

South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework

A Roadmap for Green Infrastructure

VI.0 March 2016



Foreword



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Produced on behalf of the South Downs National Park Authority and partners.

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Introduction

This Framework sets out a roadmap for green infrastructure planning for the South Downs National Park and the wider region. It is the first, united, step by a range of partners working together to ensure that economic growth and development is achieved sustainably through planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure planning more commonly takes place at a district or county scale, but the establishment of the South Downs National Park Authority has offered a rare opportunity to create a truly multifunctional green infrastructure network at a landscape scale, with green infrastructure being one of the six strategic cross-boundary issues identified in the South Downs Local Plan.

This Framework sets out to bridge the divide between urban and rural areas, making new connections and bringing greater understanding of the synergies and interactions between them. It sets out a challenging ambition, but one which is necessary to secure a strategic network of green infrastructure across the sub-region.

Aim of the Framework

To create, protect and enhance a connected network of green and blue spaces;* which sustainably meets the needs of local communities and supports the special qualities of the South Downs National Park; by achieving a consensus about the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of green infrastructure.

** See page 3 for a definition of spaces included in the term green infrastructure*

Responding to the Needs of Partners

Early in 2014, during the preparation of the South Downs National Park Local Plan, partner organisations were asked whether a partnership approach to green infrastructure planning for the wider South Downs area should be developed. The response was overwhelmingly in support, with 80% of respondents supporting this approach.

In response, in October 2014 the South Downs National Park Authority began the process of developing a Green Infrastructure Framework for the South Downs National Park and wider sub-regional area with its partners.

The wide range of invited stakeholders generated discussion, ideas and agreement on taking the Framework forward.

A Partnership Approach

This Framework is a strategic document to support spatial planning in every local authority of the Framework area.¹ Each of these must adapt to the increased

pressures of a growing population, to protect the quality of life of residents and meet its

This is a collaborative document, developed with the input and advice of many partner organisations. It brings together the existing strategies and plans of partners and places these alongside additional evidence to add depth to the understanding of the area.

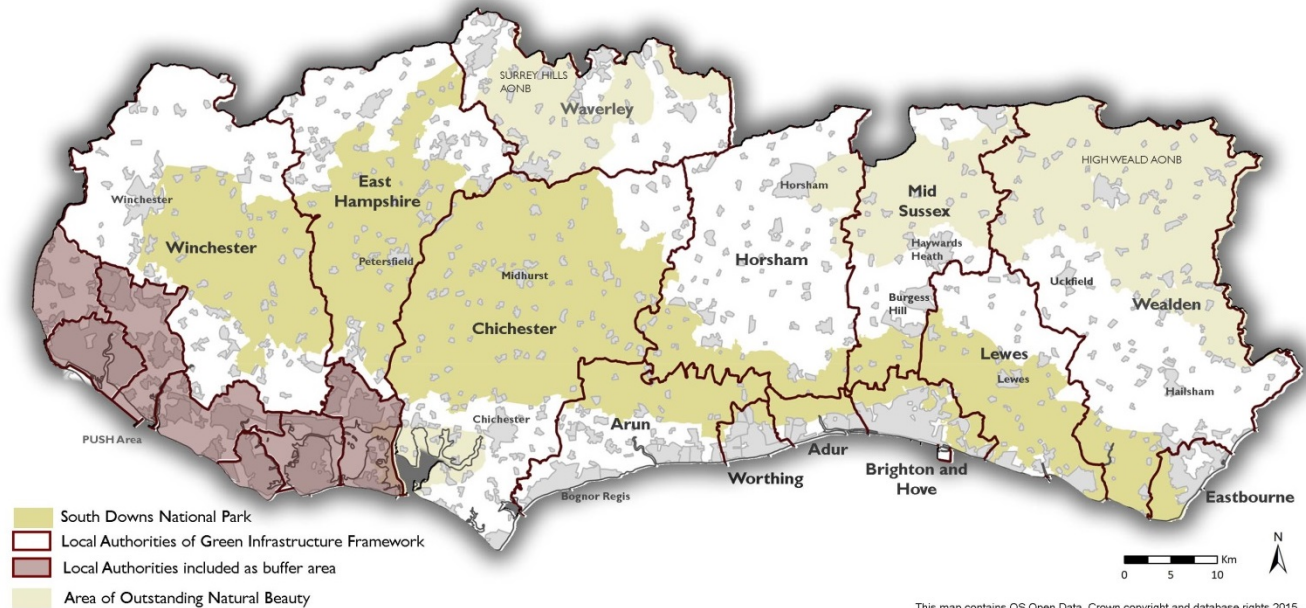
It is not prescriptive in the specific actions which partners should take to further green infrastructure planning and delivery but, rather, provides (as the name suggests) an over-arching framework of priorities and principles into which individual plans, strategies and most importantly, delivery, can fit. In this way the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

The Framework should be viewed as a catalyst for action. It is a further step towards greater collaborative working for green infrastructure across the Framework area, building upon existing partnership working and bringing new and existing partners together around a common agenda.

Development of the Framework has been steered by a Technical Working Group,

commitments to development and green infrastructure.

Plan 1: Framework Area



comprising representatives from a cross-section of interested partners. These individuals guided the Framework, agreeing

the scope, the aim and objectives and providing essential insight and knowledge.

This Report

This report provides a summary of the key points of the Framework study. The evidence base, analyses and further information are provided in the Evidence Report.

What is Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure

Many spaces and environmental features comprise green infrastructure, including water environments.² A key feature of green infrastructure is that networks are strategically planned and spaces and places are connected.

Each component part of green infrastructure has the potential to deliver a range of benefits, including recreation, biodiversity,³ health, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable travel, flood risk management and water quality. When planned, designed and managed as a network, these benefits are maximised.

Taking an Ecosystems Approach

To effectively capture the interactions between towns and the countryside and

between people and the natural environment the Framework has adopted an ecosystems approach.⁴

Ecosystem services are the benefits provided by the natural environment that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. Examples include food, timber and water, air quality regulation and pollination, alongside a range of services contributing to quality of life. Green infrastructure is a key mechanism in delivering ecosystem services.

The services we get from nature underpin economic prosperity and social well-being. Many decisions and policies have an impact on the provision of these services. To begin linking green infrastructure planning and an ecosystems approach, geographic information system modelling using EcoServ-GIS⁵ has been included in the evidence base.

⁴ Conservation and enhancement of natural capital is embodied in Purpose 1 of the South Downs National Park Authority and in the ecosystems approach underpinning its plans and policies.

