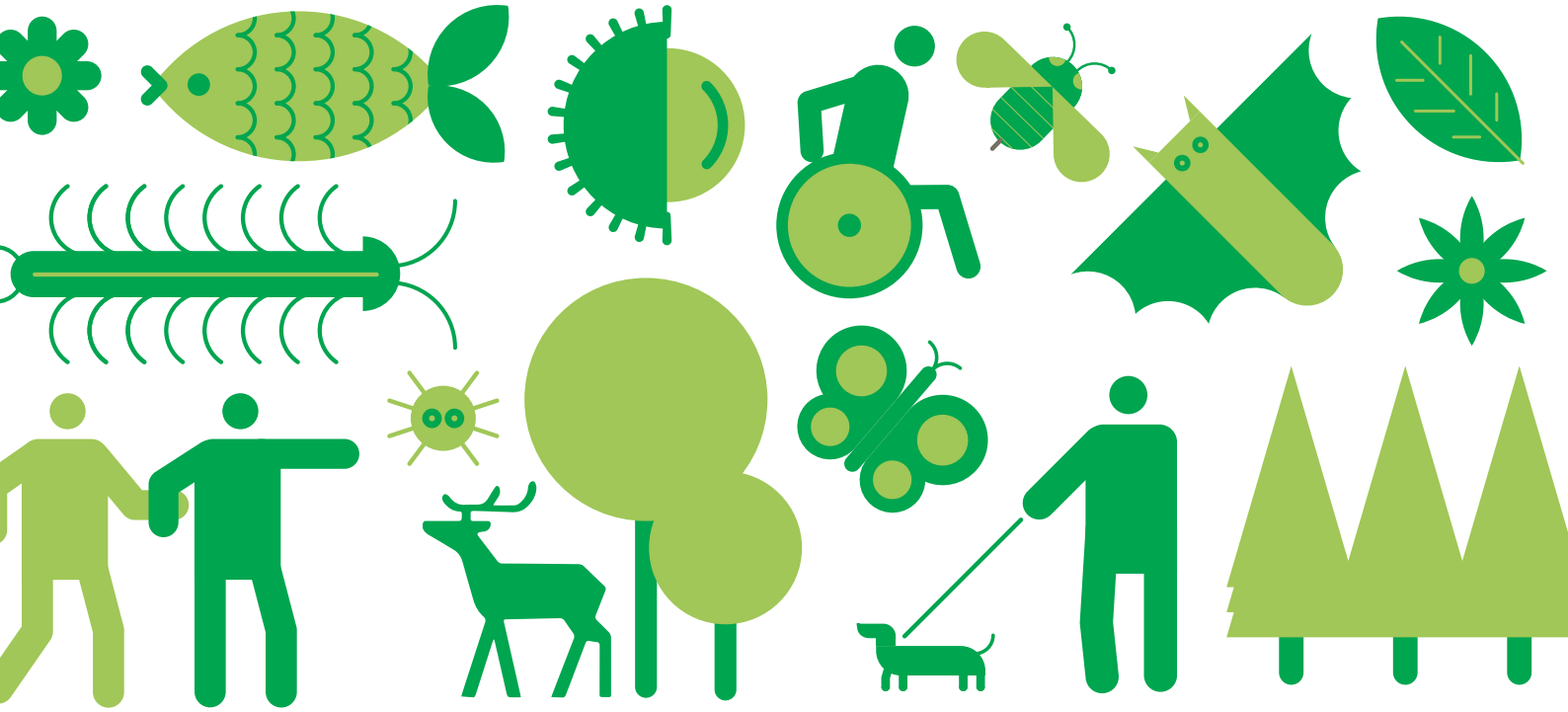
Biodiversity and Green Spaces

Topic Paper

Appendix 3: Green Infrastructure Strategy



Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Topic Paper published as part of the Proposed Submission Local Plan - Regulation 19 consultation (August 2026 - September 2026)

GREATER CAMBRIDGE
SHARED PLANNING

Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2026

1. Summary

1.1 Green infrastructure (GI) encompasses a wide range of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which can deliver a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits.

1.2 This Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2026 (GI Strategy 2026) sets out the vision for green infrastructure in Greater Cambridge and the actions being taken by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council (the Councils) to deliver that vision, including through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and through wider activities.

1.3 The GI Strategy 2026 has been produced to support the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Proposed Submission 2026, to show how a range of policies across the plan, which have been informed by supporting evidence, will contribute to delivering our vision for GI. The Strategy incorporates the outputs of green infrastructure evidence bases prepared by Land Use Consultants (LUC) and Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) that have been instrumental in informing the green infrastructure policy approach set out in the Local Plan.

1.4 The below diagram (Figure 1) summarises how the Local Plan policies and evidence, and the activities of the Councils contribute to meeting our vision for GI as set out in this Strategy.

