Contents

FIGURES

APPENDICES

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 (separate document)
- Volume 2 – Supporting Evidence (this 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

'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.'

1.1.1 Green infrastructure (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.

1.1.2 The role of 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)

1.1.3 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**).

1.1.4 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 Approach

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

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

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

1.2.3 A glossary of key GI terms can be found in Appendix A of **Volume 1**.

1.2.4 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 of **Volume 1**).

1.2.5 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.

1.2.6 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.

1.2.7 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.

1.2.8 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.

1.2.9 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 (see **Table 4.2** in **Section 4.2**).

1.2.10 The GI Strategy 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.

1.3 Report Structure

1.3.1 Drawing on existing studies and updated data/analysis, Volume 2 provides supporting evidence about current GI assets, needs and opportunities for future provision of GI within Greater Cambridge at a landscape and settlement-scale to inform the GI standards.

1.3.2 The remaining sections of this report are as follows:

- **Section 2.0** sets out a review of the national, county and local policy context and drivers for GI planning

- **Section 3.0** highlights the landscape-scale GI baseline, needs and opportunities for Greater Cambridge, building on the baseline findings and recommendations from the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study

- **Section 4.0** highlights the settlement-scale GI baseline and needs for Greater Cambridge, including mapping of a green and open space typology to inform the setting of GI standards

- **Section 5.0** provides signposts to the reviews of national GI standards and adopted local open space standards undertaken to inform the GI Strategy

1.3.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the Emerging Strategy & Standards set out in **Volume 1**.

2.0 Green Infrastructure Policy Context

2.1 General

2.1.1 This section sets out a review of the policy context and drivers for GI in relation to:

- GI Planning in National Policy (including the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and the national Green Infrastructure Framework)
- GI Planning in Cambridgeshire
- GI Planning in Greater Cambridge

2.2 National

National Planning Policy Framework

2.2.1 The NPPF (Revised 12 December 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The provision of GI is an integral part of the NPPF.

2.2.2 With regards to plan-making, NPPF para 20d chapter 3 requires local planning authorities to set out an overall development strategy in local plans that makes sufficient provision for GI among other strategic considerations:

> '20. Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for: …
>
> d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and **green infrastructure**, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation'

2.2.3 With regards to promoting healthy and safe communities, NPPF para 96c chapter 8 states:

> '96. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: …

c) Enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible **green infrastructure**, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.'

2.2.4 With regards to open space and recreation, NPPF para 103 chapter 8 states:

'103. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.'

2.2.5 The NPPF also sets out the approach to protection of open space (para 104), protection and enhancement of public rights of way networks including National Trails (para 105) and designation of land as Local Green Space (paras 106-108).

2.2.6 With regards to achieving well-designed places, NPPF para 136 chapter 12 states:

'136. Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined[52], that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.'

2.2.7 With regards to protecting Green Belt land (Cambridge Green Belt shown in Figure 1.1), NPPF paras 156c and 159 chapter 13 state:

‘156. Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review[58], or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application[59], the following contributions (‘Golden Rules’) should be made: …

c) the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.’

‘159. The improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.’

2.2.8 With regards to meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, NPPF paras 164a, 172c and 182 chapter 14 state:

‘164. New development should be planned for in ways that:

a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating **green infrastructure** and sustainable drainage systems.’

‘172. All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. They should do this, and manage any residual risk, by: …

c) using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in **green** and other **infrastructure** to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, (making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management).’

‘182. Applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. These should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity. …’

2.2.9 With regards to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, NPPF paras 187d and 188 chapter 14 state:

‘187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:…

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs

188. Plans should:

- distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework[65];
- take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and **green infrastructure**; and
- plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.’

2.2.10 With regards to habitats and biodiversity, NPPF para 192 in chapter 14 states:

‘192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity[68]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[69]; and
b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.‘

2.2.11 With regards to ground conditions and pollution, para 199 in chapter 14 of the NPPF states:

‘199. Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified,

such as through traffic and travel management, and **green infrastructure** provision and enhancement.''

National Planning Practice Guidance

2.2.12 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on the Natural Environment (updated 14 February 2024) includes advice on the role of GI in planning.

With regards to what GI can include, the PPG advises that:

'Green infrastructure 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.'

2.2.13 With regards to why GI is important, the PPG advises that:

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

2.2.14 The PPG advises that GI can help to achieve the following planning goals:

- 'Building a strong, competitive economy - Green infrastructure can drive economic growth and regeneration, helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors.
- Achieving well-designed places - The built environment can be enhanced by features such as green roofs, street trees, proximity to woodland, public gardens and recreational and open spaces. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beauty.
- Promoting healthy and safe communities - Green infrastructure can improve the wellbeing of a neighbourhood with opportunities for recreation, exercise, social interaction, experiencing and caring for nature, community food-growing and gardening, all of which can bring mental and physical health benefits…Green infrastructure can help to reduce health inequalities in areas of socioeconomic deprivation and meet the needs of families and an ageing population. It can also help to reduce air pollution and noise.

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

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

2.2.15 With regards to how local plans can take a strategic approach to GI, the PPG advises:

'Strategic policies can identify the location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks and set out appropriate policies for their protection and enhancement. To inform these, and support their implementation, green infrastructure frameworks or strategies prepared at a district-wide scale (or wider) can be a useful tool.

These need to be evidence-based and include assessments of the quality of current green infrastructure and any gaps in provision. Existing national and local strategies – for example on tree and woodland provision – can inform the approach to green infrastructure; and standards such as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard can be applied when assessing provision.

The green infrastructure strategy can inform other plan policies, infrastructure delivery requirements and Community Infrastructure Levy schedules. In view of their potential scope and use, authorities need to collaborate with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders such as Local Nature Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Local Enterprise Partnerships when developing green infrastructure strategies.'

2.2.16 With regards to how GI can be considered in planning, the PPG advises:

'Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.

Depending on individual circumstances, planning conditions, obligations, or the Community Infrastructure Levy may all be potential mechanisms for securing and funding green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure will require sustainable management and maintenance if it is to provide benefits and services in the long term. Arrangements for funding need to be identified as early as possible, and factored into the design and implementation, balancing the costs with the benefits. Local community engagement can assist with management and tailoring provision to local needs.'

2.2.17 The national PPG on Biodiversity Net Gain (updated 1 May 2024) sets out the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain:

'Biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.'

2.2.18 The national PPG on open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space in planning (6 March 2014) includes the following advice on the role of open space in planning:

'Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 96).

Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to **green infrastructure** (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 171), as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development, and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 7-9).

It is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas. In carrying out this work, they

should have regard to the duty to cooperate where open space serves a wider area. See guidance on Local Green Space designation, which may form part of the overall open space network within an area.'

National Green Infrastructure Framework

2.2.19 A key aim of the 25-Year Environment Plan (2018) for England is the provision of more and better quality green infrastructure, including urban trees, to make towns and cities attractive places to live and work, and to bring about long-term improvements in people's health, support climate resilience and connect people with nature.

2.2.20 The 25 Year Environment Plan emphasises the need 'to improve existing green infrastructure by encouraging more investment while making sure there is a presumption for sustainable development' (page 77). The Plan also made a commitment to 'draw up a national framework of green infrastructure standards, ensuring that new developments include accessible greenspaces and that any area with little or no greenspace can be improved for the benefit of the community' (page 77).

2.2.21 The aims of the Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles and Standards for England (Natural England, 2023) are to:

- 'Align the delivery of Green Infrastructure across England with the aims of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan
- Support delivery of Environment Act measures such as Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Guide local authorities in planning green infrastructure, responding to planning reforms and integrating green infrastructure as a core component of sustainable places
- Set out best practice in developing strategic Local Plan policies for green infrastructure
- Set out how to address inequalities in access to nature and the multiple benefits it provides
- Increase good practice in long term maintenance and stewardship of green infrastructure to maximise its benefits.'

2.2.22 As a result, the Green Infrastructure Framework can help to:

- ‘Simplify, clarify and create certainty about the green infrastructure that is required for people, health and wellbeing, nature and the climate, and to support sustainable economic growth
- Help to identify and prioritise addressing inequalities in green infrastructure provision
- Improve communications between local authorities, developers and communities
- Speed up the planning processes by bringing clarity, consistency and a level playing field for planners and developers, and help to create attractive, investable places’

2.2.23 The Green Infrastructure Framework comprises:

- Green Infrastructure Principles
- Green Infrastructure Standards
- On-line Green Infrastructure Mapping Database
- Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide
- Green Infrastructure Process Journeys
- Case Studies

2.2.24 The Green Infrastructure Principles are set out below:

‘Why Green Infrastructure is important principles (benefits/outcomes)

- **Nature-Rich Beautiful Places** - Green Infrastructure supports nature to recover and thrive everywhere, in towns, cities and countryside, conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and habitats, geology and soils, and our cultural and personal connections with nature.

- **Active and Healthy Places** - Green neighbourhoods, green/blue spaces and green routes support active lifestyles, sense of place, community cohesion and nature connections that benefit physical and mental health, wellbeing, and quality of life. Green Infrastructure also helps to mitigate health risk factors such as urban heat stress, noise pollution, flooding and poor air quality.

- **Thriving and Prosperous Communities** - Green Infrastructure helps to create and support prosperous communities that benefit everyone and adds value by creating high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors, create green jobs, support retail and high streets, and help drive prosperity and regeneration.

- **Improved Water Management** - Green Infrastructure reduces flood risk, improves water quality and natural filtration, helps maintain the natural water cycle and sustainable drainage at local and catchment scales,

reducing pressures on the water environment and infrastructure, bringing amenity, biodiversity, economic and other benefits.

- **Resilient and Climate Positive Places** - Green Infrastructure makes places more resilient and adaptive to climate change and helps to meet zero carbon and air quality targets. Green Infrastructure itself should be designed to adapt to climate change to ensure long term resilience.'

'What good Green Infrastructure looks like principles (attributes of good Green Infrastructure)

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.'

'How to plan, design and nurture Green Infrastructure principles

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **Design** – Understand an area's landscape/townscape, natural, historic and cultural character to create well-designed, well-managed, beautiful, and distinctive places.

- **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.'

The Environment Act 2021

2.2.25 In support of commitments made by the 25 Year Environment Plan 2018, the Environment Act 2021 introduced two key statutory measures relevant to GI delivery in England: Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

2.2.26 **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** is an approach which aims to leave biodiversity and the natural environment in a measurably better state when land use changes and when development occurs. The Environment Act 2021 includes provisions that make delivering a minimum 10% BNG mandatory for most development types in England.

2.2.27 The Biodiversity Metric developed by Natural England/Defra used to calculate BNG includes GI features such as sustainable drainage systems, green roofs and walls etc, inclusion of which within a development site can contribute towards BNG requirements.

2.2.28 Enhancing the biodiversity value of, or creating new, off-site GI (such as parks and other green and blue spaces, linear GI and habitats at a landscape-scale), can also be used to meet BNG requirements.

2.2.29 The Environment Act 2012 also includes a duty for public bodies in England to prepare **Local Nature Recovery Strategies** to bring together communities and decision makers across the public, private and voluntary sectors in local areas (typically at a county or equivalent level) to collaborate in planning and prioritising action for contributing to Nature Recovery Networks.

2.2.30 Local Nature Recovery Strategies are intended to work alongside other measures in the Act to support the delivery of mandatory BNG, providing a focus for a strengthened duty on all public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and help to develop partnerships for integrating nature into land management activities.

2.2.31 This in turn can help achieve wider environmental objectives (such as carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change or managing flood risk) and contribute to green economic recovery objectives.

2.3 County

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

2.3.1 The 2011 Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy aims to assist in shaping and coordinating the delivery of GI across the county to provide social, environmental and economic benefits. The Strategy demonstrates how GI can be used to help to achieve the following four objectives agreed by the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Forum:

- ‘To reverse the decline in biodiversity
- To mitigate and adapt to climate change
- To promote sustainable growth and economic development

- To support healthy living and well-being'

2.3.2 The Strategy is based on the following seven themes identified as important elements of GI in Cambridgeshire:

- 'Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Green Infrastructure gateways
- Heritage
- Landscape
- Publicly accessible open space
- Rights of way'

2.3.3 In addition, the Strategy considers three cross-cutting/overarching issues: economic development, health and well-being, and land and water management.

2.3.4 The Strategy sets out a strategic GI network that provides a county-wide framework and priorities for provision of new and enhanced GI in Cambridgeshire up to and beyond 2031, developed in line with opportunities identified for supporting the delivery of the Strategy's objectives and linking with GI provision outside of the county.

