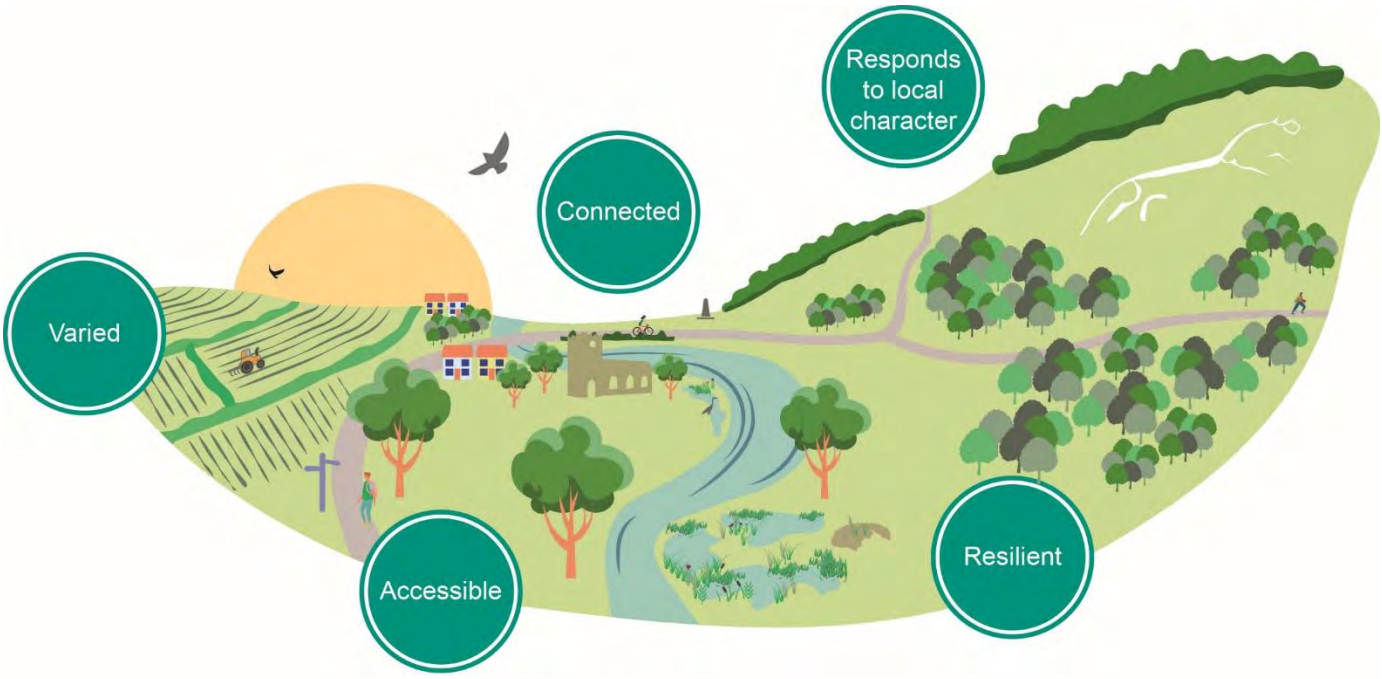
Green Infrastructure Strategy and Open Space Study

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Final Report
Prepared by LUC
September 2024



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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Strategy

1. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils commissioned LUC to develop an updated Green Infrastructure Strategy and Open Space Study to support the delivery of the Joint Local Plan. The delivery of high quality green infrastructure and open space underpins the draft Joint Local Plan objectives on achieving net zero carbon targets, nature recovery, health and the creation of great places. Consideration of both green infrastructure and open space within this report provides an integrated evidence base for the districts.

2. The overarching aim of this report is to guide the planning of a network of strategic multi-functional greenspaces within the districts, helping to deliver a range of environmental, economic and societal benefits. The document underpins strategic objectives and policies that will protect and enhance the green infrastructure network and open space provision within the districts.

Approach to the Strategy

3. The approach to the Strategy has followed current and best practice methodologies relating to the assessment of both green infrastructure and open space. This has included the integration of wider evidence base tools which outline the strategic case for investment in GI and multi-functional open space provision.

Green infrastructure

4. The Strategy has been updated to reflect changes since publication of the previous green infrastructure evidence for the districts in 2017. These updates include the integration of the mapping, principles and Headline Standards incorporated within the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. This guidance provides a mechanism to support the delivery of well planned,

designed and maintained green infrastructure. Furthermore, the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework provides a key link between other ongoing initiatives; including Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Nature Recovery Plans and natural capital.

Open space

5. Open space is an important component of green infrastructure and is recognised as such in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. The Accessible Greenspace Standard forms one of the Headline Standards presented in this guidance tool. The standard sets out the expected quantity, accessibility and quality of open space.

6. The updated methodology for the study of open space provision and standards within the districts reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, informed by the Accessible Greenspace Standard, developed as part of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. Application of the Accessible Greenspace Standard has been used as the basis for the assessment of greenspace provision across the districts, supplemented with local understanding and datasets.

The overarching vision for green infrastructure and open space

7. The vision for green infrastructure within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts aims to set the roadmap for the delivery of an integrated green infrastructure network. Developed in close collaboration with the Councils, the overarching vision has been informed by feedback from stakeholder consultation.

8. Supported by a series of strategic objectives for green infrastructure, the overarching vision has been developed to ensure alignment with the underpinning ambitions of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Corporate Plans, the vision and objectives of the (draft) Joint Local Plan and the

Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. The vision will help to deliver enhancements to the GI network and form the basis for monitoring its future success.

Overarching vision

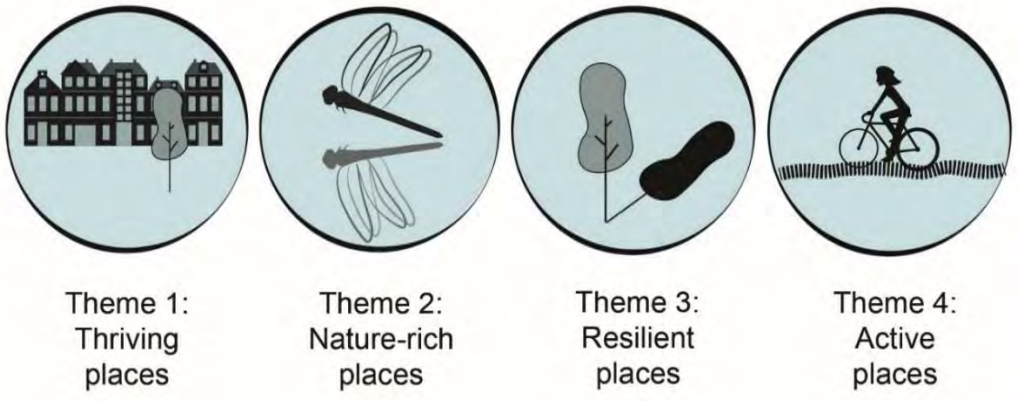
Deliver a connected green and blue network to build climate resilient landscapes, support sustainable development, grow thriving and healthy communities and promote local distinctiveness for the benefit of present and future generations.

Key findings

Green infrastructure

9. Informed by the Natural England Green Infrastructure Principles Wheel, a 'themed' approach was adopted to explore the existing green infrastructure assets within the districts, consider key needs and explore deficiencies within the existing network. The four themes are outlined below in **Figure 1:**

Figure 1: The themes used to structure the analysis of existing green infrastructure provision in the districts



10. The Strategy provides an overview of the current green infrastructure network across the districts through analysis of existing mapping, available datasets and baseline material. Existing green infrastructure assets and patterns of provision are explored, with key issues (see **Figure 2**) and needs identified. This baseline review was completed with the aim of informing the development of spatially-specific priority areas for green infrastructure investment.

Green infrastructure priority areas

11. The findings of the analysis of local needs and existing green infrastructure deficiencies were used to identify green infrastructure priority areas. These areas will guide the future delivery and investment in green infrastructure across the districts. The green infrastructure priority areas are spatially specific and identify areas where similar and unified green infrastructure interventions offer the opportunity to enhance the network at the strategic scale.

12. The green infrastructure priority areas are listed below:

- South Oxford Fringes;
- Thame Clay Vale;
- Corallian Ridge;
- Central Thames Valley;
- Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp;
- Chalk Escarpment and Foothills; and
- Chilterns Wooded Plateau.

13. The green infrastructure priority areas are illustrated on **Figure 3.** The location of the seven Tier 1 settlements across the districts and the distribution of allocated sites are also shown for context.

Figure 2: Summary of key issues and local needs



Figure 3: Green infrastructure priority areas

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White House Districts
Watercourses
Woodland cover
Tier 1 settlements
Residential allocations
Employment allocations
Other allocations

Abingdon-on-Thames
Didcot
Faringdon
Henley-on-Thames
Thame
Wallingford
Wantage

GI Priority Areas

1. Oxford Fringes
2. Thame Clay Vale
3. Corallian Ridge
4. Central Thames Valley
5. Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp
6. Chalk Escarpment and Foothills
7. Chilterns Wooded Plateau

0 2 4 km

Map scale 1:175,000 @ A3

Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS
Forestry Commission. Natural England. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

14. Each of the seven green infrastructure priority areas provide a streamlined approach to the identification and delivery of green infrastructure interventions. Their aim is to help policymakers, developers, community groups and residents deliver appropriate, multi-functional and resilient green infrastructure across the districts. Existing green infrastructure assets within the boundary of each green infrastructure priority area are summarised and supplemented with an overview of potential green infrastructure opportunities.

Action plans

15. Within each green infrastructure priority area, three 'key green infrastructure projects' have been identified, providing a variety of project types, scales and costs. These projects are intended to be taken forward by various partners as and when funding becomes available. All key projects have been incorporated into a series of detailed action plan profiles to promote their future delivery.

16. The structure of the action plan profiles is set out below:

- Purpose and justification for inclusion of key green infrastructure project;
- Description of key green infrastructure project;
- Key elements of key green infrastructure project;
- Indicative timescale:
- Potential delivery partners:
- Indicative cost:
- Funding mechanisms; and
- Next steps

17. Whilst some projects are spatially specific, the principles of other key green infrastructure projects offer the opportunity to be replicated across the districts.

Open space

18. Open spaces were assessed in terms of quantity, accessibility, quality and value. Each open space was assigned a typology based on primary function. Some typologies were also assigned a hierarchy (based on size). The final dataset comprised 1,379 sites, providing over 5,000 hectares of greenspace / open space.

Quantity

19. The findings indicate that total provision of open space across the districts is 17.74 hectares per 1,000 of the population. Based on projections of population increase to 2041, and assuming no further open space is delivered within this time period, this figure would reduce to 13.33 hectares per 1,000 of the population. This would equate to approximately 16.04 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population.

20. This quantum is significantly greater than the target of 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population set out in Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. However, the result is skewed due to the number of large natural greenspaces, often located outside of settlements within the districts. The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework highlights the importance of greenspaces located close to homes, providing day-to-day opportunities for engagement with nature.

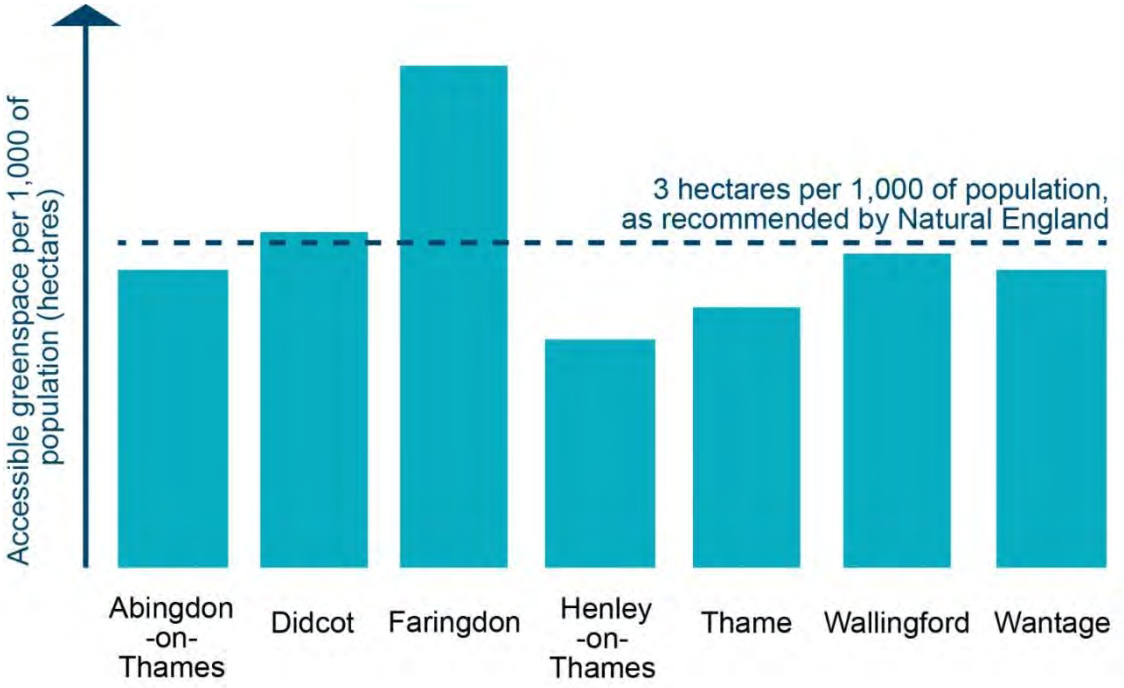
21. Analysis of open space provision within each of the Tier 1 settlements is summarised in **Figure 4.**

Quality and value

22. A sample of 200 sites (parks and gardens, recreation grounds, natural greenspace or amenity greenspaces) were visited throughout the districts and

subject to a detailed audit based on the Green Flag Award themes. The results indicate a generally high level of quality and value across the districts. An additional play audit was undertaken for provision for children and teenagers.

Figure 4: Provision of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of population (hectares) within the Tier 1 settlements



Accessibility

23. Access to open space varies across the districts. Measures of accessibility are based on straight-line distances, with a buffer set for different typologies and hierarchies of open space. Access catchments and size thresholds used within the Strategy have been based on the recommended distances set out in Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework and Fields in Trust guidance, as listed below in **Table 1.**

Table 1: Access catchments and size thresholds

Typology	Hierarchy	Access Catchment (km)	Minimum size (hectares)
Accessible greenspace	District	5,000	100
Accessible greenspace	Wider neighbourhood	2,000	20
Accessible greenspace	Neighbourhood	1,000	10
Accessible greenspace	Local	300	2
Accessible greenspace	Doorstep	200	0.5
Accessible greenspace	Pocket	100	0.01
Provision for children and teenagers	Local Area of Play	100	0.01
Provision for children and teenagers	Locally Equipped Area of Play	400	0.04
Provision for children and teenagers	Neighbourhood Area of Play	1,000	0.1
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	NA	1,000	NA

24. Access to district (minimum of 100 hectares in size) greenspaces is highest in the north, south east and south west of the districts. Small (neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket) greenspaces (maximum of 10 hectares in size) are primarily located closer to settlements. The majority of residential areas within the districts have access to at least one level of the hierarchy for greenspace.

This trend is also true for provision for children and teenagers, including equipped play areas, skate parks, table-tennis tables and Multi-use Games areas (MUGAs). Community growing spaces (including allotments) are generally well dispersed throughout the districts.

Next steps and recommendations

25. The publication of this updated Strategy establishes a vision and strategic objectives for green infrastructure across the districts based on analysis of the existing network and local needs. The Councils should evaluate progress against the delivery of the action plans and wider targets set out within this Strategy every five years.

26. The Strategy should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is kept up to date and in accordance with local priorities and context over time. Monitoring and evaluation should also be undertaken to ensure processes are in place are effective for the long-term governance, management and maintenance of green infrastructure. The findings of the Strategy should allow the Councils to plan for the adequate provision of high-quality green infrastructure and accessible open space in order to meet the future needs of the local community. The Councils should consider implementing the following actions:

Integration of the Headline Standards included within the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

27. The Headline Standards contained in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework are evaluated and recommendations for their application provided. The evidence and recommendations in the Strategy should be used for development management purposes and taken into account by developers when preparing proposals for new development.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard

- The Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard aims to ensure that green infrastructure is assessed and strategically planned across the districts and within new development. The Councils should evaluate progress against the delivery of the action plan and wider targets set out within this Strategy every five years. It is also recommended that the Councils should incorporate the requirement for the provision of a Green Infrastructure Plan as part of a planning application for any major development proposal.

The Accessible Greenspace Standard

- The Accessible Greenspace Standard defines good open space provision based on different size-proximity, capacity and quality criteria. New development should adhere to the quantity, quality and accessibility standards for accessible greenspace, provision for children and teenagers and community growing spaces (including allotments).

The Urban Nature Recovery Standard

- The Urban Nature Recovery Standard aims to increase the proportion of green infrastructure that is designed and managed for nature recovery. New development should adhere to the major development standard requiring developers to identify their contribution to nature recovery, including the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats within their Green Infrastructure Plan. This includes the potential for creation or enhancement of habitat provision.

The Urban Greening Factor Standard

- The Urban Greening Factor is a tool which aims to improve the delivery and provision of good quality green infrastructure. New development should achieve the major development standard, requiring developers to target the model scores recommended by Natural England in relation to urban greening within residential and commercial development.

The Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

- The Urban Tree Canopy Standard aims to increase tree canopy cover in urban environments. New developments should integrate the major development standard to ensure new and existing trees are incorporated into new developments.

Policy recommendations

28. The Strategy recommends that green infrastructure is fully embedded and 'mainstreamed' across the Joint Local Plan, rather than dealt with through a strategic policy alone. This allows green infrastructure to move beyond an environmental policy silo and interact with other agendas including health, economic and social policy areas.

29. A review of draft Joint Local Plan policy HP6: Green Infrastructure in new developments and the extent to which green infrastructure has been mainstreamed across the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (2024) is summarised. The Strategy provides an overall assessment of the effectiveness of green infrastructure policy across the preferred option Joint Local Plan and offers recommendations on how green infrastructure policy can be enhanced. These recommendations on the draft policy will be used to inform policies in the Council's Joint Local Plan.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils to develop an updated Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and Open Space Study (herein referred to as the 'Strategy') to support the delivery of the Joint Local Plan. The delivery of high quality GI and open space underpins the draft Joint Local Plan objectives on achieving net zero carbon targets, nature recovery, health and the creation of great places. Once adopted, the Joint Local Plan will guide development in the districts to 2041 and will provide a key delivery mechanism for securing GI and open space enhancements across the districts.

1.2 This integrated document updates and replaces the information included within the existing joint South and Vale GI Strategy (2017) (herein referred to as the '2017 GI Strategy') **[See reference 1]** and the existing open space evidence base documents available for both South Oxfordshire **[See reference 2]** and Vale of White Horse **[See reference 3]** districts. Consideration of both GI and open space within this updated Strategy provides an integrated evidence base for the districts.

1.3 The overarching aim of the Strategy is to guide the planning of a network of strategic multifunctional greenspaces within the districts, helping to deliver a range of environmental, economic and societal benefits. The document underpins strategic objectives and policies that will protect and enhance the GI network and open space provision within the districts.

Structure of this report

1.4 The Strategy is structured as follows:

- **Introduction**

Outlines the structure of the document. The concept of GI is introduced, reflecting on the evolution of approach since 2017 and an evaluation of the 2017 GI Strategy.

- **The overarching vision for GI and open space provision within the districts**

The overarching vision and supporting objectives for delivery of GI and open space provision within the districts are outlined.

- **Existing context and local needs**

Provides an overview of the existing GI and open space context within the districts, including an updated understanding of local needs. This chapter explores the existing GI assets, highlighting patterns of GI provision and deficiency.

- **Open space analysis**

The quantity of provision by typology and hierarchy is summarised in this chapter. This analysis includes all open spaces, regardless of whether they were audited.

- **GI priority areas for investment**

GI priority areas are provided based on the findings of the local needs assessment and SWOT analysis.

- **Summary of action plans for delivery of key GI projects**

Structured action plans outlining the steps to delivery of the key GI projects within GI priority areas are outlined.

- **Evaluation and setting of Headline Standards**

This chapter evaluates and applies the five Headline Standards included within the Natural England GI Framework (NEGIF) within the districts.

- **Policy recommendations**

Identifies policy recommendations to shape the future planning, design, management and maintenance of GI and open spaces within the districts.

1.5 The Strategy is also supported by the appendices listed below:

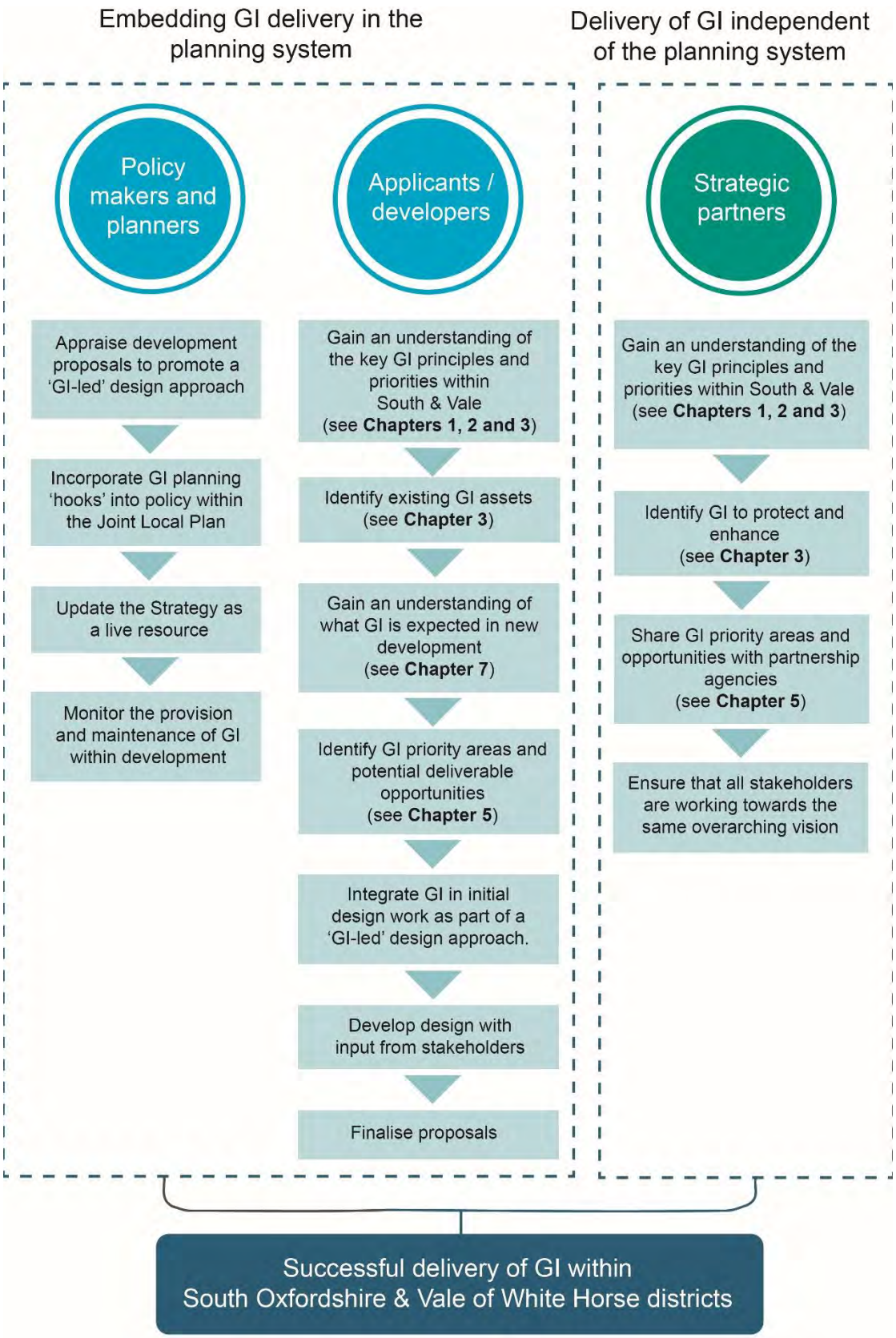
- Appendix A: Evaluation of the 2017 GI Strategy;
- Appendix B: Results of public consultation;
- Appendix C: Approach to GI within neighbouring local authorities;
- Appendix D: Policy context;
- Appendix E: Addressing global issues at a local scale;
- Appendix F: Open space methodology and detailed audit results;
- Appendix G: Open space audit guidance;
- Appendix H: Audit form;
- Appendix I: Audit scores summary;
- Appendix J: Urban Greening Factor – quantitative findings; and
- Appendix K: Detailed action plans for key GI projects.

How to use this document

1.6 The Strategy provides a 'how-to' guide to help ensure that GI is successfully delivered in the districts. The Strategy has been undertaken in close cooperation with partners, with inputs gathered via virtual stakeholder workshops in 26 March and 20 May 2024. These sessions were used to inform the preparation of the emerging Strategy.

1.7 Feedback from stakeholder consultation indicated that the delivery of GI initiatives identified in the 2017 GI Strategy has been impacted by the lack of clarity on how to interpret the document in a planning context, by both planners and developers. Consequently, a user guide has been developed as part of this Strategy to demonstrate how the document should be used by various audiences (see **Figure 1.1**).

Figure 1.1: How to use this Strategy - user guide



What is GI?

1.8 Since the publication of the 2017 GI Strategy, the definition of GI has evolved to incorporate wider environmental and societal assets and benefits. The concept has also become increasingly prevalent in national policy and the wider planning context, including with developers and transport authorities.

1.9 In addition, GI has been promoted through the 2018 publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan **[See reference 4]**. The Landscape Institute, the chartered body for the landscape profession, has also urged that it has 'never been more necessary to invest in GI…the role of GI in addressing the challenges of the 21st century cannot be underestimated' **[See reference 5]**.

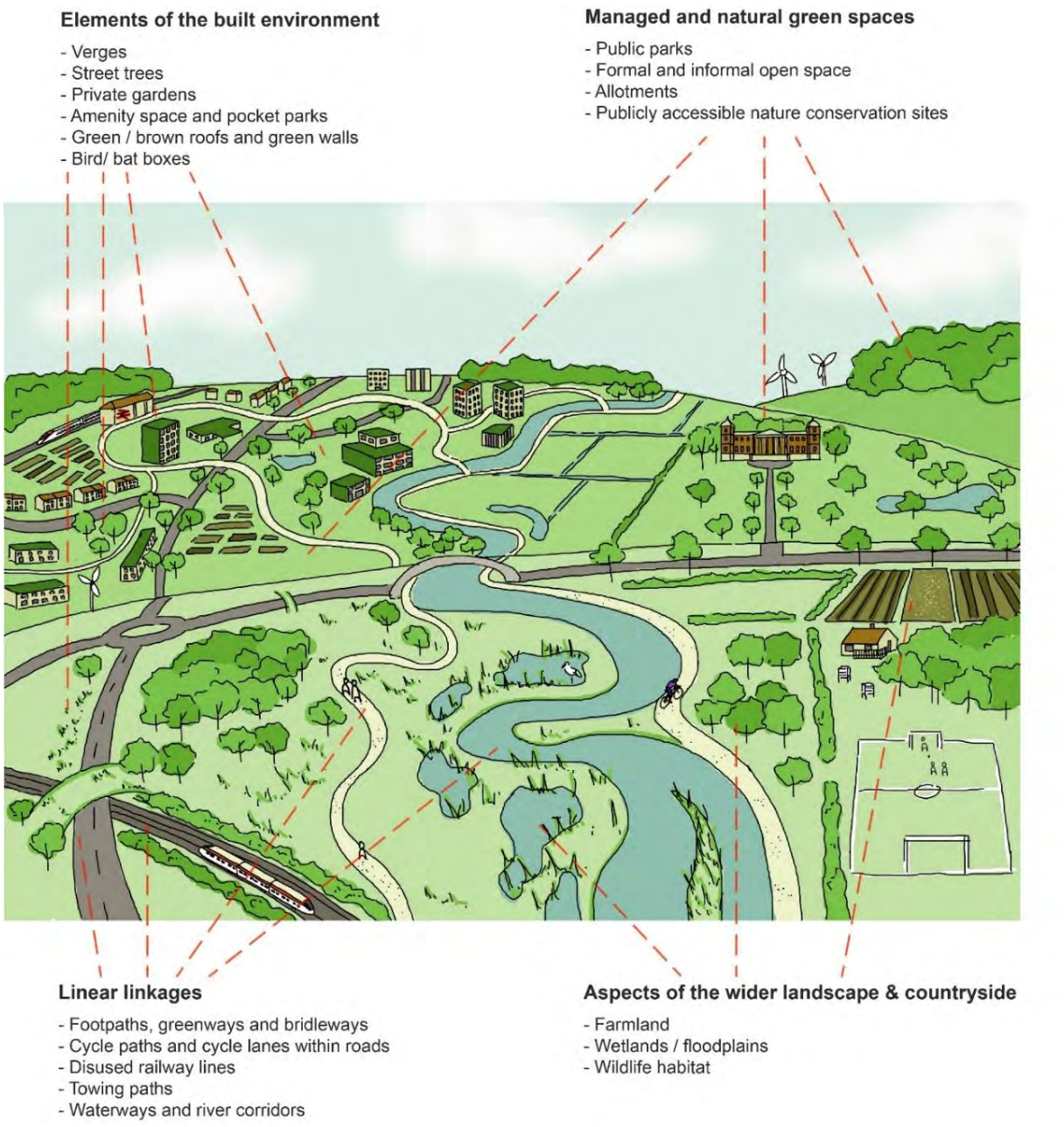
1.10 The term GI is also now widely adopted and is used to describe the network of natural and semi-natural features as well as 'blue' assets such as rivers, ponds and lakes. GI is not limited to traditional greenspaces such as parks and can involve various interventions to thread nature into streetscapes or to increase connectivity between assets at various landscape scales.

> The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **[See reference 6]** 2023 defines GI 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.'

1.11 GI as a term of reference, encompasses open spaces such as parks and public gardens, but also allotments, woodlands, hedgerows, fields, river corridors and catchments, lakes, ponds, playing fields, footpaths and cycle routes. At the street level, this might include green walls, green roofs, soft verges, trees / canopies and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

1.12 The GI assets considered for the purpose of this Strategy are listed below and displayed visually in **Figure 1.2.**

Figure 1.2: Components of GI



- Managed and semi-natural greenspaces:
  - Public parks and gardens;

  - Formal and informal open space, including civic spaces, churchyards, amenity greenspace, play space, orchards and allotments; and
  - Nature conservation sites.
- Linear linkages:
  - Public Rights of Way (PRoW), promoted routes and cycle infrastructure; and
  - Wider habitat areas and the coastal environment.
- Elements of the built environment:
  - Road verges and street trees;
  - Private gardens; and
  - Urban greening features, including green walls, green roofs and SuDS.
- Aspects of the wider landscape:
  - Forestry and woodland.

Benefits of GI

1.13 GI is defined by its multifunctionality, with a single asset having the ability to provide a number of benefits to people, wildlife and wider environmental functions. It is this variety of societal, environmental and economic benefits that play an important role in the delivery of sustainable growth.

Planning Practice Guidance **[See reference 7]** states that: 'GI 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.'

1.14 GI provides a number of functions, of varying weight and importance. This is particularly relevant where differing purposes conflict with each other. For example, the delivery of biodiversity enhancements (favourable status of statutorily designated sites or species) at select locations should be balanced with the need for active transport or recreation.

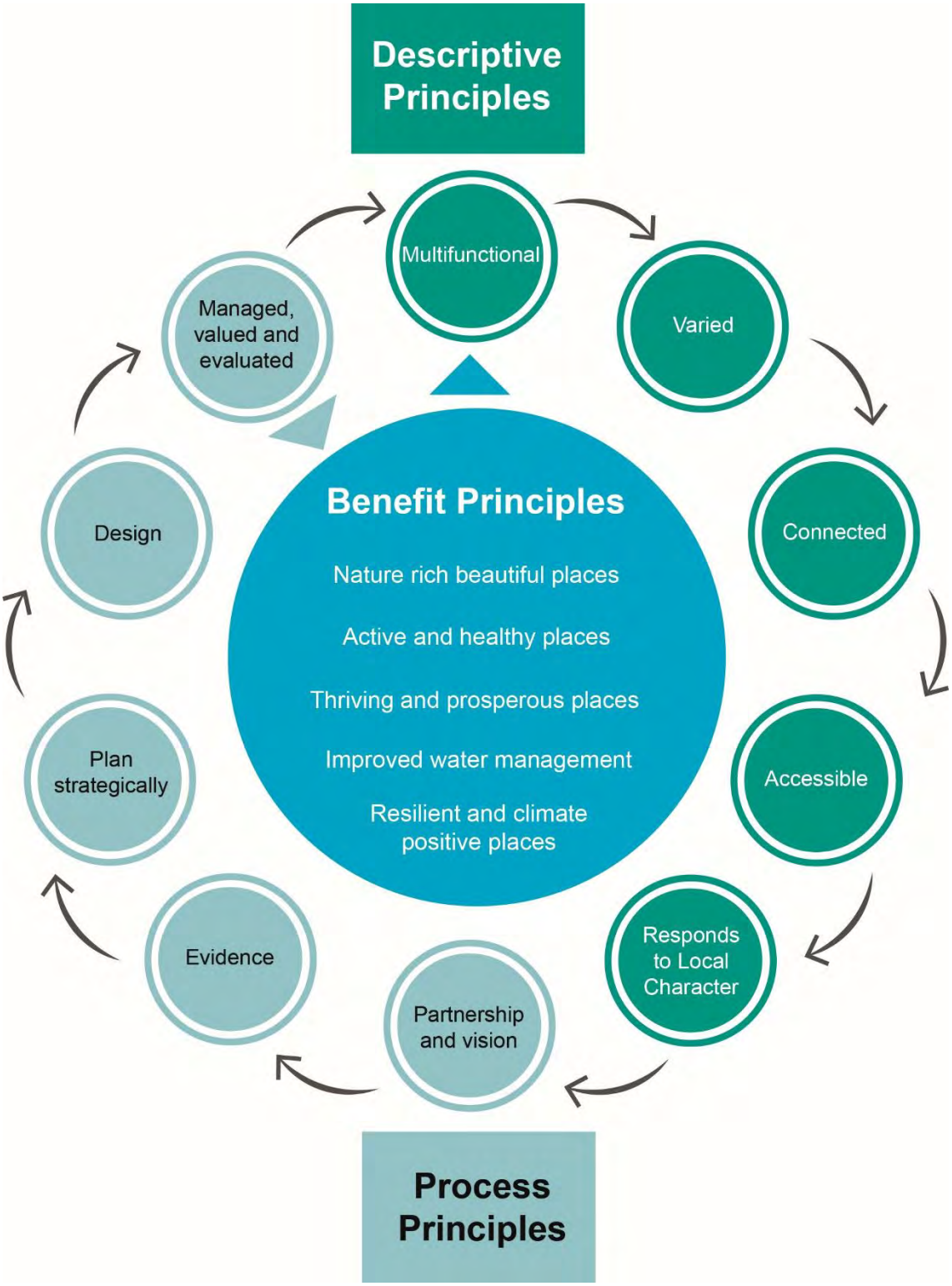
1.15 Owing to its multifunctionality, the benefits of high-quality GI are numerous and far reaching. The 'GI Principles Wheel' developed by Natural England (see **Figure 1.3**) outlines 15 principles to promote the successful delivery of GI. These 15 principles are comprised of the following:

- Five 'Benefits of GI';
- Five 'Descriptive Principles'; and
- Five 'Process Principles'.

1.16 The five 'Benefit Principles' summarise the role GI can play in the creation of high quality attractive places, providing a setting for healthy, active day-to-day living.

1.17 A review of the role and benefits of GI for Oxfordshire was commissioned by Oxford County Council in 2022 **[See reference 8]**. The document sets out the strategic case for investment in GI, outlining how benefits can be achieved as a cost-effective mechanism. Evidence for the significant cost-benefit-ratio GI can make towards the county's sustainability challenges, economy, and social wellbeing is also outlined.

Figure 1.3: 'GI Principles Wheel', as developed by Natural England



Review of approach since publication of the existing evidence base

Green infrastructure

1.18 Since the publication of the 2017 GI Strategy, the definition of GI has evolved to incorporate wider environmental and societal assets and benefits and continues to strengthen in national policy. To support this push for GI up the planning agenda, the Natural England GI Framework **[See reference 9]** (NEGIF) was launched in February 2023, a commitment made within the 25 Year Environment Plan **[See reference 10]**. The tool provides a new mechanism to support both local authorities and developers to deliver well planned, designed and maintained GI.

1.19 Comprised of GI Mapping, Principles, Headline Standards, Design Guide and Process Journeys, the NEGIF is intended to guide decision makers, policy makers and developers into delivering successful and good quality GI.

1.20 The Headline Standards form a key component of the NEGIF and aim to distinguish the recommended levels of GI achievement for both new development and area wide application. Their use within the updated Strategy provided the opportunity to set local GI targets to meet standards, either through the integration of GI into new development or retrofitting into existing urban / rural contexts. The five Headline GI standards state that everyone should have access to good quality green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home. The development of a GI Strategy is the first Headline Standard set out in the NEGIF; requiring that local authorities, in partnership with stakeholders, assess and strategically plan GI provision.

1.21 The NEGIF also highlights the important role of GI in delivering multiple benefits across health and wellbeing, climate, biodiversity and economic agendas. Furthermore, the NEGIF provides a key link between other ongoing

initiatives, including Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Nature Recovery Plans (NRP) and natural capital.

1.22 Wider GI evidence base tools available since publication of the 2017 GI Strategy also include findings from habitats regulations assessments (potentially resulting in the need for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs)), nutrient neutrality requirements and the introduction of local transport evidence studies (such as local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP)). These changes since 2017 demonstrate how the planning system can adapt to better address nature recovery challenges, net zero and climate change adaptation as part of the updated Strategy.

Open space

1.23 The previous open space strategies for both South Oxfordshire **[See reference 11]** and the Vale of White Horse **[See reference 12]** incorporated quantity, accessibility and quality standards for Parks & Gardens, Amenity Greenspace, Children's Play and Provision for Young People and Allotments. Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace was incorporated into the 2017 GI Strategy rather than the open space assessment. These elements are now all included as part of this Strategy.

1.24 The standards provide information on the types of open space that people should be able to access within a given distance of their home, as set out in the existing open space strategies for both districts are detailed in **Table 1.1** and **Table 1.2** below:

Table 1.1: Previous open space standards for South Oxfordshire district

Open space type	Proposed open space standards for new developments: Quantity per 1,000 population	Proposed open space standards for new developments: Accessibility	Proposed open space standards for new developments: Quality
Parks and Gardens & Amenity Greenspace	1.4 hectares per 1,000 in Towns and Larger Villages	710 metres for Parks and Gardens; 480 metres for Amenity Green Space	Green Flag Standard
Children's Play and Provision for Young People	0.25 hectares per 1,000 of Designated Equipped Playing Space; 0.3 hectares per 1,000 for teenage/MUGA provision	400 metres for LEAP; 1,000 metres for NEAP; 1,000 metres for teenage facilities	New Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) should meet the Fields In Trust standards as relevant to the individual site. New youth provision should reflect current best practice, and also take into account the needs expressed by local young people.
Allotments	0.4 hectares per 1,000	1,000 metres	Allotments should be secure with gates and fencing providing suitable and accessible areas for growing, and where applicable an adequate water supply and car parking.

Table 1.2: Previous open space standards for Vale of White Horse district

Open Space Type	Proposed open space standards for new developments: Quantity per 1,000 population	Proposed open space standards for new development: Accessibility	Proposed open space standards for new developments: Quality
Parks and Gardens	15% of the residential area	5,625 metres drive	Green Flag Standard
Amenity Green Space	15% of the residential area	480 metres walk	Green Flag Standard
Children's Play and Youth Provision	0.25 hectares per 1,000 of Designated Equipped Playing Space; 0.3 hectares per 1,000 for youth / MUGA provision	400 metres walk for LEAP; 1,000 metres walk for NEAP; 1,000 metres walk for youth facilities	New LEAPs and NEAPs should meet the Fields In Trust standards as relevant to the individual site; New youth provision should reflect current best practice, and also take into account the needs expressed by local people.
Allotments	0.23 hectares per 1,000 in Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon and Wantage; 0.4 hectares per 1,000 elsewhere	1,000 metres walk	Allotments should be secure with gates and fencing providing suitable and accessible areas for growing, and where applicable an adequate water supply and car parking.

1.25 Quality guidance set out within the strategies refers to Green Flag standards for Parks and Gardens and Amenity Greenspace. Fields in Trust standards are referenced for play spaces and Sport England guidance is referenced for Mutli-Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

1.26 Open Space is an important component of GI and is recognised as such in the NEGIF. The second Headline Standard presented in the NEGIF is the Accessible Greenspace Standard (AGS). This sets out the expected quantity, accessibility and quality of open space (or greenspace).

1.27 Application of the AGS has been used as the basis for the assessment of greenspace provision across the districts, supplemented with local understanding and datasets. The AGS replace the previous Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) which focussed on natural and semi-natural green space only. The change reflects the increasing focus on providing multifunctional spaces. The methodology for the study of open space provision and standards in the districts reflects the requirements of the NPPF, informed by the AGS developed as part of the NEGIF.

1.28 The current guidance for the production of open space studies remains the CABE 2005 Best Practice Guidance **[See reference 13]**. This sets out the approach to defining typologies and hierarchies. Based on the Green Flag Award criteria, the open space audit criteria is separated into factors relating to ‘quality’ and ‘value’.

1.29 As set out by (now superseded) Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) and underlined in the PPG17 Companion Guide **[See reference 14]**: “quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated”. For example, an open space may be of higher quality but if it is not accessible it is of little value, while if an open space is poor quality but has a wide range of facilities it is potentially of higher value.

Summary evaluation of the 2017 GI Strategy

1.30 An initial review of the 2017 GI Strategy identified the following opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the current document:

- Enhance the usability of the document to engage a wide range of audiences;
- Provide a renewed focus on GI delivery and implementation;
- Provide cross-cutting strategic guidance and priority GI projects;
- Emphasise the importance of GI stewardship at all scales;
- Refine the vision and objectives for GI within the districts; and
- Respond to changes in the wider GI policy context.

1.31 Further discussion of these opportunities is provided in **Appendix A.**

Chapter 2

The overarching vision for GI and open space provision within the districts

2.1 The overarching vision for GI within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts aims to set the roadmap for the delivery of an integrated GI network. Developed in close collaboration with the Councils, the vision has also been informed by feedback from stakeholder consultation.

Guiding the overarching vision for GI

2.2 The corporate plans for each district outline strategic themes to guide their future priorities The South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate Plan (2020-2024) **[See reference 15]** lists the following strategic themes and associated projects which are particularly relevant to the Strategy:

- Protect and restore our natural world
  - With partners, promote in depth mapping and surveying of ecosystems across the district, planning for restoration of the natural world and working closely with landowners and specialist agencies;
  - Celebrate, protect and enhance our natural assets, including the River Thames and the AONBs and their setting, promoting our rural district for tourism, leisure and well-being;
  - Encourage the use of natural processes to combat risks arising from climate change, such as meadows and trees to reduce flooding;
  - Recognise and support the vital role of farming in economic and ecosystem resilience, local food provision and the recovery of soils and natural processes;

- Call for the establishment of a Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire to promote an ambitious nature recovery programme, including tree and meadow planting, rewilding and providing habitats for wildlife including wildlife corridors; and
- Work in partnership with the Earth Trust, Chilterns Conservation Board, North Wessex Downs AONB, the Environment Agency and others to improve access to green spaces in and around our towns, reinforcing access to nature as a priority for community well-being.

- Action on the Climate Emergency
  - Mitigate climate change through planning and land use, enhancing biodiversity on our own land and strengthening the planning system to enforce environmental standards; and
  - Work with Oxfordshire County Council to build on our commitment to active travel including walking, public transport and cycling infrastructure.
- Improved economic and community well-being
  - Use our planning powers to preserve our valuable green spaces, particularly in urban areas; and
  - Work with our communities to maximise Community Infrastructure Levy funds and to allocate these to achieve best outcomes for residents in the district.
- Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs
  - Working constructively with local, regional and national partners we will shape and influence programmes to deliver appropriate homes and infrastructure; and
  - Sustainable transport solutions prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to reduce car dependency and air pollution.

2.3 The priorities detailed in Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan (2020-2024) share similarities with those outlined in South Oxfordshire. Those which are particularly relevant to the Strategy are outlined below:

- Providing the homes people need
  - Use Garden Villages and Towns designation as a mechanism to introduce innovative housing to meet our need for high quality, low energy, zero-carbon homes.
- Tackling the climate emergency
  - Complete tasks that are to do with reducing carbon in the wider district in Year One of the Climate Action Plan;
  - Introduce sustainable growth and environmental policies to our Local Plan; and
  - Explore setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and facilitate tree planting.
- Building healthy communities
  - Work with others to promote Active Travel and support the development of Local Cycling and the Walking Infrastructure plans to help shape new developments that link homes to work, recreation and social spaces within communities; and
  - Develop planning policies to ensure careful consideration of the effect of air pollution on the lives of people who will live there.

2.4 These strategic themes broadly relate to the overarching vision of the (draft) Joint Local Plan 2041. Key themes of the overarching Joint Local Plan are summarised below:

- Deliver carbon neutral districts for current and future generations;
- Ensure a connected network of nature corridors;
- Promote local distinctiveness and celebrate heritage and landscape character;
- Support thriving, diverse and inclusive communities;
- Deliver active travel networks and low carbon transport choices;
- Promote healthy lifestyles with access to greenspace; and
- Deliver valuable and rewarding jobs to solve pressing global issues.

2.5 Developed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision has also been adopted by both Councils. The vision emphasises the need for bold and collaborative thinking to deliver resilience and enhanced environmental, social and economic well-being. Improvements to health and well-being, coupled with long-term sustainable development (termed 'good growth'), form key drivers for the vision. The Oxfordshire Strategic Vision is intended to form an overarching framework and is not intended to replace the strategic themes defined by the Councils.

Development of the overarching vision

2.6 The overarching vision has been developed to ensure alignment with the underpinning ambitions of both the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Corporate Plans, the vision and objectives of the (draft) Joint Local Plan and the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. Furthermore, the findings of stakeholder feedback highlighted the need for the overarching vision and objectives to focus on clear language relating to climate adaptation and resilience, integration with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, sustainable development, health and wellbeing, as well as provide linkages to clear policy hooks.

Overarching vision for GI

Deliver a connected green and blue network to build climate resilient landscapes, support sustainable development, grow thriving and healthy communities and promote local distinctiveness for the benefit of present and future generations.

Strategic objectives for GI

2.7 The overarching vision is supported by a series of strategic objectives for GI which will help guide the delivery of the Strategy (see **Figure 2.1**). Informed by feedback from stakeholders, each strategic objective for GI is linked to the five 'Descriptive Principles' (as defined within the NEGIF). The strategic objectives will help deliver GI enhancements and form the basis for monitoring its success.

1. Connected: GI should function at a range of scales as part of a functioning strategic network to provide multiple benefits.

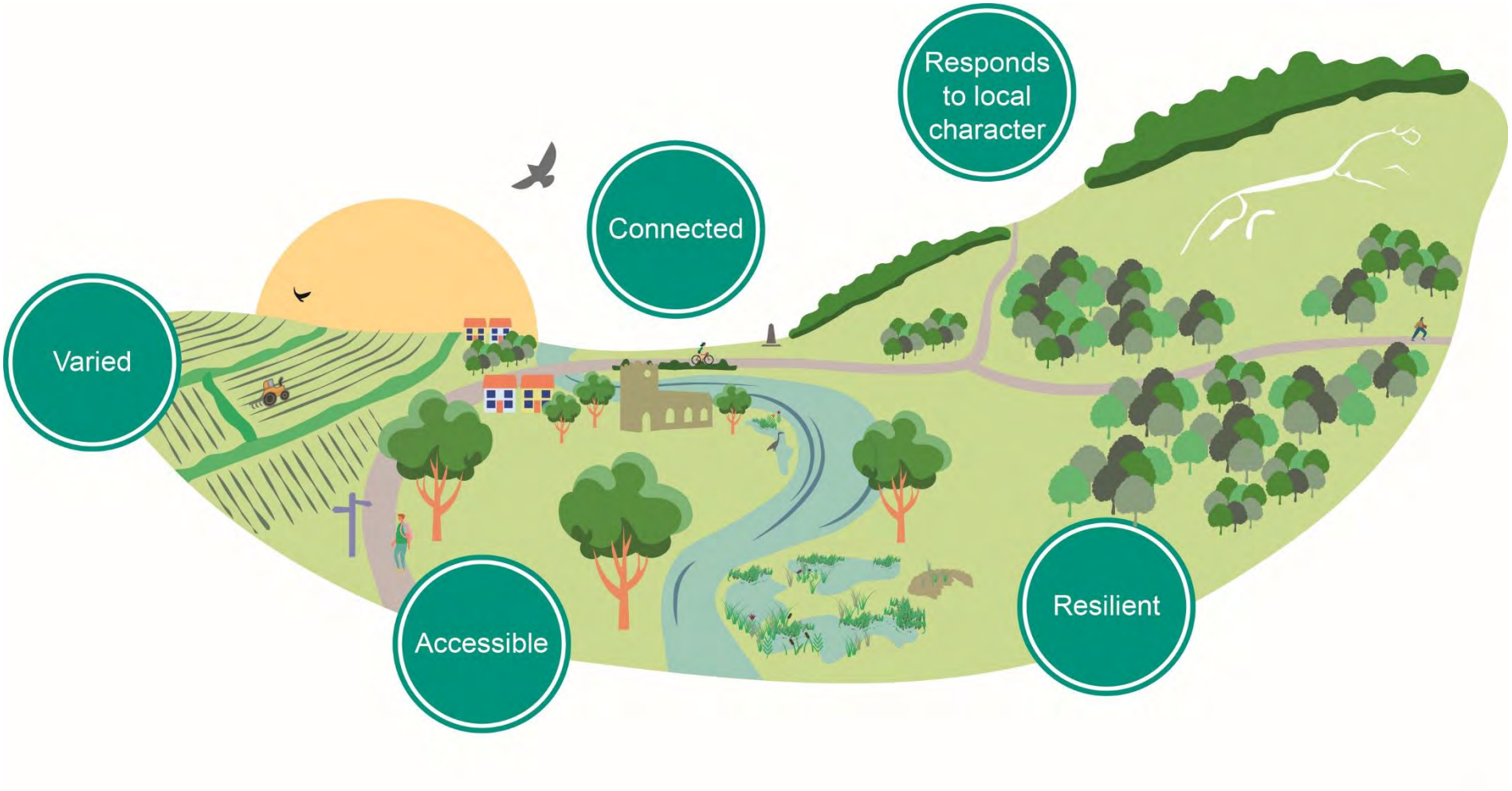
2. Varied: GI and open space provision should comprise a variety of sizes and types and intervention to address specific local issues.

3. Accessible: The delivery of GI should be informed by deficiencies in access to greenspace, forming priorities for GI investment.

4. Multi-functional: GI should deliver a range of multi-functional benefits for people, nature and places to address local needs and deficiencies.

5. Responds to local character: GI should contribute to local distinctiveness by accommodating and managing change with the aim of enhancing landscape character.

Figure 2.1: Vision for GI in South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse districts



Consultation and engagement

2.8 Consultation was used to underpin the delivery of the Strategy, involving the provision of the following elements:

- Targeted stakeholder consultation via telephone calls, video conferences and emails;
- Two virtual stakeholder workshops;
- Online public survey to provide insight into how greenspaces are used across the districts; and
- Online survey for town and parish councils aimed at obtaining information regarding the availability and demand for allotments and community growing spaces.

Approach to stakeholder engagement

2.9 Workshop invitations were extended to statutory bodies, stakeholders and local nature groups. All workshops were held on Microsoft Teams and supported by use of Miro, an online collaborative whiteboard. Details of the workshops are outlined below:

- Stakeholder workshop 1 (26 March 2024) - structured around a series of discussions which focused on visioning, the identification of valuable features, key issues and existing initiatives.
- Stakeholder workshop 2 (20 May 2024) – used to gain feedback on the draft overarching vision and strategic objectives, GI priority areas and potential delivery mechanisms.

Approach to public consultation

2.10 An online public consultation was launched to shape the recommendations of the Strategy. Residents were asked to complete a short online survey to help inform an understanding of the current use and perceptions of greenspaces across the districts. The survey was launched on 31 May 2024 and remained open until 30 June 2024, during which time a total of 560 responses were received. The majority of contributions were collected from members of the general public, although responses were also received from town and parish councillors, neighbourhood planning groups and community interest groups. Approximately 70% of the respondents were from South Oxfordshire, with approximately 30% from Vale of White Horse district.

2.11 Of the 60% of participants who were willing to answer questions to understand the demography of responses, most participants were over 55, with 50% between the ages of 55 and 75, with only 3% of participants under the age of 35. 89% of participants described their ethnicity as English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish, and a further 6% as any other White background. 25% of responses had a physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last 12 months or more, with this reducing their ability to carry out day to day activities for 73%. 96% of participants had access to a private garden, with others having access to a communal or shared garden, a balcony or terrace, or no access to a private outdoor space.

2.12 The survey asked a number of questions regarding the quality, use and accessibility of different types of greenspaces within the districts. These included formal parks, natural greenspaces, children's play areas, allotments and community growing spaces, active travel routes, and churchyards.

Summary of findings

2.13 Overall, the findings of the public consultation suggested positive opinions of greenspace across the districts. For all greenspace types, over 50% of respondents perceived overall quality as ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

2.14 Perceptions of quality were particularly high for natural greenspaces, with 80% of respondents scoring ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Responses also indicated that natural greenspaces were the most frequently visited greenspace type, with 32% of respondents visiting these sites on a daily basis, and 82% visiting once a week or more. This pattern was also closely reflected by the data relating to active travel routes, with 70% of participants using these routes on a weekly basis. This was further reflected by over 90% participants rating contact with nature, and mental and physical health and wellbeing as being ‘important’ or ‘very important’ reasons for visiting greenspaces.

2.15 Responses demonstrated that the PRoWs are generally well used features of the GI network, with over 80% of respondents using these routes as a means of accessing the countryside for recreation on at least a weekly basis. The vast majority of participants usually travelled to greenspaces on foot, and over 70% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they were content with the distance needed to travel to greenspace types. However, this number reduced to 58% in relation to the accessibility of allotments and community growing spaces.

2.16 Whilst responses regarding quality, use and accessibility were generally positive, additional comments highlighted the need for an increase in (segregated) cycle routes, as well as the need for improved active travel or public transport to key destinations such as White Horse Hill and Wittenham Clumps. Concerns regarding water quality, including the negative impacts on biodiversity and recreational use, was the most consistently raised issue. Numerous participants stated that a strategy for the future protection of watercourses, particularly of rare chalk streams, as their single biggest priority. Concerns were also strongly expressed for the loss of local greenspaces due to development pressures.

2.17 Further discussion of the results of public consultation is provided in **Appendix B.**

Allotments and community growing spaces – town and parish council survey

2.18 An online survey for town and parish councils was also launched to gather insights regarding the availability and demand for allotments and growing spaces. The findings highlighted that allotments in the districts were generally well used, with a limited number of vacant plots. Furthermore, 50% of the town and parish councils which manage their own allotment sites had at least one person on a waiting list.

2.19 Further discussion of the results of the allotments and community growing spaces survey is provided in **Appendix F**.

Introduction to the ‘themed’ approach

2.20 A ‘themed’ approach was adopted to explore the existing GI assets within the districts, consider key needs and explore deficiencies within the existing network. Four themes have been identified, informed by the ‘GI Principles Wheel’, as developed by Natural England.

Theme 1: Resilient places

2.21 This theme explores the key assets which deliver life-supporting environmental processes, including flood management, carbon storage in vegetation and air / water quality improvement. The interaction of physical influences within the landscape, including the blue infrastructure network, geology and tree cover are also considered. This theme primarily relates to the ‘resilient and climate positive places’ benefit within the 'GI Principles Wheel' (see **Figure 1.3**). It also incorporates elements from the ‘improved water management’ and the environmental health aspect of ‘active and healthy places’ benefits.

Theme 2: Thriving places

2.22 This theme explores GI which enhances the distinctive local character of the districts, supporting thriving and prosperous communities. It examines the potential of GI as a tool for the sensitive and sustainable incorporation of development into the district's existing landscape fabric. The theme incorporates the influence of protected landscapes, heritage features and other flagship or destination sites that attract visitors and investors. Equality and deprivation are also considered. This theme supports the 'thriving and prosperous places' benefit within the 'GI Principles Wheel' (see **Figure 1.3**).

Theme 3: Active places

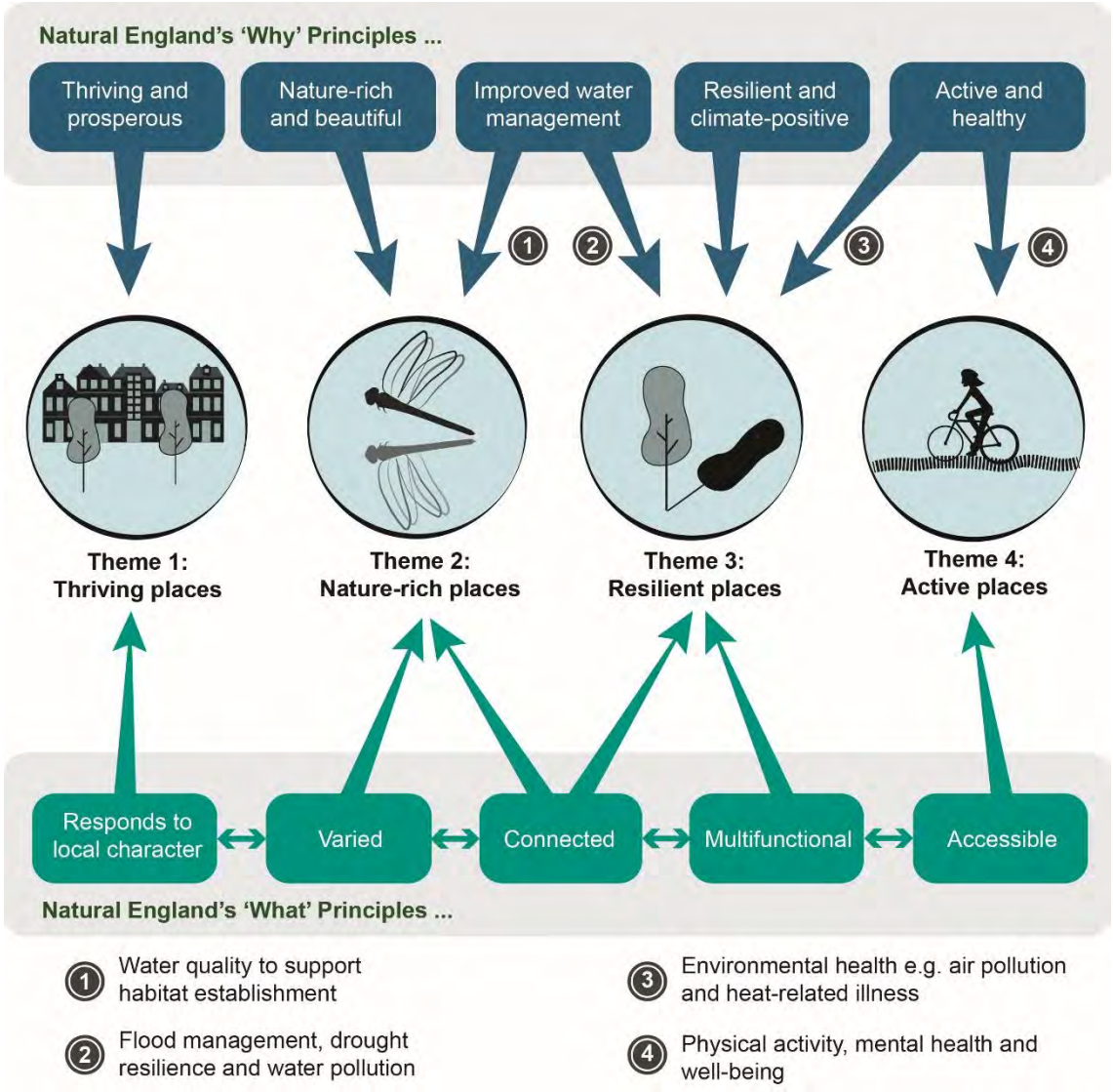
2.23 This theme explores GI which is publicly accessible, including PRoW, active travel routes, open space and all open access land. These assets support physical activity and wellbeing benefits associated with access to greenspace and nature. It also incorporates key demographic and health data for the districts. Deficiencies in the access to greenspace will be discussed, particularly in the context of the rural character of the districts and dispersed pattern of population. Supplementation of this data with consideration of the PRoW network will help to build a picture of wider access to the countryside within the districts. This theme aligns with the 'active and healthy places' benefit within the 'GI Principles Wheel' (see **Figure 1.3**).

Theme 4: Nature-rich places

2.24 This theme explores how GI supports wildlife and nature recovery. It is related primarily to large-scale semi-natural habitats, natural heritage designations and connectivity for key species. This theme aligns with the 'nature-rich beautiful place' benefit within the 'GI Principles Wheel' (see **Figure 1.3**). It also includes the ecological benefits associated with good quality blue assets associated with the 'improved water management' benefit.

2.25 Figure 2.2 demonstrates how the four themes align with the Natural England 'GI Principles Wheel'.

Figure 2.2: Development of the 'thematic' approach



Chapter 3

Existing context and local needs

3.1 This chapter provides an overview of the current GI network across the districts. Existing assets and patterns of provision are explored, with key benefits and needs set in out in the 'themed' approach, as previously outlined in **Chapter 2.** These elements are analysed to identify issues and local needs, with the aim of informing the development of the spatially-specific GI priority areas for GI and wider opportunities (see **Chapter 5**) across the two districts.

3.2 This baseline assessment of GI supplements data available as part of the NEGIF with analysis of current provision at the local level to provide a holistic evidence base.

Theme 1: Resilient places

Resilient landscapes are those able to withstand and maintain their basic, life-sustaining functions and processes in the face of environmental pressures. At a landscape scale, resilience is enhanced by ensuring connectivity across habitats and greenspaces, promoting diversity in habitat structure and species composition, and the provision of buffers around important ecological features. GI can also help deliver flood mitigation through enhanced water storage, soil absorption capacity and reduced run-off.

Assets

3.3 The predominantly rural landscape of the two districts is interspersed with numerous blocks of woodland, as indicated on **Figure 3.1**. In general, wooded areas are concentrated along the higher ground of the Chilterns and associated with the Golden Ridge (Corallian Limestone), as well as within pockets of higher elevation at the southern fringes of Oxford. Within the lower lying floodplains of the districts, woodland areas are fragmented and smaller in scale, frequently parallel to waterways or interspersed among arable fields.

3.4 The Forest Inventory (NFI) indicates that woodland coverage across the districts totals approximately 14,360 hectares, which equates to approximately 11.5% of the land use across both districts. However, it is important to note that the NFI only catalogues areas of woodland greater than 0.5ha, excluding smaller tracts of tree cover. Woodland cover is recorded at 13.9% within South Oxfordshire district compared to 8.2% in Vale of White Horse district, reflecting the wooded character of the Chilterns. Nationally, the percentage of land covered by trees is estimated at 10.1% **[See reference 16]**.



South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI Strategy and Open Space Study
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

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Figure 3.1: Existing woodland cover and woodland potential

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- National Forest Inventory
- Ancient woodland
- Working with Natural Processes - Floodplain Woodland Potential
- Working with Natural Processes - Wider Catchment Woodland Potential
- Working with Natural Processes - Riparian Woodland Potential

The Working with Natural Processes (WWNP) datasets support flood risk management by identifying areas where natural interventions, such as woodland planting and floodplain reconnection, can be implemented. These datasets provide insights for enhancing both flood resilience and ecological benefits at landscape scales.

Floodplain Reconnection Potential dataset highlights areas where reconnecting floodplains to rivers could help manage flood risk, improve habitat connectivity, and enhance natural floodplain functions.

Wider Catchment Woodland Potential maps areas in wider catchments where woodland planting could contribute to flood risk reduction, erosion control, and broader ecological benefits.

Riparian Woodland Potential shows potential locations for riparian woodlands along riverbanks, intended to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and enhance biodiversity.

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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3.5 The watercourses throughout the districts are a defining feature of the landscape, contributing to the agricultural economy of the region and providing key habitat links. Running broadly east-west, the low-lying clay vale forms part of a lowland valley and is characterised by farmland and a network of drainage ditches (see **Figure 3.2** and **Figure 3.3**). This valley feature rises to a series of low limestone hills forming the Corallian Limestone Ridge to the north and the Chalk Downs to the south. The broad belt of chalk uplands in the south is dissected by the River Thames, separating the Chilterns from the North Wessex Downs National Landscapes.

3.6 The underlying chalk and clay geology characterising the land to the south of the districts supports rare grassland habitats, such as lowland or calcareous swards. Additional habitat types are also associated with riparian habitats and grazing marsh, providing key habitat networks. These are heavily concentrated along the River Thames and its tributaries, as well as the scarp slopes forming the northern extent of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes, respectively. The chalk bedrock is also highly permeable, facilitating water infiltration to the aquifers significantly faster than further north in the districts.

3.7 The River Thames largely defines the boundary between the two districts as it flows south from Oxford, moving east towards the southern boundary of South Oxfordshire. The large and fertile floodplains broadly parallel the corridors of the Rivers Thames and Ock form a distinct feature within the districts, with multiple tributaries forming meandering streams through largely arable fields. Floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, and semi-improved grassland form important habitat networks along the watercourses, although these are somewhat fragmented.

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Figure 3.2: Hydrological network and geology

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
Blue Infrastructure Network

Superficial geology (625k)

- Alluvial Deposits - Clay, Silt And Sand
- Glacigenic Deposits - Diamicton (Clay, Sand And Gravel)
- Landslide Deposits - Unknown
- Residual Deposits - Diamicton (Clay, Sand And Gravel)
- River-Terrace Deposits - Sand And Gravel

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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Figure 3.3: Bedrock geology

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Bedrock geology (625k)

- Palaeogene
- Cretaceous
- Jurassic

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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3.8 Despite exhibiting a predominantly rural character, the districts contain six Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) located within Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Henley-on-Thames, Marcham, Watlington, and Wallingford (as indicated on **Figure 3.4)**. These AQMAs are designated due to elevated concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) which exceed national air quality standards and are heavily influenced by transport emissions. Although six AQMAs have been identified in past monitoring cycles, the 2022 monitoring data recorded no exceedances of NO_2 objectives in South Oxfordshire district, and only two within Vale of White Horse district, both within Botley AQMA **[See reference 17]**.

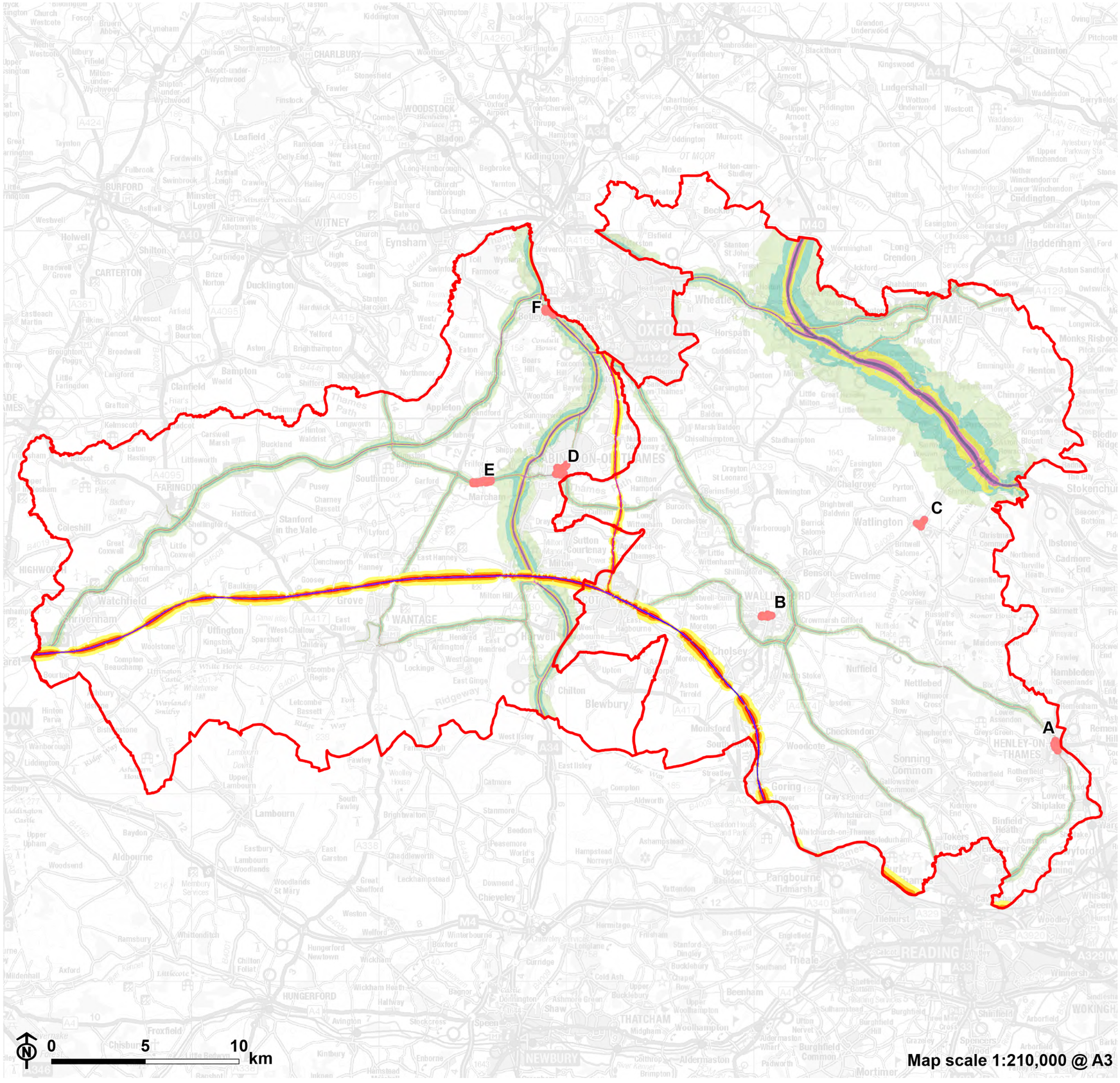
Issues and local needs

Flood risk

3.9 Fluvial (river) flooding forms the main source of flooding within Oxfordshire, associated with the network of watercourses which stretch across the county **[See reference 18]**. Approximately 11% of the land located within the districts lies within Flood Zone 2, as indicated on **Figure 3.5.** Approximately 8% of the land lies within Flood Zone 3, a functional floodplain, with much of this focussed along the River Thames, River Ock, Childrey Brook and Haseley Brook. Multiple settlements within the districts are subject to flood risk, particularly in the low-lying surrounds of Abingdon-on-Thames, which sits at the confluence of the Rivers Ock and Thames.

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Figure 3.4: Air and noise pollution



South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
AQMA
A: Henley AQMA
B: Wallingford AQMA
C: Watlington AQMA
D: Abingdon AQMA
E: Marcham AQMA
F: Botley AQMA

Rail noise - 24 hour annual average noise level (dB)

55.0-59.9
60.0-64.9
65.0-69.9
70.0-74.9
>=75.0

Road noise - 24 hour annual average noise level (dB)

55.0-59.9
60.0-64.9
65.0-69.9
70.0-74.9
>=75.0

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Figure 3.5: Flood risk zones and water pollution

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
Flood zone 2
Flood zone 3

Source Protection Zone

Zone I - Inner Protection Zone
Zone II - Outer Protection Zone
Zone III - Total Catchment

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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3.10 Surface water flooding is also evident within both districts as well as wider Oxfordshire, the main source being agricultural run-off due to the prevailing rural character of the districts **[See reference 19]**. Surface water flood risk is particularly apparent in fields where ditches have been constructed for arable drainage, along the River Ock, Land Brook, and Childrey Brook. It is also a risk within settlements, along impermeable surfaces such as roads and other built surfaces. In the south, the chalk geology is characterised by a number of natural springs, resulting in a high water table and a greater risk from groundwater flooding. The most susceptible geological areas to groundwater flooding consist of chalk, limestone and sandstone, along with sands and gravels within river valleys.

Opportunity for GI? Flood mitigation

Explore opportunities for nature-based solutions to improve resilience and adaptation to flooding along key river corridors. This includes the introduction of wetlands and riparian woodland as well as attenuation features outside of flood zones to slow the flow of water, such as ponds and ditches.

Water quality

3.11 Few of the watercourses within the districts achieve good ecological status, as indicated by the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The rural land use surrounding many of the watercourses results in a risk of diffuse pollution, with soil erosion from fields leading to a build-up of sediment and pollution in the waterways. Incidences of flooding and heavy rainfall associated with climatic changes, exacerbate these occurrences. The River Ock and its stream tributaries are particularly vulnerable to pollutants, achieving ‘poor’ ecological status as indicated by the WFD. Additionally, up to 48% of waterbodies within the Ock catchment fail physical benchmarks, indicating modifications to natural

hydrological regimes within the floodplains, including channel drains for arable use and physical barriers such as weirs **[See reference 20]**.

3.12 The permeable geology which characterises the belt of chalk uplands to the south of the districts results in enhanced water infiltration. Faster rates of water infiltration can lead to increased water pollution, as there are fewer opportunities to filter contaminants out before reaching a groundwater source. As a result, multiple Zone 1 Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are located within the districts, indicating areas where fast water infiltration is most likely. SPZs are defined as areas which are particularly vulnerable to contamination of water supplies, affecting water quality. These areas would benefit from additional protection, in order to reduce risk of aquifer contamination.

3.13 Wallingford Beach became a designated bathing water in May 2024. South Oxfordshire district is also supporting an application for bathing water status on the River Thames at Henley-on-Thames **[See reference 21]**. Strategic partnerships are key to improving overall water quality. Guided by a catchment-based approach, river catchment partnerships within the districts (South Chilterns, River Ock, River Thames) aim to improve the natural functioning of river systems and promote increased recreational usage by people.

Opportunity for GI? Water quality improvements

The opportunity exists to promote the resilience of the water environment, whilst maximising the benefits of water resources for local communities within the districts. GI interventions which support wetland creation and the promotion of sensitive land use practices to help limit nutrient run-off should be identified.

Variation in tree and woodland coverage

3.14 Woodland cover throughout the districts is above the national average **[See reference 22]**. However, variations in woodland coverage exist across the districts, primarily due to the presence of the ridgelines in the north east and south of the districts. The Chilterns National Landscape is dominated by its woodlands and forms one of the most heavily wooded areas of England **[See reference 23]**. The lower-lying floodplains in the central areas of the districts have overall sparser canopy coverage, which is mostly comprised of hedgerows, public greenspaces in proximity to settlement, and scattered copses among arable fields. As a result, overall habitat connectivity across these floodplains is fragmented, with large gaps absent of any identified core habitat. Although there is scope for woodland expansion, it is crucial that any new habitat or trees are sited appropriately.

3.15 Woodland Trust Tree Equity Score estimates existing tree canopy coverage within Vale of White Horse district at 58m^2 / person. This figure reduces slightly to 53m^2 / person within South Oxfordshire district **[See reference 24]**. These estimations are based on thermal imagery of tree canopy coverage across the districts (not just woodland coverage, as referred to within paragraphs **3.4** and **3.14**). The Oxfordshire Treescape Project estimates that approximately 36% of the county is not suitable for treescapes due to the presence of ecological designations, existing woodland, species-rich grassland and built development. However, the Committee on Climate Change has proposed a 56% increase in woodland areas, a 40% increase in hedgerows and 10% of farmland dedicated to agroforestry within Oxfordshire in order to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 **[See reference 25]**.

Opportunity for GI? Woodland creation

Woodland plays a role in sequestering carbon, improving air quality, alleviating flooding and providing shade. Contributing to a significant part of each district's identity, opportunities to increase tree cover is essential in delivering air quality enhancement, natural flood alleviation and multiple other ecosystem services.

