

# **Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy Update July 2026**



**COTSWOLD**  
District Council

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## **Introduction**

- 0.1 Why has the Green Infrastructure Strategy been prepared?
- 0.2 To direct the design and delivery of Green Infrastructure in Cotswold District to maximise its environmental, community and economic benefits. It is a guide for delivering high-quality Green Infrastructure through new developments, community partnership and land management. It identifies a number of Green Infrastructure issues at a District and at a more local scale.
- 0.3 A range of evidence has been used to inform the Strategy, including legislation and guidance. The Strategy forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan 2026 - 2043 and other new plans and strategies. Please note that the Cotswold District Pools and Halls Facility Planning Model Assessments May 2026, the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan and Strategic Assessment Report 2023 cover the strategic approach to sport in the District.
- 0.4 The GI Strategy was adopted by full Council in January 2024. This document is an update to the original for the purposes of the new draft Local Plan 2026 to 2043.

## **Who is the Strategy for?**

- 0.5 The Strategy will be of use to a range of organisations and individuals including;

### **Who - Voluntary sector and community groups**

- 0.6 How – Using the evidence to help put environmental projects and grant bids together.
- Delivering Green Infrastructure through Community and Partnership working
  - Community Planning
  - Appendix A and D
  - The GI Strategy Maps (online)

### **Who – Developers and their Agents**

- 0.7 How – Using the local evidence and Council guidelines as well as Building with Nature, and Natural England guidelines for designing new developments in the district.
- Strategic issues for GI
  - Green Infrastructure Issues and Potential for the Cotswold District
  - Possible GI solutions to address issues in the district
  - Delivering Green Infrastructure through New Developments
  - Green Infrastructure Checklist for Developers
  - The GI Strategy Maps (online)

### **Who – The Council**

- 0.8 How – Helping to guide and determine planning applications and new strategic initiatives.

- Strategic issues for GI – Possible
- Green Infrastructure Issues and Potential for the Cotswold District
- Possible GI solutions to address issues in the district
- Delivering Green Infrastructure through New Developments
- Green Infrastructure Checklist for Developers
- The GI Strategy Maps (online)

### **Who – Parish and Town Council's**

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- Delivering Green Infrastructure through Community and Partnership working
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- Strategic issues for GI
- Green Infrastructure Issues and Potential for the Cotswold District
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- Delivering Green Infrastructure through New Developments
- The GI Strategy Maps (online)

### **Who - Farmers, landowners and land managers.**

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- Strategic issues for GI
- Green Infrastructure Issues and Potential for the Cotswold District
- Possible GI solutions to address issues in the district
- Delivering Green Infrastructure through New Developments
- The GI Strategy Maps (online)

## 1. Overview and Introduction to Green Infrastructure

### What is Green Infrastructure?

The National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPF](#)) 2024<sup>(1)</sup> defines Green Infrastructure 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.”*

- 1.1 This Strategy assumes all references to Green Infrastructure include both green and blue, i.e. water-related features and infrastructure.
- 1.2 Examples of green (and blue) infrastructure in Gloucestershire include rivers; cemeteries; canals; sports pitches; orchards; green roofs; parks; open fields and woodland.
- 1.3 Green infrastructure can be considered at a range of scales, from international such as the Severn Estuary and the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation to the local, such as a pond or a hedgerow around a garden or a field. Appendix A provides a list of examples of Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Fact, Figures and Issues.
- 1.4 Since the publication of this document in 2024 the guidance on GI has grown significantly, Appendix B lists some of the key developments relating to GI in the past few years; but what hasn't changed is the fundamental principles of Green Infrastructure and as such the findings of this strategy as well as its overall aim and objectives.

### Methodology/Summary

- 1.5 The strategy has drawn upon, in the first instance, as a baseline, Building with Nature, which was used to establish the key Wellbeing and Access, Water and Wildlife elements of the District, and then the seventeen principal settlements as outlined in the adopted [Local Plan 2018-2031](#)<sup>2</sup>. These elements were then mapped to provide an overview of what is available and what isn't in these areas. In doing so, the mapping and desk top research was used to understand the key opportunities for Wellbeing, Water and Wildlife in those settlements. (See Appendix C). However, the various guidelines, issues and standards referred to in this strategy also apply to the other, non-principal settlements within the Cotswold District.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF\\_December\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/cotswold-district-council-local-plan/>

- 1.6 Section 2 makes reference to best practice standards, these include play spaces, allotments and the amount of accessible green space recommended by Natural England. These standards help to define what the Council means by good Green Infrastructure and should be used in conjunction with Building with Nature and the more recently published Natural England's GI Principles. In addition to providing practical advice the guidelines have helped to establish that the Cotswold District has a deficit of accessible green space.
- 1.7 Natural England have developed their own (non-statutory) set of GI principles '[The Green Infrastructure Framework](#)',<sup>3</sup> this was published in 2023, it provides further guidance on the principles and importance of GI. The Natural England Framework, correlates very closely with the principles set out in the up-dated 2022 Gloucestershire County GI framework as well as the spirit of Building with Nature. Both the Natural England GI principles as well as Building with Nature should be referred to, to assist with the implementation of GI for the District.
- 1.8 In establishing that the District has a deficit of Accessible Green Space the Strategy provides guidance and possible solutions to address this issue. It also provides clarity regarding what the council expects when delivering new GI or addressing existing GI issues in the district or working with partners to create new opportunities for GI.
- 1.9 To deliver on the aim and objectives and priorities of the Strategy many other partners, stakeholders and individuals will also have to play their part. The Council will support action by others both practically and by providing a leadership role.

## **The Benefits of GI at a Local Level**

- 1.10 The strategic framework for Green Infrastructure in Gloucestershire includes a map to show the location of the strategic GI in the county and how it links to GI across the county boundaries. The key GI features of relevance to the District are the wider Cotswold lakes area (Upper Thames Vales), the Cotswold Scarp and the main rivers that run NW/SE across the District.
- 1.11 The benefits of GI below have been taken from the [Green Infrastructure | Gloucestershire LNP](#)<sup>4</sup>

### **The key environmental and social benefits include:**

- Ensuring a more attractive place for people to live, work and visit.
- Improving health and wellbeing including through access to and an appreciation of nature.
- Helping mitigate and adapt to climate change, for example by carbon sequestration, urban cooling and flood alleviation. Improving air and water quality.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/green-infrastructure-pledge>

- Creating, enhancing and connecting habitats to deliver biodiversity net gains and nature recovery. Providing sustainable and active travel routes.
- Enabling local food production – in allotments, gardens, community orchards and through agriculture.

**The key economic benefits include:**

- Attracting inward investment by enhancing places for investors and potential residents
- Generating employment by attracting new businesses and residents to an area.
- Increased visitor spend – a more attractive county for tourists and visitors
- Saving environmental costs – for instance by diffusing and reducing pollution, helping to manage flood risk plus storing water during droughts.
- Providing health benefits – for example through providing access to high-quality green space, better air quality, improved mental health and wellbeing, and also encouraging community cohesion.
- Promoting sustainable and increased local food production.

- 1.12 Green infrastructure provides a wide range of benefits simultaneously and from the same piece of land, often at a lower cost than non-natural solutions to the same problems.

## **The Aim of the Cotswold Green Infrastructure Strategy**

**The Aim of the Strategy is:**

- 1.13 The overall aim of the strategy is to protect and enhance the GI framework of the District for the benefit of everyone, wildlife and the wider environment.

**The Objectives**

- Ensure that new and enhanced GI relates to the local character of the area and meets local needs.
- Provide a baseline to evaluate the key GI elements in the District.
- Set out and drive the GI priorities for the District and in particular for Cotswold District Council and its key partners.
- Illustrate Cotswold District Council's commitment to the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership [Green Infrastructure | Gloucestershire LNP](https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/green-infrastructure-pledge)<sup>5</sup>
- Ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation is central to all GI policies, projects and initiatives.
- Reinforce the measures in the Cotswold District Ecological Emergency Action Plan.
- Ensure that new development delivers high quality, timely, well-managed and beneficial GI

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/green-infrastructure-pledge>

- e.g. through the use of [Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles](#)<sup>6</sup> or [Building with Nature](#)<sup>7</sup>
- Extend and improve access to Green Infrastructure to better include groups that don't currently benefit from it directly.
- Provide detailed data, mapping and analysis of GI across the District and beyond including key shared GI with neighbouring local authorities but, particularly within the 17 principal settlements.
- To augment the information, policies and guidance provided within the Cotswold District Local Plan, including the updated Cotswold Design Code.

## Key GI Assets in the Cotswold District - Nationally and Locally designated sites in and adjacent to the district.

- 1.14 Cotswold District has a diverse range of habitats, species, important sites and features for biodiversity. The District has a small proportion of the internationally significant Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area for Conservation (SAC) within its boundary and Rodborough Common SAC, North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC are within 3 KM of its boundary.
- 1.15 To enable development to come forward that might otherwise cause likely significant recreational effects on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC or the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC, the Council has worked with Natural England and neighbouring Local Authorities to prepare recreation mitigation strategies for these SACs. These set out the types of recreational impact and the mitigation (and its cost) required to address those recreational impacts. They also provide data on the areas from which visitors come to the sites, enabling a Zone of Influence to be defined.

### The District supports several nationally and locally designated sites.

| Designation                                                                                             | Number of Sites | Total area of sites | Percentage of the District |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - includes a percentage Cotswold Beechwood & Cotswold Lakes | 37              | 468Ha               | 0.4%                       |
| Local Wildlife Sites                                                                                    | Over 260        | 5,027.2Ha           | 4.31%                      |
| Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves                                                          | 7               | 139.41Ha            | 0.12%                      |

<sup>6</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/GIPrinciples.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://sintali.com/building-with-nature>

|                       |     |          |         |
|-----------------------|-----|----------|---------|
| Local Nature Reserves | 2   | 13.41Ha  | 0.0115% |
| Ancient Woodlands.    | 146 | 3,566 Ha | 3 %     |

**Percentage of land within the district covered by priority habitats and wildlife sites.**

| Designation/ Land type | Percentage of land cover in the district |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Priority Habitat       | 11 %                                     |

**Gloucestershire Local Nature Improvement Areas**

DEFRA define Nature Improvement Areas as:  
 “large (in the region of 10,000-50,000 hectares), discrete areas that, by taking a landscape–scale approach, will deliver a step change in nature conservation, where a local partnership has a shared vision for their natural environment.”

