Contents

Preface

The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The emerging approach to the Strategy is set out in the following documents, which are being published alongside the Regulation 18 draft local plan for consultation:

- Volume 1 – Emerging Strategy & Standards (this document)
- Volume 2 – Supporting Evidence (separate document)

In addition to a set of proposed Green Infrastructure standards, emerging approaches to developing other potential Green Infrastructure standards are also outlined which are continuing to be explored by the Councils (see next steps in Volume 1).

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The role of green infrastructure (GI) in supporting sustainable development goals is recognised by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This includes:

- Making sufficient provision for GI in strategic policies (para 20d)
- Promoting provision of safe and accessible GI to support healthy lives (para 96c)
- Incorporating GI into the planning of climate resilient places (para 164a)
- Maintaining and enhancing GI networks to conserve the natural environment (para 188) and improve air quality (para 199)

1.1.2 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service to prepare a joint Local Plan covering the period up to 2045 for the Greater Cambridge Area (see **Figure 1.1**).

1.1.3 In this context the GCSP commissioned CBA to develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy to provide evidence to inform the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, including recommended GI standards for supporting policies related to the following aims and themes of the plan:

- **'Biodiversity and green spaces**: Increase and improve our network of habitats for wildlife, and green spaces for people, ensuring that development leaves the natural environment better than it was before.
- **Wellbeing and social inclusion:** Help people in Greater Cambridge to lead healthier and happier lives, ensuring that everyone benefits from the development of new homes and jobs.
- **Climate change:** Help transition to net zero carbon by 2050, by ensuring that development is sited in places that help to limit carbon emissions, is designed to the highest achievable standards for energy and water use, and is resilient to current and future climate risks.

- **Great places:** Sustain the unique character of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and complement it with beautiful and distinctive development, creating a place where people want to live, work and play.
- **Infrastructure:** Plan for transport, water, energy and digital networks; and health, education and cultural facilities; in the right places and built at the right times to serve our growing communities.'

1.2 What is Green Infrastructure

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

1.2.1 GI can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies.

1.2.2 **Figure 1.2** illustrates the varied scales, settings and types of GI assets and connections that provide the "building blocks" or foundations of the GI network for Greater Cambridge. Together, these GI assets provide a range of ecosystem functions that have potential to deliver important nature-based benefits for people, places and nature (see the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Study for details).

1.2.3 Harnessing the potential of these GI assets to enrich people's lives and support nature in Greater Cambridge is at the heart of this proposed GI Strategy.

1.3 Approach

Structure of the Strategy

1.3.1 The emerging approach to the Greater Cambridge GI Strategy is set out in the following documents:

- **Volume 1** – Emerging Strategy & Standards (this document)
- **Volume 2** – Supporting Evidence (separate document)

1.3.2 In addition to a set of proposed GI standards, emerging approaches to developing other potential Green Infrastructure standards are also outlined.

1.3.3 A glossary of key GI terms can be found in **Appendix A**.

Developing the GI Strategy

1.3.4 The GI Strategy has been developed in line with the principles of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework, which provides a set of national standards and supporting guidance to assist local planning authorities and developers with making provision for GI in local plans and planning applications (see **Appendix B**).

1.3.5 The GI Strategy has also been shaped by the Building with Nature Standards, which provide a benchmark of good practice for enhancing the quality of the built environment by integrating well-designed GI into development.

1.3.6 Reflecting these national approaches, the proposed GI Strategy promotes a shift away from the conventional approach to considering the recreational/sports functions of public open space in isolation, towards a more integrated approach that considers open space as part of a multifunctional GI network.

1.3.7 Government planning policy and guidance makes it clear that GI is not simply an alternative term for open space. Public open spaces have the potential to deliver multiple functions beyond providing outdoor facilities for physical activity, sport and play. Well-designed accessible green spaces can also

help support nature recovery and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature; while also contributing to the setting of built development and helping to address the effects of climate change.

1.3.8 In line with the principles of the national Green Infrastructure Framework, GI networks should be multi-functional, varied, connected and accessible. The GI approach therefore embraces both publicly accessible green space (i.e. such as parks and other open spaces provided for the primary purpose of sport, recreation and visual amenity), and other types of private green space and natural features in and around settlements that provide corridors of connectivity with GI in the surrounding countryside at a landscape-scale.

1.3.9 Reflecting this approach, a typology of green and open space for Greater Cambridge has been identified and mapped to support the setting of GI standards (as shown in **Table 1.1** – see Section 4.2 in **Volume 2** for details).

1.3.10 The GI Strategy set out in **Section 2.0** draws on evidence provided by the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study. A wide range of internal GCSP stakeholders and external stakeholder organisations (such as Natural England, the Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership and Cambridge Past, Present & Future) were engaged in shaping this Study and its recommendations.

Table 1.1: Greater Cambridge Green & Open Space Typology

Primary Types	**Sub-Types**	**Accessible Green Space**		**Private Green Space**
		Publicly Accessible Green Space	**Restricted Accessible Green Space**	
Food Growing Space	Allotments	No	Yes	No
	Community Orchards	Yes	Yes	No
	Community Gardens	Yes	Yes	No
Informal Area of Open Space	Amenity Green Spaces	Yes	No	No

	Informal Open Space	Yes	No	No
	Civic Spaces	Yes	No	No
Burial Grounds & Churchyards	Burial Grounds & Churchyards	Yes	No	No
Parks & Recreation Space	Urban Destination Parks & Gardens	Yes	Yes	No
	Urban Neighbourhood Parks	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country Parks	Country Parks	Yes	Yes	No
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Children & Young People Space	Play Spaces	Yes	No	No
	Youth Space	Yes	No	No
Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space	Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space	Yes	Yes	Yes
Domestic Gardens	Domestic Gardens	No	No	Yes
Green/Blue Corridors	Urban Corridors	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Countryside Corridors	Yes	Yes	Yes

Developing the GI Standards

1.3.11 The overall approach to developing GI standards for Greater Cambridge has been shaped by the national outcomes for GI highlighted by the Green Infrastructure Framework (**Box 1.1**).

Box 1.1 – National Outcomes for Green Infrastructure

- 'More people having access to greenspace close to home (within 15 mins walk) and to a variety of larger greenspaces and natural areas within 10 km, providing opportunities for contact with nature, increased physical activity, reduced stress, and improved health and wellbeing

- Towns and cities that are greener and more beautiful, attracting inward investment and leading to more prospering communities. Greener offices and business parks that encourage and retain new skilled staff and increase productivity. Greener high streets that encourage people to visit them and spend time and money there – enhancing local economies and making them more resilient

- Increased tree cover and other green and natural features, helping to address climate change by storing carbon, reducing temperatures during heat waves (particularly in urban areas) and soaking up rain water to help reduce flooding

- Green roofs and walls that insulate buildings and reduce energy use

- Green infrastructure making a significant contribution to the Nature Recovery Network, especially in urban areas, and contributing to the target of 30% nature rich land cover by 2030

- More parks, trees and green roofs etc are well managed and maintained for the long term, enabling them to deliver benefits and value for current and future generations'

1.3.12 The GI standards outlined in **Section 3.0** are based on Natural England's recommended national "Headline GI Standards" for Accessible Greenspace, Urban Greening, Urban Tree Canopy Cover and Nature Recovery (see Appendix B in **Volume 2** for details), adapted to reflect local needs and opportunities.

Implementing the GI Strategy & GI Standards

1.3.13 Recommendations for implementing the proposed GI Strategy and GI Standards through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and related delivery mechanisms are set out in **Section 4.0**.

2.0 Strategy

2.1 General

2.1.1 Reflecting the national priorities for GI, a proposed high-level strategy for protecting, enhancing and expanding GI across Greater Cambridge is outlined below.

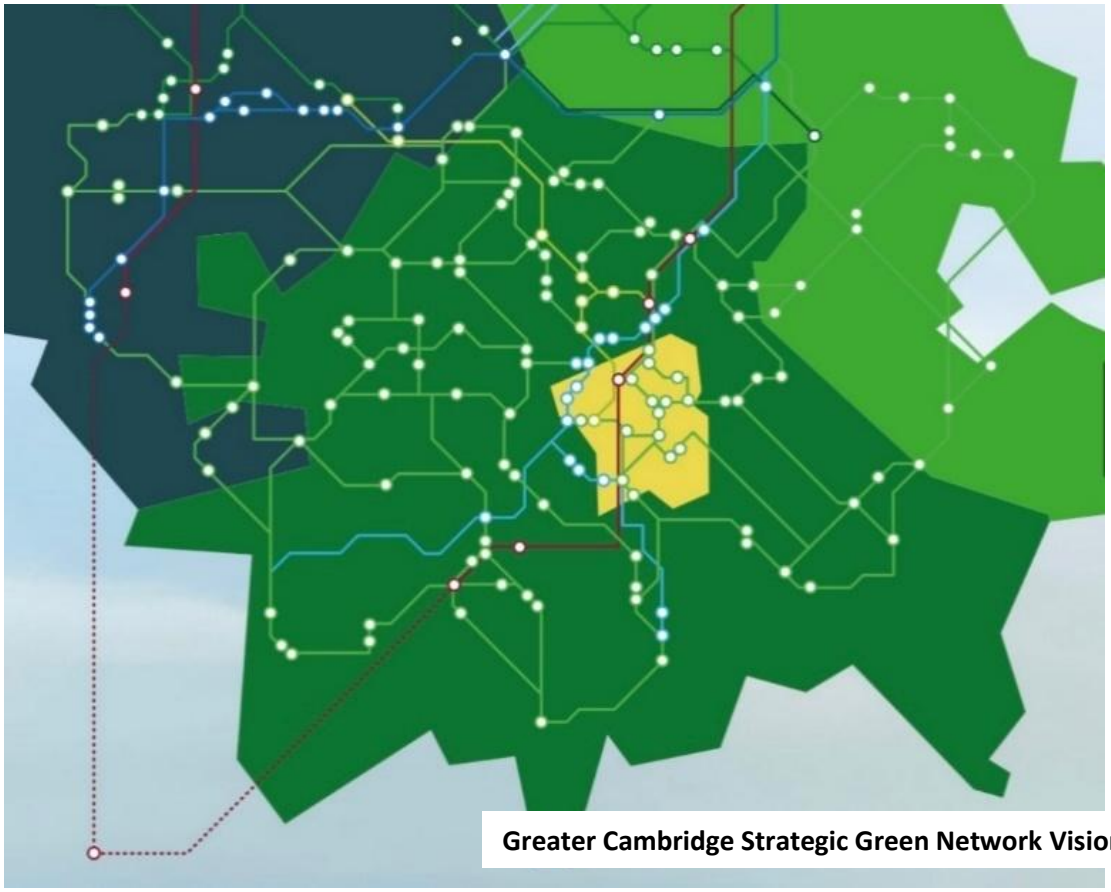
2.1.2 It includes a vision for a Strategic Green Network connecting people, places and nature in Greater Cambridge, underpinned by three overlapping Wellbeing, Wildlife and Water themes that are the aims of the GI Strategy (see **Figure 2.1**).

2.1.3 The emerging strategy also sets out the approach to achieving good GI through the setting and adoption of GI Standards, linked to delivery of the Strategic GI Initiatives recommended by the Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping Study.

Parker's Piece, Cambridge, Karen Cann

2.2 Strategic Green Network Vision

2.2.1 Building on and supporting the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Parks Partnership's Blueprint, an aspirational Vision for the Greater Cambridge Strategic Green Network is proposed in **Box 2.1**.



Greater Cambridge Strategic Green Network Vision

Box 2.1 – Vision for the Greater Cambridge Strategic Green Network

The Vision is to create and maintain a green infrastructure network of well-connected, good-quality and multi-functional accessible green and blue spaces to support sustainable growth across Greater Cambridge

It will support a greener, fairer, healthier and prosperous future for local communities by helping address the linked challenges of improving health, tackling climate change and restoring nature. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Council will work with delivery partners in securing opportunities to maximise the varied benefits of this green network for people, places and nature.

2.2.2 The ambition is for Greater Cambridge to be a place where socially inclusive, safe, welcoming and well-managed green and blue spaces provide the backdrop to peoples' everyday lives and wellbeing. A place where nature can be experienced in a variety of settings close to home and in wider countryside destinations; and healthy communities with opportunities for outdoor recreation and play, active travel and local food growing.

2.2.3 Greater Cambridge is a place where expanded networks of nature-rich habitats provide space for wildlife to thrive in the countryside and urban areas. A place where the potential of habitats and water to provide nature-based solutions - such as natural flood management and sustainable drainage systems, green roofs and walls, urban forests and carbon storage – is harnessed to strengthen the resilience of communities and wildlife to a changing climate.

2.2.4 It is a place where the benefits of good quality GI are widely valued by local communities and businesses. A place where well-designed GI is embedded in all new development to ensure that new homes and employment areas enhance the wider green network. A place where local authorities, communities and businesses come together to create and maintain vibrant green spaces, ensuring the long-term stewardship of GI assets for present and future generations.

2.2.5 Greater Cambridge is known as an exemplar of how GI can be a foundation for a growing city-region with an innovative and dynamic economy.

The Backs, Cambridge, Cajeo Zhang

2.3 Theme 1: Wellbeing

Box 2.2 – GI and Wellbeing

This theme is about harnessing the potential of GI for contributing to happy, healthy and active communities, and prosperous places, in Greater Cambridge

Midsummer Common, Cambridge, John Sutton

2.3.1 GI can help support active and healthy places in Greater Cambridge by creating green neighbourhoods with networks of green/blue spaces and green corridors/routes supporting active lifestyles, sense of place, community cohesion and nature connections, which benefit peoples' physical and mental

health, wellbeing and quality of life. Green spaces, green roofs and the tree canopy can act as “air conditioning” to keep urban environments cool and the air clean, and help mitigate noise pollution.