² 'Blue infrastructure'.

³ Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat.

What is Green Infrastructure?

- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green spaces – including woodland, scrub, grassland, hedgerows, heath, wetland, open and running water, brownfield sites, coasts;
- Parks and gardens – urban parks, country parks, formal and private gardens, institutional grounds (e.g. schools and hospitals);
- Amenity green space – recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, community and roof gardens, village greens, commons, hedges, civic spaces, highway trees and verges;
- Allotments, city farms, orchards and farmland;
- Cemeteries and churchyards;
- Green and Blue corridors – rivers, canals, road verges, rail embankments, cycling routes, rights of way;
- Nature conservation sites – Designated sites and statutory and non-statutory Nature Reserves;
- Green space designations (selected for historic significance, natural beauty, recreation, wildlife, or tranquillity);
- Archaeological and historic sites;
- Functional green space such as sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) and flood storage areas;
- Built structures – living roofs and walls, bird and bat boxes, roost sites.

Abridged from: Town & Country Planning Association and The Wildlife Trusts (2012), *Planning for a Healthy Environment – Good Practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity*.

Why is a Sub-Regional Approach Needed?

Sub-regional green infrastructure frameworks are developed at a strategic scale to guide green infrastructure planning, investment and delivery. This Framework has been developed to support and provide direction for an ongoing partnership approach to planning and delivering green infrastructure across the South Downs National Park and within the surrounding areas of partner authorities and organisations.

Sub-regional green infrastructure frameworks are important in:

- **Providing a common cross border agenda for action and a supporting evidence base.** Working at a sub-regional scale reveals connections, synergies, pressures and opportunities which may not be apparent at a local level;
- **Ensuring strategic issues are considered at their appropriate scale.** The environment operates across a much wider geographic scale than that defined by governmental structures. River catchments, ecosystem services and ecological

connectivity are some of the most obvious in environmental terms, but people also travel to different areas for recreation. Yet governmental boundaries are the geographic scale at which policies are formulated and delivered, with a drive towards greater localism;

- **Promoting the consistent and joined-up management of larger scale assets,** especially those crossing administrative boundaries;
- **Supporting and guiding partnership working and providing a platform for bringing partners together.** The partner local authorities each have their own approaches to green infrastructure planning and delivery. This strategic approach will help partners to achieve more, collectively, in terms of high quality green infrastructure policy, strategies and delivery, through sharing approaches and knowledge and enabling decisions to be made with greater appreciation for the effect on neighbours;

- **Providing a common framework to attract and guide investment** in green infrastructure.

A Duty to Cooperate

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to take a strategic approach in their Local Plans to create, protect, enhance and manage green infrastructure and biodiversity networks, including policies and planning for biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries and identifying and mapping ecological networks.⁶

The Duty to Cooperate created by the Localism Act 2011 also places a legal duty on a range of authorities to engage constructively, effectively and on an ongoing basis on strategic cross-boundary issues.

The duty recognises that climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and ecological networks and flood risk management are better planned at a strategic scale. The

⁶ NPPF paragraphs 114 and 117.

Environment Act 1995⁷ also places a Duty of Regard on Local Authorities towards the purposes of the National Park.

Bringing Economic Benefits to the Area

A primary reason for a sub-regional approach is to support sustainable economic growth across the Framework area, as defined in the principle of sustainable development.⁸

Green infrastructure planning can uphold the environmental and social ‘pillars’ of sustainable development, helping to ensure that economic growth does not have a negative impact on the environment and society and, ideally, results in improvement. This also relates to the need to preserve the ‘Special Qualities’ of the South Downs National Park as demands on it increase.

The economic benefits of green infrastructure are now well evidenced.⁹ Green infrastructure can make a direct and immediate contribution to the economic ‘pillar’ of sustainability. Green infrastructure planning and delivery are

essential to underpin future sustainable economic growth in the Framework area.

South Downs National Park - Seven Special Qualities

- Diverse, inspirational landscape and breath-taking views;
- A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species;
- Tranquil and unspoilt places;
- An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise;
- Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences;
- Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage;
- Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area.

CASE STUDY Using Nature for Flood Management

In Winchester, Winnall Moors, one of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts and Winchester City Council’s premier nature reserves, located in the Itchen Valley – has played a vital role in reducing the level of flooding currently affecting the city. This initiative by Winchester City Council and HIWWT is allowing the water meadows to flood using traditional water management systems such as sluices to direct excess water into the meadows and away from the city, there has been a dramatic reduction in the speed by which flood water has entered the city. See [Hants and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust \(external link\)](#) for further details.



⁷ Section 62.

⁸ The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and

... there is little doubt that returns on green infrastructure investment are high. Investments in green space have been shown to improve a region's image; helping to attract and retain high value industries, new business start-ups, entrepreneurs and workers... increasing 'Gross Value Added' (GVA). *Natural Economy North West (2008)*

A core economic rationale for the Framework is also about investing in green infrastructure to build and improve the natural capital of the South Downs and wider Framework area.

Green infrastructure underpins many economic activities. Concepts such as 'Payment for Ecosystem Services' seek to demonstrate the economic value of green infrastructure and the direct role green infrastructure has in providing goods, services and materials and, through such provision, supporting economic prosperity. Disregarding these services will incur societal costs in the longer-term.

Green infrastructure increases the attractiveness, and distinctiveness, of local areas, drawing in investment. This attractiveness also increases visitor numbers - and spend. Both the South Downs National Park and the South Coast attract high numbers of visitors. Combining the visitor offer can only

benefit local businesses and the visitor economy. A quality environment is critical to success into the future.

An accessible, attractive outdoor environment is important in encouraging physical activity which, in turn, improves physical and mental health, thereby reducing the public cost burden. Such health improvements increase productivity as well as allowing health expenditure to be invested elsewhere.

Green infrastructure also contributes to the resilience, and sustainability, of economic growth through reducing key risks, such as flooding and temperature extremes. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and green roofs, for example, bring economic as well as environmental benefits. Not only does green infrastructure reduce damage costs (releasing investment for productive activities) it often provides more cost-effective solutions. These risks, and costs to society, will increase with projected climate change.

Better Through Working Together

There are, and will continue to be, pressures on both local authority and third sector resources. More needs to be delivered to

meet the environmental element of sustainable development, but at a time when the ability to resource this is becoming increasingly difficult. This requires smarter and more efficient working, reducing duplication and wasted resources.

