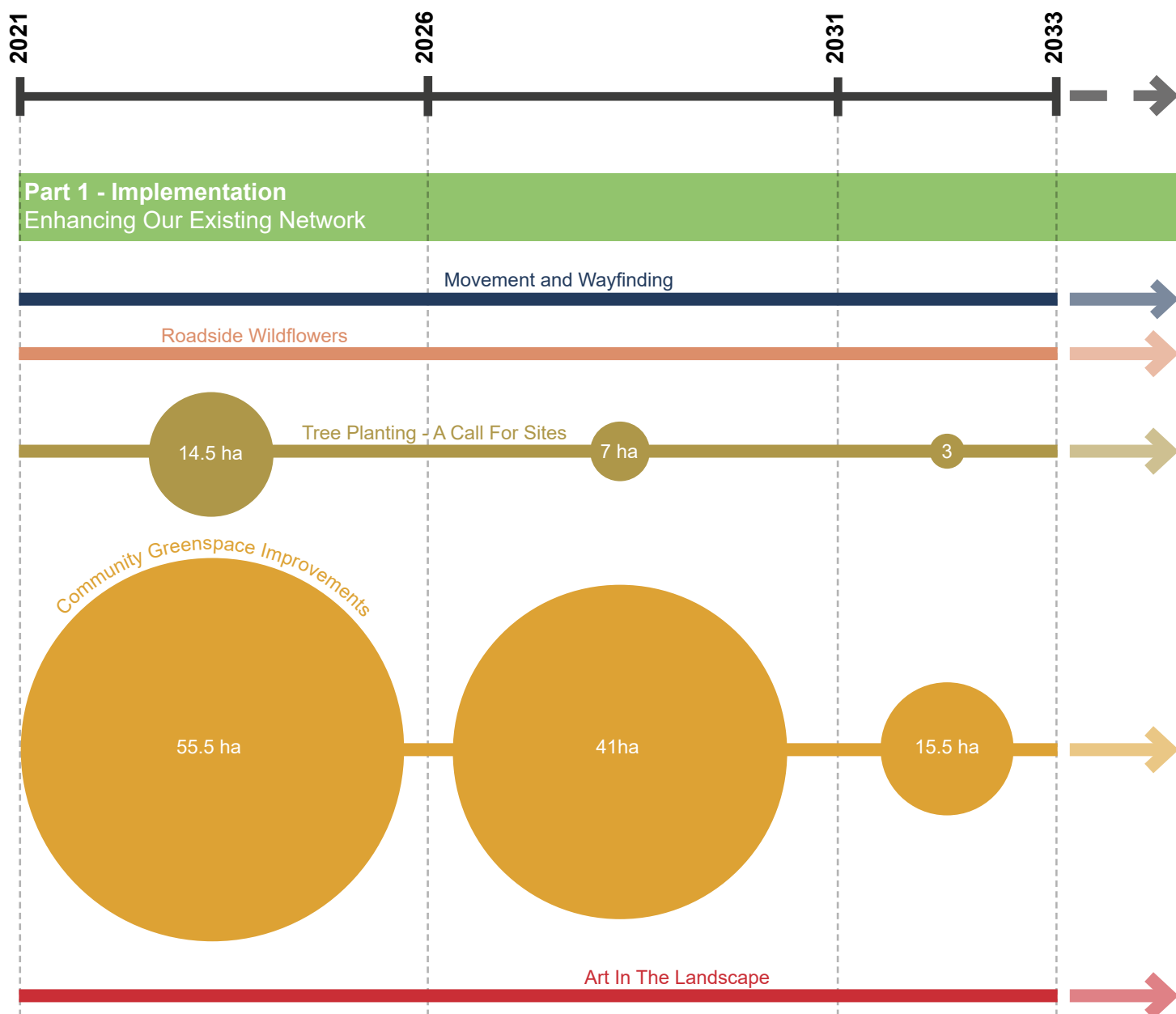
DELIVERY PLAN

0.1

0.1 DELIVERY PLAN

These pages set out how much Green Infrastructure will be delivered through this Strategy, and by when (the below time periods align with the [Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan \(IDP\)](#) and the [Local Plan Submission Version 2017](#)). Some projects are 'themes' which can be implemented steadily across the GI network (such as Movement and Wayfinding, Art in the Landscape), whereas some are more 'defined' and quantifiable (such as Community Greenspace Improvements, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace). More information can be found by reading [Parts 1, 2 and 3](#).

This Delivery Plan forms the basis for our Mission in achieving 56% of Green Infrastructure identified in this Strategy to be delivered by 2026, and 100% by 2033.



Data Sources

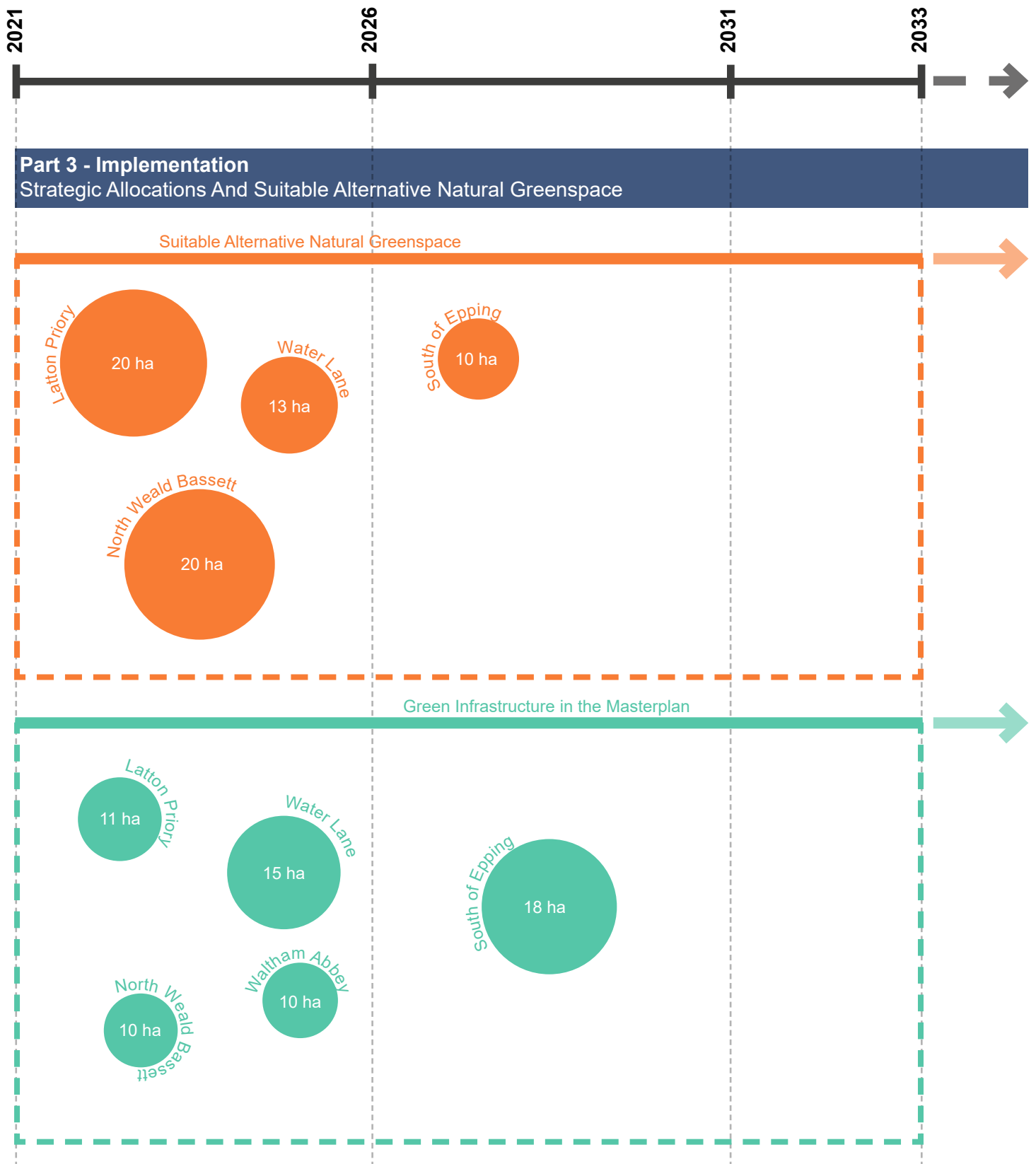
Tree Planting - A Call For Sites:

50% of total area of potential tree planting sites identified by the EFDC Tree Taskforce in early discussions (November 2020), assuming the other 50% would be undeliverable or inappropriate. This figure is then distributed between the three periods, with greater focus on tree planting between 2021 - 2026.

Community Greenspace Improvements:

Sites identified in EFDC's Infrastructure Delivery Plan as Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure for improvement / enhancement.

0.1 DELIVERY PLAN



Data Sources

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace:

As set out for each Strategic Masterplan in this Strategy (*Part 3 - Implementation: Strategic Allocations and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace*)

Green Infrastructure:

Strategic Allocations as identified in [Local Plan Submission Version 2017 Appendix 6 Site Specific Requirements](#), where Green Infrastructure is assumed to be Indicative Development Area subtracted from Masterplan Area. Latton Priory and Water Lane Green Infrastructure provision is taken from early masterplan development in 2019.

Green Infrastructure provision within Strategic Masterplans is subject to design development and the number above is a current estimate, not a guide.

ABOUT THE STRATEGY

0.2

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Overview

The social, environmental, and economic benefits of Green and Blue Infrastructure has become key to creating sustainable communities and liveable neighbourhoods.

The Council's emerging Local Plan proposes the most significant level of development to be brought forward across the District in a generation. In doing so it has established ambitious policies in relation to:

- The protection of ecological and landscape assets
- The provision and enhancement of Green and Blue Infrastructure
- The importance of design in the creation of high quality places for people to live, work and visit
- The stewardship of Green and Blue Infrastructure

The evidence base for the emerging Epping Forest District Local Plan provides an assessment of landscape character, the quantity and type of existing Green and Blue Infrastructure, identifies where there are deficits, and assesses the effects that new homes in particular may have on the Epping Forest and other ecologically important sites. This evidence underpins the policy approach to the provision and enhancement of Green and Blue Infrastructure across the District. This evidence base, including the [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) (EB703), provide an important resource for all of those using this Strategy as it provides a much more fine-grained analysis of a significant number of the District's Green Infrastructure assets in particular.

The Strategy also recognises the importance of cross-boundary opportunities to integrate Green and Blue Infrastructure by working with a range of partners including our neighbouring authorities inside and outside of London.



A view across Harlow towards Central London

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

What Is Green And Blue Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is a network of high quality greenspaces and other environmental features such as parks, public open spaces, playing fields, sports pitches, woodlands, and allotments. The provision of Green Infrastructure can provide social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work.

Blue Infrastructure is infrastructure provision relating to water. This includes natural features such as rivers, streams and ponds, semi-natural features such as sustainable drainage systems, bio swales and canals, and other engineering features such as dams, weirs and culverts. Blue and Green infrastructure are often considered together, placing emphasis on the importance of biodiversity and flood risk mitigation.



Green infrastructure: Waltham Abbey Gardens



Blue Infrastructure: River Roding

What Does Green Infrastructure Include?

[Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guide](#) provides a useful summary of what GI includes:

- **Parks and Gardens** – urban parks, Country and Regional Parks, formal gardens.
- **Amenity Greenspace** – informal recreation spaces, greenspaces related to housing developments, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space, green roofs.
- **Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces** - woodland and scrub, grassland (such as downland and meadow), heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground), bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs and quarries).
- **Green corridors** – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way.
- **Other** - allotments, community gardens, city farms, cemeteries and churchyards.

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The Value Of Green And Blue Infrastructure

The need for people to have contact with greenspace and nature has long been recognised. The Victorians saw the need for public parks as a release from urban overcrowding and a broad coalition of local people working with the City of London Corporation fought to save the Epping Forest from enclosure. This culminated in the passing of the Epping Forest Act in 1878 which established the City of London Corporation as the Conservators of Epping Forest and has ensured the protection of the Forest.

Later, in the 20th Century, Sir Frederick Gibberd's work in masterplanning the original Harlow New Town responded to Sir Patrick Abercrombie's plans for London and Greater London - based on the idea that open space should be coordinated into a park system to provide 'an easy flow of open space from garden to park, from park to parkway, from parkway to green wedge and from green wedge to Green Belt'. Gibberd, in his Harlow New Town Masterplan set out that 'Links to the countryside are formed by green wedges designed to embrace natural features such as valleys, woods, brooks and quarries. It is proposed that the wedges and valleys left free of buildings should be kept as natural as possible, and in no way turned into the character of a Town Park.'

The 20th Century also saw the establishment of the Lee Valley Regional Park. The park was created by a unique Act of Parliament as a 'green lung' for London, Essex and Hertfordshire. It comprises a 26-mile-long, 10,000 acre park containing award winning green spaces, world class sports venues and ecologically vital wildlife havens. Responsibility for its oversight lies with the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and the Council is represented on its Board.



Sir Frederick Gibberd's Harlow New Town

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

While the value of greenspace has long been considered important, only recently has it been more clearly evidenced. Bodies such as the United Nations (through its Sustainable Development Goals), the World Health Organisation, Natural England, and Public Health England make a clear and robust case for the multiple benefits that Green and Blue Infrastructure can deliver, across a diverse agenda including: tackling obesity, responding to the climate emergency, enhancing and protecting biodiversity assets, the 'healthy living' agenda, water quality and improving mental health.

Work done by Fields in Trust and the Greater London Authority in recent years demonstrates the monetary value of Green and Blue Infrastructure. This has provided the formulation of pragmatic fiscal arguments for investing in the delivery and maintenance of Green and Blue Infrastructure.

The Value of Green and Blue Infrastructure is also recognised in [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) as follows:

Green infrastructure is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. For communities, these benefits can include enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services.

Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019

For the sake of brevity the term Green Infrastructure (GI) is used in the rest of this Strategy but its use encompasses both Green and Blue Infrastructure.

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Why have a Strategy?

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out the government's national policy context that local planning authorities need to take account of in developing plans and making decisions. The NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11), with sustainable development having economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective is that development should protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment as well as protecting biodiversity, minimising pollution and adapting to climate change and the demands of a low carbon economy. In addition, national planning policy and guidance requires councils to take a strategic approach to protecting, maintaining and enhancing ecological habitats and landscape features, including those of heritage importance.

Whilst one purpose of the Strategy is to respond to the requirements of the NPPF, it also provides a mechanism for supporting a range of other legislation and national policies ranging from the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act through to the government's 25 Year Environment Plan (see [Appendices](#)).

As well as allocating sites for development the Council's emerging Local Plan contains policies which respond to the government's environmental objectives. This not only includes policies which require larger scale developments, including within the Masterplan Areas, to be self-sufficient in terms of the provision of GI, but also provides for the protection of existing GI and, where appropriate, its enhancement.

This Strategy supports the implementation of those policies by providing a clear framework through which to ensure that new development proposals respond positively to the achievement of high-quality GI provision across the District. These include in particular policies SP3 (Place Making), SP4 and SP5 (the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Communities), SP7 (The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure), DM2 (Epping Forest SAC and Lee Valley SPA) and DM5 (Green and Blue Infrastructure). More information on the suite of relevant policies within the emerging Local Plan are set out in the [Appendices](#) of this Strategy.

The Strategy, and in particular Parts 3 and 4, forms a key part of the Council's approach to avoiding or mitigating the effects of plans and projects, both alone and in combination, on the Epping Forest SAC in order to demonstrate that development will not have an adverse effect on its integrity. The following Strategies (which have already been endorsed by the Council as a material consideration in relation to the determination of planning applications and other development related activities) together with this Strategy, form the Council's comprehensive approach:

- [Epping Forest Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy: Managing the Effects of Air Pollution on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation December 2020](#)
- [Interim Approach to Managing Recreational Pressures on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation October 2018 \(EB134\)](#)

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

From a cross boundary perspective, the Strategy supports the GI objectives of the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor, the Green Arc partnership and the [Green Essex Strategy](#). The Strategy also recognises and supports the opportunities provided by the Lee Valley Regional Park whilst protecting its internationally important ecological sites and responds to the need to protect other designated assets such as SSSI's.

This Strategy has been endorsed as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, the development of Masterplans and Concept Frameworks, and other development related activities. This is in order to provide it with material planning weight within the planning process.

The Council also recognises that there are wider opportunities to provide new and enhance the District's existing GI assets which are not dependent on new development. It has taken the opportunity to build these into the Strategy. This is to ensure that a coherent and complementary approach is taken to the District's GI provision and a holistic and strategic approach taken.

In terms of development over the period 2011-2033, the growth proposed in the Council's emerging [Local Plan](#) will provide for a minimum of 11,400 new homes. Much of this will be delivered on larger strategic sites where planning applicants will be required to take a collaborative, cohesive, coherent, integrated and proactive approach to the provision of Green Infrastructure. This includes for those sites which form part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

What Planning Goals Can Green Infrastructure Help To Achieve?

The [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) sets out that GI can help in:

Building a strong, competitive economy

- Green infrastructure can drive economic growth and regeneration, helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors.

Achieving well-designed places

- The built environment can be enhanced by features such as green roofs, street trees, proximity to woodland, public gardens and recreational and open spaces. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beauty.



Sovereign Square, Leeds by re-form landscape architecture

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- Green infrastructure can improve the wellbeing of a neighbourhood with opportunities for recreation, exercise, social interaction, experiencing and caring for nature, community food-growing and gardening, all of which can bring mental and physical health benefits. Outdoor Recreation Value (ORVal) is a useful online tool that can be used to quantify the recreational values provided by greenspace. Green infrastructure can help to reduce health inequalities in areas of socio-economic deprivation and meet the needs of families and an ageing population. It can also help to reduce air pollution and noise.



Bridget Joyce Square and Community Rain Garden, White City by Robert Bray Associates

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change

- Green infrastructure can contribute to carbon storage, cooling and shading, opportunities for species migration to more suitable habitats, and the protection of water quality and other natural resources. It can also be an integral part of multifunctional sustainable drainage and natural flood risk management.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- High-quality networks of multifunctional green infrastructure contribute a range of benefits, including ecological connectivity, facilitating biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks and opportunities for communities to undertake conservation work.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 8-006-20190721

Revision date: 21 07 2019



Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford by Hargreaves Associates and LDA Design

Green Infrastructure also has an important role in enhancing the setting of, access to, and revealing of heritage assets within the landscape. It can help to provide a sense of place and make tangible links with local history and integrating heritage assets with Green Infrastructure.

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Epping Forest Special Area Of Conservation

The Epping Forest is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Under the [Habitats Directive 1992](#) and [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019](#), the Council is required to ensure that our emerging Local Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC. We know from the Habitats Regulations Assessments undertaken to inform our emerging Local Plan that the Forest is already under pressure from recreational use by existing residents and visitors, and from atmospheric pollution caused by vehicles using roads in close proximity to the Forest.

The responsibility for the development of an approach to avoid or mitigate any harm to the Epping Forest SAC lies with the competent authorities. Competent authorities are any organisation or individual that has a statutory role as defined in UK legislation and have a legal responsibility to help safeguard the features of an internationally designated site in undertaking their work and thereby achieve the aims of the Habitats Directive. The competent authorities for the Epping Forest SAC include (but are not limited to) EFDC and the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge. We will continue to work with the other competent authorities, Natural England (as the responsible statutory body) and with the Conservators of Epping Forest (as the body responsible for the management of the Epping Forest) to secure the implementation of the relevant components of our approach to avoidance and mitigation (as set out above).

The Epping Forest SAC extends across local authority administrative boundaries and we know, having undertaken surveys in [2018](#) and [2020](#), that it is not just people who live, or will live, in Epping Forest District who use, or will be likely to use, the Epping Forest SAC on a regular basis. People from the surrounding local authority areas, including a number of London Boroughs and from further afield also use the Epping Forest SAC. This information has helped us to identify a 6.2km 'Zone of Influence' (Zol) around the Epping Forest SAC boundary, which indicates where 75% of existing visitors come from. This means that all new residential development within this Zol will need to either avoid or mitigate the effects of the new visitors that would result.



Epping Forest

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

As well as the provision of larger areas of new natural greenspace linked to the Masterplan sites proposed in the emerging local plan, the provision of smaller areas, the improvement of existing GI or creating connections between different GI assets, can all contribute to attracting people away from using the Epping Forest. In this way we can avoid as much as possible putting extra pressure on the Epping Forest. In particular we do not believe that the simple provision of SANG provides the most robust approach to protecting the Epping Forest – not just the SAC itself, but areas adjoining it which are designated as SSSIs. By taking an informed approach to the design of the SANG ‘offer’ and integrating them as part of a wider GI Strategy, as well as providing new GI on smaller sites and enhancing and connecting existing GI assets can support the delivery of a more integrated and attractive offer for residents, both new and existing, to encourage the use of GI opportunities closer to home. Taking such an approach has the potential not only to provide for new residents’ recreational needs but also offer an attractive alternative to existing residents so that they reduce the number of visits that they make to the Epping Forest. It will also help to reduce car journeys by supporting more local access and therefore help to reduce the effects of atmospheric pollution on the Epping Forest SAC.

This Strategy, in all its forms, provides the framework for delivering this integrated approach and the positive contribution that it will make in delivering avoidance and mitigation measures.

More detail about the Council’s proposed approach to avoidance and mitigation measures is set out in [Part 3 - Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations](#) and [Part 4 - Implementation: Identified Sites](#).

Lee Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site

The Lee Valley Regional Park contains a Special Protection Area (SPA) and is a Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Site, both of which designations relate to internationally important ecological habitats. The Lee Valley comprises a series of embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits along the extent of the valley. These waterbodies and reedbeds support internationally important bird populations. In addition, the site’s Ramsar status is on account of the rare and scarce plants and invertebrates present. The Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar consists of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest, of which Turnford and Cheshunt Pits SSSI, Rye Meads SSSI and Amwell Quarry SSSI all lie on the Hertfordshire/Essex border. The SPA and Ramsar site are managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and by Thames Water and there are a number of management plans in place including in relation to visitor access and water pollution.

0.2 ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Partners

The development of this Strategy has sought to take into account and respond to the views of a range of stakeholders as to how the provision of Green Infrastructure can be best secured within the District. Stakeholders include Natural England and the Conservators of Epping Forest and a range of local authorities and public bodies through the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Member and Officer Groups.

Ongoing engagement with our partners will be key to the successful funding, design and delivery of projects. Our partners include: Natural England, the Conservators of Epping Forest, adjoining local authorities, the Environment Agency, Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council, Harlow Council, Essex Wildlife Trust, EFDC Countrycare, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, the Canal and River Trust, Parish and Town Councils, the Ramblers Association, the Woodland Trust and Local Friends Groups. Developers, landowners and farmers will also be key partners in the achievement of the Strategy's Vision and Objectives.

Where appropriate existing partnership mechanisms such as the 'Green Arc' strategic partnership, the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town partnership, will be used to ensure an efficient, effective and coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of 'larger than local' Green Infrastructure is achieved.

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

0.3

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Landscape Overview

Epping Forest District has a predominantly agricultural landscape. Ridges which run east-west across the District are the high points in the landscape - the town of Epping sits on the Epping Forest Ridge whilst Rye Hill Ridge defines the southern edge of Harlow. To the west of the District the Lea Valley presents a unique landscape shaped by industry and ecology, while to the north the Stort Valley's significant wet woodland and marshland habitat wraps around the northern edge of Harlow. The remnants of an extensive ancient forest are reflected in the presence of mature trees which are the defining landscape feature in woodlands, hedgerows and in open fields. While the Epping Forest itself (both the SAC and the wider Forest) is the largest and most well-known part of this ancient forest, remnants of the wider forest exist in pockets of ancient woodland and trees located across the District. The [Council's Landscape Character Assessment](#) (EB709) provides an in-depth analysis of the District's landscape.

The need to protect the Metropolitan Green Belt, which currently applies to over 92% of the District, has previously limited development. However, a minimum 11,400 new homes, along with new employment floorspace, is now required to be built over the 2011-2033 period of the emerging Local Plan.

Balancing future development alongside ecological well-being, responding to the climate crisis and meeting objectives to improve physical and mental health are some of the key challenges for the emerging Local Plan. In Epping Forest District, we have a unique opportunity to consider the function of Green Infrastructure in respect of these challenges and through this Strategy answer the following questions:

How do we create a mix of landscapes that encourage people to use outdoor space near their home, rather than travel to the Forest?

How do we make that mix of spaces function as social infrastructure to help address build resilient communities?

How do we build an ecological network to tackle the ecological and climate crises'? And how does that network build on historic landscape character, or create new landscape character?

How do we increase understanding and appreciation of the landscape, its ecology and its cultural and natural heritage? And how to we engage new users to draw them into the countryside?

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Quantity

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) (EB703) separates open spaces into different types (as shown in the graph on the next page) and assesses their provision across nine settlement areas. The quantity of open space required in relation to the resident population is assessed against Fields in Trust standards. Whilst this Strategy seeks to move away from the delivery of individual types of Green Infrastructure and focus more on the creation of more multi-functional spaces where at all possible and appropriate, having an understanding of the level of existing provision of different open spaces provides a useful starting point to help understand what type of provision should be prioritised in the future.

The most striking feature is the extent of Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace within the District (from here on referred to as 'natural' greenspace^{*1}) - it is over 18 times the Fields in Trust standards minimum provision. This is in part because it includes those areas of the Epping Forest and Lee Valley Regional Park located within the District, but also because the District benefits from a generous network of other Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace.

The District has a wide range of Green Infrastructure assets but some of these, including parks and provision of open space specifically for children and young people are below the minimum Fields in Trust standards in some parts of the District. As well as the Open Space Strategy 2017 further information is available on a parish by parish basis in the [Council's Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Audit](#) (EB706).



Roding Valley Meadows SSSI

Next page, a graph to show the current provision of green infrastructure in the District measured against National Fields in Trust Standards broadly accepted classifications:

Natural and Semi Natural Open Space 1814%

Parks and Gardens 38%

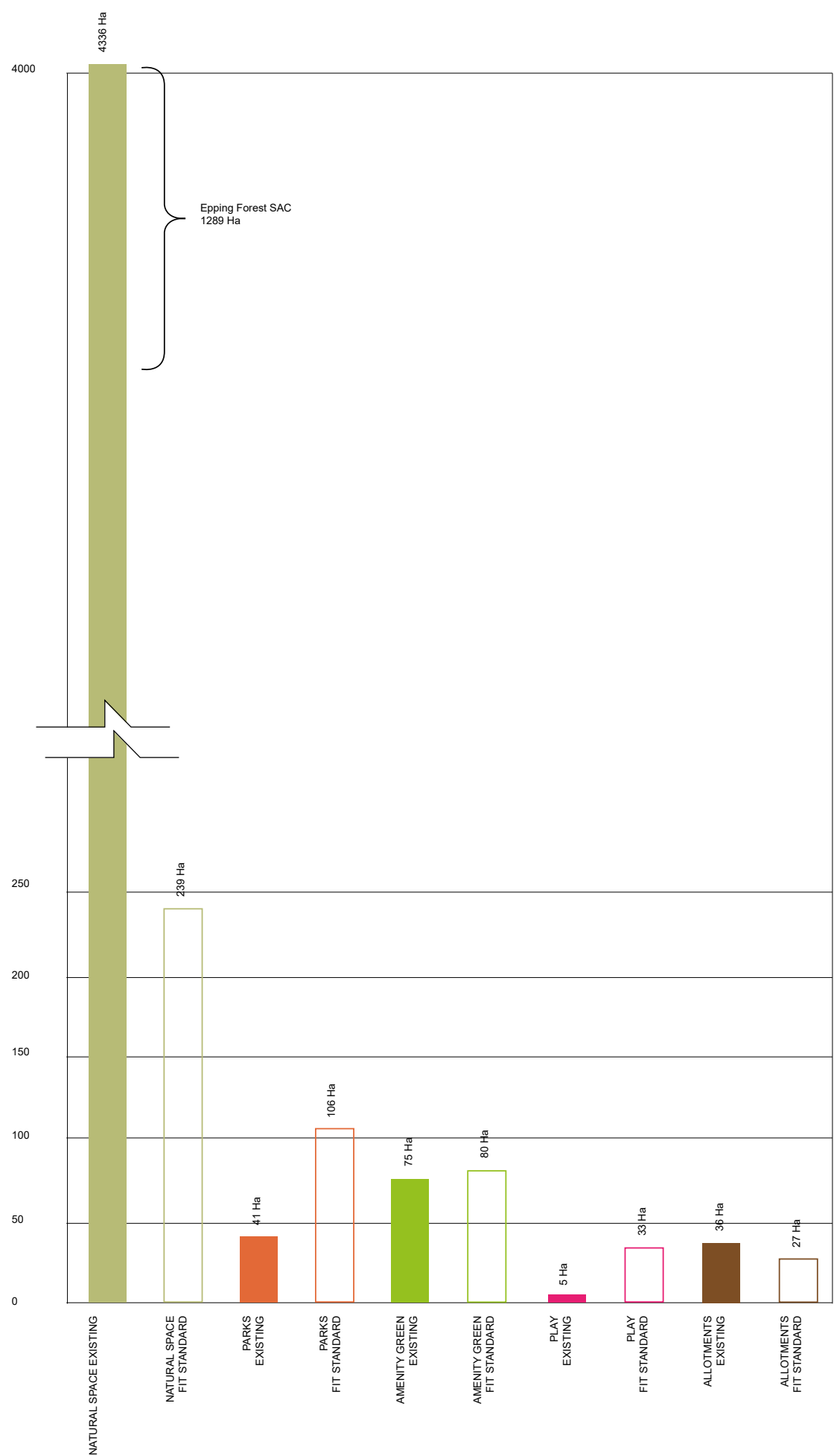
Amenity Greenspace 94%

Play and facilities for Young People 15%

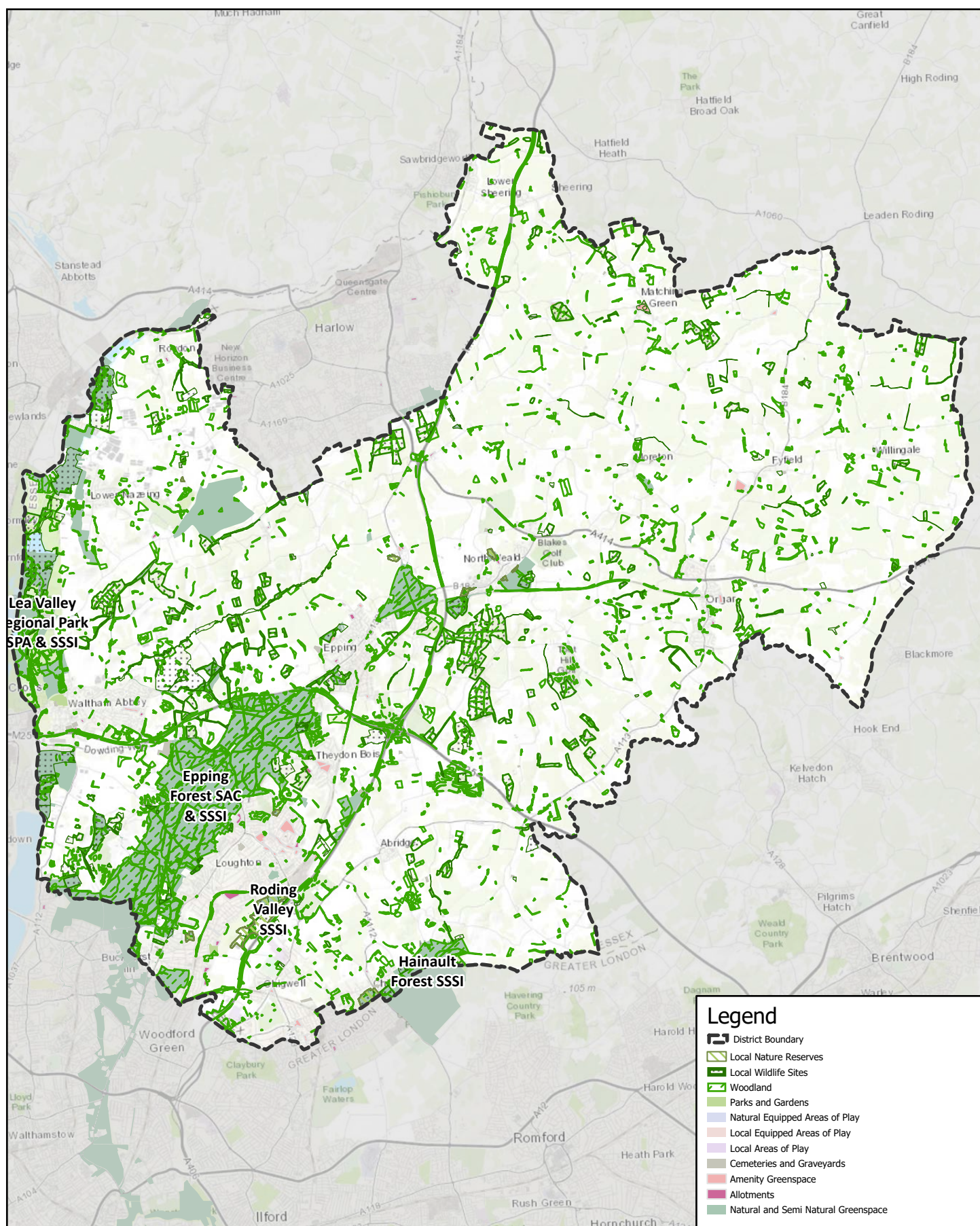
Allotments 133%

^{*1} The accepted classification of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace is something of a misnomer. No open space in Britain is truly natural as each is shaped by the humans and it is this confluence between people and nature which gives us today's landscapes which are often rich in cultural heritage. For expedience and clarity Natural or Semi-Natural Greenspace will be referred to as 'natural' open space.