Doubling Nature Vision for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Doubling Nature: A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

2.3.5 Developed by Natural Cambridgeshire (the Local Nature Partnership), the 2019 Vision aims to double the area of wildlife habitats and natural greenspace within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2050 to enable the area in becoming a world-class environment where nature and people thrive, and businesses prosper. The Vision is supported by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Doubling Nature Investment Fund project, which aims to establish a fund to provide resources for doubling nature. It is expected that the Doubling Nature Vision will form the basis of the statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire.

Cambridge Nature Network

2.3.6 The Cambridge Nature Network is one of 6 landscape-scale priority areas for nature recovery in Cambridgeshire identified by Natural Cambridgeshire's Doubling Nature Vision. The vision is for Cambridge to have significant areas of downland, fens, meadows, waterways and woodlands around it, where nature can recover and thrive and where people can experience a wilder countryside and nature on their doorstep. The 2021 Nature Recovery Network for Cambridge and its Surrounds report, prepared by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire and Cambridge Past, Present & Future, highlights opportunities to create new habitats and large-scale natural greenspaces in five priority landscape areas in and around the City.

South Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Strategy

2.3.7 The South Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Strategy (2021) sets out South Cambridgeshire District Council's approach as the local planning authority to increasing wildlife-rich habitats, tree canopy and access to green spaces in South Cambridgeshire. The vision is to double nature in South Cambridgeshire by 2050 and, in so doing, enable wildlife and people to thrive and businesses to prosper.

Developing with Nature Toolkit

2.3.8 Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership's Developing with Nature Toolkit (2018) aims to help developers and infrastructure providers demonstrate their commitment to achieving a net biodiversity gain to the public, local authorities or shareholders. The Toolkit is primarily intended for major developments requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (new settlements, major urban extensions, housing developments above 100 dwellings, commercial developments greater than 1 Ha or 1,000m² floor space, mixed use developments greater than 2 Ha, or major transport infrastructure projects).

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Future Parks Accelerator Project

2.3.9 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) Project is a collaboration between the eight local authorities of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the Local Nature Partnership with a vision to secure a sustainable future where green spaces can thrive, helping people lead happy, healthy lives for generations to come.

2.3.10 The FPA Project aims to improve access to local, high quality green spaces to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all who live and work in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This includes engaging with those who use green spaces and working to understand the barriers for those who do not. Parks and green spaces also have an important role to play in helping tackle the challenges of the climate emergency.

Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping and Standards Study

2.3.11 The FPA Project included development of the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Technical Report (JSA/PNC, Nov 2020), which created consistent baseline quantity and accessibility standards for provision of public open spaces across Cambridgeshire informed by national, regional and local planning policy and local open space strategies.

Cambridgeshire Open Space Standards Toolkit

2.3.12 The FPA Project also developed the Cambridgeshire Open Space Standards Toolkit (LUC, 2022), which provides best practice guidance to help district authorities in Cambridgeshire with applying the recommended standards in their local areas. The Toolkit recommends that district authorities in Cambridgeshire either adopt the quantity and accessibility standards recommended by the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards

Technical Report, or use them as a baseline to benchmark the setting of standards in their local areas.

2.3.13 In addition, FPA Project also has a stakeholder engagement workstream focussed on understanding how new communities (around 10 years old or less) use and value their local community parks and green spaces.

Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan

2.3.14 The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan Update 2016 sets out Cambridgeshire County Council's approach to managing the Public Rights of Way network as an integral part of a wider transport system which meets local community needs for safe sustainable local transport, improves public health, enhances biodiversity, increases countryside recreational opportunities and contributes to the rural economy.

2.3.15 The updated ROWIP operates in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Transport & Connectivity Plan and other transport strategies, including the Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy.

Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth

2.3.16 The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth (2010) adopted by the City of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Councils includes the following principles for integrating GI and green space into development:

'Community principles:

- 5: There should be a mixture of formal and informal green space, and interconnectivity between new and existing Green Infrastructure. It is important to consider function as well as location, for example, cemeteries and play areas.
- 7: Public spaces should encourage social interaction (which could include specific cultural activities) and support healthy lifestyles. There should be a clear allocation of responsibilities for managing communal spaces and the public realm. Activity and maintenance make places feel safe, and increase the sense of wellbeing.'

'Connectivity principles:

- 4: New developments should contribute to the wider environmental goals for the Cambridge area and enhance the feasibility of walking and cycling.'

'Climate principles:

- 6: Public buildings, housing and neighbourhoods as a whole should be designed to anticipate climate change so they are capable of being upgraded and adapted easily and economically to minimise the resources used in both their construction and operation, and to cut down on air pollution.
- 7: Biodiversity and wildlife should be encouraged through a network of green spaces and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). This should be done within a sub-regional strategic context. Surface water should be managed sustainably.
- 9: Trees and planting should be used extensively to provide cooling in summer and to soak up rain, as well as to provide a landscape that encourages people to walk and cycle.'

'Character principles:

- 1: The existing landform and features of the site, such as water and landscape and the relationship to existing settlements, should be used to create varied and memorable townscapes, including vistas, intimate local places, informal natural areas with windbreaks, ponds and waterways.
- 6: Open space requirements should be integrated with buildings throughout the scheme. There should be a mix of private gardens, balconies and terraces, semi-private and public space depending on the development types.
- 7: The creation of good landscapes is as important as the creation of good townscapes. Different kinds of spaces should be provided to give character to the neighbourhoods and improve biodiversity, ranging from linear parks, squares and crescents to more intimate communal spaces looked after by adjoining properties or community trusts.'

2.4 Local

Adopted Local Plans

Cambridge Local Plan (Adopted October 2018)

2.4.1 While the adopted Cambridge Local Plan does not have a specific GI policy, it does include the following policies for individual GI assets:

- Policy 7: The River Cam
- Policy 8: Setting of the City
- Policy 19: West Cambridge Area of Major Change
- Policy 67: Protection of open space development
- Policy 68: Open space and recreation provision through new development
- Policy 69: Protection of sites of biodiversity and geodiversity importance
- Policy 70: Protection of priority species and habitats
- Policy 71: Trees
- Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

2.4.2 The following relevant documents provide part of the evidence base for the adopted Cambridge Local Plan:

- Cambridge Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2011
- Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031
- Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031
- Cambridge City Play Space Provision 2024
- Cambridge City Outdoor Play Spaces Investment Strategy 2024
- Cambridge Biodiversity Strategy 2022

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted September 2018)

2.4.3 The adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan includes the following relevant policies:

- Policy NH/4: Biodiversity
- Policy NH/5: Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
- Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NH/7 Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees
- NH/11: Protected Village Amenity Areas
- NH/12: Local Green Space
- Policy SC/1: Allocation for Open Space

- Policy SC/7: Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments
- Policy SC/8: Protection of Existing Recreation Areas, Playing fields, Allotments and Community Orchards

2.4.4 The following relevant adopted SPDs support the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:

- South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- South Cambridgeshire Health Impact Assessment SPD

2.4.5 Specific elements of the South Cambridgeshire Open Space in New Development SPD will be superseded by the new Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations SPD, in particular the costings in section 2.

2.4.6 The following relevant documents provide part of the evidence base for the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:

- South Cambridgeshire Recreation and Open Space Study July 2013
- Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031
- Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031

New Greater Cambridge Local Plan

2.4.7 South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are working in partnership to produce a joint Local Plan that will identify how development needs for housing and jobs should be met across Greater Cambridge. The emerging Local Plan's proposed aims and themes are:

- **'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.
- **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.

- **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.
- **Jobs:** Encourage a flourishing and mixed economy in which includes a wide range of jobs, while maintaining our area's global reputation for innovation.
- **Homes:** Plan for enough housing to meet our needs, including significant quantities of housing that is affordable to rent and buy, and different kinds of homes to suit our diverse communities.
- **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.'

2.4.8 The Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals Regulation 18 Consultation undertaken in 2021 set out preferred options for the planned level and distribution of growth for Greater Cambridge up to 2041, including the proposed direction of policies for shaping development and guiding planning decisions. Drawing on the supporting Biodiversity & Green Spaces Topic Paper (2021), the following policies related to GI, biodiversity and green spaces were proposed:

- Policy BG/GI: Green infrastructure
- Policy BG/BG: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Policy BG/TC: Improving tree canopy cover and the tree population
- Policy BG/RC: River corridors
- Policy BG/PO: Protecting open spaces
- Policy BG/EO: Providing and enhancing open spaces

2.4.9 Noting the cross-cutting benefits that GI can provide, GI principles were also included in the following other proposed policies:

- Policy GP/LC: Protection and enhancement of landscape character
- Policy GP/PP: People and place responsive design
- Policy WS/HD: Creating healthy new developments
- Policy CC/FM: Flooding and integrated water management
- Policy GP/PP: People and place responsive design
- Policy I/ST: Sustainable transport and connectivity
- Policy GP/QP: Establishing high quality landscape and public realm
- Policy WS/HS: Pollution, health and safety

- Policy CC/CS: Supporting land-based carbon sequestration
- Policy CC/DC: Designing for a changing climate

2.4.10 The Report on the First Proposals Consultation highlighted support for Biodiversity and Green Spaces as a key theme for the Local Plan.

2.4.11 In addition to this Green Infrastructure Strategy for Greater Cambridge, the Councils have jointly commissioned a number of relevant strategies/studies to inform the evidence base for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping

2.4.12 Commissioned by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning to inform policy development for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and support the Doubling Nature Vision, the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Baseline Report outlines the current extent, distribution and condition of GI assets and networks in Greater Cambridge and the opportunities available to enhance and expand these.

2.4.13 The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Recommendations Report identifies 14 Strategic Initiatives for enhancing and expanding GI across Greater Cambridge.

Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment

2.4.14 The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, 2021) provides a source of baseline information about the defining landscape and townscape characteristics and features that contribute to Greater Cambridge's local distinctiveness and sense of place. The Study identifies the forces for change in the landscape that are eroding or enhancing local distinctiveness, and provides guidance on ways by which landscape change might best be managed to reinforce and enhance landscape character.

Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment Baseline Study

2.4.15 The Greater Cambridge Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment Baseline Study (CBA, 2021) provides an analysis of the setting of Cambridge to support the assessment of strategic options for growth and allocation sites as part of the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The study identifies the defining attributes of the setting of the City and its environs that contribute to its historic significance, identity and sense of place, and highlights their sensitivity to change.

Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

2.4.16 The Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted February 2022) provides guidance to support national and local policy requirements for protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value, including provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace to avoid and mitigate recreational pressure within and around Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

2.4.17 A draft Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published in November 2024 for consultation.

2.4.18 The SPD sets out the approach, policies and procedures that Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will take in respect of using planning obligations (also known as Section 106 agreements) to make a development proposal acceptable through site-specific mitigation of adverse impacts. These include direct provision of infrastructure (both on and off site) and through payment of financial contributions to the local planning authority.

2.4.19 The SPD includes Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity, Public Open Space and Public Rights of Way in the range of proposed topics for which planning obligations may be sought.

Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base

2.4.20 The Greater Cambridge Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base (2021) provides baseline information and policy recommendations to support the transition to net zero carbon across the Greater Cambridge area through planning for sustainable patterns and types of growth to meet people's needs in the twenty-year period from 2020 onwards. The study highlights the role of the Green Infrastructure Strategy in identifying features and ecosystem services that help to remove carbon, and considering the need to be compensated if development causes unavoidable loss.

Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study

2.4.21 The Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study (2021) includes a Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to support the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The study informs a collaborative approach to managing land and water that delivers co-ordinated management of water storage, supply, demand, wastewater, flood risk, water quality and the wider environment. The study highlights the potential for including blue-green infrastructure (ponds, swales green roofs, buffer strips etc.) within sustainable drainage systems to deliver wider benefits in terms of improved biodiversity and protection from summer temperature extremes.

Greater Cambridge Sports Strategy

2.4.22 The Greater Cambridge Interim Sports Strategy sets out future needs for new Outdoor Sports Facilities provision (including indoor leisure facilities, playing pitches, outdoor courts and rinks) required to support planned growth.

3.0 Landscape-scale Green Infrastructure

3.1 General

3.1.1 Drawing on evidence from recent studies, this section outlines what the provision of landscape-scale GI within Greater Cambridge looks like in terms of:

- **Baseline** – the current provision of landscape-scale GI within Greater Cambridge
- **Needs** – strategic needs and priorities for landscape-scale GI in Greater Cambridge
- **Opportunities** – strategic opportunities for new and enhanced provision of landscape-scale GI in Greater Cambridge

3.2 Baseline

Landscape Context

3.2.1 Greater Cambridge's landscape is varied with intimate river valleys contrasting with open fens, wooded claylands and ridges, and rolling chalk hills (**Figure 3.1**). Village greens, common land, recreation grounds, orchards and mature trees have shaped the form and character of the villages, which are distinctive features of South Cambridgeshire's rural landscapes (**Figure 3.2**).

