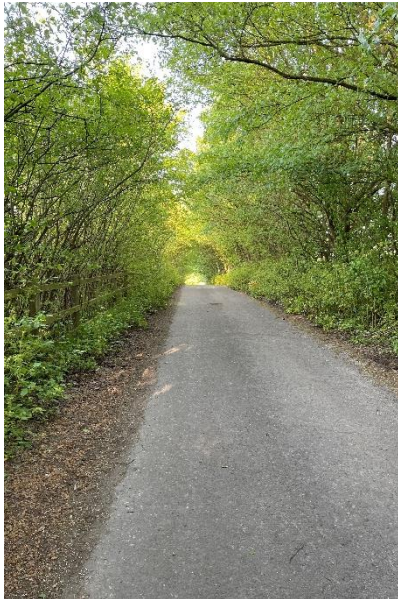




Lewes District Green and Blue Infrastructure Study

Lewes District Council

May 2024

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The GBI Study and Supporting Documents

1. This document reports on a study into the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) of Lewes District outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The study has been undertaken over the period September 2023 to March 2024. The purpose of the study is to provide evidence to inform the preparation of a new Local Plan.
2. This document provides a district-wide analysis of GBI, following the relevant parts of Natural England's recommended process for GBI¹. It has three parts:
3. Part 1 describes the "Local Context", including an introduction to GBI planning, an overview of Lewes District's GBI, a review of GBI policy, a summary of stakeholder views, and a schedule of existing local GBI initiatives. Appendices A and B provide detailed policy analysis and summary of stakeholder consultation.
4. Part 2 is titled "Lewes District's Green and Blue Infrastructure". Over the course of five chapters a detailed appraisal of the priorities, opportunities and deficiencies of the district's GBI is set out, using Natural England's five "Why" principles:
 - Nature-Rich and Beautiful Places;
 - Active and Healthy Places;
 - Thriving and Prosperous Places;
 - Improved Water Management; and
 - Resilient and Climate-Positive Places.
5. Part 2 also introduces the Settlement GBI Appraisals for fourteen of the district's larger towns and villages.
6. Part 3 is titled "Analysis" and provides a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) analysis of Lewes District's GBI. It then moves on to describe what a future GBI Strategy and Action Plan for Lewes District outside the National Park should cover, using Natural England's "How" and "What" principles.
7. This report is accompanied by a separate "Map Catalogue" which provides detailed mapped evidence to accompany the study. A selection of maps from the catalogue is included in the text of this report.
8. Fourteen Settlement GBI Appraisals have been produced and are separate documents – these include a review of the local priorities and an audit (using Green Flag Award principles) of some of the open spaces in and around the settlements. The audit will enable development of neighbourhood action plans to enhance local GBI. It also provides a template for practitioners to audit other open spaces.

¹ [Natural England's Process Journey for Local Authorities](#)

PART 1 – LOCAL CONTEXT



PART 1 – Local Context

1.0 Introduction

Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 Lewes is a rural district on the South East coast of England in the county of East Sussex. This Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Study is concerned with the local plan area which are the areas of Lewes District north and south of the South Downs National Park (SDNP), which spans the district (see Figure 1 which shows Map 1 from the GBI Map Catalogue). Throughout this report 'North Lewes' refers to the area of the district north of the SDNP which is primarily villages and settlements in a rural landscape and 'South Lewes' refers to the coastal area south of the SDNP which is predominantly the towns of Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven.
- 1.2 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is responsible for planning within the National Park and has its own Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 1.3 This study describes the existing GBI, and summarises the opportunities and challenges for protection, creation, maintenance and enhancement of GBI in the area covered by Lewes District Council (LDC) as planning authority. This study will form part of the evidence base for Lewes District's new Local Plan.

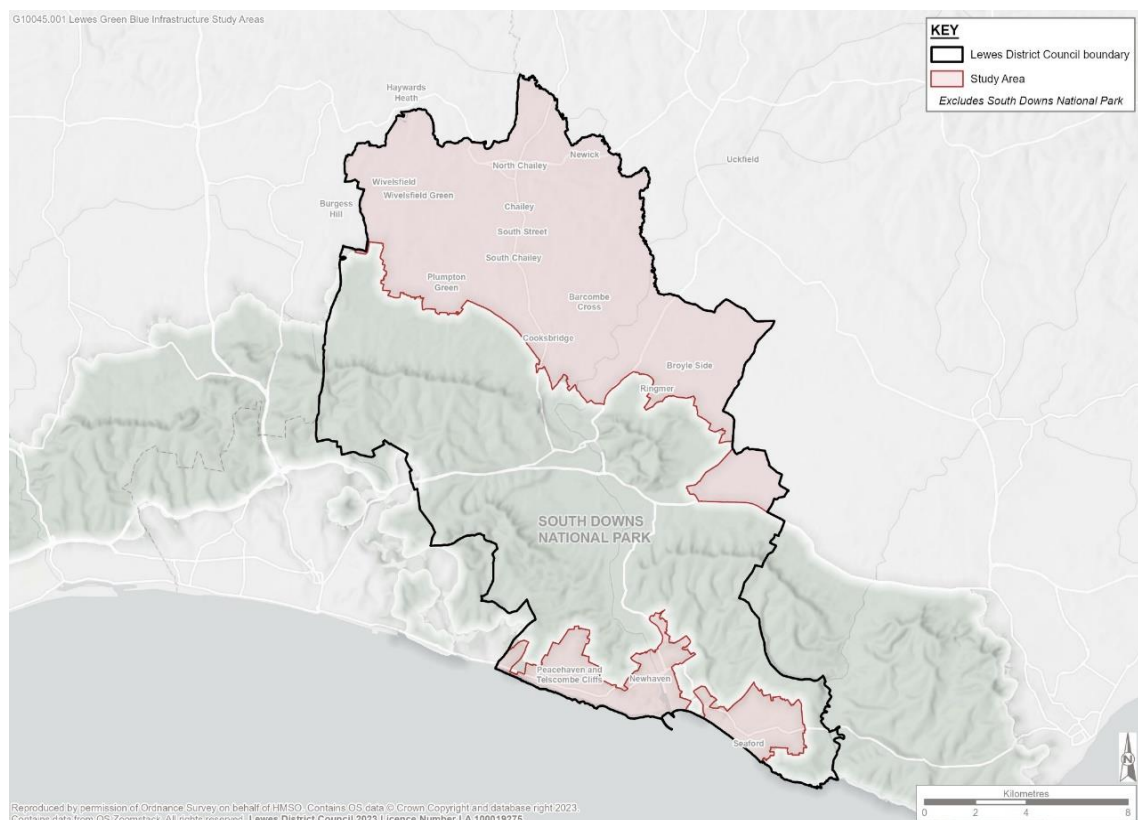


Figure 1: Study Area (Map 1 from the Map Catalogue)

What is Green and Blue Infrastructure?

- 1.4 GBI is the network of green spaces and water environments that sustain the ecosystems which support life. The National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF, 2023) defines GBI as:

“A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.”

Types of Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 1.5 GBI includes a wide range of habitats, from small urban features to the broad habitats of open countryside – see Figure 2:

- Active Travel corridors;
- Adaptations such as bird and bat boxes, bug hotels and sympathetic fencing;
- Agricultural land;
- Allotments;
- Amenity open space;
- Beach and coastline;
- Hedgerows;
- Green roofs and living walls;
- Grounds to public buildings;
- Grounds to religious buildings;
- Parks and gardens;
- Ponds, lakes and reservoirs;
- Private gardens;
- Sport facilities;
- Sustainable drainage systems;
- Vegetation along transport corridors;
- Semi-natural habitats;
- Watercourses; and
- Woodland and individual trees.

² [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

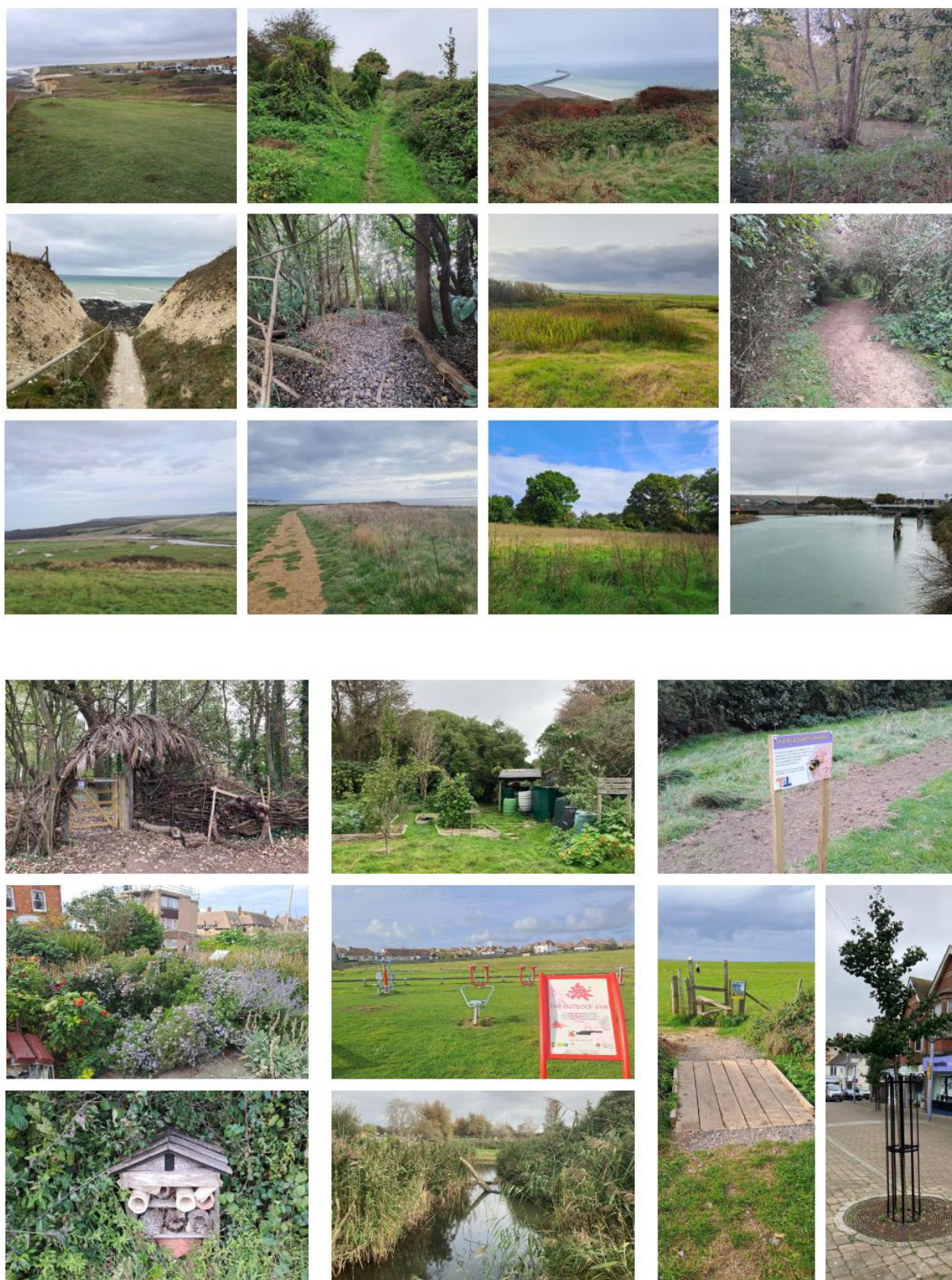


Figure 2: (Upper) Landscape-scale and (Lower) Local-scale GBI in Lewes District

Who is responsible for GBI?

- 1.6 GBI transcends administrative boundaries and professional specialisms (including engineering, town planning, farming, landscape architecture, ecology, forestry and healthcare). Citizens and professionals from a range of disciplines need to collaborate in planning and delivering GBI in Lewes District.

GBI and Ecosystem Services

- 1.7 People and nature benefit from many natural resources and processes that are dependent on ecosystem health. Ecosystem services are grouped into four broad categories:
- Provisioning services, such as the production of food and clean water;
 - Regulating services, such as managing the climate;
 - Supporting services, such as nutrient cycles and crop pollination; and
 - Cultural services, such as recreational benefits.
- 1.8 GBI planning can help support and underpin ecosystem services relevant to the urban and rural areas of Lewes District – see Figure 3.



Figure 3: Ecosystem Services

Natural England GI Framework

- 1.9 The Natural England (NE) Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework³ published in 2023 provides “Why”, “What” and “How” principles for Green Infrastructure planning, design and implementation – see Figure 4.



Figure 4: Why, What and How Principles of good GBI

- 1.10 The principles were derived from studying international practice, analysing feedback from 10 GBI trials, and developing the overall GI framework with specialists and representatives across the sector. They provide a baseline from which to develop stronger GBI policy.

“Why” Principles

- 1.11 The 5 “Why” principles are concerned with the multiple benefits of GBI in ecosystem management and place-shaping. This study analyses Lewes’ GBI by reference to these principles, at Chapters 6 to 10:
- **Nature-rich beautiful places:** this principle deals with nature’s recovery, protecting and enhancing habitats for wildlife, geology and soils. Our cultural and personal connections to nature are important everywhere, from cities to the countryside.

