

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 5.86 Green Infrastructure refers to networks of green spaces and natural elements, including open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage, heritage assets, earth science interests and open countryside. It provides for multi-functional uses, for example providing landscape, wildlife, recreational and cultural experiences, and can play a key role in adapting to and mitigating climate change, including through the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems. The Council will plan for Green Infrastructure in partnership with neighbouring local authorities, the County Council, relevant interest groups and landowners.
- 5.87 Green Infrastructure can support existing and new communities and provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people, and should be planned, delivered and managed in a coordinated and consistent manner across the District with an appropriate level of investment to promote these benefits. Green Infrastructure may particularly provide opportunities for biodiversity gain by linking habitats and creating corridors allowing response to climate change.
- 5.88 The aim in planning for Green Infrastructure is to create, extend and enhance existing linked networks, whilst ensuring appropriate management and maintenance.
- 5.89 Green Infrastructure is important at all scales. It will inform the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and will be considered in assessing applications for new development.
- 5.90 The Council has conducted an Open Space Study Update (2010)¹⁶ and has produced a Green Infrastructure background paper (2010) which identifies the key assets for Green Infrastructure in the District, existing and potential linkages between these and links to surrounding areas. These assets are illustrated in Appendix 5.
- 5.91 The key Green Infrastructure assets in Three Rivers include:
- The corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal
 - the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - the District's Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, wildlife sites key biodiversity areas and priority habitats and species identified by the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan
 - the Colne Valley Park.
- 5.92 These are important Green Infrastructure assets within the District into which other assets link through the identified Green Infrastructure corridors. However, these are not the only important elements for Green Infrastructure within and around the District, and open spaces, woodlands and other spaces may also be significant.
- 5.93 The Council is working with the County Council and Natural England to produce a suite of compatible district-scale plans in parallel with a county plan that highlights strategically important Green Infrastructure, and a more detailed local strategy taking into account standards for accessible open and green space. These will inform the production of a Green Infrastructure and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document which will also include an updated landscape strategy for the District.

¹⁶ Open Space Study Update (2010) <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/EvidenceBase>

5.94 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule includes some specific schemes that will contribute to Green Infrastructure in the District. These will be updated annually through the Annual Monitoring Report.

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The Council will seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure, through the protection and enhancement of assets and provision of new green spaces.

Priorities for Green Infrastructure focus on conserving and enhancing the following key assets and the linkages between them which are illustrated in Appendix 5:

- a) the corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal
- b) the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- c) the Colne Valley Park
- d) the District's Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, wildlife sites, key biodiversity habitats, species and areas identified in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan and heritage assets and landscape character within areas of Green Infrastructure.

It is also important to improve connectivity between key assets through the establishment of linked and coherent networks and corridors of green spaces and sustainable transport links.

More detailed ongoing work will inform future priorities for Green Infrastructure in Three Rivers and will be included within the Green Infrastructure and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document.

The Council will require new development to contribute to the delivery of new Green Infrastructure and the management of a linked network of new and enhanced open spaces and corridors.

Development will not compromise the integrity of the Green Infrastructure network, by causing fragmentation, damage to, or isolation of Green Infrastructure assets including natural habitats and species.