3.2.2 Cambridge is an iconic historic University city at the heart of the Greater Cambridge area (**Figure 3.3**). An essential part of its character stems from the relationship between the City's buildings and its open spaces, and the important role of trees.

3.2.3 Key features and areas identified as being essential to defining Cambridge's character include: the green corridors into the City (**Figure 3.4**); open green spaces within the City; watercourses; the historic core; approaches to the City; views of the City skyline; and the rural setting and separation between the City and necklace villages.

3.2.4 Many of the green spaces in Cambridge link together to form an extensive network, with frequent juxtaposition of public and private spaces of different sizes and functions. These open spaces form a number of corridors of green semi-natural habitat that link the heart of the built-up area to accessible greenspaces in the surrounding countryside - such as country parks and local nature reserves.

3.2.5 As illustrated on **Figure 3.5,** Greater Cambridge encompasses a variety of habitat types and networks that are part of a wider nature network across Cambridgeshire and beyond. A number of woodland, grassland and wetland sites within Greater Cambridge are designated for their biodiversity value (**Figure 3.6**).

3.2.6 In addition, street trees, trees in public open spaces and private gardens, woodlands and hedgerow trees, in urban and rural areas, contribute to landscape/townscape character and sense of place, provide clean air and regulate stormwater runoff/extreme temperatures, and support wildlife and wellbeing. The existing woodland and tree canopy is shown on the maps on **Figure 3.7**.

3.2.7 Together, these urban green spaces and habitats create the existing GI network connecting people and nature throughout Greater Cambridge and beyond.

Green Infrastructure Network

3.2.8 The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Baseline Report outlines the current extent, distribution and condition of GI assets and networks in Greater Cambridge.

3.2.9 It provides an up-to-date understanding of the GI Network, which is mapped using relevant open source and local GIS datasets informed by stakeholder consultation. Figure 1.2 in the Baseline Report illustrates the simplified

extent of the GI Network in terms of GI, water space, private garden and agricultural land.

3.2.10 The Baseline Report provides a detailed overview of GI assets that form the existing GI Network and the ecosystem services that this provides for the area under the following themes:

1. **Landscape, cultural heritage and sense of place** – considers how GI contributes to broad landscape character (Figure 6.1) and the character of heritage assets such as registered historic parks and gardens or scheduled monuments (Figure 6.2), as well as how key forces for change might affect these

2. **Biodiversity and geodiversity** - considers how locally and nationally designated biodiversity assets such as sites of special scientific interest (Figure 6.4) and priority habitats (Figure 6.6) contribute to GI benefits, such as reduction of flood risk and improved air quality, or access to nature

3. **The water environment** – considers how rivers and other watercourses/waterbodies (Figure 6.8) contribute to GI, as well as linking to challenges such as flood risk from fluvial and surface water sources (Figure 6.9) and water pollution

4. **Access and connectivity** – considers the contribution of accessible spaces as well as their connectivity (Figure 6.11), to GI benefits such as health and wellbeing, air quality, climate change and biodiversity

5. **Recreation and play** – considers the contribution of recreation, play and open spaces to GI benefits for health and wellbeing (as well as to biodiversity, for climate change adaptation, enhancing landscape character and creating a sense of place)

6. **Carbon sequestration** – considers the benefits provided by a range of GI assets in sequestering carbon (Figure 6.15)

7. **Agriculture and community food growing** – considers the role of agricultural land (Figure 6.18) as the predominant land use across Greater Cambridge, making it an essential component of the wider GI network

3.2.11 In addition to these seven themes, the cross-cutting themes of climate change, wellbeing and social inclusion, and environmental factors (which includes, for example, air quality, rainfall, temperature regulation and noise) are also considered by the Baseline Report.

Condition of Green Infrastructure Assets

3.2.12 The condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are monitored and recorded by Natural England. Information about the current condition of SSSIs within Greater Cambridge can be found in the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Baseline Report 2020.

3.2.13 The condition of council-owned trees in the Cambridge was assessed as part of the Cambridge City-Wide Tree Strategy (2016). Where an assessment was undertaken, the tree stock was assessed as being in good (56%) or fair (36%) condition at that time. It is understood that there is currently no information on the condition of council-owned trees in South Cambridgeshire.

3.2.14 As highlighted in the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Baseline Report, the condition of GI assets within Greater Cambridge requires further investigation due to the current lack of available data.

3.3 Needs

3.3.1 Drawing on analysis and stakeholder consultation set out in the Baseline Report, the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Part 2 Recommendations Report (September 2021) identifies a number of strategic needs and priorities for GI. These are:

- **'Addressing climate change -** Undertaking land management in a way that prevents release of carbon from over-reliance on fossil fuel use or poorly considered land management practices and where possible sequesters carbon from the atmosphere. Creating urban and rural environments which are more resilient to the impacts of climate change such as increased rainfall and higher temperatures. Providing for local food growing opportunities to reduce emissions associated with the transportation of food.

- **Improving and creating biodiversity and green spaces** - Providing adequate space to allow nature to thrive, and for people to undertake leisure, recreation and learning about the natural world.

- **Improving wellbeing and social inclusion -** Facilitating access to open spaces and linear routes, to enable engagement with people and nature and opportunity for play, sport, recreation, local food production and personal reflection.

- **Creating great places and supporting growth -** Providing landscape restoration responsive to local character, protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets and their settings, providing attractive places and sensitively harnessing natural products.

- **Reducing flood risk and resilience and combating drought -** Managing water resources in order to provide biodiversity, social and wellbeing benefits whilst reducing risk to people and property, and managing water resources to help maintain river levels and water availability for the general public.

- **Facilitating other organisations to deliver local plan objectives -** Encouraging and facilitating involvement from other organisations to deliver local plan objectives.'

3.3.2 Further details about current and future demand for GI in Greater Cambridge can be found in **Section 4.3**.

3.4 Opportunities

3.4.1 The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Baseline Report outlines opportunities to enhance and expand the GI network in Greater Cambridge under the following themes:

- Landscape, cultural heritage and sense of place
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Water environment
- Access and connectivity
- Recreation and play
- Carbon sequestration
- Agriculture and community food growing
- Climate change
- Wellbeing and social inclusion
- Environmental factors (eg. air quality, rainfall, temperature regulation and noise)

3.4.2 As shown on the opportunity zones maps (Figures 1.3 & 1.4) in the report:

- River corridors are key areas where GI interventions could result in multiple benefits
- There are large areas of multi-theme opportunities to the south east and south of Cambridge
- North east of Cambridge presents multiple opportunities
- Areas west of Cambridge around Bourn and Kingston also present multiple opportunities
- Opportunities associated with the northern fens, washes and wetlands also feature in multiple themes

3.4.3 In responding to the strategic needs and priorities for GI highlighted in **Section 3.3**, the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Study Part 2 Recommendations Report (September 2021) identifies 14 Strategic Initiatives for improving Greater Cambridgeshire's Green Infrastructure Network to address gaps in provision and inequalities in distribution. These Strategic Initiatives have a particular focus on delivery of landscape-scale GI.

3.4.4 The Strategic Initiatives are set out below and shown on **Figure 3.8**:

'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.'

4.0 Settlement-scale Green Infrastructure

4.1 General

4.1.1 Drawing on evidence from previous studies and updated data/analysis, this section outlines what the provision of settlement-scale GI within Greater Cambridge looks like in terms of:

- **Baseline** – the current types of green and open space provision in and around the City of Cambridge and the towns and villages within the rural areas of South Cambridgeshire
- **Needs** – the current and future demand for accessible green and open spaces in and around settlements

4.2 Baseline

Green and Open Space Typology

4.2.1 A Green and Open Space Typology for settlement-scale GI within Greater Cambridge has been developed in consultation with the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service team, based on a review of existing open space typologies and definitions set out in **Appendix A**.

4.2.2 In line with the Green Infrastructure Strategy's approach, the typology comprises different types of green and open spaces defined in relation to their "green" appearance and/or primary function (i.e. purpose/use), and in some cases size, as appropriate. 'Primary' and 'sub-types' of green and open spaces have been identified to support the setting of GI standards.

4.2.3 In the context of a GI approach, the Green and Open Space Typology reflects the following definitions adapted from current and emerging national/local policy and best practice guidance:

Green Space
Green space embraces “green” vegetated land and areas of water, and may be private or accessible.

(Adapted from Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Standards - Annex 1: Definitions of Greenspace)

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.’

(National Planning Policy Framework 2024 – Glossary)

Accessible Green Space

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).

(Adapted from Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards for England – Summary, Appendix 5: Definitions)

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).

(Adapted from Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards for England – Summary, Appendix 5: Definitions)

Private Green Space

Green spaces within the grounds/gardens of private institutions/residences, and urban greening features, that are not accessible to the public but have an important role to play in contributing to an area’s character, environmental quality and biodiversity.

4.2.4 The Green and Open Space Typology for Greater Cambridge is set out in **Table 4.1** and illustrated on the maps in the following figures:

* Based on the Greater Cambridge Green & Open Space Typology GIS Database (February 2025) available from the Councils on request

- **Figure 4.1** – Cambridge Urban Area & Fringe Green & Open Space Types
- **Figure 4.2a** – South Cambs Green & Open Space Types: North West
- **Figure 4.2b** – South Cambs Green & Open Space Types: North East
- **Figure 4.2c** – South Cambs Green & Open Space Types: South East
- **Figure 4.2d** – South Cambs Green & Open Space Types: South West

4.2.5 As shown on **Table 4.1**, the typology encompasses both accessible green space and private green space as defined above.

Table 4.1: Greater Cambridge Green and Open Space Typology Overview

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

4.2.6 Definitions of the Green and Open Space sub-types are provided below:

Allotments

Allotments are Restricted Accessible Green Space.

Food growing space with a primary purpose of cultivating fresh local food by allotment holders/members for their own consumption on land leased either from a local council or private landlord including fruit and vegetables, and the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees, that provides opportunities for exercise, encouraging healthy lifestyles and attracting pollinators.

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020)

Examples:
- Nuffield Road Allotments, Cambridge
- Stonehill Road Allotments, Great Shelford

Community Gardens

Community Gardens can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space or Restricted Accessible Green Space.

Shared food growing spaces with a primary purpose of cultivating fresh local food on a collective basis for communal consumption on land leased either from a local council or private landlord including fruit and vegetables, and the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees, that provides opportunities for exercise, encouraging healthy lifestyles and attracting pollinators.

(Source – adapted from South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Histon Community Garden
- Nightingale Community Garden, Cambridge
- Romsey Community Garden

Community Orchards

Community Orchards can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space or Restricted Accessible Green Space.

Shared food growing spaces with a primary purpose of cultivating fresh local food on a collective basis for communal consumption on land leased either from a local council or private landlord mostly comprised of orchards where a variety of standard fruit trees are grown. This provides opportunities for exercise, encouraging healthy lifestyles and attracting pollinators.

(Source – adapted from South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Little Eversden Community Orchard
- Lolworth Community Orchard
- Impington Community Orchard

Amenity Green Spaces

Amenity Green Spaces are Publicly Accessible Green Space.

Informal green spaces, predominantly of small size associated with housing estates, business parks, some highway verges and villages, typically consisting of mown grassed areas with shrub/tree planting, with a primary purpose of providing informal recreational opportunities and/or contributing to the amenity of an area by separating different buildings/land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons.

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020)

Examples:
- Pye Meadow Amenity Green Space, Cambridge
- Osprey Drive Amenity Green Space, South Trumpington
- Cannons Green Amenity Green Space, Petersfield

Informal Open Space

Informal Open Spaces are Publicly Accessible Green Space.

Informal green spaces, predominantly of medium to larger size associated with housing estates, business parks, some highway verges and villages, typically consisting of mown grassed areas with shrub/tree planting and occasional ornamental flower beds, with a primary purpose of providing informal recreational opportunities and/or contributing to the amenity of an area by separating different buildings/land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons.

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020 and South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Barrington Green (East)
- Church Lane Recreation Ground, Pampisford
- Farmstead Close, Histon

Civic Spaces

Civic Spaces are Publicly Accessible Green Space.

Public squares and market places, and other hard surfaced ‘grey space’ designed for pedestrians, with a primary purpose of providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations, markets and community events in the urban area.

(Source – adapted from City of Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011)

Examples:
- The Market Place
- War Memorial Square
- Fisher Square

Burial Grounds & Churchyards

Burial Grounds & Churchyards are Publicly Accessible Green Space.

Cemeteries and other burial grounds (e.g. natural burial sites), churchyards and spaces associated with other places of worship with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for quiet contemplation and burial/cremation of the deceased, which may also be spaces of value for wildlife.

