Appendix A: Glossary - Green and Blue Infrastructure

<u>Asset</u>
A GBI Asset is identified where there is a need for GBI being met by a Type/Typology of GBI.

<u>Typologies</u>
This is the primary use or description of GBI. The typologies used within this technical report are outlined below:

Agricultural Land and Horticulture
Agricultural land used for crop production and grazing.

Allotment, Community Garden or Urban Farm
These are open spaces primarily utilised by members of the public for the cultivation of fruit, vegetables and flowers. They usually consist of cultivation beds and boundary vegetation, and access can sometimes be restricted.

Amenity Green Spaces and Village Greens
This typology includes sites which are primarily for public recreation, and consist of grassed surface and associated vegetation. They are usually publically owned and managed.

Cemeteries and Churchyards
These are areas which are associated with churchyards or burial grounds. They primarily consist of grass with occasional shrubs or trees.

Derelict and Vacant Land, Sewage Treatment Works
Derelict and vacant land is land which has no formal use. It can include 'urban commons' which are used for informal recreation and brownfield land which has not yet been redeveloped. Sewage treatment works are large areas of private land which contain sludge drying areas, filter beds and other features associated with sewage treatment.

Grassland, Heathland and Scrubland
This typology includes sites which consist primarily of grassland and scrubland which are not agriculturally improved, but are also not part of a formal recreation space such as a village green.

Green Corridors along Railways, Highways and Other Routes
These are linear open spaces associated with transport routes such as cycle paths, roads and railways. They can consist of a mixture of grass, shrubs and trees.

Green Roof
The roofs of buildings which have been covered in vegetation with the intention to reduce water surface runoff. A variety of vegetation can be present, including mosses, sedges and other low level vegetation.

Landscaped areas Around Housing and Industrial Estates/Premises
These are areas which are associated with housing and industrial estates or premises. The areas usually consist of amenity grass, shrubs and trees.

Parks and Formal Gardens
This typology includes parks and formal gardens designed for public use and contain a variety of landscape and horticulture elements. Extraneous facilities such as a toilet block or visitor centre may also be present on site.

Play Area (All Types)
This typology includes open spaces designated for use by young people for recreation. It typically consists of grassed areas, trees and shrubs, with additional play equipment.

Playing Fields, Golf Courses, Equestrian Centre and Other Recreational Grounds
This typology includes sites designated for sports recreation. They typically include vegetated sports surface and associated vegetation. The sites can be publically or privately owned.

Private Domestic Garden
These areas are privately owned open space within the curtilage of individual dwellings, and are generally inaccessible to members of the public. They can include a variety of hard and soft landscape features.

Reservoir
This typology consists of sites which are primarily large expanse of open water which do not form part of another open space site (such as a park). As stated in the data limitations, it was not possible to identify smaller waterbodies such as ponds from the source datasets.

School and Hospital Grounds
These are open spaces associated with the grounds of educational and health facilities, and typically includes grassland with scattered trees, hedgerows and shrubs.

Street Trees
Street trees are composed of a row or collection of individual trees along the side of a road in tree pits or on grass verges.

Watercourse
This includes large areas of running water, such as rivers and canals. As stated in the data limitations, it was not possible to identify smaller watercourses such as streams or brooks from the source datasets.

Woodland
This typology includes sites which are identified as woodland by the GiGL open spaces dataset. The woodland can include both deciduous and coniferous trees, and can be privately owned or publically accessible. Woodland within other open space typologies, such as parks and formal gardens, may not be included within this typology.

Benefits
Whereas GBI functions refer to the specific use of land, benefits refer to the wider, potentially less tangible contributions to people and nature arising out of GBI. The graphic opposite demonstrates the link between specific GBI functions and the wider benefits. For example, the green travel route function can deliver a number of wider benefits, such as health and wellbeing for people who choose to walk or cycle, recreation benefits and a reduction in motorised traffic leading to less emissions into the atmosphere and reduced climate change risk.