³ GreenInfrastructurePrinciples.pdf (naturalengland.org.uk)

- **Active and healthy places:** green and blue spaces, routes and neighbourhoods support active lifestyles and connected communities and provide physical and mental health benefits. They reduce urban heat stress, pollution, noise and flooding.
- **Thriving and prosperous places:** good GBI makes places more attractive to live, work and invest in. It helps regenerate local economies and creates green jobs.
- **Improved water management:** GBI manages water at local and catchment scale, reducing flooding and relieving pressure on water infrastructure. Improvements in water quality and natural filtration will also benefit people and wildlife.
- **Resilient and climate positive places:** green and blue spaces need to be resilient to adapt to changing climate conditions in the future. They can also contribute to net zero targets providing passive cooling and improving air quality.

“What” Principles

1.12 The 5 “What” principles guide the design and management of new and existing GBI:

- **Multifunctional:** GBI should provide a variety of functions that are relevant to local needs. This is particularly important in urban areas or places where green spaces are scarce and in high demand.
- **Varied:** the wide range of possible spaces, routes and features that can make up a GBI network should provide for specific local needs in appropriate places.
- **Connected:** GBI networks need to join up to function well at small and large scales. They need to connect all the benefits of nature with those that need them.
- **Accessible:** everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy green and blue spaces. GBI needs to create places that are safe, welcoming and inclusive.
- **Responsive to local character:** good quality landscapes will use GBI to protect, enhance and conserve distinctive local spaces which make people feel proud of their local community and identity.



Figure 5: View of Seven Sisters from Seaford Head

“How” Principles

- 1.13 The 5 “How” Principles set out how to plan for GBI effectively, work with communities and ensure partnerships and good governance:
- **Partnership and Vision:** GBI should be designed and delivered according to a vision that has been formed through collaboration between a diverse range of citizens from different backgrounds, and professionals across different sectors and disciplines.
 - **Evidence:** scientific evidence and good land use practice should be followed when planning GBI. Sound understanding of the benefits of current assets and data on local environmental, social and economic needs will enable resources to be used effectively.
 - **Plan Strategically:** GBI assets should be secured in local strategy and policy at all scales as a mainstream consideration in environmental, social and economic policy. This should address inequalities in GBI provision and create sustainable places for current and future generations.
 - **Design:** GBI should form part of beautiful, well-designed places that are designed to enhance the natural, historic and cultural character of the landscape or townscape.
 - **Managed, valued and evaluated:** there should be a strong business case for GBI assets to secure funding for long-term management and maintenance. Good governance needs to be in place, monitoring and evaluation of asset performance which can be understood and celebrated by local communities.
- 1.14 Natural England’s Guidance provides detailed guidelines of how all 15 principles should be applied at strategic (i.e. district-wide) and at local (i.e. settlement-scale) levels. This study reports on the GBI at district level, and in parallel, settlement-scale GBI analysis has been carried out for 14 settlements in the plan area– summarised at Chapter 11.
- 1.15 This GBI study provides the evidence necessary for good decision making. It is informed by stakeholder engagement and a review of the relevant plans (including Local Plans), strategies, policies and studies of LDC and its strategic partners. It sets out planning and design principles to support the successful implementation of GBI through the emerging Local Plan.

Links to Local Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 1.16 The Lewes District Local Plan was adopted in 2016 and this report makes reference to identified local priorities and issues within the two Local Plan documents, Part 1: Joint Core Strategy and Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies.
- 1.17 The GBI study provides evidence to support the new Lewes Local Plan which is currently being prepared.

- 1.18 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is being co-ordinated by East Sussex County Council who are the “responsible authority”. At the time of writing (March 2024), the LNRS is still in development, and is expected in 2025. LDC is a “supporting authority.”
- 1.19 The GBI study will assist with and complement the LNRS in the local plan area and can provide relevant information to support planning and investment decisions relating to nature in the interim period until the LNRS is complete.
- 1.20 In addition to biodiversity, the GBI study covers a broad range of matters which depend on good environmental quality; issues such as active travel, health and wellbeing, landscape character, water management, climate change and the green economy. There are many recent and ongoing studies covering these matters which have informed the analysis of GBI in Lewes District. These are summarised in chapter 2.0 and described in detail in Appendix A: Policy Review. They are also referred to in relevant chapters throughout this document.

2.0 Policy Background

Policy Structure

- 2.1 The planning, design and implementation of GBI is influenced by national, regional and local policy (see figure 6). A full policy analysis is presented in Appendix A and is summarised below.



Figure 6: Policy Hierarchy

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 describes how GBI fits into the wider context of local authorities' strategic plans. These must set the overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of places, encompassing the essential aspects of GBI:
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment;
 - Encouragement of sustainable development and good design practice;
 - Promotion of healthy, inclusive and safe places and communities;
 - Protection and enhancement of open, green, and locally significant spaces;
 - Support for nature's recovery through resilient ecological networks and net gain for biodiversity; and
 - Improvement of air quality, water quality and flood and drought resilience in a changing climate.
- 2.3 GBI helps absorb pollutants, including emissions from farmland, enabling better air quality. The Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) considers climate change and how a comprehensive approach to GBI can promote better water resource management and water quality. GBI can also reduce overall flood risk on development through

sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which can also deliver benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife. In terms of biodiversity, PPG reinforces the NPPF with the need to pursue sustainable development and achieve net gain in the context of an expanding ecological network.

- 2.4 PPG sets out the value and benefits of open space, sports and recreation and the need to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way (PROW) and support active travel. It recognises the important role of GBI in promoting social interaction and healthy lifestyles which relieve pressure and reduce costs for health services. Well integrated GBI can also emphasise local character and identity without stifling innovation and can boost tourism.
- 2.5 PPG promotes evidence-based authority-wide green infrastructure strategies and recognises that green infrastructure networks cross administrative boundaries and the need for collaboration among stakeholders to address cross-boundary issues. Arrangements for the management and funding of green infrastructure are also key and should be identified as early as possible.
- 2.6 In response, this study provides evidence on the quantity and quality of existing GBI assets in the plan area, an analysis of pressures facing GBI, and guidance on opportunities for enhancing GBI in the context of existing and planned development, and local priorities and concerns.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

- 2.7 The 'A Green Future' plan provides details and new mechanisms that are currently in the process of implementation that will support the practical delivery of all the social, environmental and economic benefits of multifunctional GBI across the many relevant stakeholders. They include support for farmers to implement and maintain appropriate GBI, financial mechanisms and markets for developers to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and comprehensive LNRS to ensure that individual projects contribute to a meaningful overall picture.
- 2.8 This study provides relevant information to support planners, developers and local communities to inform how these new requirements are implemented in the district.

Regional, Local and Neighbourhood Policies

- 2.9 LDC declared a climate emergency in 2019 and the climate action plan references the UN sustainable development goals, providing a broad picture of the scale of change needed to meet multiple social, environmental and economic challenges. It includes targets for 20% BNG across all developments, tree planting planning and development of a carbon capture fund.
- 2.10 Lewes District is for the majority rural with no towns larger than a district centre. However, the towns of Uckfield, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath lie just beyond the district boundary, and the GBI in LDC's Local Plan area will have to accommodate some demand for recreation and leisure from current and future populations of those towns, as well as demand from the district's own population. Brighton and Hove, along with Eastbourne are Primary Regional Centres which also lie outside the district boundary but exert a strong influence on the district.

- 2.11 Affordable housing is recognised as necessary to meet internal demand and new housing development should deliver new and enhanced GBI.
- 2.12 Regeneration investment in the coastal towns, particularly Newhaven, needs to combine the benefits of new development with serious consideration of congestion along the A259, air quality issues and current commuting patterns. GBI can support active travel routes and provide pollution mitigation whilst also making the area more attractive to residents and visitors.
- 2.13 The rich and diverse landscape across the district, including the SDNP, is recognised as part of the local heritage and identity. Sustainable tourism is recognised as part of the Lewes District Local Plan: Part1 (2016) Core Policy 5 – Visitor Economy, and GBI has a role in preserving the setting of existing assets and enabling new sustainable tourism enterprise. Rural farming and enterprise is diverse and innovative, with arable, livestock, fruit-growing, vineyards, woodland and regenerative systems all present, sometimes within the same landholding. Protection and enhancement of GBI within the rural landscape is critical for soil health, water supply and pollination which underpin these enterprises.
- 2.14 The River Ouse is recognised as an asset. Most flooding in the district is attributed to coastal or river flooding rather than surface water, although this can be a significant localised issue. Groundwater flows can be of concern in the lower Ouse with occasional, but severe and long-lasting impact. These are explored further in chapter 9.
- 2.15 Large scale green and blue corridors have the potential to provide significant ecological regeneration whilst also alleviating flooding issues.
- 2.16 The SDNPA area cuts across Lewes District and covers the whole National Park designation beyond the boundaries of Lewes. As the landscape designation infers, there are robust policies to protect landscape character and biodiversity, with web resources and maps available showing opportunity areas that cross the boundary into the Lewes local plan area. There are also studies on people’s relationship with nature, and policies on climate change adaptation, cycling, walking and equestrian routes.
- 2.17 Wealden and Mid-Sussex Districts both consider GBI in their local plans, which is important as nature does not respect administrative boundaries. Both place importance on biodiversity corridors for nature. Mid Sussex has a focus on PRow and community recreation facilities due to expected growth around Burgess Hill, and also considers conservation of trees and hedgerows. Wealden is home to Ashdown Forest which has a protected designation and a 7km buffer, which extends into Lewes District, requires strict mitigation measures for any development or disturbance within that zone (e.g. a requirement for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)).
- 2.18 Several of the made Neighbourhood Plans have designated Local Green Spaces and/or highlighted green infrastructure priorities.
- 2.19 More details on the policy and references can be found in Appendix A. A resume of the relevant policy framework is also given in relation to the 5 “Why” principles (chapters 6-10).

3.0 Overview of Lewes' Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 3.1 Lewes District had 99,900 inhabitants at the 2021 census⁴ and covers 292 square kilometres, of which 56% falls within the SDNP.

Topography and Geology

- 3.2 Figure 7 shows the topography of the district, with the dramatic chalk downland and steep scarp slopes of the SDNP crossing the middle of the district. This study is concerned with the areas of Lewes District north and south of the SDNP, which are generally level and low-lying.

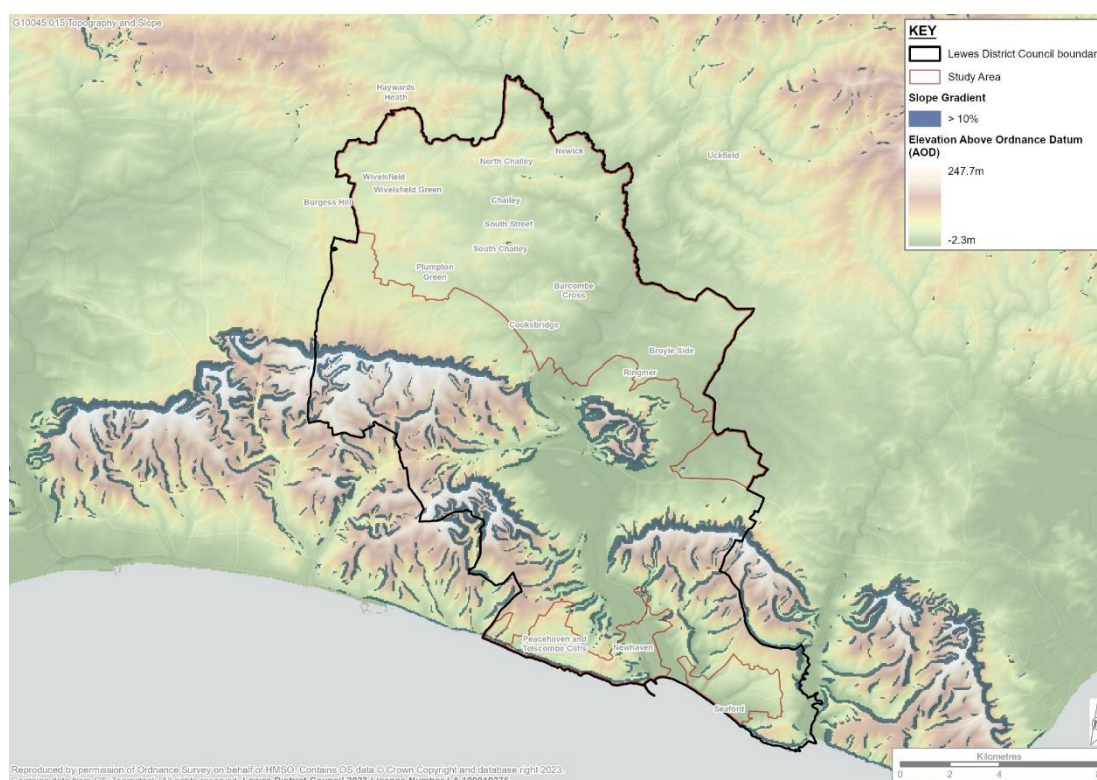


Figure 7: Topography and Slope, Lewes District (Map 2 in the Map Catalogue)

- 3.3 Map 3 in the separate Map Catalogue shows the geology of the district. The northern part of the study area lies predominantly within the Low Weald and is varied with bands of different formations of mudstone, sandstone, siltstone and limestone. Much of the bedrock to the north of this northern part is Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand. The geology transitions southwards across the northern part of the study area into a Weald clay formation, with dark grey thinly bedded mudstones, fine-to medium-grained sandstones, including calcareous sandstone, shelly limestones and clay ironstones.
- 3.4 The geology of the southern part of the study area has a band of Newhaven chalk that extends from Brighton to Seaford covering this area. There are localised pockets of clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group near Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford.