Air and noise pollution

3.16 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. In addition, a strong correlation often exists between areas with poor air quality and areas of less affluence **[See reference 26]**. In 2020, concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ in both districts were lower than the regional average for the South East and slightly above the national average. This trend also continues for the mortality rate of adults over 30 years attributed to particulate air pollution, where the figure of 5.7% for the districts is slightly lower than the regional average yet higher for the average for England **[See reference 27]**.

3.17 Figure 3.4 indicates the source of air and noise pollution issues within the districts. Exposure to noise levels above 50 decibels (dB) has been shown to lead to negative health effects **[See reference 28]**. Approximately 15% of the total area of the districts experience daily or nightly noise exposure above this threshold. Areas of higher risk occur along the M40 in the east of South Oxfordshire and other major roads, including the A34, A40, A420, and A4074. Communities which are impacted by this include Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon, Milton Common, Milton Heights, Stokenchurch, Wantage, and Wheatley.

3.18 Priorities highlighted within the Air Quality Action Plan for the districts include the need to reduce traffic emissions within Botley, Henley-on-Thames and Marcham AQMAs, as well as the wider implementation of area wide

measures to improve air quality across all six AQMAs in the districts. A feasibility study focussing on the use of GI to implement recommendations relating to mitigation of poor air quality in AQMAs is highlighted as an area-wide measure within the Air Quality Action Plan. During consultation on the draft Air Quality Action Plan, 81% of respondents agreed with this action, the highest level of support for all area-wide recommendations in both districts. An Air Quality Assessment for the districts is currently in development to support the Joint Local Plan.

3.19 The Place-based Carbon Calculator estimates that 24 of Oxfordshire's 407 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) were rated in the worst 1% in England for consumption based carbon footprint per person. Areas of particularly high emissions were recorded within rural parts of South Oxfordshire and within a mix of rural and settlement-based locations within the Vale of White Horse district **[See reference 29]**. Proximity to major roads can also result in nitrogen deposition, which can degrade habitat quality through soil eutrophication or acidification. Natural England establishes a 200m buffer alongside major roads where this habitat simplification is likely to happen **[See reference 30]**.

Opportunity for GI? Mitigation of air and noise pollution

The integration of greening interventions, if implemented correctly, can have significant noise abatement benefits. GI can also be used to improve air quality along key transport corridors, reducing impacts from vehicle emissions. However, GI measures should be appropriately sited to avoid adverse impacts on air flow due to tree planting, resulting in detrimental effects on areas already experiencing poor air quality. The opportunity also exists to promote the establishment of suitable buffers along major road corridors to reduce the risk of habitat degradation due to nitrogen deposition.

Theme 2: Thriving places

Thriving places exhibit a strong sense of place, characterised by engaged communities and vibrant local economies. GI contributes to thriving communities through good quality placemaking which responds to local character, contributing to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and historic environment. Economies are embedded within nature, and therefore investment in GI can bring economic benefit to communities by supporting and attracting both investment and visitors.

Assets

3.20 Oxfordshire is considered to be the most rural county in south east England **[See reference 31]**. The distinctive characteristics of the landscape of the districts include the wide fertile floodplains which support intensive arable use. The prevailing land use within the districts is agriculture. For South Oxfordshire, the main exception to this pattern is within the south east where the wooded landscape of the Chilterns rises sharply from the Thames Valley. **Figure 3.6** indicates the distribution of farmland by agricultural land classification, with large swathes of grade 1, 2, and 3 farmland associated predominantly with the floodplains of surrounding watercourses and chalk dominated slopes. The best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land is defined by Natural England as land falling in agricultural land classification (ALC) grades 1 to 3a.

3.21 Figure 3.7 indicates the percentage of man-made area (surface that is not water, vegetation or soils) within the districts. The mapping output demonstrates the contrast between areas identified as 60-80% man-made within the towns of Abingdon-on-Thames and Didcot and surrounding rural areas falling within the 0-10% range. This pattern is exacerbated by the fact that the greenness grid dataset does not account for canopy coverage. 80% of the land located within

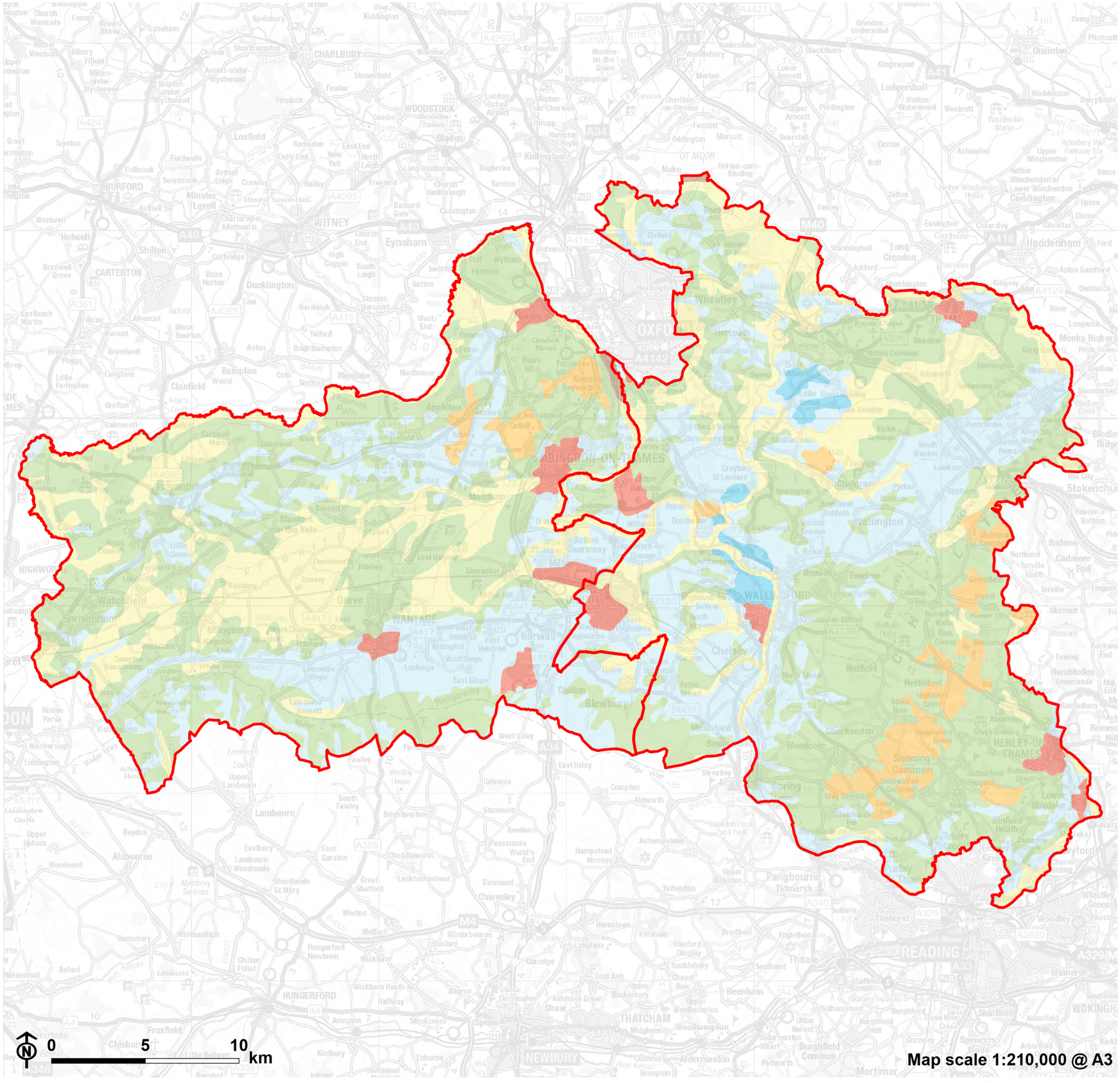
the boundary of Vale of White Horse district is described as ‘natural land’ **[See reference 32]**. This figure rises to 81% within South Oxfordshire district **[See reference 33]**.

3.22 With extensive areas of land conducive to crop growth and grazing, the districts exhibit long-standing patterns of settlement dating to the Bronze Age. The landscape is rich in historic features, and archaeological finds are still being uncovered, including most recently a Roman villa outside Wantage, a town associated with the Saxon King Alfred. The historic value of the districts is evidenced by the designation of 124 conservation areas across both districts; comprised of 72 within South Oxfordshire district and 52 within Vale of White Horse district (see **Figure 3.8**).

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Figure 3.6: Agricultural Land Classification



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Figure 3.7: Greenness Grid

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Greenness grid

Percentage manmade

- 0.0 - 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 60
- 60 - 70
- 70 - 80
- 80 - 90
- 90 - 100

0 5 10 km

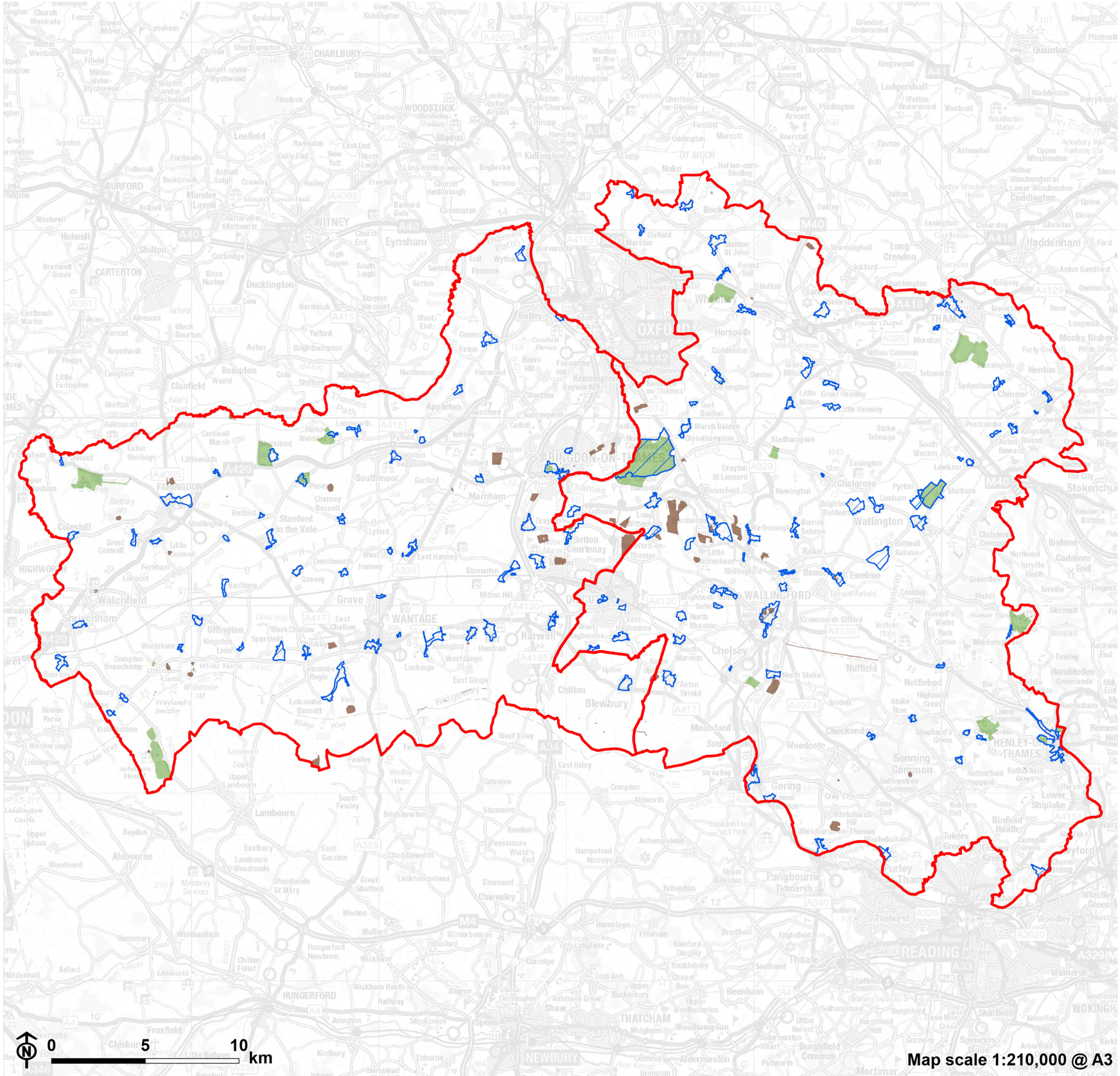
Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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Figure 3.8: Cultural heritage designations



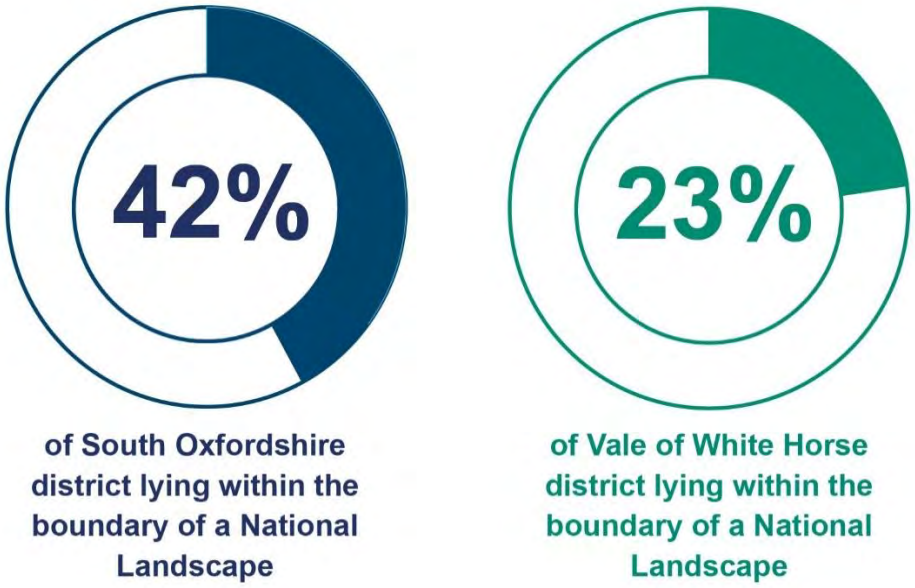
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3.23 Whilst built features cannot be considered as GI; elements of the network (including parks, open spaces, street trees and incidental vegetation) contribute towards their setting, enhance their value as key visitor destinations and help to interpret heritage, culture and changes in land use over time. Tree cover forms a key component of the character of conservation areas. Trees are therefore recognised as key natural heritage assets and are in some instances important to the setting of built heritage assets. Informed by individual conservation area character statements, conservation areas provide a significant opportunity and setting for the integration of bold GI interventions within the districts.

3.24 Totalling 5,482 across both districts, listed buildings are heavily clustered within these conservation areas and along the network of connecting minor roads. The material palette of these built up areas respond to the surrounding landscape, with historic buildings typically sourcing locally quarried stone which provides a distinctive local vernacular. A network of 20 Registered Parks and Gardens are located within the districts, often associated with listed manor or estate houses, or former religious grounds. Nuneham Courtenay, situated at the boundary between the two districts along the River Thames, is the largest of these sites, followed by Thame Park, in the east of South Oxfordshire district. This pattern of historic sites is also characterised by a network of 121 scheduled monuments across the districts.

3.25 The landscape of the districts is recognised for its value and beauty, providing a distinctive sense of place. This value is evidenced by the presence of both the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes (see **Figure 3.9**), which cover a total of 42% of South Oxfordshire and 23% of the Vale of White Horse districts, respectively. The Chilterns National landscape is nationally renowned as a destination for tourism and recreation, with just over 55 million leisure visits recorded every year, which is equivalent to nearly every resident of England visiting once a year **[See reference 34]**. Increases in population in and around the Chilterns is predicted to result in an increased number of visitors in the future, with the potential for negative impacts on sensitive habitats and sites. Tourism is also regarded as an increasingly important sector within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, albeit

with an emphasis on supporting sustainable numbers of visitors at key attractions.

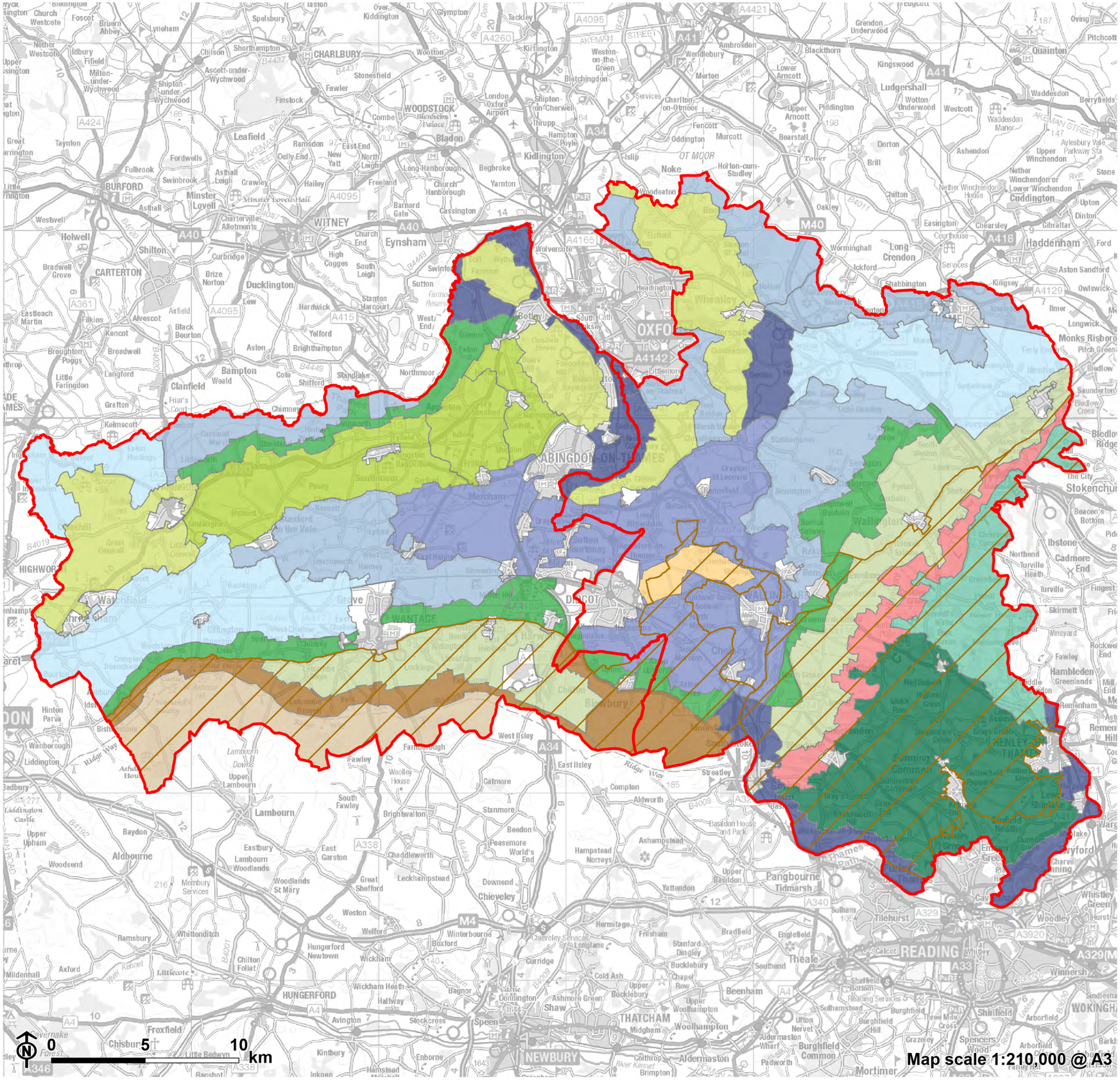


3.26 Characterised by a dramatic chalk escarpment, the Chilterns National Landscape contains a rich mosaic of nationally important chalk grassland, woodland, commons and tranquil valleys (see **Figure 3.10**). The Chilterns is considered one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, with approximately 1.6 million people living within the boundary and its adjacent urban populations **[See reference 35]**. A decline in traditional land management practices, an increase in the area of land used primarily for recreation as well as development pressures form some of the key forces for change within the Chilterns landscape **[See reference 58]**.

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Figure 3.9: Landscape character and protected landscapes



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Figure 3.10: Tranquil areas within South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Overall tranquillity

Least tranquil

Most tranquil

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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3.27 Farmland dominates the landscape of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. 84% of the land use within this protected landscape is classified as agriculture, providing the major influence on landscape character and quality. National Forest Inventory data indicates that woodland cover in the North Wessex Downs equates to approximately 12.4% of the designated area. Land located within the boundary of the districts falls primarily within the Downs Plain and Scarp Landscape Character Type (LCT), as defined by the North Wessex Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment **[See reference 36]**. The priorities for environmental land management in this LCT include the restoration of historic hedge boundaries, small-scale tree planting and improvements to the biodiversity value of arable land use.

3.28 Developed in winter 2023 by American Forests, the Woodland Trust and the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, the Tree Equity Score **[See reference 37]** seeks to identify the areas in greatest need of people-focused investment in trees within the UK. The map-based application examines disparities in tree distribution and measures how well the benefits of trees are reaching communities disproportionately impacted by extreme heat, pollution and other environmental hazards. The score uses six climate, health and socio-economic datasets that measure social deprivation and quality of life, Collectively, these indicate how vulnerable a community is to environmental hazards and how beneficial tree equity would be to them.

3.29 Both districts are allocated a composite score of 90 (out of 100), demonstrating a moderate / good overall assessment of tree equity. The Tier 1 settlements of Wantage, Abingdon-on-Thames, Didcot, Wallingford, Thame and Henley-on-Thames are allocated a tree equity score of 90 (out of 100), indicating a lower priority for future tree planting. However, these figures mask a degree of variation in tree equity scores across the LSOAs of the districts. The LSOAs ranked lowest include Milton (66), Caldecott (72) and Edmond Park in central Didcot (77). These areas also fall within lower socio-economic deciles. The relationship between lower tree equity scores and areas of deprivation within the districts does not appear to exhibit a consistent trend. For instance, areas with higher deprivation frequently achieve relatively high tree equity, such as the Richmead neighbourhood of Didcot, which has a tree equity score of 96.

Issues and local needs

Ensuring new development preserves local distinctiveness and sense of place

3.30 In terms of development management, GI interventions should be integrated within future development proposals to ensure that they enhance local distinctiveness and landscape character. Understanding landscape, land use and heritage can help ensure GI imparts a sense of place. The opportunity exists to encourage connections with the local historic environment where possible, recognising the contribution made by heritage assets to local character and setting within the districts.

3.31 Greenspaces are often also historic assets in their own right, or contain or form the setting to heritage. The historic character and associations of some greenspaces in the districts are important to distinctiveness and can act as a major draw for their use. The districts benefit significantly from the presence of heritage assets within them, which contribute to economic, social and environmental value in addition to cultural heritage. All GI proposals should be informed by conservation area appraisals / character studies as well as guidance from key stakeholders such as the heritage teams at both districts and Historic England. Heritage assets in the districts provide a significant opportunity for the integration of bold GI interventions for both enhancement and impact mitigation.

3.32 For example, Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) included within National Character Area (NCA) Profile 109: Midvale Ridge states that the historic environment and cultural character of the landscape should be maintained and enhanced by ensuring that permitted development is well integrated to preserve local character and provide greenspace and recreational opportunities for health and wellbeing benefits. The potential to promote sustainable development that contributes positively to sense of place and built

heritage is also reflected in the SEO for NCA Profile 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales, encompassing land in both districts.

Opportunity for GI? Landscape character enhancement

GI interventions as part of proposed development should reflect local character and contribute to local distinctiveness.

Landscape quality and land use change

3.33 The principal forces for change affecting the county's distinctive landscape character include changes in agricultural practices, development pressures / settlement expansion and the effects of climate change. The large extent of farmland in the districts will be required to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change over the coming years. However, the agricultural qualities of the districts require protection to reinforce the strong sense of local character and promote sustainable farming methods. Proposals outlined by the Committee on Climate Change to increase woodland, hedgerows and agroforestry on farmland in order to achieve net zero targets would result in a 7% fall in land used for food production within Oxfordshire. However, delivery of multi-functional GI benefits from this reversion would increase from between 7% to 59%.

Opportunity for GI? Promote resilience in response to landscape and climatic change

GI interventions should enhance the conservation and restoration of semi-natural habitats, geodiversity, soil quality and soil carbon stores within the districts. Land use should also make the most of fertile soils whilst also integrating semi-natural features and heritage assets into the landscape.

Theme 3: Active places

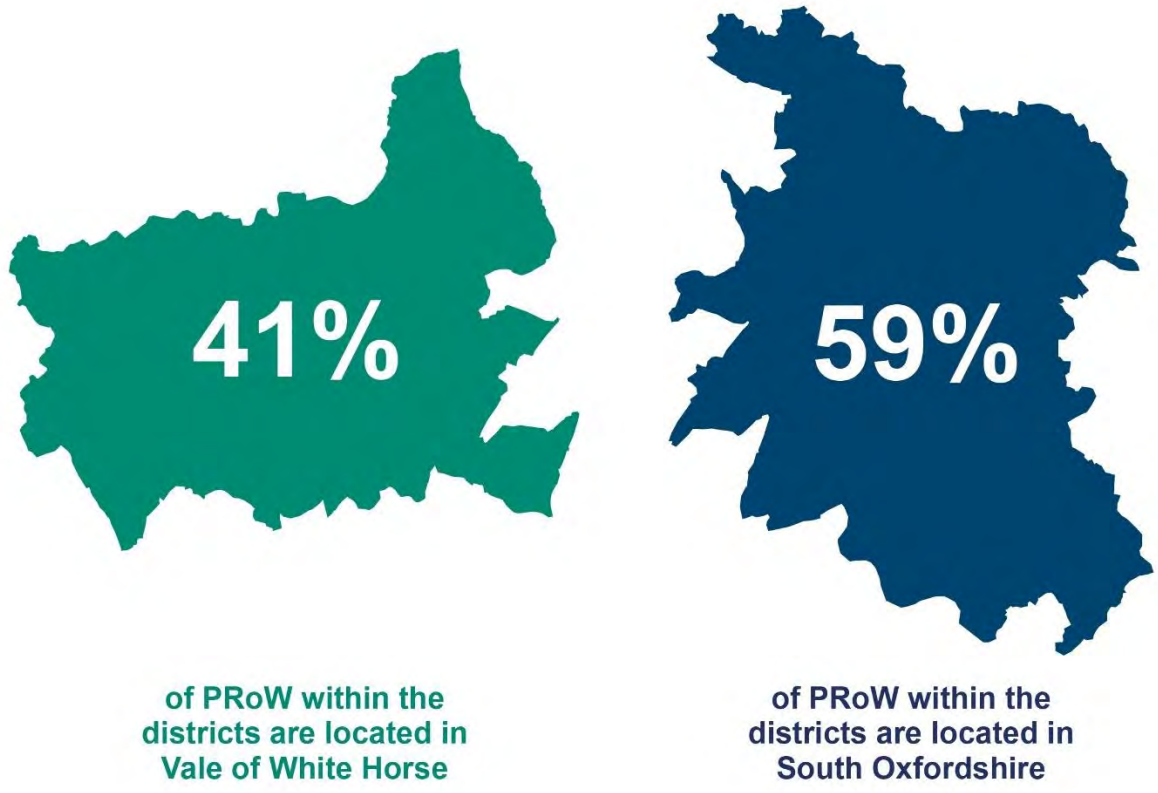
The opportunity exists to utilise green and blue corridors within the districts to enhance accessibility and infrastructure to support existing communities, whilst also accommodating future population change within the districts. The theme focusses on the accessibility of the districts and their GI network; focussing primarily on greenspace provision, the PRoW network, active travel and associated health data.

Assets

3.34 Greenspace provision within the districts varies in size and primary function. Overall, the districts contain 16.02 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. However, the spatial distribution of accessible greenspace varies across the districts. The high provision of accessible greenspace is largely due to a number of very large natural greenspace sites, including accessible woodland and historic parkland. These are often outside of settlements and act as 'destination' spaces, rather than providing day-to-day open space needs close to home. Within the Tier 1 settlements (Abingdon-on-Thames, Didcot, Faringdon, Henley-on-Thames, Thame, Wallingford and

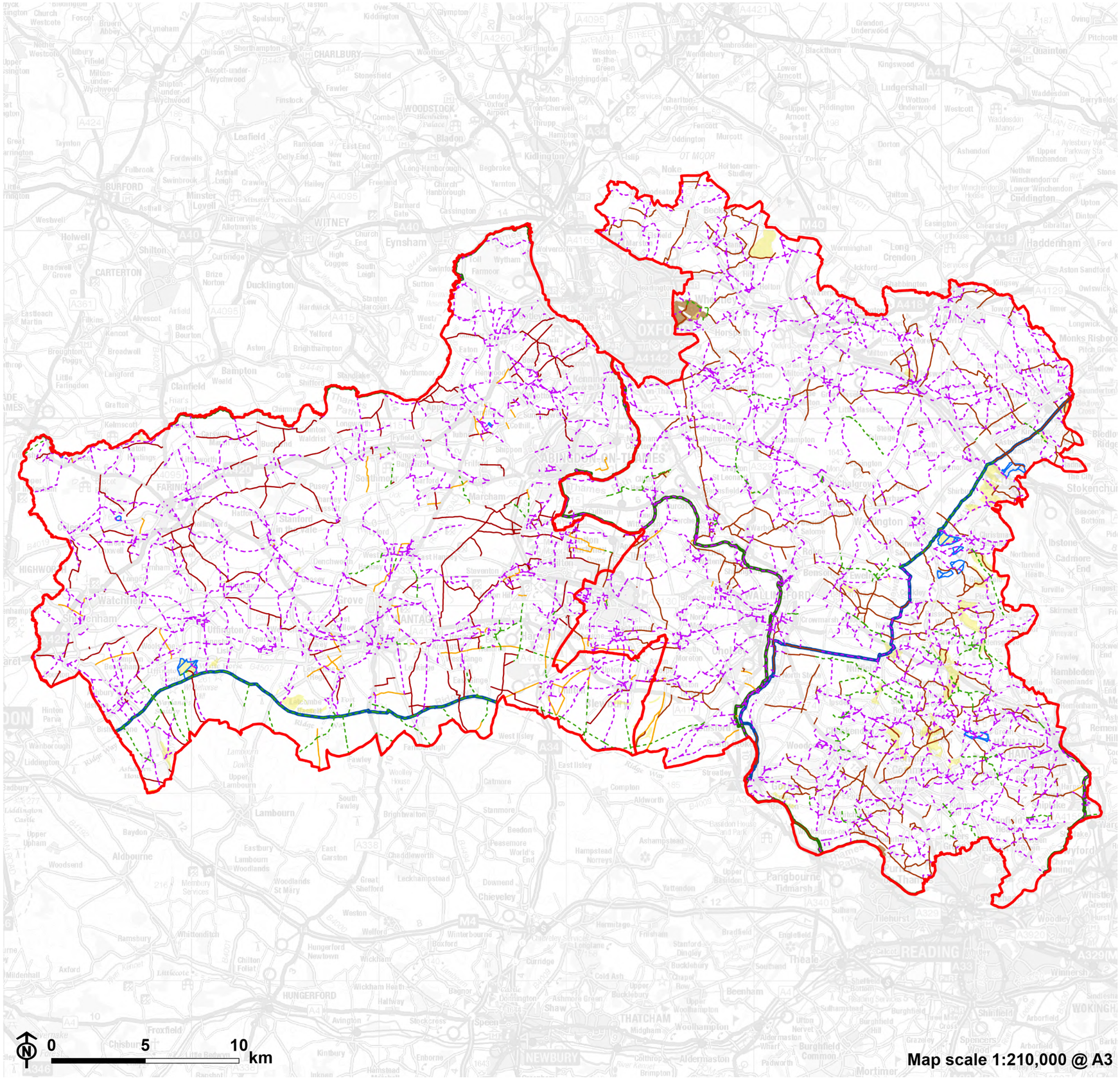
Wantage), the average provision is 2.88 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population.

3.35 The districts contain approximately 2,224 km of PRoW, with 59% of these routes located within South Oxfordshire district and 41% in the Vale of White Horse district (see **Figure 3.11**). Land lying within the boundary of the Chilterns National Landscape is characterised by a dense network of PRoW, with many of the routes ancient in origin and lying within close proximity to areas of land in National Trust ownership or Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Access Land. In general, the network of walking and cycling routes within the districts radiate from the settlements, affording connectivity across the rural landscape. This pattern is particularly apparent around the towns of Wantage, Abingdon-on-Thames, Wallingford and Henley-on-Thames as well on land adjoining Oxford City. However, the PRoW network appears much more fragmented on land broadly parallel to the corridors of the A420 and A338 within Vale of White Horse district (see **Figure 3.12**).



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Figure 3.11: Existing public access

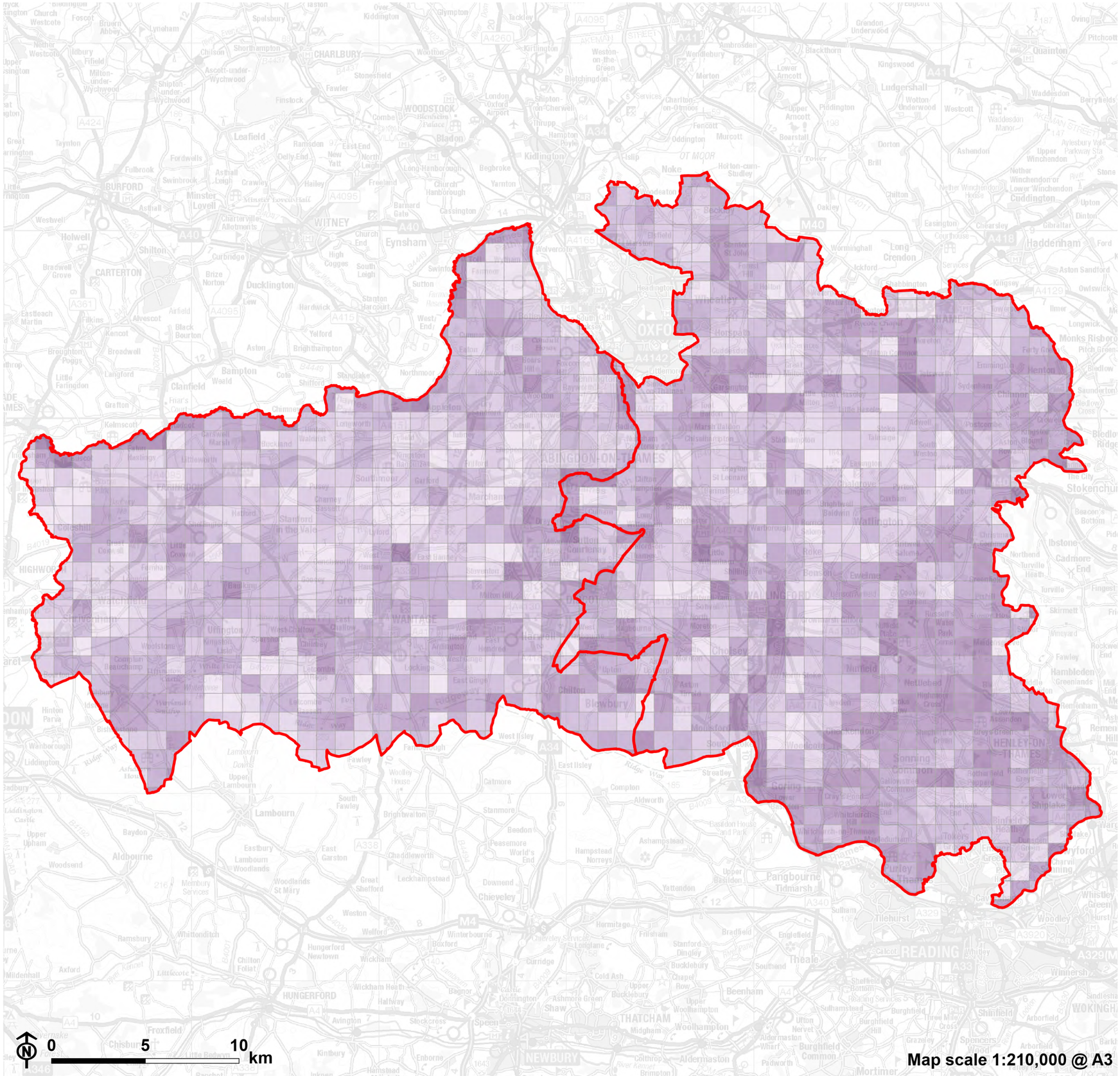


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Figure 3.12: Public Rights of Way density



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3.36 There are two National Trails located within the districts; the Ridgeway and the Thames Path. The Ridgeway follows the ridge of chalk hills through the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns National Landscapes, providing connections beyond the boundaries of the districts to Buckinghamshire and Wiltshire. The Thames Path mirrors the meandering course of the river. Multiple long-distance promoted footpaths also cross the landscape of the districts, providing linkages between settlements and wider strategic linkages. These routes include D'arcy Dalton Way, The Vale Way, Shakespeare's Way and the Oxfordshire Way.

3.37 The cycle network extends to 151 km across the districts, including National Cycle Network (NCN) routes 5, 51, 57 and 554 which provide connections between a number of settlements. NCN route 5 follows a broadly north-south alignment from the fringes of Oxford in the north, passing through Abingdon-on-Thames before moving south towards Didcot. This route then moves eastwards to incorporate the town of Wallingford, providing a wider linkage towards Reading to the south east. East-west connections are provided by NCN routes 57 and 544 which offer connections to both Thame and Wantage. Improvements and extensions are currently underway as part of the Science Vale Cycle Network (SVCN), which aims to improve connections between major employment centres (Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre) and key population centres. Improvements include re-surfacing and widening of paths, safety infrastructure, as well as the provision of new cycle connections along existing footpaths and bridleways.

3.38 Open Access Land designated under the CRoW Act 2000 covers approximately 3% of land lying within the administrative boundaries of the districts. With the exception of land at Waterperry Wood and other isolated pockets which typically form remnants of former common land, areas of CRoW Access Land are located wholly within the boundaries of the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns National Landscapes.

Issues and local needs

Health and wellbeing inequalities

3.39 NHS data for the county indicates that according to most public health indicators, including life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, the population of Oxfordshire does better or similar to the national average **[See reference 38]**. However, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) suggests that this general trend masks inequalities in health and wellbeing (see **Figure 3.13**), with people living in poorer areas of Oxfordshire expected to live 11-12 years shorter lives those in more affluent areas. Mental health rates of diagnosis and referrals continue to increase and the average level of anxiety and depression in Oxfordshire remains above the average for England. Pockets of relative health deprivation within the districts are evident within Berinsfield, land lying to the west of Abingdon-on-Thames and the southern sections of Didcot.

3.40 In 2022, 26.6% of adults in Oxfordshire were not meeting physical activity recommendations. 73.4% of adults aged 19+ years were achieving at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week. This proportion was similar to the data for the South East (70.5%) and higher than England overall (67.3%). Data for the districts also reflects this trend as the proportion of adults meeting physical activity recommendations was higher than the national average in the calendar year for 2021. In the academic year 2021-22, 46.6% of children and young people in Oxfordshire were achieving an average of 60 minutes of physical activity per day, similar to the national average of 47.2% **[See reference 40].**

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Figure 3.13: IMD and tree canopy coverage

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019

Health Deprivation and Disability Decile

- 0 - 10% (most deprived)
- 10 - 20%
- 20 - 30%
- 30 - 40%
- 40 - 50%
- 50 - 60%
- 60 - 70%
- 70 - 80%
- 80 - 90%
- 90 - 100% (least deprived)

EA Vegetation Object Model

- Canopy cover

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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3.41 The Community Wellbeing Index **[See reference 39]** provides a measure of community wellbeing at the neighbourhood level across the UK. The findings for South Oxfordshire indicates higher wellbeing scores in proximity to urban centres (including Henley-on-Thames, Didcot, Wallingford and Watlington), with areas of lower wellbeing recorded in rural areas in central areas of the district. Community Wellbeing readings of less than 40 (out of 100) were recorded at Toot Baldon, Little Haseley, Easington, Howe Hill, Hailey, Huntercombe, Postcombe, Cuddesdon, Greenfield, Clare and Adwell. The UK average Community Wellbeing score is 52. Vale of White Horse district exhibits higher levels of wellbeing in the east, where the administrative boundary adjoins South Oxfordshire district. The trend for increased wellbeing in proximity to urban centres is also apparent in this district, with lower Community Wellbeing scores apparent at the western extent of the district.

Opportunity for GI? Address inequalities in access to GI and greenspace

GI can increase and enhance the provision of greenspace or provide additional greening which can deliver a suite of health benefits. The integration of GI to create high quality, attractive places can help promote active lifestyles and improve mental wellbeing.

Increasing and ageing population

3.42 The rurality of the county is demonstrated by an average population density of 2.8 people per hectare. The results of the 2021 Census indicate average population density within both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts falls below this county average, at 2.2 and 2.4 people per hectare respectively **[See reference 40]**. However, the population is increasing in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (by 11% and 14.8% respectively

between 2011-2021). This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%) **[See reference 41]**.

3.43 The county's population is also ageing and this trend is set to continue. For South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, the number of 65+ exceeds the number of 0-15s **[See reference 42]**. This change in age profile indicates that greater consideration is needed to examine the needs of an ageing population in rural areas to ensure that residents can continue to access and enjoy the benefits of the countryside access network. The Oxfordshire Rights of Way Management Plan also highlights that changes in population demographics in the county highlight the opportunity to promote access and participation in countryside access amongst non-white ethnic groups **[See reference 43]**.

Opportunity for GI? Respond to current and future GI needs

The creation and enhancement of GI within the districts should respond to the needs of a changing population, reflecting current and future population demographics within the districts. GI offers the opportunity to promote public access for all ages and abilities as well as deliver greenspaces which act as key social spaces to tackle isolation.

Rurality and fragmentation of the PRoW network

3.44 Forming the most rural county in the south east region, 42.9% of land in Oxfordshire is used for arable farming, with only 7.5% used for greenspace and private gardens **[See reference 56]**. Rural areas are synonymous with less extensive and reliable travel options and whilst people may live in close proximity to the countryside, they may not necessarily be able to access it easily by foot, cycle or public transport. In general, land lying to the south of the M40 and A420 road corridors are less well connected by PRoW. This trend is important given that a connected PRoW network offers the opportunity to

partially mitigate poor access to greenspace within the districts. The Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan 2019-2024 also highlights the importance of the PRoW to how people experience the landscape, predicting a decline in the maintenance of the network and wider countryside access unless public funding is maintained or new funding secured in the long-term.

Opportunity for GI? Enhance connectivity across the PRoW network

Poor access to open space may be mitigated to a certain degree through improved connectivity of PRoW and enhancement of the countryside experienced along these routes. The Oxfordshire Treescape Project recognises that the addition of woodlands or species-rich grasslands along these routes could greatly increase their recreational and amenity value.

Dependency on private transport

3.45 There is a high dependency on private transport within the districts due to the dispersed settlement pattern. Findings from the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan – Baseline Report **[See reference 44]** indicates that 83% of households in Oxfordshire have access to one or more private car or van. This is significantly higher than the average for England which is 74%. This trend is reflected in the high proportion of journeys made by car outside Oxford, including a large number of short trips within the county's towns. Despite a good network of frequent bus or rail services linking the key settlements within the county, the proportion of car journeys between these towns remains high.

Opportunity for GI? Promote the use of active travel routes

Encouraging increased levels of active travel will become increasingly important in the future due to projected population increases in the districts. Through sensitive design which responds to landscape character, GI offers the opportunity to create an attractive walking and cycling environment within the districts.

Increasing heat stress due to climate change

3.46 The adverse impact of climate change on health in Oxfordshire includes extremes in heat risk **[See reference 45]**. Although some groups of people (including the very young and older people) are more at risk from high temperatures, this risk is amplified in built up areas which are more likely to retain heat than surrounding rural areas.

Opportunity for GI? Climatic regulation

GI performs a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change through local climate regulation, providing shade and reducing ambient temperatures to help mitigate heat risk. As a consequence, localised increases in the provision of greenspace and urban greening in built up areas would deliver the most benefits where the population is most at risk of adverse health impacts as a result of increased temperatures associated with climate change.

Deficiencies in access to greenspace

3.47 Natural England recommends that residents should have access to at least a neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) scale greenspace within a 15 minute walk, as well as a local (at least two hectares in size) or doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) scale greenspace within a 5 minute walk **[See reference 46]**. **Figure 3.14** shows the pattern of access to different levels of this greenspace hierarchy across the districts.

3.48 Within the Tier 1 settlements, gaps in accessibility exist within large sections of Henley-on-Thames, south west and north east Abingdon-on-Thames, eastern areas of Thame, the western edge of Wallingford, south east Didcot and land to the west of Wantage.

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Figure 3.14: Greenspace provision

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Number of accessibility buffers met (accessibility buffers indicate the proximity to greenspace experienced by people living within specific distance parameters. The more buffers that are met, the better the access.)

- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- No buffers met

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:225,000 @ A3

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3.49 In smaller villages within the districts, accessibility to at least one open space is generally available. However, there are some deficiencies in access within Wheatley (Tier 2 settlement), East Hendred (Tier 3 settlement), Whitchurch-on-Thames, Lower Shiplake and Milton Heights (Tier 4 settlements). Larger areas of natural greenspace attract visitors from a wider area and act as destination spaces. These sites are primarily located on the edge of Oxford and in the south within the Chilterns National Landscape. Gaps in this provision is evident within the districts, notably around Thame, south of Didcot and between Wantage and Faringdon.

3.50 Community growing spaces and allotments are distributed throughout the districts. However, this provision is more scattered within the south east of South Oxfordshire district; with villages such as Ipsden, Checkendon, Stoke Row and Whitchurch Hill exhibiting deficiencies in access to these types of open space.

3.51 Research conducted by the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery concluded that sixteen neighbourhoods within Oxfordshire are located in the lower 30% of socio-economic deprivation in England and lack access to greenspace according to multiple metrics **[See reference 47]**. Only one of these areas (Abingdon Caldecott) is located in the districts. However, a number of these sixteen neighbourhoods are clustered at the southern extent of Oxford; including Blackbird Leys, Northfield Brook and Littlemore.

3.52 This report also found that two neighbourhoods within Didcot and one in Abingdon-on-Thames fall within the lowest 15% in the county for both density of both PRoW and publicly accessible greenspace. Although this trend reflects accessible greenspace rather than open space, the report does indicate that low amounts of greenspace in those areas were not fully mitigated by access to the PRoW network. It is recommended that the potential for an Oxfordshire sub-regional sized publicly accessible greenspace (> 500 hectares) which is accessible by active travel and public transport should be explored to address the deficiency of this size of greenspace within the county.

3.53 Didcot is a designated Garden Town. It is a town that is growing and changing, with a wider aspiration in the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan to develop Didcot into a 'super green town'. The Didcot GI Strategy **[See reference 48]** outlines a programme of GI enhancements to support this ethos and ambition. These recommendations were informed by open space deficiency and accessibility analysis for the town.

3.54 The Didcot GI Strategy concludes that central areas of Didcot and the southern area of Ladygrove are currently deficient in access to parks. North western Didcot was also found to exhibit a significant deficit in park and playground provision, with the wider town also lacking access to accessible natural greenspace. When all typologies are combined, the accessibility analysis suggests that north west Didcot has significant under provision in all typologies of GI. In addition, central Didcot demonstrates significant deficiencies for all typologies, other than allotment provision.

Opportunity for GI? Enhance greenspace access and provision

Greenspaces form an important part of the GI network. Integration of greenspaces within a strong GI network will allow these spaces to provide safe, attractive places for all members of communities to connect with nature and have opportunities for physical activity and social wellbeing. The opportunity also exists to address greenspace inequalities and incorporate new greenspace assets within Garden Town and Garden Village developments which are constantly evolving.

Theme 4: Nature-rich places

This theme provides an overview of the biodiversity features across the districts. Assets and patterns are explored, together with an overview of the current issues and vulnerabilities of the GI network. The potential exists to enhance the connectivity of the GI network within the districts, providing a framework for a resilient network of habitats and nature recovery. Provision of GI within the districts should therefore be informed by the need for natural spaces to become bigger, better and more joined up.

Assets

3.55 Designated ecological sites are the backbone of the nature network, forming the most important locations in the districts for biodiversity (**Figure 3.15**). The designated sites of international, national and local importance are summarised below:

- There are six Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within the districts, forming internationally designated sites which offer protection to the most seriously threatened habitats across Europe. The SACs located in South Oxfordshire district are located at Little Wittenham, Hartslock Wood, Chilterns Beechwoods and Aston Rowant. Vale of White Horse district contains SACs at Cothill Fen and Hackpen Hill. Additionally, Oxford Meadows straddles the northern extent of Vale of White Horse district.
- Located in South Oxfordshire district, Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve (NNR) sits on the north western scarp of the Chiltern Hills. The site is characterised by species-rich chalk grassland, beech woodland and juniper scrub. Areas of lowland calcareous fen and oak / alder woodland habitats characterise the land at Cothill NNR, lying within Vale of White Horse district.

- South Oxfordshire district contains clusters of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located broadly at the northern and eastern extents of the district. Sites in the east are predominantly associated with areas of chalk downland and woodland mosaic characteristic of the Chilterns scarp. To the north, SSSIs are typified by woodland situated on soils derived from poorly drained Oxford Clay.
- A number of SSSIs lie at the northern extent of Vale of White Horse district. These sites form areas of woodland habitat which radiate from the belt of higher ground.

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Figure 3.15: Sites designated for nature conservation

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- 5km buffer
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Conservation Target Area

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:240,000 @ A3

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- In general, Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) follow the same pattern of distribution as SSSIs across both districts, with the exception of additional cluster of sites to the west of Faringdon and to the north of Stanford in the Vale. These sites are of local biodiversity importance.

3.56 South Oxfordshire district contains a higher percentage coverage of international and national designated sites than the average for the county. South Oxfordshire district includes 0.62% coverage of SAC, 2.29% of SSSI, and 0.23% of NNR, compared to the respective figures of 0.29%, 1.72%, and 0.18% for Oxfordshire (see **Table 3.1**). Conversely, Vale of White Horse district demonstrates a lower percentage coverage than the county average for these designations. However, Vale of White Horse exhibits a higher coverage of local nature conservation designations (3.1%) compared to South Oxfordshire (2.53%). The differing levels of designation coverage between the two districts are key for guiding regional environmental strategies and prioritising conservation efforts.

3.57 Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) represent the most critical zones for wildlife conservation within the county, where targeted actions can yield the highest benefits for biodiversity restoration on a landscape scale. These areas focus on the maintenance, restoration, and creation of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats. In Oxfordshire, CTAs encompass 95% of the land area of SSSIs. Each CTA supports one or more of the 20 UK BAP priority habitats present in the region, covering 17% of Oxfordshire's land area but containing 85% of the mapped UK BAP priority habitats and 83% of all records of UK BAP priority species. Within the districts, CTAs cover approximately 20% of the administrative areas. CTAs were instrumental in creating the foundational layers for Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network draft mapping and will underpin the statutory mapping. As such, CTAs are set to play a pivotal role in shaping future strategic conservation efforts across the county.

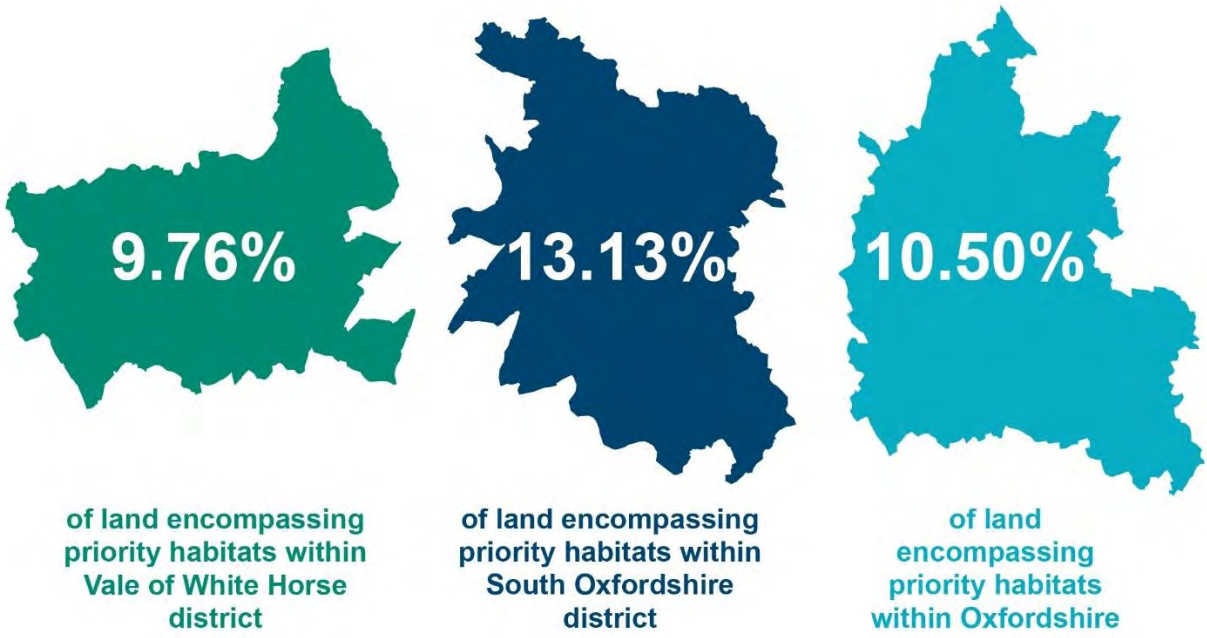
Table 3.1: Extent and coverage of the designated site network

District	Designated Site Network	Hectares	% Coverage
South Oxfordshire	SAC	419.72	0.62
South Oxfordshire	SSSI	1,552.25	2.29
South Oxfordshire	NNR	157.79	0.23
South Oxfordshire	LNR	19.36	0.03
South Oxfordshire	LWS	1,714.19	2.53
South Oxfordshire	CTA	13,522.97	19.93
Vale of White Horse	SAC	79.27	0.14
Vale of White Horse	SSSI	904.39	1.56
Vale of White Horse	NNR	1.81	0.00
Vale of White Horse	LNR	11.31	0.02
Vale of White Horse	LWS	1,793.60	3.10
Vale of White Horse	CTA	11,239.10	19.42
Oxfordshire	SAC	764.01	0.29
Oxfordshire	SSSI	4475.81	1.72
Oxfordshire	NNR	472.28	0.18
Oxfordshire	LNR	59.82	0.02
Oxfordshire	LWS	No data	No data
Oxfordshire	CTA	No data	No data

3.58 The districts showcase a diverse mosaic of nationally significant habitats, with priority habitats encompassing 13.13% of the area of South Oxfordshire district and 9.76% of the area of Vale of White Horse district (see **Figure 3.16**). This compares to the county average of 10.50% coverage in Oxfordshire. Key

trends based on the distribution of Priority Habitat Inventory habitats are summarised below and listed in **Table 3.2**:

- Deciduous woodland: Encompassing approximately 10% of South Oxfordshire district and 5.5% of the land area of Vale of White Horse district, this habitat is important for wildlife and carbon sequestration.
- Lowland calcareous grassland: Covering similar proportions in both districts (0.98 and 0.71% in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse respectively), this scarce habitat is important for supporting a variety of pollinators and providing ecological connectivity. This habitat is known for its specialised species adapted to a unique soil chemistry.
- Floodplain grazing marsh: This habitat is more prevalent in Vale of White Horse district, with a coverage of 1.1%, compared to 0.78% in South Oxfordshire district. It provides habitats for numerous wetland species and plays a significant role in natural flood management.

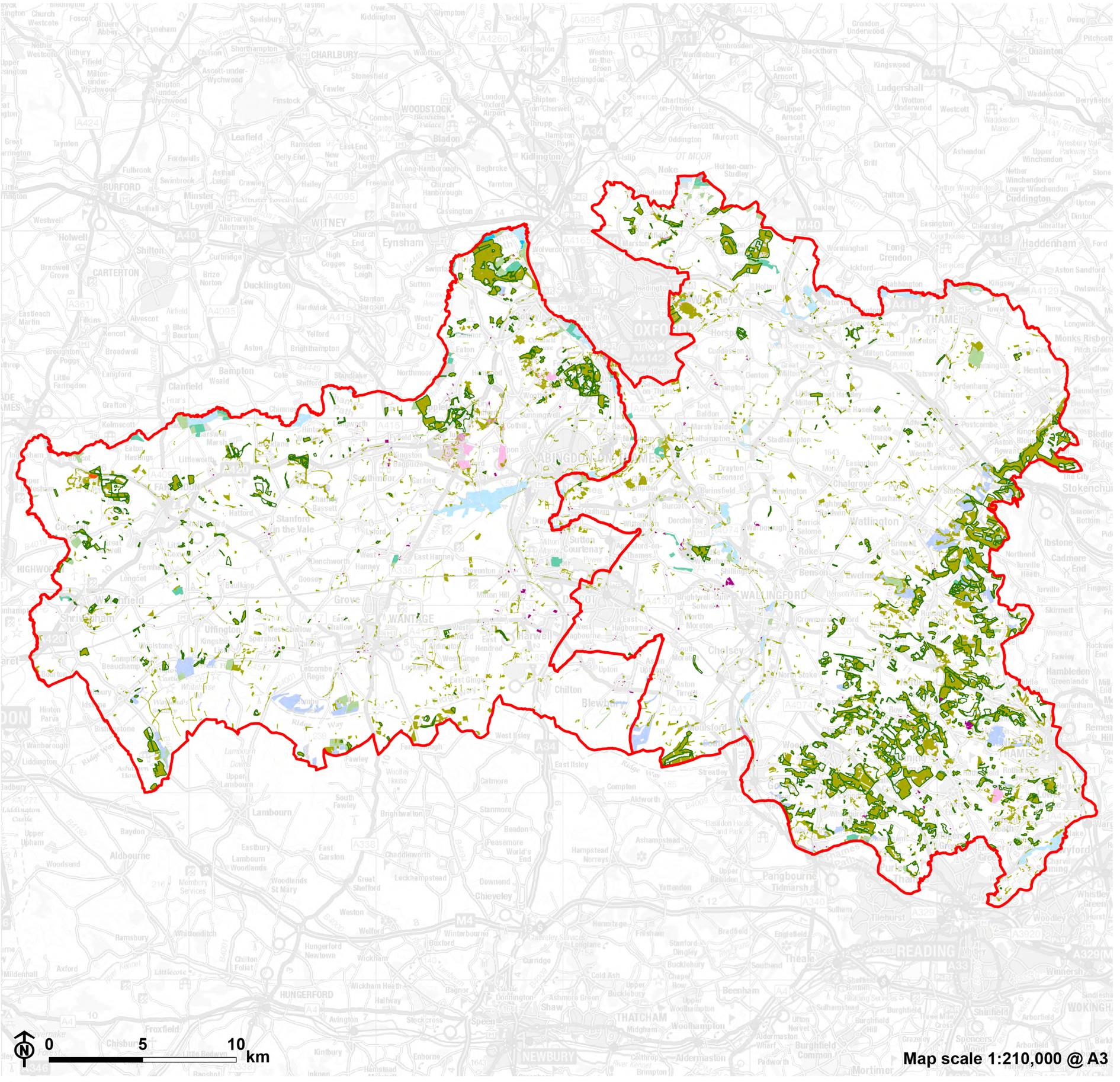


3.59 South Oxfordshire district exhibits a good distribution of ancient woodland, associated primarily with the Chiltern Hills. Total coverage within the district equates to approximately 6.74%, compared to 3.42% for the county. However, the distribution of woodland coverage within Vale of White Horse district is more fragmented (2.76% coverage), associated with the belt of higher ground to the west of Oxford and the corridor of the A420.

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Figure 3.16: Priority and notable habitats



South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Priority Habitat Inventory

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Lowland meadows
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Ponds
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- Reedbeds
- Traditional orchard
- Ancient Woodland

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Table 3.2: Coverage of Priority Habitat Inventory within the districts and Oxfordshire

Priority habitats	South Oxfordshire (hectares)	South Oxfordshire (%)	Vale of White Horse (hectares)	Vale of White Horse (%)	Oxfordshire (hectares)	Oxfordshire (%)
Deciduous woodland	6,644.18	9.79	3,175.66	5.49	16,214.57	6.22
Lowland calcareous grassland	663.39	0.98	408.49	0.71	1,530.18	0.59
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	531.97	0.78	638.29	1.1	4,258.02	1.63
Good quality semi improved grassland	361.11	0.53	392.78	0.68	1,749.62	0.67
Lowland meadows	158.25	0.23	264.2	0.46	1,529.07	0.59
Traditional orchard	93.49	0.14	67.2	0.12	266.1	0.1
Lowland dry acid grassland	42.02	0.06	119.7	0.21	163.98	0.06
Lowland fens	28.76	0.04	48.5	0.08	135.48	0.05
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh lowland meadows	0	0	22.61	0.04	33.74	0.01
Lowland heathland	0.75	0	0.76	0	1.51	0
Ponds	0.37	0	10.9	0.02	15.04	0.01

Priority habitats	South Oxfordshire (hectares)	South Oxfordshire (%)	Vale of White Horse (hectares)	Vale of White Horse (%)	Oxfordshire (hectares)	Oxfordshire (%)
Ponds / reedbeds	0	0	0	0	0.13	0
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	2.1	0	0.02	0	8.66	0
Reedbeds	0.56	0	1.19	0	3.68	0

3.60 Figure 3.17 illustrates the national habitat network dataset provided by Natural England, a tool designed to map and analyse the distribution and connectivity of habitats across England. The dataset reveals promising opportunities for the creation of connectivity linkages between priority habitats across the districts. This information is valuable for complementing the Nature Recovery Network, currently being mapped as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, particularly by highlighting potential areas for habitat enhancement within the Wider Landscape Zone (as shown in **Figure 3.18**).

3.61 Between 2010 and 2021, data suggests a decline of UK protected and notable species of 1.0% in South Oxfordshire district and 2.8% in Vale of White Horse district **[See reference 49]**. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will emphasise habitat management to enhance species conditions and prevent extinction. The statutory Local Nature Recovery Strategy will update the species lists, determine priority species, link these species to habitat management outcomes, and create tailored management plans for particular species needs.

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Figure 3.17: National habitat network

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Habitat network (combined)

- Ancient woodland
- Priorirty Habitat Inventory
- Rivers & lakes
- SSSI
- Habitat Restoration-Creation
- Restorable Habitat
- Network Enhancement Zone 1
- Network Enhancement Zone 2
- Network Expansion Zone
- Fragmentation Action Zone

Note: Habitat Creation-Restoration areas indicate locations where efforts are underway to either create or restore the primary habitat. Restorable Habitat identifies semi-natural areas where the primary habitat exists in small quantities or in a degraded or fragmented state and is suitable for restoration.

Network Enhancement Zone 1 includes land near existing primary and priority habitats where enhancing biodiversity would increase ecological resilience. Enhancement Zone 2 connects existing habitat patches but is less suitable for creating primary priority habitats. Actions here can still enhance biodiversity by increasing green infrastructure, thus buffering and linking habitats.

Network Expansion Zone comprises land near Enhancement Zones 1 & 2, ideal for new habitat creation and connecting habitats across the landscape.

Fragmentation Action Zones pinpoint smaller, fragmented existing habitats that could be expanded or connected to reduce fragmentation, highlighting priorities for restoration and creation.

0 5 10 km

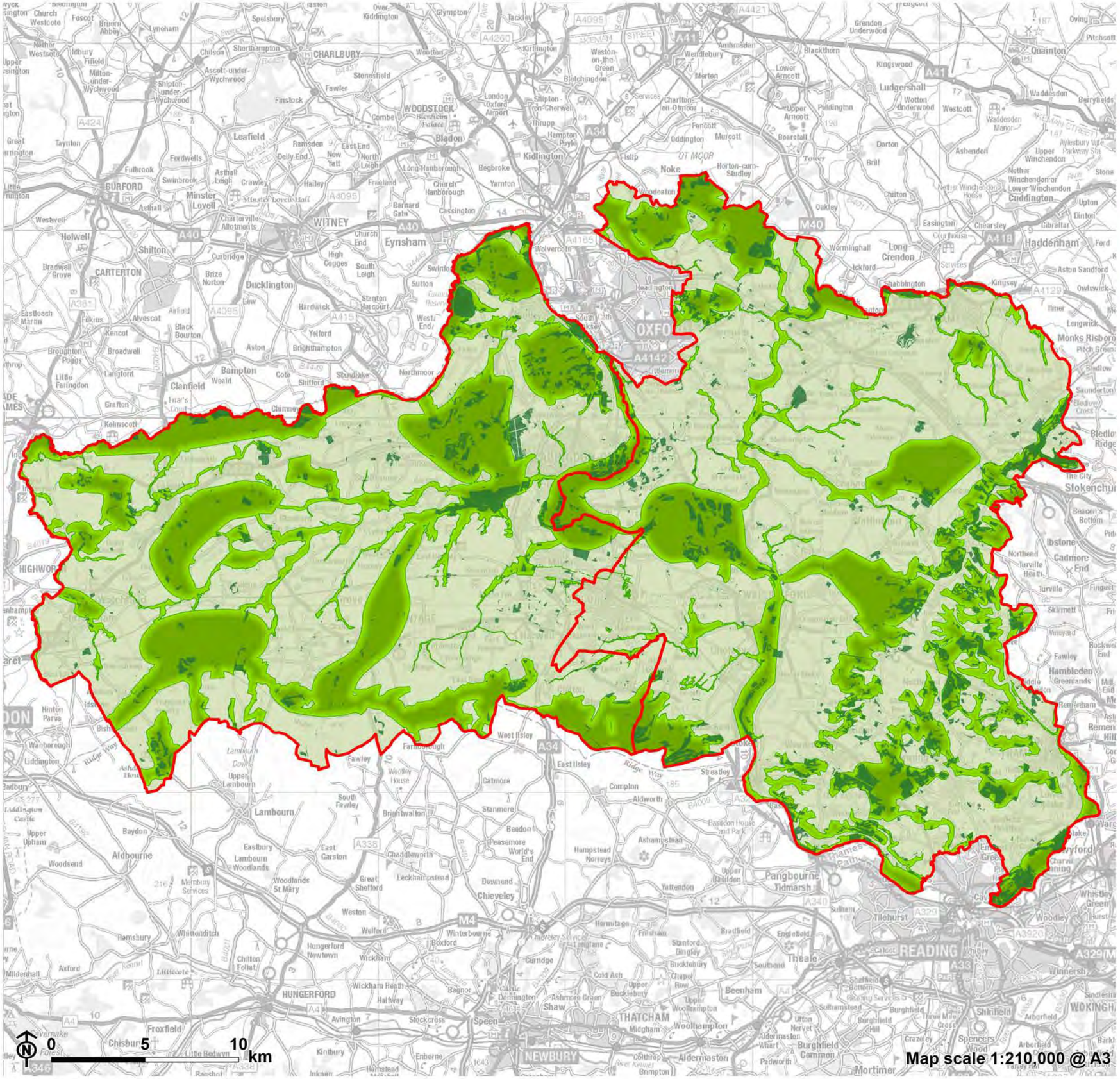
Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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Figure 3.18: Draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network



Note: Core zone – the most important sites for biodiversity in Oxfordshire – including all nationally and locally designated sites, nature reserves, priority habitats and ancient woodland.

Recovery zone – comprising the Conservation Target Areas, Important Freshwater Areas and additional areas added to provide better habitat connectivity.

Wider Landscape zone – covering the rest of the county, recognising the important contribution that agricultural and urban landscapes beyond the Recovery zone can make to nature's recovery

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Issues and local needs

Habitat fragmentation and poor connectivity

3.62 Significant gaps in connectivity exist between sites designated for nature conservation and habitats in the districts. South Oxfordshire district benefits from clusters of areas protected for nature conservation, promoting ecological linkages. However, these clusters appear somewhat fragmented. Vale of White Horse district is characterised by an even more scattered distribution of such sites. This fragmentation potentially hinders the movement of species and the flow of ecological benefits, underlining the need for strategic planning to bridge these gaps and enhance connectivity across the landscape. Development pressures also form a significant threat to connectivity, leading not only to potential habitat loss but also to increased recreational pressures on nearby natural areas.

Opportunity for GI? Enhance habitat connectivity

GI interventions should seek to increase connectivity between designated sites and habitats in the districts. The opportunity also exists to incorporate measures to mitigate the impacts of development, such as establishing buffer zones and redirecting recreational access to less sensitive areas.

Variable habitat condition

3.63 Table 3.3 provides a breakdown of SSSI condition across the districts, as defined by Natural England. The data from 2024 is shown spatially

in **Figure 3.19**. In South Oxfordshire district, 59.2% of SSSIs are in a favourable condition, indicating successful management and conservation efforts. Conversely, the Vale of the White Horse district shows only 28.6% of its SSSIs in a favourable state, suggesting challenges in maintaining these areas. 69.1% of SSSIs in the Vale of the White Horse district are categorised as 'unfavourable recovering,' indicating ongoing efforts to improve conditions, which may lead to better outcomes in the future. In contrast, South Oxfordshire district has a smaller proportion of land in this category (38.5%). The very low percentages of 'unfavourable declining' and 'unfavourable no change' statuses in both districts suggest minimal ongoing degradation, which is a positive sign for the resilience and potential recovery of these habitats.

Table 3.3: SSSI condition in the districts

SSSI condition	South Oxfordshire: Total hectares	South Oxfordshire: % of total	Vale of the White Horse: Total hectares	Vale of the White Horse: % of total
Favourable	918.92	59.2	258.31	28.6
Unfavourable declining	9.42	0.6	15.04	1.7
Unfavourable no change	25.55	1.6	0.04	0.004
Unfavourable recovering	598.48	38.5	624.93	69.1

Opportunity for GI? Improve habitat quality and condition

A district-wide approach to nature recovery is required to ensure these sites function to their full potential, promoting the improvement of habitat condition. Consideration should be given to the factors that are contributing negatively to the condition of these features, including surrounding land use, recreation and inadequate management.

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Figure 3.19: Issues and pressures – condition of SSSIs

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
SSSI Impact Risk Zone

Sites of Special Scientific Interest condition unit

Favourable
Unfavourable declining
Unfavourable no change
Unfavourable recovering

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:210,000 @ A3

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Emergence of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3.64 The LNRS represents a pivotal policy instrument and mechanism for facilitating nature recovery across England. The statutory mandate requires that designated authorities finalise and publish their LNRS in 2025. The Oxfordshire's LNRS is led by Oxfordshire County Council. In Oxfordshire, the draft Nature Recovery Network was mapped by TVERC (**Figure 3.18**). This mapping will serve as the basis for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy map with expected minor updates. The data is already being used by the districts to guide conservation efforts and negotiations for placing strategic habitat banks related to Biodiversity Net Gain credits. Together, the Nature Recovery Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy serve as fundamental components in promoting habitat connectivity and ensuring the success of nature recovery efforts.

Opportunity for GI? Support the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

It is imperative that the updated Strategy aligns with the Nature Recovery Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy to ensure collaborative and effective delivery of nature recovery initiatives.

Integration of Biodiversity Net Gain

3.65 Biodiversity Net Gain became mandatory in February 2024, and statutory guidance has been published **[See reference 50]**. Biodiversity Net Gain constitutes a statutory mandate designed to enhance the natural environment significantly beyond its pre-development state. It is essential that developments

not only avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity but also actively contribute to nature recovery. Priority should be allocated to the preservation and enhancement of existing habitat features deemed critical for local biodiversity, as highlighted in the developing Local Nature Recovery Strategy. If onsite restoration proves unfeasible, compensatory actions should be taken. Any strategic offsite Biodiversity Net Gain should be guided by the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Opportunity for GI? Utilise Biodiversity Net Gain as a delivery mechanism

The GI network will need to accommodate future population growth, balancing the need for protection of habitats and species most sensitive to disturbance and therein, promote the delivery of locally appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain. It should be used as a lever to ensure the delivery of high-quality GI interventions.

Delivery of nutrient neutrality

3.66 Part of the Vale of White Horse district falls within the hydrological catchment of the River Lambourn SAC, a chalk river. Nutrient neutrality regulations affect this area located to the south of the Ridgeway long distance footpath within Vale of White Horse district, and there is a notably high density of SSSIs. This regulatory focus highlights the critical need to transition land from intensive agricultural practices to the creation of habitats that facilitate the buffering and sequestration of nutrients before they enter local catchments. Additionally, the strategic selection of this land to bridge gaps between SSSIs can enhance both habitat connectivity and nutrient sequestration, providing ecological benefits.

3.67 Recent updates in policy have introduced the possibility of stacking credits from various environmental schemes, adhering to rules on additionality. This

enables landowners in the region to simultaneously market Biodiversity Net Gain and nutrient neutrality credits derived from the same parcel of land. This approach not only optimises land use but also maximises the ecological and economic returns from land management practices, positioning this area as a highly favourable location for implementing habitat enhancement strategies.

Opportunity for GI? Introduce interventions to reduce surface run-off

The GI strategy can significantly contribute to achieving nutrient neutrality by focusing on the creation of buffer zones which would help to effectively absorb excess nutrients before they reach water systems, significantly reducing runoff from both agricultural areas. The restoration and creation of wetlands would also naturally remove nutrients from water through biological processes, enhancing water quality. In addition, the promotion of GI interventions such as green roofs, permeable pavements, and bioswales in settlements could help reduce surface runoff, further supporting nutrient reduction efforts.

Promotion of farmland bird conservation

3.68 A new Strategic Farmland Bird Compensation Scheme is in the process of being developed, led by the Nature Space Partnership. This innovative scheme is structured similarly to Biodiversity Net Gain and Great Crested Newt licensing, where it will evaluate the impacts of development on farmland bird populations and mandate compensatory payments from developers. The initiative is financially supported by the Nature Environment and Rural Fund (NERF), and has been designated for implementation within both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

Opportunity for GI? Support wider conservation initiatives

Forthcoming mapping highlighting strategic areas for farmland bird conservation should inform the definition of priority GI areas through the identification of key areas for protective measures and habitat enhancement.

Introduction of Great Crested Newt district licensing

3.69 District licensing for Great Crested Newts is a Natural England approved alternative to the standard licensing system where licences are held by local planning authorities instead of individual developers. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts participate in a Great Crested Newts licencing scheme. This approach is underpinned by a detailed habitat suitability map that categorises areas based on their importance and suitability for Great Crested Newts.

3.70 Nationally or regionally important sites are excluded from development impacts under the District Licence Scheme; highly suitable habitats are critical for the conservation of these newts; suitable habitats indicate a likely presence of newts; moderate habitat suitability suggests possible presence; and areas with low habitat suitability have a low probability of Great Crested Newt presence.

Opportunity for GI? Complement wider conservation efforts

The Great Crested Newt mapping should inform the strategic prioritisation of GI interventions, with habitat enhancements aimed at Great Crested Newt and amphibian recovery, ensuring that conservation initiatives are effectively integrated into local and regional planning initiatives.

Chapter 4

Open space analysis

4.1 This chapter contains the headline findings from the open space analysis. A full breakdown of the methodology and further detail regarding the data that has informed this analysis, including typology descriptions and a breakdown of audit scores can be found in **Appendix F**.

Reviewing and updating baseline data

4.2 In order for an assessment of open space provision to be robust, it is essential that analysis is underpinned by accurate spatial data. Using datasets derived from the previous open space strategies for both districts and supplemented with other national datasets, the baseline was updated to reflect current open space provision within the districts. This process involved the inclusion of open space associated with developments constructed since publication of the most recent open space strategies for the districts in 2016 / 2017.

Typology

4.3 Each open space site has been assigned a primary typology, based on key characteristics and functionality. The types of open space identified in the districts comprise:

- Parks and gardens (which also contributes to the wider accessible greenspace typology);
- Recreation grounds (which also contributes to the wider accessible greenspace typology);

- Natural greenspace (which also contributes to the wider accessible greenspace typology);
- Amenity greenspace(which also contributes to the wider accessible greenspace typology);
- Provision for children and teenagers;
- Churchyards and cemeteries;
- Outdoor sports; and
- Community food growing spaces (including allotments).

4.4 'Secondary typologies' have been identified when an area of an open space has a distinctive function or character, separate to the wider site. An example of this may be an area of equipped play within a wider park. Secondary typologies have been identified for provision for children and teenagers and outdoor sports.