- 1.16 [The Local Nature Partnership](#)<sup>8</sup> have designated three “locally designated” Nature Improvement Areas (NIA) within and/or adjacent to Cotswold District.
- The Cotswold Scarp.
  - The Cotswold Valleys.
  - Cotswold Lakes.

**Gloucestershire Nature Recovery Network and Strategy 2026**

- 1.17 The aim of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), which was a key component of the Environment Act 2021 is to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to reverse nature’s decline. In [Gloucestershire the County Council published the LNRS in 2026](#).<sup>9</sup>
- 1.18 The strategy consists of three main components:

**Part 1** - Gloucestershire's Biodiversity and Opportunities for Nature Recovery. This document sets the scene for Gloucestershire's existing nature and important wildlife and explains the Key Messages of the strategy.

**Part 2** - Gloucestershire's Biodiversity Priorities and Potential Measures. This is the practical guide to how we can carry out specific actions for nature. Each Potential Measure details specific actions that can be taken to improve or create wildlife rich habitats or protect and support threatened and notable species.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/nature-improvement-areas>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/ecology-and-landscape/gloucestershire-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

- 1.19 Local Habitat Map. This is a spatial online tool that maps our priority Potential Measures across areas of the county where they would have the best impact for nature - joining up existing wildlife sites and expanding from existing habitat.

## **The Key Standards used to shape the Cotswold Green Infrastructure Strategy**

- 1.20 A number of standards have been used in analysing the data and mapping for this Strategy. The information in this section provides the relevant detail to help developers deliver GI that meets all the required standards.

### **High-quality GI in new development should use these standards and guidance:**

- Building with Nature
- Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework

### **Building with Nature (BwN)**

- 1.21 Building with Nature is a national GI benchmark, developed in 2018 that supports the delivery of high-quality GI at all stages in the development process including policy, design, planning, implementation, construction and long-term management. It was originally developed by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and the University of West of England with support from a wide partnership including Cotswold District Council. The benchmark is and has been used across the country and is a useful guide.
- 1.22 The 2024 Cotswold District GI Strategy has been developed using the Core Standards and benefit-driven themes set out in BwN, to ensure that the Strategy is comprehensive and reflects best practice. Although developers can pay for formal accreditation of their proposals the benchmark is also available on a free to use basis, with formal accreditation requiring the services of a trained Assessor.

### **Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework**

- 1.23 The Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard enables comprehensive green infrastructure policy based on the [Green Infrastructure Framework's principles and standards](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/GIPrinciples.aspx)<sup>10</sup>.

### **The known benefits of Green Space at a National Level**

- £2.1 billion per year could be saved in health costs if everyone in England had good access to greenspace, due to increased physical activity in those spaces.
- In Birmingham, the annual net benefit to society of their parks and greenspace is nearly £600 million, which includes £192 million in health benefits.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/GIPrinciples.aspx>

- In Sheffield, for every £1 spent on maintaining parks, there is a benefit of £34 in health costs saved, with local residents being the primary beneficiaries.

*(Taken from Improving Access to Greenspace: 2020 Review. Public England)*

### **Accessible Green Spaces**

- 1.24 Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) (used until December 2022) and the 2023 update. which is included in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework.

### **Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)**

- 1.25 The amount of Accessible Natural Green Space available in the District, was established using the the original Access to Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt). ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should be within easy reach of accessible natural greenspace:

| <b>ANGSt standards</b>                                                               |                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Size of Site</b>                                                                  | <b>Distance from Home</b>                          |
| of at least 2 hectares in size                                                       | no more than 300 metres (5-minute walk) from home; |
| at least one accessible 20-hectare site                                              | within two kilometres of home;                     |
| one accessible 100-hectare site                                                      | within five kilometres of home; and                |
| one accessible 500-hectare site                                                      | within ten kilometres of home                      |
| A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population. |                                                    |

### **Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework 2023**

- 1.26 In January 2023 Natural England launched a new Green Infrastructure Framework, listed below are the revised standards for access to green space. Natural England's revised Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) have had their scope broadened and are now referred to as Accessible Greenspace Standards. The wellbeing maps and information collected from the Town and Parish Councils for Section 6 of the GI Strategy highlights this and provides evidence as to where new accessible green spaces should be allocated.

**The Accessible Greenspace Standards (2023) define good provision based on different size proximity, capacity and quality criteria, as set out below:**

| <b>Natural England - Access to Greenspace Close to Home - 2023</b> |                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Size of Site</b>                                                | <b>Distance from Home</b>              |
| A doorstep greenspace of at least 0.5ha                            | within 200 metres                      |
| A local natural greenspace of at least 2ha                         | within 300 metres walk from home.      |
| And a medium sized neighbourhood natural greenspace (10ha)         | within 1km AND beyond 15 minutes' walk |
| A medium/large wider neighbourhood natural greenspace (20ha)       | within 2km                             |
| A very large district natural green space (100ha)                  | within 5 km                            |
| A very large subregional greenspace (500ha)                        | 10 km                                  |

- 1.27 The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) standard, as referred to until 2023 was applied to open space provision in the District. The introduction of Natural England's GI Framework and Accessible Green Space Standards in 2023 does not detract from the fact that the Cotswold District is deficient in Accessible Natural Greenspace.
- 1.28 Natural England (2023) estimates that parks and greenspaces in England deliver an estimated £6.6 billion of health, climate change and environmental benefits every year. The government's Environmental Improvement Plan includes a commitment that the public should be able to access green space or water, such as woodlands, wetlands, parks and rivers, within a 15-minute walk from their home.
- 1.29 [Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework \(GIF\)](#)<sup>11</sup> provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban environments is needed most. It aims to support equitable access to greenspace across the country, with an overarching target for everyone being able to reach good quality greenspace in their local area. The wellbeing maps and information collected from the Town and Parish Councils for Section 6 of the strategy highlights this and provides evidence as to where new accessible green spaces are needed and should be allocated.

## **The Play Standards**

*Play England Design for Play Guidance*

<sup>11</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Principles/GIPrinciples.aspx>

- 1.30 [Play England Design for Play - A guide to creating successful play spaces](#)<sup>12</sup> Design for Play includes 10 design principles which are at the core of a fresh, design-led approach to commissioning, and which are encapsulated in one 'golden rule':

- 'A successful play space is a place in its own right, specially designed for its location.
- Designers should take a holistic perspective on designing for play.
- Play opportunities should be embedded in the site as a 'A Guide for Creating a Successful Play Spaces'.

**Building on these standards this Strategy supports the concept of natural play endorsed by Play England Design for [Play Design for Play — Play England](#)**

#### **Learning as week as Playing**

- 1.31 In recent years there has been a move to open up the idea of play to more than the traditional idea of outside play for children. From pieces of specific equipment and locations to viewing play and associated learning as an activity for all areas, not just the playground.

#### **The Fields in Trust**

- 1.32 The [Fields in Trust](#)<sup>13</sup> has offered guidance for practitioners on open space provision and design known as the Six Acre Standard (6AS) most recently updated to [Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play](#)<sup>14</sup> (PDOSP) in 2008. While there is a need for review, given the changes in political, planning and social landscapes since 2008, the benchmark standards within PDOSP still remain a useful guidance tool.
- 1.33 The PDOSP seeks the protection, provision and improvements of outdoor spaces for sport and play and good planning and design is central to the philosophy and objectives. Using this current guidance will help to ensure that the provision of play is a sufficient size to enable effective use; is located in an accessible location and in close proximity to dwellings; and of a quality to maintain longevity and encourage its continued use.

**Table identifying the Play Standards LAPs, LEAP, and NEAPS**

|                                                             |                |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (PDOSP) 2008 | Play Standards | New and existing Play areas                                                                         |
|                                                             |                | LAPs – Local Areas for Play (very young children)                                                   |
|                                                             |                | LEAP – Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) (for children who can go out and play independently) |

<sup>12</sup>

<https://www.playengland.org.uk/designforplay#:~:text=A%20guide%20to%20creating%20successful,experience%20risk%2C%20challenge%20and%20excitement>

<sup>13</sup> <https://fieldsintrust.org/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://angmering-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan-docs/098%20Fields%20in%20Trust.pdf>

|  |  |                                                                         |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | NEAPS - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (aimed at older children) |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Parks and Open Spaces

- The Green Flag Award
- Making Space for Girls

### The Green Flag award

- 1.34 The [Green Flag Award - Green Flag Award](#)<sup>15</sup> recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. Its purpose and aims are to:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sectors.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.

### Make Space for Girls Play Guidance

- 1.35 [Make Space for Girls](#)<sup>16</sup> was registered as a charity in March 2021. Their mission is to use research, consultation, engagement and education to campaign and drive an approach to the planning, commissioning and development of parks and similar public spaces that recognises the different needs of girls and young women and finds ways to meet those needs.

### Sport England – Playing pitches

- 1.36 Playing Pitches – includes football, rugby, hockey and cricket.

- Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy - Cotswold Version – [Play and Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2023](#).<sup>17</sup>

### Sport England Guidance

- 1.37 [Sport England](#)<sup>18</sup> have developed the playing pitch calculator, which is based on information from the Playing Pitch Strategy in order to create the right amount of playing pitches and the correct typology. The Playing Pitch Strategy methodology for playing fields is not a standard but based on empirical evidence.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.greenflagaward.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/v0ulu014/a5-4-5-playing-pitch-strategy-and-action-plan-jun-2023.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ukssport.gov.uk/about-us/who-we-work-with/sport-england>

## Allotments

- The National Allotment Society

- 1.38 Allotments Standards - [The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners](#)<sup>19</sup>
- 1.39 The National Allotment Society states that 'An allotment is an area of land, leased either from a private or local authority landlord, for the use of growing fruit and vegetables. In some cases, this land will also be used for the growing of ornamental plants, and the keeping of hens, rabbits and bees. An allotment is traditionally measured in rods (perches or poles), an old measurement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. 10 poles is the accepted size of an allotment, the equivalent of 250 square metres or about the size of a doubles tennis court. There should be 15 allotment plots per 1000 households'.
- 1.40 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners has produced new guidance for Planners, developers, civil engineers, architects, local authority and/or project managers working on various stages of a new development. *Guide To 21st Century Allotments in New Developments*<sup>25</sup>: 21st Century Allotments in New Developments.