Ecosystem Services
Humankind benefits from a multitude of natural resources and processes that are sustained by ecosystems. These 'ecosystems services' include the provision of food, clean water, resources for energy and industry, flood alleviation, crop pollination and recreation opportunities. Ecosystem services are grouped into four broad categories: provisioning, such as the production of food and water; regulating, such as managing the climate; supporting, such as nutrient cycles and crop pollination; cultural, such as recreational benefits.

Functions
One of the principal drivers of GBI planning is to manage land in a more sustainable way. While most GBI assets will have a primary purpose or function it is also possible for functions to co-exist, leading to multifunctional GBI and the ability to use land more effectively and efficiently. For example street trees add aesthetic quality to an urban area but can also support wildlife and improve environmental health by reducing airborne pollution and provide shade for people and wildlife. The functions used in this framework are defined below:

Aesthetic
GBI can improve the image of an area and this can make the surrounding area a more attractive place to live, work and visit, and also result in higher property values.

Carbon Storage
Carbon storage (or sequestration) is the removal of carbon from the atmosphere and the storage in plants, trees and soils. Trees and peat soils are particularly important for the storage of carbon. Different types of GBI will sequester carbon at different rates depending on the growth speed of vegetation.

Coastal Flood Protection
GBI can protect infrastructure and agriculture close to the shore. It can protect against winds and sea spray through the reduction of the speed of the waves and the impact of tidal surges.

Connectivity for Wildlife
Areas that wildlife can disperse through between habitat spaces. This function will become more important in the future, as species' ranges increase northwards with the climate changes. Different types of GBI provide connectivity for a variety of species. However the range of species is also dependent on other factors such as climate or disturbance.

Culture
Space used for cultural purposes, the hosting of public art, events and festivals provide the function of culture.

Evaporative Cooling
Evaporative cooling is the process by which plants transpire water which is evaporated from their surfaces cooling their immediate locality. All types of vegetation can provide this function, including open water. Plants with a larger leaf area are likely to be better than those with a smaller leaf area.

During periods of drought, irrigation is likely to be necessary to maximise this function in plants, whilst open water will continue to be valuable in its own right.

Food Production
Land used for growing crops or the grazing of animals.

Green Travel Route
Green travel routes are off-road routes for pedestrians and cyclists (for recreational purposes as well as moving between places) through greenery and includes the area surrounding the green travel route. These include PRoWs.

Habitat for Wildlife
The provision of a place for wildlife to live, including a source of food. The variety of types of GBI will provide habitats for a range of species. However the range of species is also dependent on other factors such as climate or disturbance.

Heritage
Historic links in the landscape (including ancient woodlands, canals, designated sites and monuments). Heritage is defined as that which is inherited.

Learning
GBI can provide a backdrop for outdoor classrooms and learning outside of the indoor school environment. It can also be used as a setting for learning new skills which may help adults develop skills for the workplace.

Noise Absorption
Screening of noise, especially from major transport routes can improve quality of environment. However this requires GBI elements that are tall enough to intercept and absorb sound waves. This function is usually associated with urban areas, especially close to travel routes.

Private Recreation
Land which is used for recreation but only by the landowners or those invited by the landowners to use. This primarily consists of private domestic gardens.

Public Recreation
Areas that can be freely used for recreational purposes (formal/informal and active/passive), without any restrictions to access (such as payment or membership). This can include areas closed at night, on specific days or seasonally but this was assessed on an individual basis.

Restricted Public Recreation
Areas that can be used by the public for recreational purposes (formal/informal and active/passive), but is restricted (usually via payment or membership). This usually includes outdoor sports facilities and formal parks and gardens.

Shading from the Sun
Shading of people and surfaces from solar radiation can reduce temperatures and increase comfort levels and is usually provided by trees and taller plants. Shading from the sun is also important to protect agricultural land and other species from solar radiation. This function will become more critical when adapting to climate change.

Trapping Air Pollutants
Removal of pollutants, including ozone, nitrogen dioxide and particles from the air, through uptake via leaf stoma and deposition on leaf surfaces. Once inside the leaf, gases diffuse into intercellular spaces and may be absorbed by water films to form acids or react with inner leaf surfaces. This function is usually associated with urban areas, especially close to travel routes.

