

THEME 1: LOCAL PLANS AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

REVIEW OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE NETWORK AREA

2.11 In developing this Network it is relevant to understand the position of each planning authority in terms of its statutory Local Plan, so that development and other pressures on the area may be better understood. In addition it is helpful to understand the progress, or otherwise, that each authority has made in planning for green infrastructure or other nature based master planning and what each authority might need from a people and nature network at the sub-regional level.

2.12 A review of the status of Local Plans and green infrastructure or green infrastructure-related policies was carried out. The review included the planning authorities within the Network area, comprising twelve district authorities, one unitary authority and the National Park authority. The review can only be a snapshot in time and some of the Local Plans may have moved forward since this research was carried out.

2.13 A number of planning authorities were in the process of developing, updating or reviewing elements of their Plan and in the interim period were using a combination of parts of their current Plan and/or their previous Plan and its (saved)

policies. The development status of Local Plans and green infrastructure policy for each of the planning authorities is shown in Table 1 on page 35.

2.14 The review of local authorities revealed a number of key issues:

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

- All the planning authorities are planning housing growth and some more than others. For some local authorities this is resulting in pressure on existing green infrastructure;
- A shortage of housing land means that urban areas and their green spaces are increasingly squeezed by transport infrastructure and other built development;
- The timing of the Local Plan process is not neatly aligned with the bringing forward of strategic sites, with the result that green infrastructure and other policies may not apply to some of the sites;
- Most of the larger housing sites are all located in areas outside of the National Park and the AONBs. This provides protection to the designated landscapes, but places increasing pressure on the landscapes to the north of the National Park and to the south of the Surrey Hills and High Weald AONBs, as well as the coastal plain and areas to the north of Chichester Harbour AONB;

- The increasingly difficult financial position of local authorities means that in most areas the development and enhancement of green infrastructure is only likely to take place if it can be funded by new development, i.e. either directly on site by the developer, or in the form of developer contributions. However, changes in planning regulations under the NPPF and restrictions on the pooling of s106 funding mean that the funding of infrastructure (e.g. green or blue corridors, SUDS, cycle routes, major greening initiatives and so on) may be more difficult to achieve, particularly where the funding is to be sourced from smaller developments. In addition, local authorities are dealing with a range of competing pressures for this funding and green infrastructure may not be their highest local priority. The use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds may be a useful alternative source of funding for projects. It is hoped that in developing a strategic approach like the PANN that the benefits of working together across boundaries will enable a broader range of delivery funding models and tools to be sourced.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

- There is no standard approach to the development or inclusion of green infrastructure policy across the authorities;

- Four authorities in the Network area have current adopted green infrastructure policies. A number of authorities have draft green infrastructure policies within their emerging local plans. Other authorities do not have green infrastructure policies as such, but they have policies which support green infrastructure (e.g. policies regarding biodiversity, access provision, flood risk management, heritage and the setting of the National Park and AONBs);
- Where green infrastructure policies are included in Local Plans, a different approach is taken by each authority. Some include the retention and enhancement of existing assets only, whilst others are more forward-looking and include the development of new multi-functional green infrastructure and guidance for the development of green infrastructure.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES AND OTHER EVIDENCE

- There is no standard approach to the development of green infrastructure evidence across the authorities. Some authorities have produced strategies, others have plans to do so in the future, whilst others have no stated intentions to develop a strategy;

- East Hampshire, for example, has carried out a comprehensive suite of green infrastructure strategies for its area at district level (i.e. a Green Infrastructure Study of its settlements, a Green Infrastructure Strategy of the district excluding the settlements and a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the proposed new eco-town at Whitehill & Bordon);²⁰ Horsham has a green infrastructure strategy and a Draft Green Infrastructure Policy. Arun has carried out a Green Infrastructure Study and its emerging Local Plan includes policies which indicate its positive approach towards the development of green infrastructure in the future.
- Going forwards the government has set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan that it will develop national standards for green infrastructure to aid the consistent creation and delivery of green infrastructure. This will make it easier for local authorities to identify, prioritise and deliver green infrastructure needs. (25 Year Environment Plan Page 77)²¹.

