

# Green Infrastructure Policy Examples – Appendix 5

Process Guide for Local Planning Authorities –  
Developing Green Infrastructure Policies and  
Strategies using the Green Infrastructure Framework –  
Principles and Standards for England

September 2024

# Contents

- Green Infrastructure Policies – Good Practise Examples ..... 3
  - Policy examples – Adopted ..... 3
    - Islington..... 3
  - Policy examples – In-progress, consultation/draft stages ..... 4
    - Uttlesford District Council ..... 4
    - Exeter City Council ..... 6
    - Telford and Wrekin Council ..... 7
    - Portsmouth City Council ..... 9
    - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole ..... 11

# Green Infrastructure Policies – Good Practise Examples

This note highlights a range of good practice examples of GI policies to showcase how various elements of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF) can be incorporated into policy. These policy examples have often been captured at a particular stage of development and before they have been finalised, so please be aware that final versions of the policies may look different.

As the GI Framework was published relatively recently and the development process for Local Plans takes considerable time, examples of adopted policies that directly reference the GI Framework are not yet available. Regarding specific policy asks, tree canopy policies (with specific requirements for types, extent and quality of tree cover) were lacking whilst UGF policies were widely utilised. The following policies highlight how the GI Framework has been included in policies to date in differing ways that respond to local, geographic context. In addition, Urban Greening Factor policies are being widely utilised.

## Policy examples – Adopted

### Islington

The Islington Local Plan was adopted in September 2023. It includes an individual chapter titled Green Infrastructure within which five policies are listed:

- G1: Green Infrastructure
- G2: Protecting open space
- G3: New public open space
- G4: Biodiversity, landscape design and trees
- G5: Green roofs and vertical greening

Note that the GI Framework is not referenced, however the UGF is applied in response to the London Plan's urban greening policy (Policy G5). [Islington Council Local Plan: Strategic and Development Management Policies](#)

### Policy G1: Green Infrastructure

- A. Green Infrastructure is an integral part of what makes the borough sustainable, healthy, welcoming and attractive. It is extremely important in terms of addressing the Local Plan vision and objectives. Development proposals must preserve and enhance existing green infrastructure, and, where relevant, provide new green

infrastructure. Opportunities to connect new/enhanced green infrastructure to existing green infrastructure must be thoroughly investigated.

- B. Developers must consider green infrastructure at an early stage of the design process as part of an integrated design approach and incorporate the provision of green infrastructure **into the design rather than as an 'add on' at the end of the design process.**
- C. Development proposals must assess the value and benefits of existing green infrastructure on-site and adjacent to sites; and identify interventions that could improve green infrastructure value and benefits.
- D. Sites with a low existing green infrastructure value represent particular opportunities to increase green infrastructure functions. The Council will not consider existing site circumstances as the baseline for new provision.
- E. Major developments are required to conduct an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) assessment in accordance with the methodology in the London Plan. Schemes must achieve a UGF score of 0.4 for developments that are predominantly residential, and a target score of 0.3 for predominantly commercial development (excluding B2 general industry and B8 storage and distribution use).
- F. Development must contribute to the implementation of green infrastructure strategies including the All London Green Grid.

## Policy examples – In-progress, consultation/draft stages

### Uttlesford District Council

Uttlesford DC consulted on their Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 in November 2023. It includes a draft GBI policy supported by a GBI strategy (2023). Uttlesford DC are aiming to submit their Local Plan for Examination in December 2024. [The Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 - Uttlesford District Council](#)

#### Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Green and Blue Infrastructure plays an integral role in making the district sustainable, healthy and attractive and in helping to meet Local Plan objectives. All development should adopt an approach that is environment and landscape led so as to maximise the beneficial provision of green and blue infrastructure for people and nature.

In planning for major developments, priority will be given to the role of GBI in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options, supporting biodiversity and the natural environment, and ensuring open space for sports and recreation is secured for the community.

