MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

Background Paper

Green and Blue Infrastructure

July 2024

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
GI	Green infrastructure
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SANG	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SPA	Special Protection Area

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Green and blue infrastructure delivers a range of environmental, social and economic benefits including resilience to the effects of climate change, positive health and wellbeing effects, nature-based solutions and supporting nature recovery. The planning system has a key role to play in delivering green and blue infrastructure as it provides an opportunity to embed green spaces and water bodies in policy and for it to be given consideration in the decision-making process.

1.2 Mid Sussex is a rural district in the south-east of England, situated within the county of West Sussex. Mid Sussex District is characterised by beautiful countryside. Nearly 50% of the district is within the High Weald National Landscape (the legal designation is Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), and over 10% is within the South Downs National Park. Yet green and blue infrastructure is still important because there are three towns within Mid Sussex District and a number of villages and smaller settlements, and green and blue infrastructure offers an opportunity to increase access to greenspace in urban areas and for greenspace to connect to the surrounding landscape.

1.3 This paper aims to gather existing evidence on the significance of green and blue infrastructure policies and describe the green infrastructure network of Mid Sussex. It establishes the policy framework for planning for green and blue infrastructure, providing an overview of the current status of the network's different components, and outlining the rationale behind the strategies outlined in the draft policy of the emerging Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039.

2.0 Defining Green and Blue Infrastructure

2.1 There are several definitions of green and blue infrastructure, but at its most basic, it is a connected network of multi-functional green and blue spaces. Green infrastructure is also referred to as GI. The definition for green infrastructure in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023), encompasses both green and blue infrastructure, being defined as:

> A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

2.2 It should be noted in this paper that references to green infrastructure also include blue infrastructure which incorporates water elements like rivers, streams, canals, ponds, wetlands and other water bodies.

2.3 As a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces, green infrastructure can also be considered as a 'collection of connected natural capital assets managed to provide ecosystem services and benefits for people and nature' (Natural England, 2022[1]).

[1] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/WhatIsGreenInfrastructure.aspx

2.4 It is clear that green and blue infrastructure not only has an ecological and environmental focus, but also delivers socio-economic benefits, thus helping to meet sustainability objectives. In particular, the importance of green and blue space is becoming increasingly important to the health and wellbeing agenda. To offer the most benefits, green and blue infrastructure needs to be well designed and well managed.

Types of Green and Blue Infrastructure

2.5 Green and blue infrastructure functions at a variety of scales from individual street trees to large woodlands and rivers; it is found from the local to the landscape scale. Green infrastructure can also be formed of linear features such as roadside verges and rights of way.

2.6 Since green and blue infrastructure comprises a variety of green and blue spaces, it can be useful to consider green infrastructure in different categories (Table 1 – Examples of Green and Blue Infrastructure (source: Natural England, 2022 and Biodiversity Information System for Europe, 2022).

2.7). It should be noted, however, that some of these features may not be present in Mid Sussex District, but this is why it is important to think of green and blue infrastructure as networks that cross administrative boundaries and operating at a landscape scale.

2.8 Section 6 of this paper breaks down and analyses the existing green infrastructure typologies within the district.

Green infrastructure typology	**Examples**
Parks and gardens	Urban parks, country and regional parks, formal gardens
Amenity green space	Informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space
Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	Woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground
Green corridors	Rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, green bridges, field margins, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way
Features for species	Bird and bat boxes, swift bricks, hedgehog holes
Other	Street trees, allotments, community gardens and orchards, private gardens, city farms, green roofs, green walls, cemeteries and churchyards
Blue infrastructure typology	
Water bodies	Wetlands, rivers/streams, ponds, lakes, canals, reservoirs, and estuary/tidal rivers
Vegetated sustainable drainage systems, SuDS	Blue roofs, rainwater harvesting and smart controls, downpipe disconnection planters, rain

	gardens and biofiltration strips, swales, ponds, detention basins

TABLE 1 – EXAMPLES OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE (SOURCE: NATURAL ENGLAND, 2022 AND BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR EUROPE, 2022[2]).

Benefits of Green and Blue Infrastructure

2.9 The multi-functional nature of green and blue infrastructure means that it can deliver more than one function (and benefit) at the same time. For example, an area of accessible greenspace may:

- Provide opportunities for recreation facilitating healthy lifestyles.
- Deliver biodiversity improvements.
- Contribute to flood risk management.
- Moderate surface and air temperatures to help address the effects of climate change.

2.10 Ecosystem services are the benefits provided to people by the natural environment and are necessary for life. These ecosystem services link closely to economic prosperity and quality of life, and so should be considered in policy formulation and decision-making. Ecosystem services are categorised into four types[3], however, there is significant interaction between them:

- **Provisioning –** Tangible goods, harvestable from the environment, such as food, wood and fibre, water and fuel.
- **Regulating/Maintaining –** Regulating services that lead to benefits to ecosystems, such as climate regulation, flood management and water filtration.
- **Cultural –** Ways in which nature impacts people's health and wellbeing through recreational and education benefits.
- **Supporting –** Forms the basis for the other three types of services, such as the nutrient cycle, soil formation and habitat provision for biodiversity.

Ecosystem Services	Benefits from Nature	Benefits from the Sea
Provisioning	Renewable & non-renewable energy	Fish & shellfish stocks
	Materials	Energy
	Water Supply	Harvestable seaweed
	Natural Medicines	Genetic resources
	Food & drink	Sand & gravel
Regulating/Maintaining	Clean air	Storm protection
	Carbon storage	Waste breakdown & detoxification
	Flood management	Carbon storage & climate regulation
	Erosion control	Stabilise sediment

[2] Available at: https://biodiversity.europa.eu/green-infrastructure/typology-of-gi

[3] https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-and-cop15/ecosystem-approach/ecosystem-services-natures-benefits#:~:text=Ecosystem%20Services%20are%20the%20direct,as%20reducing%20stress%20and%20anxiety

	Water purification	
	Disease & natural pest control	
	Pollination	
Cultural	Physical health & mental wellbeing	Seascapes
	Tourism	Tourism
	Knowledge & learning	Science & education
	Recreation	Wildlife watching
	Sense of place	Recreation
	Inspiration	Health & wellbeing
	Spiritual & religious connections	Creativity & art
Supporting	Healthy soils	Food web
	Photosynthesis	Nutrient cycling
	Nutrient cycling	Water cycling
	Space for wildlife	Larva/gamete supply
		Habitats for species
		Water currents & sediment transport

TABLE 2 ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (SOURCE: NATURESCOT NADARALBA) [4]

2.11 Individually, green and blue infrastructure is unlikely to deliver all the functions of ecosystem services but taken together as a connected network of greenspace and waterbodies, the range of benefits of green and blue infrastructure are more likely to be achieved.

Climate Change Context

2.12 Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states that: 'Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.'

2.13 The impacts of climate change are seen in both the built and natural environment. District Plan Policy DPS1: Climate Change, is an overarching policy that sets out principles that development should adopt to tackle climate change issues and it signposts to other more detailed polices in the Plan. Green and blue infrastructure practices can help communities manage and prepare for the effects of climate change by:

- **Improving flood management**
  Preserving open spaces and integrating green/blue infrastructure can lower and manage the risk of flooding and stormwater runoff through infiltration-based practices to reduce the volume of stormwater that flows into streams, rivers and drainage systems.

[4] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-and-cop15/ecosystem-approach/ecosystem-services-natures-benefits#:~:text=Ecosystem%20Services%20are%20the%20direct,as%20reducing%20stress%20and%20anxiety

- **Prepare for droughts**
  Green infrastructure can help replenish underground water reserves by promoting water infiltration and implementing rainwater harvesting techniques to reduce stress on water supplies.
- **Reduce the Urban Heat Island effect**
  Planting trees and other vegetation along streets can improve shading on buildings and surfaces, reduce radiation from the sun, and increase comfort for pedestrians and residents.
- **Lower building energy demands**
  Vegetation cover on and around buildings, such as green roofs, can lower ambient air temperature during summer and reduce heat loss during winter. Overall, it reduces air conditioning and heating costs throughout the year.
- **Lower the costs of water management**
  Implementing green infrastructure practices can reduce water management costs by minimising rainwater runoff and recharging underground aquifers.

3.0 Objectives and Outcomes

3.1 In recent years, habitats throughout England are becoming fragmented, and species have been declining, accelerating the overall biodiversity loss. Nearly one in six species (16%) are threatened with extinction in Great Britain and since 1970, 19% of species studies have declined[5]. It is therefore important to note that the Government and environmental sector has recognised that action at the local scale is required.

3.2 As a response to this, the Mid Sussex District Plan has set out Environmental objectives (alongside Economic and Social objectives) to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. Objectives 1 and 4 highlight the importance of maintaining and creating an accessible green infrastructure network.

Environmental Objective 1
To create and maintain easily accessible high quality green and blue infrastructure in the right places to encourage active travel, improve physical and mental health, support biodiversity, and address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
Environmental Objective 4
To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities.

3.3 The Environmental, Social and Economic objectives are interdependent, therefore policy DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure aims to accomplish three strategic objectives, across two priority themes (Environment and Social) that promote the development of sustainable communities, set out as the Vision and Objectives of the District Plan 2021-2039. The three strategic objectives of Policy DPN3 are as follows:

[5] Study conducted by State of Nature Partnership, available at: https://stateofnature.org.uk/

Environmental Objective 5
To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities.
Environmental Objective 6
To ensure that development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure in the right place at the right time that supports development and sustainable communities. This includes as a priority the provision of efficient and sustainable transport networks.
Social Objective 15
To create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities, informal leisure space and the opportunity to walk, cycle or ride to common destinations.