Our vision for green infrastructure is to increase and improve our network of habitats for wildlife, and green spaces for people, that will: ensure that development leaves the natural environment better than it wasbefore; help improve equality of access and opportunities for people into lead healthier and happier lives; adapt to and mitigates against climate change, and support resilience to current and future climate risk, including the longer-term risk of flooding; and sustain the unique character and identities of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, creating a place where people want to live, work, visit and play.

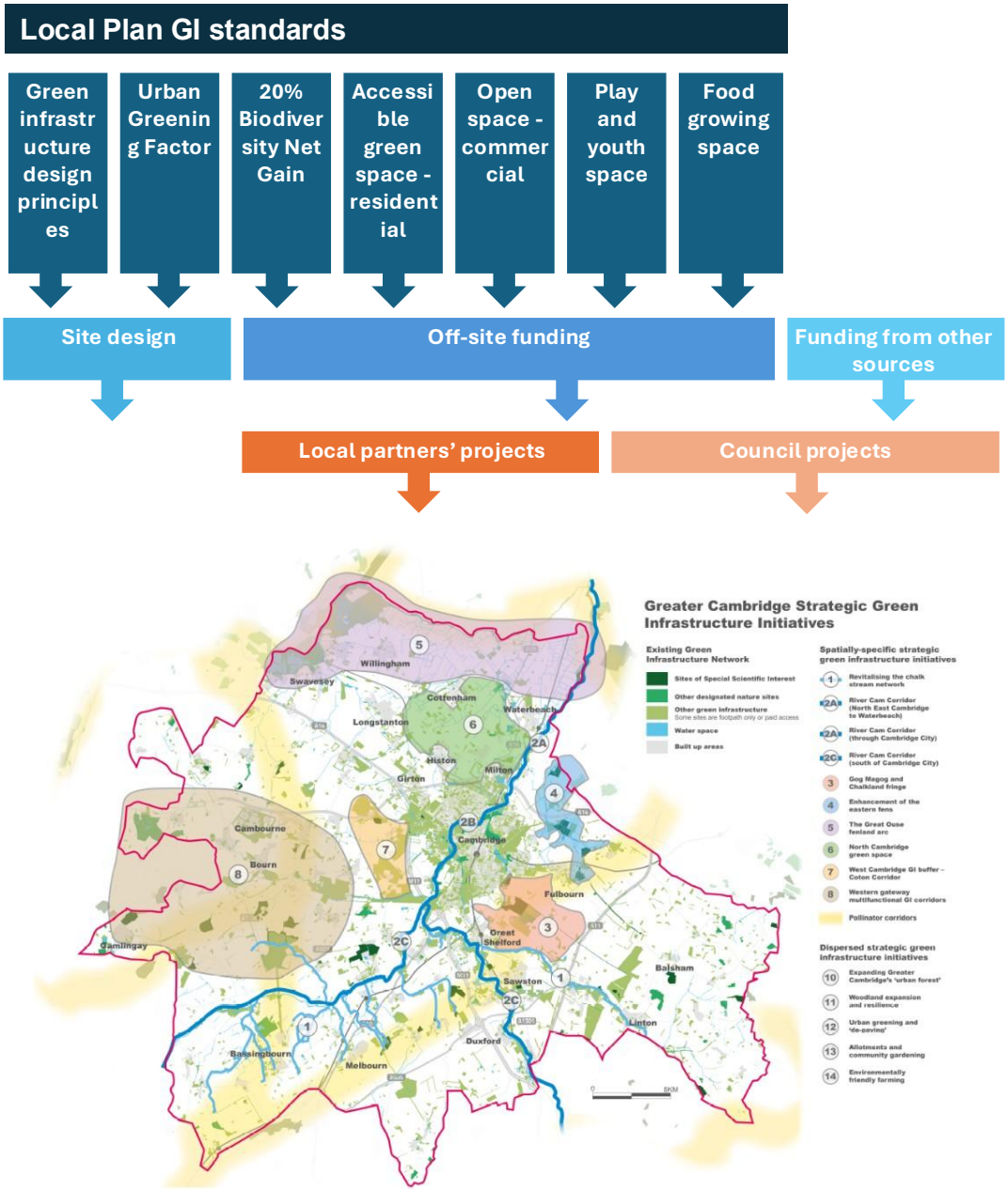


Figure 1: How the Local Plan policies and evidence, and the Councils activities contribute to meeting vision for GI in Greater Cambridge

2. About the Strategy

What is green infrastructure?

2.1 The term green infrastructure encompasses a wide range of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which can deliver a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits. Green infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, sustainable drainage systems, green and blue roofs, green walls, rain gardens, swales, features for species, trees in hard landscapes, street furniture and utility structures, traffic-free routes, allotments, orchards, private domestic gardens, more natural spaces (including woodlands, grassland, scrub and hedgerows), heritage features and the historic environment, and blue spaces (including wetlands).