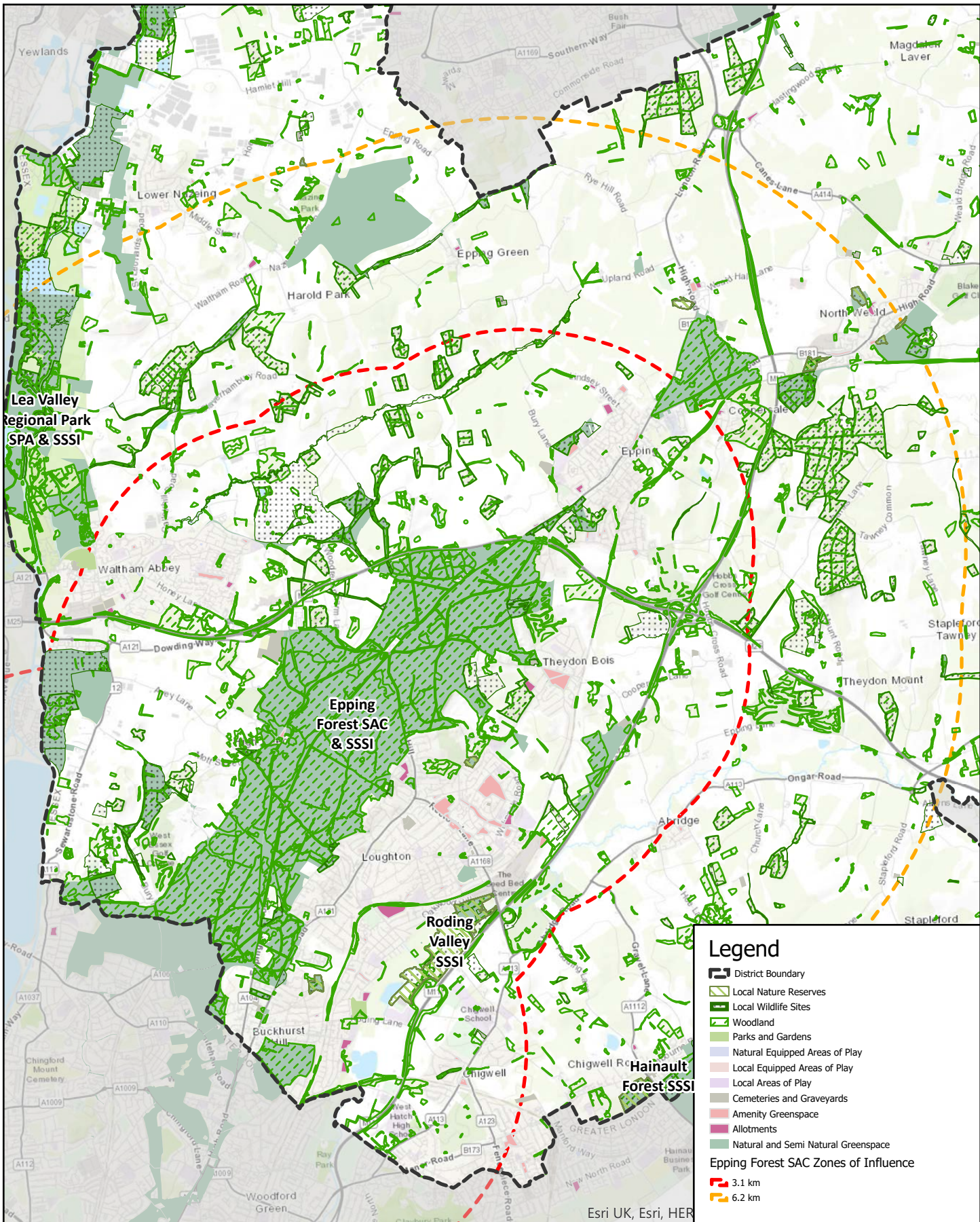
0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



Map 02: Quantity ZOI
Scale 1:75,000 @ A4

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Quality

The quality of 'natural' greenspace in the District is exceptional as evidenced by the number of sites with 'high status' environmental designations including the Epping Forest SAC, the Lee Valley Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site and numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). The District also has an extensive network of Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) - whilst not as well-known as the Epping Forest and Lee Valley, provide a high- quality patchwork of ancient woodlands and wildlife sites.

Increasing local knowledge of the existence of these sites, improving accessibility to them and raising awareness of their natural and cultural heritage could increase their use as locally accessible greenspace as well as helping to take some pressure off assets such as the Epping Forest. In doing so there is a need to ensure that this would not cause harm to their ecological value, including to their ground flora and soils. More information can be found in the [Council's LoWS Review](#) (EB708).

Quality across some landscape types is also commonly assessed against Green Flag criteria, which evaluates greenspaces as to whether they are welcoming, accessible to all, well maintained, safe and secure. Such tools can help to measure what we should expect in terms of the quality of existing and new green and blue spaces within the District. Other assessments include those provided by the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS), Green Heritage and Green Tourism assessments.

In addition to these assessments, the provision of new and enhancement of existing outdoor spaces should be created through the use of high quality, multifunctional design principles, as outlined in [Part 2 - Implementation: Landscape-Led Design](#).



High quality 'natural' greenspace exists in a patchwork of ancient woodland sites across the district.



Amenity greenspace in the district is characterised by mature trees and mown grass. These spaces which offer significant room for improvement both in terms of biodiversity and amenity value.



Provision for children and young people is of low quality when measured against best practice.

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Movement

The District has an established Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network (that can be viewed using [Essex County Council's Interactive PRoW map](#)) which provides access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders (depending on the status of the route) to many of the significant landscape and cultural heritage features in the area. The network also provides links beyond the administrative boundary of the District, including to Harlow and the Lee Valley Regional Park, and includes a variety of long- distance walks such as the Epping Forest Centenary trail, connecting the District to Greater London. Others, such as the Essex Way, provide routes east into the wider Essex area. A series of shorter trails are promoted by the Council's Countryside team, the City of London Corporation and local organisations including Parish and Town Councils and Local Access Forums.

Cycle tracks run through the Lea Valley linking into Harlow and connecting to Harlow station. To the south of the District the cycle network links into the Greater London cycle network.

There are significant physical barriers to walking, cycling and horse-riding in the District created by the M25 and M11 motorways, and railway and underground lines with a limited number of crossing places. The result is convoluted pedestrian, cycle and bridleway routes, sometimes through inhospitable environments.

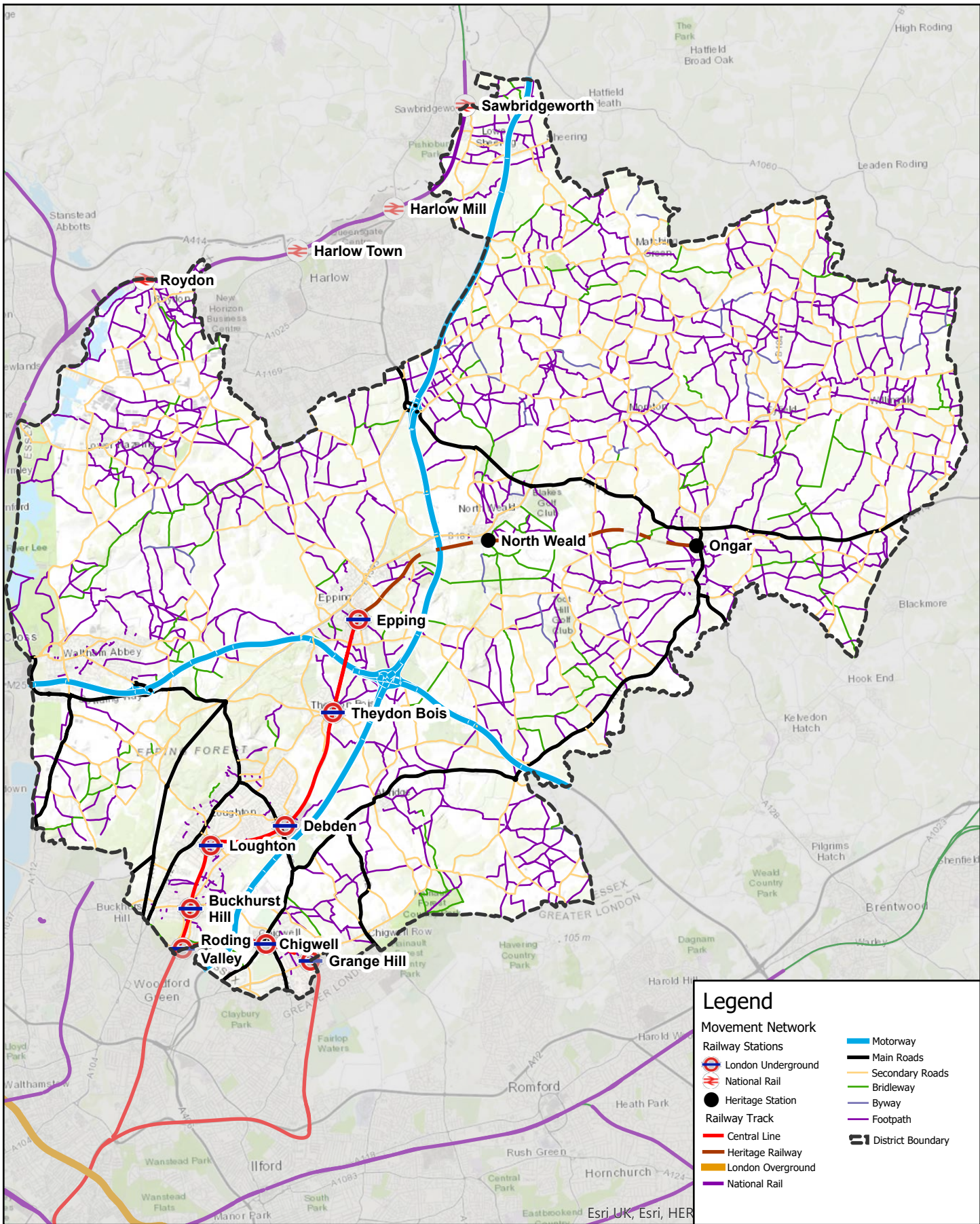
The Council recognises that making it easy for people to walk, cycle and use of public transport can help to reduce the effects of poor air quality and traffic congestion on environmentally valuable sites and local communities. The creation of well-designed multi-functional routes with a focus on creating green corridors can enhance their usability, attractiveness and support biodiversity and enhanced public realm objectives. There are gaps in the network which could be mended to further support these objectives.

Looking at ways to identify and address these fragmented parts of the walking, cycling and bridleway network will help us to work with landowners to secure real improvements to the benefit of residents of Epping Forest District.



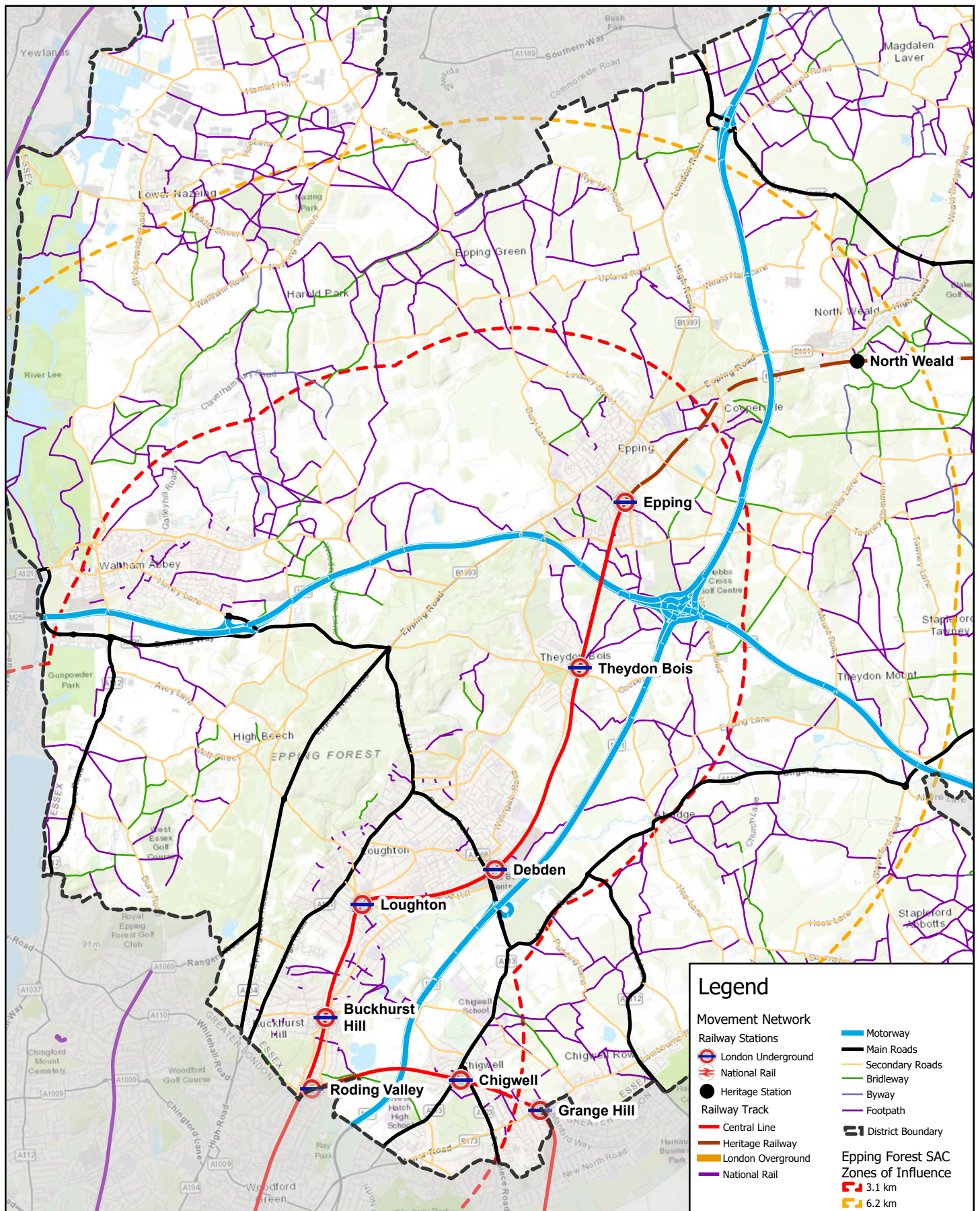
A public footpath fingerpost in Epping

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



Map 03: Movement
Scale 1:135,000 @ A4

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



Map 04: Movement ZOI
Scale 1:75,000 @ A4

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Ecology And Carbon

The District is home to a part of the internationally designated sites of the Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar, various SSSI's and a network of LoWS. A number of the LoWS within the District are designated as ancient forest and are remnants of the Essex Forest which would have once stretched across much of the District. These remaining pockets, although ecologically and culturally valuable in their own right, remain isolated in ecological terms.

The Council recognises the importance of not just focusing on ecological assets of the highest 'status', but also seeking areas for enhancement across the District. Disconnected local habitat areas provide the opportunity to create larger ecological networks of real value, re-establishing lost green links and wildlife corridors. It is important that we consider the need to increase habitats not just in response to the global biodiversity crisis but also the climate crisis. The Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019 and considers the need to increase scrub and forest cover vital in promoting carbon capture alongside biodiversity enhancement.

Management of the countryside is also changing - some projects are no longer using traditional conservation approaches such as making targeted and intensive interventions. Instead they are taking a more hands-off approach by allowing nature the space to take over. This approach is becoming more favoured and is often called 'wilding' or 're-wilding' as it seeks to restore ecosystems by reinstating natural processes and lost species - allowing nature to take care of itself.

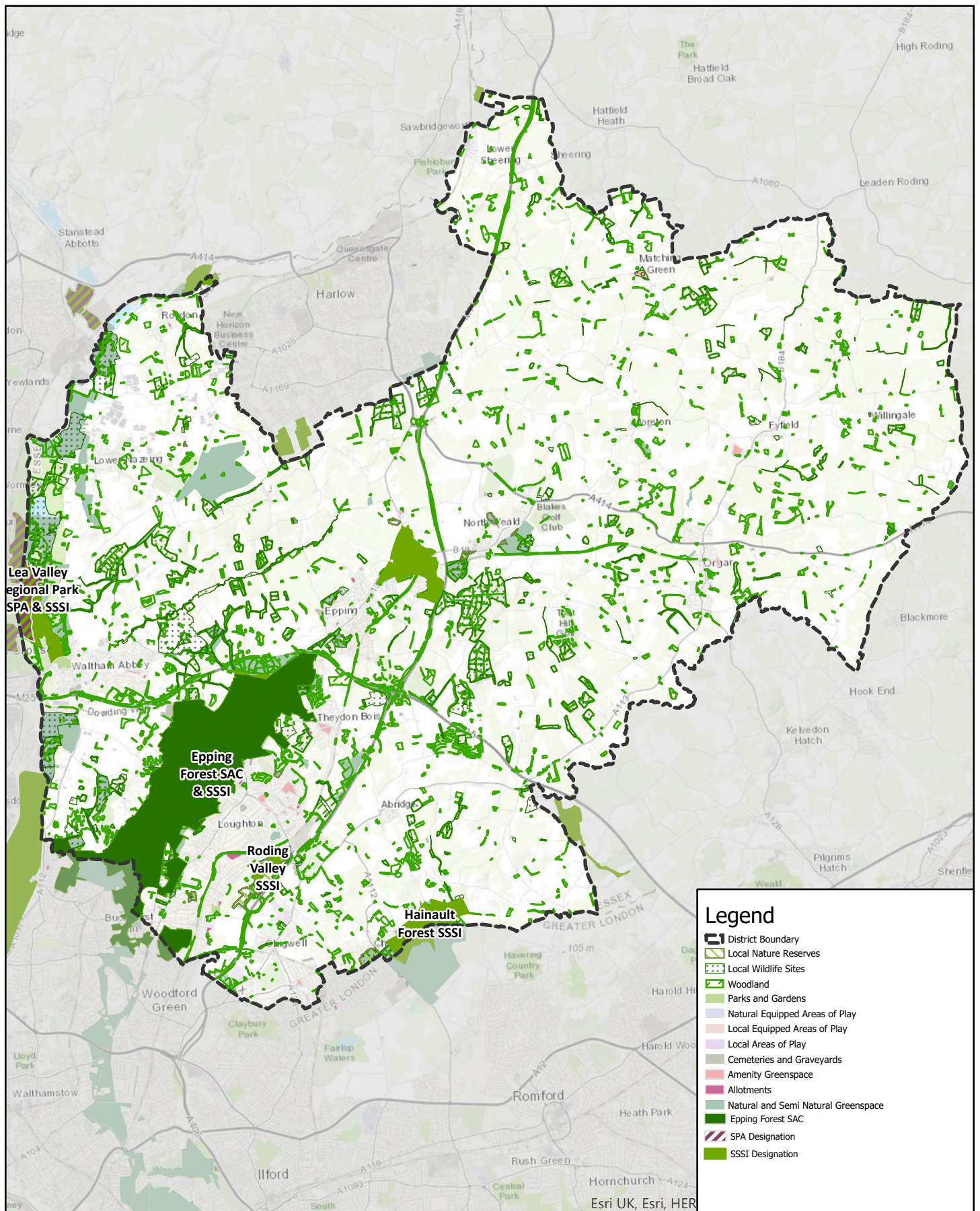
The [Government's Agriculture Act \(2020\)](#) is also proposing a different approach to subsidies. It sets out how farmers and land managers in England will "in future be paid for public goods", such as better air and water quality, improved soil health, higher animal welfare standards, public access to the countryside and measures to reduce flooding.

Within this changing context the Council will proactively encourage greater biodiversity and carbon capture across the District. To achieve this, the Council will work with partners including local communities, developers, farmers, landowners, Essex County Council, Essex Wildlife Trust and through cross boundary initiatives such as the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Partnership and the Green Arc (One Partnership).



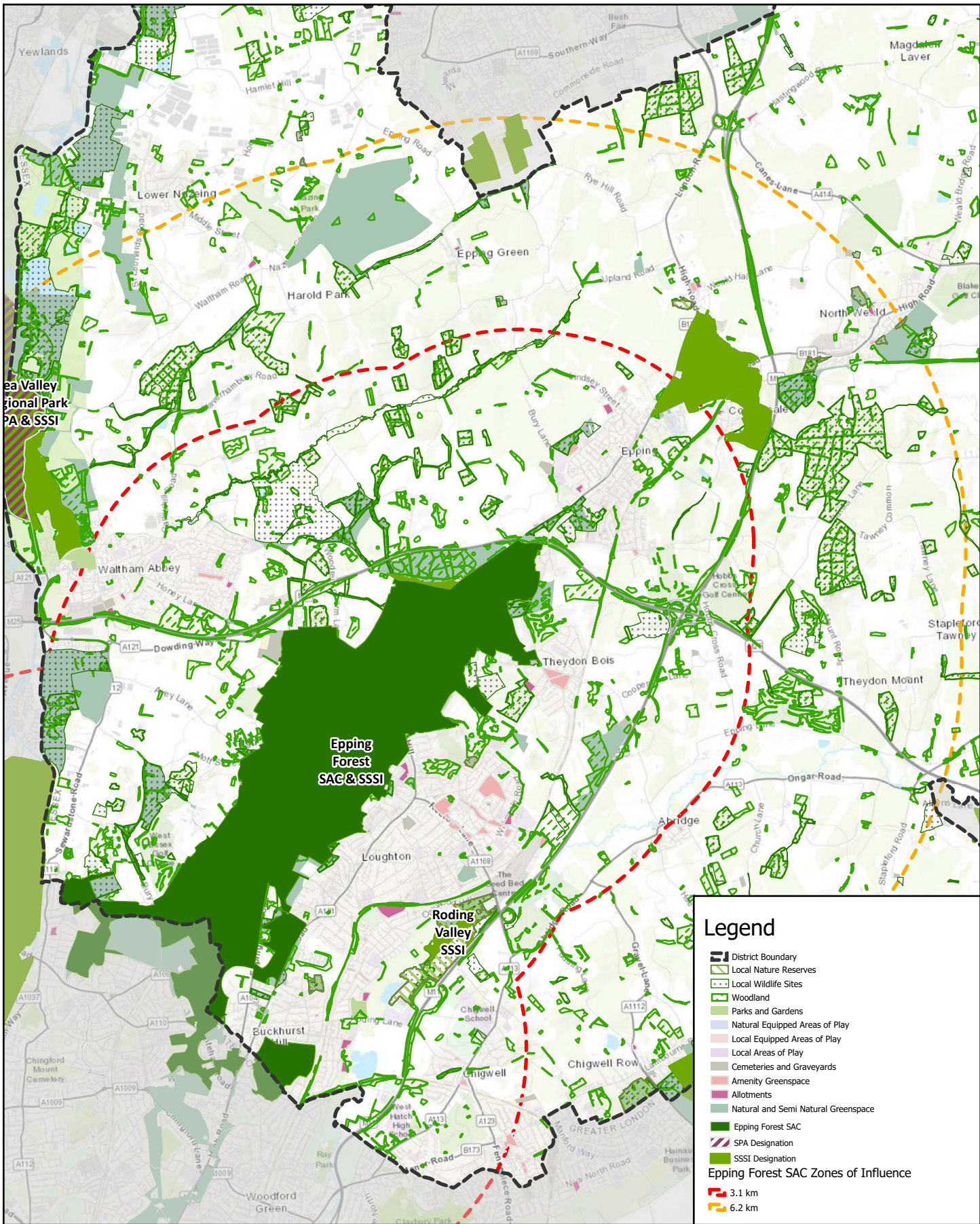
Hainault Forest SSSI

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



Map 05: Ecology
Scale 1:135,000 @ A4

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



Map 06: Ecology ZOI
Scale 1:75,000 @ A4

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Blue Infrastructure

The District has an extensive network of Blue Infrastructure, which is in places interwoven with the pedestrian footpath network. The Strategy can support improved access to the waterside where feasible as well as assist in the improvement of water quality and drainage. Ecologically the waterways, wetlands, lakes and ponds in the District provide important habitats. These Blue Infrastructure assets and their associated terrestrial habitats and built structures provide attractive habitats for urban and rural wildlife. They also help to enhance the attractiveness and interest of the local area and provide recreational opportunities for activities such as fishing and boating. Surface water and floodwater storage is also a critical consideration in development given areas of the District have poor water infiltration due to underlying clay geology and high-water tables.

The River Roding is a narrow and winding watercourse which rises in Molehill Green near Stansted Airport in the neighbouring district of Uttlesford. The Roding has several tributaries, the most significant of which are the Cripsey Brook at Ongar and the Loughton Brook.

Water quality in the River Roding is ecologically 'poor' in the north of the District and 'moderate' where the Cripsey Brook joins the River Roding at Ongar. This 'moderate' ecological status continues all the way down to the Thames. Its chemical status is 'good' throughout. The overall water quality status is 'poor' for the Upper Roding and 'moderate' for the Middle and Lower Roding, primarily due to poor soil/nutrient management from agricultural land and as a result of sewage discharges from sewerage treatment plants. The River Roding's status is impacted primarily from poor soil/ nutrient management from agricultural land.

The River Stort runs through a small section of the northern part of the District with a catchment comprising Roydon and Broadley Common. The River Stort Navigation is a heavily modified and canalised watercourse containing inland boating and structures. The water quality is chemically 'good' but ecologically 'moderate', with sewage discharge issues and diffuse pollution due to urban development. The Stort Navigation lies to the west of the District and flows into the lower parts of the River Lea at Feildes Weir on the boundary between the counties of Essex and Hertfordshire, and at Dobbs Weir. These assets are managed by the Canal and River Trust.



River Roding



River Stort Navigation

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

The River Roding's catchment area dominates the eastern two thirds of the District and its flow changes rapidly in response to rainfall, whilst the River Lea's response is much faster to reach a risk of flooding. The River Lea's catchment occupies the western third of the District, whilst a small part of the north of the District falls into the catchment of the River Stort. In addition, the Lee Navigation, Old River Lea and Lee Flood Relief Channel follow the western boundary of the District.

The main flooding risk to Epping Forest District is fluvial flooding associated with the River Roding and River Lea. The Lee Valley Flood Relief Channel (completed in 1977) is a predominantly artificial watercourse built to carry flood waters and relieve flooding in the Lee catchment. Large parts of the District do not have formal flood defences.

Groundwater fed watercourses and springs in the District are affected by seasonal variability in rainfall and through the construction of development foundations and basements. In addition, infiltration drainage systems can in parts of the District, contribute to localised groundwater flooding.

In more rural northern parts of the District, surface water drainage tends to comprise isolated systems. When these become silted or blocked, surface water flooding can occur. In more urban parts of the District, an increase of hard, impermeable surfaces over time has led to many surface water drainage systems being unable to cope, leading to an increased frequency of surface water flooding.

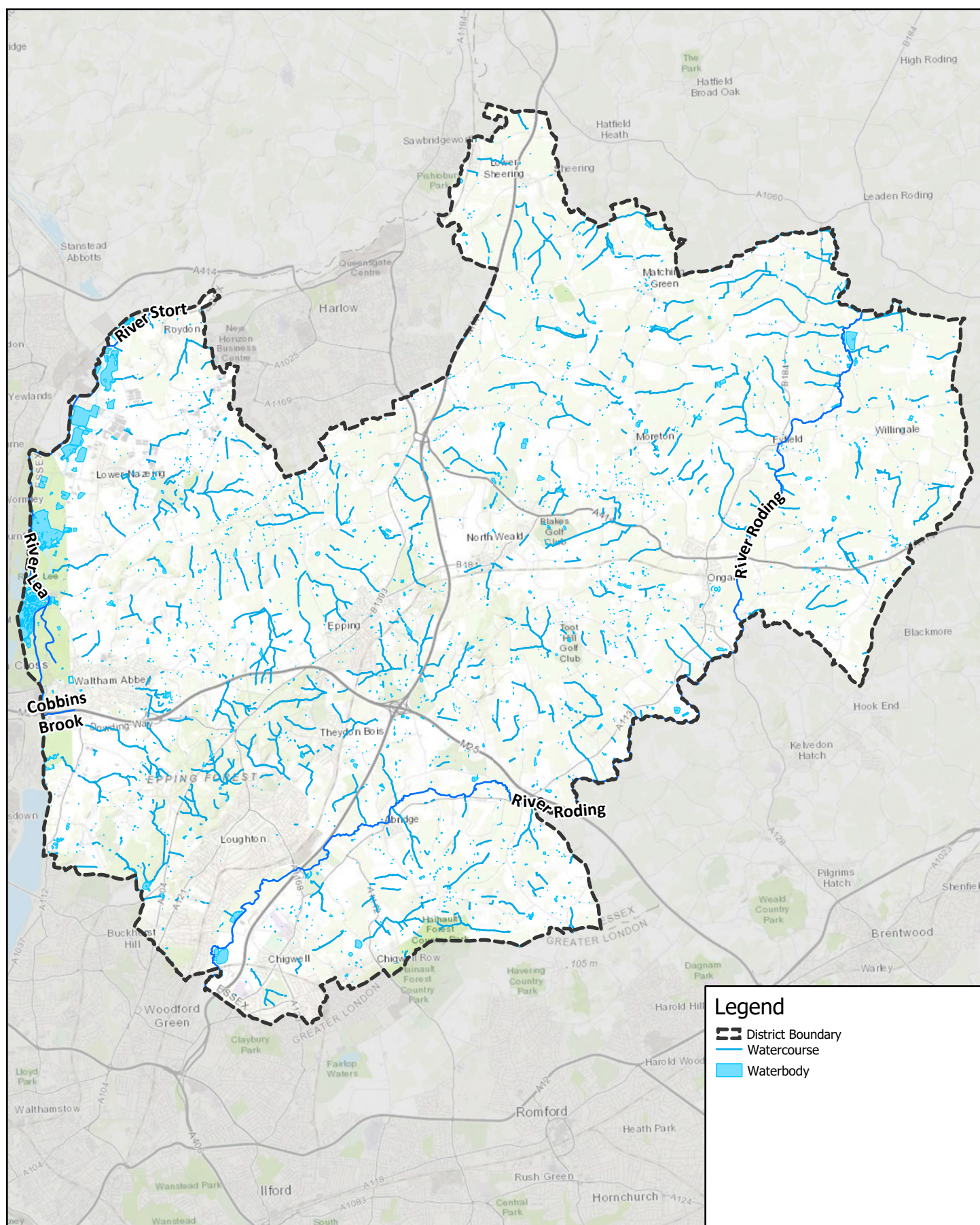
A number of reservoirs are located in the District including at Berners Hall Farm, Chigwell Row Water Works and Chigwell Washwater Lagoon, Staples Road Flood Storage Reservoir, Rye Hill No. 2 Reservoir and Cobbins Brook Flood Storage Area (FSA).

In recognition of the number of proposed allocations in the emerging Local Plan that are on greenfield sites, ensuring that they do not contribute to increased risk of flooding due to surface water run-off will be key. The preferred approach to flood risk management schemes is through the use of naturalised solutions. Within the context of the above, the Thames River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plan which covers the District, sets a number of relevant objectives to the GI Strategy including to:

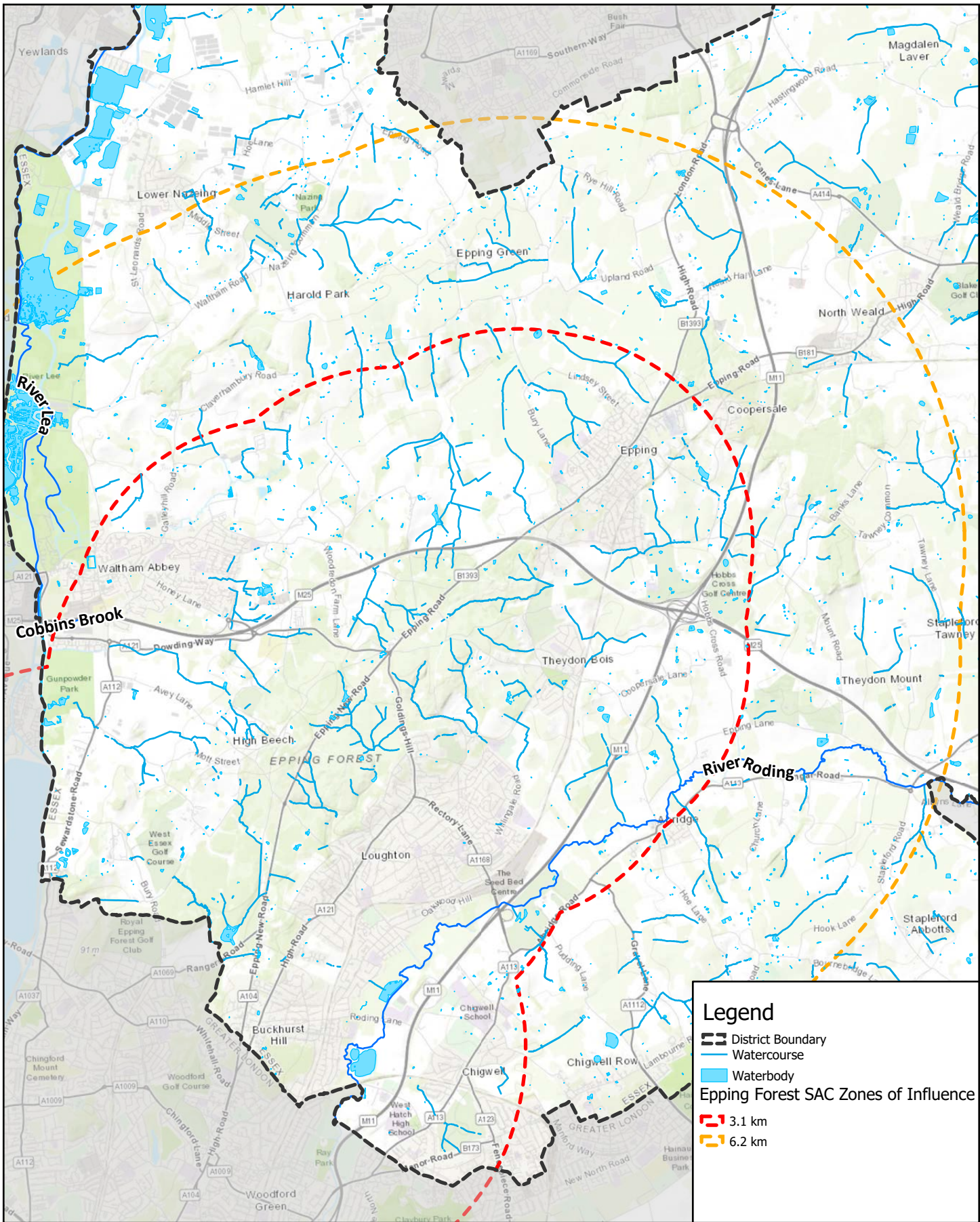
- Promote the use of sustainable drainage systems in development to help reduce pressure on existing drainage networks
- Protect and enhance biodiversity through flood risk management schemes
- Restore naturally functioning river systems where possible
- Promote sustainable land use management to achieve reduction in flood risk.

A number of other plans and strategies relevant to managing the water environment in the District include those prepared for the Lee Valley Regional Park and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and the [River Stort Catchment Management Plan](#) (which includes projects such as the restoration of the Princey Brook).

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT



Map 08: Blue Infrastructure ZOI
Scale 1:75,000 @ A4

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Visitor Offer

The Epping Forest has long been a draw for residents in the District and beyond. However, the increasing pressure from visitors has resulted in large parts of the Forest now classified as being in 'unfavourable conservation status'. As well as the Epping Forest, the District has other landscape draws including the Lee Valley Regional Park (which incorporates the Lea Valley and important heritage assets) the Stort Valley and Hainault Forest. At a smaller scale, there is a patchwork of ancient woodland across the District with differing characteristics and a series of built and landscape heritage features. These include the Ancient Green Lanes at Latton Priory, the waterways and marshland of the Waltham Abbey SSSI and the remnant of the royal deer park at North Weald Bassett. These places are unique and deserve to be more visited where this would not impact on their ecological or heritage status.

The walks that provide access to the countryside in which these features sit are themselves a visitor attraction, including long distance walks that connect into the wider Essex area and into London. In Harlow public art acts as an attraction through the sculptures by world renowned artists including Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth - which are promoted through [Harlow's Sculpture Trail](#) and the [Harlow Art Trust](#).



Gunpowder mill on the Waltham Abbey SSSI



Contrapuntal Forms, Harlow Sculpture Trail by Barbara Hepworth

0.3 ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Community

An important role of the Strategy is to ensure that all new and existing Green Infrastructure will respond to the needs of the resident population of the District. Compared to the rest of England, in 2011 the District had higher numbers of people aged 45-64 and 65 and over, with the proportion of people aged 65 and over in the District projected to grow substantially by 2033. Alongside this increase, the number of 30-64 year olds is projected to drop, with the number of 15-29 year olds projected to drop slightly and the proportion of people aged 0 to 14 to rise a little.