3.4 The Council aims to deliver various environmental, social and economic benefits by implementing the Green and Blue Infrastructure policy. The Council will achieve this by protecting existing green infrastructure networks and safeguarding green and blue infrastructure assets and links from development. Other policies in the District Plan, such as DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery can also help to meet the objectives of the Green and Blue Infrastructure policy. Following Natural England's Principles of GI[6], by implementing these policies, the Council aims to:

- Create nature-rich, beautiful places – e.g. Policy DPN1
- Create active and healthy places – e.g. Policy DPT3
- Create thriving and prospering places – e.g. Policy DPE1
- Protect and restore nature – e.g. Policy DPN1
- Strengthen resilience to the effects of climate change – e.g. Policy DPS1
- Sustainable water management (improve) – e.g. Policy DPS4
- Improve health and wellbeing – e.g. Policy DPS6
- Create sustainable places – e.g. Policy DPS2
- Create a greener and more resilient economy – e.g. Policy DPE1

4.0 Policy Context

International Agreement – UN Sustainable Development Goals

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023) is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which is broadly defined as:

> *"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".*

[6] Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles, available at: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/GIPrinciples.aspx

4.2 Following a United Nations summit in 2015, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have also agreed 17 inter-connected goals to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2016, form part of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[7].

4.3 The NPPF encourages Local Plans to reflect the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The District Plan therefore embeds these goals and sets out policies within the plan to contribute to one or more of them.

4.4 Green and blue infrastructure contributes to meeting some of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals including:

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

FIGURE 1 - UNITED NATIONS, THE SEVENTEEN GOALS, 2015.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.5 The NPPF (2023) sets out the Government's planning policies for both plan-making and decision-taking. Green infrastructure is mentioned several times in the NPPF as a mechanism to improve the provision of greenspace creating a network, to enable and support healthy lifestyles, to provide adaptation for the effects of climate change, and to improve air quality (Figure 2). Green infrastructure also has close links to other policy areas included in the NPPF as it contributes to the delivery of high-quality sustainable development and good place-making practices.

[7] Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 20

Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for:

[…]

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Paragraph 96

Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which:

[…]

c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Paragraph 159

New development should be planned for in ways that:

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

Paragraph 181

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

Paragraph 192

Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.

FIGURE 2 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE REFERENCES IN THE NPPF (2023)

4.6 The NPPF policies relating to green infrastructure are supported with guidance set out in the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The PPG[8] identifies that green infrastructure can help to deliver the following planning goals:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Achieving well-designed places
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

4.7 The PPG makes it clear that policies can identify the location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks and set out appropriate policies for their protection and enhancement. In terms of planning decisions, the PPG advises that green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.

4.8 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF specifically highlights the need for local planning authorities to address the need for green infrastructure in their strategic policies in order to conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

4.9 In response to this the District Plan includes a specific policy for Green and Blue Infrastructure (Policy DPN3). Additionally, requirements for green infrastructure are also needed for site allocations.

4.10 **Policy DPSC Gen: Significant Sites Requirements** sets out specific requirements for all Significant Sites. Bullet point 14 sets out green infrastructure requirements for these allocations, specified below:

Policy DPSC GEN
14. Develop a strategy for the long-term management and stewardship of open space and green infrastructure including initiatives for income generation that could be integrated into the scheme.

The 25 Year Environment Plan

4.11 The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan states that "the planning system can protect key natural and historic assets and encourage high-quality green infrastructure in urban areas" (p.35)[9].

4.12 The Plan sets out various goals for improving the environment by using a natural capital approach, by increasing the UK's 'natural capital' to meet the international role of protecting the planet. By using 'natural capital' as a tool we are more likely to make better informed decisions that support environmental enhancement and help reduce long-term flood risk, increase wildlife and boost long-term prosperity.

[8] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#green-infrastructure
[9] A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan

4.13 Natural capital refers to the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, air and seas.

4.14 The 25 Year Environment Plan also set out various aspirations in relation to green infrastructure including providing more and higher quality GI in towns and cities, with particular mention of encouraging more planting of trees in and around our urban areas.

4.15 This document also states that the government will be establishing a cross-government project, led by Natural England to develop a new national framework of standards and principles for green and blue infrastructure. This Framework was published in January 2023.

Green Infrastructure Framework 2023

4.16 The Green Infrastructure Framework[10] is a commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, being led and published by Natural England. It helps local authorities meet the requirements in the NPPF to consider GI in local plans and new developments and supports planning for good quality GI.

[10] Available at: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx#:~:text=The%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Framework%20is,of%20the%20Nature%20Recovery%20Network.

4.17 The Framework is comprised of Principles and Standards for Green Infrastructure. The principles provide guidelines for organisations to develop strong GI policies. It covers the 'Why, What and How of Green Infrastructure', and these are classified as follows:

Why?

- Nature rich beautiful places
- Active and healthy places
- Thriving and prospering places
- Improved water management
- Resilient and climate positive places

What?

- Multifunctional: GI delivers multiple functions and benefits
- Varied: GI includes a mix of types and sizes that can provide a range of functions and benefits to address specific issues and needs
- Connected: GI connects as a living network for people and nature at all scales, connecting provision of GI with those who need its benefits
- Accessible: GI creates green, liveable places where everyone has access to good quality green and blue spaces routes and features
- Character: GI should respond to an area's character

How?

- Partnership and vision Partnership working, collaoration and stakeholder engagement; create a vision for GI
- Evidence. Use evidence, sound science and good land use practices to underpin plans, projects, programmes and policies
- Plan GI strategically to secure GI as a key asset in policies to create and maintain sustainable places
- Design GI to create beautiful, well-designed places
- Managed, valued, monitored and evaluated. Establish good governance, funding, management, monitoring, and evaluation of GI

FIGURE 3 - NATURAL ENGLAND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PRINCIPLES (DETAILED VERSION, DATE JANUARY 2023).

4.18 The Standards set out what GI 'looks like' for planners, developers, parks, greenspace managers and communities and how to strategically plan it to deliver benefits for people and nature. GI standards will help stakeholders to deliver the 15 Green Infrastructure Principles, outlined in Figure 3.

4.19 The Green Infrastructure Framework and its Standards are voluntary but are designed to help meet national and local planning policy. The Green Infrastructure Standards can also support delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

4.20 Green Infrastructure Standards comprise 3 levels (further details can be found on Green Infrastructure Standards for England – Summary):

1. Headline Green Infrastructure Standards

2. Menu of Green Infrastructure Standards
3. Signposting Table

The Environment Act 2021

4.21 The Environment Act 2021[11] sets out a set of targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment, including air quality, water, biodiversity and waste reduction. The Environment Act 2021 operates as the new framework of environmental protection in the UK and introduced the requirement of delivering net gains in biodiversity.

4.22 Green infrastructure will help support the emerging requirements for biodiversity net gain and nature recovery introduced by the Environment Act 2021 by connecting across urban, urban-fringe and rural areas and enhancing landscape character.

5.0 Local Policy Context

5.1 With the national planning context and the requirements for biodiversity net gain and nature recovery in mind, as well as the new Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework, the Council intends to set out a planning policy position of protecting existing green infrastructure assets and to take opportunities to provide new green infrastructure especially as part of new development.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039

5.2 The District Plan 2021-2039 sets out a vision for Mid Sussex which is underpinned by three priority themes (Environment, Economy and Social) that promote the development of sustainable communities. The three priority themes are supported by 15 strategic objectives which help guide the strategy and policies within the District Plan. One of these strategic objectives specifically refers to green infrastructure. The District Plan's objectives relevant to the green and blue infrastructure policy are specified on **Section 4.0**.

5.3 To help address this Strategic Objective, the District Plan includes a policy on green and blue infrastructure. Green infrastructure has close links to other policies in the District Plan including:

- DPS1: Climate Change
- DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
- DPS6: Health and Wellbeing
- DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
- DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
- DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DPN5: Historic Parks and Gardens
- DPB1: Character and Design
- DPT2: Rights of Way and Other Recreational Routes
- DPI5: Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities

[11] The Environment Act 2021. Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/enacted

DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure

The protection of existing and provision of new green and blue infrastructure will be supported because it delivers a range of environmental, social and economic benefits including resilience to the effects of climate change, positive health and wellbeing effects, active travel opportunities, nature-based solutions and supporting nature recovery.

Green and blue infrastructure assets, links and the overall multi-functional network will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

1. Responds to and incorporates existing on-site and off-site green and blue infrastructure into the development design and layout.
2. Provides new green and blue infrastructure integrated into the development design.
3. Contributes to the wider green and blue infrastructure network by taking opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore green and blue infrastructure, and providing and reinforcing links to existing green and blue infrastructure including outside the development's boundaries to develop a connected network of multi-functional greenspace, including incorporating opportunities to contribute to strategic green and blue infrastructure.

Applicants will need to consider from the outset the landscape assets of the site and how they may be used to create part of a coherent landscape structure that links to existing and proposed landscapes to form open space networks whenever possible, revealing existing landscape features.

Green and blue infrastructure design will be expected to demonstrate through a green and blue infrastructure masterplan and statement that opportunities have been taken to:

1. Strengthen connectivity and resilience of ecological networks.
2. Improve resilience to the effects of climate change.
3. Support health and wellbeing by providing access to green space, nature and rights of way.
4. Foster and improve understanding of green and blue infrastructure including natural greenspace and nature conservation features.
5. Improve resilience to the effects of climate change.
6. Support health and wellbeing by providing access to green space, nature and rights of way.
7. Foster and improve understanding of green and blue infrastructure including natural greenspace and nature conservation features.

Green and blue infrastructure design will need to be informed by and respond to existing evidence and guidance on the multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network including Biodiversity Opportunity Area statements, priority and irreplaceable habitats, green infrastructure mapping, ecological surveys, landscape character assessments, local nature recovery networks and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Appropriate arrangements and funding for the future long-term management, maintenance and stewardship of green and blue infrastructure should be identified, implemented and delivered. Where appropriate, the Council will seek to secure this via planning conditions and/or planning obligations.

Green and blue infrastructure assets and links

To help deliver a multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network and to protect existing green and blue infrastructure assets and links, the Council has identified land to be safeguarded from development as shown on the Policies Map.

Land which will be required to create and deliver a multi-functional 'Green Circle' around Burgess Hill will be safeguarded from development and the 'Green Circle' will be allocated for informal open space as shown on the Policies Map.

Important green and blue infrastructure assets and links will be safeguarded and allocated as green and blue infrastructure as shown on the Policies Maps. In some cases, these areas are used for informal open space or linear open space and so the requirements of Policy DPI5: Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities may be relevant.