With limited resources, delivery needs to be targeted where there is the greatest need and where it will secure the greatest benefit.

Co-operation also saves resources in building evidence, in finding 'future-proof' solutions, in addressing the true gaps in knowledge and in sharing findings.

Co-ordinated approaches and robust and compelling evidence at the sub-regional scale are also more likely to unlock funding sources which may not be available at a more local level.

There are greater gains to be secured through presenting a united and agreed position on the needs, priorities and ambitions of the area as a whole. Advocacy to government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, funding bodies and others is more powerful and influential when robustly evidenced and co-ordinated.



**CASE STUDY Sussex Community
Development Agency - Green Open
Spaces for Health**

**Case Study: Black & Minority Ethnic
Communities in Seaford, East Sussex**

In September 2014, a group of 12 people from black and minority ethnic communities in Seaford were invited to take part in the initial pilot phase of the Green Open Space for Health (GOSH) project. The project is led by Sussex Community Development Association in partnership a range of Local Authority and academic partners and aims to offer programmes of activity to groups who would not normally access the on the South Downs, with a view to having a positive impact on their health & well-being.

Since participating in the pilot activity – which consisted of a walk and an art activity, the group from Seaford have been offered a number of other facilitated activities, including some walk leader training, looking at health & safety issues and route planning etc. In addition to walking, the group have enjoyed creative activities such as natural craft and photography. The group has now started to co-ordinate their own, independent walking group. The main driver behind these semi-regular walks was the fact that they were meeting as a group and enjoying walking together. The comments from participants are the best testament to the success of the programme:

“We used to worry about getting lost. Now we don’t mind—it’s quite fun!”

“I have found that the group has really helped me with feeling isolated.”

Chris Sculthorpe, Green Open Spaces for Health Development Worker
Sussex Community Development Association, chris@sussexcommunity.org.uk

Aim and Objectives of the Framework

Aim of the Framework

To create, protect and enhance a connected network of green and blue spaces; which sustainably meets the needs of local communities and supports the special qualities of the South Downs National Park; by achieving a consensus about the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of green infrastructure.

How does the Framework propose to achieve the Aim and Objectives?

1. By engagement with those authorities within or bordering the National Park under the Duty to Cooperate regarding the delivery of the Framework;
2. By establishment of a common understanding of green infrastructure amongst stakeholders;
3. Through integrating and building upon existing knowledge, partnerships, initiatives and best practice;
4. Through supporting decision-making and delivery at the most appropriate spatial scale and encouraging local input;
5. By drawing together an evidence base, at a scale appropriate to the Framework area, to maximise economies of scale, improve the quality of the evidence and ensure consistency across the region;
6. Through identifying and prioritising those issues which are best addressed at a sub-regional scale and across administrative boundaries;
7. Through supporting plan-making processes by developing proposals for strategic green infrastructure interventions that may be included in the evidence base for emerging Local Plans and in the appropriate Infrastructure Delivery Plans;
8. By periodically reviewing the framework and its priorities against the Aim and Objectives to ascertain if these are being met and if the basis for partnership working is delivering continuous improvement in strategic green infrastructure.

Objectives

- Use green infrastructure assets to support health and well-being of people and businesses in the Framework area;
- Demonstrate and deliver economic benefits through the green infrastructure Framework;
- Protect and enhance biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity to maintain and improve the health of the environment;
- Protect and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Framework area;
- Improve resilience to the effects of climate change; Plan, deliver and manage green infrastructure assets to reduce local flood risk
- Improve the sustainability of communities across the Framework area;
- Improve opportunities for enjoyment and understanding of the wildlife, natural beauty, cultural heritage and the special qualities of the National Park;
- Use green infrastructure to support the delivery of ecosystem services;
- Integrate cultural heritage into the green infrastructure network;
- Improve access opportunities to natural greenspace in the Framework area for all sectors of society;
- Identify and prioritise opportunities to enhance and deliver optimum benefits from strategic green infrastructure;
- Encourage the enhancement and delivery of strategic green infrastructure through contributions from new development.
- Plan, deliver and manage green infrastructure assets to re-naturalise river catchments and reduce local flood risk.

The Approach to Developing Priorities

Initial consideration of evidence was based upon 'Themes' identified by delegates to the Stakeholder Workshop in October 2014. Evidence was taken from a range of sources:

- National and international legislation, policy and guidance;
- Strategies, Local Plan documents and evidence documents from the partner local authorities;
- Feedback from questionnaire to local authority partners;
- Strategies and evidence from stakeholder organisations;
- Review of primary datasets;
- Modelling outputs from EcoServ-GIS;
- Input and comment from the Technical Working Group, the Steering Group and the Stakeholder Workshop of October 2014.

Analyses of the themes alongside the other evidence, in particular overarching issues validated by the Technical Working Group, has allowed a set of strategic priorities for taking forward green infrastructure in the Framework Area to be formulated. These priorities are cross-sectoral, reflecting the multi-functional nature of green infrastructure planning.



Headline Findings

Evaluating the evidence revealed a number of key issues. These findings strongly reconfirm the need for the Framework partners to continue to work together to further green infrastructure planning and delivery in the Framework area.

The National Park at the Centre

The National Park, geographically, forms the heart of the Framework area. The National Park provides many benefits to the sub-region, both for its residents and for surrounding communities. The designation of the National Park creates a new dynamic for the Framework area. The opportunity that presents is to use this as a positive force for change. With a strong collective commitment to cross-boundary working on green infrastructure, the partners can effectively harness the benefits of natural capital within the open countryside, coastline, rivers, South Downs National Park and urban parks to provide benefits for all.

An Inter-related Area

The Framework area is fundamentally inter-related. Exert pressure in one area and the effect can manifest itself in another. Lack of recreational greenspace in one area, for example, can result in more pressure on greenspaces in other areas, perhaps with unforeseen consequences such as pressure on sensitive biodiversity or erosion of landscape quality.

It is in the interests of all partners to acknowledge this – and then understand it better and plan to address it. The National Park Authority and its partners are subject to the requirements of the NPPF, albeit that the priorities are somewhat different for a National Park Authority. Every authority must manage and adapt to the increased pressures placed upon it by a growing population to protect its landscape character and meet its commitments to both development and green infrastructure. The areas outside the National Park must also accommodate growth while building vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities and retaining the qualities of their landscape.



Beachy Head © SDNPA

Working to deliver these in partnership will bring benefits to all partners, to the landscape and natural assets of the Framework area and, importantly, to residents.