EXAMPLES OF PRESSURE ON NATURAL CAPITAL

- There are deficits in open space in a number of areas and more green spaces and wildlife sites are needed;

- Some green sites are not well connected – to each other or to local housing and amenities;
- The coastal areas risk losing the potential for linking the Downs to the coast if development continues without the creation of green infrastructure (e.g. green and blue corridors);
- The pressures generated by development which may be improved by green infrastructure include recreation demand, water and flood issues and joint approaches are needed to address the pressures generated by new housing, including recreation demand and water and flood issues;
- A sub regional strategy for green infrastructure would help to direct and prioritise resources and help in potential joint bids for funding.

EXAMPLE OF A SUB-REGIONAL APPROACH: THE PFSH INITIATIVE

2.15 South Hampshire was identified as an area for growth in the South- East Plan (GOSE, 2009). The Partnership for South Hampshire (PFSH)²² recognised the benefits of working together to support the sustainable economic growth of the sub region and to facilitate the strategic planning functions necessary to support that growth. The response to the scale of growth and development planned for the area included consideration of the

20 easthants.gov.uk/green-infrastructure-strategy

21 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

22 PFSH is a partnership of Hampshire County Council, the unitary authorities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight, and district authorities of Eastleigh, East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester. In June 2019 the decision was taken by the then Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Joint Committee to to rename the partnership to the Partnership for South Hampshire (PFSH).

effects that new growth might have on the natural resources of the region.

2.16 The development of this initiative and its integrated approach to green infrastructure is well-documented, but there are a number of outputs from the PfSH initiative which are of interest to this Network and the actions which may be needed to take the work forward.

2.17 A Green Infrastructure Strategy²³ was commissioned with the aim of developing a network to shape a multi-functional and integrated green network that would help provide a high quality of life for the people in the area. The Strategy was informed by the South East Green Infrastructure Network produced in 2017 which provided detailed guidance on how green infrastructure can be delivered through the planning system. The partnership produced an implementation plan for the strategy in 2019²⁴

2.18 The PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy provided a mutually agreed basis for taking forward green infrastructure work across South Hampshire. The crucial role of local planning was recognised and the need to finalise a green infrastructure plan to respond to planning

applications as they were submitted, while offering benefits to other aspects of work such as potential Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)²⁵ mitigation requirements. A key action in the short term was to include green infrastructure policies within Core Strategies.

2.19 The PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy was produced in 2017 and made a number of recommendations based around five strategic sub-regional initiatives and forty-six proposed projects. Since that time the partnership has had to adapt to a difficult economic climate and changes in the national and regional planning landscape. PfSH is now linked with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)'s growth strategy on the theme of sustainability and the link has been made between the economy and green infrastructure.

2.20 PfSH has no statutory powers or functions but works collaboratively with the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver its distinct but complementary roles and objectives.

2.21 There is recognition of the need to develop infrastructure at the same pace as development, together with the potential impacts of climate change, the principles of sustainability (including

the need to protect and enhance environmental, historic and cultural assets) and the need for good design.

2.22 Through the LEP the green infrastructure agenda has developed and evolved, with a review of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Delivery Network and the development of the Green Economy. The LEP has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)²⁶ to develop and interpret the PfSH Core Policy Network for Sustainable Development into guidance and external funding has been secured (£3m Regional Growth Fund (RGF)²⁷ funding).

2.23 This example illustrates the value of a sub-regional partnership approach and the benefits of aligning green infrastructure with economic and sustainability work programmes through the LEP.

CONCLUSION

2.24 The local authorities across the Network area are dealing with high levels of housing growth and a range of pressures that have impacts on the natural environment.

2.25 Strategic development sites have the potential to provide the benchmark for green

23 push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/South-Hampshire-GI-Strategy-2017-2034-FINAL.pdf

24 push.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/South-Hampshire-Green-Infrastructure-Implementation-Plan-June-2019-.pdf

25 gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment

26 PfSH Sustainable Development SPD Resource Document 2009

27 gov.uk/guidance/understanding-the-regional-growth-fund

infrastructure provision for other areas of the district.

