

Briefing Note: A Green Infrastructure Framework for the South East

This Briefing Note to Local Planning Authority Officers has been produced to raise awareness of Green Infrastructure and introduce the 'Green Infrastructure Framework for the South East' project, in advance of the publication of the Framework in early 2009.

What is the South East Green Infrastructure Framework?

Natural England, the Environment Agency, the South East England Development Agency, the South East England Regional Assembly, the Government Office for the South East, the Forestry Commission, The Wildlife Trusts and Groundwork are working in partnership, and in consultation with other stakeholders, to produce a Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework for the South East. The Framework will identify the common functions of GI and the essential principles for its delivery, and provide guidance on the planning and delivery of GI and its incorporation alongside other forms of infrastructure.



What is Green Infrastructure?

GI is the network of green spaces and natural elements (including water) within and between our built environments. GI is multifunctional – it may serve a wide range of purposes, including:

- Creation or enhancement of a distinct sense of place
- Provision of recreational opportunities
- Preservation and enhancement of biodiversity,
- Sustainable transport routes
- Improved water resource and flood management
- Contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation



Overall it can improve the quality of life and provide physical and mental health benefits for residents. However, it is important to ensure that GI is actively planned and managed to ensure it fulfills these purposes.

The Essential Principles of GI Delivery

GI across the South East should:

- Be planned strategically;
- Be spatially distributed according to its function, and not restricted to a development site or administrative boundary;
- Be planned with a recognition of locally distinctive sense of place and landscape, to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the natural and built heritage of the local area;
- Be planned to include provision made for its long term management and maintenance;
- Be fit for purpose within spatial planning; and
- Be recognised as an essential component of wider infrastructure requirements.

Strategic Delivery of GI:

Policy CC8 of the draft South East Plan requires that Local Authorities plan for GI in their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Core Strategies should address the need for networks of multi-functioning green space, highlighting the functions that should be delivered. Supplementary planning documents (SPD) may be produced to elaborate how the policy will be implemented with regard to planned new development.

The GI Framework will provide guidance to Local Authorities on how to deliver a GI network. This work should form part of the evidence base during plan preparation to support spatial planning policies and help ensure that the most sustainable development is delivered throughout the South East.

GI provision is an important issue throughout the Region, however designation and management of GI will be particularly important in the planning and delivery of Eco-Towns, Growth Areas and Growth Points.



Funding GI Delivery:

Authorities delivering high levels of growth may be in line for central government funding. The recent publication by CABE Space “Paying for Parks” gives examples of several methods of funding used to create and maintain green space. They include:

- Traditional LA funding - Funded from a LA’s general revenue budget (i.e. local tax and/or government allocation).
- Multi agency public sector funding – e.g. delivery of cross cutting targets may be eligible for funding from a range of government departments and agencies.
- Planning and development opportunities – probably the most used via planning conditions and Section 106 agreements (including the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy) to fund urban green space.
- Income generating opportunities – licensing, franchising, sponsorship, fees and fines.

Other sources such as Lottery Funding, Landfill tax credit scheme funding could also contribute.

Other tools and levers with linkages to GI

As a cross-cutting issue, GI is relevant to a number of other strategies and partnerships, many of which Local Authorities are involved in, which in turn can provide tools and levers to help facilitate the delivery of GI. These include:

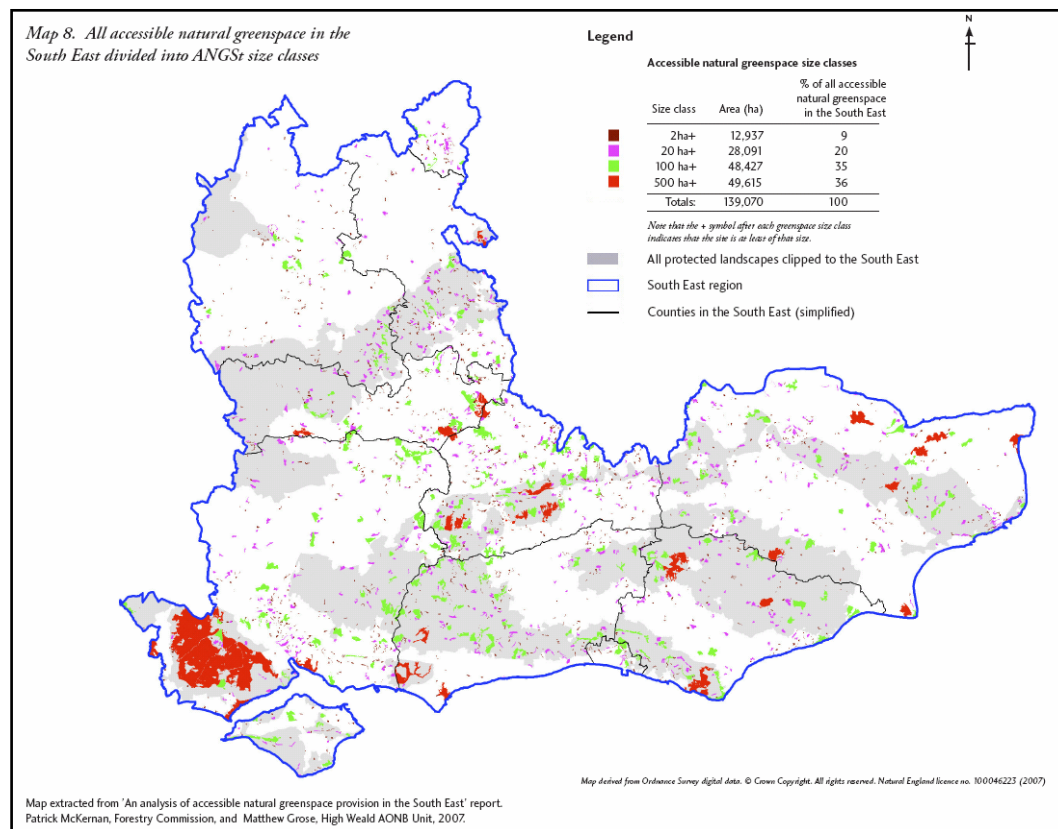
- 1) *National Planning Policy*
- 2) *Regional Spatial Strategy –South East Plan*
- 3) *Regional Economic Strategy*
- 4) *Local Development Framework*
- 5) *Sustainable Community Strategies*
- 6) *Local Area Agreements*
- 7) *Local Strategic Partnerships*
- 8) *Local Transport Plans*
- 9) *Health Strategies*



What next?

The full report “A Green Infrastructure Framework for the South East” is due to be published in early 2009, and will provide detailed guidance on the planning, implementation and delivery of a regional GI network. The project partners will be working with the RTP1 and others to ensure that all Local Authorities are supported in enshrining the principles of GI into their LDFs.

A GI mapping tool is also being developed to assist the local and sub-regional planning of green infrastructure in the South East, including case studies within the South East.



If you have any queries relating to the GI Framework please contact:

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