



Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

**Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework
for Bath and North East Somerset**

Greener Places Plan 2025 to 2035

Our Vision

Our Vision for green infrastructure in Bath and North East Somerset developed with partners is:

Green infrastructure plays a key role in ensuring Bath and North East Somerset has a more sustainable, nature-rich and climate resilient future. It is well maintained and valued, and optimises the right social, economic, and environmental benefits in the right locations. There is equitable access to high-quality and inclusive green infrastructure, ensuring that every member of the community benefits.

In delivering this vision we want to ensure that all residents and communities can easily access high-quality green infrastructure. We recognise that within communities, there are groups that will have specific needs, and we aspire to ensure accessibility for all.

This Plan has been produced by Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) and is **one of five components** that make up the Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework for Bath and North East Somerset 2025 to 2035. The Greener Places Plan sets out the purpose and context of the Framework and its constituent components and makes the case for significant and coordinated investment.

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Executive Summary

The Greener Places Plan sets out the purpose and context of the Green Infrastructure Framework. Its purpose being to provide a better understanding of the multifunctional benefits of green infrastructure (GI) and how to deliver the planned and managed green and blue connected spaces needed for our communities for their health and wellbeing, for nature recovery, to support growth and adapt to climate change.

Whilst produced by Bath & North East Somerset Council, delivery requires continued partnership working and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders.

In our urban areas we need to integrate planting, trees, and multifunctional accessible greenspaces in our streets and neighbourhoods that support active travel, biodiversity, climate resilience and health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities in access and health outcomes. This will create more space for nature, socialising and play.

In our rural areas we need to restore and better manage our natural assets and protect and enhance the services they provide, that we all depend on and or benefit us including food, water, cooling, carbon sequestration, recreation and aesthetic experience.

We need to integrate the value of nature into economic decision making to achieve sustainability and long-term prosperity,

The climate and ecological emergencies make GI an essential element of place shaping and management of our natural resources.

This Plan is to progress what has been achieved since the Valuing People, Place and Nature – A Green Infrastructure Strategy for B&NES was published in 2013.

Delivering in partnership

The strategic projects identified in 2013 are embedded within the wider established council led **partnerships** that are Bathscape, Chew Valley Reconnected, Somer Valley Rediscovered and WaterSpace. Each is working to deliver multiple benefits for people, place and nature at a catchment and or landscape scale.

The partnerships have provided a strong foundation to build on and have enabled partners to deliver projects that have attracted significant investment in the improvement and management of our green and blue infrastructure. Benefits to individuals and communities, wildlife habitats, and local economy have been

The council are committed to

- Improve policy, practice, and process to create, restore and maintain green infrastructure including securing long-term investment, to help meet climate and nature targets and address sustainability issues.
- Build, manage and maintain robust evidence to inform decision making and monitor progress of delivery.
- Increase urban greening in our streets and neighbourhoods to restore nature, provide climate resilience, create healthy places to live and attract investment.
- Reduce inequalities in access to greenspace, improve quality and ensure provision meets the needs of local communities.
- Continue leadership and support for our local and regional partnerships to deliver existing and expanded landscape scale programmes to deliver the multiple benefits that green infrastructure provides.

delivered through a range of projects, events and activities. We are keen to build on the invaluable learning and experience to continue to deliver collaboratively at a larger scale to address the pressing need to build a more resilient and nature friendly landscape for future generations.

We also work with **regional partnerships** including West of England Nature Partnership and Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership delivering on regional ambitions in the West of England Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy, for nature recovery and climate resilience and supporting the regional growth agenda.

To deliver these commitments we recognise the need to work with others to secure increased and long-term investment in GI.

The use of GI to address sustainability issues is evidenced. Issues including poor mental and physical health, inactive lifestyles, biodiversity loss, and air and noise pollution are estimated to cost the Bath and North East Somerset economy £2.4 billion per year.

Strengthening our **Local Plan GI policy** and applying it together with new **GI Standards** and revised planning obligations will ensure new growth provides the necessary GI including greenspace for healthy living. Our **GI mapping** provides evidence for the policy, standards and projects.

The Plan sets out the importance of council services taking account of nature and climate in operational practices and project delivery to contribute to the GI Standards and targets. This includes Highways, Transport and Housing Delivery integrating greening in both new and retrofit schemes including sustainable urban drainage, rain gardens, trees, and new greenspaces.

The Plan introduces the new Nature Towns and Cities accreditation (launched by Natural England, National Trust and The National Lottery Heritage Fund) as integral to the council's approach to place shaping, to identify and listen to what urban communities need and want, to create accessible greenspaces, streets and neighbourhoods that are good for wildlife, people and are climate resilient.

Actions to deliver on this Plan over the next 5 years are set out in the Greener Places Investment & Delivery Plan 2025- 2030.

The Greener Places Plan, along with the other components of the Green Infrastructure Framework are intended for use by council officers and members, delivery partners and developers, local town and parish councils and community organisations.

Our web pages provide additional information and supplement the Framework. Full description of diagram in [Appendix](#).

There are national, regional and local nature and climate standards and targets that green infrastructure will directly contribute to. Our district targets include:

- 30% land managed and protected for nature by 2030
- 30% of B&NES Corporate Estate managed and protected for nature by 2030
- 20% BNG for major development
- Net zero by 2030

Delivering in partnership

Greener Places – GI Framework for Bath and North East Somerset (5 components)

1. Greener Places Plan 2025-2035
2. Greener Places Investment & Delivery Plan 2025-30
3. GI Mapping
4. GI Standards
5. Local Plan policy



West of England GI principles

Educate
Embed
Collaborate
Communicate
Evidence
Invest

Delivering in partnership

Supporting and developing resilient and effective cross-sector partnerships and stakeholders operating at the landscape scale.

Harnessing expertise across existing governance structures.

Engaging with stakeholders and the public at the scale appropriate to strategic issues to ensure join up and shared visions at local and neighbourhood scales.

Championing multifunctionality and land sharing both in placemaking and place keeping.

Building and maintaining a robust evidence base including ecosystem mapping.

Partnerships

West of England Nature Partnership
Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership
Cotswold National Landscape
Mendip Hills National Landscape
Natural History Consortium
Bathscape
Chew Valley Reconnected
Somer Valley Rediscovered
WaterSpace

National and local organisations include: Natural England, Environment Agency, National Trust, Avon Wildlife Trust, Avon Needs Trees, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, Forest of Avon Trust and Your Park Bristol & Bath

Developers and businesses

Land and natural capital managers

Town and parish councils

Communities and residents

The Framework's purpose and priorities

The overriding purpose of the Framework through its various components, including this Plan, is to bring about a better understanding of the multifunctional benefits and value of green infrastructure. How we plan, deliver and manage green infrastructure to ensure we have resilient places for people requires changes in our approach as a council and continued partnership working with a wide range of organisations, businesses and our communities. This Plan sets out the urgent need to invest in green infrastructure to address sustainability issues and meet the climate and nature targets that the council has committed to.

This requires embedding green infrastructure in strategies and plans across multiple policy domains and improving joint working to maximise resources. This Plan identifies the changes that need to be made to existing practice and where additional resources are required to implement new and changed policy and practice, including delivery of the Green Infrastructure Standards.

The priorities to achieve greener places are:

1. Improve policy, practice and process to create, restore and maintain green infrastructure including securing long-term investment, to help meet climate and nature targets and address sustainability issues.
2. Build, manage and maintain robust evidence to inform decision making and monitor progress of delivery.
3. Reduce inequalities in access to greenspace, improve quality and ensure provision meets the needs of local communities.
4. Increase urban greening in our streets and neighbourhoods to restore nature, provide climate resilience, create healthy places to live and attract investment.
5. Continue leadership and support for our green infrastructure and regional partnerships to deliver existing and expanded landscape scale programmes to deliver the multiple benefits that green infrastructure provides.



Introduction

'Valuing People, Place and Nature – A [Green Infrastructure Strategy for B&NES](#)' was innovative and ground-breaking when it was published in 2013. It set out key objectives for placemaking including achieving healthy and thriving communities, using natural solutions to tackle climate change, maintaining and creating robust ecological networks, and contributing to a green economy and nature tourism.

The strategic landscape scale projects that it proposed now have well-established partnership delivery programmes. These include [Bathscape](#), [Somer Valley Rediscovered](#) and [WaterSpace](#), each delivering multiple benefits for people, place and nature.

Since 2013, the world has changed significantly with new evidence and policy driving the need for the Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework.

The council's [Corporate Strategy](#) has one overriding purpose – to improve people's lives and two core policies – tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies and giving people a bigger say.

Key policy documents supporting the Framework are the council's [Economic Strategy](#), [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), Climate and Nature Strategy (pending publication) and [Local Plan](#).

In addition to these documents, key drivers for the Green Infrastructure Framework are:

- **Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework.** The first of the five [Headline Green Infrastructure Standards](#) encourages local authorities to have a Green Infrastructure Strategy. This with the other Standards deliver on the UK Government's 25-year Environment Plan.
- **The West of England [Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)** is endorsed by the council, together with the West of England Combined Authority, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire councils. The council has a commitment to work in partnership to deliver the eight key outcomes and the Action Plan.
- **West of England [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) and [West of England Nature Partnerships Priority Programmes](#)**
- **The need for a joined-up approach and new funding mechanisms** to finance the planning, delivery, management, maintenance and monitoring of green infrastructure both within the council, and working with communities, developers and others who own or manage land and property.

Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure

The council defines green infrastructure (GI) as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Green infrastructure is ‘a network of multifunctional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.’