2.26 It is clear that some of the pressures do not follow administrative boundaries and joint working across landscapes may be necessary to deal with the impacts and effects. For example, where there is a fragmented access network; where development plans span the boundary between authorities; where green infrastructure in one authority area may be provided in respect of development in another; or where the issues are on a landscape scale e.g. river corridors, major transport routes and crossing points and urban fringe landscapes.

2.27 We already know that open space standards are low in some districts and there are deficits in open space provision in many areas. In some districts the standards may not even reach the Fields In Trust Standard. This nationally-recognised minimum standard only applies to outdoor sports and play provision, but is not ideal for use by local authorities who should be assessing their local requirements and setting their own standards in response to local needs.

2.28 Development could provide opportunities to enhance green infrastructure provision in urban areas. However, constraints on public sector spending and changes to development-related funding are resulting in competition for resources and threaten the delivery of green infrastructure.

2.29 The variation in approaches to evidence and policy development across the area does little to raise awareness of the importance of green infrastructure. A more consistent approach to developing green infrastructure policy and supporting evidence across the Network area would provide a foundation for the development and enhancement of green infrastructure and help identify where key infrastructure is needed; helping to raise awareness of the value of green infrastructure and supporting bids for funding.

FURTHER WORK TO BE CONSIDERED

2.30 There is the potential for local authorities to build on their current evidence base and address gaps to ensure there is adequate information to inform the development of local green infrastructure policy. This would require an assessment of the current status of the evidence base and a review of green infrastructure policies across the area;

2.31 Alternative delivery and funding mechanisms for green infrastructure need to be considered as there is too much reliance on Developers to deliver green infrastructure. This would include existing partnerships and initiatives who are already delivering green infrastructure enhancements;

2.32 Development funds (Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should have a proportion

based upon assessed need ring-fenced for green infrastructure;

2.33 Lessons could be learned (e.g. from PfSH and other partnership arrangements) on how to develop and take forward a more integrated and strategic approach to green infrastructure that would raise awareness of green infrastructure in the local authorities and its relevance and importance to sustainable development;

2.34 Green infrastructure delivery could be demonstrated by focusing on specific areas where there is a range of issues to be addressed (e.g. the NCIAAs) in an area-based approach. This would help bring stakeholder organisations and local communities together around common purposes.

TABLE 1: LOCAL PLAN AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY STATUS

Planning Authority	Date of current Local Plan	Plan in preparation?	Green Infrastructure Policy	Notes
Adur	Local Plan Adopted 2017 Plan period to 2032	n/a	Yes, Policy 30 Green Infrastructure.	Paragraph 4.92 of the Adopted Plan states that a Green Infrastructure SPD will be produced.
Arun	Local Plan Adopted 2018 Plan period 2011-2031	n/a	Yes, Policy GI SP1 Green Infrastructure & Development.	Open Space standards SPD was adopted in January 2020.
Brighton & Hove	City Plan Part 1 Adopted in 2016	Pt 2 City Plan	Not in the adopted City Plan Part 1. Emerging City Plan Part 2 includes DM37 Green Infrastructure and Nature Conservation.	City Plan Part 2 Consultation currently expected in 2020.
Chichester	Local Plan Plan period 2014-2029	Local Plan Review	Yes, Policy 52 in adopted Plan. Emerging Local Plan includes S29 Green Infrastructure and S30 Strategic Wildlife Corridors.	Submission of the emerging Local Plan Review currently expected in 2020.
Eastbourne	Borough Plan Plan period 2006-2027	Local Plan Review	No specific policy in the adopted Plan.	GI principles are reflected in Issues & Options Consultation published in 2019.
East Hampshire	Joint Core Strategy Adopted 2014 Plan period 2011-2028	Local Plan	Yes, CP28: Green Infrastructure; and CSWB10: Green Infrastructure; green infrastructure network linked to the wider countryside. In emerging policy S23 Green Infrastructure.	
Horsham	District Planning Framework Adopted 2015 Plan period to 2031	Local Plan Review	Yes Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.	Regulation 18 consultation which will set out expected policy areas currently proposed for 2020.
Lewes	Joint Core Strategy and Local Plan Part 2	n/a	Yes, Core Policy 8 Green Infrastructure	