FIGURE 4 - POLICY DPN3: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

5.4 The objectives of other policy areas can also be delivered through the implementation of green infrastructure, these links are shown in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5 GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE LINKS TO OTHER POLICY AREAS

Neighbourhood Plans

5.5 Parishes within Mid Sussex have proactively developed policies within their neighbourhood plans[12] which support the provision of green infrastructure. The implementation of policy DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure helps strengthen the green infrastructure and open space policies in the existing neighbourhood plans.

[12] Neighbourhood Plans available at: https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/neighbourhood-plans/

5.6 **Hassocks** (2020) and **Slaugham** (2019) both include a policy on green infrastructure which supports developments that include the provision of additional green infrastructure while proposals which result in the loss of existing GI will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will deliver new opportunities which mitigate or compensate its loss whilst ensuring the protection of the existing ecosystem.

5.7 **Haywards Heath** (2016) sets *Objective 6A* under Green Infrastructure to ''Co-ordinate and improve green infrastructure in the Town''. It also states that proposals which result in the loss of open spaces will not be supported, with the exception of the limited circumstances set out in the NPPF.

5.8 Section 8 of the **Burgess Hill** (2016) Neighbourhood Plan states their Green Infrastructure policies cover Areas of Open Space, The Green Circle Network, Nature Conservation and Biodiversity, Local Green Space, Allotment Sites and Footpaths and Cycle Links. With the goal of creating new areas of open space and identifying areas a green lung within the urban area. The protection of the Burgess Hill 'Green Circle' network has been continued in the Mid Sussex District Plan to provide further support to safeguard these areas from development and allocate them as informal open space.

5.9 A number of green infrastructure objectives, policies and projects have been identified in other neighbourhood plans. Most of the neighbourhood plans have included reference to green infrastructure in some form, even if not specifically by name. Examples of green infrastructure policies identified in neighbourhood plans are listed in **Table 3**.

Neighbourhood Plan	Plan Made	Green Infrastructure References
Albourne 2014-2031	Sep-2016	**ALC2**: South Downs National Park **ALC1:** Conserving and enhancing character
Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street 2015-2031	Feb-2017	**AS3:** High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty **AS7:** Ansty Village Centre and Recreation Ground
Ardingly 2013-2031	Nov-2014	**ARD4:** Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace **ARD6**: Local Green Spaces **ARD7:** Allotments **ARD8:** Biodiversity
Ashurst Wood 2015-2031	Mar-2016	**ASW1:** Protection of the Countryside **ASW4:** Recreation Space **ASW3:** Allotments
Balcombe 2016-2031	Sep-2016	**8:** Local Green Spaces
Bolney 2015-2031	Sep-2016	**BOLE1:** Protect and Enhance Biodiversity **BOLE2:** Protect and Enhance the Countryside
Burgess Hill 2015-2031	Jan-2016	**G1:** Areas of Open Space **G2:** The Green Circle **G3:** Nature Conservation and Biodiversity **G4:** Local Green Space

		G5: Allotment Sites **G6:** Footpath and Cycle Links
Copthorne 2021-2031	Jun-2021	**CPN1.3:** Proposals should retain features such as shaws, hedgerows, ponds and brooks, and enhance them, where practicable. **CNP1.4:** Proposals should protect, and encourage the use of, pavements, pathways, footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways, established tracks and twittens, and other Rights of Way. **CNP6:** Local Green Spaces **CNP8 - CA1**: High Weald AONB
Crawley Down 2014-2031	Jan-2016	**CDNP02:** Retention and Enhancement of Recreational and Local Green/Open Spaces **CDNP09:** Protect and Enhance Biodiversity
Cuckfield 2011-2031	May-2014	**CNP2**: Protection of Open Space within the Built-Up Area **CNP4:** Protect and Enhance Biodiversity **CNP5:** Protect and Enhance the Countryside
East Grinstead 2015-2031	Nov-2016	**EG14:** Protection of Open Space **EG15:** Sport, Recreation and Community use Provision Policy **EG16:** Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area
Hassocks 2014-2031	Jul-2020	**2:** Local Green Spaces **3:** Green Infrastructure **4:** Managing Surface Water
Haywards Heath 2014-2031	Dec-2016	**E1:** Green Infrastructure
Horsted Keynes 2016-2031	Feb-2023	**HK7:** Local Green Spaces **HK9:** The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty **HK10:** Protection and Improvement of Natural Habitats
Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common 2014-2031	Mar-2015	**C2:** South Downs National Park
Lindfield and Lindfield Rural 2014-2031	2016	**8:** Allotments
Slaugham 2014-2031	Sep-2019	**3:** Green Infrastructure **5:** Open Space
Turners Hill 2014-2031	Mar-2016	**THP17:** Rights of Way
Twineham 2014-2031	Mar-2016	**TNP4:** Landscape and Environment
West Hoathly 2014-2031	2014	**WHP3:** Rights of Way

TABLE 3 - EXAMPLES OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES IDENTIFIED IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS.

6.0 Local Green Infrastructure

6.1 There are a wide range of existing green infrastructure assets in Mid Sussex District. The concept of GI extends beyond existing designations to increase the asset's function and connectivity, thereby maximising benefits for both the community and wildlife.

6.2 Existing open space and GI typologies in Mid Sussex District can be divided into:

- Allotments
- Amenity Greenspace (0.15ha)
- Parks and Recreation grounds
- Outdoor Sports
- Play (Child)
- Play (Youth)
- Accessible Natural Greenspace
- Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Education
- Outdoor Sport

6.3 A breakdown of the existing provision of open space by typology and parishes is provided in Table 4.

Parish	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Cemeteries and Churchyards
Albourne	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Ansty and Staplefield	0	3	4	3	0	4	1
Ardingly	1	3	2	1	1	2	1
Ashurst Wood	0	1	2	2	1	0	0
Balcombe	2	5	1	3	1	1	1
Bolney	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Burgess Hill	5	59	9	49	13	12	3
Cuckfield	3	12	1	2	1	4	2
East Grinstead	2	50	5	18	2	6	3
Hassocks	1	8	3	4	1	3	2
Haywards Heath	4	50	5	27	5	10	2
Horsted Keynes	1	5	1	1	0	0	1
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common	3	11	7	12	3	3	5
Lindfield	1	14	2	3	0	3	1
Lindfield Rural	1	2	2	1	1	2	1
Slaugham	3	6	3	4	1	3	1
Turners Hill	2	6	1	1	1	0	3
Twineham	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
West Hoathly	1	5	2	3	1	2	0
Worth	2	18	2	3	3	5	2
District	**33**	**259**	**55**	**140**	**37**	**61**	**30**

TABLE 4 - EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION BY TYPOLOGY AND PARISH

6.4 The existing provision of open spaces within the district is intended to be protected and enhanced through Policy DPI5: Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities.

Landscapes and Biodiversity

6.5 Mid Sussex has a high-quality natural environment. Around 60% of the District is covered by protected landscape designations – nearly 50% is within the High Weald National Landscape and is designated an AONB and approximately 11% is within the South Downs National Park. Mid Sussex is the tenth most wooded district in the South East and two-thirds of this woodland is classified as 'ancient', according to the Ancient Woodland Inventory for Mid Sussex (2007)[13].

6.6 There are three landscape character areas within the District: the High Weald, the Low Weald and the Sussex Downs. Mid Sussex contains areas of ancient and ghyll woodland within the stream valleys of the High Weald. There are a significant number of standing water and wetland habitats such as ponds (including historical mill sites and hammer ponds), lakes, reservoirs and water meadows. There are also many linear/ running water habitats of small streams and ditches, for example, the Upper Adur Streams, which act as a network of wildlife corridors throughout the District.

6.7 There are a variety of nature conservation sites within the District which are important for biodiversity, **Table 5** shows a breakdown of these sites. There are no European-designated or Ramsar sites within the District, but the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) lies adjacent to the north-east boundary of Mid Sussex and within Wealden District.

6.8 There are a number of areas of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) distributed throughout the District; the condition of these sites will continue to be monitored as part of Mid Sussex's Annual Monitoring Report.

Designation	Number of Sites	Area	Percentage
Ancient Woodland	-	5298.84ha	15.86%
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	42[14]	639.74ha	1.92%
High Weald AONB	N/A	16,353.16ha	c. 50%
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	50	1097.06ha	3.28%
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	6	164.91ha	0.49%
South Downs National Park (SDNP)	N/A	3736.51ha	c. 11%

TABLE 5 - NATURE CONSERVATION SITES IN MID SUSSEX

Green Infrastructure in Mid Sussex District

6.9 Taken together, the majority of Mid Sussex District has some component of green infrastructure and it is clear that it is multi-functional and forms a connected network. A lot

[13] Available at: http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-licensing-building-control/planning-policy/local-developmentframework/evidence-base/a-revision-of-the-ancient-woodland-inventory-for-mid-sussex-districtcouncil/

[14] 42 SSSI units

of the green infrastructure is concentrated in the same areas as the two landscape designations: High Weald National Landscape (AONB) and South Downs National Park. For example, this is particularly the case for woodland, however, woodland, particularly ghyll woodland, is a character component of the High Weald National Landscape. Biodiversity designations also seem to spatially link to the landscape designations.

6.10 Mid Sussex District benefits from an extensive network of public rights of way totalling around 597.8km including:

- Footpaths – 475.2km
- Bridleways – 117.2km
- Byways – 4.8km
- Restricted byways – 0.6km

6.11 Due to the nature of the open space facilities, these are clustered around the towns and villages. These provide valuable greenspace for built-up areas and opportunities for physical activity. Contributions from developers are also used to improve these facilities.

6.12 Whilst the area of Mid Sussex between the High Weald National Landscape and the South Downs National Park, and around Burgess Hill does not necessarily have formal landscape designations, it does present the opportunity for potential green infrastructure enhancement, particularly through the delivery of the strategic allocation to the north and north-west of Burgess Hill (Brookleigh). There are areas of flood risk here which may provide an opportunity for green infrastructure and nature recovery along the river corridors. There is also a high density of public rights of way which may help to encourage people to access the countryside.