2.3.2 GI also has a role in providing economic wellbeing benefits that support prosperous communities and great places across Greater Cambridge. It can add value by creating high quality, distinctive and greener environments that are attractive to businesses and investors, support green jobs and retail/high streets, boost tourism and drive prosperity.

What does good GI look like for the Wellbeing theme?

*Based on Building with Nature Wellbeing Standards principles

- Accessible - for all to use and enjoy, bringing people closer to nature
- Inclusive - of local people and engaged with and sympathetic to their needs and strengths
- Seasonal - offers enjoyment for all, at all times of the year
- Healthy – helps reduce health inequalities in existing communities
- Social - creates a sense of social cohesion and sustainability
- Distinctive – contributes to a sense of place, where people are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and pride

What are the local GI priorities for the Wellbeing theme?

- Providing sufficient provision of socially inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible greenspace close to home, including well-designed parks, food growing spaces, informal areas of open space and natural play space
- Ensuring sufficient provision of high-quality country parks in suitable locations to meet the needs of growing communities for access to larger greenspaces
- Embedding accessible greenspace into strategic development sites
- Ensuring access to greenspace close to high density residential developments
- Embedding accessible greenspace into commercial development sites

Trumpington Allotments, Cambridge, John Sutton

2.4 Theme 2: Wildlife

Box 2.3 – GI and Wildlife

This theme is about harnessing the potential of GI for contributing to nature-rich places for biodiversity and people in Greater Cambridge

2.4.1 GI can help to create and sustain nature-rich places by providing adequate space to allow nature to recover and thrive everywhere, in the city, towns and countryside across Greater Cambridge; by protecting and enhancing habitats of biodiversity and geodiversity value, and through the creation and restoration of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats to support recovery of priority species. In built-up areas, “urban rewilding” of parks, green spaces and private gardens can help provide valuable habitats and corridors for wildlife.

2.4.2 As well as delivering benefits for biodiversity, the enhancement of habitat networks can provide wider environmental benefits such as carbon storage, improving soils and strengthening peoples’ connections with nature.

What does good GI look like for the Wildlife theme?

*Based on Building with Nature Wellbeing Standards principles

- Networked - creates and restores effective links to or stepping-stones between local habitats and ecological corridors
- Integral - treats wildlife and habitat as a fundamentally integral part of a successful built environment
- Protects and enhances - values existing habitat and features through their protection and enhancement
- Transformative - translates a commitment to wildlife, in the form of specification, design intent and management plans, into sustainable, long-life reality
- Nature-rich - contributes positively to reversing the long-term decline in biodiversity and aids nature's recovery with space for wildlife to flourish

What are the local GI priorities for the Wildlife theme?

- Protection of designated sites from visitor pressures associated with growth
- Increasing the proportion of GI that is designed and managed for nature recovery in and around urban areas
- Development provides net gains for biodiversity by contributing to the creation and restoration of nature-rich habitats that align with the priorities of the Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Increasing tree cover/other habitats to help address climate change by storing carbon and contributing to catchment-scale natural flood management

River Cam, Cambridge, Eleni Koureas

2.5 Theme 3: Water

Box 2.4 – GI and Water

This theme is about harnessing the potential of Blue-Green Infrastructure (BGI) for contributing to climate-resilient places for people and nature in Greater Cambridge

2.5.1 Like much of the UK, Greater Cambridge is experiencing warmer, drier summers and milder, wetter winters. BGI can help create and sustain places that are more resilient and adaptive to climate change by providing nature-based solutions at local and catchment scales for managing flood risk, improving water quality and maintaining the natural water cycle to replenish the chalk aquifer. Green spaces play an important role as “green sponges” to help reduce flooding by absorbing, storing or dispersing floodwater.

2.5.2 Sustainable drainage systems, such as swales, rain gardens and green roofs, can help slow down rainwater run-off into the drainage network. In addition to reducing pressures on the water environment, water-sensitive

developments incorporating BGI can deliver wider amenity, biodiversity and economic benefits.

What does good GI look like for the Water theme?

*Based on Building with Nature Wellbeing Standards principles

- Integrated – water management is a key part of the GI function
- Quantity and quality - flood and pollution risk is managed close to where rainwater falls
- Catchment connected – water storage capacity of land adjacent to, or downstream from, a site is enhanced
- Multifunctional – water is used to create a distinct sense of place and amenity and habitat for people and wildlife
- Nature-based - a diversity of natural features and landscape is used to manage water quantity, water quality and flow in a resilient and resource efficient manner

What are the local GI priorities for the Water theme?

- Managing water resources to provide biodiversity, social and wellbeing benefits, whilst reducing flood risk, improving water quality and maintaining river levels/water supply
- Increasing tree cover and other urban greening features (such as sustainable drainage systems and green roofs) to help tackle climate change by reducing flooding, particularly in areas of rising urban density and declining biodiversity

Ouse Fen, South Cambridgeshire, Hugh Venables

2.6 Achieving Good Green Infrastructure

Setting Green Infrastructure Standards

2.6.1 As highlighted in the National Planning Policy Framework, the creation of high-quality places is fundamental to the planning system. The ecosystem functions provided by GI are integral to well-designed places, and are an essential part of successful place-making and place-keeping in both urban and rural contexts.

2.6.2 GI standards provide a mechanism for addressing national and local priorities around improving health and wellbeing, tackling climate change and restoring nature through the planning process.

2.6.3 Setting standards that apply best practice principles for what good GI looks like (see **Box 2.5**) can help achieve quality and consistency in the provision of GI.

Box 2.5 – What Good GI Looks Like Principles

- **'Principle 1: Multifunctional** - Green Infrastructure should deliver a range of functions and benefits for people, nature, and places, and be designed to meet their needs. Multifunctionality (delivering multiple functions from the same area of Green Infrastructure) is especially important in areas where provision is scarce or of poor quality.
- **Principle 2: Varied** - Green Infrastructure should comprise a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces, green routes, and environmental features (as part of a network) that can provide a range of different functions, benefits, and solutions to address specific issues and needs.
- **Principle 3: Connected** - Green Infrastructure should function and connect as a living network at all scales (e.g., within sites, across regions and at the national scale). It should enhance ecological networks and support ecosystems services, connecting provision of Green Infrastructure with those who need its benefits.

- **Principle 4: Accessible** - Green Infrastructure should create and maintain green liveable places that enable people to experience and connect with nature, and that offer everyone, wherever they live, access to good quality parks, green spaces, walking and cycling routes that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all.

- **Principle 5: Character** - Green Infrastructure should respond to an area's character so that it contributes to the conservation, enhancement and/or restoration of landscapes; or, in degraded areas, creates new high-quality landscapes to which local people feel connected.'

2.6.4 In this context, GI standards have been developed to support the aims and policies of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, by helping drive forward the pace, scale and quality of GI necessary to support sustainable growth. Proposed and emerging GI standards for inclusion in the Local Plan are set out in **Section 3.0**.

2.6.5 The adopted standards will set out the Councils' expectations for the quantity, accessibility and quality of GI that new residential and commercial development should provide. It is intended that the GI standards are applied to development through the direct provision of new and/or improved GI on and/or off-site, or by making an appropriate financial contribution to off-site provision (see recommendations in **Section 4.0**).

Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives

2.6.6 The GI standards are linked to, and support delivery of, the Strategic GI Initiatives recommended by the Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping Study. Informed by engagement with local stakeholders, the Study identified 14 Strategic GI Initiatives with potential for addressing current and future gaps in GI provision. As indicated on **Figure 2.2**, these include 9 landscape-scale GI initiatives.

2.6.7 The Strategic GI Initiatives align with the proposed Strategic Green Network Vision and Themes, and are therefore considered to provide a robust basis for protecting, enhancing and expanding GI across Greater Cambridge. The aims of the proposed Strategic GI Initiatives are outlined below:

‘1. Revitalising the chalk stream network

- Conserve and restore chalk streams to increase their ecological value, by addressing the three primary issues affecting the chalk stream network – flow pressures, channel modifications and poor water quality. Restoration measures include restoring natural flows, floodplain reconnection, channel realignment, reconnecting rivers to groundwater, removal of barriers to fish passage, and the rewilding of degraded rivers.
- Protect the East Anglian chalk groundwater resource by enhancing GI features through landscape-scale management, and improving the condition of the ecosystem by reducing pollution and contamination.

2. River Cam Corridor

- Enhance the River Cam Corridor to strengthen its existing role as a key linear GI asset across Greater Cambridge, by linking together existing active travel routes, connecting existing and proposed neighbourhoods to the Cam Corridor, improving wayfinding and interpretation, balancing accessibility improvements with nature conservation, restoring floodplains, implementing natural flood management, and increasing riparian planting.

This Strategic Initiative divides the River Cam corridor into three stretches:

A: The northern section running from north east Cambridge to Waterbeach.

B: The section running through the city of Cambridge.

C: The section running south of Cambridge city.

3. Gog Magog Hills and chalkland fringe

- Conserve and enhance priority habitats, including chalk grassland and woodland.
- Provide a high quality, connected GI network to accommodate growing recreational need and enable residents to access, enjoy and learn about this part of Greater Cambridge's countryside.
- Ensure access to the countryside is managed in a way which avoids increasing recreational pressure on existing conservation sites at risk (e.g. SSSIs).

4. Enhancement of the eastern fens

- Conserve and enhance priority habitats including fen, grazing marsh and grassland (within and around the four designated SSSIs) for the benefit of wildlife.
- Create wildlife corridors to connect and expand these habitats where possible.
- Ensure negative impacts from access and recreational pressure on these sensitive ecological sites are minimised through habitat buffers and educating visitors.

5. The Great Ouse fenland arc

- Create a resilient network of fen and fen-edge habitat across the northern part of Greater Cambridge through habitat restoration, protection of peatland, sustainable soil, water and habitat management, and natural flood management.
- Enhance accessibility by linking existing and new routes to settlements and promote education of the rich geology, wildlife and heritage.

6. North Cambridge green space

- Provide new strategic green space(s) to the north of Cambridge, connected to the wider GI network by green corridors, to address the deficit in accessible GI in this area, reduce recreational pressure on existing sites and provide an important asset to meet growing demand from proposed development.

7. West Cambridge GI buffer - Coton corridor

- Enhance the recreational and habitat offer to ensure there is sufficient high-quality and accessible GI to keep pace with growing development (and associated recreational pressure) west of Cambridge. This includes improving accessibility to and between GI assets and surrounding settlements, providing more opportunities for recreation and nature (making sites 'work harder'), expanding GI where possible, and enhancing habitats.

8. Western gateway multifunctional GI corridors

- Provide opportunities to improve biodiversity by expanding and joining up the existing woodland, hedgerow and grassland habitat network. This will be delivered through new woodland planting, natural regeneration, hedgerow extension and management, and habitat restoration. Ensure opportunities for biodiversity offsets from East West rail are sought.
- Ensure negative impacts from access and recreational pressure on sensitive ecological sites (Eversdon and Wimpole SAC, and woodland SSSIs) are minimised, by providing additional GI sites for recreation, promoting alternative or new access routes, and educating visitors on the value of conserving habitats.
- Improve access throughout the area for people (where it will not cause detrimental impact on ecological sites -as above) through opportunities associated with East West rail as well as along river corridors.

9. Pollinator corridors

- Create a network of linear 'pollinator corridors' by promoting locally appropriate wildflower diversity and abundance in line with the National Pollinator Strategy.

10. Expanding Greater Cambridge's 'urban forest'

- Increase tree canopy cover and its distribution, by protecting the existing tree canopy and planting new trees using locally-appropriate species, to

help settlements adapt to climate change and sustainably enhance the urban environment for people and wildlife.

11. Woodland expansion and resilience

- Expand woodland areas (and hedgerows) through planting and natural regeneration, and improve their management outside urban areas to deliver benefits for carbon sequestration, create wildlife corridors, contribute to flood resilience and enhance the wider landscape.
- Mitigate pressures on woodlands, including recreational pressure, fragmentation and the impacts of climate change.

12. Urban greening and 'de-paving'

- Introduce urban greening interventions (e.g. green roofs, SuDS, street trees and pocket parks) within existing, regenerating and newly proposed urban areas across Greater Cambridge to deliver multiple benefits for people, wildlife and the environment.

13. Allotments and community gardening

- Create a patchwork of allotments and community growing sites across Greater Cambridge, delivered through expansion and upgrading of existing sites and providing new sites in areas of deficiency and new development.

14. Environmentally friendly farming

- Ensure that farming and food production across Greater Cambridge's predominantly rural landscape is undertaken in a way that maximises the delivery of ecosystem services (e.g. biodiversity, carbon sequestration, water quality, soil quality, health and wellbeing) by promoting partnership working and uptake of agri-environment schemes.'

2.6.8 Further information on the purpose and objectives of each Strategic GI Initiative can be found in the Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping Study Part 2 Recommendations Report (2021). It is anticipated that the Strategic GI Initiatives would be included as 'primary infrastructure' in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

3.0 Standards

3.1 General

3.1.1 The overall approach to developing GI standards for Greater Cambridge has been shaped by the national outcomes for GI highlighted by the Green Infrastructure Framework (**Box 3.1**).