Hierarchy

4.5 In order to inform a detailed analysis of the updated open space dataset with regard to quality, value and accessibility, a site hierarchy has been applied to the open space sites within the districts. The hierarchies applied have been developed for accessible greenspaces in line with the Accessible Greenspaces Standards (AGS) set out in the NEGIF and for provision for children and teenagers in line with Fields in Trust (FiT) guidance.

4.6 In accordance with the guidance in the NEGIF, accessible greenspace has been categorised into the following categories (based on size):

- District;
- Wider neighbourhood;
- Neighbourhood;
- Local;

- Doorstep; and
- Pocket.

4.7 Provision for children and teenagers has been split into the following categories (based on size):

- Local Area of Play (LAP);
- Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP); and
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP).

4.8 A hierarchy has not been applied to outdoor sports, cemeteries and churchyards or community food growing spaces (including allotments), where the functionality is less dependent on the size of the site.

Quantity

Current open space provision

4.9 Figure 4.1a – **Figure 4.1b** show the location of current open space by primary typology in both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

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Figure 4.1a: Open space by primary typology in South Oxfordshire District

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Commmunity food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:159,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.1b: Open space by primary typology in Vale of White Horse District

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Commmunity food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:135,000 @ A3

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4.10 Table 4.1 outlines the quantity (area in hectares) and number of individual sites identified as part of the Strategy. Overall, the Strategy includes 1,379 open space sites across both districts, which provide over 5,000 hectares of greenspace. When accounting only for freely accessible sites (i.e. not allotments or outdoor sports provision where access is often restricted), the amount of open space reduces to 4,793.11 hectares, provided by 1,164 individual sites.

Table 4.1: Quantity of open space

Primary typology	Number of sites	Area (hectares)
Parks and gardens	78	190.85
Recreation grounds	110	330.15
Natural greenspace	183	4,082.20
Amenity greenspace	481	190.01
Provision for children and teenagers	78	11.49
Churchyards and cemeteries	234	102.37
Outdoor sports	78	232.20
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	137	117.59
Total	1,379	5,256.90

4.11 Open space provision in the districts is dominated by natural greenspace, comprising over 75% of all open space by area. This includes nine natural greenspaces sites over 100 hectares in size. The largest natural greenspace within the districts is Wytham Woods, which equates to 379 hectares.

4.12 The most common type of open space within the districts is amenity greenspace, followed by churchyards and cemeteries. These sites tend to be

smaller in size and comprise a total of 190.01 hectares and 102.37 hectares respectively.

4.13 When calculating total quantities of provision for children and young people, consideration is given to both 'standalone' equipped play facilities, as well as those facilities occurring within a wider site (such as a play area in a park or garden). In order to fully understand the quantity of provision for children and teenagers, allowance has therefore been given to secondary typologies.

4.14 Secondary typologies have also been added for outdoor sports, where these form discrete areas with restricted access, for example bowling greens and tennis courts. Additional detail relating to the provision of outdoor sports is provided in the Leisure Facilities Assessment and Strategy **[See reference 51]** and Playing Pitch Strategy **[See reference 52]**.

4.15 Table 4.2 provides the quantity and area of these sites, including both primary and secondary typologies.

Table 4.2: Quantity of provision for children and teenagers and outdoor sports, including secondary typologies

Typology	Number of sites	Area (hectares)
Provision for children and teenagers	379	41.35
Outdoor sports	139	246.60

Quantity analysis

4.16 In order to understand the quantity of open space, it is important to compare the quantity of open space with the population, to understand the demand on open space provision within the districts.

4.17 Data from the 2021 Census has been used to derive projections of annual population through to 2041. These estimations have been used to assess the provision of open space within the districts.

4.18 The quantity of each typology per 1,000 of the population is set out in **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3: Quantity of open space per 1,000 of population

Typology	Current quantity (hectares / 1,000 population)	2041 quantity (hectares / 1,000 population)
Parks and gardens	0.64	0.48
Recreation grounds	1.09	0.82
Natural greenspace	13.67	10.27
Amenity greenspace	0.64	0.48
Accessible greenspace (total)	16.04	12.05
Provision for children and teenagers	0.14	0.10
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.34	0.26
Outdoor sports	0.82	0.62
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.39	0.30
Open space (total)	17.74	13.33

4.19 The results show that there is generally good provision of open space across the districts. This equates to approximately 16.04 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population, which is significantly above the 3

hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population recommended in the NEGIF.

4.20 However, as previously noted, the districts comprise a number of large natural greenspaces, often located outside of settlements, which skew this standard. The NEGIF highlights the importance of greenspaces located close to homes, providing day-to-day opportunities for engagement with nature. It is therefore important to consider the quantity of greenspace within settlements. The analysis of open space provision within Tier 1 settlements in the districts is outlined below.

Abingdon-on-Thames

4.21 Open space provision within Abingdon-on-Thames is shown below in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: Quantity of open space in Abingdon-on-Thames

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	1.56
Recreation grounds	0.24
Natural greenspace	0.66
Amenity greenspace	0.29
Accessible greenspace (total)	2.75
Provision for children and teenagers	0.09
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.15
Outdoor sports	0.70
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.32

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Open space (total)	3.80

4.22 Overall Abingdon-on-Thames has 2.75 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population, which is slightly below the target of 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population set out within NEGIF. However, there is nearby natural greenspace at Radley which helps boost the overall provision of accessible greenspace close to the settlement. The majority of accessible greenspace provision comprises parks and gardens, which is higher than the average within the districts. Provision of natural greenspace, amenity greenspace and recreation grounds are lower than the average for the districts.

4.23 The quantity of provision for children and teenagers is lower than the average for the districts, and also significantly below the 0.55 hectares per 1,000 of the population (comprised of play spaces and teenage provision) recommended provision set out by Fields in Trust (FiT) **[See reference 53]**.

4.24 Provision of community growing spaces (including allotments) is slightly above the average across the districts, whilst provision of cemeteries and churchyards is slightly below. There is more outdoor sports provision that the wider district average.

Didcot

4.25 The provision on open space within Didcot is shown below in **Table 4.5.**

Table 4.5: Quantity of open space in Didcot

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	1.02
Recreation grounds	0.48
Natural greenspace	0.22
Amenity greenspace	1.39
Accessible greenspace (total)	3.11
Provision for children and teenagers	0.15
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.08
Outdoor sports	0.38
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.20
Open space (total)	3.76

4.26 There are 3.11 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population in Didcot. This meets the target of 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population set out within NEGIF. Provision of amenity greenspace and parks and gardens make up the majority of the accessible greenspace provision. Natural greenspace and recreation ground provision is lower than the average across the districts.

4.27 Provision for children and teenagers is similar to the average for the districts, although still below the recommended provision of 0.55 hectares per 1,000 of population set out by FiT.

4.28 Provision of community growing spaces (including allotments), cemeteries and churchyards and outdoor sports are all below the wider average for the districts.

Faringdon

4.29 The provision on open space within Faringdon is shown below in **Table 4.6**.

Table 4.6: Quantity of open space in Faringdon

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	0.77
Recreation grounds	1.46
Natural greenspace	0.91
Amenity greenspace	1.50
Accessible greenspace (total)	4.63
Provision for children and teenagers	0.17
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.19
Outdoor sports	0.80
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.49
Open space (total)	8.46

4.30 Faringdon has 4.63 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population, higher than any of the other Tier 1 settlements. This meets the target of 3 hectares per 1,000 of population set out within NEGIF. Provision of amenity greenspace and recreation grounds are the most common typologies of accessible greenspace within the settlement. Provision of these typologies are higher in Faringdon than the average across the districts.

4.31 The provision for children and teenagers is 0.17 hectares per 1,000 of population, similar to the average provision across the districts and higher than

any other Tier 1 settlement. This provision is still below the recommended provision of 0.55 hectares per 1,000 of population set out by FiT.

4.32 Provision of community growing spaces (including allotments) is higher than any of the other Tier 1 settlements and above average for the districts. Provision of outdoor sports is also above the district averages. Cemeteries and churchyards and outdoor sports are below the average provision across the districts.

Henley-on-Thames

4.33 The provision on open space within Henley-on-Thames is shown below in **Table 4.7.**

Table 4.7: Quantity of open space in Henley-on-Thames

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	0.94
Recreation grounds	0.25
Natural greenspace	0.78
Amenity greenspace	0.14
Accessible greenspace (total)	2.11
Provision for children and teenagers	0.05
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.09
Outdoor sports	0.96
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.42
Open space (total)	3.28

4.34 Overall, provision of most typologies is lower in Henley-on-Thames compared to the other Tier 1 settlements.

4.35 Accessible greenspace provision (at 2.19 hectares per 1,000 of population) does not meet the 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population target set out within NEGIF. Provision of greenspace in Henley-on-Thames is predominantly parks and gardens and natural greenspace.

4.36 At 0.05 hectares per 1,000 of population, provision for children and teenagers is lower than the other Tier 1 settlements, the average for the districts and the recommended provision set out by FiT.

4.37 Provision or community growing spaces (including allotments) and churchyards and cemeteries are also below the average provision across the districts.

Thame

4.38 The provision on open space within Thame is shown below in **Table 4.8**.

Table 4.8: Quantity of open space in Thame

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	0.38
Recreation grounds	0.26
Natural greenspace	1.04
Amenity greenspace	0.71
Accessible greenspace (total)	2.39
Provision for children and teenagers	0.42

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.11
Outdoor sports	1.32
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.42
Open space (total)	4.24

4.39 The provision of accessible greenspace within Thame is 2.39 hectares per 1,000 of population, less than the 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population target set out within NEGIF. This includes 1.04 hectares of natural greenspace per 1,000 of population, which is higher than any other Tier 1 settlement. There is only 0.38 hectares of parks and gardens per 1,000 of population, which is lower than the average for the districts and any of the other Tier 1 settlements.

4.40 Thame has 0.12 hectares per 1,000 of population, provision for children and teenagers. This is lower than the average for the districts and the recommended provision set out by FiT.

4.41 Provision of both community growing spaces (including allotments) and outdoor sports is higher than the average across the districts. Provision of churchyards and cemeteries is below the average.

Wallingford

4.42 The provision on open space within Wallingford is shown below in **Table 4.9**.

Table 4.9: Quantity of open space in Wallingford

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	1.37
Recreation grounds	0.00
Natural greenspace	1.28
Amenity greenspace	0.24
Accessible greenspace (total)	2.89
Provision for children and teenagers	0.05
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.29
Outdoor sports	1.48
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.36
Open space (total)	5.00

4.43 At 2.89 hectares per 1,000 of the population, the provision of accessible greenspace within Wallingford is below the 3 hectares per 1,000 of population standard set out in NEGIF. This provision includes 1.37 hectares of parks and gardens per 1,000 of population, which is above the district average and 1.28 hectares of natural greenspace per 1,000 of the population. However, provision of amenity greenspace is notably low and there are no recreation grounds within the settlement.

4.44 At 0.05 hectares per 1,000 of population, provision for children and teenagers is lower than the other Tier 1 settlements, the average for the districts and the recommended provision set out by FiT.

4.45 Provision of both cemeteries and churchyards and outdoor sport is higher than in the other Tier 1 settlements and above the average across the districts.

Provision for community growing spaces (including allotments) is also above the district average.

Wantage

4.46 The provision on open space within Wantage is shown below in **Table 4.10**.

Table 4.10: Quantity of open space in Wantage

Typology	Quantity (hectares per 1,000 of population)
Parks and gardens	0.58
Recreation grounds	0.00
Natural greenspace	1.51
Amenity greenspace	0.65
Accessible greenspace (total)	2.74
Provision for children and teenagers	0.10
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.17
Outdoor sports	0.91
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	0.27
Open space (total)	4.04

4.47 Provision of accessible greenspace within Wantage is 2.74 hectares per 1,000 of population, below the 3 hectares per 1,000 of population standard set out in NEGIF. This provision includes 1.51 hectares of natural greenspace, which is higher than in any of the other Tier 1 settlements. The provision of parks and gardens and recreation grounds combined is 0.58 hectares per 1,000 of population. This is a lower combined provision than any other Tier 1

settlement, highlighting the need for additional greenspace with more explicit recreational purpose.

4.48 The provision for children and teenagers quantity is equivalent to 0.10 hectares per 1,000 of population, which is below the average for the districts and the recommended provision set out by FiT.

4.49 Provision of cemeteries and churchyards, outdoor sport and community growing spaces (including allotments) is below the average across the districts.

Quality and value

4.50 Audits were undertaken of a sample of 200 open spaces within the districts; including parks and gardens, recreation grounds, natural greenspaces, amenity greenspace and provision for children and teenagers. The selection of open space sites were selected in conjunction with the Councils.

4.51 Open spaces were audited according to their quality and value, where

- 'Quality' refers to aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities; and
- 'Value' is the presence of various features and facilities, and value to the local community).

4.52 Benchmarks were set for each of the typologies and hierarchies to determine which sites were performing well. Benchmarks were defined based on the average scores received for each of the typologies / hierarchies, and the expected features and qualities which would be expected. Additional quality and value benchmarks were set for provision for children and teenagers within wider open spaces (secondary typology). These are play quality and value benchmarks.

4.53 The spatial distribution of open spaces with their quality and value scores are shown in **Figure 4.2a - Figure 4.2b**. Provision for children and typology sites with their scores according to the play audit are shown in **Figure 4.3**.

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Figure 4.2a: Open Space Quality and Value in South Oxfordshire District

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space quality and value

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:159,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.2b: Open Space Quality and Value in Vale of White Horse District

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space quality and value

- Higher quality, higher value
- Higher quality, lower value
- Lower quality, higher value
- Lower quality, lower value
- Not audited

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:135,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.3: Provision for Children and Teenagers Quality and Value

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Provision for children and teenagers quality and value

- High quality, high value
- High quality, low value
- Low quality, high value
- Low quality, low value
- Not audited

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:225,000 @ A3

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Abingdon-on-Thames

4.54 A total of 16 greenspaces were audited in Abingdon-on-Thames, comprising three natural greenspaces, nine parks and gardens and four recreation grounds. 11 of the audited greenspaces included provision for children and teenagers.

4.55 The results indicate that only 38% of audited greenspaces in Abingdon-on-Thames met both the quality and value benchmarks. All the audited greenspaces which achieved these benchmarks were parks and gardens. Recreation grounds performed particularly poorly. None of the audited recreation grounds met the value benchmark.

4.56 Only 45% of the provision for children and teenagers which was audited met the specific play quality and value benchmarks.

Didcot

4.57 A total of 15 open spaces were audited in Didcot. This includes two amenity greenspaces, one natural greenspaces, 11 parks and gardens and one site offering provision for children and teenagers. The audited sites include a further 11 open spaces which include secondary provision for children and teenagers.

4.58 The results indicate that 47% of the audited open spaces achieved both the quality and value benchmarks. Of those that did not, 27% fell below both benchmarks, higher than in any of the other Tier 1 settlements. Parks and gardens were the sites found to most commonly fall below the benchmarks.

4.59 Sites offering provision for children and teenagers generally performed well in Dicot, relative to other Tier 1 settlements. 50% of the audited sites met both benchmarks.

Faringdon

4.60 Six open spaces were audited in Faringdon, comprising three amenity greenspaces, one natural greenspace and two recreation grounds. Five of the open spaces also included provision for children and teenagers.

4.61 All of the open spaces met the quality benchmark and only one (equivalent to 16.67%) did not meet the value benchmark. This indicates that greenspaces in Faringdon are performing well compared to many of the other Tier 1 settlements.

4.62 However, the play audits indicate poorer performance. Only 20% of the sites audited met both the quality and value benchmarks, lower than most other Tier 1 sites. In particular, provision for children and teenagers fell below the value benchmark.

Henley-on-Thames

4.63 Six greenspaces were audited in Henley-on-Thames; comprising one amenity greenspace, one natural greenspace, two parks and gardens and two recreation grounds. Four of the audited greenspaces included provision for children and teenagers.

4.64 Generally, open spaces in Henley-on-Thames performed well. 83% of those audited met both quality and value benchmarks, higher than most other Tier 1 settlements. Only one audited site did not meet both benchmarks. This was a recreation ground which met the quality benchmark but not the value benchmarks.

4.65 Sites offering areas of provision for children and teenagers also generally performed well in the settlement, compared to other Tier 1 settlements. 50% of the audited areas met both benchmarks.

Thame

4.66 Nine open spaces were audited in Thame, comprising four amenity greenspaces, one natural greenspace, two parks and gardens, one site offering provision for children and teenagers and one recreation ground. Additional areas of provision for children and teenagers were present in seven of the greenspaces.

4.67 Only 33% of the audited open spaces achieved both the quality and value benchmarks, which was lower than all the other Tier 1 settlements. Amenity greenspaces and recreation grounds tended to perform slightly better than other typologies, albeit only a limited number were actually included in the audit.

4.68 Provision for children and teenagers performed slightly better than open spaces. 38% of these spaces met both benchmarks for the play audits. Overall, the play audits which only included equipped play scored performed better than those which also included teen provision.

Wallingford

4.69 Five greenspaces were audited in Wallingford, including two amenity greenspaces and three parks and gardens. Provision for children and teenagers was also included in three of the audited greenspaces.

4.70 Two of the greenspaces (40%) met the quality and value criteria, with both examples being parks and gardens. Both amenity greenspaces met the quality benchmark, but not the value benchmark.

4.71 Provision for children and teenagers demonstrated variable quality and value scoring. Both quality and value benchmarks were achieved at one (33%) of the sites, with one site (33%) not meeting either benchmark and a further site (33%) achieving the quality benchmark only.

Wantage

4.72 Seven open spaces were audited in Wantage, comprising three amenity greenspaces, one natural greenspace, one park and garden, one recreation ground and one site offering provision for children and teenagers. Three additional areas of provision children and teenagers were present within wider greenspaces in the town.

4.73 The results indicate that 43% of the audited open spaces met both the value and quality benchmarks, including one amenity greenspace, one recreation ground and one site offering provision for children and teenagers.

4.74 Provision for children and teenagers scored higher in Wantage than other Tier 1 settlements, with 75% of sites meeting both quality and value benchmarks for the play audits. The remaining space met the quality, but not the value benchmark.

Tier 2 and 3 settlements

4.75 The audits included at least one greenspace within all Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 settlements, typically the largest / most used greenspaces within each settlement (see **Appendix A** for additional detail).

4.76 The results of the audit indicate that all Tier 2 settlements had a good provision of greenspaces. The number of audited sites and distribution of scores achieved are shown in **Table 4.11**. The exception is Watlington, where 50% of the audited sites did not meet the quality or value benchmarks.

Table 4.11: Quality and value scores in Tier 2 settlements

Settlement	++ (above quality, above value)	+- (above quality, below value)	-+ (below quality, above value)	-- (below quality, below value)	Number of open spaces audited
Botley	80%	N / A	20%	N / A	5
Chinnor	80%	N / A	20%	N / A	5
Goring-on-Thames	50%	50%	N / A	N / A	4
Grove	67%	33%	N / A	N / A	3
Watlington	25%	25%	N / A	50%	4
Wheatley	67%	N / A	N / A	33%	3

4.77 In general, only one or two greenspaces were audited within Tier 3 settlements. In most cases, at least one of the greenspaces met both the quality and value benchmarks. The exceptions to this trend are listed below:

- Drayton;
- East Challow; and
- Radley.

4.78 In addition, four audits were undertaken in Wooton, and three of these open spaces did not meet the quality and value benchmarks. These sites represent areas where enhancements to greenspaces would be most beneficial.

4.79 In addition, all Tier 2 and Tier 3 settlements included at least one area of provision for children and teenagers. However, none of these sites met the benchmarks set out in the play audit. Settlements were this pattern was evident are listed below:

- Berinsfield;

- Brightwell-cum-Sotwell;
- Drayton;
- East Challow;
- Kennington;
- Kingston Bagpuize;
- Nettlebed;
- Stanford-in-the-Vale;
- Woodcote; and
- Wooton.

Accessibility

4.80 The NEGIF proposes a size-proximity approach to accessibility of open spaces, whereby larger sites are likely to draw in users from a wider catchment area. Further information relating to this principle can be found in **Appendix F.**

4.81 The accessibility analysis has focussed on the district-wide access to larger greenspaces (district and wider-neighbourhood hierarchies) which have access catchments of 5km and 2km respectively.

4.82 As the districts exhibit a largely dispersed settlement pattern, analysis of open space access catchments within smaller settlements do not provide a true reflection of residents' perception of greenspace access. For smaller catchments, analysis has therefore considered only the Tier 1 settlements. This analysis reflects the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (within a 15-minute (1km) and five minute (up to 300 metres) catchment); provision for children and teenagers and community growing spaces (including allotments). A full definition of the Greenspace Close to Home Access target and the relevant catchment distances is provided in **Appendix F**.

District and wider neighbourhood greenspace

4.83 Figure 4.4 shows the access catchments to district (5km access buffer) and wider neighbourhood (2km access buffer) sites across the districts. All accessible greenspace at this hierarchy comprises natural greenspace. Land within the northern portion of the districts around Oxford, and in the south east, within the Chilterns National Landscape offers the widest accessibility to this hierarchy of greenspace.

4.84 As rural districts, there is generally a good provision of access to the wider countryside through the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. However, large accessible greenspace sites provide an opportunity for 'staying-in' natural spaces, rather than passing through. This can be important for those with mobility issues and to promote the social and wellbeing opportunities associated with open space.

4.85 The opportunity exists for new investment in district wide open space to the east of Oxford, between Wantage and Faringdon, land to the north, south or east of Didcot and between Wallingford and Thame to address deficiencies.

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Figure 4.4: Access to district and wider neighbourhood greenspace

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Greenspace

Natural greenspace

Access buffer

Access to district greenspace

Access to wider neighbourhood greenspace

Access to district and wider neighbourhood greenspace

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:225,000 @ A3

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Abingdon-on-Thames

4.86 In Abingdon-on-Thames, access to greenspace is generally good, as shown in **Figure 4.5**. Most of the settlement falls reflects the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (within a 15-minute (1km) and five minute (up to 300 metres) catchment). There are some gaps in provision in the north east around Peachcroft and in the south west at Caldecott. Provision of additional neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) greenspace within these locations would help to reduce these gaps in provision. Additional pocket or doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) greenspaces or expansion of street trees north of the town centre could also help mitigate some gaps within the five minute accessibility catchments.

4.87 Access to provision for children and teenagers is generally good, with most of Abingdon-on-Thames affording access to at least one level of the hierarchy (see **Figure 4.6**). However, some gaps in provision exist. These locations include a small area in the north east between the A4183 and Twelve Acre Drive. In the west around Albert Park, lower levels of provision are also evident. In addition, between Colewell Drive and Spring Road there is a small area with no access to any level of provision for children and teenagers.

4.88 Compared to other Tier 1 settlements, access to community growing spaces and allotments within Abingdon-on-Thames is poor. As displayed in **Figure 4.7**, access to this provision is only available along the western edge of the settlement and in the south of Caldecott. Throughout most of the settlement, there is no access to community growing spaces.

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Figure 4.5: Access to greenspace close to home in Abingdon-on-Thames

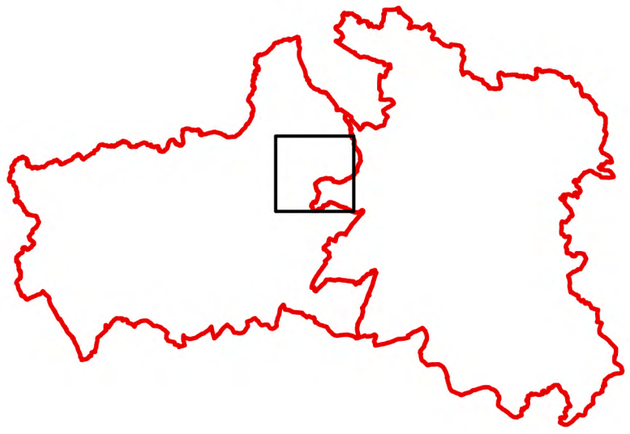
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:26,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.6: Access to provision for children and young people in Abingdon-on-Thames

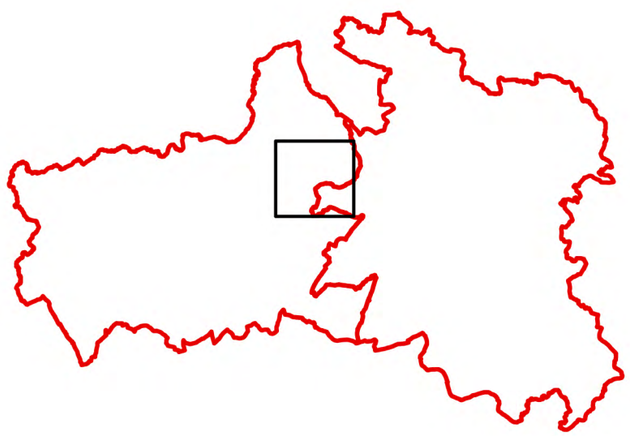
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:26,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.7: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Abingdon-on-Thames

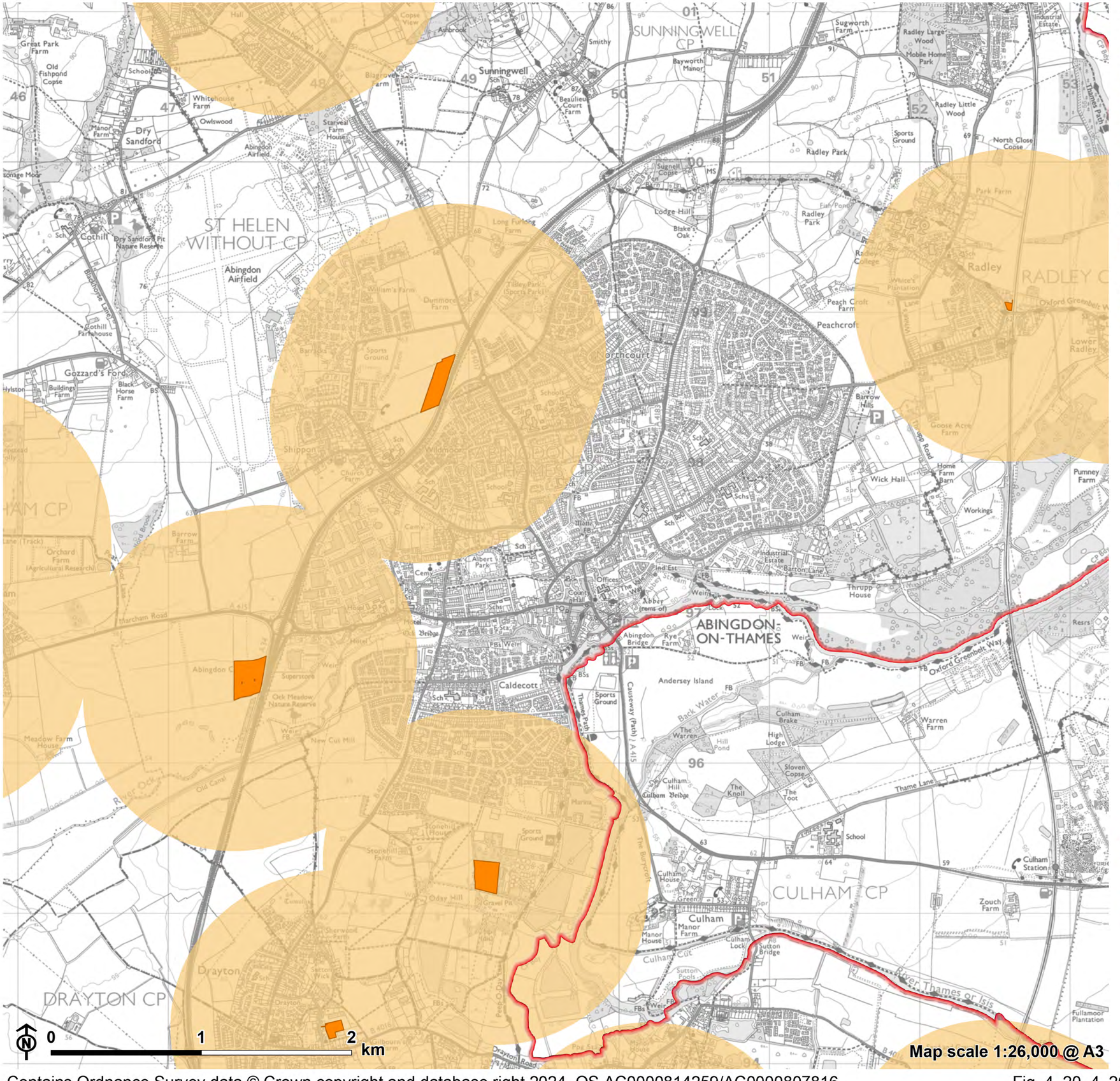
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

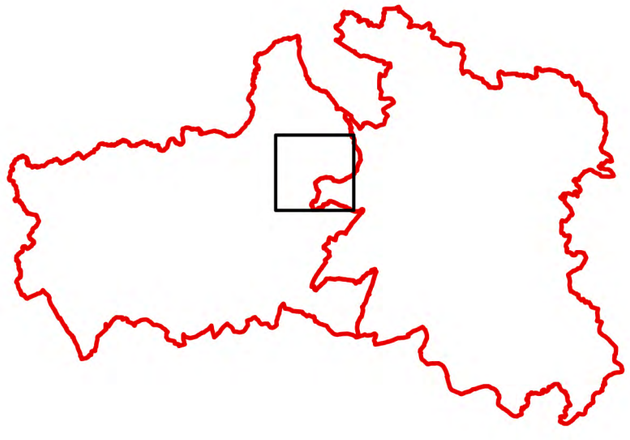
Open space

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)





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Didcot

4.89 Access to greenspace in Didcot is greatest in the north and west, as shown in **Figure 4.8**. All residential areas within these locations lie within the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (within a 15-minute (1km) and five minute (up to 300 metres) catchment). In the south east, some gaps in provision are evident, particularly related to neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) scale greenspace.

4.90 Didcot exhibits a good coverage of access to provision for children and teenagers. In the west, the majority of residences are in access to at least two levels of the hierarchy. Provision is lower in the east where many residences only have access to a NEAP. This pattern is shown in **Figure 4.9.**

4.91 Access to community growing spaces (including allotments) in Didcot are shown in **Figure 4.10.** Areas to the south of the settlement benefit from the greatest levels of access to this typology of open space. However, most of the settlement located to the north of the railway line and along the western edge (south of the A4130) are not afforded access to a community growing space.

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Figure 4.8: Access to greenspace close to home in Didcot

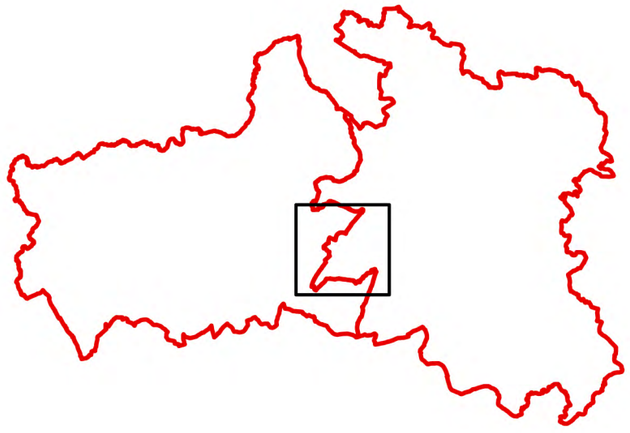
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:31,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.9: Access to provision for children and young people in Didcot

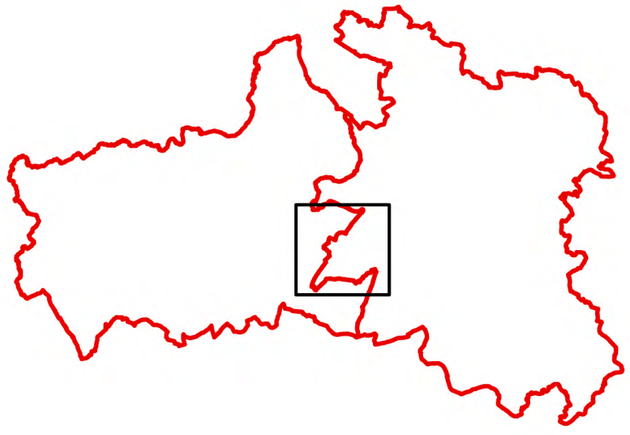
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:31,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.10: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Didcot

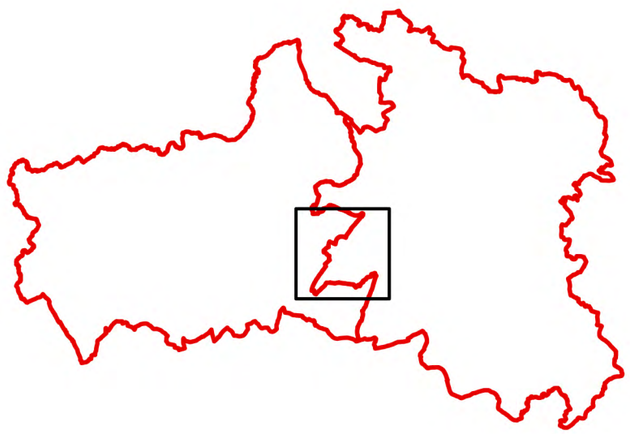
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:31,000 @ A3

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Faringdon

4.92 As shown in **Figure 4.11**, large areas of the settlement achieve the Greenspace Close to Home Access target. However, a deficiency in access to neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) scale greenspace exists in the west. This pattern is mitigated partially though by the close proximity of Faringdon Sports Park and Folly Park, which together function as one larger greenspace within Faringdon.

4.93 Faringdon also offers good access to provision for children and teenagers, as shown in **Figure 4.12**. The majority of residences within the settlement are within access to at least two hierarchies of open space access.

4.94 The north and west of Faringdon are located within access catchments of community gardens (including allotments), as shown in **Figure 4.13**. However, overall access to this typology of open space is lower than for the greenspace and provision for children and teenagers typologies. The eastern edge of the settlement and areas to the south around King Street / Fernham Road have no access to community growing spaces.

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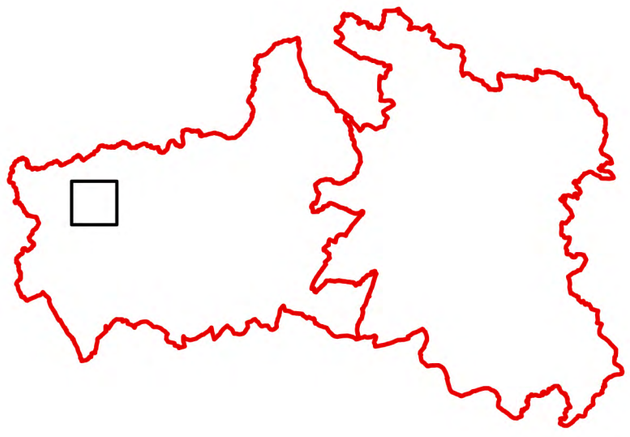
Figure 4.11: Access to greenspace close to home in Faringdon

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3

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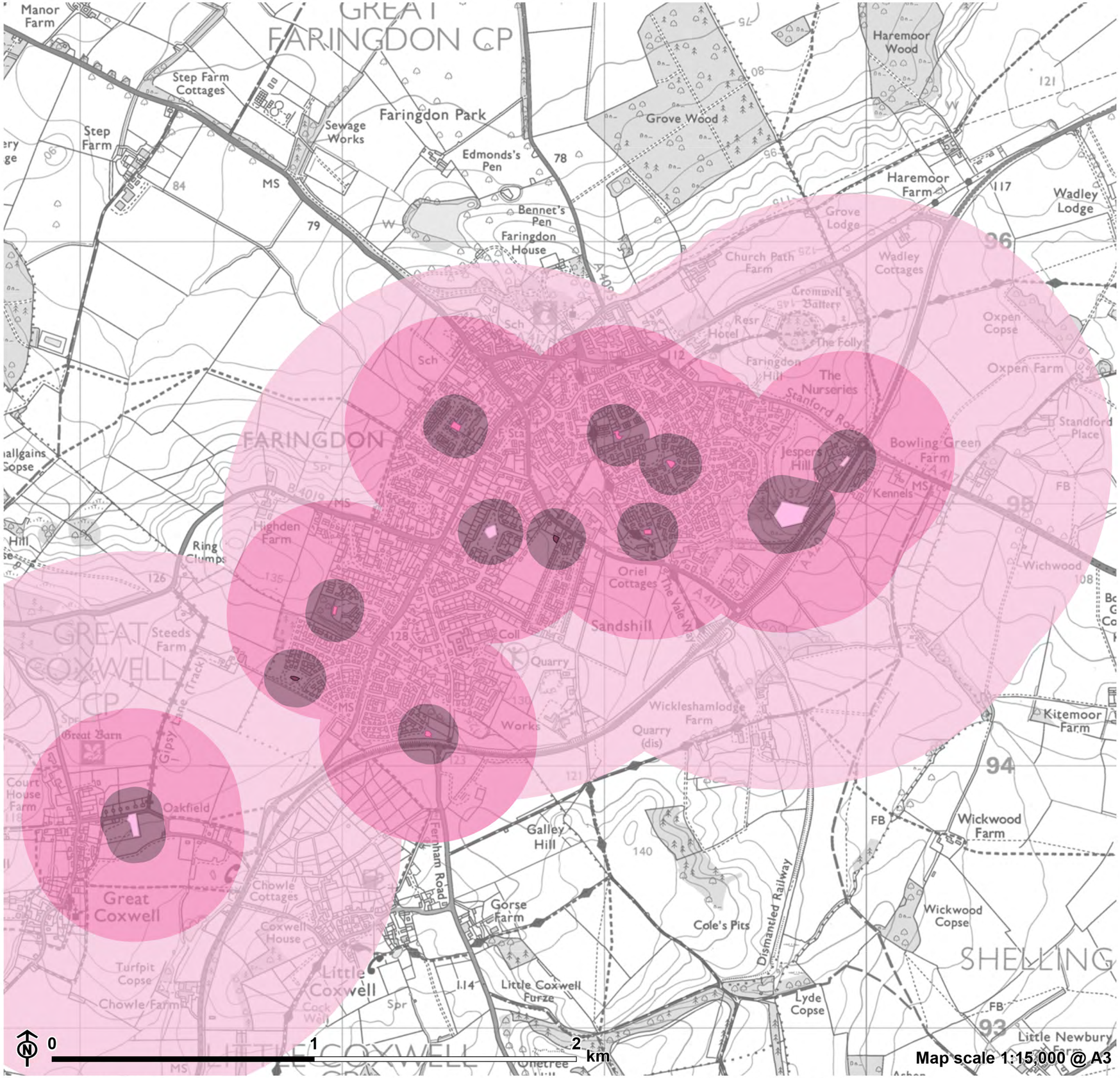
Figure 4.12: Access to provision for children and young people in Faringdon

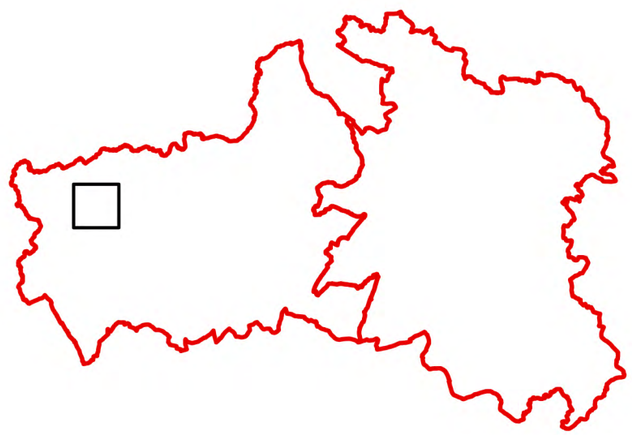
Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)





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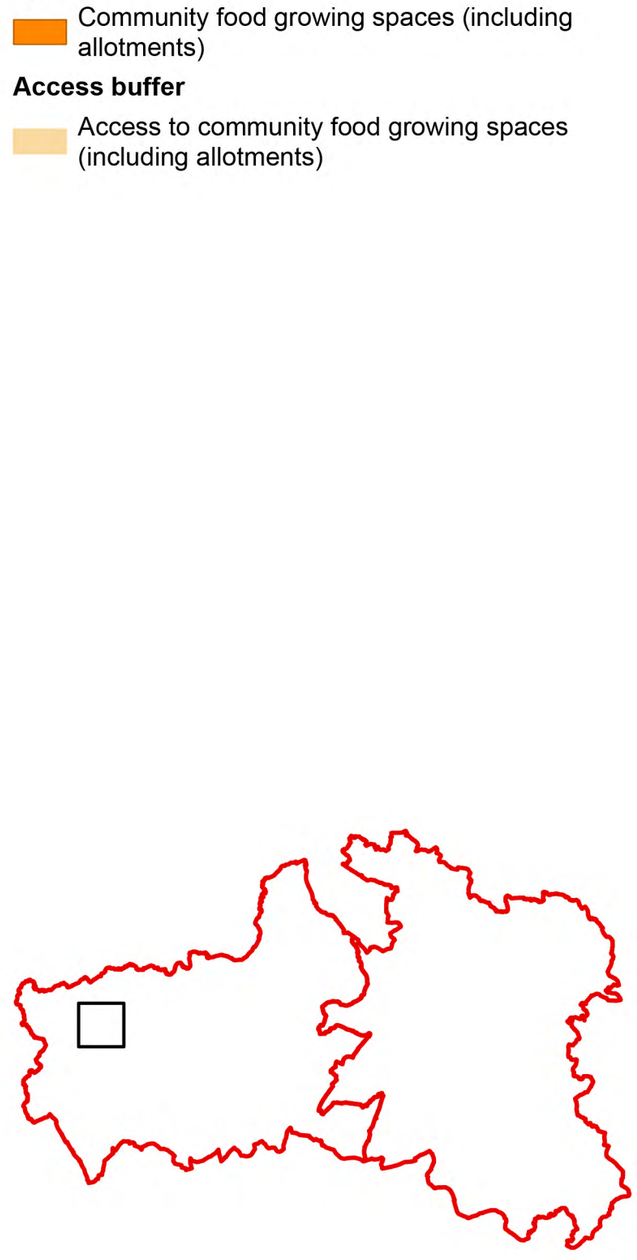
Figure 4.13: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Faringdon

Open space

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3

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Fig_4_20_4_26_Allotment_Access_r0_A3L 20/09/2024 EB:Horton_K

Henley-on-Thames

4.95 The Greenspace Close to Home Access target is only partially achieved within Henley-on-Thames, as indicated in **Figure 4.14**. Large parts of the settlement do not have access to either local (at least two hectares), doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares) or pocket greenspaces. In addition, only the southern edge of Henley-on-Thames lies within the neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) greenspace catchment buffer. Due to the town's location within the Chilterns National Landscape and proximity to promoted long-distance walking routes, the priority in this settlement should be for additional local, doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) and pocket greenspace provision to address deficiencies.

4.96 Figure 4.15 shows the access to provision for children and teenagers in Henley-on-Thames. Most of the settlement has access to at least one level of the hierarchy. The exception is very small pockets on the edge of the settlement. This includes around Elizabeth Road in the south west and along Lambridge Wood Road in the north west.

4.97 The access to community growing spaces (including allotments) within Henley-on-Thames is shown in **Figure 4.16.** The mapping indicates that access to these sites is greatest in the east, with a lack of access to allotments available in the west.

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Figure 4.14: Access to greenspace close to home in Henley-on-Thames

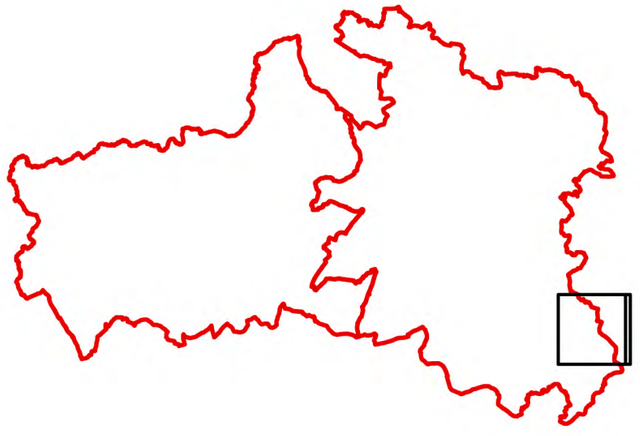
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.15: Access to provision for children and young people in Henley-on-Thames

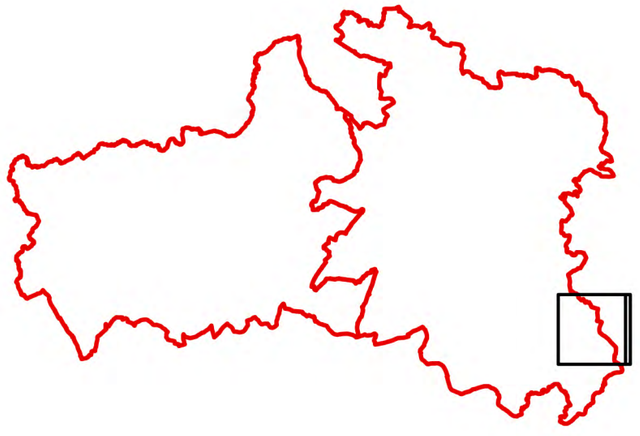
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.16: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Henley-on-Thames

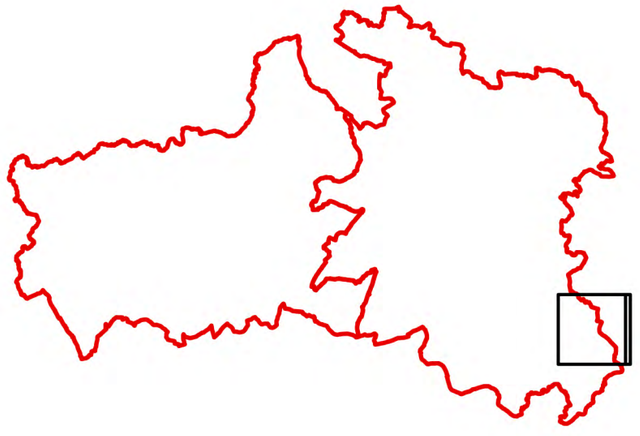
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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Thame

4.98 Figure 4.17 indicates gaps in the provision of access to greenspace within Thame, particularly in the east. The only access to neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) accessible greenspace is provided by Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve, which lies within the western portion of the settlement.

4.99 As shown in **Figure 4.18**, there is relatively good access to provision for children and teenagers in Thame. All residences in the settlement have access to at least one level of the hierarchy. Good provision of access is also afforded to two levels of the hierarchy, particularly in the south.

4.100 As shown in **Figure 4.19**, the majority of the settlement lies within the access catchments for community growing spaces (including allotments). However, land lying between the A4129 and the B445 to the north is devoid of access to this typology of open space.

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Figure 4.17: Access to greenspace close to home in Thame

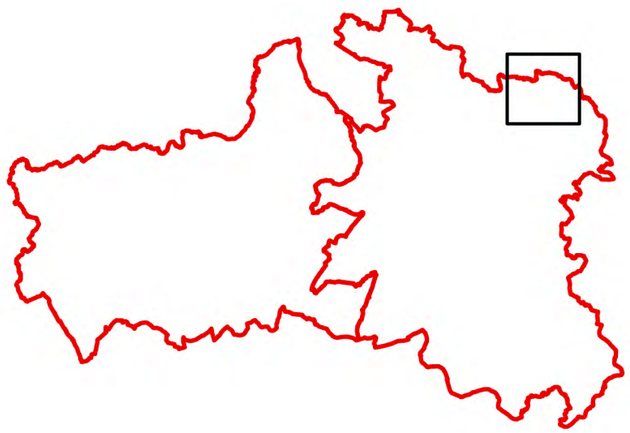
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.18: Access to provision for children and young people in Thame

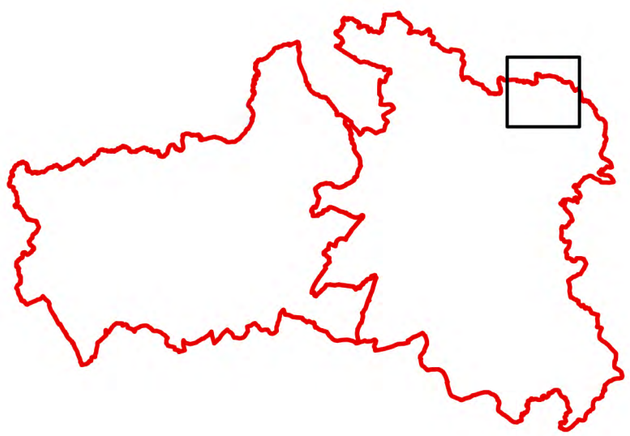
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.19: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Thame

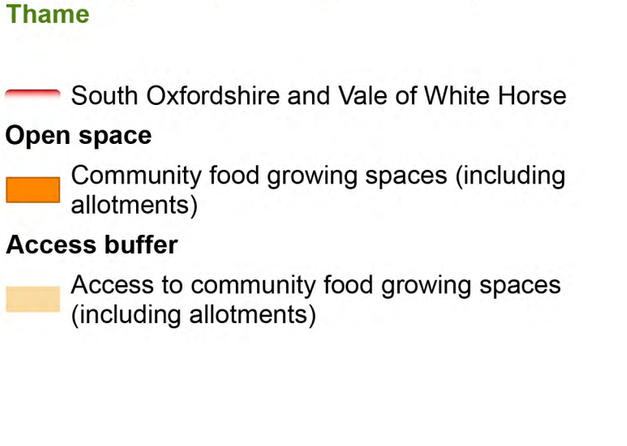
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Open space

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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Wallingford

4.101 In Wallingford, large areas of the settlement achieve the Greenspace Close to Home Access target. This pattern is displayed visually in **Figure 4.20**. Wallingford Castle Meadows provides access to a neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) scale greenspace and the catchment for this site extends across much of the settlement. Ensuring high quality and value of greenspace at this site is therefore important as it forms a key greenspace for the settlement. Some gaps in provision for the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (within a five minute (up to 300 metres) accessibility catchment) are evident at the southern and western fringes of Wallingford.

4.102 Access to provision for children and teenagers is greatest in land to the east of Wallingford (see **Figure 4.21**). Bullcroft Park serves as the key provision of this typology and for the vast majority of the settlement, this is the only provision for children and teenagers available. Gaps in the coverage of access catchments are evident in the south around Winterbrook and in the north west along Wantage Road.

4.103 Access to community growing spaces (including allotments) in Wallingford is shown on **Figure 4.22**. The only community growing space in the settlement is located along the western edge of the settlement. Additional access to allotments is available across the River Thames in Crowmarsh Gifford. However, due to a lack of access crossings across the watercourse at this location, the actual accessibility may be lower than indicated by the mapping. In addition, land to the south around Winterbrook and a small area in the north around Blackstone Road, lie outside of the access buffers for community growing spaces and allotments.

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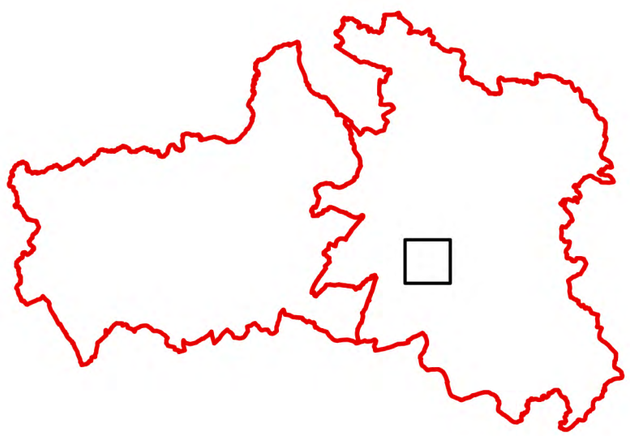
Figure 4.20: Access to greenspace close to home in Wallingford

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3

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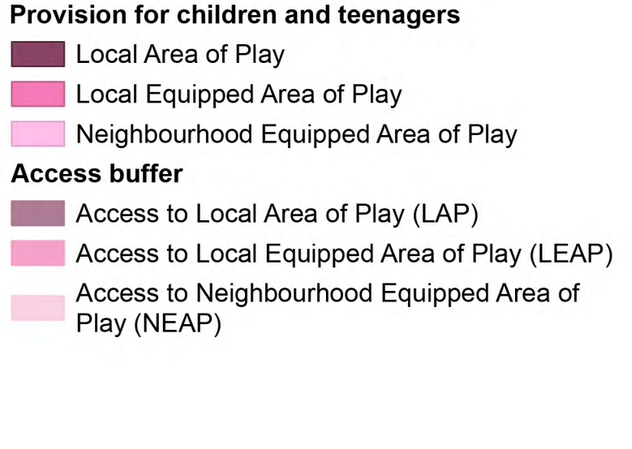
Figure 4.21: Access to provision for children and young people in Wallingford

Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3

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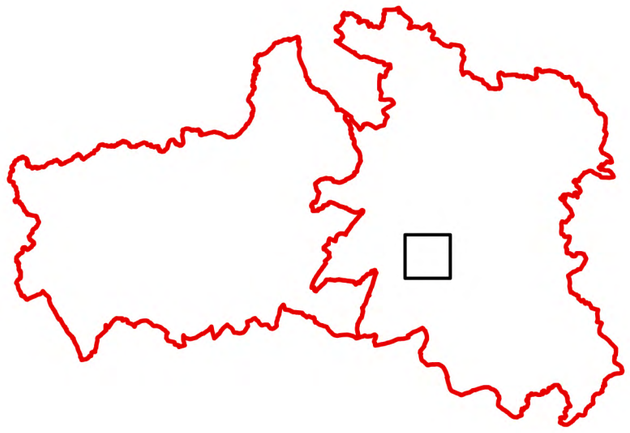
Figure 4.22: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Wallingford

Open space

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)



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Fig_4_20_4_26_Allotment_Access_r0_A3L 20/09/2024 EB:Horton_K

Wantage

4.104 Areas meeting the Greenspace Close to Home Access target in Wantage are displayed visually in **Figure 4.23**. The majority of the settlement lies within the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (within a five minute (up to 300 metres) accessibility catchment) promoting access to local (at least two hectares), doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) or pocket greenspace), although there are notable gaps in provision at the south western extent. Provision of neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) accessible greenspace is not available within the settlement, although nearby provision at Ardington and Lockinge community woodland is within access of the south eastern edge of the settlement. Improved access to natural greenspace at Letcombe Valley through the delivery of PRoW improvements or new walking routes along Letcombe Brook could be considered as a mechanism to improve access to greenspace within Wantage.

4.105 As shown in **Figure 4.24**, access to provision for children and teenagers in Wantage is greatest in the west. In this part of the settlement, most residences are within access to one or two levels of the hierarchy. Access in the north west is particularly good, where many residences lie within access to all three levels of the hierarchy. In the west, large areas of the settlement is devoid of access to provision for children and teenagers, including around Charlton.

4.106 Figure 4.25 indicates the access to community growing spaces (including allotments) in Wantage. A relatively good spatial distribution to this typology of open space affords access across the settlement.

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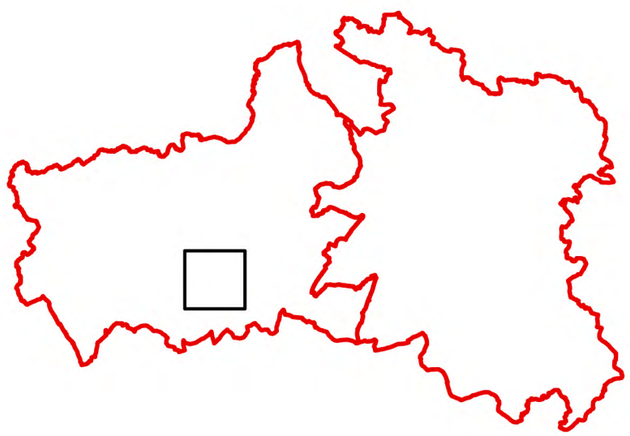
Figure 4.23: Access to greenspace close to home in Wantage

Greenspace

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural greenspace
- Parks and gardens
- Recreation ground

Access Standards

- Access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to local, doorstep and pocket greenspace
- Access to neighbourhood greenspace and local, doorstep and pocket greenspace



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:20,000 @ A3

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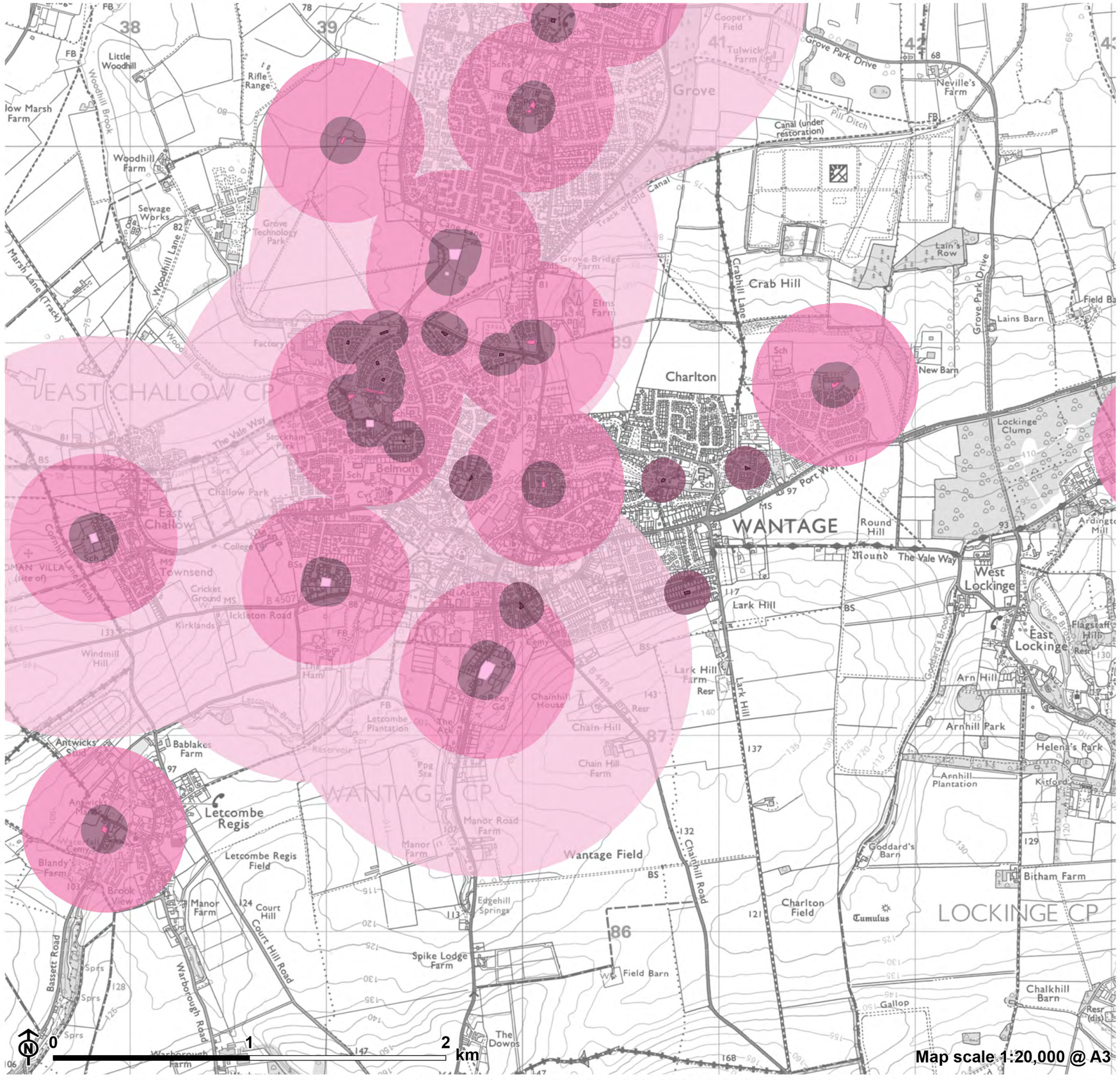
Figure 4.24: Access to provision for children and young people in Wantage

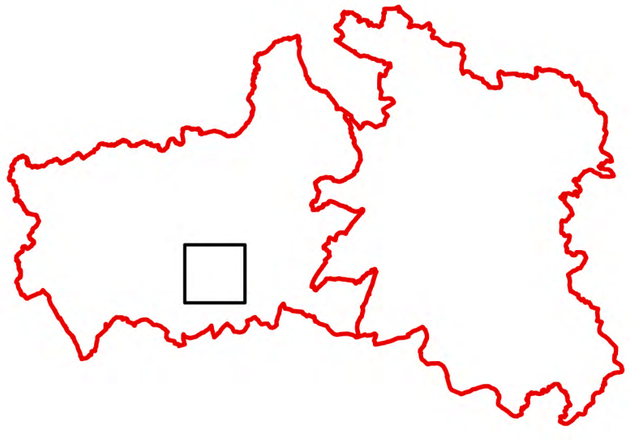
Provision for children and teenagers

- Local Area of Play
- Local Equipped Area of Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play

Access buffer

- Access to Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Access to Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Access to Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)





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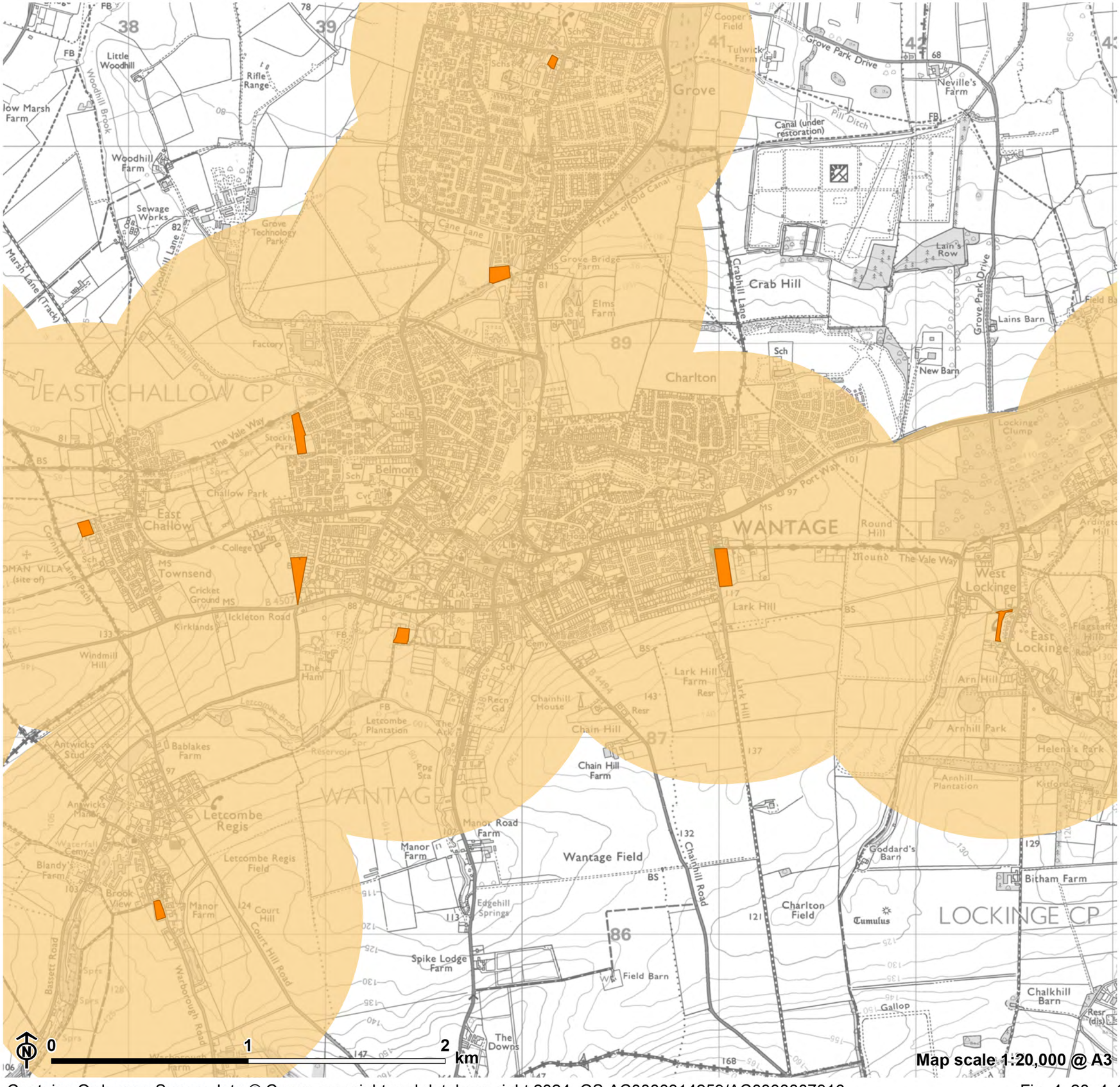
Figure 4.25: Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments) in Wantage

Open space

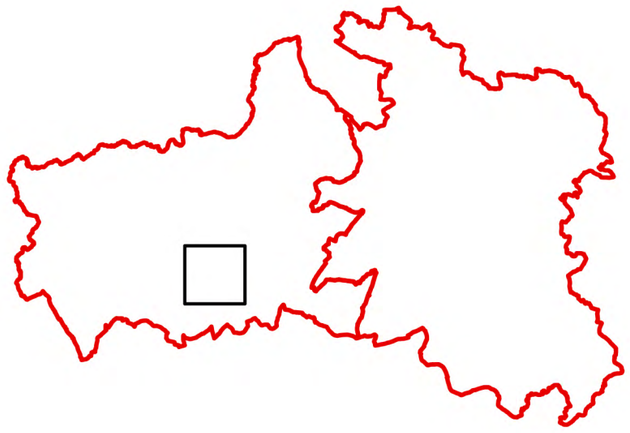
Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Access buffer

Access to community food growing spaces (including allotments)



Map scale 1:20,000 @ A3



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Summary of open space analysis

Open spaces were assessed in terms of quantity, accessibility, quality and value. Each open space was assigned a typology based on primary function. Some typologies were also assigned a hierarchy (based on size). The final dataset comprised 1,379 sites, providing over 5,000 hectares of greenspace.

Quantity

The findings indicate that total provision of open space across the districts is 17.74 hectares per 1,000 of the population. Based on projections of population increase to 2041, and assuming no further open space is delivered within this time period, this figure would reduce to 13.33 hectares per 1,000 of the population. This would equate to approximately 16.04 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. This is significantly greater than the target of 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population set out in Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. However, these results are skewed by the number of large natural greenspaces, often located outside of settlements. The Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework highlights the importance of greenspaces located close to homes, providing day-to-day opportunities for engagement with nature.

Quality and value

A sample of 200 sites (parks and gardens, recreation grounds, natural greenspace or amenity greenspaces) were visited throughout the districts and subject to a detailed audit based on the Green Flag Award themes. The results indicate a generally high level of quality and value across the districts. An additional play audit was undertaken for provision for children and teenagers.

Accessibility

Access to open space varies across the districts. Measures of accessibility are based on straight-line distances, with a buffer set for different typologies and hierarchies of open space. Access to district (minimum of 100 hectares in size) greenspaces is highest in the north, south east and south west of the districts. Small (neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket) greenspaces (maximum of 10 hectares in size) are primarily located closer to settlements. The majority of residential areas within the districts have access to at least one level of the hierarchy for greenspace. This trend is also true for provision for children and teenagers, including equipped play areas, skate parks, table-tennis tables and Multi-use Games areas (MUGAs). Community growing spaces (including allotments) are generally well dispersed throughout the districts.

Abingdon-on-Thames

Abingdon-on-Thames has 2.75 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population, which is slightly below the target of 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population set out within the NEGIF. The results of the audits indicate that less than half of the audited greenspaces in Abingdon-on-Thames met both the quality and value benchmarks. Access to accessible greenspace and provision for children and teenagers is generally good in Abingdon-on-Thames, but access to community growing spaces (and allotments) is limited to the west and south of the settlement.

Didcot

Didcot has a mix of open space typologies, dominated by amenity greenspace and parks and gardens. Accessible greenspace provision is equivalent to 3.11 hectares per 1,000 of the population. Whilst the number of audited sites achieving the quality and value benchmarks is similar to the district average, Didcot has more audited sites which fell below the benchmarks for both quality and value than the other Tier 1 settlements. Provision for children and teenagers is similar to the average for the districts. However, the provision of community growing spaces (including allotments), cemeteries and churchyards and outdoor sports are all below the wider average for the districts.

Faringdon

Faringdon has the highest quantity of open space compared to other Tier 1 settlements, equating to 4.63 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. Amenity greenspace, recreation grounds and natural greenspace are the most common typologies in the settlement. The results of the audit indicate that greenspaces in Faringdon are performing well compared to many of the other Tier 1 settlements. All of the open spaces achieved the quality benchmark, and only one did not meet the value benchmark. Provision for children and teenagers is similar to the average across the districts, and higher than any other Tier 1 settlement. The supply of community growing spaces within the settlement also follows this trend.

Henley-on-Thames

Henley-on-Thames has lower greenspace provision than other Tier 1 settlements, equivalent to 2.11 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. The most common typologies in the settlement are parks and gardens and natural greenspace. Whilst the quantity of open space is lower than other settlements, the site audits showed that open spaces in the settlement are performing well for quality and value. Only one audited site did not meet both benchmarks. Access to provision for children and teenagers is lower than the other Tier 1 settlements and the average for the districts. Access to community growing spaces (including allotments) is limited to land at the west of the settlement.

Thame

Thame has a mix of open space typologies, dominated by outdoor sport and natural greenspace. The provision of accessible greenspace within Thame equates to 2.39 hectares per 1,000 of population. This includes 1.04 hectares of natural greenspace per 1,000 of population, which is higher than any other Tier 1 settlement. However, only a third of the audited open spaces achieved both the quality and value benchmarks, which was lower than all the other Tier 1 settlements. Access to open space is greatest in the western half of the settlement, where there is a good access to accessible greenspace. Provision for children and teenagers is lower than the average for the districts. Provision of community growing spaces (including allotments) is higher than the average across the districts.

Wallingford

Wallingford's open spaces are dominated by outdoor sports, parks and gardens and natural greenspace. There is 2.89 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. This provision includes 1.37 hectares of parks and gardens per 1,000 of population, which is above the district average and 1.28 hectares of natural greenspace per 1,000 of the population. Only a small number of open spaces were audited in Wallingford. However, both parks and gardens sites achieved the quality and value criteria. Access to provision for children and teenagers is lower than the other Tier 1 settlements and the average for the districts. Provision for community growing spaces is above the district average.

Wantage

Wantage has the highest amount of natural greenspace compared to other Tier 1 settlements. In total, there is 2.74 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. Overall, audited accessible greenspaces in Wantage performed similar to the average for the districts. Play audits for provision for children and teenagers indicate that audited sites in Wantage performed better than the other Tier 1 settlements. The provision for children and teenagers quantity is below the average for the districts. This pattern is also replicated for the provision of community growing spaces.

Chapter 5

GI priority areas for investment

5.1 The identification of GI priority areas will aim to guide the future delivery and investment in GI across the districts. The boundaries of these areas have been informed by the distribution of GI assets requiring protection and enhancement, combined with areas of local needs or existing GI deficiencies. These areas form priority areas for investment in GI across the districts.

5.2 This chapter is structured as set out below:

- Qualitative analysis of Tier 1 settlements;
- Holistic GI opportunities and threats within Tier 1 settlements;
- Methodology for identifying GI priority areas;
- Description of GI priority areas:
  - South Oxford Fringes;
  - Thame Clay Vale;
  - Corallian Ridge;
  - Central Thames Valley;
  - Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp;
  - Chalk Escarpment and Foothills; and
  - Chilterns Wooded Plateau.

Qualitative analysis of Tier 1 settlements

5.3 The following qualitative analysis considers the functionality of the GI network and how it will be required to respond to future challenges. The analysis places a specific focus on the Tier 1 settlements within the districts due to the potential of GI in these locations to maximise multi-functional benefits for people. The analysis has been informed by a comprehensive review of local policy, an understanding of local needs (see **Chapter 3**) and the findings of the stakeholder workshops. An overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the GI network across the seven Tier 1 settlements within the districts is provided.

5.4 The analysis considers the benefits provided by the GI network in relation to the five 'Descriptive Principles' included within the 'GI Principles Wheel', as developed as part of the NEGIF. The aim of this approach was to ensure that GI opportunities identified within the action plans are holistic, whilst also informing the siting of the GI Priority Area boundaries. The Tier 1 settlements located within the districts are listed below:

- Abingdon-on-Thames;
- Didcot;
- Faringdon;
- Henley-on-Thames;
- Thame;
- Wallingford; and
- Wantage.

5.5 The strengths and weakness of the GI network are provided for each settlement. Opportunities and threats are grouped for all settlements with the aim of ensuring future GI delivery is holistic and multifunctional.

Abingdon-on-Thames

Strengths:

- The corridors of the River Thames and Abbey Stream provide conduits for the movement of people (both walking and cycling) and nature. The routes of The Vale Way and Thames Path provide public access within close proximity to the settlement edge. Public access is also available via the Ock Valley River Walk locally promoted route which extends to the west towards Ock Meadow Nature Reserve. National Cycle Network (NCN) route 5 runs through the settlement, providing connections to Oxford and Didcot. PRoW provision at the settlement edge also affords wider connectivity to the south and north of the town.
- Lying within the east of the town, Abbey Fishponds Local Nature Reserve provides an important stepping-stone habitat to support the wider nature network. A linear tract of ancient woodland is present parallel to the River Stert.
- The town is characterised by good provision of greenspace within the parks and gardens typology, equivalent to 1.56 hectares per 1,000 of the population.
- Most of the settlement meeting the Greenspace Close to Home Access target.
- Access to provision for children and teenagers is generally good, with most of Abingdon-on-Thames affording access to at least one level of the hierarchy.
- Based on the Tree Equity Score (see **Chapter 3**), large sections of the town exhibit equitable access to trees. Land to the north of Ock Meadow Nature Reserve, within Northcourt as well as the northern extent of Caldecott form low priority areas for future tree planting (tree equity scores of 90-99 out of 100). Tree equity is achieved (score of 100 out of 100) at land lying to the north of Abbey Meadows, where existing

canopy cover reaches 25%. In these locations the minimum standard for tree cover appropriate for the area has been reached.

Weaknesses:

- The corridor of the A34 limits some wider connectivity to the west of the settlement edge.
- Woodland coverage adjoining the eastern boundary of the town and bordering the River Thames is largely non-accessible to the public, as indicated by data from the NEGIF.
- The southern fringes of Caldecott and land lying to the east of the B4017 at Wildmoor form greater priorities for future tree planting (tree equity scores of 70-79 out of 100). Existing tree canopy coverage at these locations ranges from 9-15%. Parcels of land lying to the east of the A34 at Abingdon Business Park and Wildmoor as well as land at Peachcroft, the town centre and land at the southern extent of the settlement are characterised by moderate priority tree equity scores (80-89 out of 100).
- Abingdon-on-Thames AQMA encompasses all or partial sections of Stert Street, Bridge Street, High Street, Stratton Way, Vineyard, West St Helens Street, Oct Street and Bath Street due to levels of NO2.
- Bordering the western boundary of Abingdon-on-Thames, the corridor of the A34 forms a source of noise pollution (risk of exposure >50 decibels).
- An LSOA at Caldecott lies within the bottom 20% of the IMD index in England **[See reference 54]**.
- Large swaths of land associated with the River Thames and its wider tributaries, including the River Ock, lie within land defined as Flood Zones 2 and 3.

- Greenspace provision in the town is equivalent to 2.75 hectares per 1,000 of the population, less than the expected 3 hectares target. A deficit in amenity greenspace is also evident when compared to other settlements in the districts.
- Deficiencies in access to the neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) scale of greenspace within 15 minutes walking distance are apparent in the north east and south west of the settlement.
- Less than half of the audited open spaces within Abingdon-on-Thames achieved both the quality and value benchmarks.
- Relatively poor access to allotments and community growing spaces.

Didcot

Strengths:

- Designated as a Garden Town so there are mechanisms and funding available for vision-led large-scale change, including GI interventions.
- The North Wessex Downs National Landscape lies within close proximity of Didcot's eastern and southern boundaries, with the availability of some PRoW and National Cycle Network (NCN) connections which offer direct connections from the settlement edge.
- The Didcot Garden Town Masterplan proposes a landscape-led approach to placemaking, including the implementation of a programme of GI enhancements as part of a wider aspiration to develop a 'super green town' **[See reference 55]**.
- A network of PRoW radiate from the settlement edge, largely following the routes of local tracks, watercourses or field boundaries. Access is also supplemented by the routes of NCN routes 5 and 544, located at the northern and southern extents of the settlement edge, which provide good connectivity to Abingdon-on-Thames and the wider countryside, respectively.