Green infrastructure should be accessible and safe to all members of the community. Whilst an aging population requires careful consideration of those with age-related impairments, younger years access and enjoyment and providing access for those with disabilities must also be integrated into the development of enhanced or new outdoor spaces. The important role of GI for local communities has become even more evident since the start of the COVID-19 crisis.

STEWARDSHIP FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

0.4

0.4 STEWARDSHIP FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintaining Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure assets will need to be supported by efficient and effective management and maintenance if it is to provide long term benefits and be of a high quality.

There is no central government funding specifically identified for the maintenance of GI - instead it is left to landowners. Local authorities and parish and town councils, (who have traditionally been the custodians of Green Infrastructure), have been experiencing increasing budget cuts whilst having to balance spending on a range of funding priorities including for statutory services.

As a result, open spaces and landscapes in public ownership are increasingly facing underfunding for their maintenance despite the importance of their value to communities and are relying more and more on local volunteers to help maintain them. To ensure long-term maintenance of green Infrastructure is sustainable and does not result in unreasonable cost burdens, the Strategy provides examples of potential approaches to stewardship of new spaces currently being considered by the Council as part of the work on developing stewardship models for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.



Maintaining new outdoor spaces and green infrastructure

0.4 STEWARDSHIP FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Stewardship

Stewardship: *“ensuring that a community asset is properly looked after in perpetuity”*

[TCPA \(2014\) Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow](#)

The right stewardship model will provide benefits for communities, developers, landowners and public bodies involved in the long-term management of Green Infrastructure assets.

For communities it means putting people at the heart of delivering successful places, by ensuring that long-term maintenance and management arrangements are in place to ensure that they continue to be of a high quality.

For developers, it creates confidence that any assets provided as part of a development, or where they have made a contribution towards the provision and management of Green Infrastructure assets, that they will be maintained to a high quality for the long term, with place-making at its heart and support the marketability of their development.

For public bodies, it can help to reduce long-term financial liabilities and therefore provides greater value for the community of Epping Forest District.

The Council has assessed a number of stewardship options and has identified **two potential stewardship models** that best meet these principles and objectives. These stewardship model options include:

- **Community Interest Company** - A company which must trade and use its assets for a social purpose, to benefit the community
- **Community Land Trust** - An organisation backed by a trust which is controlled by the community for the benefit of the community

In the following pages, examples of where these stewardship models have been successful are provided, and further details of the strengths and weaknesses of each can be found in the [HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report, June 2020](#).

In any stewardship of Green Infrastructure, the Council expects a key principle to be community engagement and involvement in the shaping and management of outdoor spaces. Whilst the following options are not exhaustive, they provide a starting point for exploring potential stewardship models appropriate for new green infrastructure.

0.4 STEWARDSHIP FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Interest Company (CIC)

The [HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report, June 2020](#) defines a Community Interest Company as:

‘... a limited company that trades for a social purpose or the benefit of the community.’

This type of stewardship model would be appropriate for the future management and maintenance of new green infrastructure in large developments and strategic masterplan areas.

An example of where this type of approach has been adopted is at Monksmoor Park in Daventry, Northamptonshire - a new, edge-of-town development of 1000 homes with associated open spaces, green links and public realm.

The CIC's members include homeowners, school providers, registered providers of affordable homes and commercial property owners within the development, as well as the developer as founding member. Green infrastructure asset ownership was transferred from the developer to the CIC upon completion of construction and is managed for the long-term benefit of the community it serves. Funds are raised through service charges and an initial 'set-up' payment of £100,000 by the developer.

Full details of this case study can be found in the [HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report, June 2020](#).

Epping Forest District Council is currently in the process of setting up a CIC. During its establishment, it may be found to be appropriate that some open spaces and Green Infrastructure could be acquired and managed by the Council's CIC in the future.



Monksmoor Park in Daventry, Northamptonshire

0.4 STEWARDSHIP FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Land Trust

The [HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report, June 2020](#) defines a Community Land Trust as:

‘... a community-controlled organisation backed by a trust, which acquires and manages assets for the benefit of the local community.’

This type of stewardship model would also be appropriate for the future management and maintenance of new Green Infrastructure assets proposed as part of large developments and strategic masterplan areas.

An example of where this approach has been adopted is Countryside and L&Q’s residential development at Beaulieu, Chelmsford. They chose the Land Trust to take over the ownership and management of the 72 hectares of Green Infrastructure that was being provided as part of a development of 3600 new homes - including parks, village greens, orchards, meadows, community gardens and playgrounds.

The following stewardship principles in relation to green infrastructure were established:

- creating, restoring and managing green spaces to improve the natural environment through increasing biodiversity and enhancing habitats;
- promoting the use of green spaces for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of communities;
- inspiring the current and next generation through vocational outdoor education and training opportunities;
- optimising the economic values of spaces and the services that they can provide
- to benefit the communities that are connected with them;
- involving local people through volunteering and use of sites and encouraging emotional ownership; and
- well managed green open spaces provide multiple benefits for people.

Full details of this case study can be found in the [HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report, June 2020](#). The Community Land Trust approach would also be appropriate for the stewardship of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).



Beaulieu in Chelmsford, Essex

FUNDING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

0.5

0.5 FUNDING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Funding Projects In The Long Term

Green Infrastructure projects and assets need funding for both their delivery (capital) and their maintenance and management in the long-term (capital and revenue). The latter is normally undertaken by an identified stewardship body.

The sustainable, long-term success of a stewardship model can only be achieved with an effective means of long-lasting funding, including through income generation. Two types of funding/finance are usually required for projects and to support the stewardship body:

Capital investment - which can take a number of forms:

- development capital – required at the start of the organisation and for any new plans/ projects;
- growth capital – required for purchase, development or refurbishment of assets; and
- working capital – required to support an uneven cash flow.

Revenue stream – income required to cover every day running costs and repay any borrowing.

There are a number of mechanisms and sources that can be utilised to secure funding for capital investment and to generate a revenue stream. The funding mechanisms include:

- section 106 funding
- grants and endowments;
- income earned from trading;
- public sector funding;
- resident charges;
- charitable funding; and
- loans and equity finance.

Section 106 Funding

The principle source for funding capital projects and the on-going revenue support for stewardship bodies for Green Infrastructure associated with development proposals is from monies secured through the development process such as through Section 106 planning obligations. These will be used to secure funding for the provision and ongoing management of community assets.

Some green and blue infrastructure projects and costs have already been included within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

0.5 FUNDING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Funding Of Community-Led Projects

Funding opportunities other than through the developer contributions system are available for smaller scale projects, including for those initiated by community groups. This includes charitable and grant funding. Some funding schemes require an element of 'match funding' either in the form of a financial contribution or people's time.

The Council award grants to organisations involved in providing community work, cultural or sport activities that improve the well-being of residents in the Epping Forest district. More information on [Grant Aid](#) can be found on our website.

The Big Lottery Fund gives out millions of pounds from the National Lottery to good causes every year. Funding goes to community, environment, health and education projects. The [Big Lottery Fund's 'Awards for All'](#) programme funds small, community-based projects across the UK.

The [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) operates a number of funds for both capital and revenue activities, including 'Local Places for Nature' and 'Community Woodlands' funds. [Groundwork](#) provide grants for local community environmental projects across the UK as well as specifically listing those available in the East of England. Fields in Trust provide a useful list of suggested [funding resources for Community Park Projects](#).

The gov.uk website provides details of possible grants from a number of Government Departments including Health; the Home Office; Education and Skills; and Transport. Government funding opportunities include the [Urban Tree Challenge Fund](#), which supports the planting and establishment of small trees in urban and adjacent areas in England.



Groundwork's Community Food Growing Hubs

0.5 FUNDING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Funding Mechanism	Funding Source	Description
Endowments	Development process	Endowments from the planning and development processes including: S106 agreements and CIL.
	Gifts/donations	Large endowments from philanthropists or foundations. This can be land, property or a financial endowment.
Income earned from trading	Through an asset	Income earned through utilising an asset, e.g. income from hiring out premises.
	Selling goods and services	Providing goods and services for a fee.
Public sector funding	Grant or subsidy	Funding from on-going statutory budgets, time limited programmes (e.g. regeneration programmes), sector specific subsidies. Can be provided as capital grants or revenue grants.
	Landlord rents	'Peppercorn' rents charged by public sector landlords which functions to save money, reducing revenue costs and releasing funding for capital investment.
	Commissioning of services	Public sector commissioning of services defined by commissioning body.
	National Lottery	Time-limited grant funding annually through a wide range of programmes.
Resident charges	Service charges	Charges levied by landlords/management companies to cover costs of provision and maintenance of shared space detailed in leasehold agreement. Can apply to residential and commercial property.
	Estate management scheme charges	Landlords retain some management control over assets in cases where freehold has been sold to leaseholders. If a scheme is used to provide for upkeep of shared facilities it may permit recovery of charges (rent charges or contractual arrangements).
Charitable funding	Grants from foundations	Grants from a range of charitable institutions, which may be one-off in nature.
	Donations from individuals	Donations and legacies from public fundraising initiatives. Level of funding secured is usually dependent upon body's profile and ability to compete for funding.
Loans and equity finance	Equity and quasi-equity	Public investment of shares in CIC or CS with a limit of £20,000 per individual for co-operative investment. Financial intermediaries can also invest.
	Bonds	A small number of bond issues are raising finance to support charities and social enterprises.
	Social impact bonds	Social investors pay for the project at the start and then receive payments based on the results achieved by the project.
	Loans	Traditional loans or specific sector loans such as the Public Works Loan.
Community Land Trust Funds	Loans and Grants	Feasibility Fund Technical Assistance Fund Investment Fund

Above: Table 01 showing different funding mechanisms and sources, from the HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report, June 2020. It should be noted that the mechanisms available will be influenced by the type and purpose of the asset and the legal form of the stewardship body. Therefore, these funding mechanisms may not be appropriate for all assets or if particular legal forms are selected for the stewardship body.

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

0.6

0.6 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Having considered the legislative and policy context together with an understanding of the current issues and opportunities in relation to GI within the District the Council's Vision for GI is that:

By 2033 a well-connected network of Green and Blue Infrastructure will have been created and secured for the future to ensure that both existing and new communities are supported by high-quality, well-maintained multi-functional spaces which are safe and sociable, support peoples' health and wellbeing, and are accessible to all.

The District's important ecological, natural heritage and landscape assets will have been protected and enhanced and links to the wider area will have been strengthened. Net gains in carbon capture and biodiversity will have been achieved and a design-led approach to the provision and integration of Green and Blue Infrastructure will have been at the heart of creating the District's new places.



Church Lane Flood Meadows, near North Weald Bassett

0.6 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

In order to deliver the Vision our objectives are:

1. To protect the District's Green and Blue Infrastructure assets (including those of ecological importance and heritage value). We will do this by resisting development on GI assets which conflict with our Local Plan policies and secure contributions from new development where it will put additional pressure on existing assets to invest in projects to mitigate any impacts.

2. To enhance the quality, attractiveness and functionality of the District's existing Green and Blue Infrastructure. We will do this by:

- Working with local communities and providing Council resources to help deliver local projects;
- Working with partners to implement initiatives such as the creation of wildflower verges and by tapping into available funding.

3. To secure long-term carbon sequestration and enhancement of biodiversity. We will do this both through applying our local plan policies robustly in respect of new development through the determination of planning applications. We will also invest in tree planting and bring forward sites on Council owned land, including in North Weald, in response to the climate and biodiversity crisis.

4. To ensure that existing and new Green and Blue Infrastructure is well-connected both within the District and beyond to enhance the extent of the network. We will do this by working with neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies and partnerships to deliver 'larger than local' projects such as through the 'Green Arc' partnership, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

5. To ensure that existing and new Green and Blue Infrastructure is well-connected to the communities it serves, provides choice in the range of opportunities available and is accessible to all regardless of age or physical ability. We will do this by assessing all projects to ensure that they comply with Equalities principles and engage with organisations who can provide invaluable advice on how to engage different sections of our communities including our Youth Groups and Access Forum.

6. To embed a landscape led approach to the design of new Green and Blue Infrastructure as part of new development to secure the delivery of high-quality spaces which enable communities to have active, healthy and sociable lifestyles. We will do this by rigorously applying our planning policies and guidance in the Masterplanning and determination of planning applications.

7. To ensure that appropriate funding and management mechanisms are in place to sustain the long-term future of Green and Blue Infrastructure. We will do this as part of assessing planning applications to ensure that funding is adequate and that management arrangements are robust and have longevity.

8. To effect positive change guided by local communities and the custodians of Green and Blue Infrastructure. We will do this by engaging with local communities and our partners on an on-going basis and through timely and on-going monitoring and review of this strategy.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION: ENHANCING OUR EXISTING NETWORK

1

You should read this document after reading
[The Primer](#) if you are:

A Local Resident / Community Group /
Parish Council / Authority Officer
with an interest in initiating or implementing
green infrastructure projects

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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure a strategic and holistic approach is taken to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecology, landscape and heritage in the District.

The Primer (Part 0) provides an overview of the Strategy and its purpose, commentary on the existing Green Infrastructure assets in the District, and the Vision and Objectives of the Strategy. The other Parts of the Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Primer. These are:

This Part provides guidance on:

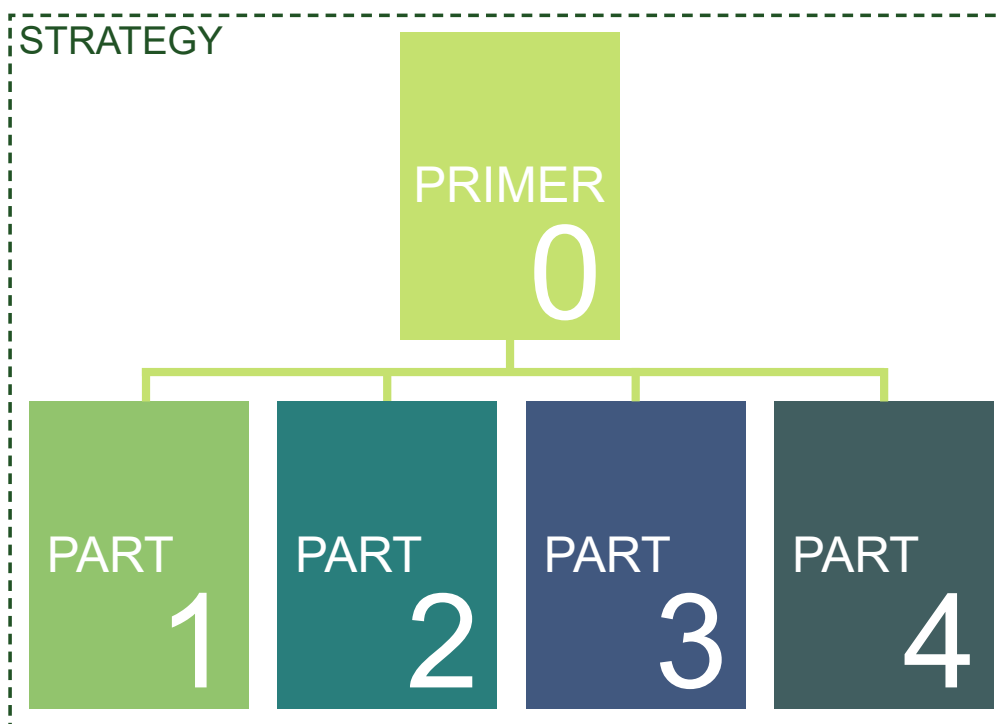
1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network

It provides:

- A list of potential District-wide projects to enhance existing Green Infrastructure at both strategic and community-led scales
- Initiatives that can be incorporated into small-scale development schemes
- Information on maintenance and stewardship for relevant projects of this type
- Information on funding for relevant projects of this type

The other Parts of the Strategy cover:

2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design
3. Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations
4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Who will use the Strategy and Part 1?

The Strategy comprises four Parts. Anyone using the Strategy and the associated guidance and projects should read the Primer first, to familiarise themselves with the purpose, context and vision of the Strategy.

This Part of the Strategy (1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network) is primarily for local residents, community groups, parish and town councils, and council officers with an interest in initiating and implementing Green Infrastructure projects. It should also be used by planning applicants preparing smaller scale development proposals. It provides ideas and advice on how to take local projects forward or where there is a need to introduce Green Infrastructure provision into a development proposal.

When to use this document?

If you are interested in initiating or delivering a local, community-led, or strategic project which seeks to enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network within or across the District, this document will help provide ideas and guidance on how to plan for, collaborate, fund and maintain these types of projects.

DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

1.1

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Overview

This Part of the Strategy looks at ways we can enhance the District's existing Green infrastructure network. The projects that can contribute to this objective are set out in the following pages and guidance acts as briefs for each one. They can be implemented across the District to enhance our existing landscapes across a variety of scales. The projects are divided into four types:

- Strategic Projects
- Community Initiated Projects
- Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green infrastructure
- Projects for Small Scale Developments

In the future, more District-wide projects will be identified and briefs for them will be included as part of future updates to the Strategy.

Strategic Projects

These projects are of a District scale or need coordination across the District. These are:

- Movement and Wayfinding
- Roadside Wildflowers

Community Initiated Projects

These projects are appropriate for implementation across the District but would be initiated by local communities, including by town and parish councils, with support from the Council. These are:

- Tree Planting - A Call for Sites
- Community Greenspace Improvements

Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green infrastructure

This project aims to increase the numbers and diversify the range of people using the District's Green infrastructure network:

- Art in the Landscape

Projects for Small Scale Developments

All planning applications are required to comply with the Council's local plan policies. All development schemes, no matter how small, are capable of making a positive contribution to the enhancement of Green Infrastructure across the District. This Section provides further information on the types of initiatives that can be incorporated into these types of schemes.

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Strategic Projects

Movement And Wayfinding

The Project

Developing and supporting the implementation of a Strategy for the enhancement of the District's Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network to make it more legible, accessible and useable by everyone.

Why?

To ensure new and existing communities have better access to high-quality and local green and blue spaces and to create connections between the District's communities. The approach supports a number of objectives including in relation to health and well-being and carbon reduction.

What Does Success Look Like?

The implementation of a coherent set of initiatives which have resulted in the provision of improved signage, removal of physical barriers to support access for all, provided more complete routes across the PRoW network and the introduction of maintenance regimes. The District's PRoW network will have been made safer, more visible, coherent and accessible for all as a result.

How Do We Get There?

By commissioning a consultant team with expertise in wayfinding design and landscape architecture - to design, develop and construct a series of wayfinding interventions across the District. This will be supported by raising awareness and promotion of routes and working with landowners to join up missing parts of the network and ensure that routes across private land is clearly defined.

Key Stakeholders

- Town and Parish Councils
- EFDC's Countrycare team
- Essex County Council Highways
- Local User Groups
- Sustrans
- Landowners
- Developers

Potential Funding Sources

- Highways England
- Essex County Council
- Government Active Travel Grants
- Town and Parish Council precepts
- Section 106 planning obligations

Approximate cost (per square meter)

£70-650 (depending on level of works)



Walthamstow Wetlands by Kinnear Landscape Architects



Borough Highstreet by East Architecture

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Strategic Projects

Roadside Wildflowers

The Project

To implement cutting regimes for roadside verges, and undertake the seeding of areas, to provide for the creation of wildflower verges.

Why?

To tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, by providing long-term benefits for people, wildlife and ecology and improving the visual amenity of the District.

What Does Success Look Like?

The successful implementation of a management approach which results in an improvement in the natural capital of the District and the creation of wildlife corridors.

How Do We Get There?

- The Council will work with Essex County Council and Highways England (both of which have statutory biodiversity duties) to identify verges and roadside areas that are appropriate for wildflower planting. Opportunities to expand Essex County Council's Special Roadside Verges scheme will be explored. The project will include encouraging the implementation of a species-appropriate seeding programme and/or the establishment of mowing regimes for the relevant organisation responsible for maintaining the verges to implement to support wildflower growth. In doing so consideration will be given to keeping junction verges clear of taller planting to allow for safe visibility splays.
- Encourage local communities to identify local opportunities for highway verge wildflower planting.
- Publicising the approach to support awareness raising.

Key Stakeholders

- Local communities
- Town and Parish Councils
- EFDC's Countrycare
- Essex County Council
- Highways England
- Essex Wildlife Trust

Potential Funding Sources

- Existing highway maintenance budgets
- Plantlife
- Biffa Award for Rebuilding Biodiversity

Approximate cost (per square meter)

£2-7 (depending on seeding or turfing options)



Roadside wildflowers in Sheffield



Roadside meadow planting in Leeds

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Community Based, Council Supported

Tree Planting - A Call For Sites

The Project
Boosting the District’s tree canopy cover with new tree planting on appropriate sites identified by the community. Tree planting can be on rural or urban sites, and can range in scale from just a few trees to improve a local greenspace, to extensive woodland planting projects.

Why?
To tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, providing long-term benefits for people, wildlife and ecology and enhance the visual amenity of the District.

What Does Success Look Like?
Improved quality of outdoor spaces and places and carbon capture through well considered tree planting and helping to deliver the next generation of big trees in the District.

- How Do We Get There?**
- The Council will put out a call for sites via social media and engagement platforms
 - Communities to respond with potential sites they have seen where this approach could be adopted so the Council can assess the results to compile a list of sites to take forward
 - The Council, in partnership with parish and town councils and community groups, will help to implement tree planting using ‘Right Tree Right Place’ principles and arrange appropriate stewardship for long-term success
 - The Council will work with Essex County Council to explore opportunities to co-ordinate schemes as part of its Tree Planting Forest Initiative

- | Key Stakeholders | Potential Sources of Funding |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town / Parish Councils and Community Groups• Epping Forest District’s Hedgerow and Tree Wardens• Essex County Council• GreenArc Partners• Schools• Landowners and developers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woodland Trust• Forestry Commission• Essex Forest Initiative |

Approximate cost (per square meter)
£86-390 (depending on specification of tree and planting density)



New tree planting in urban ‘Forest’ by Spacehub



New woodland creation at Heartwood Forest, Hertfordshire

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Community Based, Council Supported

Community Greenspace Improvements

The Project

Improving local greenspaces through a community-led design approach, by developing a toolkit of guidance on initiatives and stewardship strategies. The toolkit may include elements such as: introducing relaxed mowing regimes, provision of seating, bins, growing beds, improved boundary treatments, drainage and natural play elements (such as mounds, logs and boulders). Guidance on how to create spaces that are designed to be used by all, including for those with special needs and dementia will also be provided.

Why?

Well-designed and multifunctional greenspaces can make people happier, healthier and bring communities together. Developing a resource for communities will make it easier for them to bring forward local projects.

What Does Success Look Like?

An increased use of enhanced local greenspace by a range of ages, backgrounds and abilities within the community. An improved feeling of civic pride and sense of community are amongst the social benefits of these projects, whilst environmental gains can be made through biodiversity enhancement.

How Do We Get There?

- The Council will seek nominations from community-based organisations to establish a trial project. The identified project should have the potential for the creation of a greenspace which is capable of incorporating a significant number of the elements identified above. There will also need to be a clear commitment by the community organisation to engaging in both the development of the toolkit and the implementation of initiatives.
- Advice will be provided by the Council and its Countrycare Service in relation to any maintenance, stewardship and funding applications.

Key Stakeholders

- Community Groups
- Community Champions
- EFDC's Countrycare
- Town and Parish Councils

Potential Sources of Funding

- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Groundwork
- Section 106 planning obligations
- Town and Parish Council precepts

Approximate cost (per square meter)

£44-196 (average)



Drapers Field, Waltham Forest by Kinnear Landscape Architects



Warpole Park, Ealing by J&L Gibbons

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green Infrastructure

Art In The Landscape

The Project

To develop a network of high-quality art across the District, which is integrated into the landscape and builds on Harlow's Sculpture Trail.

Why?

Well-designed and multifunctional greenspaces can make people happier, healthier and bring communities together. 'Art in the Landscape' can also act as a visitor attraction, helping to draw people away from existing spaces which are under pressure from visitors (including the Epping Forest), and encourage people into the countryside for the first time. It also has the potential to showcase the skills of local artists and makers.

What Does Success Look Like?

The introduction of high-quality art which has been sensitively sited in the landscape for all to access and enjoy. Artwork could come from local artists or artists from elsewhere, well-known or lesser-known artists, could be temporary or permanent and could vary from sculpture to theatre. Any artwork should respond to its surroundings, be meaningful to its location, and enhance a visitor's connection to the landscape.

How Do We Get There?

By establishing a working group which includes experts in public art curation and landscape architecture, whilst ensuring community groups are involved and engaged throughout the process.

Key Stakeholders

- Town and Parish Councils
- Local Educational and Art Programmes
- Local Schools
- Harlow Arts Trust
- Landowners and developers

Potential Sources of Funding

- Arts Council England
- Heritage Fund
- Section 106 planning obligations



Nuria and Irma, Yorkshire Sculpture Park by Jaume Plensa



Theydon Bois Earthwork, Richard Harris for The Woodland Trust

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Projects for Small-Scale Developments

The following projects are aimed at smaller scale residential developments of 10 homes or fewer. The projects allow these sites to develop a Green Infrastructure network which is appropriate to the scale of the development, and contribute to the District's effort to combat the climate and biodiversity crises.

Back Garden Wildlife Corridors

Private gardens are a significant contributor to urban greening - streets of houses are often accompanied by corridors of back gardens. Collectively they form a valuable resource to wildlife by being planted with a wide variety of trees, shrubs, fruiting specimens and flowering plants and creating wildlife corridors.

Tall and impermeable garden boundaries can restrict wildlife movement between gardens, meaning many small mammals and invertebrates are not able to move freely within a Back Garden Wildlife Corridor. Garden boundaries that allow wildlife to travel from garden to garden are important in all residential sites, especially smaller sites where there may not be significant areas for green infrastructure provision.

Boundaries could be planted with mixed, native hedging to allow better wildlife movement. If timber fencing is preferred, it could be detailed with gaps or 'holes' at ground level to allow creatures to climb through.

Typical cost: **£20-125 per linear m** (depending on type and height)

Roofscapes as Landscapes

Green and biodiverse roofs provide an excellent alternative to more standard roofing materials - both visually and ecologically. They can be installed on flat or pitched roofs, and can be planted with a mix of sedums and wildflowers. For maximum biodiversity impact, the substrate should vary in depth.

By installing green or biodiverse roofs, a significant proportion of a site can contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain, where it would have otherwise not done so. Planted roofs can also be used alongside water harvesting and blue roof systems.

Typical cost: **£200-230 per sqm**



Wildlife-friendly garden fencing



Biodiverse roof with sedum, wildflowers and hibernaculum

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Refuges for Wildlife

Man-made hibernaculum are places where wildlife can seek refuge, and they can be easily integrated into all sites. Bird and bat boxes can be integrated into building facades, whereas bug hotels and stripped logs can be placed on green / biodiverse roofs. Hibernaculum can even be used as a sculptural element within greenspaces.

Typical cost: **£30-80 each** (depending on type)

Planting for Biodiversity

All proposed planting should be diverse in species, form and seasonality. The best plantings for biodiversity recreate natural environments based on the microclimate of the location - for example, a shady, sheltered area would suit a native woodland-inspired planting design, whereas a sunny, windy spot would suit a prairie-style planting design.

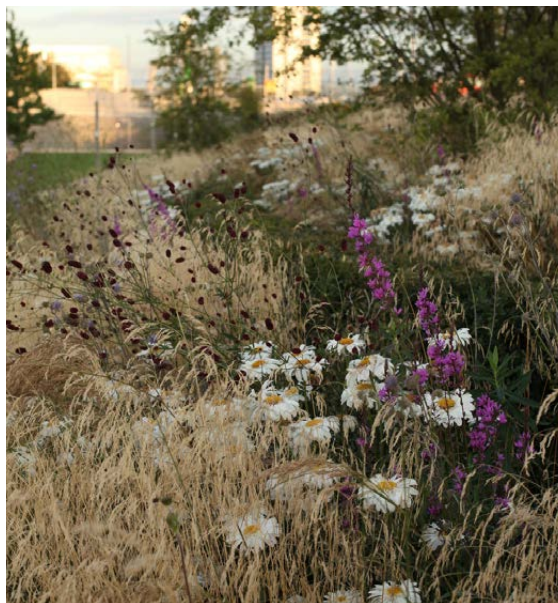
Proposed plantings should maximise their benefit to invertebrates and pollinators with a mix of native and non-native plants, with diverse flowering periods. Seasonality is key to wildlife-friendly planting, as well as visual interest - therefore there should be a mix of deciduous and evergreen specimens.

Larger areas of amenity grass can be planted with a biodiverse lawn mix, while areas not intended for heavy use can be planted with wildflower meadow.

Typical cost: **£9-35 per sqm** (depending on planting type and planting density)



An example of a bug hotel



Biodiverse planting at The Olympic Park by Sarah Price, James Hitchmough and Nigel Dunnett

1.1 DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Drainage as Habitat

Sustainable Drainage Systems are strongly encouraged on all sites, regardless of their size. The key principle of SuDS is that they mimic natural water processes, capturing water where it falls and slowing runoff into nearby watercourses. Some SuDS such as rain gardens and swales can also provide excellent habitat potential for a range of invertebrates and amphibians. They can be planted with species which can cope with being wet and dry with the seasons, providing much more ecological and visual impact than piped systems.

Urban Design London's [Designing Rain Gardens: A Practical Guide](#) provides a useful introduction to soft SuDS options.

Typical cost: **£50-530 per sqm** (depending on depth)

The Next Generation of Trees

When planning a site, every effort should be made to keep good quality, existing trees - mature specimens hold ecological, visual and cultural value. Looking at the future of our mature trees throughout the District however means we must plan for the next generation. New tree planting should be sought in all sites - ranging in species and specification to suit the local environment, following 'Right Tree, Right Place' principles. New trees must be planted in generous tree pits with good quality soil and appropriate irrigation provision.

Increasing tree cover in the District will also improve carbon capture abilities.

Typical cost: **£86-390 per sqm** (depending on specification of tree and planting density)

Further guidance on projects for small sites and individual homes has been produced by [Rewild My Street](#).



Street SuDS in White City, by Robert Bray Associates



Planning for the next generation of trees in Accordia, Cambridge

STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT- WIDE PROJECTS

1.2

1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Strategic Projects

Movement And Wayfinding

What are the stewardship principles?

To maintain the pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian Public Rights of Way network to a high standard, ensuring safe, legible and accessible routes all year round for the benefit of District residents and visitors.

Who is the current owner?

Essex County Council and landowners with Public Rights of Way on their land.

What are the current stewardship arrangements?

- Essex County Council is responsible for maintenance of all routes, except Public Rights of Way running across private land
- Landowners are responsible for the maintenance of Rights of Way over their land
- Epping Forest District Council are responsible for clearing roads, pavements and cycleways of litter

What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

Introducing major changes to the current stewardship arrangements would not be appropriate. However more regular reviews of the Public Rights of Way network as part of monitoring and updating the Movement and Wayfinding Strategy could be undertaken to identify areas requiring improvements - as well as encouraging greater community involvement.

How can the community be involved?

Regular engagement with user groups and communities to help identify areas of the Public Rights of Way network which could be improved to achieve safe, legible and accessible routes all year round.

1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Strategic Projects

Roadside Wildflowers

What are the stewardship principles?

To develop a network of biodiverse roadside verges and maintain them to encourage wildlife without compromising road safety.

Who is the current owner?

Essex County Council / Highways England

What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Essex County Council pay for Epping Forest District Council's Countrycare team to maintain all adopted highway verges in the District

What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

Some changes to Countrycare's maintenance programme and practices would enable the development of the Roadside Wildflowers project - through relaxed mowing regimes and undertaking seeding.

How can the community be involved?

Communities could help identify potential verges for Roadside Wildflowers, either through their Town or Parish Council, through a community group (for example the Epping in Bloom initiative) or through the development of a tool on the Council's website - where members of the public could 'apply' for verges near them to be part of the Roadside Wildflowers project.

1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Community Based, Council Supported

Tree Planting - A Call For Sites

What are the stewardship principles?

To manage new tree planting to ensure its longevity and continued benefit to local communities, the environment and in support of the District's carbon capture potential.

Who is the current owner?

A mixture of owners depending on which sites come forward but will be primarily the responsibility of Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council and Town / Parish Councils and landowners. In the first stages of the project, site identification will focus on Council owned land.

What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Management and maintenance is typically dependant on the ownership of each site. Identified tree planting sites within Epping Forest District Council's ownership are currently looked after by a combination of the Council's Grounds Maintenance Team, Countrycare and the Environmental Protection and Drainage Team.

What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

The responsibility for stewardship would largely remain with the current landowners of the identified sites. In Council-owned sites, an appropriate maintenance and management plan could be established in new tree planting areas to ensure healthy growth and maximum benefit to biodiversity. Further training could be given to the teams carrying out maintenance in order to achieve these.

How can the community be involved?

The community would largely be involved in the identification of tree planting sites across the District, and therefore the continued development of the project. Community members could suggest sites through their Town or Parish Council, through a community group (for example the Epping in Bloom initiative) or through the development of a tool on the Council's website.

1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Community Based, Council Supported

Community Greenspace Improvements

What are the stewardship principles?

To ensure the community continue to be engaged in the management and maintenance of their own improved greenspaces to achieve high levels of community cohesion, pride in local spaces and care for the local environment.

Who is the current owner?

Primarily, Community Greenspaces are in the ownership of Epping Forest District Council or Town and Parish Councils.

What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Greenspaces within Council ownership are currently looked after by a combination of the Epping Forest District Council's Grounds Maintenance Team, Countrycare and the Environmental Protection and Drainage Team.

What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

Day to day maintenance would still remain with the above identified teams, however the overall management strategy would largely depend on the greenspace improvements identified by the community. Therefore, the overarching management strategy could be developed by the community with input and support from the Council.

How can the community be involved?

The local community would set up a group to help bring about improvements to their local greenspace. The community group would be leading the project, and that would include making decisions about the future stewardship of the space. The Council will provide advice and resources to make informed decisions, as well as supporting potential funding applications for the long-term management of the greenspace.

1.2 STEWARDSHIP FOR DISTRICT-WIDE PROJECTS

Projects to Encourage Engagement with Green Infrastructure Art In The Landscape

What are the stewardship principles?

To involve communities in the development of an art network across the District - where well maintained, accessible and meaningful artwork is used to engage people in their surrounding green infrastructure and outdoor spaces.

Who is the current owner?

Previously, there has been very little public art commissioning in the District, despite it being home to various artists over the years (such as Walter E Spradbery and Jacob Epstein). Artwork proposals for this project are yet to be developed, including where any artwork is to be placed - and therefore it will be dependent on who owns the land. However, it is anticipated that artwork will predominantly be placed on Council or Town and Parish Council owned land or within larger areas of open space provided as part of the strategic sites proposed as part of the emerging Local Plan.

What are the current stewardship arrangements?

Whilst pieces of public art remain few in the District, the artwork located in parks and gardens (such as the Memorial to King Harold in Waltham Abbey Gardens) are typically looked after by the local Town Council. The Theydon Bois Earthwork is maintained by The Woodland Trust.