2.2 A high quality and resilient natural environment within and near to new and existing homes and businesses is key in supporting thriving communities and by aligning green space planning with housing and economic growth, we help deliver sustainable places that support people and nature. As such, this GI Strategy addresses spaces that meet the needs of nature and people.

Existing Green infrastructure within Greater Cambridge

Key facts

2.3 Greater Cambridge has a varied range of green infrastructure ranging from college gardens and parks of varying sizes within Cambridge, to recreation grounds and agricultural fields within rural South Cambridgeshire, with the area being dissected by the River Cam and its tributaries. Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is the sole international nature conservation designation within Greater Cambridge: an ancient woodland supporting the barbastelle bat. Together the network provides many benefits to our area, including for landscape, cultural heritage and sense of place; biodiversity and geodiversity; the water environment; access and connectivity;

recreation and play; carbon sequestration; and agriculture and community food growing.

2.4 Our green infrastructure network (see Figure 2) faces a range of challenges, some of which are highlighted below:

- Cambridgeshire has one of the lowest proportions of land designated for nature in the UK (3.3%), the second lowest woodland cover at just 4.8%, and one of the lowest proportions of nature-rich habitats (approximately 8%) in England. It also has one of the lowest percentages of open access land and accessible natural greenspaces[1], a deficit that has been exacerbated by rapid economic and population growth. Both Councils recognise the pressure that rapid growth places on GI and the need to protect and enhance biodiversity whilst also ensuring there is sufficient outdoor recreational space for residents to be able to access and enjoy.
- In Cambridge, despite current efforts, habitat audits show that many of the city's most visible commons and recreation spaces remain in poor or only moderate ecological condition; and furthermore, recreational pressure and urbanisation continue to erode wildlife value.[2]

2.5 The impact of climate change poses a threat to the functionality and resilience of the GI network within Greater Cambridge, with consequences for human health[3]. Equally however, the GI network can play a substantial role in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts through, for example, careful management of the water environment and enhancing the role of wetlands and trees in carbon sequestration and storage, as well as the role of green infrastructure in mitigating and adapting to the urban heat island effect.

[1] The Cambridge Nature (CNN) Final Report, March 2021
[2] Pg.7, Cambridge City Council Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2031
[3] Cambridgeshire Healthy Places Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Chapter 2_Climate Change