(Source – adapted from South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Mill Road Cemetery, Cambridge
- St Andrew’s Churchyard, Swavesey
- Arbory Trust Natural Burial Ground, Barton

Urban Destination Parks & Gardens

Urban Destination Parks & Gardens can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space or Restricted Accessible Green Space.

Designed/formally laid out parks and formal gardens in urban areas with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal recreation, holding major events and access to nature/heritage, that typically make a significant contribution to the character, environmental quality and recreational resources of the City by virtue of their location, significant size and high quality.

Examples:
- Parker’s Piece Public Park, Cambridge
- Jesus Green/Midsummer Common Public Parks, Cambridge
- Cambridge Botanic Gardens, Cambridge

Urban Neighbourhood Parks

Urban Neighbourhood Parks can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space, Restricted Accessible Green Space or Private Green Space.

Parks and green spaces providing a social and recreational focus for local neighbourhoods in urban areas, including green spaces associated with private educational institutions.

Urban Neighbourhood Parks have the primary purpose of providing amenity space and opportunities for informal recreation, local community events and access to nature. These spaces can make a significant contribution to the character, environmental quality/biodiversity and recreational resources of neighbourhoods by virtue of their location, size and quality. They may include recreation grounds where the primary purpose of the space is informal recreation, rather than organised sport, and can also include small green spaces such as pocket parks.

In rural villages, Urban Neighbourhood Parks often have a quite informal, natural appearance with some furniture including benches and litter bins. In more urbanised settings, they may also have facilities such as a toilet block, dedicated barbecue stands and other informal equipment (e.g. a fixed table tennis area), and can include some formal outdoor sports facilities (e.g. a tennis court/netball hoop).

Examples:
- Accordia Pocket Park, Cambridge
- Kings Park, Cottenham
- Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground, Cambridge

(Source – adapted from City of Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011 and Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020)

Country Parks

Country Parks can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space or Restricted Accessible Green Space.

Country parks and other areas of accessible countryside destinations typically located in urban fringe areas, including for example woodland, grassland, wetland, heathland or designed parkland/gardens, with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal active and passive recreation, community events and access to nature/heritage.

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020)

Examples:
- Milton Country Park
- Wandlebury Country Park

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Outdoor Sports Facilities can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space, Restricted Accessible Green Space or Private Green Space.

Outdoor sports facilities with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for participation in formal outdoor sporting activities – including tennis/netball courts, bowling greens/rinks, grass playing fields/artificial playing pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, camping sites/caravan parks, school grounds and other institutional playing fields, multi-use games areas, equestrian facilities and other outdoor sports areas.

In rural areas, outdoor sports facilities tend to be located within a village recreation ground, where the primary use of the space is for organised sport (rather than informal recreation).

(Source – adapted from City of Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011 and South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Trinity College Playing Field, Cambridge
- Chesterton Bowls Club, Cambridge
- Orwell Recreation Ground

Note: information and mapping of different types of outdoor sports facilities will be provided by the Greater Cambridge Interim Sports Strategy.

Play Spaces

Play Spaces are Publicly Accessible Green Space.

Designed spaces, usually associated with housing areas and neighbourhood parks, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for outdoor play and social interaction, including play spaces for children (playgrounds with equipped and natural play areas for children up to around 12 years of age)

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020 and South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Chestnut Grove Recreation Ground, Cambridge
- Albion Yard Children's Play Area, Cambridge

Youth Space

Youth Spaces are Publicly Accessible Green Space.

Designed spaces, usually associated with housing areas and neighbourhood parks, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for outdoor play and social interaction for young people (recreation facilities for teenagers between 13 and 17 years of age such as pump tracks, informal ball kick-about areas and shelters).

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020 and South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013)

Examples:
- Brownsfield Recreation Ground - Pump Track, Cambridge
- Chesterton Recreation Ground - Pump Track and Skate Ramp, Cambridge

Natural/Semi-Natural Green Spaces

Natural/Semi-Natural Green Spaces can be either Publicly Accessible Green Space, Restricted Accessible Green Space or Private Green Space.

Areas of semi-natural green space with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and providing opportunities for environmental education and raising awareness of nature, typically comprising natural habitats such as woodland, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, and derelict open land. Public accessibility of these areas is mixed.

(Source – adapted from Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020)

Examples:
- Barnwell West Local Nature Reserve, Cambridge
- Coldhams Common Local Nature Reserve, Cambridge
- Wilbraham Fens Site of Special Scientific Interest

Domestic Gardens

Domestic Gardens are Private Green Space.

Private spaces with the primary purpose of providing amenity green space for private residences (including shared communal private gardens for flats), contributing to the amenity value of streetscapes and also providing habitats/corridors for wildlife.

Note: Domestic Gardens have been mapped with reference to the OS Mastermap Greenspace data (urban areas only).

Urban Corridors

Urban Corridors can include Publicly Accessible Green Space, Restricted Accessible Green Space and/or Private Green Space.

Predominantly accessible green/blue corridors in urban areas, typically following the River Cam and tributary watercourses (brooks), connecting the City to the surrounding countryside with the primary purpose of providing opportunities for walking and cycling (whether for leisure purposes or active travel), access to nature and wildlife movement.

(Source – adapted from Assessing Needs & Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17, 2002)

Note: for the purposes of the Strategy, in addition to assigning the primary purpose/use of a green and open space site, the supporting function of the site as an urban corridor is recorded where applicable in the GIS database (based on the Green Corridors in Cambridge defined in Section 6.0 of the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2021 – see **Figure 3.4**).

Countryside Corridors

Countryside Corridors can include Publicly Accessible Green Space, Restricted Accessible Green Space and/or Private Green Space.

Landscape-scale green/blue corridors predominantly in rural areas providing space for nature, opportunities for carbon storage/sequestration and informal countryside recreation (walking, cycling, bird watching, etc) and farmland/ woodland for food production/renewable energy generation.

Quantity of Green & Open Spaces

4.2.7 An assessment of the current quantity of Green and Open Space Types within Greater Cambridge has been undertaken to provide a baseline for the setting of GI standards. The quantity of Green and Open Space Types, in terms of number and total area of sites where applicable, is set out in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Quantity of Green and Open Spaces within Greater Cambridge

***** Based on the Greater Cambridge Green & Open Space Typology GIS Database (February 2025), supplemented by domestic gardens data for the Cambridge urban area (OS Mastermap Greenspace 2022), and Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space has been supplemented by Natural England Priority Habitats data, Natural England Statutory Designations data, Natural England Access Land data, Woodland Trust woodland data and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre Non-Statutory County Wildlife Sites data.

Primary Types	Sub-Types	Cambridge		South Cambs		Greater Cambridge	
		Total No. Sites	Total Area (Ha)	Total No. Sites	Total Area (Ha)	Total No. Sites	Total Area (Ha)
Food Growing Space	Allotments	28	36	87	87.6	115	123.6
	Community Orchards	1	2	16	7.9	17	9.9
	Community Gardens	3	0.85	1	0.55	4	1.4
Informal Area of Open Space	Amenity Green Spaces	219	50.6	95	31.4	314	82
	Informal Open Space	0	0	219	90.6	219	90.6
	Civic Spaces	10	2.1	3	0.5	13	2.6
Burial Grounds & Churchyards	Burial Grounds & Churchyards	15	18.2	135	69.8	150	88
Parks & Recreation Space	Urban Destination Parks & Gardens	9	77.6	0	0	9	77.6
	Urban Neighbourhood Parks	74	113.9	77	93.3	148	207.2
Country Parks	Country Parks	3	43.5	4	298.5	5	342
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor Sports Facilities	166	249.2	331	413.4	497	662.6
Children & Young People Space	Play Spaces	90	11.9	170	25.9	260	37.9
	Youth Space	2	0.18	0	0	2	0.18
Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space	Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space	NDA	412.9	NDA	7448	NDA	7860
Domestic Gardens	Domestic Gardens	NDA	881.4	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA

NDA – No Data Available

Quality of Green & Open Spaces

4.2.8 A review of previous quality assessments of open spaces within Cambridge (2011) and South Cambridgeshire (2013) has been undertaken as outlined below.

Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011

4.2.9 Site audits carried out by CCC officers for the Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011 assessed the quality of c.350 open spaces using the following criteria:

'Environmental Importance:
- Does the site make a major contribution to the setting, character, structure and the environmental quality of the City?
- Does the site make a major contribution to the character and environmental quality of the local area?
- Does the site contribute to the wildlife value and biodiversity of the City?

Recreational importance:
- Does the site make a major contribution to the recreational resources of the City as a whole?
- Does the site make a major contribution to the recreational resources of the local area?

Quality:
- Each site received a score between 1 and 5 to a series of 44 questions, and an overall % quality score was generated.'

4.2.10 There were relatively few high-quality open spaces (scores above 90%) in Cambridge at that time, which predominantly represented private amenity spaces including:

- Cambridge University Botanic Garden
- Kings College School
- Cripps Court - Selwyn College
- Faculty of Education
- Castle School Playground
- Murray Edwards College Gardens
- Perse School for Boys Playing Field

4.2.11 Open space sites in Cambridge with the lowest ranking quality scores (less than 35%) in 2011 included:

- Accessible Semi Natural Green Spaces (Disused Railway Line North of Ronald Rolph Court, Cobbetts Corner, Hayster Drive Open Space, Meadow & Small Wood - South of Hayster Drive, Spinney - Blue Circle)
- Amenity Green Spaces (Amenity Green Space Outside 73-87 Peverel Rd, Amenity Green Space Outside 33-47 Peverel Road, Brother's Place Amenity Green Space),
- Allotments (Auckland Road Allotments)
- Place Spaces (Play Area Behind 70-78 Hazelwood Close, St Thomas' Road Play Area)

4.2.12 Drawing on these site audits, the Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011 includes an analysis of open space quality issues for each ward within the City at that time. For example:

- Abbey Ward – the quality of open spaces is very varied with 'average' quality of maintenance on some sites. Needs include enhancement of Barnwell West Local Nature Reserve to improve access and reduce fly tipping and damage caused by recreational dog walkers
- Arbury Ward – play areas behind Hazlewood Close are in very poor condition, with significant disrepair evident, isolated and have been vandalised. Blandford Way Play Area is currently very limited with two play items for toddlers.
- Cherry Hinton Ward – many natural and semi-natural green spaces are not well managed and maintained
- East Chesterton Ward – Causeway Park is in very poor condition with a lack of purpose. Needs include improving paths across Chesterton Recreation Ground to allow better access on the clear desire line between Longworth Avenue and Church Street
- King's Hedges Ward – Hawkins Road play area is in very poor condition and many amenity green spaces around flats could be enhanced with trees and more landscaping
- Market Ward – deterioration in the quality of publicly accessible open spaces due to high levels of use
- Queen Edith's Ward – need for enhancement of the pavilion at Nightingale Avenue Recreation Ground and the children's play spaces at Gunhild Way and Holbrook Road
- West Chesterton Ward – need for improvements to children's play space, particularly Chestnut Grove Recreation Ground and Bateson Road Play Area

4.2.13 It is understood that play spaces within the City of Cambridge currently have their own quality standards and site audit methodology developed by CCC officers.

South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013

4.2.14 Site audits carried out by SCDC officers for the South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013 assessed the quality of open spaces for each village (99 in total) in South Cambridgeshire. The assessment was based on an extensive range of detailed criteria used to generate an overall % quality score as follows:

- 85-100% - excellent quality
- 75-84% - very good quality
- 65 - 74% - good quality
- 55-64% - average quality
- 35-44% - poor quality

4.2.15 In summary, the 2013 assessment found that:

- In approximately 40% of South Cambridgeshire's villages, all of the open spaces assessed were of good or very good quality (noting that in some cases open spaces are very limited in number or type).
- In around one third of the villages, some of the open spaces were assessed as being of average quality with some other spaces assessed as good quality
- Less than 10% of the villages assessed contained spaces assessed as being of poor quality.

Conclusions

4.2.16 The review of previous quality assessments of open spaces has revealed that the Cambridge (2011) and South Cambridgeshire (2013) data is of limited current value due to age, variations in approach and application of evaluation criteria, and the lack of mapping within a GIS database.

4.2.17 Further investigations would be required to provide suitable information about the quality of open space sites within Greater Cambridge to inform targeted assessment of needs for improvements to open spaces on a type or site-specific basis.

4.2.18 A consistent framework for undertaking open space site audits and quality assessments, based on the Green Flag award criteria and other recognised guidance, has been developed by the 2021 Fenland Open Space Standards study for local authorities across Cambridgeshire to use.

4.2.19 Within Greater Cambridge, three accessible greenspaces currently have Green Flag Awards:

- Cherry Hinton Hall, Cambridge
- Christ's Pieces, Cambridge
- Great Shelford Recreation Ground

4.3 Needs

Current Demand for Green Infrastructure

4.3.1 In collaboration with Public Health England, Natural England published a review of evidence for the health and wellbeing benefits provided by greenspaces and wider GI features in 2020.