- Mowbray Fields Local Nature Reserve abuts the southern boundary of the town.
- The town exhibits a good distribution of neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares), local (at least two hectares) and doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares) scale accessible greenspaces. The northern and western sections of the settlement achieve the Greenspace Close to Home Access target, providing good access to accessible greenspace within walking distance from home.
- Tree equity scores of 90 and above (out of 100) (see **Chapter 3**) are recorded at Ladygrove, Fleet Meadow, land south of the A4130 / B4493 at Mendip Heights, the B4493 Wantage Road corridor and land lying south of Didcot Community Hospital. This data indicates that these areas form low priority areas for future tree planting. Tree equity (100 out of 100) and a 25% existing canopy coverage is achieved at land to the north of Ladygrove, at the north eastern extent of Didcot.
- Didcot is defined as 'relatively un-deprived' **[See reference 56]**. As indicated by the IMD, no areas within the town were in the 10% most deprived nationally and many areas were in the 10% least deprived.

Weaknesses:

- The distribution of sites included within the Priority Habitats Inventory within the town indicates generally low ecological connectivity.
- The corridors of the Great Western Rail Line and Didcot to Oxford Rail Lines result in land severance, landscape and visual impacts from overhead electrification gantries and a source of noise pollution.
- A variation in tree equity exists across the settlement, with lower scores recorded at land lying at the north western extent within Science Vale (66 out of 100), land at Edmonds Park (77 out of 100) and Old Didcot / town centre (79 out of 100). These locations should form the greatest priority for future tree planting. Current canopy coverage at these locations ranges from 11-15%.

- Forming a tributary of the River Thames, a section of land forming the floodplain of Moor Ditch falls within an areas defined as Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- Fragmentation of the PRoW network is evident in the town, particularly to the east of the settlement.
- The town is characterised by limited provision of natural greenspace (0.22 hectares per 1,000 of population), lower than the other Tier 1 settlements in the districts.
- Gaps in neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) scale provision is evident in the south east of the settlement.
- Deficiencies in access to large district-wide greenspace exist throughout Didcot, increasing the reliance on the PRoW network to mitigate the need for access to open space.
- Land to the north of the railway line and along the western edge are not afforded access to a community growing space.

Faringdon

Strengths:

- Market town set within a rural hinterland.
- The settlement is typified by good provision of accessible greenspace, equivalent to over four hectares per 1,000 of population. Existing sites include both Folly Hill and Folly Park.
- Relatively high provision of community food growing spaces (including allotments) and sites for children and teenagers, at 0.49 and 0.72 hectares per 1,000 of the population respectively.
- Overall, accessible greenspaces within Faringdon are of high quality and value. All audited sites achieved the quality benchmark and five out of the six audited sites met the value benchmark.

- The Vale Way emerges from the eastern and southern boundaries of the settlement edge. This long distance route is supplemented by a network of local PRoW which provide access to the wider countryside.

Weaknesses:

- The corridor of the A420 forms a barrier and source of noise pollution (risk of exposure >50 decibels) at the south eastern boundary of the settlement.
- Greenspace provision within the settlement is dominated by smaller sites, with deficiencies evident in access to neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares), wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) and district (at least 100 hectares) sites within the hierarchy.
- A small area of central Faringdon lies within the 50% most deprived LSOAs nationally **[See reference 57]**.
- Only 20% of audited play sites in Faringdon met both the quality and value benchmarks, lower than most other Tier 1 sites.
- The eastern edge of the settlement and areas to the south around King Street / Fernham Road have no access to community growing spaces.

Henley-on-Thames

Strengths:

- Characterised by its bankside setting, the River Thames forms a key landscape feature of Henley-on-Thames which is central to the town's character, culture and history.
- Tracts of broadleaved woodland characteristic of the Chilterns National Landscape, interconnected by shelter belts and wooded field boundaries, provide a well-wooded setting to the town. The settlement is bordered to both the north and south by ancient woodland at Lambridge Wood and Harpsden Wood, respectively.
- Equitable access to trees is achieved on land at the settlement's western and north western extents, resulting in a current canopy

coverage ranging from 26-33%. The remaining land lying within the settlement boundary is also low priority for tree planting, as indicated by tree equity scores of 90-99 out of 100 (see **Chapter 3**).

- The settlement is enveloped to the north, west and south west by the Chilterns National Landscape, accommodating long distance routes such as the Oxfordshire Way which provide connections from the settlement edge.
- The Thames Path National Trail provides access to the riverside at the eastern extent of the settlement boundary. An extensive PRoW network radiating from the settlement edge affords access to the wider countryside.
- Forming the principal public park, Mill Meadows, is a 2024 Green Flag Award winner. This reflects the overall high quality of open space provision in the settlement, with all of the audited open space sites achieving the value benchmark and five of the six sites meeting the quality benchmark.
- Henley-on-Thames is 'relatively un-deprived' **[See reference 58]**, with four areas of the town ranked within the 10% least deprived nationally on the IMD index.
- The network of Registered Parks and Gardens bordering the town (Frair Park, Fawley Court & Temple Island and Park Place & Temple Combe) contribute to a sense of place.

Weaknesses:

- Despite bordering a dense network of woodland tracts, data from the NEGIF indicates that these wooded areas are predominantly non-accessible to the general public.
- Centred on the corridors of the A4130 and A4155, Henley-on-Thames AQMA was declared due to high levels of NO2 from traffic sources.
- Land at the eastern extent of the town is located within an area of flood risk associated with the River Thames.

- Henley-on-Thames is characterised by low provision of all types of open space; including 2.19 hectares of accessible greenspace and 0.15 hectares of community food growing (including allotments) per 1,000 of the population.
- Accessible greenspace within the town is generally located on the periphery of the settlement, with large residential and town centre areas falling outside the access buffers to any accessible greenspace.
- Large parts of the settlement do not have access to either local (at least two hectares), doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares) or pocket greenspaces. In addition, only the southern edge of Henley-on-Thames lies within the neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares in size) greenspace catchment buffer.

Thame

Strengths:

- Thame is characterised by an agricultural base, with a number of PRoW offering access to the wider countryside (principally from the southern and eastern extents of the settlement). The corridor of National Cycle Network (NCN) route 57 (Phoenix Trail) follows the route of a disused railway through Thame, offering wider connections to the east. The route of Bernwood Jubilee Way also lies approximately 600m north of Thame's settlement edge.
- The corridor of the Cuttle Brook and adjoining Cuttle Brook Local Nature Reserve bisect the settlement boundary of Thame, forming a distinctive north-south green corridor. These assets form key areas of natural greenspace provision within the settlement.
- In general, large areas of Thame has equitable access to trees. The southern and south western fringes of the settlement are low priority areas for investment in future tree planting, typified by tree equity scores ranging from 90-99 out of 100 (see **Chapter 3**).

- Thame is 'relatively un-deprived' **[See reference 59]**, with all areas of the settlement defined as 30% of the least deprived in England.

Weaknesses:

- Land at Thame's northern limit and land immediately south of Kingsey Road form moderate priority areas for future tree planting (scores of 80-90 out of 100). Existing tree canopy coverage at these locations is recorded as 6% and 13%, respectively.
- The corridors of the A418, A4129 and A329 border the settlement and provide a source of noise pollution (risk of exposure >50 decibels).
- The settlement borders land located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 at the northern extent of the town. The Cuttle Brook is also characterised by localised flood risk.
- As indicated by sites within the Priority Habitats Inventory, ecological connectivity is relatively fragmented and largely associated with the existing river networks.
- Provision of accessible greenspace within the settlement is relatively low, equating to 2.39 hectares of greenspace per 1,000 of the population. Provision of parks and gardens and recreation grounds are particularly low compared to other settlements, limiting recreational opportunities.
- Deficiencies are evident in access to district (at least 100 hectares) and wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) greenspace across the settlement. The eastern section of Thame also experiences a deficiency in neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) greenspace.
- Only 33% of the audited open spaces achieved both the quality and value benchmarks, which was lower than all the other Tier 1 settlements.
- The provision for children and teenagers in Thame is lower than the average for the districts.

- Land lying between the A4129 and the B445 to the north is devoid of access to allotments and community growing spaces.

Wallingford

Strengths:

- The town's network of greenspaces and corridor of the River Thames lying to the east of the town centre form key recreational assets. Awarded a Green Flag Award, Wallingford Castle Meadows abuts the settlement boundary and lies within close proximity of greenspaces at Bull Croft and Kine Croft (both designated as scheduled monuments). These greenspaces form part of the proposed Wallingford Green Network, aimed at providing a suite of muti-functional benefits.
- An area of riverbank known as Wallingford Beach is popular for wild swimming and was designated as achieving Bathing Water Status in May 2024.
- Large areas of Wallingford meet the Greenspace Close to Home Access target, providing good access to accessible greenspace within walking distance from home.
- Running broadly north-south and adjoining the eastern extent of the settlement boundary, the River Thames and adjacent Thames Path National Trail provides a conduit for movement. A number of other PRoW radiate from the settlement edge, principally from its northern and western extents.
- The settlement lies in close proximity to protected landscapes, with the Chilterns National Landscape adjoining the settlement's eastern boundary as it follows the corridor of the River Thames. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape also abuts the north eastern extent of Wallingford.

- Land at Winterbrook and Highcroft form low priority areas for future tree planting (tree equity scores of 90-99 out of 100) (see **Chapter 3**). These areas are characterised by current canopy cover percentages of 22% and 27%, respectively.
- Wallingford is 'relatively un-deprived' **[See reference 60]**, with one LSOA lying within the 10% least deprived areas nationally.

Weaknesses:

- An AQMA in Wallingford town centre exists due to elevated levels of NO_2. The urban topography and 'street canyon' effect of high-sided buildings combined with a narrow carriageway exacerbates the issue of poor pollutant dispersal.
- The A4130 corridor provides a source of noise pollution (risk of exposure >50 decibels) at the western and southern limits of the settlement.
- With the exception of land at Winterbrook and Highcroft, tree equity scores indicate the town forms a moderate priority for investment in tree planting (scores of 80-89 out of 100). Land immediately east of Highcroft is typified by a current canopy cover percentage of 10%.
- Risk of flooding associated with the River Thames, located at the eastern extent of the town.
- Ecological connectivity, characterised by the distribution of sites forming part of the Priority Habitats Inventory, is generally limited to land forming the corridor of the River Thames at the eastern extent of the settlement.
- The settlement is characterised by a deficiency in access to both district (at least 100 hectares) and wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) natural greenspaces.
- Provision of accessible greenspace within Wallingford is slightly below 3 hectares per 1,000 of the population, equivalent to 2.89 hectares per 1,000 of the population.

- Value of greenspaces lower than in other settlements, with three of the five audited sites in the settlement not meeting the set value benchmarks.
- Provision for children and teenagers is lower than for the other Tier 1 settlements.
- Land to the south around Winterbrook and a small area in the north around Blackstone Road, lie outside of the access buffers for community growing spaces and allotments.

Wantage

Strengths:

- Wantage forms a gateway to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, offering direct linkages to the landscape via a network of PRoW.
- Located close to the settlement edge, the Vale Way is accommodated on sections of the towpath of the restored Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal. This long distance footpath also follows the alignment of local roads and tracks at the settlement's south eastern extent. Linkages to the wider countryside are provided by PRoW lying at the settlement's southern boundary.
- The majority of the settlement lies within the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (five minute accessibility catchments) involving access to local (at least two hectares), doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) or pocket greenspace).
- In general, land lying at the western and north eastern extents of the settlement achieve Tree Equity Sores of 90-99 out of 100 (see **Chapter 3**), indicating that a minimum standard for tree cover appropriate for this area has been reached.

- The Letcombe Brook, a rare chalk stream, contributes to the landscape setting of Wantage.
- All LSOAs within Wantage rank within the 50% least deprived areas in England based on overall IMD scores **[See reference 61]**.

Weaknesses:

- Central Wantage, Charlton and land forming the southern extent of the settlement form moderate priority areas for tree investment (tree equity scores of 80-89 out of 100). Current canopy cover in these areas ranges from 12-17%.
- Sections of land bordering the Letcombe Brook lie within land defined as Flood Zones 2 and 3, as determined by the Environment Agency.
- The settlement exhibits a slight deficiency in greenspace, with 2.74 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. This includes a notable deficiency of sites lying within the parks and gardens and recreation ground typologies.
- Four out of the seven audited accessible greenspaces within Wantage did not achieve either the quality or value benchmarks.
- The western sections of the settlement are characterised by deficiencies in access to neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares), wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) and district (at least 100 hectares) scale accessible greenspaces.
- In the west, large areas of the settlement is devoid of access to provision for children and teenagers, including around Charlton.

Holistic GI opportunities and threats within the Tier 1 settlements

5.6 Informed by the preceding analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the GI network, a number of GI opportunities and threats have been identified. These are applicable to multiple Tier 1 settlements and are listed below.

Holistic GI opportunities:

- Integrate GI along existing and proposed active travel routes to promote sustainable modes of transport between settlements. Gaps in the coverage of cycle routes should also be addressed.
- Introduce an enhanced network of walking and cycling connectivity as part of delivery of strategic allocation sites and garden communities to address gaps in both the quality and quantity of provision.
- Enhance the river corridors within Didcot, Abingdon-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford as a recreational resource to help increase access and improve accessibility.
- Improve the integration of the settlement edge and surrounding rural landscape by strengthening landscape character through the use of locally appropriate GI interventions.
- Following the successful designation of bathing water status at Wallingford Beach, continue the campaign for water quality improvements at Henley-on-Thames where bathing water status is sought.
- Deliver enhancements to the multi-functionality of existing open spaces within all Tier 1 settlements.
- Ensure that tree planting species choice promotes climate reliance to increase the ability of the landscape to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

- Introduce appropriately sited nature-based solutions (NbS) along transport corridors to mitigate water, air and soil pollution.
- Enrich the experience of recreational users along PRoW through the delivery of GI interventions.
- Where settlements adjoin or lie within close proximity, conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes.
- Connect and enhance areas of existing riparian woodland or wet meadows along river catchments close to settlements to help deliver nature recovery objectives and promote climate resilience. The introduction of NbS should also be used to help address flood risk at the settlement scale.
- Deliver enhancements to settlements which are currently deficient in accessible greenspace, ensuring that projected population growth is accounted for in the proposed quantum of GI provision.
- Improve the provision of the PRoW network at the settlement edge to improve connections to the wider landscape.
- Ensure that new development maximises opportunities for the integration of NbS to manage surface water run-off and limit potential flooding events, particularly through the use of SuDS.
- Address air quality issues in areas covered by AQMAs by increasing pollutant capture through appropriately sited urban greening methods.
- Utilise appropriate urban greening, including street trees as a placemaking tool to enhance the setting of settlements.

Potential threats:

- Increased pressures on local landscape character due to new development, including the exacerbation of water and air quality issues.

- Potential for greater visitor pressure on the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes, as well as ecologically designated sites, if alternative opportunities for recreation are not provided in accordance with proposed growth and development.
- Increased need for sustainable transport alternatives linking key settlements delivered as part of development proposals.
- Enhanced risk of flooding due to climate change has the potential to alter fragile ecosystems.
- Increasing temperatures and extreme weather events can disrupt ecological connectivity, resulting in further habitat fragmentation.

5.7 These holistic GI opportunities and potential threats are explored in spatially-specific detail for each GI priority area. Each action plan (see **Chapter 6** and **Appendix K**) provides a list of key GI projects to strengthen and enhance the GI network within the GI priority area, as well as a 'toolbox' to aid delivery.

Methodology for identifying GI priority areas

5.8 A series of GI priority areas were identified to help focus the next stage of opportunity identification and the creation of action plans (see **Appendix K**). The GI priority areas are spatially specific and identify areas where similar and unified GI interventions offer the opportunity to enhance the GI network at the strategic scale. The development of the GI priority area boundaries was informed by a number of criteria combined together to provide finalised areas, including:

- The areas of greatest need, which amalgamated all research completed to date through the baseline and stakeholder consultation;
- The areas which provide the most opportunities which are viable and deliverable;

- The areas which have the most potential to deliver multifunctional benefits;
- The outputs of the qualitative / SWOT analysis; and
- The location of the Tier 1 settlements and strategic allocation sites, as these are most likely to see the most change and growth as well as deliver viable funding mechanisms through developer contributions.

5.9 The inclusion of settlements and strategic allocation sites demonstrates the focus on growth, needs and potential users within the GI priority areas.

5.10 The proposed GI priority areas are listed below and displayed visually on **Figure 5.1:**

- South Oxford Fringes;
- Thame Clay Vale;
- Corallian Ridge;
- Central Thames Valley;
- Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp;
- Chalk Escarpment and Foothills; and
- Chilterns Wooded Plateau.

Assumptions

5.11 The following key assumptions are important to the functionality of the GI priority areas:

- The GI opportunities identified are not confined to GI priority areas. These opportunities can also fall out of these areas and potentially get taken forward; and
- The boundaries of the GI priority areas are not prescriptive and are not meant to be hard lines / follow defensible boundaries within the landscape.

Figure 5.1: GI Priority Areas

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White House Districts
Watercourses
Woodland cover
Tier 1 settlements
Residential allocations
Employment allocations
Other allocations

Abingdon-on-Thames
Didcot
Faringdon
Henley-on-Thames
Thame
Wallingford
Wantage

GI Priority Areas

1. Oxford Fringes
2. Thame Clay Vale
3. Corallian Ridge
4. Central Thames Valley
5. Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp
6. Chalk Escarpment and Foothills
7. Chilterns Wooded Plateau

0 2 4 km

Map scale 1:175,000 @ A3

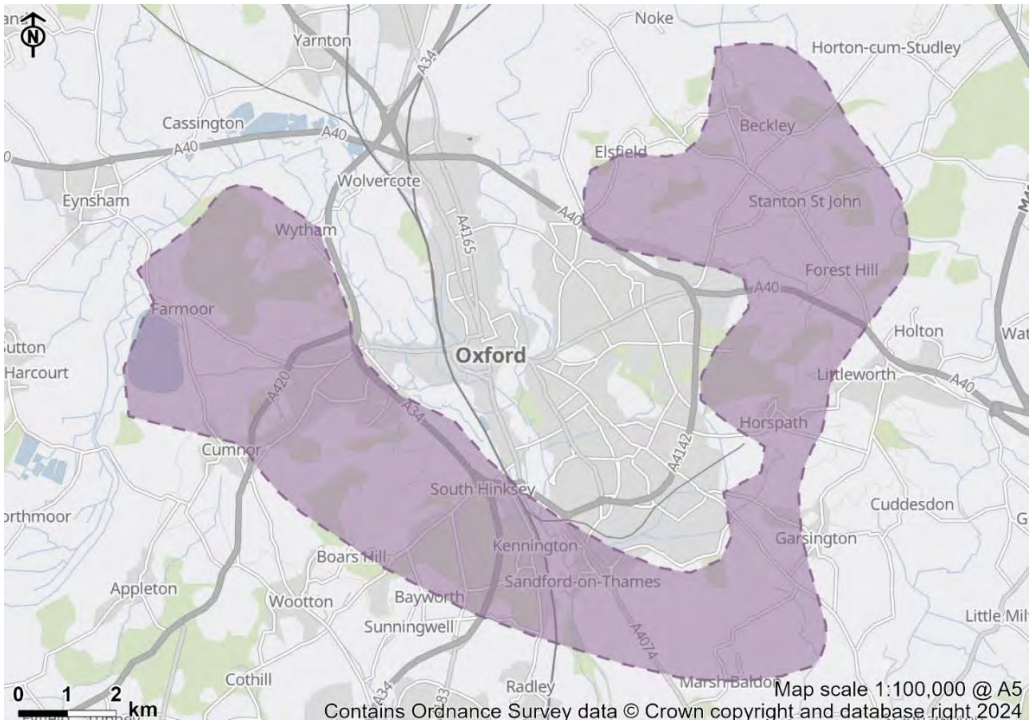
Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS
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GI Priority Area 01: Oxford Fringes

5.12 Adjoining the settlement edge of Oxford, this GI priority area is characterised by a combination of predominantly residential land use and key infrastructure routes, interspersed with areas of woodland and large-scale greenspace. Centred on key road corridors, the urban areas include Botley, Kennington, Littlemore, Blackbird Leys, Barton and Risinghurst.

5.13 Sections of key transport corridors radiate from the urban fringes of Oxford (including the A420, A34, A4074 and the A40). Western (A34) and south western (A423) sections of the Oxford Ring Road also lie broadly parallel to the boundary of the GI priority area. Running broadly north-south, the Cherwell Valley Rail Line bisects the area, accommodated within close proximity to the meandering course of the River Thames, while the River Cherwell and its floodplain meadows pass roughly in parallel north-south through the city.

Figure 5.2: Spatial extent of Oxford Fringes GI Priority Area





Expansive views across the Oxford skyline from South Hinksey

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.14 The River Thames and its floodplain form key blue infrastructure assets, broadly following the administrative boundary of Vale of White Horse district at the north western extent of the GI priority area, before moving south where the watercourse passes to the east of Kennington. The route of the Thames Path National Trail borders this route, providing a key recreational resource, supplemented by a network of PRoW which radiate from the settlement edge. Located to the west of Botley, Farmoor Reservoir offers public access.

5.15 Typified by areas of locally elevated topography, woodland tracts form characteristic landscape features interspersed within the areas of agricultural and urban land use. However, this tree coverage is somewhat fragmented in

distribution. Wytham Great Wood and Marley Wood provide significant woodland coverage at the north western extent of the GI priority area, with Bagley Wood lying further south and bisected by the corridor of the A34. Bernwood Forest abuts the eastern extent of the GI priority area.

5.16 Open space provision within the GI priority area is dominated by a mosaic of natural greenspaces, typified by the pattern of woodland coverage. Shotover County Park provides a key destination greenspace at the eastern fringes of Oxford. RSPB Otmoor Nature Reserve also forms a key cross-boundary GI asset at the north eastern limit of the GI priority area.

Overview of GI opportunities

- Create a sub-regional (minimum 500 hectares) or district-wide (minimum 100 hectares) greenspace at land north east of Oxford and linking to Otmoor;
- Enhance woodland connectivity to promote improved habitat linkages and multiple other ecosystem services at the settlement edge;
- Introduce GI interventions to further enhance biodiversity within the fertile floodplain bordering the River Thames, including grazing marsh, deciduous wet woodland and semi-improved grassland (where appropriate);
- Address localised severance of the PRoW network and improve provision at the settlement edge to enhance connections to the wider rural landscape. These interventions should be focussed in areas of existing greenspace deprivation; such as land at Dean Court in Botley which lacks access to accessible greenspace within the 15 min walk target recommended by Natural England.
- Introduce improvements to localised PRoW linkages to the Thames Path National Trail, promoting the route as a recreational resource to communities located within the fringes of Oxford;

- Explore the potential integration of SuDS interventions and catchment-scale nature-based solutions to improve resilience and adaptation to flooding, principally within areas located within Flood Zones 2 and 3;
- Ensure the appropriate siting of GI along key transport corridors, such as the A34 in Botley, to improve air quality and achieve noise abatement benefits;
- Integrate GI interventions with the aim of softening the abrupt pattern of built form at the settlement edge, whilst also enhancing local distinctiveness and landscape character; and
- Improve greenspace provision in areas in areas of deficiency and deliver enhancements to the multi-functionality of existing open spaces.
- Enhance riparian corridors along the River Thames and its tributaries, connecting SSSIs and other key habitats to enhance ecological connectivity.
- Introduce an access framework within close proximity to sensitive or recovering habitats to balance public access and nature conservation pressures.

GI Priority Area 02: Thame Clay Vale

5.17 Encompassing the settlement of Thame and its eastern, western and southern fringes, this GI priority area is characterised by a predominantly agricultural landscape with smaller pockets of residential land use. Urban areas are nestled off major road corridors that connect to the north of Thame from the west and east, including Great Milton, Great Haseley, Chalgrove (with Chalgrove Airfield to the north), Tetsworth, and Towersey. Sections of the A418, A4129, A329, A40 and M40 run broadly north west to south through the landscape of the priority area. The River Thames meanders to the north of Thame, with tributaries including Cuttle Brook running through the settlement. National Cycle Network (NCN) route 57 (Phoenix Trail) lies to south of Thame and extends eastwards towards Princes Risborough.

Figure 5.3: Spatial extent of Thame Clay Vale GI Priority Area





Land at Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.18 The River Thames, its tributaries (Cuttle Brook and Haseley Brook) and corresponding floodplain form the primary blue infrastructure assets at the north east and south of the GI priority area. The Thame Valley Walk follows the river just north of the GI priority area, with access to part of the route from Thame. National Cycle Network (NCN) route 57 lies at the south of Thame's settlement edge and connects to Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve, accessed by a network of PRoW that radiate both south and west.

5.19 Associated with the low-lying rolling clayland topography, a patchwork of fields bordered with ditches and treelines form characteristic landscape features. Wooded areas are scattered throughout the GI priority area with watercourses bordered by wet woodland. However, woodland cover is low and

largely fragmented across the landscape, markedly around the M40, which bisects the GI priority area from north west to south.

5.20 Open space provision within the GI Priority Area is dominated by parks and gardens and amenity greenspace. Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve provides a natural greenspace in the west of Thame. The small Spartum Fen SSSI also forms a GI asset, located on land lying between the M40 and Little Haseley.

Overview of GI opportunities

- Improve accessibility to river corridors to improve their role as a recreational resource.
- Address localised flood risk through the integration of SuDS interventions and nature-based solutions to improve resilience in vulnerable areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3, specifically at Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve.
- Create a new wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) greenspace that is accessible from Thame's eastern settlement edge.
- Enhance tree and hedgerow planting to address habitat fragmentation, whilst also helping to mitigate noise pollution associated with the corridors of the A418, A4129 and A329.
- Expand and connect riparian woodlands along the Cuttle Brook and other catchments, focusing on species that enhance climate resilience and biodiversity.
- Expand woodland cover within the priority zones, in accordance with the WWNP Wider Catchment Woodland Potential dataset to promote habitat connectivity and the expansion of ecological networks.
- Create a new wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) greenspace that is accessible from Thame's eastern settlement edge.
- Increase provision for children and teenagers within Thame, including the quality and value of existing sites.

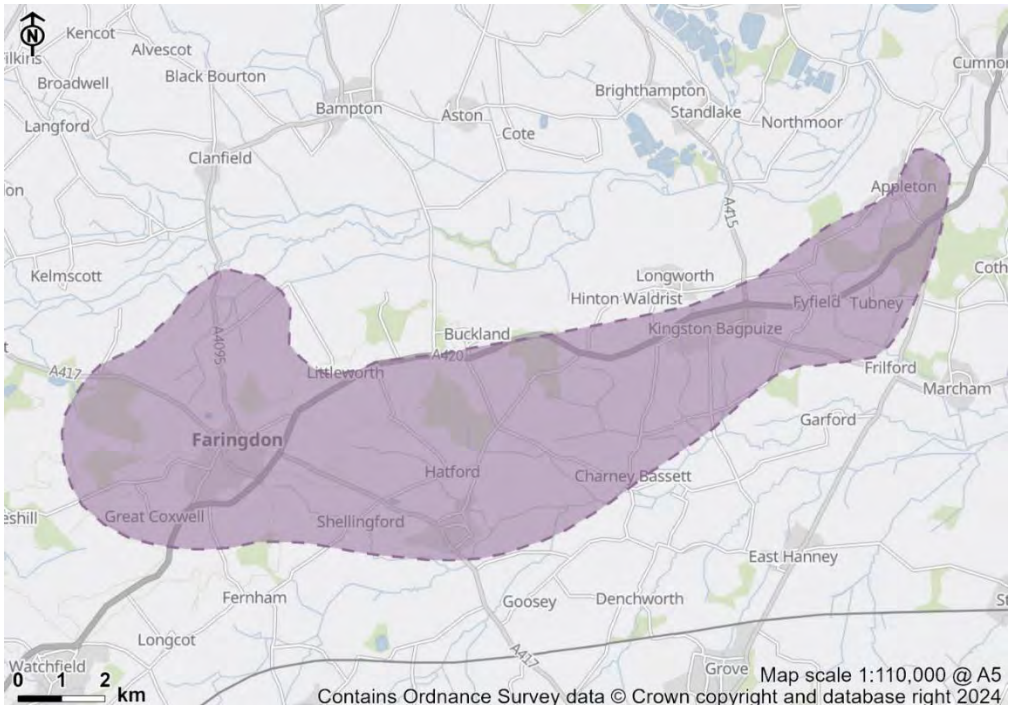
- If demand exists, introduce community growing spaces and allotments within land lying between the A4129 and B445 to address deficiencies in access.

GI Priority Area 03: Corallian Ridge

5.21 The Corallian Ridge GI Priority Area is largely linear, with the settlement of Faringdon situated in the west. The road corridor of the A420 runs broadly west to east towards Oxford. The landscape is characterised by its rurality and PRoW network that connects Faringdon with the wider countryside.

5.22 The Vale Way long distance route emerges from the eastern and southern boundaries of the settlement edge, connecting Faringdon with smaller urban areas close to the A420 and A417. These predominantly residential areas include Great Coxwell, Hatford, Stanford in the Vale, Littleworth, Buckland, Kingston Bagpuize, Fyfield, Tubney (with Frilford Heath Golf Course in the south), and Appleton. Pockets of woodland punctuate the landscape at intervals throughout the GI priority area, with larger tracts located to the east around Appleton and west surrounding Faringdon.

Figure 5.4: Spatial extent of Corallian Ridge GI Priority Area





Long views south east from Faringdon Hill

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.23 A network of springs, streams and rivers form key blue infrastructure assets, located to the south of the A420. Tributaries of the River Thames radiate towards Faringdon and Kingston Bagpuize from the administrative boundary of the Vale of White Horse district in the north. The Vale Way runs west to east, connecting Faringdon to Wantage and Abingdon-on-Thames to the wider countryside.

5.24 The GI priority area straddles the Midvale Ridge and Upper Thames Clay Vales NCAs, giving way to a varied topography. Typified by a contrast in moderately elevated limestone hills and ridges and the surrounding low-lying clay vales, a mix of pastoral and arable fields lined with ditches, hedgerow and hedgerow trees dominate the landscape. Well-wooded areas in the west and east form characteristic landscape features, with fragmented but important

semi-natural habitats surrounding smaller urban areas in the east towards Abingdon-on-Thames, including acid grassland, calcareous fens and flushes, wet woodland and calcareous grass heaths.

5.25 Large areas of the GI priority area exhibits good provision of existing accessible greenspace, equivalent to over four hectares per 1,000 of the population. Folly Hill and Folly Park provide two key areas of greenspace in the west of the Priority Area, associated with Faringdon.

Overview of GI opportunities

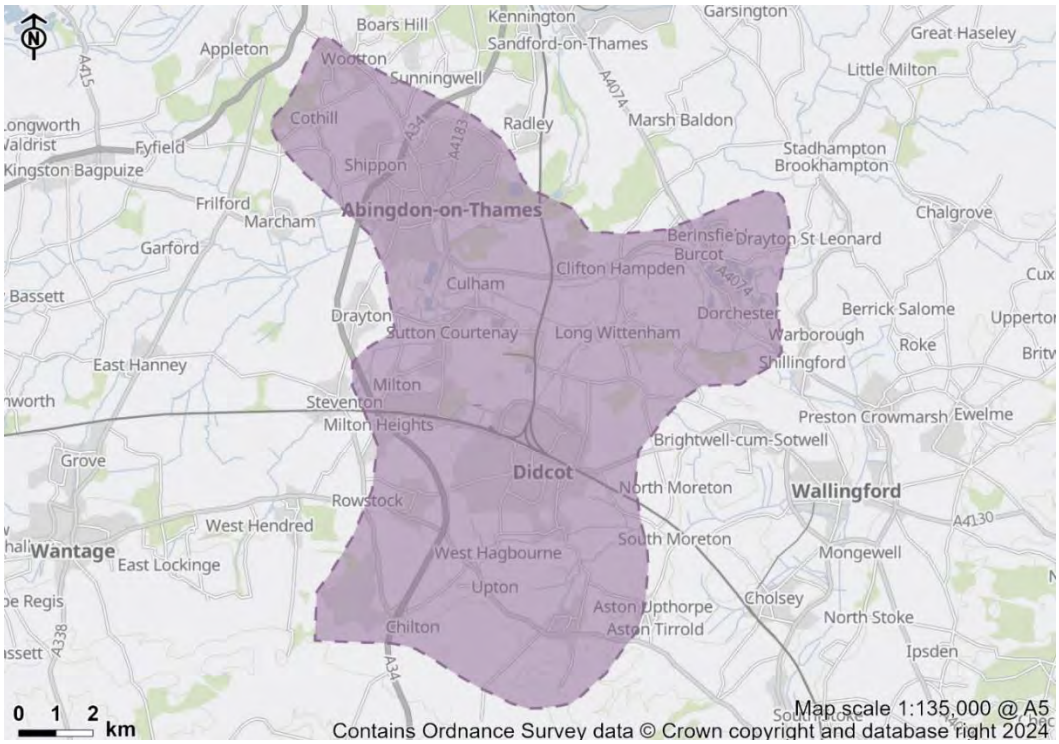
- Prioritise tree planting and GI interventions around the A420 corridor to help mitigate air and noise pollution along this route.
- Introduce surfacing and interpretation improvements along existing PRoW radiating from the settlement edge of Faringdon to promote improved linkages to the wider countryside.
- Provide green linkages between ‘local’ (at least two hectares) and ‘pocket’ greenspaces in Faringdon as part of the wider GI network.
- Enhance woodland connectivity to promote habitat linkages and deliver multiple other ecosystem services within the lower lying floodplains, as highlighted by the WWNP Floodplain Woodland Potential dataset.
- Restore and enhance green corridors and watercourses located in the recovery zone of the draft nature recovery network (future Local Nature Recovery Strategy).
- Explore the opportunity to introduce a neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) scale greenspace to the west of Faringdon.
- Increase the provision for children and teenagers within Faringdon, including the quality and value of existing sites.
- Address deficiencies in access to community growing spaces and allotments at the eastern and southern extents of Faringdon.

GI Priority Area 04: Central Thames Valley

5.26 Encompassing the large towns of Didcot and Abingdon-on-Thames, as well as several surrounding settlements, this GI priority area straddles both districts and is centred on the confluence of the Rivers Ock, Stert, and Thames. The landscape is characterised by urban areas separated by agricultural land use, the meandering course of the River Thames and its tributaries, tracts of woodland, and areas of industrial land use and road corridors.

5.27 Key transport corridors include the A34 which runs along the western edge of Abingdon-on-Thames, Drayton, Milton, and Didcot, as well as the A4130, A4183, and A4074. Running broadly north-south, the Cherwell Valley Rail bisects the area, joining the Great Western Main Line at Didcot.

Figure 5.5: Spatial extent of Central Thames Valley GI Priority Area





Burford Bridge across the River Thames, Abingdon-on-Thames

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.28 The River Thames and its tributaries form key blue infrastructure assets within this GI priority area, winding through arable fields and continuing along and through multiple settlements. The various smaller tributaries as well as the Rivers Ock and Stret form a dense network, and are typically bordered by grassy floodplains or dense bands of riparian woodland. PRoW, including the Thames Path, frequently run parallel to these watercourses and link the smaller settlements in the floodplain of the River Thames.

5.29 Woodland cover across the GI priority area is primarily concentrated along the floodplains of the River Thames and its tributaries, particularly along the eastern edge of Abingdon-on-Thames, near Cothill, and Wittenham. Within the settlements, pockets of woodland and street trees provide tree coverage and

publicly accessible greenspaces, such as Abbey Meadows in Abingdon-on-Thames, and Ladygrove Loop and Millennium Wood in Didcot. The floodplains are also characterised by large areas of important grassland and grazing marsh, which closely parallel the numerous watercourses.

5.30 Open space provision within the GI priority area is concentrated within the settlements, consisting mostly of smaller recreation grounds and parks and gardens. Larger natural greenspaces are limited, and found within the floodplain of the River Thames. Key destinations include Wittenham Clumps, Cothill National Nature Reserve, and Ock Meadow Nature Reserve.

Overview of GI opportunities

- Address the deficiency in 'district' (at least 100 hectares) greenspace to the north, east or south east of Didcot through the creation of a new accessible greenspace.
- Support the short, medium and long-term recommendations of the Didcot GI Strategy to enhance connectivity between GI assets as part of the wider 'super green town' proposals for Didcot.
- In accordance with the aspirations of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan, implement an enhanced network of walking and cycling connectivity across Didcot.
- Extend Millennium Wood and surrounding woodland tracts to enhance habitat connectivity towards Mowbray Nature Reserve.
- As identified within Oxfordshire's Rights of Way Management Plan, support the implementation of 'aspirational access development measures' which radiate from Didcot into the wider countryside from the north, south and east.
- Enhance the network of nature-based solutions, including wetlands and riparian vegetation, to improve resilience and adaptation to flooding along key watercourses; including the River Thames, Abbey Stream, River Ock and the floodplain of Moor Ditch in Didcot.

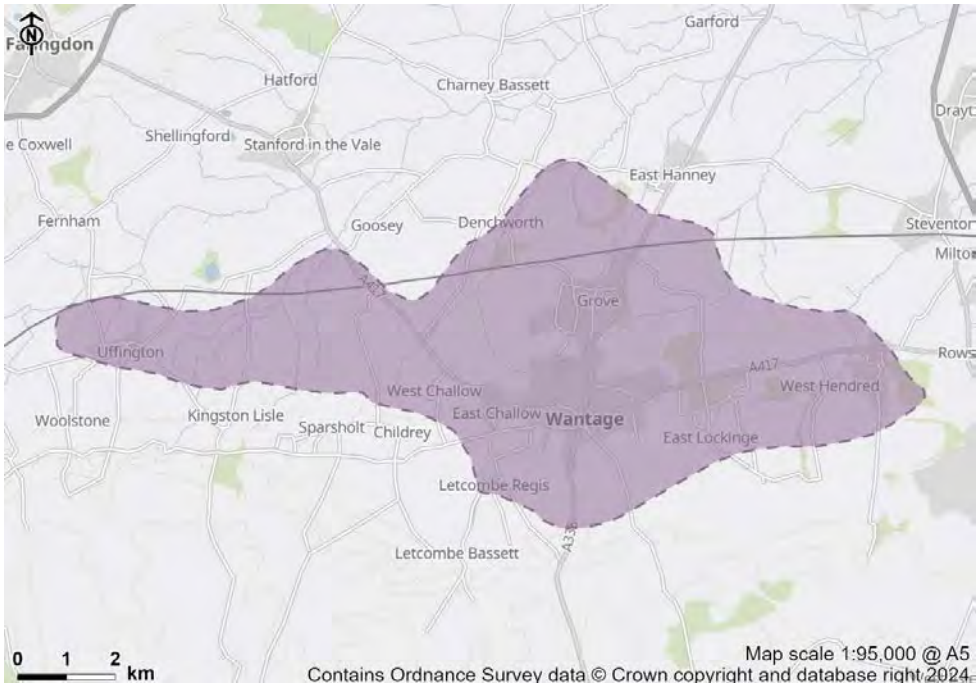
- Introduce tree cover and hedgerow expansion projects to enhance habitat connectivity across the lower lying floodplain of the River Thames.
- Utilise appropriately sited GI to mitigate poor air quality within Abingdon-on-Thames AQMA.
- In accordance with the Didcot GI Strategy, create a fully accessible, active travel and leisure community link route from the northern extent of Didcot to Wittenham Clumps.
- Enhance the corridor of the River Thames north of Didcot and within Abingdon-on-Thames as a recreational resource, including improvements to local PRoW which provide linkages to the Thames Path National Trail.
- Enhance wider connectivity to the north west from Abingdon-on-Thames beyond the corridor of the A34.
- Tackle greenspace deficiencies through the provision of a new neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) scale accessible greenspace within Caldecott and Peachcroft (Abingdon-on-Thames) and land to the south east of Didcot.
- Create additional doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) or pocket greenspaces within Abingdon-on-Thames to help mitigate gaps in access to the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (five minute accessibility catchment).
- Greenspace Close to Home Access target
- Explore opportunities to increase provision for children and teenagers within Abingdon, including improvements to the quality and value of existing sites.
- Increase provision of community growing spaces and allotments within Abingdon-on-Thames and to the north and west of Didcot.
- Introduce a programme of future tree planting within Milton, Caldecott, Edmond Park (Didcot) and Old Didcot to address inequitable access to trees, as identified by the Tree Equity Score.

- As identified within the Didcot GI Strategy, utilise urban greening (including street trees) as a placemaking tool to enhance the setting of the Orchard Centre and surrounding street pattern in Didcot.

GI Priority Area 05: Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp

5.31 Characterised by the northern slopes of the Wessex Downs Scarp and adjacent lower lying farmland, this GI priority area is typified by arable fields dissected by wooded streams and scattered settlements. The area is broadly centred on the settlements of Wantage and Grove, extending towards East Hendred to the east and Uffington in the west. Watercourses which are partially encompassed within the GI priority area include the River Ock and its various tributary streams; including the upper reaches of Stutfield Brook, Letcombe Brook, and Childrey Brook. The route of the Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal is also located in this GI priority area. Key transport routes intermittently dissect the area, including the A338 (north-south), A417 (east-west), and the Great Western Main Line.

Figure 5.6: Spatial extent of Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp GI Priority Area





The Vale Way at West Hendred

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.32 The River Ock and its various stream tributaries cross the GI priority area, broadly flowing from the higher elevations south of Wantage across the fertile floodplains further north east. The Wilts & Berks Canal travels perpendicular to these tributaries, with intermittent public access in proximity to Wantage. From the settlement edge, a network of PRoW radiate out into the surrounding countryside, with a number entering the Wessex Down National Landscape in the south. Along the southern edge of the GI priority area, the Ridgeway National Trail travels east-west across the chalk slopes of the Wessex Downs, passing immediately south of Uffington and Wantage.

5.33 Corresponding with the sloping chalk topography in the south, scattered areas of important grassland habitat are found across the slopes of the GI priority area. Further north, the lower-lying arable land is host to hedgerows along field boundaries and scattered woodland, and lowland meadows near the

numerous streams. However, these habitat networks are fragmented, separated by settlement and large areas of arable fields. Tree coverage within the GI priority area is similarly fragmented, with large woodland blocks evident near Ardington and at the peripheries of smaller settlements.

5.34 Open space provision within the GI priority area is somewhat limited, and dominated by smaller recreation grounds and playing fields near settlements, as well as larger natural greenspaces along Letcombe Brook and Ardlington.

Overview of GI opportunities

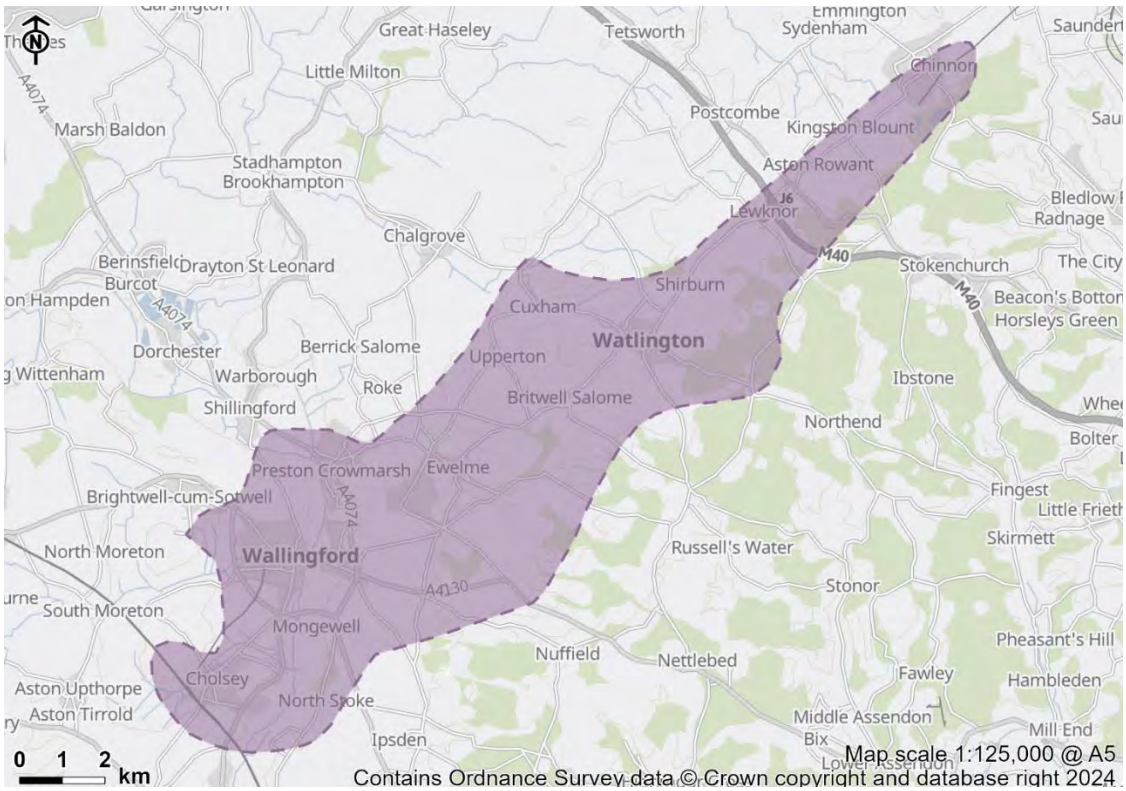
- Support the restoration of the Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal as a navigable waterway, offering an ecologically-rich active travel corridor with recreational value.
- Improve access to natural greenspace at Letcombe Valley through the delivery of PRoW improvements or new walking routes along Letcombe Brook as a mechanism to improve access to greenspace within Wantage.
- Support PRoW improvements that enhance connectivity and promote sustainable access to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape from Wantage and surrounding communities.
- Enhance east-west linkages by addressing fragmentation of the PRoW network along the corridor of the A338.
- Increase the network of multi-user routes to the west of Wantage, as defined within Oxfordshire's Rights of Way Management Plan. Introduce surfacing and interpretation improvements on existing routes, including those to the north of Wantage which cross the rail line.
- Enhance environmental land management through the restoration of historic hedge boundaries, small-scale tree planting and improvements to the biodiversity value of arable land use.
- Address flooding issues associated with the Letcombe Brook within Wantage through the integration of GI and nature-based solutions. The watercourse forms a rare chalk stream which has been identified as a target area within the draft nature recovery network mapping.

- Increase the investment in tree planting within land lying central and to the south of Wantage.
- Focus tree planting efforts in central, eastern and southern areas of Wantage, where Tree Equity Scores are moderate.
- In areas that abut the nutrient neutrality catchment of the River Lambourn SAC, support nutrient sequestration and habitat creation initiatives to improve water quality.
- Address gaps in the Greenspace Close to Home Access target (within a five minute (up to 300 metres) accessibility catchment) through the introduction of local (at least two hectares), doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares) or pocket greenspaces at the south western extent of Wantage.
- Introduce provision for children and teenagers on land to the west of Wantage.

GI Priority Area 06: Chalk Escarpment and Foothills

5.35 This GI priority area is characterised by the north western escarpment of the Chiltern Hills National Landscape and the western edge of the Vale of Aylesbury. The landscape is typified by large areas of wooded scarp, and pastoral and arable fields interspersed with small urban areas across the foothills. Extending north east from Wallingford, the GI priority area generally follows the B4009 and encompasses the settlements of Ewelme, Watlington, Shirburn, and Chinnor. Key transport routes run broadly north-south; including the M40 in the north-east, the A430 which follows Wallingford's western edge, and the Great Western Main Line in the west.

Figure 5.7: Spatial extent of Chalk Escarpment and Foothills GI Priority Area





Agricultural land use at Turner's Green Lane

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.36 Following the eastern edge of Wallingford, the River Thames and its floodplain forms a key blue infrastructure asset in the west of the GI priority area. Further north east, various chalk-fed streams, including Haseley Brook and Chalgrove Brook, emerge from the escarpment and meander towards the river. Long distance paths cross through the area, including the Thames Path and the Ridgeway National Trails, which travel along the chalk escarpment and is directly adjacent to numerous areas of CRoW land. However, the wider PRoW network is often fragmented, particularly between the foothill settlements and the wooded chalk escarpment in the south.

5.37 Large areas of woodland, much of which is ancient, chalk grassland and pastoral fields are characteristic features across the slopes in the south of the GI priority area, visible from the settled foothills in the north. The density of tree coverage significantly lessens across the foothills, with large arable and pastoral fields interspersed with clumps of woodland and hedgerow. Fragmented areas of razing marsh and riparian woodland are located along the River Thames and adjoining watercourses.

5.38 Open space provision within the GI priority area is largely characterised by parks and gardens within the settlements, as well as natural greenspaces located along the River Thames and within the Chiltern Hills National Landscape. These natural greenspaces often correspond to the pattern of woodland coverage. Watlington Hill provides a key destination along the southern edge of the GI priority area.

Overview of GI opportunities

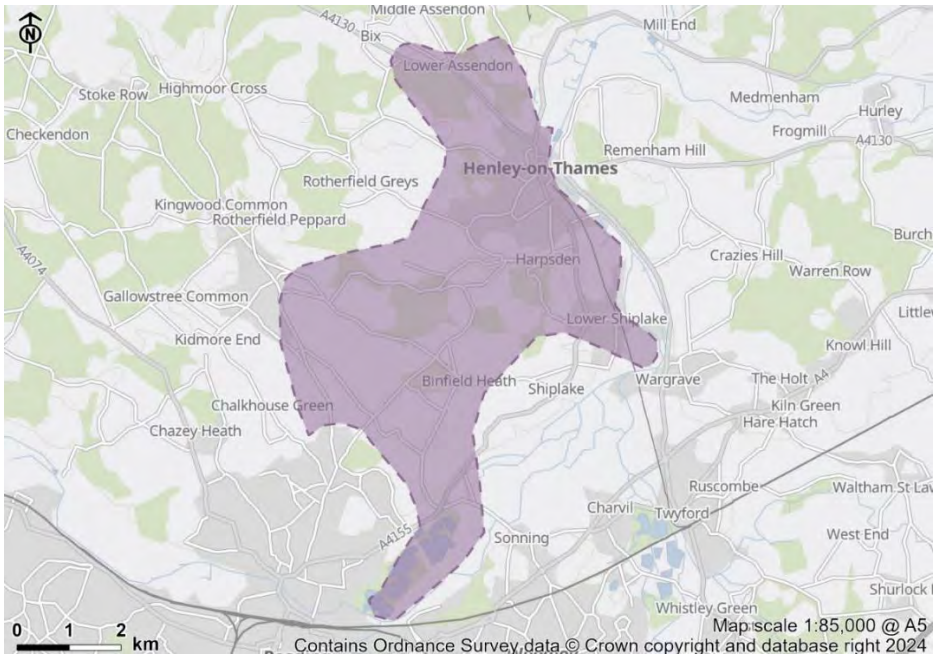
- As identified within Oxfordshire's Rights of Way Management Plan, introduce localised improvements to the network of PRoW and multi-user routes around Wallingford. Connections to the north west could be enhanced through the creation of a new multi-user route following the approximate alignment of the A4130 and Sires Hill.
- Integrate appropriately sited-GI interventions to aid pollutant dispersal within the Wallingford AQMA.
- Utilise GI and nature-based solutions, including improvements to riparian habitats, to address flooding issues associated with the River Thames at the eastern extent of Wallingford.
- Enhance habitat connectivity through the establishment of green corridors to provide linkages between riparian zones and ancient woodlands to the south of the priority area.
- Introduce buffer zones and access management strategies within the north eastern portion of the priority area, due to its concentration of SSSIs (including Swyncombe Downs and Aston Rowant Woods).

- Address deficiencies in the five minute accessibility catchment through the introduction of doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares) and pocket greenspace provision at the southern and western fringes of Wallingford.
- Enhance the quality and value of existing greenspaces within Watlington.
- Increase provision for children and teenagers to address deficiencies in Wallingford, particularly in the south around Winterbrook and in the north west along Wantage Road.
- Introduce community growing spaces and allotments within land to the south around Winterbrook and a small area in the north around Blackstone Road to address deficiencies in provision.

GI Priority Area 07: Chilterns Wooded Plateau

5.39 This GI priority area is characterised by a combination of land uses; including residential areas (Lower Assendon, Henley-on-Thames, Lower Shiplake, Shiplake, Binfield Heath, Dunsden Green, and Sonning Common), waterways (River Thames), lakes (Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake), and larger-scale greenspace. Bordered by the meandering River Thames and Regatta Railway Line to the east, the area is centred on the settlement of Henley-on-Thames. The road network is generally characterised by numerous local scale corridors that radiate from sections of the A4155 and A4074. Henley-on-Thames in the north east and Sonning Common in the west both lie at the edge of the Chilterns National Landscape boundary, with PRoW connecting the urban areas to the wider landscape.

Figure 5.8: Spatial extent of Chilterns Wooded Plateau GI Priority Area





Chiltern Way at Crowsley Park Woods

Summary of existing GI assets within the boundary

5.40 The River Thames and its floodplain broadly follow the GI priority area boundary east of Henley-on-Thames and south to Sonning and Reading. At the south of the GI priority area lies a network of lakes, as well as the Thames Valley Park Nature Reserve. These watercourses form significant blue infrastructure assets within the landscape, and the Thames Path National Trail, which follows the route of the river, provides a key resource for access and recreation.

5.41 Woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields are extensive across the landscape, associated with the pattern of chalk plateau topography and the boundary of the Chilterns National Landscape. Pockets of deciduous woodland, wood pasture and wooded parkland and commons dominate between residential areas. Chalk rivers and streams are largely concentrated in the east

and south of the GI priority area. However, these habitats are fragmented by the pattern of settlement and agricultural land.

5.42 Open space provision within the GI priority area is largely limited, particularly within residential areas such as Henley-on-Thames. Although the landscape presents a mosaic of woodland throughout the GI priority area, there is limited access to larger natural greenspaces from urban areas as well as limited provision of amenity greenspace within residential locations.

Overview of GI opportunities

- Introduce improvements to localised PRoW to provide linkages to areas of accessible woodland and the wider countryside.
- Promote local connections to the Thames Path National Trail and Oxfordshire Way long distance routes as a mechanism to increase access to the riverside and greenspaces surrounding Henley-on-Thames.
- Expand the network of local (at least 2 hectares), doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares) and pocket (at least 0.5 hectares) greenspaces within residential areas of Henley-on-Thames with the aim of improving access to greenspace within five minutes' walk from home (Greenspace Close to Home Access target).
- Increase the provision for children and teenagers within Henley-on-Thames to address deficiencies.
- Expand the provision of allotments and community growing spaces to the west of Henley-on-Thames.
- Integrate appropriately sited GI interventions within the Henley-on-Thames AQMA, particularly around the A4130 and A4155 corridors and PRoW networks.
- Explore the potential integration of SuDS interventions and nature-based solutions to improve the resilience and adaptation to flooding in at risk areas associated with the River Thames.

- Identify GI interventions that support wetland creation and the promotion of sensitive land use practices to help limit nutrient run-off.
- Implement floodplain restoration initiatives along the River Thames within Henley-on-Thames to manage flood risk and support nature recovery efforts.
- Establish a new woodland corridor to enhance habitat connectivity between ancient woodlands, whilst also managing visitor access to ensure nature recovery and sustainable public access.
- Collaborate with local stakeholders, such as the Chilterns Conservation Board and the South Chilterns Catchment Partnership, to align GI and nature recovery initiatives with broader conservation goals.

Chapter 6

Summary of action plans for delivery of key GI projects

6.1 Each of the seven GI priority areas provide a streamlined approach to the identification and delivery of GI interventions. Their aim is provide a framework for action to help policymakers, developers, community groups and residents to deliver appropriate, multifunctional and resilient GI across the districts.

6.2 Within each GI priority area, three 'key GI projects' have been identified, providing a variety of project types, scales and costs, and are intended to be taken forward by various partners as and when funding becomes available. These projects are structured within a series of action plans to promote their future delivery. Whilst some projects are spatially specific, the principles of other key projects offer the opportunity to be replicated across the districts.

6.3 The action plans are structured as set out below:

- Name and description of the project – see **Chapter 6**;
- Key elements of the project – see **Chapter 6**;
- Next steps – see **Chapter 6**;
- Purpose and justification for inclusion of project – see **Appendix K**;
- Indicative timescale – see **Appendix K**;
- Potential delivery partners – see **Appendix K**;
- Indicative cost – see **Appendix K**; and
- Funding mechanisms – see **Appendix K**.

6.4 The rationale for identification of the key GI projects is outlined below:

- Multifunctionality and range of benefits: Projects that provide multiple benefits that align with the 15 principles to promote the successful delivery of GI within the NEGIF.
- Meeting identified need: The degree to which the project meets an identified gap in the existing GI network within the districts.
- Timescales: A range of timescales, including quick win, medium-term and long-term projects, to allow for a variety of scales, delivery mechanisms and achievement of aspirations.
- Deliverability: Projects that were deemed to be 'more deliverable' were put forward, for example, those in receipt of existing stakeholder support, relating to a clear funding stream, or alignment with other existing initiatives.
- Professional judgement: The finalised list of key GI projects were compiled using professional judgement to ensure the above criteria provide a representative list of projects.

6.5 To help contribute towards the forward-planning of all the key GI projects identified, outline cost bands and timescales have been devised based on professional judgement. The categories are outlined below in **Table 6.1** and **Table 6.2:**

Table 6.1: Indicative cost categories for key GI projects

Cost category	Value (£)
Low	<£250k
Medium	£250 - £1 million
High	>£1 million

Table 6.2: Indicative timescale categories for key GI projects

Timescale category	Number of years
Quick win	<1 year
Medium-term	1-5years
Long-term (aspirational)	>5 years

6.6 The list of key GI projects for each GI priority area are outlined below. All key projects have been taken forward into a series of detailed action plan profiles (see below and within **Appendix K**).

6.7 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will form the key strategy document for the delivery of nature recovery throughout the lifespan of the Strategy, particularly in assessing synergies between the GI network and Nature Recovery Networks. However, Local Nature Recovery Strategy mapping is not available at the time of writing.

6.8 The data used to inform this the key GI projects in this Strategy is based on TVERC's draft Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire. It is recognised that the final Local Nature Recovery Strategy mapping may highlight different priority areas, though internal consultation suggests these changes are unlikely to be significant. As this project progresses, ongoing collaboration and the use of the most up-to-date Local Nature Recovery Strategy data will be essential.

GI Priority Area 01: Oxford Fringes

Proposed key GI projects

1a. Create a sub-regional (minimum 500 hectares) or district-wide (minimum 100 hectares) greenspace at land north east of Oxford and linking to Otmoor



Land bordering Otmoor Nature Reserve

Description

6.9 The creation of a new sub-regional (at least 500 hectares) or district-wide (minimum 100 hectares) scale greenspace will aim to address deficiencies in access to larger greenspace to the north east of Oxford. Multi-functional in scope, this large accessible greenspace will deliver a range of facilities offering recreational, ecological, landscape and cultural benefits.

6.10 A key element of the vision will involve working with partners to promote connectivity and cooperation at the landscape scale, as part of the wider spatial framework for the site. A range of financial mechanisms should be explored and adopted to incentivise land managers to provide these benefits alongside sustainable agriculture, ensuring sufficient space for people and nature. A combination of funds from public, private and charitable sectors will likely be required to deliver a greenspace of this scale.

Key elements of the project:

- Develop a spatial framework to provide a starting point for the exploration of opportunities with stakeholders and local communities to contribute to the delivery of the sub-regional / district scale greenspace.
- Formulate a boundary for the site based on an analysis of key landscape features and ecological networks.
- Produce a draft vision and set of objectives for the development of the sub-regional / district greenspace to promote stakeholder and community ‘buy-in’.
- Establish a working group to aid the strategic identification of landowners and developers willing to collaborate.
- Undertake comprehensive engagement with landowners, stakeholders, the local community and potential delivery partners to generate support for the project and the opportunities identified.

- Develop and assess governance models to provide strategic direction for the delivery of the sub-regional / district greenspace's vision and objectives.

Next steps

- Establish the spatial framework to identify potential opportunities and priority areas for the development of the sub-regional / district scale greenspace.
- Deliver early pilot projects to generate momentum around the delivery of the sub-regional / district scale greenspace, delivering quick win benefits, whilst also testing potential funding mechanisms.
- Explore new finance models to fund the delivery of some of the elements.

1b: Integrate SuDS interventions and catchment-scale nature-based solutions to improve resilience and adaptation to flooding within the floodplain of the River Thames



Thames Path National Trail

Description

6.11 This project aims to increase resilience and adaptability to future flood events along the River Thames, aligned with Local Nature Recovery Strategy and regional flood resilience strategies. Through the enhancement and expansion of existing riparian corridors and restoration of floodplains, the floodplain's capacity to absorb excess floodwater will increase and reduce flood risk. The creation of new wetland habitats in low-lying areas alongside the river will mitigate seasonal flooding as well as increase habitat connectivity along the

river corridor. Planting as part of these initiatives will act to intercept water and stabilise soil, slowing water flow, reducing soil erosion, and preserving the integrity of the fertile fields which border the river. The opportunity also exists to integrate SuDS features such as rain gardens, permeable paving and attenuation basins at the settlement edge.

Key elements of the project:

- Strategic creation of wetlands and water meadows within low-lying fields adjacent to the river corridor, in cooperation with local landowners.
- Cooperation with local landowners and developers to integrate (new or retrofitting) SuDS interventions and to manage flood risk (at the site and further downstream).
- Riparian habitat restoration and expansion along the river, consisting of appropriate species which are adapted to the local environment, and which contribute positively to local biodiversity needs.
- Identification of locations along the River Thames where arable fields or other land uses lacking appropriate riparian buffers intersect with the river course, followed by establishment of new riparian habitats to mitigate flood risk, run-off and soil erosion.

Next steps

- Conduct hydrological and ecological assessments to identify priority areas for riparian restoration and wetland creation.
- Collaborate with local community groups and local authorities to identify priority areas for floodplain restoration and retrofit SuDS installation.
- Undertake public engagement to ensure community involvement in the project.
- Funding applications should be prepared, targeting SuDS, and nature-based solutions funding streams.

- Pilot areas for SuDS and riparian restoration should be initiated once planning and funding approvals are secured.
- A long-term management / maintenance plan should be prepared to promote successful establishment.

1c. Enhance woodland connectivity to promote improved habitat linkages at the settlement edge, balancing public access with Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives regarding nature recovery



PRoW at Woodcraft Wood

Description

6.12 This project focuses on enhancement of riparian habitats and the creation of linkages between critical ecological sites such as SSSIs. The initiative will seek to improve water quality along the River Thames and its tributaries through targeted riparian restoration, the introduction of climate-resilient planting, and

wider habitat creation. Enhancement of riparian corridors will promote ecological connectivity, support biodiversity, and contribute to Local Nature Recovery Strategy goals. Additionally, the project will introduce GI interventions in floodplains, such as grazing marsh, deciduous wet woodland, and semi-improved grassland to deliver ecosystem services. Public access should be carefully managed through a zoning framework, balancing nature recovery with controlled access. Improvements to the PROW network will seek to enhance connections to the Thames Path National Trail, promoting it as a recreational resource for local communities.

Key elements of the project:

- Riparian corridor enhancement along the River Thames and its tributaries.
- Introduction of climate resilient vegetation along the watercourse.
- Creation of an ecological corridor creation linking SSSI sites.
- Introduction of a public access framework with zoning.
- Use of educational programmes and interpretive signage.

Next steps

- Undertake detailed ecological assessments of the targeted riparian corridors and SSSI clusters, ensuring alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives.
- Commence engagement with key stakeholders, including the South Chilterns Catchment Partnership and local authorities, to refine the public access framework and balance nature recovery and recreational access.
- Pilot areas for riparian restoration should be identified and public consultation initiated to ensure the access framework reflects local needs, whilst protecting sensitive habitats.

GI Priority Area 02: Thame Clay Vale

Proposed key GI projects

2a. Create a new wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) greenspace that is accessible from Thame's eastern settlement edge



Land at Windmill Road

Description

6.13 A new wider-neighbourhood greenspace will provide recreational, social and cultural value, as well as localised landscape and ecological benefits. Cooperation with local communities, developers and partners will form a key element of the project, in order to identify an appropriate location (as well as securing sufficient funding). A spatial framework should be developed, to ensure connectivity between existing greenspaces and landscape features. A combination of funds from public, private and charitable sectors will likely be required to deliver a greenspace of this scale.

Key elements of the project:

- Develop a spatial framework to provide a starting point for the exploration of opportunities with stakeholders and local communities to contribute to the delivery of the wider neighbourhood scale greenspace.
- Formulate a boundary for the wider-neighbourhood greenspace based on an analysis of existing greenspaces, access to residential neighbourhoods, key landscape features and ecological networks.
- Establish a working group to aid the strategic identification of landowners and developers willing to collaborate.
- Undertake comprehensive engagement with landowners, stakeholders, the local community and potential delivery partners to generate support for the project and the opportunities identified.

Next steps

- Establish a spatial framework to identify potential opportunities and priority areas for the development of the wider-neighbourhood scale greenspace.
- Explore new finance models to fund the delivery of some of the elements.
- Deliver early pilot projects to generate momentum around the delivery of the new greenspace, delivering quick win benefits, whilst also testing potential funding mechanisms.

2b. Enhance tree and hedgerow planting to address habitat fragmentation , whilst also helping to mitigate noise pollution associated with the corridors of the A418, A4129 and A329



Hedgerow planting along the Oxfordshire Way

Description

6.14 Introduction of new tree and hedgerow planting (including supplementation, where required) along the A418, A4129 and A329 within Thame. Works to be undertaken during the bare-root planting season, using appropriate species selection to promote climate resilience.

Key elements of the project:

- Strategic planting of trees and hedgerow within agricultural land and wooded areas to improve habitat connectivity and mitigate the effects of noise pollution, particularly in areas visible from the settlement edge. The proposals should target locations where vegetation cover is minimal and / or loss is evident, subject to the results of a site survey. Consider potential synergies with the proposed use of GI to mitigate air pollution, as outlined within the South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District Councils Aire Quality Action Plan.
- Hedgerow establishment and supplementation bordering the PRoW network connecting northern Thame to the wider countryside.
- Encourage a varied age range of planting to ensure arrange of developmental stages, including young (1.5 – 4.0m tall) and middle aged (4.0-10.0m tall) tree belts for more effective noise control.

Next steps

- Feasibility and ecological surveys should be undertaken to ascertain areas best suited for the intervention, including appropriate species selection. This should include the extent and condition of existing hedgerows.
- Identify landholders and commercial partners and engage with potential stakeholders.
- Whilst the project is small scale, consideration should be given to whether any permissions or consents should be acquired.
- A management / maintenance plan (60 months) should be prepared to promote successful establishment.

2c. Enhance habitat connectivity through the strategic expansion of riparian woodlands along Cuttle Brook and Haseley Brook



Woodland bordering Cuttle Brook

Description

6.15 The project proposes the expansion of riparian woodlands along the banks of the Cuttle Brook / Haseley Brook, involving the introduction of climate-resilient tree species. Low-lying locations within the Cuttle Brook corridor that naturally accumulate water will also be targeted for wetland creation. Existing wetlands within this corridor should also be restored through the control of invasive species and reintroduction of semi-natural vegetation to enhance their ecological function. Upstream, the project should implement NFM Techniques in

partnership with land owners. Measures such as the restoration of natural meanders in the watercourse should be explored to slow water flow, reduce peak flood levels, and enhance groundwater recharge. These interventions will be strategically placed to mitigate flood risks, whilst improving the overall resilience of the hydrological system.

Key elements of the project:

- Collaboration with local landowners for upstream NFM interventions.
- Creation of woodland linkages to promote ecological networks, as per future Local Nature Recovery Strategy mapping.
- Expansion of riparian woodlands along the Cuttle Brook / Haseley Brook.
- Creation and restoration of wetlands in key low-lying areas.
- Introduction of climate resilient species.

Next steps

- Undertake engagement with key stakeholders, including local landowners and environmental groups, to secure commitments for riparian restoration and woodland expansion.
- Detailed ecological assessments of the Cuttle Brook / Haseley Brook corridors should identify priority areas for woodland planting and wetland creation. The project team should work with partners to design and implement NFM measures upstream.
- Funding applications should be developed in parallel. Public engagement and consultation will also be required to ensure buy-in from the local community and support the project’s goals and activities.

GI Priority Area 03: Corallian Ridge

Proposed key GI projects

3a. Introduce surfacing and interpretation improvements along existing PRoW radiating from the settlement edge of Faringdon to promote improved linkages to the wider countryside



The Vale Way to the east of Faringdon

Description

6.16 This project will involve a series of enhancements to the PRoW network which connect Faringdon to smaller settlements and the surrounding rural landscape. Key improvements will relate to the clear demarcation of PRoW along the settlement periphery, providing adequate 'gateways' to increase the legibility of footbath entrances. Surfacing along PRoW will require improvements and maintenance particularly in areas of poor drainage or heavy traffic, to ensure continued access and ease of use. Where PRoW cross roadways, particularly the A420, the improvement of crossings with lighting or updated surfacing and markings will increase safety.

Key elements of the project:

- Improved wayfinding elements along PRoW networks.
- Introduction of accessible gates or stiles along PRoW, ensuring safe and improved construction, and bordering vegetation does not encroach.
- Improved surfacing at points experiencing high foot traffic, with drainage mitigation in locations experiencing frequent standing water.
- Clearly marked PRoW at all roadway crossings, and roadway markings or signs to alert drivers of crossing location.

Next steps

- Engage with the local community to establish buy-in and identify priority rotes for intervention.
- Conduct outreach efforts to local landowners and farmers to understand land use and current maintenance regimes where PRoW cross private land.
- Establish appropriate funding sources.

3b. Mitigate air and noise pollution, whilst also reducing the impact of the barrier caused by the A420 corridor through tree planting and appropriately sited GI interventions

Description

6.17 The A420 is a major road corridor forming the southern extent of Faringdon, with associated noise pollution affecting the surrounding land use. Areas of woodland within the priority area are concentrated at Tubney, west and north west Gainfield, and north and east Pusey, with smaller pockets of wooded area at irregular intervals throughout the predominantly arable landscape. Due to the contrastingly low tree cover within the expansive agricultural fields and bordering the A420, woodlands associated with the Corallian Ridge are largely fragmented. Strategic tree and shrub planting proposals should aim to improve habitat connectivity in the wider landscape and help mitigate the effects of noise pollution due to the A420 corridor.

Key elements of the project:

- Strategic planting of trees and hedgerow within agricultural land and wooded areas to improve habitat connectivity and mitigate the effects of noise pollution, particularly in areas visible from the settlement edge. The proposals should target locations where vegetation cover is minimal and / or loss is evident, subject to the results of a site survey. Consider potential synergies with the proposed use of GI to mitigate air pollution, as outlined within the South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District Councils Air Quality Action Plan.
- Promote a varied age range of planting to ensure arrange of developmental stages, including young (1.5 – 4.0m tall) and middle aged (4.0-10.0m tall) tree belts for more effective noise control.

Next steps

- Identify landholders / commercial partners and engage with potential stakeholders.
- Seek advice as to whether any permissions or consents should be acquired.
- Undertake feasibility and ecological surveys of the area to determine areas and species best suited to the various interventions, including appropriate species selection. This should include the extent and condition of existing woodland and tree species.
- A management / maintenance plan (60 months) should be prepared to promote successful establishment.

3c. Restore and enhance green corridors and watercourses located in the recovery zone of the draft nature recovery network (future Local Nature Recovery Strategy)



Woodland cover at Badbury Hill

Description

6.18 The project will seek to enhance ecological connectivity and improve water quality, whilst facilitating public access through the restoration and enhancement of green corridors located in the recovery zone of the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This initiative will target specific areas within the

nature recovery network that are currently fragmented or degraded. Potential interventions include the restoration of degraded riverbanks with semi-natural vegetation, habitat enhancements for aquatic and riparian species and the integration of carefully designed access networks to accommodate public access. The potential exists to deliver the project in partnership with the Ock Catchment Partnership, working together to implement catchment-based solutions. This partnership is essential to leverage national and regional, more coarse mapping, with local knowledge and local data, in order to identify priority projects within the larger zones identified by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Key elements of the project:

- Ongoing collaboration with Ock Catchment Partnership to ensure existing green corridors which are currently fragmented or degraded are prioritised for delivery.
- Restoration of degraded riverbanks with native vegetation in strategic sites with the most potential to improve habitat connectivity.
- Introduction of educational signage along green corridors to raise awareness of local biodiversity.
- Integration of public access with secluded zones for biodiversity protection.

Next steps

- Undertake engagement with the Ock Catchment Partnership to finalise priority areas for restoration and promote data integration between national and local sources.
- Ecological assessments should be conducted along the river corridors to identify specific sites for replanting and habitat restoration.
- Funding applications should be prepared, targeting Local Nature Recovery Strategy and environmental grants.

GI Priority Area 04: Central Thames Valley

Proposed key GI projects

4a. Address the deficiency in 'district' greenspace to the north, east or south east of Didcot through the creation of a new accessible greenspace



Elevated view from Wittenham Clumps

Description

6.19 The creation of a new district (at least 100 hectares) scale greenspace will aim to address deficiencies in access to larger greenspace at the north, east and south east of Didcot. Multi-functional in scope, this large accessible greenspace will deliver a range of facilities offering recreational, ecological, landscape and cultural benefits. A key element of the vision will involve working with partners to promote connectivity and cooperation at the landscape scale, as part of the wider spatial framework for the site. A range of financial mechanisms should be explored and adopted to incentivise land managers to provide these benefits alongside sustainable agriculture, ensuring sufficient space for people and nature. A combination of funds from public, private and charitable sectors will likely be required to deliver a greenspace of this scale.

Key elements of the project:

- Develop a spatial framework to provide a starting point for the exploration of opportunities with stakeholders and local communities to contribute to the delivery of the district scale greenspace.
- Formulate a boundary for the greenspace based on an analysis of key landscape features and ecological networks.
- Establish a working group to aid the strategic identification of landowners and developers willing to collaborate.
- Produce a draft vision and set of objectives for the development of the district scale greenspace to promote stakeholder and community ‘buy-in’.
- Undertake comprehensive engagement with landowners, stakeholders, the local community and potential delivery partners to generate support for the project and the opportunities identified.
- Develop and assess governance models to provide strategic direction for the delivery of the district greenspace’s vision and objectives.

Next steps

- Establish the spatial framework to identify potential opportunities and priority areas for the development of the district scale greenspace.
- Deliver early pilot projects to generate momentum around the delivery of the sub-regional / district scale greenspace, delivering quick win benefits, whilst also testing potential funding mechanisms.
- Explore new finance models to fund the delivery of some of the elements.

4b. Strengthen ecological connectivity and resilience through riparian restoration and the development of green corridors along key watercourses (including the River Thames, Abbey Stream, River Ock and the floodplain of Moor Ditch in Didcot)



Thames Path National Trail along Culham Cut

Description

6.20 The initiative seeks to strengthen ecological connectivity and resilience through the introduction of riparian restoration and the development of green corridors. Specific emphasis should be placed on key watercourses, including the River Thames, Abbey Stream, and the Ock Valley River in Abingdon-on-Thames, as well as the floodplain of Moor Ditch in Didcot. The project will seek to prioritise the enhancement of riparian buffers through the planting of semi-natural climate-resilient vegetation, with the aim of improving water quality, reducing flood risks, and improving habitat connectivity. The opportunity also exists to create and enhance green corridors, particularly within areas of low ecological connectivity in Didcot and Abingdon-on-Thames.

Key elements of the project:

- Riparian corridor restoration along key watercourses and planting of semi-natural climate-resilient vegetation.
- Development of green corridors to connect fragmented habitats.
- Integration of SuDS and nature-based solutions for flood management.

Next steps

- Initiate engagement with the South Chilterns Catchment Partnership and local authorities to finalise priority areas for riparian restoration and habitat connectivity.
- Ecological surveys should be conducted along key watercourses to identify areas most in need of intervention.
- Public consultations should be carried out to ensure community input, particularly around access improvements and recreational opportunities.
- Funding applications targeting nature-based solutions should be developed, and partnerships with local stakeholders strengthened to ensure alignment with broader catchment management goals.