Water Infiltration
Vegetation and roots can aid the movement of water into the ground. Includes both surface infiltration and deep infiltration, which can reduce the risk of flooding.

Water Interception
The interception of rainwater before it reaches the ground, by the leaves of trees and plants will slow the flow of water to the ground. This can reduce the risk of flooding. All vegetated types of GBI will intercept water in some way, although this varies with leaf area.

Water Storage
Water storage in ponds, lakes, rivers and some wetlands. This water is accessible for human use and for irrigation if it is required.

Wind Shelter
GBI can provide shelter from winds by slowing or diverting currents.

Geographic Information System (GIS)
GIS is a system designed to capture, analyse, manage and present all types of geographical data. In the context of the Blackpool GBI Framework, GIS is used to map all GBI assets and identify the existing functions of those assets. GIS also provides the analysis for the needs assessment.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)
This is a measure of relative deprivation for Lower Super Output Areas. It is made up of 37 indicators reflecting different aspects of deprivation experience by those living in an area.

Lower Super Output Area
The Lower Super Output Area is a geographic area used by the Office for National Statistics for many of its statistical outputs.

Natural Capital Accounting
Natural capital is 'the stock of our physical natural assets (such as soil, forests, water and biodiversity) which provide flows of services that benefit people (such as pollinating crops, natural hazard protection, climate regulation or the mental health benefits of a walk in the park). Natural capital is valuable to our economy. Some marketable products such as timber have a financial value that has been known for centuries. In other cases (e.g. the role of bees in pollinating crops), we are only just beginning to understand their financial value.'
Natural capital accounting is the process of calculating the stocks and flows described above and attributing them a financial value.

Needs
The essence of sustainable development is providing for people's and nature's needs, now and in the future. So it is important to take people and nature as the starting point for GBI planning in the context of the built and natural environment. People and wildlife have many needs: for example people have needs to use greenspace for recreation and leisure and health and wellbeing; wildlife species have needs to move across land to find sources of food and places to shelter.

Appendix B: Potential Funding Streams

The examples of funding opportunities provided in this appendix are not an exhaustive list and new funding opportunities are emerging frequently.

Funding	Information
EU funding*[1]	
EU funding through the Structural and Cohesion Policy and its European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or LIFE+ programme	Both enable green infrastructure projects by providing funding to support ecological coherence or connectivity. Most projects are rural, but some urban projects have been funded.
EU INTERREG	Funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Its aim is to jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and more. Kent have secured funding through the INTERREG Experience Project with a focus on sustainable tourism. Both Visit Kent and Kent Downs AONB are partners in this project with Swale Borough Council match funding the Kent Downs AONB element of the project.
Mainstream public sector funding	
Swale Borough Council	Capital and Revenue Funding
	Environment Grants
	Local Engagement Forum (LEF) Funding
	Sport and Physical Activity Grants
	Culture Grants
	Heritage Grants
Kent County Council	Capital and Revenue Funding
	Capital Grants for Sport
	Mental Health Grant Scheme (Revenue Grant)
Multi-agency public sector funding*[2]	
A Green and Biodiverse Borough	
Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)	The biggest of the rural grants and payments that provide help to the farming industry. Farmers apply once a year - between March and May - and payments begin in December. Greening relates to agricultural practices which benefit the climate and the environment. Greening payments are made in addition to BPS payment for compliant farmers. Greening practices include: crop diversification; maintenance of permanent grassland; and ecological focus areas.
Heritage Lottery funding	Funding for heritage projects, which could include: • Nature – Works to improve habitats or conserve species, as well as helping to connect people to nature in their daily lives

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*[1] This includes existing and short term EU funding only. UK organisations, such as charities, businesses and universities, will continue to receive funding over a project's lifetime if they successfully bid into EU-funded programmes before the end of 2020. For example, Interreg Experience funding has been secured in relation to sustainable tourism with a substantial budget for infrastructure investments over the project lifetime.