Box 3.1 – National Outcomes for Green Infrastructure

- 'More people having access to greenspace close to home (within 15 mins walk) and to a variety of larger greenspaces and natural areas within 10 km, providing opportunities for contact with nature, increased physical activity, reduced stress, and improved health and wellbeing
- Towns and cities that are greener and more beautiful, attracting inward investment and leading to more prospering communities. Greener offices and business parks that encourage and retain new skilled staff and increase productivity. Greener high streets that encourage people to visit them and spend time and money there – enhancing local economies and making them more resilient
- Increased tree cover and other green and natural features, helping to address climate change by storing carbon, reducing temperatures during heat waves (particularly in urban areas) and soaking up rain water to help reduce flooding
- Green roofs and walls that insulate buildings and reduce energy use
- Green infrastructure making a significant contribution to the Nature Recovery Network, especially in urban areas, and contributing to the target of 30% nature rich land cover by 2030
- More parks, trees and green roofs etc are well managed and maintained for the long term, enabling them to deliver benefits and value for current and future generations'

3.1.2 The GI standards set out in this section are intended to support the aims and policies of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. It includes proposed GI standards and also emerging approaches for other potential GI standards where further exploration is needed (see recommended Next Steps in

Section 4.5) The GI standards should be read in conjunction with the definitions set out in Section 4.2 of **Volume 2**.

3.1.3 Quantity standards are generally expressed as a quantum of GI provision per 1000 population, and some are expressed as a target for a specified quantum of GI provision. Aspirational targets for an uplift in GI to meet current and future needs over the period of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan are also included where appropriate. Quality standards are based on current best practice planning, design and management guidance for relevant types of GI.

3.1.4 The approach to setting GI standards has been informed by national best practice guidance advocated by Natural England set out in the Green Infrastructure Framework Principles & Standards for England. The GI standards for Greater Cambridge are based on Natural England's recommended national "Headline GI Standards" for Accessible Greenspace, Urban Greening, Urban Tree Canopy Cover and Nature Recovery (see **Appendix B** in **Volume 2** for details), adapted to reflect local needs and opportunities.

3.1.5 In addition to overall GI standards for Accessible Greenspace, specific quantity, accessibility and quality standards for the following open spaces in Greater Cambridge are proposed as appropriate:

- Country Parks
- Food Growing Space
- Informal Areas of Open Space
- Children & Young People Space

3.1.6 The approach to setting local standards for the above open spaces is based on a review of the existing adopted open space standards for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (see **Appendix C** in **Volume 2**), and informed by the baseline standards for Cambridgeshire recommended by the Cambridgeshire

Open Space Mapping & Standards (COSMS) Technical Report (JSA, 2020) where appropriate.

3.1.7 Individual standards are not proposed for the following primary types included in the Greater Cambridge Green & Open Space Typology (see **Table 1.1**) as follows:

- Burial Grounds & Churchyards, Parks & Recreation Space and Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space – these are covered by the proposed Accessible Greenspace Standards
- Domestic Gardens and Green/Blue Corridors – provision of these GI types is context and place-specific
- Outdoor Sports Facilities – these are addressed by the Greater Cambridge Interim Sports Strategy

3.1.8 Provision of the above types of open space should be shaped by good practice GI design and management guidance highlighted in **Appendix E** where relevant.

3.2 Proposed Green Infrastructure Standards

3.2.1 The proposed GI standards are listed in **Box 3.2** and detailed in this section.

Box 3.2 – Proposed GI Standards for Greater Cambridge

Building with Nature Standards

- Core Quality Standards
- Wellbeing Quality Standards
- Water Quality Standards
- Wildlife Quality Standards

Green Infrastructure Standards:

- Overall Accessible Greenspace Area-Wide Standard
- Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standard for Residential Development
- Accessible Greenspace Quality Standard
- Urban Greening Quality Standard
- Urban Tree Canopy Cover Quantity Standard
- Urban Tree Canopy Cover Quality Standard
- Overall Nature Recovery Area-Wide Standard

Open Space Standards:

- Country Parks Quality Standard
- Food Growing Space Quantity Standard
- Food Growing Space Quality Standard
- Informal Areas of Open Space Quality Standard
- Children & Young People Space Quantity Standard
- Children & Young People Space Quality Standard

Building with Nature Standards

Proposed Approach: Building with Nature Standards

Proposed Standard

Residential and commercial development meets the Building with Nature Core, Wellbeing, Water and Wildlife Quality Standards for the design of good quality GI.

Justification

3.2.2 The Building with Nature (BwN) Standards provide a benchmark of good practice for enhancing the quality of the built environment by integrating well-designed GI into development. The BwN Standards are a set of GI quality standards, supported by a voluntary third-party assessment and accreditation system, for developers, planners and built environment professionals. The BwN Standards Framework includes 12 Standards that together define a benchmark for "what good quality GI looks like" covering the following Core, Wellbeing, Water and Wildlife Quality Standards (see **Appendix D** for details):

Core Quality Standards:

1. Optimises Multifunctionality and Connectivity
2. Positively Responds to the Climate Emergency
3. Maximises Environmental Net Gains
4. Champions a Context Driven Approach
5. Creates Distinctive Places
6. Secures Effective Place-keeping

Wellbeing Quality Standards:

7. Brings Nature Closer to People
8. Supports Equitable and Inclusive Places

Water Quality Standards:

9. Delivers Climate Resilient Water Management
10. Brings Water Closer to People

Wildlife Quality Standards:

11. Delivers Wildlife Enhancement
12. Underpins Nature's Recovery

Implementation

3.2.3 It is proposed that the BwN Standards are adopted as a benchmark for assessing the suitability of GI proposals for residential and commercial development in Greater Cambridge. It is recommended that the latest version of the BwN Standards Framework be applied as a GI planning and design checklist for planning applications in a manner proportionate to the nature and scale of proposed development. Accreditation under the BwN Standards should also be encouraged for strategic development sites in particular (such as regeneration schemes or urban extensions).

Green Infrastructure Standards

Proposed Approach: Overall Accessible Greenspace Area-Wide Standard

Proposed Standard

At least 8.7ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population and no net loss or reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population.

Justification

3.2.4 For the purposes of this standard, accessible greenspace includes the following types of publicly accessible green space (see Section 4.2 in **Volume 2** for details):

- Parks & Recreation Space (Urban Destination Parks & Gardens and Urban Neighbourhood Parks)
- Country Parks
- Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space
- Food Growing Spaces (Community Orchards and Community Gardens)
- Informal Areas of Open Space (Amenity Green Spaces, Informal Open Space and Civic Spaces)
- Burial Grounds & Churchyards
- Children & Young People Space (Play Spaces and Youth Space)

3.2.5 The proposed standard aligns with the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Capacity Standard for local authorities to have at least 3ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population with no net loss or reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population at an area-wide scale, in order to sustain the current level of provision.

3.2.6 Greater Cambridge currently has approximately 8.7ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population (based on current 2024 population of 322,000). Allowing for projected population growth to a total of 462,000 by 2045 for the Greater Cambridge area, with no additional provision of accessible greenspace this figure would decrease to 6.05ha per 1000 population. The proposed standard of at least 8.7 ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population would maintain the current level of provision across Greater Cambridge to meet future needs.

Implementation

3.2.7 The standard can be met by direct provision of new and improved accessible greenspace by the Councils working in partnership with other providers, and/or through direct provision by developers, and/or through an appropriate financial contribution from developers towards off-site provision as appropriate.

Proposed Approach: Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standard for Residential Development

Proposed Standard

Development meets size and proximity criteria for accessible greenspace associated with the development specified by the local planning authority based on the Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standards.

Justification

3.2.8 The Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standards aim to ensure that everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing and contact with nature within 15 minutes' walk from home, and that all greenspaces should be accessible by public transport or safe active travel routes.

3.2.9 It is proposed that the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standard for residential development is adopted as the local standard for Greater Cambridge, which is based on the following size and proximity criteria:

'Within 15 minutes' walk:
EITHER a Doorstep OR Local Accessible Greenspace

- A doorstep greenspace of at least 0.5ha within 200 metres, or
- A local natural greenspace of at least 2ha within 300 metres walk from home.
- AND a medium sized neighbourhood natural greenspace (10ha) within 1km.
- AND beyond 15 minutes' walk:
- A medium/large wider neighbourhood natural greenspace (20ha) within 2km, and

- A large district natural greenspace (100ha) within 5km, and
- A very large sub-regional greenspace (500 ha) within 10 km.'

3.2.10 A GIS-based analysis of how the above Accessible Greenspace Accessibility Standards criteria relate to current provision and future needs across Greater Cambridge is set out in **Appendix D** of **Volume 2**. The mapping shows that there are significant gaps in provision at most scales across a range of the City of Cambridge wards (although there is mostly good provision at the wider neighbourhood natural greenspace scale); and there are significant gaps in provision at all scales for many settlements across South Cambridgeshire District. There are also gaps in provision of traffic-free active travel routes between accessible greenspace at all scales.

Implementation

3.2.11 The standard can be met by development being required to meet the size and proximity criteria specified by the local planning authority in order to address the gaps in provision of accessible greenspace and connectivity as identified by the analysis in **Appendix D** of **Volume 2**.

Proposed Approach: Accessible Greenspace Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Planning, design and management of accessible greenspace provision meets the Green Flag Award® Criteria and The Sensory Trust's inclusive access guidance.

Justification

3.2.12 It is proposed that the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Quality Standard is adopted as the local standard for Greater Cambridge. The Natural England Accessible Greenspace Quality Standard recommends that the Green Flag Award® (see **Appendix B** in **Volume 2** for details) criteria are used to inform the planning, design and management of accessible greenspace. The criteria set out in the Green Flag Award® Guidance Manual (Ellicott, 2020) include:

- A welcoming place

- Healthy, safe and secure
- Well maintained and clean
- Environmental management
- Biodiversity, landscape and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing and communication
- Management

3.2.13 The Natural England Accessible Greenspace Quality Standard also recommends that The Sensory Trust's best practice inclusive access guidance in 'By All Reasonable Means: Least Restrictive Access to the Outdoors' (The Sensory Trust, 2020) should be followed. This publication sets out guidance for providing more inclusive access, in more places, for more people of all ages, circumstances and backgrounds to enjoy the outdoors (see **Appendix B** in **Volume 2** for details).

3.2.14 In addition, proposals for Accessible Greenspace and Active Travel Routes should be shaped by the following good practice planning, design and management guidance as appropriate (see **Appendix E**):

- Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide
- Sustrans Traffic-free Routes & Greenways Design Guide

Implementation

3.2.15 The standard can be met by development being required to reflect the above good practice GI planning, design and management guidance for new and improved accessible greenspace and active travel routes in proposals.

Proposed Approach: Urban Greening Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Development in urban areas reflects good practice GI planning, design and management guidance for Urban Greening features.

Justification

3.2.16 The Natural England Urban Greening Standard seeks to improve the resilience, sustainability, and biodiversity value of urban residential neighbourhoods, achieving measurable net gains for biodiversity and increasing the delivery of ecosystem services (including soil protection and enhancement, surface water management, air quality regulation, noise attenuation and carbon sequestration).

3.2.17 For the purposes of this standard, green cover in urban areas encompasses "green" vegetated surfaces on land and buildings/structures, including urban woodland and street trees (see the proposed Urban Tree Canopy Cover Quality Standard), and urban waterbodies.

3.2.18 Development proposals should be shaped by the following good practice planning, design and management guidance for urban greening features as appropriate (see **Appendix E**):

- Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide
- Sustrans Traffic-free Routes & Greenways Design Guide
- Trees & Design Action Group Green Infrastructure Guide
- Living Roofs & Walls Guidance
- Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage
- Wildlife Gardening Guidance

Implementation

3.2.19 The standard can be met by development being required to reflect the above good practice GI planning, design and management guidance for urban greening features in proposals.

Proposed Approach: Urban Tree Canopy Cover Quantity Standard

Proposed Standard

Urban Tree Canopy Cover across the Greater Cambridge area increased to a target of 20% by 2050 from current baseline. Development achieves a minimum future tree canopy cover of 30% of the site area through retention of existing trees and planting of new trees, including a minimum of 30% street tree canopy coverage.

Justification

3.2.20 The proposed urban tree canopy cover standards reflect the need to increase urban woodlands and street trees, which contribute to green cover in urban areas (see the Urban Greening Standards).

3.2.21 The Cambridge Tree Strategy (2016) includes a target for achieving a 19% urban tree canopy cover by 2050 based on 17% baseline cover. There is no baseline tree canopy information, strategy or target for South Cambridgeshire currently available. In terms of national benchmarks, the Urban Forestry & Woodland Advisory Committee (2017) recommended a target of at least 20% overall tree canopy cover for a local authority area, or where the target is already met the aim should be to increase tree canopy cover from the current baseline. In this context, the proposed uplift target of 20% by 2050 for the Greater Cambridge area as a whole is considered to be appropriate. The Woodland Trust recommends a minimum 30% tree canopy cover target for new development land.

Implementation

3.2.22 The standards can be met by direct provision of new and/or improved urban tree canopy cover on and/or off-site, or through an appropriate financial contribution to off-site provision as appropriate. Provision of on-site/off-site Biodiversity Net Gain can contribute to meeting this standard.

Proposed Approach: Urban Tree Canopy Cover Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Proposals for increasing and maintaining Urban Tree Canopy Cover reflect good practice tree planting and management GI guidance.

Justification

3.2.23 Proposals for planting and management of trees to increase and maintain Urban Tree Canopy Cover in Greater Cambridge should be shaped by the following good practice planning, design and management guidance as appropriate (see **Appendix E**):

- Trees & Design Action Group Green Infrastructure Guide
- Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide

Implementation

3.2.24 The standard can be met by development being required to reflect the above good practice tree planting and management GI guidance in proposals for the planting and management of trees.

Proposed Approach: Overall Nature Recovery Area-Wide Standard

Proposed Standard

Target of 100% increase in the proportion of GI that is designed and managed for nature recovery across the Greater Cambridge area over the Local Plan period.