There is a link between communities in poor health, high levels of social or economic deprivation and lack of greenspace. In a number of places in the Framework area where these issues exist and where significant growth is planned, these communities are likely to experience added pressures.

Unless the existing, underlying issues affecting these places are addressed, including raising the standard and provision of greenspace and green infrastructure, the effect of new development could be to worsen the situation for the people living there.

Addressing Deficits in Existing Green Infrastructure Provision

Based on the review of standards,¹⁰ greenspace provision is insufficient for identified need in many places, particularly outside the National Park. Many local

authorities are facing increasing pressures on their ability to both retain and manage their greenspace sites.

The requirement to provide green infrastructure alongside new development presents a key opportunity to create new areas of greenspace or improve existing sites and help address the deficiency. However, without a policy framework, evidence of longer-term economic benefits and local political support in championing the need for green infrastructure, this opportunity will be missed.

The Need for Connectivity

The need to make links is a common thread:

- Joining up fragmented habitats, improving biodiversity and supporting landscape resilience;
- Addressing gaps in the access network;
- Working across landscapes not confined by local authority boundaries;
- Planning green infrastructure at river catchment scale using catchment partnerships and their supporting member organisations.



¹⁰ For example for Accessible Natural Greenspace, LUC, May 2008. Understanding the relevance and application of the Access to Natural Green Space Standard.

Urban Edge Pressures

Across the Framework area there are examples of urban-edge landscapes under pressure, particularly evident along the southern boundary of the National Park. The causes vary, but include recreation pressure as a result of a lack of greenspace, changes in the farmed landscape (e.g. fragmentation of farmsteads and conversion to residential use), gaps in the access network, loss of strategic gaps, encroachment of the urban edge and barriers to access (e.g. major roads and railways).

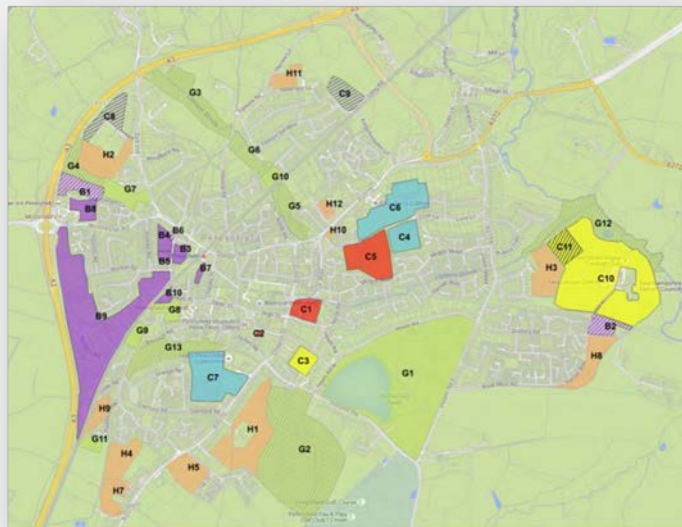
The pressures manifest themselves as:

- Declining biodiversity condition;
- Urbanisation of the landscape
- Urban edge anti-social issues (such as fly-tipping);
- The gradual degradation of landscape quality and character.

CASE STUDY Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan – Bringing the Downs into the Town

During consultation on the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan (adopted January 2016) the wider community made it very clear that their close relationship to the surrounding countryside, in particular the South Downs, was of utmost importance. The Plan states that most residents live within 15 minutes' walk of open land and the plan aspires to retain existing green fingers of space that bring the countryside into the town and allow the town to 'breathe'. The allocation of development land has taken this key principle into consideration, ensuring that the size, form and location of new buildings doesn't cut new and existing residents off from the glorious views of the surrounding landscape or detract unduly from the views that people enjoy of the town from the surrounding landscape. The Plan also allocates 13 new Local Green Spaces that reinforce the aspiration to maintain close connection to the surrounding countryside. The map below shows how the local green spaces (G1, G2 etc.) draw the surrounding countryside into the town.

Another key principle of the plan is to allow people to move easily around the town with a network of footpaths or cycle paths, the intention to keep the town 'walkable' and housing and employment land allocations have been allocated to maintain the walkability of Petersfield as a Market Town.



Building Resilience

The environment faces many pressures including climate change, built development and urbanisation, recreation demand and intensification of agriculture. Green infrastructure planning at the Framework scale is needed to identify areas under pressure and the actions needed to build resilience.

The Need to Work Together

There are benefits to planning green infrastructure at the strategic level - and delivering locally.

The Framework presents an opportunity for partners to work together to agree their priorities and shared objectives. Working across boundaries will enable the pooling and sharing of knowledge and joint approaches to securing resources. It will enable combined advocacy to raise the profile of the significance and value of green infrastructure so that this is fully recognised and appreciated by decision-makers and seeking champions at the highest level.

There are many existing partnerships and initiatives already active. These partnerships, with their established networks and local

CASE STUDY Bordon Inclosure – Building Resilience for Communities and Wildlife

This 24ha mixed woodland Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) site forms part of a 150ha green infrastructure resource, which will be delivered over the next 15 years as mitigation for new development for 1,440 new residents as part of the Whitehill & Bordon Regeneration Project, following the Army's vacation from the town. Site-specific greenspace improvements as well as an access management and monitoring regime direct residents away from the Wealden Heaths Phase 2 Special Protection Area (SPA) nearby for which the ground-nesting bird populations are vulnerable to recreational disturbance particularly from dog-walking.

Extensive stakeholder input has contributed to a costed management plan demonstrating arrangements are in place to maintain the site and protect the SPA for a minimum period of 80 years.

Key components of the management plan include:

- To promote the site as a wildlife corridor connecting Deadwater Valley LNR to the south and Broxhead Common to the north (aided by increasing the capacity of the Deadwater Valley LNR ranger team).
- Accommodation of walking and cycling routes as part of the 7 miles "Green Loop" and the long distance Shipwrights Way route; and
- To promote community interest and involvement in the wildlife of Whitehill & Bordon through Whitehill Town Council and the Deadwater Valley Trust.

knowledge are ideally placed to deliver local green infrastructure initiatives; and already do. The potential value of these schemes could clearly be enhanced if they also contribute to a network of green infrastructure, planned at a strategic scale.

The Priorities and Investment Areas for Green Infrastructure

This Framework aims to provide the catalyst to improve green infrastructure planning and delivery across the entire Framework area. It aims to raise ambition so that benefits are secured for all communities now and into the future.