4.3.2 Undertaken in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic, the evidence review sets out the sizeable body of research that underlines the importance of creating more, bigger, better and joined-up accessible green spaces, especially near to where people live, and to address inequalities. In addition to the vital role played by green spaces in offering people opportunities for exercise, fresh air, contact with nature, and play and relaxation, the review highlights the wider health and wellbeing benefits of GI, for example in nature recovery, addressing climate change and mitigating noise and air pollution. The key findings of the evidence review are outlined below:

‘Linkages between green infrastructure and health

The evidence base indicates that green infrastructure has a positive influence on population and individual level health and wellbeing. There is established, but variable or incomplete, evidence which indicates that more frequent exposure to green infrastructure has a positive influence on mortality rates, certain types of morbidity, mental health, quality of life, and is associated with less stark inequalities in health.

There is some un-certainty as to how green infrastructure benefits health and wellbeing. It is likely that green infrastructure influences health and wellbeing through direct and ‘active’ pathways such as promoting positive mental health states, providing a context and motivation for physical activity and recreation, and allowing people to experience nature. However, the evidence base is incomplete and sometimes inconsistent.

It is also likely that green infrastructure influences health and wellbeing through indirect or ‘passive’ pathways such as contributing to healthy micro-biomes and better nutrition, and through the mitigation of health risks such as heat island effects, noise pollution, flooding and poor air quality. Health and wellbeing outcomes of exposure to green infrastructure through both direct/active or indirect/passive pathways are highly context dependant. Whilst these pathways are likely, the evidence base is limited, and in some cases incomplete and inconsistent.

There is established but incomplete evidence which suggests that green infrastructure can result in ecosystem dis-benefits such as increased exposure to pollen or zoonotic disease which have the potential to harm health and wellbeing.

Who benefits from green infrastructure and in what ways?

All social groups are likely to benefit from exposure to and/or use of green infrastructure however the evidence is currently inconsistent on who benefits, in what ways, and to what degree.

Some groups, including more socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged populations, appear to disproportionately benefit from greener living environments.

The evidence base suggests that there is no consistent pattern in the distribution of green infrastructure according to socio-demographics; in some areas more socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged groups have similar provision of green infrastructure to less socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged groups, in other areas there are inequalities in provision.

There is some evidence to suggest that green infrastructure tends to be poorer quality in more socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged areas.

What is 'good' or 'good enough' green infrastructure for health and wellbeing outcomes?

Currently the evidence base has limited utility for clarifying what is 'good' or 'good enough' green infrastructure. Whilst it is likely that the type, amount, location/proximity, and quality of green infrastructure are key factors in health and wellbeing outcomes the evidence is, as of yet, incomplete, variable and in some cases inconsistent. However, the evidence indicates that:

- Greener living environments are associated with better health and wellbeing.
- Different types, sizes and configurations of green infrastructure afford different benefits and that mixed provision (e.g. a mix of publicly accessible greenspaces, domestic and shared gardens, green routes and street trees) is most likely to be beneficial. Both publicly accessible and private greenspace (e.g. domestic gardens, institutional spaces) have a role in promoting health and wellbeing.
- It is likely that greenspaces that are closer to the home or education/work place are important, however 'accessibility' varies according to factors such as urban form, terrain, climate, availability of transport, and to personal factors such as preferences, physical capacity to walk etc. It also appears that people are selective in their choice of destination and that proximity is not necessarily the primary factor. The perception of proximity appears to be as important as objective proximity.
- Better quality and well-maintained green infrastructure is associated with better health and wellbeing outcomes. The perception of quality, which is highly variable between socio-cultural groups, is again important.
- The evidence suggests that the value of different types, amounts and locations of green infrastructure for health and wellbeing outcomes is likely to be highly contextual; what is appropriate in one locale may not be appropriate in another.

Does improving the amount, quality and connectivity of green infrastructure improve health and wellbeing?

Currently the evidence base has limited utility (there are a very small number of robust studies and demonstrating health or wellbeing gain resulting from environmental change is complex) for clarifying how the provision of new green infrastructure, or the modification and adaptation of, or changes to the management or promotion of existing green infrastructure, could be used to improve health and wellbeing. However, the evidence indicates that:

- In new developments mixed provision (e.g. a mix of different sizes and types of publicly accessible greenspaces, domestic and shared gardens, green routes, street trees etc.) with appropriate connectivity is most likely to be beneficial.
- Improving the quality and management of green infrastructure and improving knowledge of and accessibility of spaces may have a positive impact on perceptions and use. Interventions to promote use likely need to be plural, involving changes to physical spaces in addition to complementary social programmes.
- There is evidence that new, or modifications to the provision or management of existing green infrastructure can exacerbate inequalities in health through processes such as gentrification or unequal access.
- The provision, modification or use of green infrastructure to promote health and wellbeing is most likely to be successful if there is a good understanding of the local social, cultural and economic context, where the health needs of target populations are understood, and where linkages are made with, and buy-in gained from wider networks of social and health services. Further effective approaches are informed by a theoretical understanding of the ways in which the environmental change may influence health and where the desires and perceptions of local communities are taken into account.'

4.3.3 Surveys during the Covid-19 pandemic 'lockdown' highlighted the value that people placed on access to green spaces and private gardens in coping with the challenges of the pandemic and the 'stay at home' measures to control its spread.

4.3.4 Natural England's People & Nature Survey found that, in May 2020, the vast majority of adults surveyed (89%) agreed or strongly agreed that green and natural spaces should be good places for mental health and wellbeing, with 30% reporting visiting local green and natural spaces more than usual. Eight out of 10 adults agreed that being in nature made them feel very happy with 41% reporting that visiting local green spaces had been even more important to their wellbeing.

4.3.5 People's response to the Covid-19 pandemic 'lockdown' measures also led to greater awareness of the inequalities in access to publicly accessible greenspace and private gardens amongst different socio-economic and demographics groups. For example, 1 in 8 households do not have a garden. This highlighted the importance of public greenspace provision for contact with nature.

4.3.6 A review of previous open space studies for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire has been undertaken to identify available information about what type of green spaces people in Greater Cambridge want and value.

Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011

4.3.7 While the Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011 was not informed by a Questionnaire Survey of open space users, the document was subject to public consultation which supported the recommendations for retaining and protecting more or less all areas of open space in Cambridge, including those operated by private landowners.

South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013

4.3.8 The South Cambridgeshire Recreation and Open Space Study (2013) was informed by a Village and Parish Council Questionnaire Survey of open space users.

4.3.9 Of those that responded, 85% said that open spaces were very important to their community. 38% of respondents said that their open spaces were of excellent quality (overall quality of your sites in respect of the amount of space and the facilities), 42% good quality, 8% satisfactory quality, and 12% poor quality. Maintenance of these was considered to be excellent by 18% of respondents, good by 76%, satisfactory by 5% and poor by 2%.

4.3.10 The main uses for open spaces were identified as informal play (14%), walking (13%), dog walking (13%), using play equipment (12%), and relaxation (10%). Facilities for children (18%) was the most frequently considered factor which would encourage more use of open space sites.

4.3.11 Respondents were also asked to consider a variety of threats to open space sites. Dog fouling (26%), vandalism (20%), litter (19%), anti-social behaviour (16%), graffiti (13%), and development (5%) were all considered to be threats. Key limiting factors which prevent people from using open space sites were lack of facilities (50%) and accessibility (33%).

Future Demand for Green Infrastructure

4.3.12 The key pressures and drivers of change that are likely to shape the demand for GI over the Greater Cambridge Local Plan period to 2045 are highlighted below.

Climate Change

4.3.13 Climate change due to carbon emissions is widely acknowledged to result in hotter drier summers and milder wetter winters in the UK, which will affect both people and wildlife. GI has a key role to play in providing nature-based solutions for helping mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

4.3.14 Cambridge City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set a target for Cambridge to be net zero carbon by 2030. The Cambridge Climate Change Strategy 2021-26 sets out the Council's approach to helping mitigate climate change and build local resilience in Cambridge to the impacts of climate change. The Council has also set a target to reduce its own emissions to net zero by 2030, as detailed in the City of Cambridge Council Carbon Management Plan 2021-26.

4.3.15 South Cambridgeshire District Council declared a climate emergency in November 2019, and an ecological emergency in July 2019, which has resulted in some changes to the delivery of services. The South Cambridgeshire Zero Carbon Strategy adopted in May 2020 sets out the need to halve net carbon emissions in the district by at least 2030 and the plans to support this.

Population & Demographics

4.3.16 Greater Cambridge currently has a total population of 322,000 comprising 150,500 people in Cambridge and 171,500 in South Cambridgeshire (based on 2024 population data provided by GCSP).

4.3.17 The area's population is projected to rise to 462,500 by 2045 with 207,000 people in Cambridge and 255,500 in South Cambridgeshire (based on projected population data provided by GCSP). An increasing population across Greater Cambridge drives the future demand for GI, particularly in Cambridge which has seen one of the largest increases in the East of England region over the past decade.

4.3.18 In line with the population of England as a whole Greater Cambridge's population continues to age, particularly in South Cambridgeshire where there has been a 28.7% increase in people aged 65 or over between 2011 and 2021 (in contrast to an increase of 4.1% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 8.5% in children aged under 15 years). In Cambridge, there has been a 13.7% increase in people aged 65 or over between 2011 and 2021 (in contrast to an increase of 18.2% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 16.8% in children aged under 15 years).

4.3.19 As at the last Census, the population of Cambridge was 74.6% White and 25.4% from Asian, Mixed/Multiple, Black, Arabs and other ethnic groups. In South Cambridgeshire, the population was 89% White with 11% from Asian, Mixed/Multiple, Black, Arabs and other ethnic groups.

4.3.20 Changes in the area's population and demographics drives differing demand and needs for GI. For example, an increase in the number of children aged under 15 years is likely to drive increasing demand for play and youth spaces, whilst an increase in people aged 65 or more (particularly those with limited mobility) may drive increasing demand for green space with facilities such as benches and paths.

4.3.21 In addition, different ethnic groups can have specific cultural needs for the use of outdoor spaces, and may experience particular challenges to accessing and using green spaces due to cultural barriers.

Housing Growth

4.3.22 The number of households in Cambridge in 2021 was 52,474 and 66,996 in South Cambridgeshire. Sustained population and employment growth has led to a housing shortage within Cambridge with high house prices and low levels of housing affordability. Cambridge is frequently ranked as one of the most unaffordable places to live within the UK, with housing affordability decreasing since the late 1990s. Average prices of 'real' sales is well above other districts in the county, and significantly higher than the regional and national averages.

4.3.23 The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Development Strategy Update (Regulation 18 Preferred Options) published in January 2023 gives an overview of the Council's current position on the provision of total new homes over the plan period of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan as 51,723 between 2020-2041 (average annual rate of 2,463).

4.3.24 There are a number of challenges relating to water and housing delivery in the area, but the Development Strategy Update notes that whatever the outcome on those issues there will be capacity for some additional development beyond the commitments detailed in the 2018 Local Plans. This additional development is particularly relevant at the three identified

strategic sites (North East Cambridge, Cambridge East and Cambridge Biomedical Campus), proposed as the central building blocks of any future strategy for development.

4.3.25 A high quality and resilient natural environment within and near to new and existing homes will be key to supporting thriving communities. Increased housing provision will therefore drive an increased need for both local and strategic GI, either through provision of new spaces, or by improving or changing the functionality of existing spaces. Where there are strategic sites of significant size this can present the opportunity for significant new provision, whilst smaller sites may require off site provision to meet growing and changing needs. Consideration will also need to be given to the challenges presented in providing GI to meet the needs of residents in high density developments, as more conventional approaches may not be sufficient.

Deprivation

4.3.26 The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation data for England shows that Greater Cambridge includes some of the most affluent areas in the country, as well as areas of significant deprivation (see **Figure 4.3**). South Cambridgeshire has predominantly moderate to low levels of overall deprivation, with the exception of a pocket of higher deprivation around Bassingbourn and Whaddon. In contrast, Cambridge has more varied levels of overall deprivation with higher levels of deprivation focussed around the north east of the city (Kings Hedges, Chesterton, Barnwell and Arbury).

4.3.27 Greater Cambridge has areas with higher levels of Income Deprivation Affecting Children (see **Figure 4.4**) to the north of Cottenham and Willingham in South Cambridgeshire, in the north and east of Cambridge and in the south west of the City around Trumpington. There are also areas with higher levels of Income Deprivation Affecting Older People (see **Figure 4.5**) in the north east of Cambridge and around the St John's College/St Edmund's

College areas of the City, in contrast to South Cambridgeshire where the levels are lower.

