



Newick GBI Settlement Appraisal

Prepared for: Lewes District Council

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Introduction

The settlement appraisal is intended to provide a picture of the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) in and around the settlement boundary and highlight opportunities for improvement.

It is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Local Context - which provides detail of existing local issues and relevant planning policy

Part 2: Current GBI – which examines local GBI from the perspective of the five 'Why' Principles of the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework

Part 3: Audit and analysis - which provides a summary of a selection of audited sites from the settlement and highlights potential opportunities for improvement.

Useful terms:

GBI – Green and Blue Infrastructure

SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems

PRoW – Public Rights of Way

SDNP – South Downs National Park

LGS – Local Green Space

NE – Natural England

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

LNRS – Local Nature Recovery Strategy

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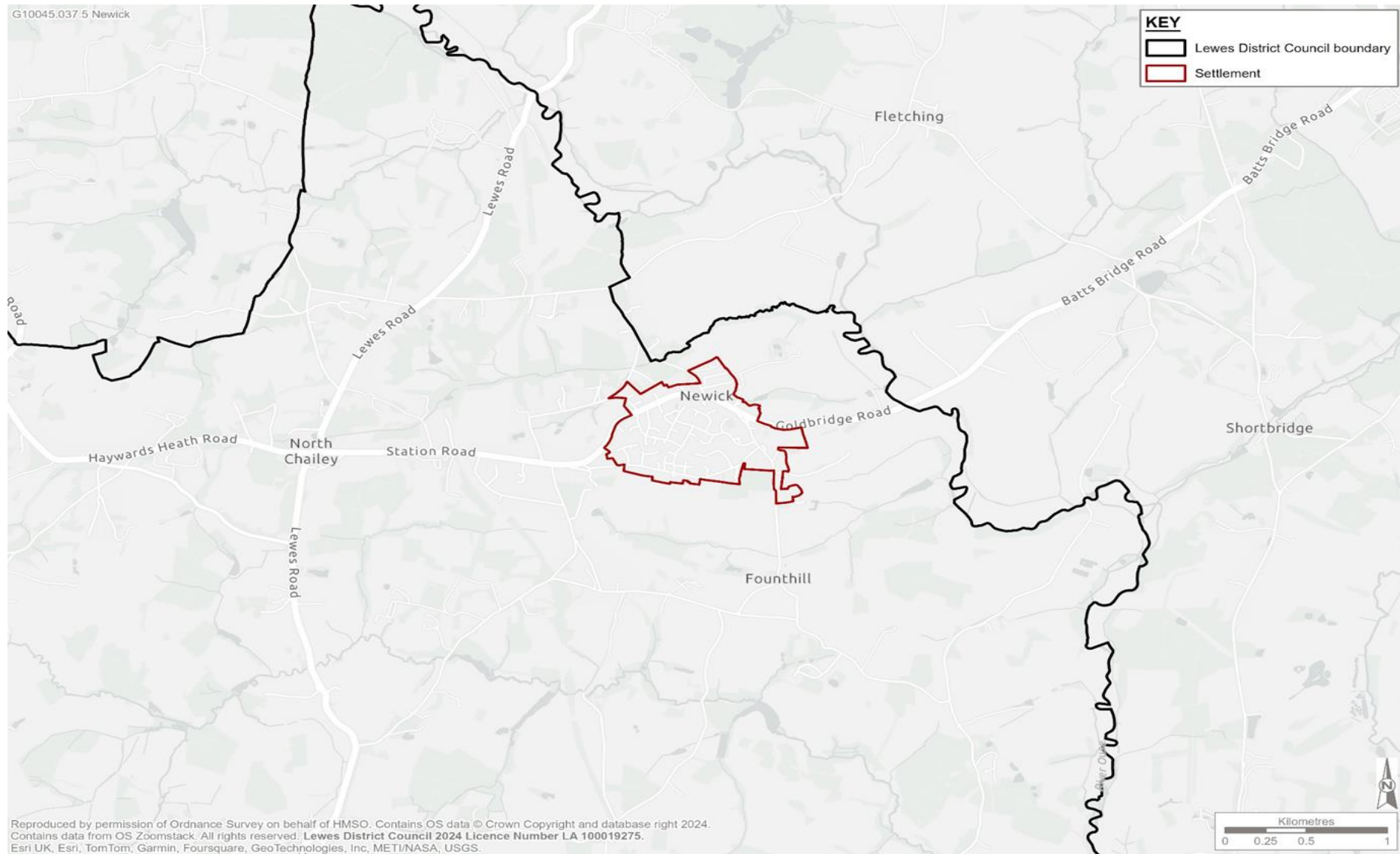


Figure 1: Newick settlement

Part 1: Local Context

1 Overview

The Parish of Newick, is a largely rural area of just under 8 square kilometres (three square miles) in the north-east corner of Lewes District. At the centre of the Parish is the historic village of Newick, which has been a settlement for well over a thousand years shown in Figure 1.

Newick is classified as a 'Rural Service Centre' in the Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023) due to having a basic level of key services and facilities which meet day to day needs and has some opportunities for employment. Residents from Newick may also travel via the A272 to close by Uckfield to the east, and Haywards Heath to the west for further services and employment opportunities.

Newick has two general stores, a bakery, pharmacy, post office, two hairdressers, three public houses, a restaurant and an estate agent. Other businesses include a residential care home and some small industrial units.

There is an hourly bus service to Lewes, Haywards Heath and Uckfield during the day, but has no services in the early morning or evening and none on Sunday.

Newick has a spacious village hall which has just been renovated. The recreation ground consists of two playing fields

and a Sports Pavilion which provide opportunities for football, cricket rugby, plus a small play area and skate park.

At the centre of the historic village, is the Village Green, which is an amenity green space to the east of the village to the north of A272, and runs through the centre of the village. The Village Green is made up of several pieces of land and forms an important setting for the historic buildings around the Green and Grade II listed village pump. Newick Sports Pavilion is adjacent to the Village Green and provides a space for local residents to meet.

Newick's village falls almost entirely within a 7km zone from the edge of Ashdown Forest of Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). Thus, any development within this zone needs to be alongside the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG).