## The Woodland Trust - [The Woodland Access Standard](#)<sup>20</sup>

- 1.41 According to The Woodland Access Standard, no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size. There should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20 ha within 4km of people's homes. This is intended to be an aspirational benchmark and some flexibility and local assessment is needed in its interpretation. Currently only 18.2% of the population of Britain lives within 500m of accessible woodland, in the Cotswolds this is 6.3 %. This standard has not been used in assessing GI provision within the District as it is, to some degree, covered by the ANGSt standard.

## The Cotswold District

- 1.42 There are a number of documents, which contribute towards the mitigation and adaptation of climate change. These include but are not limited to the [Cotswold Renewable Energy Study](#)<sup>21</sup> and the [Cotswold Climate Emergency and Ecological Emergencies](#).<sup>22</sup>
- 1.43 The [Town and Country Planning Association \(TCPA\)](#)<sup>23</sup> holds the UK's biggest GI knowledge base, this knowledge base is constantly being updated, this is a useful resource base and should also be referred to.

<sup>19</sup> <https://thenas.org.uk/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/woodland-access-implementation-plan>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/kr1lgbj3/cotswold-renewable-energy-study-january-2025.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/>

## **2. Green Infrastructure Issues and Potential for the Cotswold District**

- 2.1 These issues come from evidence prepared as part of this Strategy and from other data and evidence sources.

### **The Strategic GI Issues for Cotswold District**

#### **Strategic Access and Wellbeing led Issues**

- To ensure that high-quality GI is created and maintained, for the benefit of all, as part of new developments.
- To encourage the development of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANG)
- To address the lack of accessible natural green space at both the strategic level (such as county parks) and at the more local or neighbourhood scale (such as allotments, local parks).
- To create new strategic GI cycle and pedestrian links, linking up existing settlements and other important destinations.
- To improve access to and create new public footpaths in and around the principal settlements.
- To increase play provision, including informal play opportunities, within new developments and elsewhere.

#### **Strategic Water Led Issues**

- To improve the water quality of water courses.
- To deliver Hydro-energy projects (particularly those that may also provide fluvial flood resilience).
- To ensure that SUDS are incorporated within new developments.
- To improve the management of watercourses, including their banks.
- To deliver upstream new SUDS.
- To consider water and its value as a natural and valuable resource at a catchment-based level.
- To ensure that the District has a sufficient water supply for current and future needs.
- To ensure that the District has sufficient sewage treatment provision for current and future needs.

#### **Strategic Wildlife Led Issues**

- To reverse habitat and species loss and fragmentation and build resilience to climate change and disease.
- To address recreational pressures on the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- To develop a strategic approach to biodiversity conservation in the Cotswold Water Park.
- To implement biodiversity net gain in a way that maximises the outcomes for biodiversity and GI more widely.
- To ensure that habitats created and enhanced reflect locally important habitat networks through utilising the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**Strategic Planning Led Issues**

- To encourage the development of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANG)
- To ensure that the natural environment, natural capital and GI is fully considered in all investment decisions relevant strategies and policies, including community planning, the update of the local plan and strategic level projects and their implementation.
- To maximise the contribution that GI can make to the climate change agenda – both mitigation and adaptation.
- To protect, enhance and create green wedges and corridors, for their connectivity value, within existing and new developments.
- To continue to develop the evidence base to support effective GI provision.
- Ensure there is a consistent, early and coordinated approach taken to the management of GI.
- To ensure new developments to provide gardens and open spaces, for wellbeing, to enable and encourage biodiversity and connectivity.

**Possible GI solutions to address issues in the District**

- 2.2 To realise the full potential of GI and to deliver maximum benefits across the District will require the input and efforts of a broad range of partners and stakeholders at the national, county, district and local level. The research findings in this strategy form the basis of critical information about the District. These findings provide real GI possibilities and solutions, in doing so they have the ability to deliver on more than one element of GI for the District. Below are potential GI solutions for the District.

**Potential GI solutions - Wellbeing and Access**

- 2.3 The creation of new (and particularly medium to large scale) country or natural parks within the district, including the opportunity to deliver Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANG).
- 2.4 GI led strategic cycle and pedestrian routes in the District, with an emphasis on linking up existing settlements (within and outside the District) and other important destinations, prioritising –
- Cirencester to Kemble (included in Local Plan)
  - Cirencester - the re-use of the Andoversford to Cirencester dis-used railway where possible or quiet lane network for a new Active Travel Route
  - Kemble to Tetbury (included in Local Plan) Kemble – re-use the dismantled railway
  - Cirencester and Kemble, and Kemble to Tetbury for active travel
  - Andoversford – re-use the disused railway where possible and/or A40 corridor between Cheltenham and Andoversford for active travel. Reuse the disused railway (where possible) and quiet lane network between Andoversford and Cirencester/Andoversford and Bourton on the Water
  - Bourton- on- the- Water – re-use the disused railway between Bourton on the Water and Kingham for active travel and connectivity to mainline rail services
  - Cirencester to South Cerney, the Cotswold Water Park and out to Swindon Fairford to Lechlade (included in Local Plan)

- The settlements along the Fosseway
- Ensuring that as many of these routes as possible are off-road or traffic free
- Re-using disused railway lines and canals. For example, the canal for access from Cirencester to the Cotswold Lakes .
- Providing routes that are accessible for all users, including families and disabled people and horse riders.
- Designs that also increase wildlife habitat connectivity to be delivered through new and existing developments
- Encourage the creation and promotion of circular, signed and accessible for all, circular walks around each of the principal and new settlements in the Local Plan for the benefit of local residents, workers and visitors.
- Encourage the provision of new allotments in all settlements, new and existing.
- To encourage landowners to provide opportunities for GI and natural capital as part of the Green Recovery.
- Provide better guidance on and encourage the provision of play opportunities in new developments and elsewhere, with a particular emphasis on natural play and play provision that is integrated across the whole development.
- Where appropriate, review the management of the Council's own land holding to maximise its contribution to the GI network and to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

### **Potential GI solutions - Water**

- Work in partnership with landowners and other key stakeholders to improve the water quality of water courses and to deliver Hydro- energy projects (particularly those that may also provide fluvial flood resilience)
- Ensure that SUDS are considered from the first point of developer engagement with the Council; emphasising not only their water management role but also their potential to deliver biodiversity and amenity benefits.
- Foster a better understanding of the root causes of sewage into the district waterways.
- Work with partners to improve access to the Thames and Severn Canal. This ongoing project continues to restore the canal.
- Work with riparian owners and other partners to improve watercourse management.
- Work with partners for leaving space for flood water by safeguarding land through the Local Plan and utilising greenspace for flood storage and slowing the flow.

### **Potential GI solutions - Wildlife**

- Support and work with key partners to minimise recreational pressures on the Cotswold Beechwoods SACs and North Meadow/Clattinger Farm SAC.
- Support the implementation of the Gloucestershire Tree Strategy (2020), in particular the actions for the Cotswold District.
- Work with partners to ensure that the nature recovery network mapping and a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Gloucestershire is kept up to date, and it is reflected in District level policy and strategy.

- Ensure that habitat gain achieved through any District-licensing projects also delivers on wider GI objectives.
- Investigate how Biodiversity Net Gain can best deliver wider GI objectives and whether there is a case for delivering Net Gain at a higher level than mandated nationally.

### **Potential GI solutions - Planning**

- Ensure there are mechanisms in place for the management of new or enhanced GI from the first stages of design to ensure high-quality management, community involvement and that the mechanism for stewardship will deliver on aspirations.
- Review the success of the current local plan policies and GI principles; amending them where necessary as part of the local plan update.
- Ensure that the update of the local plan, including new allocations and revised policies (including the revised Cotswold Design Code) fully considers better alignment with GI Standards such as the Natural England GI Framework published in January 2023; the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and other new legislation, policy and guidance if appropriate.
- Consider how GI issues can be highlighted within the site allocation process, for example by including the GI on and offsite requirements for each proposed development site and within the relevant policies.
- Encourage the provision of new accessible open spaces through the local plan update.
- Consider how any new cycle or pedestrian routes could be included in the update of the local plan and how funding from development, for example via CIL, might be achieved.
- Highlight the importance of the consideration of the natural environment, natural capital and GI within Neighbourhood Development Plans; for example by providing – GI mapping.
- Analysis of GI mapping – looking for opportunities to enhance and connect GI. an evidence paper and policy template for NDPs on GI and the natural environment
- Review the current evidence base for the designation of Special Landscape Areas and update where necessary.
- Work with Highways England and other partners to maximise the opportunities for the A417 (Missing Link) project and any related projects to deliver GI benefits.
- Work with the Local Nature Partnership, Duty to Cooperate and other partners to update the Strategic Framework for GI in Gloucestershire, when needed.
- Ensure that the Steadings Development delivers on its aspirations to provide high-quality GI (that meets the BwN benchmark).
- Encourage the appropriate planting of more trees and woodland and rewilding projects to address climate change and ensure that this occurs in the design and creation of areas where multi-benefits are maximised.

### **Potential GI solutions - Review and Monitoring Actions**

- Monitor the success of the GI strategy; update new GI-related initiatives and update the GI strategy, as necessary.
- The strategy is part of the Local Plan evidence base and will be subject to periodic updates, which will be delivered as part of extant Forward Planning and Development Management existing resources.