What changes to the stewardship arrangements could be made?

As an example, The Harlow Art Trust is responsible for the development and stewardship of the Harlow Sculpture Trail. In Epping Forest District, the Qualis Community Interest Company (CIC) could extend their stewardship responsibilities to the development of a coherent artwork network in the landscape.

How can the community be involved?

The local community can be included in the procurement, creation and location of artworks, as well as the development of a trail over time.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION: LANDSCAPE LED DESIGN

You should read this document after reading
[The Primer](#) if you are:

A Developer / Designer / Authority Officer
who is designing, assessing or delivering
masterplans and developments with new green
and blue spaces



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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Purpose of the Strategy and Parts

The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure a strategic and holistic approach is taken to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecology, landscape and heritage in the District.

The Primer (Part 0) provides an overview of the Strategy and its purpose, commentary on the existing Green Infrastructure assets in the District, and the Vision and Objectives of the Strategy. The other Parts of the Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Primer. These are:

1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network

This Part provides guidance on:

2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design

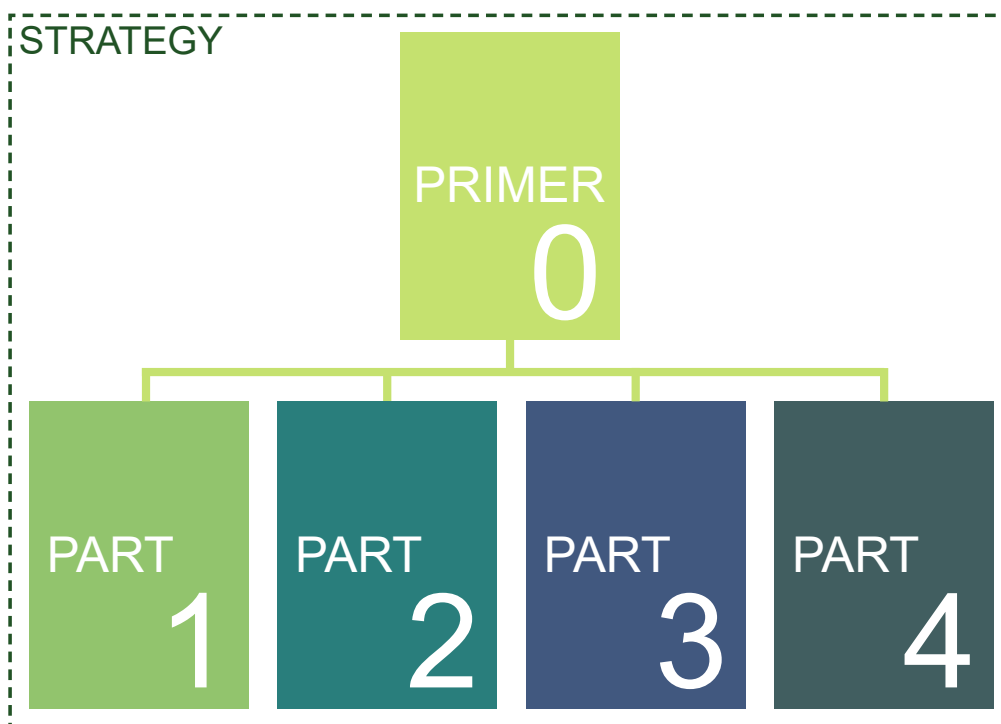
It provides:

- The Council's expectations for achieving high quality landscape-led design through the design and masterplanning of development sites
- Approaches for delivering multifunctional high quality places, including case studies for different types of green and blue spaces
- Information on maintenance and stewardship for these types of projects

The other Parts of the Strategy cover:

3. Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations

4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Who will use the Strategy and Part 2?

The Strategy comprises four parts. Anyone using the Strategy and the associated guidance and projects should read the [Primer](#) first, to familiarise themselves with the purpose, context and vision of the Strategy.

This Part of the Strategy (2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design) is primarily for developers, designers and council officers who are designing, assessing and delivering masterplans and developments which are required to provide new and enhanced green and blue infrastructure assets. The guidance contained in this Part of the Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Council's [Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note](#) (October 2018). Whilst not all larger scale sites will be required to prepare a Strategic Masterplan the principles and process set out in the Briefing Note provides useful information for all developers of larger scale sites .

When to use this document?

When designing a masterplan or development proposal the Council expects that a landscape-led design approach is followed from the outset, as set out in Part 2. Guidance and case studies are provided of multifunctional high-quality green and blue spaces.

THE ROLE OF DESIGN

2.1

2.1 THE ROLE OF DESIGN

The Role of Design in New Development

The success of new and enhanced Green Infrastructure assets is not just about the quantity provided. It also needs to be of a high quality. This can be best achieved by taking a design-led approach and, wherever possible and appropriate, should maximise the opportunities to create multifunctional spaces as this can enhance their attractiveness and therefore their use. The benefits to communities and the environment can be lost if a narrow and rigidly categorised approach to Green Infrastructure provision and enhancement is taken.

The Council, through the policies in its emerging Local Plan, requires all development proposals to demonstrate that Green Infrastructure provision is of a high-quality design which supports this multifunctional approach, where this is appropriate. How this can be done and what factors need to be considered are outlined in this Part of the Strategy.

Throughout the process of designing developments, proposals must clearly demonstrate how they deliver on the vision and objectives of this Strategy. Design should be landscape led and be integrated from the initial planning stage and continue to be so throughout the design, planning and implementation stages.

The best design and development outcomes will be delivered by engaging the best design consultants. It is important that the design process is iterative and is a collaboration between the Council's officers, the development design team and stakeholders. Engagement with the Council's Quality Review Panel can be hugely beneficial to all Parties by securing objective and impartial advice at key stages in order to achieve the best possible outcome for both new and existing residents.

Design quality of Green Infrastructure proposals in new developments can be assessed using the Green Infrastructure Submission Checklist in EFDC's [Sustainability Guidance / Major Developments \(+10 units\) Draft October 2020](#).



Accordia, Cambridge by Grant Associates

2.1 THE ROLE OF DESIGN

Initial work necessary to inform a Landscape Led approach to masterplanning is set out below:

Survey and Analysis

- Researching, surveying and analysing the site and its context, at different spatial geographies
- Particular attention should be paid to landscape character, landscape features, views, ecology, flooding and water, trees, movement networks within the site and the relationship with, and connections to, nearby communities and Green Infrastructure assets

Identifying Opportunities

- Identifying ways to connect, develop and enhance existing Green Infrastructure in and around the site
- Prioritising pedestrians, cyclists and, where appropriate, horse-riders by identifying links to existing communities and places, using existing footpath / cycleway/ bridleway networks and public transport including identifying the potential for their enhancement

Landscape as the Driver for Design

- Using the identified opportunities to shape the site layout, so landscape provides the framework that informs the design of the layout and built form of the scheme
- Embedding the multifunctional design principles described in this Part of the Strategy, where appropriate, in order to create high quality Green Infrastructure assets for the benefit of both new and existing communities
- Using the techniques set out in this Part of the Strategy to develop a comprehensive strategy to secure the long-term management of the Green Infrastructure assets created

Communicating Design

- Ongoing engagement with Council Officers through regular meetings to support and inform the design progress
- Using illustrative tools such as sketches, images of real-world examples, drawings and models to provide an understanding of how these spaces and places will look and are intended to work, and how they relate to the development's built form and its surrounding context
- Engaging with local communities and stakeholders throughout the design process and using feedback to develop positive design responses and the creation of a successful Masterplan or development proposal.

DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

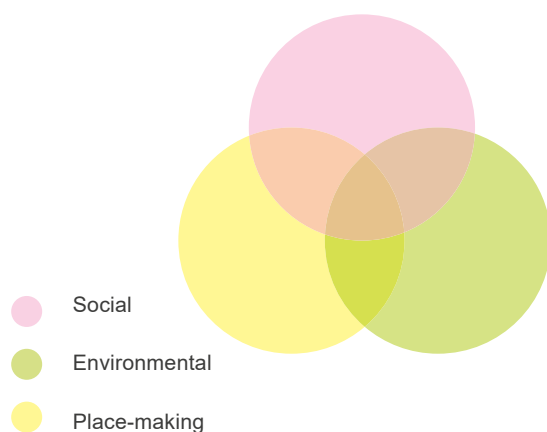
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2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Design And Multifunctionality

These pages provide more detail about how multifunctional places and spaces can be delivered. They identify the approaches and opportunities that can be integrated into Green Infrastructure – both existing and new. These opportunities should be used as part of a package of measures to enhance the attractiveness, use and function of Green Infrastructure for all. The Council will expect proposals for Green Infrastructure provision to incorporate a multifunctional approach. However, in some specific cases, such as where a site is being provided as a mitigation measure in relation to existing ecologically important assets, or to enhance biodiversity where public access would not be appropriate, opportunities to take this approach may be more limited.

Multifunctional spaces as an outcome of good landscape led design incorporate a balance of social, environmental and place-making functions. In the following pages each type of Green Infrastructure element is assessed against these three functions using the diagram below:



Example of multifunctional space in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Natural And Semi Natural Greenspace

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) (EB703) defines Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace as including:

'... woodland, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, open access land wetlands and derelict open land. Maintenance is usually informal, but may include elements of intervention such as coppicing for the long-term health and natural balance of woodland, flail cutting of meadow to increase biodiversity, and clearance of water habitats.'

As described in the [Green Infrastructure Strategy Primer](#), there is a significant amount of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace within the District which is well located in relation to towns and villages. However, some smaller natural greenspaces have issues of accessibility and legibility.

In terms of ecology, the District benefits from high quality habitats, but they can often be isolated. Woodland habitats beyond the Epping Forest are sparsely distributed across the District, in which currently provide only a limited capacity for biodiversity, recreational and carbon capture benefits.

Considering The Role Of 'Natural' Open Space

Natural open space has a significant role to play in peoples' lives if they are attractive, safe and easy to access. It is important therefore to make these spaces and their rich cultural and ecological heritage visible. Natural open spaces can also support the Council's aim to become a carbon neutral District by increasing the number of trees, planting and connected habitats to support an attractive network of spaces and corridors.



Knepp Wildland Project in West Sussex

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

How Do We Get There?

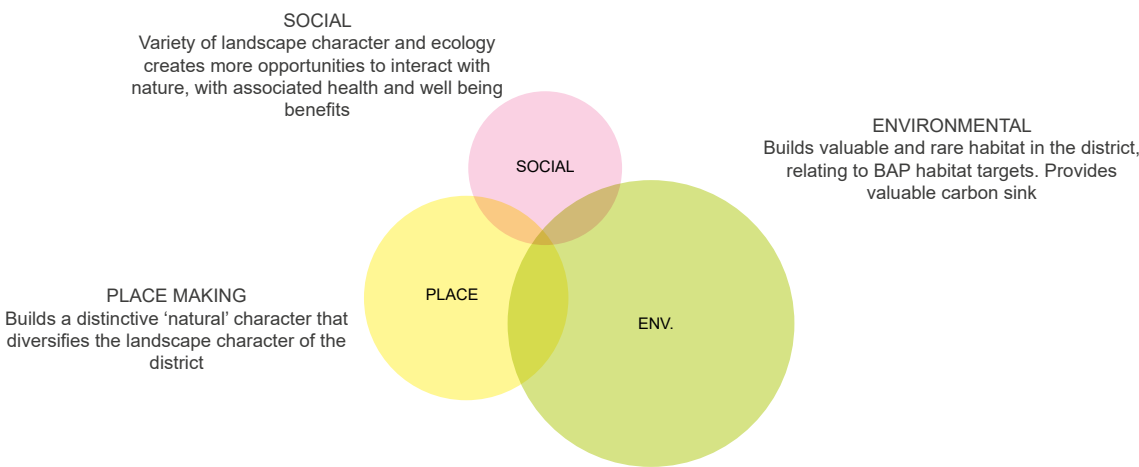
Approaches are needed which focus on revealing and connecting the District's natural open space network and engaging the public with it. These approaches will need to be delivered by taking a collaborative approach with landowners, applicants, arts organisations and land management teams.

The extension and connection of natural spaces makes a vital contribution to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises, whilst potentially forming a significant attractor to visitors - such as in the case of the Knepp Wildland Project in West Sussex.

Boosting biodiversity and re-wilding parts of the District (where it does not have negative consequences on important habitats and species) should happen at all scales, from local left-over greenspaces to district-wide projects and strategic development . Some of this can be achieved through our partnerships, such as with the Green Arc (One Partnership).

Enhance

The enhancement of existing landscape features and identification of site-specific opportunities to create more varied and ecologically connected places and spaces is an important strand of this Strategy. An example of such an approach is through building wet woodland and other natural attenuation features in flood plains to increase their visual attractiveness and ecological diversity.



Wet woodland at West Wood, Little Sampford, Essex

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

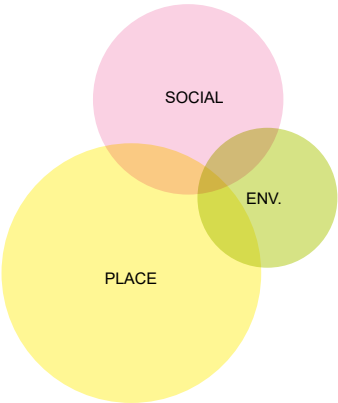
Reveal – Through Management

Lifting canopies and clearing scrub on the edge of woodlands (where it would not cause harm to ecological or natural heritage designations) can create windows into their wooded interior. This reveals to people the exceptional landscape character that woodlands provide that might not be apparent to most. It can also help to overcome perceptions that such spaces are unsafe by making them feel more inviting and usable. Lifting canopies can also be beneficial to the health of tress and enhance the ecological condition of the woodland floor to support flora and fauna.

This will need to be approached in a sensitive, informed and carefully managed way to ensure that any removal of edge or understorey does not result in negative conservation outcomes. This is because scrub edges and scrub mosaics are also the most important areas for biodiversity. Ancient woodlands in particular need to be managed for their special features, distinctive sense of place and wildlife value.

SOCIAL

Being made aware of what is already there people are more likely to use spaces and interact with nature, with associated health and well being benefits



ENVIRONMENTAL

Canopy lifting should be done with biodiversity benefit in mind letting more light into the forest floor

PLACE MAKING

Crucially allows people to appreciate is already there



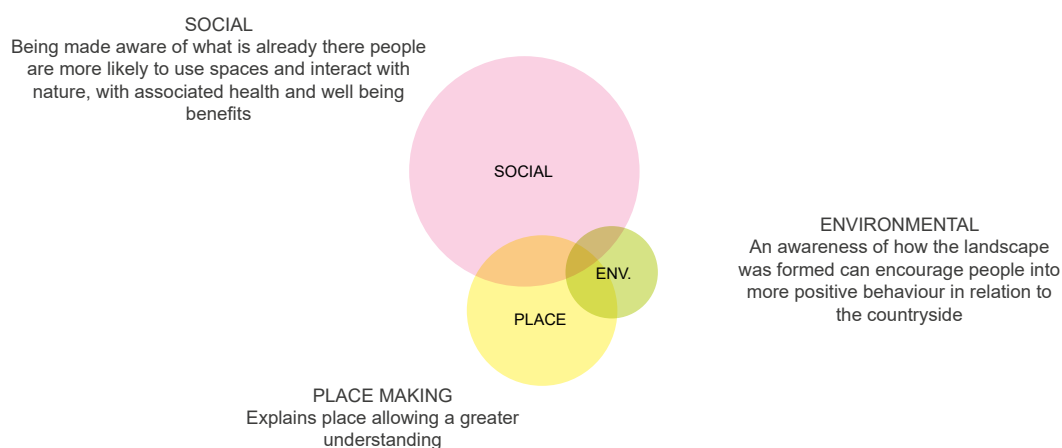
Managing woodland edges, The Wildlife Trust

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Reveal – Through Thoughtfully Designed Interpretation

Interpretation should be coordinated with a wayfinding package in order to identify existing or create new strategic routes that take in the best of the District as well as making provision for more locally focused opportunities.

How this interpretation is provided is an important part of any approach and will need to be designed to be sensitive to its environment so that it sits carefully within its landscape setting, intrigues visitors, encourages curiosity and informs them of what they are seeing or experiencing. Interpretation should appear as something that is incidental to its setting and not intrude on the natural character of the place. The use of digital technology such as mobile phone apps can also have an important role to play in the interpretation of large sites in particular.



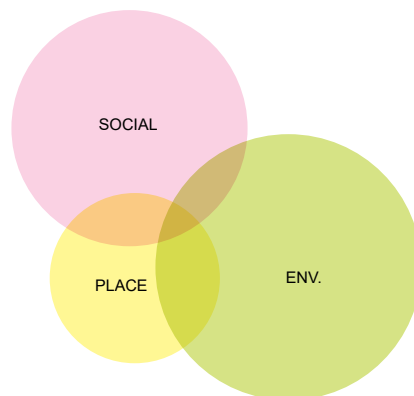
Interactive interpretation posts installed by Forestry and Land Scotland

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Engage – Through Management

Management of woodland can ensure large low branches are left to allow tree climbing where it does not cause damage to the trees in terms of their health or historic importance, whilst leaving fallen branches can provide opportunities for building dens. Overlapping natural assets and play can help to engage children and families with the natural world through play. Leaving old wood in place also creates new habitats for both flora and fauna.

SOCIAL
Engages more children and families with the natural world and natural play with a myriad of health benefits



PLACE MAKING
Builds character of the woodland

ENVIRONMENTAL
Maintenance opens up the woodland floor creating more biodiverse habitat, leaving wood in place also creates habitat for invertebrates



Den building and natural play in woodlands

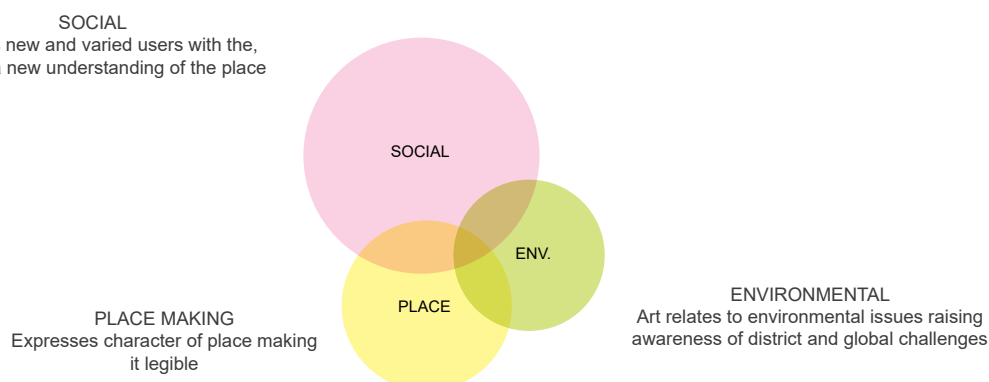
2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Engage – Through Curation Of Art And Sculpture

Art has the power to captivate and reveal landscapes, views and places that have previously been unnoticed or underused. A focus on the commissioning of quality art would build on and connect into Harlow's exceptional sculpture collection, which includes works by Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore.

It provides both visual interest and can make an outdoor space a destination in its own right. How such work is procured will be critical in ensuring that the right installation is commissioned for its intended location. Artwork can be temporary or permanent and can be varied in terms of its form. Installations which allow for temporary displays, for example, can add continued interest for more regular visitors. It can also support local educational art programmes and opportunities for local artists to showcase their talents.

The topography of the District provides real opportunities to use art to appreciate the wider landscape, including through locating artworks in places where longer distance views can be experienced. As part of GI provision such places are often free to access, allowing people to have their own experience of both the artwork and its setting. It can attract people into the countryside for the first time and well-placed art can expose people to exceptional views of their local and wider area in support of wider place-making objectives. An example of this is the Theydon Bois Earthwork.



The Hear Heres by Studio Weave, Derbyshire

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Parks

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) (EB703) defines Public Parks and Gardens ('Public Parks') as including:

'...urban parks, country parks and formal gardens. Usually include a wide range of activities, and may include other typologies (e.g. Provision for Children and Young People and Natural and Semi Natural Greenspaces). Very often includes formal elements of provision such as ornamental lawn, herbaceous border or rose garden.'

The District has only very limited provision of Public Parks. Only two spaces in the District are categorised as 'Public Parks' in the Open Space Strategy 2017. These are Waltham Abbey Gardens and the Roding Valley Recreation Ground in Buckhurst Hill.

Considering The Role Of Urban Parks

As the District currently has so few parks, new development on the strategic sites identified in the emerging Local Plan can provide real opportunities to create open spaces which include an element of the attributes associated with Public Parks. This would support the ability for new spaces to act as both attractors for visitors and as social infrastructure which benefits both new and existing communities .

Through exceptional quality design, the design of large-scale open spaces should incorporate attributes of Public Parks and:

- Engage people with landscape, nature and healthy eating opportunities;
- Encourage spontaneous activity to get the inactive active;
- Encourage interaction between communities and community groups;
- Engage and be accessible to people of all ages; and
- Form part of the wider Green Infrastructure network, by building on local landscape character and ecology to create distinctive and ecologically valuable places.



Waltham Abbey Garden, Epping Forest District

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

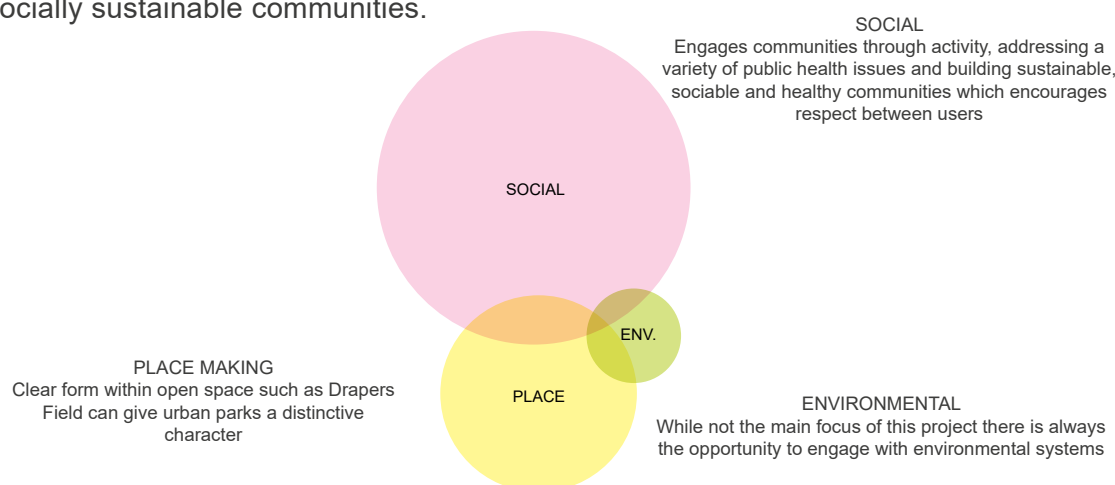
How Do We Get There?

To deliver on these opportunities, large-scale open spaces should be designed in at the start of the masterplanning process, and form part of a coherent open space network which is closely related to other social infrastructure such as local centres, schools and community facilities. Initiatives which support access for all, such as dementia friendly spaces, should be incorporated. The design process should include specific workshops with community groups and the Council's officers.

What Does Success Look Like?

An example of such an approach can be found at Drapers Field, in London Borough Waltham Forest, near the 2012 Olympics Athletes Village. Drapers Field was one of a series of Olympic fringe projects which aimed to further the Olympic legacy while providing space for new and existing communities to come together.

The project is included as it looks beyond the conventional approach to designing an urban park to address wider issues including community cohesion and wellbeing. Drapers Field achieved this through the creation of an undulating surface which is not fenced off or defined in terms of its use. Features such as concrete waves can be used as a play feature, a skate park or as seating. This encourages the surface to be shared with people sunbathe, run through the 'waves', skateboard, scoot, break dance and much more. This maximises its use and encourages positive engagement between different groups of people through activity, helping to build healthy and socially sustainable communities.



Drapers Field, Waltham Forest by Kinnear Landscape Architects

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Amenity Greenspace

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) provides the following definition:

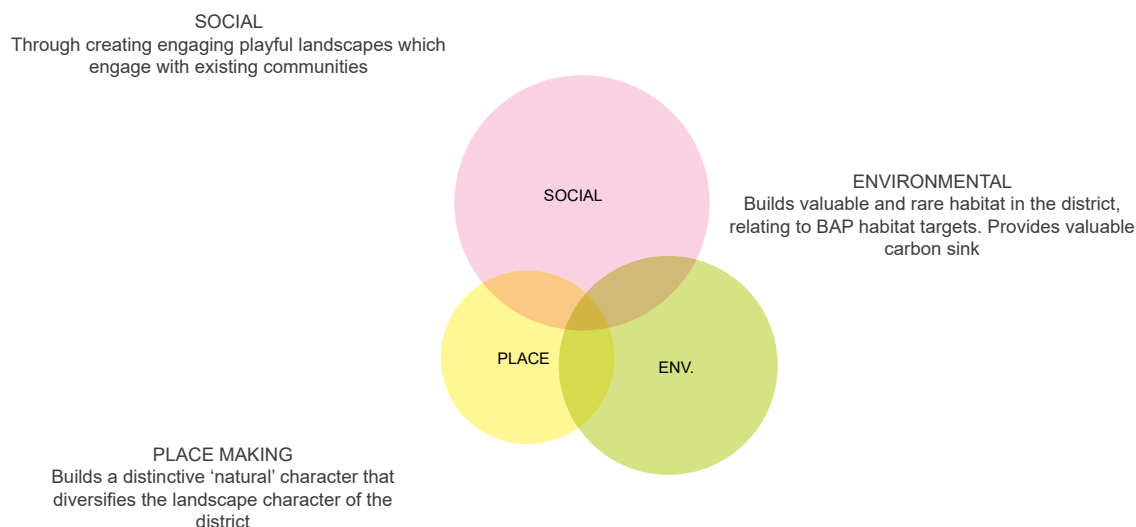
'...informal recreation spaces (private or open to the public), roadside verges, greenspaces in and around housing and other premises e.g. hospitals, schools and colleges, industrial and business premises and village greens. May include other typologies, most frequently Provision for Children and Young People.'

The Open Space Strategy 2017 indicates that the District has a good level of amenity greenspace. However, it tends to only provide areas of high-maintenance grass of average quality and function.

Considering The Role Of Amenity Greenspace

Amenity Greenspace should be viewed as an integral part of a development's open space offer, as well as forming part of a wider network of complementary open spaces that are attractive to communities, full of character, provide for more informal activities, and which enhance biodiversity.

Amenity greenspace is much more than finding a use for leftover pieces of land - designing space which considers the potential for incorporating overlapping functions such as food production, play and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can deliver multiple benefits with relatively low capital and maintenance costs.



2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

How Do We Get There?

Amenity greenspace should be designed in during the early stages of planning a development so that it contributes to the creation of a cohesive and coherent open space network which is integrated with other social infrastructure including local centres, schools and community facilities. The design process should include specific workshops focusing on amenity greenspace with community groups and Council officers. Within existing settlements initiatives to improve Amenity Greenspace should be community led and council supported, as set out in Part 1 - Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network.



Amenity greenspace at Centre Green, Epping



Normand Park, London by Kinnear Landscape Architects

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Allotments And The Productive Landscape

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) (EB307) provides the following definition:

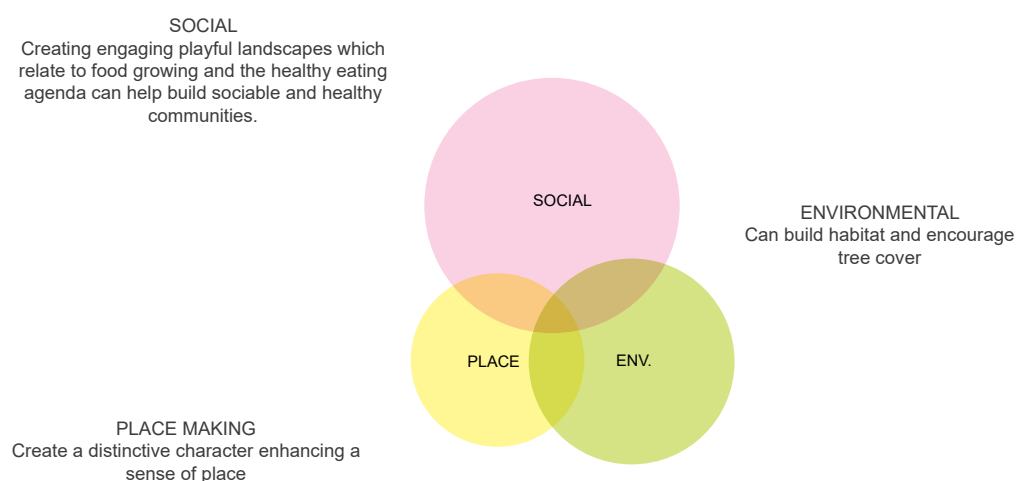
'Allotments are generally for the growing of food crops. Community Gardens are generally more informal, and may include "garden" landscapes for outdoor relaxation.'

This Strategy uses the term 'Productive Landscape' which incorporates Community Gardens. According to the Open Space Strategy 2017, there is a good level of allotment provision within the District. However, allotments have historically been designed so that they are inward looking, often due to their location on the fringes of urban areas or on back-land sites. As a result, they can often appear to be closed off from their immediate surroundings and not integrated with the local community.

Considering The Role Of Allotments

As well as providing healthy food, allotments support mental and physical well-being through establishing a connection to nature, providing outdoor exercise and encouraging social interaction with others.

There is the opportunity to expand the variety of productive landscapes beyond the provision of new allotments to widen people's engagement with local food production. This could be as simple as providing a public orchard with benches to encourage people to linger. Similarly, providing informal play equipment, interpretation pieces or art as part of outdoor growing spaces can help to introduce people to food growing. Opportunities for designing in productive landscapes at schools and as part of amenity greenspace supports this ambition and can provide climate change benefits through 'few miles travelled' for food.



2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

How Do We Get There?

Food growing should be seen as an opportunity to engage people with the benefits that can stem from productive landscapes. Consideration should be given as to how food growing can be integrated into different types of open space such as amenity greenspace, streets and parks as well as within schools, other community facilities, and even within commercial developments. Food growing opportunities and the provision of new allotments should be considered from the first stages of the masterplanning and designing of new developments. Relevant community groups should be engaged in the process and careful consideration should be given to where initiatives should be located to avoid, for example, impacts from air pollution.



Lower Bury Lane Allotments (Tower Road end), Epping



A Variety of Cultures by Alec Findlay - ladders art installation for picking apples, pre-empting the orchard reaching maturity

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Provision For Children And Young People

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) (EB703) defines 'Provision for Children and Young People' as including:

'....play areas, areas for wheeled play, including skateboarding, outdoor kick about areas, and other less formal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters). May include different aspects of play such as natural or "green" play, or "iplay" to incorporate information technology elements to stimulate greater usage.'

The District's children and young people currently have very little high-quality space available to them. Any existing areas tend to be fenced off or isolated and play areas contain exclusively traditional equipment.

Considering The Role Of Play

Integrating imaginative spaces for children and young people into development requires creative thinking as to how the role of play can be successfully provided. It is important to ask the following questions to inform the approach to designing in facilities for Children and Young People:

- Who is going to take part in play?
- What senses are engaged?
- How can it encourage greater activity and movement?
- How can it provide for a variety of ages?
- How can it engage with nature?

Alongside designated play areas, play should be considered as a theme that runs through the landscape and wider open space provision. This can be achieved in a number of ways. For example:

- Branches and logs can be left in woodland spaces as natural play and for den building.
- Playful art or sculptural play can help to bring amenity space to life and act as a draw to local residents and children.
- Safely incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as a play and educational element in outdoor spaces.
- Connections between places and spaces can also be enhanced by creating 'Play on the Way.'



Sound play at Elbe Waterfront Park by Rehwaltd LA



Sand play at Victoria Park by LDA design

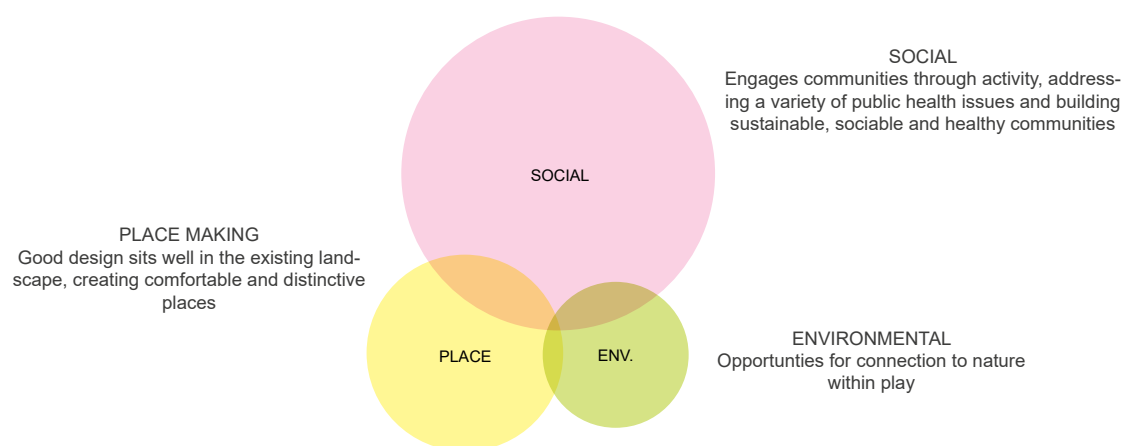
2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

How Do We Get There?

Diversifying the play offer across the District and moving away from the provision of traditional playgrounds requires spaces for children and young people to be designed by engaging and working with communities. This should be supported by using illustrations to show what collaborative, natural and intergenerational play looks like, right from the outset of the design and planning process.

Youth Shelter And Sport

Safe and attractive spaces for young people are difficult to find in the District, and they are often not provided for in new development. MUF's work (below) demonstrates the value of combining space for young people to socialise with sport and encouraging young people to take part in activity. This approach is in contrast to the more traditional approach of providing an off the shelf 'Youth Shelter' which leaves young people feeling bored and disconnected.



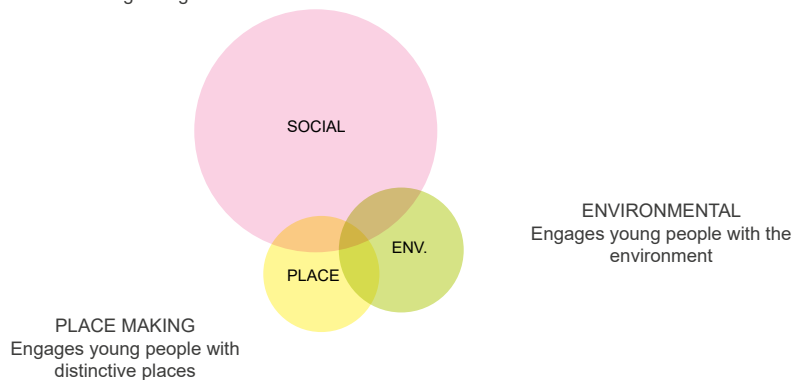
The social MUGA by MUF Architecture and Art

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Play On The Way

Informal play can be incorporated in ways that go beyond the playground and is a way of encouraging activity in everyday life and in different places. This approach focuses primarily on building play into more traditional pedestrian environments. It has become a relatively well-known concept and has been termed 'play on the way.' It can be readily incorporated in schemes and encourage interaction with nature or other themes, such as healthy eating.