Green Infrastructure Assets

6.13 District Plan Policy DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure seeks to identify and safeguard specific green infrastructure assets. The green infrastructure assets and linear corridors to be safeguarded are predominantly focused on the three towns (Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath) because they act as local green space that is mainly accessible, but which also provides connectivity to the wider countryside and acts as a wildlife corridor.

6.14 The appendices provide further details on the following green infrastructure assets that will be safeguarded and allocated as informal open space or linear open space. These green infrastructure assets are also shown on the Policies Maps.

Burgess Hill Green Circle

6.15 Land which will be required to create and deliver a multi-functional 'Green Circle' around Burgess Hill will be safeguarded from development. In particular, the following areas will be safeguarded as green and blue infrastructure and allocated for informal open space:

- Batchelors Field
- Land south of Greenlands Drive
- Nightingale Lane Meadows/Nightingale Lane Open Space
- Hammonds Ridge Meadows
- Maltings Farm
- Malthouse Lane Meadows

- Eastlands Farm
- Grassmere Meadow
- Pangdene Lane Meadows
- Land north of Sussex Way
- Land to the north of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park
- Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve
- Land along the Railway line to the north and south of Wivelsfield Station
- Land in the Northern Arc/ Brookleigh

East Grinstead

6.16 The following areas will be safeguarded and designated as green and blue infrastructure in East Grinstead. In some cases, these areas are used for informal open space or linear open space and it should be noted that each designation may have different primary functions and green and blue infrastructure benefits:

- East Court & Ashplats Wood
- Brooklands Park
- Spring Copse
- St. Margaret's Loop
- A22 Beeching Way
- Forest Way
- Worth Way (East Grinstead and Worth)

Haywards Heath

6.17 The following areas will be safeguarded and designated as green and blue infrastructure in Haywards Heath. In some cases, these areas are used for informal open space or linear open space and it should be noted that each designation may have different primary functions and green and blue infrastructure benefits:

- Land from Turvey Wood/Franklands Wood to the Scrase Valley
- Ashenground and Bolnore Woods
- Heath Recreation Ground
- Blunts Wood and Paiges Meadow LNR

Linear open space

6.18 The following areas will be safeguarded and designated as green and blue infrastructure. In some cases, these areas are used for informal open space or linear open space and it should be noted that each designation may have different primary functions and green and blue infrastructure benefits:

- Worth Way
- Forest Way

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Green and blue infrastructure delivers a range of environmental, social and economic benefits including resilience to climate change, positive health and wellbeing effects, active travel opportunities, nature-based solutions and supporting nature recovery.

7.2 Green and blue infrastructure functions at a variety of scales from individual street trees to large woodland; it is found from the local to the landscape scale. Green and blue infrastructure can also be formed of linear features such as roadside verges, rights of way and rivers.

7.3 District Plan Objectives 1 and 4 highlight the importance of maintaining and creating an accessible green infrastructure network. Objectives 5, 6 and 15 are the strategic objectives behind Policy DPN3 (To ensure the protection of historical and visual qualities of the built environment, promote the development of sustainable communities, and create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle).

7.4 Policy **DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure** will help the Council deliver a multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network and to protect existing green and blue infrastructure assets and links.

7.5 Important green and blue infrastructure assets and links will be safeguarded and allocated as green and blue infrastructure. These areas have been highlighted in Section 6 and further information is provided in the appendices.

7.6 The green and blue infrastructure objectives and policies of the emerging District Plan are backed by paragraphs 20, 96, 159, 181 and 192 of the NPPF, as set out in Section 4.5. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF specifically highlights the need for local planning authorities to address the need for green infrastructure in their strategic policies in order to conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

7.7 These policies are supported by the NPPG which makes it clear that policies can identify the location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks and set out appropriate policies for their protection and enhancement.

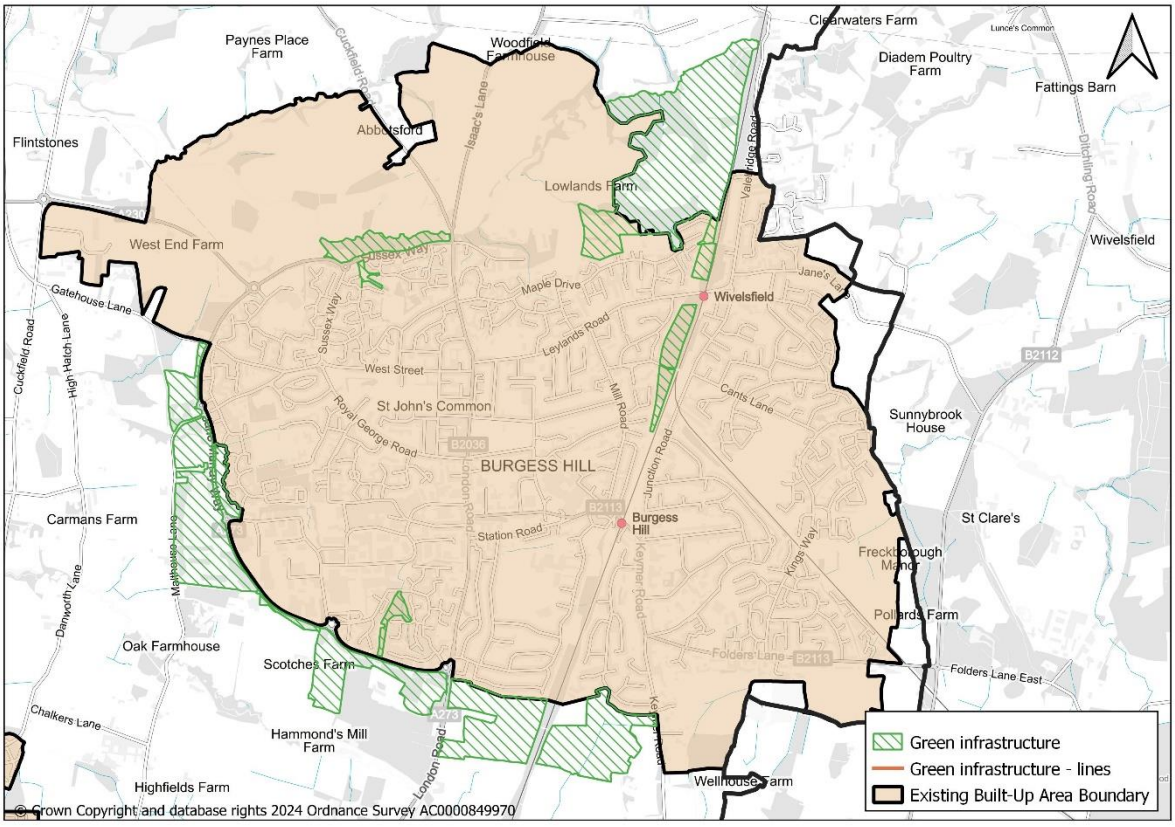
7.8 In response to this, the District Plan includes a specific policy for Green and Blue Infrastructure and requirements for Green and Blue Infrastructure on Significant Sites are set out in Policy DPSC GEN, bullet point 14.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 The appendices set out information relating to the green infrastructure assets and links to be safeguarded through Policy DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Burgess Hill

GI Asset	Burgess Hill Green Circle		
Settlement	Burgess Hill	**Parish**	Burgess Hill, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common
GI Asset Size	133.31 ha	**Ownership**	Mid Sussex District Council, Burgess Hill Town Council

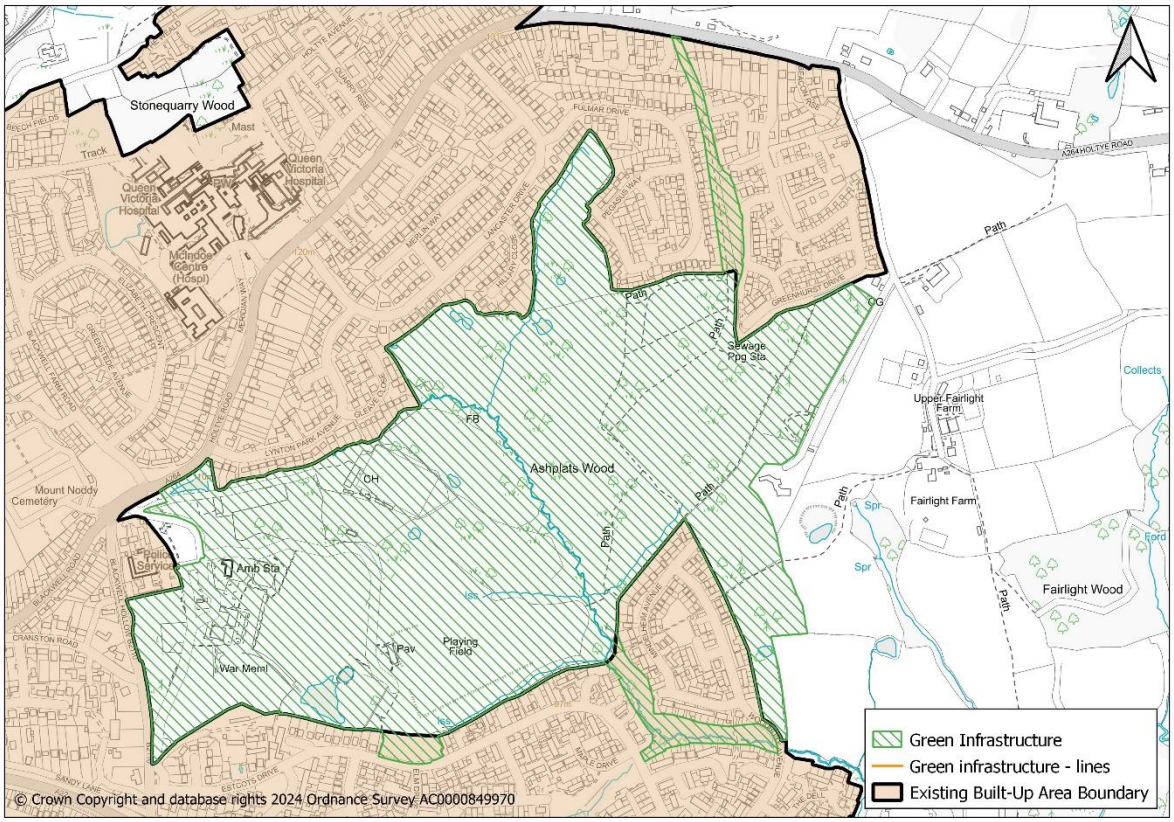


Habitat(s)	Meadows, grassland, hedgerows, woodland including ancient woodland, ponds, streams
Designations	Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve Bedelands Local Wildlife Site Burgess Hill Railway Lands Local Wildlife Site Burgess Hill Green Crescent Biodiversity Opportunity Area Deciduous woodland priority habitat