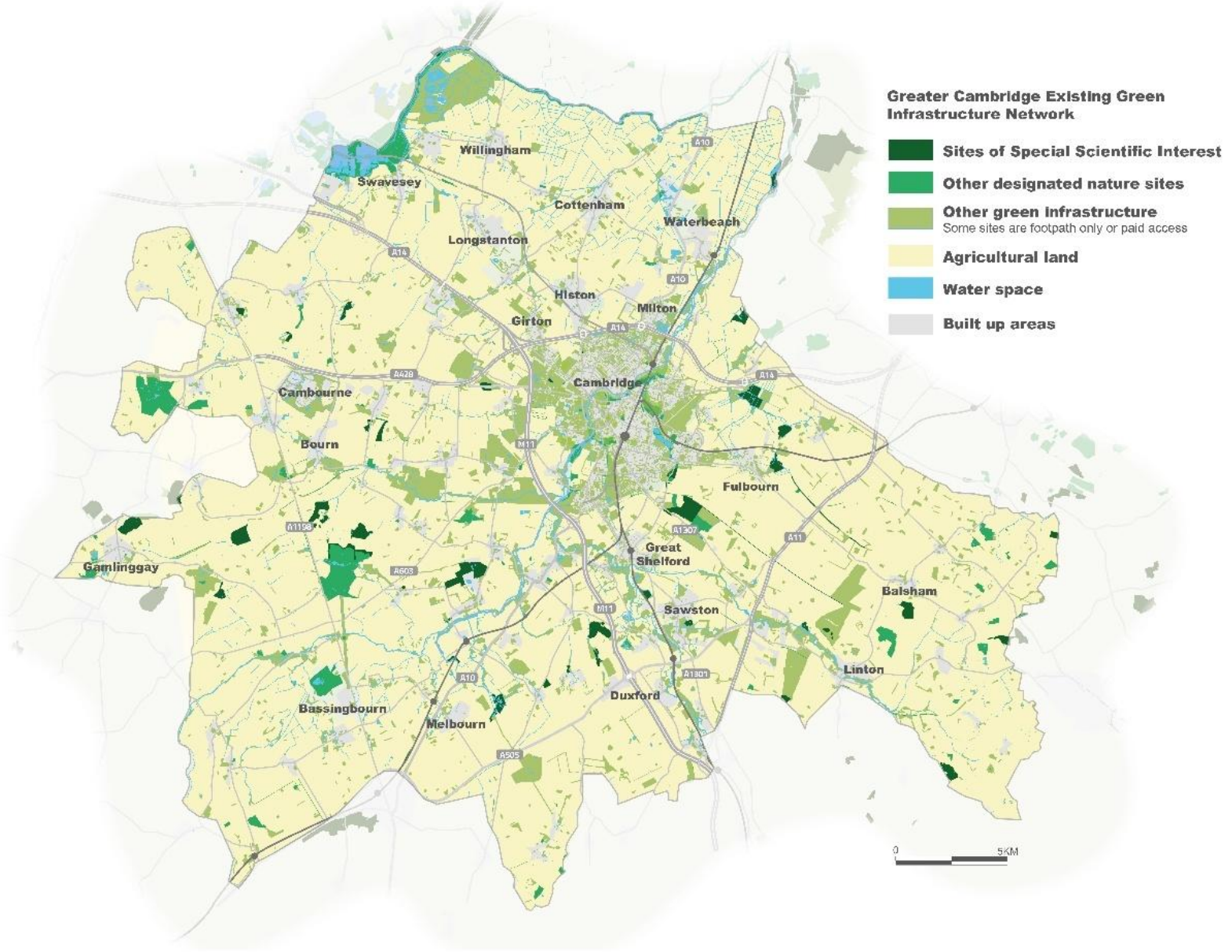


Figure 2: Greater Cambridge Existing Green Infrastructure Network Map

2.6 Further detail regarding the current state of green infrastructure in Greater Cambridge can be found in the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report (Land Use Consultants) November 2020 and in the Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Recommendations Report (Land Use Consultants) September 2021

Key drivers for the GI Strategy

2.7 Noting the issues and challenges above, in summary the following reasons provide clear justification for the Local Plan to support a step change increase in provision of land for biodiversity enhancement, and accessible green space.

- Greater Cambridge has a low proportion of land comprising nationally or internationally important protected areas, compared to the national average.
- Greater Cambridge has a particular deficit in strategic scale green space.
- The combination of the above factors mean that a significant number of SSSIs in the area are negatively impacted by recreational use.
- Greater Cambridge is seeing a very significant amount of development which will exacerbate the above problems if not appropriately mitigated. The Greater Cambridge Local Plan will increase the current number of homes and jobs by 39% and 33% respectively.

2.8 The above conclusions are agreed with Natural England in a Statement of Common Ground supporting the Proposed Submission Plan.

2.9 A further driver for increasing GI is the urgent need for climate change adaptation: GI is increasingly planned as essential climate resilience infrastructure, delivering urban cooling, flood management and water resilience.

What has informed the GI Strategy 2026?

National frameworks and strategies informing the GI Strategy

2.10 **Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework 2023:** The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework (NEGIF) offers guidance and practical tools to support the development of high-quality green spaces. Published in 2023, the NEGIF has formed the starting point for our consideration of green infrastructure standards for Greater Cambridge included within this GI Strategy.

2.11 **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025:** The Cambridge and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (CP LNRS) was published in December 2025. It includes a Statement of Biodiversity, Priorities Areas of particular importance for biodiversity, and Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity with actions associated with these areas. In relation to the GI Strategy, it sets out a quantified goal of doubling wildlife rich habitats in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough from 8% to 16% by 2040. Similar to the 14 strategic green infrastructure initiatives, the LNRS has drawn on the Cambridge Nature Network, and Natural Cambridgeshire's other landscape-scale priority areas, such that the Councils' GI initiatives match well with the LNRS, albeit they have a broader focus (see Appendix 1 of the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Topic Paper 2026 for further details on how the Greater Cambridge Local Plan has regard to the CP LNRS).

Local frameworks and strategies informing the GI Strategy

Cambridge City Council

2.12 The biodiversity emergency is intricately linked with the climate emergency. Therefore, the updated Climate Change, Urban Forest and Biodiversity strategies (see paragraphs 2.11 to 2.13 below) work together to ensure that the council maximises its efforts to tackle these threats.

2.13 **Cambridge City Council's (CCC) Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031:** CCC's Climate Change Strategy 2021 to 2026 shared a vision for the city of

Cambridge to be net zero by 2030. The 2026-2031 Climate Change Strategy builds on this, setting out how the council will continue to target net zero emissions in its own operations by 2030 and support the city to do the same. It introduces new areas of focus including integrating climate-adaptation into the whole strategy – for example, enhancing nature, preserving water and ensuring new buildings will be able to cope with heat, or drought, by designing them to use less water, stay cool, and be resilient during extreme weather. The new Climate Change Strategy has incorporated the principles and policies of the proposed Greater Cambridge Local Plan relating to climate change and biodiversity which aim to deliver significant carbon emissions reductions and a high degree of climate resilience, helping Greater Cambridge transition to net zero carbon by 2050. A strategic theme within the strategy seeks to integrate food into the built environment and encourages developers to incorporate food growing opportunities. This supports the Local Plan's proposed policy approach to providing opportunities to access healthy food including through allotments and food growing opportunities (see below).