⁴ ONS - Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence.

The Lambeth Group deposits make ground conditions highly variable, unpredictable and potentially unstable which can cause engineering issues. However, it also sustains locally distinctive habitats such as acid grassland.

Types of Green and Blue Infrastructure

Broad Habitats

- 3.5 Maps 4 and 5 in the separate Map Catalogue show the broad habitats in the north and south respectively.
- 3.6 Table 1 shows the areas of different land uses, in terms of “broad habitats” for the 13,062 ha area outside of the SDNP which is the focus of this study. All areas are rounded and approximate.

Table 1: Broad Habitats of the Study Area

Broad Habitats	Area in hectares	% of land use
Agricultural land <i>Arable and pastoral land</i>	7339	56%
Woodland <i>Broadleaved, coniferous or mixed woodland including scattered heathland trees</i>	1852	14%
Non-GBI/ Urban <i>Roads, buildings, sealed surfaces, unvegetated unsealed surfaces including mineral workings</i>	1217	9%
Private gardens <i>Mostly soft landscaped spaces which can contribute to GBI</i>	1211	9%
Grassland <i>Continuous cover of modified, natural or semi-natural grasses including sports pitches and amenity sites. Distinct from “semi-natural grassland” (below) as it is found in urbanised areas or associated with infrastructure. Does not include agricultural grassland</i>	893	7%
Heathland and scrub <i>Vegetation dominated by native shrubs, may include grasses and herbs</i>	214	2%
Water <i>Ponds, reservoirs and reedbeds</i>	163	1%
Rock and scree <i>Cliffs, boulders, rock and shingle, in the natural environment. Includes supralittoral vegetated shingle</i>	69	<1%
Semi-natural grassland <i>Rough grassland and marsh – distinct from “grassland” above as found outside urbanised areas or infrastructure. Does not include agricultural grassland.</i>	53	<1%
Littoral mixed sediments	51	<1%

Broad Habitats	Area in hectares	% of land use
<i>Shoreline mud, shingle and sand</i>		

Blue Infrastructure - Watercourses

- 3.7 The River Ouse runs from the northern border of Lewes District, through the SDNP to the estuary at Newhaven. The eastern arm of the River Adur passes to the west of Wivelsfield before heading further west out of the district north of Burgess Hill. In total the Lewes Local Plan area has 29km of statutory main river and 319km of other watercourses.
- 3.8 Maps 6 and 7 show the principal watercourses in the study area. A detailed analysis of blue infrastructure is made at Chapter 6, “Nature Rich and Beautiful Places” and Chapter 9 “Improved Water Management”.

Linear GBI – Active Travel Network

- 3.9 There are 618km of PRoW across the District, 348km of which are in the LDC plan area.
- 3.10 Map 8 shows the active travel network in the district. A detailed analysis of how the active travel network contributes to GBI in the study area is made at Chapter 7, “Active and Healthy Places”.

Accessible Open Spaces

- 3.11 The Lewes Open Space Strategy⁵ maps all open space typologies, together with an assessment of open space standards for quantity, quality, value and accessibility.
- 3.12 Of the greatest relevance to the GBI study are the following typologies of accessible open space – see Maps 9 and 10, extracted from the Lewes Open Space Strategy 2020:
- Amenity Greenspaces;
 - Natural and semi-natural Greenspaces;
 - Parks and Gardens; and
 - Green Corridors and Cycleways.

GBI Assets and Typologies

- 3.13 Maps 11 and 12 bring all the above sources of information together to show the principal GBI Assets and Typologies at district-wide scale. Whilst all open land and indeed some parts of the urban fabric contribute to the GBI resource, the key assets are the district’s:
- Protected Areas;
 - Priority Habitats;

⁵ <https://planningpolicyconsult.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/1568674/192047813.1/PDF/-/Lewes%20District%20Open%20Space%20Strategy.pdf>

- Watercourses;
- Accessible Open Spaces – many of the protected areas and priority habitats are also managed as public open space, so Maps 11 and 12 only show the other accessible open spaces not protected or prioritised for habitat value; and
- Active Travel Network – for ease of interpretation, this is shown Map 8 and in detail for each settlement appraisal – see chapter 11.

District-wide Analysis

3.14 Chapters 6 to 10 analyse the district's GBI in terms of the five "Why" principles of GBI benefit. For each of the principles, the analysis is structured as follows:

- A Vision statement, derived from Natural England's guidance and reflective of the priorities in Lewes District;
- A statement of the strategic priorities for GBI, derived from Natural England's guidance;
- A summary of key points arising from local policy review and stakeholder engagement;
- A topic analysis of GBI provision, deficiencies, priorities and opportunities, illustrated by relevant maps; and
- Case studies of good GBI practice and signposting to relevant standards and guidance.

- 3.15 For each of the five “Why” principles, the district-wide analysis is broken down into the topics shown at Figure 8 below. These topics align with the strategic priorities advised by Natural England and the review of local policies and stakeholder priorities.

Principle 1: Nature Rich and Beautiful places

Managing Core Sites to deliver the 30 by 30 nature goal
 Strengthening and De-fragmenting Ecological Networks
 Contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain objectives
 Sustaining Healthy Soils
 Contributing to Landscape Character and Distinctiveness

Principle 2: Active and healthy places

Increasing accessible spaces
 Improving Connectivity and Enabling Active Travel
 Inclusive Access to Natural Green Spaces
 Healthy Communities

Principle 3: Thriving and Prosperous Places

Sustainable Development and Regeneration
 High Streets and Business Centres
 Supporting the Visitor Economy
 Sustaining and Enhancing Natural Capital – supply of food and woodland produce
 Training, Skills and Volunteering

Principle 4: Improved Water Management

Improving Flood Risk Management
 Water Quality Enhancement

Principle 5: Resilient and climate-positive places

Increasing carbon stored in habitats
 Urban Greening for climate resilience
 Future-proofing existing GBI

Figure 8: The “Why” Principles and related priorities for Lewes District

4.0 Stakeholder Views

- 4.1 In September 2023, stakeholder consultation was undertaken via a workshop with LDC and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) planning and technical officers. This was followed by one-to-one interviews between TEP and technical experts from ESCC, DEFRA group organisations and local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
- 4.2 TEP also conducted interviews with local representatives from settlements and parishes across the Study area.
- 4.3 Consultees were asked to highlight relevant local policies and initiatives, and to explain local issues and opportunities, with the discussion structured in terms of the 5 Natural England “Why” principles.
- 4.4 The stakeholder consultation results are presented in Appendix B alongside details of the process and consultees.
- 4.5 Lewes District covers two very different geographical zones – the rural inland area to the north of the SDNP and the urban coastal settlements to the south. The consultation is summarised in terms of district-wide responses, but issues specific to North and South Lewes are also highlighted.
- 4.6 Relevant insights from the consultation relating to the “Why” principles are summarised at the beginning of chapters 6-10. These help to put the technical information into local context.
- 4.7 Stakeholder analysis relevant to individual settlements is included in the settlement appraisals, which are explained further in chapter 11.

5.0 Local Initiatives

- 5.1 Residents, communities, businesses, landowners and environmental practitioners are very active in the creation and management of GBI across Lewes District. The district enjoys many formal and informal partnerships which have formed to address matters of environmental concern, e.g. climate action, local flooding, nature recovery, improvements in access and creation of private and social enterprises dependent on the outdoor environment.
- 5.2 Table 2 lists local initiatives drawn to TEP's attention during the process of policy review and stakeholder engagement. This will not be a full list and it is hoped that promoters of other initiatives will come forward during consultation, so that the final GBI Study can be as inclusive as possible.
- 5.3 One of the "How" Principles – see chapter 14 - is that GBI is delivered through partnership and there is an opportunity for LDC or a partner organisation to host a directory and network of GBI initiatives.
- 5.4 Table 2 also summarises some of the known local initiatives, organised in terms of the 5 "Why" Principles. One opportunity for enhancing GBI is through broadening of the scope of existing initiatives to cover a wider range of GBI benefits. This is picked up again at Chapter 14.

Table 2: Summary of existing known local GBI initiatives in and around the study area, organised by “Why” principle

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Web link (if available)	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
The Ouse Valley Climate Action Project	Ouse Valley – Lewes District	https://southdownstrust.org.uk/ouse-valley-climate-action/					
River Festival	Lewes	https://www.visitlewes.co.uk/whats-on/river-festival-p1782351					
Emergency Food Network	Lewes District	https://sussexcommunity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/LDFP-Statement-In-Response-To-LDC-Cost-Of-Living-Fund.pdf					
Seaford to Eastbourne Nature Recovery Project	Seaford	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/seaford-to-eastbourne-nature-recovery-project-launches`					
Nature Space Scheme - Partnership	East Sussex	https://naturespaceuk.com/new-conservation-scheme-for-great-crested-newts-comes-to-east-sussex/					
Cockshut Stream Restoration Project	South Downs National Park (SDNP)	https://www.cockshutstream.org/					
Changing Chalk	East Sussex	https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/the-changing-chalk-partnership					
Chalk Rangers	Lewes and Eastbourne	https://www.railwaylandproject.org/post/welcome-to-our-chalk-life-rangers					
Walk the Chalk	England Coastal Path and Lewes	https://walkthechalk.org/					
Good Catch	London	https://www.sustainweb.org/about/					
The Tide Mill Project	SDNP and Sussex	https://tidemillsproject.uk/					

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Web link (if available)	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
Sussex Community Development Association	Sussex	https://sussexcommunity.org.uk/about-us/					
Natural Flood Management - Making a Difference in Lewes (LDC, OART and SWT)	Lewes District	https://makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com/natural-flood-management/					
Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve Extension Project	Newhaven	https://seafordpartnership.co.uk/ouse-estuary-nature-reserve-extension/					
Natural Flood Management	Adur, Ouse, Wivelsfield	https://oart.org.uk/project/natural-flood-management/					
Farmers Clusters	SDNP	https://www.farmerclusters.com/profiles/south-east/csff140008-eastern-south-downs/					
SEA Environmental Alliance	Seaford	https://www.seafuture.org/about-us/					
Storing the Storm <i>Barcombe Case Study</i>	Barcombe	https://makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Storing-the-Storm-Barcombe-case-study-2023.pdf					
Storing the Storm <i>Plumpton Case Study</i>	Plumpton	https://makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Storing-the-Storm-Plumpton-case-study-2023.pdf					
Storing the Storm <i>Ringmer Case Study</i>	Ringmer	https://makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Storing-the-Storm-Ringmer-Scouts-case-study-2023.pdf					
Trees for Seaford	Seaford	https://treesforseaford.wordpress.com/					
Hill Stone Wood	Sussex	https://hillstonewood.com/					

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Web link (if available)	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
Lost Woodland	Low Weald area of West Sussex and northeast of Lewes District	Love our Lost Woods! (smallwoods.org.uk)					
Egrets Way Cycle Path	Newhaven and Lewes	https://www.egretsway.org.uk/route					
Wilder Ouse (formerly Sussex Flow Initiative)	River Ouse Valley - Barcombe	https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/get-involved/projects/wilder-ouse					
Ringmer Community Orchard	Ringmer	Ringmer Community Orchard — Common Cause					
Natural Flood Management – Wivelsfield	Wivelsfield	https://makingadifferenceinlewesdistrict.com/natural-flood-management/					
Denton Sensory Garden	Newhaven	https://sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/community-hubs/newhaven/denton-island-community-garden/					



PART 2 – Lewes District’s Green and Blue Infrastructure

6.0 Principle 1: Nature-rich and beautiful places

Vision

- 6.1 Lewes District’s GBI supports nature to recover and thrive everywhere, in towns and countryside, conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and habitats, geology and soils, and our cultural and personal connections with nature.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a strategic level GBI should:

- Integrate with Local Nature Recovery Strategies and seek to contribute to the Nature Recovery Network and contribute to national target to create and restore wildlife rich habitats and to protect at least 30% of land.
- Create and strengthen networks of habitats and reduce fragmentation
- Help deliver Biodiversity Net Gain requirements
- Contribute to cross species objectives such as pollinator strategies
- Help achieve targeted individual species recovery
- Maintain and enhance geodiversity assets
- Prevent and reduce soil degradation and loss
- Be designed to deliver multiple benefits including landscapes that have a distinct sense of place

Insights from Policy Review (more details in Appendix A)

- Local communities should be able to enjoy access to the SDNP and a high quality network of habitats.
- Biodiversity interventions will include nature-based solutions, ecosystem service provision, natural flood management, renaturing and rewilding, managing council land for biodiversity, community-led projects and nature-friendly development.
- Areas of rich biodiversity also have great potential for managing water quality and flood mitigation.