GI includes:

- Parks and Gardens – urban parks, country and regional parks, formal gardens
- Amenity Greenspace – informal recreation spaces, housing greenspaces, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space
- Natural and semi-natural urban green and blue spaces - woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground
- Green and blue corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, green bridges, field margins, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way
- Vegetated sustainable drainage systems - green roofs, blue roofs, rainwater harvesting and smart controls, downpipe disconnection planters, rain gardens and biofiltration strips, swales, ponds, detention basins
- Features for species such as bird and bat boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog holes
- Other - street trees, allotments, community gardens and orchards, private gardens, city farms, green walls, ponds, cemeteries and churchyards

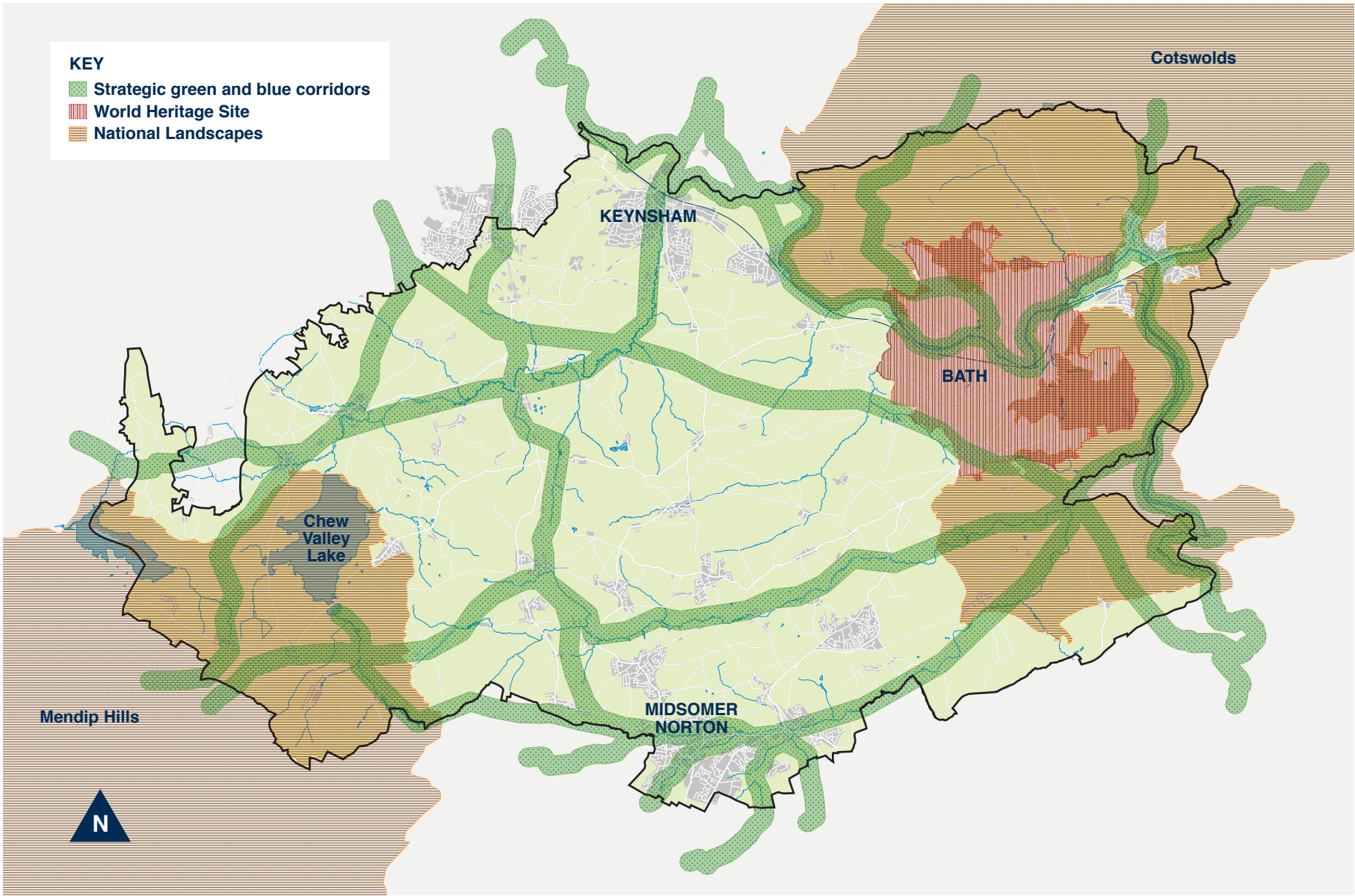
Green infrastructure networks

The GI network hierarchy that we need to enhance consists of the following:

- Primary Networks - these are the strategic green and blue corridors across Bath and North East Somerset that connect with networks beyond the authoritative boundary. This includes connected large open spaces, waterways and open countryside. These are recognised in the Local Plan.
- Secondary Networks - these are the green and blue corridors at a residential area scale, that connect with the primary network. This includes parks and local and neighbourhood centres, connected by green streets and/or streams or rivers.
- Tertiary Networks - these are within developments and estates, individual properties and private gardens, that connect to the primary and secondary networks.

This green and blue multifaceted and integrated network is an integral part of sustainable places. It enables people and wildlife to move easily through attractive and diverse urban and rural landscapes, in turn creating sustainable and healthy communities.

Strategic green and blue corridors



Full description of map in [Appendix](#).

Benefits green infrastructure provides include:

- Promoting economic growth, employment and skills improvement
- Supporting resilient ecosystems and biodiversity
- Mitigating and adapting the natural and built environment to climate change
- Conserving and enhancing a legible network of greenspaces
- Reducing and managing flood risk and drought
- Improving mental and physical health, and the cohesion of local communities
- Increasing the sustainability of food production
- Maintaining and enhancing cultural heritage, landscapes and natural resources

Green infrastructure outcomes and principles

The [West of England Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy \(JGIS\)](#) identifies eight GI Outcomes for the West of England:

- Create and maintain sustainable places
- Create and maintain valued healthy landscapes
- Health and wellbeing for all
- Support sustainable and local food production
- Greater resilience to climate change
- Build a resilient economy
- Sustainable water management
- Improved and better-connected ecological networks

The GI outcomes are to be achieved through the application of the six GI principles for the West of England. These are complimentary to Nature England's 'how' principles and are to be applied in delivery of the Green Infrastructure Framework for Bath and North East Somerset.

West of England green infrastructure principles

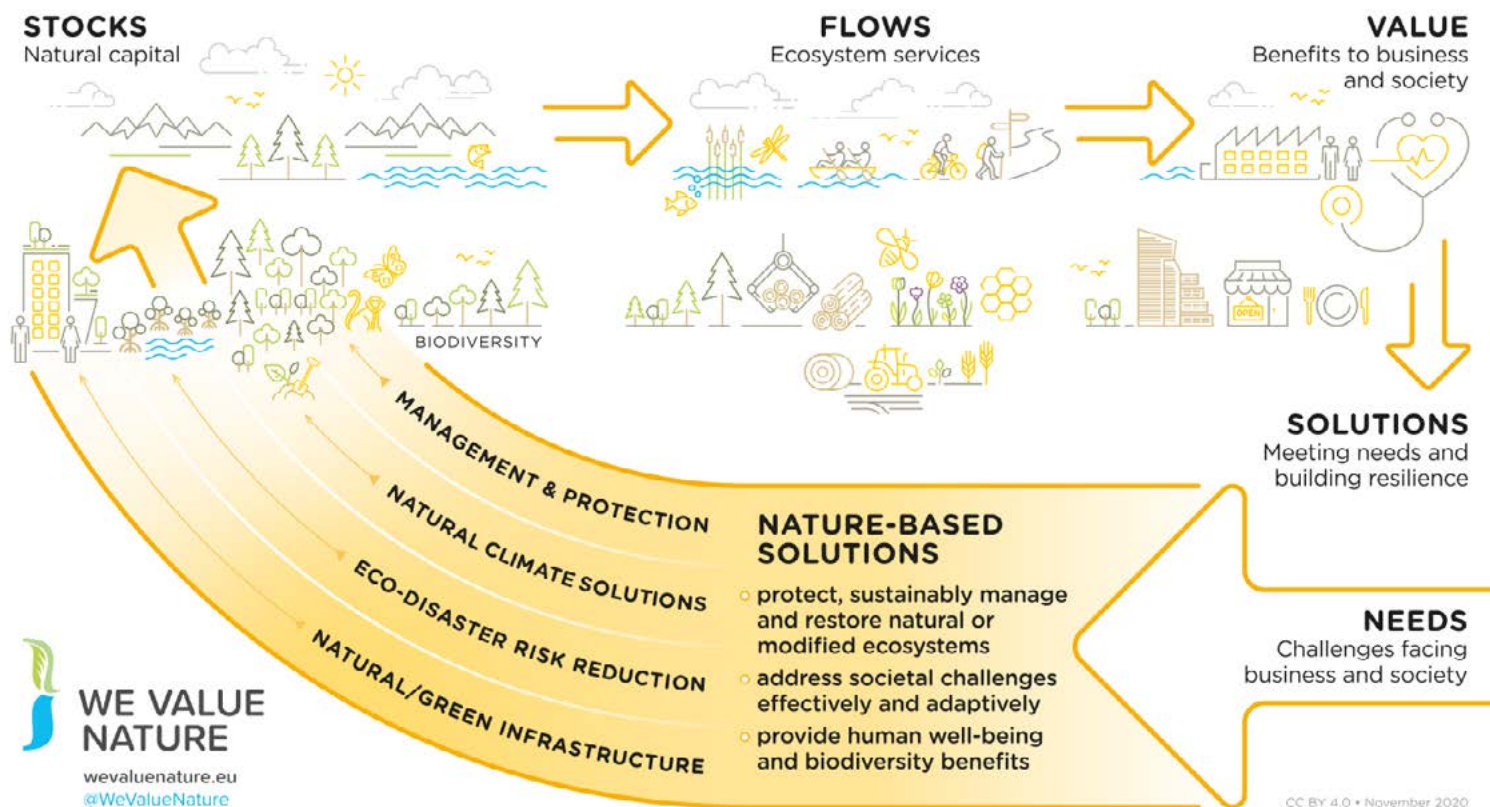
- **Educate** - Ensure that the multifunctional benefits of GI are better understood and recognised
- **Embed** - Apply a natural capital approach to ensure that new development delivers a net gain in natural capital whilst protecting irreplaceable habitats, and supports the maintenance and enhancement of the strategic GI network
- **Collaborate** - Ensure early, continuous and effective engagement with stakeholders and the public at the scales most appropriate to identified issues, and where appropriate join up at a local and neighbourhood scale with a shared vision
- **Communicate** - Promote wider public understanding of GI and natural capital, the benefits it provides and opportunities to enhance GI
- **Evidence** - Build and maintain a robust evidence base
- **Invest** - Secure investment in GI through the planning process and other delivery and funding mechanisms to deliver strategic GI priorities and its long-term stewardship



How natural capital, ecosystem services and net gain contribute to green infrastructure networks and environmental planning

It is important to understand the terms 'natural capital', 'ecosystem services' and 'net gain' as they are integral to environmental policy and planning. They all feature along with GI in national guidance including the [government's 25 Year Environment Plan](#) and the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). These terms aid mainstreaming the environment and provide context to inform decision-making processes. In simple terms, natural capital is the stock of nature that delivers multifunctional benefits via nature's ecosystem services where GI is one of the principal delivery mechanisms. Projects, programmes, policy and plans will result in net gains or losses of nature and it is important to recognise that different ecosystem services have trade-offs against each other.

The [natural capital approach](#) considers the value of the natural environment (the asset) for people and economy, and helps to better understand the tangible value of investment in GI.



Environment and biodiversity net gain simply mean delivering more than currently provided. Environment net gain includes gain for natural capital and ecosystem services, recognising that there will be trade-offs depending on project priorities. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory for new development and requires a specific percentage increase.

Infographic from Natural Capital Protocol that shows how the stock of natural capital provides a flow of ecosystem services. Copyright: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

Full description in [Appendix](#).