### 3. Delivering Green Infrastructure through New Developments

- 3.1 The creation and enhancement of GI are key components of delivering high-quality new developments and creating excellent places for people to live, work and play. This Strategy should help to ensure that this happens.

#### Policy Background

- 3.2 The potential of GI to help create great places is recognised in local, national and international policy and guidance that relates to specific GI benefits or issues.
- 3.3 At a national level the [NPPF](#)<sup>24</sup> and iterations of it over the last four years covers GI. In the latest version 2023, GI is made reference to in a number of different sections, including design and the natural environment, highlighting the multi-functional nature of GI.

#### Green Infrastructure in the Emerging Local Plan

- 3.4 The emerging Cotswold Local Plan 2026-2043 places Green Infrastructure at the heart of delivering sustainable growth and healthy, resilient communities. A range of strategic policies support the protection, enhancement and creation of Green Infrastructure and recognise its contribution to climate resilience, biodiversity recovery, health and wellbeing, active travel, landscape character and placemaking. In particular, the following policies are relevant to the delivery of Green Infrastructure:
- Core Policy 1 Addressing Climate Change
  - Core Policy 16 Thames and Severn Canal
  - Core Policy 33 Sustainable Transport and Connectivity
  - Core Policy 35 Active Travel: Walking, Cycling and Wheeling
  - Core Policy 43 Specialist Accommodation
- 3.5 These policies should be read alongside other relevant Local Plan policies and the Cotswold Design Code. Together they provide a framework for ensuring that Green Infrastructure is considered from the earliest stages of site identification, allocation and design. The implementation of these policies and associated design principles will help ensure that new development delivers high-quality, multifunctional Green Infrastructure that responds to local context, supports nature recovery, improves access to green space and contributes positively to place-making. The evidence base prepared to support the emerging Local Plan also provides important information on landscape, biodiversity, active travel, open space provision, recreation mitigation and health and wellbeing, all of which are relevant to Green Infrastructure planning and delivery.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- 3.6 The emerging Local Plan also recognises the important role that Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs), Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspaces (ANRGs) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) can play in delivering wider Green Infrastructure objectives. Whilst these mechanisms have specific statutory and policy purposes, they also provide opportunities to increase access to natural greenspace, strengthen ecological connectivity, support habitat creation and improve the overall quality of the District's Green Infrastructure network. Where appropriately designed and managed, these measures can deliver multiple environmental and community benefits, helping to address recreational pressures on sensitive habitats whilst contributing to nature recovery and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

### **Cotswold Local Plan - Cotswold Design Code**

- 3.7 The emerging Local Plan promotes a masterplanning-led approach for strategic-scale development. Green Infrastructure should be identified and planned at the outset of the masterplanning process and used as a primary structuring element for new development. Existing landscape features, watercourses, habitats, public rights of way, heritage assets, trees, hedgerows and open spaces should be incorporated into a connected Green Infrastructure network that shapes the layout of development, movement corridors and community facilities. This approach helps ensure that Green Infrastructure delivers multiple benefits for people, place and nature whilst creating distinctive and successful new neighbourhoods.
- 3.8 The Cotswold Design Code provides further guidance on the delivery of high-quality places and includes a range of design principles relevant to Green Infrastructure. Sections D1-D65 address matters such as local character, landscape setting, connectivity, inclusive design, movement, public realm and boundary treatments, all of which contribute to successful Green Infrastructure design. The Design Code is being updated and is intended to be published as a separate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The most up-to-date version of the Design Code and any associated guidance should therefore be referred to alongside this Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.

### **Effective Green Infrastructure and High-Quality Landscape**

- 3.9 High-quality, well-integrated and carefully designed Green Infrastructure and landscape provision are essential to the long-term success of development. The spaces between buildings, the surrounding landscape and the connections between people, places and nature are all critical components of successful placemaking. Green Infrastructure should not be viewed as residual land or solely as mitigation for development impacts. Instead, it should form a connected multifunctional network that supports biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable drainage, active travel, recreation, health and wellbeing whilst reinforcing local landscape character and sense of place. Well-designed Green Infrastructure contributes significantly to the attractiveness, functionality and long-term sustainability of new and existing communities.

## 4. Designing Excellent Green Infrastructure in New Developments

4.1. Planning policies require new developments to fully consider GI issues but there are also benefits for developers in creating excellent GI which go beyond those policy requirements, including to:

- Ensure that all the land within the development site is used optimally delivering a range of benefits from flood management and cycle routes to biodiversity mitigation and landscape enhancements.
- Resolve local community concerns about new development, for example by providing new public open spaces.
- Demonstrate a commitment to high-quality GI.

| How can High-Quality GI Contribute to the 3 Benefit-Based Themes?                                 |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wellbeing                                                                                         | Water                                                                              | Wildlife                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Can be designed to promote health, wellbeing, community cohesion and active living                | Can be used to minimise surface water runoff and manage flood risk as part of SuDS | Can be used to avoid, mitigate and compensate for negative impacts on existing biodiversity; and offer the opportunity to restore, create and enhance biodiversity in line with targets |
| Can be designed to be inclusive of the needs of vulnerable and excluded groups                    | Can be used to improve water quality                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Can be designed to be used and enjoyed all year round                                             | Can be designed to create better places for people and wildlife to live            | Offer the opportunity to ensure linkages between habitats                                                                                                                               |
| Can assist in supporting local priorities for reducing/and or preventing health inequalities      | Can provide opportunities to improve water management at a catchment level         | Can contribute to the target conservation status of key species                                                                                                                         |
| Can inspire innovative solutions to overcoming social and cultural boundaries to use and enjoy GI | Can provide a range of features to minimise pollution downstream                   | Can include ecological features around and within the built environment                                                                                                                 |
| Can add positively to distinctiveness of place                                                    |                                                                                    | Can play a role in restoring and sustaining wider ecological networks                                                                                                                   |

|  |                                                                          |  |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | Water management features can add value to the overall design of a place |  |
|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

**Table: How can High-Quality GI Contribute to the 3 Benefit Based Themes? (Taken from Building with Nature)**

## Designing GI

- 4.2. The Cotswold Design Code provides a framework of principles for designing high-quality GI within new developments. Additional information on the [Cotswold Design Code advice on Green Infrastructure](#),<sup>25</sup> particularly at the pre-application stage, has been prepared for (funded by the MHCLG Innovation Fund). A simple, additional way for developers to demonstrate that they are delivering high-quality GI at both the design, implementation and long-term management stages is to make use of the BwN benchmark process.

## Natural England has also produced a [GI Design Guide 2023](#)<sup>26</sup>

- 4.3. The purpose of the Planning and Design Guide is to provide evidence based practical guidance on how to plan and design good Green Infrastructure. It complements the National Model Design Code and National Design Guide.

## Green Infrastructure Checklist for Developers

- Remember Green Infrastructure means blue infrastructure as well.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/4sojaskr/green-infrastructure-planning-advice.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/DesignGuide.aspx>

- Consider what the GI requirements for the site may be before purchase of a site to ensure that the land value fully reflects those requirements.
- Engage with CDC at an early stage to make sure GI is central to the design of the development, including using the Green Infrastructure Pre Application Advice Note.
- Consider how the GI will be managed from the first stages of design to ensure high-quality management community involvement and that the mechanism for stewardship will deliver on aspirations.
- Use the full range of Local Plan policies to consider the broader elements of GI.
- Use the Design Code in the Local Plan, Natural England's GI Framework and principles and Building with Nature Benchmark to inform what GI is appropriate, in terms of location, type, quantum and quality (including reference to the standards set out in section of this GI Strategy).
- Engage, at an early stage, with local Town and Parish Councils to better understand community GI aspirations.
- Ensure that the GI related policies and projects in adopted and draft Neighbourhood Plans are fully considered.
- Use the mapping data and other evidence in this GI Strategy to better understand the local GI context. This will maximise the opportunities for the GI enhanced or created as part of new development to contribute to the overall GI network of the area and to deliver multiple benefits for Wellbeing, Water and Wildlife at a local as well as at a district level.
- Have a full understanding of the context of the site and its role in the GI network of the area, for example by referring to the Nature Recovery Network mapping, and the Landscape Character Assessments 31. A full set of the Landscape Character Assessment maps you can refer to Ecology and landscape - Gloucestershire County Council In addition to the mapping and other information in this Strategy.
- Ensure that all the relevant assessments and studies have been undertaken, for example ecological appraisals; onsite Biodiversity Net Gain, landscape visual impact assessments etc and that these have informed the design of the new development.
- Look for opportunities to deliver the District and local actions in the GI Strategy in section 2 Green Infrastructure Issues and Potential for the Cotswold District
- Consider in full the range of soft and hard landscape interventions to ensure the maximum usability, quality and attractiveness of GI.
- Look at the Natural Capital mapping website and Nature Recovery Network for GI opportunities <https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/>
- Put long-term mechanisms in place to retain and manage new or enhanced GI.

## 5. Delivering Green Infrastructure through Community and Partnership working

### Community and Partnership Activities and Projects

- 5.1. There are a wide range of GI-related activities, projects and initiatives happening in the District, from those at a landscape scale, such as the Glorious Grasslands Project to individual actions, for example; installing a single bat box in a garden. Information on many of these projects can be found on [Gloucestershire Nature Project Map](https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/gloucestershire-nature-project-map).<sup>27</sup> This mapping illustrates the diverse nature of the organisations involved in GI, and the importance of partnership working to ensure that the right people are involved and that the most effective use is made of the resources available.
- 5.2. Although many of these projects, listed below, focus on one of the benefit-based outcomes of Wellbeing, Water or Wildlife, as the table above shows, they usually have beneficial outcomes for all. Most of the GI-related activities, projects and initiatives in the District are already delivering on many GI elements within this strategy and new ones will come forward that are also able to do that. The setting out of a clear list of issues and possibilities for the District may help projects to focus their activities and to justify what they are doing where this is necessary, for example within funding bids. The mapping and other evidence in the strategy should also assist in identifying where projects and partnerships can target their work to enhance the GI network of the District – and also, improve delivery at a more local community level.