4.3.28 Greater Cambridge has areas with higher levels of Health and Disability Deprivation (see **Figure 4.6**) in the south west of South Cambridgeshire around Bassingbourn and Whaddon, and in the north of the district around Cottenham, and in the north and east of Cambridge particularly around Kings Hedges, Chesterton, Barnwell and Romsey. There are also areas with higher levels of Living Environment Deprivation (see **Figure 4.7**) in the centre of Cambridge, as well as within parts of South Cambridgeshire to the east and west of the City, and in the south west of the district around Little Gransden and Bassingbourn.

4.3.29 Levels of obesity in Greater Cambridge are better than, or not significantly different from the national average with 43.4% of adults and 11.2% of children in Cambridge and 58.1% of adults and 13.3% of children in South Cambridgeshire considered to be clinically obese.

4.3.30 While some health indicators have been improving across the Greater Cambridge area, current statistics highlight the need for continuing emphasis on improving behavioural risk factors for poor health outcomes, including a lack of physical activity and obesity. Improving accessible greenspace provision in those areas of Greater Cambridge where the Index of Multiple Deprivation maps indicate high levels of health deprivation can help address these issues, particularly in high density residential areas within the City.

Air Quality

4.3.31 Air quality is an issue in Greater Cambridge, predominantly within the busy central streets in Cambridge City Centre and along the A14 between Milton and Bar Hill in South Cambridgeshire. This is addressed by the Cambridge City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2018-2023, and the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Air Quality Strategy 2008-2013.

4.3.32 The busy central streets in Cambridge City Centre and the A14 between Milton and Bar Hill in South Cambridgeshire are both designated as an Air Quality Management Area because the level of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) exceeds the National Air Quality Objectives (NAQO). The levels of PM10 in Cambridge City are below the legal limits, but exceed legal limits within the A14 area in South Cambridgeshire. Maintaining and improving provision of street trees can help improve air quality.

5.0 Review of Standards

5.1 Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Standards

5.1.1 A review of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Standards that underpin the local standards for Greater Cambridgeshire is set out in **Appendix B**.

5.2 Adopted Open Space Standards

5.2.1 A review of the adopted open space standards for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire undertaken to inform the GI Strategy is set out in **Appendix C**.

5.3 Accessible Greenspace Standard Analysis

5.3.1 An analysis of how the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standards relate to current local provision and future needs across Greater Cambridge is set out in **Appendix D**.

Appendix A
Review of Existing Open Space Typologies

Table A1.1: Review of Existing Open Space Typologies

City of Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011

Allotments
Amenity green space
Cemeteries & churchyards
Provision for children & young people
Outdoor sports facilities
Parks & gardens
Country Parks not considered
Natural & semi-natural green spaces
Civic spaces
Not considered

South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013

Allotments & Community Gardens/ Orchards
Informal open space
Burial grounds
Children's formal & informal play space
Outdoor sport
N/A – no parks & gardens in the area
Country Parks not considered
Natural & semi-natural green spaces not considered
N/A – no civic spaces in the area
Not considered

Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020

Allotments
Informal parkland & amenity space

Cemeteries & churchyards not considered
Neighbourhood playgrounds
Outdoor sports facilities not considered
Neighbourhood parks & gardens
Country Parks
Natural & semi-natural open space
Civic grey spaces (e.g. public squares) not considered
Not considered

Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2025: Primary Types

Food Growing Space
Informal Area of Open Space
Burial Grounds & Churchyards
Children & Young People Space
Outdoor Sports Facilities
Parks & Recreation Space
Country Parks
Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space
Informal Area of Open Space
Domestic Gardens

Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2025: Sub-Types

Allotments
Community Orchards
Community Gardens
Amenity Green Spaces
Informal Open Space
Burial Grounds & Churchyards
Play Spaces

Youth Space
Outdoor Sports Facilities
Urban Destination Parks & Gardens
Urban Neighbourhood Parks
Country Parks
Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space
Civic Spaces
Domestic Gardens

Table A1.2: Review of Existing Open Space Typologies – Definitions

City of Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2011

Guidance
Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation (2001)
Assessing Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17 (2002)

Purpose & Definitions
'It [the Strategy] covers all open space within the City, from major tracts of green space to small pockets of open space. It covers land, which is available for use by the public, but also private land, which contributes to the character, environmental quality or recreational resources of the City. This includes significant areas of land owned and managed by the Colleges of the University of Cambridge.'
Green Corridors not considered as a discrete type.

Open Space Typology
Allotments
Amenity green space
Informal open space
Informal parkland & amenity space
Cemeteries & churchyards
Burial grounds

Provision for children & young people
Children's formal & informal play space
Neighbourhood playgrounds
Outdoor sports facilities
Outdoor sport
Parks & gardens
N/A – no parks & gardens in the area
Country parks not considered
Natural & semi-natural green spaces
Natural & semi-natural green spaces not considered
Civic spaces
N/A – no civic spaces in the area

Open Space Type Definitions
Allotments & Community Gardens/ Orchards
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: 'Allotments, community gardens & city (urban) farms'
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: 'Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.'
Definition:
'An allotment is a piece of land that can be rented for the production of fruit or vegetables for consumption by the allotment holder. Flowers may also be planted, although the primary focus of a site should be the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Livestock, such as chickens or rabbits, may also be kept on some sites, subject to management agreement and any other necessary consents. Allotment land can be owned by a local council or a private organisation. Many allotments, although publicly owned, are managed by allotment societies.'

Amenity green space
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: 'Amenity greenspace'
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: 'Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.'
Definition (adapted from PPG17): 'Including informal recreation spaces and greenspaces in and around housing. Includes large areas of highways land that function as amenity green spaces used by local people.'

Cemeteries and churchyards
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: ‘Cemeteries, disused, churchyards and other burials grounds.’
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: ‘Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.’
Definition: None provided.

Provision for children & young people
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: ‘Provision for children & young people.’
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: ‘Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.’
Definition (adapted from PPG17): ‘Including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, formal and more informal areas e.g. ‘hanging out’ areas, teenage shelters).’

Outdoor sports facilities
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: ‘Outdoor sports facilities’
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: ‘Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics & water sports’
Definition (adapted from PPG17): ‘Outdoor sports facilities (publicly and privately owned) including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, camp sites, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, equestrian facilities, and other outdoor sports areas.’

Parks & gardens
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: ‘Parks & gardens’
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: ‘Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events’
Definition (as per PPG17): ‘Including urban parks, country parks and formal Gardens.’

Natural & semi-natural green spaces
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: ‘Natural & semi-natural greenspaces, inc urban woodland’
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: ‘Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness’
Definition (as per PPG17): ‘Natural & semi-natural urban green spaces including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons & meadows) wetlands, open & running water, wastelands & derelict open land & rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries & pits).’

Civic spaces
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: ‘Civic spaces: civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.’
PPG17 Companion Guide Primary Purpose: ‘Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.’
Definition (as per PPG17 Typology)

South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study 2013

Guidance
Assessing Needs & Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17 (2002)

Purpose & Definitions
‘Recreation open space is space that is safely accessible and available to the general public, and of a suitable size and nature, for sport, active recreation, and children’s play and includes allotments and community orchards.’
Private greenspace not considered.
Green Corridors not considered as a discrete type.

Open Space Typology
Allotments & Community Gardens/ Orchards
Amenity green space
Informal open space
Informal parkland & amenity space
Cemeteries & churchyards not considered
Provision for children & young people
Children’s formal & informal play space
Neighbourhood playgrounds
Outdoor sports facilities
Outdoor sports facilities not considered
Parks & gardens
Neighbourhood parks & gardens

Country parks not considered
Natural & semi-natural green spaces not considered
Civic spaces
Civic grey spaces (e.g. public squares) not considered

Open Space Type Definitions
Allotments & Community Gardens/ Orchards
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology/ Primary Purpose (as per City)
Definition:
'An allotment plot is a piece of land, usually about 250 square metres in size, which can be rented for growing fruit and vegetables for householders and their family. The land is generally owned by the local village/parish council. They provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Community gardens tend to be situated in residential areas of villages, towns or cities. There are, however, an increasing number of community gardens set in a purely rural setting. They are often planted with a variety of trees, shrubs and flowering plants; rarely will they include vegetables. Orchards consist of a variety of standard fruit trees planted at low density.'

Informal open space
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology: N/A
Definition: 'Used by people of all ages for informal unstructured recreation such as walking, relaxing, or a focal point, ranging from formal planted areas and meeting places to wilder, more natural spaces, including green linkages.'

Burial grounds
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology/ Primary Purpose (as per City)
Definition: 'Burial grounds comprise of cemeteries, disused, churchyards and other natural woodland burials grounds. These areas are used for quiet contemplation and burial of the dead. They are often linked to the promotion of wildlife, conservation and biodiversity.'

Children's formal & informal play space
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology/ Primary Purpose (as per City)

Definition: ‘Designated areas for outdoor play for children and young people. This will contain a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play. This includes formal equipped play areas and provision for teenagers including wheeled sports parks and macadam kick-about areas. It also includes areas for informal play, including grass kick-about areas within housing developments.’

Outdoor sport
PPG17 Companion Guide Typology/ Primary Purpose (as per City)
Definition: ‘Facilities such as grass pitches for a range of sports, bowling greens, tennis courts, athletics tracks and multi-use games areas plus ancillary facilities such as car park, changing and storage. Water can only be included if it is in the form of a formal water sports lake with associated facilities and car park.’

Neighbourhood parks & gardens
Definition: ‘A designed green space that provides a social and recreational focal point for a neighbourhood that offers a variety of facilities including recreation centres, sports fields and playgrounds and providing opportunities for a variety of active and passive outdoor activities and access to nature.’

Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards Study 2020

Guidance
Open Space Strategies Best Practice Guidance (Mayor of London & CABE Space, 2009)

Purpose & Definitions
‘This study is concerned with the development of standards for ‘publicly accessible greenspace’. For the purposes of this study, this is defined as ‘open land that is accessible to the public at nil cost at all times and which predominantly comprises of natural materials (grass, planting and trees).’
‘Within the study, publicly accessible greenspace [is] further broken down into different ‘open space typologies. A typology is defined as ‘a description of different types of publicly accessible greenspace that relates to size, to use or to both’.
Open space not considered includes:

• Land which is open but has restricted access, sometimes via payment of charges
• Green corridors (railway land, road verges)
• Private greenspace (e.g. private gardens)

Open Space Typology
Allotments
Amenity green space
Informal open space
Informal parkland & amenity space
Cemeteries & churchyards
Burial grounds
Provision for children & young people
Children's formal & informal play space
Neighbourhood playgrounds
Outdoor sports facilities
Outdoor sport
Parks & gardens
Neighbourhood parks & gardens
Country parks
Natural & semi-natural green spaces
Natural & semi-natural open space
Civic spaces
Informal Area of Open Space

Open Space Type Definitions
Allotments
'An allotment is an area of land, leased either from a private or local authority landlord, for the use of growing fruit and vegetables. In some cases this land will also be used for the growing of ornamental plants, and the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees.'

Informal parkland & amenity space
Definition: 'Informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work.'

Neighbourhood playgrounds
Definition: ‘Areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play comprising casual or informal playing space.’

Outdoor sports facilities not considered
(No definition provided)

Country parks
Definition: ‘A predominantly natural or semi-natural landscape of at least 10 hectares in size; for example woodland, grassland, wetland, heathland or parkland, with no more than 5% of the area built upon (excluding car parks).’

Natural & semi-natural open space
Definition: ‘Urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits) with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.’

Civic grey spaces (e.g. public squares) not considered
(No definition provided)

Appendix B
Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Standards

General

The Green Infrastructure Standards for England were published by Natural England in January 2023 as part of the National Green Infrastructure Framework. The Standards are voluntary; they are intended to support local authorities set out a strategic approach in their local plans to planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of GI networks as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Green Infrastructure Standards include five national "Headline Standards" for achieving 'good GI' comprising:

- Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard
- Accessible Greenspace Standards
- Urban Nature Recovery Standard
- Urban Greening Factor Standard
- Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard

'Area wide:

- 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.

Major development:

- Each major new development has a Green Infrastructure Plan (which may be part of a Design and Access Statement) setting out how the development will deliver the Green Infrastructure Framework's 15 Green Infrastructure Principles and the Green Infrastructure Standards as set out in local green infrastructure policies, proposals and development requirements in development plans and local design codes. The green infrastructure delivered within (or associated with) major new developments should be managed, maintained and monitored for a minimum of 30 years. '

Accessible Greenspace Standards, including Quality Standards

The Green Infrastructure Standards have updated Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) to broaden their scope to include all publicly accessible green and natural spaces, and re-named them as Accessible Greenspace Standards.