SOCIAL
Allows opportunities for play to be built into everyday lives and presents the opportunity to engage with nature and other beneficial themes such as food growing



Informal play on the edge of Epping Forest

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Smaller Spaces

Smaller spaces have a meaningful role to play in the provision of Green Infrastructure, provide an 'everyday' accessible resource and add significant value to the quality of a place. When considered collectively these spaces provide a significant component of the District's Green Infrastructure assets, particularly in terms of the opportunities they provide for informal play and places to meet, net biodiversity and environmental gain.

As an example, a local greenspace could be improved through simple measures such as through the introduction of a relaxed mowing regime, using fewer herbicides, implementing plug planting to create biodiverse wildflower areas, forming a depression into the ground so that it can act as a swale or play feature; or simply by providing seating or introducing logs to act as an informal play opportunity. The importance of these more incidental spaces should not therefore be underestimated in terms of their local community value, including in providing local outdoor meeting places. Their value can also be enhanced by connecting them into the wider landscape-scale GI network. Where there are opportunities to do this, this should be enabled through good design.

Working with local people to identify opportunities for introducing these types of interventions, such as through the creation of a 'Pocket Park', can enhance a local area and can often be implemented in a cost-effective way but with significant social, visual and environmental benefits.

Similarly, at a District scale, underused and leftover spaces have the potential to contribute significantly more to the environmental and visual quality of the area than they currently do. This is explored in the Roadside Wildflowers and Community Greenspace Improvements projects in [Part 1: Enhancing Our Existing Network](#).



St Andrews, Bromley-by-Bow by Townshend Landscape Architects



Wildflower verges in North East Lincolnshire

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Movement

Designing in opportunities for walking, cycling and, where appropriate, horse riding at the outset will help to create the opportunity for more people to be able to move safely and easily throughout the District without need to use their cars. This is an important component of the development of the Strategic Masterplan Areas (See [Part 3](#)). This means helping people to:

- Easily and successfully find their destination;
- Understand where they are in relation to other key locations;
- Be able to readily orientate themselves in an appropriate direction with little misunderstanding or stress;
- Discover new places and services; and
- Feel safe

Route hierarchy

Developing a route hierarchy and prioritising routes should be done as part of the development of Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) or similar approaches. Considering access to nearby attractors and landscapes across the District and encouraging people to use them is a fundamental principle in the development of LCWIPs. Being able to get to a destination without the need to keep stopping and starting should also be a consideration in designing routes. Essex County Council's preference is that, where appropriate, provision should be through multi-user routes. These need to be well-designed to ensure that there are no conflicts between different users. Awareness of routes should be raised through local marketing and promotion.

Accessibility and safety

Ease of access for all users should be considered across the network. For example, some routes cut across fields meaning that they are less accessible at certain times of year, whilst stiles and other obstacles along the network can limit the use by some people. Improvement of these routes should focus on accessibility for all. Connecting spaces through the use of 'Quietways' for cyclists and, where appropriate, horse-riders can encourage more people living in towns and villages to access Green Infrastructure beyond their immediate surroundings.



Accessible surfaces facilitate easy cycling as well as use by buggies and wheelchairs



Prominent entrances with a suite of signage can make routes clear and legible

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

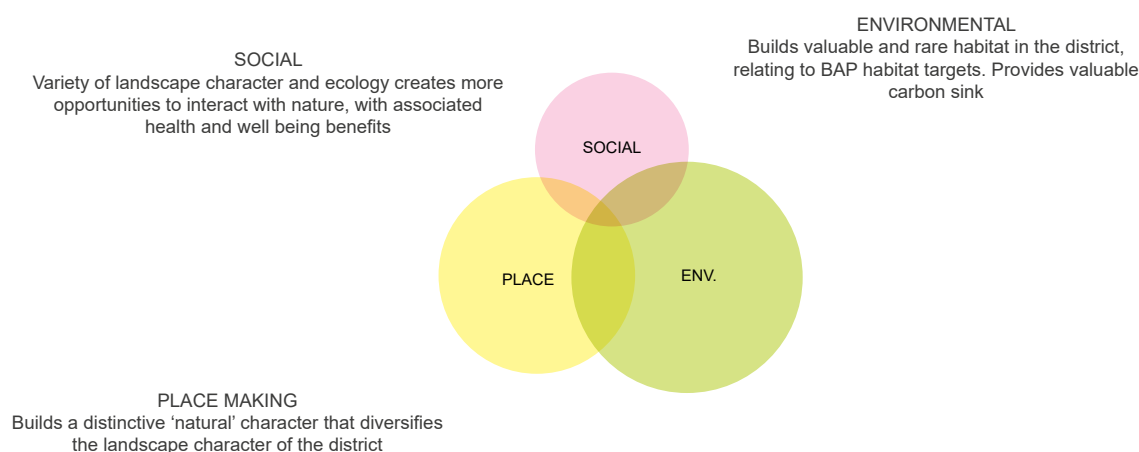
Legibility

This can be viewed as how clear, without the use of signage, the route is. Legibility can be achieved by consistent surfacing, adopting a management regime that ensures routes are easy to use and by using a distinct landscape feature to signal the way such as lining routes with a distinctive tree species or opening up views at appropriate places along the route.

Wayfinding and signage

A coherent set of wayfinding proposals should build on the inherent legibility of the route. This may be achieved through signage, such as finger posts and in-ground signage, or could be through landscape improvements to open up views so that people can better see where they are or improved information on routes including information on distances. Information should be presented in a consistent way that can be quickly read and understood. This should not result in visual clutter. Using digital technology, such as mobile phone apps, can help to achieve this and reflects the way that younger people in particular prefer to access information.

Routes should tie easily into new and existing communities giving easy access to both. Routes should be visible within settlements and should take advantage of any points of interest along their length. New and enhanced landscaping as part of a project can also add to the attractiveness of the route, as well as contribute to its ecological value. All of these approaches if taken forward in a comprehensive, area-based way support both recreational and commuter-based walking and cycle trips.



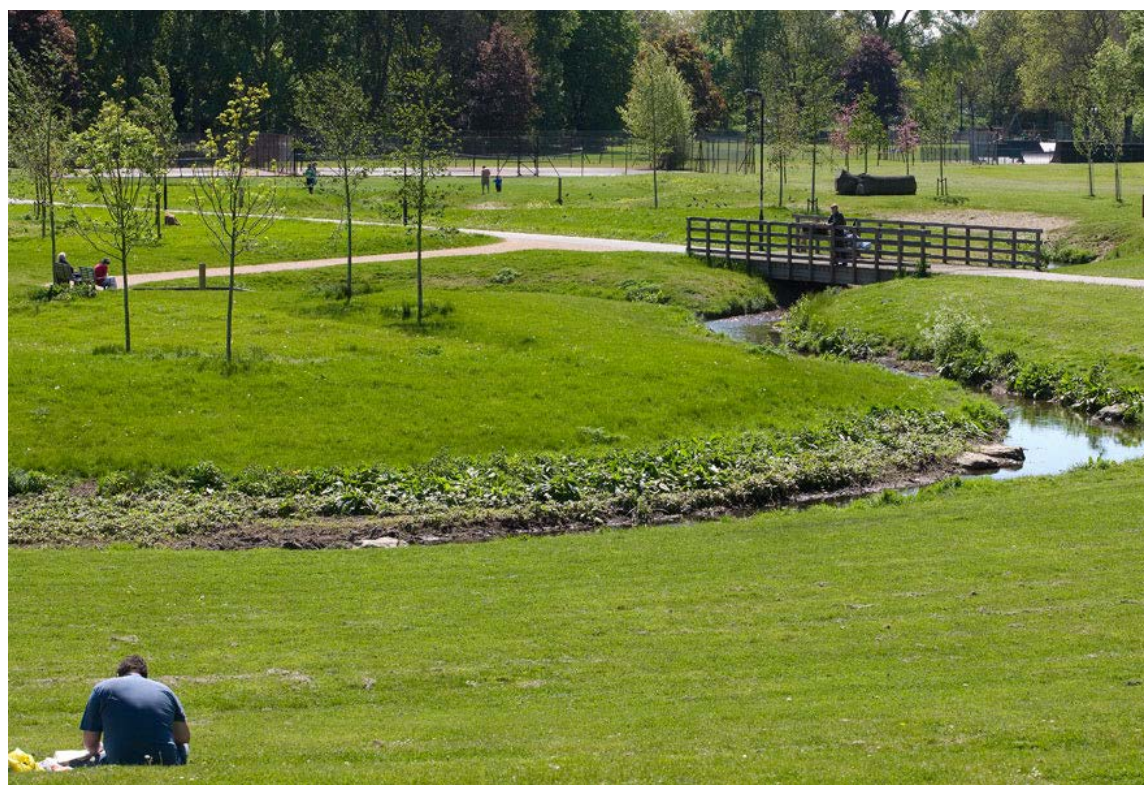
2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

The Water Environment

Taking a proactive approach to managing the water environment can have a number of significant benefits for the health and well-being for both people and the natural environment. The use of a multi-functional approach to the delivery of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), helps to manage flood risk, can provide interest as part of the design and provision of public open space, and increase biodiversity.

Essex County Council, as the Local Lead Flood Authority, has responsibility to reduce the impact and incidences of local flooding and has developed a [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#). As well as influencing new development and drainage by commenting on development proposals and through the development of a SuDS Design Guide, the Strategy includes a number of initiatives*¹ which can be brought forward by working in partnership with communities, councils, and landowners.

There are also opportunities to work with landowners to encourage best practice in terms of land management to support biodiversity objectives ranging from changing management approaches to the banks of watercourses and the management of non-invasive species through to changes in land management practices to secure the reduction of ammonia in surface water runoff.



Ladywell Fields, Lewisham by BDP

*¹ These include looking after watercourses and supporting the enhancement of Essex County Council's Flood Asset Register through to building new flood defences.

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Sustainable Drainage Systems

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are designed to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible, by mimicking natural drainage systems and processes to encourage infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment. SuDS are designed to both manage the flood and pollution risks from urban surface water runoff and to contribute to environmental and biodiversity enhancements and place-making. With this in mind, the multi-functionality and multiple benefits of SuDS provision should always be incorporated into development proposals and masterplans.

Good SuDS design should follow the SuDS philosophy, by adopting a number of key principles:

- A management train – using a variety of SuDS components in series
- Source control – managing runoff as close as possible to where it falls as rain
- Managing water on the surface – runoff should be managed through above ground features if possible and should mimic natural drainage processes
- Early and effective engagement – consider the use of SuDS at the earliest stages of the design process.



Grey to Green SuDS project, Sheffield by Nigel Dunnett



Ladywell Fields, Lewisham by BDP

2.2 DELIVERING MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

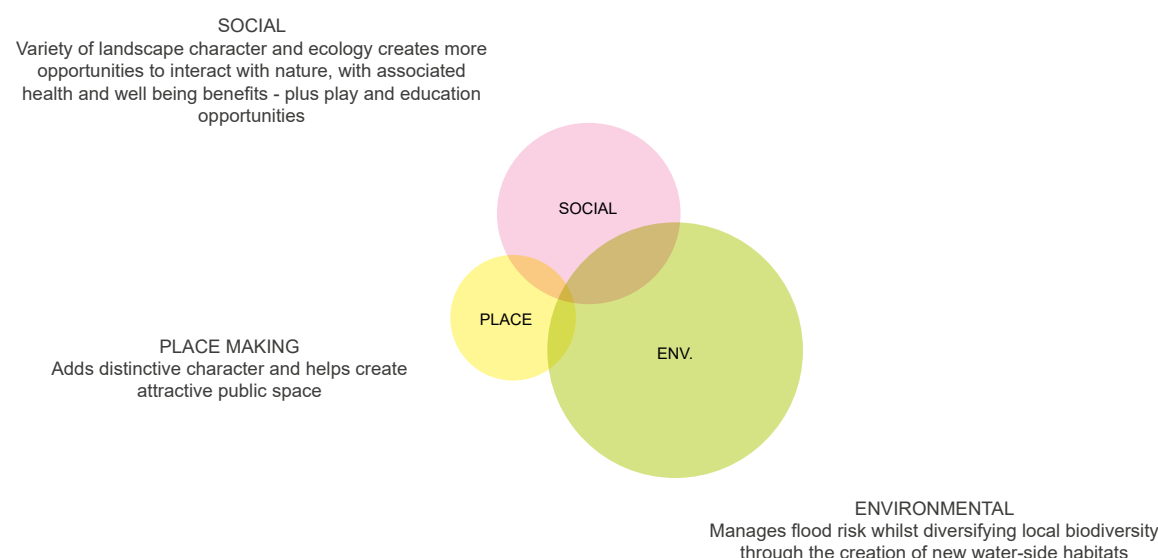
Benefits Of Suds

The benefits of SuDS include:

- Flood risk management – reducing the risk of flooding from development
- Water quality management – reducing the impact of diffuse pollution
- Improving amenity and biodiversity – the integration of Green Infrastructure with SuDS solutions can help to create new habitat, recreation and biodiversity areas
- Water resources – SuDS can help to recharge groundwater supplies and capture rainwater for re-use purposes
- Community benefits – attractive, well designed public open spaces that incorporate SuDS can help to create better communities through social cohesion and quality of life improvements
- Recreation – multi-purpose SuDS components not only manage surface water, but also act as sports/play areas
- Education – SuDS in schools provide a fantastic learning opportunity whilst also providing additional recreational space
- Enabling development – SuDS can help to free up capacity in already established drainage networks, and the provision of SuDS can often be a prerequisite of planning permission.

How Do We Get There?

The main mechanism for securing SuDS is through the development process. Consequently, the consideration of SuDS as part of the early stages of designing a development or Masterplan will be key to its success and provides the opportunity to integrate measures as part of the multifunctional approach that this Strategy is seeking to achieve. The Council will also work with Essex County Council to identify opportunities for retrofitting SuDS.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

You should read this document after reading
[The Primer](#) if you are:

A Strategic Site Developer / Designer /
Authority Officer / Policy Maker
who is designing, assessing or delivering Green
Infrastructure



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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Purpose of the Strategy and Parts

The purpose of the Green Infrastructure Strategy (“the Strategy”) is to ensure a strategic and holistic approach is taken to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecology, landscape and heritage in the District.

The Primer document provides an introduction and to the existing green and blue assets in the District, and the Vision and Objectives of the Strategy. The other parts of the Strategy are to be read in conjunction with Primer. These are:

1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network
2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design

This Part provides guidance on:

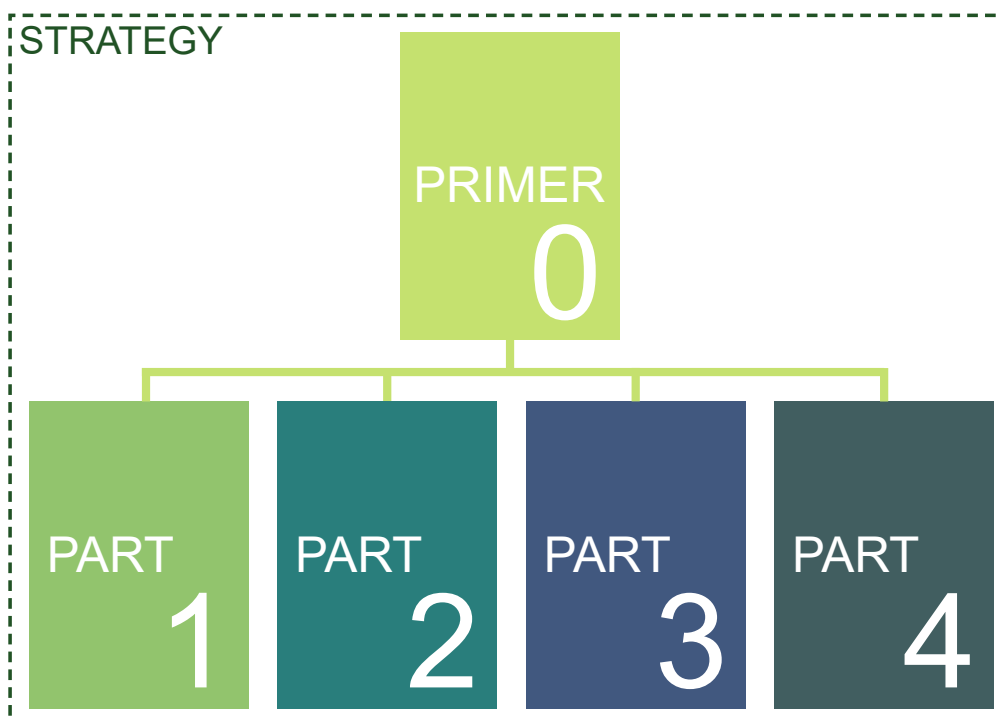
3. Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations

It provides:

- A more in-depth look at green and blue infrastructure in relation to specific Strategic Allocations
- Guidance on the creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

The other Parts of the Strategy cover:

4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Who will use the Strategy and Part 3?

The Strategy consists of five Parts. Anyone using this Part of the Strategy and the associated guidance and projects should read the [Primer](#) first, to familiarise themselves with the purpose, context and vision of the Strategy.

This document (3. Implementation: Strategic Allocations) is primarily focused at strategic site developers, designers, authority officers and policy makers, who are designing, assessing and delivering green and blue infrastructure as part of wider Masterplanning activities. The East of Harlow Garden Town Community Masterplan Area lies within both the Epping Forest District and Harlow District Council administrative areas. Because the masterplanning of the site involves a partnership between the two councils the site has not been included for detailed analysis within Part 3.1. Nevertheless, the development of the masterplan and subsequent detailed planning applications for the East of Harlow Garden Town Community will be expected to accord with the principles contained within this Strategy in relation to GI provision.

When to use this document?

Developers and designers of Strategic Sites should refer to the principles and guidance in Part 3 when initiating their masterplanning process, and in order to demonstrate, where appropriate, that the development of the site would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of ecologically important sites.

STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

3.1

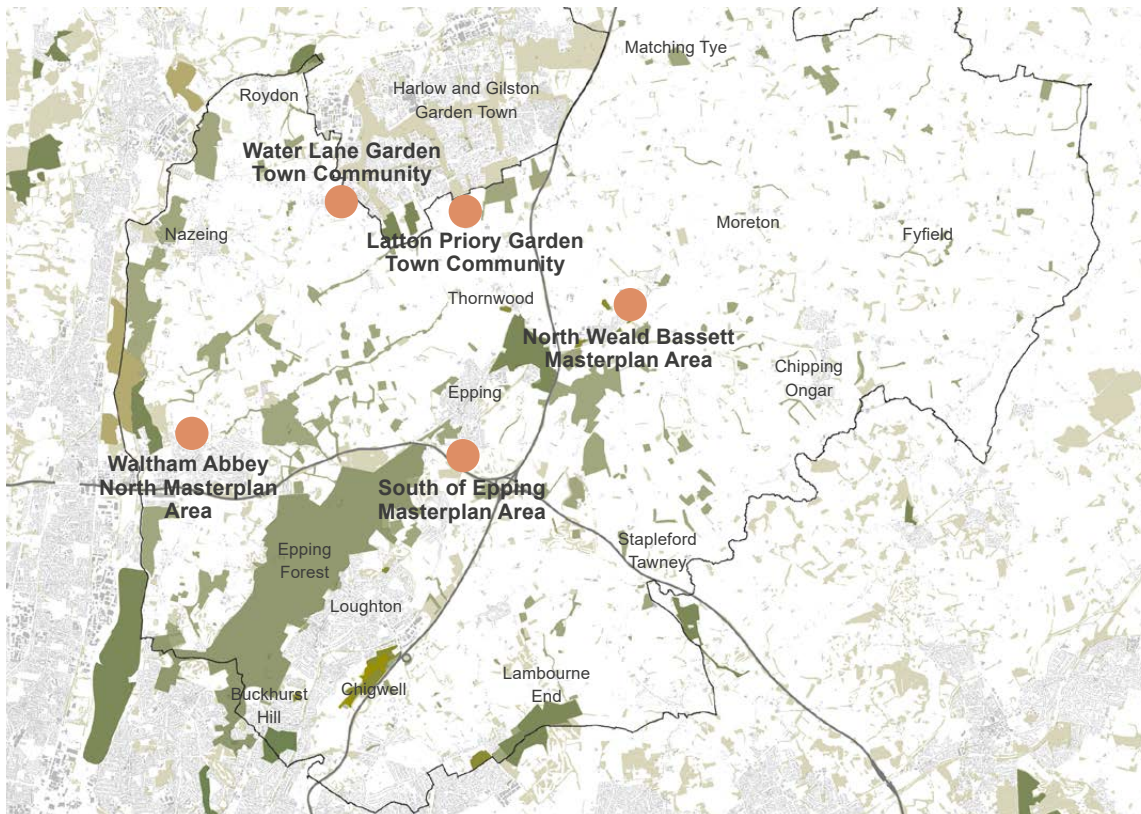
3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Overview

The development of the strategic allocations in the emerging Local Plan provides the opportunity to deliver an integrated and complementary GI offer that supports place-making principles, encourages healthy lifestyles and community cohesion, provides for a net-gain in biodiversity, responds to climate change issues. It also supports the objective of avoiding harm to the integrity of ecologically important sites such as the Epping Forest SAC including, where appropriate, through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). Further detail on the principles that should be applied to the development of SANG is set out in Part 3.2.

The development of masterplans, and the Landscape Frameworks within them, for the following locations will therefore be required to take a coordinated approach to the provision of a significant and varied amount of green infrastructure. In doing so the Council recognises that it will only be at the detailed planning application stage that a granular level of detail will be able to be provided. This Part of the Strategy has been developed to inform both the development of the Masterplans and subsequent planning applications.

- Latton Priory and Water Lane Garden Communities
- North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area
- Waltham Abbey North Masterplan Area
- South of Epping Masterplan Area



District map showing the location of Strategic Allocations

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

1. Summary for Latton Priory and Water Lane Garden Town Communities

Latton Priory

Residential capacity: **c. 1050 homes**

GI provision: **In accordance with emerging Local Plan policies SP4 and SP5**

Indicative SANG size: **20ha** (see page 123 for further information)

Preferred location: **Southern part of the Masterplan Area**

Future proofing required? **Yes**

Water Lane

Residential capacity: **c. 2100 homes**

GI provision: **In accordance with emerging Local Plan policies SP4 and SP5**

Indicative SANG size: **13ha** (see page 123 for further information)

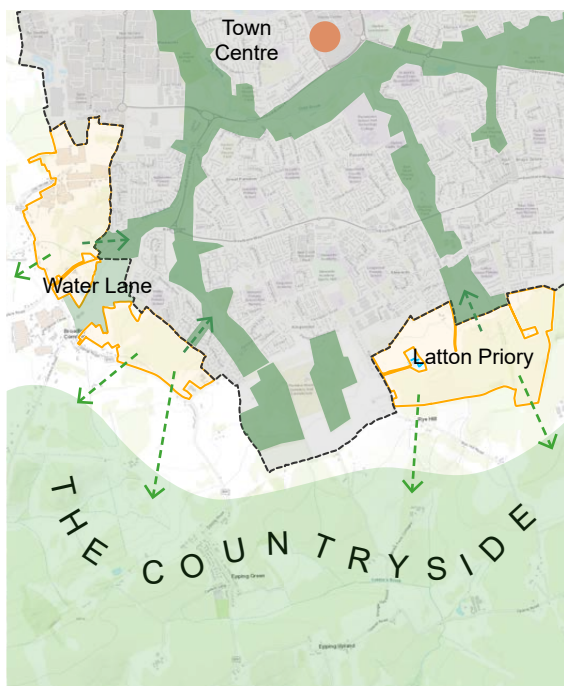
Preferred location: **Integrated with the West Sumners site**

Future proofing required? **Yes**

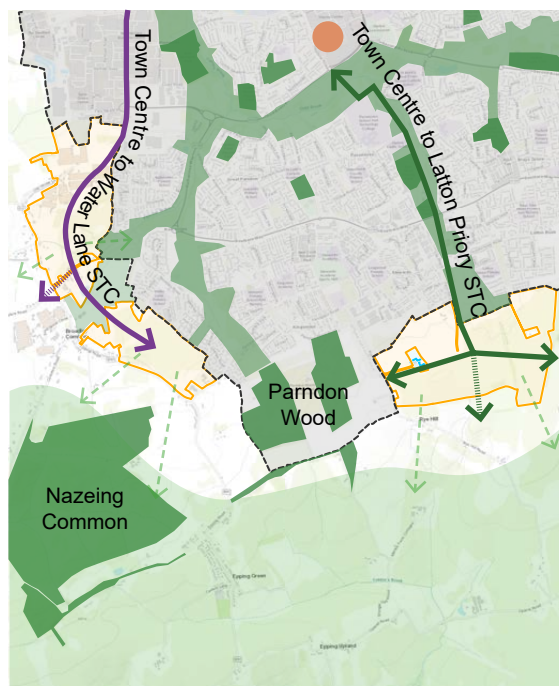
Green Infrastructure Key Characteristics:

1. **Connecting into the big landscape attractors including the Lea and Stort Valleys**
 - Link to the Stort Valley Way and Lea Valley
 - Connect into Harlow's Green Wedges to provide direct links to Harlow Town Centre, the surrounding countryside and other greenspaces
2. **Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside**
 - Achieving a network of greenspaces centred around safe walking and cycling connections
 - Connect new communities into the proposed Sustainable Travel Corridor (STC)
 - Develop local walks to connect communities with local Green Infrastructure assets including Nazeing Common
3. **Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG**
 - Complete strategic scale ecological corridor between Long Green Lane and Marks Wood (Ware)
 - Enhance habitats by improving management of local woodlands and grasslands, including Harlow and Latton Commons
 - Include natural play elements along routes and in greenspaces
 - Develop a complementary network of new spaces – using a balanced variety of greenspace typologies
4. **Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside**
 - Develop a network of interventions to increase understanding and appreciation for natural greenspace and encourage visitors
 - Provide initiatives to encourage social interaction between communities
 - Encourage community participation in greenspace through inclusion of productive landscapes.

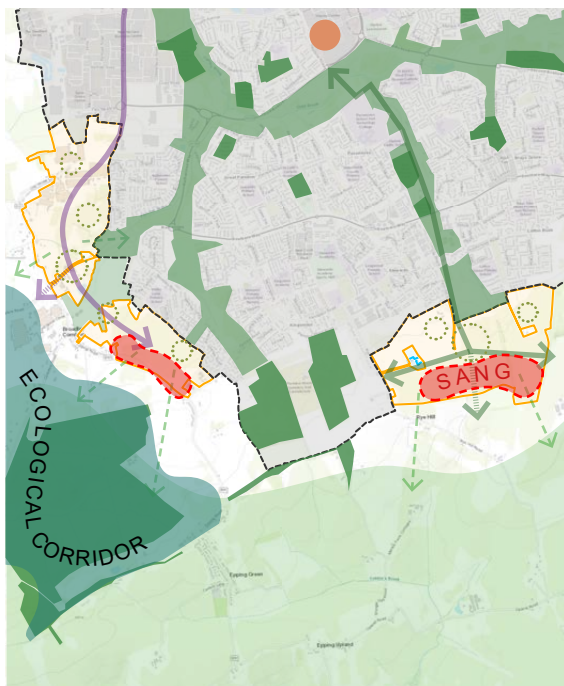
3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS



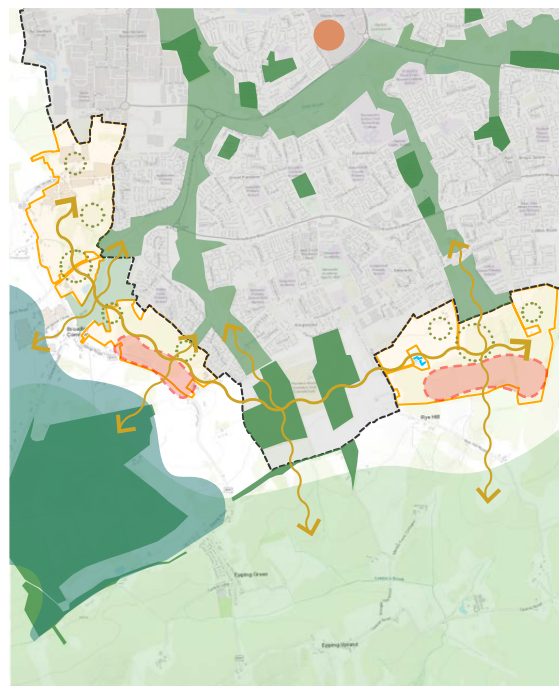
1. Connecting into the big landscape attractors including the Lea and Stort Valleys



2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside



3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG



4. Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside

Key

↔ New Pedestrian and Cycle Links

● Green Wedges and Fingers

↔ Sustainable Transport Corridor

● Nearby Greenspaces

● Ecological Corridor to Marks Wood near Ware

● Indicative SANG

○ New Open Spaces

↔ Network of Interventions between Countryside and Communities

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Latton Priory and Water Lane Garden Town Communities

The Latton Priory and Water Lane Garden Communities are proposed for allocation in the emerging Local Plan as part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. They are strategic sites which are required to have Masterplans in place prior to any planning application(s) for their development being determined.

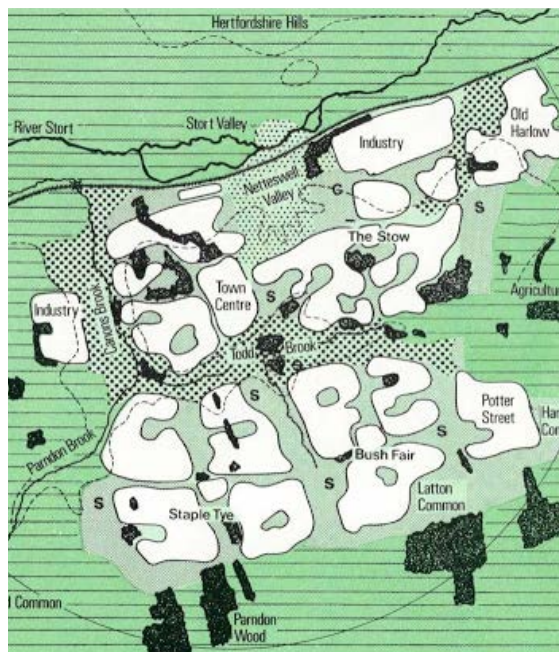
Landscape Context

Latton Priory sits on a prominent ridge between Jack's Hatch and Church Langley which is identified as 'Farmland Ridge' in the Council's [Landscape Character Assessment 2010](#) (EB709). The ridge forms the highest land point in the District and was a defining landscape feature in Sir Frederick Gibberd's planning of Harlow, with the town sitting in the dip in the landscape to the north of the ridge. There are views from the ridge south across gently undulating farmland towards the town of Epping and northwards towards Harlow - the centre of which is a prominent feature. However, in the surrounding residential areas it is mature trees rather than the built form which dominates the view. Trees are also a key component of the landscape character of the ridge with large blocks of ancient woodland defining the landscape.

Water Lane is located on the edge of an undulating landscape of predominately arable fields with mature hedgerows and veteran trees which is described as 'Farmland Plateau' in the Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2010. This landscape is part of the historic field patterns and settlements identified within the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Areas. As it is set on lower ground than Latton Priory, Water Lane is not as visually important to the setting of Harlow despite there being views back towards the town from it.



Farmland Ridge landscape character, Epping Forest District Council's Landscape Character Assessment

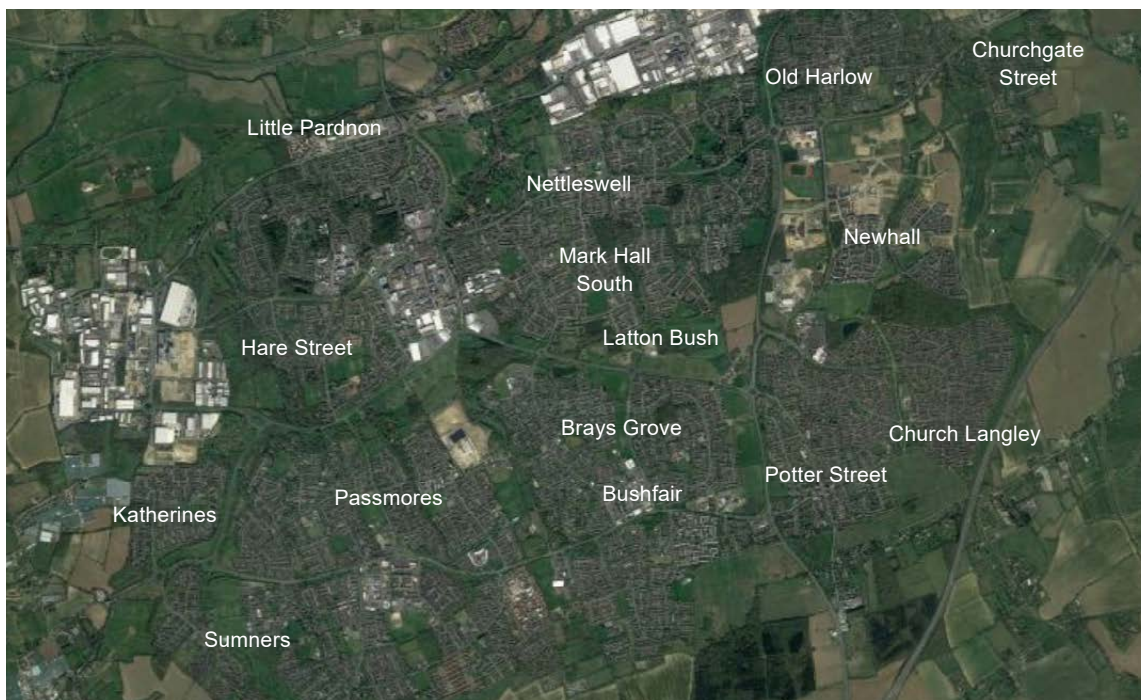


Harlow's Green Wedges as planned by Sir Frederick Gibberd

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Harlow's Green Wedges were a major feature of Sir Frederick Gibberd's design for bringing the countryside into the town and continue to have a significant influence on the design of the town. The aim of the approach was to give residents the opportunity to experience the best of town and country living. The Wedges provide amenity space for residents, habitats for wildlife, transport corridors, locations for schools and sport and community facilities. Harlow District Council has undertaken reviews of the individual Green Wedges in the context of the criteria relevant to them.

The Wedges relate directly to Latton Priory and Water Lane and the continuation of this landscape structure through the sites and its relation to the surrounding countryside and pedestrian rights of way will be key to creating an integrated landscape. In doing so regard should be had to the relevant policies set out in the [Harlow Local Development Plan](#) (adopted December 2020) including Policy WE2 (Green Belt, Wedges and Green Fingers).



Harlow's Green Wedges today

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Communities

Latton Priory is located to the south of the Staple Tye and Latton Bush neighbourhoods within Harlow District. The emerging Local Plan proposes to allocate the site (SP5.1) for development including the provision of a minimum of 1050 new homes, traveller pitches, new employment opportunities, a new primary and secondary school and a new local centre. There is a policy requirement to provide strategic 'green infrastructure' comprising natural/ semi natural open space (including SANG), walking and cycling routes, flood mitigation, wildlife space and urban agriculture.