Ecosystem services include:

- **Provisioning services** – products from nature such as food, water, energy and materials. This includes agriculture, water extraction, renewable energy and mineral extraction
- **Regulating services** – services helping to maintain the quality of our environment, such as carbon sequestration to remove greenhouse gases, parks and blue spaces to cool, and vegetation to remove air pollutants
- **Cultural services** – these are non-material benefits people obtain from natural capital, such as tourism, recreation and aesthetic experience

Protecting, enhancing and extending GI networks is key to ensuring that our natural capital and ecosystem services on which we depend are protected and enhanced.



The Case for Investment in Green Infrastructure

There is robust evidence that demonstrates GI can make a cost-effective and significant contribution to tackling sustainability issues, thereby enabling an economy to grow in a sustainable way. This evidence includes the [Dasgupta Review \(2021\)](#) commissioned by the HM Treasury UK Government. [Enabling a Natural Capital Approach Defra guidance](#) and a [2019 Valuing Nature publication](#) provide a good introduction to what benefit to cost ratios are and how to calculate them. [The Treasury Green Book](#) now includes natural capital mainstreamed into project appraisal.

Benefits stated in [Natural England's State of Natural Capital Report for England \(2024\)](#) include:

- Avoided health outcomes provided by the removal of air pollution by natural capital in 2021 is estimated to have an annual value of £2.5 billion
- Annual expenditure on tourism and recreation in the natural environment in 2022 is estimated at £10.6 billion
- The associated annual health benefits in 2023 were valued at around £7 billion

Making the Case for Investment in Green Infrastructure in Bath and North East Somerset Report (2024) was commissioned to demonstrate that investment in GI is fundamental to sustainable future growth, and achieving positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. The Report identified the benefits of using GI to address sustainability issues. Additional cost-benefit information is provided in a further report that analysed eight key council and regional plans and strategies.

The Making the Case for Investment Report highlighted eight issues, which are impacting future growth and are causing significant economic cost to Bath and North East Somerset's Gross Value Added (GVA) each year. See table below.

There is robust evidence that demonstrates GI can make a cost-effective and significant contribution to tackling sustainability issues, thereby enabling an economy to grow in a sustainable way.

Making the Case for Investment in Green Infrastructure in Bath and North East Somerset

8 sustainability issues cost Bath and North East Somerset GVA £2.5 billion per annum:

- Mental health - **£1,026 billion**
- Biodiversity loss - **£606 million**
- Climate change - **£253 million**
- Obesity - **£251 million**
- Transport - **£156 million**
- Air pollution - **£80 million**
- Noise - **£48 million**
- Inactive lifestyles - **£26 million**

Green infrastructure solution
Every £1 invested generates £4 of benefits

- Invest £50 million per annum x 26 years

£5.2 billion benefits from green infrastructure by 2050:

- Reducing flood risk
- Climate change adaptation & mitigation
- Improving air quality
- Thriving biodiversity
- Supporting housing development
- Sustainable transport
- Better health & wellbeing

Figures are from Case for Investment Report 2024

The eight sustainability issues cost an estimated GVA of £2.5bn every year, representing over 48% of the districts GVA which B&NES Economic Strategy estimates at £4.5bn. This equates to £12,780 per person living in Bath and North East Somerset based on the ONS Mid-term 2022 population estimate of 195,618.

Economic studies on the value of GI suggest that a 4:1 Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is a conservative and reasonable assumption. That means for £1 invested in GI, £4 of benefit is generated.

To make a substantial difference, a substantial amount of investment is required. The Making the Case for Investment Report for Bath and North East Somerset proposes an investment of £50 million per year in GI over 26 years (up to 2050) to grow the economy sustainably. This can be estimated using the BCR to generate an annual economic benefit of at least £200 million. As part of investment, ongoing management costs must be considered.

A combination of private and public sector investment is required. This includes investment through planning requirements and major public and private infrastructure schemes e.g. highways and utilities provision, and the National Health Service.

In Bath and North East Somerset, we have seen several strategic GI programmes and projects develop using a variety of funding sources. These include [WaterSpace](#) and [Bathscape](#). Both programmes have secured substantial investment from partners including Wessex Water, National Trust, university research, and developer contributions. There is further scope and opportunity for investment through Biodiversity Net Gain, [Nature Restoration Fund](#), and future payments for ecosystem services as knowledge and work in these areas intensifies.

The Somer Valley and Chew Valley catchments will benefit from funding provided by Wessex Water and Bristol Water, secured via the Water Industry National Environment Programme (2025-2030).

Addressing sustainability issues

There is a strong case for investment in GI in Bath and North East Somerset given the multiple benefits that GI provides and a need for strategic, sustainable, and cost-effective measures to tackle the eight sustainability issues.

Sustainability issue	Green infrastructure benefits include:
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables recreation and leisure – relaxation and play benefits • Improves public health • Promotes equity and access • Fosters stronger communities - social interaction, inclusion and cohesion • Improves psychological health and mental wellbeing - eco therapy • Connects people with nature, heritage, culture and landscape
Obesity and overweight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves levels of physical activity and health • Increases life expectancy and reduces health inequality
Biodiversity loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains and restores habitat • Increases habitat area • Increases populations of protected species • Increases species movement
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides climate change mitigation, adaptation and community resilience • Provides flood alleviation, water management and mitigates storm water/flooding • Regulates climate - reducing heat in urban areas, lowering rates of heat related illness and death • Sequesters carbon • Passive benefits to buildings including shading
Transport – congestion/accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves sustainable modes of transport and transport links
Air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves air quality
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides noise screening
Inactive lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves levels of physical activity and health

Integration of green infrastructure in plan and strategy delivery

The following eight strategies were assessed to identify how well they integrate GI and for references to the key sustainability issues:

- Active Travel Masterplan (2024)
- Climate Emergency Strategy 2019 - 2030
- Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2023 - 2030
- Economic Strategy 2024 - 2034
- Flood Risk Strategy 2015 – 2025
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023)
- West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4: 2020 to 2036
- Journey to net zero – Reducing the environmental impact of transport in Bath (2022)

These were chosen as GI delivers on the primary policy objectives of each strategic document, while also delivering positive outcomes for the eight sustainability issues. The bespoke reports identify opportunities of how use of GI can assist deliver the aims of each of the eight plans and strategies. The reports are to assist joint working to co-design projects to achieve multiple benefits and shared outcomes.



Integration of green infrastructure in plan and strategy delivery to achieve shared targets and outcomes

The **Green Infrastructure Framework** supports and guides implementation of regional and local strategies

Delivery of GI is implemented through a range of **strategies and plans**

Strategies and plans deliver a range of **activities**

Measured using a range of **metrics**

Delivering shared **targets and outcomes**

Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework



B&NES key policy documents

Local Plan
Economic Strategy
Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Climate and Nature Strategy

West of England strategies including:

Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
Climate and Ecological Strategy Action Plan
Tree and Woodland Strategy

Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Tree and Woodland Strategy

Local Food Strategy

+ Various other plans and strategies including; Playing Pitch Strategy, Local Flood Risk Strategy, Journey to Net Zero and City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan

Review of Local Plan policies and new policies

Implementation of Local Plan policy and Planning Obligations

Projects including those led by organisations, partnerships and communities

Strategic capital projects

Operational changes across all services

BNG Metric

Urban Greening Factor

Number of trees planted

Percentage increase in land managed for nature

Other indicators including:

Air quality
Health indicators
Green jobs created

30% land managed for nature by 2030

20% BNG target for major development

Net zero by 2030

GI Standards:

GI Strategy
Accessible Greenspace
Nature Recovery
Urban Greening
Tree Canopy Cover
Local Food Growing
Play Space

8 West of England GI outcomes

In addition to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, GI plays an important role in supporting the delivery of other health related strategies and plans that are in development. These include B&NES Be Well Strategy (a health improvement strategy), B&NES Social Prescribing Framework (including green social prescribing), and B&NES Local Food Strategy, through which good access to GI such as community growing spaces and edible landscapes will be promoted.

Within the council and the West of England region, there are various plans and strategies, each with their own objectives and targets, that address one or more of the eight sustainability issues. There is a need for join up between plans and strategies, and integration of GI to achieve objectives.

There is also a need for greater collaboration and new ways of working to deliver the green transformation required to achieve greater benefits and meet our targets for climate and nature. It is critical that we find new ways of funding the GI required to support healthy communities and to maintain and grow our natural capital. This is complex, but there is an urgent need for this, as recognised by the declaration of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.



B&NES Council's Accessible Greenspaces

The council defines accessible greenspace as set out in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023). This is defined as greenspace specifically provided for public access, or one to which the public would usually expect to access (such as a cemetery), or one over which there is a public right to open access and deemed likely to be accessible to the public at any reasonable time, free to entry and available for a range of pastimes. This does not cover formal sports provision, nor play provision, however, play spaces are an important element of accessible greenspace.

The location of all the council's greenspaces can be viewed here:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/find-park-or-green-space

The following sets out the council's key commitments to ensure that its accessible greenspaces contribute to people's health and wellbeing and respond to the Ecological and Climate Emergencies.

The council will work collaboratively with others who are responsible for accessible greenspace to achieve regional and local outcomes and standards for GI provision and climate and nature targets.

Greenspace commitments

The council recognises the role accessible greenspace plays in realising the vision for GI and wants more people than ever before to enjoy accessible greenspaces, stay for longer and to take part in activities which make them healthier and happier. The council aims to provide a thriving network of accessible greenspaces for local people, that communities consider are inclusive, safe, fun and rich in nature and wildlife.

The council are committed to ensuring accessible greenspaces are:

- thriving places for nature and play a significant role in tackling the Ecological Emergency
- helping to tackle the Climate Emergency through contributing to water management and keeping places cool
- helping to improve health outcomes for residents
- sustainable long-term community assets
- managed strategically to prioritise areas of greatest need
- managed in partnership with communities. The power and resilience of community groups will be improved through their access to and involvement in the management of accessible greenspaces. The council will also support partners and communities to create food growing spaces to achieve greater food equality and sustainable food growing

In addition to these, we have identified commitments under priority themes.

Our work will deliver the following benefits for greenspaces



Priority Themes

Nature recovery and climate resilience

The commitments listed below support local and regional ambitions.

The council are committed to:

- Working with partners, communities and parks groups to manage and protect 30% of land within the Corporate Estate for nature by 2030
- Securing funding to support nature recovery and exploring new opportunities such as Biodiversity Net Gain
- Identifying priority areas where the provision of more natural vegetation, including trees, would help keep communities cooler as we expect more extreme hot weather due to climate change
- Ensuring habitats are designed to thrive in changing climate conditions and contribute to urban and rural nature networks and the West of England Local Nature Recovery Network
- Considering how the council's greenspaces could host low carbon energy infrastructure (such as heat networks) in a way that maintains the other benefits of our spaces
- Identifying opportunities to provide flood protection such as sustainable drainage systems

Case study – Keynsham Memorial Park River & Weir Improvement Project

The River Chew flows through the park before joining the River Avon in north Keynsham. Public consultation has previously highlighted how important the greenspace, wildlife, and access to the river is for residents.