*[2] This funding stream is split by the four Opportunity Areas identified within Section 5.0 of the GBI Strategy. Not all funding streams fit neatly within one Oppportunity Area with large areas of overlap, with opportunities for funders to meet multiple objectives within the GBI Strategy.

Funding	Information
	- Designed landscapes **-** improving and conserving historic landscapes such as public parks, historic gardens and botanical gardens - Landscapes and the countryside **-** large-scale rural projects that help improve landscapes for people and nature, by for example, restoring habitats and celebrating the cultural traditions of the land https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/check-what-we-fund
Environment Agency	The Environment Agency develop 5 year work programmes which deliver projects to improve water quality and for flood management. Through these 5 year programmes there are opportunities to tap into funds for projects such as SuDS enabled tree pits, GBI related to flood alleviation as well as actions identified within the North Kent Catchment Action Plan.
Countryside Stewardship	Countryside Stewardship (CS) provides financial incentives for farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment. The current scheme runs out in early July 2020. The aim of the scheme is look after and improve the environment by: - conserving and restoring wildlife habitats - flood risk management - woodland creation and management - reducing widespread water pollution from agriculture - keeping the character of the countryside - preserving historical features in the landscape - encouraging educational access
Rural Development Programme for England: LEADER funding	LEADER funding (UK Government scheme) is available to local businesses, communities, farmers, foresters and land managers. All projects must support one or more of the 6 LEADER priorities. These are to: - support micro and small businesses and farm diversification - boost rural tourism - increase farm productivity - increase forestry productivity - provide rural services - provide cultural and heritage activities
Carbon Reduction	
Woodland Trust	Two delivery periods per year for free trees for schools. 30, 105 and 420 sapling packs available. Both schools and community groups can apply. https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/

Funding	Information
Environmental Land Management Schemes	Funding sources including Defra, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Projects may include woodland planting and management, or habitat creation and management. Current priorities include carbon sequestration and water quality. Match funding is needed.
Woodland Carbon Guarantee (WCaG)	A £50 million scheme that aims to help accelerate woodland planting rates and develop the domestic market for woodland carbon for the permanent removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Woodland Carbon Guarantee provides you with the option to sell your captured carbon dioxide in the form of verified carbon credits, called Woodland Carbon Units (WCUs), to the government for a guaranteed price every 5 or 10 years up to 2055/56, or to the open market. This scheme is not currently accessible to the public sector, though there may be potential for tenants of public sector land to apply. However, private and charitable landowners can apply.
CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting Scheme for International Aviation)	Addresses the increase in total CO2 emissions from international aviation above 2020 levels through offsetting and mitigation projects.
Public Sector Local Carbon Offsetting Scheme	The public sector may be able to establish a carbon offsetting scheme, either on a verified or non-verified basis. Such a scheme could be used to tap into funds from local businesses seeking to offset their carbon emissions on an informal basis.
Countryside Productivity Scheme	Provides funding for projects in England which improve productivity in the farming and forestry sectors and help create jobs and growth in the rural economy. It is administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). Under the RDPE Countryside Productivity Scheme, there are grants for: • small grants • water resource management and reservoirs • improving forestry productivity • adding value to Agri-food • improving farm productivity The grants are funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).
A Healthy Blue Environment	
Water Environment Grant (WEG)	UK Government funding for organisations and land managers to improve the water environment in rural England. Administered by Environment Agency.
Insurance Industry	Detailed modelling carried out in the Wyre River catchment has shown that there is a strong case for NFM investment due to the potential savings available for the insurance industry from a reduction in household flooding claims.
Water Utilities Companies	There are regulatory pressures on water utilities to use catchment management approaches to reduce pollution entering water courses. Water companies have recognised that it is often more cost-effective to support farmers in adopting better land management practices to improve water quality at the source of pollution, rather than investing in water treatment infrastructure.
A Healthy, Connected and Active Swale	