Water Lane (SP5.2) is located to the west of the existing Katherines, Sumners and Kingsmoor communities within Harlow District. The emerging Local Plan proposes that a minimum of 2100 new homes is provided for within the Masterplan area, together with a new primary school, traveller pitches, as well as local shops and services. There is a policy requirement to provide strategic 'green infrastructure' comprising natural/semi natural open space (including SANG), walking and cycling routes flood mitigation, wildlife space and urban agriculture.

Developing a cohesive urban and landscape structure that allows easy movement between communities (including those within Harlow), Harlow's local centres/hatches and landscape destinations (such as parks, woodlands or play spaces) will be key to creating connected, healthy and sustainable communities. In this it is essential that existing communities are able to see the benefits of development in their own neighbourhoods and that new development feels like a cohesive part of Harlow, where existing residents feel welcome.



Parndon Wood SSSI, located between Latton Priory and Water Lane Garden Town Communities

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Landscape and Ecology Assets

The [Green Infrastructure Plan for Harlow](#) (2005) identifies the landscape to the south and west of Harlow, within which the Latton Priory and Water Lane sites are located, as “a ‘heritage landscape’ which reflects key historic themes that are characteristic/ distinctive of the Harlow Area.

One of the defining features of this landscape is the significant blocks of ancient woodland that stretch from Copy Wood to Harlow Park Woods. Smaller relics of ancient woodland also appear within the urban form of Harlow at Burnett’s Wood and Maunds Wood. Within these various woodlands there are a variety of distinctive woodland characters such as the canopy of oak with coppiced hornbeam growing beneath it in Parndon Woods and the sparse canopy of elms with rich under-story and ground flora in Copy Wood. These habitats are a product of ancient ecologies intertwined with the cultural heritage of the area and provide a distinct experience of nature in an urban context. As such they have significant local value. This is evidenced by the Green Infrastructure Plan for Harlow which identifies Harlow Woods as having a district wide draw.

To the east, Latton Common and Harlow Common provide freely accessible common land which are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) in recognition of their grassland habitats. They represent significant vestiges of the once large tract of common land which stretched from Harlow Common to close to Maunds Wood. To the west Nazeing Common is another significant area of common land which is the subject of the Nazeing Wood or Park Act 1947 and is regulated and managed by Trustees. It was originally part of Waltham Forest but was deforested in the 13th century for pasture. It was used in the early stages of the Second World War as a dummy airfield, designed to be a decoy for North Weald airfield, and was then put into agricultural production. It contains a Scheduled Monument encompassing an above ground and below ground night shelter from this time.



Harlow Common

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Running east - west Epping Long Green is an ancient landscape feature which pre- dates the town of Epping. It consists of a broad strip of semi-improved natural grassland and a footpath, bordered on both sides by ancient hedgerows. Epping Long Green was historically part of a network of drovers routes connecting, Waltham Abbey, Harlow, Latton Priory and surrounding villages. Together these natural greenspaces provide a distinctive landscape character while also offering a wide variety of culturally and ecologically rich places. Work to improve their legibility, access, habitat value and ecological connections would all contribute to strengthening a hugely valuable shared resource for current and future residents.

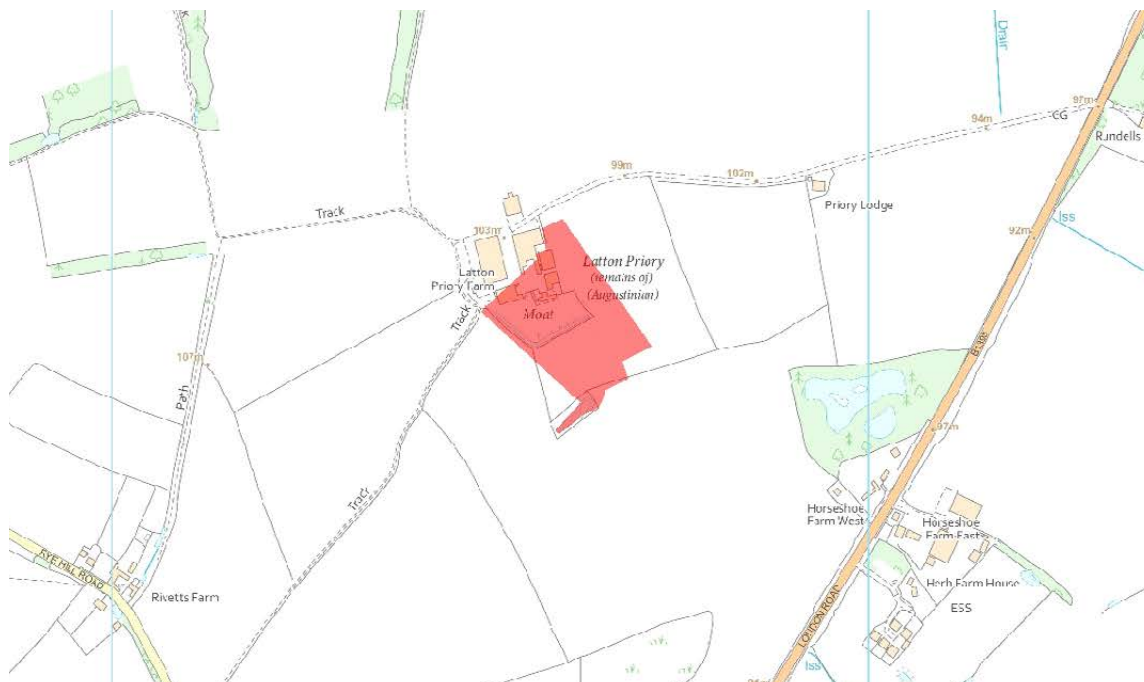


Epping Long Green

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Heritage

Latton Priory and Water Lane are located in areas which provide a rich diversity of landscape and heritage assets, from Ancient Green Lanes and Woodlands, through to the Scheduled Monument of Latton Priory. Developing and signing a clear network of footpaths is key to allow these assets to form an integrated part of the network of landscape assets.



Historic England map for the Scheduled Monument at Latton Priory - the site of an Augustinian priory

Amenity Greenspace and Public Parks and Gardens

The [Harlow Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study](#) assesses the quantity, quality and value of the open space and green infrastructure in Harlow District, and forms part of the Evidence base for Harlow District Council's adopted Local Plan. Amenity Greenspace and Public Parks and Gardens are assessed separately but here, given the similarities of the provision and the potential for overlapping functions, they are grouped together as this gives a more comprehensive picture of provision. The study showed that in terms of size 'Sumner, Kingsmoor and Staple Tye' (which are the closest neighbourhoods to the Latton Priory and Water Lane Masterplan areas) is currently above the advised minimum provision while 'Bush Fair and Harlow Common' has less provision. However, this shortfall is to some extent compensated for by the proximity of Latton and Harlow Commons.

Amenity greenspaces and parks are of mixed quality, with a number of parks assessed in the Harlow Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study (2013) falling below quality standards with the highest proportion being located on the southern side of Harlow.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Allotments

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) shows that allotments are generally well provided for across the District and the Harlow Green Infrastructure Strategy shows a similar position. Allotments and food growing are key components of the network of greenspaces as they provide the green social infrastructure that can support the creation of cohesive and healthy communities. To do this any new allotment provision should, through their location and allocation, serve new and existing communities. While limited public access can help build a strong community within allotment sites themselves it also limits the public engaging with food growing. Therefore, proposals should look to expand the variety of productive landscapes beyond just the provision of allotments and look to incorporate ways of engaging new users with them.

The Netteswell Common Allotments are located within the existing Green Wedge proposed to be extended into the Latton Priory Garden Town Community. The shortage of provision at Sumners, Kingsmoor and Staple Tye could be addressed through enhancements to provision within the Green Wedge.

Provision for Children and Young People

Current provision is located in the adjacent Harlow communities and consists of almost exclusively traditional equipment in fenced play areas. The condition of the equipment is mixed. There is therefore significant opportunity to enhance both the quality and variety of opportunities for children and young people of all age groups.



Playground at Maunds Hatch

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Movement

There is an established network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that runs through the surrounding countryside. These routes are well used but as with many routes across the District there is room for improving accessibility, legibility and wayfinding. Both sites are well linked into the wider PRoW network by local footpaths.

Regional walks such as the Nazeing Country Walk, the Stort Valley Way and the Forest Way Long Distance Walking Path (which runs from the edge of the Epping Forest to Hatfield Forest and crosses both Latton and Harlow Commons) highlight the draw of the local landscape. There are real opportunities to link the sites into this wider network, including to integrate different parts of the bridleway network and byway network.

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town will be served by a network of Sustainable Transport Corridors (STCs) which will provide rapid transit, walking and cycling routes from the proposed Garden Town Communities through existing communities to Harlow town centre and its train stations. Two arms of the proposed STCs will extend to Water Lane and Latton Priory. There is potential to continue the walking and cycling component of these routes to connect Latton Priory and Water Lane. There is significant room to improve accessibility, legibility and wayfinding through the Green Wedges especially where the wedges link into Latton Priory and Water Lane. The existing PRoW network should also be enhanced to create an attractive connection between the two new communities and in particular the proposed secondary school in Latton Priory.

There are also two well-established walking routes known as [Millennium Walks 2 and 3](#), in Thornwood and Hastingwood, which were established to celebrate the turn of the millennium. There is a significant opportunity to link these existing routes through to the new development at Latton Priory, including to the proposed secondary school, and provide for their enhancement.



The Stort Valley Way at Harlow

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Opportunities

The opportunities set out below are in line with the key principles for the development of strategic sites:

1. Connecting into the big landscape attractors including the Lea and Stort Valleys
2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside
3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG
4. Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside

Connecting into the big landscape attractors

The Stort Valley Way offers an opportunity to link into a strategic route that ties into the Stort Valley. Alongside this the Green Wedges provide direct routes into Harlow's greenspaces and Harlow Town Centre. Existing routes also enable access to longer distance routes including to the Stort Valley as well as to more local destinations including Nazeing Common. Prioritising the enhancement of these routes to be able to accommodate additional users or including new links is key to the integration of the sites into their context and the promotion of destinations such as the Stort Valley as an accessible recreational landscape.

Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside

Easy, safe and attractive walking and cycling connections between neighbourhoods and open spaces are an important component of building a successful network of greenspaces. Consideration should also be given to the needs of horse-riders where appropriate. To deliver these connections improved accessibility, legibility and wayfinding will be needed. Key areas will include:

- Enhancements to the Green wedges that currently run out to the countryside in order to provide high quality connections into the Green Wedge network and on to Harlow Town Centre and the stations and facilitate local links into existing greenspaces and local centres
- Continuing the walking and cycling component of the proposed STC routes to connect Latton Priory and Water Lane, including in order to provide Water Lane residents with a safe and active route to the proposed secondary school in Latton Priory
- Develop a series of local walks that link communities with local GI assets. Routes should be planned to give a series of routes that are of an optimal distance for users including dog walkers and to provide variety in walking routes and lengths.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG

Local GI Overview

In line with the rest of the District an analysis of existing open space provision indicates that high quality Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace already exists both in the locality and further afield. However, some of this greenspace is itself under pressure (including both the Harlow Woods SSSI and the Epping Forest SAC) and therefore the provision of SANG will help to 'absorb' pressure arising from new residents by adding to the Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace offer.

Other types of open space, including parks, play and allotments are of average or lower quality and are generally under provided. These should therefore be integrated into the GI offer for the sites.

Reveal and Enhance

Specific opportunities to reveal and enhance the existing Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace offer include the following:

- Complete the ecological corridor from Long Green Lane to Marks Wood. Where it would not be harmful to the ecological and natural heritage value of the assets tree canopies could be lifted and scrub cleared to allow views into woodland areas
- Enhance habitats through improved management including to the grassland of Harlow and Latton Commons and woodlands in the locality
- Maximise opportunities to create an overlap between people and ecology such as leaving some large, felled trees in woodlands or retaining low branches on appropriate trees when pruning for play opportunities



Latton Common

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

Initial design work has started on developing the approach to SANG provision for Latton Priory and Water Lane including how it relates to existing paths and habitats.

Latton Priory Garden Community:

This site has an indicative capacity for 1050 homes. Based on this indicative c. 20ha of SANG would be required. Whilst part of the site lies outside of the current 6.2 km Zone of Influence the full quantum of development would need to be mitigated recognising the need to 'future-proof' the development in light of the potential for the Zone of Influence to increase (as is already indicated in the 2019 Epping Forest SAC Visitor survey) and to minimise the potential for the site to contribute to this increase. The preferred location of the SANG is on land on the southern side of the Masterplan area. The detailed form of the SANG provision will be determined once the final location of the access road has been resolved. The site promoter has control over land contiguous with the southern boundary of the site allocation. This could be brought forward for SANG provision as indicated at the Local Plan Examination hearing sessions this land could be brought forward SANG provision. The priority for its use will be as mitigation for the development arising from the Masterplan area. Any residual carrying capacity which is potentially able to mitigate the impacts of development elsewhere will be subject to commercial arrangements.

Water Lane Garden Community:

The Masterplan area provides for some 2,100 new homes. Based on the total number of homes proposed within the Masterplan area the provision of SANG would equate to 39.68 ha. However, the Masterplan area comprises two distinct areas for development, the larger of which (West Katherine's) is located some distance from the current 6.2km Zone of Influence and a significant proportion of the smaller site (West Sumners) is also outside of the Zone of Influence. Nevertheless, as with Latton Priory, the Council considers that there is a need to 'future-proof' the development and to minimise the potential for the site to contribute to any extension to the Zone of Influence. The Council is therefore seeking an element of SANG provision based on the total indicative residential capacity of the West Sumners site. Assuming a capacity of c. 700 dwellings the size of SANG required would be c. 13ha.

The Masterplan should also identify greenspace connections to the Green Wedge and to the west towards Epping Long Green. GI beyond the provision of the SANG will also need to be developed as part of the emerging masterplan.

Complimentary Network

Provision of open space should be integrated as part of the Masterplanning of the Garden Town Communities and designed in such a way as to encourage integration between the new and existing communities. A balance of open space typologies across the wider area within both Epping Forest and Harlow Districts should also be planned for. Existing spaces that need to be addressed in qualitative terms are Rye Hill Road Recreation Ground, Paringdon Road Recreation Space, and Parsloe Road Open Space.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside

The landscape should be considered as forming part of the social infrastructure. This will help to support the creation of cohesive communities through engaging more people with outdoor space and creating opportunities for social interaction. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- Natural and Semi natural open space should be enhanced where possible to help increase peoples understanding and appreciation of nature and inspire new people to visit these places. Potential areas where this could be achieved are: Local woodlands, the three Commons, local Green Lanes, and the Scheduled Monuments at Latton Priory and Nazeing. Potential interventions could include: Bird Hides, Natural Play, Low key interpretation and Art
- Parks and amenity space should be brought to life with initiatives that encourage social interaction and which link help to tackle loneliness, obesity, and encourage healthy eating. Places where this could be achieved are: The Green Wedge north of Latton Priory, and the Parsloe Road Open Space. Initiatives could include: Multi-sensory planting, intergenerational and natural play, art, food growing
- Productive Landscapes should be developed beyond just the provision of allotments to encourage wider participation and engagement between communities. The main place where this could be achieved is at the Netteswell Common Allotments. Other potential opportunities include: Rye Hill Road Recreation Ground, Parsloe Road Open Space and the proposed schools to be developed within the Garden Town Communities.



The Kerb Garden, Stockwell by The Edible Bus Stop



Magneten Sensory Garden, Copenhagen by MASU Planning

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

2. Summary for North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area

Residential capacity: **c. 1050 homes**

GI provision: **In accordance with emerging Local Plan policies SP4 and SP5**

Indicative SANG size: **20ha** (see page 134 for further information)

Preferred location: **Between the commercial and residential masterplans**

Future proofing required? **Yes**

Green Infrastructure Key Characteristics:

1. Connecting into the big landscape attractors

- The masterplan area is too far away from the Lea and Stort Valleys to make a significant connection
- Therefore, walking routes to Latton Priory and nearby heritage landscapes are to be promoted

2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside

- Create a 'Green Loop' connecting North Weald Airfield, Weald Common, North Weald Redoubt and the Recreation Ground
- Connect to the Essex Way and develop a wider network of routes with improved wayfinding and accessibility, including to the Latton Priory Masterplan Area and its proposed secondary school.

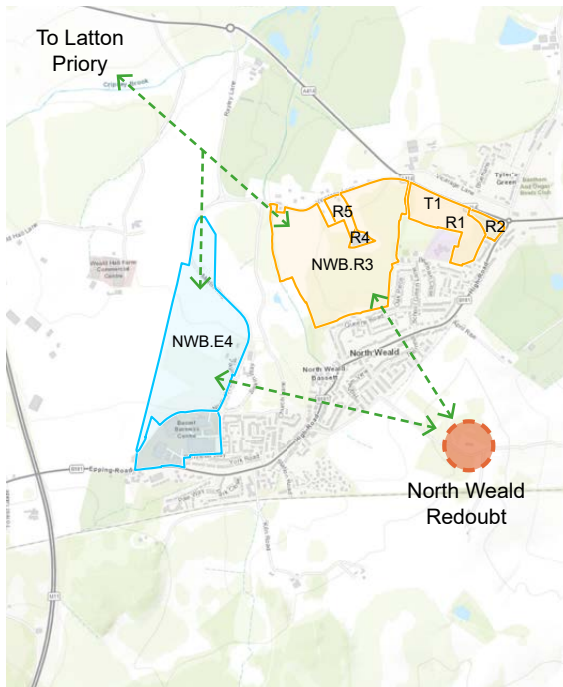
3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG

- Provide new greenspaces within the masterplan with different types of open space than those currently in existence, for the benefit of new and existing communities
- Consider improvements to existing greenspaces surrounding the site, such as the Recreation Ground and the court facilities within the Common

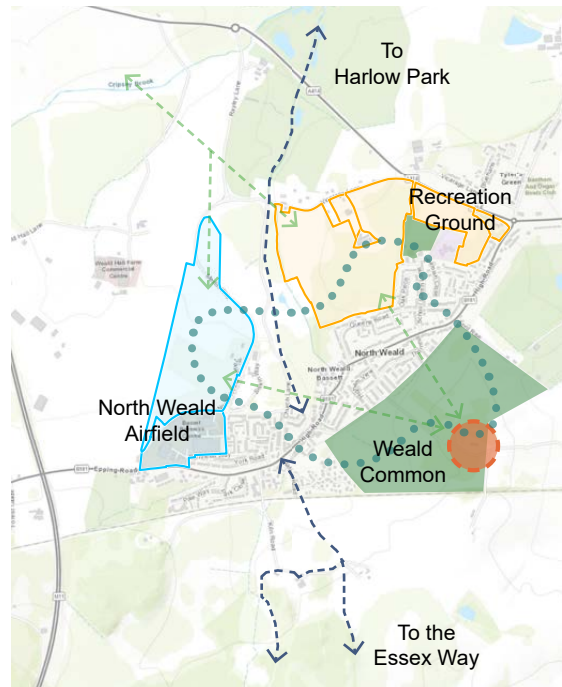
4. Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside

- Include initiatives such as sensitively integrated play, art and interpretation elements

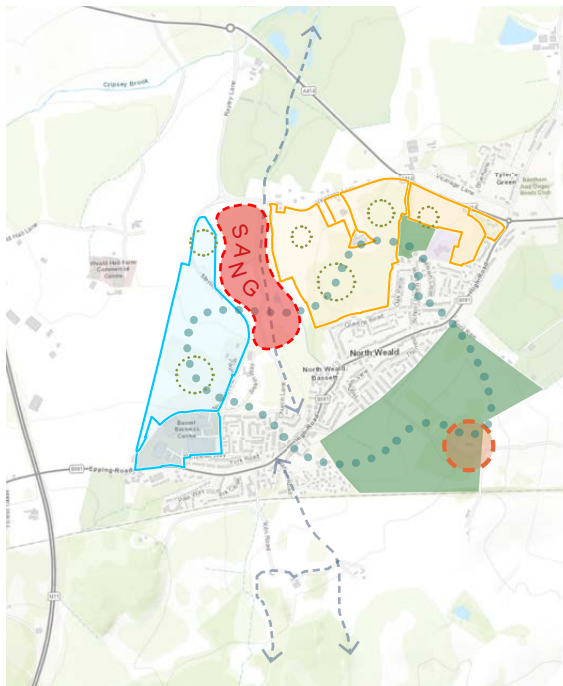
3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS



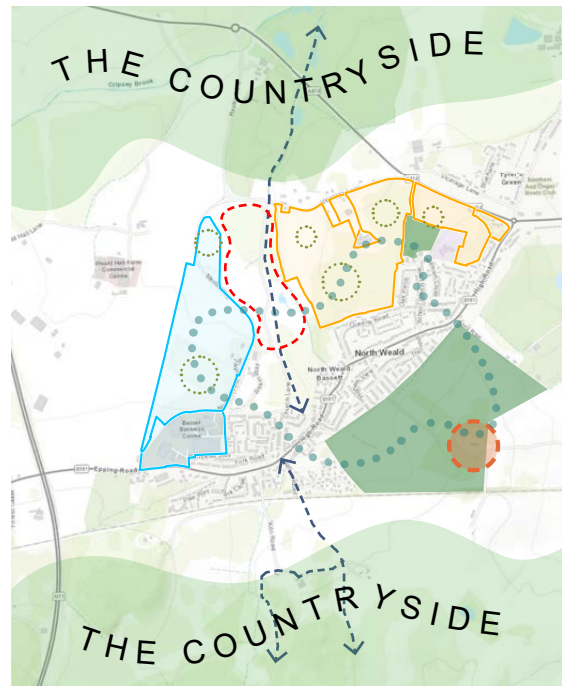
1. Connecting into the big landscape attractors



2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside



3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG



4. Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside

Key

←--> New Pedestrian and Cycle Links

North Weald Redoubt

Nearby Greenspaces

Green Loop

←--> Existing PRoW Network

Indicative SANG

New Open Spaces

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area

Landscape Context

North Weald Bassett lies in an area defined as 'Ridges and Valleys' in the Council's [Landscape Character Assessment 2010](#). The landscape is characterised by a patchwork of arable fields, with mature hedgerows. Mature trees are also a defining feature of the landscape both within hedgerows and in fields and there are a large number of trees in the village which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. This landscape pattern provides for a number of open and framed views to the surrounding landscape. North Weald Airfield, which is defined by a strong fenced perimeter, is a significant presence in the landscape as is the M11 to the west.



Ridges and Valleys landscape character, Epping Forest District Council's Landscape Character Assessment

Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace and Landscape and Ecology Assets

There are a variety of lowland mixed deciduous ancient woodlands, located mainly to the south of North Weald Bassett. These woodlands include original and replanted ancient woodland with BAP Habitats designated as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (UK); and Ancient Woodland (Essex). An existing Nature Reserve is located adjacent to the proposed residential Masterplan Area and is a source of extensive biodiversity.

Woodlands include a variety of flora which provide a range of distinctive woodland characters including virtually pure hornbeam coppice (Reynkyns Wood); blocks of Scotts Pine (Birching Coppice Complex); and Hornbeam/ Pedunculate composition with scattered Rhododendron (Birching Coppice Complex).

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

These woodlands provide a significant natural resource within easy reach of North Weald Bassett. There is an opportunity to connect people to these ancient woodlands, through improved physical connections and legibility, to bring them into people's consciousness. This would need to be carefully managed to ensure that their ecological and natural heritage interest features are not harmed. There are a variety of species rich grasslands, wetland and reed beds that are also located in the area including relatively recent flood alleviation works.

There is significant potential to connect people to these landscape assets drawing out cultural and ecological heritage while building new relationships between local people and their environment. Carefully considered natural play opportunities, seating, low key interpretation and art, could engage local people to connect with these areas.

The provision of SANG should complement the existing provision of Natural Greenspace to provide a more coherent and attractive network of spaces and places.



Church Lane Flood Meadow Local Nature Reserve

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Heritage

North Weald Bassett has an interesting variety of built and landscape heritage. North Weald Airfield opened in 1916 to defend London against German air raids in World War I. Operational flying ceased in 1919 but restarted as an operational RAF Fighter station in 1927. Its role in the Battle of Britain resulted in enemy raids on the airfield with many bombs falling on the village and surrounding areas. Squadrons from many nationalities were based at North Weald during the course of the war, including Norwegians, Czechs, Poles, Canadians, New Zealanders and American volunteers. The last operational fighter squadron left in 1958 and the RAF vacated the airfield in 1964. A memorial is located at the former main entrance to the airfield dedicated to all who served there between 1916 and 1964. The airfield's control tower, which was built in 1952, is a Grade II Listed Building as is the former Officer's Mess. The control tower was one of only seven of its type to be constructed post-war and is a rare physical reminder of the role of RAF Fighter Command in the early years of the Cold War.

Ongar Park Woods (part of the Birching Coppice Complex) was historically part of the same woodland lying within the boundary of Ongar Great Park, the earliest deer park in Essex (dating back to the 11th century). The woodland remnants of Ongar Great Park still exist to the south of the town, while ancient woodlands with distinctive coppiced trees are landscape remnants of the formerly common practice of coppicing timber on rotation.

Immediately to the south of North Weald Bassett is the North Weald Redoubt Scheduled Monument. It was constructed in the 1890's as a mobilisation centre as part of a comprehensive military scheme known as the London Defence Positions drawn up to protect the capital in the event of enemy invasion. It was reused as a radio station after the First World War and has a remarkable level of survival. To the west, on the edges of Thornwood, lies the moated site known as Marshalls which is likely to have been constructed between 1250 and 1350, and which is also a Scheduled Monument.

There is significant potential to connect and illuminate the landscape and heritage assets of the area.



North Weald Redoubt Scheduled Monument

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Parks and Amenity Greenspace

The [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#) shows that there is an under supply of amenity greenspace in North Weald Bassett and that there are no parks. The existing amenity greenspace consists primarily of short cut grass and therefore has the potential to be enhanced in terms of its amenity, biodiversity and community offer.

The Memorial Playing Fields provides the main amenity greenspace within North Weald Bassett and includes play and sports facilities as well as a community hub. The Memorial Playing Fields have the potential to be enhanced to accommodate new residents if additional land is provided to ensure that this is not to the detriment of their enjoyment by existing residents. This would be a positive initiative in terms of creating a space for recreation, community activities and for quiet contemplation and as such would support community integration, by providing a place where people from new and existing communities can come. Any such initiative should provide the opportunity for existing and new communities to come together. Additional provision is supported by the Council's Open Space Strategy which identifies the need for an increased park offer in North Weald Bassett.

Provision for Children and Young People

There is currently a significant under supply of facilities in North Weald Bassett. The existing equipment is traditional and functional but lacks variety when measured against best practice. There is therefore a real opportunity to broaden the play offer to include natural play, multi-sensory play, play for all ages and play that is accessible for all. Consequently, new and enhanced provision should provide variety in the offer including using the provision of natural play opportunities as a means of encouraging people into the wider landscape and particularly as a means of bringing children into contact with nature.

Potential improvement to the existing basketball facilities, or the provision of other new ball courts, should look to MUF's social MUGA highlighted below and in [Part 2](#) of this Strategy as an example of best practice.



The social MUGA by MUF Architecture and Art

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Allotments

North Weald Bassett, in line with the District as a whole, has an adequate supply of allotments in relation to [Fields In Trust standards](#). Engagement with the North Weald Bassett community in the development of the emerging residential Masterplan should test the supply of allotments to ensure that provision continues to meet community needs.

Alongside this food growing opportunities should be developed in a wider sense. Allotments and food growing are key components of the network of greenspaces that will provide the green infrastructure that can aid the development of cohesive and healthy communities. To do this any new allotment provision should, through its location and allocation, serve as an integrated resource for both new and existing communities. While limited public access can help build a strong community within allotments it also limits the public engaging with food growing. Therefore, in addition to any allotment provision, proposals should look to expand the variety of productive landscapes and to look to engage new users with them.

Movement

There is an established network of both Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and informal routes that run through the surrounding countryside. This includes a well-used walking route around North Weald Village, known as [Millennium Walk 1](#), which was established to celebrate the turn of the millennium. There are a further two Millennium walks in the Parish of North Weald, in Thornwood and Hastingwood respectively. There is a significant opportunity to link these existing routes through to the new development at Latton Priory. These routes are well used but as with routes across the District there is room for improving accessibility, legibility and wayfinding. Such improvements should focus on promoting links between the existing community, the emerging masterplan areas, the surrounding countryside and between settlements. An existing bridleway runs through the site which will need to be preserved in a semi-rural state.

There is considerable community support for a wider active travel (walking and cycling) network to connect North Weald Bassett to both Latton Priory and Epping. As set out in [Parts 1](#) and [2](#) of the Strategy the Council supports active travel and will look to work with landowners/developers, the community and other stakeholders to secure these opportunities. In particular the route of the Epping-Ongar Railway line between North Weald Bassett and Epping should be explored as an opportunity for such a link to be provided adjacent to it.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

The Essex Way, which runs 82 miles across Essex from Epping to the coast at Harwich, lies just to the south of North Weald Bassett. The development and enhancement of the local PRow network provides a good opportunity to link into this wider facility.

Significant barriers to movement are created by the M11 Motorway and the A414. Nevertheless, the Council will work with landowners, developers and stakeholders to explore ways of circumventing these barriers, and how any such initiative should be funded.



The Essex Way

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Opportunities

The opportunities set out below are in line with the key principles for the development of strategic sites:

1. Connecting into or creating landscape attractors.
2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside.
3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG.
4. Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside.

Connecting into the big landscape attractors

Due to the distance between North Weald Bassett and the Stort and Lea Valleys it is not envisaged that these will serve as significant attractions. However, the promotion of wider strategic footpaths including a route north to tie into Latton Priory and to heritage assets in the locality should be pursued.

Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside

Easy, safe and attractive walking and cycling connections between the residential and airfield Masterplan sites, existing neighbourhoods and open spaces are key to building a successful network of greenspaces. Such an approach also supports the objective of creating a connected community and place. To deliver these connections improvements to accessibility, legibility and wayfinding should be provided for including:

- To create a green Loop to link new green space with key existing local green spaces and attractors, including North Weald Airfield, North Weald Common and the North Weald Redoubt and the Recreation Ground. Wayfinding and easy links through North Weald Bassett will be key to achieving this. This will require a collaborative approach between developers, landowners and the Council and it is recognised that there are significant safety and accessibility challenges in relation to North Weald Redoubt itself.
- A series of wider routes with improved legibility and access would provide longer walks and provide connections that link to strategic routes such as the Essex Way to the south and to the development at Latton Priory.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG

The proposed network of paths described above aims to provide improved access to existing greenspaces where this would not affect their ecological interest features.

- Reveal and Enhance
- Build ecological links between established habitats
- Where it would not be harmful to the ecological or natural heritage value of the asset tree canopies could be lifted and scrub cleared to allow views into woodland areas
- Enhance habitats through improved management including to the North Weald Common
- Identify opportunities for tree planting at North Weald Common to establish future large field trees
- Look for overlap between people and ecology such as leaving some large, felled trees in woodlands or retaining low branches on appropriate trees when pruning for play opportunities.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

The provision of SANG should complement the existing network of Natural Greenspace offer in North Weald Bassett. The preferred location for the SANG is between the emerging Local Plan's commercial and residential Masterplan Areas, as this area would best enable the creation of distinctive and valuable habitats, maximise access to the PRoW network as well as the opportunity to allow people to connect with these assets. This would provide a positive alternative offer to the Epping Forest SAC. The Council, in its landowner role, has indicated that it is proposing to provide an element of SANG to complement development within the North Weald Airfield Masterplan. In order to maximise this opportunity, the Council and the site promoters of the residential led Masterplan should work together to better understand how this land could support the delivery of an enhanced SANG offer in North Weald Bassett.

The Masterplan Area provides for some 1050 new homes. Based on the total number of homes proposed within the Masterplan area this equates to c.20 ha of SANG. It is recognised that a large part of the site lies beyond the current 6.2km Zone of Influence. As with the Latton Priory and Water Lane Masterplan Areas, there is a need to 'future-proof' the development recognising that the Zone of Influence could extend further, and that the development of the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area should not contribute to that expansion. Therefore, there will be a need to ensure that sufficient SANG provision is provided. There are also opportunities within close proximity to the Masterplan site that could, with appropriate enhancements and financial contributions towards long-term maintenance costs, be used by dog- owners in particular. In the event that the quantum of SANG to be provided cannot adequately accommodate such activities without creating conflict with other users of the SANG, it may be possible to adopt a flexible approach if this can be fully justified in terms of protecting the Epping Forest SAC and be deliverable.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Complimentary Network

Provision of other types of open space provision should be designed in as part of the masterplanning process for the new development. This should be designed in a way to encourage integration between the new and existing communities. The masterplanning process should ensure that there is a balance of types of open space across the wider area. Any approach should include improvements outside the site allocation boundary to develop the wider network. Some key opportunities include:

- The expansion of recreation opportunities at the Recreation Ground to include high quality play and park facilities to become a focal point for new and existing communities. This will require working with the Parish Council and ensure that it does not impact on its use by the existing community
- Broadening the food growing theme to outside of the allotment
- Enhancing the existing basketball court and facilities for young people in the existing play areas by the Common.

Activation and interpretation projects to engage a wider range of people with the countryside

This will involve initiatives including sensitively integrated play, art and interpretation. Opportunities that should be considered include those identified landscape and heritage assets set out earlier in this Part.