All major developments must:

- i. demonstrably take a green and blue infrastructure design-led approach to development schemes, and utilise Uttlesford's green and blue Infrastructure design checklist, to ensure green infrastructure is considered and well-integrated into developments at the earliest stages
- ii. ensure green and blue infrastructure is multi-functional, accessible to all and designed to meet local needs, taking into account the views of key stakeholders
- iii. avoid the loss and fragmentation of existing green and blue infrastructure networks, including within the built environment. Existing landscape features, watercourses and habitats should be integrated into development, and green and blue infrastructure proposals must identify opportunities to maximise their quality and achieve biodiversity net gain. Development proposals must protect and enhance sites that form part of the existing green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network as well as associated landscape heritage features
- iv. where relevant, demonstrate how the appropriate use and permanence of the Green Belt will be maintained and enhanced by existing and new GBI onsite
- v. development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland or chalk streams and riparian ecology will be refused
- vi. integrate Sustainable (urban) Drainage Systems (SuDs) into the development, as appropriate, ensuring they are designed to have multifunctional benefits for biodiversity, recreation and aesthetic value
- vii. consider connectivity as a core principle of green and blue infrastructure, integrating active travel and recreational routes that connect with open space and meet accessibility, quantity and quality standards for all users, including connections to existing communities, facilities and services. Appropriate greening should be integrated into these routes, providing and improving connections to adjacent habitat networks especially where this would contribute to wider nature recovery, and
- viii. protect existing trees and hedgerows during and after development and where proposed development might affect trees an accurate assessment by a competent arboriculturist should be undertaken and protective measures put in place. Opportunities should be maximised for increasing tree cover# through new planting. New canopy should provide a mix of species to include orchard and fruiting trees that are resilient to pests, diseases and climate change and support biodiversity.

All proposals for green and blue infrastructure should be checked against the design checklist in the Uttlesford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and relevant sections of the Uttlesford's Design Code, together with Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance, the Council's Open Space Strategy 64 and the LNRS.

Development proposals for major developments must be accompanied by an acceptable GBI Plan for the site in accordance with the GBIS, and the Master Plan for the site in accordance with the relevant Area Strategy. This should include stewardship arrangements for not less than 30 years to cover maintenance, management and funding arrangements.

An endowment sum should be provided to contribute to the maintenance of the GBI and/or a revenue contribution depending in the nature of the proposed GBI element, to be secured through section 106.

Contributions towards local green infrastructure projects as set out in the Strategy will be sought where they are related to the development or where they mitigate the impacts of new development.

## Exeter City Council

Exeter CC consulted on their Full Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 in October 2023. It includes polices covering two GI Framework standards, UGF and tree canopy cover. Exeter CC are aiming to submit their Local Plan for Examination in March 2025. [The Exeter Plan Full draft Regulation 18 - Oct 23](#)

### NE4: Green infrastructure (Strategic policy)

All development proposals will be required to protect existing and take opportunities to deliver new, green infrastructure in accordance with the updated Green Infrastructure Strategy.

All large-scale residential development proposals will be required to submit a Green Infrastructure Plan setting out how the development will link to existing green infrastructure (including Public Rights Of Way, Valley Parks and the Exeter Green Circle) and demonstrating how the development will contribute to the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Where necessary, contributions to enhance green infrastructure, sustainable transport links and gateway access points will be sought.

### NE6: Urban Greening Factor

Major development proposals must include the latest version of Natural England's Urban Greening Factor (UGF) calculator demonstrating how the development will achieve UGF scores of at least:

- a. 0.3 for predominately commercial development; and
- b. 0.4 for predominately residential development (or 0.5 for predominantly greenfield residential development).

An operation and maintenance plan must also be included which satisfactorily demonstrates that the green features will be successfully retained throughout the life of the building.

### NE7: Urban Tree Canopy Cover

To contribute towards the City Council achieving its target to increase tree canopy cover to 30%, all new streets must be tree-lined and major development proposals must increase tree canopy cover on-site by at least 5.5% when compared to the pre-development baseline.

## Telford and Wrekin Council

In their Regulation 18 draft local plan, consulted on in October 2023, Telford and Wrekin split their GI policies into multiple categories; UGF, Strategic greens gaps, Green network, BNG and Protecting and Enhancing green spaces. Telford and Wrekin are aiming to go to consult on their Regulation 19 Local Plan in autumn 2024. [Draft local plan review - Oct 2023](#)

### Policy NE4

#### Greening factor

1. The council will require all major development proposals to contribute towards the greening of the borough through the integration of multifunctional green and blue **infrastructure within a development's site design**.
2. All major residential development proposals, or proposals that are predominately residentially led, should meet a minimum Greening Factor of 0.4.
3. All major non-residential development, or proposals that are predominately non-residentially led, should aim to meet a Greening Factor of 0.3.
4. Where the Greening Factor cannot be met on site, then the council will work with applicants to identify offsite opportunities to enhance local green infrastructure. This would be secured by planning conditions and/or obligations and delivered in line with locally identified needs.