The council, working in partnership with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, Environment Agency and Bristol Water is developing a project to explore options to increase people's access to nature, celebrate the Memorial Park's heritage, and improve biodiversity through river restoration and improved fish passage. The council, with support of partners, will utilise relevant data and evidence and undertake consultation with local groups and residents to develop the project to meet these aims.

The weir and surrounding remains of the mill structure and adjacent bandstand will be a key consideration of the project. These structures are an important part of the Town's local heritage. These structures are also the most downstream barriers to fish passage in the River Chew catchment. They currently obstruct endangered migratory fish such as Atlantic salmon, sea trout, sea lamprey and European eel from moving up the river to spawn in the headwaters of the Chew catchment.

This project will seek to balance opportunities for improving river habitat and biodiversity, celebrating the cultural heritage of the town, and providing recreational and educational opportunities for all park users.



Health and wellbeing

The council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy's vision for 2030 sets out four priorities to help people have the best start in life, live well in caring, compassionate communities, and make it easier for people to live physically and emotionally healthy lives.

Provision of accessible greenspaces contribute to all four priorities:

- **Priority 1:** Ensure that children and young people are healthy and ready for learning and education
- **Priority 2:** Improve skills, good work and employment
- **Priority 3:** Strengthen compassionate and healthy communities
- **Priority 4:** Create health promoting places

Accessible greenspaces play a key role in supporting communities to live healthier lifestyles and preventing ill-health. They provide a solution to key health and wellbeing needs, including maintaining a healthy weight through sport and general physical activity, and good mental health as people can relax and make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood through volunteering.

The council are committed to:

- Conducting research to understand why some people do not use parks and greenspaces, or only do so occasionally, and support work to increase active recreation in these spaces
- Using evidence to make the health benefits of parks and greenspaces more within reach for all people and target health interventions for those who would benefit most
- Improving quality of existing greenspaces in areas of highest deprivation, ensuring plans for maintaining quality are in place including support for community volunteering
- Ensuring an appropriate mix of accessible greenspaces to meet our GI Standards as the area's population grows and new housing is delivered

Case study - Staddlestones Riverside Park improvements and wellbeing activities

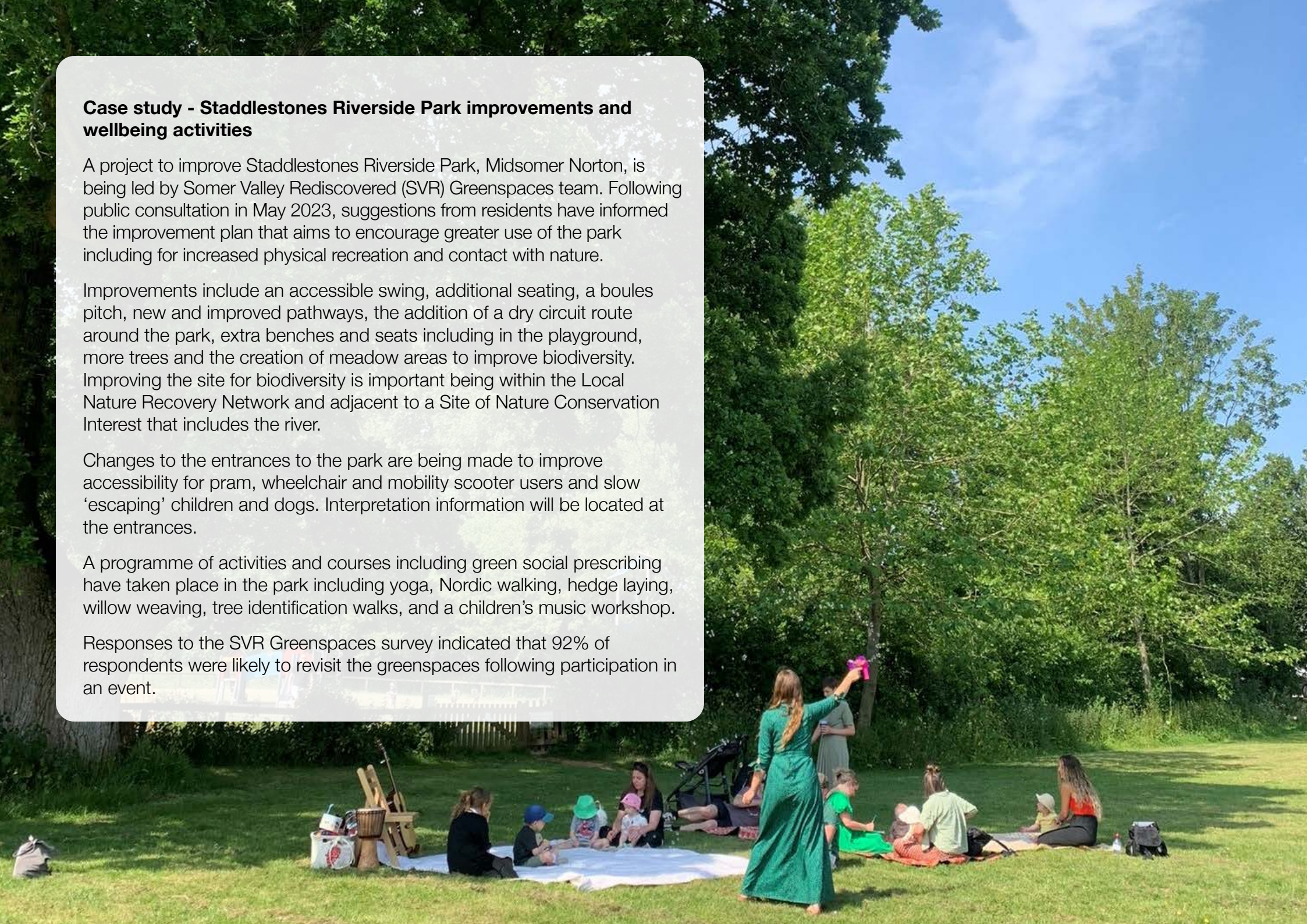
A project to improve Staddlestones Riverside Park, Midsomer Norton, is being led by Somer Valley Rediscovered (SVR) Greenspaces team. Following public consultation in May 2023, suggestions from residents have informed the improvement plan that aims to encourage greater use of the park including for increased physical recreation and contact with nature.

Improvements include an accessible swing, additional seating, a boules pitch, new and improved pathways, the addition of a dry circuit route around the park, extra benches and seats including in the playground, more trees and the creation of meadow areas to improve biodiversity. Improving the site for biodiversity is important being within the Local Nature Recovery Network and adjacent to a Site of Nature Conservation Interest that includes the river.

Changes to the entrances to the park are being made to improve accessibility for pram, wheelchair and mobility scooter users and slow 'escaping' children and dogs. Interpretation information will be located at the entrances.

A programme of activities and courses including green social prescribing have taken place in the park including yoga, Nordic walking, hedge laying, willow weaving, tree identification walks, and a children's music workshop.

Responses to the SVR Greenspaces survey indicated that 92% of respondents were likely to revisit the greenspaces following participation in an event.



Children and young people

Accessible greenspaces provide opportunities for socialising, play, learning and healthy development. The council's approach to delivery will be informed by the principle that every child and young person should have a high-quality and spacious place to play.

Research tells us that children in urban areas and from low socio-economic backgrounds spend less time in gardens and nature (Natural England 2025). This impacts on children's development and life chances.

There are 38,863¹ children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset who could use greenspaces for recreation, social opportunities and many other benefits that these spaces provide. There is, however, unfair access and are barriers to access which the council are aware of and committed to improving to ensure that more children and young people can access greenspace.

It is not just the physical spread of accessible greenspaces which impacts unfair access. Layout and design of these spaces can create barriers to girls and other sectors of the community, as well as making them feel unsafe and not welcome in them.

The council are committed to:

- Involving children and young people in decision-making about play provision and play experiences, aiming to be inclusive and relevant to the needs of communities
- Seeking to provide a children's play space within 600m (a 10 minute walk from home) and youth play space within 720m (a 12 minute walk from home)
- Exploring ways of integrating play, education and learning. Where possible, the council will work with local councillors and communities to commit resource to improving play facilities where they are most needed

¹ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence/document-library/population>

Case study – Brickfields Park, Bath - Improving access, safety and usage for teenage girls

Your Park Bristol and Bath (YPBB) have co-designed new features at Brickfields Park in Bath with local teenage girls. Their input has played a central role in shaping the future of this community space. To understand what young people wanted from the park, YPBB carried out a consultation and worked with Make Space for Girls early on to address the specific needs of teenage girls.

Brickfields Park is surrounded by three areas of multiple disadvantage: Whiteway, Twerton and Southdown. It is a large park mainly used as a space for dog walking and as a pass-through for commuters, but otherwise was being underused, other than for its free full size basketball court (only one in Bath), due to a high antisocial behaviour rate.

Within the locality:

- 23% of people live in purpose-built blocks of flats with extremely limited outdoor space
- Over double the amount of people compared to B&NES as a whole are in very bad health

YPBB recognised that teenage girls were not regular users of the park and reached out to Make Space for Girls to provide support in ensuring that teenage girls were represented in the 2021/2022 consultation to improve the park.

The redevelopment of Brickfields Park was driven by this research and an understanding of how the space was used and what was missing.

The improvements at Brickfields Park opened in March 2025 and includes: a five-way swing, accessible entrance gateways, tree trunk social seating and climbing areas, a bespoke figure-of-eight bench and somersault bars. Hedgerow heights have also been reduced to improve sightlines and safety.

The project has been a collaboration between YPBB, local schools, the council, and the wider community. Key partners included Hayesfield Girls' School and the Mixed Sixth Form.

The £75,000 worth of improvements were funded through donations and support from the council's Community Infrastructure Levy.

Continuing to work with YPBB, the changes at Brickfields Park are just one step towards creating more inclusive and accessible spaces across Bath and North East Somerset.



Community participation

The council value the work of Bath and North East Somerset's residents, community groups and organisations that fundraise and work hard to keep accessible greenspaces looking good and inclusive for everyone. Without this support, accessible greenspaces would struggle to sustain the level of service provision they maintain today.

The council will empower greenspace users, volunteers and community groups to engage in their maintenance and improvement; and work collaboratively with local partners to support communities to make the most of their greenspaces. The council will be looking at ways in which to grow the support from community groups, volunteers, and other organisations. The council will seek to design and deliver ways to devolve responsibility for the management of spaces to communities.

Greenspaces should be accessible, safe and welcoming for all, but this is not always the case. The council will use research, guidance and best practice developed by neighbouring councils and organisations such as Your Park Bristol and Bath (YPBB) to improve accessibility and safety.