### Examples of Working in Partnership to Achieve Green Infrastructure Outcomes

| Working In Partnership to Achieve Green Infrastructure Outcomes |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |            |       |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|----------|
| Organisation                                                    | Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Well-being | Water | Wildlife |
| Cotswold District Council                                       | The Community Wellbeing Team at CDC hosts The Cotswold Community Network (CCN) group made up of Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups, NHS, Foodbanks, Town and Parish Councils, Youth Providers to name just a few. There are currently over 115 members. | X          | X     | X        |

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/gloucestershire-nature-project-map>

|                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Cotswold District Council,<br/>Gloucestershire County Council,<br/>Environment Agency</b> | <b>Flood Defences</b> 29 Parishes in the Cotswold District have either had work completed or have work planned or both on flood defences since 2007; including 11 of the 17 key settlements. Progress and implementation is published annually.                          | X | X | X |
| <b>Cotswolds National Landscape</b>                                                          | <a href="#">Glorious Grasslands</a> <sup>28</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | X | X | X |
| <b>Gloucestershire County Council Highways – Rights of Way</b>                               | <a href="#">PRoWs - Rights of Way Map Online</a> <sup>29</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | X | X | X |
| <b>Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group</b>                                                   | <a href="#">The Cotswold Water Park WILD Project</a> <sup>30</sup><br>Water with Integrated Local Delivery) is a three year project set within the Cotswold Water Park, it aims to improve water quality and biodiversity in order to meet the demands of EU legislation | X | X | X |
| <b>Gloucestershire Highways</b>                                                              | <a href="#">Biodiversity Guidance</a> <sup>31</sup> contains advice to help the County Council implement its                                                                                                                                                             | X | X | X |
| <b>Cotswold Canals Trust (CCT)</b>                                                           | <a href="#">Restoration</a> <sup>32</sup> is well advanced on the western section of the canal. Plans to similarly restore the eastern section to Connect                                                                                                                | X | X | X |

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/our-work/nature-recovery/glorious-cotswold-grasslands/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/prow/rights-of-way-online-map/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.waterpark.org/wild-project/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.thinktravel.info/media/xmuhdhvl/ghbg-v32-may2022.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> <https://cotswoldcanals.org/>

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
|  | the Water Park to the Thames are being made. The Eastern Visitor Centre located in the Cotswold Water Park , a joint venture between the CCT and the Cotswold Lake Trust opened in May 2023 and has since welcomed over 5500 visitors. |  |  |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|

## Community Planning

- 5.3. Local communities, including Parish and Town Councils are keen to shape their towns and villages and this can be achieved through project work where local communities are key to successful outcomes, or by community planning initiatives, such as Parish Plans, Community Design Statements or Neighbourhood Plans. There is robust evidence to show that community involvement in GI has many benefits, including addressing social exclusion and improved mental health outcomes. Using GI as a focus for community effort can also encourage a wider range of people to become involved and to harness the energies of those who might otherwise be considered to be “hard to reach”, for example young families are unlikely to engage in traditional community planning exercises but may be interested in wildlife projects.

## Local Green Spaces

- 5.4. An important example of GI within community planning for Green Infrastructure is Local Green Spaces (LGS). The NPPF makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of particular importance to those communities, where development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances. Local Green Spaces can be designated through a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 5.5. In the 2011-31 Local Plan 12 Local Green Spaces were adopted. In the draft Local Plan 2026-2043, 37 Local Green Spaces have been proposed by Town and Parish Councils. The Council developed a toolkit to ensure that any proposed designation is robust and provide consistency.

## This Strategy should help to provide that local context:

- The maps and additional information the GI Strategy should also help local communities to : Develop local community GI projects, (based on evidence of need).
- Support bids for external funding.

- Inform the Neighbourhood Planning process for example helping to identify breaks in connectivity for footpaths or wildlife that could be addressed through the NDP.
- Ensure that new developments can contribute to local GI by working directly with developers – showing them where the GI priorities lie or by providing detailed comments that refer to GI in responses to planning applications and other consultations .
- Inform NDP site allocations by providing clarity on sites that may not be suitable for development in GI terms or by highlighting opportunities to create new or improve existing GI within new site allocations (including providing detail on the type, location and quantum of GI that should be incorporated).

## 6. The Evidence – what does the evidence tell us?

### GI Mapping

- 6.1. The mapping for the Strategy took place during 2018 and 2019, with additional amends made in 2020 and 2022. The maps, listed below, helped to establish a picture of existing work in the GI field at a County level. These maps include: The Strategic Framework for GI in the County, The Gloucestershire Nature Map, this map was the basis for the nature recovery network and Gloucestershire Nature Improvement Areas.
- 6.2. The Gloucestershire Nature Map was a strategic approach to showing the best places to maintain and extend terrestrial habitats at a county scale. The Nature Map identifies the Lowland Calcareous (Limestone) Grassland, Lowland Meadows, Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Woodland Mosaic and river areas as strategic areas for the Cotswolds.
- 6.3. Focusing on the Cotswold District, the following maps established key elements of GI within it, or on the District's boundary. These maps include:
  - All the elements of Green Infrastructure in the District as well as a 15KM from the boundary line to recognise that GI does not respect boundary lines and our neighbours GI,
  - Linear Green Infrastructure, which includes existing Sustrans Routes, National Trail (Cotswold Way & Thames Path) Promoted Routes (Diamond Way, Macmillian Way & Monarch's Way) and rivers,
  - Agricultural Land Classification in the District,
  - Landscape Classifications Cotswold District,
  - Nature Conservation Plans and Key Access Routes and areas of opportunity.
- 6.4. Finally, maps were set up for each of 17 principal settlements to mirror the Local Plan. For each of the 17 settlements a Wellbeing, Water, and Wildlife map was created to pull through the Building with Nature themes.

**The following table shows the GI asset mapped for each of the Building with Nature themes.**

| Main GI assets mapped |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Wellbeing</b>      | Access Land, Allotments, Amenity Green Spaces, AONB, Cemeteries and Churchyards, Common Land (registered), Historic Parks and Gardens (registered), Local Green Space, National Trail, Permissive Footpaths, Playgrounds (including school playgrounds), Playing Fields (including school playing Fields), Promoted Routes, Public Rights of Way, Railway line Active, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Special Landscape Area, Sports Grounds, Sustran Route |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Water</b>    | Bogs, Flood Zone 3b, Lakes, Main Rivers, Marshland, Thames and Severn Canal, Watercourses (this includes river tributaries) Cotswold Water Park                                           |
| <b>Wildlife</b> | Ancient Woodland, Dismantled Railway, Local Wildlife Sites, National Forestry<br>Inventory, Priority Habitat, Scientific Sites of Special Interest, Regionally Important Geological Sites |

- 6.5. The mapping work for the 17 principal settlements was undertaken in partnership with the parish and town councils in 2017 and 2021 and builds on earlier work conducted for the Open Spaces Strategy in 2015/16. The Parish and Town Councils added their suggestions and refinements to the maps (and suggested further GI ideas. See Appendix C.
- 6.6. The detailed outcomes of this mapping and data work with the 17 principal settlements along with a brief analysis of the information collated as part of the 2017 work, 2021 consultation and other data are set out in Appendix C.

## Open Space provision

- 6.7. Further analysis of the mapping was conducted, with a particular emphasis on access to open spaces and provision of open spaces in the District. In addition, research into linear routes, for example, public rights of way (PROW) and cycle routes also took place. By using the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt).

**The following information became apparent: –**

| <b>ANGSt standards</b>                  |                                                    |                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Size of Site</b>                     | <b>Distance from Home</b>                          | <b>Does provision in the Cotswold District meet this standard?</b>                              |
| of at least 2 hectares in size          | no more than 300 metres (5 minute walk) from home; | Desktop mapping has taken place, but input by a community, by community basis would be helpful. |
| at least one accessible 20 hectare site | within two kilometre of home;                      | No                                                                                              |
| one accessible 100 hectare site         | within five kilometres of home; and                | No                                                                                              |
| one accessible 500 hectare site         | within ten kilometres of home                      | No                                                                                              |

|                                                                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population. | No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

## Off-road Cycle and pedestrian routes

- 6.8. Within the District, access to services is a key issue, with a lack of regular public transport. In addition, there is a strong tourism sector, with an increasing emphasis on the walking and cycling offer. The county Health and Wellbeing Strategy also emphasises the need to increase activity levels and walking and cycling could make a cost-effective contribution to this, as well as helping to deliver against the climate change agenda with a modal shift from private cars to walking and cycling. The data, derived from the mapping evidence, shows that there are currently very few off-road cycle routes and that many of the public rights of way do not readily link up settlements and other key destinations (including those outside the District). There are a number of linear features, which have potential to deliver (in some cases long distance) linear off-road routes; this includes disused railway lines and canals. There are also opportunities to create and better promote circular pedestrian routes from the 17 principal settlements as well as a circular route around the Cotswold Water Park. These measures would benefit not only tourism, but also local residents and those that work in the settlements.
- 6.9. Policies and information within the current District Local Plan and its existing evidence base. Information on the relevant policies in the draft local plan can be found in section. The evidence on which the current local plan was based is extensive and includes –
- Cotswold Water Park Topic Paper 2015.
  - Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan July 2021
  - Special Landscape Areas Review 2017.
  - Local Green Spaces Evidence Paper 2026.
  - [JBA Consulting Report Template](#)<sup>33</sup> Cotswold District Council Local Plan Partial Update: Water Cycle Study Final July 2025.

## Emerging evidence collated as part of the Local Plan Update 2026-2043

- 6.10. The local plan update is currently taking place, including the GI policies and the Cotswold Design Guide.

## Engagement with principal settlements

- 6.11. The GI Strategy has, as it was expected to go In 2018, local communities were not only asked to comment on and improve the local GI mapping they were also asked to highlight some GI ideas within their parishes. Please see Appendix C. Further engagement and

<sup>33</sup> [https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/ymxhji0e/jll-jbau-xx-xx-rp-en-0005-d1-c01-cotswold\\_par\\_joanne-corbett.pdf](https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/ymxhji0e/jll-jbau-xx-xx-rp-en-0005-d1-c01-cotswold_par_joanne-corbett.pdf)

updates took place in 2021 and 2022. The consultations gave individuals, public and private organisations as well as key strategic partners and community representatives an opportunity to provide further feedback.