Justification

3.2.25 The Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is expected to include biodiversity priorities to support the Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision's target of 100% increase in the proportion of GI that is designed and managed for nature recovery in Cambridgeshire. It is proposed that development in Greater Cambridge contributes to this target for the creation and restoration of nature-rich habitats in line with the Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy by meeting the landscape-scale and settlement-scale nature recovery standards.

Implementation

3.2.26 The standard can be met by direct provision of new and enhanced nature-rich habitats by the Councils working in partnership with other providers, and/or through direct provision by developers, and/or through an appropriate financial contribution from developers towards off-site provision as appropriate. Provision of on-site/off-site Biodiversity Net Gain can contribute to meeting this standard.

Open Space Standards

Proposed Approach: Country Parks Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Country park provision reflects good practice planning, design and management guidance.

Justification

3.2.27 It is proposed that the planning, design and management of Country Parks in Greater Cambridge should be shaped by the Accessible Greenspace Quality Standard and the Natural England Country Park Accreditation Scheme criteria (see **Appendix E**).

Implementation

3.2.28 The standard can be met by proposals for new and enhanced country parks being required to reflect the above good practice guidance.

Proposed Approach: Food Growing Space Quantity Standard

Proposed Standard

Food Growing Space provision of at least 0.4 ha per 1000 population.

Justification

3.2.29 For the purposes of this standard, Food Growing Space provision includes Allotments, Community Orchards & Community Gardens.

3.2.30 The current level of Food Growing Space provision in Cambridge is 0.26ha per 1000 population based on 38.85ha total area of existing provision and the current population. The current level of Food Growing Space provision in South Cambridgeshire is 0.56ha per 1000 population based on 96.05ha total area of existing provision and the current population. See **Table 4.2** in **Volume 2** for a detailed breakdown of existing provision of Allotments, Community Orchards & Community Gardens by each district.

3.2.31 The adopted local standards for Food Growing Space provision are 0.4ha per 1000 population for allotments only (Cambridge) and 0.4ha per 1000

population (South Cambridgeshire). The quantity standard for allotments recommended by the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards (COSMS) Technical Report (JSA, 2020) is 0.21ha per 1000 population. The National Allotment Association quantity standard for allotments is 0.2 ha per 1000 population.

3.2.32 It is proposed to retain the adopted allotment provision standards for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire as the Food Growing Space standard to increase provision within Cambridge to address current deficit in provision against the adopted standards, sustain the general current level of provision in South Cambridgeshire and to meet the needs of an increasing population.

3.2.33 Publicly accessible Food Growing Spaces (i.e. Community Orchards and Community Gardens) provision contributes to the overall Accessible Greenspace Quantity Standard.

Implementation

3.2.34 The standard can be met by direct provision of new and enhanced Food Growing Space by the Councils working in partnership with other providers, and/or through direct provision by developers, and/or through an appropriate financial contribution from developers towards off-site provision as appropriate.

Proposed Approach: Food Growing Space Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Food Growing Space provision reflects good practice GI planning, design and management guidance.

Justification

3.2.35 For the purposes of this standard, food Growing Space provision includes Allotments, Community Orchards & Community Gardens. Proposals for Food Growing Space in Greater Cambridge should be shaped by Local Food Growing good practice planning, design and management guidance (see **Appendix E**).

Implementation

3.2.36 The standard can be met by proposals for new food growing spaces, and improved management of existing spaces, being required to reflect the above guidance.

Proposed Approach: Informal Areas of Open Space Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Informal Areas of Open Space reflects good practice planning, design and management GI guidance.

Justification

3.2.37 Proposals for new and improved Informal Areas of Open Space (including Amenity Green Spaces, Informal Open Space & Civic Spaces) in Greater Cambridge should be shaped by the following best practice GI planning, design and management guidance as appropriate (see **Appendix E**):

- Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide
- The Fields in Trust Standards 2024
- Play England Design for Play Guide 2008

Implementation

3.2.38 The standard can be met by proposals for new informal areas of open space, and the improved management of existing spaces, being required to reflect the above good practice guidance.

Proposed Approach: Children & Young People Space Quantity Standard

Proposed Standard

Children & Young People Space provision of at least 0.55ha per 1,000 population.

Justification

3.2.39 The current provision of Children & Young People Space (including Play Spaces and Youth Space) in Greater Cambridge as a whole is 0.12ha per 1000 population based on 37.98ha total area of existing provision and the current population. The adopted local standards for Children & Young People Space are 0.3ha per 1000 population (Cambridge) and 0.8ha per 1000 population (South Cambridgeshire). The benchmark standard recommended by the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards (COSMS) Technical Report (JSA, 2020) for Children & Young People Space provision is 0.55ha per 1000 population.

3.2.40 As there is currently a deficit of Children & Young People Space provision against the adopted standards, it is proposed to adopt the benchmark COSMS standard for Children & Young People Space of 0.55ha per 1000 population, to meet the needs of an increasing population. Best practice local guidance provided by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Open Space Standards Toolkit (LUC, 2022) recommends that district authorities in Cambridgeshire either adopt or adjust the standards recommended by the COSMS Technical Report.

Implementation

3.2.41 The standard can be met by direct provision of new and enhanced children and young people space (including play spaces and youth space) by the Councils working in partnership with other providers, and/or through direct

provision by developers, and/or through an appropriate financial contribution from developers towards off-site provision as appropriate.

Proposed Approach: Children & Young People Space Quality Standard

Proposed Standard

Design of Children & Young People Space reflects good practice GI guidance for play space.

Justification

3.2.42 Proposals for new and improved Children & Young People Space provision in Greater Cambridge should be shaped by the following best practice design guidance for play space – including natural/adventure play and equipped play (see **Appendix E** for details):

- Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide (Section 4.20)
- The Fields in Trust Standards 2024
- Play England Design for Play Guide 2008

Implementation

3.2.43 The standard can be met by proposals for new children and young people spaces (including play spaces and youth space), and the improvement of existing spaces, being required to reflect the above good practice guidance.

3.3 Emerging Green Infrastructure Standards

3.3.1 Emerging approaches for other potential GI standards listed in **Box 3.3** are outlined in this section.

Box 3.3 – Emerging GI Standards for Greater Cambridge

Green Infrastructure Standards:

- Accessible Greenspace Quantity Standard for Residential Development
- Accessible Greenspace Quantity & Accessibility Standards for High Density Residential Development
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Quantity & Quality Standards for Residential Development
- Accessible Greenspace Quantity & Quality Standards for Commercial Development
- Urban Greening Quantity Standard
- Settlement-scale Urban Nature Recovery Area-Wide Standard

Open Space Standards:

- Country Parks Quantity Standard
- Food Growing Space Accessibility Standard

3.3.2 Further work is needed to explore approaches to setting these GI standards in a way that is achievable in Greater Cambridge. The implementation approach to these standards will be developed alongside consideration of the policy approach.

Green Infrastructure Standards

Emerging Approach: Accessible Greenspace Quantity Standard for Residential Development

3.3.3 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing a potential accessible greenspace quantity standard for residential development.

3.3.4 In line with the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standard, it is proposed that residential development be designed to meet an accessible greenspace quantity standard.

3.3.5 The Natural England Accessible Greenspace Capacity Standard is for local authorities to have at least 3ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population, with no net loss or reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population at an area-wide scale, in order to sustain the current level of provision. Greater Cambridge currently has approximately 8.7ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population (based on current 2024 population of 322,000). Allowing for projected population growth to a total of 462,000 by 2045 for the Greater Cambridge area, with no additional provision of accessible greenspace this figure would decrease to 6.05ha per 1000 population. A potential standard of at least 8.7 ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population would maintain the current level of provision across Greater Cambridge to meet future needs.

Emerging Approach: Accessible Greenspace Quantity & Accessibility Standards for High Density Residential Development

3.3.6 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing potential accessible greenspace quantity and accessibility standards for high density residential development.

3.3.7 For the purposes of this potential standard, “high density” is defined as residential development typically as part of urban extensions comprising at least 70 dwellings per hectare. Based on North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (2021) and North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Open Space & Recreation Topic Paper (2021).

3.3.8 Setting standards for accessible greenspace in high density residential developments, where there is a limited amount of space available, presents specific challenges that require an alternative approach to traditional residential developments with private gardens. Quality and accessibility (proximity) of accessible greenspace provision (on-site or off-site) are often more important that the quantity provided.

3.3.9 The priority is to incorporate as much good quality “doorstep-scale” accessible greenspace as possible on-site, or as close to the site as possible, that enables people in high density residential developments to have access to nature close to where they live, and encourages active and healthy lifestyles.

Emerging Approach: Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Quantity & Quality Standards for Residential Development

3.3.10 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace quantity and quality standards for residential development.

3.3.11 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is accessible greenspace that is of a quality and type suitable to provide alternative natural greenspace to divert visitors away from sensitive designated biodiversity sites (including nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites such as Special Areas of Conservation). SANG may typically include Country Parks, Local Nature Reserves and other types of suitable accessible greenspace. In addition to sufficient quantity of provision, the Natural England SANG Guidelines (see **Appendix E** for details) advises that the effectiveness of SANG as mitigation will depend upon its location and design (quality and type of provision).

Emerging Approach: Accessible Greenspace Quantity & Quality Standards for Commercial Development

3.3.12 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing potential accessible greenspace quantity and quality standards for commercial development.

3.3.13 For the purposes of this potential standard, commercial development relates to Use Classes E(g) Commercial, business and service; (i) offices, (ii) research & development and (iii) industrial processes.

3.3.14 Accessible greenspace for commercial development is likely to include Informal Areas of Open Space (Amenity Green Spaces, Informal Open Space and Civic Spaces) and other types of suitable accessible greenspace.

3.3.15 This potential standard reflects the specific needs for accessible greenspace provision generated by commercial development in Greater Cambridge. It is important that larger-scale commercial development (such as, but not limited to, business, science and industrial parks) meets the needs of workers to have access to on-site green spaces for gathering, relaxation and informal recreation, which can also be used by local residents in the wider community outside of working hours. The priority is to incorporate good quality accessible greenspace on-site that enables employees to have access to nature close to where they work, and encourages active and healthy lifestyles.

3.3.16 There is currently no national recommended quantity standard for the provision of accessible greenspace for commercial development, although the Natural England Urban Greening Standard recommends an urban greening factor score of 0.3 for commercial development is adopted where appropriate. There are currently limited relevant examples of such an approach from elsewhere with none identified that are directly comparable to Greater Cambridge.

Emerging Approach: Urban Greening Quantity Standard

3.3.17 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing a potential urban greening quantity standard.

3.3.18 It is proposed that the Natural England Urban Greening Standard area-wide target of 40% average green cover in new urban neighbourhoods is adopted. The Natural England Urban Greening Standard reflects the need to increase the total level of green cover in existing and new urban residential neighbourhoods, particularly in areas of rising urban density and declining biodiversity.

3.3.19 For the purposes of this potential standard, green cover in urban areas encompasses “green” vegetated surfaces on land and buildings/structures, including urban woodland and street trees (see the proposed Urban Tree Canopy Cover Quantity Standard), and urban waterbodies.

3.3.20 The Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide advises that the Urban Greening Factor Standard for major residential and commercial development can be used alongside Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), especially on sites with no or very limited pre-existing biodiversity value, to drive urban greening by helping to set the quantity and functionality of GI that should be delivered on-site. The Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool includes urban greening GI features that provide nature-based solutions such as sustainable drainage systems, green roofs and walls etc, that can contribute towards a development’s on-site BNG requirements.

Emerging Approach: Settlement-scale Urban Nature Recovery Area-Wide Standard

3.3.21 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing a potential settlement-scale urban nature recovery standard.

3.3.22 It is proposed to adopt the Natural England Urban Nature Recovery Standards with regards to the provision of Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites. The standard is to provide at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population and improved provision of Local Wildlife Sites to support urban nature recovery targets, and increase opportunities for access to nature on people’s doorsteps in urban neighbourhoods as the population grows.

3.3.23 Further work is needed to explore integration with the emerging Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, SANG provision and Biodiversity Net Gain.

Open Space Standards

Emerging Approach: Country Parks Quantity Standard

3.3.24 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing a potential country parks quantity standard.

3.3.25 In the absence of any national or county level benchmark standards for Country Park provision, it may be appropriate to consider developing a standard that sustains the current level of provision of country parks across Greater Cambridge to meet the needs of an increasing population.

Emerging Approach: Food Growing Space Accessibility Standard

3.3.26 The Councils are continuing to explore approaches to developing a potential food growing space accessibility standard.

3.3.27 For the purposes of this standard, food growing space provision includes Allotments, Community Orchards & Community Gardens.

3.3.28 In the absence of national level benchmark accessibility standards for Food Growing Space provision, it is proposed to adopt the accessibility standard for allotments within 560m straight line distance of new development recommended by the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards (COSMS) Technical Report as the proposed Food Growing Space Accessibility Standard for Greater Cambridge. Good practice local guidance provided by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Open Space Standards Toolkit recommends that district authorities in Cambridgeshire either adopt or adjust the accessibility standards recommended by the COSMS Technical Report.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 General

4.1.1 This section sets out recommendations for implementation of the GI Strategy and GI Standards under the following headings:

- Local Plan Policy
- Planning Delivery Mechanisms
- Project Delivery Mechanisms
- Next Steps

4.2 Local Plan Policy

4.2.1 Taking into account Natural England guidance for developing GI policies, recommendations for implementation of GI standards through local plan policy for Greater Cambridge are set out below.