The council are committed to:

- Providing more opportunities to take part and volunteer, and generating opportunities for people to develop new skills and become more connected to their local community
- Developing projects together with YPBB, a key charitable organisation and partner, that can help support volunteering, community grant funding and help grow the capacity in communities to make greenspace management decisions
- Investing in the council's workforce and developing services to ensure the skills, processes and structures are in place to engage with communities who want to improve, invest in and develop their local spaces

Case study - Bath Activator Project

Working with local communities, volunteers and Friends of Groups this project, led by Your Park Bristol and Bath (YPBB) aimed to create and maintain sustainable natural habitats in Bath's greenspaces. The ultimate aim is to work alongside communities and volunteers to reintroduce natural habitats to Bath's greenspaces at scale, boost the city's biodiversity and invest in the infrastructure and resource needed to sustain these habitats permanently.

Funded by Community Infrastructure Levy and WECA's Pollinator Fund 2023 - 2024, the project developed and tested management plans with the council's Parks & Open Spaces team and Friend's of Groups, enabling the community to jointly manage parks more easily after the project ended in March 2025.

Volunteers, working in 20 greenspaces, have taken part in activities including bulb planting, tree planting, tree care, mulching, meadow creation and ongoing maintenance, wildflower seed-saving, physical grassland management by scything, pond creation and ongoing maintenance, new hedging, creation of dead wood habitats such as log features, dead hedging and making a 'stumpery', scrub bashing, making bug hotels and beetle banks, hurdle-making, orchard pruning, litter picking, balsam bashing, and erecting fencing.

YPBB recruited and supported a roving volunteer group who worked across the 20 sites over the project period. They were also the primary providers of support to Friend's group volunteers who have been encouraged to take on more sensitive management of key habitats, such as wildflower meadows. YPBB supported groups to develop and deliver plans to support more wildlife and groups and the roving volunteers were frequently brought together to take on bigger projects at certain sites. YPBB were able to provide a programme of training in 2023 and 2024 to increase volunteer skills and knowledge, and increase the likelihood of volunteer sustained maintenance.

Due to current funding ending, YPBB have significantly less resource to continue the level of habitat management on key sites where they have worked for the past 2 years. Having made significant habitat and biodiversity gains, YPBB have crafted a model of continuing volunteer participation in park maintenance and enhancement.

It is recognised that there is a gap between what the Parks & Open Spaces operations staff can do with limited resources, and what would be needed to fully embrace the complexity of managing parks for people and wildlife.

YPBB and the council are working with others to secure funding to continue this projects work, building capacity of groups in practical skills and boost their confidence to become more self-sufficient to manage greenspaces.

A total of **10,737m²** of natural habitat has been improved or created comprising:

2110m² of new meadows

2332m² of enhanced meadows

3 new ponds (**30m²**)

5226m² of trees and hedgerows

145m² of bulb planting

894m² miscellaneous/other



Culture

The West of England Cultural Plan and the council's emerging Cultural Development Plan both identify the cultural importance of the region, and Bath's cultural heritage and potential to drive inclusive growth throughout the area. Parks and greenspaces play a key role in Bath and North East Somerset's cultural offer.

Whether as part of the City of Bath World Heritage Site (including the parks of Sydney Gardens, Royal Victoria Park, Hedgemoor Park, Henrietta Park, Alexandra Park and Alice Park) or Keynsham Park (for its Roman archaeology), our parks and accessible greenspaces contribute to the area's cultural identity. Preserving and celebrating these spaces will ensure we contribute to the area's rich cultural legacy.

Regular engagement with greenspaces and their cultural offerings has been linked to improved mental health, reduced stress levels, and increased overall wellbeing.

The council are committed to:

- Working with a network of stakeholders to ensure decision-making around cultural offerings in parks and greenspaces is aligned to the needs and aspirations of communities

Case study – Sydney Gardens, Bath

Sydney Gardens date from 1795 and are one of Britain's most extensive and attractive Georgian pleasure gardens. Historically the gardens attracted fashionable society. Early patrons included Jane Austen, who lived for several years in adjoining Sydney Place.

A major restoration of the gardens was undertaken 2019-2022 by a partnership between our Parks & Open Spaces team, The Friends of Sydney Gardens, residents groups and the Holburne Museum. Grant funding of £3.4 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund was used to restore historic buildings, enable landscape and garden restoration works, and create new play areas for all ages and provide a Community Pavilion to retain an event space.

A programme of events and activities was delivered, centred around art, nature, horticulture, wildlife, play, sport, archaeology and history; celebrating the fascinating history of the gardens and engaging with a wide range of residents and visitors.

Friends of Sydney Gardens formed in 2013 to preserve and improve the Gardens, run regular gardening sessions, tours and talks. Forest schools and exercise classes also take place in the gardens.



Improving and maintaining quality of accessible greenspaces

Quality standard

We will continue to use the Green Flag Standard as a guide to ensure our quality standards are robust and measurable. The Parks that are currently meeting the benchmark standard annually are:

- Royal Victoria Park
- Bloomfield Green
- Alexandra Park
- Sydney Gardens
- Henrietta Park
- Hedgemoor Park
- Haycombe Cemetery & Crematorium

The cost of applying and preparing for the Green Flag Award means that it will only be suitable for the key heritage parks with a high profile. There is, however, a benefit in having a quality standard that is applicable for all our greenspaces, and we plan to develop our own benchmark standard alongside the Green Flag entries.

Our strategic aim is to prioritise raising the quality of greenspaces in areas of higher deprivation and where satisfaction is low. Continuing to work with Your Park Bristol and Bath with whom we have developed a strong partnership is key to achieving this aim.

The council's **Parks & Open Spaces team's ongoing improvement and maintenance programmes**, in which projects will change over time, are listed below:

Improvement programme

Parks Pulse Programme – Installation of outdoor gym/exercise equipment across the parks portfolio to encourage increased diversity of offering, increased footfall, increased health and wellbeing (through exercise, promoting being outdoors and social interaction) and improved passive safety through increased use of parks.

Parks For All Programme – Programme of improvements to improve accessibility and equality across the parks portfolio. This will include new and improved paths, entrances, furniture and play and exercise equipment.

Events Implementation support – Improvements to Parks and greenspaces to enhance commercial revenue earning events and mitigate potential damage to infrastructure caused by high frequency of large events.

Maintenance programme

Parks Tree Programme – Inspect, report and maintain parks tree assets.

Parks Capital Cyclical & Planned Maintenance Programme – Inspect, report, repair and maintain parks built assets (including conservation of heritage elements).

Parks Play Equipment Replacement Programme – Inspect, report, repair and maintain parks play assets.

Parks Equipment Replacement Programme – Inspect, report, repair and maintain parks equipment.



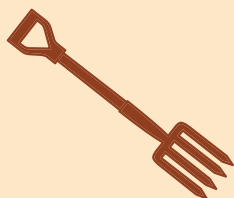
B&NES Council accessible greenspace facts



17 Friends and volunteer groups



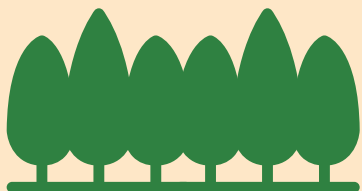
53 Listed buildings and structures



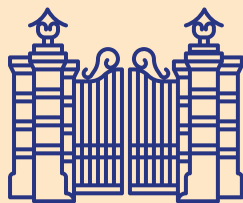
1,221 Allotment plots in Bath



55 Play areas to inspect



1000 ha of woodland



6 Heritage Parks including **4** Registered Parks and Gardens



5 Cafes



8 Cemeteries and crematoriums



44 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest



50 Parks & Open Spaces staff



3 Parkruns



44 Events in parks



131,940 People attended events in parks



10,737m² Habitat enhancement by Your Park Bristol & Bath

(all the above are 2024 figures)

Introduction to the other Framework components



1. Greener Places – Investment & Delivery Plan for Bath and North East Somerset

Whilst the Greener Places Plan is for a 10-year period, the Greener Places - Investment and Delivery Plan is for five-year period. The Plan identifies priority actions and where investment is needed. Some of the actions involve activities that extend outside the authoritative boundary of Bath and North East Somerset to deliver benefits and address issues and needs at a landscape and water catchment scale.

The Plan identifies actions under the following headings:

- **Building and maintaining green infrastructure evidence**

This section focuses on developing mapping tools. Digitally mapping GI will ensure that we prioritise where investment in GI will make the most difference. Making this information easily accessible will increase awareness and support engagement with a wide range of partners and residents.

- **Managing and investing in our Corporate Estate**

This section identifies priorities for the council in managing its estate with regard to greenspaces for people, nature recovery and climate resilience.

- **Improving practice and processes within the council to support green infrastructure delivery**

This section focuses on the actions required to deliver green transformation of council services, and new Local Plan policy, to ensure GI and nature recovery targets are met. This includes a review of current practice and staff resources to ensure there is an appropriate provision of specialist advice and support.

It includes an action to seek Nature in Towns and Cities Accreditation as part of the council's approach to place shaping. This aligns with the ambition of the West of England Combined Mayoral Authority on behalf of the unitary authorities, to achieve the accreditation for the region.

- **Delivering new and maintaining existing green infrastructure to support growth**

This section is to ensure GI is incorporated into plans and strategies including those focused on new development and place shaping. Provision needs to be made for the long-term management, maintenance and monitoring of new and existing GI assets, in the same way as grey infrastructure is budgeted for.

This aligns with the ambition of the West of England Combined Authority, to achieve the accreditation for the region.

● **Nature Towns and Cities accreditation**

Launched in 2025 by Natural England, National Trust and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF) accreditation will:

- ◆ Strengthen and formalise partnership working under one shared vision
- ◆ Ensure the right foundations are in place to deliver transformational change
- ◆ Set benchmarks, best practice and progress
- ◆ Provide assurance to potential investors and funders that our towns or city are a good investment or funding opportunity
- ◆ Re-establish that GI is vital for the long-term success and resilience of a town or city

Obtaining accreditation, that necessitates producing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for each place, will demonstrate to investors (including NHLF who have supported many projects in Bath and North East Somerset) that our towns and city are good places to invest in.

Whilst accreditation is not a requirement of applying to NLHF, accreditation demonstrates that there is local and regional leadership support for prioritising urban greening, thereby reducing the risk associated with any investment and provides more confidence from an investor viewpoint.

Accreditation aligns with obtaining Green Flag Awards, which for some parks, are a condition of NLHF for work completed (e.g. Sydney Gardens and Royal Victoria Park), to demonstrate that we are maintaining standards and investing in our heritage.

Neighbourhood Plans and Local Climate and Nature Action Plans produced by parishes and rural communities will also feed into place shaping and set ambitions and actions for the delivery of GI.

● **Retrofitting the urban environment for climate resilience, people and nature**

This section focuses on actions to incorporate more green and blue spaces into our urban environments to address climate change and loss of nature.

● **Landscape scale delivery and interventions**

This section focuses on existing landscape scale programmes and the development of new area-wide initiatives. These support delivery of the West of England Green Infrastructure Outcomes, address key sustainability issues, and contribute towards meeting the council's climate and nature targets and Green Infrastructure Standards. It includes council and partner led partnership programmes and projects at a local and landscape scale.