4c. Introduce a programme of future tree planting to address disparities in tree coverage within Abingdon-on-Thames, Milton Park and Didcot

Description

6.21 Introduce street tree planting to soften the existing public realm within Abingdon-on-Thames, Milton Park and Didcot. This intervention will deliver a positive contribution to townscape character, whilst also delivering a suite of environmental and health and well-being benefits. Working in conjunction with residents to encourage community ownership, locations for new street tree planting should be identified. A hierarchy of trees should be established, for example, principal tree lined streets, streets with trees incorporated within parking nodes and streets with trees to frame views.

Key elements of the project:

- Implementation of tree planting to increase canopy cover in the urban settings of Abingdon-on-Thames, Milton Park and Didcot which fall within lower socio-economic deciles. The aspirations of the Oxford Urban Forest Strategy (2050) and Oxfordshire County Council's Tree Policy should be reflected in the proposals.
- Where space permits, incidental seating, raised planters and linear rain gardens should also be delivered to create community parklets.
- Consideration should be given to the implementation of a replenishment programme to address the diminished tree stock in the settlements.

Next steps

- A feasibility study should be undertaken to determine areas and species best suited to the various interventions.

- Initiate engagement with residents and community groups to identify locations for tree planting and the selection of appropriate species.

GI Priority Area 05: Upper Slopes and Wessex Downs Scarp

Proposed key GI projects

5a. Restore the floodplain and riparian buffer along the Letcombe Brook to enhance habitat connectivity along this chalk stream, identified as a target area within the draft nature recovery network mapping

Description

6.22 The project will include targeted planting of a diverse mixture of climate-resilient species along the banks of Letcombe Brook; specifically chosen to enhance habitat complexity, support local wildlife, and improve water retention. The expanded and / or improved buffers will help filter runoff, reduce sedimentation, and lower nutrient loads entering the brook, thereby improving water quality which is currently under poor condition (as described by the WFD River, Canal and SWT Waterbody Classifications). This intervention will act to reconnect the brook with its floodplain, create a mosaic of wetland habitats, provide habitats for aquatic and terrestrial species as well as provide a natural flood attenuation system.

6.23 The potential exists for the project to be delivered in partnership with the Ock Catchment Partnership to implement catchment-based solutions. This partnership is essential to integrate coarse mapping such as the WWNP, with local knowledge and local data, in order to identify priority projects within the larger zones identified by the Nature Recovery Network.

Key elements of the project:

- Riparian buffer zone expansion with native, climate-resilient vegetation.
- Restoration of floodplain habitats in Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- Improved water quality through reduced runoff and sedimentation.
- Creation of diverse wetland habitats for wildlife.
- Enhanced natural flood management through floodplain reconnection; and
- Collaboration with Ock Catchment Partnership for the delivery of catchment-based solutions.

Next steps

- Engagement with the Ock Catchment Partnership to identify priority areas for riparian and floodplain restoration.
- Ecological surveys should be conducted along Letcombe Brook to assess current conditions and inform the design approach.
- Local landowners, such as floodplain owners, farmers, and stakeholders should be consulted to secure support for tree planting and floodplain reconnection.
- Public engagement will also be required to raise awareness of the project's goals and encourage community involvement in restoration activities.
- Funding applications should be developed, targeting nature-based solutions grants.
- Pilot areas for riparian buffer planting should be identified and initiated once funding and approvals are secured.

5b. Enhance east-west linkages by addressing fragmentation of the PRoW network along the corridor of the A338



PRoW leading from the A338

Description

6.24 Through a series of enhancements, this project aims to create additional east-west PRoW connections across the A338. Key interventions will involve the creation of new connections and enhanced crossing points across the road corridor. The existing towpath along the Wilts & Berks Canal, which crosses between Grove and Wantage, will require improved wayfinding and surfacing interventions. The opportunity also exists to extend the route, in collaboration with ongoing canal restoration works.

Key elements of the project:

- Enhancement of the existing towpath along the disused Wilts & Berks Canal, with improved wayfinding, surfacing, and traffic calming measures and signage where it crosses key road corridors.
- Extension of footpaths in instances where they currently terminate at the A388, particularly where opportunities arise to create new footpaths along existing greenspaces.
- Implementation of interventions to improve safety for pedestrians where PRoW lie in close proximity to key road corridors.
- Use of traffic calming elements where existing PRoW are fragmented by the A388.

Next steps

- A feasibility study should be undertaken to assess potential route options.
- Seek advice as to whether any permissions or consents should be acquired.
- Consult with local communities to determine buy-in and gain understanding of where footpath connections and improvements are most required.
- Engage with key landowners, local organisations and community groups to seek potential partner organisations.

5c. Support PRoW improvements that enhance connectivity and promote sustainable access to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape from Wantage and surrounding communities



Cornhill Lane byway

Description

6.25 This project aims to improve the connectivity of PRoW across Wantage and surrounding communities to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Wayfinding improvements, enhancements to the existing PRoW network and the introduction of new cohesive routes should be considered as mechanisms to address fragmentation. Interventions should aim to promote sustainable access to the wider countryside.

Key elements of the project:

- Enhancement of existing routes, with installation of wayfinding and educational signage to provide clearly defined paths; and
- Extension of existing PRoW and the creation of new routes where gaps in continuity occur, to allow uninterrupted passage and increased access that is well-defined and clear to understand.

Next steps

- Commission a feasibility study and consult with local communities to determine buy-in and gain understanding of where PRoW improvements should be prioritised.
- Seek advice as to whether any permissions or consents should be acquired.
- Conduct surveys to assess current recreational pressures across the landscape.
- Engage with local wildlife organisations and community groups to seek potential partner organisations.
- Prepare a code of conduct and public access management plan.

GI Priority Area 06: Chalk Escarpment and Foothills

Proposed key GI projects

6a. Introduce localised improvements to the network of PRoW around Wallingford, including a new multi-user route following the approximate alignment of the A4130 and Sires Hill



Thames Path National Trail at Wallingford

Description

6.26 This project seeks to improve the connectivity and opportunities for active travel in Wallingford and the surrounding landscape. This should incorporate improved connections from near Crowmarsh towards Benson and onwards to Oakley Wood, increasing linkages to the eastern edge of Didcot, as well as to the south east towards Ipsden. With most of these locations occurring within the Chiltern Hills National Landscape, sufficient efforts to protect sensitive habitats found along these routes should be undertaken.

6.27 Educational signage as well as habitat buffers (where required) should also be installed, forming widened green corridors through the landscape. To increase active travel between Wallingford and the surrounding communities, a multi-user route following the alignment of the A4130 should be developed. The A4130 roughly forms a loop around Wallingford, and intersects with numerous PRoW, as well as National Cycle Network (NCN) route 5, and allocation sites at the south western edge of Wallingford.

Key elements of the project:

- Creation of a multi-user route which broadly aligns with the A4130, affording active travel opportunities for residents, visitors, and commuters in a loop around Wallingford.
- Enhancement of existing routes, with installation of educational signage and clearly demarcated paths, to prevent harm to sensitive habitats in the surrounding landscape.
- Extension of PRoW where gaps in continuity occur, to allow uninterrupted passage and increased access that is well-defined and clear to understand.
- As determined by surveys and consultee feedback, creation of additional habitat buffer zones alongside PRoW, to provide increased protection to sensitive habitats.

- Use of cohesive paving or surfacing materials, particularly at crossing points, to improve perception of continuity along PRoW.

Next steps

- Engage with local landowners and community groups, to gauge interest and partnership opportunities.
- Conduct surveys to assess current recreational pressures across the landscape and determine priority focus areas.
- Determine buy-in from local communities.
- Prepare a code of conduct and public access management plan.
- A public access management plan should be developed, alongside the preparation of funding applications to support restoration efforts.

6b. Utilise GI to enhance ecological connectivity along the River Thames at the eastern extent of Wallingford



Land bordering the River Thames at the eastern extent of Wallingford

Description

6.28 The project will involve the restoration of riparian buffers zones along the River Thames to enhance water quality and deliver habitat enhancements. These buffers should be planted with climate-resilient species that support local biodiversity and contribute to the overall ecological health of the river corridor. The creation of green corridors that connect the riparian zones with ancient

woodlands to the south will ensure that wildlife can move freely between these habitats.

6.29 Access management strategies along the Thames Path National Trail and other PROWs that traverse sensitive riparian habitats will ensure the balance is maintained between recreation and biodiversity. This may include designating specific areas for controlled public access and developing infrastructure, such as boardwalks or viewing platforms, to minimise disturbance for particularly sensitive habitats.

6.30 The WWNP Floodplain Woodland Potential and Floodplain Reconnection Potential can guide, at a high level, priority zones for the restoration. However, this is a nation-wide dataset with coarse granularity, and specific interventions should be complemented with local and expert knowledge. To this end, working with the South Chilterns Catchment Partnership will prove beneficial.

Key elements of the project:

- Development of green corridors linking riparian habitats with ancient woodlands.
- Restoration of riparian buffer zones with climate-resilient species.
- Implementation of access management strategies along the Thames Path National Trail.
- Introduction of infrastructure improvements to minimise habitat disturbance.
- Collaboration with South Chilterns Catchment Partnership.

Next steps

- Engage with the South Chilterns Catchment Partnership to identify priority areas for riparian restoration and green corridor development.
- Undertake ecological assessments of the River Thames corridor to inform the selection of sites for planting and habitat connectivity improvements.

- Initiate public consultations to balance recreational use with habitat protection, and specific access management strategies developed.
- Prepare funding applications to secure resources from nature-based solutions programmes.
- Pilot projects for riparian restoration and floodplain reconnection should be initiated once ecological assessments and funding are in place.

6c. Introduce a SSSI access management initiative and strategic access framework to manage visitor pressure whilst protecting sensitive habitats

Description

6.31 This project seeks to mitigate recreational pressures across the northern edge of the Chiltern Hills, protecting SSSI and other sensitive habitats whilst continuing to provide access for the public. A balance between nature recovery and controlled access should be a key component of the management framework, with regular updates responding to changing conditions in the landscape, and communicated clearly to the public. A zoning approach should be used to identify separate areas for potentially conflicting recreational activities, drawing locals and visitors away from ecologically sensitive sites.

Key elements of the project:

- Preparation of a comprehensive access strategy which is regularly updated and communicated to the public.
- Development of a management access framework, using a zoning strategy which designates areas for specific activities and monitors visitor use and numbers.
- Introduction of routes which help the public avoid direct conflict or interaction with sensitive habitats and species, such as elevated boardwalks, guardrails, seating, or viewing platforms.
- Development of options for alternative recreational areas.

Next steps

- Conduct surveys, identifying popular destinations and footpaths, and thus priority areas of focus.
- Undertake ecological assessments of the targeted areas and adjoining PRoW, ensuring alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives.
- Engage with key stakeholders, including the Chiltern Conservation Board and Environment Agency.
- Undertake public consultation to ensure the access framework reflects local needs, whilst protecting sensitive habitats.

GI Priority Area 07: Chilterns Wooded Plateau

Proposed key GI projects

7a. Establish a new woodland corridor to enhance habitat connectivity between ancient woodlands, whilst also managing visitor access to ensure nature recovery and sustainable public access



Bones Wood

Description

6.32 The project seeks to create a strategic woodland corridor, with the aim of improving ecological connectivity and strengthening the resilience of local ecosystems. The intervention should restore habitats through reforestation, enhancement of understorey vegetation, and removal of invasive species.

6.33 Buffer zones should be created around sensitive habitats to afford protection from external pressures, whilst targeted habitat restoration efforts should deliver enhancements to the ecological function of the corridor. Public access should be carefully managed through the enhancement of existing PROW network, with limited, well-defined trails guiding visitors and protecting the most sensitive areas. Educational signage should be installed to inform the public about the importance of the corridor for local wildlife.

Key elements of the project:

- Creation of buffer zones around sensitive areas.
- Access management with designated trails and educational signage.
- Woodland restoration and invasive species removal at strategic sites.
- Enhancement of understorey vegetation for biodiversity.

Next steps

- Initiate engagement with the Chilterns Conservation Board and the South Chilterns Catchment Partnership to propose areas for restoration.
- Detailed ecological surveys should be conducted to assess current habitat conditions and identify priority zones for reforestation and invasive species removal.
- A public access management plan should be developed, alongside the preparation of funding applications to support restoration efforts.

- Community engagement should be undertaken to gather input on access routes and promote public awareness of the project's environmental benefits.

7b. Enhance flood resilience within the southern extent of Henley-on-Thames through the integration of SuDS with nature recovery efforts



River Thames to the south east of Henley-on-Thames

Description

6.34 The project aims to enhance flood resilience and promote biodiversity through two distinct but complementary approaches. Firstly, the project will focus on reducing flood risk from the River Thames by restoring riparian

habitats and improving floodplain management. Secondly, the project will address urban flooding caused by poorly designed drainage systems through the implementation of retrofit SuDS features. These features, such as permeable pavements, rain gardens, and green roofs, should be installed in urban areas prone to surface water flooding. By implementing SuDS features, such as rain gardens and wetlands, the project will intercept stormwater and reduce downstream flood risks. Tackling flood risk from both river flooding and urban drainage issues, this project should ensure a comprehensive approach to flood resilience, whilst also supporting nature recovery goals through habitat restoration.

Key elements of the project:

- Ongoing collaboration with the Environment Agency and other potential delivery partners to target and deliver SuDS interventions.
- Installation of SuDS features that also have the potential to enhance biodiversity (e.g. rain gardens).
- Introduction of riparian habitat restoration along the River Thames.
- Conversion of low-lying areas into wetlands or water meadows.
- Alignment with Local Nature Recovery Strategy and regional flood resilience strategies.

Next steps:

- Initiate collaboration with the Environment Agency, South Chilterns Catchment Partnership and local authorities to identify priority areas for floodplain restoration and retrofit SuDS installation.
- Undertake detailed hydrological and ecological assessments to guide the selection of areas for riparian restoration and wetland creation.
- Initiate public engagement to promote community involvement in the project, particularly in relation to urban SuDS installations.

- Prepare funding applications, targeting SuDS and nature-based solutions funding streams.
- Pilot areas for SuDS and riparian restoration should be initiated once planning and funding approvals are secured.

7c. Expand the network of doorstep (at least 0.5 hectares in size) greenspaces within residential areas of Henley-on-Thames with the aim of improving access to greenspace within five minutes' walk from home

Description

6.35 This project involves a series of enhancements to the network of open spaces within Henley-on-Thames, providing additional small-scale greenspaces for residents. Given the limited availability of land, additional greenspaces will likely take the form of 'pocket parks', providing a sense of enhanced greenspace in the constrained setting. The intervention should involve the identification of small unused areas within residential neighbourhoods for public amenity space, the conversion of existing uses to greenspace, or the enhancement of existing greenspaces to promote multi-functionality to increase the network of greenspaces.

Key elements of the project:

- Identification of suitable options for greenspace enhancements embedded within residential neighbourhoods, in collaboration with the local community.
- Provision of additional planting for privacy and interest, using a cohesive localised palette, as well as street furniture, where appropriate.
- Improved streetscape setting, encouraging increased pedestrian and multi-modal use of the streetscape.
- Incorporation of SuDS elements where appropriate, integrated into roadway verges, mitigating surface flood risk and increasing local biodiversity.

Next steps

- Engage with the local communities, assessing interest and local buy-in.
- Undertake a feasibility study to identify potential sites and areas of focus across the neighbourhoods, identifying a range of project options for further public and stakeholder consultation.
- Prepare a landscape masterplan outlining the strategic approach and proposed project phasing.

Chapter 7

Evaluation and setting of Headline Standards

7.1 This chapter evaluates the current approach within the districts regarding the five Headline Standards included within the NEGIF. These include:

- The Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard;
- The Accessible Greenspace Standard;
- The Urban Nature Recovery Standard;
- The Urban Greening Factor Standard; and
- The Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard.

7.2 All of the GI standards are divided into an area-wide standard and a major development standard.

7.3 Whilst none of these are currently adopted by the districts, some existing policies are in place which achieve the same or similar objectives. Understanding what is currently in place will help in assessing whether adopting each of the standards would bring additional benefit in the delivery, quality and multi-functionality of GI. A review of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2035, the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 and any associated supplementary planning guidance has been carried out to establish the current approach for each of the standards.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard

7.4 Working together with the other four standards, this standard aims to ensure that GI is assessed and strategically planned across a local authority area and within new development:

- The area-wide standard sets out that local authorities, working in partnership with stakeholders and local communities, should assess and strategically plan their GI provision, through the production of a GI Strategy. The GI Strategy should set a vision and objectives for GI in the area and local authorities should set SMART targets in a supplementary Delivery Plan to the GI Strategy which aim to achieve the GI Framework Standards and local policies over time. This includes ensuring arrangements are in place for the long-term management and maintenance of all GI. The local authority should plan, monitor and evaluate progress against the delivery of these targets every five years **[See reference 62]**.
- The GI Strategy Standard for major development advises that each new major development has a GI Plan. This could be a standalone document or be provided as part of a Design and Access Statement. The GI Plan should set out how the development will deliver the GI Principles and GI standards which have been adopted in local policies / local design codes. The plan should set out how GI delivered within major new developments will be managed, maintained and monitored for a minimum of 30 years **[See reference 63]**.

Current approach based on adopted Local Plans

7.5 The 2017 GI Strategy sets out a strategic vision for GI across the two districts. Each Local Plan contains policy which sets out that GI should be delivered in accordance with the GI Strategy. The ongoing review and update to

the 2017 Strategy seeks to ensure that it is up to date and integrates other GI standards, as appropriate.

7.6 With regard to major development, Policy ENV5 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 sets out expectations for GI provision within new development.

7.7 Policy STRAT4: Strategic Development sets the requirement for new development within strategic allocations and for large scale major development. It states that each development will be expected to provide a Landscape Management Plan to provide appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of GI. Similarly, Core Policy 34: 'Green Infrastructure' of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan states that all major applications must be accompanied by a statement demonstrating that they have 'taken into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing GI and how this will be retained and enhanced'.

7.8 Core Policy 38: 'Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites' sets the requirement for housing allocations and major development sites to be accompanied by a site-wide design strategy which includes a masterplan incorporating GI provision and GI framework for open space provision.

7.9 Whilst both districts have existing requirements for GI documentation to be provided within strategic and major development planning applications, there is no existing requirement for applicants to demonstrate assurance of GI management, maintenance and monitoring for at least 30 years.

Recommendations

Adoption of an area wide standard

7.10 The publication of this updated Strategy establishes a vision and strategic objectives for GI across the districts based on analysis of the existing network

and local needs. The Councils should evaluate progress against the delivery of the action plan and wider targets set out within this Strategy every five years. The Strategy should be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is kept up to date and in accordance with local priorities and context over time. Monitoring and evaluation should also be undertaken to ensure processes are in place are effective for the long-term governance, management and maintenance of GI.

Adoption of a major development standard

7.11 The Councils should incorporate the requirement for the provision of a GI Plan as part of a planning application for any major development proposal. This could be provided as a standalone document or be provided as part of a Design and Access Statement. The GI Plan should contain the following information:

- How the development proposal will meet the 15 GI Principles of the NEGIF (see **Introduction**);
- How the development proposal meets the Headline Standards which have been adopted by the districts;
- How the major development proposals align with this Strategy; and
- A management and maintenance plan which sets out how the multi-functional benefits of GI in development will be secured for at least 30 years.

Accessible Greenspace Standard

Current approach based on adopted Local Plans

7.12 The 2017 GI Strategy sets out the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) adopted within the Local Plans for the districts, forming the predecessor to the AGS outlined in the NEGIF. Adopted quantity, accessibility and quality standards for parks & gardens, amenity greenspace, children's play

and provision for young people and allotments are also outlined in the previous open space strategies for the districts.

Recommendations

7.13 Standards have been set for the quantity, quality and accessibility of three typologies of open space:

- Accessible greenspace (to include parks and gardens (or recreation grounds), natural greenspace and amenity greenspace);
- Provision for children and teenagers; and
- Community growing spaces (including allotments).

7.14 The quantity standard should be scaled to reflect the anticipated population increase of the development. Where a development incurs a population increase of less than 1,000 people, provision of open space should be calculated on a pro-rata basis. On site provision of open space should be provided in the first instance.

7.15 Whilst the access buffers provided refer to straight-line distances, the actual walking / cycle distances should be considered in design. Development should be planned to offer safe, attractive walking or cycling routes where possible. Greenspaces with access catchments of 1km or more should provide cycle parking and disabled car parking.

Quantity standard

7.16 Major development should provide the equivalent of at least 3 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population for new development, in accordance with the standards set out in the NEGIF.

7.17 Accessible greenspace should be multifunctional, including elements of natural greenspace, amenity greenspace and opportunities for formal and informal recreation to suit the needs of the local context. As a guideline, the provision should include:

- A third of greenspace with characteristics of parks and gardens, including paths, seating, and planting;
- A third of greenspace comprising of accessible biodiverse, naturalistic habitats such as woodland, wetland and wildflowers meadows; and
- A third of greenspace comprising useable amenity space, offering opportunities for informal games or run-around and dog-walking.

Quality standard

7.18 Greenspace should follow the guidance set out in the Green Flag Criteria **[See reference 64]**. This includes provision of welcoming, safe and well-maintained open spaces. Greenspace should be designed to be inclusive for all, taking account of the guidance set out in the Safer Parks guidance **[See reference 65]**. Furthermore, greenspace should maximise environmental and ecological benefits, including biodiversity enhancements and opportunities for shading and water storage.

7.19 Design of new greenspaces should ensure that different uses within sites do not conflict.

Accessibility standard

7.20 Hierarchies of greenspace should be accessible within varying access catchments. These access buffers are shown in **Table 7.1.**

7.21 Major development should ensure that new open space is accessible to all residential properties and employment areas. The development (including areas of employment) should have access to:

- A neighbourhood accessible greenspace, if it is of sufficient size to deliver this scale of site (i.e. expected population of over 3,100); **and**
- A local, doorstep **or** pocket accessible greenspace.

Table 7.1: Accessible greenspace access catchments

Hierarchy	Minimum size (hectares)	Access catchment (metres)
District	100	5,000
Wider neighbourhood	20	2,000
Neighbourhood	10	1,000
Local	2	300
Doorstep	0.5	200
Pocket	0.01	100

Additional contribution for district greenspace

7.22 Provision of new accessible greenspace is based on the concept of no-net loss. Currently, the districts contain 16.02 hectares of accessible greenspace per 1,000 of the population. Provision of an additional 16.02 hectares for every 1,000 of the future population would not be viable. Therefore a lower standard has been set for new development. However, to help mitigate for the decrease in overall provision, new development within the access buffer of wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) or district scale (at least 100 hectares) greenspace should also contribute to enhancement of these greenspaces. This will allow these spaces to accommodate the uplift in visits and number of users as a result of new development. Where development does not fall within access to an existing greenspace of this scale, contribution to new large accessible greenspace projects (see **Chapter 6**) or improvements to the adjacent PRoW network should be considered.

Provision for children and teenagers

Quantity standard

7.23 New development should provide 0.55 hectares of provision for children and teenager per 1,000 of the population. Where development is large enough to provide the full 0.55 hectares of provision, this should include 0.25 hectares of equipped play and 0.3 hectares of teenage provision per 1,000 of the population. Where play provision is delivered within accessible greenspace, this space can contribute to both the 3 hectares of accessible greenspace standard and the provision for children and teenagers standard.

7.24 Guidance for the type of play provision in line with the development size is shown in **Table 7.2**. Nearby provision of existing play facilities should be considered and, where appropriate, alternative play types to those shown in **Table 7.2** may be provided.

Table 7.2: Play access thresholds per development size

Scale of development	LAP (at least 0.01 hectares)	LEAP	NEAP	Teen contribution
5-10 dwellings	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A
10 – 200 dwellings	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
102- 500 dwellings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
501+ dwellings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Quality standard

7.25 Provision for children and teenagers should be designed with consideration of the guidance set out in Play England's Design for Play guide **[See reference 66]**. Play spaces should include a variety of spaces to suit all needs, including sensory play and equipment designed for those with disabilities. Reference should also be made to the Joint Design Guide **[See reference 67]** to ensure the provision of a diverse range of safe and inclusive play areas and youth provision that meets the needs of the community.

7.26 Teenage provision should also consider alternatives to traditional sport-based facilities. In accordance with the Joint Design Guide, this could include natural, incidental and nature-based play, offering adequate shade, planting and seating to promote active and social play. Guidance from Making Space for Girls **[See reference 68]** should be considered for planning, designing and implementing teenage provision.

Accessibility standard

7.27 The access catchments for play spaces are shown in **Table 7.3**. Play provision should be sited within the development so the whole development is within access to at least one type of provision for children and teenagers.

Table 7.3: Provision for children and teenagers access catchments

Hierarchy	Buffer size (m)
Local Area of Play (LAP)	100
Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)	1,000

Hierarchy	Buffer size (m)
Teen provision	700

Provision of community growing spaces (including allotments)

Quantity standard

7.28 Major development should provide 0.4 hectares of community growing space per 1,000 of the population. This provision can contribute to both the 3 hectares accessible greenspace standard and the provision for children and teenagers standard.

7.29 Where community growing space is delivered within accessible greenspace and fully open to the public, this space can contribute to both the 3 hectares accessible greenspace standard and the community growing space standard.

Quality standard

7.30 Community growing spaces and allotments should be high quality, offering sustainable growing spaces and support biodiversity. The National Allotment Society provide a wealth of guidance relating to wildlife enhancements, sustainable management of water, health and safety, and soil health **[See reference 69]**. Management arrangements for the ongoing maintenance and appropriate use of growing spaces should be agreed prior to creation of a new space.

Access standard

7.31 New development should be within 1 km of allotments or a community growing space.

Urban Nature Recovery Standard

7.32 This standard aims to increase the proportion of GI that is designed and managed for nature recovery:

- The area-wide standard sets out that in urban and urban fringe areas, local planning authorities are encouraged to set area-wide targets, for a percentage increase of GI that should be designed and managed for the purpose of urban nature recovery. The area-wide standard also includes targets for nature recovery through the provision and sustainable management of Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
- The major development standard requires developers to identify within GI Plans their contribution to nature recovery and the creation / restoration of wildlife-rich habitats which can contribute to the delivery of local nature recovery targets.

Current approach based on adopted Local Plans

7.33 Neither adopted Local Plan set a specific requirement for a quantitative % increase of GI that is designed and managed for urban / urban fringe nature recovery, however most of both districts are rural in character. There is also no requirement or target set in either Local Plan for an increase in the number of LNR / LWS through development. In South Oxfordshire, the adopted Local Plan Policy ENV3: Biodiversity, sets out the requirements for all proposals to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain using a recognised biodiversity metric.

7.34 Policy ENV5 sets the requirement for GI in new developments, including making contributions to gains in biodiversity. Core Policy 45 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan sets out that 'net gain in GI, including biodiversity, will be sought either through on-site provision of off-site contributions', and that a net loss will be resisted (p.141). At a national level, the mandatory requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain came into force in England in February 2024 and this will be implemented into the preparation of future local planning policy and guidance.

7.35 The 2017 GI Strategy sets out guiding principles for increasing biodiversity, including for enhancing the strategic GI network across the districts, settlement-specific GI opportunities and advice for delivering high-quality GI with ecological benefits.

Recommendations

7.36 The findings of the Strategy recommend that a major development standard is adopted. This would require developers to identify their contribution to nature recovery; including the creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats, within their GI Plan. Natural England states that to adopt this standard there is no requirement that an exact proportion is set and instead the requirement is on developers to clearly set out how GI will contribute to nature recovery. This should be done through the identification of opportunities drawing on the best available data on existing habitats and species. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be a key source of information which developers can draw upon to evidence their contribution to local priorities once this has been published.

7.37 The major development standard requires developers to explicitly identify and plan their contributions to nature recovery within their GI Plans. This includes their potential creation or enhancement, utilising local data and strategies such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This approach would be more specific than the general Biodiversity Net Gain requirement, which does not specify the location of gains.

Urban Greening Factor Standard

7.38 The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is a tool which aims to improve the delivery and provision of good quality GI. The UGF Standard offers the opportunity to enhance green cover within development through the adoption of the UGF standard, as outlined below:

- The area-wide UGF standard specifies that urban greening is at least 40% average green cover in urban residential neighbourhoods where they do not already meet that standard and that there is no net loss of green cover in urban neighbourhoods.
- The UGF for major development is calculated by assigning a score to all the surface cover types in a proposed development based on the ability of the GI measure to provide a variety of benefits, such as reducing storm water run-off.

7.39 The UGF for major development is calculated by assigning a score to all the surface cover types in a proposed development based on the ability of the GI intervention to provide multi-functional benefits. Each surface cover type has a weighting factor between 0.0 and 1.0 that is used to calculate the UGF score. The UGF is comprised of a menu of 22 surface cover types describing a range of GI interventions, structured around four key headings as outlined below:

- Vegetation and Tree Planting;
- Green Roofs and Walls;
- SuDS and Water Features; and
- Paved Surfaces.

7.40 Each surface cover type has a weighting factor between 0.0 and 1.0 that is used to calculate the UGF score.

7.41 The UGF surface cover types that score highly include retained or created semi-natural vegetation, trees, native hedgerow, orchards and allotments,

intensive and extensive green roofs, flower rich herbaceous planting, and rain gardens.

Current approach based on adopted Local Plans

7.42 There is no existing policy or guidance which sets a target for green cover in the districts and the UGF isn't currently incorporated into policy.

Recommendations

7.43 To test whether the adoption of a UGF policy within the Joint Local Plan would be beneficial to increase the amount and quality of greenspace provided in new development, UGF scores have been calculated for several consented schemes in the districts. Seven developments were selected for testing, covering a range of development types. This review assesses whether the model UGF target (0.4 for predominantly residential and 0.3 for predominantly commercial development types, as per the NEGIF) would have been achieved.

7.44 The UGF score was calculated using the Natural England UGF User Guide **[See reference 70]**. The scores for each of the developments are shown in **Table 7.4**.

Table 7.4: Calculated UGF scores for selected consented developments in the districts

Application reference	Type of development	Summary of development	Calculated UGF score
P23-V1024-FUL (Vale)	Small residential (4-9 units)	Erection of nine residential dwellings.	0.28
P23-V1883-FUL (Vale)	Small residential (4-9 units)	Demolition of existing gym and outbuildings. Erection of five residential dwellings and associated works.	0.42
P23-SO433-RM (South)	Medium residential (25-75 units)	Erection of 60 residential dwellings.	0.46
P23-V2881-FUL (Vale)	Medium residential (25-75 units)	Erection of 42 residential dwellings.	0.57
P14-V2061-RM (Vale)	Large residential (150-300 units)	Residential development comprising 195 dwellings.	0.46
P22-S3532-RM (South)	Large residential (150-300 units)	Residential development comprising 176 units.	0.58
P15-SO433-FUL (South)	Commercial	Orchard Shopping Centre, Didcot	0.12

7.45 The quantitative findings of the UGF analysis are provided in **Appendix J.**

7.46 The analysis concluded that five of the seven schemes achieved the UGF model target scores outlined in the NEGIF. Of the schemes assessed, only two (P23-V1024-FUL and P15-SO433-FUL) did not achieve the UGF model target scores recommended by Natural England.

7.47 The schemes that achieved the target UGF scores were reliant mostly on the incorporation of areas of existing greenspace, retained trees or areas of semi-natural habitat into the development boundary, rather than urban greening features such as green roofs, green walls or rain gardens. The potential therefore exists for future schemes to incorporate GI interventions that are

integral to the built form of proposed development to enhance urban greening. Whilst site design is not likely to be materially affected, the adoption of a UGF target score for major developments within policy would ensure developers give due consideration to the full suite of GI interventions.

7.48 As the findings of the UGF calculations demonstrates that the score is achievable within typical development types in the districts, we recommended that policies relating to major development in the Joint Local Plan should be expanded upon to incorporate urban greening. In accordance with the recommendations of the NEGIF, it is recommended that the model scores (0.4 for predominantly residential and 0.3 for predominantly commercial development types) are adopted as targets for major developments to ensure a proportionate approach. We would also recommend that any site specific GI requirements are highlighted in site allocation policies.

7.49 By utilising the simple metric and model scores outlined in the NEGIF, the UGF can help secure improvements in urban greening of sites whilst giving a degree of flexibility to the developer to devise an approach that is both site specific and responsive to local context. Flexibility should be built into the policy so that a lower score could be accepted if evidence can be provided that meeting the target score would impact viability.

Urban Tree Canopy Standard

7.50 The Urban Tree Canopy Standard aims to increase tree canopy cover in urban environments:

- The area-wide standard requires urban tree canopy cover to be increased by an agreed percentage based on a locally defined baseline and taking into account local needs, opportunities and constraints.
- The major development standard requires major residential and commercial development to be designed to meet these locally set targets within the development site. It also requires new and existing trees to be

incorporated into new developments and that all new streets are tree lined (as per existing requirements within NPPF).

7.51 A tree canopy standard recognises the wider range of ecosystem services which large canopied tree species can provide, and moves beyond a narrow focus on the overall number of trees within developments.

Current approach based on adopted Local Plans

7.52 There are no strategic policies which focus on delivering increased urban tree canopy cover in the districts. However, a large component of the land use within the districts is rural in nature. As set out previously in this chapter, both adopted Local Plans set out expectations for delivering net gain in GI and biodiversity within new developments, however a specific requirement or local standards for tree canopy cover is not included. Similarly, there is no existing local policy in either district which sets the requirement for all new streets to be tree-lined. Both Local Plans state that GI should be delivered in line with the GI Strategy. The 2017 GI Strategy sets out opportunities improving GI within the districts, including planting within new development to provide shade, cooling and wind interception. It does not set out specific quantitative requirements for tree canopy cover.

Recommendations

7.53 The Woodland Trust recommends a target of 30% woodland cover on major development sites. However, existing tree canopy coverage is recorded at 13.9% within South Oxfordshire district and 8.2% in Vale of White Horse district. The Oxfordshire Treescape Project also estimates that approximately 36% of the county is not suitable for treescapes due to the presence of ecological designations, existing woodland, species-rich grassland and built development.

7.54 The findings of the Strategy recommend that a major development standard is adopted. In accordance with guidance from the NEGIF, new and existing trees should be incorporated into new developments and new streets should be tree-lined (in line with NPPF requirements).

7.55 The Urban Tree Canopy Standard should be set as a percentage increase, rather than an overall target percentage. This would help prevent potential limitations of a blanket standard, such as an increased focus on woodland at the expense of a more biodiverse mix of habitats and landscapes. It is recommended that developers are asked to demonstrate how they are contributing to an increase in canopy coverage as part of their GI Plan. However, where a development site exhibits a baseline of zero with no existing trees canopy cover, it must be demonstrated that development proposals deliver an appropriate tree canopy coverage for the site and context.

Chapter 8

Policy recommendations

8.1 When considering Joint Local Plan policy, it is important to ensure that GI is fully embedded and 'mainstreamed' across the Joint Local Plan, rather than dealt with through a strategic policy alone. This approach avoids the sidelining of GI due to competing policy priorities or concerns regarding undermining the viability of development. This strategic policy should be complemented by a wider Joint Local Plan which mainstreams GI by weaving references throughout other policy areas, allowing GI to move beyond an environmental policy silo and interact with other agendas including health, economic and social policy areas.

8.2 This chapter provides a review of draft Joint Local Plan policy HP6: Green Infrastructure in new developments and the extent to which GI has been mainstreamed across the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (2024) **[See reference 71]**. It provides an overall assessment of the effectiveness of GI policy across the preferred option Joint Local Plan and offers recommendations on how GI policy can be enhanced. These recommendations on the draft policy will be used by the Councils to inform the final policy in the deposit Local Plan.

GI policy good practice guidance

8.3 The 'GI Planning Policy Assessment Tool' **[See reference 72]** sets out an assessment process based on a content analysis of Local Plan wording. As well as GI mainstreaming, this also includes criteria related to support integration of GI into development, specific GI functions and aftercare. The tool identifies seven key areas to address in a 'good' GI planning policy, which are summarised below:

- Design process: it is important to emphasise the need to consider multi-functional GI design from the pre-application stage onwards, including through engagement with relevant stakeholders.

- Wider context: GI design should be informed by analysis of the site and wider context, including local needs, wider habitat networks, open space provision and public access. A strategic policy can set certain performance standards for GI based on this evidence.
- Biodiversity: GI policy should link to policy on biodiversity net gain (mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain is a new driver of funding for GI) and be designed to protect and enhance on-site biodiversity and habitat networks within and adjacent to the site.
- Water management: SuDS should form an integral part of multi-functional GI design, maximising amenity and biodiversity benefits alongside flood management (and public access where safe and appropriate).
- Access networks: GI design should retain and enhance active travel routes (linking key destinations such as housing to town centres and schools) to encourage walking and cycling.
- Greenspace: GI should meet the quantity, quality and accessibility standards for open space for the districts, seeking to address deficiencies in access and be designed to cater for all in the community.
- Stewardship: appropriate management and maintenance agreements for GI, supported by clear and long-term funding mechanisms, must be agreed with the Councils.

8.4 More recently, the NEGIF **[See reference 73]** identifies some key principles that should be reflected in policy on GI and urban greening, some of which overlap with those fined above. These include:

- Setting out a vision for GI: to enable developers and their design teams to understand how their proposal can contribute or 'plug-in' to the wider strategic network.
- Providing a good evidence base: enable developers and their design teams to deliver meaningful contributions by being able to access or commission the most appropriate information.
- Developing clear strategy and policies: the need to give developers certainty over what GI is needed on a site, including by defining

quantitative standards / targets and site-specific requirements in site allocation policies.

- Influencing the design process: the need for developers and their design teams to consider multi-functional GI design from the pre-application stage onwards through engagement with relevant stakeholders and analysis of the site and wider context. GI should be multi-functional, varied, connected (for people and nature), designed to be accessible for all and responsive to an area's landscape / character.
- Ensuring long-term management, maintenance and monitoring: the need for developers and their design teams to provide sufficient information about long-term management and maintenance to ensure new GI provides the long-term benefits desired. The importance of local authority monitoring and evaluation of GI delivery is also emphasised.

8.5 The policy assessment tool and NEGIF guidance also emphasise the importance of strong policy wording. This includes the use of 'should' and 'must' rather than 'is advised' to provide strong direction and clarity to developers on what the requirements for GI in development are.

Strategic Policy

8.6 Policy HP6: Green Infrastructure provides a framework for the delivery of Green Infrastructure across the districts. An assessment of the draft policy within the preferred option Local Plan was undertaken against each of the assessment criteria within the GI Planning Policy Assessment tool. An additional assessment of whether the policy clearly integrates the NEGIF 'what' principles of; multifunctional, varied, connected, accessible and responsive to local character has been undertaken, with the following conclusions drawn:

- The policy wording is generally strong with the use of 'should' in most criteria, setting out clear expectations for developers.
- The draft policy benefits from the incorporation of a requirement for GI to be considered from the earliest stages of development. This wording could be enhanced through a requirement for the design of GI to be 'landscape

led' and responsive to local character. This is currently only incorporated as a requirement in the design of SuDS.

- The policy incorporates a requirement for local needs to be considered. This could be enhanced by reference to a consideration of site-specific context, including local scale improvements and site specific constraints.
- The draft policy could draw links to Biodiversity Net Gain. It could do this through the incorporation of a direct reference to the requirements for this within draft policy NH1: Nature recovery. This could in turn be cross referenced back to HP6: Green Infrastructure.
- The draft policy is currently strong in its requirements for the integration of SuDS and the requirement for these to deliver multi-functional benefits.
- The policy would benefit from the incorporation of a requirement to consider active travel as a core component of the GI network and overall connectivity of the network for people and nature.
- The policy includes a direct requirement for GI to be publicly accessible. Appropriate headline standards should be incorporated into the policy.
- The Councils should consider the integration of a specific requirement for developers to provide evidence that management and maintenance requirements are in place within their GI statements. These documents should incorporate evidence that long-term funding mechanisms are secured which will guarantee the long-term sustainability of multi-functional benefits.

8.7 In addition to the above recommendations, there should be a clear requirement within policy for this Green Infrastructure and Open Space study to be considered in the development of proposals.

8.8 Overall, the draft policy has a good coverage of green infrastructure principles and incorporates strong wording. To enhance the policy further the Councils could consider these conclusions and their integration into the final strategic GI policy within the deposit Local Plan.

Policy mainstreaming

8.9 The preferred option draft Joint Local Plan incorporates GI across 23 of its policies beyond HP6: Green Infrastructure. This demonstrates a good mainstreaming of GI across several policy areas including; climate change and environmental quality, well-designed places, healthy places, nature recovery, heritage and landscape and infrastructure. GI requirements are also well integrated into settlement specific policies and policies for site allocations (further detailed review of these policies to follow). Whilst this presents good coverage, there is scope to incorporate GI across further policies to recognise the full range of multi-functional benefits GI can provide. Specifically, GI could be incorporated into the following draft policies:

- Sustainable design and construction (CE1) to include a direct reference to GI within 2(b) to state its benefits in reducing the heat island effect and helping to shade and cool buildings, thus reducing internal overheating issues.
- High quality design (DE1) to include a direct reference to GI with the 'Place and Setting' section to outline the importance of the integration of well-designed GI to help the development respond positively to the site and the surrounding landscape and historic character.
- Jobs and tourism (JT2 and JT6) to reflect the economic benefits that GI can have in creating attractive employment areas and enhancing the attractiveness of an area to tourists.
- Town centres and retail (TCR2) to reflect the economic benefits GI can have in improving the attractiveness of town centres and increasing footfall.
- Infrastructure, transport, connectivity and communications (IN2). Whilst GI is covered in policy IN1, it could also be incorporated into policy IN2 to reflect the importance of integrating GI along active travel routes to increase their attractiveness and safety and encourage increased use.

Alignment with the emerging Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Local Nature Recovery Strategy)

8.10 The emerging Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is due to be completed in spring 2025. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will play a major role in identifying and mapping the best locations to create, enhance and restore nature and provide wider environmental benefits, helping to shape the Nature Recovery Network and meet the government's wider commitments and targets. Once completed there will be an expectation that developers consult the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as well as this GI and Open Space strategy in detail to ensure that spatial nature recovery priorities are fully met in forthcoming development. It is important that the Joint Local Plan policy is written so that developers have clear guidance on how these documents should work together to promote GI and nature recovery through planning policy.

8.11 It is therefore recommended that a specific reference to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is included within the strategic GI policy. This alignment could be enhanced through incorporating a reference to the GI network within policy NH1 – Nature recovery.

Recommended addition: GI provision should be multi-functional and designed to meet local needs and priorities as identified within this Strategy and the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Garden Villages

Garden villages context

8.12 The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) sets out nine 'Garden City Principles' which capture the success of the Garden City model of development as a tool for the delivery of high-quality places within a 21st century context **[See reference 74]**. The TCPA defines the Garden City as; 'a holistically planned new settlement which enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities'.

8.13 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **[See reference 75]** paragraph74(c) sets clear expectations for the quality of places to be created and how this can be maintained, such as by following Garden City principles and ensuring that appropriate tools such as masterplans and design guides or codes are used to secure a variety of well-designed and beautiful homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community.

8.14 The TCPA's nine interlocking principles are:

- **1. Equitable:** Land value capture for the benefit of community.
- **2. Visionary and collaborative:** Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- **3. Nurtured:** Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- **4. Genuinely affordable:** Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- **5. Local employment:** A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.

- **6. Designed to marry town and country:** Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- **7. Landscape-led, climate resilient:** Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- **8. Vibrant and inclusive:** Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant and sociable neighbourhoods.
- **9. Accessible for all:** Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

8.15 Of particular relevance to GI are principles 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

8.16 The Government's Garden Communities Toolkit **[See reference 76]** provides national planning policy guidance for the delivery of garden communities. This includes principles to follow for the creation of a policy framework for garden communities, including; using clear language, ensuring policies are supported by a strong evidence base, setting out the main components the garden community is expected to deliver (e.g. infrastructure, housing mix and tenure, greenspace typologies, etc.), including tangible criteria/targets that development proposals can be measured against, and ensure necessary provisions / infrastructure for the delivery of the garden community are referenced in the policy.

8.17 As a minimum (and including private gardens), 50% of a new Garden City's total area should be allocated to greenspace (of which at least half should be public), consisting of a network of multi-functional, well managed, high-quality open spaces linked to the wider countryside. Homes should have access to private or shared gardens, and space must be allocated to allow local food production from community, allotment and/or commercial gardens.

8.18 This context has informed the site-specific policy requirements for proposed Garden Communities within the districts, as set out below.

Garden village allocations

8.19 The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan (Preferred Options Consultation – Regulation 18 Part 2) includes policies for two garden villages; Berinsfield and Dalton Barracks.

8.20 The draft policies have been tested against the garden city principles which relate to the provision of GI, alongside a wider assessment of the policies coverage of GI. All development within the garden village allocations must be compliant with Local Plan policy HP6: Green Infrastructure and therefore recommendations for garden village policies focus on site specific issues.

8.21 Some site specific issues identified in the analysis are common across several sites, particularly in relation to the provision and greening of active travel routes and enhancement of notable habitats. Given their frequency and commonality the Councils may wish to consider their inclusion within strategic policy HP6 as an alternative to site specific requirements.

Berinsfield Garden Village

8.22 Draft policy AS1 allocates land for approximately 1,700 new homes, 5 hectares of additional employment land and supporting service and facilities at the Berinsfield Garden Village. Draft policy AS13 identifies principles for all new development within Berinsfield Garden Village. Existing key GI assets and constraints which should be considered include:

- A small area in the south west of the site falls within Flood Zone 2;
- A PRoW runs through the site from Burcot Lane to Fane Drive, connecting to a bridleway within the existing Berinsfield village;

- There are no priority habitats or designated sites within the site allocation, although there is a small area of BAP priority woodland habitat to the north of the site; and
- Queenford Lakes to the south of the site has been designated as a site of importance for nature conservation.

Policy recommendations

It is considered that policies AS1 and AS13 already provide good coverage of GI provision and the integration of the TCPA garden city principles. The policies could be enhanced by the following:

- Inclusion of references to new and existing PROW and active travel routes could make a direct reference to greening along these routes to improve their attractiveness and future use.

Dalton Barracks Garden Village

8.23 Draft policy AS10 allocates land for approximately 2,750 homes, supporting services and facilities (including parkland, education provision, leisure and recreation facilities, local centres and employment opportunities) at Dalton Barracks. Draft policy AS14 sets out the principles and objectives within Dalton Barracks Garden Village, including land allocated within Policy AS10. These policies are supported by the Dalton Barracks Supplementary Planning Document (adopted in 2022) **[See reference 77]** which provides detail on how these objectives should be achieved. Existing key GI assets and constraints which should be considered include:

- Sanford Brook passes the site's western boundary and a small area of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3;
- There is an area of ancient semi natural woodland / BAP priority habitat along Sanford Brook;
- Dry Sanford Pit Nature Reserve is within the north west of the site and is designated as a SSSI;
- Cothill Fen SAC and SSSI sit to the north west of the site;
- A large area to the west of the site has been designated as a nature conservation target area for priority habitats and species;

- There are no existing PROW within the site but opportunities exist to connect into the surrounding network; and
- Areas to the south of the site are impacted by road noise from the A34.

8.24 The policy sets out that all development within the Dalton Barracks Garden Village (DBGV) will meet the TCPA Garden Village principles, as well as a number of site-specific objectives.

Policy recommendations

- It is considered that policies AS10 and AS14 already provide good coverage of GI provision and the integration of the TCPA garden city principles. The policies could be enhanced by the following:
- Inclusion of references to greening along PRoW and active travel routes to improve their attractiveness and future use;
- Addition of a direct reference to the GI network in 1(b) within policy AS14; and
- Inclusion of a specific reference to multi-functional SuDS, including naturalised design, public access and providing aesthetic / amenity value.

Site Allocation Policies

8.25 The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan (Preferred Options Consultation – Regulation 18 Part 2) allocates a number of strategic development sites within the two districts. It is important that GI is mainstreamed into planning policy and into decision-making processes regarding new development. Development on strategic site allocations will be a key mechanism for the delivery of new GI and it is therefore essential that Local

Plan policies for these sites is strongly worded and tailored so that the new GI will directly benefit the existing GI network where possible.

8.26 The Green Infrastructure Planning Policy Assessment Tool sets out 26 assessment criteria covering core GI functions. As per the assessment approach taken to the core Local Plan policies, this tool has been used to guide the appraisal of strategic site allocation policies below, as well as recommendations for their further development. All development on strategic site allocations must be compliant with Local Plan policy HP6: Green Infrastructure and therefore recommendations for site allocation policies focus on site specific issues.

Policy AS2: Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre

8.27 Policy AS2 allocates land for approximately 3,500 new homes adjacent to the Culham Science Centre as part of a mixed-use development which also retains and optimises the existing employment area on land east of the railway. Existing key GI assets and constraints which should be considered include:

- The River Thames flows along the northern site boundary and there are areas in Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the northern site boundary;
- There are woodland habitats along the River Thames and a small area of ancient woodland to the west of the site;
- The PROW network connects along the River Thames to Abingdon-on-Thames and east of Culham Science Centre, offering wider links to the wider countryside and the Thames Path National Trail;
- Adjacent residential areas west of the site (i.e. along Thames Lane, north-east of Culham) currently lack access to greenspace within the neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket greenspace hierarchies. Greenspace provision on this site could help address this deficit;
- There are small areas of priority habitat within site (deciduous woodland); and

- Railway noise impacts on tranquility (intersects east of the site).

8.28 The policy aligns with a number of the GI policy assessment criteria. However, recommendations are provided below for additional and strengthened requirements in relation to GI.

Policy recommendations

- The draft policy benefits from making specific reference to local features (designated sites and BAP priority habitats) as well as opportunities for site-specific biodiversity enhancement (riparian woodland, floodplain and wetland habitats). There is an opportunity to provide more explicit reference to the potential for on-site GI to contribute to broader scale access and recreation connectivity, nature networks and habitat connectivity (e.g. with the river Thames corridor).
- The policy could make specific reference to the incorporation of GI within the provision / enhancement of transport / active travel infrastructure and the PRoW network, such as greening along new routes and transport provisions identified in part (f).
- The policy could further expand on the proposals for biodiversity enhancement within the site e.g. opportunities to protect and strengthen hedgerows / tree belts within the site.
- The policy could reference the opportunity for GI to contribute to noise mitigation from the railway line and Culham railway station.

Policy AS3: Land South of Grenoble Road, Edge of Oxford

8.29 Policy AS3 allocates land for approximately 3,000 new homes, 10 hectares of additional employment land, a mobility hub and supporting services and facilities. Existing key GI assets and constraints which should be considered include:

- Two existing PROW cross the site, providing east-west and north-south connections to Oxford and the surrounding countryside;
- The Thames Path National Trail runs approximately 750m to the west of the site;
- Adjacent neighbourhoods within Oxford city (i.e. areas of Littlemore and Blackbird Leys) currently lack access to greenspace within the neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket hierarchies.
- A local wildlife site sits adjacent to the east of the site and covers a small section of land within the south east of the site. This includes BAP lowland mixed deciduous woodland; and
- The west of the site is impacted by road noise from the A4074.

8.30 The policy aligns with a number of the GI policy assessment criteria. However, recommendations are provided below for additional and strengthened requirements in relation to GI.

Policy recommendations

- The policy makes specific reference to the site's local context and key features (e.g. site-specific hydrological features, including requirement for the biodiversity enhancement of Littlemore Brook). The policy should include the requirement to consider the potential of the site to strengthen links with the wider GI network, nature networks and offer improved habitat connectivity (e.g. east-west habitat connectivity at the urban edge and habitat / recreation links with the River Thames corridor).
- The policy should further expand on the proposals for biodiversity enhancement within the site e.g. opportunities to protect and strengthen hedgerows / tree belts within the site.
- The policy sets requirements for sustainable and active travel including enhancement of existing cycling and walking infrastructure and PRoW on and off-site. The policy should make specific reference to the role of GI within the provision / enhancement of active travel infrastructure and the PRoW network, such as greening along active travel / recreation routes (e.g. the PRoWs that intersect the site and connectivity to the Thames Path National Trail to the west).
- The policy should reference the role of GI in noise / air quality mitigation, due to the site's proximity to the A4074.

Policy AS4: Land at Northfield

8.31 Land at Northfield, Edge of Oxford is allocated to deliver approximately 1,800 new homes and supporting services / facilities. Key GI features and constraints considered include:

- Northfield Brook borders the south and east of the site, with areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 within this boundary;

- A small section of the Northfield Brook at the north east of the site is identified as a BAP priority river habitat;
- The north of the site is identified as a network enhancement area for wood pasture and parkland habitat;
- There is a small area of lowland meadow at the south of the site;
- Adjacent neighbourhoods within Oxford city (i.e. Blackbird Leys) currently lack access to greenspace within the neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket greenspaces hierarchies. Greenspace provision on this site could help address this deficit; and
- One existing PROW abuts the southern corner of the site providing a connection between Blenheim and Oxford.

Policy recommendations

- Reference to the use of SuDS and other GI features to help reduce flood risk along Northfield Brook should be included in the policy.
- The policy should make specific reference to the role of GI within the provision / enhancement of active travel infrastructure and the PRoW network, such as greening along active travel / recreation routes.

Policy AS5: Land at Bayswater

8.32 Land at Bayswater is allocated for approximately 1,100 new homes. The policy aligns with a number of the GI policy assessment criteria. However, recommendations are provided below for additional and strengthened requirements in relation to GI. Key GI features and constraints considered include:

- Bayswater brook runs along the south of the site, with land lying within Flood Zones 2 and 3;

- Areas of BAP deciduous woodland and designated as a SSSI connect to the north of the site;
- Several PRoW cut north-south across the site, providing connections between Headington and the wider countryside (including the settlements of Elsfield and Beckley);
- Adjacent neighbourhoods within Oxford city (i.e. areas of Sandhills and Headington) currently lack access to greenspace within the neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket hierarchies. Greenspace provision on this site could help address this deficit; and
- The south of the site is impacted by road noise from the A40 affecting tranquility.

Policy recommendations

- The policy could reference the role of GI in noise / air quality mitigation, due to the site's proximity to the A40; and

Policy AS6: Rich's Sidings and Broadway, Didcot

8.33 Policy AS6 allocates land to deliver a mixed-use scheme comprising of new jobs and approximately 100 homes. The draft policy does not set out any additional detail at present and therefore only a brief assessment has been made. Key GI features and constraints considered include:

- National Cycle Network (NCN) route 544 borders the north of the site;
- The site borders a conservation area (Didcot Northbourne Conservation Area) to the south; and
- The entire site is impacted by rail noise.

Policy recommendations

- The policy would benefit from the requirement to demonstrate how it will contribute to the GI deficit in the area surrounding Didcot;
- The policy could include the enhancement of links to National Cycle Network (NCN) route 544;
- The policy should state the need for GI design to be landscape-led and informed by the character of the adjoining conservation area so that this is not negatively impacted; and
- The policy could reference the role of GI in noise / air quality mitigation, due to the site's proximity to the town centre and railway line / Didcot Parkway railway station.

Policy AS7: Didcot Gateway, Didcot

8.34 Policy AS7 allocates land to deliver approximately 200 homes as part of a mixed-use development. The draft policy does not set out any additional detail at present and therefore only a brief assessment has been made. Key GI features and constraints considered include:

- The entire site is impacted by rail noise;
- National Cycle Network (NCN) route 544 crosses the north of the site; and
- An existing pond is identified as BAP priority habitat for eutrophic waters.

Policy recommendations

- The policy would benefit from the requirement to demonstrate how it will contribute to the GI deficit in the area surrounding Didcot;
- The policy should reference the role of GI in noise / air quality mitigation, due to the site's proximity to the town centre and railway line / Didcot Parkway railway station;
- The policy should set out requirements for active travel infrastructure and open spaces within the site, including the integration of GI; and
- The policy should incorporate a requirement for existing priority habitats on the site to be protected and enhanced through the development.

Policy AS8: North West of Grove, Grove

8.35 Policy AS8 allocates land to deliver approximately 600 new homes and supporting services and facilities. Key GI features and constraints considered include:

- An existing PROW connects the site from the north across agricultural land to Denchworth and West and East Hanney; and
- The entire site is impacted by rail noise from the rail line to the north.

Policy recommendations

- The policy sets requirements for sustainable and active travel, including enhancement of existing cycling and walking infrastructure and PRoW on- and off-site. The policy should make specific reference to the role of GI within the provision / enhancement of travel infrastructure and the PRoW network, such as greening along active travel / recreation routes, particularly connections to existing PROW extending north from the site.
- The policy benefits from the requirement to investigate noise impact from the existing railway and ensure necessary mitigation. However, it should include specific reference to the role of GI as mitigation.

Policy AS9: North West of Valley Park, Didcot

8.36 Policy AS9 allocates land for approximately 800 new homes, supporting services and facilities, including education provision and a local centre. Key existing GI features and constraints considered include:

- Adjacent existing PROWs connect the site to Milton Heights and Harwell;
- Adjacent neighborhoods of Milton Heights currently lack access to greenspace within the neighbourhood, local, doorstep and pocket greenspace hierarchies. Greenspace provision on this site could help address this deficit;
- There is an area of possible priority neutral grassland habitat to the south of the site;
- The north of the site is impacted by noise from the rail line and the A4130; and
- There is a small area in Flood Zones 2 and 3 at the north east of the site.

Policy recommendations

- The policy benefits from the requirement to demonstrate how it will contribute to the GI deficit in the area surrounding Didcot.
- The policy sets requirements for sustainable and active travel, including enhancement of existing cycling and walking infrastructure and PRoW on- and off-site. The policy should make specific reference to the role of GI within the provision / enhancement of travel infrastructure and the PRoW network, such as greening along active travel / recreation routes, including the existing adjacent routes.
- The policy should reference opportunities to enhance existing priority grassland habitats to the south of the site, improving habitat connectivity.
- The policy benefits from reference to areas of Flood Zone 2 / 3 within the site and investigation of surface water flooding. The provision of multi-functional SuDS could be explicitly referenced in the policy, with reference to naturalised design, public access and providing aesthetic/amenity value.
- The policy benefits from the requirement to investigate noise impact from the existing railway and ensure necessary mitigation. However, it should include specific reference to the role of GI as mitigation.

Policy AS16: Vauxhall Barracks, Didcot

8.37 Policy AS16 allocates land for a residential-led scheme comprising approximately 300 homes. Key existing GI features and constraints considered include:

- There are areas of Priority Habitat (deciduous woodland) to the north of the site, following the railway line.

- An existing PROW (Vauxhall Barracks Walk) adjoins the site at Great Western Drive Park.
- The site borders a conservation area (Didcot Old Conservation Area) to the south-east.
- The north of the site is impacted by noise from the rail line.

Policy recommendations

- The policy would benefit from the requirement to demonstrate how it will contribute to the GI deficit in the area surrounding Didcot.
- The policy should reference opportunities to enhance/strengthen existing priority woodland habitats to the north of the site, improving habitat connectivity.
- The policy sets requirements for maximising sustainable and active travel, with consideration to connectivity within Didcot and enhancements to PRoWs on- and off-site. The policy should make specific reference to the role of GI within the provision / enhancement of travel infrastructure and the PRoW network, such as greening along active travel / recreation routes, including the existing adjacent routes.
- The policy could reference the opportunity for GI to contribute to noise mitigation from the railway line.

Appendix A

Evaluation of the 2017 GI Strategy

A.1 An initial review of the 2017 GI Strategy identified a number of opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the current document. These opportunities are outlined below.

Enhance the usability of the document to engage a wide range of audiences

A.2 The incorporation of a user guide within the updated Strategy would promote enhanced usage as a working document by both policy planners and development management. The addition of a navigation panel should also help demonstrate where the document sits within the wider planning policy framework. The user guide would act as a 'how-to' guide to promote the effective delivery of GI, providing a user friendly document which would be used as part of everyday planning procedures in the districts.

Provide a renewed focus on GI delivery and implementation

A.3 Initial consultation feedback from key stakeholders demonstrated that, whilst comprehensive and well received when originally published, delivery of the Strategic Green and Blue Corridors and Strategic Green Access Links identified in in the 2017 GI Strategy has been limited. The development of the updated Strategy should ensure that it is embedded in the planning context through the use of 'planning hooks'. This would address previous challenges of successful implementation of GI across the districts.

Provide cross-cutting strategic guidance and priority GI projects

A.4 GI opportunities identified within the existing GI Strategy require updates to reflect the current needs and objectives of the districts. GI projects at a range of scales should be identified, supported by the identification of delivery partners and outline project costings to ensure that realistic 'asks' can be incorporated into Infrastructure Delivery Plans associated with the delivery of the Joint Local Plan. Organisation of GI projects and opportunities into a delivery / action plan offers the opportunity to support GI delivery across the districts.

Emphasise the importance of GI stewardship at all scales

A.5 It is essential that GI delivery is supported by strong processes for management and maintenance. The updated Strategy should take the existing document one step further through the inclusion of key stakeholders and partnerships already involved in protecting and enhancing GI assets in the districts to help deliver improvements to the wider GI network. Updated sources of GI fundings should also be identified.

Refine the vision and objectives for GI within the districts

A.6 The vision for GI should be re-visited to reflect the post-2017 context (including the climate and ecological emergencies) to set the roadmap for the successful delivery of GI across the districts. The vision will need to ensure a greater alignment with the ambitions of each Council's corporate plan as well as the wider draft vision for the Joint Local Plan.

Respond to changes in the wider GI policy context

A.7 The updated Strategy should correspond to the most pertinent updates in policy on a national, county and local scale (see **Appendix D**). The wider drivers and 'needs' for GI within the districts should also be acknowledged, reflecting the post-2017 context.

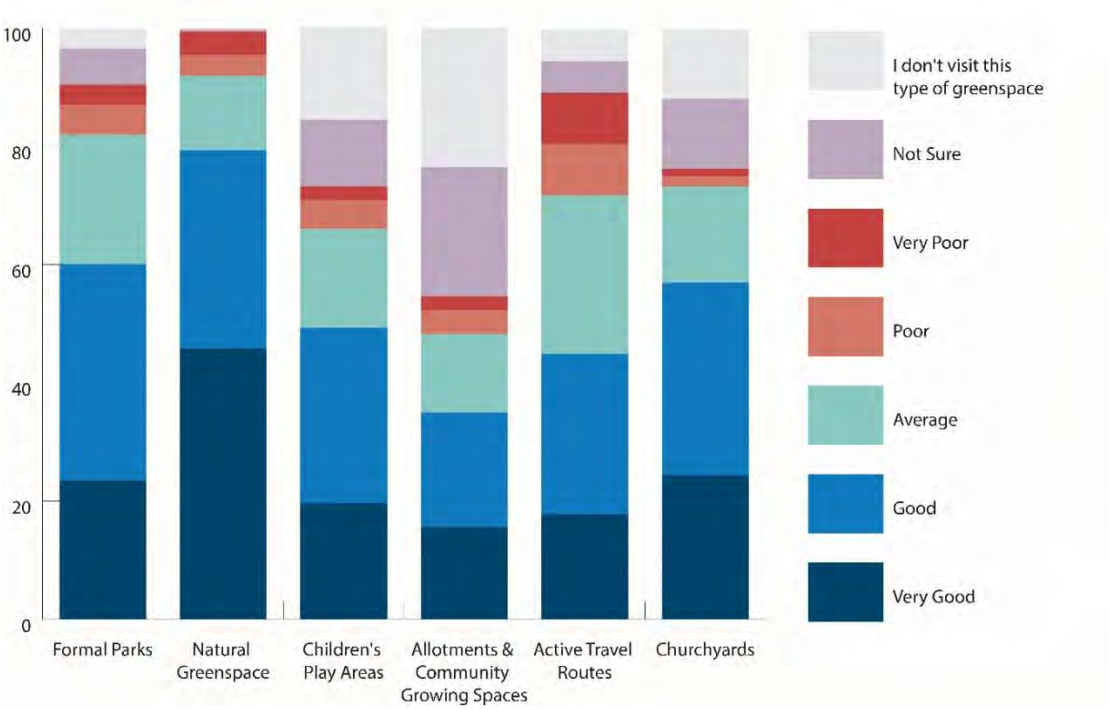
Appendix B

Results of public consultation

Quality of greenspaces

B.1 The survey revealed that participants have an overall positive perception of the quality of greenspaces in the districts. Perceptions were particularly high for natural greenspace, with 46% rating provision as 'very good', and 80% rating 'good' or 'very good'. Formal parks were rated as 'good' or 'very good' by 60% of participants. Responses were more variable for active travel routes, with 45% of participants rating these routes as 'good' or 'very good'. However, the highest proportion of participants (18%) rated the quality of these assets as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Figure B.1: Question: What do you think of the overall quality of the following types of greenspace in your local area?

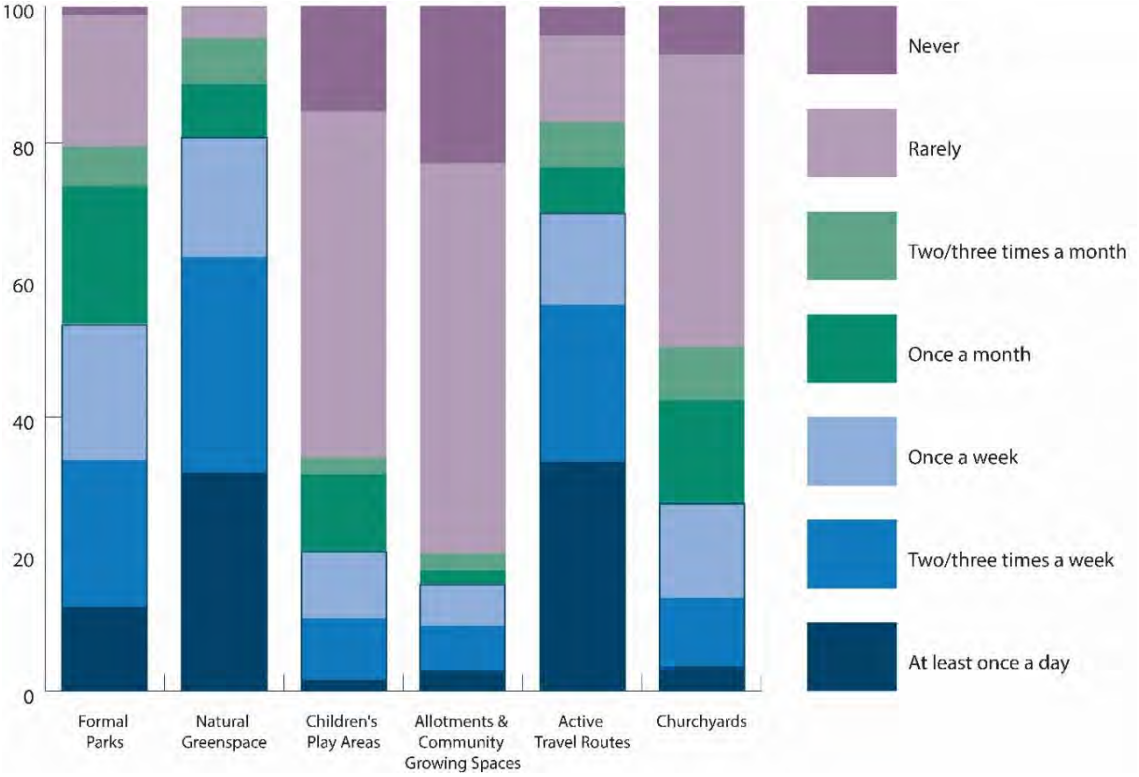


Frequency of use

B.2 Responses revealed that natural greenspaces were the most frequently visited greenspace type across the districts. Over 30% of participants visited natural greenspaces at least once a day, a further 30% visited two or three times a week, and 18% visited once a week. This was closely followed by active travel routes, with 70% visiting once a week or more. Formal parks were visited by over 50% of respondents once a week. Churchyards, children's play areas and allotments & community growing spaces were visited least frequently, with 40% or more visiting this greenspace type 'rarely'.

B.3 The survey revealed that of the 40% of participants that had an interest in allotments & community growing spaces, 66% had access, 3% were on waiting lists and 30% didn't have access (but would like to be involved).

Figure B.2: Qestion: On average, how often do you visit the following types of greenspace?



Accessibility and travel

B.4 Responses revealed that the majority of participants were content with the distance needed to travel to the different types of greenspace. Participants were most content with the distance to reach natural greenspaces with 83% selecting 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. Responses for formal parks, active travel routes and churchyards were 65% or higher, and of those that used children's play areas and allotments or community growing spaces, 58% were content with the distance required to travel. 11% of participants were not content with the distance of travel for active travel routes, and just under 10% for formal parks and natural greenspaces. When asked what, if anything, prevented participants from visiting greenspaces, the most common response was 'nothing' at 30%, but approximately 15% selected poor maintenance, uncleanliness or anti-social behaviour.

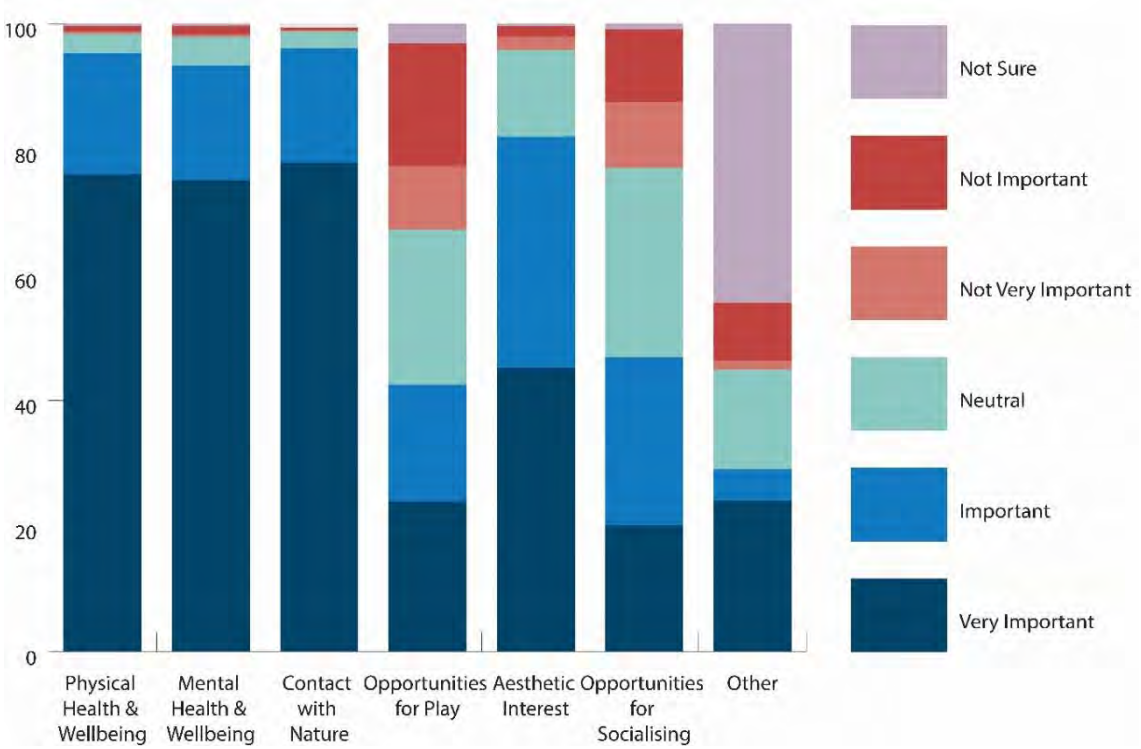
B.5 The most frequent mode of travel to greenspaces was on foot, with 60% or higher selecting this option as their usual method of travel to greenspaces. This was even higher for natural greenspace, at 73%. Car use was the next most frequent mode of travel, which ranged between 13% and 30%, with formal parks normally travelled to by car by 30% of participants, followed by natural greenspaces at 20%. A smaller proportion of participants travelled by bicycle, approximately 5%, but this increased to almost 20% in relation to active travel routes.

B.6 The responses to the survey emphasised the need for a safe and better-connected cycle network, particularly for use by children. Issues of safety were also raised as a key hinderance to accessing greenspaces, with a number of respondents reporting having to walk along busy roads, obstruction from overgrown vegetation, and lack of suitability for wheelchair users and mobility scooters. Several comments expressed the desire to visit key destination sites in the districts, such as White Horse Hill and Wittenham Clumps, but are currently unable to do so without access to private transport.

Value of greenspaces

B.7 The survey revealed clear consensus in the importance of greenspaces in facilitating contact with nature, physical health and wellbeing, and mental health and wellbeing. 90% of participants rated these as 'important' or 'very important', with this being as high as 96% for contact with nature. 'Access to nature' was also being selected as an important justification for visiting a greenspace by 78% of participants. This was closely followed by areas providing peace and quiet at 74%, and then ease of access at 55%. Well maintained greenspaces that provide a sense of safety were also considered important by 45% of participants.

Figure B.3: Question: How important are the following options to you when visiting greenspaces?



Greenspace provision and quality of features

B.8 Participants were asked to comment on the provision and quality of street trees, wildflower verges, green roofs and walls, and rivers and streams. In general, responses were positive for street trees, with approximately 40% feeling these assets are present in the right amount and in good condition. A further 40% agreed that these feature was present, although they would like to see greater tree canopy coverage. Less than 2% of participants stated that they would like to see fewer trees in the districts.

B.9 Positive responses were also received in relation to wildflower verges, with a higher proportion of 45% requesting to see more of these features, albeit only 27% agreed that these were in good condition. 7% of participants stated that they would like to see fewer of these features, although comments indicated this was primarily due to how wildflower meadows are maintained and the potential for obstructed visibility at road junctions. 66% of respondents indicated that green roofs and walls are not present in their local areas, with only 5% agreeing the features have good coverage in the districts. 16% of participants stated that green roofs and walls are present, although they would like to see increased provision.

Appendix C

Approach to GI within neighbouring local authorities

C.1 A number of neighbouring local planning authorities have produced GI evidence base documents to support the preparation of local policy. These documents afford the opportunity to consider strategic cross-boundary GI linkages as part of the emerging Strategy. **Figure C.1** shows the location of the districts in relation to neighbouring authorities.

Reading

C.2 Reading Borough Council has not produced a stand-alone GI strategy. However, the Reading Infrastructure Delivery Plan (March 2018) **[See reference 78]** includes an overview of the infrastructure requirements for the delivery of GI. This includes reference to the Council's Open Spaces Strategy (2007, 2017 update note) including requirements for parks and open spaces, and the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan which sets out aims, objectives and actions to conserve and enhance Reading's biodiversity.