Integrate GI into the local plan vision/objectives

4.2.2 To ensure that GI is at the heart of supporting sustainable growth of homes and jobs in Greater Cambridge, it is recommended that the proposed Strategic Green Network vision set out in **Section 2.0** of this GI Strategy is integrated into the overall vision and objectives of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Embed GI into plan policies and allocations

4.2.3 It is recommended that the Councils consider embedding the GI standards into the relevant polices of the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan to set requirements for the type, quality and amount of GI that new residential and commercial development is expected to provide or contribute towards. It is recommended that the standards are applied to Local Plan site allocations to identify the type, location, quantity and quality of GI, both on-site and off-site,

that is considered appropriate for supporting the quantum and nature of proposed development.

4.2.4 It is also recommended that the Councils consider embedding the strategic GI initiatives for enhancing and expanding the existing GI network in Greater Cambridge into the relevant plan polices. Development should be required to support delivery of the strategic GI initiatives through direct provision of new and/or improved habitats/green spaces off-site, or through an appropriate financial contribution to off-site provision as appropriate. The policy should have regard to the emerging Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Embed GI standards into design guides/codes

4.2.5 As highlighted by the Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide , good quality GI can contribute to the National Design Guide's ten characteristics of well-designed places by helping create nature-rich, healthy, climate-resilient and thriving places in urban and rural areas. The National Model Design Code emphasises that new development should contribute towards the creation of a network of green spaces and facilitate access to natural green space where possible.

4.2.6 To support good GI design, it is recommended that the proposed GI quality standards are used alongside adopted design guides and embedded into any future design guides, including any design codes for strategic development sites in Greater Cambridge.

Promote a GI-led approach to design

4.2.7 As highlighted by Natural England's guidance for developers and design teams, integrating well-designed GI into development is important for creating good quality, distinctive and sustainable places.

4.2.8 To help promote a strong GI-led approach to design, it is recommended that the Councils consider adopting the Building with Nature Standards as a good practice benchmark for integrating well-designed GI into residential and commercial development in Greater Cambridge.

4.2.9 The GI design principles set out in the Building with Nature Standards can be used as a checklist by developers to help ensure that GI is fully considered and integrated into their proposals. The checklist can also be used by planning officers to assess the adequacy of the type, quantity and quality of GI provision proposed at the pre-application and application stage.

4.2.10 The GI checklist could be appended in the Local Plan, or alternatively the requirements could be set out in a planning application validation list.

Require submission of a GI plan to support planning applications

4.2.11 In line with the Natural England Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard, it is recommended that the GI policy should require planning applications for major development to submit a "Green Infrastructure Plan".

4.2.12 The Councils' local planning validation checklists should include the requirement for a GI Plan to be submitted in support of outline and full planning applications for all major residential and commercial development – either as a standalone document or included as part of a Design & Access Statement.

4.2.13 The GI Plan should demonstrate how the proposals respond to the GI requirements set out in relevant policies, including any relevant supplementary guidance. The Plan should also include details about how the new and improved GI provision will be managed, maintained, monitored and funded for the lifetime of the development (minimum of 30 years).

4.2.14 When reviewing their design guides, the Councils may wish to consider including guidance for developers on preparing GI Plans.

Monitor and evaluate delivery of GI policies, standards and targets

4.2.15 As part of the overall Greater Cambridge Local Plan Monitoring Framework, it is recommended that the Councils develop a simple set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating delivery of the adopted GI Standards through the GI and other relevant policies every five years. The monitoring framework should include details of relevant data sources/frequency, targets and baseline where relevant, triggers for action and actions for each indicator.

4.2.16 The GIS mapping of existing GI assets set out in the 2020 Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study and the Greater Cambridge Green & Open Space Database held by GCSP (see Section 4.0 in **Volume 2** for details) provide a baseline against which increases/decreases against the indicators can be monitored.

4.3 Planning Delivery Mechanisms

4.3.1 Taking into account Natural England guidance for implementing GI policies, the recommended approach to securing and funding the provision and long-term management of GI through developer contributions is set out below.

Planning obligations

4.3.2 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduced a new Infrastructure Levy (IL), which may replace the current Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements regime at the local level. Currently neither Cambridge City Council nor South Cambridgeshire District Council have a CIL in place, and continue to use planning obligations (also known as Section

106 agreements) to secure and fund infrastructure required as mitigation for the impacts of development.

4.3.3 The Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will set out the current approach, policies and procedures taken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council with respect to the use of Section 106 legal agreements for securing the direct provision of on-site and off-site infrastructure, and for payment of financial contributions towards off-site infrastructure. The SPD applies to green infrastructure, including public open space, biodiversity and public rights of way.

4.3.4 The GI Standards can be used to inform decisions about when GI provision will be required for a proposed development, taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints.

Calculating financial contributions for offsite GI

GI capital costs

4.3.5 Determining capital costs for the provision and improvement of offsite accessible greenspace will depend upon the nature of the development. Developer contributions can be calculated on the basis of a contribution per dwelling approach using indicative capital costs per m^2.

Table 3.2: Indicative Capital Costs for Accessible Greenspace

Type	£ cost per m^2
Parks & Recreation Space	24.00
Country Parks	24.00
Natural/Semi Natural Greenspace	17.00
Informal Areas of Open Space (amenity greenspace)	16.00
Allotments	12.00

4.3.6 The estimated capital costs per m^2 for the main types of accessible greenspace set out in **Table 3.2** have been generated based on industry standard rates from the Spon's External Works & Landscape Price Book, and sense checked against other relevant comparator GI strategies/studies. These indicative costs:

- Include materials and labour costs
- Exclude land acquisition costs
- Exclude professional fees
- Exclude sports/play equipment costs for Parks & Recreation Space/Country Parks (includes soft & hard landscape costs only)

4.3.7 The indicative capital costs per m^2 are intended to provide an initial guide to the order of capital costs required for the provision or improvement of offsite accessible greenspace, and should be kept under review by the Councils. It is recommended that the Councils publish a financial contribution schedule that sets the capital costs per m^2 for each type of accessible greenspace updated annually in line with inflation.

4.3.8 The financial contribution per dwelling towards the provision or improvement of offsite accessible greenspace for residential development can be calculated as follows:

1. Multiply number of proposed dwellings by the average household occupancy to give estimated population of the proposed development
2. Multiply estimated population by the relevant ha per 1000 quantity standard from **Section 3.0** and convert ha requirement into m^2
3. Multiply m^2 requirement by the relevant indicative cost per m^2 from **Table 3.2** to calculate the £ contribution per dwelling

4.3.9 The average household occupancy is assumed to be 2.41 in Cambridge and 2.40 in South Cambridgeshire based on the 2021 Census. Average household occupancy for high density residential development is assumed to be 1.95 for both Councils.

4.3.10 The costs of land acquisition, professional fees and certain other types of accessible greenspace (e.g. Children & Young People Space and Civic Space) depend on the specific nature of a proposal, and would need to be

calculated on a case-by-case basis. These costs should also be sought as part of any financial contribution towards the provision or improvement of offsite accessible greenspace for residential development.

GI management costs

4.3.11 Determining costs for management/maintenance of accessible greenspace will depend upon specific requirements related to the nature of the provision. Developer contributions can be calculated on the basis of an indicative annual % cost estimate.

4.3.12 Management/maintenance costings for formal accessible greenspace (parks and gardens) and informal accessible greenspace (natural/semi natural greenspace and amenity greenspace) is estimated as 12% of the capital cost contribution annually.

4.3.13 This estimate includes ongoing labour and replacement soft/hard landscape costs based on industry standard rates from the Spon's External Works & Landscape Price Book, and has been sense checked against other relevant comparator GI strategies/studies. The estimate excludes professional fees for setting up/administration of a management company.

4.3.14 The indicative annual % cost estimate is intended to provide an initial guide to the order of accessible greenspace management/maintenance costs for calculating costs over a 30-year period, and should be kept under review by the Councils.

Securing financial contributions for GI

4.3.15 It is anticipated that financial contributions to the capital costs of offsite accessible greenspace provision or improvement, including commuted sums for on-going management/maintenance, would be secured through an

appropriate legal agreement or infrastructure levy in accordance with procedures in force at that time.

4.3.16 It is also anticipated that 30-year management/maintenance plans for new or improved accessible greenspace would be submitted for approval by the Council as a planning condition or as part of a legal agreement.

Identifying priorities for offsite GI provision and improvement

4.3.17 It is recommended that financial contributions from developers for offsite provision or improvement of accessible greenspace are targeted towards delivery of the Strategic GI Initiatives for Greater Cambridge set out in the proposed GI Strategy (see **Section 2.0**), taking into account the Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy's preferred locations for habitat creation and enhancement to deliver biodiversity and other environmental objectives.

4.3.18 In order to support access to good quality multifunctional GI close to where people live, the priorities for offsite provision or improvement of accessible greenspace should be to:

1. Deliver new provision within the accessibility catchment of the development
2. Where this is not possible, improve or expand existing provision within the accessibility catchment
3. If this is not possible. deliver new provision or improvements of accessible greenspace elsewhere in the ward (Cambridge) or settlement (South Cambridgeshire)

4.3.19 Where there are no Strategic GI Initiatives within the accessibility catchment of a development or elsewhere in the ward/settlement, financial contributions from developers for offsite GI provision or improvement should be targeted

towards delivery of Local GI Initiatives identified and agreed in discussion with the local planning authority.

Biodiversity Net Gain

4.3.20 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves nature in a measurably better state than before the development took place. The Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum 10% net increase of post-development biodiversity value compared to the pre-development biodiversity value of a site.

4.3.21 The statutory biodiversity metric used to calculate biodiversity value includes a range of habitat types that can contribute to achieving BNG, including urban GI features such as sustainable drainage systems, bioswales and rain gardens, green walls and biodiverse green roofs. Where onsite habitat enhancement or creation is not possible, BNG can be achieved by the allocation of registered offsite biodiversity gain sites to the development or by purchase of statutory biodiversity credits as a last resort.

4.3.22 As BNG habitats need to be legally secured, managed and monitored for a minimum of 30 years, it can provide a long-term mechanism for helping deliver GI as part of the Greater Cambridge Green Network through revenue generated from the offsite biodiversity gain sites/habitats banking market, and the sale of statutory biodiversity credits to developers.

4.4 Project Delivery Mechanisms

4.4.1 Taking into account Natural England guidance, recommended mechanisms for delivering projects to support the Strategic GI Initiatives are outlined below.

Working in partnership

4.4.2 The proposed vision and aims of this GI Strategy can best be achieved through the combined efforts of partners and stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors in Greater Cambridge, working together with local communities, farmers and landowners/managers, and developers. Partnership working enables greater benefits to be achieved by adopting a strategic approach to GI planning and delivery across local authority boundaries and sectors.

4.4.3 In support of the established Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Parks Partnership, it is recommended that the Councils consider establishing a cross-sectoral Greater Cambridge GI Programme Team with responsibility for implementation and monitoring of the GI Strategy. It is anticipated that the GI Programme Team would comprise a cross authority group of planning, environment, communities, health and transport officers drawn from the following organisations:

- Cambridge City Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Local Nature Partnership, Natural Cambridgeshire
- Public Health Cambridge

4.4.4 Building on stakeholder engagement through development of the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study, it is suggested that the GI Programme Team encourages other local stakeholders to become delivery partners in support of relevant Strategic GI Initiatives, such as: Natural England; Environment Agency; Forestry Commission; RSPB; Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust; National Trust; Water Resources East; Woodland Trust; Cambridge Past, Present, Future; CoFarm Cambridge; and Cambridge Sustainable Food, for example.

4.4.5 A key role of the GI Programme Team will be to work with partner partners in targeting offsite GI developer contributions towards delivery of the Strategic

GI Initiatives, and securing other sources of funding opportunities for collaborative projects.

Developing a GI delivery plan

4.4.6 It is recommended that consideration is given to developing a five-year GI Delivery Plan to provide a flexible programme of work to support implementation of the GI Strategy.

4.4.7 Developed in consultation with delivery partners, the GI Delivery Plan would set out clear actions, timescales and responsibilities for delivery of a pipeline of projects for taking forward the Strategic GI Initiatives. This would be supported by maintaining a live database of GI project development and implementation activity across Greater Cambridge

Showcasing what good GI looks like

4.4.8 The Councils may also wish to consider developing an online portal to demonstrate successes in delivering the Strategic GI Initiatives as a way of bringing stakeholders together to make connections between projects and partners. This could be supported by the nomination of a “GI Champion” to help raise awareness of the benefits of GI by showcasing and celebrating examples of good practice across Greater Cambridge.

Developing an online GI story map

4.4.9 It is recommended that the Councils consider developing an online Greater Cambridge GI Story Map to provide an interactive visual summary of the evidence underpinning the GI Strategy and mapping tool for supporting decision making and monitoring. For example, see the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Story Map. It can be used by policy-makers,

decision-makers and delivery partners to inform implementation of local plan policies, planning applications and prioritisation of GI projects for development, funding and delivery. Parish/town councils and local groups can also use the Story Map as a tool for supporting community-led "grassroots" projects.

GI management

4.4.10 Securing commitments around the long-term management and maintenance of GI provided as mitigation for development is vital. The development process can serve as an opportunity to co-create accessible greenspace with the communities that they will serve, including arrangements for effective and comprehensive future stewardship.

4.4.11 Good management and adequate funding for GI maintenance is also critical to securing long-term benefits, particularly where this falls outside of planning requirements. Adopting a strategic approach to management of GI across multiple land parcels, organisations and boundaries is recommended in order to optimise delivery of benefits from multi-functional GI at a landscape and catchment scale.

4.4.12 It will also be important to embed GI into decision-making across the Councils by mainstreaming GI considerations into the management and maintenance of public land, buildings and grey infrastructure. Positive management, upgrading or repurposing of public parks, amenity green space and highway verges has the potential to enhance the value and functionality of existing GI assets. For example, increasing wildflower planting, tree planting and lighter touch maintenance on council owned land to "re-wild" amenity green spaces for the benefit of urban wildlife and pollinators.