Insights from Stakeholder Engagement (more details in Appendix B)

- The LNRS will be developed over the next 12-18 months led by ESCC. Habitat and species priorities will emerge through the LNRS.
- A Nature Recovery Network Report by Sussex Wildlife Trust is planned for spring 2024 which will look at core areas, buffers, and where policy and delivery should be focused.
- Local Wildlife Sites are not all under positive management. Even where they are owned by a sympathetic landowner, they often need investment and funding.

- There is a need to protect and improve existing open spaces to provide opportunities for all to enjoy nature close to home to improve wellbeing and encourage interest in nature and conservation.
- Encouraging local groups in areas with potential for improved habitats will be most helpful.
- Full restoration of some habitats such as rivers and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) can be constrained if there are access routes present, for example a floodplain cannot be fully restored where the works would cut off access.
- It is important to consider the impact of human access on sensitive wildlife areas and maximise chances for interaction with nature in urban areas to engage people with the natural environment.
- Chalk is an internationally rare geology and the associated springs and aquifers are important for biodiversity and water supply.
- There is concern over how chalk grassland will adapt to a changing climate – it cannot migrate.
- Some communities that are close to green and blue spaces and natural resources (like the SDNP) have limited awareness of, or access to, those spaces.
- Many rural villages under pressure from development want to maintain character and green space.
- Opportunities identified by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership regarding biodiversity opportunity areas are policy integration, education and community engagement, landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes, farmland bird interest, chalk grassland management, restoration and creation, volunteer opportunities and access improvements.

Nature Conservation Resource

- 6.2 Maps 13 and 14 show Statutory Ecological and Geodiversity Designations north and south. Maps 15 and 16 show Notable Habitats North and South. Due to data licencing restrictions, local ecological designations cannot be shown on maps, but there are about nine Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in the south, covering grasslands, coastal and scrub areas. There are about 30 LWSs in the north, mostly covering woodlands, with some wetlands, scrub and grassland.
- 6.3 The northern part of the district is low-lying over largely clay soils, which influences the habitats present.
- 6.4 The River Ouse and its associated floodplain with meandering tree lined minor river and stream valleys flow south through the northern part of the district, forming a county-scale wildlife corridor with trees such as alder, willow, and poplar visually prevalent. There are also priority habitat areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh along the Ouse and its tributaries that provide habitats for foraging and breeding wader birds, and important aquatic species like sea trout and sea lampreys. The ditch networks also provide valuable habitat for invertebrates.
- 6.5 A relatively high proportion of the north comprises broadleaf woodland with oak and ash, some of which is identified as ancient woodland. Some areas of woodland are fragmented following assarting (clearing woodland for agriculture) dating back to medieval times. The historic small and irregular field patterns remain present in areas,

often with species rich hedgerows and shaws that may be remnants of the woodland assarting.

- 6.6 Other vegetation types in the north include the lowland grasslands and heathlands at Chailey Common, the lowland dry acid grassland around Ditchling Common and the stream of chalk rivers that run along the foot of the northern scarp slopes of the SDNP.
- 6.7 In the south, there are distinct vegetation types within the maritime cliffs and slopes between Peacehaven and Newhaven, the coastal vegetated shingle at Seaford Bay, and the mudflats around South Heighton. The northern edge of the coastal downs abuts the SDNP, but in this marginal zone are open spaces with a chalk downland character, with occasional patches of acid heath – see Map 16.
- 6.8 The Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere reserve is home to 211 species that have been recorded on international conservation lists. Nationally designated sites include Ditchling Common SSSI, Chailey Common SSSI and Plashett Park Wood SSSI in the north and the Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs SSSI in the south. There are several LWSs in the north, mostly ancient woodland. Seaford Head Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in the south is home to many nationally rare and significant species of plants, birds and insects.



Figure 9: Bee orchid

Managing Core Sites to deliver the 30 by 30 goal

- 6.9 Political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in 2020, including the UK, committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030⁶. One expression of this commitment is the “30 by 30” goal which is to see at least 30% of land protected and managed for nature by 2030.
- 6.10 In essence, the goal is to see 30% of land:
- In a “Protected Area”; or
 - In an “Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure” (OECM).
- 6.11 Definitions are shown in the box below.

The “30 by 30” goal for protection of nature

The full definition of the “30 by 30” goal is stated as Target 3 in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF):

“Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.”

The UK goal is stated as a commitment for 30% of land to be protected and managed for nature recovery by 2030.

Under the CBD, the 30% means land that is either:

- In a “Protected Area”, or
- In an Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure (OECM)

While national parks meet the IUCN definition of a protected area, most conservationists consider that UK national parks in their entirety do not meet the GBF Target 3 criteria because large proportions are not designated for ‘*particular importance for biodiversity*’ nor are they “*effectively conserved and managed*” for nature.

The IUCN CBD defines OECMs as:

“A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values” (CBD, 2018).

Their purpose is the same as that of Protected Areas - to provide long-term and effective conservation of biodiversity in the areas they cover – as is the level of importance for biodiversity. OECMs have a distinctive advantage in expanding long-term conservation efforts through a grassroots approach by distributing the responsibility for protecting biodiversity among a wider group of stakeholders. This approach also increases the visibility of individual stakeholder contributions towards conservation efforts.

⁶ [Home - Leaders Pledge for Nature](#)

- 6.12 In December 2023 DEFRA published ‘Delivering 30 by 30 on land in England’⁷ which provides guidance on types of land that may be included. To qualify for the 30 by 30 goal, sites must comply with three categories of criteria covering purpose, protection and management.
- 6.13 To meet the purpose criterion, the site should have biodiversity protection as its main purpose to qualify as a ‘protected area’ even if it has other secondary objectives. Alternatively, it may have protection of nature as a secondary objective, as long as the primary purpose does not conflict with this. Then it could count as an OECD.
- 6.14 To meet the protection criterion, the area must be effectively protected from loss or damage to biodiversity, legally or otherwise.
- 6.15 The management criteria cover requirements for governance, management plans, monitoring, evidence of long term sustainability and wildlife value.
- 6.16 The publication describes types of site and designation currently considered as counting towards the 30 by 30 goal, and further areas with potential to count:
- Designations currently counting towards 30 by 30 include the national designations of SSSI, National Nature Reserve (NNR), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites. Woodland areas that are protected and managed for biodiversity, such as the public forest estate are also included.
 - Areas considered as potential sites for 30 by 30 include priority habitat and some additional woodland areas, LNRs and Country Parks, Natural World Heritage Sites, National Parks and National Landscapes, Nature Recovery Projects and farmland within any of the above under appropriate management.
 - Further nationally unmapped areas with potential to be included for 30 by 30 are Landscape Recovery projects and chalk stream recovery projects, land under appropriate agri-environment schemes, LWSs, and other private or public estate such as environmental NGO estate or BNG ‘habitat banks’.
- 6.17 As more Defra guidance is due on the 30 by 30 targets during 2024, land in Lewes District can be examined for compliance with the three types of criteria listed above to build up a clearer picture of the potential for nature recovery.
- 6.18 For the time being, this GBI study suggests there is scope for improvement, given the following analysis which suggests that 21.45% of Lewes District outside the SDNP might eventually meet the 30 by 30 goal – as shown at Map 17:
- Statutory designated nature sites (SSSI, LNR): 420.51 hectares;
 - Natural and semi-natural greenspace under Lewes District Council or community management: 513.17 hectares – although not necessarily all is currently managed with biodiversity as an objective;
 - Land under Countryside Stewardship agreement: 2015.90 hectares;

⁷https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65807a5e23b70a000d234b5d/Delivering_30by30_on_land_in_England.pdf

- Woodlands in a long-term management plan agreed with Forestry Commission: 436.05 hectares; and
 - Land pledged for nature under the Weald to Waves initiative: Area unknown, but there are 9 householder pledges and 1 other pledge.
- 6.19 The different categories above can be further examined to establish the management timeframes and commitments, with reference to the definitions and any further emerging guidance from the government.
- 6.20 To help meet the national 30 by 30 objective, it will be necessary to encourage and enable a variety of landowners to bring all existing priority habitats into nature-oriented positive management and increase the area of priority habitat – see Nature Networks case study.

Nature Networks

Farmers and land managers can have a huge impact on nature's recovery. There are different schemes in Lewes District to help engage farmers, landowners and land managers to make a positive difference.

Farmer clusters provide support for a 'lead farmer' interested in environmental collaboration to invite neighbouring farmers to create a shared vision for nature recovery. They then assign a facilitator to support with training, funding and collaboration.

Weald to Waves is a local initiative aiming to register over 20,000 hectares as a ribbon of largely contiguous natural habitat along a corridor of rivers including the Ouse so that wildlife can travel through the landscape more easily. This network of farmers, land managers, councils, researchers, wildlife charities, schools, gardeners and community groups has a set of interactive [maps](#) which help to track and connect projects.

DEFRA has been regularly monitoring different methods of engaging farmers and supporting them with nature recovery projects, and publishes regular blogs and evidence reports.

[A test and trials spotlight: Weald to Waves – Farming \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Strengthening and De-fragmenting Ecological Networks

- 6.21 The Sussex Nature Partnership has identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (see Maps 18 and 19). These are areas that present the best opportunity for enhancing biodiversity, and often provide buffers around or links between existing sites.
- 6.22 In order to drill down a further level into opportunities for connecting ecological networks in Lewes District, Maps 20 and 21 show core areas of biodiversity connectivity and linear corridors – thumbnails shown at Figure 10 below.

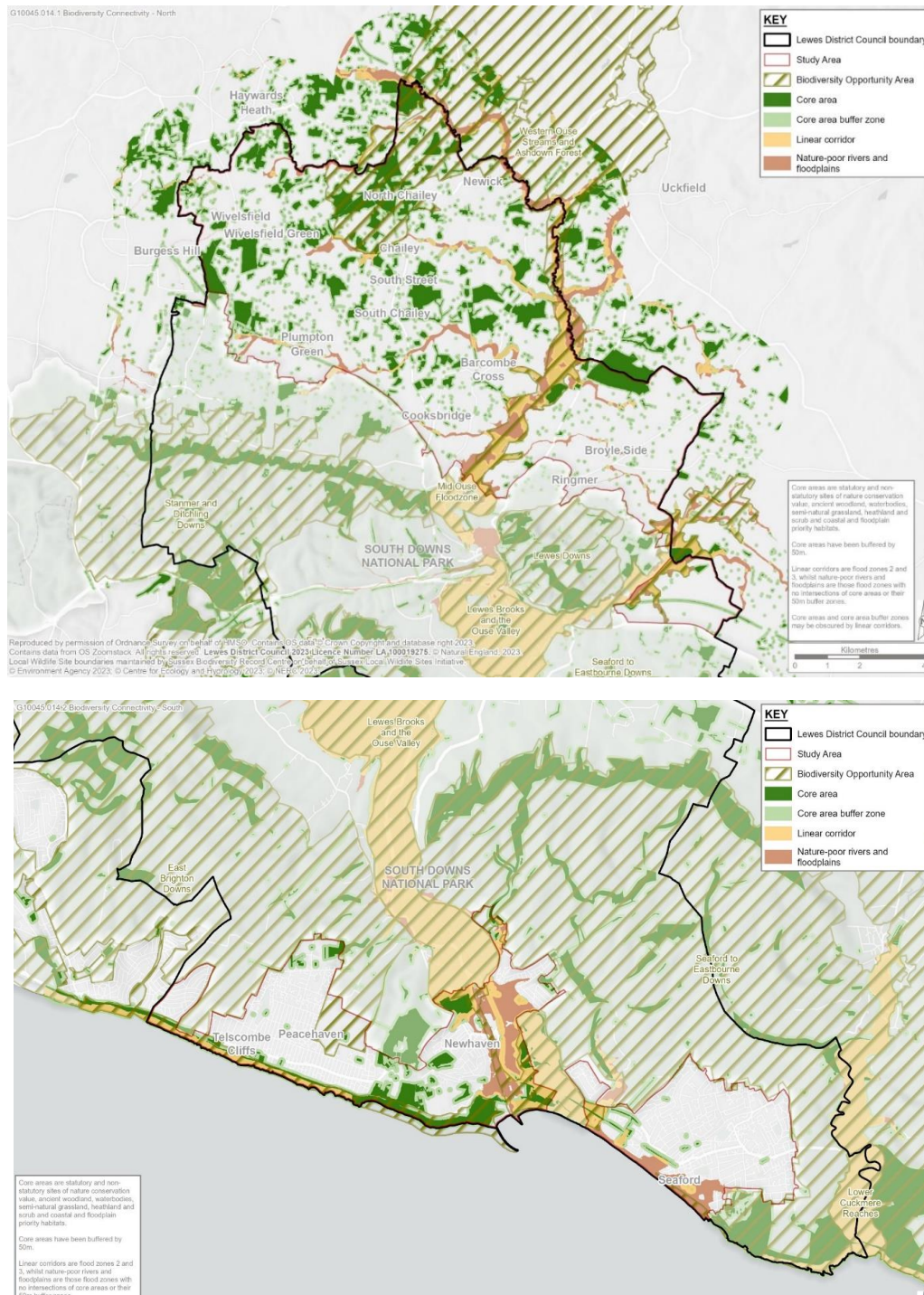


Figure 10: Biodiversity Connectivity North and South (Maps 20 and 21 from the Map Catalogue)