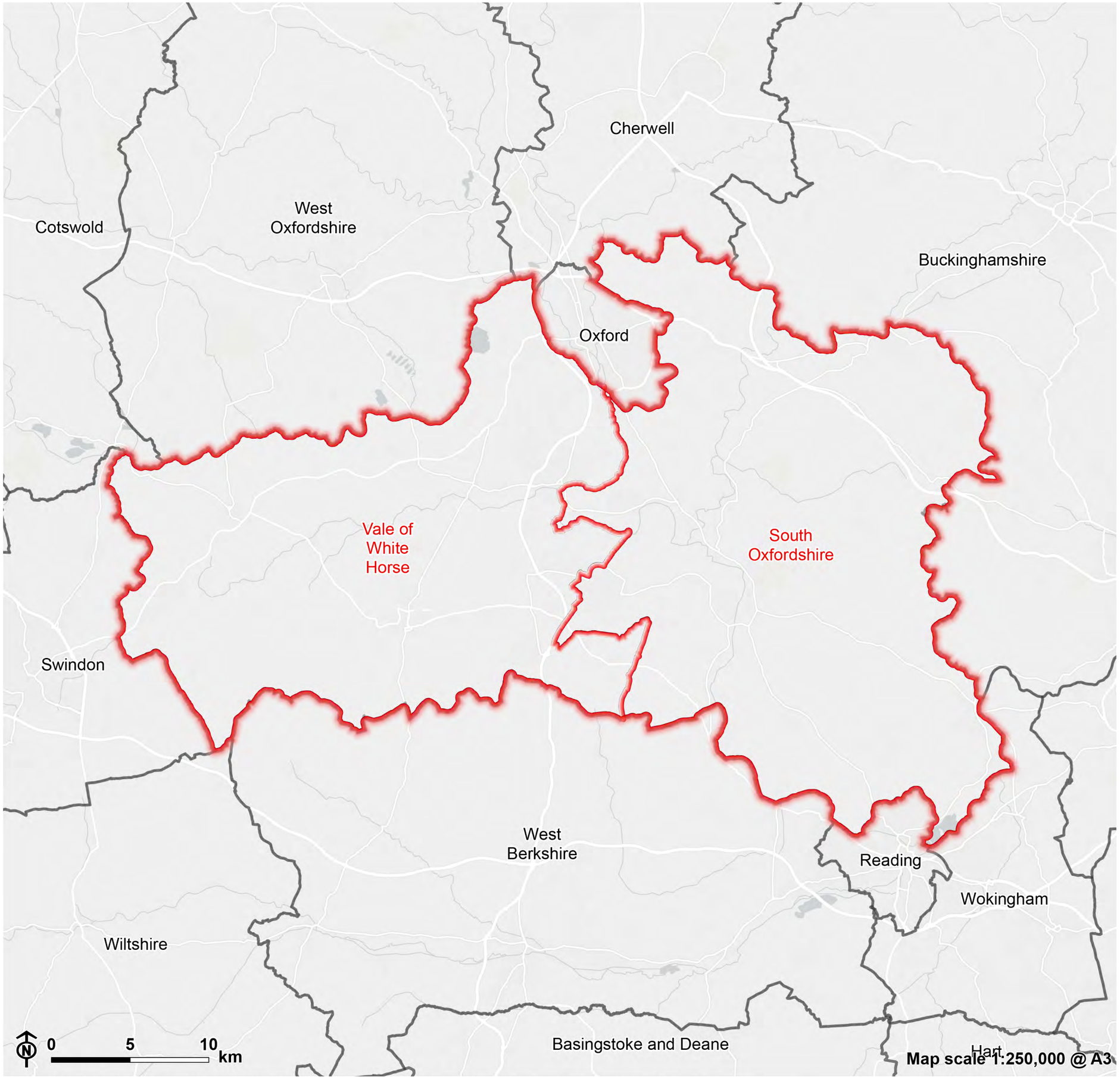
West Berkshire

C.3 West Berkshire Council has not produced a stand-alone GI strategy for the district. However, the current Core Strategy Development Plan **[See reference 79]** sets out the overall planning strategy to 2026, including core policies relating to the protection and enhancement of the district's GI.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI Strategy

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts

Figure C.1: Location Plan and Neighbouring Authorities



Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS. Contains Ordnance Survey data
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Wiltshire

C.4 Wiltshire Council produced the Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy, adopted in 2022 **[See reference 80]**, providing an overall approach to GBI corridors and space, climate adaptation and resilience, biodiversity improvements, and heath & wellbeing. The document covers an eight year period to 2030 and sets out a shared vision and goals for GBI in the area which are:

- Vision:
  - More – creating new GBI assets to protect, enhance and expand what we already have;
  - Higher quality – improved and well-managed, resilient and multifunctional GBI networks; and
  - Better connected – green corridors and active travel networks linking people and wildlife throughout our towns and countryside.
- Goals:
  - Goal 1: Mitigation, adaptation and resilience to climate change, through adoption of nature-based solutions;
  - Goal 2: Halting loss of & improving biodiversity, with a more resilient ecological network; and
  - Goal 3: Contributing to enhanced health & well-being by improving access to nature and the sustainable use and health of natural resources.

Swindon

C.5 A GI Strategy for Swindon (2010 – 2026) **[See reference 81]** was originally produced in 2011, prioritising the planning, development and investment in GI in

the borough to 2020. It provides a summary of the baseline context, key issues and opportunities within the area, and proposals for enhanced GI across Swindon. It sets out a vision for the area's GI, with Swindon sitting at the heart of a 'far-reaching network of interconnected greenspaces', as well as a number of aims and objectives focused around access, linkages, community participation, economic growth, local transport, and other strategic priorities. The Strategy identifies three strategic corridors (the Upper River Thames, the Ridgeway and the River Ray / Sustrans Cycle Route 45) for improved landscape-scale GI connectivity at a regional scale, as well as a number of sub-regional corridors and local GI clusters.

Cotswolds

C.6 Cotswolds District Council adopted their current GI Strategy **[See reference 82]** in January 2024. The new strategy provides an overview of key aims including; protecting and enhancing existing GI to ensure it meets local needs; identifying GI priorities with climate change adaptation and mitigation central to all initiatives; and extending and improving access to GI to include groups that currently do not benefit from assets directly. The new GI initiatives have a three-pronged approach aimed at addressing:

- Wellbeing and access: bringing nature closer to people and supporting equitable and inclusive places.
- Water: delivering climate resilient water management and bringing water closer to people.
- Wildlife: delivering wildlife enhancement and underpinning nature recovery.

West Oxfordshire

C.7 West Oxfordshire District Council published a 2031 Vision document **[See reference 83]** that sets out aims and core objectives to guide the vision, which includes meeting specific housing needs, protecting and enhancing the

environment, and reducing impacts from climate change. The following objectives for enhancing the environment relate to GI:

- Conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire's high quality natural, historic and cultural environment – including its geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and arts – recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people's quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the district and beyond;
- Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk;
- Enable improvements in water and air quality;
- Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions; and
- Improve the sustainable design and construction of new development, including improving energy, water efficiency and water management.

C.8 The Council also published an interim GI Study in 2011 **[See reference 84]**, that identified and mapped existing components of GI within the district, aimed at ensuring new development accounted for existing GI or augmented it where possible, and to lay ground for GI strategy to be integrated into future planning and management by feeding into local development frameworks. It used a number of databases to gather information on GI in West Ox, the main types of GI being parks and gardens, semi natural sites, amenity greenspace, green corridors, sports grounds, cemeteries and churchyards, and allotments. Whilst the document did not undertake an assessment of deficiency or future needs in relation to GI, it made note of general improvements (including the restoration of existing GI, creation of new GI, and linking of GI assets) and identified areas for opportunity where new development / existing projects were already underway, including the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Wychwood Project, and Conservation Target Areas.

Oxford

C.9 Oxford City Council published a GI Study in 2022 **[See reference 85]**. The study incorporates a number of valuation tools to quantify the benefits of existing GI in the district and highlight areas where there is scope to improve GI or link assets to increase these benefits, particularly those related to ecosystem services and carbon sinks (Oxford's Urban Forest Strategy). Several factors were also considered in the identification of priority sites, including Indices of Multiple Deprivation to highlight areas of deprivation, population density, environmental conditions, access to private gardens / open space / tree canopy cover, and risk of flooding. Areas of priority were found to be most dense in the south towards Rose Hill & Iffley and Northfield Brook; east around Barton & Sandhills and Quarry & Risinghurst; and part of the city centre. The rivers Thames and Cherwell were identified as key corridors where enhancement of ecological networks and biodiversity could be achieved through strategic GI interventions.

Cherwell

C.10 Cherwell has a newly developed GBI Strategy, prepared by LUC and published as an online report in 2024 **[See reference 86]**.

C.11 The district adopted its existing Local Plan in 2015, which provides a framework for growth until 2031. An update to the plan is currently underway and will cover the period up to at least 2040. It will integrate strategies in relation to the climate emergency, biodiversity, and nature networks.

C.12 The GBI Strategy amalgamated the existing evidence base to inform the emerging Local Plan. It identified priority areas of the GBI network and will help to inform allocations and site-specific requirements as well as the best direction of funding streams. The strategy highlighted five focus areas. The Wider Banbury Area, Wider Bicester Area, and Wider Kidlington Area are Cherwell's three main built-up areas that are undergoing significant development changes.

The Mid-Cherwell Corridor and the Otmoor, Bernwood and Ray Nature Park were also identified as key areas as they provide strategic GBI assets and corridors. The following opportunities were outlined in the report, relating to each of these key areas:

- Key Opportunity 1: Managing flood risk in Cherwell's urban areas.
- Key Opportunity 2: Restoring Cherwell's blue corridors.
- Key Opportunity 3: Growing green towns in Cherwell.
- Key Opportunity 4: Expanding woodlands in Cherwell.
- Key Opportunity 5: Encouraging walking, cycling, and wheeling in Cherwell.
- Key Opportunity 6: Making the most of our parks and open spaces (including biodiversity enhancements).

Buckinghamshire

C.13 The Buckinghamshire GI Delivery Plan 2013 **[See reference 87]**, was developed through consultation with key stakeholders, including the public, community groups, and statutory bodies. It is focused on delivering high-quality, multi-functional GI and includes flagship projects that address the GI needs for new housing developments and help mitigate deficits in existing GI. Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale were specifically mentioned in the report.

C.14 Key GI areas in Wycombe were identified around the Thames Corridor and include the Wye Valley, Bernwood Forest and Woodlands, and the strategic access link in the form of a disused railway line between High Wycombe and Bourne End. The plan outlined the River Thames Corridor Strategy as an existing strategic GI project, proposed by The River Thames Alliance Partnership, to seek a strategic approach to the management and protection of the Thames Corridor to be delivered between 2007-2026.

C.15 The Aylesbury Linear Park, proposed by Aylesbury Vale District Council, was also named as an existing flagship project as identified in the Aylesbury Vale GI Strategy 2011-2016. Parts of the project had already been delivered at the time of publication of the GI Delivery Plan in 2013, including through section 106 contributions at Quarrendon Leas.

C.16 The Chiltern National Landscape was also identified as a key source of GI assets, with the Chilterns Chalk Stream Project: River Wye and Hughenden Stream referenced from the 2009 GI Strategy. The project was aimed at improving chalk streams for water quality, biodiversity and recreation. Key areas for GI proposals within the delivery plan included assets relating to settlements that fall within the Chilterns National Landscape Area, including Wycombe and Chesham

Appendix D

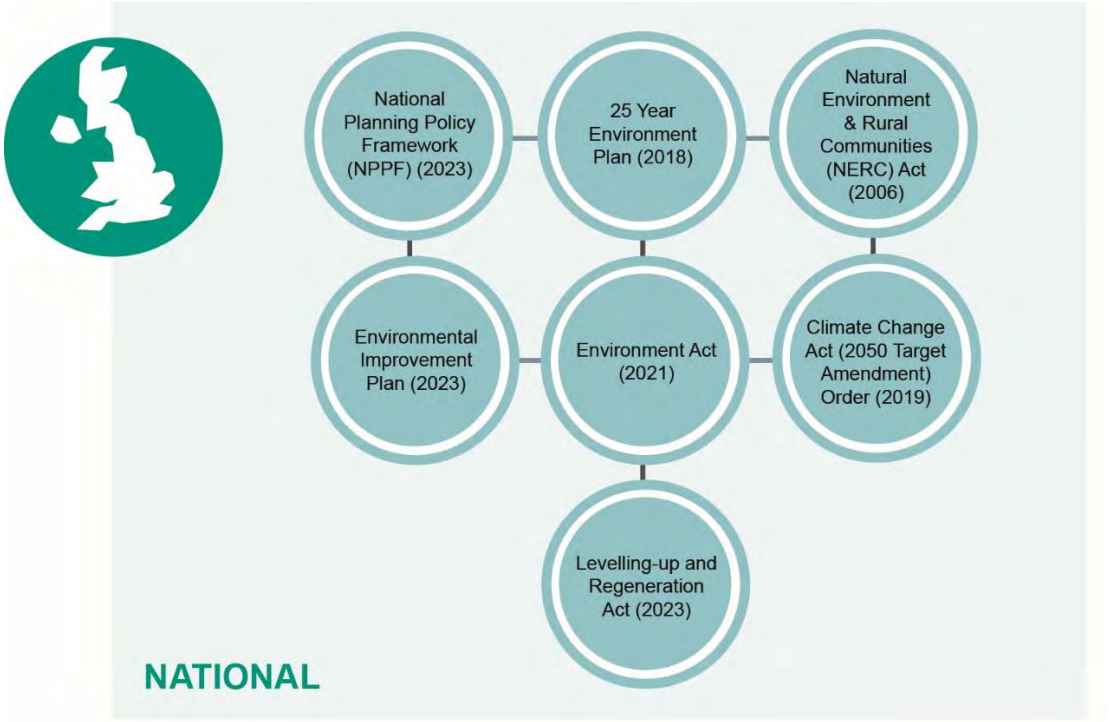
Policy context

National level

D.1 The principal drivers behind GI delivery at the national level include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (as amended in December 2023);
- 2018 Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP);
- 2023 Environmental Improvement Plan;
- 2021 Environment Act;
- 2006 Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act;
- 2008 Climate Change Act (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019; and
- 2023 Levelling-up and Regeneration Act.

Figure D.1: National policy context



D.2 The NPPF (updated December 2023) **[See reference 88]** emphasises the importance of placing GI at the heart of plan making, reinforcing the value of taking a strategic approach to maintain and enhance networks of GI, and planning for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries (Paragraph 181). GI is identified as a tool to help meet the challenge of climate change (Paragraph 20), notably in relation to the planning of new development (Paragraph 159) and to promote healthy and safe communities (Paragraph 96).

D.3 Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that 'access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative and qualitative deficits and surpluses) and opportunities for mew provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and

recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

D.4 Paragraph 103 states that: 'existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better prevision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use'.

D.5 The NPPF also provides a mechanism by which local authorities can protect some open spaces through 'Local Green Space' designations (Paragraph 106). These areas should be managed by policies which are consistent with those for Green Belt.

D.6 The 2018 25YEP set the direction for the Environment Act, including long-term targets for environmental improvement. It sets a commitment to a national GI framework, a network of 'nature recovery areas' and to embed the principle of 'environmental net gain' to development (see later subheadings). These emerging approaches will become established during the lifespan of this Strategy. The 2023 Environmental Improvement Plan builds on the 25YEP vision, setting out how government, landowners, communities and businesses should deliver each goal for improving the environment. This is matched with interim targets to measure progress.

D.7 The 2021 Environment Act **[See reference 89]** requires the development of targets by government to enact change, and drive a landscape-scale, network-led response. The Act addresses four 'priority areas' of air quality, water, biodiversity and resource efficiency / waste reduction. The legislation also outlines the requirement for a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (Biodiversity

Net Gain). In addition, the Act includes a duty on local authorities to review every five years all policies regarding nature conservation.

D.8 The 2006 NERC Act **[See reference 90]** places a duty on public and local authorities to have 'regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions', including the provision of local polices and strategies, in planning and development control, and in managing their estates. Section 41 of the Act lists the habitats and species of principal importance; these are used to inform the identification of local conservation priorities.

D.9 A legal commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 was also introduced in a 2019 amendment to the 2008 Climate Change Act **[See reference 91]**.

D.10 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act **[See reference 92]** makes significant changes to the planning system with regard to the provision of GI, as outlined below:

- Requirements for design codes to accompany Local Plans;
- Strengthening protection of the historic environment through the planning system, including giving registered parks and gardens the same statutory protection as conservation areas; and
- Placing more weight on neighbourhood plans in decision making.

County level

Oxfordshire County Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050

D.11 Oxfordshire County Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) (2022 – 2050) **[See reference 93]** sets out the long-term county-wide vision and policies

for the delivery of an inclusive and safe net-zero transport system that will tackle inequality, deliver health and wellbeing improvements and promote social inclusivity, as well as enhance the natural and historic environment.

D.12 The LTCP outlines aims to improve sustainable travel across the county, including cycling and walking opportunities and access improvements. It includes specific reference within **Policy 30 – Green Infrastructure** which aims to embed the protection, maintenance and enhancement of GI within decision-making processes and work to deliver a transport network that achieves and, where possible, exceeds government and local Biodiversity Net Gain targets.

D.13 The LTCP is to be supported by several area and corridor travel plans which will aim to implement its vision and outcomes in locations across the county. This includes the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district-wide travel plan incorporating Didcot, Abingdon-on-Thames, Henley-on-Thames, Thame, Faringdon, Wallingford and Wantage.

Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan

D.14 Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) **[See reference 94]** was produced in 2010 by the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF). It includes a map of Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) across the county, individual CTA target statements, BAP habitat targets for achieving condition, restoration and creation of habitats, and numerical 2015 targets for restoration and creation of habitat.

State of Nature in Oxfordshire Report (2017)

D.15 The State of Nature in Oxfordshire Report 2017 **[See reference 95]** provides a comprehensive record of Oxfordshire's wildlife. The report was led by Wild Oxfordshire, with support from RSPB, Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Environment

Agency, Natural England, Oxfordshire County Council and Banbury Ornithological Society.

D.16 The report provides baseline data on the county's wildlife and habitats, including an overview of important species and designated sites, landscape-scale priority areas of nature, key habitats (lowland semi-natural grassland and heathland, rivers and wetlands, woodland and trees, farmland and settlements), as well as opportunities to improve nature in Oxfordshire, providing case-study nature restoration project examples.

D.17 The report identifies that to seek real change and improvement across the area requires taking a strategic, joined-up approach that can deliver coherent landscape-scale improvements for both nature and people. These can include Oxfordshire's Conservation Targets Areas (CTAs), BBOWT's Living Landscapes and RSPBs 'Futurescapes' initiatives, River Catchment Partnerships and the National Landscapes. It sets out key approaches that contribute to the aim of delivering 'more', 'bigger', 'better' and 'joined' outcomes for the ecological network including:

- Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management;
- Increase the size of current sites with high quality habitat;
- Enhance connections between, or join-up, sites either through wildlife corridors, or the creation of 'stepping stones';
- Create new sites where wildlife can thrive; and
- Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

Oxfordshire Draft Nature Recovery Network

D.18 The Environment Act (2021) **[See reference 96]** sets out the government's duties to support better spatial planning for nature through the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRs). The intention is that the whole of England will be covered by LNRs. The 25 Year Environment Plan

highlights six key areas for action for the environment, with one being to establish a Nature Recovery Network (Nature Recovery Network).

D.19 The draft Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network **[See reference 97]** has the vision of 'a future environment rich in wildlife and valued by all' with the aim of doubling the extent of land of high value for nature in the county by 2050. The development of the draft Nature Recovery Network map was conducted collaboratively by a partnership of local nature conservation organisations and informed by extensive consultation with a wide group of stakeholders.

D.20 Since 2006, Oxfordshire's Conservation Target Areas have established the spatial component of the area's approach to biodiversity, providing useful foundations for a local Nature Recovery Network in the county. The draft Nature Recovery Network consists of three zones – 1) the core zone (covering the most important sites for biodiversity in Oxfordshire, including nationally and locally designated sites, nature reserves, priority habitats and ancient woodland); 2) the recovery zone (comprising Conservation Target Areas, Important Freshwater Areas and additional areas to provide better habitat connectivity); and 3) the wider landscape zone (covering the rest of the county, recognising the important contribution that agricultural and urban landscapes can make to nature recovery).

Oxford University - Natural Capital Mapping in Oxfordshire

D.21 The University of Oxford Environmental Change Institute is working in partnership with two local authorities, Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council, on studies to help protect natural assets across the region. The team of researchers are working to create 'Natural Capital Maps' which show the ecosystem value of land in the area. Unlike previous maps, which have considerable focus on high-value ecological sites such as nature reserves and CTAs, these maps aim to show the ecosystem value of all land, including farmland and domestic gardens. The aim of the study is to provide a resource that will help to show the value of land for delivering multiple services for people

as well as nature, including health, wellbeing, local identity as well as biodiversity **[See reference 98]**.

North Wessex Downs National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan

D.22 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape team published a Nature Recovery Plan in 2023 **[See reference 99]** which identifies priorities for restoring nature in the protected landscape. The document sets out the policy framework, vision and baseline condition of nature in the North Wessex Downs. It also sets out overarching targets for the National Landscape and specific opportunities for the key habitats and species within the area i.e. chalk grasslands, rivers and streams, floodplain grazing marsh and lowland fen, lowland heath, meadows, farmed land, deciduous woodland, parklands, orchard and open waters/canals. It identifies actions, targets and practical opportunities to reverse biodiversity decline and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.

D.23 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape team have secured a £1.5 million grant from the government's Species Survival Fund which will help focus conservation efforts and kickstart delivery of the plan. Work within the Partnerships for Nature programme has commenced efforts on a number of projects within the National Landscape. This includes heathland and wood pasture restoration and enhancement, chalk grassland restoration, chalk stream and riverbank improvement, wetland restoration, new cultivated field margins and regenerative arable field management at seven sites across the area. The Partnerships for Nature programme will run until March 2026 **[See reference 100]**.

Local level

D.24 This section outlines details of the current Local Plans for both districts, which the new Joint Local Plan will replace once adopted. The evidence base to support the preparation of the Joint Local Plan 2041 will incorporate assessments of relevance to the preparation of this Strategy; including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Playing Pitch Strategy and wider landscape evidence base.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2011-2035)

D.25 South Oxfordshire's Local Plan (2011-2035) **[See reference 101]** was adopted in December 2020. The document and its supporting evidence base provide an overall strategic and spatial vision for the future of the district to 2035. The document identifies locations for housing, retail and employment land as well as the infrastructure required to support growth in the district.

D.26 The Local Plan is underpinned by a series of objectives which balance the principle of sustainable development with the need to provide sufficient development to meet the needs of the existing and future population. These include objectives for Infrastructure (Objective 4), including making sustainable transport, walking and cycling an attractive and viable choice for people; Design (Objective 5) including the delivery of well-designed, locally distinctive and sustainable developments; Community (Objective 6) championing neighbourhood planning, the provision of access to services and facilities and supporting sport, recreation and people's health and wellbeing; and Climate Change (Objective 8) which focuses on minimising carbon emissions and increasing our resilience to the impacts of climate change. Each of these objectives relate to the multi-functional benefits of GI. Objective 7 (Natural and Built Development) makes specific reference to protecting and enhancing GI as well as biodiversity, landscapes and waterways. The importance and value of the Oxford Green Belt, two National Landscapes and the river Thames are also highlighted.

D.27 The adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan's Spatial Strategy sets out the plan for strategic development across the district. This includes support for the delivery of ambitious GI provision as part of Didcot Garden Town (Policy STRAT3), as well as other strategic development site allocations.

D.28 The policies relating to GI (although not all specifically reference GI) in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan are listed below:

- Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside - sets out the Council's approach to ensuring the highest level of protection to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (now the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs National Landscapes). The policy also seeks to ensure that South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development, with the aim to retain important hedgerows.
- Policy ENV2: Biodiversity (Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species) – describes the approach to conserve and protect sites containing irreplaceable habitats or those subject to an international, national or local ecological designation.
- Policy ENV3: Biodiversity – seeks to ensure that development proposals conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, providing net gains in biodiversity.
- Policy ENV4: Watercourses – sets out the requirement that development of land that contains or lies adjacent to a watercourse must protect and enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity.
- Policy ENV5: Green Infrastructure in New Developments – outlines that development within the district will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional GI, whilst also protecting or enhancing the existing GI network. The policy states that proposals should provide an appropriate level of GI with regard to the requirements set out in the 2017 GI Strategy, AONB (now National Landscapes) Management Plans or the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Reference is also made to ensuring that GI provision is designed in regard to the quality standards set out in the 2017 GI Strategy, or where relevant the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.

- Policy ENV10: Historic Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes – states that development proposals should conserve or enhance the special historic interest of heritage assets. The GI and biodiversity value of historic landscapes is also underlined.
- Policy EP4: Flood Risk - seeks to ensure that flood risk is managed through development, including through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where appropriate, recognising that there is an opportunity through flood risk management or mitigation to achieve wider environmental benefits in relation to flood risk.
- Policy DES1: Delivering High Quality Development – sets out the requirement for all new development to exhibit high quality design principles, incorporating and providing links to a well-defined network of GI. The policy also states the need to ensure new development is sustainable and resilient to climate change.
- Policy DES2: Enhancing Local Character – underlines the need for all new development to enhance and complement the character of the local area, informed by contextual analysis.
- Policy DES4: Masterplans for Allocated Sites and Major Development – sets out the requirement for masterplans for allocated sites and major developments. This includes setting out GI provision within masterplans.
- Policy DES5: Outdoor Amenity Space – outlines the requirement for private outdoor gardens or outdoor amenity space for proposed residential developments.
- Policy DES8: Promoting Sustainable Design - seeks to ensure that all development proposals address the anticipated effects of climate change.
- Policy CF3: New Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities – outlines the principles for integration of new open spaces and / or sport / recreation facilities, including the requirements for future long-term maintenance and management.
- Policy CF4: Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities - describes the Council's approach to safeguard, improve, expand and promote access to open spaces through retaining and enhancing open

space and requiring new development to contribute to the provision of open space.

- Policy CF5: Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development – sets outs requirements for the provision of new facilities within development sites and in perpetuity.

Vale of White Horse Local Plan (2031)

D.29 The Vale of White Horse District's Local Plan (2031) and its supporting evidence base is divided into two parts. Part 1 **[See reference 102]** was adopted at Full Council in December 2016 and sets out the spatial vision and strategy as well as the strategic policies and objectives for the district to deliver sustainable development. Part 2 **[See reference 103]** was adopted at Full Council in October 2019 and is supportive of Part 1, setting out specific policies, locations and additional development sites for housing within the district's portion of Oxford's housing need up to 2031. The Oxfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, and saved policies of the Local Plan 2011 (until Local Plan Part 2 was adopted) fed into the current Local Plan Parts 1 and 2.

D.30 The Local Plan Part 1 includes a series of objectives that are centred around four key themes; building healthy and sustainable communities; supporting economic prosperity; sustainable transport and accessibility; and protecting the environment and responding to climate change. Objective 4 makes specific reference to maintaining the natural environment; including GI as well as biodiversity, landscape, and waterways. The objective also highlights the importance of enhancing and conserving natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets of the district whilst minimising pollution and improving climate change resilience with particular emphasis on flood mitigation.

D.31 The policies relating to GI (although not all specifically reference GI) in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan are listed below:

- Core Policy 13 / 13a: The Oxford Green Belt – sets out guidance for development within the Green Belt, ensuring its openness and permanence is maintained.
- Core Policy 14 / 14a: Strategic Water Storage Reservoirs – outlines the offsetting requirements for any proposal for a reservoir, including maximising the creation of wildlife habitats and biodiversity and promoting recreational uses of the reservoir in line with landscape and biodiversity values.
- Core Policy 33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility – underlines the need for sustainable transport access both within new sites and linking with existing sites / facilities / employment. The policy also seeks to promote improvements to the transport network to increase safety, air quality and attractiveness of towns and villages.
- Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking – seeks to ensure that new developments encourage and enable cycling and walking as preferred modes of transport within sites and linking to nearby services / employment areas / educational facilities / public transport hubs.
- Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness – outlines that new development should conserve and enhance historic character, reinforce local identity or establish a district identity whilst also incorporating and / or linking to high quality GI and landscaping to enhance biodiversity and meet recreational needs, including PRoWs.
- Core Policy 38: Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites – sets out the requirement for proposals for housing allocations and major developments to be accompanied by; a Masterplan that contains a GI framework to ensure public and private open space standards are met, relate well to each other and to existing areas, and that new spaces are safe, convenient, accessible and functional. An outline of GI provision, suitable infrastructure such as SuDS in the public realm, and existing and potential movement connections should also be provided. A Design and Access Statement should contain the principles and steps taken to reinforce local distinctiveness to achieve a positive sense of place and identity as well as how sustainability and environmental matters will be addressed.

- Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment – states that the Council will work with landowners, developers, community, Historic England and other stakeholders to ensure development conserves / enhances heritage assets and their setting and to encourage understanding of the significance of these assets and conservation areas.
- Core Policy 40: Sustainable Design and Construction – seeks to ensure that all development proposals address the anticipated effects of climate change, with particular emphasis on flood risk mitigation.
- Core Policy 42: Flood Risk – seeks to ensure that flood risk is managed with wider environmental benefits maximised through development, that new development is directed to areas with the lowest probable flood risk, and to effectively manage areas where flood risk is high.
- Core Policy 43: Natural Resources – encourages developers to make provision for the effective use of natural resources where applicable, including maximising renewable energy sources, minimising waste by for example harvesting grey water, and avoiding development of the most versatile agricultural or high environmental value land.
- Core Policy 44: Landscape – outlines that key features such as hedgerows, field boundaries and watercourses will be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced. The policy also states that high priority for conservation and enhancement will be given to the North Wessex Downs AONB (now North Wessex National Landscape).
- Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure – seeks to ensure a net gain in GI, including biodiversity, through on-site provision or off-site contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources. It outlines that proposals will be required to contribute to the delivery of new GI and / or the improvement of existing assets such as Conservation Target Areas.
- Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity – permits development that conserves, restores or enhances biodiversity including the connection of sites, habitat restoration and enhancement, and habitat re-creation. The policy highlights that the level of protection / mitigation should be proportionate to the status of habitat or species and its importance individually and as part of a wider network.

South and Vale Joint Design Guide

D.32 As part of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' commitment to securing the highest quality development within the districts, the South and the Vale Design Guide **[See reference 104]** is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which aligns with the National Design Guide (2019). It is relevant for all scales of development and sets out a number of objectives for consideration at the outset of and throughout the design process, within the local context of the two districts. These include specific reference to GI i.e. 'ensure the proposal incorporates and / or links to a well-defined network of green and blue infrastructure'. The multi-functional benefits of GI are also referenced; including landscape character, biodiversity net gain, climate mitigation and adaptation, delivering a high-quality public realm and opportunities for active travel.

Didcot GI Strategy

D.33 Prepared on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council, the Didcot GI Strategy assesses current GI provision and provides guidance on the enhancement, expansion and connectivity of the network. The report is underpinned by the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan (2017) **[See reference 105]**, which includes proposals to transform Didcot into a 'super green town'. Projected population growth in Didcot and the surrounding area, due to the proposed development of Didcot Garden Town, is likely to reveal deficiencies in existing greenspaces. However, this development also presents opportunities to deliver ambitious GI provision, the mechanisms of which are outlined in the document. Based on an assessment of future provision, a range of project options set out proposals for GI enhancement across Didcot. The proposals are organised as short, medium and long-term objectives, with the overarching aim of promoting landscape-scale connectivity.

Neighbourhood level

D.34 Both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils have supported communities who have wished to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP).

D.35 Within South Oxfordshire, the neighbourhood planning areas of Wheatley, Cuddesdon and Denton, Little Milton, Tiddington with Albury, Tetsworth, Sydenham, Lewknor, Pyrton, Culham, Long Wiltenham, Dorchester, Berrick Salome, Ewelme, Benson, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, East Hagbourne, Cholsey, Crowmarsh, Goring, Woodcote, Kidmore End, Sonning Common, Henley-on-Thames and Harpsden and Shiplake have all made and adopted NDPs. Other communities including Beckley and Stowood, Stanton St John, Horpath, Garsington, Thame, Aston Rowant, Chalgrove, Clifton Hampden, Berinsfield, Warborough and Shillingford, Watlington, Wallingford, South Stoke, Binfield Heath and Eye and Dunsden are all at various stages of NDP preparation and adoption.

D.36 Within the Vale of White Horse, the communities of Appleton with Eaton, Asbury, Blewbury, Chilton, Cumnor, Drayton, East Challow, Faringdon, Great Coxwell, Longworth, North Hinksey, Shrivenham, Radley, Uffington and Baulking, West Hanney and Wooton and St. Helen Without have all made and adopted NDPs. The communities of Abingdon-on-Thames, Ardington and Lockinge, Charney Basset, East Hanney, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Marcham, Shellingford, Stanford in the Vale, Steventon, Sunningwell, Sutton Courtenay and Wantage are all at various stages of plan preparation and adoption.

D.37 Some of the adopted Neighbourhood Plans across the districts include proposed allocations for designated Local Green Spaces (LGSs), on which new development will not be supported other than in very special circumstances. LGS designations allow communities to identify and protect areas of importance to them and as such policies for managing development within a LGS should emulate that of Green Belts with focus on sustainable development and GI in relation to value to the local community, local environment, and local economy.

The NPPF also stipulates that LGS designations should only be used where the greenspace is:

- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Holds local significance, such as for its beauty, historic value, recreational value, tranquillity, or biodiversity value; and
- Local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

D.38 There are a number of LGS allocated throughout the districts through adopted NDPs, including village greens, allotments, play areas, sports pitches, ponds, and parks.

D.39 Figure D.2 shows the distribution of adopted NDPs and LGS designations within both districts.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI Strategy and Open Space Study
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

LUC

Figure D.2: Distribution of allocated Local Green Spaces within adopted neighbourhood development plans

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- Adopted neighbourhood development plan
- Local Green Space within adopted neighbourhood development plan

0 5 10 km

Map scale 1:225,000 @ A3

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Appendix E

Addressing global issues at a local scale

E.1 This Strategy was developed against the backdrop of global challenges, forming the 'backbone' of key drivers for GI opportunities. The following section outlines the key challenges facing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts. Positively addressing these challenges in the context of future growth pressures will transform the issues into opportunities for positive change within the districts.

Climate challenge

E.2 In 2019, both districts declared a 'Climate Emergency'. A proposed reduction in carbon emissions forms a key target of both Councils, with pledges to significantly reduce carbon emissions across the districts by 2030. South Oxfordshire District Council is targeting a date of 2030 to become a carbon neutral district. At Vale of White Horse District Council, a 75% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 is proposed **[See reference 106]**. Average carbon emissions per person within Oxfordshire fell by 35% between 2008 and 2019, but remain above the national average. This pattern is observed within both South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts, largely as a result of emissions from transport **[See reference 107]**. As part of their Climate Action Plans, both districts acknowledge the need to put climate considerations at the core of decision making and policy, and working in partnership across the region in order to achieve their aims.

E.3 The GI network provides an opportunity to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts. However, consideration is required to understand the impacts on the GI network which are set to amplify due to climate change, such as the increased frequency and magnitude of extreme weather. Links to climate

change are referred to throughout, but the key emphasis in the Strategy relates to:

- Building on key existing assets and extending their influence within the GI network, including areas of intact woodland and extensive blue corridors;
- Leveraging the extensive areas of agricultural land into a key part of the GI network, increasing biodiversity and connectivity across these areas;
- Improving habitat connectivity and increasing protective buffers around key ecological assets, to strengthen climate resilience;
- Enhancing waterways and associated floodplains, improving water quality and provision, as well as mitigating flood and drought risk;
- Promoting locally appropriate urban greening to increase carbon storage within settlements, as well as reducing urban heat island effect and mitigating surface flood risks; and
- Delivering active travel networks to reduce transport emissions with the aim of encouraging sustainable travel and improving health and wellbeing.

Biodiversity challenge

E.4 Globally, nature is facing an unprecedented decline: natural ecosystems have declined by almost half, over 1 million species are threatened with extinction, and the global biomass of wild mammals has declined by over 80% **[See reference 108]**. This is mirrored within Oxfordshire, with huge losses in natural grassland habitats, severe impacts on water quality and river habitat, and resulting significant decreases in farmland and woodland biodiversity **[See reference 109]**. South Oxfordshire District Council declared an Ecological Emergency in 2021, reflecting a priority set out in the South Oxfordshire Corporate Plan to protect and restore biodiversity.

E.5 Increased intensification of agriculture has led to habitat loss and fragmentation, and the transport corridors within both districts act as barriers to wildlife movements. However, the identification of opportunities for habitat protection, creation, enhancement and connection at a local and regional scale

will aid in addressing these challenges. The GI network will need to accommodate future growth, but balanced with the need for habitat and species protection, avoiding loss whenever possible and promoting the delivery of locally appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain.

E.6 The existing ecological networks across both districts are rich and varied, with two National Landscapes and numerous sites designated for nature conservation. However, habitat connectivity across the districts is somewhat fragmented, with gaps apparent in the continuity of core habitat across the districts (see **Chapter 3**). As the prevailing land use, the opportunity exists for agricultural land to deliver enhancements for biodiversity. Delivering nature recovery is therefore underpinned by the need for natural spaces to become bigger, better and more joined up. Climate change and biodiversity loss are also closely linked – species struggle to adapt to changing global temperatures, and the ongoing and consistent degradation of ecosystems undermines nature's ability to regulate carbon emissions. Without a good quality and reliable network of GI, we undermine nature's ability to be productive, resilient and adapt to a changing climate.

Health challenge

E.7 Access to greenspace and GI offers the potential to support the delivery of significant physical and mental health benefits for residents and communities within the districts, a key finding of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several studies have recognised the role of greenspace and active travel networks **[See reference 110]**, two pillars of a successful GI network, in combating health challenges. Public Health England (PHE) highlights that people who have greater exposure to greenspace have a range of more favourable physiological outcomes, although competing demands for space is putting pressure on these resources **[See reference 111]**. Additionally, evidence has shown that the 'naturalness' of greenspaces can improve mental health benefits, with possibilities to use GI as an asset for 'social prescribing' within the districts **[See reference 112]**. Social prescribing refers to a holistic approach to healthcare that brings together the social and medical models of health and wellness. The approach provides a formal pathway for health providers to address the diverse

determinants of health, using the familiar and trusted process of writing a prescription.

Economic challenge

E.8 The GI network within the districts performs a role in creating attractive places to live, work and invest, particularly within areas of growth and development. Some studies have shown that incorporating GI into public open spaces can improve economic activity by up to 40% **[See reference 113]**. This is particularly relevant for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts given the projected population growth and the need for carefully planned GI provision to support a growing population. For this to be achieved, GI must be considered from the outset, as part of a GI-led approach to design and planning. GI also encourages cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods, which are fundamental to attracting high-quality investment.

Appendix F

Open space methodology and detailed audit results

Data collation

How has the open space data set been collated?

F.1 The following data sets were provided by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils:

- Open space data for Vale of White Horse, created by Kit Campbell (YEAR)
- South Ox local data set (YEAR AND SOURCE)
- Accessible Natural Greenspace data (ANGSt) created by AECOM (YEAR)
- OS Open Space data (publicly accessible)
- OS MasterMap data (available through Local Authority licence)
- CRoW Open Access land (publicly accessible)
- Aerial imagery (Bing and google)
- Google street view
- Strava global heat map

F.2 Previous open space strategies for both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse focussed on amenity greenspace, parks and gardens and sport provision within settlements. A number of steps were taken to generate the final dataset, as listed below:

6. Removal of private spaces (e.g. school grounds) and golf clubs from existing the data sets.

7. Natural greenspace outside of settlements was mapped as part of the ANGSt study (YEAR). However, on closer inspection, this dataset comprised 'natural' spaces, but they were not necessarily publicly accessible. Therefore, a manual search of the districts, using aerial imagery and open access data was undertaken to identify these rural natural open spaces.

8. Missing and new open spaces were identified based on a manual search of aerial imagery and Google Street View, particularly where new development was present.

9. All open spaces were viewed on aerial imagery and Google Street View to determine the most appropriate typology.

10. Finally, the data set was checked by staff at South Oxfordshire District Council.

F.3 Whilst the dataset has been collated as thoroughly as possible, due to the large area covered by the districts and in some rural locations absence of up-to-date Google Street View, there may be some discrepancies. Any accessible open space being used by the public should be maintained as such, even if it was not recorded within this data set. In addition, the dataset may include car park spaces or buildings adjacent too or within the open space. These do not need to be afforded the same protection as accessible open space.

How have typologies been defined?

F.4 Each open space site has been assigned a primary typology, based on key characteristics and functionality. The types of open space identified in the districts are set out and described below.

- **Parks and gardens:** Accessible greenspace offering opportunities for informal and organised recreation, often with a mix of habitats (including trees, grass and ornamental planting). These are multi-functional open spaces, providing space for quiet relaxation and a range of amenities. Parks and gardens may also contain equipped children's play, teenage facilities and / or outdoor sports facilities. Access may be restricted to opening hours.
- **Recreation grounds:** Accessible greenspace offering opportunities for organised sport, as well as other informal recreation and play facilities. They may be owned or managed by a local sports club, with permissive access for dog walking and play. These sites are often located next to a village hall, sports club or other community facility, forming an important social area for local outdoor events.
- **Natural greenspace:** Accessible greenspace which primarily provides access to nature, as well as space for wildlife conservation, management for biodiversity and environmental education. Visitor facilities and amenities may be limited, but the offer space for quiet contemplation, wildlife watching and walking. They include small areas of woodland as well as larger country parks and destination sites, with car parking facilities and interpretation signage.
- **Amenity greenspace:** Typically smaller areas of accessible greenspace found close to where people live or work. These sites offer a less formal greenspace experience than parks and gardens, generally with fewer amenities and facilities. Within new developments, these areas may include SuDS including swales or detention basins, as well as areas of new tree planting, wildflower meadow and children's play areas.
- **Provision for children and teenagers:** Accessible equipped facilities providing opportunities for play, sport and recreation for children and teenagers of different ages. This also includes those aimed at children and young people, including Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), BMX tracks, skate parks and green gyms. Kick-around areas within fenced play areas are also included. Generally these areas do no support other recreation, with dogs and unaccompanied adults often unwelcome.

- **Churchyards and cemeteries:** Accessible burial space, offering opportunities for quiet contemplation and reflection as well as habitat refuges, particularly where veteran trees are present. Active recreation, including play and sports is not supported within these types of open space.
- **Outdoor sports:** Organised sport, with access usually restricted to paying members and sports clubs. This includes grass and artificial pitches, with use limited to participation in sport. Habitat provision and other functionality provided may be limited.
- **Community food growing spaces (including allotments):** Opportunities for the community to grow their own produce. Use of allotments is generally restricted to members, with limited access for non-members.

F.5 For the purposes of this Strategy, all contiguous, individual open spaces have been assigned a 'primary typology'. However, an individual open space can support a range of functions and it is important that this is reflected in the analysis.

F.6 The use of 'secondary typologies' are used when a discrete area of an open space has a distinctive function or character, separate to the wider site. The use of secondary typologies allows quantitative analysis of all open spaces within the districts, including specific functions such as outdoor sports typologies, whilst avoiding duplication.

F.7 Secondary typologies have been identified for provision for children and teenagers and outdoor sports.

Accessible greenspace

F.8 The NEGIF describes accessible greenspace as areas available for the general public to use free of charge and without time restrictions. Accessible greenspaces are available to all, meaning that every reasonable effort is made to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2020. The sites are typically

characterised by areas of vegetation set within a landscape or townscape, often including blue space (i.e. lakes, rivers and wetlands).

F.9 For the purposes of this Strategy, accessible greenspace is classified within the following typologies:

- Parks and gardens;
- Recreational grounds;
- Natural greenspace; and
- Amenity greenspace.

How have hierarchies been defined?

F.10 A size-based hierarchy has been used, based on the assumption that larger areas of greenspace have the potential to provide more facilities and deliver a greater offer. These sites are therefore more likely to attract users from a wider area and score more highly on quality and value criteria. These are shown in **Table F.1.**

Table F.1: Hierarchies of open spaces

Hierarchy	Applicable typologies	Minimum size
District accessible greenspace	Parks and gardens	100 hectares
District accessible greenspace	Recreation grounds	100 hectares
District accessible greenspace	Natural greenspace	100 hectares
Wider neighbourhood accessible greenspace	Parks and gardens	20 hectares

Hierarchy	Applicable typologies	Minimum size
Wider neighbourhood accessible greenspace	Recreation grounds	20 hectares
Wider neighbourhood accessible greenspace	Natural greenspace	20 hectares
Neighbourhood accessible greenspace	Parks and gardens	10 hectares
Neighbourhood accessible greenspace	Recreation grounds	10 hectares
Neighbourhood accessible greenspace	Natural greenspace	10 hectares
Local accessible greenspace	Parks and gardens	2 hectares
Local accessible greenspace	Recreation grounds	2 hectares
Local accessible greenspace	Natural greenspace	2 hectares
Local accessible greenspace	Amenity greenspace	2 hectares
Doorstep accessible greenspace	Parks and gardens	0.5 hectares
Doorstep accessible greenspace	Recreation grounds	0.5 hectares
Doorstep accessible greenspace	Natural greenspace	0.5 hectares
Doorstep accessible greenspace	Amenity greenspace	0.5 hectares
Pocket accessible greenspace	Parks and gardens	0.01 hectares
Pocket accessible greenspace	Recreation grounds	0.01 hectares
Pocket accessible greenspace	Natural greenspace	0.01 hectares

Hierarchy	Applicable typologies	Minimum size
Pocket accessible greenspace	Amenity greenspace	0.01 hectares
Local Area of Play (LAP)	Provision for children and teenagers	0.01 hectares
Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)	Provision for children and teenagers	0.04 hectares
Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP)	Provision for children and teenagers	0.1 hectares

F.11 A hierarchy has not been applied to outdoor sports, cemeteries and churchyards or community food growing spaces (including allotments), where the functionality is less dependent on the size of the site.

F.12 The hierarchy for amenity greenspace has been capped at 'local'. The location and character of this typology limits the overall functionality of, and distance people will travel to reach, these sites.

F.13 The open space dataset includes some very small areas of open space (less than 0.02 hectares), which do not fit in any of the hierarchies. These open spaces are limited in terms of their functionality and it is unlikely that visitors would travel to access these spaces. These can be considered incidental greenspaces which will be included in the quantity analysis within this Strategy but will not have specific quality and value and access standards assigned.

F.14 The exception to this is where sites are equipped to provide for a specific function. This includes provision for children and teenagers, churchyards and cemeteries, outdoor sports and community food growing spaces (including allotments).

Quantity

How has open space per 1,000 of the population been calculated?

F.15 When calculating open space per 1,000 of the population for the districts, only open space within the two districts themselves was considered. Where an open space crossed the district boundaries, only that area within the settlement was calculated as contributing to the quantity of open space. The total quantity (in hectares) of open space for each typology within the district boundaries was then divided by the population estimates and multiplied by 1,000.

F.16 For the Tier 1 settlements, manual identification of the open spaces that were located within each of the settlements was used to sum the quantity of open space in the settlement. These quantities only considered open space within the built footprint of the settlement. Whist adjacent open spaces outside the built footprint of the settlement may be regularly used by those within the settlement, these are also likely to support a wider population and so for the purposes of understanding quantum of greenspace per 1,000 they were excluded. Maps showing the open spaces used for the quantity calculation in each settlement are shown in **Figure F.1** - **Figure F.7**.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse GI Strategy and Open Space Study
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

LUC

Figure F.1: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Abingdon-on-Thames

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries

Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

Amenity greenspace

Churchyard and cemeteries

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Natural greenspace

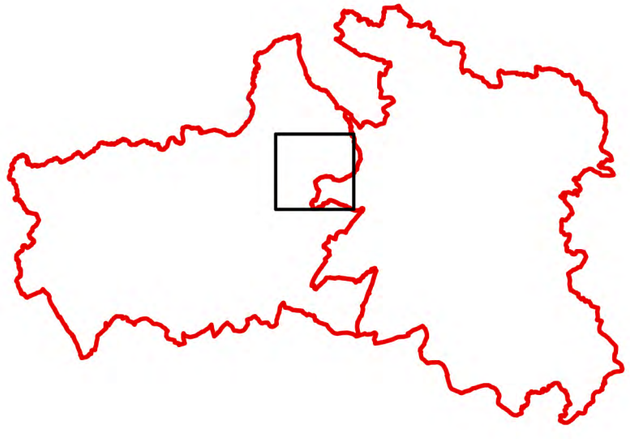
Outdoor sports

Parks and gardens

Provision for children and teenagers

Recreation ground

Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:26,000 @ A3

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South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

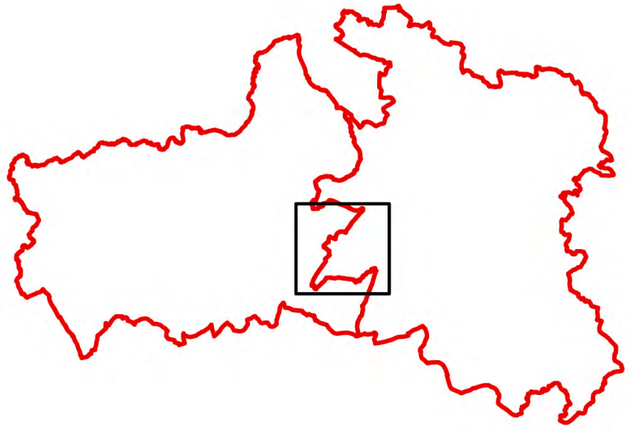
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Figure F.2: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Didcot

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries
- Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Community food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground
- Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



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South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

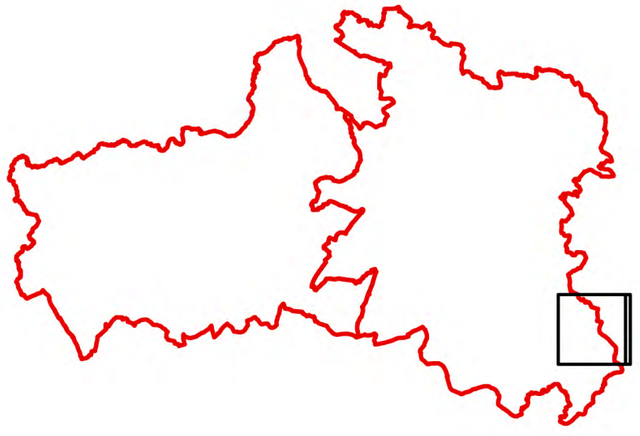
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Figure F.3: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Henley-on-Thames

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries
- Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Community food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground
- Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

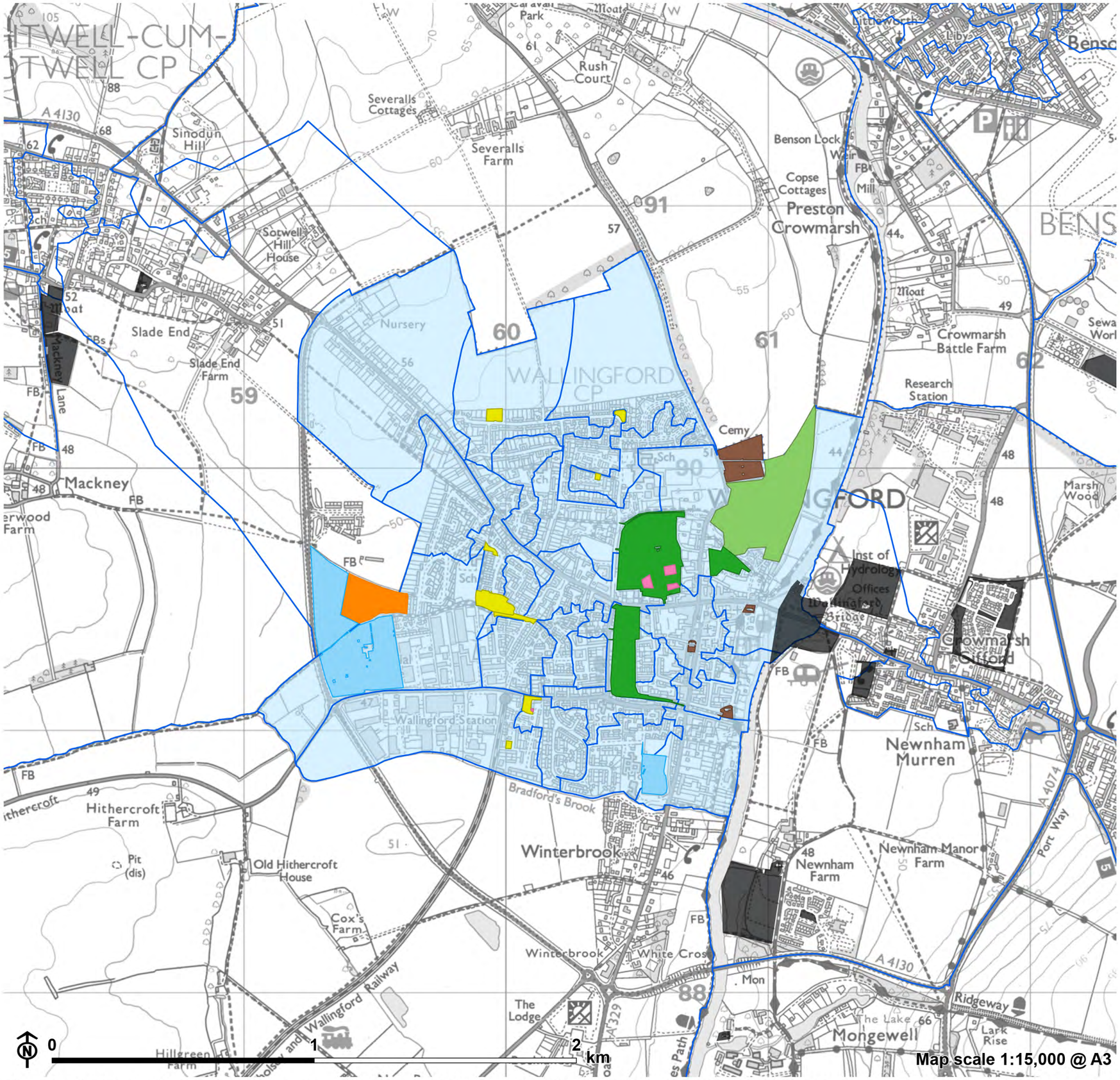
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Figure F.4: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Wallingford

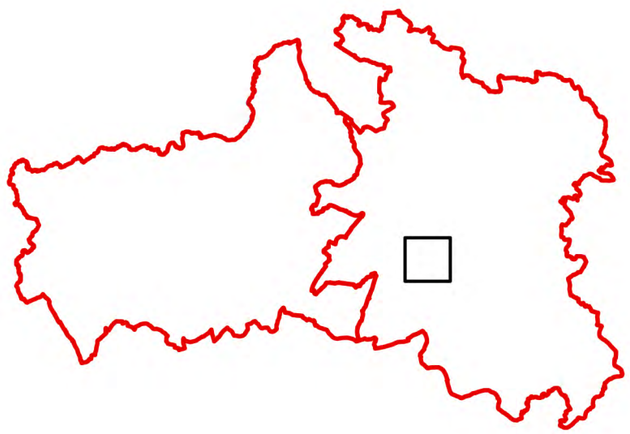
- Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries
- Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Community food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground
- Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3



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Figure F.5: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Faringdon

Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries

Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

Amenity greenspace

Churchyard and cemeteries

Community food growing spaces (including allotments)

Natural greenspace

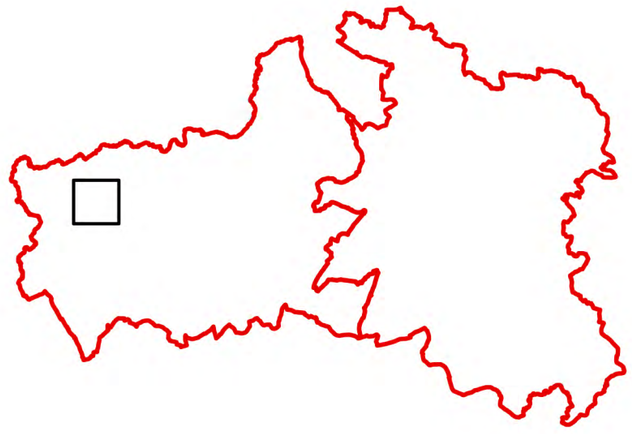
Outdoor sports

Parks and gardens

Provision for children and teenagers

Recreation ground

Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



0 1 2 km

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South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

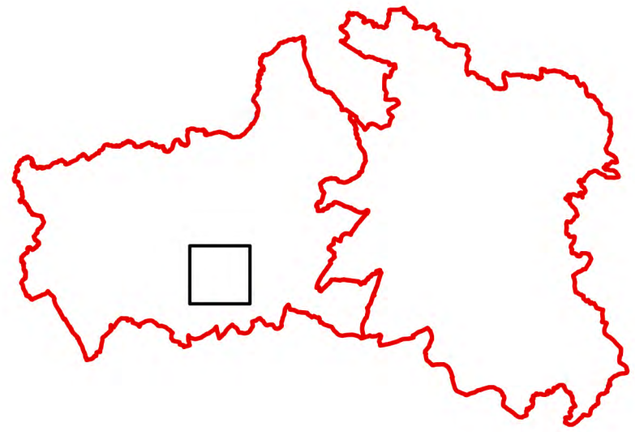
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Figure F.6: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Wantage

- Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries
- Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Community food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground
- Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



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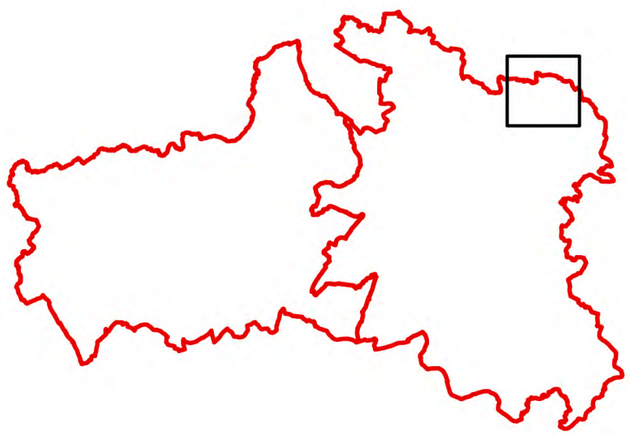
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Figure F.7: Output areas and open spaces used for quantity calculations in Thame

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse
- Output Areas (OAs) within tier 1 settlement boundaries
- Output Areas (OAs) boundary

Open space by primary typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Churchyard and cemeteries
- Community food growing spaces (including allotments)
- Natural greenspace
- Outdoor sports
- Parks and gardens
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Recreation ground
- Open space site (not included in quantity analysis for this settlement)



0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:24,000 @ A3

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How has population been estimated?

F.17 Data from the 2021 Census has been used to derive projections of annual population through to 2041. These estimations have been used to assess the provision of open space within the districts.

F.18 The population projections used for this analysis are summarised in **Table F.2**.

Table F.2: Population estimates

Age range and district	2024 population	2041 population
South Oxfordshire total	152,932	199,377
Vale of White Horse total	146,201	198,879
Both districts total	299,133	393,255

F.19 Locally held population estimates provide yearly estimated population for each MSOA (Medium Super Output Area) between 2021 (the last Census data) up to 2041. The 2024 estimate from this dataset has been used as the estimate for population across both districts.

F.20 To estimate population for the Tier 1 settlements, the following steps were undertaken:

1. Identify the OAs (Output Areas) that best matched the footprint of each settlements.

2. Sum the 2021 population from the relevant OAs based on data from the 2021 Census (relevant OAs are also included in **Figure F.1** -**Figure F.7**).

3. Apply the district-wide population uplift between 2021 and 2024 to estimate the 2024 population for each settlement (multiply by 103.86%).

F.21 As the majority of population increase is projected within settlements, and some rural MSOAs may have seen a decline rather than increase in population, it is acknowledged that these population estimates may be slightly lower than actual population. However, by applying this methodology population estimates are expected to be closer to the actual population compared to just using the 2021 population from the latest Census.

F.22 The population used for each settlement is shown below.

Table F.3: Population projections for Tier 1 settlements

Settlement	Estimated 2024 population
Abingdon-on-Thames	34,194
Didcot	35,704
Faringdon	8,069
Henley-on-Thames	12,666
Thame	12,493
Wallingford	8,193
Wantage	13,079

Quality and Value

How were the open space sites to be audited identified?

F.23 A sample of 200 sites were visited throughout the districts and subject to a detailed audit based on the Green Flag Award themes. The selection of the 200 sites was based on the following principles:

- Geographic spread of sites: At least one site was selected for each of the Tier 1, 2 and 3 settlements, with more sites audited in larger settlements.
- Focus on multi-functional typologies: Parks and gardens, recreation grounds and provision for children and teenagers typologies were prioritised, as well as national and local nature reserves. Larger sites were also selected for inclusion based on the assumption that these sites would deliver a greater recreational offer.
- Inclusion of a number of recently delivered open space sites: The selection included open spaces delivered as part of new development, and often managed externally. These reflect the types of open spaces that are likely to be delivered as part of future development, so it was important to understand how these sites were performing.

How were open spaces audited?

F.24 The site audit form is based on the Green Flag Award criteria. This is the recognised benchmark standard for open space management in the UK and internationally. The following themes were considered within the audit form:

- A Welcoming Place: Welcoming, good & safe access, signage, equal access for all.

- Healthy, Safe and Secure: Safe equipment & facilities, personal security, dog fouling, appropriate provision of facilities, quality of facilities.
- Clean and Well Maintained: Litter & waste management, grounds maintenance & horticulture, building & infrastructure maintenance.
- Sustainability: Environmental sustainability, waste minimisation, arboriculture & woodland management.
- Nature Conservation and Heritage: Conservation of nature features, wild flora & fauna, conservation of landscape features, conservation of buildings & structures.
- Community Involvement: Community involvement in management & development including outreach work, appropriate provision for the community
- Marketing and Culture: Marketing & promotion, provision of appropriate information, provision of appropriate education interpretation/information

F.25 In addition, a separate audit form was used to take a closer look at the play provision on site. This was undertaken for provision of children and teenagers, including secondary typology. This is referred to as the ‘play audit’.

F.26 Sites were audited against a numeric scoring system. The audit form and accompanying scoring guidance are provided in **Appendix G** and **Appendix H.** The audit form is designed to be repeatable, allowing audits of other open spaces to be undertaken.

F.27 Criteria on the audit form is categorised as outlined below:

- 'Value' (the presence of various features and facilities, and value to the local community); or
- 'Quality' (aspects relating to management and the condition of features and facilities).

F.28 The need to consider quality and value separately is usefully set out within the (now superseded) Planning Practice Guidance 17 (PPG 17) Companion

Guide which states “quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated”. PPG17 remains the most recent guidance which sets out a detailed method for undertaking open space assessments. For example, an open space may be of high quality (by virtue of being well maintained and in good condition), but if it is not accessible or does not have the level of facilities that would be expected of the type of site, it may be of low value. Conversely, an open space could have an appropriate range and level of facilities (high value), but the condition of the site or standards of maintenance could still fall short (low quality).

F.29 Audits were undertaken between 8th April 2024 and 13th April 2024, which coincided with Easter school holidays. This may have increased the number of users on sites, particularly families, as well as the number of people visiting larger, destination sites on days out.

F.30 A separate play audit was completed for provision for children and teenagers, in addition to the full open space audit form.

How have quality and value scores been calculated?

F.31 Individual questions within the audit form were assigned a numeric value, which contributed to either the quality score or the value score.

F.32 For the most part, questions relating to quality scored features on a 1-5 scale:

- 1 = Very poor;
- 2 = Poor;
- 3 = Fair;
- 4 = Good;
- 5 = Very good; and

- 0 = Not applicable (used only when the feature being scored is not present).

F.33 Value scores were usually scored if a certain feature or characteristic was present, with a score of 0 if the feature or characteristic was not present.

F.34 After completion of the audit form, the quality and value scores were summed to create a final quality and final value score.

How have site audit scores been analysed?

F.35 The purpose of undertaking the site audits was to provide a strategic assessment of the quality and value of sites across the districts, providing guidance on where enhancements should be prioritised.

F.36 A breakdown and comparison of the scores for each of the themes and questions is presented below. Understanding how different typologies of open space score according to themes is useful for identifying opportunities for future management and helping assign benchmark scores.

F.37 The adopted and proposed NDPs outlined above also set out additional policies and design principles for the incorporation of GI within local communities and potential opportunities for the enhancement of the local GI network, providing additional local and site-specific context for the areas they cover.

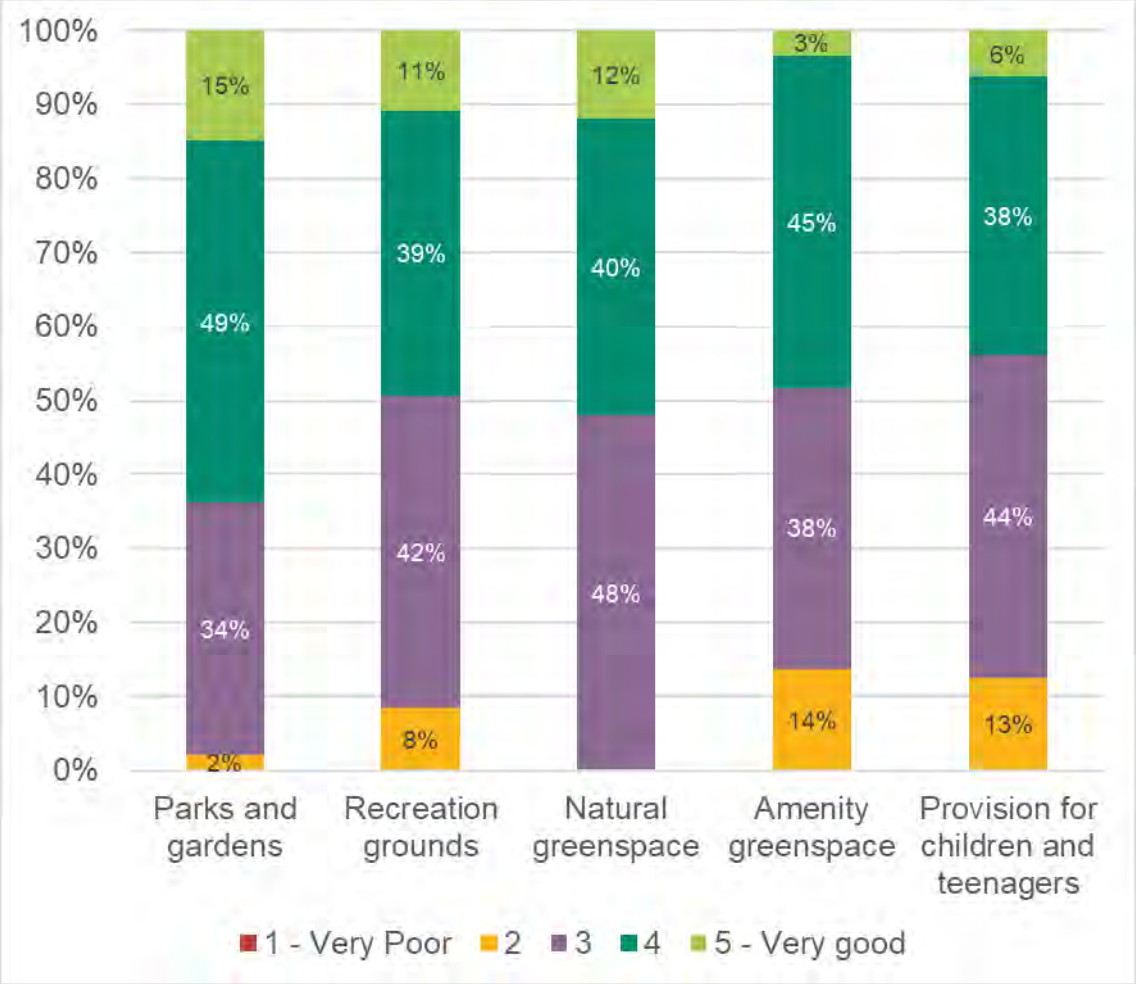
A welcoming place

Entrances

Entrances can contribute to how sites are perceived by potential visitors and local residents. To be inviting, entrances should be open, clean, in a good state of repair and provide some visibility in and out of the site. They should be easy to find, generally have welcome or advisory signage, and be of an appropriate size for all users.

The results of the site audits, shown at **Figure F.8**, indicate that the quality of entrances across all audited sites is generally good. No audited sites scored 'very poor' for the quality of entrances, and only 7% of all sites scored 'poor'. However, there is some variation across the typologies. Parks and gardens achieved the highest proportion of ‘very good’ scores for this criterion, followed by natural greenspaces and recreation grounds. Amenity greenspaces often do not have an obvious entrance.

Figure F.8: Extent to which entrances are well presented



Signage

Up to date, clear, good quality signage that is accessible and legible for a range of users gives an indication of whether a site is well cared for and can enhance the experience for new and regular users. For larger sites and natural greenspaces, signage can be used to indicate promoted walking and cycling routes and provide information as to what facilities are on site. Good signage should provide information suitable for locals and visitors in appropriate levels of detail, and be generally positive and welcoming in tone. Inclusive signage considerations were also audited. This may include the use of multiple

languages, suitable size and colour of text and background, and complexity of language used.

As shown in **Figure F.9,** the overall provision of signage varies across open spaces. The amenity greenspace typology scored particularly low, with over 60% of sites scoring 'very poor' or 'poor'. However, many of these sites will have limited facilities and features, which reduces the need for signage. Wayfinding and directional signage may be of use to these sites. Of the 200 sites audited, only 18 sites contained signage that included inclusive considerations.

Figure F.9: Overall provision of welcoming signage



Quality of access

The audits included an assessment of both the quality of access to the open space as well as within and through the open space. Quality of access to open spaces may be influenced by several factors. Some sites benefit from good access via several modes of transport, such as nearby public transport links, provision of car parking, cycle paths and cycle parking. Where located within urban areas, amenity greenspaces should offer easy access for informal recreation close to residential properties.

Watercourses within the districts, including the Thames River corridor, can provide physical barriers to accessing sites from nearby residences. Topographical variations may also limit access in places, and influence the use of some sites and limits good access. This can be a particular issue for those less mobile, including elderly residents. Due to the range of facilities that may be provided, parks and gardens and recreation grounds require careful consideration of the Equality Act (2010). Open spaces will provide a wider range of benefits if they have good access for all, and can be used by the elderly, infirm, and people with physical disabilities.

Generally, all sites audited performed fairly well against the access to open space criterion, as shown in **Figure F.10** and there were no ‘very poor’ scores. However, there was also only a limited number of sites which scored 'very good' (4% of all audited sites).

Figure F.11 shows the quality of access and accesses within and through the open spaces. All typologies again broadly perform well with no ‘very poor’ sites and only 5% of all audited sites scoring 'poor'. Parks and gardens in particular scored well, with 80% scoring ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Natural greenspace, overall scored below average, with 20% of audited sites scoring 'poor'. 90% of the sites have step free access. Those sites without were mostly recreation grounds and parks and gardens.

Figure F.10: Overall quality of access to the open space

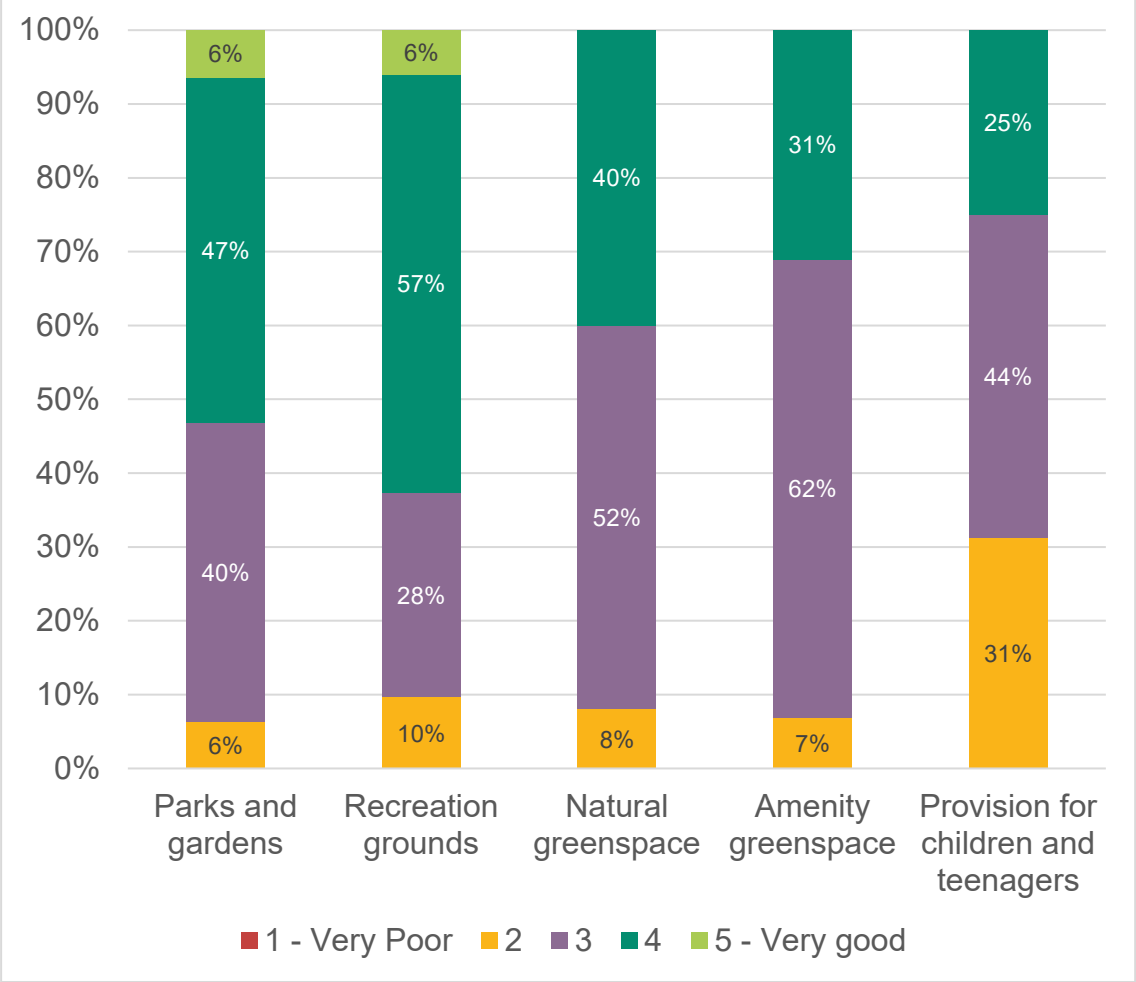
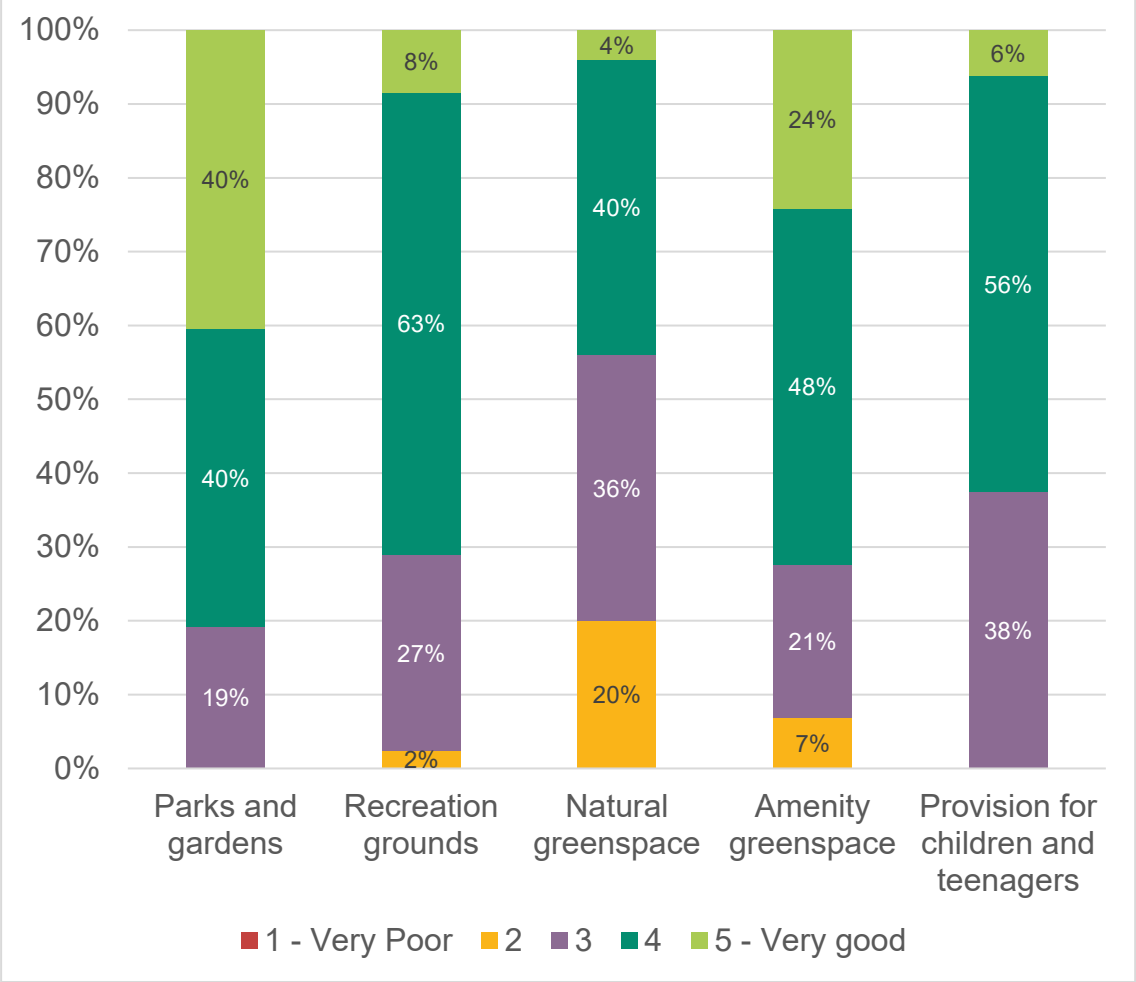


Figure F.11: Overall quality of access within the open space



Healthy, safe, and secure

Community safety and sense of security

This Green Flag Award theme relates to facilities, site attributes and management aspects that encourage and facilitate active and informal recreation, as well as healthy lifestyles. Residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds should feel comfortable entering and using open spaces. Fostering a sense of safety and security can be achieved through appropriate

management and design and may help encourage users of all ages and abilities to enjoy and utilise their local open space.