The broader scope of the Accessible Greenspace Standards reflects the Government's ambitions in the 25 Year Environment Plan for the National Green Infrastructure Framework to ensure that new developments include accessible greenspaces, and that any area with little or no greenspace can be improved for the benefit of the community.

The wider scope is consistent with the Green Infrastructure Framework's Principles for the integrated planning and design of greenspace to deliver multifunctionality and multiple benefits (while not impacting negatively on sites of nature conservation value). The Green Infrastructure Standards recognise that, in many cases, enhancing greenspaces for nature can be integrated with delivery of benefits for health and wellbeing, climate, water and the economy.

The new scope of the Accessible Greenspace Standards excludes greenspaces that are not publicly accessible (e.g. the greenspace around privately-owned buildings, and other typologies such as allotments that are normally only accessible to members).

At the area-wide scale, the Accessible Greenspace Standards define good provision based on different size-proximity, capacity and quality criteria.

'Area wide:

Accessible Greenspace Standards (AGS) - size and proximity criteria: Everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing and contact with nature, to meet the AGS size and proximity criteria, with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home. (See Appendix 2 for size and proximity criteria.)

Size 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

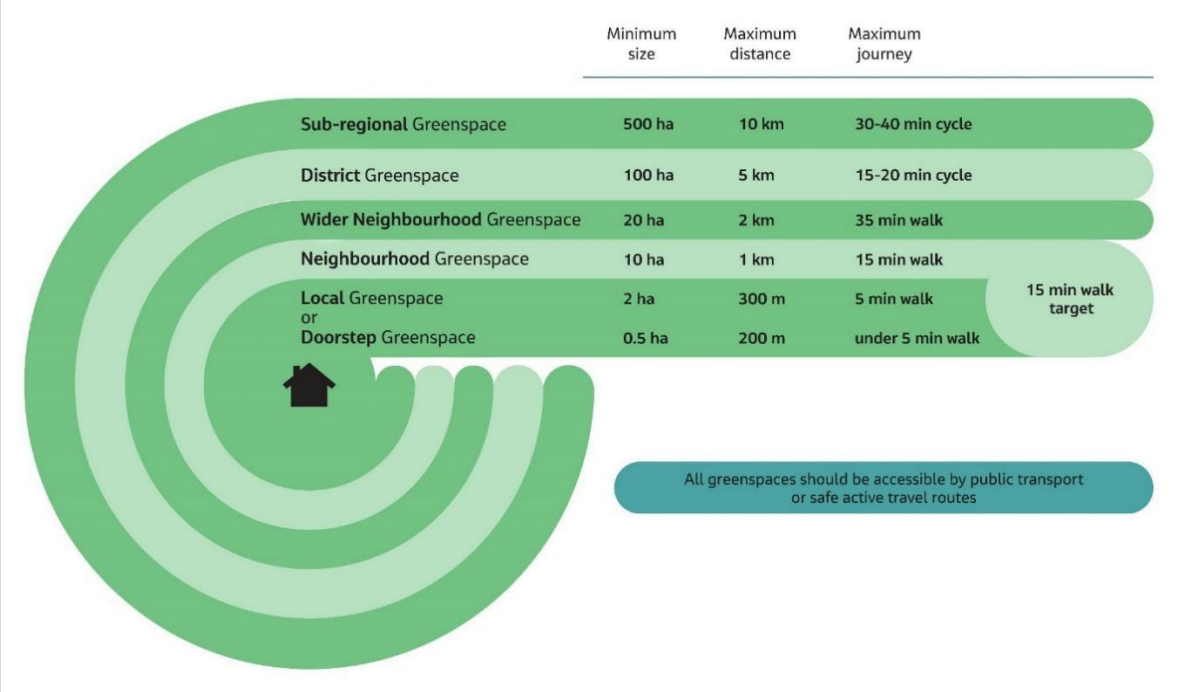
- A medium sized **neighbourhood natural greenspace** (10ha) within 1km.

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 **subregional greenspace** (500 ha) within 10 km.

All greenspaces should be accessible by public transport or safe active travel routes

Accessible Greenspace Standards - size-proximity:



Accessible Greenspace Standards:

Category of Accessible Greenspace	Actual walking distanc	Name of criterion	Accessible Natural Greenspac	Size criteria (min)	Approx walking/ cycling time

1. Small greenspace close to home: either a Doorstep or Local Greenspace	200m	Doorstep Greenspace	N	0.5 ha	Less than 5 minutes
As above	300m	Local Natural Greenspace	Y	2 ha	5 minutes
2. Medium sized greenspace within 1km	1km	Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace	Y	10 ha	15 minutes
3. Medium large Greenspace within 2km	2km	Wider Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace	Y	20ha	35 minutes
4. Large greenspace within 5km from home	5km	District Natural Greenspace	Y	100 ha	15 – 20 minutes cycling from home
5. Very large Greenspace within 10km from	10km	Sub-regional Natural Greenspace	Y	500 ha	30 - 40 minutes cycling from home

Notes:

- Distances given are actual walking distances. Actual walking distance will be measured though network analysis in due course. However, in the meantime, the Green Infrastructure Mapping uses a straight line distance from home to the boundary of the greenspace in analyses of the AGS standards.
- Where possible all greenspaces should be accessible by public transport and or safe active travel routes.
- The Accessible Greenspace Standards do not cover formal sports provision, for which Sport England is responsible; nor play provision, which is covered by Play England.
- The above diagram uses a walking speed of 60 metres per minute, which is the average for people of 60 years and teenagers. It uses a cycling speed of 20 kilometres per hour as an average for inexperienced cyclists'

'Accessible Greenspace Standards - capacity criteria: Local authorities have at least 3 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population and there is no net loss or reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population at an area-wide scale. Local authorities specify capacity targets for all major residential

development informed by a local accessible greenspace baseline, and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints.

Capacity Criteria

A traditional and commonly used way to set standards for greenspace is to set capacity standards for accessible greenspace. This is advocated by Fields in Trust (Fields in Trust, 2015) and included in the National Model Design Code (DLUHC 2021a). It has been adopted by many local authorities.

A Capacity standard of at least 3 ha accessible greenspace per 1,000, measured at district/borough/unitary authority-wide scale, has been included in the Accessible Greenspace Standards to ensure that sufficient greenspace is provided across a local authority area. Please see the Green Infrastructure Standards User Guide and Green Infrastructure Mapping User Guide for clarification of the types of Accessible Greenspace (and Accessible Natural Greenspace) that are covered by the Accessible Greenspace Standards and Green Infrastructure Mapping Analysis.

Accessible Greenspace Standards - quality criteria: Accessible greenspace meets the Green Flag Award Criteria, (Ellicott, 2016) and best practice in accessibility for all: By All Reasonable Means: Least restrictive access to the outdoors (The Sensory Trust, 2020).

Quality Criteria

The Accessible Greenspace Standards Quality Criteria recommend that: Accessible greenspace meets the Green Flag Award Criteria, (Ellicott, 2016) and best practice in accessibility for all: By All Reasonable Means: Least restrictive access to the outdoors (The Sensory Trust, 2020).

The Green Flag Award® scheme originated in 1996 and is a non-profit international accreditation programme that recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. (Ellicott, 2016)' The Green Flag Award® is managed under licence from the UK Government by Keep Britain Tidy and delivered internationally through a network of national operators. It is an ISO 9001 (QMS) Certified process.

Natural England recommends that parks and greenspaces managers use the Green Flag Award® criteria to assess the quality of their site management, and to plan and deliver management enhancements as needed. Local authorities and others may wish to apply for accreditation through the Green Flag Award®, but this is not necessary to meet the Green Infrastructure Framework's Accessible Greenspace Standards.

The criteria include the following which are set out in The Green Flag Award® Guidance Manual (Ellicott, 2020):

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure

- Well Maintained and Clean
- Environmental Management
- Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing and Communication
- Management

The award criteria can be applied to all greenspaces including:

- City Parks
- Nature Reserves
- University Campuses
- Woodland
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Country Parks
- Cemeteries and Burial Grounds
- Botanic and Historic Gardens

The Access for All criteria within the Accessible Greenspace Standards are based on the principle of inclusive access, and best practice guidance set out in 'By All Reasonable Means – Least restrictive access to the outdoors' (Sensory Trust, 2020). This publication guides greenspace, recreational route and other recreational land managers in providing more inclusive access, in more places, for more people, i.e. enable more people of all ages, circumstances and backgrounds to enjoy the outdoors.

The Guide is an updated version of an original publication, commissioned by Natural England's predecessor, the Countryside Agency, from the Sensory Trust to produce practical guidance for countryside managers on Access for All in 2005. The Sensory Trust updated this on behalf of Natural England, and in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales, in 2020.

The updated Guide responds to the Equality Act 2010, and addresses accessibility in its widest sense, embracing all the protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act (2010). The Guide is based on the principle of Least Restrictive Access – an approach that aims for the highest standards possible for a particular piece of work.'

Major development:

- Accessible Greenspace Standards – Size Proximity criteria: For all major residential developments, the local authority specifies to the developer the quantity, size and distance criteria (see Appendix 2) for any accessible greenspace to be provided within/ associated with the development, based on the Accessible Greenspace Standards.

- Accessible Greenspace Standards – capacity criteria: All major residential development is designed to meet capacity targets (hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population), specified by the local planning authority.

- Accessible Greenspace Standards – quality criteria: Accessible greenspace meets the Green Flag Award Criteria, (Ellicott, 2016) and best practice in accessibility for all: By All Reasonable Means: Least restrictive access to the outdoors (The Sensory Trust, 2020) in major new developments.'

Urban Nature Recovery Standard

'Area wide:

In urban and urban fringe areas, the proportion of green infrastructure that is designed and managed for nature recovery is increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints. This includes the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats, which can contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery objectives.

Local authorities in urban and urban fringe areas set targets for nature recovery through provision and sustainable management of Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites, to:

- Provide 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) per 1,000 population (for nature conservation and quiet enjoyment).
- Enhance existing and identify new areas that qualify as Local Wildlife Sites (for nature conservation).

Major Development:

- The developer identifies in the Green Infrastructure Plan for the development (or in the Design and Access Statement, as appropriate), its contribution to nature recovery and the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats, which can contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery objectives, including the potential for creation or enhancement of Local Nature Reserves or Local Wildlife Sites.'

Urban Greening Factor Standard

'Area wide:

- Urban greening is at least 40% average green cover in urban residential neighbourhoods where they do not already meet that standard. There is no net loss of green cover in urban neighbourhoods. (User Guide etc, Natural England, 2023a-e)

Major Development:

- Major development meets National Urban Greening Factors of at least 0.3 for commercial development, 0.4 for residential development, (and, where appropriate, 0.5 for residential greenfield development). (User Guide etc, Natural England, 2023a-e)'

Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

‘Area wide:

- Urban Tree Canopy Cover is increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints.

Major Development:

- Major residential and commercial development is designed to meet these targets
- New and existing trees are incorporated into new developments and new streets are tree lined (in line with NPPF requirements).’

Appendix C
Review of Adopted Open Space Standards

General

The Councils have adopted open space standards, set out in their adopted 2018 Local Plans. These establish the quantity and accessibility of open space that should be provided, when it should be on site or is used to guide the scale of financial contribution required for off-site provision, guided by local opportunities and constraints.

The adopted standards are different for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, reflecting the differences between the City with its urban character and formal parks for example, and the more rural environment of the villages.

A review of the adopted open space standards has been undertaken to inform the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

There is currently no up-to-date single source of national guidance on setting open space standards in England. The approach to reviewing and setting local open space standards for Greater Cambridge has been informed by the best practice local guidance provided by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Open Space Standards Toolkit (LUC, 2022). The Toolkit recommends that district authorities in Cambridgeshire either adopt or adjust the quantity and accessibility standards recommended by the Cambridgeshire Open Space Mapping & Standards (COSMS) Technical Report (JSA, 2020). or use them as a baseline to provide a benchmark for testing the setting of standards in their local areas.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Open Space Standards Toolkit (CPOSST) recommends setting local open space standards for:

- Quantity – defined as the amount of publicly accessible open space which should be available per person across any given area
- Accessibility – defined as how far people should be expected to travel to reach open space from where they live

Evidence for the adopted open space standards set out in the 2018 Local Plans is provided in the following reports:

- Cambridge Open Space & Recreation Strategy (COSRS) 2011
- South Cambridgeshire Recreation & Open Space Study (SCROSS) 2013

Review of Adopted Open Space Quantity Standards

The adopted open space quantity standards have been reviewed. Current and future provision of open space (ha/1000 people) for the Local Plan period to 2045 based on population data provided by the GCSP (see **Table C1.1**), based on current quantity of provision is shown in **Table C1.2**.