Within the Parish there are several areas of woodland which have been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

The River Ouse skirts around the east of Newick, outside of the settlement boundary. The River Ouse then travels south and is joined by its main tributary, the River Uck flowing in from the north east.

To the western end of the village is Reedens Meadows SANG, which comprises 29 acres of grassland, scrub and trees. It was provided by a developer as part of a mitigation strategy to reduce recreational pressure on Ashdown Forest and the site will be transferred from Thakeham Homes to Lewes District

Council in due course. The meadows are popular for walkers and provide a place for recreation, nature and for education.

There are several campsites within the area of Newick, including Wyld Wood Campsite to the northwest of Newick, which bring people and tourists into the village enhancing the local economy. Alder Lake Farm is an equestrian centre which provides training, clinics and events which brings people to be village and provides local employment opportunities.

There are various sporting clubs present in Newick including Newick Lawn Tennis Club, Newick Rugby, Cricket and Football Club as well as Stoolball. Newick Village Hall also provides a range of social and sporting opportunities such Tai Chi, Indoor bowls, Pilates, Cinema, and Badminton.

2 Consultation

Newick Neighbourhood Plan undertook consultation between 2012 and 2013. The following key themes were identified:

- Protect and enhance the natural and historic environments;
- Maintain separation between Chailey and Newick and preserve the village green;
- Protect the biodiversity of the Parish;
- Reduce impacts on climate change;
- Address highway congestion; and
- Protect Newick's grass verges.

The consultation found that Newick has several important GBI spaces which are regularly used by residents and visitors. However, there is no cycling provision in or around the village and there is no train station, the closest is Haywards Heath which is approximately 7 miles west of Newick. Therefore, there are opportunities to explore for green travel.

Lewes District Council with consultants TEP, undertook consultation in 2023 to support the GBI Study. As part of the consultation an interview was undertaken with a representative from Newick Parish Council.

As a parish Newick has several important GBI spaces including Newick Common, Newick Village Green, King George V Playing Fields and Reeden Meadows which are regularly used by residents and visitors. The parish council have expressed a concern over funding opportunities to enhance existing GBI as well as creating new initiatives and highlighted a requirement to consider improving opportunities for the younger population of Newick.

3 Local GBI Initiatives

There are various local initiatives in Newick, some examples include the following:

- **Allotments** - Newick Allotment Society started initially in 2008 after several years of involvement and support with the Parish Council. Two separate allotment sites were allocated in the village of Newick with a total of 27 plots between them.

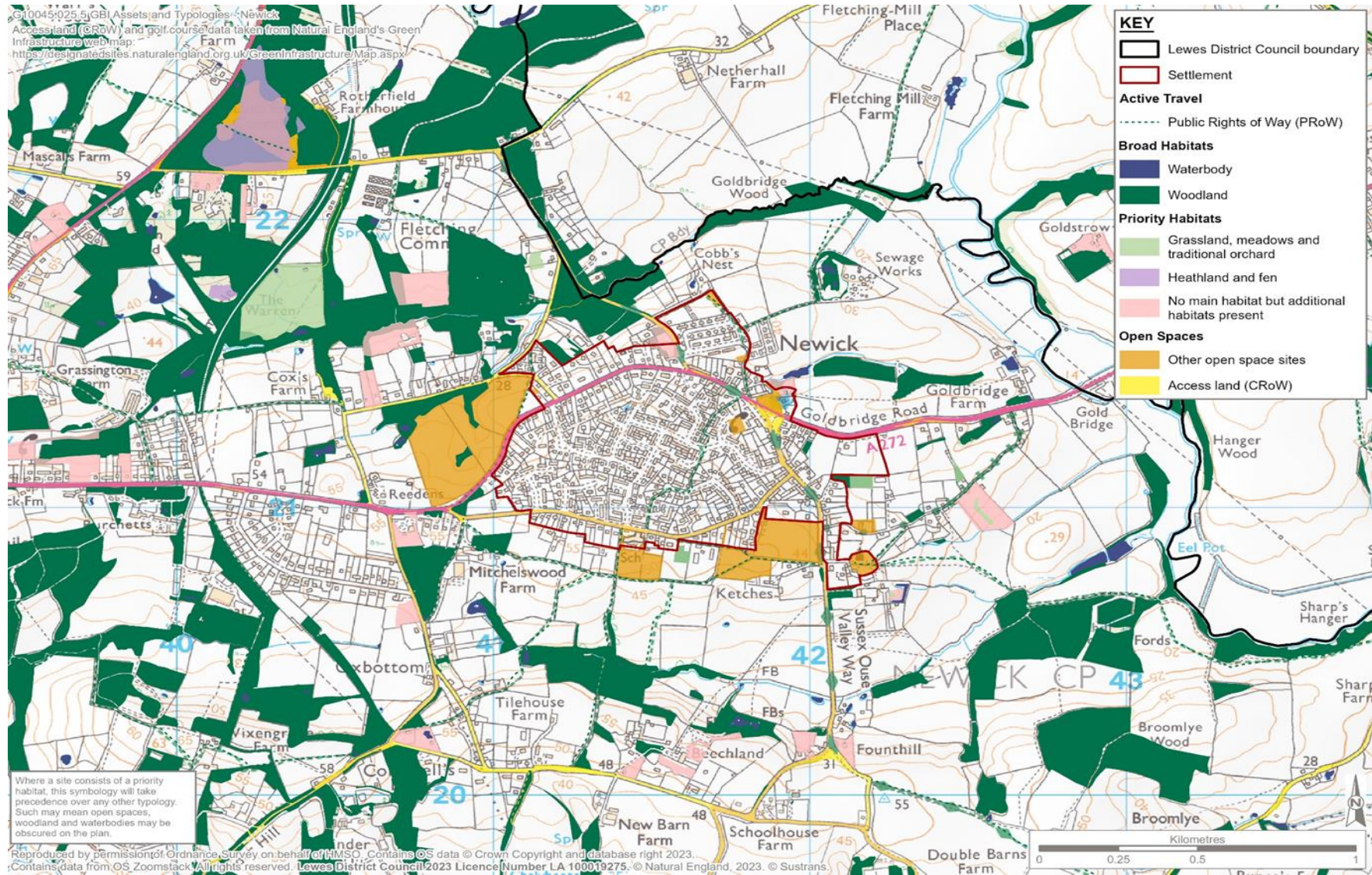
This contributes to the biodiversity of the area by providing foraging resource and habitats for a range of as well as providing residents with an activity which benefits their physical and mental health, and supporting local food provision.