Most typologies performed well in terms of allowing natural surveillance with clear views of the open space from nearby residences, or from busy high streets or village centres. However, natural greenspaces scored lowest in this question, with natural surveillance noted on only 52% of audited sites. This may be due to several factors, including a high proportion of tree cover and sites generally being located away from adjoining properties and settlements. Just under half of the provision for children and teenagers did not exhibit natural surveillance. Those without natural surveillance may be due to boundary hedges, or isolation from built development.

A flow of people indicates a site that is well used and can often be influenced by a site's location; for instance, where a site functions as a through route or thoroughfare. The results of this criteria will be influenced by the time of day and weather conditions when the site audit was undertaken but provides an indication of sites that may suffer from a reduced sense of safety and security. Parks and gardens and natural greenspace were found to have the highest number of sites with a flow of people through the space (47% and 44% respectively). The trend for natural greenspace may be slightly skewed as the audited sites for this typology primarily included the large, destination sites. These may have been particularly busy as sites were audited during school holidays.

Overall, the majority of sites were found to feel safe to visit, with only 9% of sites scored as a being perceived as unsafe. Of the sites that felt unsafe, natural greenspace and provision for children and teenagers characterised the majority of sites fairly evenly, with amenity and parks and gardens contributing the remaining sites. This section of the audit form considers all safety and security features including:

- Natural surveillance;
- Self-surveillance;
- Multiple entrances and exits;

- Lighting provision;
- CCTV provision;
- Marked help points; and
- Onsite staff.

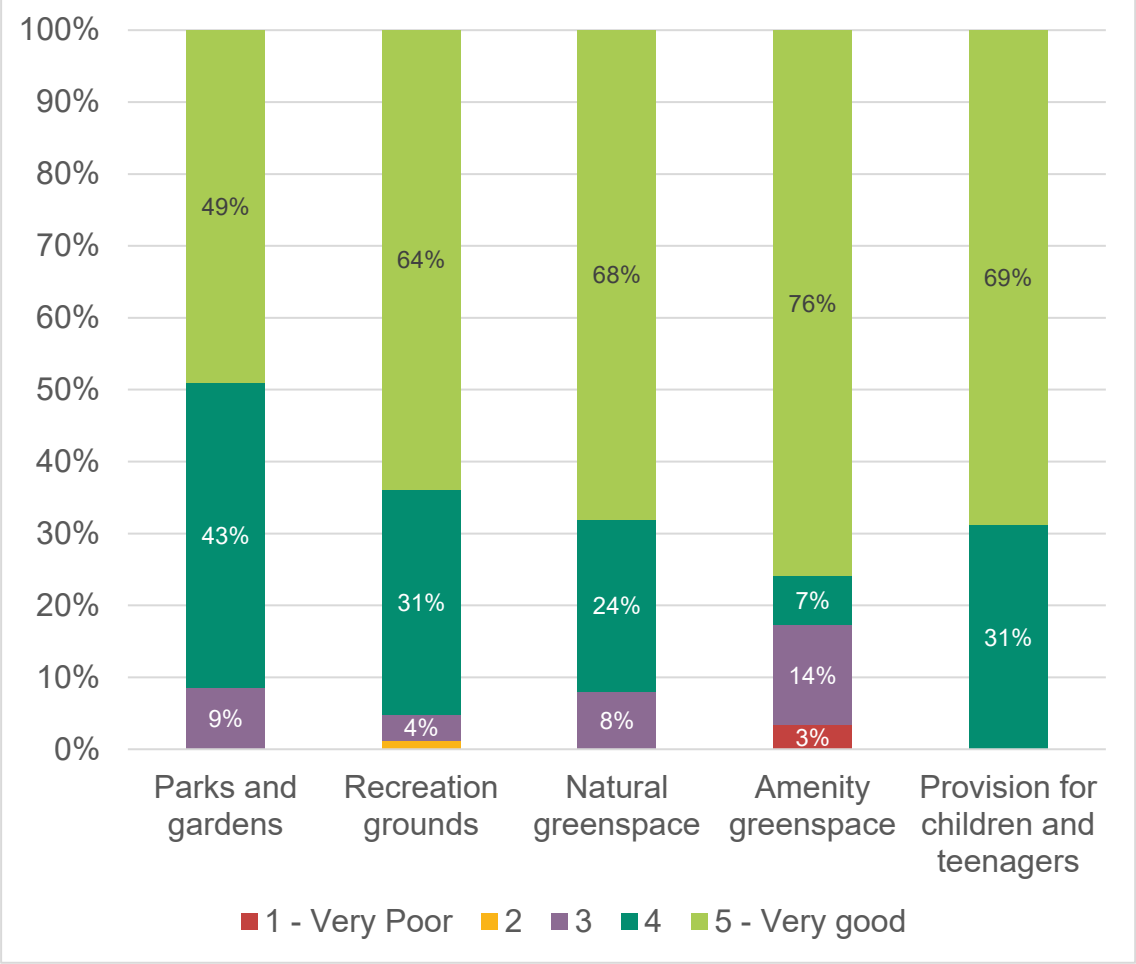
Clean and well maintained

Cleanliness

The theme of clean and well maintained is important for health and safety, as well as aesthetic reasons. A clean park, free from litter, dog fouling and vandalism creates a safe, attractive environment for users to enjoy visiting open spaces.

The overall level of cleanliness within the open spaces was generally found to be ‘very good’, with over half of sites achieving this score, as shown in **Figure F.12**. Only 1% of all sites scored 'very poor' or 'poor'. Amenity greenspaces were the most variable, with clean, well-cared for spaces often within new developments.

Figure F.12: Overall cleanliness



Planted and grass areas

Figure F.13 and **Figure F.14** show the audit results for the overall condition of planted and grassed areas. Parks and gardens and amenity greenspaces had the highest proportion of sites characterised by planted areas, with parks and gardens generally performing better in comparison to the other typologies.

The vast majority (97% of sites) contained grassed areas. Those which did not were primarily woodland areas within the natural greenspace typology. Recreation grounds and parks and gardens incorporated the greatest proportion of 'very good' and 'good' grassed areas. Amenity greenspace was the only typology to contain sites which scored ‘very poor’.

Figure F.13: Condition of planted areas

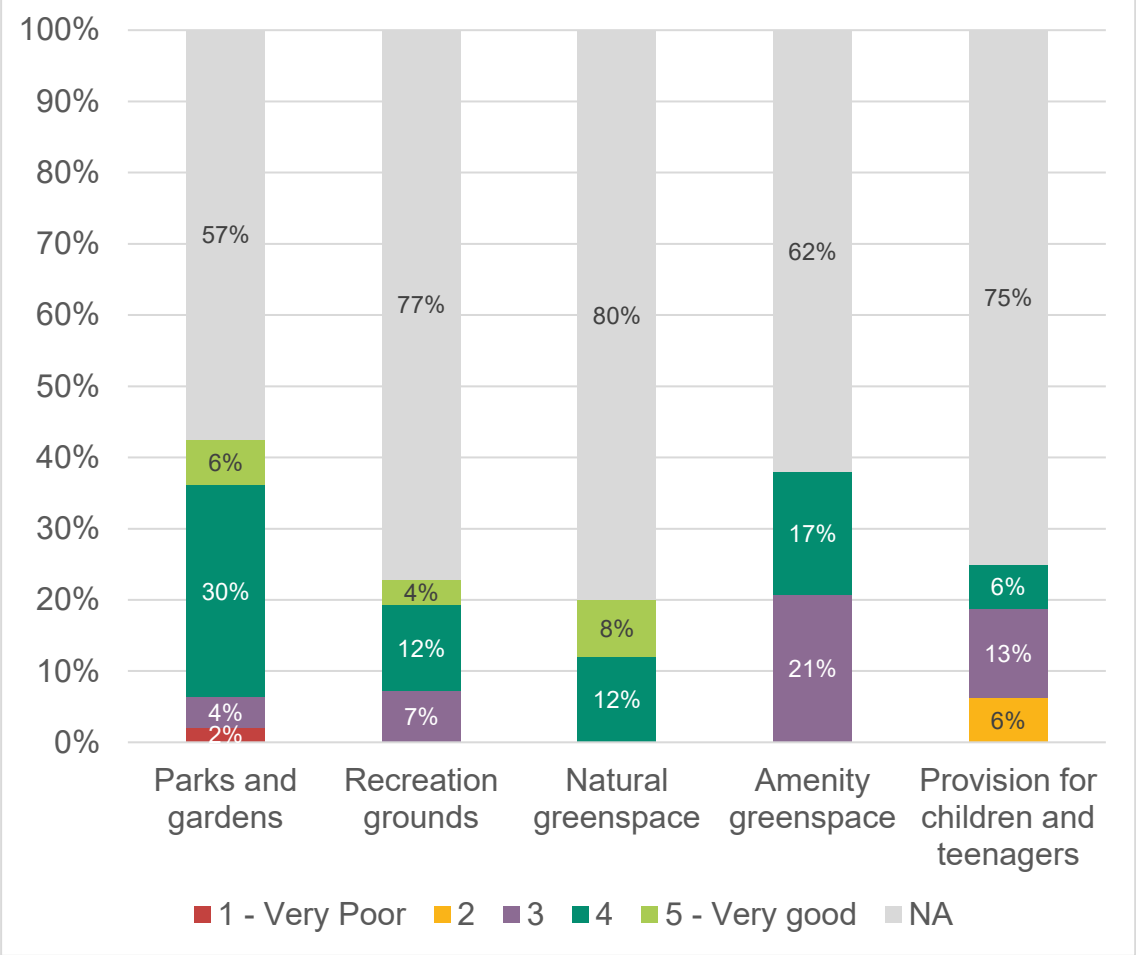
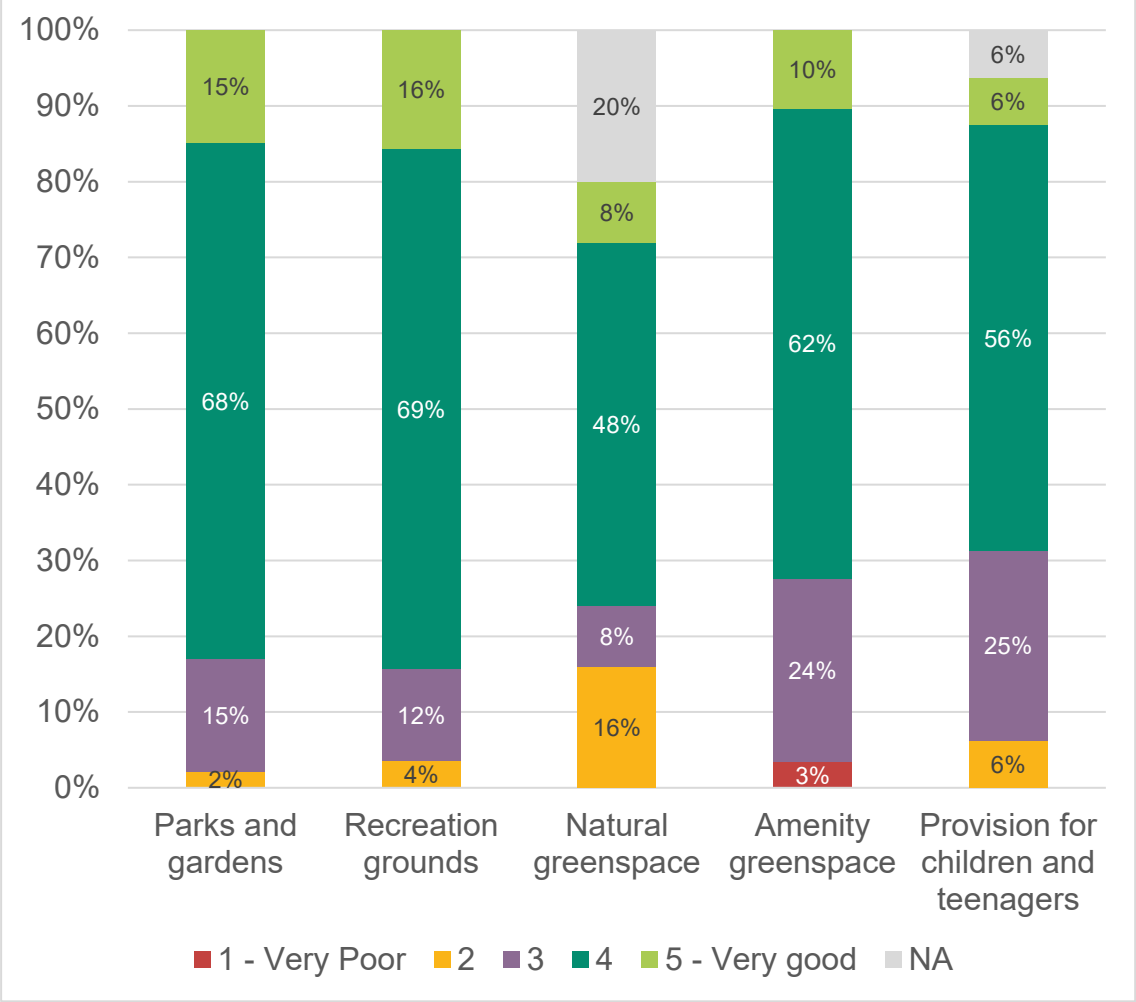


Figure F.14: Condition of grassed areas

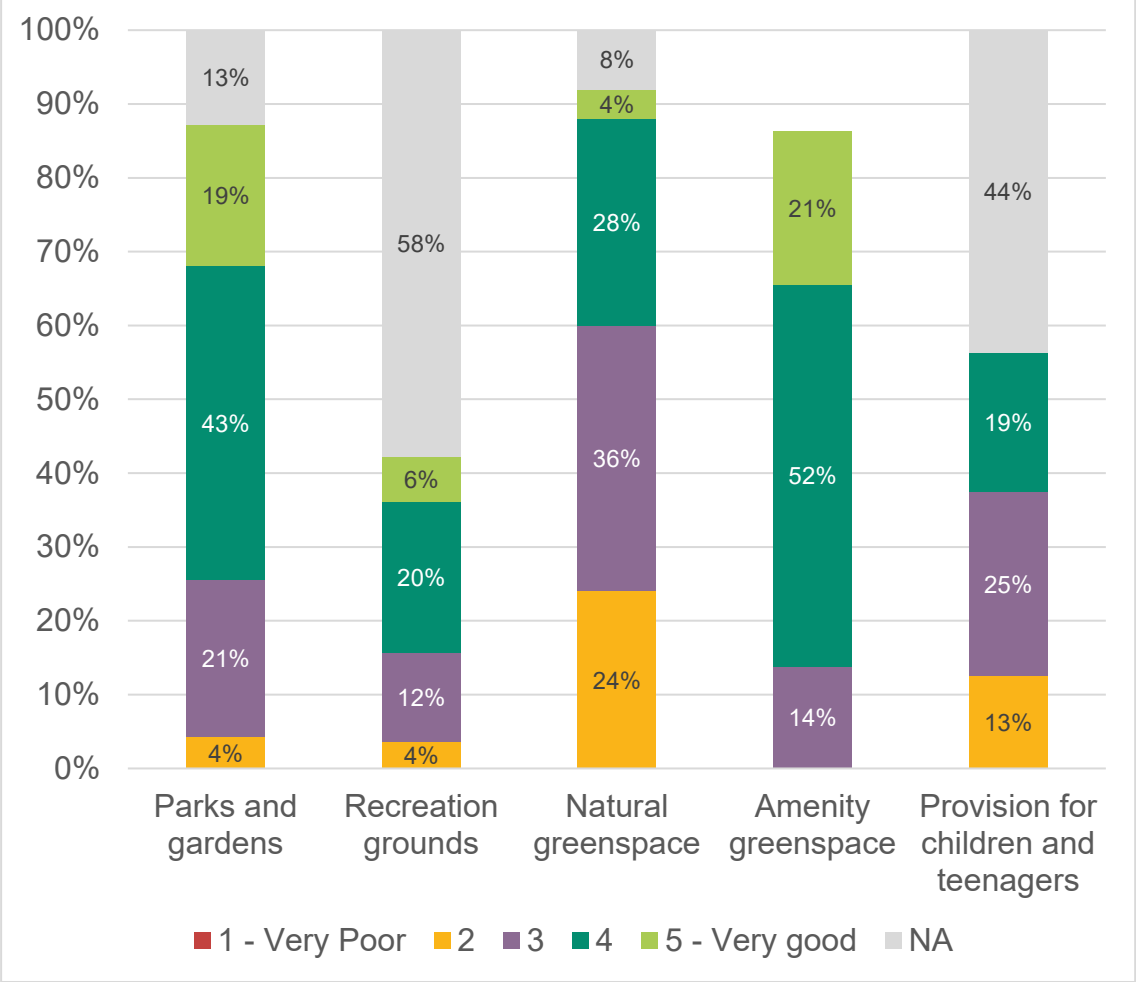


Footpaths

The condition of footpaths can have a significant impact upon quality of access within and through an open space and can limit the range of users that may access and benefit from site features, facilities and amenities.

Figure F.15 shows the results relating to the overall condition of footpaths, with the majority of sites exhibiting 'fair' to 'good' condition scores. Some sites, particularly recreation grounds do not exhibit a recognisable network of footpaths.

Figure F.15: Condition of footpaths



Buildings

The vast majority of sites do not contain buildings. Where present, these are most commonly found in recreation grounds and parks and gardens. The condition of the majority of buildings was found to be ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Lower scores were generally due to a lack of maintenance.

Threats, disturbances and issues

The audits demonstrated that a number of sites were impacted by threats and disturbances. The most significant of these was noise pollution, which impacted 36% of all audited sites. This was particularly notable within parks and gardens (51%) and natural greenspace (40%) which were often located close to busy roads. For the provision for children and teenagers typology, lack of landscape management and maintenance was the biggest threat, recorded for 25% of audited sites.

Sustainability

Sustainable management practices

Open spaces can perform a range of functions with regards to environmental sustainability. Sustainable management practices within open spaces may include good waste management, water conservation and harvesting, good woodland management, or the use or generation of sustainable energy.

The audit results showed that the full potential of sustainable management was not widely adopted within sites, with the exception of woodland management. This was recorded in 59% of sites, most notably natural greenspace. Recreation grounds were the most likely to include facilities for recycling of waste and materials. This was recorded at 11% of these sites. Water conservation and sustainable energy was only recorded at 1% of open space sites.

Sustainable planting

Sustainable planting and vegetation can help a site respond to future extreme weather conditions and climate change. Sustainable planting can include drought tolerant planting, extensive shade planting, orchards and other

community food growing areas, sustainable water management and natural flood measures, and green or brown roofs on site buildings.

The most common type of sustainable planting across the open space typologies was planting which provided shade. This was found at 69% of all sites audited, including 84% of natural greenspace and 83% of parks and gardens. Drought tolerant planting was present at 14% of amenity greenspaces, particularly those in newer developments. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Natural Flood Management (NFM) features were most common in natural greenspaces (24%), followed by parks and gardens (19%) and amenity greenspace (14%).

Nature conservation and heritage

Overall, there was good evidence of nature conservation across all typologies. Natural greenspaces had the highest proportion of nature conservation indicators, with parks and gardens, and recreation grounds also exhibiting these features. Provision for children and teenagers contained the lowest numbers of nature conservation indicators. Whilst the primary function of these typologies is often equipped play, improving natural habitats within these open spaces can provide nature conservation benefits and help connect young people with their natural environment, for example through natural play.

The most common type of management for nature conservation was areas of new tree planting and unmown grass areas. These were recorded in 43% and 42% of audited sites respectively. Within natural greenspace, dead wood habitat piles were present in the majority of sites (84%).

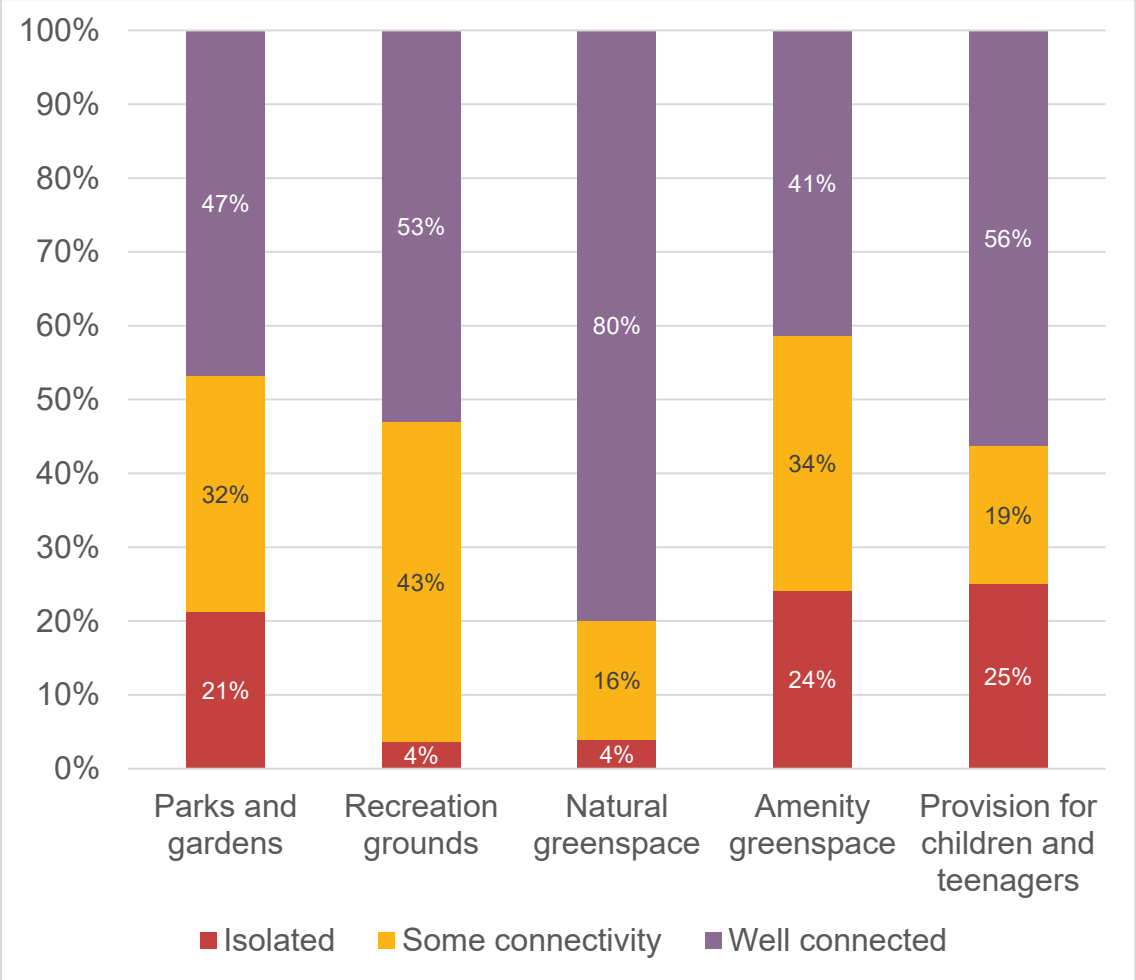
Connectivity

Greenspace connectivity is necessary for functioning and healthy ecosystems, key for the survival of animal and plant species, and is crucial to ensuring diversity and adaptation to pressures such as climate change. Nature networks

connect open spaces to form part of a wider network of GI, with well-connected networks immediately adjoining a natural feature such as a river, wider naturalistic landscape, heathland, hedgerow, or woodland. Medium value connections are typified by some connectivity to nearby greenspaces, through street trees or surrounding trees leading to other pockets of greenspace. Low value connections are often isolated or poorly connected by limited street trees.

Figure F.16 shows that all typologies within the districts are well connected. Natural greenspaces show the lowest levels of isolation, and 80% of these sites were scored as being 'well connected'. Connectivity is particularly important for natural greenspaces, which are likely to support a larger range of habitats.

Figure F.16: Evidence of GI connectivity



Community involvement, marketing and culture

Community involvement

Community groups may be involved in organising events, volunteering opportunities or other organised activities. Evidence of an active community group was noted on sites within each typology, with the exception of provision for children and teenagers. This evidence primarily comprised of posters or signage advertising group meetings or events. However, this does not necessarily indicate that groups are involved in active management of a site or represent a recognised 'friends group'. Similarly, lack of evidence noted during the timing of the audit does not necessarily indicate that there is no community involvement.

Active community groups were mainly associated with recreation grounds, where 27% of audited sites showed evidence of community involvement. This was often related to management or involvement from local sports clubs on the site. There was some evidence of community involvement in natural greenspaces (16% of audited sites) and parks and gardens (11% of audited sites).

Marketing and communication

Marketing and communication can be used to increase the use and value of open spaces by targeting specific user groups. The sites were audited for the presence of noticeboards indicating a programme of cultural / community activities.

Overall, the majority of sites did not have a permanent noticeboard (74%) or a programme of cultural or community activities (93%). Recreation grounds had the highest number of noticeboards (41%) and activities (14%). Recreation grounds were often located close to community facilities, including sports clubs,

scouts huts and village halls which provide an additional community link. These form important community spaces, particularly in small settlements.

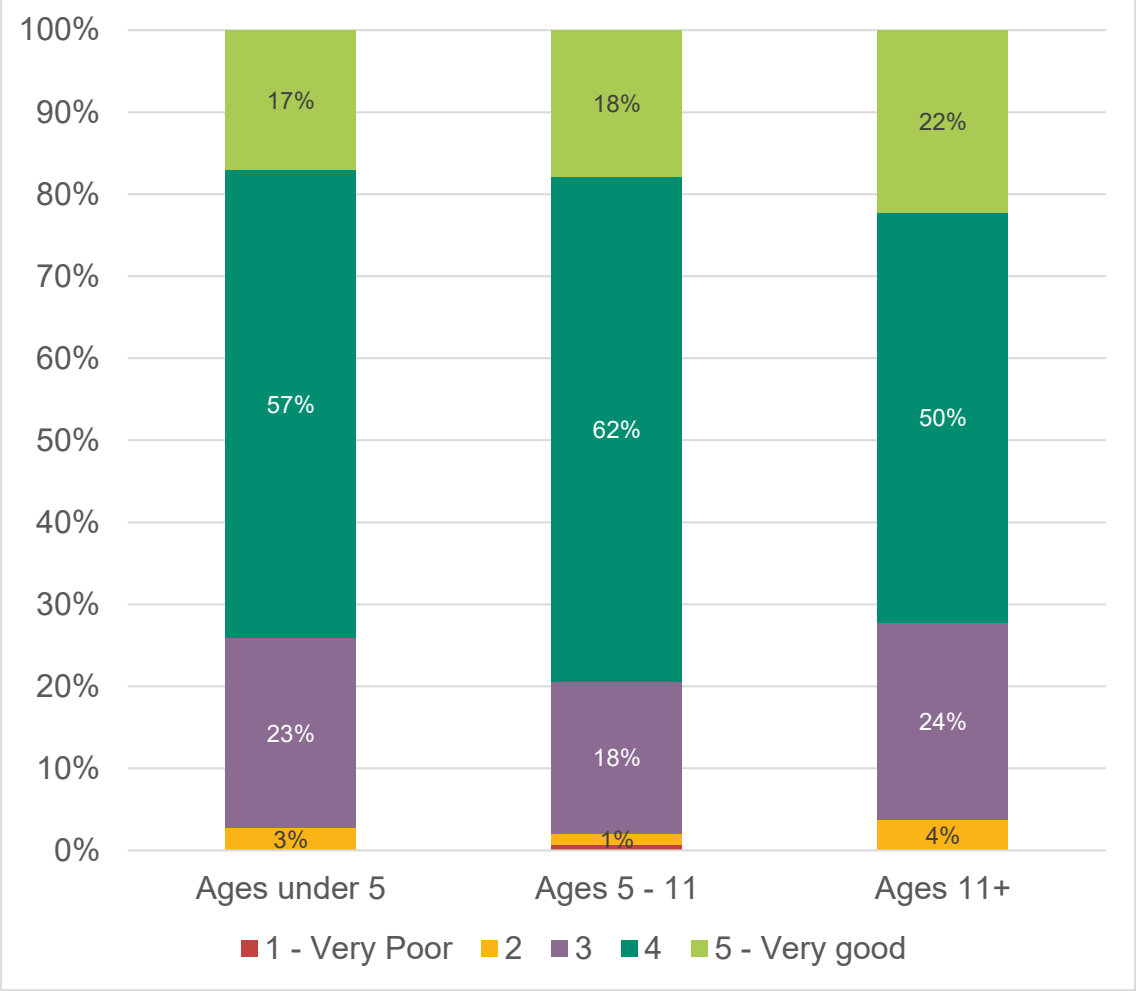
Play facilities

Equipped play

Equipped play facilities most frequently occur within parks and gardens and recreation grounds, with these typologies also showing the highest number of equipped play site for older (11+) children.

Overall, the audit found the condition of play facilities to be ‘good’, with the majority of the remaining sites distributed between ‘fair’ and ‘very good. A very small number of sites were considered to be ‘poor’ and one site considered ‘very poor’. Full details are shown below in **Figure F.17.**

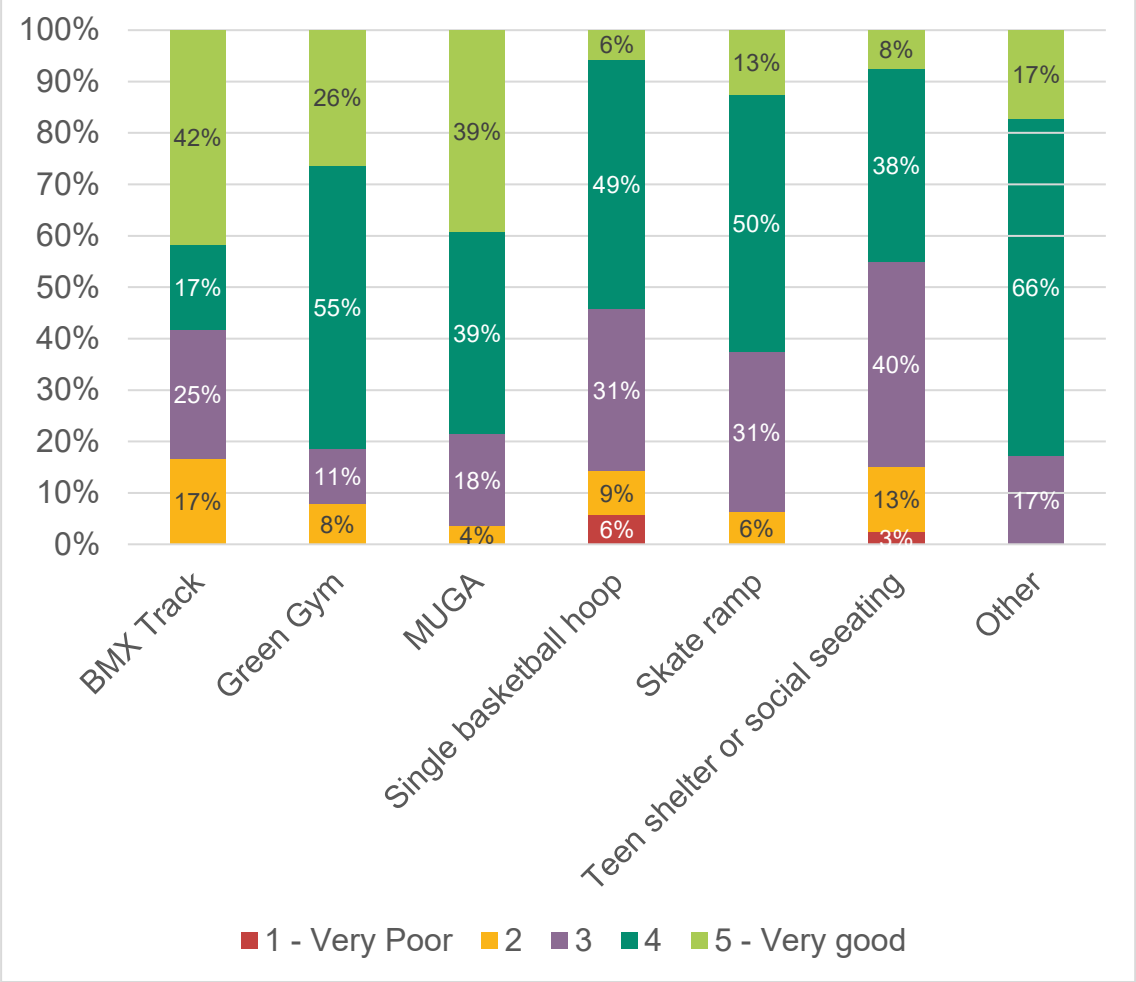
Figure F.17: Condition of equipped play



Other play facilities

The overall condition of other play facilities was generally considered to be 'good' with the majority of the remaining sites described as either 'fair' and 'very good', as shown below in **Figure F.18.** The most common of the features rated either 'poor' or 'very poor' were teen shelter or social seating and single basketball hoops.

Figure F.18: Condition of other play facilities

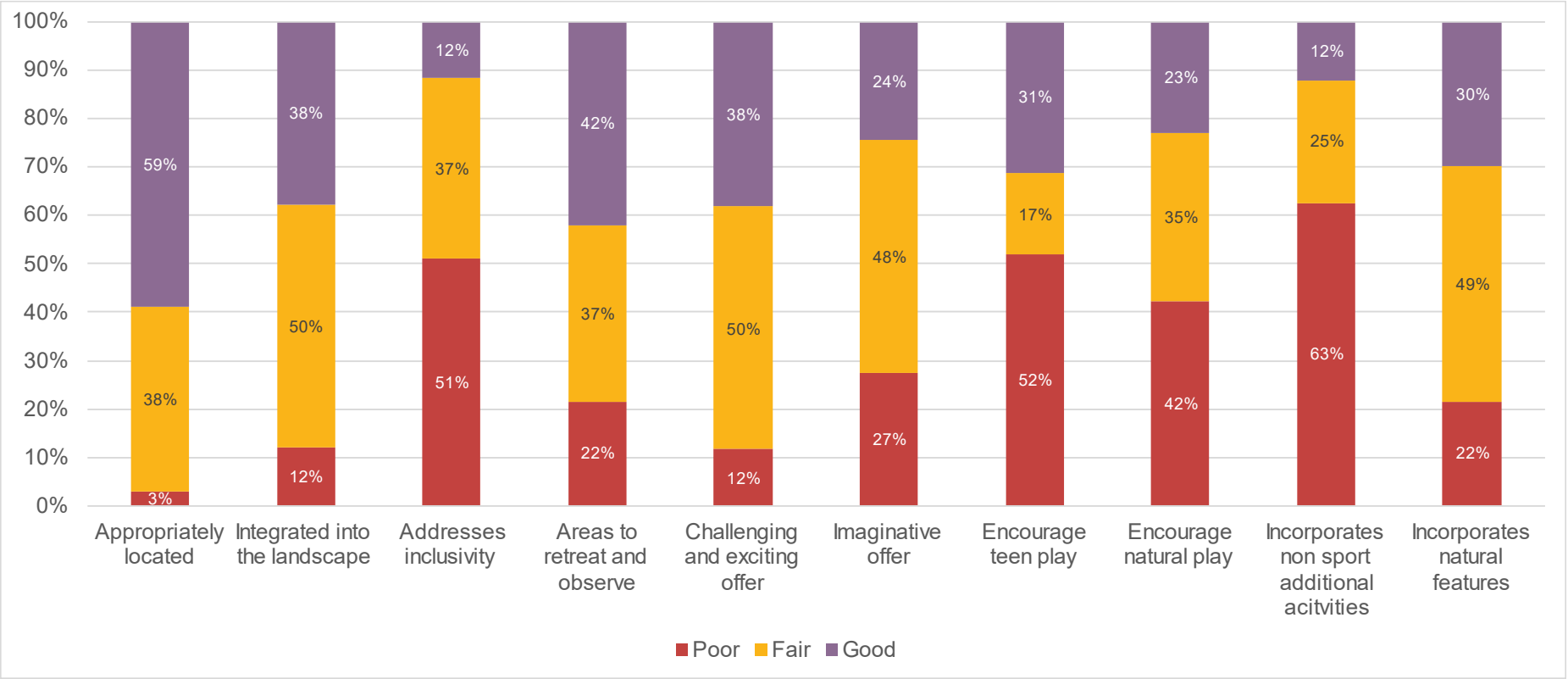


Additional value of play spaces

Play sites were assessed according to additional value criteria which assessed how equipped play and other play sites were addressing the needs of all children and young people. This included addressing wider inclusive needs, including for children with disabilities and groups, as well as groups traditionally less likely to use play spaces, such as teenage girls.

The results of these are shown in **Figure F.19.**

Figure F.19: Additional value of play sites



F.38 Overall, these results show that there is variety in whether play spaces are fully reaching their full potential in terms of being inclusive and maximising benefits for everyone. Audited sites generally scored well in terms of being appropriately located, and most sites were well integrated into their landscape / townscape setting.

F.39 However, the findings indicate that there is room for improvement in terms of addressing inclusivity, encouraging teenage play and incorporating non-sport activities (including social seating and performance areas). 51%, 52% and 63% of audited sites scored poorly for these criteria respectively.

How have quality and value benchmarks been assigned?

F.40 To this end, benchmarks have been identified which are relevant to the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse context. A site scoring below the quality and below the value benchmark is not necessarily an inadequate site, but it is performing more poorly than other audited sites.

F.41 Different quality and value benchmarks have been developed for different typologies and hierarchies to ensure that sites have been compared 'like for like'.

F.42 Because NA scores can be given for quality if features were not present, higher value scores will result in a high quality score for the same overall condition. This is particularly relevant within play sites where the only quality scores achieved are based on the types of play provision present. To mitigate for this, average quality scores (with NA not contributing to the average) were used for the play audits.

F.43 The benchmarks used are shown in Table F.4.

Table F.4: Quality and value benchmarks

Typology	Hierarchy	Quality benchmark	Value benchmark
Natural greenspace	District and wider neighbourhood	55	30
Parks and gardens	Neighbourhood	90	40
Natural greenspace	Neighbourhood	50	25
Parks and gardens	Local	70	30
Recreation Grounds	Local	70	30
Natural greenspace	Local	40	20
Parks and gardens	Doorstep and pocket	58	20
Recreation Grounds	Doorstep and pocket	58	20
Natural greenspace	Doorstep and pocket	30	15
Amenity greenspace	All	45	15
Provision for children and teenagers	All	54	18

F.44 Additional quality and value benchmarks have been set for the separate play audit.

Table F.5: Play audit quality and value benchmarks

Provision for children and teenagers hierarchy	Quality benchmark	Value benchmark
Local Area of Play (teenage provision)	3.7	29
Locally Equipped area of Play (including teenager provision)	3.7	35
Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (including teenage provision)	3.7	40
Local Area of Play	3.7	29
Locally Equipped Area of Play	3.7	33
Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play	3.7	34

Accessibility

What access distances have been used?

F.45 Access distances used for the analysis have been based on the recommended distances set out in NEGIF and Fields in Trust (FiT). These are shown in **Table F.6.**

Table F.6: Access catchments

Typology	Hierarchy	Access Catchment (km)	Minimum size (hectares)
Accessible greenspace	District	5,000	100
Accessible greenspace	Wider neighbourhood	2,000	20
Accessible greenspace	Neighbourhood	1,000	10
Accessible greenspace	Local	300	2
Accessible greenspace	Doorstep	200	0.5
Accessible greenspace	Pocket	100	0.01
Provision for children and teenagers	Local Area of Play	100	0.01
Provision for children and teenagers	Locally Equipped Area of Play	400	0.04
Provision for children and teenagers	Neighbourhood Area of Play	1,000	0.1
Community growing spaces (including allotments)	NA	1,000	NA

F.46 As the access catchments are based on minimum size, the catchments can stack. For example, a greenspace that is 11 hectares would have an access catchment of 1km, but within 300m it would also act as a local greenspace, within 200m it would act as a doorstep greenspace and within 100m would act as a pocket greenspace.

F.47 Hierarchies for provision for children and teenagers have also been based on a size threshold for this study, rather than the age of children they target. This is because understanding the intended age ranges has not been collected within the data set and is difficult to ascertain from mapping or aerial imagery. Teenage provision has also been included within the same hierarchies as provision for children and teenagers.

What is the Greenspace Close to Home Access target?

F.48 The NEGIF focusses on the importance of providing greenspace close to home (i.e. within a 15 minute walking distance, or 1km distance). The Greenspace Close to Home Access target states that all residents should lie within:

- 1km of a neighbourhood accessible greenspace (no more than 15-minute standard); **and**
- **Either** 300m of a local accessible greenspace **or** 200m of a doorstep accessible greenspace (no more than 5 minute standard).

F.49 As this Strategy has considered accessible greenspace less than 0.5 hectares, the second section of the standard has been extended to also include the option for being within 100m of a pocket accessible greenspace.

F.50 This standard is applicable to urban or built development, as rural communities and small villages are not always large enough to require a dedicated greenspace, particularly at the neighbourhood scale. This target has been considered for Tier 1 settlements as part of this analysis.

How have access catchments been mapped?

F.51 Access catchments have been mapped based on straight-line distances to create a buffer. The buffer has been applied from the full edge of the open space and does not take account of site entrances or the adjacent road network.

F.52 Access catchments have also been applied where locations of open spaces outside of the districts are held, and where the access catchment for these sites continues into South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. This is to take account of the fact that administrative boundaries are not a boundary to access and people may cross into neighbouring districts to visit open spaces within these areas.

How has consultation on allotment and community food growing provision influenced analysis?

F.53 A total of 31 town and parish councils responded to the online consultation regarding provision of allotments and community growing spaces. Of these, 21 owned or managed their own allotments, equating to approximately 1,000 allotment plots. Botley and Hinksey, Cholsey, Wantage and Watlington included the most council managed allotment provision within the districts.

F.54 Approximately 50% of the town and parish councils with allotments had at least one person on a waiting list and no vacant plots. Wantage had the largest waiting list of 35 people. Most of the waiting lists were between six months and two years. The longest estimated waiting list was at Chilton Field, where the average waiting time is three years.

F.55 The current provision of allotments is 0.39 hectares per 1,000 of the population. Evidence shows that there is a slightly greater demand for

allotments in some locations, but for most town and parish councils this is broadly in line with demand (with no vacant plots and no waiting list). A proposed quantity standard of 0.4 hectares of community growing space (including allotments) was therefore proposed.

Appendix G

Open space audit guidance

1.1 Site Access

Table G.1: 1.1a Site access scores

1.1a	Please select which option applies from the following list	Score
Freely accessible to public	Assume freely accessible unless any indication that there is restriction to access	+5
Freely accessible to public: opening hours	Remember to check signs for any opening hours – may be easy to miss if auditing in the middle of the day when the site is open anyway	+4
Freely accessible to public: de-facto access	This is where there is no official access but there is clear evidence that a site is being used for recreation e.g. gap in fence / broken down fence	+3
Restricted access: members/tenants only	Most common for allotments and outdoor sports. Also may include open space that is very close to housing. Normally you would know if this access was present as we would be accompanied by someone who would grant us access.	+1
Restricted access: other (please state)	Any other access requirement	+2
No Public access	No public access (in most cases if this was the case no audit form would be completed)	No Score

Table G.2: 1.1b site access scores

1.1b	Unscored
Are there any areas which are fenced from public access?	This excludes areas fenced for sport but accessible for sport users. Note any areas fenced for habitat restoration, or otherwise restricted in access but which are included within the site boundary

1.2 Access and entrances

Table G.3: 1.2a Access and entrances scores

1.2a	Yes (+1)
Is the site connected to other nearby open spaces (including through walking and cycling routes)	Long distance path running through it, or accessible from a long distance path, or immediately adjacent to another open space – with access between (perhaps just a bridge across a river or road crossing away). This question is thinking about connectivity for people (rather than habitat connectivity).

Table G.4: 1.2b-f Access and entrances scores

1.2b-f	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
1.2b To what extent are the entrances well presented?	Poor presentation and maintenance, maybe less obvious as an entrance to an open space	Apparent as an entrance, obvious, open inviting and clean	Easy to find, may have a welcome / advisory sign, appropriate size, clear, clean, tidy, well maintained and inviting

1.2b-f	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
1.2c To what extent are the boundaries well defined and maintained?	Defined but maintenance needed, or not clearly defined at all.	All clearly defined – maintenance 'patchy', or well maintained and defined but additional barrier needed e.g. if very close to a busy road	All clearly defined and well maintained
1.2d What is the overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space?	Paths in poor condition, e.g. tree roots interrupting the path, sloping, unsafe condition. No paths and difficult terrain to cross.	Limited number of paths, narrow paths, or no paths but level, suitable surface	Paths allowing access to majority of the open space. Suitable materials, level for safe use, edges well defined, surfaces clean and debris and weed free, wide paths.
1.2e What is the overall quality of access and accesses for people travelling to the open space?	No public transport links, provision for pedestrians to cross busy trafficked roads, cycle parking or disabled parking. May have limited entrance points which reduce access from surrounding properties on some sides of the park.	May have some public transport links but these may not be suitably located. Provision for pedestrians to cross busy roads, or may be located close to properties and easily accessible from these.	Good public transport links which are suitably located, provision for pedestrians to cross busy roads, cycle parking within or adjacent to site and disabled parking adjacent to site.
1.2f What is the overall provision of	No information about the park made available,	Limited information about the park made available, or	Information available for locals and

1.2b-f	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
welcoming signage?	or very badly damaged signage which makes the open space feel unwelcoming.	some signage which discourages use	visitors (could be on boards or leaflet form) in some detail. Signage generally positive and welcoming in tone.

1.3 Inclusivity

Table G.5: 1.3a-d inclusivity scores

1.3a-d	Higher value (+1)
1.3a Signage includes inclusive considerations (text size, location of signage)	Considerations include multiple languages (if appropriate), size of text, complexity of language used in signage
1.3b Step free access	Flat surface, or ramp available for access. Also consider here the width / gateway options. Are entrance gaps wide enough form pushchairs / wheelchairs. Also check for any kerbs.
1.3c Seating spaced along paths	More applicable to larger sites – this is where there are benches well-spaced along paths within the site to allow resting points for older / less mobile users.
1.3d Specific features designed to increase accessibility and inclusivity	Score if any such features are present. Features may include: picnic benches with space for a wheelchair, passing points along footpaths / steps etc.

2 Health, safety and security

2.1 Community safety/sense of security

Table G.6: 2.1a-gCommunity safety/ sense of security scores

2.1a-g	Yes (+1)
2.1a Is there natural surveillance into the site from surrounding properties or high streets?	Score given if there are clear views of the open space from nearby residences, or from busy high streets or village centres.
2.1b Multiple entrance / exit points	Score given if there are an appropriate number of entrance / exit points to allow 'escape routes'. This may include regular entrance and exit points along linear spaces, or entrances at opposite ends of an open space. Score can also be given if the open space is open e.g. green within a housing estate with no fence.
2.1c Is there a flow of people through the open space (to achieve self-surveillance)?	Score if there are multiple users visiting the site whilst doing site audit – in particular if there are multiple people using the same route, suggesting this is used as a short cut for multiple users. Due to differences in time of day / weather this score may not always give an indication of true sense of surveillance within the open space
2.1d Is lighting provided?	Score if feature present. This does not include street lights on an adjacent road, but would include continuation of street lights alongside a pathway through the open space.
2.1e Is there CCTV?	Score if feature present. Indications of this may also include signs e.g. 'smile you're on camera'
2.1f Is there a marked help point or onsite staff?	Score if feature present. This may also include provision of a phone number on signage

2.1a-g	Yes (+1)
2.1g: Overall, does the open space feel safe to visit?	Consider all the features above as well as any other perceptual qualities which effect this. Think about how you would feel using the open space as a park user, the open space should be a place for recreation so 'safe' should also include feeling relatively relaxed.

2.2 Basic amenities

Table G.7: 2.2a-f Basic amenities scores

2.2a-f	Very poor (+1)	Average (+3)	Very good (+5)
2.2a Litter +/ dog bin	Present but not enough so the size of the site, or very poor quality	Adequate number, fair condition, or limited in number (considering size of the site) but good condition.	Numerous (considering the size of the site) and in good condition.
2.2b Seating	Limited seating for the size of the site, and very poor condition, potential safety issues	Limited seating for size of site but good condition, or mixed condition across site, or fairly good seating, but old and worn.	Numerous for the size of site, and clean, good condition.
2.2c Personal rescue equipment (lifebelts)	Lifebelts not easily identifiable, appear damaged or otherwise unsafe. Or very limited number for size of waterbody.	Identifiable, appear to be in good working order. Suitable number.	Easily identifiable and located in an appropriate location. Lifebelts clean and appear to be in good working order with no signs of vandalism.

2.2a-f	Very poor (+1)	Average (+3)	Very good (+5)
			Suitable number.
2.2d Cycle parking	Damaged, or very limited in number for size of size. Inappropriately located	Adequate, may be metal rings or similar, fair number for size of site	Sheltered bike parking, or multiple bike stands at various entrances. Numerous for the size of site and appropriately located e.g. with surveillance
2.2e Toilets	Provided within or adjacent to the open space. Poor condition – likely to be avoided by park users, or temporary (e.g. associated with event)	Provided within or adjacent to the open space. Fair condition, may be difficult to find or access	Provided within or adjacent to the open space. Good condition, feel safe to use, easy to access, signed and maintained.
2.2f Cafe	Building in poor condition, limited (for example may be take-out only), or otherwise uninviting	Building in fair condition, clean and inviting, limited in offer	Welcoming, clean and inviting, accessible access, wider offer

Table G.8: 2.2g Basic amenities scores

2.2g	Score
2.2g Other	Any other basic amenity on site (not included in the lists below) Follow similar scoring system to those above.

Active recreation/sport provision

Table G.9: 2.3a-f Active recreation/sport provision scores

2.3a-f	Very poor (+1)	Average (+3)	Very good (+5)
2.3a Grass pitches	Very muddy under goal posts, small in size, no paint, not level, grass cover less than 60% or inappropriate grass length, puddling/ponding indicating poor drainage, widespread litter/dog fouling issues	Good condition, grass cover may be thin in places, some evidence of litter debris etc. but small (for example half size pitch with just one goal post), faded paint. Limited ponding due to problems with drainage.	Full grass cover, grass appropriate length, well drainage, clear markings, free from litter etc. Appropriate size.
2.3b Artificial pitches (e.g. Astro turf)	Surface material poor quality. Pitch surface uneven, severely sloping showing major signs of disrepair (e.g. worn areas, potholes), potential health and safety concern. Level of litter/ debris, dog fouling, unofficial use poses major issue. Any permanent markings are very faint. Significant puddling or other evidence of poor drainage. Signs	Surface poor in places (60-84%). Some damage to surface and evidence of litter/ debris, unofficial use, permanent markings fading. Some signs of ponding on the surface due to problems with drainage. OR Good quality but not freely accessible for all users.	Good quality surface. Freely accessible. Even, flat surface which is well drained and in excellent condition. Where permanent painted markings exist, these are clear. No sign of moss/ lichens. Access for disabled players.

2.3a-f	Very poor (+1)	Average (+3)	Very good (+5)
	of moss/ lichens. No access for disabled players.		
2.3c Tennis courts	Court surface is uneven, severely sloping showing major signs of disrepair (e.g. worn areas, potholes), potential health and safety concern. Level of litter/ debris, dog fouling, unofficial use poses major issue. Any permanent markings are very faint. Nets and fencing, if present, are in a poor condition. Significant puddling or other evidence of poor drainage. Signs of moss/ lichens. No access for disabled players.	Some damage to the surface and evidence of litter/ debris, unofficial use, permanent markings fading. Some sign of ponding on the surface due to problems with drainage. Nets and surrounding fencing in fair condition. Possibly signs of some moss/ lichens. Access for disabled players. OR Good quality but not freely accessible for all users.	Freely accessible. Even, flat surface which is well drained and in excellent condition. Permanent painted markings are clear. Nets and surrounding fencing in good condition. No sign of moss/ lichens. Access for disabled players.
2.3d Walking/ jogging. Walking or jogging route only applies to signed route (e.g. kilometre markers or other wayfinding) If noticeboard evidence suggests park run, could also score for this.)	Signage and or surfacing / routes in poor condition. Access issues with none or very little of the route accessible for all.	Signage and or surfacing / routes in fair condition. Some access issues with only a proportion of the route accessible for all.	Signage and surfacing / routes in good condition. No major access issues with the whole route accessible to all.

2.3a-f	Very poor (+1)	Average (+3)	Very good (+5)
2.3e Water activities (other than play areas). This may include pedal boating, canoeing etc. or other event if park includes large lake or is on the river side.	Poor condition, potential safety issues, unclean water.	Safe but limited offer or minor wear and tear or other cleanliness issues with equipment.	2.3e Water activities (other than play areas)
2.3f Bowls	Playable surface is uneven, severely sloping showing major signs of disrepair (e.g. worn areas, potholes), potential health and safety concern. Level of litter/ debris, dog fouling, unofficial use poses major issue. Any permanent markings are very faint. Grass inappropriate length. Significant puddling or other evidence of poor drainage. Signs of moss/ lichens. No access for disabled players.	Some damage to the surface and evidence of litter/ debris, unofficial use, permanent markings fading. Some sign of ponding on the surface due to problems with drainage. Grass inappropriate length. Possibly signs of some moss/ lichens. Access for disabled players. OR Good quality but not freely accessible for all users.	Freely accessible. Even, flat surface which is well drained and in excellent condition. Permanent painted markings are clear. Grass suitable length, arisings removed. Adequate ancillary features, seating etc. No sign of moss/ lichens. Access for disabled players.

Table G.10: 2.3g Active recreation/sport provision scores

2.3g	Score
2.3g Other	Other physical activity provision not otherwise listed. Scored similar to above thinking about wider offer, fit for purpose, overall condition and availability of use. (Other activities may include pitch and putt, cycle track etc.)

2.4 Play and young people provision

Table G.11: 2.4a-i Play and young people provision scores

2.4a-i	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
2.4a Equipped play (under 5)	Obvious damage to equipment through vandalism or lack of maintenance. Limited play appeal, unattractive	Fit for purpose but some evidence of wear and tear, minor graffiti or vandalism, rust etc. Some play appeal	High quality, varied and attractive play equipment, good physical condition, suitable safety surface, wide offer and some attractive/imaginative offer
2.4b Equipped play (5-11)	Obvious damage to equipment through vandalism or lack of maintenance. Limited play appeal, unattractive	Fit for purpose but some evidence of wear and tear, minor graffiti or vandalism, rust etc. Some play appeal	High quality, varied and attractive play equipment, good physical condition, suitable safety surface, wide offer and some attractive/imaginative offer
2.4c Equipped play (11+)	Obvious damage to equipment through vandalism or lack of maintenance.	Fit for purpose but some evidence of wear and tear, minor graffiti or	High quality, varied and attractive play equipment, good physical condition, suitable safety

2.4a-i	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
	Limited play appeal, unattractive	vandalism, rust etc. Some play appeal	surface, wide offer and some attractive / imaginative offer
2.4d MUGA	Poor condition, potentially unsafe, vandalised or graffiti evidenced, poor level of cleanliness/litter etc., poorly located	Adequate condition, clean etc. but maybe poorly located, or sense of enclosure within, some paint faded etc.	Good condition, clean, different game offers clearly provided for, well located and inviting (e.g. not caged on all four side)
2.4e Single basketball hoop	Un-level, poor surface, other issues with litter/vandalism, poorly located.	Fair condition/good condition but poorly located	Good condition, clean, flat, well maintained surface and hoop, well located
2.4f Teen shelter or social seating	Vandalism, unclean, graffiti, poorly located	Average, teen shelter undamaged, fair location with some surveillance	More imaginative/inviting teen shelter, well located creating a safe and welcoming feature,
2.4g Green gym	Poor condition, potential safety issues, poorly located so feels unwelcoming	Fair condition (some vandalism/graffiti but minor, safe) or good condition but otherwise limited in size/offer	Good condition, maintained, clean, welcoming, well located
2.4h Skate ramp	Poor condition, potential safety issues, poorly located so feels unwelcoming	Fair condition (some vandalism/graffiti but minor, safe) or good condition but otherwise limited in size/offer	Good condition, maintained, clean, welcoming, well located
2.4i BMX track	Poor condition, potential safety	Fair condition (some	Good condition, maintained, clean,

2.4a-i	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
	issues, poorly located so feels unwelcoming	vandalism/graffiti but minor, safe) or good condition but otherwise limited in size / offer	welcoming, well located

Table G12: 2.4j Play and young people provision scores

2.4j	Score
2.4j Other	Any other recreational feature not otherwise considered. Scored similar to above thinking about wider offer, fit for purpose, overall condition and how it is located. (Other features may include outdoor table tennis or similar)

3. Clean and well maintained

3.1 Cleanliness

Table G.13: 3.1a-b Cleanliness scores

3.1a-b	None (0)	Low impact (-1)	High impact (-2)
3.1a is graffiti evident?	No evidence of graffiti	Only isolated areas of graffiti/vandalism	Numerous and/or large areas of graffiti/vandalism
3.1b Is vandalism evident?	No evidence of vandalism	Only isolated areas of vandalism	Numerous and/or large areas of vandalism

Table G.14: 3.1c Cleanliness scores

3.1c	Very poor (+1)	Average (+3)	Very good (+5)
3.1c Overall cleanliness?	Widespread distribution of litter, dog fouling etc.	Predominately free of litter	No evidence of litter, dog fouling or graffiti or vandalism

3.2 Maintenance

Table G.15: 3.2a Maintenance scores

3.2a What is the condition of the following features?	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
Overall condition of planted areas – Planted areas includes formally planted areas e.g. flower beds, areas of shrubbery etc. This criteria is not about the condition of all vegetation within the open space. Remember to consider the time of year – autumn or winter surveying will be more difficult to assess.	Limited planting with limited maintenance (e.g. weeds dominating, plants struggling)	Limited range of plants, maintenance acceptable	Numerous planting, with appropriate mix of plants, installed and maintained to a high standard

3.2a What is the condition of the following features?	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
Overall condition of grass areas	General grass cover poor, wear has led to patchy and poor cover with little or no serious attempts to correct the problem, clippings obvious and cut quality poor	Full grass cover throughout main area but some 'thin' patches evident; some bald areas discreet; grass cut frequently but length excessive between cuts, cut quality good (no tearing)	Full grass cover throughout, dense sward, good colour and cleanly cut
Overall condition of footpaths	Obvious damage to surfacing or showing major signs of disrepair.	Generally fit for purpose, fair condition with surface clean, and largely intact and little evidence of disrepair.	Fit for purpose, good condition with surface clean, intact and no evidence of disrepair, good width
Overall condition of water and associated edge treatment	Water very cloudy with significant encroachment by invasive weed growth or algal bloom or depth of water significantly affected by silt build up. No evidence of aeration or circulation, water stagnant	Water appears slightly murky with some evidence of surface weed growth or algae, or silt build up. Edging to water features unattractive or showing signs of deterioration. Little evidence of water aeration (if still water present on site).	Water appears clear, free of any surface weed, algae or leaf litter/debris. Effective and visually appropriate edging to water feature. Evidence of water aeration/ circulation i.e. presence of pumps (if still water presence on site)
Overall condition of buildings and built features	Obvious damage to buildings / structure	Generally fit for purpose but some evidence of vandalism or	Fit for purpose, good condition (brickwork in good condition,

3.2a What is the condition of the following features?	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+3)	Higher value (+5)
	through vandalism or lack of maintenance, showing major signs of disrepair (e.g. brickwork or roofing unsound or damaged paintwork, rotting woodwork, gutters blocked, broken glass.)	deteriorating physical condition (brickwork or roofing showing evidence of damage/deterioration or paintwork/woodwork deteriorating or gutters not operating fully or windows dirty/minor cracks evident).	roofing in sound condition, gutters clear and intact, painted surfaces clean/intact, windows clean and undamaged, no evidence of vandalism.)

3.3 Overall attractiveness

Table G.16: 3.3a-b Overall attractiveness scores

3.3a-b	Yes (+1)
3.3a Does the green space contribute to the setting of the immediate local area?	Assume yes unless there is some particular feature that distracts from the impact of the site, or if there is a particular clash in setting e.g. inappropriate park within historic residential/village setting
3.3b Is the open space visually attractive?	Assume yes unless there is a particular issues which makes the open space unattractive and detracts from an area

Table G.17: 3.3c-n Overall attractiveness scores

3.3c-n What threats/ disturbances/ issues are detracting from the site	**Tick if this is detracting from site (-2) (all these should be scored only if they are noticeably detracting from enjoyment of the site. Think as well about overall impact on the site, e.g. if it is a large site and you can hear traffic from just one edge then noise pollution would not be a detracting feature so it would not score)**
3.3c Noise pollution	Significant noise disturbance (score for this even if it is coming from what appears to be temporary source e.g. road works)
3.3d Air and water pollution	Score if perception is that air and water pollution present e.g. if water looks discoloured or significantly unclean, if air smells or feels polluted and claggy
3.3e Intrusive buildings	Score if buildings encroaching into open space – particularly unattractive, prefab construction, portacabins etc. Think about context as well, civic spaces in an urban setting are less at risk from this as they are suited to a more urban environment
3.3f Erosion	Score if significant erosion, particularly on slope or riverbanks which detracts from the site / gives the appearance of a safety risk or prevents access
3.3g Lack of landscape management/ maintenance	Score if significant issues with weeds or other management of vegetation which prevents access, blocks paths etc. Think about the appropriateness in consideration of the site, e.g. woodland will have more dense planting, but main paths should still be free from obstructions
3.3i Motorcycle scrambling and mini bikes	Evidence of motorcycle tracks which is extensive and likely to be off-putting to other users, or is causing long-term damage to vegetation cover
3.3j Fly tipping	Significant fly tipping which detracts other users from accessing the site
3.3k Flooding	Flooding which reduces or limits access – consider the weather when auditing. If after significant rainfall flood event then this may not need to be scored against if there is just limited flooding.

3.3c-n What threats/ disturbances/ issues are detracting from the site	Tick if this is detracting from site (-2) (all these should be scored only if they are noticeably detracting from enjoyment of the site. Think as well about overall impact on the site, e.g. if it is a large site and you can hear traffic from just one edge then noise pollution would not be a detracting feature so it would not score)
3.3l Excessive lighting	May be difficult to assess during the day, but consider the amount of lighting, any large-scale nearby developments etc.
3.3m Dog fouling	Significant dog fouling issue which would clearly detract users
3.3n Other	Anything else that would detract from anyone using the site

4 Sustainability

4.1 Planting

Table G.18: 4.1a-e Planting scores

4.1a-e	Tick which of the following are present (+1)
4.1a Drought tolerant planting	Thinking here about ornamental planting rather than trees or other more natural vegetation. Look out for plants with silver or grey-green leaves, or a coating of fine hairs on their leaves or stems.
4.1b Significant areas of shade	Think about positioning of trees or tree belts and how much shade they are likely to give considering the size of the site. Bear in mind position of sun (From east to west through south) and think about where shade will fall if tree belts are on the edge of a site.
4.1c Orchards / edible planting	Evidence of orchards, growing beds etc. Thinking here about features which are planned to provide edible

4.1a-e	Tick which of the following are present (+1)
	food, rather than presence of species suitable for foraging.
4.1d Green or brown roofs	On buildings within the open space (this may also include buildings immediately adjacent the park if they are linked (e.g. if the park is the grounds of feature, if they clearly share a car park etc.)
4.1e Rain gardens, swales, detention basin or other SuDS / NFM features	Such features are often depressed areas, usually would be wet, may feature marginal vegetation, look out for obvious drainage inflow/outflows as well.

4.2 Sustainable management practices

Table G.19: 4.2a-d Sustainable management practices scores

4.2a-d	Tick which of the following are present (+1)
4.2a Water conservation measures	Evidence may include evidence of rain storage, rain harvesting etc.
4.2b Recycling of waste and materials	Recycling bins on site (this does not include household/commercial recycling if adjacent housing or commercial building but should be recycling for park users).
4.2c Sustainable energy (e.g. solar/wind/electric car charging)	E.g. Inclusion of solar or wind energy within the open space, or electric car charging available for park users.
4.2d Woodland management	Evidence of where limbs have been removed, tree tagging etc. In most woodland areas assume yes unless there are clear issues with branches/fallen debris in inappropriate locations.

4.3 Buffer

Table G.20: 4.3a-c Buffer scores

4.3a-c	Does the green space act as a buffer for/ absorb noise or air pollution from (+1)
4.3a Nearby traffic	Open space alongside busy road, vegetation, tree edge within open space along busy road
4.3b Nearby industry	As above but adjacent to industry
4.3c Other (Please state)	As above but adjacent to something else e.g. railway line or other disturbance

5 Nature conservation and heritage

5.1 Vegetation

Table G.21: Vegetation scores

5.1a-e	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+2)	Higher value (+3)
5.1a Grassland	Amenity grass, fine lawn	Wildflower grass verges, unmown grass areas, small area of wildflower meadow	Natural grassland/ wildflower meadow of significant area
5.1b Woodland/ scrub	Single species, non-native shelter belts or scattered trees	Mixed shelter belts, Mixed scattered trees/ tree groups,	Deciduous woodland, veteran trees, scrub, wood area

5.1a-e	Lower value (+1)	Medium value (+2)	Higher value (+3)
		Coniferous (non-native) plantation	with standing deadwood
5.1c Planting	N/A	Fromal / annual bedding, Ornamental planting, Shrubs	N/A
5.1d Hedgerow	Non-native single species hedge	Native, single species hedgerow	Native, mixed hedgerow
5.1e Wetland	Concreted channel / ditch	Waterbody with no marginal vegetation	Pond or lake (with marginal vegetation)

Table G.22: 5.1f Vegetation scores

5.1f	Limited impact (-1)	Moderate impact (-2)	High impact (-3)
Is there evidence of invasive non-native plant species – Note, refer to INNS plant species, rather than animals e.g. grey squirrels	Some INNS species e.g. Rhododendron, Himalayan balsam, but not dominating the site, or evidence of INNS nearby, with potential risk for spreading into site	Notable INNS on site, e.g. Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, some Giant Hogweed	INNS dominating the site, or notable Giant Hogweed

Table G.23: 5.1g Vegetation scores

5.1g	Lower value (0)	Medium value (+1)	Higher value (+2)
Does the green space form part of a wider network of green spaces and green infrastructure (e.g. street trees, verges, rivers, wider countryside?)	Isolated, limited street trees or other greenspaces nearby	Some connectivity to nearby greenspaces, may be street trees on surrounding trees leading to other pockets of green space	Well connected, e.g. immediately adjoining a river, wider naturalistic landscape, heathland or woodland.

5.2 Management

Table G.24: 5.2a-c Management scores

5.2a-c	Tick which of the following are present (+1)
5.2a Animal homes e.g. Bird boxes / bat boxes / bug hotels etc.	Score if any of above features or similar are present – bird /bat boxes look at trees, bug hotels on the ground. Any other constructed animal habitat or feature e.g. badger gates can also count.
5.2b Infrastructure to facilitate wildlife watching e.g. bird hide	Score if any features/infrastructure to promote or support wildlife watching are present
5.2c Educational signage detailing species that can be found on the site	Score if signage includes any information on species etc.

Table G.25: 5.2d-g Management scores

5.2d-g	Which of the following management practices are applied (+1)
5.2d Areas of grass left unmown	Score if small pockets of grassland are left unmown within wider amenity landscape
5.2e New tree planting	Score if new tree planting present (e.g. if there are trees with tree guards, or other evidence of young planted trees)
5.2f Dead wood habitat piles left	Score if present. This includes log/branch piles as well as standing deadwood which has been left

5.3 Heritage

Table G.26: 5.3a-c Heritage scores

5.3a-c	Tick which of the following are present (+1)
5.3a Heritage park features	E.g. formal tree avenues, amphitheatre seating, Victorian walls / gateways, statues, fountains, ornamental ponds, bandstand etc.
5.3b Designed parkland landscape	E.g. wood pasture, ha-ha, serpentine lake etc.
5.3c Any other historic features	Anything else of note (bear in mind that scheduled monuments, listed buildings etc. will be scored anyway as part of the desk based assessment)

6. Community involvement, marketing and culture

6.1 Community involvement

Table G.27: 6.1a Community involvement scores

6.1a	Tick which of the following are present – Yes (+3)
6.1a Is there evidence of an active community group	Evidence may include signage within notice board, volunteers working etc.

Table G.28: 6.1b-f Community involvement scores

6.1b-f	Tick which of the following are present – Yes (+1)
6.1b: Is there a permanent public noticeboard on site?	Notice board – usually a glass fronted case with notices / leaflets and/or other park information in.
6.1c: If so, are up to date notices displayed?	Score if notices present, unless they are obviously not up-to-date, e.g. dates for events several months ago
6.1d Is a programme of cultural or other community activities displayed?	Check any notice board for signs of these or similar

6.1b-f	Tick which of the following are present – Yes (+1)
6.1e Are there any temporary notices on site informing users about current developments?	E.g. if there are temporary works etc. Even if no temporary work going on. do not score
6.1f If so, are they up to date?	Score if notices are up to date

6.2 Education

Table G.29: 6.2a-d Education scores

6.2a-d Is the site supporting education:	Yes (+1)
6.2a Does the site offer educational interest (e.g. nature conservation interest or local historic significance)?	This can include anything of interest such as historic ruins, habitats etc. there does not need to be evidence that these are being used for nature conservation.
6.2b Is there a built facility on site which is being used by the local community for education?	E.g. community facility etc, with signage which suggests it is used for education.
6.2c Is there evidence that a natural feature on site is being used by the local community for education?	Evidence may include pond dipping platform, signage for guided walks etc.

6.2a-d Is the site supporting education:	**Yes (+1)**
6.2d Is there a school, immediately adjacent to the green space?	School next to park (including across a road with crossing, but no further)

6.3 Marketing scores

Table G.30: 6.3a-h Marketing scores

6.3a-h	**Are any of the following social and cultural facilities located on or adjacent to green space? Tick those which apply. – Yes (+1)**
6.3a Community centre	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.
6.3b Youth centre	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.
6.3c Arts or cultural venue	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.
6.3d Village hall	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.
6.3e Sports changing rooms	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.
6.3f Indoor sport hall/ leisure centre	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.
6.3g Village shop / convenience store	Score if present or adjacent – can use Google maps or similar to assist.

6.3a-h	Are any of the following social and cultural facilities located on or adjacent to green space? Tick those which apply. – Yes (+1)
6.3h Other	Score if another feature of note present – can also use this category if unsure which of the above criteria a facility fits into

6.4 Arts and culture

Table G.31: 6.4a-c Arts and culture scores

6.4a-c	Are any of the following social and cultural facilities located on or adjacent to green space? Tick those which apply. – Yes (+1)
6.4a Is there a dedicated outdoor performance area within the green space?	E.g. bandstand, other kind of stage, informal performance area with seating around
6.4b Does the green space contain public art?	This may include sculptures, murals, or other art installations
6.4c Does the green space feature any recognisable landmark features of local importance?	This may also include a particularly important view over local area, as well as any buildings of note,

7. Summary

7.1 Evidence of informal recreation

Table G.32: 7.1a-j Evidence of informal recreation scores

7.1a-j	Is there evidence the green space is being used for informal recreation? Please tick those which apply. – Yes +1
7.1a Walking	Score if evidence of this whilst on site
7.1b Dog walking	Score if evidence of this whilst on site
7.1c Informal children's play (not play equipment)	Score if evidence of this whilst on site (e.g. informal kickabout, playing tig etc.) – evidence may also include informal shelters in woodland or similar which may have been built by children
7.1d Young people hanging out	Score if evidence of this whilst on site – e.g. sitting on park bench/grass chatting, or standing chatting
7.1e Sitting/ relaxing	Score if evidence of this whilst on site
7.1f Desire lines (unplanned worn routes)	Score if there are signs of informal routes through grass or other vegetated areas within the site
7.1g Skateboarding (not formal skate park)	Score if evidence of this whilst on site
7.1h Cycling (not formal BMX track)	Score if evidence of this whilst on site

7.1a-j	Is there evidence the green space is being used for informal recreation? Please tick those which apply. – Yes +1
7.1i Food growing	Score if evidence of this whilst on site, or if any other evidence that orchard or other food growing provision is being used
7.1j Other	Any other activity that is being undertaken whilst on site

7.2 Overall offer

Table G.33: 7.2a Overall offer scores

7.2a	Poor (+1)	Average (+2)	Good (+3)
Overall provision for informal recreation?	Very small site, or otherwise limited in the amount of free space available. Very steeply sloping ground, or vegetation so dense that access is limited to a small number of pathways.	Larger space, offering space to run around, informal kick-about etc. Or wooded area offering more exploratory play options, in addition to spaces to sit and watch	Includes a variety of areas, e.g. open areas suitable for informal kick-about as well as wooded areas for building dens, climbing trees etc.

Play

1. Play Provision

1.1 Overall Play Provision

Table G.34: 1.1a-e Overall Play Provision scores

1.1a-e	Tick is present (+1)
1.1a Is there play equipment on site (including natural play)	UNSCORED – tick if any play equipment – including natural play e.g. boulders, sand pit, willow shelters etc.
1.1b How many separate items of equipment	UNSCORED – if a big play site it is okay to estimate, large climbing frames etc. with multiple sections can be counted as multiple pieces of equipment as is appropriate
1.1c Is it for under 5 years	E.g. very small climbing frame, toddler swings etc.
1.1d Is it for 5-11 years	E.g. other swings, slightly bigger equipment etc.
1.1e Is it for over 11 years?	E.g. More challenging equipment, social swings etc.