4.4.13 It is recommended that the Councils consider using the assessment framework developed by the Fenland Open Space Standards study to review

needs and opportunities for improvements to green spaces in Greater Cambridge.

Community engagement & stewardship

4.4.14 Sustaining green spaces through effective long-term stewardship and funding is vital to delivering benefits and value for future generations. It is recommended that the Councils encourage local community engagement in the delivery and ongoing stewardship of GI through consideration of:

- Appropriate community-led stewardship bodies to support long-term adoption, management and maintenance of green spaces
- Agreements for long-term management/maintenance of GI assets
- Support for local groups and initiatives (building community capacity/dialogue)
- Innovative revenue/maintenance funding models for ensuring the long-term legacy and care of GI assets
- Appropriate mechanisms for ensuring the aims of the GI Strategy are supported by landowners/management organisations through good management and maintenance
- Opportunities to promote and support the benefits of volunteering for people's health and wellbeing, sense of purpose, learning new skills and strengthening connections

4.4.15 This could also include supporting delivery of community-led GI projects by engaging with parish/town councils and local community groups to:

- Raise awareness of how the GI Strategy can be used to inform projects
- Showcase case studies of successful "grassroots" GI projects
- Offer advice on sources of relevant funding opportunities
- Provide signposts to guidance (e.g Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Greenspace Stewardship Toolkit and Planning Aid Community-led Green Space Toolkit)

Reviewing the GI strategy

4.4.16 It is recommended that the Council keeps the overall approach set out in this proposed GI Strategy under review to ensure that it remains relevant and aligned to national legislative/policy drivers and local priorities for GI.

4.5 Next Steps

4.5.1 In line with Stages 5 and 6 of Natural England's guidance for implementing GI strategies (see **Appendix B**), the recommended next steps for setting GI standards for inclusion in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan are set out in **Box 4.1**.

Box 4.1 – Next Steps for implementing the Greater Cambridge GI Strategy

- Embed GI Standards into relevant policies of the draft Local Plan
- Consult stakeholders on the emerging approach to the GI Strategy, including the proposed and emerging GI Standards set out in **Section 3.0**, alongside the polices set out in the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan
- Undertake further work to explore emerging approaches for developing the other potential GI standards outlined in **Section 3.3**
- Consider the appropriate scale of development that specific GI standards will apply to
- Embed GI Standards into design guides/codes where appropriate
- Set requirements in planning validation checklists for submission of GI Plans
- Ensure a joined-up approach between the GI Strategy and the emerging Cambridgeshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Align the emerging sports and play strategies with the GI Strategy
- Ensure provision and long-term management of GI is effectively secured and funded through developer contributions, alongside other funding sources
- Work with local partners to co-develop a GI Delivery Plan and pipeline of projects for delivering the Strategic GI Initiatives
- Monitor GI delivery and report on progress to demonstrate effective implementation and identify lessons for the future

Appendix A
Green Infrastructure Glossary

Accessible Greenspace: Includes 'publicly accessible green space' (green space provided for free public use without time restrictions - e.g. a public park, nature reserve, public rights of way or open access land) and 'restricted accessible green space' (green space provided for public use with time restrictions and/or entry fee - e.g. a National Trust property or outdoor sports facility).

Biodiversity: The variety of all life on Earth: genes, species and ecosystems. It includes all species of animals and plants, and the natural systems that support them.

Biodiversity Net Gain: BNG is an approach to development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that leaves nature in a measurably better state than before the development took place. The Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum 10% increase of post-development "biodiversity value" compared to the pre-development biodiversity value of the site for which permission has been granted.

Biodiversity value is calculated using the statutory biodiversity metric to generate "biodiversity units". There must be a net increase of at least 10% biodiversity units post-development compared to pre-development achieved through the "biodiversity gain hierarchy":

1. Avoid adverse effects on onsite habitat of biodiversity value
2. Mitigate unavoidable adverse effects as far as possible
3. Compensate for residual adverse effects by achieving onsite biodiversity gains (habitat enhancement/creation); or where not possible by allocation of registered offsite biodiversity gain to the development: or by purchase of statutory biodiversity credits as a last resort

Blue-Green Infrastructure: Refers to the use of blue elements of GI (e.g. rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains and sustainable drainage systems) alongside green elements (e,g, trees, forests and parks) in urban and land use planning

Climate Change: The large-scale, long-term shift in global weather patterns and average temperatures across the world due to the release of greenhouse gases (most notably carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere since the mid-1800s by humans.

Climate Change Resilience: The ability of places, communities and individuals to adapt and thrive in the face of multiple risks, uncertainty and threats posed by rising temperatures, increased extreme flood events and damage to ecosystems due to climate change.

Ecological Networks: Habitats that interact and connect to enable the migration and dispersal of wildlife species within urban and rural areas

Ecosystem Functions: The foundational functions associated with nature (biodiversity, soil and geodiversity, and water), climate (carbon and energy, temperature regulation), health and wellbeing (access to nature, food, active lifestyles, clean air, enhanced soundscapes) and prosperous communities (including education and sense of place, amongst others)

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

Green Infrastructure Assets: Green/blue spaces and natural/semi-natural features that provide valuable ecosystem functions and benefits for people and wildlife.

Green Infrastructure Standards: An approach that applies the principles of what good GI looks like to achieve quality and consistency in the provision, management and stewardship of GI as an essential part of place-making and place-keeping to deliver multiple benefits for people and nature.

Green Roofs: A vegetative roof system that hosts plants in a growing medium installed over a waterproof membrane. Green roofs can be designed as wildlife habitats and to optimise energy conservation (through insulation) and/or for aesthetic value, and can be a source of water

Green Space: Green space embraces “green” vegetated land and areas of water, and may be private or accessible (NB. see Vol 2/Section 4.2 for definitions of green space types).

Green Walls: A vertical wall (partially) covered in greenery, often planted in soil at the base, but sometimes using wall-mounted boxes or special panels. Green (or living) walls offer several benefits such as contributing to heat retention and cooling, storm water retention and capturing pollutants

Major development: Major residential development is where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m2 or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Multi-functionality: The ability of GI assets to provide multiple functions/benefits at the same time (e.g. a green space providing opportunities for recreation whilst delivering biodiversity, contributing to flood risk management and regulating extreme temperatures)

Natural Capital: Elements of nature that produce value for people (e.g. ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, air, oceans and natural processes. Natural

capital assets are stocks of nature which provide flow of ecosystem services/functions and benefits to people over time

Nature-based Solutions: A term used to describe natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits; and also refers to solutions supported by working with natural processes

Nature Recovery: Halting and reversing the loss of species and habitats, and enhancing sites that are designated for nature conservation and other nature-rich places, by creating and restoring habitats, corridors and stepping-stones to help wildlife populations recover

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. (NB. see Vol 2/Section 4.2 for definitions of open space types).

Place-keeping: The long-term management and stewardship of public green spaces involving partnership, funding, design and management, governance, policy and evaluation processes.

Place-making: The process of shaping public green spaces that brings together professionals, elected officials, local groups, residents and businesses in the planning and design process.

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS): An approach to managing surface water run-off from rainfall close to where it falls to replicate natural drainage by slowing and holding back run-off, reducing pressure on existing piped systems and reducing flood risk.

Urban Cooling: Measures for reducing the urban heat island effect where higher-than-normal heat temperatures are experienced compared to surrounding areas due to heat stress when densely-populated urban landscapes of tarmac, brick, metal and dark rooftops soak up energy from sunlight

Urban Greening: Increasing and enhancing green cover and urban nature, including wider environmental improvements (e.g. reducing pollution and positive environmental behaviours)

Wellbeing: The state of being happy and healthy. Being in or close to nature can make people feel better emotionally, and contribute to physical wellbeing by reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension and production of stress hormones.

Appendix B
Approach to Developing the Green Infrastructure Strategy

The approach to developing the Greater Cambridge GI Strategy responds to the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework's GI Strategy Standard set out below:

- 'Local authorities, working in partnership with stakeholders including local communities, assess and strategically plan their green infrastructure provision, for example as part of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. Plans set out how green infrastructure will help to create greener, beautiful, healthier and more prosperous neighbourhoods, with a thriving nature network that can reduce air and water pollution, support sustainable drainage and help places adapt to climate change.

- In doing this, they apply the 15 Green Infrastructure Principles and the Green Infrastructure Standards locally (adapting them to local context where appropriate) and set green infrastructure policies, proposals and development requirements in development plans and local design codes. Local authorities set SMART targets in a Delivery Plan for achieving the Green Infrastructure Framework Standards and local policies over time, as well as arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of all green infrastructure.

- Plan and monitor and evaluate progress against delivery of these local targets every five years.'

The proposed GI Strategy has been developed in line with the stages recommended by the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework guide for local planning authorities as outlined in **Table B1**.

Table B1 – GI Strategy Preparation Stages

Stages

- Stage 1 – Partnerships: ‘Build strong partnerships at the outset, and work in partnership to plan together at all stages’
- Stage 2 – Vision - ‘Create a high-level vision informed by the strategic context’

GI Principles

- Principle 1: Partnership and Vision - ‘Work in partnership and collaborate with stakeholders from the outset to identify opportunities and constraints, co-plan, develop and deliver a vision for Green Infrastructure in the area. Engage a diverse and inclusive range of people and organisations including citizens, neighbouring local authorities, developers, communities, landowners, green space managers, environmental, health, climate, transport, and business representatives.’

Greater Cambridge Approach

Implementation of GI Strategy is proposed via the established Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Parks Partnership

Greater Cambridge GI Strategy: Emerging Approach – Vol 1 Strategy & Recommendations (CBA, 2025)

Stages

- Stage 3 – Evidence: **‘**Gather evidence on local GI delivery, including needs and priorities’

GI Principles

- Principle 2 – Evidence: ‘Use scientific evidence, and good land use practices when planning and enhancing green and blue infrastructure. Understand existing Green Infrastructure assets and the environmental, social, and economic challenges and needs in the area. Refer to good practice for caring for and enhancing Green Infrastructure.’

Greater Cambridge Approach

Greater Cambridge GI Strategy: Emerging Approach – Vol 2 Evidence & GI Standards (CBA, 2025)

Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping Study – Part 1 Baseline Report (LUC, 2020)

Stages

- Stage 4 **– Plan strategically and develop GI Policy:** 'Setting standards and targets for delivery'

GI Principles

- **Principle 3: Plan Strategically:** 'Plan strategically and secure Green Infrastructure as a key asset in local strategy and policy, at all scales. Fully integrate and mainstream Green Infrastructure into environmental, social, health and economic policy. Create and maintain sustainable places for current and future populations, and address inequalities in Green Infrastructure provision and its benefits.'
- **Principle 4: Design:** 'Understand an area's landscape/ townscape, natural, historic and cultural character to create well-designed, well-managed, beautiful, and distinctive places.

Greater Cambridge Approach

Greater Cambridge GI Strategy: Emerging Approach – Vol 1 Strategy & Recommendations (CBA, 2025)

Greater Cambridge GI Strategy: Emerging Approach – Vol 2 Evidence & GI Standards (CBA, 2025)

Greater Cambridge GI Opportunity Mapping Study – Part 2 Recommendations Report (LUC, 2021)

Stages

- **Stage 5 – Integrating the GI Strategy:** 'Making sure GI is included in local plans and policies'
- **Stage 6 – Managed Valued Monitored Evaluated :** 'Ensuring long term funding and monitoring to evaluate progress'

GI Principles

- **Principle 5: Managed, valued, monitored, and evaluated:** 'Plan good governance, funding, management, monitoring, and evaluation of Green Infrastructure as a key asset from the outset and secure it for the long-term. Make the business case for Green Infrastructure. Engage communities in stewardship where appropriate. Celebrate success and raise awareness of Green Infrastructure benefits.'

Greater Cambridge Approach

Greater Cambridge GI Strategy: Emerging Approach – Vol 1 Strategy & Recommendations (CBA, 2025)

Appendix C
Green Infrastructure Components

Green Spaces

Green spaces can provide important wellbeing, quality of life and other benefits for local communities. Evidence shows that access to green space and nature plays a critical role in supporting people's mental health.

Urban parks (including city parks, neighbourhood parks and pocket pockets – see **Box C.1**) and natural green spaces (including country parks and local nature reserves – see **Box C.2**) provide places in and around settlements where people can meet, socialise, relax, exercise, play and connect with nature on a daily basis. Natural play spaces (**Box C.3**) for children to play and learn in a more natural outdoor environment are increasingly a key element of green spaces.

Community orchards, allotments and community gardens (see **Box C.4**) provide urban food growing spaces that help connect people to local food production. Private domestic gardens (**Box C.5**) can help strengthen ecological networks and offer many benefits for householders associated with accessible greenspace provision close to home.

Urban green spaces, including urban squares (see **Box C.6**), are often of historic or cultural importance, providing heritage features that can make an important contribution towards a place's distinctive character and identity.

Box C.1 – Urban Parks

Public parks in urban areas form the backdrop to many people's everyday lives. Urban parks are often designed for amenity purposes and support a range of informal recreation, play or more formal sport and recreational uses. The following types of Urban Parks are considered to be particularly relevant to meeting the needs of communities for informal recreation and play facilities close to where people live and work:

- **City parks** – are larger-scale urban green spaces and key landscape destinations that celebrate a city's cultural heritage and provide a unique offer. They provide open spaces to relax, play, exercise and socialise, and help strengthen connections between neighbourhoods. City parks typically attract visitors from surrounding town neighbourhoods and settlements further afield.
- **Neighbourhood parks** – embedded within the local community, neighbourhood parks serve local residents and benefit from passive surveillance near homes. They typically include formal play spaces, community food growing initiatives and places to sit and rest, ensuring it is inclusive for all ages. This scale of park primarily attracts residents from the surrounding neighbourhood within a short walk.