- **Newick Rootz** – The Rootz network is a volunteer group formed in 2011 to support Newick Parish Council. The group is involved in improving public footpaths such as repairing stiles, kissing gates and clearing vegetation in the parish, with monthly on-site workdays. The Rootz network have also worked on monitoring Reeden Meadows, in partnership with The University of Sussex.



Figure 2: Manwaring Robertson Field

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4 Current GBI Assets

GBI assets in and around Newick have been mapped from desk-based assessment and are shown in Figure 3. There are several existing open spaces within the settlement, which support a wider network of GBI adjacent to Newick.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

There are several PRoWs across Newick, which provide important accessibility for residents and visitors to the open countryside.

The Sussex Ouse Valley Way long distance walking route runs through Newick from the north west to the south east, along Newick Hill, A272 and Church Road. The Sussex Ouse Valley Way follows the valley of the River Ouse from its source to sea, travelling through High Weald, Low Weald, and the South Downs National Park (SDNP) to Seaford.

Woodland/Waterbodies

There is no woodland present within the settlement boundary, but there are several areas of woodland outside of the settlement boundary, these areas of accessible woodland including Fletching Common, Newick Common and Beechland Mill Woods.

There are no waterbodies within the settlement boundary, but there are small waterbodies associated with woodland outside of the settlement boundary.

Habitats

The 'no main habitat' area within Newick indicates that priority habitats are likely to be present but further surveys are required to establish more detail.

There are no other habitats within the settlement boundary. However, there are small areas of grassland to the east, south and west of Newick as well the heathland/fen area to the north west close to neighbouring North Chailey.

Open Space Sites/Access Land

There are two 'other open space' sites within the settlement boundary, which contribute to the GBI network for Newick. These sites include the Green (amenity grassland), St Marys Church (churchyards and cemeteries), Cricketfield Allotments, Marbles Road (outdoor sports facility) and Mantell Close Play Area (provision for children and young people).

There are additional larger other open space sites outside, but adjacent to, the settlement boundary. These open spaces include King George V Playing Field (outdoor sports facility), Newick Church of England Primary School (outdoor sports facility), Manwaring Robertson Field (outdoor sports facility) and Reeden Meadows (natural and semi-natural greenspace).

There is a small area of Access Land located south of Newick Village Green. This provides opportunities for all to access and enjoy the space available for walking, running and watching wildlife.

5 Planning Policy and Strategy Review

A review of existing national, regional and local planning policy, strategies and evidence bases was undertaken as part of the district wide GBI Study and relevant findings are summarised below.

Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Core Strategy (2016), states that Newick will continue to retain its 'village feel' and that the whole Parish will remain a vibrant, thriving and sustainable community. The built and natural heritage of the Parish will have been retained and protected. The most highly valued countryside area of the Parish will have been recognised and conserved. Newick will become a healthier, more inclusive community supporting those of all ages equally.

“Although the majority of recent development would have been directed to the urban areas of the district, development that meets the community’s needs for housing, including affordable housing, and supports the rural economy will have been sensitively accommodated, particularly in those settlements with the best range of community services and facilities and ease of access to employment opportunities.

With the London to Lewes railway line passing through this part of the district, further opportunities for sustainable travel, particularly to and from the stations of Plumpton and Cooksbridge will have been realised.

Although travel by the private car will still be, in many instances, the only practical way of accessing and travelling around this part of the district, improvements to road safety, including the lowering of speed limits in the villages, will ensure that this form of transportation is undertaken in the safest possible manner.”

Spatial Policy 2 – Distribution of Housing identified that a minimum of 100 net additional units will be built in Newick up to 2030. Newick’s Neighbourhood Plan (2015) allocated 4 sites within Newick for residential development, these sites range from 0.1 hectares to 1.94 hectares. Two of the four sites have been completed, the remaining two have planning permission and are under construction.

Due to the proximity to Ashdown Forst SAC and SPA, it was considered that the figure of 100 new dwellings in Newick is appropriate if mitigated through the delivery of SANGs. The Newick Neighbourhood Plan (NP) (2015) states that developments of more than six homes should provide and or develop recreational space, to supplement the community’s open space provision.

The Newick NP (2015) states that the Parish Council vision for the future of Newick is that its centre will retain its essential 'village feel' and the whole parish will remain vibrant, thriving and will continue to support a sustainable rural community. Newick will become a healthier, more inclusive community for those of all ages.

Policy EN1 from Newick NP (2015) states that all new developments in the parish will respect the local landscape character including the Conservation Areas and be designed to blend in with the existing built environment.

The Lewes Open Space Strategy (2020) identifies that there is a deficiency in Newick of allotments, community gardens and city farms, amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace, parks and gardens and provision for children and young people.

The council are in the process of drafting a new local plan which will set new housing requirements across the district, allocate development sites and set out up to date policies for new development.

6 Other Local Policies and Guidance

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (Adur and Ouse River Catchment)

The River Ouse skirts around the east of Newick, outside of the settlement boundary. The River Ouse then travels south and is joined by its main tributary, the River Uck flowing in from the north east.

The River Ouse is formed by an extensive network of tributaries, streams and brooks collecting water from across 650km² of East and West Sussex. Its major tributary is the River Uck. Both rise in High Weald and the SDNP and flow through the countryside towards Uckfield before joining at Barcombe Mills where the river becomes partly tidal before continuing down through Lewes and reaching the sea at Newhaven. Newick is located close to the river and experiences localised flooding.

Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (May 2023)

Newick falls into character area C1 'Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey Western Low Weald', with undulating land and limited drainage. The forces for change relevant to GBI at a settlement scale are:

- PRow networks improved by local volunteers with increased recreational pressures;
- Reduced management resulting in damage to heathland habitat and species; and
- Challenges posed by climate change, including extreme weather events and pressure for renewable development.

As described in the district wide GBI study, the relevant GBI management guidelines set out in the LCA are:

- Preserve the rural character away from development and roads. Plant new woodlands to improve screening and reduce disturbance from roads and overhead lines;
- Maintain semi-enclosed character with available views onto surrounding higher ground;
- Encourage local natural flood management initiatives;
- Support heathland restoration through tree removal and grazing;
- Protect and retain existing vegetation, especially ancient woodland; and
- Implement new developments within a robust landscape framework.

7 Local Priorities

From the desk based evidence including local and neighbourhood planning documents, GIS mapping and consultation, Newick's local priorities are to:

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Parish;
- To protect and enhance the countryside setting of the main residential area of the Parish;
- To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Parish;
- To ensure that development doesn't not take place in area with high flood risk;
- To ensure new development provides suitable natural green spaces and facilities for the increased population;
- To ensure the Parish's GBI caters for the needs of the younger population;
- To reduce the Parish's impact on climate change; and
- Address the highway congestion in Newick Parish and reduce the need to travel by car.

Local priorities are taken from the Neighbourhood Plan, but only include priorities relevant to this GBI Study.



Figure 4: Reedens Meadow – Access and wayfinding

Part 2: Current GBI

In 2023 Natural England (NE) published a framework of Green Infrastructure (GI) Principles to guide the planning and implementation of GBI. In this section we consider the settlement in terms of the five 'Why' principles at local level.

8 Principle 1: Nature rich beautiful places

“To achieve nature rich and beautiful places at a local level, GI should:

- ***Thread biodiversity through the built environment connecting recreational, natural green and blue spaces;***
- ***Prioritise native species;***
- ***Be designed to connect people to nature; and***
- ***Contribute to site specific BNG requirements”***

There are no international or nationally designated sites within Newick. However, there are two non-statutory locally designated sites located outside of the settlement boundary, but still connected to Newick via PRow, Newick Common and Newick Fields.

To ensure the Ashdown Forest (SAC and SPA) is protected from recreational pressure, residential development that results in a net increase of one or more dwellings within 7km of the Ashdown Forest will be required to contribute to the provision of SANG's (Lewes Local Plan Core Strategy Policy 10). Much of Newick lies within that zone. SANGs provide an excellent opportunity to develop new areas of GBI and accessible open space, as well as protecting sensitive ecological sites.

Reeden Meadows (SANG) is located on the western boundary of Newick and provides 29 acres of green space accessible to the community but also provides new habitats, which link to the wider countryside. It is a well maintained, accessible Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace which offers opportunities for walkers and a variety of habitats for biodiversity including grassland, scrub and trees.

There are two Conservation Areas in Newick. One is to the south east of Newick around Church Road and St. Mary's Church and the second includes The Green and area along the High Street (A272), including the Village Hall.

The Conservation Areas are designated because of the qualities of their buildings, the enhancement of the character of the buildings by their rural setting and abundance of trees, the historic St. Mary's Church, and the views across the open countryside across to High Weald National Landscape.

Many trees in Newick are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), which protect and preserve the character of the Newick village.

Newick NP states in Policy EN2 that the protection and or enhancement of wildlife opportunities, by retaining or providing wildlife corridors and stepping stones such as hedgerows, ditches, strips of tree planting, green open spaces with trees and grass verges to roads will be supported.

The Rootz network is a volunteer group in Newick which formed in 2011 supporting Newick Parish Council. The group maintains and improves public footpaths, including repairing gates to clearing vegetation.

9 Principle 2: Active and healthy places

“To achieve active and healthy places at a local level GI should:

- ***Maximise health and wellbeing outcomes particularly in deprived areas and for disadvantaged groups;***
- ***Address issues of inequality in access to quality natural green space and routes, using the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (AGS); and***
- ***Be managed to deliver indirect benefits such as urban cooling, noise reduction, flood risk management and air quality improvements which can improve health outcomes.”***

Newick has a good network of PRoWs and Promoted Routes (these are routes which have a significance in the area and are popular with visitors, the routes typically consist of different types of PRoWs, minor roads and permissive paths).

The existing network of footpaths and twittens¹ within the village, including both public and permissive footpaths and bridleways in the Parish are highly valued. Therefore, potential opportunities for improving and extending this network of footpaths would provide and create links between new housing developments. This aligns with Policy EN3 of the Newick NP which states that the extension of the existing network of footpaths and twittens would be highly supported and EN4 supported the provision of cycle paths.

¹ Twitten (derived from the old Sussex dialect) – *a narrow path between two walls or hedges, especially on hills* - <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/twitten>

Beechland Mill Wood is located 500m south of the village of Newick and is owned by the Woodland Trust. The woodland is predominately ancient semi-natural woodland with mature oak over a hazel understory. The area at the western end has a series of pits/ponds, dams and spillways which are associated with its previous industrial use. Footpaths run throughout the woodland offering opportunities for the public to enjoy nature and the associated benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing.

A PRoW is present running from north to south through the centre of Newick. This provides access from Newick into neighbouring settlements including Chailey and Barcombe.

10 Principle 3: Thriving and prosperous places

“To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a local level GI should:

- ***Integrate services such as air quality regulation, flood risk management, noise mitigation, recreation, urban cooling, and pollination into development based on local needs;***
- ***Use early collaboration with adjacent local authorities, other developers, landowners, or infrastructure providers to create opportunities for jointly funded GI; and***
- ***Link to skills development, training and jobs by local employers, contractors, and training institutions”***

Historically, farming and fruit growing were major sources of employment within Newick, but in line with experience across the British countryside, the Parish has seen some socio-economic changes which have led to the movement of people from the countryside to larger towns. Although much of the agricultural land is still farmed the number of farmers and agricultural employees has reduced dramatically.

As well as traditional farming practices, farmers are diversifying for example a vineyard has been created to the south of King George V Playing Field. Diversification is likely to be more common as challenges in farming continue.