Funding	Information
Department for Transport Funding	Funds large parts of Sustrans Work. Following Sustrans' Paths for Everyone report, they secured £21 million to develop the National Cycle Network in England. There may be funds for cycling as a result of the recent Coronavirus package announced by Department for Transport in April 2020.
England Coastal Path Establishment Fund (ECPEF)	Landowners can apply for a grant from the UK Government to help with 'establishment work'. This is work necessary to make the stretch fit for use as part of the England Coast Path.
Sport England Grant Funding	There are multiple funding streams but the Community Asset Fund for examples provides funding for enhancing the spaces which give communities the opportunity to be active, such as parks and green spaces.
Social Prescribing Funds	There is funding to employ Social prescribers as part of each Primary care network, which are forming under the new GP contract, bringing together local GP practices to cover populations of 30000+. There may also be opportunities to develop similar income streams for GI managers to provide social care and education activities on a paid-for basis. This is all still embryonic and relies on local initiative and willingness of the local health/education commissioners to invest in parks and health rangers. SBC have previously had a 'health activator' in place, which would be a good starting point to develop a similar model.
A Beacon for the Visitor Economy	
National Lottery Community Fund (previously the Big Lottery Fund)	A distributor of National Lottery funding, established as a non-departmental public body by an Act of Parliament. Grants provided for community-led activity, empowering young people, reaching communities, sports, arts and heritage. This funding has been granted to Milton Creek Country Park for the 'Arts in the Park' project.
Planning and Development Opportunities	
Section 106 Agreements	Negotiated with developers by local authorities. These generally last for five years before costs fall back to the local authority, and relate only to on-site measures.
The Community Infrastructure Levy (Planning Act 2008)	A local development tax toward the upkeep of all types of community infrastructure
Biodiversity Net Gain Funds	Under NPPF and local policy, biodiversity net gain is required for most forms of development. The Environment Bill (Royal Assent in early 2021, but not coming into full legal force till 2023) will require 10% biodiversity net gain. This is likely to generate funds via s106 agreement from future development, and there is merit in Swale Borough Council seeking to allocate land for biodiversity net gain where there is greatest opportunity for enhancement. This will encourage developers to direct their funding to such sites and enable the Council's planning team to influence the disbursement of such funds. Kent County Council and Natural England have a district licencing scheme in place for great crested newts which funds pond creation and restoration. In the future there may be district licencing for other species.
Fiscal Initiatives	
Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)	Business Improvement District (BID) Regulation allow local businesses to vote for a levy on their rates bill to fund investment in the local trading environment. Successful application of the BID model will require greenspaces to be located in close proximity to those local businesses to be taxed under the scheme. It will also be necessary to convince local businesses of the potential benefi ts which will accrue in terms of visitor perceptions and numbers.

Funding	Information
Landfill Communities Fund (LCF)	A tax credit scheme enabling operators of landfill sites in England and Northern Ireland to contribute money to deliver projects. Projects must be within 10 miles of an Environment Agency registered landfill site, and must fall within the following categories: • Object A - the reclamation, remediation or restoration of land which cannot currently be used; • Object B - the prevention of potential for pollution or the remediation of the effects of the pollution; • Object D - the provision, maintenance or improvement of a public park or another public amenity; • Object DA - the conservation or promotion of biodiversity; and • Object E- the restoration of a place of religious worship or of historic or architectural interest.
Commercial Finance	
Income generating opportunities	Revenue may be generated from the private sector or the general public in return for benefits they receive from greenspace. Income sources from businesses include rent or franchise fees for operating commercial activities within the greenspace (as in some Country Parks, for example), sponsorship or charitable donations, contributions to large scale, structural planting to offset carbon emissions, or the sale of renewable energy from generating facilities built in the greenspace
Service Charges	SBC building or tourism occupiers would pay a service charge. This would contribute to revenue funding for maintenance of GBI. An established mechanism for collecting charges and commissioning work would need to be developed.
Biodiversity and Carbon Offsetting	Statutory and voluntary contributions arising from developments and industries required to offset biodiversity effects and greenhouse gas emissions. Projects may include woodland planting, habitat creation and enhancement, or soil enhancement for carbon sequestration. This funding stream requires a 30 year management commitment. It could be linked to Council's own declaration of climate and ecological emergency – wishing to offset its own unavoidable emissions.
Other	
Voluntary maintenance by local communities	To maintain green spaces on a volunteer basis. Some councils, such as Islington Council in London, transfer a proportion of maintenance funds to the community for this service. Funding requirements can be reduced by fund-raising activities and by contributions of labour and expertise from not-for-profi t organisations and voluntary and community groups.
Natural Environment Research Council	NERC funds excellent, world-leading research across the environmental sciences. Have previously invested around £1.2million in innovative projects to make use of green infrastructure. https://nerc.ukri.org/innovation/activities/infrastructure/ https://nerc.ukri.org/press/releases/2016/09-infrastructure/
Urban Tree Challenge	Round 2 closes on 31 May 2020 but similar schemes are expected in the future.