### **Feedback from relevant stakeholders**

- 6.12. The Council is part of a number of partnerships and stakeholder groups, for example the Local Nature Partnership. Recently, feedback from those partnerships have informed the development of this strategy. For example:
- The need to consider how the agricultural community can contribute to and benefit from the GI agenda.
  - The increasing importance of natural capital data and the multiple benefits of creating circular walks from the market towns in the district to benefit tourism and leisure but that will also benefit those that live and work in the towns.
- 6.13. It is important to take a landscape approach. Large (in the region of 10,000 – 50,000 hectares), discrete areas that by taking a landscape-scale approach, will help deliver a step change in nature conservation, where a local partnership has a shared vision for their natural environment. The Gloucestershire Nature Recovery Network and the opportunity areas will help to define the boundaries of these Gloucestershire Local Nature Areas.

## 7. Access to Open Spaces

- 7.1. In this section, access to open spaces in the District is broken down to explain the conclusions drawn. Again using the ANGST standard, for the following:
- Potential sites 20 - 100 ha in area (indicating principal settlements within 5KM)
  - Potential sites over 100 ha (indicating principal settlements within 5 KM)
  - Potential Accessible Natural Greenspaces over 500 ha. (indicating principal settlements within 10 KM)
- 7.2. The Access Tables show the distance from where people live. The distance to the nearest principal settlement was used as a proxy to measure this; as the majority of people in the district live within these settlements. Access issues are also examined in the settlement specific sections see Appendix C.
- 7.3. It is clear from the data in the tables that although some of these open spaces are of a relevant size, they are not fully accessible to the public for reasons listed below.
- Access may be limited to public footpaths so people are unable to roam freely,
  - The site might be outside the Cotswold District Boundary,
  - There may be a charge for access, including a cost for parking,
  - Access might be restricted because of irregular public transport,
  - Access may be limited to certain days or times etc.
  - Access is at the discretion of the landowner.
- 7.4. A description of why particular sites are discounted, can be found in Appendix C, Delivering GI in the Principal Settlements in the District.
- 7.5. Sites below 20ha have not been included on the District level mapping and the data tables, but are identified, on the wellbeing maps for the 17 principal settlements. Natural green spaces 2ha for each of the Principal Settlements are also mapped on the wellbeing maps and are listed in the tables that indicate how delivering GI in the Principal Settlements might be achieved. See Appendix C

| <b>Potential sites 20 - 100 ha in area (indicating principal settlements within 5KM)</b> |                                         |             |                                                         |                                                                   |                  |                       |                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Site</b>                                                                              | <b>Principal Settlements within 5KM</b> | <b>Size</b> | <b>Location – within District or within 15km buffer</b> | <b>Access Limitations e.g. entrance fee; footpath access only</b> | <b>Ownership</b> | <b>Cost of access</b> | <b>Does this site constitute accessible natural greenspace?</b> |

|                                          |                                              |          |                          |           |                                                  |      |    |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|------|----|
| <b>Dovers Hill</b>                       | Blockley<br>Chipping<br>Campden<br>Mickleton | 75<br>ha | Within<br>District       | Footpaths | National<br>Trust                                | Yes  | No |
| <b>Greystones<br/>Nature<br/>Reserve</b> | Bourton on<br>the Water                      | 66<br>ha | Within<br>District       | Footpaths | Glos<br>Wildlife<br>Trust                        | None | No |
| <b>Clattinger<br/>Farm SAC</b>           | Kemble<br>South Cerney                       | 60<br>ha | Within<br>15km<br>buffer | Footpaths | Natural<br>England                               | None | No |
| <b>North<br/>Meadow</b>                  | Down Ampney<br>South Cerney                  | 44<br>ha | Within<br>15km<br>buffer | Footpaths | Natural<br>England                               | None | No |
| <b>Lineover<br/>Wood</b>                 | Andoversford                                 | 50<br>ha | Within<br>District       | Footpaths | Woodland<br>Trust                                | None | No |
| <b>Barber<br/>Wood</b>                   | None                                         | 39<br>ha | Within<br>District       | Footpaths | Woodland<br>Trust                                | None | No |
| <b>Crickley<br/>Hill</b>                 | None                                         | 27<br>ha | Within<br>15km<br>buffer | Footpaths | National<br>Trust &<br>Glos<br>Wildlife<br>Trust | None | No |

**Potential sites over 100 ha (indicating principal settlements within 5 KM)**

| <b>Site</b>                     | <b>Principal<br/>Settlements<br/>within 5KM</b> | <b>Size</b> | <b>Location<br/>– within<br/>District<br/>or within<br/>15km<br/>buffer</b> | <b>Access<br/>Limitations<br/>e.g.<br/>entrance<br/>fee;<br/>footpath<br/>access only</b> | <b>Ownership</b>    | <b>Cost<br/>of<br/>Access</b> | <b>Does this<br/>site<br/>constitute<br/>accessible<br/>natural<br/>greenspace?</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Westonbirt<br/>Arboretum</b> | Tetbury                                         | 242<br>ha   | Within<br>District                                                          | Footpaths                                                                                 | Forestry<br>England | Yes                           | No                                                                                  |
| <b>Newark<br/>Park</b>          | None                                            | 222<br>ha   | Partially<br>in District                                                    | Footpaths                                                                                 | National<br>Trust   | Yes                           | No                                                                                  |
| <b>Hidcote</b>                  | Chipping<br>Camden<br>Mickleton                 | 125<br>ha   | Within<br>District                                                          | Footpaths                                                                                 | National<br>Trust   | Yes                           | No                                                                                  |

| <b>Batsford Estate</b>                                                                                           | Blockley Morton in Marsh                          | 114 ha      | Within District                                         | Footpaths                                                                                              | Private          | Yes                   | No                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Potential Accessible Natural Greenspaces Over 500 ha.<br/>(indicating principal settlements within 10 KM)</b> |                                                   |             |                                                         |                                                                                                        |                  |                       |                                                                 |
| <b>Site</b>                                                                                                      | <b>Principal Settlements within 10 KM</b>         | <b>Size</b> | <b>Location – within District or within 15km buffer</b> | <b>Access Limitations e.g. entrance fee; footpath access only</b>                                      | <b>Ownership</b> | <b>Cost of Access</b> | <b>Does this site constitute accessible natural greenspace?</b> |
| <b>Sherborne Park</b>                                                                                            | Northleach Bourton on the Water, Upper Rissington | 1160 ha     | Within District                                         | Footpaths                                                                                              | National Trust   | Yes                   | No                                                              |
| <b>Cirencester Park</b>                                                                                          | Cirencester, Kemble, South Cerney. Down Ampney    | 1055 ha     | Within District                                         | Access based on goodwill of owner. Some PROW limitations                                               | Private          | None                  | No                                                              |
| <b>Beechwood SAC</b>                                                                                             | None                                              | 590 ha      | Partly within District                                  | Open access. High level of recreational disturbance, further unlimited access should not be encouraged | Natural England  | None                  | No                                                              |

#### Official Local Nature Reserves in the Cotswold District

**Standard – A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population. CDC population 2011 Census – 82,881 – number of LNR = 2**

| Where                                             | Size  | Ownership                                                              | Cost access | Does this site constitute accessible natural greenspace? |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Coke's Pit (Lake 34)</b>                       | 10 ha | Cotswold Water Park is on a lease from Gloucestershire County Council. | Free        | Yes                                                      |
| <b>Cirencester City Bank Local Nature Reserve</b> | 3 ha  | Cirencester Town Council                                               | Free        | Yes                                                      |

- 7.6. It should be noted that where there isn't a cost for accessing the site there might be a parking charge expected.
- 7.7. Special Areas of Conservation – Cotswold Beechwoods SAC and North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. These two sites lie close or partially within the district. These accessible natural greenspaces, although available, are very vulnerable to recreational disturbance and without additional measures put in place, increased access to these sites should not be encouraged. This is recognised, in the Local Plan, policy INF7 Green Infrastructure. For this reason, the two SACs have not been included in the analysis of publicly accessible open space.

## **Recreation Mitigation and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs)**

- 7.8. The emerging Cotswold District Local Plan 2026-2043 recognises that increased housing growth has the potential to increase recreational pressure on internationally important nature conservation sites, particularly the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC and North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC. To address this issue, the Council has prepared a Recreation Mitigation Study and Habitats Regulations Assessment evidence base, which identify the scale of mitigation required to support planned growth whilst protecting these sensitive sites.
- 7.9. A key recommendation of the Recreation Mitigation Study is the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) and Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspaces (ANRGs). These spaces are designed to provide attractive, accessible locations for recreation, walking and informal enjoyment of nature, helping to divert visitor pressure away from protected habitats. In addition to their mitigation role, SANGs and ANRGs can make an important contribution to the wider Green Infrastructure network by increasing

access to natural greenspace, supporting health and wellbeing, providing opportunities for active travel, and contributing towards nature recovery objectives.

- 7.10. The emerging Local Plan proposes that major strategic housing allocations deliver significant areas of new green infrastructure, including SANG and ANRG provision where required. The Recreation Mitigation Study identifies that the strategic allocations are capable of accommodating substantial areas of mitigation land as part of their masterplans, alongside the potential delivery of a strategic district-scale SANG to serve developments that are unable to provide bespoke mitigation on-site. Together, these measures have the potential to address recreation impacts on protected sites whilst also helping to tackle the District's identified deficit of accessible natural greenspace.
- 7.11. The delivery of SANGs and associated green infrastructure represents an opportunity to achieve multiple benefits through a single intervention. Well-designed and appropriately managed sites can provide recreational opportunities for new and existing communities, strengthen green infrastructure connectivity, support biodiversity enhancements and habitat creation, and contribute to the long-term resilience of the District's natural environment.