- 6.23 Core areas are existing protected statutory and non-statutory sites of nature conservation, irreplaceable and priority habitats such as ancient woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, waterbodies, semi-natural grassland, heath land and scrub, and coastal and floodplain priority habitats, plus a 50m buffer around them. These would be priority areas for management and expansion of existing habitats.
- 6.24 Given the importance of Lewes District's watercourses for ecological connectivity, and the associated water management benefits, Maps 20 and 21 also show the flood zones which do not have any core areas or associated buffer zones. For this study, these are classified as "nature-poor linear corridors" due to the current absence of priority habitats and nature conservation management agreements.
- 6.25 Creation of floodplain habitats such as pools, wet woodlands and grasslands, or even fencing out sections of riverbank to allow natural regeneration will improve connectivity and contribute to GBI principle 4 "Improved Water Management".
- 6.26 Such habitat creation can usually be accommodated in a sustainable farming initiative since floodplain land is unsuitable for tillage and livestock access to water can be maintained. Public access routes alongside watercourses are very important to Lewes' residents, both in terms of protecting and improving existing rights of way and opening new connections. However, this can conflict with floodplain restoration and livestock management, so collaborative approaches to detailed design and routing will be needed.
- 6.27 Policy for ecological networks would include support for measures to bring core areas and buffer zones into a management system with biodiversity as a primary or secondary objective (see 30 by 30 definitions above); and to promote river and floodplain restoration in the "nature-poor linear corridors", taking opportunity to maintain and enhance public access, using collaborative design approaches to resolve potential conflicts with nature recovery and rural land management where possible.

Contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain objectives

- 6.28 Mandatory BNG, set at 10% under the Environment Act (2021), will generate a steady flow of on and off-site biodiversity enhancements associated with development. Local Plan policy has some influence over how and where the enhancements are made, and can increase the net gain % above 10%, where justified and locally tested. The preferred policy direction in the emerging Local Plan is for major developments to attain a 20% BNG, with off-site measures being consistent with the strategic aims of the LNRS and/or the GBI Network.
- 6.29 Outside the development sector, voluntary biodiversity contributions and corporate "nature-related disclosures" may also stimulate a flow of revenue towards BNG.
- 6.30 The LNRS will identify areas of priority for nature recovery. This in turn will influence policy about where BNG contributions can be most usefully deployed.
- 6.31 The role of a GBI Strategy is to identify how and where biodiversity improvements can be most multi-functional i.e. delivering against the five "Why" GBI principles. An analysis of current deficiencies and opportunities is set out at Table 3, based on the evidence arising from spatial analysis, stakeholder engagement and policy review.

This table can be used to assist developers, planners and landowners about optimal places to deliver BNG, whether that be mandatory, policy-driven or voluntary.

Table 3: Spatial Priorities for Biodiversity Net Gain in Lewes District

GBI Principle	Spatial Priority for adding value from BNG	Type of Habitat most likely to add value
Connecting Ecological Networks	Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Nature-poor corridors (Maps 18 to 21)	- Grassland - Woodland - Reedbeds, ponds - In-channel watercourse enhancements e.g. fish barrier removal - Hedgerows and scrubby field margins
Healthy Soils	Regularly tilled soils in arable and leguminous rotations (Maps 22 and 23) Amenity and urban landscapes in and near development (Maps 9 and 10)	- Arable field margins and mixed scrub (including watercourse buffer strips) on productive farmland - Urban habitats that create deep and healthy soils e.g. raingardens, SuDS-enabled civic trees and private gardens with deep soil provision
Beauty and Distinctiveness	Development in the North should focus on creation of habitats that restore the features of the “Low Weald” and “Ouse Valley” landscape character types (Map 24) Development in the South should focus on creation of habitats that restore the features of chalk downland, particularly in “Downland Fringe” open spaces used by coastal town residents (Map 24) Also planting of urban trees in the coastal towns (Map 47)	- North – wet woodland, acid or neutral grassland as appropriate, floodplain grassland, ponds, reedbeds - South – calcareous grassland and scrub in open spaces and urban trees in coastal towns
Nature-connectedness	Enhancement of “natural” habitats in accessible open spaces ideally within 300m of existing or new settlement	Dependent on research about which habitats are most beneficial to mental wellbeing, provided they are appropriate to local character and do not affect perceptions of personal safety in the open space.
Thriving Places	North and South priorities as set out under “Beauty and Distinctiveness” above.	As per “Beauty and Distinctiveness” above

GBI Principle	Spatial Priority for adding value from BNG	Type of Habitat most likely to add value
	Also habitats along primary transport corridors	• Appropriate grassland (acid/neutral/calcareous) on major highway verges
Flood Risk Management and Water Quality Improvement	Highest-risk catchments in the North i.e. Bevern Stream, Longford Stream, Iron River and Hamsey River. Meeching Valley, Tide Mills and other areas at risk of flooding from sea, in the south (Maps 40 and 41)	• Ponds, ditches, floodplain grassland, wet woodlands, field margin habitats along watercourses. • In-channel watercourse enhancements e.g. leaky dams, installation of large woody debris • Managed realignment of watercourses and coastal habitat restoration
Water Resource Management in face of drought	Creation of SuDS features in and around new development and existing settlements Arable habitats on clay soils of the Low Weald Local wetlands in surface water flowpaths (Maps 38 and 39)	• Swales and raingardens in urban areas • Ponds in rural areas
Climate Resilience and habitat carbon storage	Coastal towns Ancient woodland in north areas (Map 46)	• New urban trees • New mixed woodland • Management of existing woodland to address pests, diseases and invasive species • New wetland habitat

Healthy Soils

- 6.32 Soils contain more carbon than habitats and plants combined⁸. Carbon is stored in both organic and inorganic soils. A healthy soil will contain a large number and variety of organisms (i.e. have a high biodiversity) which will interact to provide a wide variety of ecosystem services. It is estimated that perhaps a quarter of all species on earth live in soils, including fungi and bacteria essential for nutrient cycling.
- 6.33 Future partnerships could include working with the rural land management sector to promote healthy soil management that:
- Retains soil on the land by reducing sediment run-off or wind-blown erosion during extremes of rainfall or drought; for example cover-cropping and low-tillage practices in arable areas;
 - Increase organic content of soils through application of organic based manures or compost at appropriate times of year;
 - Enables cropping and grazing practices that increase the carbon stored in soils, typically through use of deeper rooting permanent grassland and clover mixes;
 - Celebrates the economic, cultural and biodiversity value of soils; and
 - Reduces use of pesticides.
- 6.34 LDC's Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy (2019) builds on the previous Pesticide Reduction Plan which is phasing out use of pesticides and increasing pollinator-friendly, best practice landscape management on council sites. Pesticide free parks are promoted through publicity and signage (see figure 11).
- 6.35 Maps 22 and 23 show cropping in Lewes District, based on Crop Map of England data – different tactics for healthy soil management are needed for cereal, leguminous and grassland fields, and Defra's Sustainable Farming Initiative signposts landowners to suitable options to increase soil organic matter (SOM – essentially the carbon stored in a soil) and reduce erosion.
- 6.36 The overall benefits associated with increasing SOM and subsequently the water holding capacity and biodiversity of soil, primarily involve greater environmental resilience to extreme weather events. During dry periods, soils will hold more water and be able to withstand long periods of drought. Whereas during wet periods, soils will have a greater capacity to store water, reducing flooding and erosion.
- 6.37 Moreover, soils with a greater water holding capacity require less water from rainfall or irrigation, increasing their resilience and reducing the cost of irrigation and associated infrastructure. Overall, by increasing the water holding capacity of soil, crop yield and



Figure 11 Pesticide-free Parks

⁸ [BSSS Science-Note Soil-Carbon_Short-Version_Final_May22_75YRS_DIGITAL.pdf \(soils.org.uk\)](#)

environmental resilience will be improved, promoting economic and environmental sustainability – see Horsham Farm case study below.

- 6.38 Managers of golf courses, parks and cemeteries can also apply healthy soil management practices alongside improved agronomic practices, which can improve the resilience of these surfaces, reducing irrigation requirements and all but the most localised pesticide application.

Case Study: Healthy Soil Carbon Management at farm scale in Horsham

David Exwood, the owner of this mixed-farming business is implementing several techniques to increase soil carbon (soil organic matter – SOM) as SOM is vital to a soil's water holding capacity and overall health. The farm covers 2,500 acres. Around 1,800 acres is in a six year arable rotation of winter wheat, winter oats, winter oilseed rape, spring beans and spring maize. The remaining land is grazed by sheep and beef cattle.

SOM can be defined as all the organic materials found in a soil which are part of, or have previously been part of, living organisms. The optimal agricultural soil contains 45% minerals and 5% soil organic matter (SOM), with the remaining 50% being water and air-filled pore space.

Exwood's soil is classed as a silty-clay, characterised by a clay content greater than 50% which is highly productive but challenging to manage. The undulating topography of the land also means diffuse pollution and runoff can be an issue in the area. The climate and soil type can create two extremes of waterlogged soils but alternately incredible periods of dryness. Therefore, soil management is crucial for crop productivity and environmental sustainability.

"Soil organic matter is key to the workability, sustainability and resilience of soils and cropping" – David Exwood

A full soil test is carried out every three years to assess the health of the soil and if management can be changed to improve sustainability. David actively carries out practices with the aim of increasing the SOM content of his soils:

- long, diverse rotations, which increase crop residues incorporated into the soil
- cover cropping, beneficial for overall soil health because crops are grown over the periods when soils would otherwise be bare, protecting soil from degradation.
- grass leys
- organic manures
- straw incorporation
- maintenance of drains to prevent anaerobism
- careful timing of cultivation to minimise soil damage

Since focusing on SOM improvement, David has experienced an SOM increase of 1% in five years, with the current SOM percentage across the farm being between 3-4%. In response, the farm has seen dramatic improvements in yield and workability, along with less cultivation and reduced diesel usage.

- 6.39 New development has a role in soil conservation (see Cultural Charter Case study below):

- Soil conservation and management plans are particularly appropriate for greenfield and open space sites;
- Soil creation plans are appropriate for brownfield development which generates mineral waste that is capable of being blended and formed into soils that can be used in gardens and amenity spaces (a “circular economy” approach);
- Newly-created private gardens could have a minimum soil standard requirement that ensures that incoming residents have deep and fertile soils that can be used for vegetable-growing and also have sufficient water storage capacity to attenuate heavy rainfall. Such a standard could be based on Defra guidance on soil management for landscaping and gardens⁹ which refers to a minimum of 150mm of topsoil over a fertile and uncompacted subsoil.

Case Study: Cultural Charter for Soils and Substrates

The Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) promote a cultural charter for soil and substrates. The Charter invites groups and individuals to champion and cherish soils as integral to culture and promote healthy soil as the basis for nature recovery, through policy and action.



Artwork by Jamie Reid (c)

CULTURAL CHARTER FOR SOILS & SUBSTRATES

Soil and substrates, along with air and water, are vital to flourishing biodiversity and sustaining all life. This Cultural Charter for Soils and Substrates encourages change in our perception of soils, bringing the realities of the living world to human understanding and care. The Charter invites groups and individuals to:

1. Champion and cherish soils as integral to culture, and promote healthy soil as a growing medium and the basis for nature recovery.
2. Value the unique potential of every different soil, subsoil and novel substrate.
3. Prevent the waste of topsoil on all landscapes and optimise biodiversity, especially in the design and development of public projects so as to harness every opportunity.
4. Enable people to experience the value and beauty of soil, reconnecting us with each other, land and nature.
5. Embed a community land ethic based on circular economies which minimise carbon miles and maximise carbon capture.
6. Demonstrate the appropriate and local use of subsoils, biochar and recycled soils to strengthen the culture, ecology and topography of place.
7. Encourage strategic and resourceful approaches to the creative management of soils to create mosaics of habitats. Most species-rich environments thrive on nutrient-poor soils.
8. Be bold in our responses as we work together to restore and transform landscapes for the well-being of future generations and all life, in and on Earth.

<https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/CulturalCharterforSoilsandSubstrates2022.png>

⁹ Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites (publishing.service.gov.uk) – understood to be currently under review.

Contributing to Landscape Character and Distinctiveness

- 6.40 The Lewes District Landscape Character Assessment¹⁰ (LCA) has identified a series of landscape character types as shown at Map 24.
- 6.41 In terms of this GBI Study, the most relevant character types are those that are larger in extent and provide accessible open spaces near settlements. These are:
- Western Low Weald;
 - Lewes Ouse catchment; and
 - Downland Fringe.
- 6.42 The LCA provides guidance on forces for change and management and creation of GBI assets in each of the above areas, with the aim of restoring and/or enhancing strong and distinctive character. The key priorities and opportunities for GBI policy and delivery are summarised in the subsequent paragraphs. These GBI management guidelines aim to use GBI to preserve and/or restore natural beauty, biodiversity, and historical significance, taking account of the evolving forces of change in the landscape.