High quality play at Peckham Rye Park by Turkington Martin

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

3. Summary for Waltham Abbey North Masterplan Area

Residential capacity: **c. 740 homes**

GI provision: **In accordance with emerging Local Plan policy P3**

Indicative SANG size: **N/A**

Other requirements: **Contributions towards GI projects within the Lee Valley Regional Park** (see pages 142 and 143 for further information)

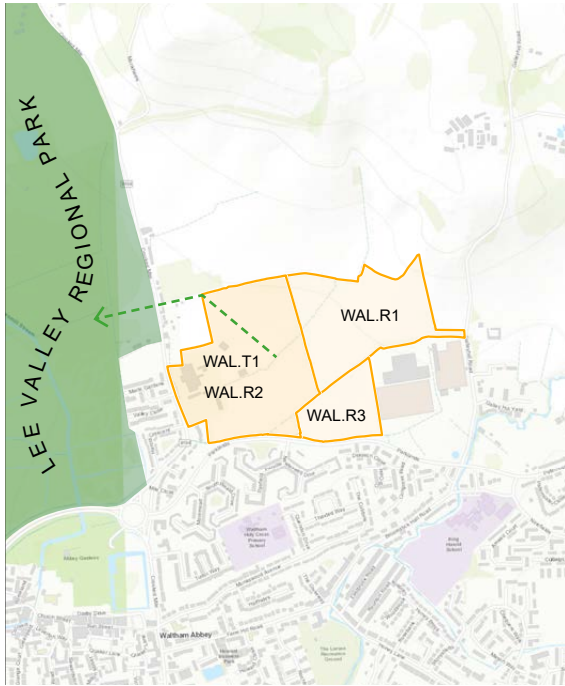
Preferred location: **N/A**

Future proofing for potential ZOI expansion? **N/A**

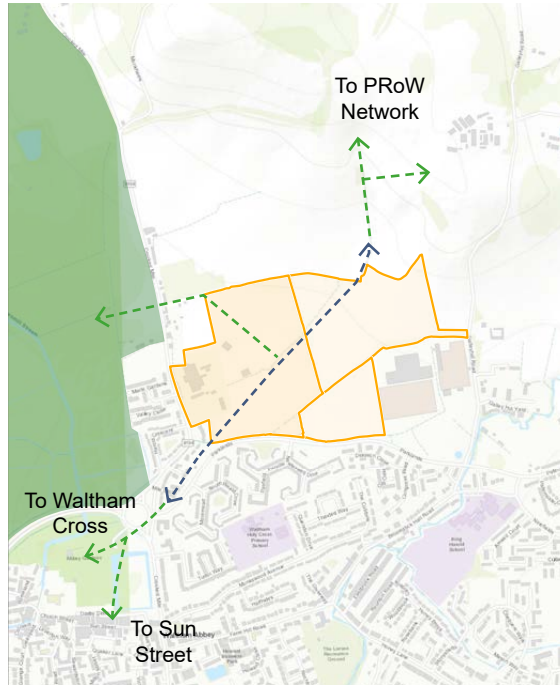
Green Infrastructure Key Characteristics:

1. **Connecting into the big landscape attractors**
 - Create new walking and cycling links into the Lee Valley Regional Park
2. **Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside**
 - Enhance the existing Public Right of Way through the masterplan area
 - Provide new and improved routes to connect to the PRow network, Waltham Abbey and Waltham Cross railway station
3. **Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG**
 - Provide new greenspaces within the masterplan with different types of open space provision than those currently in existence, for the benefit of new and existing communities
 - Using the existing PRow through the site to develop a 'Green Corridor'
 - Integrate Green Infrastructure provision into the site's defensible edge condition
 - Secure Green Infrastructure improvements beyond the site boundary, such as enhanced water habitats along Cobbins Brook and improved facilities for young people at Town Mead and Honey Lane

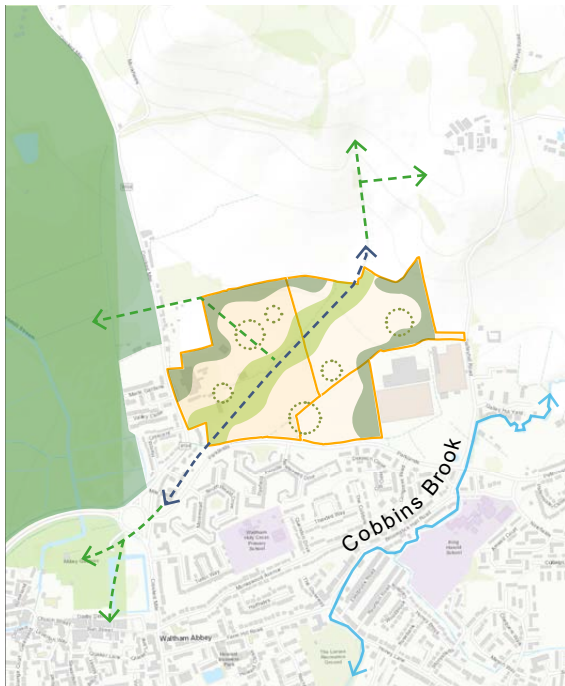
3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS



1. Connecting into the big landscape attractors



2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside



3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG

Key

- Green Belt Boundary and Defensible Edge
- Green Corridor
- Existing PRoW Network
- New Pedestrian and Cycle Links
- New Open Spaces

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Waltham Abbey North Masterplan Area

The Waltham Abbey North Masterplan Area is proposed for allocation within the emerging Local Plan and is located immediately to the north of the existing urban area of Waltham Abbey.

Landscape Context

The Masterplan Area lies at the southern end of the Holyfield Ridges and Valleys Character Area as defined in the [Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2010](#). The Landscape Character Area encompasses a patchwork of large, medium and small-scale irregularly shaped arable fields, some of which have wooded field boundaries. Fields are interspersed with patches of broadleaved woodland which are located on prominent ridges and slopes within the character area, which, in places results in views to wooded horizons. The southern part of the character area, to which this site relates, contains several modern nurseries and glasshouses.

The western boundary of the Masterplan Area is in close proximity to the Lea Valley Marshes Landscape Character Area, which is formed by the floodplain of the River Lea. However, it is visually separated from it by built development and an allotment site.



Holyfield Ridges and Valleys landscape character, Epping Forest District Council's Landscape Character Assessment

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Communities

The Masterplan Area is located to the north of the town of Waltham Abbey. Its southern boundary is defined by hedgerows with intermittent tree planting which form the edge of Parklands, the main northern road link serving Waltham Abbey. The Masterplan Area will provide for approximately 740 homes, up to five pitches for traveller accommodation, a new local centre and community facilities and the provision of public open space.

Landscape and Ecology Assets

The Masterplan Area does not contain any designated landscape or ecological assets and the land on the northern and western boundaries comprises open arable fields. The land to the north has a gentle incline leading to a belt of trees visible within the wider landscape.

To the west, and in close proximity to the Masterplan Area, lies the Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP). The LVRP was created in 1967 and is a strategically important site for both recreation and nature conservation. It is a linear park which is some 26 miles long (running from the East India Dock Basin on the River Thames to Ware in Hertfordshire) and 10,000 acres in size and is the only regional park serving Essex, Hertfordshire and London. The LVRP is managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority which has a duty to develop and preserve leisure, recreation, sport and nature throughout the Park.

The area of the LVRP to the west of the site contains a range of ecological habitats. Parts of the LVRP are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and as a Special Protection Area and Ramsar site (which denotes it as an internationally important wetland habitat).

The Masterplan Area also falls within the recreational pressures 'Zone of Influence' of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation, which lies to the east and south-east of Waltham Abbey but which is separated from it by the M25 Motorway.



Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP)

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Heritage

There are no known heritage assets within the Masterplan Area itself. However, Waltham Abbey and its immediate environs have a wealth of history. The town takes its name from its former Abbey, the remains of which are designated as a Scheduled Monument and are located in Abbey Gardens, which is a Public Park. In 1177, as part of his penance for his part in the murder of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry II refound the existing church in Waltham (as it was then known) as an Augustinian Priory. The priory was enlarged and was founded as an Abbey in 1184. The majority of the Abbey itself and its associated buildings were demolished following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. Only some remnants of the Abbey's structure and the parish church remained. Legend has it that the body of King Harold Godwinson, who died in the Battle of Hastings in 1066, was brought to Waltham to be buried. The town also lies on the Greenwich Meridian, which is demarcated by a number of markers within the town itself and within the LVRP.

To the west, within LVRP, lies the site of the historic Royal Gunpowder Mills, which contains a number of nationally listed buildings and is also a scheduled monument. The site originally housed a mill used initially for cloth and then vegetable oil production.

The mill was converted into gunpowder production in the 1660's and was one of the first examples in the 18th century of an industrialised factory system. It was purchased by the Crown in 1787 and provided gunpowder for both military and civil purposes until the Mills closed in 1943. The site is now home to a Museum including interactive educational exhibits, together with an important wildlife habitat, much of which is designated as a national important Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Parks and Amenity Greenspace

Abbey Gardens is one of only two Public Parks in the District. Abbey Gardens is an attractive and well-maintained site with wider than local significance due to its history (see Heritage Section above) and is located a short distance to the south west of the edge of the Masterplan Area. Waltham Abbey also has five sites classified as amenity greenspace and is assessed as currently having less amenity greenspace than recommended by the national Fields in Trust standards. The quality of the sites, as defined in the Council's Open Space Strategy 2017, is varied with Pick Hill and Thaxted Way being assessed as 'good', High Beech and the Linear Open Space at the Community Centre assessed as 'average' and Winter' Way 'poor'.



Waltham Abbey Gardens

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Provision for Children and Young People

Current provision for children's' play across Waltham Abbey is based primarily on traditional playgrounds (although the Townmead Sports and Social Club has a wider offer including a play park and skate park). In terms of quantity, provision is below that recommended by the Field in Trust standards. The sites are located at Harold Crescent, Pynest Green and Poplar Shaw (rated 'good' in terms of their quality) and Honey Lane (rated 'average'). The closest children's playground to the Masterplan Area is Harold Crescent, which lies to the south-west. The playground is located within a small grassed area surrounded by existing residential properties.

Allotments

Waltham Abbey Town Council manages three allotment sites. The Council's Open Space Strategy 2017 identifies Waltham Abbey as being the only settlement in the District with an under-provision based on national standards. In terms of quality these sites, which comprise Denny Avenue, Capershotts and Longfields, are rated as 'average'. These sites are located some distance from the Masterplan Area, being located to the south and east of the town. The Crooked Mile allotment site immediately adjacent to the Masterplan Area is in private ownership.

Movement

A Public Right of Way (PRoW) crosses the Masterplan Area from south-west to north-east and links into a wider network of public footpaths and bridleways. As such the Masterplan Area already has, for the main part, connections into the wider countryside including towards Warlies Park. Safe and direct walking and cycling opportunities for accessing the LVRP and its extensive GI offer are far more constrained with the main barrier being the Crooked Mile. The Crooked Mile lies immediately to the west of the proposed allocation, runs in a south to north direction and separates the site and its environs from the LVRP.



Warlies Park

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Opportunities

The opportunities set out below are in line with the key principles for the development of strategic sites.

1. Connecting into the big landscape attractor of the LVRP.
2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside.
3. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities.

Connect into the big landscape attractors

The creation of new walking and cycling links to the LVRP provides a significant opportunity to provide access to its considerable range of recreational and natural environment assets. Such an approach is supported by both the LVRPA proposals for the River Lea Country Park (Area 6) and the Council's emerging Local Plan.

Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside

The enhancement of the existing PRoW that runs across the site together with the provision of new and improved walking and cycling connections and wayfinding/signage are an important component of the Masterplanning of the proposed allocation. The approach would support greater opportunities for both new and existing residents to access existing networks into the countryside, Waltham Abbey, the LVRP and to the national rail station at Waltham Cross.

Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities

The development of the Masterplan Area provides the opportunity to take a multi-functional approach to the provision of spaces for people of all ages which provides a different experience to that provided elsewhere within Waltham Abbey. This will help to provide an offer which complements rather than competes with existing GI assets.

Existing natural features within the Masterplan area together with the PRoWs which cross the site provide the opportunity to create a corridor of natural greenspace through it. Whilst the Masterplan area is located within the Zone of Influence of the Epping Forest SAC, its proximity immediately adjacent to the LVRP is such that the provision of a meaningful proportion of bespoke SANG would be difficult to justify. A more robust and appropriate response, having regard to the site-specific circumstances, is for investment to be made to providing safe walking and cycling connections into the LVRP (in accordance with Policy P3) and for financial contributions to be made to support enhancements within the LVRP itself (as included in the IDP under reference WLA15).

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

These financial contributions would be secured to support the LVRPA's adopted proposals including for example:

- For Gunpowder Park to create a more flexible visitor hub and provide the core range of services including refreshment facilities, an indoor public visitor space and park information point
- For the management and enhancement of Gunpowder Park, Sewardstone Marsh and Patty Pool Mead as a key access to nature site with habitat improvements to be undertaken throughout
- Management activities for the existing wet woodland habitats at Osier Marsh and Sewardstone Marsh in order to maintain and expand their special wildlife interest
- Enhancements to visitor access by extending boardwalks and improving interpretation
- The enhancement of floodplain grassland and fen habitat on Sewardstone Marsh and the wet grassland habitat of Patty Pool Mead to be improved to provide nesting opportunities for breeding waders.

Wider opportunities within the Waltham Abbey area include:

- Working with landowners to secured enhanced ecological habitats and improved water quality including along the Cobbins Brook corridor.
- Work with Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council to support the development of high-quality walking and cycling networks to local schools, Waltham Abbey Town Centre and Waltham Cross railway station.
- Create more cohesive and connected green spaces and enhance existing facilities including those for young people at Town Mead and Honey Lane.
- Improved access and more welcoming entrances to the three allotment sites, including through the provision of productive landscaping.

Amenity greenspace and Natural and semi-natural greenspace should be planned as an integrated asset which is varied and has the potential to incorporate SuDS features within it. The provision of a defensible boundary to the site should be integrated as part of the GI offer rather than developed separate to it. The boundary has the opportunity to support the creation of new habitats for wildlife and should make reference to the wooded field boundaries which form part of the character of the Holyfield Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

4. Summary for South of Epping Masterplan Area

Residential capacity: **c. 450 homes**

GI provision: **In accordance with emerging Local Plan policy P1**

Indicative SANG size: **10ha** (see page 150 for further information)

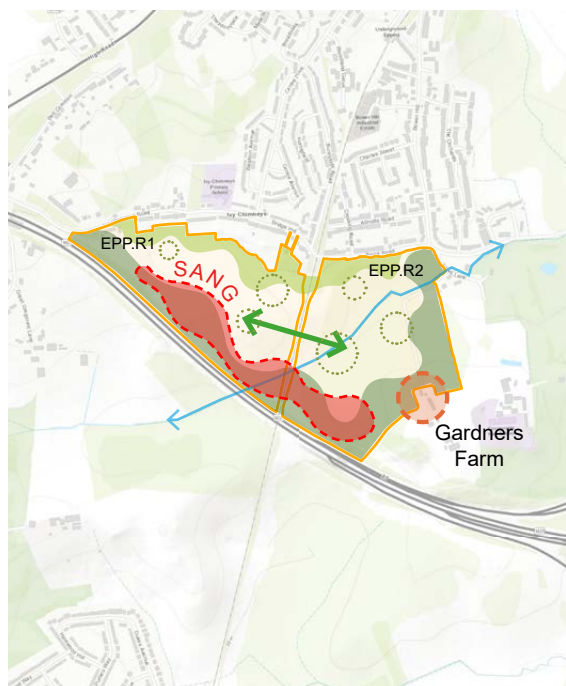
Preferred location: **Between the residential development and the M25 motorway**

Future proofing for potential ZOI expansion? **No**

Green Infrastructure Key Characteristics:

1. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG
 - Secure walking and cycling opportunities between the two sites by improving the accessibility of the existing footbridge link over the London Underground Central Line
 - Regard the prominence of Gardners Farm listed building in the landscape and maintain their setting
 - Integrate Green Infrastructure provision and visual enhancement opportunities into the southern M25 noise mitigation measures and Green Belt boundaries
 - Enhance northern site boundaries for biodiversity gain and visual buffer for adjacent existing properties
 - Retain and integrate all Public Rights of Way across the site, plus existing watercourses and associated vegetation
 - Ensure play for all ages and public open space are integrated as part of the overall Green Infrastructure offer
2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside
 - Enhance existing walking and cycling routes in addition to providing new ones, particularly to the eastern part of the masterplan

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS










1. Complimentary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG



2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside

Key

-  Improved footbridge link over the Central Line
-  Gardners Farm
-  Green Belt Boundary and Noise Buffer
-  Biodiversity Boundary and Visual Buffer

-  Indicative SANG
-  Existing PRoW Network
-  New Open Spaces

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

South of Epping Masterplan Area

The South of Epping Masterplan Area is proposed for allocation for residential development in the emerging Local Plan and is located on the southern side of the existing built-up area of the town of Epping.

Landscape Context

The site lies on the northern edge of the Theydon Garnon Wooded Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area as defined in the [Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2010](#). The northern boundary of the site abuts the built-up edge of the town of Epping whilst its southern edge is strongly defined by the M25 motorway. The Masterplan area is bisected from north to south by the London Underground Central Line and comprises a number of arable fields. The western, northern and eastern boundaries are, for the main part, defined by established planting including mature trees.



Theydon Garnon Wooded Ridges and Valleys landscape character, Epping Forest District Council's Landscape Character Assessment

Communities

The Planning Inspector who is examining the emerging Local Plan has supported the principle of allocating the South of Epping Masterplan Area for primarily residential development. However, in her advice note of [2 August 2019 \(ED98\)](#) she identified a number of matters which required further assessment including Green Belt and Habitats Regulation Assessment considerations as well as the need to respond to noise and air quality issues associated with the M25 Motorway. In response a review of the level of development that can be accommodated within the Masterplan Area and the infrastructure needed to support new residents has been undertaken. The Council now considers that the indicative number of dwellings that can be accommodated across the Masterplan area is c.450.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Landscape and Ecology Assets

The northern most part of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies very close to the south western part of the Masterplan Area in EPP.R1. The SAC is recognised as being under pressure from recreational use and impacted by atmospheric pollution, primarily as a result of vehicle emissions. The western part of the Masterplan Area contains a Public Right of Way (PRoW) that crosses over the M25 Motorway and provides easy access to the SAC. In addition, the Bell Common/ Ivy Chimneys Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) is located on the north side of Ivy Chimneys Road in close proximity to the western side of the Masterplan Area.

The western part of the Masterplan Area (EPP.R1) has several detracting characteristics including high voltage pylons which run across the south part of the site together with the M25 Motorway along its southern boundary, which is elevated at this point. The core of the site also lacks some of the more valuable landscape and ecology elements such as hedgerows, trees and woodland blocks. The site is enclosed by existing residential development, woodland and planting, and man-made structures. Views across the site can be gained from the existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which cross the centre of the site and run along its eastern and northern boundaries. The Central Line, which bisects the Masterplan Area north to south is well planted and a wooded ridge is located beyond the site to the west.

The northern boundary to the eastern part of the Masterplan Area (EPP.R2) is formed by planting, including mature trees. The western boundary is formed by the London Underground Central Line, the southern boundary by the M25 Motorway, and to the east by mature planting, including trees. This part of the Masterplan Area is currently used as arable land. The main landscape feature within the site comprises an existing water course, within a mature planted setting, which runs from the north east corner of the site to the centre of the western boundary. The watercourse is crossed at several points by existing PRoWs that cross the site. The topography is undulating and rises up to the south towards Gardners Farm which is located immediately adjacent to the site and at a high point in the landscape and is therefore a prominent feature within it.



London Underground Central Line bisecting the masterplan

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Heritage

Gardners Farmhouse, and an associated barn, are Grade II Listed Buildings lie within the context of the built-up area of Epping Town to the north, and in close proximity to the M25 motorway and electricity pylons. The farmhouse is believed to date back to at least the 15th century (but with later additions) and is mainly timber framed and plastered with some red brick and a red plain tiled hipped roof. The barn is 18th century, with a timber frame, weatherboarding and a plain red tiled roof.

Coopersale Hall which lies to the south east of the site is also Grade II Listed. It dates back to the late 18th /early 19th century and is screened from the site primarily by established planting and trees.

In medieval times, the precursors to what is now the town of Epping, Epping Street and Epping Upland, were sited on a long-distance south-east to north-west trade route. The town owed much of its development to its main road position and its proximity to London. The improvement of the main road through Epping by the Epping and Ongar Highway Trust (1769-1870) increased the amount of traffic using this route on the way to and from London, Norwich, Cambridge, and Bury St. Edmunds amongst other places. The building of a railway line to Loughton in 1856 by the Eastern Counties Railway Co. started the decline in the coaching trade. In 1865 this line was extended to Epping and High Ongar. Epping railway station was built about half a mile to the east of the High Street in order to avoid the high ridge on which the town is built. House building to the east of the town was encouraged by this development. The old steam railway was electrified after the Second World War (1948/1949) and became part of the London Underground Central Line.

Parks and Amenity Greenspace

Despite having twelve sites identified as amenity greenspace in the [Council's Open Space Strategy 2017](#), in terms of quantity Epping has a slight under- provision. From a quality perspective Thornwood Common, Ivy Chimneys Road, High Street/Church Hill, Broadoaks, Station Road and High Street/Hemnall Street are all rated as 'good'. Frampton Road, Lower Swaines, Brook Road, Central Avenue North, Western Avenue South and Hemnall Street are rated as 'average'.



View of Copped Hall from Bell Common

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Provision for Children and Young People

There are a number of existing sites within Epping Town itself with facilities for children and young people. In terms of quantity there is considered to be an under-provision. In qualitative terms Ivy Chimney Road and Stonards Hill were rated as 'good' in the Council's Open Space Strategy 2017, Frampton Road as 'average' and Lower Swaines is 'poor'. Ivy Chimney Road, which is the closest site to the western part of the Masterplan Area, was refurbished in 2015 and caters for a number of different age groups. It includes flat swings, a junior swing, a nest, multi-play, roundabout, seesaw, zip line, activity panels, infinity bowl and seats and benches.

Allotments

Epping is considered to be well served by allotment sites, but the quality of the sites is mixed. All of the existing allotment sites are located some distance from the Masterplan Area.

Movement

The Masterplan Area contains a number of PRowS which link into a wider network, including the Essex Way, which is a long-distance footpath of some 82 miles that runs across Essex. The PRow which runs north to south through the western part of the Masterplan Area provides access to Theydon Bois and the Epping Forest SAC via a footbridge over the M25 motorway. The PRow network on the eastern part of the Master Plan Area links into a much wider network via an underpass beneath the M25 and then beyond via an underpass beneath the M11 Motorway. However, this route is currently unattractive for walkers and cyclists and there are opportunities for these to be improved as part of the development of the Masterplan area.

The Masterplan Area lies a short distance from Epping Station. However, there is currently no attractive walking and cycling provision linking from the site through to the built-up parts of Epping including to the High Street. There are opportunities to improve these links as part of the integration of the Masterplan area with Epping Town Centre and the Station.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

Opportunities

The opportunities set out below are in line with the key principles for the development of strategic sites but by necessity differs in relation to connections to big landscape attractors which in this case is the Epping Forest SAC.

1. Complementary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG.
2. Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside.

Complementary network of green open spaces tying together new and existing communities, including the provision of SANG

The Masterplan Area provides a significant opportunity to provide an integrated approach towards GI both within the site and into the wider area. A key component of the approach will be the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in order to provide an attractive alternative recreation destination to the Epping Forest SAC. This is in order to avoid placing additional recreational pressure on the SAC. Taking into consideration the site's close proximity and the ease of access to the SAC by using the existing PRow link from the western part of the Masterplan Area on-site SANG provision will be critical. In addition, walking and cycling opportunities between the two parts of the Masterplan Area should be secured through the improvement of the existing footbridge over the London Underground Central Line.

Based on the indicative capacity of the site to accommodate 450 dwellings and the need to ensure that the SANG can accommodate a reasonable length walking route within it (reflecting the site's close proximity to the SAC) the quantum of SANG to be provided should be a minimum of 10ha. The location of the SANG will be critical to its success and should therefore be located between the residential development and the boundary with the M25 which separates the site from the SAC and its buffer lands. Also, of importance will be the pedestrian links to the SANG from other parts of the site to provide ease of access for all of the new residents across the Masterplan area.

3.1 STRATEGIC ALLOCATIONS

As well as the provision of SANG the Masterplan, and the Landscape Framework within it, should take account of, and provide for, an integrated approach which responds to the following:

- The setting of the Listed Buildings in Gardners Farm and regard to the prominence of the buildings within the landscape;
- That noise mitigation measures in the vicinity of the M25 Motorway and the buffer to the electricity pylons across the western part of the site are designed in such a way as to maximise GI and visual enhancement opportunities;
- That protected trees form part of the wider GI offer;
- That the northern boundaries of the site in particular are enhanced where necessary to provide biodiversity opportunities and act as a visual buffer for existing properties adjacent to, or in close proximity of, the site;
- That the strengthening and/or creation of new Green Belt boundaries are a component of, rather than separate to, the GI offer;
- That the PRoW and existing watercourse and its vegetation, are integrated, retained and improved as part of the GI offer;
- Using the provision of SuDS as a GI opportunity;
- That provision of play for all ages as well as wide public open space opportunities (including the replacement of the Brook Road Informal Recreation Ground) are designed as an integrated part of the overall GI offer; and
- The Ancient woodland assets, the BAP Priority Habitat within the site and the nearby Local Wildlife Site are protected, and if possible enhanced.

Access between existing and proposed communities and into the surrounding countryside

The enhancement of the existing PRoWs that run across the site together with the provision of new and improved walking and cycling connections and wayfinding/ signage will be an important component of the masterplanning of the proposed allocation. This should ensure the provision of attractive and safe access from Epping through the site and into the surrounding countryside. Significant focus should be given to the PRoW network within and beyond the eastern part of the Masterplan Area to provide an enhanced offer which acts as an alternative to the SAC for walking and dog-walking in particular. This could include enhancing and signposting a range of circular walking routes. This approach would support greater opportunities for new and existing residents to access existing networks into the wider countryside and help to avoid placing further recreational pressure on the SAC.

DELIVERING SANG

3.2

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

This section sets out some of the key principles that should be considered in the design of bespoke SANG provision where this is required as set out in [3.1 Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations](#).

The responsibility for the development of an approach to avoid or mitigate any harm to the Epping Forest SAC lies with the competent authorities. Competent authorities are any organisation or individual that has a statutory role as defined in UK legislation and have a legal responsibility to help safeguard the features of an internationally designated site in undertaking their work and thereby achieve the aims of the Habitats Directive.

The competent authorities for the Epping Forest SAC include (but are not limited to) EFDC and the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Redbridge. We will continue to work with the other competent authorities, Natural England (as the responsible statutory body) and with the Conservators of Epping Forest (as the body responsible for the management of the Epping Forest) to take a joined up approach to protecting the Epping Forest SAC where this is appropriate. This reflects the fact that the Epping Forest SAC extends across local authority administrative boundaries and we know, having undertaken surveys in 2017 and 2019 that it is not just people who live, or will live, in Epping Forest District who use, or will be likely to use, the Epping Forest SAC on a regular basis in the future. People from the surrounding local authority areas, including a number of London Boroughs and from further afield also use the Epping Forest SAC.

In recognition of this we have been working with adjoining local authorities to develop approaches to managing the effects of development on the Epping Forest in a co-ordinated way. Whatever approach we take through this Strategy we know that not all recreational pressure can be avoided. We have already developed an [‘Interim Approach to Managing Recreational Pressures on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation’](#) in conjunction with our partners. This was agreed by the Council’s Cabinet in October 2018. The Interim Approach identifies a number of projects and programmes to be delivered within the Epping Forest itself, together with monitoring measures, and how these will be delivered through the securing of financial contributions. The Interim Approach will be updated in due course, including in light of the latest information from the [2019 Visitor Survey](#) and will sit alongside this Strategy as set out in the [Primer \(Part 0\)](#).

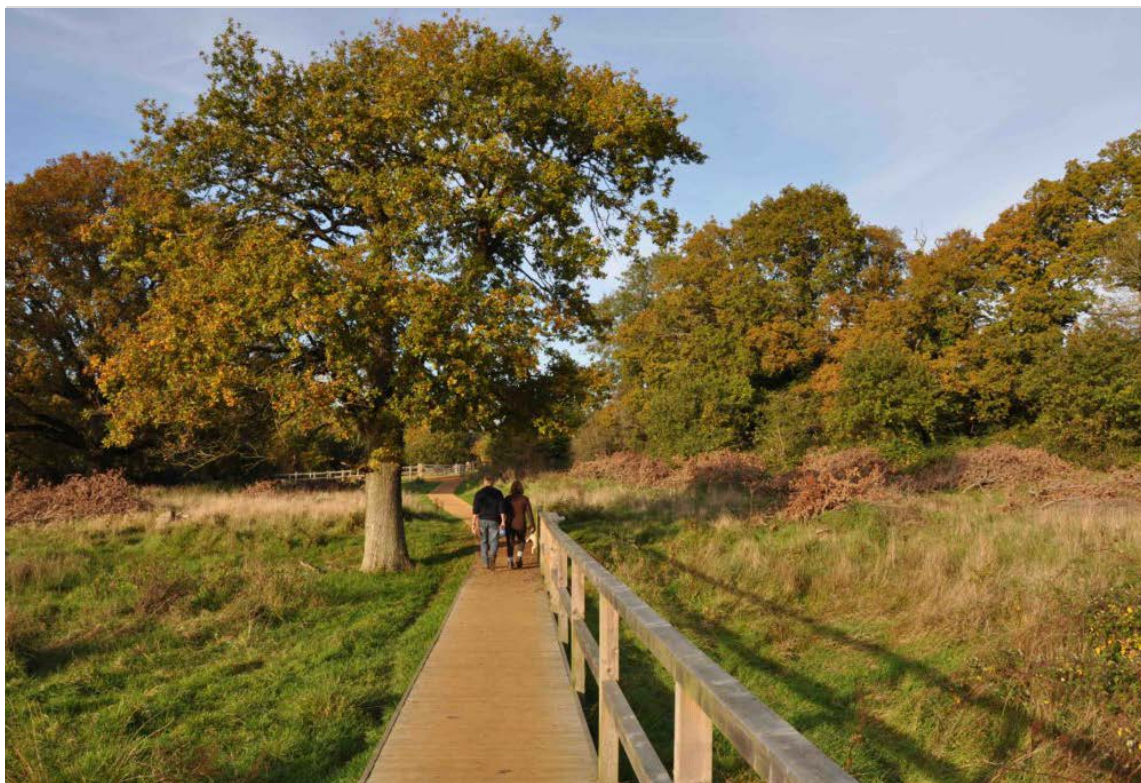


An entrance to the Epping Forest at High Beech

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

The Epping Forest Visitor surveys undertaken in [2017](#) and [2019](#) provide a wealth of information about the characteristics of existing visitors. This means that we have a better understanding of not just where people come from, but also when they visit, how often they visit, why they visit, what attracts them to use the Epping Forest and what types of activities they undertake. Consequently, the information contained in these surveys should be used to help inform the design and form of the site specific SANG provision within the context of the specific characteristics of each site and their context. This will help to ensure that the design approach taken is appropriate, follows a Landscape Led design approach and forms part of the Landscape Framework element of the site-specific Masterplan produced. Taking this approach will provide for a holistic and coherent approach to the provision of green and blue infrastructure which provides a high-quality offer for residents. In doing so the provision of green and blue infrastructure, including the SANG provision, will contribute to attracting people away from using the Epping Forest to avoid as much as possible putting extra pressure on it.

This Strategy is a key tool to achieving this ‘avoidance’ not just through the provision of SANG but also through the provision and enhancement of GI to attract existing residents who currently use the Epping Forest to other GI opportunities instead. Whilst there is a focus on avoiding placing pressure on the Epping Forest SAC the approach should also be considered where it is necessary to relieve pressure on other important sites of ecological and natural heritage importance affected by recreational use, such as Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs).



Naishes Wood SANG at Crookham Park, Fleet

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

Principles

The provision of SANG in order to avoid and/or mitigate recreational pressure on internationally designated sites is not a new concept and there is now a large amount of best practice available in terms of approaches to delivery. This includes the quantum of SANG considered necessary to positively influence visitor choice. One of the international sites where a SANG approach has now been operating for over 10 years in order to avoid an adverse effect on its integrity is the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (TBHSPA). The approach taken by the authorities in terms of the quantum of SANG that should be provided is 8ha per 1,000 population. This level of SANG was based on the recommendations of the South East Plan Technical Assessor. It is recognised that the recreational impact pathway for the TBHSPA was focused on the disturbance of ground nesting birds from dog-walking activities.

For the Epping Forest SAC the recreational pressure impact pathway is focused on the harm to its woodland and other habitats caused by walkers, horses and cyclists, including as a result of deposition of dog faeces. We know from the [2017](#) and [2019](#) Epping Forest Visitor Surveys that dog-walkers make up a significant component of the visitor profile followed by walkers. Whilst the interest features of the TBHSPA and the Epping Forest SAC differ, the visitor profile with the greatest impact and therefore the most appropriate approach to avoiding and mitigating that harm is similar. Consequently, the Council considers that, with the exception of the South of Epping Masterplan Area (see Section 3.1 above) the use of the 8ha per 1,000 population figure to guide the quantum of SANG required is a reasonable and justified approach.

In order to undertake the assessment of the quantum of SANG required based on the increase in the population likely to arise as a result of new development the Council is proposing to use the latest nationally derived household projections (which are currently 2018 based). These household projections suggest that the average household size in Epping Forest District in 2033 will be 2.34 persons.

Incorporating SANG within the Masterplan Landscape Framework will have the added advantage that it can be identified within the context of other aspects of GI provision including sustainable drainage, public open space, green infrastructure, play and take account of visual amenity considerations. These can be clearly articulated without having to provide full details at such an early stage.



Chobham Water Meadows SANG, Chobham

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

It is recommended that the approach taken to developing the Masterplanning Landscape Framework is as follows:

- Show the existing landform and landscape features of the site that will influence the design
- Show the location and dimensions of major green areas
- Show the broad concept for drainage for the major green areas (and any provision for taking surface water from within the development areas)
- The broad treatment types applicable to each area of land and the management aspirations for each (for example: woodland; meadow; amenity grass; natural play)
- Identifies a network of connections and circular walks and their hierarchy.

The SANG elements of the Landscape Framework should look to articulate or explain briefly by, for example, a table or list explaining how the proposal intends address a range of matters such as:

- Good pedestrian connections with residential areas
- Linkages with other open spaces, streets, walking routes (and how these will be achieved)
- Provision of attractive walking routes with appropriately surfaced paths
- Open sight lines along walking routes, avoiding overhanging vegetation where this exists
- Access for dog walking with off-lead areas and facilities to attract dog walkers
- Secure boundaries where needed
- Biodiversity enhancements
- Seating, litter and dog waste bins
- Signage and interpretation
- Ongoing landscape management.

It is suggested that the following are also illustrated on the Landscape Framework:

- Play,
- Tree groups,
- Holding ponds,
- Scrapes and swales,
- Furniture and features,
- Any underground constraints or legal constraints.



Kentwood Meadows SANG, Wokingham

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

The location, type and level of provision for these individual elements will help ensure that land is used efficiently whilst maximising the offer - not only for diverting trips from the Epping Forest or other ecological sites but also to ensure that character of place and quality of life achieves their full potential through good design.

Taking a Landscape Framework approach provides the opportunity at an early stage to identify, where appropriate, an element of multi-functionality of provision can be achieved. For example Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) features can also support biodiversity net gain objectives and create a natural interest feature which provides variety of landscape for the visitor.

SANG is not, however, intended to address the other functions of greenspace. Nevertheless, there are some functions which may be appropriate to incorporate within SANG where it adds value to the attractiveness of the provision and is appropriate within the context of the character of the Natural Greenspace. For example, appropriately designed natural children's play and SuDS provision may be acceptable. To support the attractiveness of the SANG for all appropriately designed and located seating will be acceptable.

SANG may be created from:

- Existing open space of SANG quality with no existing public access or limited public access, which could be made fully accessible to the public.
- Existing open space which is already accessible but is underused and which could be enhanced so that it is more attractive to residents.
- Land in other uses which could be converted into SANG

As SANG is intended to attract new residents arising from the relevant Masterplan areas the SANG provision should be located adjacent to the built parts of the site and designed to be visually and physically linked with it. This does not necessarily need to be within the Masterplan area as proposed to be allocated but can be adjacent/ in close proximity to it. The 'test' will be that it can be demonstrated through the site wide masterplanning process and at the detailed planning application stage that its location will be effective in attracting new residents to it. In particular, easy access to the site should be created. This should be via clear and 'logical' access points from the new development that the SANG is intended to serve and wherever possible, new points of access should be created to make it easy for the existing community to access the SANG in order to support community cohesion. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to making contributions to a quantum of off-site provision where it can be clearly demonstrated that such an approach will be effective in providing an appropriate SANG offer in relation to the requirements of the Habitats Regulations.

