

## 5 Core Policies

### Green Infrastructure

#### Policy CS 18

##### Green Infrastructure

The District's green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced. The Council will work with partners, including Parish Councils and the community to address the District's green infrastructure needs and deficiencies as set out in the forthcoming Green Infrastructure SPD.

New developments will make provision for high quality and multifunctional open spaces of an appropriate size and will also provide links to the existing green infrastructure network. Specific standards for provision within new developments will be identified in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and through the masterplanning for strategic sites.

Developments resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. Where exceptionally it is agreed that an area of green infrastructure can be lost a new one of equal or greater size and standard will be required to be provided in an accessible location close by.

**5.123** Green infrastructure (GI) is the network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes, and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. West Berkshire is generally well provided for in terms of green infrastructure, and it will be important to protect and increase this provision in the future, to meet the future needs associated with new development. The overall strategy for green infrastructure in the District is for:



- the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure; and
- the creation of new green infrastructure and links to better connect green infrastructure.

Further information about the delivery of green infrastructure is set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>(92)</sup>.

**5.124** For the purposes of this Core Strategy, green infrastructure is defined as:

- Parks and public gardens, including parks, country parks and formal gardens.
- Natural and semi-natural green spaces – including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, common land, grasslands, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas.
- Green corridors – including river and canal banks, cycleways and rights of way.
- Outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces, either publicly or privately owned) – including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas.

- Amenity green space (most commonly, but not exclusively, in built up areas) – including informal recreation spaces, public green spaces in and around housing and village greens.
- Provision for children and teenagers – including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. ‘hanging out’ areas, teenage shelters).
- Allotments, community gardens, urban farms, and land used for permaculture.
- Cemeteries and churchyards.
- Lakes and waterways.
- Green roofs and walls.
- Designated Local Green Space.

**5.125** The multi-functional nature of GI in the District is important for many reasons. It contributes significantly to the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors, in terms of both visual amenity and for sport and recreation purposes. GI creates a sense of place allowing for greater appreciation of valuable landscapes and cultural heritage. It increases access to the countryside, and supports healthy living. In addition GI plays an important role in flood management and sustainable design, makes a positive impact to combating climate change, and provides opportunities for sustainable transport and the production of local food, for example within public allotments. It contributes significantly to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity by creating an ecological network allowing for the movement of wildlife along corridors, and facilitating the colonisation of new areas.

**5.126** Particular assets in terms of natural and semi-natural spaces include:

- the Thatcham Nature and Discovery Centre and Reedbeds;
- Greenham Common and Snelsmore Common near Newbury; and
- Wokefield Common near Burghfield Common.

**5.127** Within the main urban areas, Northcroft Park in Newbury, and the Linear Park at Calcot have the Green Flag Award. Several other parks and smaller spaces can be just as valuable in both urban and rural communities; for example, the recreation ground at Burghfield, the Croft in Hungerford, and Newbury Lock are all examples of open spaces that are highly valued.

**5.128** Waterways are an important part of the District’s GI, with the Kennet and Avon Canal being a popular route for narrow boats, walking, cycling, and an important tourist attraction, as well as the Rivers Thames, Enborne, Lambourn, Pang and Kennet. There are 1178 kilometres of public rights of way, and two national trails pass through the District: the Ridgeway and the Thames Path. These are all important connecting corridors within the wider strategic network for both people and wildlife.



**5.129** Sporting provision ranges from established sports clubs with good facilities such as Newbury Rugby Club, Newbury Town, Thatcham Town and Hungerford Town Football Clubs, and Falkland Cricket Club, to facilities for amateur sport like Henwick Playing Fields and Newbury Athletics Club. In addition there are boating and sailing facilities at Burghfield and Theale, canoeing on the Thames at Pangbourne, and a large number of golf courses throughout the District.

**5.130** An assessment of open space and leisure need carried out in July 2005 suggested that the District is well catered for in terms of the quantity of open space. This perception is supported by open space assessments of two of the largest urban areas in the District: Newbury and the Eastern Area. These concluded that these areas have above average levels of sports facilities and open space, when compared to national standards. The studies found that there was room for improvement

## 5 Core Policies

in terms of quality, but that quality standards were also above national standards. A Green Infrastructure SPD will set out the Councils comprehensive approach to protecting and improving the network of GI in West Berkshire as well as a framework for the creation of new GI.

### **Delivery and Monitoring**

This policy will be implemented through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, the forthcoming Green Infrastructure SPD, the Rights of Way Action Plan, the Biodiversity Action Plan, the determination and monitoring of planning applications and appeals, and the use of planning obligations in planning agreements or planning conditions.

Provision of open space and recreational facilities will be monitored in the AMR.