2.14 **Cambridge City Council's Urban Forest Strategy 2026-2036:** CCC's Urban Forest Strategy replaces the previous Tree Strategy. It reaffirms the council's promise to restore, protect and grow Cambridge's tree canopy cover to 20% by 2050[4], within the context of a changing climate and the rising threat of pests and diseases. The strategy recognises the urban forest as critical green infrastructure, providing essential ecosystem services including climate resilience, urban cooling, flood mitigation, carbon storage, biodiversity enhancement, improved air quality and health and wellbeing. It also reaffirms that the council will continue to target areas that currently lack tree cover to create equitable access to green infrastructure. The strategy sets out to support habitat creation and ecological connectivity, coordinating with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other landscape-scale initiatives, and to pursue grants and external funding to support community and strategic delivery. The strategy supports the council's aim to gain Nature City Accreditation which is

[4] N.B. this is an aspirational, citywide outcome and does not create site-specific requirements, alter planning validation criteria, or override existing planning policy.

based on the Natural England Green Infrastructure Principles. It also includes an aim to embed trees and canopy into policy and decision-making, for example through promoting sustainable urban drainage systems and GI that incorporate trees; this approach aligns with, and supports, the strategic GI initiative 12- Urban greening and 'de-paving', referred to below.

2.15 **Cambridge City Council's Biodiversity Strategy 2026-2031:** CCC's Biodiversity Strategy updates the 2022 strategy to strengthen the council's commitment to addressing the biodiversity emergency, with a vision for bigger, better, more joined up nature in every ward of the city; with quality open space within walking distance of people's homes or workplaces. The strategy notes that this will require improvements and enhancements to core sites in the city to create a biodiverse blue and green thread through the heart of Cambridge. It also includes the following strategic objectives for nature which support the Local Plan's approach as reflected in this GI Strategy:

- To secure a measurable net gain in biodiversity across the city by 2031 (including a minimum 20% net gain on all Council-led developments and a net increase in biodiversity units across Council-managed natural green spaces by 2031), compared with the 2020 baseline, in support of the Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision by 2030,
- To ensure designated sites and priority habitats are in good / favourable condition, wherever feasible, and that by 2031 no Council-managed LNR, Common or County Wildlife Site remains in poor condition without a management plan in place.
- To maximise biodiversity potential of council properties, parks and urban spaces, whilst balancing their multi-functional uses through promoting community-led projects

South Cambridgeshire District Council

2.16 The Council declared an ecological emergency in July 2019 and a climate emergency in November 2019 which led to the development of the Zero Carbon Strategy (2020) and Doubling Nature Strategy (2021). The Climate and Nature Strategy 20206-2030 (see paragraph 2.17) combines the previous

Strategies within one new joint Strategy, recognising the inextricable links between our natural environment and our climate.

2.17 **South Cambridgeshire District Council's Climate and Nature Strategy 2026-2030:** SCDC's Climate and Nature Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions and actions for climate and nature. The Councils vision is to create a greener, healthier district, allowing wildlife, people and local businesses to thrive. To help achieve this vision, the Council aims to double nature and reach Net Zero emissions across the district by 2050. It includes the following targets for nature that support the Local Plan's ambitious approach to nature as reflected in this GI Strategy:

- Double the quantity and quality of land managed for nature, including increasing the area of land managed for nature from 7% to 14% by 2050 in the district.
- Seek to introduce a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement for major new developments through the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, above the national standard requirement of 10%

Greater Cambridge Local Plan activity informing the GI Strategy

2.18 The Councils have taken an ambitious approach to biodiversity and green infrastructure, including completing a call for green space sites in 2020, and consulting on the emerging policy approach via the Issues and Options 2020 consultation, the First Proposals 2021 consultation and draft plan consultation 2025/6. Outside of formal consultation periods we have engaged extensively with local and national environmental partners, including Natural England. In particular, to inform the Local Plan's policy approach we commissioned the following evidence base studies:

- **LUC Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping 2020-21:** The Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping Baseline Report 2020 and Recommendations Report 2021 together provide a robust evidence base on the quantity and quality of existing GI assets in Greater Cambridge, and through analysis and consultation with environmental groups, councillors,

parish councils and resident associations, identify specific and deliverable opportunities to enhance the network, as well as informing local plan policies. The headline output from this work was the identification of strategic green infrastructure initiatives (see our vision for green infrastructure below in section 3).

- **CBA Green Infrastructure Strategy Emerging Approach 2025:** The CBA Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy - Vol 1: Emerging Strategy and Standards (2025) and Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy - Vol 2: Supporting Evidence (2025) built on the Opportunity Mapping, to identify an initial set of GI standards, drawing on the NEGIF 2023. These informed the emerging policy approach set out in the draft Local Plan Biodiversity & Green Spaces theme policies.