Funding	Information
	The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) has been developed in response to HM Treasury releasing £10 million in the 2018 Autumn Budget announcement for planting at least 20,000 large trees and 110,000 small trees in urban areas in England. The fund provides 50% of published standard costs for planting and establishment. The remaining costs of planting and establishing trees supported under the UTCF must be met through match funding, either in the form of money or labour. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund

Appendix C: Planning Policy Recommendations

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FOR SWALE – PLANNING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 Introduction

A Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy for Swale has been prepared by TEP. The GBI Strategy will guide the delivery of the GBI vision and support the implementation of programmes and projects to enable the creation a strategic network of green and blue infrastructure across Swale, addressing needs and opportunities.

This note outlines the key points from the GBI Strategy to be incorporated into local planning policy for Swale. As the local plan is emerging, this is an optimum time for this work to be undertaken to ensure it fully reflects the evidence within the GBI Strategy.

2.0 Planning Context

Local Context

The borough of Swale lies on the north Kent coast, covering a total area of 37,387 hectares. The borough is centred on the Swale estuary and encompasses land on both sides of the channel. The Isle of Sheppey lies to the north, separated from the mainland by the Swale estuary, and Faversham, Sittingbourne and hinterlands to the south. As a result of its coastal position, Swale is home to 71km of coastline.

Apart from the northern coast of the Isle of Sheppey and the town of Sittingbourne, it is a predominantly a rural borough, with a high concentration of orchards known as the North Kent Fruit Belt. Most of the southern half of the borough lies within the Kent Downs AONB, whilst Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey forms the south eastern parts of the Thames Estuary Growth Area (2018).

Sittingbourne, Faversham and many of the Borough's larger villages lie either side of the A2 Watling Street, the main Roman road between Dover, Canterbury and London. Sheerness is now the main town on the Isle of Sheppey, though is of relatively recent construction having grown in association with the naval dockyards in the early 19th century.

On the Isle of Sheppey, Warden Village and Leysdown-on-Sea are both tourist areas, separated by agricultural land and areas of nature conservation interest.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') sets out the Governments definition of sustainable development and identifies how planning policies for England are expected to be applied. The Framework also provides guidance on Local Plan making and site allocation requirements that local planning authorities need to meet.

The Framework is purposefully positive, opportunity focused and pro-growth in seeking to facilitate development which will contribute to meeting the wider Government objectives.

Paragraph 20 outlines that Strategic Policies as set by local authorities that set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, making specific provision for the '*conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation*.'

Within Section 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities), the Framework states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other
- Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling (Paragraph 91)

In section 14, the Framework emphasises that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures (Paragraph 149). Paragraph 150 advises that new development should be planned in ways that 'avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.'

Section 15 is focused on Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment. This section states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures
- Wherever possible, make improvements to the local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans (Paragraph 170)

Paragraph 171 states that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through green infrastructure provision and enhancement (Paragraph 181).