### Policy NE5

#### Green Network

1. The council will protect, maintain, enhance and, where possible, extend the green network.
2. The council will only support new development within the green network where it identified, protects and enhances the green network and its functions, proposals would be expected to assess and justify the development against these functions, including:

- a. To provide significant visual amenity value in the form of extensive views over green open areas, water bodies or woodland;
  - b. To provide separation between built up areas by significant open green areas, water bodies or woodland which help to retain and enhance the individual identity of local communities;
  - c. To provide an appropriate supply of open land to meet the diverse recreational needs of an expanding population, combining the more formal parkland and recreation areas with wider landscaped areas valuable for informal recreation;
  - d. **To maintain, protect and enhance the borough's ecological value in terms of** natural habitats and species by providing ecological networks, corridors and stepping stones by which wildlife can move through, and thrive within, urban environments;
  - e. To maintain, protect and enhance the unique geological and archaeological features within the borough as a legacy of its early place in the Industrial Revolution;
  - f. To provide open space linkages through which footpath, cycleways and ecological corridors can connect different parts of Telford or Newport forming **accessible 'green ways' through urban areas.**
3. Where adverse impacts are identified, development will need to demonstrate that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh any adverse impacts on the Green Network and its functions.

## Policy NE7

### Strategic green gaps



1. The council will only support development within a strategic green gap where it:
  - a. Will not be detrimental to the function or aim of the strategic green gap;
  - b. Preserves the identity of the settlements of Lilleshall and Wrockwardine; and
  - c. Clearly maintains a physical and perceptual separation between the built areas of the settlements; or
  - d. Is demonstrated that it is essential for the development to be located in the strategic green gap, and the benefits of the proposal outweigh the potential impact on the strategic green gap.
2. Development within a strategic green gap should have regard to:
  - e. The siting, layout, scale, design, materials and landscaping to protect the function of the strategic green gap and retain the undeveloped character; and
  - f. **Maintaining and enhancing the local communities' access to the countryside via footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.**

## Portsmouth City Council

Portsmouth's Draft Local Plan currently includes a strategic GI policy which incorporates the GI Framework standards and principles. The pre-submission (Regulation 19) consultation is running from July to early September (2024). [Pre-submission Portsmouth Local Plan](#)

### Strategic Policy PLP38: Green Infrastructure

1. Development proposals will be supported provided that they maintain, protect and enhance the function, integrity, quality, connectivity and multi-functionality of the existing green and blue infrastructure network and individual sites.
2. Development will be permitted where it provides or contributes to green infrastructure, in line with the five key standards as set out in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework including the 15 GI Principles and emerging Portsmouth City Council Greening Strategies.
3. Development should look to conserve and enhance the Green Grid, as shown in Figure 9.1 and on the Policies Map, and should meet the green infrastructure priorities set out in the Portsmouth City Council Green Infrastructure Background Paper.
4. Development proposals that reduce the quality of the green infrastructure network including the proposed Green Grid, as shown in figure 9.1 and on the Policies Map, will only be permitted where suitable mitigation is identified and secured.

5. Development that directly impacts upon or is adjacent to proposed green infrastructure projects named in the PfSH [Partnership for South Hampshire] Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan should not prejudice its future delivery and should where possible provide a physical connection to it.
6. Proposals which impact the Green Grid should take opportunities to raise awareness of nature as part of the design of the scheme.
7. Development that does not provide onsite green infrastructure as set out above will only be permitted where sustainable alternative green infrastructure provision of an equivalent standard is provided in close proximity to the development.

### Supporting text

9.17 The purpose of this policy is to take every opportunity to green the City by making green infrastructure in the City bigger, better and more joined up.

9.18 Major Development in Portsmouth should be designed and delivered in line with the five key standards for Green Infrastructure as set out in the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework. These standards are:

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

9.19 The City Council is in the process of developing strategies that set out how it intends to meet the five key standards for Green Infrastructure. When these strategies are published development proposals should take their recommendations into account. The Council intends to review its Green Grid through future detailed assessment.

9.20 Proposals should consider the 15 GI Principles as set out by Natural England. Further detailed Guidance on these principles and how they can be implemented in development have been published by Natural England's 'Process Journey for Developers and Design Teams.

9.21 Greening the City is a City-wide requirement for major development and should be evidenced by the use of an Urban Greening Factor. Until such time as the City Council publishes additional guidance, applicants should use Natural England's Urban Greening Factor as set out in its Green Infrastructure Framework using surface cover types and factors<sup>178</sup>. The target minimum score for commercial development is 0.3 and 0.4 for residential developments.