Compared with many other villages in Lewes, Newick has retained access to a variety of retail businesses and services to meet many day to day needs of the residents and those from the wider rural

hinterland. These include a pharmacy, a post office, two small general stores, a bakery, an estate agent, three public houses and a restaurant. Newick also has access to a physiotherapist, a chiropractor, a funeral director and a garage. Despite the range of local businesses there are still limited job opportunities for local people within the village.

Newick has a thriving community with local organisations hosting events such as the annual circus, fun fair and Newick Bonfire on The Green. The sports pavilion is utilised for activities such as football, cricket, rugby and stoolball.

There is an aging population within the village, with many residents retired, and there are a host of different community groups to be involved in including Newick Rootz and Newick Allotment Society.

The Newick Allotment Society (NAS) is a voluntary organisation started in 2008. The NAS manages two separate allotment sites within Newick; Cricket field has (5 plots) whereas Cornwell Bank has (22) plots.

Newick Parish has four main bus services which run towards neighbouring parishes such as Haywards Heath, and Lewes. Currently the services are infrequent and therefore residents often choose to travel by car rather than public transport.

11 Principle 4: Improved water management

“To achieve sustainable water management at a local level GI should:

- ***Provide sustainable water management including though sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);***
- ***Be adaptable to take account of the impacts of climate change;***
- ***Reduce site specific flood risks identified in flood risk assessments;***
- ***Improve water quality and help address existing sources of pollution;***
- ***Improve natural filtration where this will protect and enhance groundwater supplies;***
- ***Help connect recreational, natural green and blue spaces and provide opportunities for everyone to safely experience blue space;***
- ***Use water to enhance public open space for a variety of recreational uses, ensuring potential conflicts are managed;***
- ***Create and enhance habitats including re-naturalising river corridors and providing riparian buffer zones;***
- ***Soften estuary edges with coastal habitats that can act as buffers to coastal erosion and tidal flooding; and***
- ***Prioritise native species and ensure biosecurity principles are adhered to avoid spreading non-native invasive species and diseases.”***

The River Ouse runs along the eastern boundary of the Newick Parish Council area, to the east of Newick village. However, there is no access to the river here for walking or water based recreational activities.

The Parish Council reported during the consultation that there is regular flooding of the River Ouse into the surrounding farmland, but this protects Newick village from any impacts of flooding. However, some low lying open spaces sometimes get wet under foot after heavy rainfall.

12 Principle 5: Resilient and climate positive places

“To achieve resilient and climate positive places at a local level GI should:

- ***Be audited using local information for instance using local resilience strategies and plans to improve the climate resilience of existing GI***
- ***Incorporate adaptive management to ensure GI is planned to provide multi-functional benefits and continues to do so as the climate changes”***

Newick NP (2015) Objective 6 emphasises a requirement to reduce *‘the Parish’s impact on climate change and prepare the community and environment for its impact’*.

To date, there are no electric charging points in Newick or the wider Parish, which are for communal use. All charging points are located in private homes, therefore limiting the facility for people who visit Newick.

The Parish Council has implemented a ‘dark skies’ policy which is tied directly to climate change by reducing the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies. These policies have aimed to control the types of outdoor lighting that may be installed on domestic and building premises and promote guidance about appropriate lighting levels and warranting conditions.



Figure 5: Newick Green

Part 3: Audit and Analysis

13 GBI Site Audits

Site audits were undertaken in October 2023 to provide an indication of how local green and blue spaces are performing. The exercise is not intended as a comprehensive review of all GBI in the settlement as only a limited number of sites could be audited across the district. However, the audit methodology and scoresheets can be used by an open space practitioner to evaluate other green spaces and draw up improvement plans in the future if required. GBI assets were chosen in each settlement from existing GIS mapping data to cover a range of different uses and GBI services for people and nature.

Audits assessed the current contribution of the green space to the five “Why” principles of good GBI. The audit covered “Quality and Value” using a system derived from best practice methods associated with the Green Flag Award criteria², adapted to include additional criteria relevant to GBI.

The scores awarded in each category are classed from X to 4 outlined below:

- X - not appropriate;
- 0 - missing but needed;
- 1 - complete re-designed needed;
- 2 - major improvement needed;
- 3 - minor improvement needed; and
- 4 - no improvement needed.

² [Green Flag Award - Green Flag Award](#)

The audit also covered criteria of multifunctionality, connectivity, variety and distinctiveness, which are relevant to the NE “What” principles of good GBI.

Site Audit Map

The site audit map shown in Figure 6 shows the settlement boundary of Newick and the 6 main GBI assets which were audited for this study.

Table 1 below shows the Quality and Value scores from the site audits. Scores from site visits are based on a snapshot in time and should be considered in the context of local knowledge and other more detailed surveys where those are available.