- **LUC Green Infrastructure Standards Framework 2026**: builds on the CBA Green Infrastructure Strategy Emerging Approach 2025 and NEGIF 2023 to propose a robust set of implementable GI and open space standards which are proportionate to the Greater Cambridge context. The standards have been developed to respond to different development locations and scales across the Local Plan area, supported by robust evidence to demonstrate their appropriateness. Consideration is also given to the inter-relationship between standards to promote a streamlined approach and avoid potential duplication. The Framework also includes user guides for developers and development management officers to implement the standards. The Framework has informed the policy approach set out in the Proposed Submission Local Plan Biodiversity & Green Spaces theme policies.

- **Green infrastructure evidence supporting site design**: Noting that our largest new sites present both the largest impacts on our GI network but also the largest opportunities for enhancements to it, we commissioned specific GI evidence to inform our site approach at Cambourne North, and also engaged with site promoters and environmental organisation partners to inform the approach to GI at these sites.

- **Greater Cambridge Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP):** sets out the infrastructure required to meet needs arising from the development included within the plan. The IDP includes a GI chapter that has been informed by the GI standards within the plan as well as by engagement with local and national environmental organisations.

3. Our vision for green infrastructure in Greater Cambridge

Vision for green infrastructure

3.1 Our vision for green infrastructure is to increase and improve our network of habitats for wildlife, and green spaces for people, that will:

- ensure that development leaves the natural environment better than it was before.
- Help improve equality of access and opportunities for people in to lead healthier and happier lives
- Adapt to and mitigates against climate change, and support resilience to current and future climate risk, including the longer term risk of flooding
- Sustain the unique character and identities of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, creating a place where people want to live, work, visit and play

3.2 This vision is a synthesis of the Biodiversity and Green Spaces, Climate Change, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion, and Great Places strategic priorities set out in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, noting the multifunctional benefits that green infrastructure provides.

Spatial vision

3.3 Our spatial vision for GI in Greater Cambridge is shown in Figure 3 (overleaf), including 14 strategic green infrastructure initiatives.