Paragraph 174 outlines the ways in which biodiversity should be protected and enhanced:

- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them, and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, recreation or creation
- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and priority species, and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity

There is further information in Planning Practice Guidance, a review of which is provided in the Appendices of the GBI strategy.

Local Policy

Adopted Policy

The Swale Borough Local Plan sets the vision and overall strategy for the area for the period between 2014 and 2031. The Local Plan recognises the value and benefits of green infrastructure for health and wellbeing and biodiversity and for creating attractive environments for inward investment.

The Local Plan identifies a natural assets and green infrastructure network and strategy for Swale highlighting the existing GBI network and potential ways in which to protect and enhance the network for expansion over the lifetime of the Local Plan.

The Local Plan establishes the vision behind this GBI Strategy for Swale, which is to 'act as the means by which action can take place,' building upon the existing work to date.

Emerging Policy

As a new Local Plan is progressed, it is important to ensure green and blue infrastructure forms a key focus within the Local Plan. Therefore the inclusion of a policy or a number of policies relating to green and blue infrastructure will ensure this is at the forefront on the Local Plan and can be both protected, enhanced and created.

At present, SBC are working on preparing the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan and have completed the local landscape designation review, employment land review, gypsy and traveller and travelling show person accommodation assessment and the Swale landscape sensitivity assessment.

3.0 Policy Recommendations

The following section sets out policy recommendations from the GBI strategy. This is an indication of the key points and themes to be included within the policy, or at a more strategic level within the emerging Local Plan.

The strategic level points should be considered from the outset and the development of the key strategy and objectives for the Local Plan. The policy specific points should be considered with the GBI policies themselves, or within other relevant policies of the Local Plan. The recommendations below have been split in line with the themes of the GBI strategy.

Strategic Level Points:

- Develop a resilient, biodiverse and multi-functional GBI network to contribute to ensuring Swale a great place to live, work, visit and invest, and respond to the climate and ecological emergency.
- View GBI as critical infrastructure alongside transport and utilities to ensure maximum benefit

Policy Specific Points:

A Green and Biodiverse Borough

- Encourage tree planting, particularly in urban areas
- Enable connections between GI assets
- Protect and enhance existing habitats
- Promote GI in new developments
- Encourage town centre greening projects and retrofit where feasible
- Encourage use of sustainable modes of transport

A Healthy Blue Environment

- Reduce flood risk
- Encourage the use of SuDS in new developments, and retrofit where appropriate into existing development

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PLANNING   I   DESIGN   I   ENVIRONMENT

- Improve access to watercourses and riverbanks for recreation

A Connected, Active and Healthy Swale

- Provide connections between green and blue spaces to encourage sustainable modes of transport and enable recreation and leisure uses
- Encourage healthy lifestyles
- Improve air quality across Swale

A Beacon for the Visitor Economy

- Encourage tourism in Swale and improve arrival spaces and gateways through retrofitted GI
- Promote active travel for visitors in Swale
- Protect and enhance heritage assets, integrating GBI into the setting of those assets
- Provide and enhance connections to the Kent Downs AONB
- Promote eco-tourism in Swale as a key opportunity

4.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

The note has set out the key points from the GBI Strategy which should be considered for inclusion with the emerging Local Plan. This includes key points to include in any GBI specific policy which is prepared to ensure key messages from the GBI Strategy are reflected in the emerging Local Plan.

Consideration should also be given to the multi-functionality mapping in the GBI Strategy which highlights key areas where enhancements could be made aligned to local needs. This may be particularly relevant for any site allocations that are included within the Local Plan. The areas identified could be incorporated into the allocations and clear requirements to improve / enhance these can then be specified into the policy. It may also be appropriate to avoid certain areas for development, as depicted through the mapping in the GBI Strategy.

There needs to be consideration given to how the proposals and recommendations provided within the GBI Strategy are considered as part of the planning application process. Further detail on GBI in development is presented in Chapter 7.0 of the GBI Strategy. Ensuring that some of the points raised in 3.0 Policy Recommendations are incorporated into the emerging policy will establish a clear baseline for GBI as developments come forward.