1.2 Play activities

Table G.35: 1.2a-o Play activities scores

1.2a-o	Tick is present (+1)
1.2a Balancing	E.g. balance beam, stepping stones etc.
1.2b Rocking	E.g. rockers, seesaw
1.2c Social play	May be found on the side of climbing apparatus e.g. noughts and crosses or other social games
1.2d Rotating	E.g. roundabout -
1.2e Viewing	E.g. viewing platform on climbing frame, other viewing holes within equipment
1.2f Touching	E.g. sand, other tactile surfaces within equipment
1.2g Swinging	E.g. swings, tyre swing, hammocks etc.
1.2h Sliding	Slides, fireman pole
1.2j Climbing / agility	Climbing apparatus, climbing wall, climbing frame, monkey bars etc.
1.2k Jumping	Trampolines in the ground, other jumping equipment
1.2l Counting	Hopscotch, other counting games
1.2m Waterplay	Waterpark, splash park etc.
1.2n Crawling / hiding	Tunnels, hidden areas within larger equipment etc.
1.2o Meeting up / relaxing	Child friendly benches within equipment

1.3 Equipment surroundings

Table G.36: 1.3a-c Equipment surroundings scores

1.3a-c	Tick is present (+1)
1.3a Is there impact absorbing surfacing around the equipment?	E.g. safety surface, bark chippings, grass
1.3b Are there benches within enclosure / adjacent to equipment?	Score if present
1.3c Are there litterbins within the enclosure / adjacent to equipment?	Score if present

Table G.37: 1.3d Equipment surroundings scores

1.3d	None	Poor (+1)	Average (+2)	Good (+3)
1.1d Is there a play area notice at the entrance stating dog free, children only and emergency contacts	No signage present	Signage with one of the criteria, or more criteria but not fully legible.	Signage with two of the criteria clearly legible	Signage with all three criteria legible

2. Youth provision

2.1 Youth provision

G.1 This is scored the same as section 2.4 in the main open space audit

3. Wider considerations

Table G.38: 3.1a-i Wider considerations scores

3.1a-i	Poor (+1)	Average (+2)	Good (+3)
1.3a Play / youth facilities appropriately located	Located away from main thoroughfares, with no surveillance, difficult to access	Fair access, limited surveillance	Well located, with surveillance, easy to access.
1.3b Play / youth facilities designed for the site / integrated into the landscape	The play space stands out and does not look attractive. No attempt has been made to design the space to complement the settings.	Some attempt has been made to integrate the play equipment and features.	The play space is an attractive place, with a distinctive and welcoming character, and located with regard to its setting.
1.3c Is inclusivity addressed within the access, equipment and wider play offer	Site offers little or nothing for children and young people with sensory or physical impairments.	Limited offer to children and young people with physical or sensory impairments. Disabled children and young people and non-Disabled children	Features are designed for a range of abilities and impairments including sensory and physical impairments and behaviours. Disabled and non-disabled

3.1a-i	Poor (+1)	Average (+2)	Good (+3)
		and young people are unlikely to use the space together.	children and young people are able to use the space together.
1.3d Are there areas to retreat and observe?	No areas to retreat and observe.	Spacing within play enclosure or play zone offering space to retreat if needed but still be nearby	Sensory spaces within play enclosure or zone to retreat and observe in a safe environment
1.3e Is there challenging / existing play offer?	Features (including equipment, natural features and landscaping) are at basic level only and adds little to play value.	Features (including equipment, natural features and landscaping) are more than basic and adds to play value but does not do so significantly.	Features (including equipment, natural features and landscaping) are advanced in nature and add significantly to play value e.g. loose parts, places to hide/for reverie, good integration and use of natural environment, a range of textures, planting, use of contours, challenging, risk, cooperation needed, and attention paid to all the senses.
1.3f Is the imaginative play offer?	The site has no design features to provoke the children and young people's imagination, fantasy or role play.	The site has limited design features to provoke the child's imagination, fantasy or role play (e.g. kitchens, features	The site is deliberately designed to provoke and engage children and young people's imagination, encourage fantasy and

3.1a-i	Poor (+1)	Average (+2)	Good (+3)
		as vehicles, castles etc).	roleplay e.g. through changes in level and texture, loose parts, sculptures, natural features and imaginative signage. Features may include huts, kitchens, vehicle / animal structures, boats, castle themes etc.
1.3g Does the provision encourage teenage play?	The site does not actively encourage, or may exclude older children and teenagers through a lack of appropriate facilities or spaces to socialise.	Encouraging teenage play is limited to the provision of facilities for informal sports (i.e. a MUGA), but opportunities for social play and a range of other activities / active play are lacking.	A combination of generous social space and facilities with an activity focus are provided. Activities may include wheeled sports facilities, ball court but also more social activities (such as an outdoor 'stage' for performance play/interaction) Spaces are located near circulation routes for teens to 'see and be seen'. Play spaces may be designed to provide space for intergenerational play for both children and adults, whilst also providing separate areas

3.1a-i	Poor (+1)	Average (+2)	Good (+3)
			aimed primarily at younger children
1.3h Does the provision encourage natural play?	Landscaping and planting either actively discourages play or no opportunities are available to engage with the natural environment.	Landscaping and planting is minimal and offers limited provision for encounters with natural environment.	Site provides a range of natural features such as trees, bushes, plants, shrubs, wild flowers and long grass, sand, water, rocks, and a variety of levels; and a range of visual and sensory stimuli. There is opportunity to use the natural environment in play.
1.3i Are there opportunities for teenage girls?	No inclusion of features designed for teenage girls e.g. social seating, performance spaces	Some provision for teenage girls e.g. social swings, performance space, good seating, but this may be away from other play or youth areas or otherwise poorly located	Provision of wider range of youth facilities designed with teenage girls in mind (see making space for girls for examples)

Appendix H

Audit form

Open Space Audit

Desk based assessment

+3 Number indicates the increase or decrease in score.

Completed by:
Site ID:
Site Name:
Grid reference:
Ownership (council, private, other):
Area (ha):
Category of open space:

Value scores are highlighted in yellow

Quality scores are highlighted in green

0. Designations

0.1 National

0.1a	Listed building	☐	+3
0.1b	Scheduled Monument	☐	+3
0.1c	Site of Special Scientific Interest	☐	+3
0.1d	Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens	☐	+3
0.1e	Special Area of Conservation	☐	+2
0.1f	Special Protection Area	☐	+2
0.1g	Ramsar	☐	+2
0.1h	Green Belt	☐	+3
0.1i	National Nature Reserve	☐	+3

0.2 Regional

0.2a	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation/Local Wildlife Site	☐	+2
0.2b	Regionally Important Geological Site	☐	+2
0.2c	Biodiversity Opportunity Areas	☐	+2

0.3 Access

0.3a	National/Regional Trails	☐	+3
0.3b	Sustrans Routes	☐	+3

0.4 Local - Statutory

0.4a	Conservation Area	☐	+1
0.4b	Local Nature Reserve	☐	+1
0.4c	Locally Important Geological Site	☐	+1

0.5 Other

0.5a	Within a Flood Risk Zone	☐	+1
0.5b	Ancient Woodland	☐	+1
0.5c	Tree Preservation Order	☐	+1
0.5d	Has the site achieved a Green Flag Award?	☐	+3
0.5e	Has the site achieved a Green Flag Community Award?	☐	+3
0.5f	Has the site achieved a Green Heritage Award?	☐	+3
0.5g	Contain Priority Habitat?	☐	+1

Open Space Audit

Site based assessment

Site ID:
Site Name:
Category of open space:
Audit date and time:
Time spent surveying:
Survey site access (e.g. access to whole site/ access to part of site/ no access to site):
Is the site still an open space? If not, please describe below:

1. Welcoming place

1.1 Site access

1.1a Please tick which option applies from the following list:

Freely accessible to public	☐	+5
Freely accessible to public: opening hours	☐	+4
Restricted access: members/tenants only	☐	+3
Restricted access: other (please state)	☐	+2
Freely accessible to public: de-facto access	☐	+1
No Public access	☐	

1.1b Are there any areas which are fenced from public access? ☐
Comment:

1.2 Access and entrances

1.2a	Is the site connected other nearby open spaces (including through walking and cycling routes)	☐	+1
	Please score each of the following - use the guidance note to help where necessary:		
1.2b	To what extent are the entrances well presented?	☐	+1-5
1.2c	To what extent are the boundaries well defined and maintained?	☐	+1-5
1.2d	What is the overall quality of access and accesses within and through the open space?	☐	+1-5
1.2e	What is the overall quality of access and accesses for people travelling to the open space?	☐	+1-5
1.2f	What is the overall provision of welcoming signage?	☐	+1-5

1.3 Inclusivity

Is there evidence of any of the following:

1.3a	Signage is accessible and welcoming for all users)	☐	+1
1.3b	Step free access and useable gates / entryways	☐	0 or +1
1.3c	Spaced benches along footpaths	☐	0 or +1
1.3d	Specific features designed to increase accessibility e.g. picnic benches with space for a wheelchair, passing points along footpaths, signage indicating accessible routes/footpaths)	☐	0 or +1

2. Health, safety and security

2.1 Community safety/sense of security

Please tick those which apply:

2.1a	Is there natural surveillance into the site from surrounding properties or high streets?	☐	+1
2.1b	Multiple entrance / exits	☐	+1
2.1c	Is there a flow of people through the green space (to achieve self surveillance)?	☐	+1
2.1d	Is lighting provided?	☐	+1
2.1e	Is there CCTV?	☐	+1
2.1f	Is there a marked help point or onsite staff?	☐	+1
2.1g	Overall, does the open space feel safe to visit?	☐	+1

2.2 Basic amenities

Please tick and score those that are on site - use the guidance note to help where necessary.

2.2a	Litter +/ dog bin	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.2b	Seating	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.2c	Personal rescue equipment	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.2d	Cycle parking	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.2e	Toilets	☐	+3
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.2f	Cafe	☐	+3
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.2g	Other	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5

2.3 Active recreation/ sport provision

Please tick and score those which apply:

2.3a	Grass pitches	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.3b	Artificial pitches (e.g. Astro turf)	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.3c	Tennis courts	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.3d	Walking/ jogging	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.3e	Water activities (other than play areas)	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.3f	Bowls	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.3g	Other	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5

If any of the above are ticked

2.4 Play and young people provision

Please tick and score those which apply:

2.4a	Equipped play (under 5)	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5

2.4b	Equipped play (5-11)	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4c	Equipped play (11+)	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4d	MUGA	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4e	Single basketball hoop	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4f	Teen shelter or social seating	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4g	Green gym	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4h	Skate ramp	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4i	BMX track	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4j	Other	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.4k	Non-equipped designated area of play	☐	+1
		☐	NA or +1-5

If any of the above are ticked

3. Clean and well maintained

3.1 Cleanliness

3.1a	Is graffiti evident?	☐	0 or -1-2
3.1b	Is vandalism evident?	☐	1 or -1-2
3.1c	Overall cleanliness?	☐	+1-5

3.2 Maintenance

What is the condition of the following features?

3.2a	Overall condition of planted areas	☐	NA or +1-5
3.2b	Overall condition of grass areas	☐	NA or +1-5
3.2c	Overall condition of footpaths	☐	NA or +1-5
3.2d	Overall condition of water and associated edge treatment	☐	NA or +1-5
3.2e	Overall condition of buildings and built features	☐	NA or +1-5

3.3 Overall attractiveness

3.1a	Does the green space contribute to the setting of the immediate local area?	☐	+1
3.1b	Is the open space visually attractive?	☐	+1

What threats / disturbances / issues are detracting from the site?

3.1c	Noise pollution	☐	-2
3.1d	Air and water pollution	☐	-2
3.1e	Intrusive buildings	☐	-2
3.1f	Erosion	☐	-2
3.1g	Lack of landscape management / maintenance	☐	-2
3.1h	Motorcycle scrambling and mini-bikes	☐	-2
3.1i	Flytipping	☐	-2
3.1j	Flooding	☐	-2
3.1k	Excessive lighting	☐	-2

3.1l	Dog fouling	☐	-2
3.1m	Other	☐	-2
	Please state:		

4. Sustainability

4.1 Planting

Tick which of the following are present

4.1a	Drought tolerant planting	☐	+1
4.1b	Significant areas of shade	☐	+1
4.1c	Orchards / edible planting	☐	+1
4.1d	Green or brown roofs	☐	+1
4.1e	Rain gardens, swales, detention basin or other SuDS / NFM features	☐	+1

4.2 Management

Tick which of the following are present

4.2a	Water conservation measures	☐	+1
4.2b	Recycling of waste and materials	☐	+1
4.2c	Sustainable energy (e.g. solar/wind/electric car charging)	☐	+1
4.2d	Woodland management	☐	+1

4.3 Buffer

Does the green space act as a buffer for/ absorb noise or air pollution from

4.2a	Nearby traffic	☐	+1
4.2b	Nearby industry	☐	+1
4.2c	Other	☐	+1
	Please state:		

5. Nature conservation and heritage

5.1 Vegetation

Tick which of the following are present

5.1a	Grassland	☐	NA or +1-3
5.1b	Woodland	☐	NA or +1-3
5.1c	Wetland	☐	NA or +1-3
5.1d	Hedgerows	☐	NA or +1-3
5.1e	Horticultural planting	☐	NA or +1-3
5.1f	Is there evidence of invasive non-native plant species?	☐	0 or -1-3
5.1g	Does the green space form part of a wider network of green spaces and green infrastructure (e.g. street trees, verges, rivers, wider countryside?)	☐	0 or +1-2

5.2 Management

Tick which of the following are present

5.2a	Animal homes e.g. Bird boxes / bat boxes / bug hotels etc.	☐	+1
5.2b	Infrastructure to facilitate wildlife watching e.g. bird hide	☐	+1
5.2c	Educational signage detailing species that can be found on the site	☐	+1

Which of the following management practices are applied

5.2d	Areas of grass left unmown	☐	+1

5.2e	New tree planting	☐	+1
5.2f	Dead wood habitat piles left	☐	+1
5.2g	Other evidence of management for nature conservation	☐	+1

5.3 Heritage

Tick which of the following are present

5.2a	Heritage Park features	☐	+1
5.2b	Designed parkland landscape	☐	+1
5.2c	Any other historic features	☐	+1

6. Community involvement, marketing and culture

6.1 Community involvement

6.1a	Is there evidence of an active community group?	☐	+3

Are the following notices displayed:

6.1b	Is there a permanent public noticeboard on site?	☐	+1
6.1c	If so, are up to date notices displayed?	☐	+1
6.1d	Is a programme of cultural or other community activities displayed?	☐	+1
6.1e	Are there any temporary notices on site informing users about current developments?	☐	+1
6.1f	If so, are they up to date?	☐	+1

6.2 Education

Is the site supporting education:

6.2a	Is the site providing educational interest through interpretation or evidence of specific educational activities	☐	+1
6.2b	Is there a built facility on site which is being used by the local community for education?	☐	+1
6.2c	Is there evidence that a natural feature on site is being used by the local community for education?	☐	+1
6.2d	Is there a school, immediately adjacent to the green space?	☐	+1

6.3 Marketing

Are any of the following social and cultural facilities located on or adjacent to green space? Tick those which apply.

6.3a	Community centre	☐	+1
6.3b	Youth centre	☐	+1
6.3c	Arts or cultural venue	☐	+1
6.3d	Village hall	☐	+1
6.3e	Village shop	☐	+1
6.3f	Sports changing rooms	☐	+1
6.3g	Indoor sport hall/ leisure centre	☐	+1
6.3h	Village shop / convenience store	☐	+1
6.3i	Other	☐	+1

Please state:

6.4 Arts and culture

Please tick if yes to each question below

6.4a	Is there a dedicated outdoor performance area within the green space?	☐	+1
6.4b	Does the green space contain public art?	☐	+1

6.4c Does the green space feature any recognisable landmark features of local importance? ☐ +1

7. Summary

7.1 Informal recreation

Is there evidence the green space is being used for informal recreation? Please tick those which apply.

7.1a Walking ☐ +1
7.1b Dog walking ☐ +1
7.1c Informal children's play (not play equipment) ☐ +1
7.1d Young people hanging out ☐ +1
7.1e Sitting/ relaxing ☐ +1
7.1f Desire lines (unplanned worn routes) ☐ +1
7.1g Skateboarding (not formal skate park) ☐ +1
7.1h Cycling (not formal BMX track) ☐ +1
7.1i Food growing ☐ +1
7.1j Other ☐ +1
Please state:
7.1k Overall provision for informal recreation? ☐ +1-3

8. Potential themes for enhancement

8.1 Benefits / services

8.1a Please indicate which benefits/ services should be prioritised for future management or enhancement.

9. Comments

9.1 Further information

9.1a

Please add any further information on open space e.g. details of primary or secondary uses/ purposes or any significant issues/ opportunities which should be highlighted in addition to those specified in Q8.

Open Space Audit - Play spaces

Site based assessment

Site ID:
Site Name:
Category of open space:
Audit date and time:
Time spent surveying:
Survey site access (e.g. access to whole site/ access to part of site/ no access to site):
Is the site still an open space? If not, please describe below:

1. Play provision

1.1 Overal play provision

1.1a	Is there play equipment on site (including natural play)? Tick those which apply.	☐	
1.1b	How many separate items of equipment?	☐	
1.1c	Is it for under 5 years?	☐	+1
1.1d	5-11 years?	☐	+1
1.1e	Over 11 years?	☐	+1

1.2 Play activities

What play activities are provided for? Tick those which apply.

1.2a	Balancing	☐	+1
1.2b	Rocking	☐	+1
1.2c	Social play	☐	+1
1.2d	Rotating	☐	+1
1.2e	Viewing	☐	+1
1.2f	Touching	☐	+1
1.2g	Swinging	☐	+1
1.2h	Sliding	☐	+1
1.2i	Climbing / agility	☐	+1
1.2j	Loose parts	☐	+1
1.2k	Jumping	☐	+1
1.2l	Counting	☐	+1
1.2m	Waterplay	☐	+1
1.2n	Crawling / hiding	☐	+1
1.2o	Meeting up / relaxing	☐	+1

1.3 Equipment surroundings

1.3a	Is there impact absorbing surfacing around the equipment?	☐	+1
1.3b	Are there benches within enclosure/adjacent to equipment?	☐	+1
1.3c	Are there litterbins within enclosure/adjacent to equipment?	☐	+1
1.3d	Is there a play area notice at the entrance stating dog free, children only and emergency contacts?	☐	+1-3

1.3e	Is there space, separate from the equipped area, for informal play/ general runabout/ natural play?	☐	+1
1.3f	Overall condition of play equipment	☐	+1-5

2. Youth provision

2.1 Youth provision

2.1a	MUGA	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.1b	Single basketball hoop	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.1c	Teen shelter or social seating	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.1d	Green gym	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.1e	Skate ramp	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.1f	BMX track	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5
2.1g	Other	☐	+1
	Condition	☐	NA or +1-5

3. Wider considerations

3.0a	Play / youth facilities appropriately located?	☐	+1-3
3.0b	Play /youth facilities designed for the site / integrated into the landscape?	☐	+1-3
3.0c	Is inclusivity addressed within the access, equipment and wider play offer?	☐	+1-3
3.0d	Are there areas to retreat and observe?	☐	+1-3
3.0e	Is there a challenging / exciting play offer?	☐	+1-3
3.0f	Is there an imaginative play offer?	☐	+1-3
3.0g	Does the provision encourage teenage play?	☐	+1-3
3.0h	Does the provision encourage natural play?	☐	+1-3
3.0i	Are there non-sport baseed play facilities? E.g. Social seating, performance areas	☐	+1-3
3.0j	Is there incorporation of natural features, including shading around play / young people provision?	☐	+1-3
3.0k	Is there adjacent bike or scooter parking?	☐	+1

Appendix I

Audit scores summary

ID	Name	Typology	Settlement	District	Area (ha)	Hierarchy	Quality (Q)	Value (V)	Q/V score	Play hierarchy (size based)	Inclusion of provision for teenagers	Q play	V play	Q/V score play
1	Makins Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Henley - Upon-Thames	South Ox	1.66	Doorstep	75	29	++	NEAP	Yes	4.2	50	++
3	Drayton Recreation Ground	Parks and gardens	Drayton	Vale	1.12	Doorstep	54	24	-+	LAP	NA	3.0	33	-+
4	Dairy Meadow	Recreation ground	Garford	Vale	0.37	Incidental	50	14	--	LAP	NA	3.0	31	-+
5	Marcham Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Marcham	Vale	2.41	Local	91	36	++	NEAP	Yes	5.0	41	++
6	Wytham cricket recreation ground	Recreation ground	Wytham	Vale	1.56	Doorstep	51	24	-+	LAP	NA	4.0	27	+-
7	East Hanney Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	East Hanney	Vale	5.80	Local	98	30	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	54	++
8	Stanford in the Vale Football Club	Recreation ground	Stanford-in-the-vale	Vale	1.60	Doorstep	67	22	++	NEAP	Yes	3.2	31	--
9	Charney Basset Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Charney Basset	Vale	1.12	Doorstep	62	24	++	LEAP	NA	2.0	27	--
10	Great Coxwell Park	Parks and gardens	Great Coxwell	Vale	1.12	Doorstep	69	27	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	38	+-
11	Tucker Park	Recreation ground	Faringdon	Vale	3.18	Local	72	26	+-	LAP	NA	4.0	28	+-
12	Faringdon Sport Park	Recreation ground	Faringdon	Vale	8.69	Local	102	39	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	28	+-
13	Markus Avenue	Amenity greenspace	Thame	South Ox	0.13	Incidental	58	14	+-	LAP	NA	4.0	33	++

ID	Name	Typology	Settlement	District	Area (ha)	Hierarchy	Quality (Q)	Value (V)	Q/V score	Play hierarchy (size based)	Inclusion of provision for teenagers	Q play	V play	Q/V score play
14	Queen Elizabeth Circle Recreation Area / Edgehill Recreation Ground	Parks and gardens	Thame	South Ox	1.81	Doorstep	63	19	+-	NEAP	Yes	4.0	47	++
15	Rotherfield Peppard Well	Natural greenspace	Peppard Common	South Ox	18.23	Neighbourhood	36	21	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
16	Wallingford Castle Grounds and Meadow	Parks and gardens	Wallingford	South Ox	11.51	Doorstep	58	30	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	Chilton Field Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Chilton	Vale	4.20	Local	92	23	+-	NEAP	Yes	5.0	47	++
18	Kine Croft Park	Parks and gardens	Wallingford	South Ox	3.40	Local	53	24	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
19	Lawson Road	Amenity greenspace	Henley - Upon-Thames	South Ox	1.29	Doorstep	55	19	++	LEAP	Yes	3.5	29	--
20	Greenwood Square	Amenity greenspace	Chinnor	South Ox	0.34	Incidental	55	17	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	33	++
21	Great Haseley Park	Provision for children and teenagers	Great Haseley	South Ox	0.37	Incidental	40	16	++	NEAP	NA	5.0	32	+-
22	Elms Park	Parks and gardens	Thame	South Ox	2.67	Local	58	21	--	NEAP	Yes	2.5	33	--
23	Francis Brown Way	Amenity greenspace	Chalgrove	South Ox	0.36	Incidental	54	14	+-	LAP	NA	5.0	29	++

ID	Name	Typology	Settlement	District	Area (ha)	Hierarchy	Quality (Q)	Value (V)	Q/V score	Play hierarchy (size based)	Inclusion of provision for teenagers	Q play	V play	Q/V score play
24	Bishopswood Sports Ground	Recreation ground	Sonning Common	South Ox	6.01	Local	63	26	--	LEAP	Yes	5.0	18	+-
25	Tilbury Fields	Natural greenspace	Botley	Vale	1.56	Doorstep	46	20	-+	LEAP	NA	4.0	29	+-
26	Cherry Orchard	Parks and gardens	Stoke Row	South Ox	1.66	Doorstep	64	26	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	30	+-
27	Nettlebed Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Nettlebed	South Ox	2.00	Doorstep	65	24	++	NEAP	NA	3.0	29	--
28	Benson Waterfront Green	Parks and gardens	Benson	South Ox	0.25	Incidental	57	26	-+	LAP	Yes	3.0	21	--
29	Faye Elizabeth Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Benson	South Ox	3.19	Local	101	31	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	42	++
30	Woodcote Green	Parks and gardens	Woodcote	South Ox	0.47	Incidental	61	23	++	NEAP	Yes	3.3	29	--
31	Fair Mile Hosptial play and green	Parks and gardens	Cholsey	South Ox	4.91	Local	89	28	+-	LEAP	NA	4.0	33	++
32	Watlington Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Watlington	South Ox	5.40	Local	107	29	+-	NEAP	Yes	3.7	46	++
33	Marsh Recreation Ground	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	0.35	Incidental	60	16	+-	NEAP	Yes	4.0	36	+-
34	Franklin Park	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	0.18	Incidental	77	19	+-	LEAP	NA	5.0	37	++
35	Stanton St John Green	Amenity greenspace	Stanton St John	South Ox	2.39	Local	51	22	-+	LAP	NA	5.0	32	++

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36	Ladygrove Meadow / Chaunterell Way	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	7.96	Local	62	28	+-	LAP	NA	3.0	27	–
37	Harcourt Road	Amenity greenspace	Wantage	Vale	0.16	Incidental	37	14	–	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
38	Pike Reach	Provision for children and teenagers	Wantage	Vale	0.06	Incidental	56	21	++	LAP	Yes	5.0	30	++
39	Mary Green Park	Parks and gardens	Grove	Vale	1.10	Doorstep	60	22	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	37	++
40	Penney Park	Provision for children and teenagers	East Hendred	Vale	0.15	Incidental	54	25	++	NEAP	NA	4.0	34	++
41	Greenwood Way Neighbourhood Park	Parks and gardens	Didcot	Vale	12.67	Neighbourhood	90	28	+-	LEAP	Yes	4.3	42	++
42	Kingston Blount Rec	Recreation ground	Kingston Blount	South Ox	1.86	Doorstep	92	29	++	LEAP	Yes	4.5	45	++
43	Juniper Way	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	1.37	Doorstep	78	21	++	NEAP	NA	4.0	36	++
44	Ironside Drive	Parks and gardens	Watchfield	Vale	4.27	Local	59	26	--	LAP	NA	5.0	32	++
45	Roman Way	Amenity greenspace	Shrivenham	Vale	0.38	Incidental	63	18	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	39	++
46	Fuller Way	Amenity greenspace	Steventon	Vale	0.32	Incidental	59	18	++	LAP	NA	4.0	29	++
47	The Glebe Park	Provision for children and teenagers	Cumnor	Vale	0.32	Incidental	82	22	++	NEAP	Yes	3.8	45	++
48	Seven Sisters Way -wider area	Natural greenspace	Cumnor	Vale	2.25	Local	67	26	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	28	+-
50	Farm Piece	Amenity greenspace	Stanford in the Vale	Vale	0.94	Doorstep	44	17	-+	LEAP	NA	4.0	30	+-

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51	Coleshill Drive	Amenity greenspace	Faringdon	Vale	1.40	Doorstep	50	16	++	LEAP	NA	3.0	31	--
52	Volunteer Way	Amenity greenspace	Faringdon	Vale	0.22	Incidental	70	21	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	32	+-
53	Tiddington Village Hall Rec	Recreation ground	Tiddington	South Ox	0.48	Incidental	68	21	++	LEAP	Yes	2.7	39	-+
54	Folly Hill	Natural greenspace	Faringdon	Vale	1.88	Doorstep	65	29	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
55	Kingston Bagpuize Millenium Green	Natural greenspace	Kingston Bagpuize	Vale	4.82	Local	83	29	++	LAP	Yes	5.0	21	+-
56	Southmoor Park	Parks and gardens	Kingston Bagpuize	Vale	1.18	Doorstep	50	17	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
57	Abbey Fishponds	Natural greenspace	Abingdon	Vale	5.62	Local	38	19	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
58	Cuttle Brook	Natural greenspace	Thame	South Ox	13.00	Neighbourhood	57	24	+-	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
60	Mowbray Fields	Natural greenspace	Didcot	South Ox	3.41	Local	52	22	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
61	Tuckmill Meadows	Natural greenspace	Watchfield	Vale	5.69	Local	52	31	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
62	Marsh Meadows	Parks and gardens	Henley - Upon-Thames	South Ox	9.47	Local	81	35	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
63	Tetsworth Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Tetsworth	South Ox	2.51	Local	66	27	--	NEAP	Yes	3.8	45	++
64	Gillots Field	Natural greenspace	Henley - Upon-Thames	South Ox	8.22	Local	54	22	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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65	Onslow Drive	Amenity greenspace	Thame	South Ox	0.56	Doorstep	54	15	++	LEAP	Yes	3.5	28	--
66	Letcombe Wildlife Area / Willow Nature Reserve	Natural greenspace	Wantage	Vale	4.08	Local	52	18	+-	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
67	Lower Greensands	Amenity greenspace	Faringdon	Vale	1.11	Doorstep	55	15	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	41	++
68	Shotover Country Park	Natural greenspace	Horspath	South Ox	103.32	District	52	33	-+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
69	Albert Park	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	5.72	Local	80	28	+-	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
70	Ock Valley Walk	Natural greenspace	Abingdon	Vale	4.28	Local	38	27	-+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
71	Raleigh Park	Natural greenspace	Botley	Vale	8.97	Local	40	25	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
72	Shepcot Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Goring on Thames	South Ox	5.44	Local	75	25	+-	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
73	Brightwell Upperton Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Brightwell Upperton	South Ox	0.76	Doorstep	52	19	--	LEAP	Yes	2.5	36	-+
74	North Hinksey lane	Natural greenspace	Botley	Vale	0.38	Incidental	58	19	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
75	Betjemen Millenium Park	Parks and gardens	Wantage	Vale	0.59	Doorstep	56	23	-+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
76	Franklin Gardens	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	4.47	Local	66	26	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
78	Peppard Common Green	Amenity greenspace	Peppard Common	South Ox	0.82	Doorstep	50	21	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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79	The Rectory Garden	Parks and gardens	Goring on Thames	South Ox	0.19	Incidental	60	20	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
80	Three Fields	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	1.98	Doorstep	51	17	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
81	Marsh Baldon Green	Recreation ground	Marsh Baldon	South Ox	8.90	Local	52	23	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
82	Abingdon Marina Park	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	1.84	Doorstep	55	21	-+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
83	Britwell Salome Recreation	Recreation ground	Britwell Salome	South Ox	1.72	Doorstep	67	23	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	37	+-
84	Jarn Field and Heath	Natural greenspace	Boars Hill	Vale	6.37	Local	44	26	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
86	Uffington White Horse Hill	Natural greenspace	Woolstone	Vale	31.61	Wider Neighbourhood	61	34	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
88	Chinnor Hill Nature Reserve	Natural greenspace	Chinnor	South Ox	28.85	Wider Neighbourhood	44	35	-+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
89	Rosemoor Drive	Provision for children and teenagers	Watlington	South Ox	0.05	Incidental	51	13	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	37	++
90	Lea Drive	Provision for children and teenagers	Sonning Common	South Ox	0.43	Incidental	63	18	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	46	++
91	The Ruth Popper Playground	Provision for children and teenagers	Whitchurch-On-Thames	South Ox	0.10	Incidental	50	17	++	LEAP	NA	3.0	37	-+
92	Sovereign Place	Amenity greenspace	Wallingford	South Ox	0.25	Incidental	49	13	+-	LAP	NA	4.0	21	+-

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93	St Annes Court	Amenity greenspace	Didcot	South Ox	0.33	Incidental	55	17	++	LAP	NA	4.0	33	++
94	Middle Furlong	Provision for children and teenagers	Didcot	South Ox	0.04	Incidental	31	14	++	LEAP	NA	3.0	20	--
98	Seymour Crescent	Amenity greenspace	Wantage	Vale	0.64	Doorstep	79	29	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	45	++
99	Cullum Road	Amenity greenspace	Wheatley	South Ox	0.21	Incidental	64	17	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	36	++
101	Asquith Park	Provision for children and teenagers	Sutton Courtenay	Vale	0.07	Incidental	41	16	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	30	+-
102	Badgers Drive	Amenity greenspace	Wantage	Vale	0.12	Incidental	56	11	+-	LAP	NA	4.0	26	+-
103	Puddledock playground	Provision for children and teenagers	Ardlington	Vale	0.08	Incidental	64	20	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	34	++
104	Furrows End	Provision for children and teenagers	Drayton	Vale	0.07	Incidental	45	17	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	30	+-
105	Fidlers Orchard	Amenity greenspace	Harwell	Vale	0.23	Incidental	64	18	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	36	++
106	Mill Meadows	Parks and gardens	Henley - Upon-Thames	South Ox	2.41	Local	119	51	++	NEAP	NA	5.0	40	++
107	Binfield Heath Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Binfield Heath	South Ox	0.98	Doorstep	67	22	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	41	++
108	Abbey Road	Amenity greenspace	Watchfield	Vale	0.41	Incidental	36	16	++	LAP	NA	4.0	43	++
109	Sonning Common Memorial Park	Parks and gardens	Sonning Common	South Ox	3.84	Local	99	33	++	NEAP	Yes	5.0	48	++

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110	Checkendon Cricket Club	Recreation ground	Checkendon	South Ox	3.07	Local	60	26	--	NEAP	NA	4.0	36	++
111	Chazy Heath Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Chazy Heath / Tokers Green	South Ox	1.15	Doorstep	67	30	++	NEAP	Yes	3.0	48	-+
113	Riverside Park	Parks and gardens	Wallingford /Crowmarsh Gifford	South Ox	4.22	Local	55	33	-+	NEAP	Yes	4.0	23	+-
114	Crowmarsh Gifford Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Crowmarsh Gifford	South Ox	3.97	Local	105	34	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	44	++
115	Bullcroft Park	Parks and gardens	Wallingford	South Ox	6.86	Local	82	36	++	NEAP	Yes	3.0	36	--
116	Whitchurch Village Green	Parks and gardens	Whitchurch Hill	South Ox	0.84	Doorstep	61	22	++	LAP	Yes	3.5	38	-+
117	Gardiner Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Goring on Thames	South Ox	2.14	Local	80	25	+-	LAP	NA	4.0	31	++
118	Freemans Meadows	Recreation ground	Henley - Upon- Thames	South Ox	1.45	Doorstep	57	24	-+	NEAP	Yes	4.0	39	+-
119	The Bourdillon Children's Playing Field	Recreation ground	Goring on Thames	South Ox	0.76	Doorstep	60	21	++	NEAP	Yes	3.0	37	--
120	Woodcote Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Woodcote	South Ox	3.40	Local	67	25	--	LEAP	Yes	3.5	30	--

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121	South Stoke Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	South Stoke	South Ox	1.53	Doorstep	99	35	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	51	++
122	Ipsden village green	Amenity greenspace	Ipsden	South Ox	0.44	Incidental	51	16	-+	LEAP	Yes	3.5	30	--
123	Halifax Road	Amenity greenspace	Wallingford	South Ox	0.14	Incidental	63	14	+-	LAP	NA	5.0	33	++
124	French Gardens / Mcculloch Meadows	Parks and gardens	Crowmarsh Gifford	South Ox	2.35	Local	74	19	+-	LEAP	NA	5.0	35	++
125	The Astons Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Aston Tirrold	South Ox	2.00	Doorstep	83	22	++	NEAP	Yes	3.3	42	-+
126	Jubilee Recreation	Recreation ground	Brighwell-cum-Sotwell	South Ox	1.97	Doorstep	77	27	++	LAP	Yes	3.3	33	-+
127	Cholsey Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Cholsey	South Ox	7.85	Local	122	40	++	NEAP	Yes	3.8	39	+-
128	Moulsford Pavillion	Recreation ground	Moulsford	South Ox	2.51	Local	86	27	+-	NEAP	Yes	4.0	43	++
129	Shiplake Memorial Hall Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Shiplake	South Ox	2.09	Local	78	21	+-	LEAP	Yes	3.5	38	-+
130	Tickers Folly Field	Recreation ground	Blewbury	Vale	2.32	Local	92	34	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	50	++
131	East Hagbourne Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	East Hagbourne	South Ox	1.57	Doorstep	63	22	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	34	++

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132	Edmonds Park	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	7.44	Local	77	29	+-	NEAP	Yes	4.5	43	++
133	Smallbone Recreation Park	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	1.08	Doorstep	76	25	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	32	+-
135	Loyd Recreation Ground	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	3.02	Local	63	21	--	NEAP	NA	4.0	37	++
136	Great Western Drive Park	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	0.84	Doorstep	61	22	++	NEAP	Yes	3.7	42	-+
137	Abbey Sports Centre	Recreation ground	Berinsfield	South Ox	6.77	Local	81	38	++	NEAP	Yes	3.1	44	-+
138	Drayton St Leonard Park	Provision for children and teenagers	Drayton St Leonard	South Ox	0.21	Incidental	55	21	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	31	+-
139	Chalgrove Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Chalgrove	South Ox	5.83	Local	94	31	++	NEAP	Yes	3.4	40	-+
140	Chinnor Community Pavillion and Playing Field	Recreation ground	Chinnor	South Ox	3.99	Local	109	40	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	52	++
141	The Green (Stadhampton Recreation Ground)	Recreation ground	Stadhampton	South Ox	4.62	Local	54	20	--	LAP	NA	4.0	29	++
142	Forest Hill Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Forest Hill	South Ox	1.92	Doorstep	66	24	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	40	++
143	Woodperry Park	Recreation ground	Beckley	South Ox	2.20	Local	91	27	+-	LEAP	Yes	4.7	34	+-

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144	Cuddesdon Village Hall Green	Parks and gardens	Cuddesdon	South Ox	0.95	Doorstep	52	20	-+	LEAP	Yes	4.0	34	+-
145	Great Milton Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Great Milton	South Ox	2.06	Local	74	27	+-	NEAP	Yes	3.0	35	--
146	Ardington and Lockinge Community Woodland	Natural greenspace	Ardlington	Vale	58.30	Wider Neighbourhood	48	25	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
147	Wheatley Park	Parks and gardens	Wheatley	South Ox	0.39	Incidental	71	22	++	LEAP	Yes	4.0	38	++
148	The Green (Warborough Recreation Ground)	Recreation ground	Warborough	South Ox	3.73	Local	85	26	+-	NEAP	Yes	4.7	40	++
149	Berrick & Roke Village Hall Green	Recreation ground	Berrick Salome	South Ox	1.46	Doorstep	59	22	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	30	+-
150	Minchin Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Dorchester on Thames	South Ox	2.41	Local	87	29	+-	NEAP	Yes	3.8	40	++
151	Esingdon Drive	Amenity greenspace	Thame	South Ox	1.72	Doorstep	52	12	+-	NEAP	NA	4.0	24	+-
152	Clifton Hampden Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Clifton Hampden	South Ox	1.96	Doorstep	50	24	-+	LAP	NA	2.0	28	--
153	Little Milton Village Hall Green	Recreation ground	Little Milton	South Ox	1.26	Doorstep	82	34	++	LEAP	Yes	3.5	41	-+

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154	Garsington Sports and Social Club	Recreation ground	Garsington	South Ox	3.93	Local	61	24	--	NEAP	Yes	4.0	37	+-
155	Forest Side Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Kennington	Vale	1.97	Doorstep	75	30	++	NEAP	Yes	4.3	39	+-
156	Elizabeth Avenue	Recreation ground	Abingdon	Vale	0.47	Incidental	59	19	+-	LEAP	Yes	4.0	29	+-
157	Kennington Memorial Field	Natural greenspace	Kennington	Vale	4.91	Local	48	25	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
158	Radley Village Hall Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Radley	Vale	2.84	Local	54	23	--	LAP	NA	4.0	32	++
159	Sandford Village Hall Green	Recreation ground	Sandford on Thames	South Ox	0.71	Doorstep	58	24	++	NEAP	NA	5.0	38	++
160	Abbey Gardens	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	9.56	Local	101	53	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	46	++
161	Sutton Courtney Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Sutton Courtenay	Vale	3.37	Local	95	33	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	53	++
162	Towersey Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Towersey	South Ox	4.03	Local	58	19	--	LEAP	NA	4.0	38	++
163	Culham Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Culham	South Ox	2.05	Local	56	23	--	NEAP	Yes	4.3	37	+-
164	Appleford Recreation Ground and Football Field	Recreation ground	Appleford	Vale	2.24	Local	73	29	+-	NEAP	Yes	3.7	35	--
164	Appleton Lower Common	Natural greenspace	Appleton	Vale	0.00	Incidental	29	25	-+	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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165	Tilsley Park	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	17.29	Neighbourhood	96	43	++	NEAP	NA	5.0	39	++
166	Long Furlong Park	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	6.83	Local	80	31	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	35	++
167	Boxhill Road Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Abingdon	Vale	2.10	Local	67	29	--	NEAP	Yes	4.0	36	+-
168	Rye Farm Meadows	Natural greenspace	Abingdon	South Ox	8.08	Local	61	36	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
169	Chilton Close	Recreation ground	Abingdon	Vale	0.61	Doorstep	62	19	+-	LEAP	NA	4.0	33	++
170	Peachcroft Park	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	0.46	Incidental	63	23	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	41	++
171	Louie Memorial Playing Fields	Recreation ground	Botley	Vale	7.90	Local	91	40	++	NEAP	Yes	4.3	41	++
172	Masefield Crescent	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	1.83	Doorstep	62	23	++	NEAP	Yes	3.7	33	--
173	Roman Way	Amenity greenspace	Thame	South Ox	1.03	Doorstep	59	15	++	LAP	NA	5.0	29	++
174	Caldecott Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Abingdon	Vale	3.68	Local	71	29	+-	NEAP	Yes	4.5	33	+-
175	Southern Town Park Lambrick Way	Parks and gardens	Abingdon	Vale	3.62	Local	73	22	+-	NEAP	Yes	3.7	42	-+
176	Grove Rugby and Football Club	Recreation ground	Grove	Vale	9.95	Local	76	37	++	NEAP	Yes	3.8	34	+-
177	East Hendred Sports Club	Recreation ground	East Hendred	Vale	1.75	Doorstep	80	21	++	LAP	NA	5.0	34	++

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178	Steventon Play ground	Provision for children and teenagers	Steventon	Vale	0.40	Incidental	65	29	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	27	+-
179	Harwell Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Harwell	Vale	4.03	Local	95	32	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	43	++
180	Upton Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Upton	Vale	2.01	Local	87	26	+-	NEAP	Yes	5.0	46	++
181	Ashbury Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Ashbury	Vale	1.19	Doorstep	79	25	++	LEAP	NA	4.0	34	++
182	Jubilee Field (Uffington Recreation Ground)	Recreation ground	Uffington	Vale	1.80	Doorstep	85	33	++	NEAP	Yes	3.7	41	-+
183	Shivenham Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Shrivenham	Vale	4.32	Local	104	35	++	NEAP	Yes	4.5	40	++
184	Thame Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Thame	South Ox	3.26	Local	84	32	++	NEAP	Yes	3.7	47	-+
185	Watchfield Sports Pavilion	Recreation ground	Watchfield	Vale	2.19	Local	92	31	++	NEAP	Yes	4.7	41	++
186	Childrey Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Childrey	Vale	1.61	Doorstep	92	33	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	34	+-
187	Letcombe Sport and recreation ground	Recreation ground	Letcombe Regis	Vale	3.60	Local	94	29	+-	LEAP	Yes	3.5	40	-+
188	East Challow Recreation Ground	Parks and gardens	East Challow	Vale	2.43	Local	66	22	--	NEAP	Yes	4.0	38	+-

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189	Memorial Recreation Ground (on google is memorial park)	Recreation ground	Wantage	Vale	6.99	Local	112	39	++	NEAP	Yes	5.0	48	++
190	Chilton Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Chilton	Vale	2.74	Local	74	25	+-	NEAP	Yes	5.0	44	++
191	Wooton Recreation Ground	Parks and gardens	Wooton	Vale	3.91	Local	57	24	--	LAP	Yes	2.5	32	-+
192	Sandleigh Road Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Wooton	Vale	1.97	Doorstep	49	16	--	LEAP	Yes	4.0	32	+-
193	Wooton Play Ground	Provision for children and teenagers	Wooton	Vale	1.85	Doorstep	54	21	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	35	+-
194	Wooton Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Wooton	Vale	0.36	Incidental	46	18	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
719	Whitchurch Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Whitchurch	South Ox	2.40	Local	84	32	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
724	Bodkins Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Long Wittenham	South Ox	1.47	Doorstep	60	16	+-	NEAP	NA	4.0	28	+-
795	Thame Skatepark	Provision for children and teenagers	Thame	South Ox	6.19	Local	46	15	++	NEAP	Yes	3.0	22	--
804	Links Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Kennington	VAle	2.56	Local	80	31	++	LEAP	Yes	2.7	41	-+
1213	Fogwell Recreation Ground	Recreation ground	Botley	Vale	3.97	Local	73	31	++	NEAP	Yes	4.0	39	+-

ID	Name	Typology	Settlement	District	Area (ha)	Hierarchy	Quality (Q)	Value (V)	Q/V score	Play hierarchy (size based)	Inclusion of provision for teenagers	Q play	V play	Q/V score play
1214	Keel Drive	Parks and gardens	Grove	Vale	3.53	Local	72	23	+-	NEAP	Yes	3.4	39	--
1216	Watlington Chalk Pit	Natural greenspace	Watlington	South Ox	2.95	Local	31	16	--	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1217	Aspen Way	Amenity greenspace	Didcot	South Ox	1.57	Doorstep	69	19	++	NEAP	NA	3.0	36	-+
1218	Ladgygrove Loop	Parks and gardens	Didcot	South Ox	12.66	Neighbourhood	101	40	++	NEAP	Yes	3.6	47	-+
1223	Ewelme Watercress Beds	Natural greenspace	Ewelme	South Ox	1.16	Doorstep	72	28	++	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1497	Old Kiln Lakes	Natural greenspace	Chinnor	South Ox	42.74	Wider Neighbourhood	84	31	++	LEAP	Yes	4.5	45	++
1499	Lummas Mead	Amenity greenspace	Chinnor	South Ox	0.44	Incidental	55	15	++	NEAP	NA	4.0	35	++
1552	Evenloade Drive	Amenity greenspace	Berinsfield	South Ox	0.38	Incidental	42	16	-+	LEAP	NA	3.0	28	--
1573	Hillside	Amenity greenspace	Cholsey	South Ox	2.58	Local	71	21	++	LEAP	NA	5.0	34	++
7771	Watlington Playground and Garden	Provision for children and teenagers	Watlington	South Ox	0.39	Incidental	61	22	++	NEAP	NA	4.0	29	+-
7772	Farm Road Close Play Area	Provision for children and teenagers	Wheatley	South Ox	0.13	Incidental	52	16	++	NEAP	NA	4.0	32	+-

Appendix J

Urban Greening Factor – quantitative findings

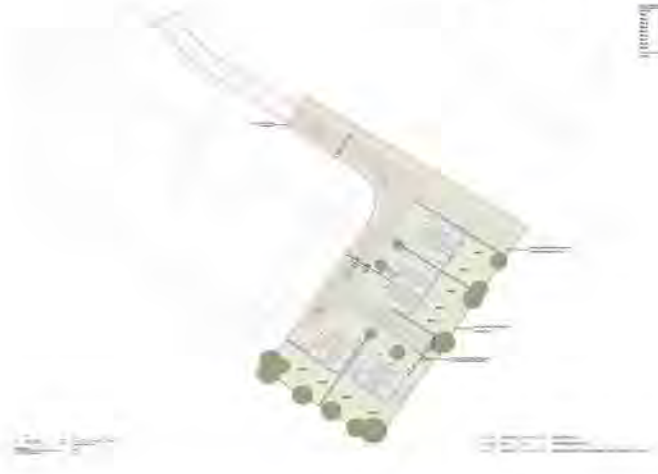
Urban Greening Factor User Guide Spreadsheet - Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Version 1.1 31012023

P23/V1024/FUL (Residential - Small) - Vale of White Horse

Excel Spreadsheet for calculating the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)
Refer to UGF User Guide for description and specification of surface cover types and guidance on completing the UGF calculation
The applicant should provide area figures for the cells highlighted in yellow and all area figures are to be in Square Meters (m2)

No.	Surface Cover Type	Area (m2)	Factor	Value	Notes
1	Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	0.00	1.0	0.00	
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	0.00	1.0	0.00	
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.00	0.9	0.00	
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	594.00	0.7	415.80	
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	0.00	0.7	0.00	
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	0.00	0.7	0.00	
8	Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	79.60	0.6	47.76	
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	24.20	0.5	12.10	
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	1,488.10	0.4	595.24	
11	Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.00	0.7	0.00	
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.00	0.3	0.00	
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	0.00	1.0	0.00	
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	0.00	0.7	0.00	
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	0.00	0.5	0.00	
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.00	0.2	0.00	
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	0.00	0.2	0.00	
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	0.00	0.1	0.00	
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	0.00	0.0	0.00	

Total Value	1,070.90
Total Development Site Area (m2)	3,853.00
Urban Greening Factor	**0.28**



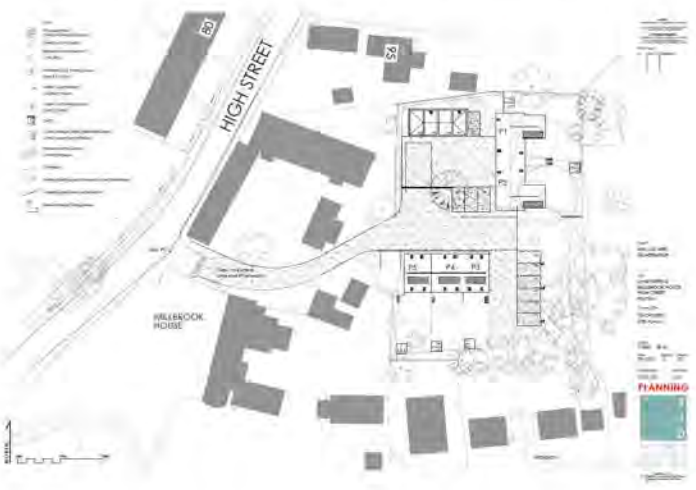
Urban Greening Factor User Guide Spreadsheet - Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Version 1.1 31012023

P23/V1883/FUL (Residential - Small) - Vale of White Horse

Excel Spreadsheet for calculating the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)
Refer to UGF User Guide for description and specification of surface cover types and guidance on completing the UGF calculation
The applicant should provide area figures for the cells highlighted in yellow and all area figures are to be in Square Meters (m2)

No.	Surface Cover Type	Area (m2)	Factor	Value	Notes
1	Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	399.00	1.0	399.00	
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	211.00	1.0	211.00	
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.00	0.9	0.00	
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	452.00	0.7	316.40	
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	0.00	0.7	0.00	
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	0.00	0.7	0.00	
8	Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	144.00	0.6	86.40	
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	34.00	0.5	17.00	
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	593.00	0.4	237.20	
11	Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.00	0.7	0.00	
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.00	0.3	0.00	
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	0.00	1.0	0.00	
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	0.00	0.7	0.00	
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	0.00	0.5	0.00	
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.00	0.2	0.00	
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	0.00	0.2	0.00	
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	1,002.00	0.1	100.20	
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	207.00	0.0	0.00	

Total Value	1,367.20
Total Development Site Area (m2)	3,277.00
Urban Greening Factor	**0.42**



Urban Greening Factor User Guide Spreadsheet - Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Version 1.1 31012023

P23/S0433/RM (Residential - Medium) - South Oxfordshire

Excel Spreadsheet for calculating the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)
Refer to UGF User Guide for description and specification of surface cover types and guidance on completing the UGF calculation
The applicant should provide area figures for the cells highlighted in yellow and all area figures are to be in Square Meters (m2)

No.	Surface Cover Type	Area (m2)	Factor	Value	Notes
1	Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	3,121.00	1.0	3,121.00	
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	15,097.00	1.0	15,097.00	
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.00	0.9	0.00	
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	1,965.00	0.8	1,572.00	
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	11,400.00	0.7	7,980.00	
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	2,625.00	0.7	1,837.50	
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	869.00	0.7	608.30	
8	Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	787.00	0.6	472.20	
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	1,417.00	0.5	708.50	
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	36,660.00	0.4	14,664.00	
11	Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.00	0.7	0.00	
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.00	0.3	0.00	
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	1,732.00	1.0	1,732.00	
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	1,577.00	0.7	1,103.90	
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	0.00	0.5	0.00	
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.00	0.2	0.00	
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	0.00	0.2	0.00	
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	2,774.00	0.1	277.40	
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	32,580.00	0.0	0.00	

Total Value	49,173.80
Total Development Site Area (m2)	106,410.00
Urban Greening Factor	**0.46**



Urban Greening Factor User Guide Spreadsheet - Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Version 1.1 31012023

P23/V2881/FUL (Residential - Medium) - Vale of White Horse

Excel Spreadsheet for calculating the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)
Refer to UGF User Guide for description and specification of surface cover types and guidance on completing the UGF calculation
The applicant should provide area figures for the cells highlighted in yellow and all area figures are to be in Square Meters (m2)

No.	Surface Cover Type	Area (m2)	Factor	Value	Notes
1	Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	3,236.00	1.0	3,236.00	
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	3,000.00	1.0	3,000.00	
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.00	0.9	0.00	
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	3,424.00	0.7	2,396.80	
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	0.00	0.7	0.00	
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	0.00	0.7	0.00	
8	Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	318.00	0.6	190.80	
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	1,526.00	0.5	763.00	
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	3,723.00	0.4	1,489.20	
11	Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.00	0.7	0.00	
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.00	0.3	0.00	
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	0.00	1.0	0.00	
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	0.00	0.7	0.00	
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	470.00	0.5	235.00	
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.00	0.2	0.00	
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	909.00	0.2	181.80	
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	2,340.00	0.1	234.00	
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	915.00	0.0	0.00	

Total Value	11,726.60
Total Development Site Area (m2)	20,682.00
Urban Greening Factor	**0.57**



Urban Greening Factor User Guide Spreadsheet - Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Version 1.1 31012023

P14/V2061/RM (residential)

Excel Spreadsheet for calculating the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)
Refer to UGF User Guide for description and specification of surface cover types and guidance on completing the UGF calculation
The applicant should provide area figures for the cells highlighted in yellow and all area figures are to be in Square Meters (m2)

No.	Surface Cover Type	Area (m2)	Factor	Value	Notes
1	Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	0.00	1.0	0.00	
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	1,165.90	1.0	1,165.90	
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.00	0.9	0.00	
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	75.50	0.8	60.40	
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	17,993.30	0.7	12,595.31	
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	0.00	0.7	0.00	
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	0.00	0.7	0.00	
8	Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	529.60	0.6	317.76	
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	1,447.30	0.5	723.65	
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	17,368.30	0.4	6,947.32	
11	Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.00	0.7	0.00	
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.00	0.3	0.00	
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	0.00	1.0	0.00	
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	135.60	0.7	94.92	
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	759.10	0.5	379.55	
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.00	0.2	0.00	
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	0.00	0.2	0.00	
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	0.00	0.1	0.00	
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	0.00	0.0	0.00	

Total Value	22,284.81
Total Development Site Area (m2)	48,019.20
Urban Greening Factor	**0.46**



Urban Greening Factor User Guide Spreadsheet - Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework Version 1.1 31012023

P15-S0433-FUL (Commercial) - South Oxfordshire

Excel Spreadsheet for calculating the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)
Refer to UGF User Guide for description and specification of surface cover types and guidance on completing the UGF calculation
The applicant should provide area figures for the cells highlighted in yellow and all area figures are to be in Square Meters (m2)

No.	Surface Cover Type	Area (m2)	Factor	Value	Notes
1	Semi-natural vegetation and wetlands retained on site (including existing / mature trees)	3,195.00	1.0	3,195.00	
2	Semi-natural vegetation established on site	505.00	1.0	505.00	
3	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in connected tree pits)	0.00	0.9	0.00	
4	Native hedgerow planting (using mixed native species)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
5	Standard / semi-mature trees (planted in individual tree pits)	2,250.00	0.7	1,575.00	
6	Food growing, orchards and allotments	0.00	0.7	0.00	
7	Flower rich perennial and herbaceous planting	0.00	0.7	0.00	
8	Single Species or mixed hedge planting (including linear planting of mature shrubs)	313.00	0.6	187.80	
9	Amenity shrub and ground cover planting	2,683.00	0.5	1,341.50	
10	Amenity grasslands including formal lawns	839.00	0.4	335.60	
11	Intensive green roof (meets the Green Roof Organisation / GRO Code)	0.00	0.8	0.00	
12	Extensive biodiverse green roof (meets the GRO Code, may include Biosolar)	0.00	0.7	0.00	
13	Extensive green roof (meets GRO Code)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
14	Extensive sedum only green roof (does not meet the GRO Code)	0.00	0.3	0.00	
15	Green facades and modular living walls (rooted in soil or with irrigation)	0.00	0.5	0.00	
16	Wetlands and semi-natural open water	126.00	1.0	126.00	
17	Rain gardens and vegetated attenuation basins	0.00	0.7	0.00	
18	Open swales and unplanted detention basins	0.00	0.5	0.00	
19	Water features (unplanted and chlorinated)	0.00	0.2	0.00	
20	Open aggregate and granular paving	0.00	0.2	0.00	
21	Partially sealed and semi-permeable paving	18,405.00	0.1	1,840.50	
22	Sealed paving (including concrete and asphalt)	16,231.00	0.0	0.00	

Total Value	9,106.40
Total Development Site Area (m2)	77,796.00
Urban Greening Factor	**0.12**



Appendix K

Detailed action plans for key GI projects

GI Priority Area 01: Oxford Fringes

1a. Create a sub-regional (minimum 500 hectares) or district-wide (minimum 100 hectares) greenspace at land north east of Oxford and linking to Otmoor

K.1 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The deficiency mapping outputs indicate gaps in the provision of larger scale greenspaces to the north and east of Oxford, within the administrative boundary of South Oxfordshire District Council. The Mid-Cherwell Corridor and the Otmoor, Bernwood and Ray Nature Park was identified within the Cherwell GBI Strategy as a focus area for the provision of strategic GBI assets and corridors the area. Research conducted by the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery also recommended the potential for an Oxfordshire sub-regional sized publicly accessible greenspace (> 500 hectares) which is accessible by active travel and public transport should be explored to address the deficiency of this size of greenspace within the county.

K.2 Indicative timescale: Long-term (aspirational)

K.3 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Cherwell District Council;
- Oxfordshire County Council;

- Buckinghamshire Council;
- Local communities;
- Local landowners and developers;
- Independent charitable trust; and
- Community interest company.

K.4 Indicative cost: High

K.5 Funding mechanisms:

- Planning obligations;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund;
- Crowd funding;
- Public sector grant funds;
- Payments for access;
- Payment for ecosystem services (carbon markets);
- Biodiversity Net Gain;
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship; and
- Grant funding.

1b. Integrate SuDS interventions and catchment-scale nature-based solutions to improve resilience and adaptation to flooding within the floodplain of the River Thames

K.6 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The River Thames and its floodplains are a key feature at the western periphery of Oxford, providing a blue infrastructure asset in proximity to areas of settlement. Although this proximity provides some access to natural greenspaces, it also poses a flood risk to various land uses adjacent to the river course which fall within Flood Zones 2 or 3. As climate change advances, it is likely that flood events will increase. Through the use of SuDS interventions and nature-based solutions along this corridor, the opportunity exists to mitigate flood risk within this GI priority area and further downstream.

K.7 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.8 Potential delivery partners:

- Local communities;
- Local authorities (South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council);
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- Wild Oxfordshire;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Natural England; and
- Thames Water.

K.9 Indicative cost: Medium to high

K.10 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs);
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funding;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

1c. Enhance woodland connectivity to promote improved habitat linkages at the settlement edge, balancing public access with Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives regarding nature recovery

K.11 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Improve ecological connectivity through enhancement of riparian corridors along the River Thames. By integrating Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives with watercourse enhancement, contribute towards ecological restoration and promote climate resilience.

K.12 Indicative timescale: Medium-term / long-term (aspirational)

K.13 Potential delivery partners:

- Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- South Chilterns Catchment Partnership;
- Natural England;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Environment Agency;
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils; and
- Local community groups.

K.14 Indicative cost: Medium

K.15 Funding mechanisms:

- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Water Restoration Fund;
- LPA funding streams; and
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets.

GI Priority Area 02: Thame Clay Vale

2a. Create a new 'wider neighbourhood' greenspace that is accessible from Thame's eastern settlement edge.

K.16 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Deficiencies are evident in access to district (at least 100 hectares) and wider neighbourhood (at least 20 hectares) greenspace across Thame. The eastern section of Thame also experiences a deficiency in neighbourhood (at least 10 hectares) greenspace. Delivery of a wider-neighbourhood scale greenspace will provide increased access to nature and recreation, improving long-term mental and physical well-being for residents.

K.17 Indicative timescale: Long-term (aspirational)

K.18 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Thame Town Council;
- Local communities;
- Local landowners and developers;
- Independent charitable trust;
- Community interest company; and
- Wild Oxfordshire (CPRE Funded Hedgerow Heroes).

K.19 Indicative cost: High

K.20 Funding mechanisms:

- Planning obligations;
- Public sector grant funds;
- Payments for access;
- Payment for ecosystem services (carbon markets);
- Biodiversity Net Gain;
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship; and
- Grant funding.

2b. Enhance tree and hedgerow planting to address fragmentation within land at the northern extent of Thame, whilst also helping to mitigate noise pollution associated with the corridors of the A418, A4129 and A329.

K.21 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The corridors of the A418, A4129 and A329 border the settlement of Thame and provide a source of noise pollution (risk of exposure >50 decibels).The opportunity exists to introduce appropriately sited GI interventions, such as tree and hedgerow planting, along these key road corridors to mitigate the effects of noise pollution. Planting proposals should aim to address localised habitat fragmentation, whilst also increasing the opportunity for carbon sequestration through the establishment of additional vegetation cover. Consideration should be given to local landscape character and maintenance of historic field patterns to reinforce sense of place.

K.22 Indicative timescale: Quick win = 1 year (plus requirement for 60 month establishment maintenance).

K.23 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Thame Town Council;
- Thame Green Living;
- Thame Trees (21st Century Thame);
- The Oxfordshire Treescape Project;
- Wild Oxfordshire (CPRE Funded Hedgerow Heroes);
- Oxfordshire County Council; and

K.24 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.25 Funding mechanisms:

- Thame Town Council;
- Tree Council (Branching Out Fund);
- The Woodland Trust (MOREhedges Scheme); and
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship and AQ Grant Bid.

2c. Enhance habitat connectivity through the strategic expansion of riparian woodlands along Cuttle Brook and Haseley Brook

K.26 Purpose and justification for inclusion: This initiative aligns with Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives with the aim of creating climate-resilient ecosystems linked to the expansion of riparian woodlands and integration of wetlands along the Cuttle Brook / Haseley Brook corridors. These interventions will seek to improve ecological connectivity, increase biodiversity and reduce flood risk through natural flood management (NFM) techniques.

K.27 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.28 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- Local landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Woodland Trust
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Natural England;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Local community groups;
- Catchment-based Approach partners; and
- Thames Water.

K.29 Indicative cost: High

K.30 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs);
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

GI Priority Area 03: Corallian Ridge

3a. Introduce surfacing and interpretation improvements along existing PRoW radiating from the settlement edge of Faringdon to promote improved linkages to the wider countryside

K.31 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The network of PRoW which emerge from the settlement edge of Faringdon provide connections to the wider countryside. However, existing PRoW are somewhat fragmented, frequently overgrown or lacking wayfinding elements, or comprised of poor surfacing. Additionally, the A420 along the southern boundary of the settlement acts as a physical barrier, restricting access to the south and discouraging use. Improvements to the existing PRoW network will aim to increase safety and accessibility, resulting in increased connectivity and enjoyment of the surrounding landscape.

K.32 Indicative timescale: Quick win / medium-term

K.33 Potential delivery partners:

- Oxfordshire County Council's Countryside Access Team;
- Faringdon Town Council;
- Local community groups (Ramblers);
- Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT); and
- Oxfordshire County Council (ROWIP).

K.34 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.35 Funding mechanisms:

- Faringdon Town Council; and
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship; and
- Oxfordshire County Council.

3b. Mitigate air and noise pollution, whilst also reducing the impact of the barrier caused by the A420 corridor through tree planting and appropriately sited GI interventions

K.36 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The Corallian Ridge is characterised by agricultural land use, often bordered by fragmented sections of hedgerow. The corridor of the A420 forms a barrier and source of noise pollution (risk of exposure >50 decibels) at the south eastern boundary of the Faringdon, exacerbated by the gaps in roadside vegetation.

K.37 Indicative timescale: Quick win = 1 year (plus requirement for 60 month establishment maintenance).

K.38 Potential delivery partners:

- Vale of White Horse District Council;
- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (Plant a Tree campaign);
- The Oxfordshire Treescape Project;
- Wild Oxfordshire (CPRE Funded Hedgerow Heroes); and
- Oxfordshire County Council.

K.39 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.40 Funding mechanisms:

- Faringdon Town Council;
- Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council;
- Tree Council (Branching Out Fund);
- The Woodland Trust (MOREhedges Scheme); and

- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship and AQ Grant Bid.

3c. Restore and enhance green corridors and watercourses located in the recovery zone of the draft nature recovery network (future Local Nature Recovery Strategy)

K.41 Purpose and justification for inclusion: This initiative aligns with Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives, supporting the enhancement of green corridors, particularly around the River Ock and its tributaries. The project will aim to restore fragmented ecological corridors and improve water quality along the river network.

K.42 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.43 Potential delivery partners:

- Ock Catchment Partnership;
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- Vale of White Horse District Council;
- Local landowners;
- Community groups and conservation organisations;
- Environment Agency;
- Natural England;
- Local wildlife trusts; and
- Thames Water.

K.44 Indicative cost: High

K.45 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs);
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

GI Priority Area 04: Central Thames Valley

4a. Address the deficiency in 'district' greenspace to the north, east or south east of Didcot through the creation of a new accessible greenspace

K.46 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Didcot is characterised by a good distribution of smaller scale greenspaces within its boundaries, offering access to public greenspaces close to home. However, there is a gap in larger-scale, or 'district' (at least 100 hectares) accessible greenspace provision within or in close proximity to the settlement, increasing the reliance on the PRoW network to mitigate the need for access to open space. The town is also characterised by limited provision of natural greenspace (0.22 hectares per 1,000 of population), lower than the other Tier 1 settlements in the districts. In addition, the creation of a new larger-scale greenspace offers the opportunity to reduce visitor pressure at Wittenham Clumps. Delivery of the district greenspace will potentially act as a catalyst for positive change for people and nature; offering increased recreational opportunities, enhanced access to natural greenspaces, and improved mental and physical well-being for residents.

K.47 Indicative timescale: Long-term (aspirational)

K.48 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Didcot Town Council;

- Local communities;
- Local landowners and developers;
- Independent charitable trust;
- Community interest company; and
- Wild Oxfordshire (CPRE Funded Hedgerow Heroes).

K.49 Indicative cost: High

K.50 Funding mechanisms:

- Planning obligations;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund;
- Crowd funding;
- Public sector grant funds;
- Payments for access;
- Payment for ecosystem services (carbon markets);
- Biodiversity Net Gain;
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship; and
- Grant funding.

4b. Strengthen ecological connectivity and resilience through riparian restoration and the development of green corridors along key watercourses (including the River Thames, Abbey Stream, River Ock and the floodplain of Moor Ditch in Didcot)

K.51 Purpose and justification for inclusion: This project aims to enhance ecological resilience by addressing localised habitat fragmentation and flood risks. By focusing on key watercourses, the project targets water quality improvement, flood risk reduction, and habitat connectivity. Aligning with the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, this initiative will ensure that local actions contribute to broader nature recovery and environmental goals.

K.52 Indicative timescale: Quick win to medium-term

K.53 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Councils;
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- South Chilterns Catchment Partnership;
- Local landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Woodland Trust;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Natural England;
- Oxfordshire County Council;

- Local community groups; and
- Thames Water.

K.54 Indicative cost: Medium

K.55 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs);
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

4c. Introduce a programme of future tree planting to address disparities in tree coverage within Abingdon-on-Thames, Milton Park and Didcot

K.56 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Introduce a programme of future tree planting within areas of Abingdon-on-Thames, Milton Park and Didcot to address inequitable access to trees, as identified by the Tree Equity Score. The LSOAs ranked lowest include land to the east of Milton Park (66), Caldecott (72) and Edmond Park in central Didcot (77). These areas also fall within lower socio-economic deciles.

K.57 Indicative timescale: Quick win to medium-term

K.58 Potential delivery partners:

- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (Plant a Tree Campaign);
- Abingdon Carbon Cutters (Tree Planting Group);
- Trees for Cities (national scale Tree Planting Programme);
- The Tree Council (Plant-A-Tree); and
- Forestry England;
- Local community;
- Local businesses; and
- Oxfordshire County Council Highways team.

K.59 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.60 Funding mechanisms:

- Didcot Town Council;

- Milton (Abingdon) Parish Council;
- Abingdon on Thames Town Council;
- Tree Council (Branching Out Fund); and
- The Woodland Trust (MOREwoods Scheme / Emergency Tree Fund for Local Authorities).

GI Priority Area 05: Central Thames Valley

5a. Restore the floodplain and riparian buffer along the Letcombe Brook to enhance habitat connectivity along this rare chalk stream, identified as a target area within the draft nature recovery network mapping

K.61 Purpose and justification for inclusion: This project focuses on restoring the ecological integrity of Letcombe Brook, a rare chalk stream, through riparian buffer and floodplain restoration. The project addresses issues of poor water quality and habitat degradation, whilst also improving biodiversity and reducing localised flood risk. Letcombe Brook is recognised as an Oxfordshire Important Freshwater Area, and its restoration will contribute to broader ecological connectivity, linking with the River Ock and supporting regional nature recovery goals guided by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. By improving water retention and filtering runoff, this project will align with key catchment management strategies and help achieve both local and regional conservation objectives.

K.62 Indicative timescale: Long-term (aspirational)

K.63 Potential delivery partners:

- Local authorities (South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council);
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- Ock Catchment Partnership;

- Local landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Woodland Trust;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Natural England;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Local community groups; and
- Thames Water.

K.64 Indicative cost: High

K.65 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to further rollouts);
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

5b. Enhance east-west linkages by addressing fragmentation of the PRoW network along the corridor of the A338

K.66 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Settlements along the northern slopes of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape are relatively well connected to the wider landscape by the existing PRoW network. However, east-west connections are fragmented or otherwise limited, with most uninterrupted connections following an approximate north-south alignment. Running through Grove and Wantage, the corridor of the A338 provides a key transport route whilst also creating a significant barrier to pedestrian movement and active travel.

K.67 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.68 Potential delivery partners:

- Oxfordshire County Council (ROWIP team);
- Wilts & Berks Canal Trust;
- Local communities;
- Local landowners and businesses;
- Letcombe Brook Project;
- Wantage Town Council and Grove Parish Council;
- Canal and River Trust;
- Sustrans;
- Wild Wantage; and
- Natural England.

K.69 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.70 Funding mechanisms:

- Wild Wantage;
- Sustrans;
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- National Lottery Community Fund;
- Royal Countryside Fund; and
- Thriving in Nature Fund.

5c. Support PRoW improvements that enhance connectivity and promote sustainable access to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape from Wantage and surrounding communities

K.71 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The North Wessex Downs National Landscape provides an expansive landscape in proximity to numerous settlements along the northern slopes. Several PRoW extend from the settlements, providing locals and visitors access to the wider countryside. Some settlements are better provisioned than others with cohesive routes, including Wantage, Ardington and Uffington. However, others (including Childrey, Kingston Lisle and Hendreds) are characterised by somewhat fragmented PRoW linkages to the Wessex Downs National Landscape.

K.72 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.73 Potential delivery partners:

- Oxfordshire County Council – ROWIP team;
- Local communities;
- Letcombe Brook Project;
- Vale of White Horse District Council;
- Canal and River Trust;
- Sustrans;
- Wild Wantage; and
- Natural England.

K.74 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.75 Funding mechanisms:

- Wild Wantage;
- Sustrans;
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- National Lottery Community Fund;
- Royal Countryside Fund;
- Thriving in Nature Fund; and
- Private sector contributions (Biodiversity Net Gain offsets).

GI Priority Area 06: Chalk Escarpment and Foothills

6a. Introduce localised improvements to the network of PRoW around Wallingford, including a new multi-user route following the approximate alignment of the A4130 and Sires Hill

K.76 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Situated along the River Thames, Wallingford is well connected to the surrounding landscape, with a network of PRoW radiating from the settlement edge. In proximity to the river as well as both the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns National Landscapes, the town is popular as a recreational node for the surrounding landscape. Although both the Thames Path and Ridgeway National Trails pass within close proximity to the settlement, there are opportunities to improve PRoW connections. There are also no multi-user routes bordering Wallingford, although National Cycle Networks (NCN) route 5 connects the Chiltern Hills with Wallingford and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, and with the Wittenham Clumps.

K.77 As identified within Oxfordshire's Rights of Way Management Plan, localised improvements to the network of PRoW and multi-user routes around Wallingford should be introduced. This includes connections to the north west through the creation of a new multi-user route following the approximate alignment of the A4130 and Sires Hill. A new multi-user path extending broadly along the A4130 will increase access and enjoyment of the countryside, promoting sustainable travel between Wallingford and surrounding communities.

K.78 Indicative timescale: Quick win to medium-term for PRoW improvements, medium-term for a new multi-user route.

K.79 Potential delivery partners:

- Local communities;
- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Canal and River Trust;
- Sustrans;
- Oxfordshire County Council; and
- Natural England.

K.80 Indicative cost: Medium to high

K.81 Funding mechanisms:

- Sustrans;
- Defra (ELMS / CS);
- National Lottery Community Fund;
- Royal Countryside Fund; and
- Private sector contributions (Biodiversity Net Gain offsets).

6b. Utilise GI to enhance ecological connectivity along the River Thames at the eastern extent of Wallingford

K.82 Purpose and justification for inclusion: This project addresses the need for ecological connectivity and habitat restoration along the River Thames. The initiative focuses on localised improvements to riparian habitats through native vegetation planting, water quality enhancements, and the provision of linkages from riparian zones to nearby ancient woodlands. Access management strategies should be implemented to protect sensitive areas along the Thames Path National Trail, balancing recreational use with habitat conservation. The project supports regional biodiversity goals, aligning with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, whilst contributing to flood risk mitigation.

K.83 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.84 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Councils;
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- South Chilterns Catchment Partnership;
- Local landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Woodland Trust;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Natural England;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Local community groups; and

- Thames Water.

K.85 Indicative cost: Medium to high

K.86 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

6c. Introduce a SSSI access management initiative and strategic access framework to manage visitor pressure whilst protecting sensitive habitats

K.87 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The chalk escarpment forming the northern edge of the Chilterns National Landscape is host to numerous sensitive habitats designated as SSSIs. The wider landscape is a popular recreational destination, with a dense PRoW network attracting locals and visitors from the surrounding settlements and further afield. Many SSSI are located along the PRoW network, or in close proximity to the Ridgeway National Trail, affording public access. However, recreational pressures on these sensitive sites threaten the important habitats and species found within them. The adoption of an integrated access and management framework will allow continued public engagement with the chalk landscape, whilst ensuring the continued protection of sensitive habitats.

K.88 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.89 Potential delivery partners:

- Chilterns Conservation Board;
- Chilterns Rangers;
- Rural Communities Fund;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Environment Agency;
- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Natural England; and
- Local landowners.

K.90 Indicative cost: Medium to high

K.91 Funding mechanisms:

- Heritage Lottery Fund;
- LPA funding streams;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets; and
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship.

GI Priority Area 07: Chilterns Wooded Plateau

7a. Establish a new woodland corridor to enhance habitat connectivity between ancient woodlands, whilst also managing visitor access to ensure nature recovery and sustainable public access

K.92 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The project aims to restore and connect ancient woodlands, enhancing the resilience of ecological networks and local wildlife populations at the interface between the urban areas of Henley-on-Thames and the rural landscape. Data from the NEGIF indicates that a number of these wooded areas are predominantly non-accessible to the general public. This project is aligned with the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy and broader regional biodiversity and nature recovery objectives.

K.93 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.94 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Chilterns Conservation Board;
- South Chilterns Catchment Partnership;
- Local landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Woodland Trust;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;

- Natural England;
- Oxfordshire County Council; and
- Local community groups.

K.95 Indicative cost: Medium

K.96 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding

7b. Enhance flood resilience within the southern extent of Henley-on-Thames through the integration of SuDS with nature recovery efforts

K.97 Purpose and justification for inclusion: The project integrates flood management and nature recovery efforts as a mechanism to improve water management, reduce flood risks, and enhance local biodiversity in areas lying within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The project aligns with regional goals for flood resilience and nature recovery, contributing to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy objectives and broader conservation efforts.

K.98 Indicative timescale: Medium-term

K.99 Potential delivery partners:

- South Oxfordshire District Council;
- Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy team;
- Ock Catchment Partnership;
- Local landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Woodland Trust;
- Local Wildlife Trusts;
- Natural England;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Local community groups; and
- Thames Water.

K.100 Indicative cost: Medium

K.101 Funding mechanisms:

- Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (subject to future rollouts);
- Environment Agency funding;
- DEFRA Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) / Countryside Stewardship;
- DEFRA's Natural Flood Management programme;
- Woodland Trust funds;
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets;
- Charitable trusts (e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund);
- Woodland Carbon Code grants; and
- Local authority environmental funding.

7c. Expand the network of 'doorstep' greenspace within residential areas of Henley-on-Thames with the aim of improving access to greenspace within five minutes' walk from home

K.102 Purpose and justification for inclusion: Despite its proximity to the wider countryside within the Chilterns National Landscape, Henley-on-Thames is host to compact residential neighbourhoods with a limited number of public amenity spaces. The number of 'doorstep' greenspaces is relatively low relative to other Tier 1 settlements, with many locals needing to travel more than five minutes by foot to reach a public greenspace. Potential benefits include improved health and well-being, air quality and biodiversity enhancements as well as multi-generational recreational use and socialisation.

K.103 Indicative timescale: Medium-term to longer-term (aspirational)

K.104 Potential delivery partners:

- Sustrans;
- Local community groups and organisations;
- South Oxfordshire District Council; and
- Local community.

K.105 Indicative cost: Low to medium

K.106 Funding mechanisms:

- Rural Communities Fund;
- Heritage Lottery Fund; and
- Private sector contributions through Biodiversity Net Gain offsets.

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