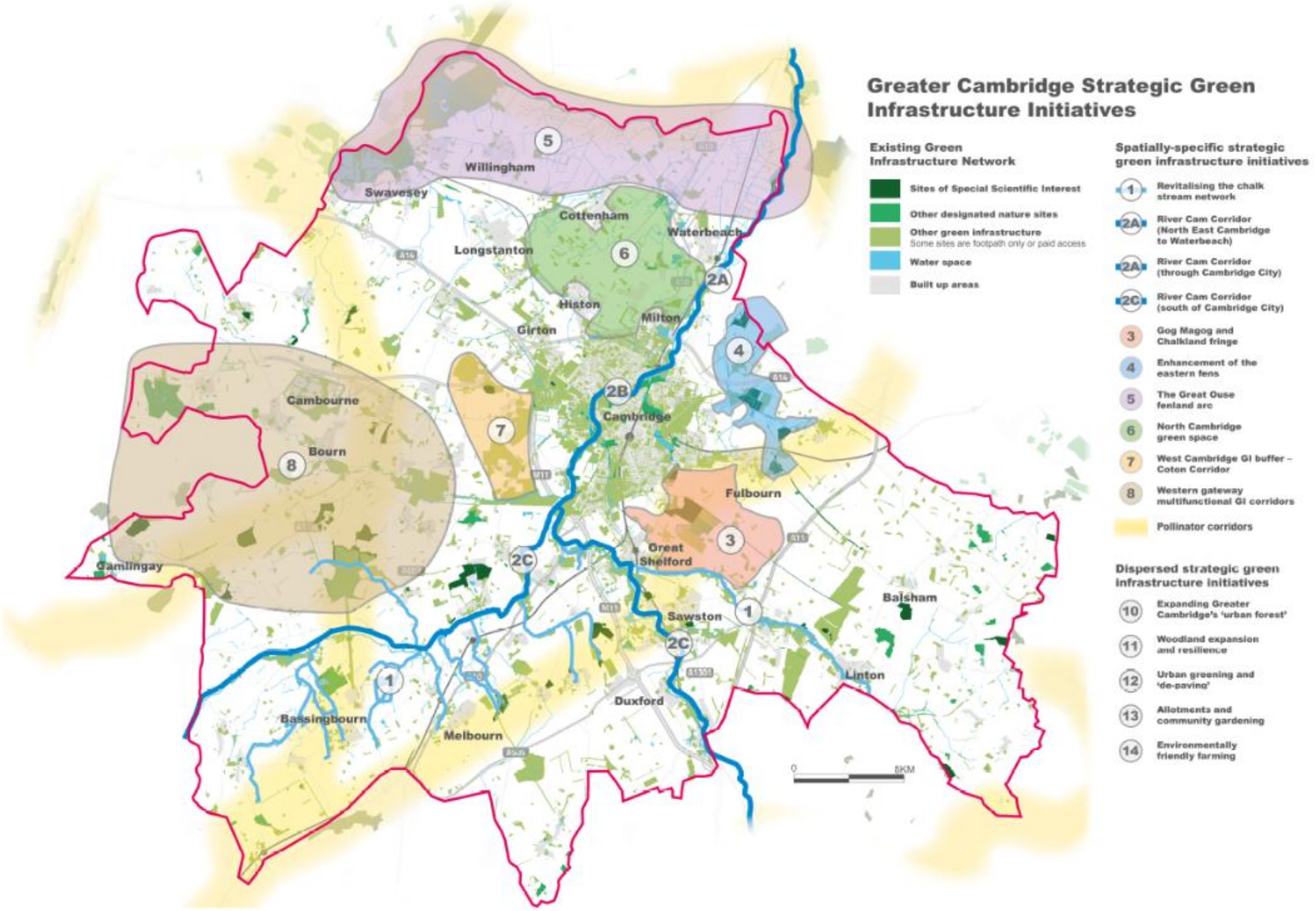


Figure 3: The Spatial Vision for GI in Greater Cambridge

Strategic GI initiatives objectives

3.4 The objectives for each of the strategic GI initiatives (1-14) are set out below.

1. Revitalising the chalk stream network

Conserve and restore chalk streams to increase their ecological value, by addressing the three primary issues affecting the chalk stream network – flow pressures, channel modifications and poor water quality. Restoration measures include restoring natural flows, floodplain reconnection, channel realignment, reconnecting rivers to groundwater, removal of barriers to fish passage, and the rewilding of degraded rivers.

Protect the East Anglian chalk groundwater resource by enhancing GI features through landscape-scale management, and improving the condition of the ecosystem by reducing pollution and contamination.

2. River Cam Corridor

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

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

B: The section running through the city of Cambridge.

C: The section running south of Cambridge city.

3. Gog Magog Hills and chalkland fringe

Conserve and enhance priority habitats, including chalk grassland and woodland.

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

4. Enhancement of the eastern fens

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

5. The Great Ouse fenland arc

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

6. North Cambridge green space

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

7. West Cambridge GI buffer - Coton corridor

Enhance the recreational and habitat offer to ensure there is sufficient high-quality and accessible GI to keep pace with growing development (and associated recreational pressure) west of Cambridge. This includes improving accessibility to and between GI assets and surrounding settlements, providing more opportunities

for recreation and nature (making sites 'work harder'), expanding GI where possible, and enhancing habitats.

8. Western gateway multifunctional GI corridors

Provide opportunities to improve biodiversity by expanding and joining up the existing woodland, hedgerow and grassland habitat network. This will be delivered through new woodland planting, natural regeneration, hedgerow extension and management, and habitat restoration. Ensure opportunities for biodiversity offsets from East West rail are sought.

Ensure negative impacts from access and recreational pressure on sensitive ecological sites (Eversden and Wimpole SAC, SSSIs, and ancient woodlands) 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, sustainable urban drainage systems, 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

Support farming and food production across Greater Cambridge's predominantly rural landscape to be 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. Local Plan policies supporting GI

Local Plan policies supporting GI

4.1 The following policies within the Local Plan are particularly relevant to supporting the protection, enhancement and expansion of green infrastructure within Greater Cambridge.

- Policy BG/BG: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Policy BG/GI: Green infrastructure
- Policy BG/UGF: Urban Greening Factor
- Policy BG/TC: 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
- Policy CC/IW: Integrated water management, sustainable drainage and water quality
- Policy CC/CS: Supporting land-based carbon sequestration and carbon sinks
- Policy WS/HD: Creating healthy new developments
- Policy GP/LC: Protection and enhancement of landscape character

Quantitative biodiversity and green infrastructure standards

4.2 Quantitative biodiversity and green infrastructure standards set out in the plan comprise:

- **20% Biodiversity Net Gain** on major development (Policy BG/BG)
- **Urban Greening Factor** for residential and commercial development (Policy BG/UGF)
- **7 hectares of Accessible Green space** per 1,000 population, on major residential-led development, with a minimum of 3 hectares per 1,000 population on site (Policy BG/EO)
- **2 hectares of open space per 1,000 employees**, on employment proposals of 2,000m^2 or more (Gross Internal Area) within Use Classes E(g)(i), E(g)(ii), as well as sui generis uses where the proposal comprises

a research, innovation or institutional campus (Policy BG/EO)

- **0.6 hectares of play and youth space** per 1,000 population (Policy BG/EO)
- **0.4 hectares of food growing space** per 1,000 population **(**Policy BG/EO)

4.3 The Councils' shared ambition for an increase in tree canopy cover will be enabled primarily via policies BG/BG and BG/UG, in combination with policy BG/TC. Policy BG/TC encourages the integration of existing and new trees within proposed development schemes and seeks to ensure no net loss of tree canopy and/or hedgerow cover through appropriate replacement planting (to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority).