Partnerships that the council contributes to are the West of England Nature Partnership, Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership, Natural History Consortium and Cotswolds and Mendip Hills National Landscape partnerships. To avoid duplication with other delivery plans, not all partnership activities are included in the Greener Places - Investment & Delivery Plan.

Key partnership delivery plans:

[West of England Nature Partnership Priority Projects Programme](#)

[Bristol Avon Catchment Plan](#)

[Mendip Hills National Landscape Management Plan](#)

[Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan](#)

- **Current landscape and catchment programmes (and their partnerships where they exist) include:**

- ◆ [Chew Valley Reconnected](#) (Chew Valley Reconnected Partnership) – projects include: Lower Chew Forest, Great Avon Wood, Chew Valley Lake Recreational Trail, Chew Valley Farm Cluster, Landscape Recovery on the Lower Chew, Pollinator Pathways, Keynsham Memorial Park River & Weir Improvements
- ◆ Landscape City – including [Bathscape](#) NHLF programme (Bathscape Board), [Bath River Line](#), and [Landscape City](#) Framework
- ◆ [Somer Valley Rediscovered](#) (Somer Valley Rediscovered) – projects include: Greenspaces; Cam & Wellow Farm Cluster and Cam & Wellow River Restoration Project
- ◆ [WaterSpace](#) (Waterspace Partnership) – the partnership provides strategic direction and steer for the River Avon corridor and links to projects such as Bath River Line and WaterSpace Connected
- ◆ [Limestone Link](#) – currently in development, this partnership programme will focus on the area between the Mendip Hills and the Cotswolds around the Limestone Link footpath, delivering better protected and ecologically enhanced habitats, including grasslands
- ◆ [Western Forest](#) – includes the whole of Bath and North East Somerset (partnership in development)

There are numerous community and volunteer groups connected to the programmes mentioned above. In addition to these, there are other projects across the area, led by individuals, town and parish councils and community organisations, contributing to shared outcomes.

- **Research, training and green social prescribing as part of a regional approach**

This section recognises the need for additional research to inform prioritising investment in GI, and actions to develop green skills and support volunteering initiatives that engage people in greenspaces, benefitting their health and wellbeing.



2. Green Infrastructure Mapping

The first phase of work has focused on mapping data to evidence the Green Infrastructure Standards.

Mapped data will show existing Green Infrastructure provision, the range of assets and deficiencies. The maps will provide context and evidence to support decisions and investment to protect, improve and create GI. This includes developing GI strategies for specific places including Keynsham and Saltford, Bath, and rural areas, as part of the councils approach to place shaping.

A GIS Data Maintenance Plan will be produced to ensure that there is an understanding and commitment by the council to maintain the mapping and update the data.

Recognising that other bodies and organisations have or are developing environment data platforms, it is essential that the council works with partners to establish shared mapping platforms and review mapping and data. This is to ensure consistency, save on resources, avoid duplication and ensure there are appropriate resources to support ongoing management of these platforms.

Existing green infrastructure provision

Existing GI provision has been assessed including use of the mapping. A few key facts are provided below. Further evidence gathering, mapping and analysis work is planned as part of the Investment and Delivery Plan.

GI facilitates inclusive prosperity and regeneration, helping to create high quality environments

- In the B&NES Voicebox survey 2024, when asked what makes somewhere good to live 'Access to nature and greenspace' scored as the most important factor. In planning for new housing development, 'Greenspaces for nature and recreation' came second only to improved public transport.

- Green corridors contributing to the primary GI network, supporting movement for health and wellbeing, include Bath River Line, Bristol Bath Railway Path, River Avon Trail, Bath Linear Park, Colliers Way, and Norton Radstock Greenway.
- Regeneration schemes are combining heritage and GI by incorporating street planters and improving greenspaces in Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock, creating attractive settings to encourage investment.

GI supports movement and recreation, addresses health inequalities, and supports activities that are beneficial to health and wellbeing

GI enhancements in areas of high population density and high deprivation would provide a range of benefits addressing sustainability issues.

- Areas best served by **accessible greenspace** are generally found in Bath. Over 60% of households in Central Bath & Lansdown have accessible greenspace where the Neighbourhood standard and one of either the Doorstep standard or Local standard have been met. This is followed by Oldfield Park West (57%), Combe Down (54%) and Kingsmead (53%). The areas with less access are Keynsham South (6%), Pensford, Clutton and Temple Cloud (9%) and Odd Down (10%).
- The Cotswolds and Mendip Hills National Landscapes provide large and varied areas of open space and PRoW networks for recreation, however, lack of active travel provision and connections, and poor public transport make them difficult to access on foot, by bike or by public transport.
- New and improved walking and cycle routes have been delivered in Bathscape, Somer Valley Rediscovered areas and at Chew Valley Lake.

GI improves ecological connectivity, species rich habitats and connects people to nature

- Initial estimates suggest that 6.2% of land in the district is managed and / or protected for nature. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) make up the largest share. A further 16.96% of land is/or very likely to be providing some value for nature, but it is not possible to ascertain from current data if management is in place.
- There are seven Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), providing 0.78 ha per 1,000 population. Avon Wildlife Trust's Folly Farm reserve in the Chew Valley, is the largest, covering an area of over 98 ha. The only other rural LNR is Camerton Batch. The other LNRs are found in urban areas where they provide a refuge for nature and places for quiet enjoyment. Carrs Wood to the west of Bath and Manor Road Community Woodland in Keynsham are the largest of our urban LNRs, each covering over 20 ha.



GI helps mitigate climate change and address the effects of climate change

Soil and vegetation act as carbon stores and can support improvements to air quality, road and rail noise exposure, and mitigate against rising surface temperatures from climate change.

- **Large, vegetated areas** are more likely to be found in rural areas, however, there are large areas of soil and vegetation in urban areas across Bath and North East Somerset. These include Brown's Folly to the east of Bath, which covers an area of 54 ha, Waterside and West Hill Gardens in Westfield, that cover 40 ha and Keynsham Hams in Keynsham that covers an area of 39 ha.
- **Tree canopy** covers around 16% of land within Bath and North East Somerset. It is most extensive within our urban cities and towns, where collectively it covers almost 20% of the total area. There is, however, considerable variability across the urban area and areas such as Paulton, and Publow and Whitchurch have the lowest cover at 9% and 10% respectively. Collectively tree canopy cover is lowest in our rural towns and fringe, where it covers around 14% of the total area.

GI improves water quality and quantity and reduces flood risk

The district is in the Bristol Avon Catchment that includes the River Avon, River Chew, Cam Brook, Wellow Brook, and a network of streams and lakes.

Tree and hedge planting, buffer strips alongside rivers, restored soils, vegetated sustainable drainage schemes and restoring wetland can have many benefits for water management including: reducing flood risk and pressure on sewers, storing and purifying water resources, reducing risk of drought and restoring biodiversity. Frequency of surface water flooding or flash flooding in both urban and rural areas is likely to increase with climate change.

- Water quality is poor with only two of the 18 waterbodies in the district in good ecological status and physical barriers impacting on fish passage.
- Physical barriers on the River Chew, including the Keynsham Memorial Park weir, and the 18 barriers identified on the Cam and Wellow are known or are likely to be having an impact on fish passage.
- Fluvial flooding has been identified to be the most significant source of flood risk with events being associated with the main watercourses - the River Avon, River Chew, Cam Brook and Wellow Brook. An area upstream of Keynsham Weir on the River Avon has been identified to be tidally influenced and, therefore, may be susceptible to tidal flooding. Due to sea level rise, this area may become more susceptible to tidal flooding in the future.

3. Green Infrastructure Standards

The Green Infrastructure Standards define what GI is required to develop and support sustainable places and communities and address the Climate and Ecological Emergencies. The provision of GI needs to be planned strategically, and whilst the Standards are fundamental to delivering new growth, they are for all who have a role in the provision, management and maintenance of GI. This includes developers, landowners and managers, council officers, parish and town councils and communities.

The Standards are derived from [Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework](#) Standards. A baseline assessment was undertaken in 2024 to assess the local context for Natural England's GI Standards and adapt them where appropriate. Standards for Bath and North East Somerset and targets will be confirmed as part of the Local Plan review and will form part of the revised Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. Baselines, details for the baseline assessments and technical explanations for the methods used to define the Local Food Growing Space and Play Space Standards (that are not covered by Natural England) is provided in the Green Infrastructure Standards for Bath and North East Somerset Methodology Report. This also includes a section covering the application of the Standards.

The council will monitor and evaluate progress against delivery of the Standards for Bath and North East Somerset every five years.

A Green Infrastructure Standards Dashboard linked to the GI Mapping will update on progress. Information provided with the Dashboard will explain what data has been collated, its source and frequency of updates. This will be linked to and reported in the council's Strategic Evidence Base.



The Green Infrastructure Standards for Bath and North East Somerset are:

Standards		Targets
Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard	Major development Each major new development has a Green Infrastructure Plan	No target set
Accessible Greenspace Standards	<p>District At least 3 ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population and no reduction in capacity of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population at a Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) scale</p> <p><u>Within 15 minutes' walk from home:</u> EITHER a Doorstep OR Local Accessible Greenspace i) A Doorstep Greenspace of at least 0.5 ha within 200m (under 5 minutes' walk), or a Local Natural Greenspace of at least 2 ha within 300m (5 minutes' walk) from home AND a Neighbourhood Accessible Natural Greenspace ii) A medium sized Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace of at least 10 ha within 1km (15 minutes' walk) from home</p> <p><u>Beyond 15 minutes' walk from home:</u> i) A medium / large wider Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace of at least 20 ha within 2km, and ii) A large District Natural Greenspace of at least 100 ha within 5 km</p> <p>Blue spaces are included where they are within the boundary of accessible greenspaces.</p>	No target set

Standards	Targets	
<p>Major development</p> <p>Major residential development (including purpose-built student and co-living accommodation) must be designed to provide at least 3 ha of publicly accessible greenspace per 1,000 population and should be designed to ensure each household has access to a Doorstep Greenspace or a Local Accessible Greenspace and a Neighbourhood Greenspace concurrently.</p> <p>Local Accessible Greenspace is preferred; however, the Doorstep Greenspace criterion has been introduced in recognition that in existing and densely built-up areas there may not be sufficient space to create new greenspaces of at least 2 ha in size.</p>		
<p>District</p> <p>Quality of greenspace meets the Green Flag Award criteria and any adopted B&NES greenspace quality criteria.</p>		
Nature Recovery Standards	<p>District</p> <p>The proportion of land managed for nature is increased to meet the nature recovery targets. This includes enhancing and identifying new areas that qualify as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)</p>	30% of Bath and North East Somerset managed and protected for nature by 2030
	<p>At least 1 ha of Local Nature Reserve (LNR) per 1,000 population for nature conservation and quiet enjoyment</p>	
	<p>Major Development</p> <p>Major residential (including purpose-built student and co-living accommodation) and commercial development must be designed to create, restore, and manage wildlife rich habitats, which can include establishing LNRs.</p>	30% of B&NES Corporate Estate managed and protected for nature by 2030