Public Access	Accessible informal open space Public art trail Public rights of way run through the Green Circle with links to the wider countryside
GI Functions	Nature conservation Ecological corridor with connections to the wider countryside Recreation Health and wellbeing
Opportunities	The Burgess Hill Green Circle is an aspiration to create a ring of green open spaces around Burgess Hill. There are or will be footpaths, cycle tracks and bridleways linking the greenspaces to the countryside and town centre forming a series of spokes. The Brookleigh development will provide for the continuation of the existing Green Circle creating increased opportunities for recreation and biodiversity. The Burgess Hill Green Circle is also a Biodiversity Opportunity Area which may provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity as part of biodiversity net gain and nature recovery including through the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Summary	The Green Circle comprises linked areas of informal open space around Burgess Hill. The majority of the land is in public ownership and managed for nature conservation and recreation. The areas that form the Burgess Hill Green Circle to be allocated for informal open space include: • Batchelors Field • Land south of Greenlands Drive • Nightingale Lane Meadows/ Nightingale Lane Open Space • Hammonds Ridge Meadows • Maltings Farm • Malthouse Lane Meadows • Eastlands Farm • Grassmere Meadow • Pangdene Lane Meadows • Land north of Sussex Way • Land to the north of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park • Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve • Land along the railway line to the north and south of Wivelsfield Station • Land in the Northern Arc/ Brookleigh

East Grinstead

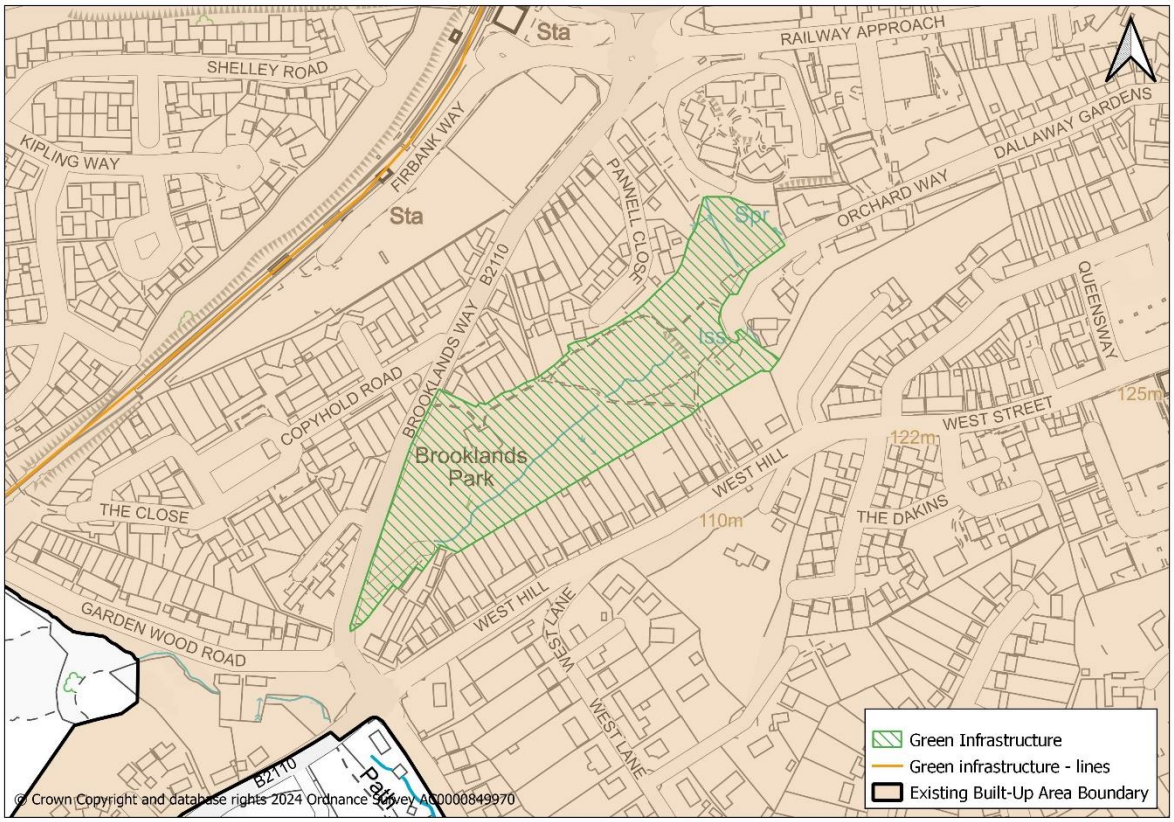
GI Asset	East Court & Ashplats Wood		
Settlement	East Grinstead	**Parish**	East Grinstead
GI Asset Size	56.87ha	**Ownership**	Charitable trust and leased to Mid Sussex District Council



Habitat	Ancient and semi-natural woodland, woodland glades of neutral grassland, gill stream, ponds
Designations	High Weald National Landscape (AONB) Ashplats Wood Local Wildlife Site East Court & Ashplats Wood SANG Lowland mixed deciduous woodland priority habitat Woodpasture and parkland priority habitat

Public Access	There is a network of paths running through the woodland with access to adjacent residential streets and East Court playing fields. There are links to public rights of way providing opportunities to connect to the wider countryside. There is a car park at East Court and adjacent to the East Court playing fields and pavilion.
GI Functions	Ecological connectivity to additional woodland to the east and the wider countryside. Recreation including walking and dog walking.
Opportunities	Enhanced woodland management including the potential for coppicing and removal of invasive species. Improved pond management. Improved path maintenance to encourage greater public use.
Summary	As part of the mitigation approach for the Ashdown Forest SPA, the East Court & Ashplats Wood SANG is an important green infrastructure asset and area of informal recreation.

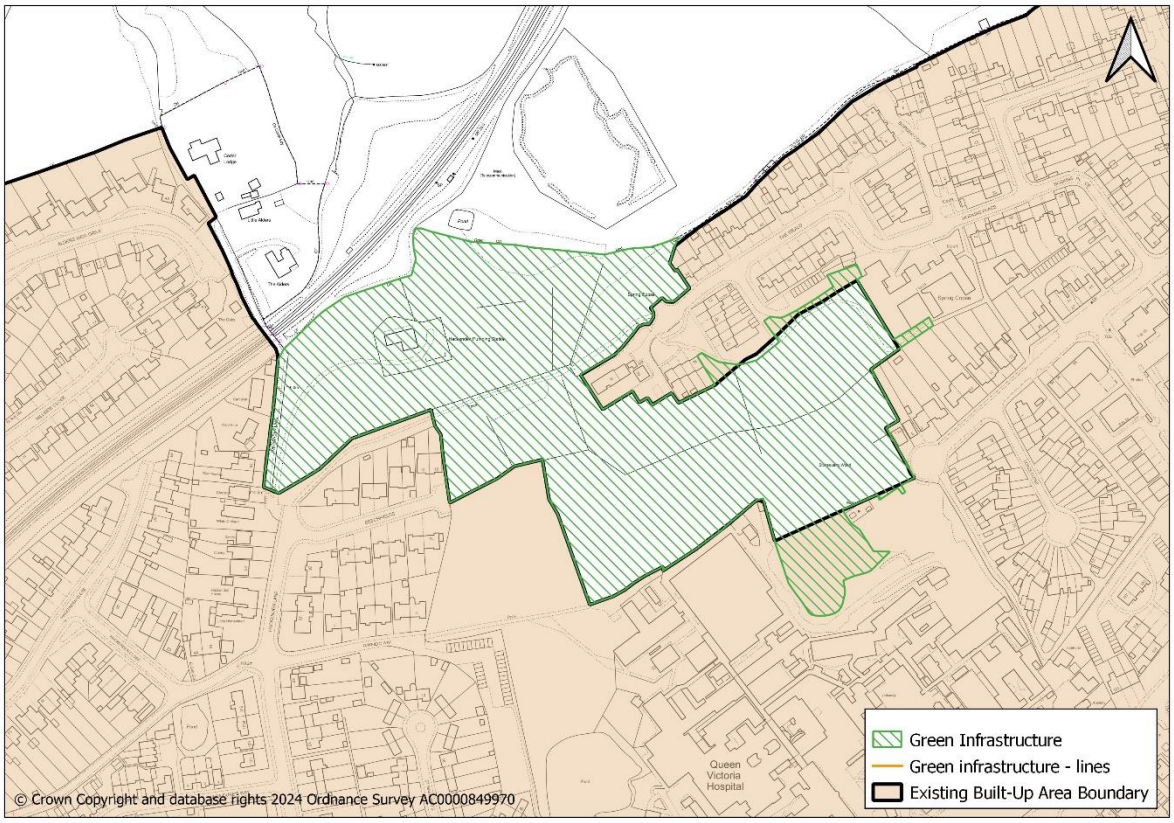
GI Asset	Brooklands Park		
Settlement	East Grinstead	Parish	East Grinstead
GI Asset Size	3.10ha	Ownership	Mid Sussex District Council



Habitat(s)	Stream, woodland, grassland
Designations	Tree Preservation Orders
Public Access	Full public access as the site is a park; there is a car park and connectivity with the surrounding streets.
GI Functions	Ecological connectivity to the Hill Place Farm SANG to the south-west. The stream provides ecological connectivity and may be an opportunity for sustainable flood management. Recreation including walking, dog walking, play and picnics. This has important links to health and wellbeing. This site has been part of the BLUE Campaign's Rewilding Britain project.