GI accessibility standards

4.4 The Local Plan requires new green space provision to have regard to existing local provision and identified gaps in the relevant space type, including for accessible greenspace when assessed against the size-proximity criteria set out in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards as shown below.

Figure 4: Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards size-proximity criteria

GI Quality standards

4.5 Policy BG/GI sets out that major development must demonstrate how green infrastructure has been integrated into the design approach at an early stage, to ensure that on-site green infrastructure is:

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

4.6 The policy also encourages development of 100 dwellings or more or 5,000 square metres or more of gross internal floorspace (GIA) to seek accreditation under the Building with Nature Standards.

4.7 Noting the sensitivity of our designated nature sites, Policy BG/EO specifically requires that Accessible Green Space provision for development proposals that are located within a zone of potential risk for a publicly accessible Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that is sensitive to the effects of recreational pressure, must be informed by Natural England guidance and delivered alongside early phases of development.

4.8 Further to this, the policies listed at the top of this section all set out qualitative requirements associated with their specific topic, including referring to best practice where relevant.

5. Delivering the GI vision

Delivery associated with development

5.1 Delivering our GI vision will be achieved through the following ways:

All development

5.2 Planning applications for relevant land uses and which meet scale thresholds will be subject to the GI standards set out in the thematic policies referred to above. This should ensure that substantive amounts of GI is delivered on site that responds to local context. Policy BG/EO is also likely to generate funding for a significant amount of offsite GI via developer contributions.

Operation and management plans

5.3 To secure delivery and strong management of GI, for all GI, the policies require that an Operation and Maintenance Plan must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, before any development is occupied. The approved plan will be implemented for the lifetime of the development.

Strategic site allocations

5.4 In addition to the thematic standards set out above, policies at strategic sites include specific requirements for biodiversity and GI measures responding to their local context, providing additional green spaces for people and mitigating impacts on local habitats and species.

Delivery of offsite green infrastructure

5.5 An expanding range of habitat banks have been set up within Greater Cambridge to meet demand arising through biodiversity net gains, including for example at Coton Country Park, where offsite BNG funding will support enhancement areas of grassland, scrub and woodland over the next two to three decades. This is an example of a site that is delivering biodiversity benefits that meet the LNRS priorities, as well as the objectives of our strategic

green infrastructure indicatives (in this case initiative 7: West Cambridge GI buffer - Coton corridor).

5.6 Beyond this, the Local Plan IDP includes a list of deliverable strategic GI projects that would support the achievement of the objectives of our strategic GI initiatives. Developer contributions arising through Policy BG/EO as described above should provide a significant funding source to support these, alongside other funding opportunities. The IDP is a point in time document, and over time the Councils expect that other strategic projects supporting our strategic GI initiatives will be identified and delivered.

Corporate activities

5.7 Beyond delivering GI through the development process, the Councils' own activities are directly supporting delivery of GI, as explained in the corporate strategies referred to in section 2. Key projects that the Councils are involved in include:

- SCDC and CCC are both supporting:
    - The Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream project: chalk streams are increasingly under threat from development, pollution, sedimentation and erosion, and over-abstraction. As well, invasive plant and animal species can disrupt the streams' ecological balance. This project is a CCC led partnership project covering watercourses in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. It has been set up to address the challenges through conducting research to better understand the complex ecological dynamics of the chalk streams, and using this evidence base to decide on appropriate solutions.
    - 'Nature Recovery – From the Ground Up': this is a four-year project led by Cambridgeshire County Council and Natural Cambridgeshire, funded by the Cambridgeshire County Council Just Transition Fund to support communities to create their own Community Nature Recovery Plans, aligning with the aims of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- SCDC supports nature recovery efforts through community involvement and Nature Recovery Projects for example:
  - Six Free Trees programme – six free native tree whips or one large tree for every parish in South Cambridgeshire
  - Community Chest Grant – Biodiversity - £10,000 per year to support biodiversity projects,
- SCDC has provided over £855,000 of funding (since 2019) through the Zero Carbon Communities Grant, helping communities in South Cambridgeshire to take action on climate change. The Community Chest grant also provides up to £2000 for community projects, including those with a nature focus.
- Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have begun construction of a solar energy park to help power the Council's growing fleet of electric bin lorries. As well as powering electric bin lorries, the project is expected to supply 59% of the depot's total energy needs from renewable sources and achieve over 40% biodiversity net gain through measures such as wildflower planting and new hedgerows to create a haven for local wildlife.