Table C1.1 – Current and Projected Population Data

Area	Current (2024)	Projected (2045)
Cambridge	150,500	207,000
South Cambridgeshire	171,500	255,500
Greater Cambridge	322,000	462,500

As set out in **Table C1.2**, the adopted open space quantity standards have also been reviewed against the benchmark provided by the COSMS baseline quantity standards.

Table C1.3 sets out the review of the adopted open space quantity standards against the benchmark provided by open space quantity standards for similar neighbouring local authorities within Cambridgeshire.

Review of Adopted Open Space Accessibility Standards

The adopted open space accessibility standards have been reviewed against the COSMS baseline open space accessibility standards (**Table C1.4**), and the benchmark provided by open space accessibility standards for similar neighbouring local authorities within Cambridgeshire (**Table C1.5**).

Table C1.2 – Review of Adopted Open Space Quantity Standards[1]

Primary Types	Sub-Types	Current Provision (ha/1000)			Future Provision (ha/1000)			Adopted Local Standards (ha/1000)		COSMS Baseline Standards (ha/1000)
		Cambridge	South Cambs	Greater Cambridge	Cambridge	South Cambs	Greater Cambridge	Cambridge	South Cambs	
Food Growing Space	**Allotments**	0.24	0.51	0.38	0.17	0.34	0.27	0.4	0.4*	0.21
	Community Orchards	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.02	N/I	0.4*	N/I
	Community Gardens	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/I	0.4*	N/I
Informal Area of Open Space	**Amenity Green Spaces**	0.34	0.18	0.25	0.24	0.12	0.18	2.2*	0.4*	0.6*
	Informal Open Space	0.00	0.53	0.28	0.00	0.35	0.20	2.2*	0.4*	0.6*
	Civic Spaces	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	N/I	N/I	N/I
Burial Grounds & Churchyards	**Burial Grounds & Churchyards**	0.12	0.41	0.27	0.09	0.27	0.19	N/I	N/I	N/I
Parks & Recreation Space	**Urban Destination Parks & Gardens**	0.52	0.00	0.24	0.37	0.00	0.17	2.2*	N/I	0.8*
	Urban Neighbourhood Parks	0.76	0.54	0.64	0.55	0.37	0.45	2.2*	N/I	0.8*
Country Parks	**Country Parks**	0.29	1.74	1.06	0.21	1.17	0.74	N/I	N/I	N/I

Primary Types	Sub-Types	Current Provision (ha/1000)			Future Provision (ha/1000)			Adopted Local Standards (ha/1000)		COSMS Baseline Standards (ha/1000)
		Cambridge	South Cambs	Greater Cambridge	Cambridge	South Cambs	Greater Cambridge	Cambridge	South Cambs	
Outdoor Sports Facilities	**Outdoor Sports Facilities**	1.66	2.41	2.06	1.20	1.62	1.43	1.2	1.6	N/I
Children & Young People Space	**Play Spaces**	0.08	0.15	0.12	0.06	0.10	0.08	0.3	0.8	0.25 (equipped play) 0.3 (MUGA etc)
	Youth Spaces	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
Semi Natural Green Space	**Semi Natural Green Space**	2.74	43.43	24.41	1.99	29.15	16.99	2.22	N/I	1.8
Domestic Gardens	**Domestic Gardens**	5.86	NDA	NDA	4.26	NDA	NDA	N/I	N/I	N/I

Notes:
N/I – not included
*These figures are counted collectively (eg. Allotments and community gardens should have a combined provision of 0.4ha per 1000 people based on the existing local standard in South Cambridgeshire)

Table C1.3 – Review of Benchmark Open Space Quantity Standards in Similar Neighbouring Local Authorities within Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

Open Space Types	Fenland District Council (Proposed Standards)	Peterborough City Council (Adopted Standards)
Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	0.9 ha/1000 people	1.36 ha/1000 people
Natural & Semi-Natural Open Space	1.8 ha/1000 people	0.42 ha/1000 people
Informal Parkland & Amenity Space	0.34 ha/1000 people	N/I
Total Public Open Space	3.04 ha/1000 people	N/I
Neighbourhood Playgrounds	12m^2 per child	0.04 ha/1000 people
Allotments	0.21 ha/1000 people	0.29 ha/1000 people

Table C1.4 – Review of Adopted Open Space Accessibility Standards

Open Space Types	Cambridge Adopted Local Standards	South Cambs Adopted Local Standards	COSMS Baseline Standards
Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	N/I	N/I	400m (Local up to 20ha) 800m (District 20-50ha)
Natural & Semi-Natural Open Space	N/I	N/I	300m (Small 0.25-2.0ha) 2000m (Local 2-20ha) 5000m (District 20-100ha)
Informal Parkland & Amenity Space	N/I	N/I	480m
Neighbourhood Playgrounds	60m (LAP) 240m (LEAP) 600m (NEAP)	100m (LAP) 450m (LEAP) 1000m (NEAP)	100m (LAP) 400m (LEAP) 1000m (NEAP) 700m (Other Play)
Allotments	1000m	N/I	650m
Country Parks	N/I	N/I	5000m

LAP – Local Areas of Play (LAP)
LEAP - Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP)
NEAP - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP)

Table C1.5 – Review of Benchmark Open Space Accessibility Standards* in Similar Neighbouring Local Authorities within Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
* Straight line distance

Open Space Types	Fenland District Council (Proposed Standards)	Peterborough City Council (Adopted Standards)
Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	300m (Small Local) 400m (Local)	560m
Natural & Semi-Natural Open Space	300m (Small Local) 2000m (Local)	300m (0.25 -2ha) 2000m (20+ ha) 5000m (100+ ha) 10000m (500+ ha)
Informal Parkland & Amenity Space	480m	N/I
Neighbourhood Playgrounds	100m (LAP) 400m (LEAP) 1000m (NEAP) 700m (Other Play)	200m (LAP) 450m (LEAP) 800m (NEAP) N/I
Allotments	650m	560m
Country Parks	N/I	5250m

Appendix D
Accessible Greenspace Standard Analysis

Figures

General

An analysis of how the Accessible Greenspace Standards (see **Appendix B** for details) relate to current provision and future needs across Greater Cambridge is set out below.

Accessible Greenspace Standards – size/proximity criteria

For the City of Cambridge, analysis against the Accessible Greenspace size and proximity criteria (see **Figure D1.1**) shows that there are significant gaps in provision at most scales within the City's wards (see **Figure D1.2**):

- **Doorstep greenspace** (at least 0.5ha within 200 metres) or **local natural greenspace** (at least 2ha within 300 metres): There are some significant gaps in provision in parts of Arbury Ward, West Chesterton Ward, King's Hedges Ward and East Chesterton Ward in the north of the City. There is also a large gap in provision within Romsey Ward, Coleridge Ward and Queen Edith's Ward in the south of the City, and across parts of Trumpington Ward. Elsewhere there are scattered smaller gaps in provision.

- **Neighbourhood natural greenspace** (10ha within 1km): There are some significant gaps in provision in much of King's Hedges Ward in the north of the City as well as the adjacent Arbury Ward and West Chesterton Ward. There are also gaps in provision in Queen Edith's Ward in the south of the City.

- **Wider neighbourhood natural greenspace** (20ha within 2km): There is generally good provision across the City at this scale, with a gap in the north across parts of King's Hedges Ward, Arbury Ward and East Chesterton Ward.

- **District natural greenspace** (100ha within 5km): Wards in the west of the City have provision at this scale (from access to Coton Countryside Reserve), but there is no provision at this scale for parts of King's Hedges Ward, East Chesterton Ward, Abbey Ward, Romsey Ward, Coleridge Ward, Cherry Hinton Ward and Queen Edith's Ward in the east of the City.

- **Subregional greenspace** (500ha within 10 km): There is no provision within Greater Cambridge at this scale.

Some of these gaps in provision correlate with areas of higher deprivation (see **Figures 4.3-4.7**). For example, in Cambridge, parts of the King's Hedges Ward (which ranks poorly for both overall deprivation and health and disability deprivation) have gaps in provision of doorstep and local greenspace, and limited neighbourhood greenspace provision. Other more deprived areas within the north east of the City around Abbey Ward and East Chesterton Ward have no provision of the larger district or subregional greenspaces.

In terms of access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home for people in Cambridge, (which includes doorstep greenspaces of at least 0.5ha within

200 metres, local greenspace of at least 2ha within 300 metres and neighbourhood greenspace of 10ha within 1km), there are gaps in provision particularly in the north, north west and south of the City, with scattered gaps elsewhere.

It should be noted that some of the accessible greenspace included within the analysis for the Cambridge City area is included as Parks and Recreation space, but is noted to be owned by the University (and therefore access may be restricted at certain times, or to specific groups of people). It is retained within the analysis because it is identified as providing important greenspace access, particularly for students and university employees, many of whom make up the population in the immediate locale.

For South Cambridgeshire, analysis against the Accessible Greenspace size and proximity criteria shows that there are also significant gaps in provision at all scales within the District's villages (see **Figure D1.3**):

- **Doorstep greenspace** (at least 0.5ha within 200 metres) or **local natural greenspace** (at least 2ha within 300 metres): Provision at this scale has some significant gaps. Almost all of the villages (for example Great Shelford and Stapleford in the south of the District and Willingham in the north) have limited or no provision at this scale.

- **Neighbourhood natural greenspace** (10ha within 1km): There are significant gaps in provision at this scale, such as for Cottenham, Histon and Impington in the north, and for much of the south of the area, including Great Shelford, Sawston, the Abingtons and Linton. There is good provision around Cambourne and Northstowe, as well as for many of the settlements on the periphery of Cambridge, with the exception of the north of Cambridge where there is a gap at this scale of provision.

- **Wider neighbourhood natural greenspace** (20ha within 2km): There are significant gaps in provision at this scale, particularly across the north/northeast and south/southwest. away from the edge of Cambridge. The western areas and villages close to Cambridge are slightly better provided for by greenspaces such as Milton Country Park, Wandlebury Country Park and greenspaces around Cambourne, as well as from the nature reserves (Fen Drayton Lakes and Ouse Fen) in the northwest. There is a gap at this scale of provision for settlements to the north of Cambridge.

- **District natural greenspace** (100ha within 5km): There are significant gaps in provision at this scale, particularly across the east of the area. The west is better provided for by greenspaces such as Coton Countryside Reserve and greenspaces around Cambourne, as well as from the nature reserves (Fen Drayton Lakes and Ouse Fen) in the northwest.

- **Subregional greenspace** (500ha within 10 km): There is no provision within Greater Cambridge at this scale.

In South Cambridgeshire, there are some villages associated with limited areas of higher overall or health and disability deprivation that have gaps in greenspace provision – such as gaps in doorstep/local and neighbourhood natural greenspace for parts of the villages of Whaddon and Meldreth.

In terms of access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home for people in South Cambridgeshire, (which includes doorstep greenspaces of at least 0.5ha within 200 metres, local greenspace of at least 2ha within 300 metres and neighbourhood greenspace of 10ha within 1km), there are significant gaps in provision for villages across most of the District.

Greater Cambridge benefits from a network of public transport services and safe active travel routes, as well as public rights of way and cycle routes (see **Figure D1.4)**, linking settlements with accessible greenspaces. Greater Cambridge's network of public transport services includes:

- A bus network with direct connections from Cambridge to the surrounding rural towns and villages, and to larger greenspaces such as Milton Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve and Wandlebury Country Park
- The segregated Cambridgeshire Guided Busway connecting Cambridge and St Ives
- Nine train stations at Cambridge, Cambridge North, Waterbeach, Foxton, Shepreth, Meldreth, Ashwell & Morden, Shelford and Whittlesford Parkway

Greater Cambridge's cycle network provides safe active travel routes linking settlements with accessible greenspaces. This includes:

- Traffic free cycle routes, cycle lanes and shared footways in and around Cambridge
- Traffic free cycle route along the segregated Cambridgeshire Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives
- National cycle network routes 11 (Great Shelford to Waterbeach via Cambridge) and 51 (Cambridge to Bottisham)

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan Transport Existing Conditions Report notes that whilst there is good provision for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in Cambridge, the level of coverage in South Cambridgeshire is currently less comprehensive. The report also highlights future opportunities for addressing gaps in public transport and active travel networks.

Accessible Greenspace Standards - capacity criteria

Greater Cambridge currently has 8.6ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 population (based on current 2024 population of 322,000). This exceeds the Accessible Greenspace Standards capacity criteria. Allowing for predicted population growth to a total of 462,000 by 2045 for the Greater Cambridge area, this number would decrease to 6ha per 1000 population. This number would still exceed the Accessible Greenspace Standards capacity criteria.