Opportunities	Brooklands Park has been identified as a location for parks improvements. A masterplan has been prepared and funding is being sought. The overarching themes for the improvements are nature, play, access and water. There are proposals to enhance the woodland and wildflower meadows, provide a wider variety of play experiences, improved path, more seating and picnic areas, and protection of the stream along with better access to the stream.
Summary	The masterplan for Brooklands Park demonstrates commitment by Mid Sussex District Council to improve this green space thus showing support for its green infrastructure value. This green infrastructure asset provides multiple GI functions.

GI Asset	Spring Copse, East Grinstead		
Settlement	East Grinstead	**Parish**	East Grinstead
GI Asset Size	3.04 ha	**Ownership**	Mid Sussex District Council and other landowners



Habitat(s)	Woodland and scrub, grassland, informal open space
Designations	Area Tree Preservation Order
Public Access	A public right of way runs through the site and along the site boundaries
GI Functions	Biodiversity Ecological connectivity Climate resilience through cooling and carbon sequestration
Opportunities	Enhanced management of the woodland

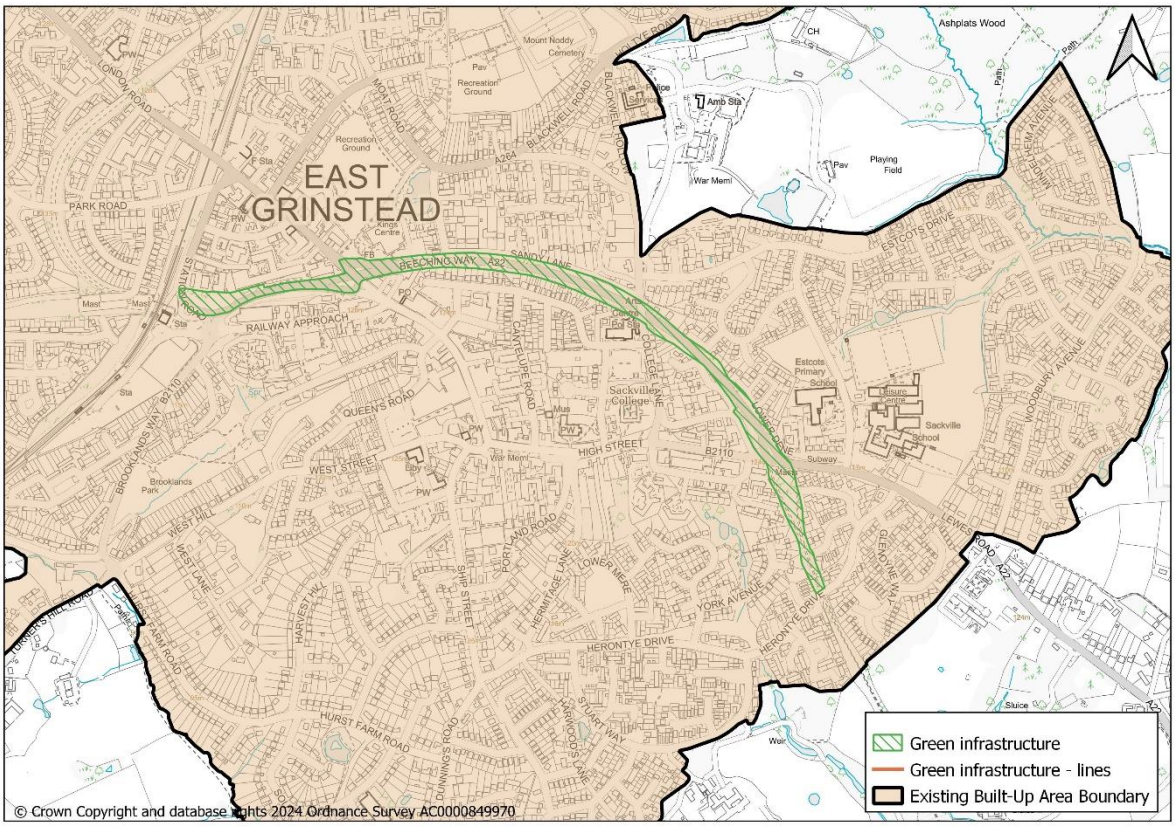
	Ecological corridor connecting green space in the town to the wider countryside Informal recreation
Summary	This green infrastructure asset is a valuable area of woodland in East Grinstead. Located on the edge of the town, it provides ecological connectivity to the wider countryside.

GI Asset	St. Margaret's Loop		
Settlement	East Grinstead	**Parish**	East Grinstead
GI Asset Size	3.30ha	**Ownership**	Multiple ownership

Habitat	Former railway cutting and disused railway corridor that is now largely overgrown
Designations	Part of the Worth Way Local Wildlife Site Area Tree Preservation Order
Public Access	None/ restricted A public right of way crosses the site along a footbridge to the north, joining Charlwoods Road with Green Hedges Avenue
GI Functions	Ecological corridor
Opportunities	Located in the centre of East Grinstead, there is an opportunity to enable public access to create a pedestrian and cycle route providing connections to the railway station and town centre. It will also link to the Worth Way

	route. This is supported by Policy SS7 of the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan.
Summary	Although the site is currently a disused railway corridor with restricted public access, it is an ecological corridor within an urban area. There may be future opportunities to increase the public access.

GI Asset	A22 Beeching Way		
Settlement	East Grinstead	**Parish**	East Grinstead
GI Asset Size	4.75ha	**Ownership**	West Sussex County Council

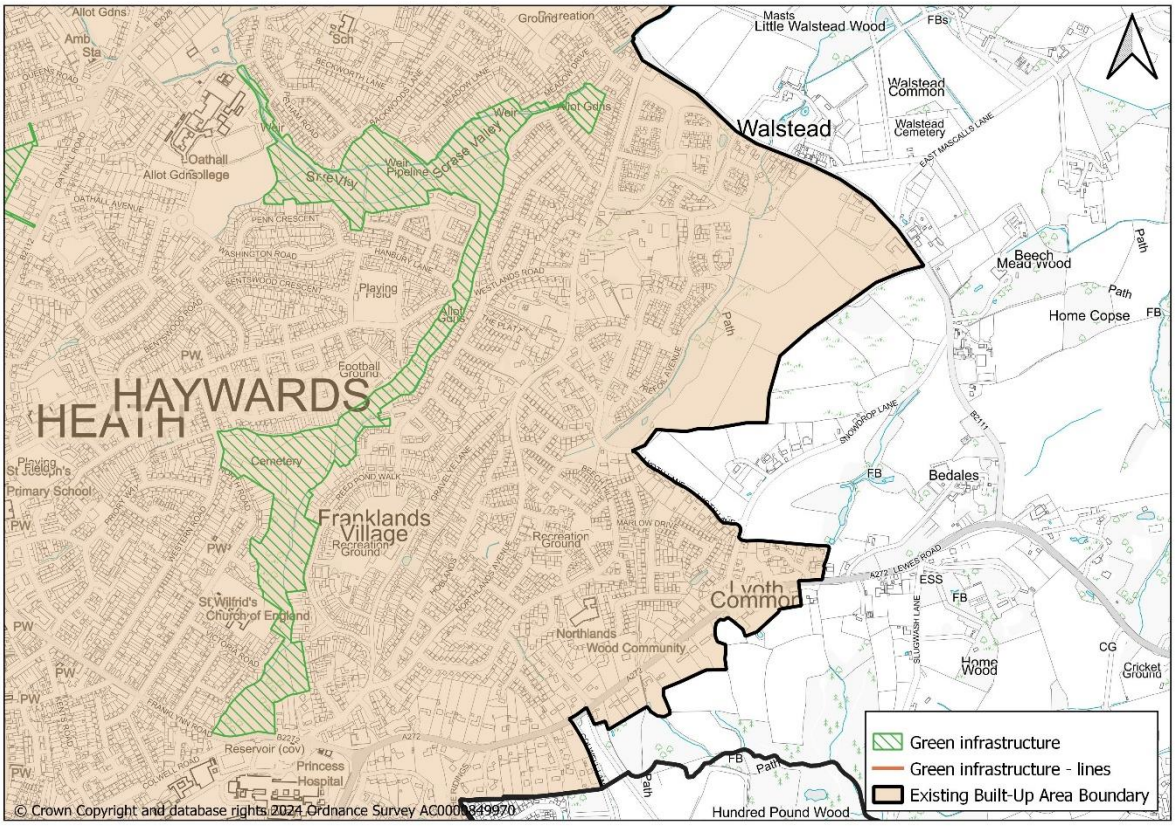


Habitat(s)	Mature trees and scrub habitats on the verges and embankments either side of the road
Designations	None
Public Access	No pedestrian access
GI Functions	Ecological connectivity from the Worth Way through the centre of East Grinstead to the outskirts and the wider countryside via the Forest Way
Opportunities	Enhanced management of the trees and scrub

Summary	Although a busy road, the A22 Beeching Way is a green corridor through East Grinstead providing connectivity between the Worth Way and the Forest Way

