



The countryside charity
Hampshire

VERSION 1 as at Sept 2021

Position Statement

Blue Green Infrastructure

CPRE Issue

Infrastructure is the services and systems that communities need to function. The impact of new infrastructure, and the expansion of existing infrastructure on the special qualities of our countryside, are of particular concern to CPRE who believe it should be delivered through Landscape Led Local Plans.

“GREEN Infrastructure” embraces a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It includes parks, playing fields, areas of open spaces, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and “BLUE Infrastructure” such as rivers, streams, ponds, canals, lakes and other water bodies.

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

CPRE issue is that all infrastructure must reflect the importance of both local and national “valued landscapes”, be appropriately designed, should minimise the impact on and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. Intrinsically, Local Plans should be Landscape Led.

Blue / Green Infrastructure opportunities and requirements must be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.

Guidance.

Strategic, Landscape Led policies should identify the location of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks and set out appropriate policies for their protection and enhancement.

Green infrastructure strategies or frameworks, which must be prepared at a district-wide scale (or wider), should be evidence based and include assessments of the quality of the current green infrastructure and any gaps in provision. Standards such as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard can be applied when assessing provision.

The green infrastructure strategy can inform other plan policies, infrastructure delivery requirements, and CIL schedules. In view of their potential scope and use, authorities should be encouraged to collaborate with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders such as Local Nature Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Boards



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and Local Enterprise Partnerships to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local priorities and evidence.

The natural environment may best be conserved and enhanced by high-quality networks of multifunctional green infrastructure which will contribute to a range of benefits including ecological connectivity, facilitate biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks, and create opportunities for communities to undertake conservation work.

Local priorities such as transport, utilities and telecommunications need to be considered in terms of environmental impact (e.g roads, underground cables, sympathetic siting of masts etc.) and that they are adequately supported by existing infrastructure, or reasonable infrastructure investment is secured by way of suitable planning obligations, for example s106 agreements or CIL contributions.

CPRE are not an organisation solely dedicated to protecting National Parks or AONBs but we see no reason not to apply the same Landscape Led planning standards across all rural England. Whilst we recognise the need for growth, it must be done sympathetically, which is where we can make a difference.

Sample Policy – Blue and Green Infrastructure.

1. Development proposals will only be permitted where they demonstrate that they:
 - a) Maintain or enhance the integrity, quality, connectivity and multi-functionality of the existing blue and green infrastructure network and individual sites;
 - b) Provide new green, and where appropriate, blue infrastructure, or improvements to existing green and blue assets and linkages, which are integrated into the development design, that meets the needs of communities both within and beyond the site's boundaries.
2. Blue and Green infrastructure proposals must be designed to;
 - a) Strengthen connectivity and resilience of ecological networks;
 - b) Incorporate measures that are appropriate to the type and context of the development proposal as part of an overall landscape design;
 - c) Maximise opportunities to mitigate, adapt and improve resilience to climate change;
 - d) Maximise opportunities for cycling and walking, including multi-user routes and, where possible, facilitate circular routes; and
 - e) Support health and wellbeing.
3. Development proposals that may harm the existing Blue or Green Infrastructure network must incorporate measures that sufficiently mitigate or offset their effects.



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4. Where appropriate, the Authority will seek to secure, via planning condition or legal agreement, provision for the future management and/or maintenance of Blue / Green Infrastructure.

NB In considering the wording of individual policies in Local Plans, it is important to bear in mind that Local Plans must be looked at as a whole. This means, for example, that policies for the protection of landscape must be applied when considering each and every planning application; and accordingly, there is generally no need for other policies to refer specifically to landscape matters.