- **Pocket parks** – the smallest scale of urban park, this type of space encourages opportunities for informal play and relaxation on the doorstep of homes by providing a 'pocket' of green space within the heart of communities/commercial areas for the benefit of immediate residents/workers.

Box C.2 – Natural Green Spaces, Country Parks & Local Nature Reserves

Natural (or semi-natural) green spaces are publicly accessible green spaces, in and around urban areas, where there is a sense of naturalness due to less intensive human control and activities. Natural green space may be found as parts of more formal Urban Parks, or can exist as discrete more natural types of accessible green space such as:

- **Country Parks** – are larger-scale "destination" public green spaces, often at the edge of urban areas, that give people experience of the countryside. They provide places for people to visit and enjoy the outdoors, countryside recreation activities and experience nature in an informal, rural setting. Country parks are often established on former country house estates, industrial sites, mineral workings, farms, or around historic monuments. Most country parks in England are accredited by Natural England.

- **Local Nature Reserves** – are protected areas of land with wildlife and/or geological features of special local interest, offering opportunities for people to access, interact with and enjoy nature.

Creating new/expanded Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves can help meet the needs of local communities for access to nature and the countryside. They also offer opportunities for delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and Biodiversity Net Gain as mitigation for development.

Box C.3 – Natural Play Space

Play is a vital part of childhood and growing up. It helps children to learn by developing social, physical and emotional skills. Providing children with play spaces in a more natural outdoor learning environment, incorporating areas for quiet, creative, active and stimulating play, allows children to learn whilst using their imagination.

Conventional playground design typically focusses on providing places for physical activity, with the play space being an enclosed location for manufactured play equipment. This means play space tends to be devoid of vegetation and natural features and unvegetated surfaces often dominate. As a result, play spaces often do not provide the full range of potential benefits associated with GI.

As recognised and promoted by the Forest Education Network and the National Trust, amongst others, exposure to nature, vegetation and soil has many benefits for children and improves their development, health and wellbeing. This can include exercise that builds strength and stamina, social interaction to improve wellbeing,

and opportunities to interact with and develop an interest in the natural world. Exposure to soil microbes also benefits the immune system.

Play areas can often benefit from the incorporation of shade trees and wildflowers, which can add stimulating textures and colours. Fences associated with play areas also provide opportunities to grow climbing plants. Introduction of natural features like logs and boulders can be used as an alternative to manufactured play equipment. There are also opportunities to provide features and gathering space to encourage exploration and play in green space outside of designated play space areas. Play spaces can offer an opportunity to provide sustainable drainage systems and biodiverse planting, and also include special features for wildlife, including nesting/roosting boxes/refuges for invertebrates for example.

Play facilities provided for young people are typically Multi Use Games Areas and skate parks, all with hard surfacing, and many spaces are not inclusive. Making play spaces feel safe and welcoming for girls is particularly important.

Box C.4 – Community Orchards, Allotments & Urban Food Growing Spaces

Community orchards, allotments and other community growing spaces have a key role in supporting community food growing systems that can help re-connect people in urban areas to the process of food production. They not only help promote good health through healthy eating, exercise and physical work, but can also provide opportunities to bring communities together across generations and cultures to share knowledge, information and passions for growing fresh food.

Thriving community-run food growing spaces have the potential to strengthen community cohesion by providing cherished, nature-rich community spaces, and empowering people to act locally to tackle global climate change by reducing food miles.

Engagement in community gardening can improve people's mental health and wellbeing by helping reduce loneliness through interaction with other gardeners, and contact with nature. Increasingly, community gardening activities are often linked to green or nature-based social prescribing by health practitioners.

Urban food growing has an important role to play in education and learning at all levels. Gardening enables skills to be learned and used, not only horticultural skills but also social and community skills. It can offer opportunities for training and employment for people with learning disabilities within a social enterprise setting – for example, growing and selling of fresh produce and plants, poultry and bee keeping, garden design/maintenance and allotment makeovers.

Community orchards, allotments and other community growing spaces can also contribute to local biodiversity by providing forage, shelter and green corridors for birds, reptiles, small mammals and invertebrates - especially in urban areas where wildlife is otherwise scarce, or in rural areas dominated by intensive agricultural practices.

Box C.5 – Private Domestic Gardens

Private domestic gardens make up a significant proportion of urban GI, covering 30% of the total urban area in England. In combination with other types of GI, private domestic gardens can provide valuable links that help strengthen urban green networks and offer many of the benefits associated with ecosystem services provided by GI close to home.

There are opportunities for development in include wildlife gardens with a variety of planting, including native species and non-native species with value for attracting wildlife. This can include wildflowers, ponds, log piles and features for species such as hedgehog highways. Gardens with sealed surfaces, including paving and artificial lawns, can exacerbate surface water flooding problems, therefore it is important that soil, water, and vegetation continue to be the dominant features. Gardens may also include trees of amenity value or old or interesting specimens.

Box C.6 – Urban Squares and Heritage Features

Urban and market squares provide a focus for civic life. Urban squares not only have a key role to play in contributing to a place's character and sense of identity, but can also help with making places greener and more resilient to climate change.

Trees offer shade and evaporative cooling, which saves energy and carbon by reducing reliance on air conditioning in summer. Vegetation, including tree belts, hedges and green walls can help to reduce the impact of cold winds in winter. Sustainable drainage systems can also contribute to the climate resilience of urban squares and strengthen their role as part of the wider ecological network.

Well planned, designed and maintained GI in urban squares can contribute to providing many different benefits related to clean air, safety, noise abatement, places to rest and relax, shade and shelter and community gardening.

Where vehicular access to urban squares is reduced to create a more pleasant experience for pedestrians and cyclists, there can be opportunities to include shade trees to keep people cool and relaxed, ideally in large pits that can also be designed as sustainable drainage features.

Historic buildings, green spaces and veteran trees are often the foundation of a place's character and sense of identity, helping to underpin prosperous, confident and cohesive communities. GI and the public realm are often a key influence on how these heritage features are accessed and perceived, used and enjoyed by people.

Green & Blue Corridors

Multi-functional green and blue corridors are also important elements of the Green Network, facilitating movement of both people and wildlife between places and key locations within Greater Cambridge and beyond.

Opportunities for access to green space and nature afforded by a strong network of green and blue corridors play a vital role in supporting active lifestyles and improving people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Green and blue corridors can include walking and cycling routes for commuter, school and leisure travel, and can integrate "play on the way" opportunities. They can also provide important benefits for biodiversity and help communities to tackle climate change.

Climate resilient streets (see **Box C.7**) and traffic-free routes and greenways (**Box C.8**) can offer tree-lined green corridors connecting places where people live to places where people spend time outdoors, and to places where people work and access services (such as business and retail parks, and city, town and local neighbourhood centres). Blue space and corridors (including rivers and other waterbodies – see **Box C.9**) offer opportunities for people to exercise and connect with nature on a daily basis, and are important as wildlife habitats and for flood water management.

Box C.7 – Climate Resilient Streets

Streets not only have a key role in providing connections within the Green Network, but can also help with making urban areas more resilient to climate change.

Trees offer shade and evaporative cooling, which saves energy and carbon by reducing reliance on air conditioning in summer. Vegetation, including tree belts, hedges and green walls can help to reduce the impact of cold winds in winter. Sustainable drainage systems can also contribute to the climate resilience of streets and strengthen their role as part of the wider ecological network.

Well planned, designed and maintained GI in street schemes can contribute to a "healthy streets" approach in urban settings, providing many different benefits related to active travel, clean air, safety, noise abatement, road crossings, places to rest and relax, shade and shelter and community gardening.

Box C.8 – Traffic-free Routes & Greenways

Traffic-free routes and greenways provide important connections in the wider Green Network, and have a key role to play in promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

Off-road, traffic-free routes and trails can include public footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways. Greenways provide traffic-free, often segregated routes for cyclists and pedestrians on shared surfaces (typically 3m wide). Being traffic-free they can often be relative tranquil.

Although usually surfaced and unvegetated in urban settings, these routes often have vegetated shoulders (typically 1m wide) which are occasionally mown.

Box C.9 – Blue Space & Corridors

Blue space and corridors are places where water is the key natural feature such as rivers, streams, wetlands and ponds. Water is a vital part of the natural world for people and wildlife, and blue spaces are often a key focus of settlements providing the setting for historic places. Blue corridors, such as river valleys, often provide a focus for cycle paths, bridleways and footpaths that support health and wellbeing. Wetlands are particularly valuable habitats for biodiversity, and are good for carbon storage and sequestration.

Many freshwater habitats like wetlands, rivers and ponds have been lost, modified and polluted in urban areas, and the species that depend on them are in decline.

A balanced approach to designing access to blue spaces and corridors is needed to ensure biodiversity, habitats, river functionality (including the river channel, marginal habitat and riparian habitat) and wildlife connectivity are protected.

Nature-Based Solutions

Nature-based solutions can be used to reduce some of the physical and financial risks associated with climate change and ecosystem degradation, particularly in urban areas. Working with nature, solutions such as sustainable drainage systems (see **Box C.10**), green roofs and walls (**Box C.11**) and street trees (**Box C.12**) can be harnessed to help urban areas adapt to climate change impacts, such as flooding events and heat waves, as well as tackling poor air quality and biodiversity loss. Nature-based solutions can help to moderate microclimate, enhance nature, improve water quality and provide amenity benefits.

Box C.10 – Sustainable Drainage Systems

Sustainable drainage systems involve the management of surface water runoff within the urban environment to mimic the natural drainage processes, while supporting broader biodiversity and amenity aims. They may also be known as drainage systems, natural drainage systems or water sensitive urban design.

Sustainable drainage systems can include green-blue roofs, rain gardens, swales and other features, modified to store water and slow down surface water run-off before it enters watercourses. They can also be used to allow water to soakaway into the ground. Sustainable drainage systems provide an alternative or addition to conventional drainage systems that rely on pipes and the rapid conveyance of rainwater to drains and watercourses.

The sustainable drainage systems approach involves a succession of features taking surface water from a dispersed array of source control features (e.g. green roofs, rain gardens and permeable surfaces/paving) to site control features (e.g. rain gardens or small ponds) or to regional-scale control features (e.g. large ponds, wetlands, or detention basins), before sending water to watercourses.

Sustainable drainage systems can also be integrated with the catchment-based approach to improving the quality of the water environment by reducing downstream flooding, strengthening GI networks and assisting with the recovery of nature through

landscape-scale projects. Natural flood management solutions such as wetlands, leaky dams and reconnecting floodplains can help reduce flood risk where located upstream of urban areas to retain flow in rural areas.

Box C.11 – Green Roofs & Walls

Green roofs involve vegetation growing on a structure's horizontal surface. They may also be known as living roofs, eco-roofs, roof garden, brown roofs, green-blue roofs or biodiverse roofs. Green roofs can be installed on buildings and other structures such as bus shelters or bin/cycle stores.

Green walls involve vegetation growing on or against a vertical surface. They may also be known as green facades, living walls, vertical greening system, greenscreens or hedges.

Box C.12 – Street Trees

Street trees are trees located next to or within a public road in hard landscapes, and may also be combined with a sustainable drainage system. Government policy aims to encourage increased street trees along highways. Street trees and trees planted into paved areas are a key component of urban greening. Evidence shows that trees are important for a wide range of functions including summer shade and cooling, sequestering carbon, improving air quality, providing habitat for wildlife, and helping to reduce flood risk.

Appendix D
Building with Nature Standards

The Building with Nature (BwN) Standards are a set of GI quality standards, supported by a voluntary third-party assessment and accreditation system, for developers, planners and built environment professionals. The BwN Standards Framework includes 12 Standards that together define a benchmark for "what good quality GI looks like" covering Core Standards and Wellbeing, Water and Wildlife Standards. A summary of the Standards is set out below (see BwN Standards Framework for details):

'Core Quality Standards

1. Optimises Multifunctionality and Connectivity
2. Positively Responds to the Climate Emergency
3. Maximises Environmental Net Gains
4. Champions a Context Driven Approach
5. Creates Distinctive Places
6. Secures Effective Place-keeping

Summary
The six Core Standards provide the foundation for distinguishing green infrastructure from a more conventional approach to the design and delivery of open and green space.

Their purpose is to define some of the fundamental, underpinning aspects that the design and delivery of green infrastructure shall embody and follow. This includes sympathetic placing and connection with the local environment, responding to the climate and biodiversity emergencies in a positive way and future safeguarding of their functions and benefits.

Principles
A project that can be described using the following qualities is one that delivers green infrastructure that meets the Building with Nature Core Standards:

- Multifunctional - individual features in combination contribute to a network of multiple benefits
- Connected – provides or fills a missing natural link in the landscape for the benefit of nature and people
- Sympathetically placed – reflects and/or creates a sense of place, considerate to the context and character of the local environment and priorities of its people and wildlife
- Resilient – responds to the climate emergency in a positive, contributory way
- Responsibly managed – has a sustainable mechanism to support its life-long function and benefits
- Environmentally sensitive – mitigates its own local impact and improves the quality of the immediate natural environment'

‘Wellbeing Quality Standards

7. Brings Nature Closer to People
8. Supports Equitable and Inclusive Places

Summary
One of the key tenets of Building with Nature’s mission is maximising the benefits that high-quality green infrastructure can deliver for people when it is put at the heart of placemaking. By bringing nature closer to people we not only build great places for us to live, work and play, but we make development a force for societal good. Realising these benefits ensures that green infrastructure is a major contributor towards better health and wellbeing outcomes in our communities and helps to reduce the social and economic cost to our society from lost opportunities.