## **2023 Update - The challenge of creating new country and natural parks**

- 7.12. The data analysis in the strategy, particularly the application of the ANGSt standards, has indicated that the district's provision of country and natural parks at all scales is poor. At a county scale, the Gloucestershire strategic framework also emphasises the lack of strategic scale green spaces.
- 7.13. Providing new country and natural parks will be challenging, particularly as very little land in the District is in public ownership. These parks are likely to come forward either as part of development proposals or where a landowner can see sufficient benefit for them in opening up access. There are a few landowners, particularly in the charitable sector, where increasing access to the countryside is at the core of their work, but other landowners, such as farmers, will also need to see significant economic benefits. These may arise from agri-environment schemes, such as, the delivery of Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) or Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGs), payment of ecosystems services and other grants; delivery of biodiversity net gain; off-site provision of GI or open space that is required to meet development needs; increased diversification potential. There are pockets of land in the Cotswold District that are not suitable for either high productivity agriculture or development, and these may provide useful opportunities for creating new accessible open spaces.

## 2026 update

- 7.14. The emerging Local Plan (2026-2043) proposes a number of strategic growth locations across the District. The scale of this development creates an opportunity to deliver significant new Green Infrastructure as an integral part of the development of new communities, rather than as a residual or mitigating element. This includes the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG), strategic green corridors, accessible natural greenspace, habitat creation, sustainable drainage systems and active travel connections.
- 7.15. These new green infrastructure assets should be planned as multifunctional networks that support nature recovery, strengthen ecological connectivity, improve climate resilience, provide opportunities for recreation and active travel, and protect the distinctive landscape character of the District. They can also help reduce recreational pressure on internationally and nationally important wildlife sites whilst improving public access to high-quality natural green spaces close to where people live.
- 7.16. The introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Network mapping provides a stronger framework for targeting investment and securing measurable environmental improvements. Together, these mechanisms offer an opportunity to create a more connected, accessible and resilient green infrastructure network across the District that benefits both people and nature.

## Masterplanning and Green Infrastructure

- 7.17. For strategic-scale development, Green Infrastructure should provide the primary framework for the preparation of comprehensive masterplans. Existing and proposed Green Infrastructure assets, including habitats, watercourses, hedgerows, trees, public rights of way, landscape features, heritage assets and open spaces, should be identified at the outset and used to shape the disposition of development rather than being treated as residual land.
- 7.18. Comprehensive masterplans should demonstrate how a connected, multifunctional Green Infrastructure network will:
- provide strategic landscape structure and maintain settlement identity
  - secure biodiversity enhancement and contribute to the Nature Recovery Network
  - integrate SuDS, climate resilience and natural flood management
  - support walking, cycling and access to green space
  - respond positively to landscape character, heritage assets and key views, and
  - establish a long-term framework for stewardship, management and maintenance.
- 7.19. The Green Infrastructure network should be planned across the whole allocation and, where relevant, beyond site boundaries, ensuring connectivity with surrounding green and blue infrastructure assets. Development parcels, movement corridors, community facilities and

open spaces should be designed within this framework to create coherent, healthy and resilient places.

## 8. Glossary

### A

**Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst)** – are a set of national benchmarks for ensuring access to a variety of greenspaces near to where people live.

**Active travel** – a concept of travel that includes only those forms of transport that require active use of the human body as a transport machine. Examples include walking and cycling, as these burn off energy in contrast to sedentary forms of travel, such as driving or getting the bus. People who already walk or use a bicycle as a primary mode of transport may do so for environmental, health or practical reasons.

**Affordable Housing** – social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

**Air pollution** - Degradation of air quality with negative effects on human health or the natural or built environment due to the introduction, by natural processes or human activity, into the atmosphere of substances (gases, aerosols) which have a direct (primary pollutants) or indirect

(secondary pollutants) harmful effect

**Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)** Since December 1997 each local authority in the UK has been carrying out a review and assessment of air quality in their area. This involves measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change in the next few years.

**Allocated** – land which has been identified in the development plan for a specific form of development.

**Amenity** – those qualities of life enjoyed by people that can be influenced by the surrounding environment, in which they visit, live or work. 'Residential amenity' includes for example, a reasonable degree of privacy, freedom from noise nuisance, air pollution etc. normally expected at home.

**Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW)** – ancient woodland is land that has had a continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD, and may be ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), which retains a native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally; or plantation on ancient woodland sites where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, often with conifers, and usually over the last century. The location of ancient woodlands over 2 ha in area is recorded in the National Inventory of Ancient Woodlands, which is maintained by Natural England.

**Ancillary** – use or development of a different subsidiary use, but which is related to and often found in association with primary use or development.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** – a designated area of nationally important landscape value within which the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty is the priority. The Cotswolds AONB is the largest in the country and covers 80 % of the District. It was designated by the Countryside Commission in 1966.

**Aquifer** – underground layers of water-bearing permeable rock or drift deposits from which groundwater can be extracted for human use may be extracted by means of wells or boreholes. Aquifer designations reflect the importance of aquifers in terms of groundwater as a resource (drinking water supply) but also their role in supporting surface water flows and wetland ecosystems.

**Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** – a report on how the Council is performing in terms of the Local Plan. Includes monitoring implementation and performance of policies following changes brought in by the Local Planning Regulations 2012. It replaces the Annual Monitoring Report. Local planning authorities are no longer required to send an Annual Monitoring Report to the Secretary of State and instead monitoring should be a continuous process.

## **B**

**Biodiversity** - Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems (UN, 1992)

**Biofuel** - A fuel, generally in liquid form, produced from biomass. Biofuels currently include bioethanol from sugarcane or maize, biodiesel from canola or soybeans, and black liquor from the paper-manufacturing process. See also Biomass and Bioenergy.

**Biomass** - Living or recently dead organic material. See also Bioenergy and Biofuel.

**Bluespace/ Blue infrastructure** Outdoor environments, either natural or built, that prominently feature water such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies.

**Building with Nature - (BWN)** Puts nature at the heart of development in a way that's good for people and for wildlife. Through the Building with Nature Standards, which provide planners and developers with evidence-based, how-to, guidance on delivering high-quality Green Infrastructure. Through supporting and championing best-practice, BWN aim to help great schemes get built, raise the bar for industry, and mainstream Green Infrastructure in placemaking.

## **Building with Nature Standards**

## **C**

**Carbon sequestration** - The process of storing carbon in a carbon pool. See also Blue carbon, Carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS), Uptake and Sink.

**CIL** - The Community Infrastructure Levy is a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money should be used to support development by funding

infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want

**Climate** - Climate in a narrow sense is usually defined as the average weather, or more rigorously, as the statistical description in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period of time ranging from months to thousands or millions of years. The classical period for averaging these variables is 30 years, as defined by the World Meteorological Organization. The relevant quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, precipitation and wind. Climate in a wider sense is the state, including a statistical description, of the climate system.

**Climate change** - Climate change refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings such as modulations of the solar cycles, volcanic eruptions and persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use. Note that the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in its Article 1, defines climate change as: 'a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.' The UNFCCC thus makes a distinction between climate change attributable to human activities altering the atmospheric composition and climate variability attributable to natural causes.

**Cotswold District Council - (CDC)** The Local District Authority, which covers the Cotswold District

## **D**

## **E**

**Ecosystem Services** - The components of nature that are directly and indirectly enjoyed, consumed, or used in order to maintain or enhance human well-being.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** – A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)

There are 3 new schemes that will reward environmental land management:

- Sustainable Farming Incentive
- Local Nature Recovery
- Landscape Recovery

These schemes are intended to support the rural economy while achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050.

Through these schemes, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering the following:

- clean and plentiful water
- clean air
- thriving plants and wildlife
- protection from environmental hazards
- reduction of and adaptation to climate change
- beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment

**Environmental Net Gain** - Environmental Net Gain means improving all aspects of environmental quality through a scheme or project.

**Evidence Base** – is the information and data gathered by local authorities to justify the “soundness” of the policy approach, including physical, economic, and social characteristics of an area.

## F

**Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)** – is an assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered. **Flood** - The overflowing of the normal confines of a stream or other body of water, or the accumulation of water over areas that are not normally submerged. Floods include river (fluvial) floods, flash floods, urban floods, pluvial floods, sewer floods, coastal floods, and glacial lake outburst floods.

## G

**Geographical Information Systems (GIS)** – A computer software system to record, store, process, and analyse overlays of information linked to geographic areas.

**Global warming** - The estimated increase in global mean surface temperature (GMST) averaged over a 30-year period, or the 30-year period centered on a particular year or decade, expressed relative to pre-industrial levels unless otherwise specified. For 30-year periods that span past and future years, the current multi-decadal warming trend is assumed to continue. See also Climate change and

Climate variability.

**Gloucestershire First or GFirst** – is the service that promotes Gloucestershire as a location for business, for visitors and for investors and are the driving force for the recently formed Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that promotes business in the Forest of Dean, Cotswold hills and major settlements of Gloucester, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Stroud. **Gloucestershire Nature Map** The Gloucestershire Nature Map represents the core of an ecological network for the future as produced by the Gloucestershire Biodiversity Partnership in 2011. The selected landscape-scale blocks of land called Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs), show where the characteristic habitats that typify the county can be expanded and linked to help wildlife survive in an uncertain future. The SNAs can be grouped together

within priority landscapes. Main rivers marked in blue on the schematic map as well as looking after existing and new strategic Green Infrastructure.

The Gloucestershire Nature Map, and its SNAs will eventually be replaced by the emerging Nature Recovery Network and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG)** – is a gas in an atmosphere that absorbs and emits radiation within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect.

**Greenspace** - Any area of vegetated land, urban or rural. This includes both public and private spaces such as parks, gardens, playing fields, children's play areas, woods and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments, green corridors, disused railway lines, rivers and canals, derelict, vacant and contaminated land which has the potential to be transformed.