Planning Authority	Date of current Local Plan	Plan in preparation?	Green Infrastructure Policy	Notes
Mid-Sussex	District Plan Adopted 2018 Plan period 2014-2031	Site Allocations DPD	No. The inspector deleted the GI policy that was submitted as part of the District Plan.	Pre-Submission Consultation on the Site Allocations DPD currently expected Spring 2020.
SDNPA	Local Plan Adopted 2019 Plan period 2011-2034	n/a	Specific policy SD45 Green Infrastructure. Principles also incorporated into other policies.	
Waverley	Local Plan Part 1 Adopted 2018 Plan period to 2031	Local Plan Part 2	Yes, NE2 Green and Blue Infrastructure	Local Plan Part 2 underwent Preferred Options consultation in 2018.
Wealden	The Development Plan currently comprises Saved Policies of the Wealden Local Plan (1998) and the Core Strategy Local Plan Adopted 2013 Plan period 2006-2027	Local Plan	Yes, green infrastructure Policy WCS13 is part of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2013); No specific green infrastructure policy within the Wealden Local Plan 1998;	The Local Plan underwent examination in 2019. The Inspector raised significant concerns and in January 2020 WDC stated their intention to withdraw the Local Plan.
Winchester	Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy Adopted 2013 Local Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations Adopted 2017	Local Plan 2036	Yes; Policy CP15: Green Infrastructure	Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted by WCC and SDNPA on 19 and 20 March 2013.
Worthing	Core Strategy Adopted 2011 Plan period to 2026	New Local Plan in preparation	Yes; Policy 14: Green Infrastructure	Worthing Local plan (2003) saved policies not deleted by the adoption of the Core Strategy

Information updated in February 2020. This information is subject to continual change.

COUNTY AND WIDER LEVEL INITIATIVES IN THE NETWORK AREA

2.35 There are other strategic approaches to Natural Capital, Habitat Connectivity and Ecosystem services in the region which share similar goals and objectives to those of the Network. The network provides evidence and an approach which will nest with and compliment other initiatives in the region. There will be significant benefits for all in taking a collaborative approach and sharing resources and expertise.

SUSSEX NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

2.36 This document has been developed to provide strategic, high level direction for the Sussex Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and marks the beginning of an important process to plan and coordinate the collective investment in the natural capital of Sussex. It covers the entire geography of the counties of East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority, both on land and at sea (out to the boundary of inshore waters at six nautical miles). It is intended to complement existing strategies and policies within these administrative areas for the conservation of nature (not replace them) by providing a different 'lens'

through which to understand and communicate the value of nature to society and decision-makers. This is in line with the refocusing on natural capital by Defra, as outlined in the 25 Year Plan for the Environment.

2.37 It is a first step which will require future refinement and modification as the natural capital methodology evolves and as scientific understanding and datasets grow. More detailed work will also be needed to take the broad strategy it contains, and translate this into detailed proposals for action and investment on the ground. This strategy provides:

- Initial understanding (based on best available data) of the natural capital of Sussex,
- Where it is located and the raft of benefits and services it provides to people and the economy of the area.
- Initial strategic assessment of how best to focus effort, resources and funds to protect and enhance the stock of natural capital assets for the benefit of nature and people.
- Identification of opportunities to use a natural capital approach to deliver specific outputs of interest to LNP members, such as clean water, accessible nature, carbon storage and flood risk reduction.

2.38 The intention of this ambitious piece of work is to open up new opportunities for investment in nature, whilst ensuring that all Sussex LNP stakeholders are working consistently and collaboratively towards this goal, using compatible frameworks and priorities.