Standards	Targets
Urban Greening Standard	<p>Major development Major commercial development must achieve an Urban Greening Factor of at least 0.3. All major residential development (including purpose-built student and co-living accommodation) must achieve at least 0.4 on land that has previously been developed and in the case of residential greenfield development must seek to achieve 0.5.</p> <p>No target set</p>
Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard	<p>District Aspire to a minimum of 20% tree canopy cover in urban areas²</p> <hr/> <p>Major Development Major residential (including purpose-built student and co-living accommodation) and commercial development is designed to meet the district standard, incorporate new and existing trees and new streets are tree lined (in line with NPPF requirements)</p> <p>No target set</p>
Local Food Growing Space Standard	<p>District At least 0.3 ha of local food growing space per 1,000 population and no reduction in capacity of local food growing space per 1,000 population at a Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) scale.</p> <hr/> <p>A local food growing space within 1200m (20 minutes' walk from home)</p> <hr/> <p>Major development Major residential development (including purpose-built student and co-living accommodation) must be designed to provide at least 0.3 ha of local food growing space per 1,000 population within 1200m (20 minutes' walk from home)</p> <p>No target set</p>

² Further details to come in forthcoming Bath and North East Somerset District Tree & Woodland Strategy (2026)

Standards	Targets
Play Space Standards	<p>District At least 0.05 ha of children's play space per 1,000 population and no reduction in capacity of children's play space per 1,000 population at a Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) scale</p>
	<p>No target set</p> <hr/> <p>At least 0.03 ha of youth play space per 1,000 population and no reduction in capacity of youth play space per 1,000 population at a Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) scale.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Within 15 minutes' walk from home:</u> i) A children's play space within 600m (10 minutes' walk), and ii) A youth play space within 720m (12 minutes' walk)</p> <hr/> <p>Major development Major residential development must be designed to provide at least 0.05 ha of children's play space per 1,000 population within 600m (10 minutes' walk from home) and 0.03 ha of youth play space per 1,000 population within 720m (12 minutes' walk from home).</p>

4. Green Infrastructure Local Plan policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 recognises the importance of GI. References to use of GI in the NPPF include the GI Standards in the Golden Rules (para. 159), safe and healthy communities (para. 96(c)), climate change (para. 164), conserving and enhancing the natural environment (para. 188), and ground conditions and pollution (para. 199).

The UK's Planning Practice Guidance for Natural Environment states that:

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

The Local Plan, guided by national policy, is key to ensuring new development is creating healthy and sustainable places, and takes account of ecosystem services and the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.

The council's Local Plan (2022 - 2042) will include a revised GI policy that is expected to require developers submitting proposals for major development to submit a Green Infrastructure Plan for approval.

The Plan should be informed by local policy and evidence, and set out how the development meets the Green Infrastructure Standards and will deliver the Green Infrastructure Outcomes set out in the Greener Places Plan. The Green Infrastructure Plan will contribute to the wider urban design scheme (that considers design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes) to deliver a successful development.

The use of the [Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool](#) to assess environmental impacts and benefits, and use of other standards such as [Building with Nature](#) to support compliance with the policy will be encouraged.

The need to ensure that GI is featured in other policy sections of the Local Plan to explicitly address the multifunctionality of GI is recognised.

Delivery of planning policy

With a new GI Policy and Standards, there is a need to review existing process and practice to ensure there are sufficient resources to:

- **CREATE** new GI to address need and to meet growth
- **RESTORE** and enhance existing GI and improve quality and access to greenspace
- **MAINTAIN** existing and new GI through management, maintenance and monitoring arrangements

The changes place new demands on the council's Development Management team and those involved in the planning process (including landscape specialists and ecologists). Assessing the information submitted with an application (including the Green Infrastructure Plan) will require collaboration and a specialist officer with sufficient knowledge of GI and local requirements.

Within the Greener Places Investment and Delivery Plan the following actions have been identified to record and monitor the effectiveness of the new policy and Standards:

- **Planning application/decision monitoring** – establishing and maintaining a record of Green Infrastructure Plans submitted and Urban Greening Factors achieved
- **Monitoring success of delivery of planning schemes** - potentially linked to BNG monitoring
- **Recording of investment in GI** across council services. This is mainly investment through developer contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and project funding



The Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out what developers are required to provide. **Section 106 Agreements (S106)** are legal agreements the council makes with developers to mitigate any negative effects a development might have on the local area. Funding secured through S106 may include payments for services or facilities, including provision or improvement of greenspaces and new trees, and is different to **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** payments which are more strategic. Funding towards maintenance of new GI can also be secured through planning conditions and non-financial obligations.

CIL is a planning charge designed to help deliver infrastructure (such as schools, transport links, open spaces, recreational and waste facilities) to serve the residents and users of developments. CIL is payable on new developments, including housing, student accommodation, supermarkets and hotels.

The **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)** informs the infrastructure requirements for the current and emerging Local Plan (2022 to 2042). This is produced by the council and is accompanied by a schedule of infrastructure projects including GI, estimated costs, phasing and delivery arrangements, and potential funding sources.

Management, maintenance and monitoring of green infrastructure in new development

GI requires sustainable management and maintenance if it is to provide benefits and services for the long term. Arrangements for funding need to be identified as early as possible, factored into the design and implementation, and planned for the lifetime of the development. In the case of major development, this must be set out in a Green Infrastructure Plan.

Green Infrastructure Plans should be developed with the local community, as engagement can assist with management and tailoring provision to local needs. Communities and new residents provide an important role when it comes to monitoring the delivery and condition of GI, and in some instances report issues to the council. Involving communities makes them more likely to assist with future management.

Establishing separate bodies and community involvement, using management companies and service charge levies as a way of funding, is a common way of delivering ongoing maintenance for new development.

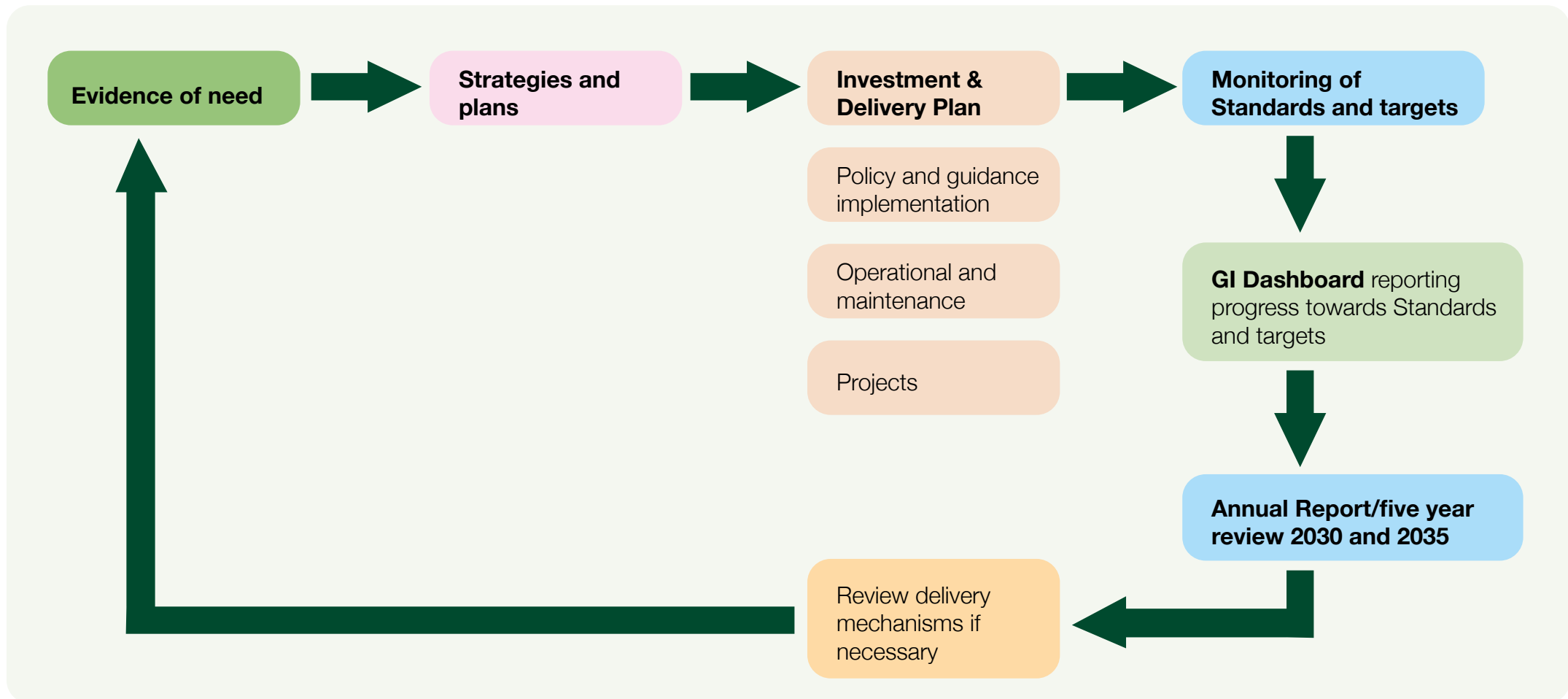
A monitoring schedule is required as part of the Green Infrastructure Plan to ensure the commitments are delivered.

[Natural England's 'Process Journey for Developers and Designers \(Stage 4 Funding and Obligations\)](#) provides clear guidance on how to approach management and maintenance. It articulates that GI is unlikely to affect the viability of a development on its own, and interventions such as sustainable drainage schemes can reduce management and maintenance costs over time.

Monitoring and reporting

Reviews will be undertaken in 2030 and 2035 to identify progress towards meeting the Green Infrastructure Standards and targets, and if the outcomes are being achieved.

Monitoring Greener Places delivery - Full description of diagram in [Appendix](#).



Glossary

Definitions – Accessible Greenspaces

District Accessible Natural Greenspace is defined as an accessible natural greenspace of at least 100 ha within 5km from home.

Doorstep Accessible Greenspace is defined as an accessible natural greenspace or playing field (which is available to all) of at least 0.5 ha within 200m from home. The incorporation of playing fields is unique to this typology.

Local Accessible Natural Greenspace is defined as an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 ha within 300m from home.

Neighbourhood Accessible Natural Greenspace is defined as an accessible natural greenspace of at least 10 ha within 1km from home.

For the Green Infrastructure Framework for Bath and North East Somerset **playing fields** are large, flat areas of grass or specifically designed surfaces, which encompass at least one playing pitch, used primarily for outdoor sports i.e. football, rugby, cricket. N.B The Ordnance Survey depictions of ‘Playing Fields’ are not entirely in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act definition, and this definition combines the two.

Sub-Regional Accessible Natural Greenspace is defined as an accessible natural greenspace of at least 500 ha within 10km from home.

Wider Neighbourhood Accessible Natural Greenspace is defined as an accessible natural greenspace of at least 20 ha within 2km from home.