To do this requires a structured approach. First, a set of principles will help to raise the status of green infrastructure across the whole Framework area. For each of these principles we have developed strategic priorities. In addition, priority geographic areas have also been identified where targeted investment in green infrastructure is needed. These are spatial priorities (Green Infrastructure Investment Areas).

Principles for Green Infrastructure Planning within the Framework

These encompass the actions which need to be taken across the whole Framework Area and by all partners to improve, embed and secure green infrastructure planning and delivery.

The principles can be adopted by all partners and used to bring together strategies and priorities in a coherent way. This Framework is not prescriptive in the way these should be taken forward, but rather sees them as a common thread which will bind together the partners as each of them progress their green infrastructure plans in the most appropriate way for their local area. Some of the actions which are required are detailed on the following page.

Principles for Green Infrastructure Planning in the Framework Area

Make Strong Connections

The need for better connections crosses many areas – biodiversity networks and sustainable transport, as well as planning and delivering green infrastructure across boundaries and across sectors.

A Natural and Cultural Canvas

The well-being of the area fundamentally relies on the quality of the landscape, its ecosystems and the services they provide. The natural landscape and cultural heritage should be strengthened and celebrated, providing distinctive settings for its cities, towns and villages and underpinning the future prosperity of the area.

Support Sustainable and Healthy Communities

The health and well-being of people living in the Framework area is linked to the quality of their environment. People need access to nature and the benefits of a green environment. New development must build communities, not just housing. This is vital for the health of the towns and villages and contributes to the economic prosperity of the area.

Become Fit for the Future

The Framework area needs to build resilience to help it adapt to change. Housing growth and transport will continue to make demands on the landscape and natural resources, particularly water. Climate change will create pressures and challenges which will require adaptation. Economic forces will test farming and forestry. The management of these complex challenges requires forward planning into the medium and long term horizons.

Better Through Working Together

Partnership working, shared objectives, pooling knowledge, securing resources and advocacy will be the keys to success for the Framework and its ambitions.

Strategic Priorities formed from the Principles for the Framework

Make Strong Connections	A Natural and Cultural Canvas	Support Sustainable and Healthy Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess needs and opportunities - then plan and deliver across administrative boundaries. • Link towns and villages with the countryside – considering access, landscape, wildlife and rivers, not just one in isolation. • Improve access connections around towns and from towns to countryside. • Better integration of access and biodiversity to manage recreation without unduly pressurising biodiversity. • Break down access barriers – main roads, rivers and railway lines without lateral access all disconnect the network. • Improve ecological connectivity – ‘mainstreaming’ this into all areas and at all scales and co-ordinating connectivity modelling evidence. • Work together – networks are not limited to administrative areas - everyone must look beyond their boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-sensitive planning (particularly outside the National Park where small-scale, gradual changes can alter the landscape); • Utilise tools¹¹ to improve visual impact assessment of proposed development. • Better managed and new woodland to address fragmentation, reinforce historic landscapes, provide new recreation opportunities and improve productivity, particularly through co-operatives. • Improve understanding of ecosystem services and the role of both natural and urban landscapes in providing these. • Keep special places in the landscape by identifying tranquil areas, areas of dark skies and key viewpoints. • Recognise and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance existing and create new greenspace in – and/or adjacent to - areas of deficit, especially in areas of poor health or deprivation - do not create further disadvantage in these areas. • Ensure new development adequately contributes to providing greenspace – build communities not just housing. • Increase the benefits provided by existing greenspaces in all areas e.g. increasing access, making better use of strategic gaps and urban fringe, enhancing biodiversity, increasing play space and ensuring good maintenance. • Bring nature into towns – more wildlife in parks, better urban connections, naturalised and de-culverted rivers. • Use green infrastructure in a planned way to combat noise and air pollution.

¹¹ For example Viewshed, which analyses comprises both visibility mapping and viewpoint photography to allow a baseline for the assessment of proposed development in / around the South Downs National Park: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/?s=Viewshed>

Strategic Priorities formed from the Principles for the Framework

Become Fit for the Future	Better Through Working Together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.¹² • Address future urban heat island effect through the development of green infrastructure – in particular in streets, schools and in new commercial and residential developments. • Promote sustainable water use and demand reduction to support the growing population and improve water quality. • Use natural solutions to regulate water flow, through sustainable drainage, catchment planting, creation of wetlands and re-naturalising watercourses. • Improve habitat and species connectivity to adapt to climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together organisations based around common needs e.g. coastal communities. • Identify potential advocates who will make the case for green infrastructure at all levels and to different – and influential – audiences. • Support pilot projects to demonstrate green infrastructure and ecosystem service benefits, not least in economic terms. • Provide opportunities to explore the inter-relationship green infrastructure has with other planning requirements and services to help ensure the role of planning in the delivery of green infrastructure is more widely understood, to manage expectations and to facilitate the ability for development proposals to complement the priorities of other service providers under the umbrella of green infrastructure. • Assess the potential for working with new sectors and sourcing new funds.

¹² National Planning Policy Framework para 100.

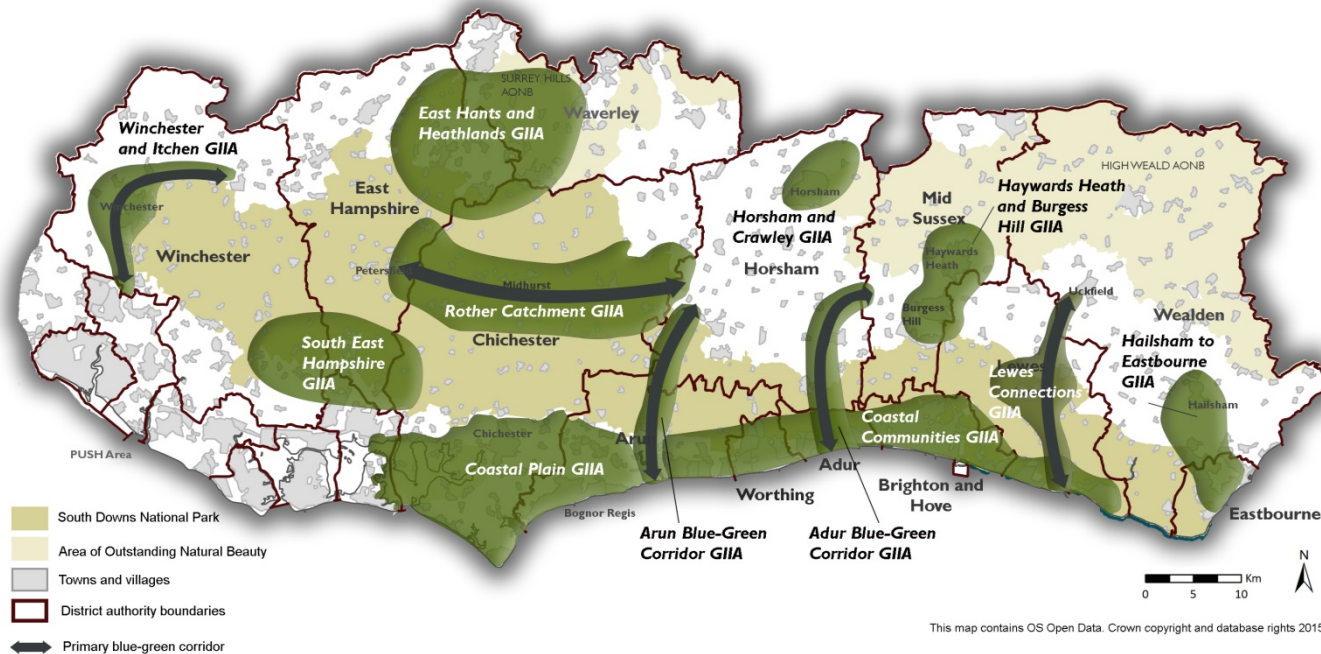
Spatial Priorities - Green Infrastructure Investment Areas