Western Low Weald (Landscape Character Area C)



Figure 12: Land near Cooksbridge, Western Low Weald

Landscape Character

- 6.43 The Western Low Weald is characterised by slightly acidic loamy and clay soils with limited drainage. The land is undulating with some high points offering extensive views. Land use primarily includes pasture and arable agriculture, sometimes with small to

¹⁰ AECOM (2023): Lewes Landscape Character Assessment

medium-scale, irregular fields. In the northern part of the character area, the landscape is generally enclosed, marked by small, nucleated settlements and winding road networks of ancient droving origin.

- 6.44 In the southern part of the Character Area near Plumpton, Cooksbridge and Ringmer, the settlement pattern is more characterised by two-storey residential development in a linear and ribbon arrangement adjacent to the road networks. There are also several smaller concentrated areas of residential development and commercial and industrial development interspersed in the agricultural landscape, including farmsteads.
- 6.45 Overhead transmission lines in the north urbanise the area. The main transport routes, A275 and A272, also have localised detracting features due to noise and traffic, as does to a lesser extent the railway.
- 6.46 Despite this, most of the character area maintains a rural and tranquil character due to its land use and dense vegetation, with church towers marking the locations of villages.

Biodiversity, Recreation, and Heritage Aspects

- 6.47 Vegetation in the area includes medium to large woodland blocks, ancient and tree-lined field enclosures, hedgerows, and hedgerow trees. The River Ouse and its tributaries wind through the landscape, often bordered by mature willow trees. Various hydrological features like ponds, weirs, and springs are found, adding to the area's charm.
- 6.48 Recreational access is facilitated by an extensive PRoW network, including routes like the Sussex Border Path and Sussex Ouse Valley Way. Pockets of Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Access Land are scattered around, and the Chailey Link Walk is a marked circular route.
- 6.49 Heritage associations include ancient routes like Theobalds Bridleway, medieval assart fields, and hedgerow boundaries. Notable listed buildings and scheduled monuments add historical significance. Large estates contribute to designed landscapes, such as the tree-lined avenue near Lunces Hall and Newick Park, a Registered Park and Garden.

Forces for Change

- increased agricultural pressure leading to hedgerow degradation and watercourse runoff;
- expanding settlements, larger development in farmsteads, and linear development along road networks with urbanising effects;
- improved PRoW networks with increased recreational pressures; and
- challenges posed by climate change, including extreme weather events and pressure for renewable development.

GBI Management Guidelines

- Retain and enhance the GBI network within the broader High Weald National Landscape and SDNP's ecosystems;

- Avoid adverse impacts on the SDNP's and High Weald National Landscape's indicators of natural beauty and their setting;
- 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;
- Conserve and enhance recreational access, particularly along watercourses;
- Protect and retain existing vegetation, especially ancient woodland;
- Implement new developments within a robust landscape framework; and
- Retain and aim to restore historic patterns of field enclosures and settlement, particularly where lost to amalgamation.

Lewes Ouse Catchment (Landscape Character Area E2)



Figure 13 Lewes Ouse Catchment near Barcombe Cross

- 6.50 The Landscape Character Area is a continuous narrow stretch of land in the northern part of the district. It extends from the edge of Lewes and the SDNP along the alignment of the River Ouse to the district's northeastern edge.

Landscape Character

- 6.51 The area has loamy and clay floodplain soils and high groundwater levels. The landscape is mainly low-lying and flat, with subtle undulations, ranging from approximately 0m to +10m AOD.
- 6.52 The River Ouse, characterised by its meandering course, is a dominant hydrological feature, along with various tributaries and small oxbow lakes. The River Ouse is a prominent physical and visual feature with varying water speeds, impacting sound levels.
- 6.53 Most of the area is very tranquil, owing to its rural character, absence of built structures and limited vehicle presence. There is limited perception of wider infrastructure, albeit some local intrusion from the A272 and occasional views of distant electricity pylons.
- 6.54 Intervisibility with the SDNP is prevalent from the more open southern part of the Landscape Character Area, forming part of the National Park's setting.

Biodiversity, Recreation and Heritage Aspects

- 6.55 The area is comprised of small-scale, irregular floodplain field enclosures primarily used for pastoral purposes. These fields are bordered by hedgerows and intermittent riverside trees. Woodland coverage increases in the northern section of the character area, contrasting with the more open southern section, altering the perception of enclosure and the broader landscape.
- 6.56 Riparian vegetation, including scrub and mature trees like willow and alder, partially obscures the River Ouse in places. Notable woodland areas include Oaktree Wood, Lodge Wood, Rocky Wood, and Hanger Wood.
- 6.57 Recreational activities include the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, which largely follows the course of the River Ouse. Other pastimes such as coarse fishing and painting are enjoyed.
- 6.58 There are distinctive views of the Grade I listed Parish Church of St Margaret, Isfield, from the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, and there are associations with the designed landscape near the remains of Isfield Castle and Isfield Place.

Forces for Change

- Climate change, leading to more extreme weather events like flooding, heat stress, and riverbank erosion;
- Urban expansion and development in the surrounding landscape, reducing tranquillity;
- Increased agricultural pressure causing hedgerow degradation and runoff; and
- Improvements to the PRow network and increased recreational pressures.

GBI Management Guidelines

- Enhance recreational access to the River Ouse, its floodplain, and across the Landscape Character Area;
- Promote improvements in vegetation, including hedgerows and woodland succession;
- Encourage local natural flood management initiatives alongside ecological efforts;
- Support Ouse Valley Climate Action goals, involving tree planting, habitat creation, and greener travel initiatives;
- Maintain and enhance the GBI network in connection with the SDNP;
- Refer to relevant SDNPA guidelines to preserve the park's setting; and
- Preserve the ancient field pattern, including strip fields.

Downland Fringe (Landscape Character Area B1)



Figure 13: Downland Fringe, Seaford

- 6.59 The Downland Fringe encompasses several land parcels surrounding Peacehaven, Newhaven and Saltdean, situated between the English Channel to the south and the SDNP to the north. It plays a vital role in physically separating these coastal settlements and providing a setting to the SDNP.

Landscape Character

- 6.60 The bedrock geology includes clay, silt, sand, and chalk, resulting in an undulating landscape with some steep rises, particularly near Fort Newhaven. The land serves various purposes, including arable agriculture, recreational areas, urban uses like sewage works, urban fencing, and hard coastal defences that can be visually detracting.

- 6.61 The vegetation in this area varies, with open spaces and mature vegetation displaying evidence of wind impact. Prominent features include white chalk cliffs and rich habitats such as species-rich chalk grassland. Urban influence from nearby settlements is notable through buildings and various fence types. However, there are pockets of tranquillity with panoramic views extending to the SDNP in the north and the sea, with wind turbines offshore, to the south.

Biodiversity, Recreation and Heritage features of the landscape

- 6.62 The Downland Fringe has ecological significance, partially falling within the Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs SSSI due to its rare plants and distinctive wildflower chalk grassland along the coastline. Castle Hill, Newhaven LNR in the southern part, features maritime grassland, gorse, and scrub, which are important bird habitats.
- 6.63 The area is popular for recreation, hosting a well-used PRow network, CRow access land, Centenary Park, National Cycle Network route 2, the England Coast Path, and Coastal Margin Access Land.
- 6.64 It also has heritage associations, including a 17th-century listed building near Peacehaven and the Bowl Barrow on Peacehaven Heights, a scheduled monument.

Forces for Change

- Development encroachment into open spaces, either physically or through visual encroachment;
- Tourism and recreational pressure along the coastline that may reduce biodiversity;
- Climate change leading to extreme weather events and coastal erosion;
- Continued sea defences with potential urban influence;
- Increased agricultural pressure affecting hedgerows and water quality; and
- Improvements to the PRow network by local volunteers.

GBI Management Guidelines

- Support the Ouse Valley climate action goals, including wildflower planting and wildlife habitat creation;
- Manage recreational and tourism pressures, preserving and enhancing the PRow network;
- Retain and improve GBI assets as a matter of policy;
- Preserve the open setting of the SDNP including long views and the intervisibility between the Downland fringe, the SDNP and the English Channel;
- Use hedging to screen or replace metal or close board fencing; and
- Reinstate historic field boundaries where previously lost to field amalgamation.

7.0 Principle 2: Active and Healthy Places

Vision

- 7.1 Lewes District's green neighbourhoods, green spaces, coastal and waterside walks and green travel routes support active lifestyles, community cohesion and nature connections that benefit physical and mental health, wellbeing, and quality of life. The District's GBI also helps to mitigate health risks such as urban heat stress, noise pollution, flooding, and poor air quality.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve active and healthy communities at a strategic level GBI should:

- Reflect public health authority, health leads, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships, strategic priorities.
- Help achieve area wide specific health targeting for particular illnesses and goals such as an increase in social prescribing.
- Align with health funding and support which can also deliver GI.
- Align with active travel plans

Insights from Policy Review

- Air quality is generally good in the Lewes District plan area, except in Newhaven and Lewes Town (outside the plan area) which have been declared Air Quality Management Areas
- SDNPA has identified the development of health and wellbeing initiatives, and improvement of accessibility to the SDNP by active travel and sustainable transport as outcomes for their Local Plan and Partnership Management Plan.
- Reduction of the need to travel and increase in sustainable and active travel are common themes in local policy.
- There is a need throughout the whole of Lewes District for more community food growing spaces, parks and gardens, provisions for children and young people, amenity greenspace, and outdoor sports facilities for women and girls.
- The accessibility of natural, green and open spaces for use by all residents of differing abilities, ages and backgrounds to improve physical and mental wellbeing is a common theme throughout local policy.
- Much of the SDNP work on GBI by the People and Nature Network (PANN) explores the need for people to access nature in the context of the protection of natural assets for wildlife, and the need to consider different ecosystem services in a holistic way.
- The former Lewes-Uckfield railway line can provide an opportunity for informal recreation and active travel in the north of the District.

Insights from Stakeholder Engagement

- Although there is an ageing population it is important that facilities for children and young people are not neglected or reduced.
- Access to nature for people with health and mobility problems is hugely important.
- Although physical health issues like obesity and asthma remain important, there is an increasing focus on healthy communities and tackling loneliness.
- Safe outdoor spaces for women and girls are needed.
- Safe and accessible outdoor spaces are needed for any vulnerable user groups, including those with mobility issues.
- GBI needs to be accessible, welcoming and inspiring – something people are excited about rather than worried about.
- It is important that people feel connected to their local scenery and associate it with their memories and identity.
- It is important that local people can enjoy the nature on their doorstep and that tourists can travel to visit.
- Often residents are unaware of natural resources like the SDNP on their doorstep.
- The People and Nature networks evidence from SDNP is being used to form a Nature for Health Strategy which is being developed by the Health and Wellbeing Working Group and seeks to improve understanding and collaboration concerning the health benefits of nature.

Increasing Accessible Spaces

- 7.2 Maps 25 and 26 show various classes of accessible GBI in the north and south i.e.:
- Accessible Green Infrastructure – from Natural England’s GI Mapping;
 - Accessible Woodland – from Natural England’s GI Mapping;
 - Accessible Waterside – from Natural England’s GI Mapping; and
 - Other Accessible Open Spaces – from Lewes District Council data.
- 7.3 Map 25 indicates that Access to GBI is inconsistent across North Lewes, with populations in the south and east of the area relatively reliant on access to the SDNP or smaller local open spaces.
- 7.4 The accessible areas of waterside are fragmented, albeit with better access to watersides around settlements, particularly around Barcombe Cross, South Chailey to South Street, Plumpton Green and west of Wivelsfield on the borders of neighbouring Burgess Hill.
- 7.5 Areas with poorer waterside access include the River Ouse south of Barcombe Mills, the Iron River running from Broyle Side and Ringmer to the Ouse, the Hamsey River, and large stretches of Longford and Bevern streams.
- 7.6 Map 26 shows that South Lewes’ communities have better overall access to green and blue spaces as they are within reach of the coast and the SDNP, as well as a network of local parks and amenity green spaces. The 2020 Open Space Strategy (OSS) also

confirms that there is generally better access to open space in the urban conurbations of South Lewes than in the rural villages/settlements north of the SDNP.

- 7.7 However, this only considers geographical distance to nearby greenspaces without accounting for population density or demographics. An analysis of equity and inclusivity of access to greenspace is given later in this chapter.
- 7.8 The 2014 Outdoor Playing Space Study highlighted that all towns in the Lewes District area outside of the SDNP were deficient in outdoor sports and children's play facilities, which is also supported by evidence from the 2020 OSS. Since these studies an improvement programme has invested in new equipment across a number of play areas in the district. Although the demographic of Lewes District is increasingly biased towards older populations, it was noted through stakeholder consultation that this should not result in reduced or deficient facilities for children and young people.