Biodiversity Net Gain – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development. The legislated biodiversity objective is a target of at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity for habitats, hedgerows and watercourses. New development will need to be designed and planned to prioritise avoiding loss and harm to existing habitats before compensating to off-set damage.

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/biodiversity-net-gain-bng>

Community Infrastructure Levy – (CIL) is a planning charge designed to help deliver infrastructure (such as schools, transport links, open spaces, recreational and waste facilities) to serve the residents and users of developments. CIL is payable on new developments, including housing, student accommodation, supermarkets and hotels.

Green Infrastructure Plan – A report which as a minimum sets out how a development will deliver green infrastructure in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Standards and Green Infrastructure Outcomes; will take account of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats; integrates with other relevant policy requirements including Biodiversity Net Gain; contributes towards meeting wider objectives identified in the Local Plan; and how the green infrastructure will be managed, maintained and monitored for a minimum of 30 years.

Green Infrastructure Standards (also see council web page for methodology) – The Green Infrastructure Standards define criteria and attributes for good green infrastructure and how to plan, deliver and maintain it. They include criteria / attributes relating to quantity, size, proximity, capacity, quality, accessibility, type and process (planning and management of green infrastructure) and are designed to be used consistently as a guideline.

Green Infrastructure targets – In the context of the Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework for Bath and North East Somerset, green infrastructure targets are performance goals to track the progress towards achieving the Green Infrastructure Standards.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are ‘a new, England-wide system of spatial strategies that will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature’s recovery and provide wider environmental benefits’, as set out by Government in the Environment Act 2022. The West of England Combined Authority is the responsible body for the West of England LNRS.

<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/the-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

Local Nature Reserves – Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are usually declared (designated) by local councils, but parish and town councils can also declare LNRs if they have the powers to do so delegated to them. LNRs can be large or small, and be created where there are wildlife or geological features that are of special local interest. They must have a management plan. LNRs are intended for people and wildlife and used for purposes such as habitat management, quiet recreation, study and to interact with nature and enjoy it.

Nature-based solutions – Nature-based solutions (Nbs) address societal challenges through actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems, benefiting people and nature at the same time. They are increasingly recognised as a cost-effective way to replace, augment, or complement traditional grey infrastructure, and for their ability to support climate resilient infrastructure. Infrastructure projects that incorporate nature-based solutions are typically referred to as one of the following: nature-based infrastructure, green or green/grey infrastructure, blue or blue/green infrastructure, hybrid infrastructure, natural infrastructure.

Natural Capital – Natural Capital refers to the aspects of the natural environment that provide benefits to people. The benefits are wide ranging and can be anything from clean air and water, wildlife to enjoy, to crop pollination. The environment’s contribution to these benefits are referred to as ecosystem goods and services. These benefits can be valued.

A formal definition of natural capital from the Natural Capital Committee is ‘the elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions.’

This quick start guide was produced by a team of natural capital specialists at Natural England:

<https://ecosystemsknowledge.net/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/Natural%20Capital%20Quick%20Start%20Guide%20%231.pdf>

Natural flood management – Natural flood management (NFM) involves working with nature to reduce the risk of flooding for communities. It uses various techniques to restore or mimic the natural functions of rivers, floodplains and the wider catchment. It aims to store water in the catchment and slow the rate at which water runs into rivers, to help reduce flooding downstream. NFM is also referred to as ‘working with natural processes’, ‘nature-based solutions’, ‘slow the flow’, ‘sustainable land management’ or ‘upstream management’.

Nature Towns and Cities – The programme has been set up by National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and Natural England. It aims to help local authorities work together with communities and partners to bring nature into every neighbourhood for all to enjoy. The Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation scheme is being piloted in England and recognises towns and cities that are putting nature and green infrastructure at the heart of their plans.

<https://naturetownsandcities.org.uk/whats-on/>

Neighbourhood Plans – Communities can influence the future of their neighbourhood by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan that sets out the vision for the local area and general planning policies to guide developments. This can help determine where new homes and businesses can be built, and what they should look like.

Sustainable Drainage schemes – Sustainable Drainage schemes (SUDs) offer a more natural approach to managing drainage systems in and around properties and developments than traditional drainage systems. They are designed to temporarily store water during storm events, reduce peak flows and reduce surface water runoff, by mimicking the natural cycle of water management by retaining water where it lands. SUDs include retention ponds, swales, green roofs, rain gardens, permeable paving, and wetlands.

Urban Greening Factor – The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) assigns a factor score to each surface cover type which are weighted based on their potential for rainwater infiltration. This is used as a proxy for naturalness and functionality. Natural England has developed an Urban Greening Factor for England, as one of a suite of five Headline Green Infrastructure Standards within the Green Infrastructure Framework. The UGF is a planning tool to improve the provision of green infrastructure, particularly in urban areas. It is voluntary and can be used to increase urban greening and contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain.

Appendix 1

Diagram explanations:

Page 6 - Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework components and how it will be delivered in partnership with others

The left hand column lists the Greener Places GI Framework components that are: Greener Places Plan, B&NES Accessible Greenspaces Plan, Greener Places Investment & Delivery Plan, GI Mapping Tools, GI Standards and GI Local Plan Policy. Below this is box with a list of GI principles. This box links to the components box and to the next column that lists how the Framework will be delivered in partnership. The column on the right lists partnerships, national and local organisations, developers and businesses, managers of land and natural capital, town and parish councils, communities and residents. [Back to page 6.](#)

Page 10 - Strategic green and blue corridors

Map shows the districts strategic green and blue corridors that provide a network across and beyond the district boundary. The City of Bath World Heritage Site, Cotswolds and Mendip Hills National Landscapes are shown as hatched areas. Location of Bath, Keynsham. Midsomer Norton and Chew Valley Lake are shown on the map. [Back to page 10.](#)

Page 14 - How the stock of natural capital provides a flow of ecosystem services

Diagram shows in bottom right needs, and challenges facing business and society. In a broad arrow it lists nature based solutions to address these needs. This links into the top left image of Stock - natural capital (trees, water, biodiversity), this links to Flows – ecosystem services, this links to Value – benefits to business and society, this links to Solutions-meeting needs and building resilience. [Back to page 14.](#)

Page 21 - Integration of GI in plan and strategy delivery to achieve shared targets and outcomes

Top of left-hand column states GI Framework supports and guides implementation of regional and local strategies. Below this the column lists the GI Framework and lists the key B&NES policy documents and regional strategies that the Framework supports delivery of. The next column lists key strategies and plans that will support delivery of the Framework. The next column lists various activities that result from plans and strategies to deliver GI including new policies, capital projects and operational changes. The next column lists the range of metrics to be used to measure what these activities deliver. The last column is a list of the targets and outcomes to be achieved by the activities. These include: 30% of land managed for nature, net zero by 2030 and the GI outcomes. [Back to page 21.](#)

Page 52 - Monitoring Greener Places delivery diagram

Evidence of need flows into strategies and plans, which then flows into Investment & Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan includes policy and guidance implementation, operational and maintenance, and projects. This then flows into monitoring of Standards and targets, which flows into a GI Dashboard. This then flows into Annual Report and five year reviews. This then flow into review delivery mechanisms if necessary and back to evidence of need. [Back to page 52.](#)

Appendix 2

Development of the Green Infrastructure Framework and Investment & Delivery Plan 2025 to 2030

The Greener Places - Green Infrastructure Framework 2025-2035 has been produced in collaboration with internal council services and external partners via several workshops.

Internal engagement

An internal council **GI Review Group** was established to facilitate cross-service discussion and input to the Framework. Terms of reference were agreed, and monthly meetings were held December – April 2024.

The council participated in **Natural England's GI Framework (GIF) Stakeholder Training Programme January – March 2024** to help embed the GIF into local strategies, and ensure GI is considered and designed into council projects. This resulted in two bespoke cross-service workshops that sought to ensure officers have appropriate information and understanding of GI to devise Local Plan policy and standards including the Urban Greening Factor, and the appropriate data for the GI map tool.

External stakeholder engagement

In **September 2023**, an **external stakeholder GI Strategy Review Workshop** was held. Reflecting on the GI Strategy produced in 2013, the wide variety of stakeholders were asked the following questions. Below are a selection of the responses:

What would make the biggest difference to delivering effective GI in the next 10 years?

- More certainty on funding/additional resources to promote greater innovation
- Innovative finance and funding solutions to invest in GI/resilient landscapes
- Align with partners for larger pool of resources and outcomes
- Sustained local authority support, prioritising and funding
- More staff resource to support development of partnership projects and deliver feasibility work required to deliver large-scale interventions
- More cross-sector join up/ bring together the right range of people as early as possible/more diverse partners “getting on board” taking a role in shaping the future
- Effective and robust Local Plan policies supported by design guides and SPD/clear requirements/expectations for GI in new development in the Local Plan
- Better recognition through policy/legislation for need to deliver integrated land and water management
- Joined-up area visions, using GI as a basis for looking at spatial needs on water, climate and green travel across the district

What are the priorities?

- Urban greening/mitigating the urban heat island effect
- Limestone Landscape Link and Avon Corridor
- Safeguarding of the World Heritage Site Setting
- Making sure that the benefits of (financial, health, nature, transport, climate, etc) investing in GI are fully understood and considered in decisions at a site and strategic level
- Making the city of Bath and the district more resilient to climate change/cultural shift to climate change solutions
- Harvesting water / floodplains
- Sustainable commuting links
- Unlock investment through collaborative action to co-fund larger GI projects
- Support and enable community action/behavioural change
- Addressing inequalities in access

In **July 2024, the follow up stakeholder session** asked attendees to develop priorities into actions.

These have been combined with actions arising from two further internal GI placemaking workshops (also held in July 2024), with officers from services across the council, and supported by Alister Scott from Northumbria University. These workshops progressed the learning and discussions from the Natural England workshops held earlier in the year. A Jam Board was used to gather what officers saw as challenges or opportunities in delivering their work areas' priorities regarding placemaking, focusing on the relationship with GI and nature recovery objectives. Based on an understanding that green infrastructure and nature recovery objectives are fundamental aspects of wider placemaking, it is important that the new Local Plan considers how these objectives and GI Standards are articulated and delivered in new development, and integrated into wider placemaking objectives. This includes taking account of and helping to deliver measures on the Ecological and Climate Emergencies, as well as revised national policy and guidance.

The **Local Plan Options document (April 2024)** set out several new and revised policy options regarding the natural environment including Biodiversity Net Gain, Green Infrastructure Standards and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There are also currently adopted planning obligations and council targets for trees and greenspace typologies. A key challenge, as part of the Local Plan process, is working through how these are linked and work together to deliver across council priorities and the various plans and strategies. A further Options Report is due out for consultation October 2025.

As part of the Local Plan site concepts and requirements work, the council will also be testing the new GI Standards set out in the GI Framework and working on initial BNG requirements and potential solutions.

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