The Green Infrastructure Investment Areas (GIAs) (see Plan 2) have emerged from the assessment and evaluation process where the coalescence of a number of issues indicated the need for more targeted, strategic and cross-cutting intervention. Each of the GIAs, while unique in their particular set of issues, needs and opportunities, share this feature.

While in many of the GIAs there are organisations and projects already operating and policies in place, the scope for more joined-up approaches to deal with cross-sectoral and cross-boundary issues is universally applicable. As the GIAs have been developed from a sub-regional scale review, they provide the opportunity for further local level planning.

A SWOT analysis was undertaken for these GIAs and for the Framework Document we have highlighted the opportunities only. The Evidence report contains the full SWOT analysis.

Plan 2: Strategic Green Infrastructure Investment Areas (GIAs)



The GIAs

- Winchester and Itchen • East Hants and Heathlands • Rother Catchment •
- South East Hampshire • Horsham and Crawley •
- Arun Blue-Green Corridor • Coastal Plain •
- Coastal Communities • Adur Blue-Green Corridor •
- Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill • Lewes Connections • Hailsham and Eastbourne •

Winchester and Itchen

This GIA follows the River Itchen from south of Winchester city and in an arc to the north. The Itchen also forms one of the Framework's Blue-Green Corridors, linking villages to the north, through Winchester City and to the south to Eastleigh/ Southampton. Winchester lies on the edge of the South Downs National Park and is an important interface area with the National Park.

Opportunities

- Improve western links from Winchester to Farley Mount Country Park;
- Link biodiversity and recreation approaches to reduce pressure on sensitive biodiversity sites;
- Explore potential to improve green infrastructure links to include isolated heritage assets as part of a network approach, including Registered Parks to the north/south of city and the Scheduled Ancient Monuments to the south-east;
- Opportunities for habitat connectivity – chalk downland east of Winchester, River Itchen valley;
- Explore the potential for natural flood risk management to replace or to complement engineered solutions; including the naturalising of watercourses, and removal of barriers to fish movement;
- Utilise natural water management, e.g. Winnall Moors;
- Blue-Green corridor links to PUSH area, scope for further joint approaches;
- To use green infrastructure to address areas of high demand for noise regulation around M3, along with areas in town centre;
- To use green infrastructure to help reduce levels of air pollution;
- Initiatives to improve rivers including 'Keeping Rivers Cool' programme, particularly trout species, and tackling pollution

South East Hampshire

This GIA lies across the northern PUSH area and the southern part of Winchester and East Hampshire districts. Alongside a large existing population, significant new housing is planned. The PUSH Green Infrastructure partners have plans and policy in place to provide green infrastructure within PUSH. Investment and co-ordinated planning needs to extend to the southern area of the National Park to protect the edge of the South Downs National Park.

Opportunities

- Integrated recreation management to manage visitors to these highly visited and valued sites, especially around Queen Elizabeth Country Park/ Butser Hill SAC;
- Extend woodland, provide more areas for recreation;
- Link sites with access routes;
- Link with PUSH partners and The Solent Forum in taking forward joint initiatives;
- Forest of Bere - potential for landscape-scale project incorporating biodiversity, access, cultural heritage and landscape. Work with partners to develop this sub-regional project.
- To explore opportunities for access and biodiversity connectivity between New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park, initially through improved connections to the Solent from South East Hampshire along The Hamble.



Rother Catchment

This GIA follows the wider catchment of the River Rother from Liss, through Petersfield and Midhurst, to join the River Arun at Pulborough Brooks. This GIA is wholly within the National Park and crosses a number of local authority boundaries; East Hampshire, Chichester and Horsham and Hampshire and West Sussex County Councils.

Opportunities

- Heathland enhancement;
 - Pulborough Brooks key site for biodiversity and access;
 - Blue-Green towns and villages – make water central to Petersfield, Liss, Midhurst, Pulborough – green infrastructure improvements for quality and bring people closer to water;
 - Heathland, woodland and chalk grassland connectivity;
 - Bat conservation around Ebernoe Common and The Mens SACs (noting the pending outcome of the National Trust's LIFE project bid), strategic approach to planning bat flight lines outside of SAC to support features of international sites;
 - River catchment green infrastructure initiatives addressing catchment issues such as sediment;
- Several active projects which could provide added-value in combined approaches - Sediment Pressures and Mitigation Options for the River Rother, Heathlands Reunited, bat conservation project and Arun and Rother Connections;
- Cultural landscape projects: parks and gardens;
 - Disused railway lines providing access routes.

East Hants and Heathlands

This GIA includes several heathland sites, many of international importance, and in several administrative boundaries (National Park, East Hampshire and Waverley District Councils, Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex County Councils and Surrey Hills AONB). Several European sites are recognised as being sensitive to recreation, for which mitigation measures are required, but many more have been highlighted as sensitive by land managers, for which mitigation of impacts is very challenging.

Opportunities

- Build on the success of the Heathlands Reunited Heritage Lottery Fund project to fully integrate landscape-scale habitat conservation and green infrastructure into the future;
- Identify heritage assets for including in green infrastructure projects to protect isolated heritage features;
- Management approaches developed through Heathlands Reunited project embedded and continued after the project to fully secure the legacy.