Improving Connectivity and Enabling Active Travel

- 7.9 The Natural England dashboard of survey data for Monitoring Engagement for the Natural Environment (MENE)¹¹ provides information across East Sussex county. Throughout the last 10 years of the survey in the period to 2019/20, over 60% of visits to natural spaces (as selected through the survey methodology) were on foot, and at 2 miles distance or less from home.
- 7.10 The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for East Sussex includes details of plans to increase the number of cycling and walking trips across local authorities, both for leisure and as part of everyday journeys.

The Strategic Network

- 7.11 The South Downs Way and National Cycle Network cross the SDNP from east to west through the SDNP. The National Cycle Network route along the coast links Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe. Existing PRoWs thread north to south – see Map 8.
- 7.12 The England Coast Path officially opened as a National Trail in 2020 and was named as King Charles III Path for his coronation in 2023. It runs from Telscombe Cliffs in the west through Peacehaven through Castle Fort to Newhaven where it crosses the Ouse Estuary on the A259 and then up to Seaford and Seven Sisters Country Park. The path winds through steep and narrow sections of cliff, but seating is located at appropriate viewpoints and there is access to parks, historic monuments, nature reserves, beaches and local cafes and pubs.
- 7.13 The Sussex Ouse Valley Way, including the Egrets Way Network follows the Ouse from Newhaven to Lewes and northwards into the High Weald, passing Barcombe Cross and Newick. The Ouse Valley Way could also link up with the disused Lewes to Uckfield railway line.
- 7.14 In terms of GBI priorities, the strategic network is highly valuable as it offers multiple points of access into linear corridors of natural greenspace. It also contributes to "Thriving and Prosperous Places" (Natural England Principle 3 – see chapter 8)

¹¹ Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (now superseded by the People and Nature Survey)

7.15 The GBI-related opportunities are:

- Maintenance of surfacing and drainage of the strategic network, with forward planning of upgrades and/or re-routing in areas prone to flooding where engineered flood defences may not be maintained in future;
- Waymarking and increasing the number of access points from settlements, new development and the local PRoW networks;
- Ensuring that as far as possible, and particularly within 1km of settlements, the strategic network is as accessible as possible to those with disabilities; and
- Ensuring that major and strategic developments take account of their linkage to the strategic network and make provision for access (directly or indirectly) to it, in accordance with the LCWIP.

Local Networks

- 7.16 Opportunities for increasing local walking and cycling activity and increasing the quality and usage of PRoW are covered in more detail in the local settlement GBI appraisals, discussed at Chapter 11.
- 7.17 The consultation noted that some routes classed as 'quiet roads' may still be intimidating for young or casual cyclists, and that mapped footpaths and cycle paths may sometimes be awkward or intimidating for less experienced or able walkers.

Case Study: Anti-idling campaign in Lewes and Eastbourne

Lewes Council has joined with Eastbourne Council to launch a campaign to encourage drivers to cut down on air pollution by turning off their engine while dropping off children at school. For every minute a vehicle idles, it could fill 150 balloons with toxic chemicals.

Across the District, schools are being invited to sign up to the anti-idling campaign. Those that do will receive digital information packs to send out to parents and pupils, giving them the opportunity to find out more about air pollution and ways to reduce it. The scheme is part of the councils' ongoing work to raise air quality awareness in partnership with East Sussex County Council, [Sussex-air](#) and Public Health England.

Inclusive Access to Natural Green Spaces

- 7.18 Figure 14 (Map 27) shows Accessible Natural Greenspace Inequalities – Local Level. This is derived from Natural England's GI mapping. It considers issues of access inequality within a 300m buffer around greenspace.
- 7.19 The results are presented in matrix form (low to high and 1 to 3) as they are derived from data on population density and amount of natural greenspace. The most favourable scenario (H3) is where there is a relatively low population density and a high provision of local natural greenspace per head of population. Conversely, the least favourable scenario (L1) is where there is a high population density and low provision of local natural greenspace per head of population.

- 7.20 Figure 14 shows there are different issues with equality of access to green space between the north and south of Lewes District. The pink areas show less favourable situations for the urban conurbations with a higher population density and relatively limited access to local natural green space, although as noted earlier, the coastal towns do benefit from access to the coast and some larger natural greenspaces albeit perhaps >300m from population centres.

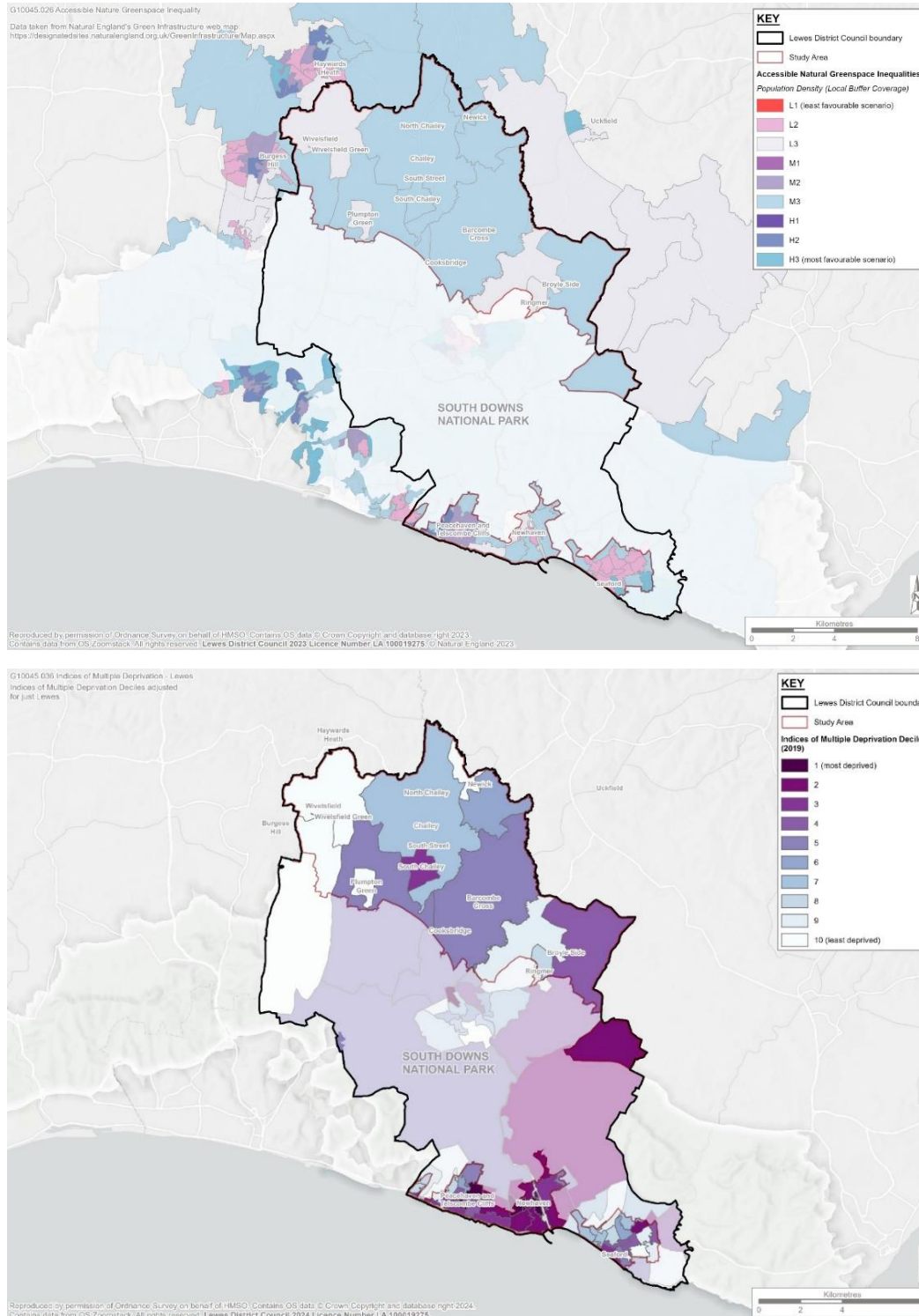


Figure 14: Accessible Greenspace Inequalities and Indices of Multiple Deprivation for Lewes (Maps 27 and 28 from the Map Catalogue)

- 7.21 Map 28 (also shown on Figure 14) shows the Indices of Multiple Deprivations (IMD) across Lewes District. The darker colours around Newhaven and Peacehaven show that residents in those areas may have less free time and disposable income to spend travelling further to access greenspace. People in the most deprived areas (i.e. those within the lower deciles) are most likely to be in need of the wellbeing benefits derived from access to nature.
- 7.22 In respect of inclusive access, the GBI policy and implementation priorities¹² are to increase access to local natural greenspace for “nature connection” and its associated health benefits. This is of particular importance for younger and older residents, where there are various opportunities:
- Ensure that new development considers the provision of high quality access towards the closest natural greenspaces and the protection of the ecological value of those sites;
 - Ensure that major and strategic development include provision for large natural greenspaces (over 2 hectares where possible), preferably with a linear component, because linear greenspaces offer several access points;
 - Improve existing rights of way to make them easier to navigate for those with limited mobility; and
 - Diversify the management of existing large amenity spaces to provide more opportunities for nature-connectedness, for example Forest Schools.

Case Study: Forest Schools

Sussex Forest School’s ethos is ‘nurturing through nature’ and the key inspiration for the holistic development of children, is allowing nature to be the teacher. Through this approach children can flourish in an ever-changing world and connect with all the benefits of nature.

Sessions include songs, stories, games, crafts and skills building such as shelter/den building, fire building, cooking outdoors, flora and fauna investigation and tree climbing.

Forest schools benefit children by:

- Achieving person and social development;
- Learning to problem-solve;
- Improve communication skills;
- Encourage emotional wellbeing; and
- Encourage children to have a positive impact on the environment and to respect and care for the natural world.

- 7.23 As another example of an appropriate response, the SDNP have widened footpaths to make them easier for wheelchair users, and this approach could be expanded as much as possible in natural spaces that are close to settlements outside the SDNP.
- 7.24 The Lewes Playing Pitch Strategy 2020 notes particularly high deficiencies in South Lewes for football pitches. Its calculation of increased demand specifically highlights increased uptake of women’s sports, noting an increased need for women’s facilities in football, cricket and rugby.

¹² Derived from the review of policy and stakeholder engagement discussed at the beginning of this chapter

Healthy Communities

- 7.25 GBI can support and promote healthy communities and cohesive inter and intra-community relationships by setting the scene for local activity in a way that is safe, inviting and appropriate for residents' needs. Local, safe and accessible natural spaces contribute to positive local interactions and sense of identity, helping improve mental wellbeing and combating loneliness.
- 7.26 The largest barriers to accessing nature across East Sussex is 'poor health', followed by 'being busy at work' and 'old age' (according to DEFRA MENE data from 2009-2019¹³). Lewes District has an older than average population and needs to consider accessibility of local scale GBI to people with limited mobility.
- 7.27 It is also necessary to ensure that children, young adults and families are catered for. The 2020 OSS found that Provision for Children and Young People were attributed some of the lowest quality scores. Newhaven particularly is working to avoid association of larger green spaces with antisocial behaviour.
- 7.28 Safety has been noted as an issue that impedes the uptake of cycling and walking along country roads particularly in north Lewes, whilst in south Lewes congestion and poor air quality are larger barriers.
- 7.29 At a strategic level the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will look at achieving a balance across the transport network, where cycle lanes and GBI can support mobility. The Nature for Health Strategy will also be targeting the specific ways in which community and individual health can be improved by improving access to nature.
- 7.30 There are a number of local examples of how communities are designing their local spaces to be more inviting, from skate parks and sensory gardens in Newhaven to memorial gardens in Telscombe, and walkable woodland trails in North Lewes.

Case Study: Telscombe Memory Garden

Telscombe Town Council have a Memory Garden situated at the northern end of Chatsworth Park. Small plaques can be purchased from Telscombe Town Council to be placed on one of the posts with personalised wording. There is a small central mound where residents are encouraged to plant any flowers of their choice and benches are provided around the mound for quiet relaxation in a tranquil setting.

¹³ [Monitoring Engagement in the Natural Environment Survey \(2009 - 2019\) \(arccgis.com\)](#)



Figure 15: Telscombe Memory Garden, Chatsworth Park, Telscombe Cliffs

8.0 Principle 3: Thriving and Prosperous Places

Vision

- 8.1 Lewes District's GBI helps to create and support prospering communities that benefit everyone. It creates high quality environments which are attractive to businesses, investors and tourists. It creates green jobs, supports high streets, and helps sustain the local economy. The special character of GBI in Lewes District's rural and coastal areas provides a setting for sustainable enterprise, community activity and skills uplift.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a strategic level GBI should:

- Be a central objective within plans and policies for new development and regeneration;
- Address gaps or pinch points where GBI demand is not being met and development can contribute to the supply;
- Provide opportunities for investment from a broad range of businesses and investors;
- Enable opportunities for collaboration between local and regional economic development bodies on integrating GBI into economic plans and proposals; and
- Maximise economies of scale for projects through funding mechanisms which can pool resources for environmental projects.