In order to be effective, the land to be used as SANG will need to be available from first occupation of the first phase of the residential development proposed. This will be secured through Section 106 planning obligations and will need to be supported by a phasing and delivery plan for the implementation of the works required to create the full SANG offer.

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

SANG must be designed so that it is perceived to be safe by users and should seek to avoid sites of high nature conservation value where increased visitor numbers would adversely affect that value. Such damage may arise, for example, from increased disturbance, erosion, input of nutrients from dog faeces, and increased incidence of fires. If any sites of high nature conservation value are considered as SANG, the impact on their nature conservation value will need to be assessed and a clear justification for its inclusion provided. This should include the measures needed to ensure the protection of its nature conservation value and how this will be secured.

What types of visitors should the SANG be designed to accommodate?

We know from surveys undertaken in [2017](#) and [2019](#) of people visiting the Epping Forest that the two main user groups who visit on a very regular basis are dog-walkers and walkers. Consequently, any SANG provision and its integration within the wider locality, including, for example, links into the local Public Rights of Way network will need to be designed to provide an attractive 'offer' that supports such activities.

The SANG should be well publicised in order to attract people to use it instead of the Epping Forest or other relevant ecologically important sites. Consequently, initiatives such as providing information for new residents promoting the existence of the SANG as well as other GI assets and encouraging their use should be explored. This could be through leaflets or a phone app. This would also help to support wider ambitions such as supporting Healthy Lifestyles.

Walking and Cycling Routes

SANG should seek to provide a choice of circular routes of around 2.3km – 2.5km in length to cater for dog- walkers. Longer circular routes of at least 3km as part of the choice will be expected to support other walkers.

For smaller scale SANG the provision of circular walking routes do not need to be entirely within the SANG itself but can include connected Public Rights of Way (PRoW), or the creation of connections to existing PRoW and other areas of Natural Greenspace in close proximity to the site where dogs are allowed off the lead. The key consideration will be that a variety of routes and opportunities are provided to dog-walkers and walkers.

Opportunities to provide cyclists and, where appropriate, horse riders with safe access to off-road or 'traffic light' routes should be identified.

Paths must be easily used and well maintained and if surfacing is to be provided in order to support greater accessibility this should be done in a sensitive way so as to avoid the site becoming too urban in feel.

3.2 DELIVERING SANG

Natural Play

Appropriately designed Natural play provision is considered to be an important element of the design to support the attractiveness of the SANG to families and would be an acceptable feature.



Hogmoor Inclosure SANG, Bordon

Wayfinding

Routes should be shown on way markers and visitor boards of a design and in a location, which would not undermine the naturalness of the space. Digital tools to facilitate wayfinding should also be explored.

Appearance

A semi-natural looking landscape with plenty of variation will be required although it will not be necessary to reproduce the landscape types within the Epping Forest.

Sport facilities and formal public open space will not be considered as contributing toward the provision of SANG.

SANG needs to reproduce the quality of the experience that a visit to other ecologically important sites would provide, so an air of relative wildness will be an important feature of SANG design.

Avoiding Conflicts

Careful consideration will need to be given to the design of the SANG and routes within it to avoid conflicts between walkers, cyclists and dogs and in some cases horse-riders. There will also be a need to consider locations for areas of natural play and their relationship with areas used for dogs which are off the lead.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION: INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

You should read this document after reading
[The Primer](#) if you are:

Epping Forest District Council and their Partners
who are delivering Green Infrastructure
enhancements to the Buckhurst Hill, Loughton,
Debden and Theydon Bois areas.

4

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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Purpose of the Strategy and Parts

The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure a strategic and holistic approach is taken to protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecology, landscape and heritage in the District.

The Primer (Part 0) provides an overview of the Strategy and its purpose, commentary on the existing Green Infrastructure assets in the District, and the Vision and Objectives of the Strategy. The other Parts of the Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Primer. These are:

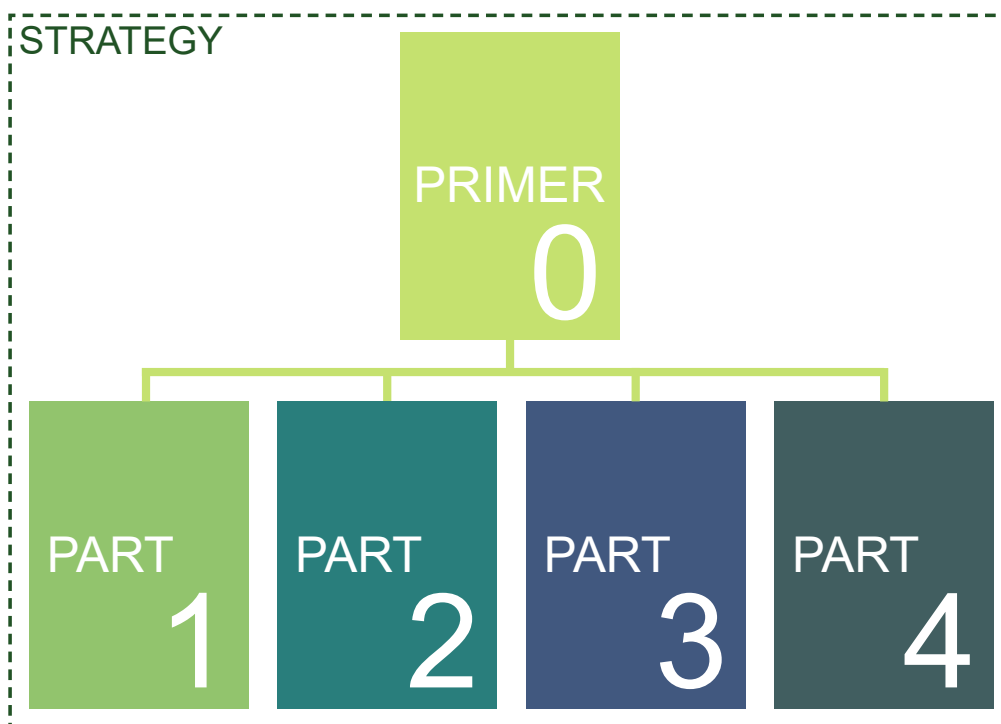
1. Implementation: Enhancing our Existing Network
2. Implementation: Landscape-Led Design
3. Implementation: Green Infrastructure in Strategic Allocations

This Part provides guidance on:

4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects

It provides:

- Specific infrastructure projects that are required to be delivered in order to avoid or mitigate an adverse effect on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Who will use the Strategy and Part 4?

The Strategy comprises four parts. Anyone using the Strategy and the associated guidance and projects should read the Primer first, to familiarise themselves with the purpose, context and vision of the Strategy.

This Part of the Strategy (4. Implementation: Infrastructure Enhancement Projects) identifies specific infrastructure projects that are required to be delivered in order to avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of the Epping Forest SAC. The projects relate specifically to development proposed in Debden, Theydon Bois, Loughton, and Buckhurst Hill and all new residential development will be required to make a financial contribution towards their delivery. These settlements have been identified for additional measures beyond payment of SAMM because all lie within easy walking distance of, and have direct access to, Epping Forest SAC by virtue of directly abutting the site. In contrast, none of the allocations at Chigwell, Epping or Waltham Abbey are within walking distance of the SAC except arguably South Epping Strategic Masterplan Area, which in any event is required to provide a bespoke SANG by virtue of its combination of size, proximity to the SAC and presence of a connecting footbridge over the M25.

The two Infrastructure Projects are intended as a minimum to address the recreational impact of the c. 300 dwellings expected at these settlements over the first five years of the Local Plan. As the infrastructure projects are developed, they may well be able to address all c. 600 dwellings allocated at these settlements. For example, if SANG were to be provided for these 300-600 dwellings it would require c. 6ha to c.11.5ha of SANG using the 8ha/1000 population metric. In other words, that is the amount of newly accessible natural greenspace required assuming it was currently entirely unused for recreation. The two Infrastructure Projects discussed below are already subject to recreational use but total more than 50ha (discounting the playing fields and cricket pitch). There should thus be ample capacity for these sites to accommodate the additional visitors from the allocated sites (which will represent just a 3% increase in total households in these settlements compared to the 19,472 existing households^{*1}, assuming that all c.600 dwellings are occupied by people who don't currently live in these settlements), particularly since these projects are intended to increase their existing recreational capacity. This will be further investigated as each project is developed.

The two projects identified in this Part are intended as a starting point from which a broader list of Infrastructure Projects can be identified through the Local Plan Review process as necessary to ensure that development in these settlements can be addressed. It is therefore not envisaged that these two projects will be the only such projects to be brought forward over the plan period and the list of Infrastructure Projects will be kept live.

*1 Source 2011 Census: 1613 existing households in Theydon Bois ward, 1907 in Loughton Alderton ward, 1965 in Loughton Broadway, 1840 in Loughton Fairmead, 1795 in Loughton Forest, 1943 in Loughton Roding, 1773 in Loughton St Johns, 1742 in Loughton St Marys, 1985 in Buckhurst Hill East and 2909 in Buckhurst Hill West. Total of 19,472 households

PROJECT 1: RODING VALLEY

4.1

4.1 PROJECT 1: RODING VALLEY

The Roding Valley Recreation Ground project area collectively comprises over 50ha of land. The Recreation Ground is located between the built-up areas of Loughton and Buckhurst Hill and the River Roding. The Recreation Ground links into, and is contiguous with, the Roding Valley Nature Reserve to the north east.

The Recreation Ground currently used for a mix of organised sport and informal recreation. Specifically, it contains:

- Football: Adult, Junior and mini pitches
- Cricket: Two pitches – one to the northern end (South Loughton Cricket Club) and one to the southern end (Roding Valley Cricket Club)
- Tennis: outdoor courts
- Two playgrounds and a Multi-Use Games Area.

Several Public Rights of Way and informal footpaths cross the site. Section 19 of the London Loop between Chingford and Chigwell crosses its southern end.

There are numerous connection points into the Recreation Ground from the residential areas to the west and Roding Lane to the south. Links across the Roding Valley Nature Reserve in the north east into the Recreation Ground can be achieved from Oakwood Hill and Chigwell Lane. There are also access points from the Project site into the Roding Valley Meadows on the eastern side of the River Roding. Part of the Roding Valley Meadows is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is also a Local Nature Reserve. Roding Valley Lake, located at the southern end of the area, is a key landscape feature and provides opportunities for fishing. Some areas are served by seating and bins and there is some signage.

The eastern boundary of the site is defined by the River Roding with views across it to the Roding Valley Meadows in many places.



Aerial view of Roding Valley Playing Fields in Loughton

4.1 PROJECT 1: RODING VALLEY

Opportunities

The area of the Project comprises both the Recreation Ground and the Roding Valley Nature Reserve to the north east which is contiguous with it. There are significant opportunities to enhance the visual amenity and biodiversity of the whole of the Project area through planting and other enhancements. This would provide opportunities to develop a more natural greenspace in places which would complement the setting of the Roding Valley Meadows.

The area comprising the Roding Valley Nature Reserve is designated as either an SSSI or a Local Nature Reserve. It has public access and has a number of footpaths running through it. Any improvements will therefore need to be carefully designed in order to avoid causing harm to its ecological value.

Enhancements across the Recreation Ground part of the Project site would help to create more visual interest, increase biodiversity and enhance its usability. This could be achieved without impacting on the formal sports pitches and would enhance their context – building on the ‘Best Kept Pitches in Essex’ award made to Loughton Town Council in 2018.



View over the Recreation Ground



Signpost within the Recreation Ground



Entrance from Oakwood Hill

4.1 PROJECT 1: RODING VALLEY

There are also opportunities to create more places to sit and dwell across the site including adjacent to the River Roding and the Roding Valley Lake as these are known to be key focal points which would be attractive for local residents to visit rather than the Epping Forest. In enhancing the site, care would be taken to ensure that it does not encourage greater use of the Roding Valley Meadows SSSI on the opposite bank of the river.

There is potential to build on the existing PRoW network and informal paths and to enhance links with the London Loop and the PRoW network beyond the site.

Taking these opportunities forward would provide for an enhanced amenity to support opportunities for new residents within these parishes to access natural greenspace as an alternative to the Epping Forest. There is also the potential, in places, to enhance cycling opportunities, as well as attractive areas for quiet contemplation and other opportunities for example for picnics and informal play for families.

Steps To Delivery

Development of Masterplan for the Project working with:

- Loughton Town Council,
- Buckhurst Hill Parish Council
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- EFDC Countryside Team
- EFDC Grounds Maintenance Team
- Roding Valley Meadows Consultative and Management Groups
- Local Sports Clubs
- Local communities
- Access Forum
- Walking and Cycling Groups
- Essex County Council
- Environment Agency

This would be supported by a Wayfinding Strategy to identify locations for enhancing signage, and the enhancement of existing, and provision of new, links including access points. This will build on initiatives such as Loughton Town Council's 'Quietways' Initiative and the Buckhurst Hill Residents Society's Walks. It will also include the development of a comprehensive information resource for residents to be accessible via an 'app' (as suggested by ECC) and also in paper form.

EFDC will provide the officer support to develop the Masterplan and Wayfinding Strategy.

4.1 PROJECT 1: RODING VALLEY

Funding

Recognising that this project is aimed at relieving recreational pressure on the Epping Forest SAC arising from new residential development in the Loughton/ Debden/Buckhurst Hill/Theydon Bois areas then contributions will be sought from all new residential development where there is a net increase in units arising within these parishes.

The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

Currently, the IDP contains the following interventions related to Project 1:

- Upgrading of Roding Valley Recreation Ground (LOU 28)
- Enhanced signage at the seven natural and seminatural greenspace sites in Loughton, including Roding Valley Meadows (LOU 29)

The costs are noted as 'dependent upon exact size and nature of scheme.'



Roding Valley Lake

PROJECT 2: LINKS TO THE THEYDON BOIS WOOD

4.2

4.2 PROJECT 2: LINKS TO THE THEYDON BOIS WOOD

The Woodland Trust acquired the land in 2006 as part of the 'Tree for All' project and planted with a mix of native broadleaf species between 2006 and 2009, helped by local community groups to create Theydon Bois Wood. Essex County Council paid for 30,000 trees, and the Buddhist religious order, Fo Guang Shan, paid for and planted 4,500 trees. In 2009, the Booker Prize judges planted an oak avenue. This planting symbolised the replenishment of trees that had been felled to produce the novels submitted for the prize. Local school children also planted a new orchard of 45 apple trees. The site is some 38.29 ha.

The mixed broadleaved trees of this young woodland are now establishing themselves and forming a bridge between the ancient and mature woods nearby. Animals and birds are moving in and the site also has wildflower meadows and a spectacular giant earth sculpture.

The land is gently sloping grade III agricultural land immediately west of the M11 near Theydon Bois. It is close to Epping Forest and it is believed may have once formed part of it. A small stream cuts through the site. The entrance to the site is on the Abridge Road, heading out of Theydon Bois just before the M11 motorway flyover and parts of the site are very visible from it. Public Rights of Way outside of the site provide links into it from both Theydon Bois and Debden. There is a good network of paths through the wood, including two linked public rights of way and a surfaced path. Part of the site has been kept free from planting in order to retain important views from the site across London.



Aerial view of The Woodland Trust Site in Theydon Bois

4.2 PROJECT 2: LINKS TO THE THEYDON BOIS WOOD

The Woodland Trust's guidelines for managing its sites including 'We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.' In line with this the site has open public access across it. This has meant that two previously unlinked PROW are now linked greatly improving the access opportunities for local people. A new surfaced path has been established through the site and links with a PRow through to Debden. There is no car park at the site for the public, but a hard-standing area is available for keyholders for use on events and is capable of accommodating coaches. The remote location of the site and the high risk of fly-tipping has meant that there are no plans to open up the parking area. The site is intended as a focus for quiet informal access for local people who can walk or cycle to the site.

Information on visiting Theydon Bois Wood can be found [here](#). The Management Plan 2017-2022 can be found [here](#).



Views to Central London across the site

4.2 PROJECT 2: LINKS TO THE THEYDON BOIS WOOD

Opportunities

The site provides a unique resource for local residents. The development of the site has linked two previously disconnected parts of the ProW network. However, the links from both Theydon Bois and Debden are, for the main part, of a poor quality and wayfinding and signage is poor. In order to provide for access to it to support its use as a natural green space the PRow network from both Theydon Bois and Debden into the site require enhancements in terms of surfacing, improving its accessibility for all and enhanced signage. Improvements of links within Debden itself to the site will also be explored.



PRow access from Theydon Bois



PRow access from Debden

COSTS

4.3

4.3 COSTS

The costs set out below have been developed as an indication of the range of improvements likely to be required to support the delivery of the Infrastructure Enhancement Projects. This has been developed following an analysis of the sites and infrastructure requirements to support enhanced connectivity. These costs will be reviewed following the development of the Masterplan and Wayfinding Strategy and will be updated at first review of the Strategy and incorporated into the next update of the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The costs below have been informed by work undertaken by LUC for the Conservators of Epping Forest in September 2020 and Spon's External Works and Landscape Price Book 2021. They are therefore considered to be up-to-date and appropriate for use to inform the costs of the implementation and maintenance costs set out in the table below.

Project Development, Support and Awareness Raising Costs

- Development of Masterplan for Roding Valley Recreation Ground (integrating with Roding Valley Meadows Nature Reserve): **£40,000**
- EFDC Staff costs for overseeing Masterplanning and implementation: **£26,000**
- Development of Wayfinding Strategy: **£10,000**
- Development of Awareness raising package (including mobile phone app): **£5,000**

Implementation and Maintenance Costs

Activity	Quantum	Initial Capital Cost	Maintenance Cost (25 years)
Footpath improvements (granular base, wooden edging, self-binding surface) 1.5m width	1800m	£81,000	£67,500
Footpath Improvements (loose surface path (e.g. woodchippings) 1.5m width	300m	£2,250	£2,850
Footpath Improvements (granular base, wooden edging, self-binding surface) 2m width	180m	£10,800	£9,000
Replacement bridges	2 x 5m span	£12,000	£12,500
Wayfinding/signage	37no. timber post signs/ finger posts	£12,765	£33,300
Seating	10no.	£18,500	£12,500
Litter/dog bins	10no.	£4,000	£10,000
Wooden interpretation signs	5no.	£1,250	£4,500
Replacement stiles	2no.	£1,000	£2,500
Specimen Tree Planting	500 sqm	£45,000	£0
Whip Planting	1000 sqm	£4,700	£0
Total		£193,265	£154,650

4.3 COSTS

Overall Costs and Cost Per Proposed Dwelling

Overall costs: £428,915

Cost per dwelling based on 599 dwellings proposed for allocation in the emerging Local Plan within the parishes of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois. Therefore, it is calculated as **£716** per dwelling.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

APPENDICES



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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNING

A1

A.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNING

Legislative And Policy Context

A significant amount of legislation and national and local planning policy and guidance provide the context to the production of this draft GI Strategy for Epping Forest District. The following section outlines the international, national, regional and local legislation and/or policies that have influenced the development of this draft Strategy.

Legislative Framework

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by government in its 25 Year Environment Plan. It therefore goes wider than just a local authority's planning functions.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, provide the primary legislative framework for the protection wildlife, nature conservation, the countryside, national parks and public rights of way in the UK. This includes the legislative framework in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), of which there are a number across the district.

The conservation of the natural environment as it relates to sites of international importance is enshrined in legislation through the EU Habitats Directive the requirements of which have been encapsulated in the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which came into force on 1 February 2020. The ultimate aim of the Directive is to "maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest" (Habitats Directive, Article 2(2)). The Directive established internationally designated sites of importance for biodiversity (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites). The District has two internationally designated sites, being the Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA and Lee Valley 'Ramsar' site. The Epping Forest (including that area designated as SAC) is legally protected. The Epping Forest Act 1878 established that the unenclosed parts of the Forest should be preserved and maintained as an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and named the City of London Corporation as its conservators.

As well as the statutory designations set out above the district contains a number of local established designations including Local Nature Reserves, County Wildlife and Local Wildlife sites.

A.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNING

The role of GI in responding to the Climate Emergency should also not be underestimated. Global climate change and species protection provide clear drivers to introduce measures such as local GI networks. International agreements and legislation make provision for addressing both climate change and species protection whilst a growing body of evidence identifies the value of nature to human health and well-being.

At a national level, legislative imperatives are included in the UK Climate Change Strategy with the overarching 'net zero' emissions target by 2050 arising from the Climate Change Act 2008. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' sets out a framework to maintain and improve the environment for the next generation. It commits to:

- Making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and well-being; and
- Focusing on increasing action to improve the environment from all sectors of society.

To complement its 25 Year Environmental Plan, Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy, the UK government launched a Clean Air Strategy in 2019. The Clean Air Strategy setting out comprehensive actions required across all parts of government and society to improve air quality. The strategy sets out how we will protect the nation's health, the environment, secure clean growth and innovation, reduce emissions from transport, homes, farming and industry and monitor our progress.

Importantly, Government re-introduced the Environment Bill on 30 January 2020. The Bill sets out how the government plans to protect and improve the natural environment in the UK. There are a number of elements within the Bill which are relevant to this Strategy including the proposed introduction of a mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain in the planning system to ensure that new developments enhance biodiversity and create new greenspaces for local communities to enjoy. In introducing the Bill Government has made it clear that net gain requirements will supplement, not replace or undermine, existing protections for protected sites or irreplaceable habitats.

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (February 2019) sets out national policy for local planning authorities and decision-takers. The NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11), with sustainable development having economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective is that development should protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment as well as protecting biodiversity, minimising pollution and adapting to climate change and the demands of a low carbon economy. The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure (which also includes Blue Infrastructure) as:

"A network of multi-functional greenspace, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities."

A.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNING

The NPPF outlines the relevance of GI to the development of policies within local plans and neighbourhood plans:

- Paragraph 20 highlights that ‘Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for...conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure’.
- Paragraph 91 requires that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places; referencing safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities and high-quality public space as a means to achieving this.
- Paragraph 150 states that ‘New development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change... including through the planning of green infrastructure’.
- Paragraph 171 states that ‘Plans should...take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure’.
- Paragraph 181 links the requirement for the identification of green infrastructure provision and enhancement at the plan making stage to the improvement of air quality or mitigation of impacts relating to this issue.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) encourages a strategic approach to incorporating GI into local plans and implementing planning decisions through an evidence-based approach. It emphasises the importance of GI to the delivery of high-quality sustainable development, alongside other forms of infrastructure such as transport, energy, waste and water. GI provides multiple benefits, notably ecosystem services, at a range of scales, derived from natural systems and processes.

The PPG states that local authorities are required to provide suitable mitigation for potential impacts on international nature conservation sites and recommends the provision of open space to deliver a range of benefits and mitigation measures.

The PPG also requires the sustainable management of GI, which should be identified at the earliest stage, alongside the determination of sources of funding for its on-going management.

A.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNING

Regional Context

At the strategic / cross-boundary level, Essex County Council's emerging Green Essex Strategy takes into consideration priorities offset out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, and other key national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans, including the Essex Growth Infrastructure Framework, that influence action to protect, manage and enhance our GI network. The emerging Vision and objectives in the Green Essex Strategy and those in this emerging GI Strategy align.

The aim of the Council is to manage the potential impact of development on GI with the strategic objective, working in partnership with other groups, of maintaining and where possible enhancing the ecological, recreational and conservation role of GI within a wider context. Within this strategic, cross-boundary context, the Council will collaborate with partners to:

- Protect and enhance the natural environment of the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor (LSCC) Core Area;
- Protect the natural biodiversity of the Lee Valley Regional Park SPA and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Site (a wetland of international importance), and support the utilisation of natural assets for recreation purposes where appropriate; and
- Conserve and enhance the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Council is taking a comprehensive approach to managing, protecting and enhancing the GI network through this Strategy. It will support the implementation of a range of policies in the emerging Local Plan to ensure development is delivered in the context of maintaining a high quality built and natural environment. Whilst the emerging Local Plan is yet to be adopted and some changes are proposed to be made to it, the overarching approach to the built and natural environment, including the relevant policies, have been supported.

A.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNING

These policies include:

- The location of development (Policy SP 2 and Chapter 5)
- Green Belt and District Open Land (Policy SP 6);
- The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure (Policy SP 7);
- Visitor Economy (Policy E 4);
- Supporting sustainable transport choices (Policy T 1);
- Protecting habitat and improving biodiversity (Policy DM 1);
- Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA (Policy DM 2);
- Landscape character, ancient landscapes and geodiversity (Policy DM 3);
- Sustainable urban drainage systems (Policy DM 16);
- Green and Blue Infrastructure (Policy DM 5);
- Open space, sport and recreation provision (Policy DM 6);
- High Quality Design (Policy DM 9);
- Managing and reducing flood risk (Policy DM 15);
- Sustainable drainage systems (Policy DM 16);
- Protecting and enhancing watercourses and flood defences (Policy DM 17)
- On site management of waste water and water supply (Policy DM 18)
- Air Quality (Policy DM 22)

Policy DM 5 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) in particular sets out the Council's expectations as to how development proposals should respond to the GI needs of the District to ensure that GI assets are protected and enhanced or new provision made to ensure that a network of multi-functional green and blue assets is created across the District.

RESOURCES

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A.2 RESOURCES

Epping Forest District Council Local Plan

[EFDC Local Plan Submission Version 2017 \(EB114\)](#)

[EFDC Local Plan Submission Documents](#)

Epping Forest District Council Local Plan Evidence Base

[EFDC Local Plan Evidence Base](#)

[EFDC Open Space Strategy 2017 \(EB703\)](#)

[EFDC Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Audit \(EB706\)](#)

[Council's LoWS Review \(EB708\)](#)

[EFDC Landscape Character Assessment 2010 \(EB709\)](#)

[EFDC Visitor Survey August 2017 \(EB715\)](#)

[EFDC Visitor Survey February 2019 \(EB716\)](#)

Epping Forest District Council Relevant Guidance and Strategies

[EFDC Sustainability Guidance / Major Developments \(+10 units\) Draft October 2020](#)

[EFDC Sustainability Guidance / Minor Developments \(1-9 units\) Draft October 2020](#)

EFDC Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy 2021

[EFDC Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note October 2018](#)

[Interim Approach to Managing Recreational Pressures on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation October 2018 \(EB134\)](#)

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Relevant Guidance and Strategies

[HGGT Vision Document 2018](#)

[HGGT Design Guide 2018](#)

HGGT Stewardship Advice Stage 2 Report 2020

[Harlow Local Development Plan \(adopted 2020\)](#)

[Green Infrastructure Plan for Harlow 2005](#)

A.2 RESOURCES

[Harlow Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study 2013 Chapters 1-5](#)

[Harlow Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study 2013 Chapters 6-9](#)

Essex County Council Relevant Guidance and Strategies

[Essex Design Guide - Landscapes and Greenspaces](#)

[Essex Design Guide - Sustainable Drainage Systems \(SuDS\)](#)

[Essex Design Guide - Garden Communities](#)

[Green Essex Strategy](#)

[Essex County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#)

National Relevant Guidance and Strategies

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[National Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment](#)

[National Design Code Consultation Version January 2021](#)

[The Habitats Directive 1992](#)

[The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019](#)

[The Agriculture Act 2020](#)

Further Reading

[EFDC Environmental Services](#)

[EFDC Interactive Planning Map](#)

[Essex County Council Public Rights of Way \(PRoW\) Map](#)

[Fields in Trust Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play](#)

[Harlow Art Trust](#)

[Harlow Sculpture Town](#)

[Landscape Institute's Green Infrastructure: An Integrated Approach to Land Use](#)

[Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance 2009 \(NE176\)](#)

A.2 RESOURCES

[North Weald Bassett Parish Council Millennium Walks](#)

[The Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes](#)

[Public Health England's Improving Access to Greenspace 2020](#)

[Rewild My Street](#)

[River Stort Catchment Management Plan](#)

[TCPA Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow 2014](#)

[Urban Design London - Designing Rain Gardens: A Practical Guide](#)

[Woodland Trust Theydon Bois Wood](#)

GLOSSARY

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A.3 GLOSSARY

Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy

A document produced by the Council with Natural England setting out the steps that will be taken to reduce pollution within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). This could include steps to reduce car usage and promote public transport.

Amenity Space

Private residential outdoor space, provided for use on a sole or communal basis, which enables the enjoyment of the property.

Ancient Woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since 1600 AD.

Biodiversity

The variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

Biodiversity Net Gain

A metric used to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development.

Blue Infrastructure

Infrastructure provision relating to water. This includes natural features such as rivers, streams and ponds, semi-natural features such as sustainable drainage systems, bio-swales and canals, and other engineering features such as dams, weirs and culverts. Blue and Green infrastructure are often considered together, placing emphasis on the importance of biodiversity and flood risk mitigation.

Connectivity

The state of being connected, or degree to which places and people are connected e.g. by transport systems including footpath networks.

Conservation Areas

An area of special architectural or historic interest, with the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local planning authorities have a duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate conservation areas.

Development

'Development' includes building operations (e.g. structural alterations, construction, rebuilding, most demolition); material changes of use of land and buildings; engineering operations (e.g. groundworks); mining operations; other operations normally carried out by a person operating a business as a builder; subdivision of a building (or any part of it) used as a dwelling house for the use as two or more separate dwelling houses. As defined by section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Development Proposals

Any proposed development scheme presented/ submitted to the Council for consideration or determination. This includes, planning applications (outline or full), other consenting mechanisms and proposals submitted as part of pre-application enquiries.

Epping Forest Buffer Land

Areas of land around the fringes of Epping Forest owned by the City of London Corporation and managed by the Conservators of the Forest. The purpose of Buffer Land is to protect the rural environment of the Forest and provide a natural barrier of land for recreation and complementary wildlife habitats.

Evidence Base

The information and data gathered to justify the policy approach set out in the Local Plan, including physical, economic, and social characteristics of an area.

Garden Town Communities/ Garden Villages

Large scale development planned in a holistic and comprehensive way, including extensions to existing settlements. Development of this nature is based on the 'Garden City' principles developed by the Town and Country Planning Association. These aim to improve quality of life by providing high quality design; infrastructure appropriate for the needs of the society such as public transport, public services, education and health facilities as well as community facilities and provision of green spaces, gardens, open spaces and landscaped areas integral to their design.

Geodiversity

Refers to the variety of the geological and physical elements of nature, such as of minerals, rocks, fossils, soils and landforms, and active geological and geomorphological processes.

Green Belt

Land protected by a policy and land use designation to protect areas of largely undeveloped or agricultural land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas. Review of Green Belt boundaries is undertaken as part of the production of Local Plans where Green Belt exists.

Green Infrastructure

A network of high quality and multifunctional green spaces, both urban and rural, including but not limited to environmental features such as parks, public open spaces, playing fields, sports pitches, woodlands, and allotments, which are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Green and Blue Corridors

A natural linear feature/habitat that supports biodiversity, primarily by enabling wildlife to move along it and connect other wildlife populations and habitats as part of a network. Green Corridors include features such as woodland and hedgerows, railway embankments or grass verges. Blue Corridors include features such as rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands and sustainable drainage measures and can facilitate natural hydrological processes while minimising flooding.

Habitats Directive

Is a Directive adopted in respect of the conservation of natural habitats of wild plants and animals transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Refers to the several distinct stages of Assessment which must be undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) to determine if a plan or project may affect the protected features of a habitats site before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.

Heritage Asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape, or archaeological remains identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

This contains the key infrastructure required to support the homes and employment development in the Local Plan. This includes physical infrastructure such as transport energy and water, social and community infrastructure such as health, education and emergency services and green infrastructure such as open spaces and allotments. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) sits alongside the Local Plan and will contain a schedule identifying when items of infrastructure are expected to be in place, sources of funding and costs. It will be regularly updated as more information becomes available.

Landscape Character Assessment

An assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, land-form, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

Listed Building

A building or structure considered to be of special architectural or historic interest that appears on the National Heritage List for England.

Local Green Space

Land outlined in this Local Plan that is intended to be afforded the same protection as Green Belt land via the use of a Local Green Space designation. The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Places with wildlife or geological features that or special interest locally. These are normally owned and statutorily designated by the local authority. In Epping Forest District, Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust.

Local Plan (LP)

The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community and stakeholders. Once adopted the Local Plan will legally form part of the Development Plan for the District, superseding the Replacement Local Plan (2006).

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), whilst not of national status, have a county-wide significance. Each site identified provides a high-grade habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna meriting careful conservation. Sites are evaluated according to criteria, including: diversity of species; features of wildlife importance; rarity of habitat and species in local and county context; management and current use; public access and linkages with other sites and areas.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

A formal agreement between two or more parties which is not legally binding. It sets out a statement of the responsibilities, activities, outcomes, and lead contacts between the parties involved in a project.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflects the needs and priorities of their communities.

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.

Place-making

The process through which communities shape their public and open spaces. It involves the planning, design, management and programming of open spaces to improve a community's cultural, economic, social and ecological situation.

Planning Obligation

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Planning Practice Guidance

Online guidance from government that expands upon the provisions in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Quality Review Panel (QRP)

An independent panel of planning, architecture, urban design and construction experts set up by the Council to provide impartial expert advice to both applicants and local authorities. The panel considers design issues in relation to new development schemes and proposals for important public spaces including significant minor applications, major planning applications, preapplication development proposals, Strategic Masterplans and Concept Framework Plans. The Quality Review Panel's feedback is a material consideration for local authorities and the planning inspectorate when determining planning applications. The purpose of the Quality Review Panel is to ensure that new development is of a high quality and contributes to place making.

Ramsar Site

Wetlands of international importance designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Registered Parks and Gardens

Are to be found on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England that recognises the importance of these as heritage assets of particular significance.

Section 106 Agreement

A mechanism listed under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would otherwise not be acceptable, focused on site-specific mitigation of the impact of development. They can involve the provision of facilities or contributions toward infrastructure.

Scheduled Monument

Scheduled for their archaeological and historic character, these are nationally important sites that would particularly benefit from close management.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites designated by Natural England to protect their wildlife or geology including those designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Area given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010. Special Protection Area (SPA) that has been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

Special Protection Area (SPA)

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.

Strategic Allocations

Allocations for specific or mixed uses of development contained in Development Plan Documents. The policies in the document identify any specific requirements for individual allocations.

Strategic Masterplan

Is a plan that takes a comprehensive approach to the planning and delivery of Strategic Masterplan Areas and associated infrastructure. The Masterplan should be produced and undertaken jointly by the landowners/promoters of the relevant sites and endorsed by the Council prior to the determination of any planning applications. Planning applications and any other consenting mechanisms for sites located within the Strategic Masterplan Area must be in general conformity with the Strategic Masterplan which has been formally endorsed by the Council.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

These are drainage systems designed to mimic natural drainage systems as closely as possible and manage surface water and groundwater to sustainably reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments on flood risk.

Sustainable Transport

Efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Swale

Are linear grass covered depressions which lead surface water overland from the drained surface to a storage or discharge system, typically using road verges.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

An order made by a local planning authority to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity

Veteran Tree

A tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape or culturally. Ancient trees are all veterans but veterans are not all ancient.