Hailsham to Eastbourne

The Hailsham to Eastbourne GIA straddles Wealden and Eastbourne local authority areas. There is development planned in both areas; in Hailsham and Polegate, the latter being directly adjacent to the Eastbourne border. All of the settlements are situated on the upstream feeder streams for the Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar. Water resources are an issue, with constraints on waste water, flooding and the need for no adverse effect on Pevensey Levels. Road and rail infrastructure forms a barrier to access in some areas.

Opportunities

- The strategic allocation plan for Polegate identifies on-site green infrastructure, but there is a greater opportunity to improve the Biodiversity Opportunity Area to form a blue-green corridor linking Eastbourne/ Shinewater, for biodiversity, access and water quality and quantity improvements;
- Access improvements, building on the existing Cuckoo Trail;
- Pevensey Levels is a sensitive, highly visible landscape which should be strengthened with appropriate planting to provide a setting for and screening of new development;
- Potential opportunities around expansion of Arlington Reservoir.

Adur Blue-Green Corridor

This GIA is one of the main river valleys which cut through the South Downs National Park. These river valleys are important corridors for access to the Downs, especially for deprived coastal communities, for water resources and biodiversity. This GIA extends from Shoreham-By-Sea to Steyning/Upper Beeding, with the Adur continuing towards Henfield.

Opportunities

- Raise recognition of importance of corridor for access and link from coastal towns to Downs;
- Shoreham Harbour JAAP and the Green Port Shoreham Initiative have the potential for a positive impact on the water quality of the Adur;
- Shoreham Cement works: cultural heritage and opportunity for green infrastructure enhancement;
- Re-naturalise rivers, e.g. support MORPH.



Horsham and Crawley

Growth of these towns is ongoing with more planned. This includes an extension to Crawley¹³ on the boundaries of both Horsham and Mid-Sussex districts. As these towns continue to grow, landscape, communities and access could come under increasing pressure unless green infrastructure is planned to develop access connections and greenspace provision and protect the edge of the High Weald AONB.

Opportunities

- Green infrastructure opportunities from new development;
- Integrated approaches to managing Arun, Adur, Mole and Ouse upper tributaries: enhance access, water resource protection and habitat connectivity, and protect High Weald AONB;
- Woodland enhancement in Rusper Ridge BOA: enhance habitats, strengthen landscape, integrate development and provide robust recreational sites to serve growing population;
- Potential to incorporate historic parks around Horsham town into wider green infrastructure projects and funding bids.

Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill

This GIA includes Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Hassocks/ Hurstpierpoint, all within Mid Sussex but adjacent to the Lewes District and National Park borders, and close to the boundaries of Wealden district and the High Weald AONB; requiring a cross-boundary approach. One of the largest housing allocations in the Framework area is planned for Burgess Hill. This area will remain the focus of development pressure, lying between two protected landscapes, necessitating an integrated 'future-proofing' approach.

Opportunities

- Burgess Hill Green Circle key asset - seek further improvements;
- Cross boundary opportunities including links to Ditchling Country Park from Burgess Hill;
- Green infrastructure here would link the High Weald AONB to the National Park;
- Further develop an access chain: Haywards Heath – Burgess Hill – National Park;
- Several nature conservation sites and Local Nature Reserves, opportunities for connecting nature and people.

¹³ Subject to a boundary review at a future date



Lewes Connections

Lewes is one of the largest settlements within the South Downs National Park, situated on the River Ouse where the river cuts through the South Downs. This GIA includes Lewes town and two corridors - the north-south River Ouse corridor and the east-west downland habitat and offers potential for an integrated approach to green infrastructure, incorporating water resources, access improvements and habitat connectivity.

Opportunities

- Enhancements to blue-green corridor towards Uckfield and south to Newhaven;
- Explore natural solutions to flood issues (as indicated in EA's Catchment Flood Management Plan)- upstream flood mitigation and habitat enhancement, tree planting and new wetlands;
- Realising the recreational potential of the river (subject to planning policy);
- Access improvements - disused railway line to Uckfield (subject to any decision to re-open); Ouse Valley Egrets Way cycleway as a key strategic route;
- High demand for noise regulation along most access roads into Lewes.

Arun Blue-Green Corridor

This GIA is one of the main river valleys which cut through the South Downs National Park. These river valleys are important corridors for access to the Downs, especially for deprived coastal communities, for water resources and biodiversity. This GIA extends from Littlehampton to Billingham, intersecting with the Rother Catchment, Coastal Plain and Coastal Communities GIAs.

Opportunities

- Improve connections from Littlehampton to river and beyond as a high priority;
- Greater coordination between Arun, Chichester and Horsham Districts, SDNPA and West Sussex CC;
- A cross-boundary and cross-sector approach, viewing the river corridor as an asset for biodiversity, water resources, flooding and sea level rise management, heritage interest, recreation and tourism;
- Footpath along riverbank but potential to upgrade for cycling;
- Link routes to Ford Station - local access and tourism potential;
- 'Access for all' improvements at Pulborough Brooks as gateway to the river valley habitats;
- Habitat restoration, naturalising channels (much of river is embanked), reconnecting habitats, floodplain grazing marsh and other wetland projects;
- Urban fringe south of National Park - enhancements to strengthen landscape quality whilst retaining its distinctiveness.



Coastal Plain

This GIA covers the low-lying coastal plain from the west of Littlehampton (where it intersects with the Arun Blue-Green Corridor and the Coastal Communities GIA) through to Chichester in the north and Bognor Regis and the Manhood Peninsular in the south, including Chichester Harbour AONB. This area is important for crops and horticulture, along with areas internationally important for wildlife. The plain crosses Chichester and Arun local authority areas, requiring a joined-up approach to developing strategic approaches.

Opportunities

- Development planned across several settlements in both local authority areas. Opportunity for co-ordinated approach in addressing some of the issues of the GIA as a whole in response to development in both local authority areas;
- Opportunity for environment to support tourism and the local economy;
- Access improvements and circular walks will bring benefits to the economy and local residents;
- A need for recreation to be developed without increasing pressure on recreation-sensitive biodiversity sites;
- Consider improving connectivity through linking existing access routes
- Deliver aspiration (in Arun Green Infrastructure Plan) for new open spaces to north west of Bognor and in Barnham area;
- Explore the potential for creating a new public open space site of sufficient scale to serve existing and new residents in both districts, to help meet open space requirements, and help to relieve pressure on Pagham and Chichester Harbours;
- Potential to link habitat improvement and flood mitigation;
- For partnerships to work together in delivering green infrastructure improvements;
- Pollination Services – High demand along urban edge due to agricultural needs. Capacity to improve this service with improvements in green infrastructure especially in any future urban edge greenspace.