The purpose of the Wellbeing Standards is therefore to take advantage of the opportunity that development offers to use green infrastructure to support people’s mental and physical health and build a sense of belonging and encourage active stewardship.

Principles
A project that can be described using the following qualities is one that delivers green infrastructure that meets the Building with Nature Wellbeing Standards:

- Accessible - for all to use and enjoy, bringing people closer to nature
- Inclusive - of local people and engaged with and sympathetic to their needs and strengths
- Seasonal - offers enjoyment for all, at all times of the year
- Healthy – helps reduce health inequalities in existing communities
- Social - creates a sense of social cohesion and sustainability
- Distinctive – contributes to a sense of place, where people are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and pride‘

‘Water Quality Standards

9. Delivers Climate Resilient Water Management
10. Brings Water Closer to People

Summary
The Water Standards encourage the effective management and use of the water that falls on and flows through the site in ways that minimise risk and impacts of flooding and drought, improve water quality and create or enhance features for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The Standards recognise that by using a range of blue infrastructure and Sustainable Drainage System features and enhancing the physical connectivity between them, the capacity to contribute to water management is increased.

In addition, from a landscape perspective, a sub-catchment approach represents the best strategy to water management: rehydrating the landscape through interception, reducing the risk from and impacts of flooding and the demand for additional water to maintain green infrastructure. Moreover, when green infrastructure is designed as an integral part of our environment it delivers multifunctional benefits to through new habitat, climate mitigation and adaptation benefits and distinctive placemaking characteristics.

Principles
A project that can be described using the following qualities is one that delivers green infrastructure that meets the Building with Nature Water Standards:

- Integrated – water management is a key part of the green infrastructure function
- Quantity and quality - flood and pollution risk is managed close to where rainwater falls
- Catchment connected – water storage capacity of land adjacent to, or downstream from, the site is enhanced.
- Multifunctional – water is used to create a distinct sense of place and amenity and habitat for people and wildlife.
- Nature-based - a diversity of natural features and landscape is used to manage water quantity, water quality and flow in a resilient and resource efficient manner.'

'Wildlife Quality Standards

11. Delivers Wildlife Enhancement
12. Underpins Nature's Recovery

Summary
The world is experiencing a biodiversity emergency. Nature and the habitats, wildlife and ecosystem functions that embody it - vital to sustaining life on earth - are under ever-increasing stress and destruction from development, land use changes and the climate emergency. The UK only has half of its natural biodiversity left; 40% of species are in decline, 15% are under threat of extinction and there has been a 13% fall in the abundance of nature since 1970 – the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. It is vital that all new development plays its part in mitigating its own impact and contribute positively and proportionately to nature's sustained recovery.

The focus of the Wildlife Standards is to put nature at the heart of development. Working alongside and going beyond statutory requirements for nature, the Standards seek to aid nature's recovery and realise the wellbeing and economic benefits to individuals and society from pursuing nature-based solutions.

Principles
A project that can be described using the following qualities is one that delivers green infrastructure that meets the Building with Nature Wildlife Standards:

- Networked - Creates and restores effective links to or stepping-stones between local habitats and ecological corridors.
- Integral - Treats wildlife and habitat as a fundamentally integral part of a successful built environment.
- Protects and Enhances - Values existing habitat and features through their protection and enhancement.
- Transformative - Translates a commitment to wildlife, in the form of specification, design intent and management plans, into sustainable, long-life reality.
- Nature-rich - Contributes positively to reversing the long-term decline in biodiversity and aids nature's recovery with space for wildlife to flourish.'

Appendix E
Green Infrastructure Planning, Design & Management Guidance

Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide published in January 2023 aims to provide practical, evidence-based advice on how to plan, design, deliver and manage good quality GI that can contribute to creating nature-rich, healthy, climate-resilient and thriving places.

The Guide can be used to help inform the design and development management process alongside the National Design Guide, the National Model Design Code and requirements set out in local design codes.

The Building Blocks of Green Infrastructure

In line with Green Infrastructure Principles that good GI should be multi-functional, varied, connected, accessible where possible, and respond to local character, the Guide sets out the important factors to consider when planning and designing the following 'building blocks' that form part of a varied GI network, and the functions they perform:

- Sustainable drainage systems
- Green and blue roofs
- Green walls
- Rain gardens
- Swales
- Features for species
- Trees in hard landscapes
- Street furniture and utility structures
- Traffic-free routes
- Allotments
- Orchards
- Private domestic gardens
- Green spaces (including parks and burial grounds)
- More natural spaces (including woodlands, grassland, scrub, and hedgerows)
- Heritage features and the historic environment
- Blue spaces (including wetlands)
- Natural play space

Designing Green Infrastructure for Multiple Functions

The Guide provides guidance on how multi-functional GI should be planned, designed, delivered and maintained to provide multiple ecosystem functions as an integral component of well-designed places:

- Biodiversity (including pollination)

- Soils and geodiversity
- Water
- Carbon and energy
- Temperature
- Food
- Access to nature and supporting health benefits
- Active lifestyles
- Air quality
- Noise and soundscapes
- Education and volunteering
- Sense of place

Designing Green Infrastructure in Different Area Types

In line with Green Infrastructure Principles that good GI should be multi-functional, connected, varied and locally appropriate wherever it is located, the Guide sets out guidance on how GI should be planned, designed, and delivered as a multi-functional network in different area types. It explains how the Green Infrastructure Standards, information about the GI building blocks and guidance on designing for multiple functions should be applied in the following different area types to support the development of local design codes:

- High density urban centres (including high streets)
- Urban
- Streets
- Suburbs/urban fringe
- Rural
- Parks and green space
- Commercial, business and industrial sites
- Schools and colleges
- Healthcare facilities
- Linear infrastructure (roads, railways and waterways)

In addition to providing design guidance for residential development, the Guide can help meet the needs generated by different types of commercial development for GI – including employment areas that are part of mixed-use developments, business parks and industrial sites.

Natural England Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Guidelines

The Natural England Guidelines aim to ensure the effectiveness of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as mitigation for increased recreational pressure on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) from residential development.

The Guidelines provide a site quality design checklist of essential and desirable requirements for creating SANG appropriate to local circumstances. SANG may be created by making existing natural greenspace with no/limited public access fully accessible to the public; changing the character of an existing accessible natural greenspace to make it more attractive to intended visitors; or converting land in other uses into SANG.

SANG typically includes similar landscape features and characteristics which draw visitors to the SSSIs, supported by appropriate visitor infrastructure and facilities (e.g. circular routes, paths, off-lead areas for dogs, access points, car/cycle parking, café, toilets, signage, interpretation, etc).

Green Flag Award® Scheme for Parks & Green Spaces

See **Appendix B** for details.

The Sensory Trust Inclusive Access Guidance: By All Reasonable Means: Least Restrictive Access to the Outdoors

See **Appendix B** for details.

Natural England Country Park Accreditation Scheme

Managers of country parks in England can apply for accreditation from Natural England under the scheme to show visitors that a park has essential facilities, and the accreditation criteria show designers and planners what a good country park should offer to provide a quality experience for visitors.

Essential criteria – a good Country Park must be:

- At least 10 hectares in size
- Defined by a clear boundary – marked on a map, whether it's open or fenced in
- Accessible – less than 10 miles from a residential area
- Free to enter
- Inclusive and accessible – show how equality and disability needs have been met and provided for varied groups
- Predominantly natural or semi-natural landscape, for example woodland, grassland, wetland, heathland or parkland, with no more than 5% of the area built upon (excluding car parks)
- Signposted and easy to navigate – show visitors where they can go, what they can do and direct them along footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes
- Visibly staffed, for example litter collection and maintenance

- Available for public or educational events
- Near public toilets – either on-site or a 2-minute walk away
- Informed by the local community – the public should have some influence over the management and development of the site

Desirable criteria – ideally a good Country Park should also have:

- A visitor centre
- Play facilities
- Catering
- Bike and horse trails
- Art and sculpture
- Permanent staff presence during the day
- Detailed information available to visitors, such as leaflets
- Brown and white tourist directional signs and shown on an OS map
- Activities outside, such as water sports and adventure sports
- Achieved, or is working towards, Green Flag Award status
- A green transport policy, such as buses and cycle routes to the site
- Facilities for less able visitors, such as easy trails, seats and information available in accessible formats
- Planned for the management of biodiversity, geodiversity and preservation of historical environment
- Opportunities for practical community involvement, such as volunteering
- Promoted the health benefits of walking
- An outreach programme promoting the site to less represented sectors of the community
- A programme of events and guided walks, promoting healthy living and environmental awareness

Natural England advise that Country Parks which also fulfil a legal role as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) must have free public access and cannot charge for entry. Parking charges should be set a level to encourage visitors to use the Country Park SANG in preference to visiting a site designated as a SSSI.

Natural England Local Nature Reserve Selection & Declaration Guide

Natural England's Local Nature Reserves Selection & Declaration Guide includes service standards and criteria for what a good Local Nature Reserve should offer to provide a quality experience for visitors. The standard comprises a set of expected criteria that most Local Nature Reserves should meet, and a set of desirable criteria that provide added value for improving the visitor experience where appropriate, in relation to:

- Location and size
- Accessibility
- Character
- Facilities
- Links to local communities & neighbourhoods
- Management
- Activities
- Information & interpretation

National Allotment Society Guidance

Growing in the Community provides guidance for local authority officers, allotment associations and plot-holders about opportunities for achieving multiple benefits from allotments for local communities and nature through collaborative ways of working.

In addition, the 21st Century Allotments in New Developments Guide provides design-led, policy-based guidance for planners and developers aiming to include allotments in new developments.

Wildlife Gardening Guidance

The RSPB, Royal Horticultural Society, the Wildlife Trusts and others provide a range of practical guidance and information about wildlife gardening for home owners and schools. These include for example:

- RSPB: Nature on your Doorstep Advice
- Royal Horticultural Society: Wildlife Gardening Advice
- The Wildlife Trusts: Wildlife Gardening Advice
- Buglife: Wildlife Gardening for Bees & Bugs

Fields in Trust Standards

The Fields in Trust Standards 2024 provides guidance for the design of open space (within a wider network of GI), outdoor sports and play space in England.

Play England Design for Play Guide

This provides guidance from Play England on the design of local areas of play, local equipped areas of play and neighbourhood equipped areas of play for children, activity spaces for young people and natural/adventure play.

Play England recommend that successful play spaces:

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution

Make Space for Girls: Safer Parks for Women & Girls Guidance

Trees & Design Action Group Green Infrastructure Guide

The Trees & Design Action Group Green Infrastructure Guide provides advice to enable appropriate tree species selection for aiding the diversification of the urban forest as an integral element of GI.

Sustrans Traffic-free Routes & Greenways Design Guide

The Sustrans Traffic-free Routes & Greenways Design Guide provides guidance for the design of new traffic-free routes and greenways based on key principles for inclusivity, construction and maintenance, land/legal issues, planning and ecology.

To ensure inclusive, safe and attractive routes, Sustrans recommends that traffic-free routes and greenways should:

- Be traffic-free
- Be accessible to all legitimate users
- Be wide enough to accommodate all users, considering future and predicted usage levels
- Minimise maintenance

- Clearly and consistently signed
- Enable all users to safely cross roads
- Be attractive and interesting places to be
- Have a smooth surface that is well-drained
- Feel like a safe place to be

Department for Transport: Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance

Living Roofs & Walls Guidance

Living Roofs & Walls provides information and case studies about the benefits of green roofs and walls for helping urban environments become greener, healthier and more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Buglife: Creating Green Roofs for Invertebrates Guidance

The Green Roof Organisation: Green Roof Code of Best Practice incorporating Blue Roofs & BioSolar Applications

Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage

The Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage provides non-statutory technical standards for the design, maintenance and operation of sustainable drainage systems to drain surface water from housing, non-residential or mixed-use developments.

Susdrain: Sustainable Drainage System Manual

Defra: Catchment-based Approach to Improving the Water Environment

UK Rain Garden Guide

Ciria: Guidance on Delivery of Blue Roofs

Habitat Creation & Management Good Practice Guidance:

- Forestry Commission: Tree Planting & Woodland Creation Guidance
- Woodland Trust: Woodland Creation Guide
- Creating Tomorrows Forests: Miyawaki Method Principles
- Rewilding Britain: Natural Woodland Regeneration Principles
- Natural England: Scrub Management Handbook
- Hedgelink: Hedgerows Guidance
- Plantlife: Managing Meadows & Grasslands Guidance
- Natural England: Wildflower Meadow Creation Guidance

Local Food Growing Good Practice Guidance:

- South Cambridgeshire Allotment Toolkit

- NHS England: Green Social Prescribing Guidance
- MHCLG: Community Orchards Guide
- The Orchard Project: Planning & Designing an Orchard Guidance
- The Orchard Project: Restoration of Old Orchards Guidance
- The National Allotment Society: Growing in the Community Guidance
- The National Allotment Society: A Place to Grow – Allotment Management Guide
- The National Allotment Society: 21st Century Allotments in New Developments Guide
- Incredible Edible Network

Urban Greening Good Practice Guidance:

- Homes England: Streets for a Healthy Life - a guide to best practice in street design for highway authorities & housing developers
- Transport for London: Contribution of Green Infrastructure to Healthy Streets Guidance
- Historic England: Streets for All Advice
- Forest Research: Urban Tree Manual
- Forestry Commission: Highway Tree Management Operations Note
- Trees & Design Action Group: Trees in Hard Landscapes Guide