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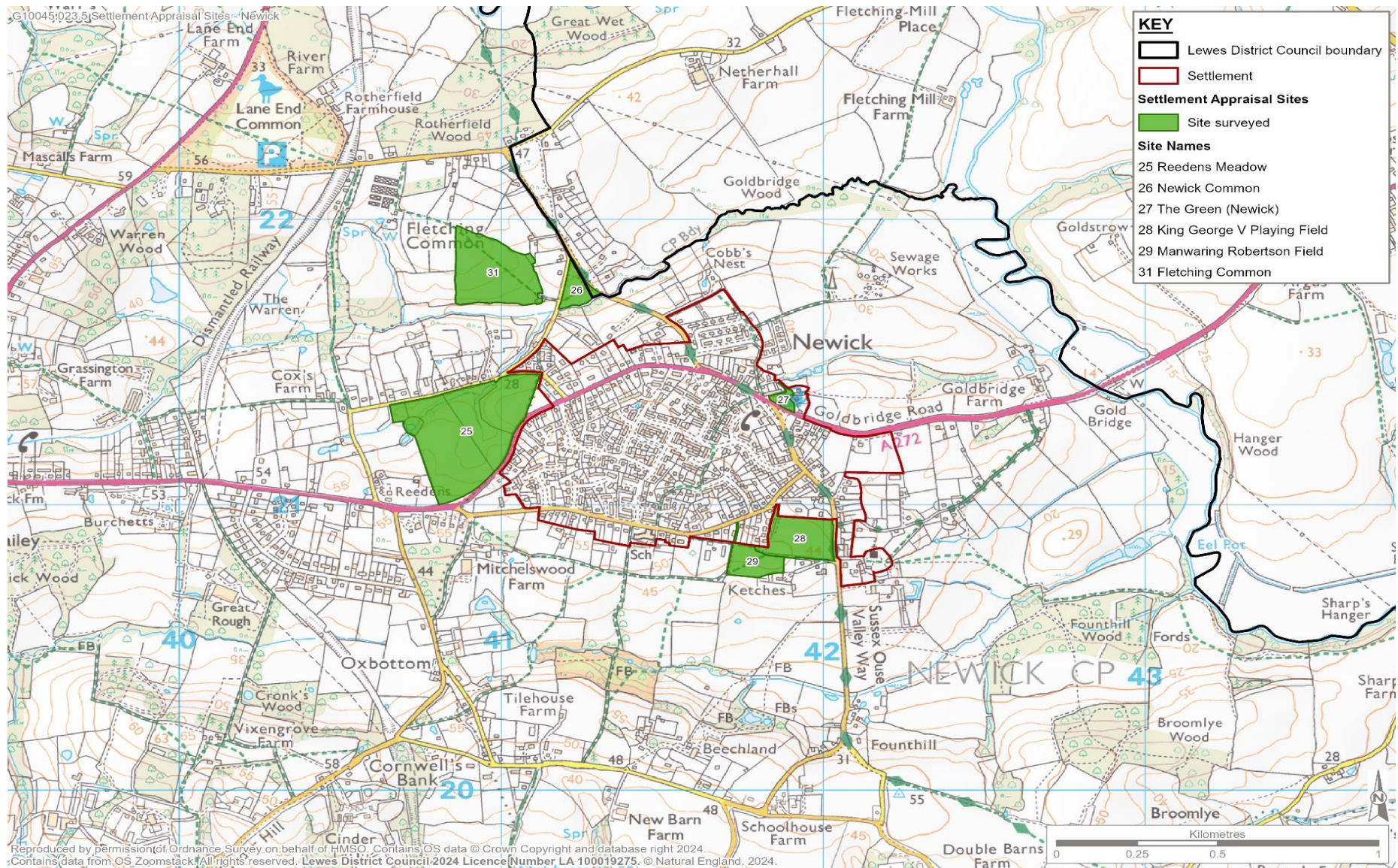


Figure 6: Site Audit Map

Criteria	GI Principles	25. Reedens Meadow	26. Newick Common	27. The Green (Newick)	28. King George V Playing Fields	29. Manwaring Robertson Playing Field	31. Fletching Common
Social Criteria – Appropriately welcoming / Accessible to all	1,2,3	4	3	2	3	2	3
Social Criteria – Healthy, safe and secure	2,3	3	2	2	3	3	2
Social Criteria – Well maintained and clean	2,3	3	4	3	4	3	3
Social Criteria – Contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place	2,3	3	2	4	4	2	2
Social Criteria – Recreation, play and exercise value	2	3	4	2	4	4	4
Environmental Criteria – Diversity and Naturalness of Habitats	1	4	4	2	3	4	3
Environmental Criteria – Site Management and Habitat Diversity supports pollinators and soil invertebrate diversity	1	3	4	2	3	4	3
Environmental Criteria – Shade and Ventilation available to users	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Environmental Criteria – Vegetation, land surface cover contributes to natural flood management	1,4,5	3	4	3	4	4	3
Environmental Criteria – SuDS or water quality management features visible and effective	4.5	2	4	4	4	3	3
Total Score	N/A	32	35	28	36	33	30
Potential Score	N/A	40	40	40	40	40	40

Table 1: Audit scores

13.1 GBI Audit Scores

Six GBI assets were accessible for auditing (one was not accessible). From the 6 accessible GBI assets, 5 scored above 30 and 1 site (The Green (Newick)) scored 28/40.

The Green (Newick) achieved the lowest score due to limited features and multi-functionality. The highest score was achieved by King George V Playing Field due to the multifunctional features such as playing pitches, play area, gym equipment and several areas maintained for nature.

Reeden Meadows – 32/40

Reeden Meadow is classed as a SANG, owned by Thakeham Homes and to be transferred to Lewes District Council in due course. There is an area for parking, accessible entrances, wayfinding, signage and a range of habitats. The Meadow scored 3 or 4 in all criteria apart from SuDS/water improvement due to limited water management functions. However, the Meadow scored a 4 for accessibility, diversity of habitats and shade/ventilation.

Newick Common – 35/40

Newick Common is a small area for woodland which has accessibility via a PRow and also links to Fletching Common to the west. The Common scores 4 in 7 out of 10 criteria due to the diverse habitats and varied woodland structure. However, the Common scored a 2 in 'healthy, safe and secure' due to no natural surveillance and 'contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place' due to no sense of place and limited local amenity.

The Green (Newick) – 28/40

The Green is within the historic core of the village and enhances the character of the village. The Green scores a maximum score of 4 for 'contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place' due to being at the centre of the village, 'shade and ventilation available to users' due to the mature trees and boundary habitats and 'SuDS or water quality management features visible and effective' due to dry ditch and areas of long grassland. However, The Green scored lower for accessibility, healthy, safe and secure, recreation and diversity of habitats/pollinators.

King George V Playing Field – 36/40

The King George V Playing Field is located in the south of the Newick and is connected directly to Manwaring Robertson Playing Field. The primary function of Kings George V Playing Field is outdoor sports, but it also has play provision, outdoor gym equipment and a skatepark for recreation. The Playing Field scored 3 or 4 in all criteria due to good accessibility via walking and car parking provision, a range of recreation provision, good natural surveillance and diversity of habitats where appropriate (i.e. around the boundaries).