Haywards Heath

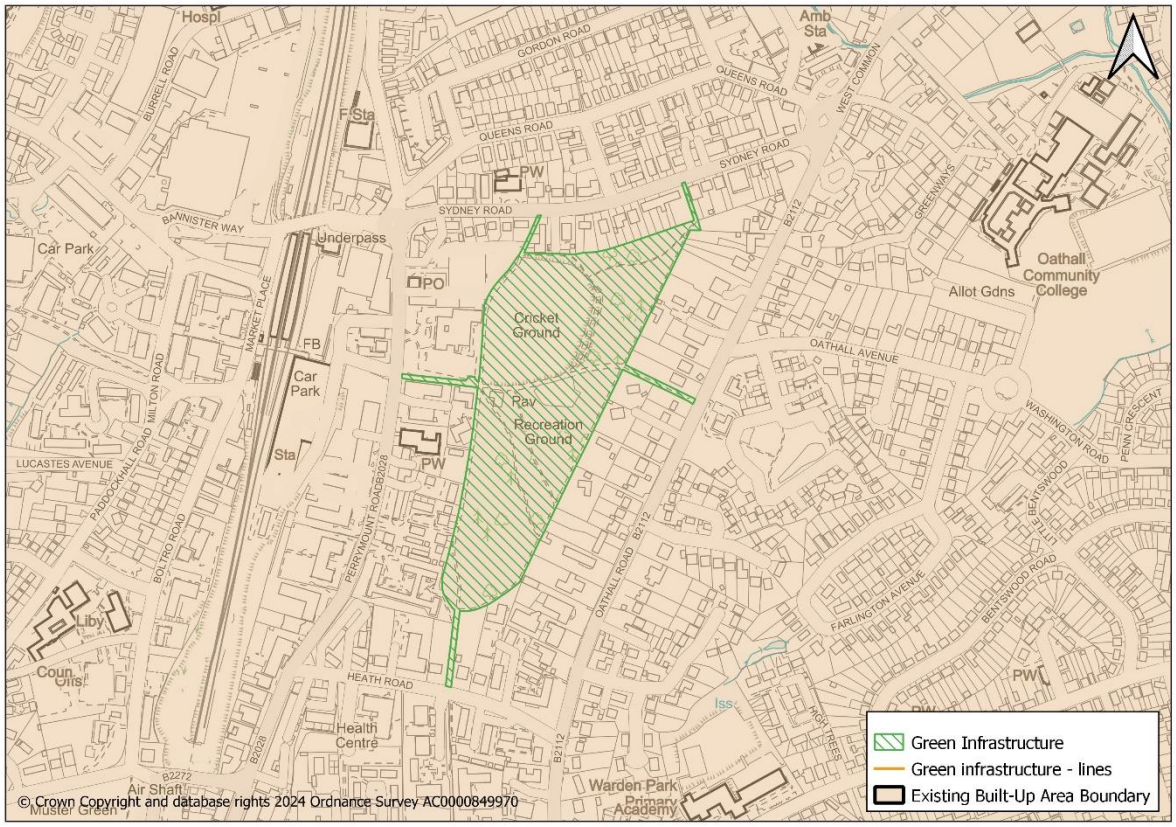
GI Asset	**Land from Turvey Wood/ Franklands Wood to the Scrase Valley**		
Settlement	Haywards Heath, Linfield	**Parish**	Haywards Heath, Lindfield
GI Asset Size	11.46ha	**Ownership**	Mid Sussex District Council, Haywards Heath Town Council, private ownership



Habitat	Wetland, grassland, woodland and scrub, including ancient woodland, Scrase stream, allotments, cemetery, informal open space
Designations	Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve Scrase Valley Local Wildlife Site Western Road Cemetery Local Wildlife Site Area Tree Preservation Order Deciduous woodland priority habitat

	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat America Lane allotments
Public Access	There is public access to the Scrase Valley LNR and Western Road Cemetery. The allotments are accessed by allotment holders. There is informal access to the land between Silver Birches and Hanbury Park Stadium football ground.
GI Functions	Nature conservation Ecological corridor Visual amenity Allotments (local food production) Recreation Flood risk management
Opportunities	There may be opportunities to enhance public access and create a linear path from the A272 at the Princess Royal Hospital to the Scrase Valley LNR. This would need to be subject to further feasibility work, funding and stakeholder engagement.
Summary	As a linear corridor in an urban area comprising several types of open space and linking existing nature conservation designations, this is a valuable green infrastructure asset for Haywards Heath.

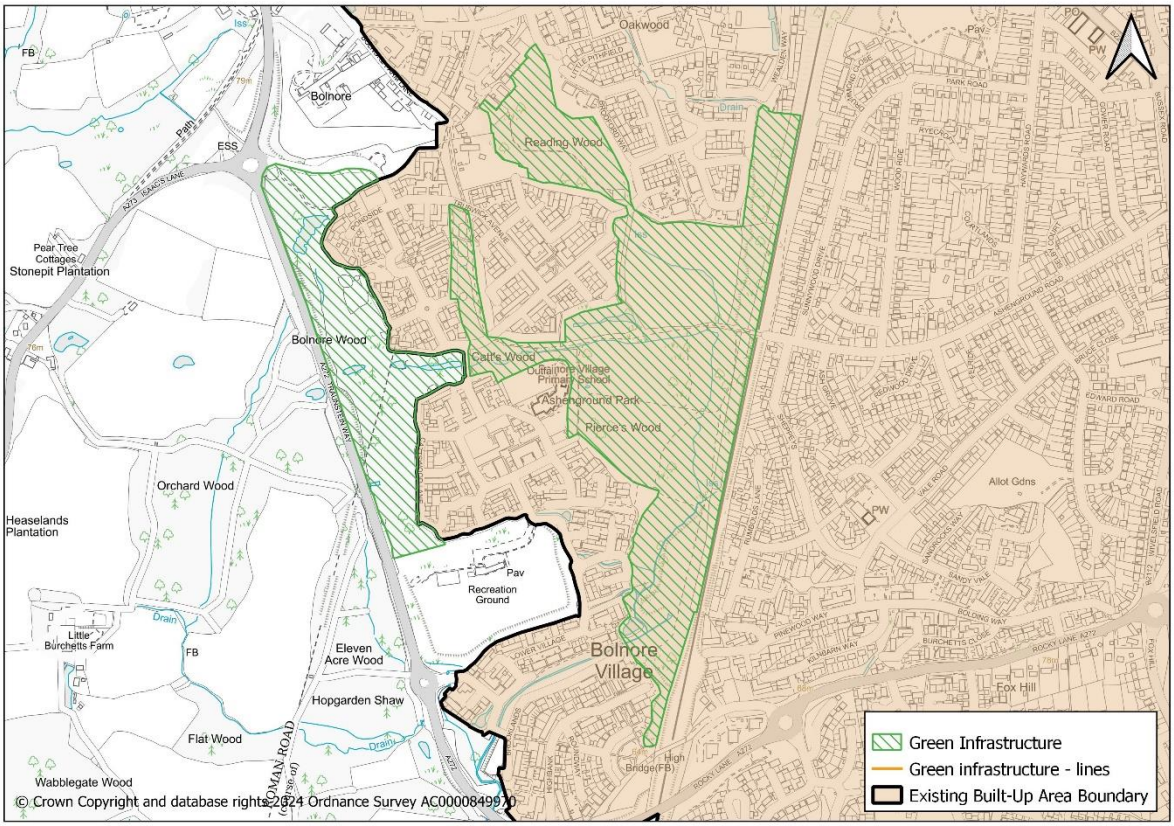
GI Asset	Heath Recreation Ground		
Settlement	Haywards Heath	**Parish**	Haywards Heath
GI Asset Size	6.14 ha	**Ownership**	Mid Sussex District Council



Habitat(s)	Woodland and scrub, outdoor play space, grassland
Designations	The Heath Conservation Area
Public Access	Full public access as the site is a park; public rights of way run across the site and along the boundary. Haywards Heath Cricket Club and cricket pitch, as well as a children's playground are within the site.
GI Functions	Nature conservation Ecological corridor Visual amenity Recreation
Opportunities	There are opportunities for this site to become part of the BLUE Campaign's Rewilding Britain project.

Summary	This site is an area of green space in Haywards Heath and may form a stepping stone for wildlife between other sites in Haywards Heath and the wider countryside.

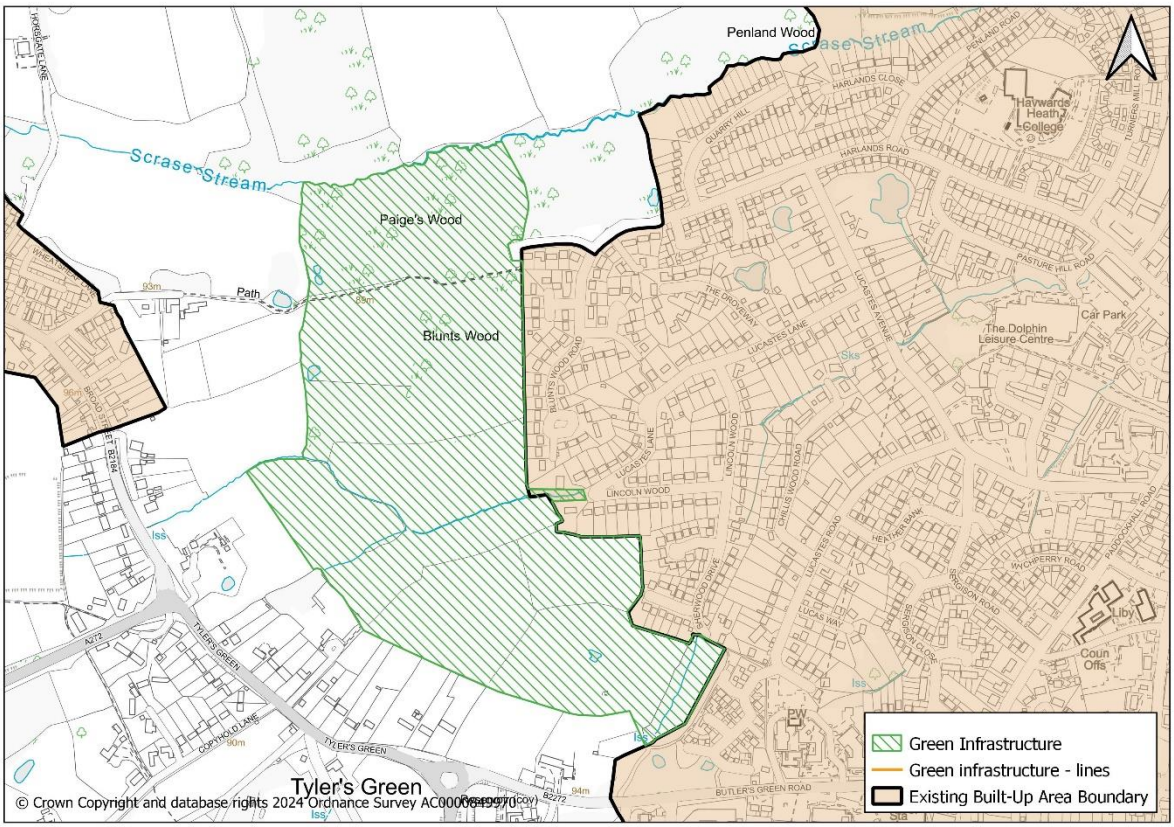
GI Asset	Ashenground and Bolnore Woods		
Settlement	Haywards Heath	**Parish**	Haywards Heath
GI Asset Size	24.77ha (AW)	**Ownership**	Mid Sussex District Council and other landowners



Habitat	Woodland including ancient woodland, grassland, mosaic habitats, ponds
Designations	Ashenground and Bolnore Woods Local Nature Reserve Catt's Wood Complex & Meadows Local Wildlife Site Deciduous woodland priority habitat
Public Access	A public right of way runs across the site and there are permissive paths through the woods Outdoor play space and multi-functional green space
GI Functions	Nature conservation Ecological corridor Recreation Visual amenity

Opportunities	There are opportunities for enhanced management including management of invasive non-native species.
Summary	The site has a number of interconnected blocks of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, much of which is also species-rich ancient woodland. The site is located on the edge of Haywards Heath and provides an accessible means for the local community to access nature.