Coastal Communities

This extensive GIA stretches from Littlehampton in the west to Seaford and Newhaven in the east, including Worthing, Shoreham-by-Sea and Brighton and Hove. It includes two rivers, the Arun and the Ouse that connect the coast with the south Downs and Weald. There are multiple issues in this GIA, with a commonality of needs, requiring co-ordinated action on many fronts.

Opportunities

- Potential for local authorities to join forces to position this GIA as a green infrastructure exemplar area – making the case that investment is essential to halt further deprivation and the loss of quality of life in already disadvantaged areas, and that it fundamentally underpins economic prospects for these towns;
- Foundations to build upon Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) for Shoreham Harbour and the Brighton and Hove Lewes Downs Biosphere - learning can be extended to other coastal towns in need of similar approaches; Shoreham Harbour JAAP and the Green Port Shoreham Initiative have the potential to provide significant blue-green corridors and bridges; it is important to build-in these links at an early stage of the development;
- The South Downs NPA also has an interest to halt degradation of the special qualities in this pressurised part of the National Park;
- Potential to improve the capacity of green infrastructure to help regulate local climate, to meet increasing population demand; e.g. the counter the 'heat island' effects of towns and to improve air quality;
- Capacity to regulate noise in areas of high demand through improving green infrastructure. Particular need in areas of high population density and poorer health - western Littlehampton, near A27 and A259 and around all main roads into town centres; requires structural planting along routes;
- Capacity to improve pollination services in high demand areas along the urban edge with green infrastructure especially future urban edge greenspace; requires development of woodland edge and other planting to attract pollinators (e.g. bees, butterflies);
- Strategic cross-boundary approach provides opportunity to develop joint strategies. This will help in understanding interactions, needs and opportunities – and potential solutions (i.e. Arun, Worthing, Adur, Brighton and Hove and South Downs NPA);
- More multifunctional use of strategic gaps wherever appropriate, to maximise this valuable, retained greenspace; requires a plan for improving the green infrastructure in these areas, to include a plan for how the open space might serve a variety of green infrastructure functions to serve the local populations;
- Address traffic congestion and difficulty in east-west movement with strategic investment in sustainable transport across the entire GIA; to include consideration of off-road cycling route across the whole area;
- Develop strategic visitor management approach in highly visited area along southern boundary of National Park - to address visitor pressure on sites potentially vulnerable to recreation pressure and damage; to include a holistic review of the visitor sites and the pressures they face.

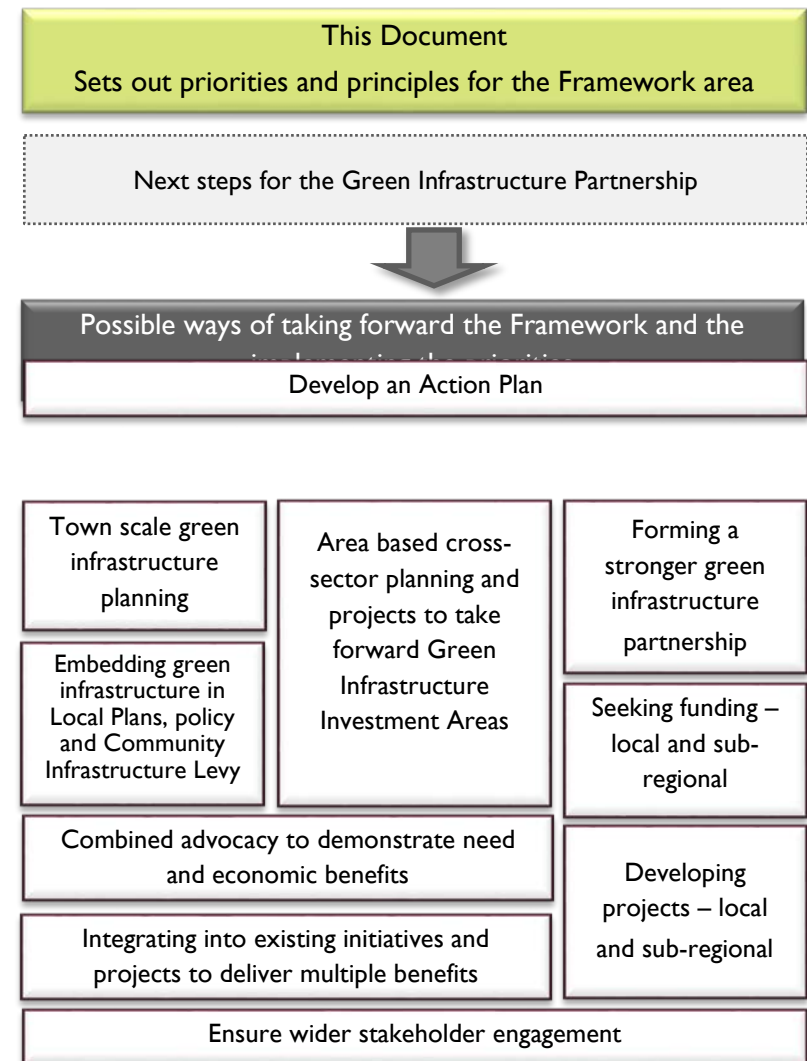


Taking the Framework Forward

This Framework is the first, uniting piece of evidence for the green infrastructure partnership. Collective commitment is now needed to see the Framework embedded into planning policy which is a critical next step. However, the most important measure of success will be the effective delivery of green infrastructure on the ground, in particular, pursuing the opportunities identified for the GIAs.

Already the partners have supported the principle of developing the Framework and what it is seeking to achieve, and to the timetable for its adoption.

The draft adoption statement below commits partners to developing a partnership approach to green infrastructure as set out in this Framework document and the supporting evidence report.



Draft Adoption Statement

A Another Planning Authority has read and supports the need for a strategic, cross-boundary approach to planning of green infrastructure within the Framework Area set out in this document.

A Another Planning Authority hereby commits to the aim, objectives and approach outlined in page 5 of this Framework as a means of enhancing the planning and delivery of green infrastructure for the benefits of all signatory authorities.

Signed

Name

Job Title

On behalf of: A Another Planning Authority