Manwaring Robertson Playing Field – 33/40

The Manwaring Robertson Playing Field is attached to the King George V Playing Field and has a PRow in the north west and south west corners of the open space linking the site with Newick and the open countryside. The Playing Field scores 2-4 in all criteria, with the highest scores for recreation, diversity of habitats, shade/ventilation and contribution to water management. The Playing Field scores 2 for accessible welcoming place and contribution to sense of place.

Fletching Common – 30/40

Fletching Common is located to the north of Newick outside the settlement boundary but is directly linked to Newick Common and Reeden Meadow via PRow. The Common comprises mainly of woodland and Wyld Wood Campsite use the Common for camping and outdoor recreational activities. The Common scores 4 in two if the criteria including 'recreation, play and exercise value' and 'shade and ventilation available to users'. The lowest scores were for 'healthy, safe and secure' and 'contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place'.

Inaccessible sites

One additional site was selected for auditing which could not be accessed. The area of trees, ditch and scrub called Newick Fields has no public access, however the GBI asset still provides benefits for wildlife and the overall GBI network.

13.2 Multifunctionality

Multifunctionality (delivering multiple functions from the same area of GBI) is especially important in area where provision of GBI is poor or scarce. GBI should deliver a range of functions and benefits for people, nature and place. The 6 audited sites were assessed for their multifunctionality, and the results are displayed below.

- **Reeden Meadows** – Reeden Meadows includes walking routes for recreation, wayfinding, education signage, diversity of habitats and benches for relaxation. Habitats comprise of long grassland, scrub and trees, which benefit wildlife and the overall GBI network.
- **Newick Common** – The PRow provides access to the Common as a walking route. There is also diversity of habitats including woodland habitat and attenuation ponds, therefore providing multifunctionality.
- **The Green (Newick)** – There is limited multifunctionality due to being made up mainly of amenity greenspace. There is also limited opportunity due to the conservation status of the area but does offer a sense of wellbeing and place.
- **King George V Playing Fields** – The Playing Fields have a range of multifunctional features including recreation, play, gym equipment, skatepark and had a range of habitats around the site boundary.
- **Manwaring Robertson Playing Field** – The Playing Field has a range of multifunctional features including playing field for outdoor sports facilities, diversity of habitats and walking routes around the playing fields.
- **Fletching Common** – The Common has a walking route, diversity of habitats including woodland and Wyld Wood Campsite with space for camping and also encouraging tourism in the area.

13.3 Connectivity – to SDNP, Coast and other GI Assets

GBI should function and connect with the living network for both people and nature at all scales (e.g., within sites, and across regions and within a national scale). It should enhance ecological networks and support a variety of ecosystem services, connecting provision of GBI with those who need its benefits.

The 6 accessible sites located in Newick were assessed for their connectivity to the SDNP, Coast and other GBI assets the results are displayed below.

- **Reeden Meadows** – There are no links to the SDNP or the coastline, but this site does offer linkages to other GBI assets including Newick Common and Fletching Common via a PRoW. Wayfinding exists at the site entrances, but the PRoW is partially via the road with no pavement available, which could create some barriers for usage due to safety concerns, especially for visitors.
- **Newick Common** – Newick Common is linked to Fletching Common via a PRoW. There is also a direct link to the north east of the site to the Sussex Ouse Valley Way long distance route, which links to SDNP including Lewes and Seaford on the coast.
- **The Green (Newick)** – The Green (Newick) is not connected to any GBI assets in Newick using the current PRoW network. However, the Sussex Ouse Valley Way long distance route passes through The Green, which links to SDNP including Lewes and Seaford on the coast.
- **King George V Playing Fields** – The Playing Field is connected to Manwaring Robertson Playing Field and is connected to the open countryside through the PRoW network. The Sussex Ouse Valley Way runs to the east of the

site, which links to SDNP including Lewes and Seaford on the coast.

- **Manwaring Robertson Playing Field** – The Playing Field directly links to King George V Playing Fields to the north and connected to the open countryside via the PRoW network. The PRoW that runs along the northern boundary of the site, also links to the Sussex Ouse Valley Way to the east, which runs through SDNP to Seaford on the coast.
- **Fletching Common** – Fletching Common is linked to Newick Common via a PRoW, which also leads beyond Newick to Rotherfield Wood approx. 250m north. This PRoW also links to the Sussex Ouse Valley Way long distance route approximately 100m to the east, which links to SDNP and Seaford on the coast.

13.4 Variety and Distinctiveness

GBI should consist of a variety of types and sizes of green and blue spaces, green routes and environmental features (as part of a network) that can provide a range of different functions, benefits and solutions to address specific issues and needs.

The 6 accessible sites located in Newick were assessed for their variety and distinctiveness, the results are displayed below.

- **Reeden Meadows** – Has a good variety of habitats including grassland, trees and scrub. The site is being enhanced for wildlife and therefore a range of habitats are expected. The site also provides a wide range of opportunities for walking across the site. There are opportunities to link the site with the PRoW network to create further recreational opportunities.
- **Newick Common** – Distinctive as a woodland habitat including mature trees, woodland ground flora and glades, which benefits wildlife and the wider GBI network. The PRoW route which runs through the woodland also provides access for recreation.
- **The Green (Newick)** – The Green is distinctive as a village green, and it contributes to the character of the village. However, due to the historic character there is limited variety of habitats or recreational opportunities. However, it does link to the PRoW network and the Sussex Ouse Valley Way.
- **King George V Playing Fields** – Is distinctive as a playing field for cricket and football. However, the site also provides opportunities for play and outdoor gym space. Due to the primary function being for recreation there is a limited variety of habitats, which are mainly around the boundaries.

- **Manwaring Robertson Playing Field** – The site is distinctive as a playing field with space for rugby and football. There is also a walking route around the site for further recreation. However, due to the primary use for recreation there is a limited range of habitats present, although the boundaries of the site have been utilised for area of long grassland and pollinating species/wildflower meadow.
- **Fletching Common** – Fletching Common is distinctive as a woodland, however due to the space also being used for outdoor recreation and camping some areas are not clearly defined and some areas of habitat have been degraded due to the recreational activities.