9.22 Development proposals which are located close to or on future identified green infrastructure identified in the Green Grid and projects identified within the PfSH Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan<sup>179</sup> should ensure they do not adversely impact on these future ambitions. This includes preventing their future delivery, blocking/fragmenting or destroying the green infrastructure network. Exceptions will only be made where alternative provision which is the same or better quality is secured. Any proposals on protected habitat which also impact the Green Grid, and which require provision of mitigation will also need to meet the tests set out elsewhere in the Local Plan in addition to the requirements of this policy.

9.23 The Green Grid is intended to create green corridors, which provide benefits for both nature and the health and wellbeing of residents. Opportunities should be taken through the provision of signage and other ways which are accessible to the wider community to raise awareness of these benefits.

9.24 The Council will support development proposals which provide green infrastructure on site and which maximise opportunities for connections to the wider green infrastructure network, as identified through the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Building with Nature Standards<sup>180</sup> provide further guidance on how greening can be incorporated into schemes.

## Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

The draft Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 27 June 2024 for Examination. The GI policy includes UGF and tree cover targets and directly references their GI Strategy and the NE GI Framework in the supporting text.

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Item 8 - Consultation on the Draft BCP Local Plan and the Draft CIL Charging Schedule \(Revised Appendices\) Agenda Supplement for Council, 09/01/2024 19:00 \(bcpCouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

## Policy NE 4: Green Infrastructure

### 1. General principles

Applicants must demonstrate how proposals will incorporate green infrastructure into new development via their Design and Access statement or council checklist, showing how the following have been considered:

- a. The BCP Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- b. Existing ecological network;
- c. The BCP Urban Greening Design Guide, including the urban greening factor score;
- d. The BCP Tree and Woodland Strategy;

- e. Food growing; and
- f. Biodiversity Net Gain.

## 2. Existing Ecological Network

The existing ecological network as shown on the policies map will be protected for wildlife movement and where appropriate public enjoyment. Development proposals on land within or adjacent to the existing ecological network must respect its function and integrity.

## 3. Green Infrastructure

Development proposals that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and multi-functional green infrastructure network will be supported. Proposals should:

- a. retain and enhance the quality and connectivity of existing green infrastructure where this can be incorporated into the development proposal;
- b. identify and incorporate opportunities for the creation of new green infrastructure, including green infrastructure that creates connections beyond the site boundary; and
- c. secure appropriate long-term management, maintenance and funding of any green infrastructure on site or directly related to the development.

## 4. Urban Greening

Development proposals must include urban greening as part of the site and building design in accordance with the BCP Urban Greening Design Guide. Urban greening can include green roofs, trees in streets and public realm, and nature-based sustainable drainage.

- a. On major developments urban greening must be provided on site and should show how design development has carefully considered the potential to achieve an Urban Greening Factor score of 0.4 for predominantly residential development and 0.3 for predominantly commercial development; and
- b. For all other development the applicant must demonstrate how urban greening has been considered and incorporated in the design.

## 5. Trees

Development proposals must ensure that existing trees of value are retained and incorporated into the design, following the guidance in the Urban Forest Strategy.

For major development:

- a. A Tree Canopy Cover Assessment must be provided that demonstrates how the development will incorporate trees on-site, and:
  - i. where there is no existing tree canopy cover, provide a minimum of 10% tree canopy cover (upon maturity) across the whole site area; or
  - ii. where there is existing tree canopy cover, provide a minimum increase of 10% tree canopy cover (upon maturity over the existing onsite tree canopy cover); or
  - iii. where there are existing ecological, historical, landscape or operational reasons that justify not meeting the canopy requirements of a.i. or a.ii. (as applicable), provide evidence to support this and agree an alternative percentage of canopy cover with the council; and
- b. Where new streets form part of the proposal, tree lined streets must be integrated into the design where appropriate and acceptable in highway terms.

## 6. Food growing

Major new residential developments should seek to enhance local food growing opportunities by providing community gardens, community orchards, allotments and/or growing spaces within communal areas.

Natural England is here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and **England's traditional landscapes** are safeguarded for future generations.

Natural England publications are available as accessible pdfs from [www.gov.uk/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/natural-england).

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0300 060 3900 or email [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk).

ISBN 978-1-78367-408-4  
Catalogue code: NE820

This publication is published by Natural England under the Open Government Licence v3.0 for public sector information. You are encouraged to use, and reuse, information subject to certain conditions. For details of the licence visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3).

Please note: Natural England photographs are only available for non-commercial purposes. For information regarding the use of maps or data visit [www.gov.uk/how-to-access-natural-englands-maps-and-data](http://www.gov.uk/how-to-access-natural-englands-maps-and-data).

© Natural England 2023