**Green Infrastructure (GI)** – is a network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It needs to be planned and delivered at all spatial scales from national to neighbourhood levels. The greatest benefits will be gained when it is designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits (ecosystem services) for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, river and canal corridors allotments and private gardens. **Greenfield Land** – is land (or a defined site) usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.

**Green stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)** An approach to moving stormwater away from the built environment aiming to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the environment. GSI attempts to mimic nature and uses simple landscaping features such as green roofs, rain gardens and bioswales to slow, collect, infiltrate, and filter stormwater. Similar to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

**Ground Water Source Protection Zones** – is an integral part of land surface zoning within the Environment Agency's Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater. Groundwater provides a third of our drinking water in England and Wales, and it also maintains the flow in many of our rivers

## H

**Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - a document to determine impacts of nearby Natura 2000 sites.

## I

## J

## K

## L

**Landscape Character Assessment** – identifies areas with similar features or qualities, mapping and classifying them and describing their character. It is based on an understanding of landscape character and of the natural, historic and aesthetic factors that combine to create local distinctiveness.

**Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** – A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

**Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** – A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it

**Local Nature Reserve** – is an area of botanical or wildlife interest where access and use by local people is encouraged through designation by the local authority.

**Local knowledge** refers to the understandings and skills developed by individuals and populations, specific to the places where they live. Local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of life, from day-to-day activities to longer-term actions. This knowledge is a key element of the social and cultural systems which influence observations of, and responses to climate change; it also informs governance decisions. This definition builds on UNESCO (2018).

**Local Plan** – The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

**Local Planning Authority (LPA)** – is the local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise statutory town planning functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP)** – is a five-year integrated transport strategy, prepared by local authorities in partnership with the community, seeking funding to help provide local transport projects. The plan sets out the resources predicted for delivery of the targets identified in the strategy.

**Local Wildlife Sites** - are areas of land that are especially important for their wildlife. They are some of our most valuable wildlife areas. Local Wildlife Sites are identified and selected locally using scientifically-determined criteria and surveys. They are corridors for wildlife, forming key components of ecological networks. The Wildlife Trusts have worked with local authorities, statutory agencies, landowners and other local partners to establish effective systems for identifying, managing and monitoring Local Wildlife Sites.

## **M**

**Mitigation Measures** – any works or actions required to be carried out by developers to reduce the impact of the development on the surrounding environment or to address particular environmental effects which would otherwise make that development unacceptable.

**Mitigation measures In climate policy** - mitigation measures are technologies, processes or practices that contribute to mitigation, for example, renewable energy (RE) technologies,

waste minimization processes and public transport commuting practices. See also Mitigation option, and Policies (for climate change mitigation and adaptation).

**Modal Shift** – a change in the means of transport, for example from use of cars to public transport, particularly applied to all travellers within an area or those travelling to a specific type of facility or destination.

**Monitoring** – a regular collection and analysis of relevant information in order to assess the outcome and effectiveness of policies and proposals and to identify whether they need to be reviewed or altered.

**Natural Capital** - The elements of nature that directly or indirectly produce value to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions.

**Natural Capital Accounting (NCA)** - Provides a variety of mechanisms to calculate the total stocks and flows of natural assets, resources and services within a designated area or ecosystem, allowing environmental considerations to be taken into account in making policy and investment decisions. NCA produces formal accounts using methods and reports that are recognisable to those working within finance and management.

**Nature Recovery Network** - This initiative provides us with the opportunity to draw together all past works in a revised spatial format, looking to identify not merely where our special wildlife and natural habitats currently are, but also the opportunities that exist for enhancing and creating additional habitat networks and connectivity - whilst also helping to strategically inform development and growth opportunities locally, rather than simply hinder them. The Nature Recovery Network is slowly replacing the use of the Gloucestershire Nature Map in informing decisions.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – this sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

**Neighbourhood Plans (NP)** – A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). **NERC** - The Natural Environment Research Council commissions new research, infrastructure and training to advance environmental science.

**Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ)** - are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. They include about 55% of land in England. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) reviews NVZs every 4 years to account for changes in nitrate concentrations.

**O**

**P**

**Priority Habitat** - are a range of semi-natural habitat types that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action.

**Place Making** – capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being. Place making is both a process and a philosophy.

**Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** – national guidance on planning practice, which compliments the NPPF.

**Pocket Parks** - are small green areas of public space, mostly seen in urban settings.

**Protected Species** – any species (of wildlife etc.) which, because of its rarity or threatened status is protected by statutory legislation.

**Public Realm** – any publicly owned streets, pathways, right of ways, parks, publicly accessible open spaces and any public and civic building and facilities.

**Public Rights of Way (PROW)** - Public rights of way are open to everyone at any time and give you the right to walk, ride a horse or cycle along certain routes. Some rights of way are open to vehicles.

## **R**

**Ramsar Sites** – a term adopted following an international conference, held in 1971 in Ramsar in Iran, to identify wetland sites of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat.

**Regionally Important Geological & Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)** – commonly referred to by their acronym RIGS are locally designated sites of local, national and regional importance for geodiversity (geology and geomorphology) in the United Kingdom. RIGS may be designated for their value to science, and to geological heritage in general, and may include cultural, educational, historical and aesthetic resources.

**Register of Historic Parks & Gardens** – a non-statutory list of parks and gardens of special historic interest maintained by English Heritage

**Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy** – Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels)

**Runoff** - The flow of water over the surface or through the subsurface, which typically originates from the part of liquid precipitation and/or snow/ice melt that does not evaporate or refreeze, and is not transpired.

## **S**

**Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** are those which have been given greater protection. They have been designated because of a possible threat to the special habitats or species

which they contain and to provide increased protection to a variety of animals, plants and habitats of importance to biodiversity both on a national and international scale.

**Suitable alternative natural green spaces (SANGs)** is a designated green area created to protect sensitive ecological sites by providing an alternative recreational space for people.

SANGs are designed to mitigate the impact of new residential developments on protected ecological areas, such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which are vulnerable to recreational pressures from increased footfall. By offering an attractive alternative for walking, cycling, and other outdoor activities, SANGs help divert visitors away from sensitive habitats, reducing disturbance to rare or threatened species and fragile ecosystems.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)** – ancient structure, usually unoccupied, above or below the ground, which is preserved by order of the Secretary of State.

**Section 106 Agreements (s106)** – allow a Local Planning Authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation, with a land developer over a related issue (often to fund necessary improvements elsewhere).

**Semi-natural & Natural Green Space** – this type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (e.g. commons and meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and biodiversity within settlements. The approach is to provide easily accessible, natural and semi-natural green space for communities which, as well as its intrinsic value for biodiversity, also provides a range of other ecosystem functions and benefits. **Sequential Test (Flooding)** – a test carried out in accordance with the NPPF to demonstrate that certain land is appropriate to develop as has less flood risk, after alternative sites have been ruled out.

**Settlement Hierarchy** – a settlement hierarchy ranks settlements according to their size, function and their range of services and facilities. When coupled with an understanding of the possible capacity for growth, this enables decisions to be taken about the most appropriate planning strategy for each settlement.

**Sink** - A reservoir (natural or human, in soil, ocean, and plants) where a greenhouse gas, an aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas is stored. UNFCCC Article 1.8 refers to a sink as any process, activity or mechanism which removes a greenhouse gas, an aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** – a site or area designated as being of national importance because of its wildlife plants or flower species and/or unusual or typical geological features. SSSIs are identified by Natural England and have protected status.

**Social and Community Infrastructure** – local facilities and services for the community including buildings and open spaces.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)** – are sites of European nature conservation importance designated under the Habitats Regulations.

**Special Protection Area (SPA)** – are sites designated under the European Commission Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – a generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use which have a significant effect on the environment'.

**Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** – provides information about flood risk throughout the area of the local planning authority (LPA), either individually or combined with neighbouring LPAs. The SFRA will consider the effects of climate change on river and coastal flooding, identify the risk from other sources of flooding, and consider appropriate policies for development in or adjacent to flood risk areas. Stroud District has published level 1 and level 2 SFRA's.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** – an appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.

**Sustainable Development** – is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The NPPF states sustainable development is about positive growth-making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

**Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)** – efficient drainage system which seeks to minimise wastage of water including the use of appropriate ground cover to enable maximum penetration of clean water run-off into the ground and, where appropriate, recycling grey water within the development. Designed to minimise the impact of development on the natural water environment.

**Sustainable Transport** – are all forms of transport which minimise emissions of carbon dioxide and pollutants. It can refer to public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling as well as technology such as electric and hybrid cars and biodiesel.

**Sustainable Transport Modes** – Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Sustrans** - Custodians of the National Cycle Network, a UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside, loved by the communities they serve.

## T

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** – statutory protection for individual trees, groups, areas or woodlands. Any works to preserved trees require the consent of the local planning authority.

## U

**Urban Design** – understanding the relationship between different buildings; between buildings and the streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces which make up the

public domain; the nature and quality of the public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with another part; and the pattern of movement and activity which is thereby established. **Urban Fringe** – the boundary between built up areas and the open countryside.

## **V**

**Viability** – an objective financial viability test of the ability of a development project to meet its costs including the cost of planning obligations, whilst ensuring an appropriate site value for the landowner and a market risk adjusted return to the developer in delivering that project. Essentially it is the ability to attract investment and business.

## **W**

**Water Framework Directive** – is a European Directive that aims to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater.

**Water Standards** aim to provide Green Infrastructure to effectively manage water quantity and quality, increase flood resilience, and maximise opportunities for amenity.

**Wellbeing-** A state of existence that fulfils various human needs, including material living conditions and quality of life, as well as the ability to pursue one's goals, to thrive, and feel satisfied with one's life. Ecosystem well-being refers to the ability of ecosystems to maintain their diversity and quality.

**Wellbeing Standards** aim to secure the delivery of health and wellbeing outcomes through the delivery of Green Infrastructure features. (Wellbeing includes access).

**Wildlife Corridor** – Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

**Wildlife Standards** aim to ensure that Green Infrastructure allows nature to flourish, both within the boundary of development, and at a landscape scale.

## **X**

## **Y**

## **Z**