13.5 Capacity to accommodate change

Newick settlement is expected to accommodate an increasing population both locally and from further afield, which will then increase demand on green spaces for social use. The first five audit scores indicate how well a site is performing for people, with a maximum score of 20.

All GBI assets will also need to adapt to inevitable consequences of climate change and provide as many environmental services as possible (like temperature regulation and water management) to best serve local communities. The final five audit scores indicate how resilient a site is to the effects of climate change, with a maximum score of 20.

- **Reeden Meadows** – Reeden Meadow scores 3 or 4 in all social criteria with an overall score of 16/20. This is due to the site having good signage, being accessible via footpaths and car parking, being clean and tidy and having natural surveillance. For the environmental criteria the site also

scored 16/20 due to the variety of habitats but had potential to provide more SuDS/water management opportunities. As a SANG, Reeden Meadows has been protected and enhanced to provide capacity for an increasing population of Newick, therefore it should continue to be managed appropriately so ensure future capacity.

- **Newick Common** – Newick Common scored 15/20 for the social criteria due to limited sense of place and not being secure, with limited natural surveillance. The environmental score is 20/20 due to the good woodland habitat and space for SuDS as part of woodland habitat. The Wood has potential to accommodate change with consideration to signage and wayfinding. The woodland habitat and amenity use should be balanced to ensure habitats are kept high quality and not degraded with population increase or climate change.
- **The Green (Newick)** – The Green (Newick) scored 13/20 for the social criteria due to limited recreation, signage and accessibility but does contribute to the sense of place. The environmental criteria scored 15/20 due to the variety of habitats and ditch for surface water runoff. There is limited capacity for change due to the small size of the GBI asset and the limited social and environmental contribution currently being made.
- **King George V Playing Fields** – The Playing Field scored 18/20 for social criteria due to having a variety of recreation opportunities and is an accessible open space. It scored 18/20 for environmental criteria due to habitats around the boundaries but further opportunities for SuDS could be sought. The site has a good balance between recreation and the environment which is managed appropriately to give the site a good score. Therefore, the Playing Field has capacity for change assuming it is managed appropriately.

- **Manwaring Robertson Playing Field** – The Playing Field scored 14/20 for social criteria due to limited signage, accessibility and sense of place but good recreational opportunities. The environmental criteria score is 19/20 due to areas of the site being utilised for habitat variety including areas for long grassland and wildflowers. The site is making the most of land for habitat diversity and therefore building in capacity for change. However, to ensure a sustainable future change enhancements for social elements should be considered.
- **Fletching Common** - Fletching Common scored 14/20 for the social criteria due to no sense of place or natural surveillance making the site feel unsafe, however there are recreational opportunities with wayfinding. It scored 3 or 4 in the environmental criteria with a total score of 16/20 due to having a range of habitats and shade, however due to camping within the woodland it has degraded the woodland ground flora, limiting variety/diversity. During the site audit it was evident that there as limited footfall through the woodland, which is most likely because of the poor signage and surveillance. Therefore, there is capacity for change as long as the woodland habitats are balanced with recreational uses.

14 Summary of GBI Opportunities for Newick

The evidence base, consultation and site audit results have been analysed and a summary of specific place-based opportunities is presented below following the five themes of the NE 'How' Principles which guide the delivery of GBI at a local level. A next step would be discussion with local experts and community leaders to further define and prioritise any detailed actions to take forward.

Partnership

Residents and stakeholders should be at the centre of the planning and design process, and well informed about risks, trade-offs and what can realistically be achieved.

Social initiatives such as Newick Rootz and Newick Allotment Society contribute to Newick's thriving community. Encourage and support Newick Parish Council, community clubs and initiatives that explore and protect local wildlife according to local demand. Help existing grassroots wildlife groups and projects to connect to regional initiatives that actively contribute to wider scale nature recovery projects and benefit from relevant funding.

Explore opportunities to enhance GBI assets like The Green (Newick), King George V Playing Fields and Manwaring Robertson Playing Field for diversity of habitats and Fletching Common and Newick Common for recreational opportunities. Balancing recreational opportunities and habitat diversity is important to ensure GBI assets are multifunctional and support capacity to change.

Evidence

Examine and collect information on the condition and usage of the PRoWs and signage to these routes, especially where PRoWs have the potential to link GBI assets, the open countryside and the Sussex Ouse Valley Way. This evidence base would provide an opportunity to improve accessibility for residents and visitors, therefore encourage active and healthy lives.

Policy & Strategic Planning

Continue to protect and enhance existing GBI assets through local and neighbourhood policies to ensure protection for open space long term. Develop a plan to increase allotments, community gardens and city farms, amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace, parks and gardens and provision for children and young people to address the existing open space deficiencies. This could include new provision at appropriate locations associated with new development if it occurs.

New development should also look to provide new SANG or similar sites to provide mitigation measures to reduce recreational pressure of Ashdown Forest. New SANG's can also help deliver open space typology deficiencies.

Design

Investigate opportunities for habitat variety wherever possible to improve climate resilience and reverse biodiversity decline. New development should consider GBI on-site and how it links into existing GBI from the early stages of the design process.

Management

GBI assets should be managed in line with best practice guidance.

Habitats should be enhanced wherever possible to encourage a variety of habitats and increase pollinating native species including The Green (Newick), King George V Playing Fields and Manwaring Robertson Playing Field but also promote ground flora within woodland such as Newick Common and Fletching Common.

Summary list of opportunities:

- Enhance GBI assets where appropriate for variety of habitats and accessibility;
- Encourage and support Newick Parish Council, community clubs and initiatives that explore and protect local wildlife according to local demand;
- Review accessibility to PRoW network from GBI assets to understand the quality of footpaths and enhancements such as signage and natural surveillance (where appropriate);
- Enhance and protect the existing open space network which provide GBI connectivity;
- Provide on-site GBI provision in new housing development (where possible). If this is not possible a contribution should be made through planning obligations to support the enhancement of GBI across Newick; and
- GBI assets that are currently managed to balance habitats and recreation should be used as best practice guidance and knowledge sharing for other GBI assets.

Newick GBI Settlement Appraisal

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