SURREY NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN

2.39 The natural capital approach is intended to drive a new way of achieving systemic investment in Surrey's natural assets and aims to mobilise local delivery within a strategic framework. This allows for the complexity of investments in natural assets to be accommodated and managed in a pragmatic way.

2.40 In November 2015 Surrey Nature Partnership published *Naturally Richer*, a Natural Capital Investment for Surrey.²⁸ This document recognised the importance of Surrey's natural capital assets to its economic and social success in the past and the reliance that continued and future success has on these natural assets.

2.41 The **Natural Capital Investment Plan** for Surrey (NCIP)²⁹ for Surrey sets out the broad actions required to achieve and maintain healthy natural assets in Surrey over the next 25yrs. It is

28 <https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/naturally-richer-a-natural-capital-investment-strategy-for-surrey.pdf>

29 <https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/natural-capital-investment-plan-for-surrey.pdf>

designed to promote discussion and comment. It also highlights the activity which has been undertaken over the last two years as part of the thought process of developing the natural capital approach in Surrey.

2.42 Key short term outcomes for the plan are;

- **Prepare a funding proposal** (and associated business plan) for the company and use this to secure appropriate seed funding to operate for a minimum of 3 years;
- **Natural capital investment funds:** designed to stimulate investments at different scales and from different types of investors;
- **Project pipeline development:** a list of feasible and investible products is essential to the success of the NCIP;
- **Environmental net gain:** A key mechanism for improving the ability to make natural capital investments associated with infrastructure development;
- **Evidence development for natural assets:** greater clarity is required about the existing stocks and flows of natural assets at different scales and within different types of management;
- **Monitoring and transparency:** Transparency and accountability of the new

funding body are an essential ingredient in creating successful investment products for natural assets;

- **Natural capital market development:** Ensuring that markets will work to support jobs, skills and also delivery healthy natural capital.

HAMPSHIRE ECOLOGICAL NETWORK MAPPING

2.43 The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) has produced a detailed ecological network map for Hampshire on behalf of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP)³⁰.

2.44 An ecological network is a group of habitat patches that species can move easily between maintaining ecological function and conserving biodiversity. Through appropriate management, ecological networks can provide a connected collection of refuges for wildlife. Establishing the network will enable biodiversity to recover from recent declines and create a more resilient natural environment.

2.45 The aims of the network are to:

- improve the quality of current wildlife sites by better habitat management
- increase the size of existing wildlife sites

- enhance connections between sites, either through physical corridors or through 'stepping stones'
- create new sites
- reduce the pressure on wildlife by improving the wider environment

2.46 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to map and consider ecological networks within their plans, policies and decisions.³¹

30 <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/MappingtheHampshireEcologicalNetworkFinalReport.pdf>

31 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf (para 170)



NEW FOREST GREEN HALO

2.47 The Green Halo vision³² is to be a global exemplar of how our most precious landscapes can work in harmony with a thriving, economically successful community. The partnership is set up as a forum for collaborative working and ideas sharing on a project focused basis.

2.48 The partnership brings together businesses, universities, charities and communities to ensure

the world class environment in and around the New Forest National Park flourishes as an integral part of the wider area's thriving economy and society

2.49 The natural environment is taken as the starting point and the benefits that the flora and fauna, watercourses and landscapes of the New Forest National Park provides – its natural capital and ecosystem services.

2.50 These help clean our air, provide fresh water and natural food supplies, and benefit both our economy and our health and wellbeing.

2.51 The partnership works to ensure that natural capital is not eroded and can therefore help meet the needs of the economy and communities, for

mutual benefit. It seeks to ensure that the value of ecosystems services is recognised, and they are protected and improved.

2.52 These actions will make a clear difference on the ground and they are covered by these four themes:

- 1. Supporting the local economy**
- 2. Improving health and wellbeing**
- 3. Encouraging sustainable living**
- 4. Enhancing the natural environment what does this mean? do they mean they took some ideas from the Green Halo project? needs to be explained more clearly**

32 newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/green-halo-partnership/