GI Asset	Blunts Wood and Paiges Meadow LNR		
Settlement	Haywards Heath	Parish	Haywards Heath
GI Asset Size	28.65ha	Ownership	Mid Sussex District Council

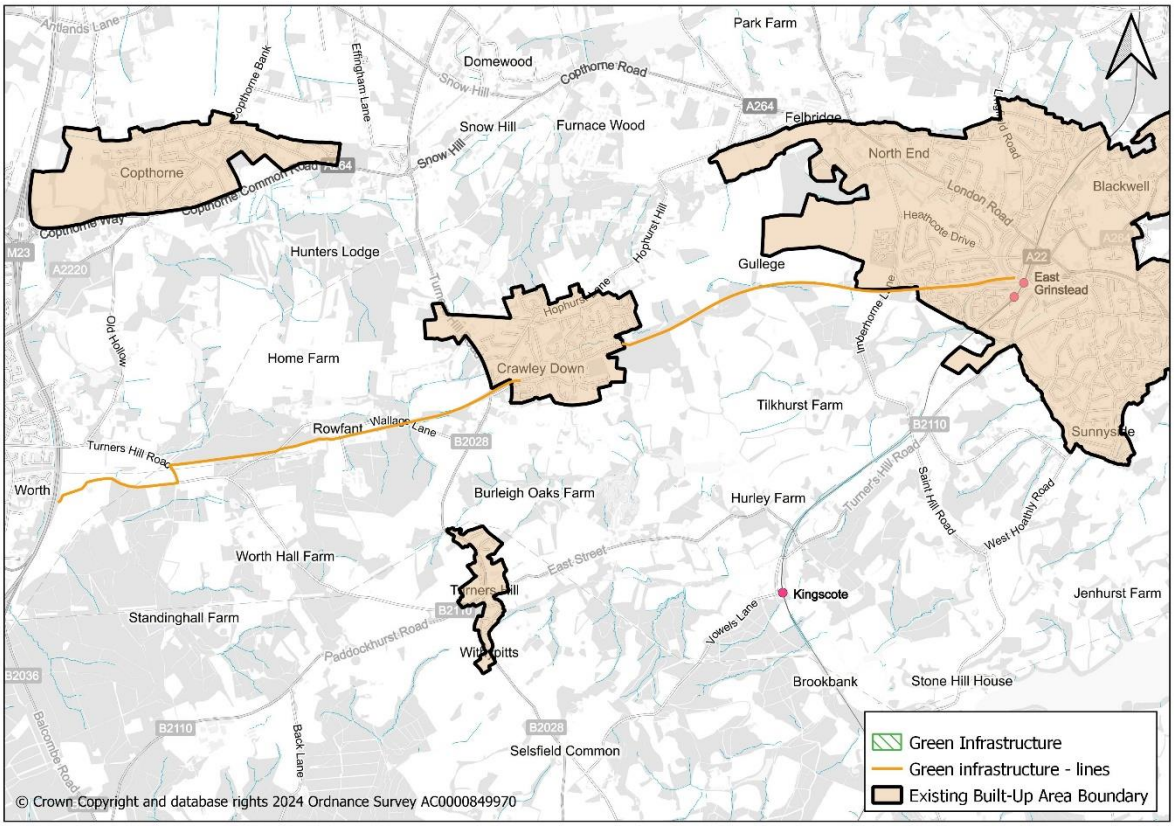


Habitat(s)	Deciduous woodland, meadows, ancient hedges and wetland, outdoor play space, watercourses and ponds
Designations	Local Nature Reserve Local Wildlife Site
Public Access	There is public access to the site and a public right of way runs across the site.
GI Functions	Nature conservation Ecological corridor Flood risk management Recreation Visual amenity

Opportunities	There are opportunities to increase the coppicing to benefit wildlife.
Summary	The site has a number of diverse habitats including woodland and meadows. The site is located on the edge of Haywards Heath and provides an accessible means for the local community to access nature.

Linear green infrastructure

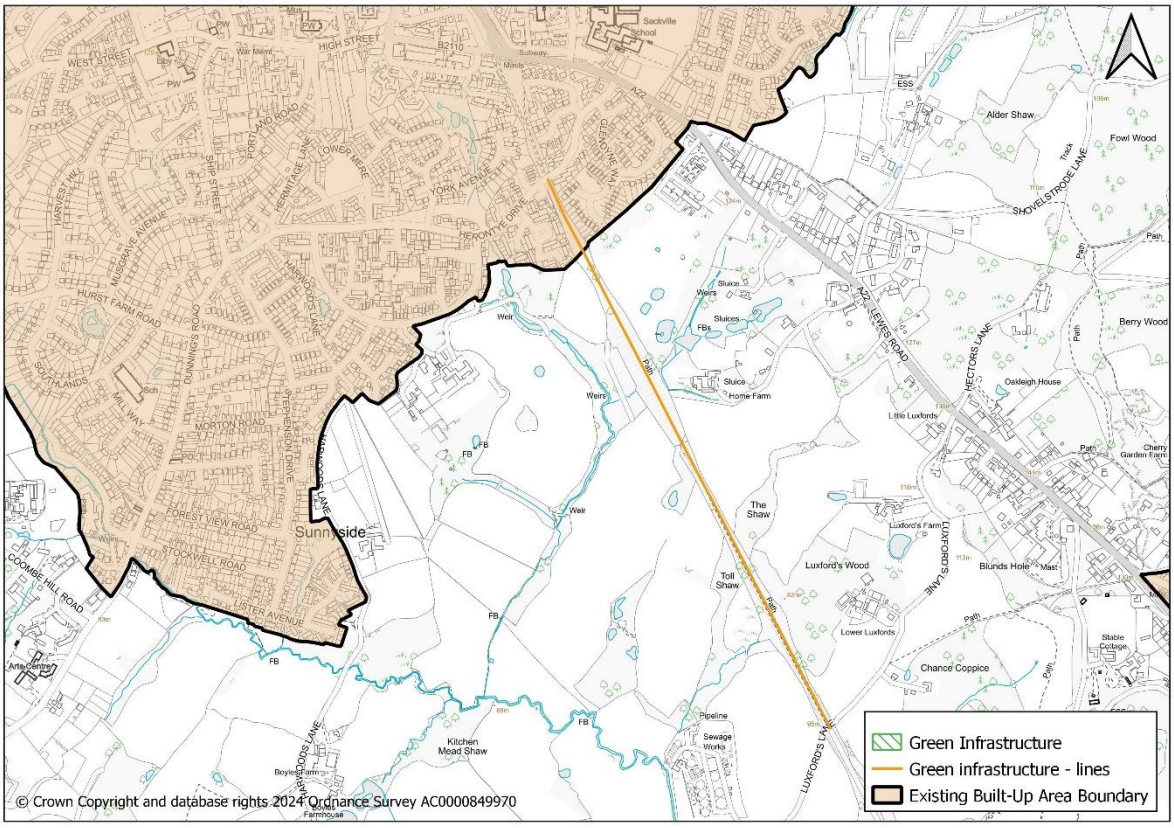
GI Asset	**Worth Way**		
Settlement	East Grinstead, Crawley Down	**Parish**	East Grinstead, Worth
GI Asset Size	8.12 km	**Ownership**	Managed by Sustrans as custodians of the National Cycle Network and West Sussex County Council



Habitat	Tree-lined path along a disused railway line, parcels of ancient woodland adjacent to the route
Designations	Worth Way Local Wildlife Site (part of the route) National Cycle Network Route 21 (London to Eastbourne) Deciduous woodland priority habitat

Public Access	The Worth Way is a 7-mile route between Crawley and East Grinstead and is part of the National Cycle Network Route 21. It can be accessed from Three Bridges, Crawley Down and East Grinstead. The Worth Way can be linked to the Forest Way through the town centre of East Grinstead. Other public rights of way provide opportunities to link to the wider countryside.
GI Functions	Pedestrian, cycle and equestrian route following a disused railway line Recreation Ecological corridor
Opportunities	There are opportunities for enhanced management and increased promotion of the route.
Summary	This linear path and open space is an important green infrastructure asset providing recreation opportunities in the form of a pedestrian and cycle route.

GI Asset	Forest Way		
Settlement	East Grinstead	**Parish**	East Grinstead, Ashurst Wood
GI Asset Size	1.33km	**Ownership**	East Sussex County Council, but managed by Sustrans and the East Sussex County Council Rights of Way & Countryside Maintenance team



Habitat	Tree-lined path along a disused railway embankment
Designations	High Weald National Landscape (AONB) National Cycle Network Route 21 (London to Eastbourne) Deciduous woodland priority habitat
Public Access	The Forest Way part of the National Cycle Network Route 21 is a 10-mile traffic-free route linking East Grinstead and Groombridge in East Sussex via Forest Row and Hartfield also both in East Sussex.

	The Forest Way can be linked to the Worth Way through the town centre of East Grinstead. Other public rights of way provide opportunities to link to the wider countryside.
GI Functions	Pedestrian and cycle route following a disused railway line Recreation Ecological corridor
Opportunities	There are opportunities for enhanced management and increased promotion of the route.
Summary	As part of the National Cycle Network, this linear path and open space is an important green infrastructure asset providing recreation opportunities in the form of a pedestrian and cycle route.