Insights from Policy Review

- Investment in Newhaven Enterprise Zone and port development are intended to revitalise the Newhaven community which has suffered from a decline in manufacturing activity by maximising potential as a gateway to the surrounding tourist hotspots.
- Regeneration in Newhaven is expected to have a positive impact on the neighbouring coastal towns of Telscombe, Peacehaven and Seaford and reduce necessity for outwards commuting to the larger employment hubs in Brighton and Eastbourne.
- New housing developments will be able to provide and support green spaces for nearby communities through existing funding mechanisms and BNG. They will be targeted towards relevant multifunctional GBI and outdoor playing spaces for children and young people.
- Organisations representing local commerce, smaller businesses and farmers have already been engaged in forming the Climate Change Roadmap.

Insights from Stakeholder Engagement

- As local town and parish councils take on responsibility for local green spaces, they will be able to ensure that they serve the particular needs of their communities.
- Many local micro businesses and traders along the south coast rely on commercial van transport and efforts to relieve congestion and promote active travel should work in tandem with practical local needs.
- In North Lewes hospitality, tourism and arts are generally well linked with the natural environment, and increasing sustainable camping and ecotourism initiatives are appearing.
- The farming community and local landowners have potential to play a huge role in the development of a thriving productive and biodiverse landscape through stewardship programmes and community schemes.
- Farmers need to understand what resources are available to help pay for environmental interventions
- The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is supporting a range of projects from STEM Centre equipment in Sussex Downs College in Lewes and Flood defences in Newhaven to Infrastructure improvements in Seven Sisters Country park and Accelerating Climate Based Solutions Project to provide a hub for connecting buyers and sellers of nature-based solutions for carbon sequestration.

Sustainable Development and Regeneration

- 8.2 Quality of life and economic activity in LDC's District Centres and Rural Service Centres¹⁴ are important to prosperity. Within the study area the district centres are Newhaven, Peacehaven & Telscombe Cliffs, and Seaford, with rural service centres at Ringmer and Newick – see Map 29.
- 8.3 New housing and commercial development in the district will be led by the Local Plan process, A new local plan is currently being drafted which will provide the framework for growth over the plan area to 2040
- 8.4 In addition, infrastructure development may come forward outside the Local Plan process; for example water treatment works and pipelines, new highway and rail infrastructure or energy grid connections.
- 8.5 All new development offers opportunity to protect, create and restore GBI, improving accessibility and connectivity between existing GBI assets. A basic level of GBI uplift can be secured through national planning policy and statute which requires GBI provision, BNG, open space provision, a strategic approach to flood risk and SuDS etc. However, Lewes District policy can go further by:
- Ensuring all development is accompanied by a GBI assessment which shows how the GBI priorities identified in this GBI Study and related studies¹⁵ are incorporated into the scheme design;

¹⁴ The definitions of district centres and rural service centres are given in the LDC Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023)

¹⁵ Such as the Open Space Assessment, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the settlement GBI Appraisals

- Signposting developers to Natural England's GI Planning and Design Guide¹⁶;
- Adopting policies requiring standards such as the Urban Green Factor¹⁷ in a manner appropriate to the scale and location of new development in the district; and
- Adopting site-specific GBI Design Principles for strategic development sites.

Case Study: Safford Park, Newhaven

Opened in 2023, this development of 145 energy-efficient new homes is on the site of a former Parker Pen factory. The site's history is commemorated with several public art features and sculptures. The development provides on-site GBI in the public realm and the building fabric. Some of the houses feature bee bricks to provide nesting sites for solitary bees. In the civic spaces, GBI is delivered through SuDS, street trees, artwork, a play area and outdoor gym, and a community garden which will be looked after by local residents with the assistance of Newhaven Town Council.

Off-site GBI contributions have improved the adjoining Local Nature Reserve, with new tree planting and management works.

High Streets and Business Centres

- 8.6 High quality GBI in town and village centres, the Newhaven Enterprise Zone and other business centres is vital to the setting and attractiveness of these areas for inward investment and high street recovery post-pandemic.
- 8.7 A greener and well-maintained environment is shown to boost property and rental values, increase visitor dwell time and provide an attractive environment for traders and small businesses and their staff.
- 8.8 Key stakeholders in this sector are the business owners, Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce and High Street managers. GBI development plans can be prepared for targeted areas such as High Streets, with the aim of securing funding for measures such as raingardens, street trees, waymarking, living walls.
- 8.9 Intervention priorities in the district are where there is a qualitative or quantitative gap in GBI in economic centres. The coastal towns generally fall into this category, as evidenced by the very low tree canopy cover compared to national standards (Map 45 – Urban Ward Canopy Cover).
- 8.10 The Settlement GBI appraisals (see Chapter 11) also reference local priorities for greening of high streets and other economic areas.

Supporting the Visitor Economy

- 8.11 Map 30 shows Outdoor Visitor Attractions which depend to some degree on the quality of Lewes' GBI. It is inevitably an incomplete map as there is no central register of visitor attractions – one opportunity discussed at Chapter 14 ("How" principles) is for

¹⁶ [GI Design Guide \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/gi-design-guide/)

¹⁷ [UGF 3.3 User Guide \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/ugf-3.3-user-guide/)

increased co-ordination, awareness and joint promotion of GBI initiatives and enterprises.

- 8.12 Outdoor visitor attractions of district-wide importance offer opportunities for job creation and enterprise in recreational, leisure, training and hospitality sectors.
- 8.13 These include actively managed public sites such as district parks and natural features that are widely accessible and well-visited, notably Ditchling Common, the River Ouse waterfront and the coastal margin. Promoted and long-distance trails are also GBI assets of touristic value, particularly where they link to the SDNP.



Figure 16: England Coast Path, Castle Fort, Newhaven

- 8.14 In the private and third sector, rural estates and farms offer events and visitor experiences, which are dependent on the quality of the GBI at district level.
- 8.15 Increasing the number of visitors and associated enterprises in GBI assets requires management and sometimes sensitive zoning. This benefits green spaces through increased revenue for stewardship, and an expanded pool of day visitors who can be reached for the purposes of environmental education and volunteering.
- 8.16 Intervention priorities in the district are where:
- there is a relative shortage of permanent jobs or enterprise opportunities, typically in the coastal towns;
 - population growth will result in more visitors to existing open spaces e.g. at Ditchling Common with growth in neighbouring Burgess Hill and potentially from strategic developments in North Lewes; and
 - increases in mobility arising from active travel initiatives will introduce new visitors e.g. along the Ouse Valley.

Coastal Open Space

- 8.17 Residents of the coastal towns are passionate about their coastline and local green spaces. These can be considered as a “string of pearls” between Seaford and Saltdean, linked by the England Coast Path and the National Cycle Network. The open spaces offer a variety of visitor experiences, with formal parks, nature reserves, marshland, cliffs, beaches, downland and livestock management.
- 8.18 Figure 17 (Map 10) below shows the different open space typologies along the coast.

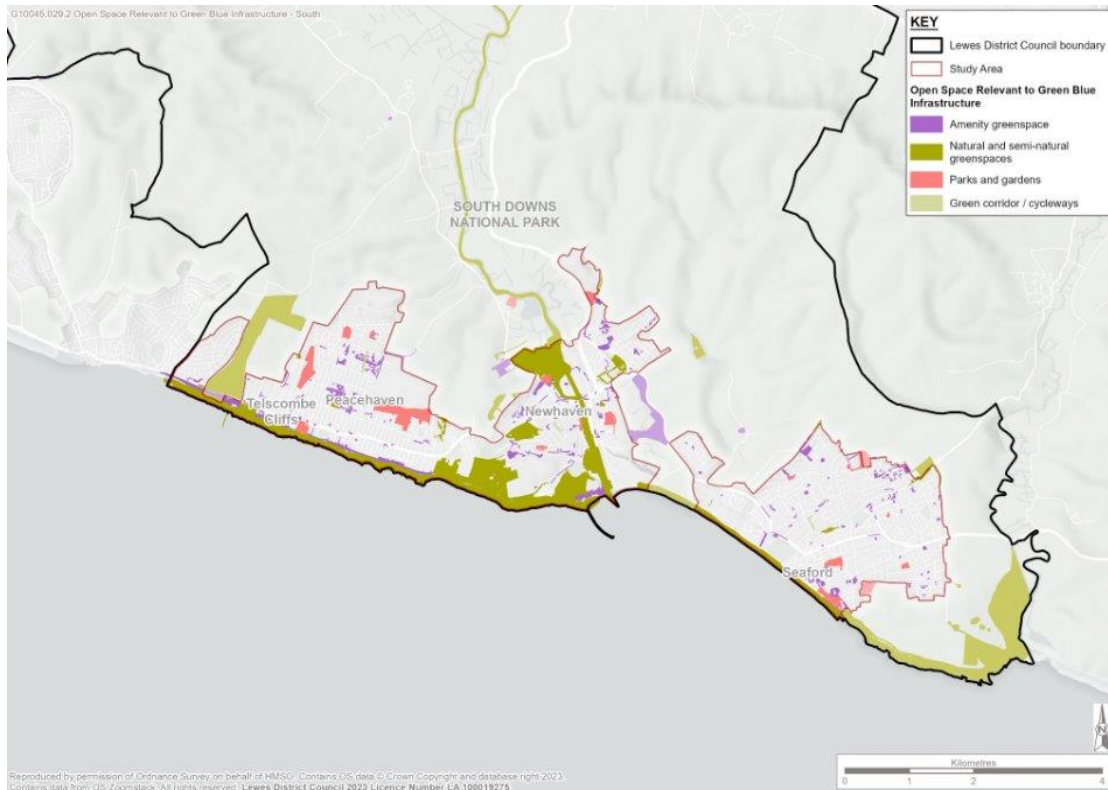


Figure 17: Open Space Typologies along Lewes District Coast (Map 10 in the Map Catalogue)

- 8.19 Collectively these open spaces are an economic resource of county importance, complementing the visitor offer of the SDNP. The coastal open spaces are also vital for protection and restoration of landscape character – priorities for the Downland Fringe are discussed at Principle 1 “Nature-rich and beautiful places”.

“We have some very active community groups who are engaged with rewilding projects and take school trips out to the Tye, but we have many other residents who are barely aware of the SDNP on their doorstep.” Cllr Clarkson, Telscombe council.

- 8.20 There are opportunities to coordinate multiple projects in the open spaces along the coast and between settlements to improve nature connectivity and invest in waymarking, branding, access improvements, greenspace management and events programmes- these would have multiple economic benefits:

- Increasing visitor numbers, dwell-time and spend - encouraging local small enterprises who depend on the natural environment;
 - Place-making i.e. boosting the attractiveness of the coastal towns for inward investment, housing regeneration, home-working and family life; and
 - Enabling town councils, businesses and volunteer groups to bid for a wider range of funding, by virtue of the greater critical mass of linked projects
- 8.21 Across the 10 years of MENE survey data (2009-2019)¹⁸ the 'Motivations' survey data shows a higher proportion of visitors from outside the Local Authority visiting natural spaces to entertain children and see family. This indicates that envisioning and managing the coastal open spaces would draw in visitors and increase spending and dwell-time.
- 8.22 The area between Newhaven and Peacehaven is an area of change with a large housing allocation on the edge of Newhaven, an application for planning permission for which is currently under consideration. Given the importance of easily accessible green and blue space for local communities, and the increasing need for communication and wayfinding highlighted earlier in this chapter, further exploration of opportunities in the area would be appropriate.

Case Study: Lincolnshire Coastal Park

The Queen Elizabeth Memorial Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park (renamed in 2023, formerly Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park) stretches along the coast from Sandilands to Chapel St Leonards. It provides visitors with access to sandy beaches and 8 nature reserves, with circular walks, dog-walking and horse-riding routes.

Managed by the County Council countryside service, there is information available on the council and wildlife trust websites to make it easy for visitors to find parking, public toilets and refreshments. There is also educational information available for wildlife identification, and details of local events across the site.

The Coastal Park designation from the Countryside Agency indicates that there are appropriate facilities to support inclusive access to the natural, wild spaces along the coast whilst also providing guidance for visitors to help protect local wildlife.

[Lincolnshire Coastal Country Park | Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust \(lincstrust.org.uk\)](https://www.lincolnshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/)

¹⁸ Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment 2009-19: Datasets and guidance on use - DATA001 (naturalengland.org.uk)

Sustaining and Enhancing Natural Capital – supply of food and woodland produce

- 8.23 The Lewes Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan refers to plans for a district and county-wide food strategy.
- 8.24 As a largely rural district, Lewes District's farming and woodland economy is important to Sussex's rural economy, security of food supply and local jobs and skills. Much of the agricultural area is Grade 3.
- 8.25 Several timber mills, merchants and associated businesses in the north of Lewes District make use of sustainably sourced timber from local woodlands with necessary licences from the Forestry Commission.
- 8.26 Viticulture in East Sussex is now well established and vineyard tours provide a boost to the local economy. Vineyards in and around Lewes District need healthy soils to produce the award-winning wines that attract visitors.
- 8.27 Community orchards and food enterprises play an important role in engaging residents with seasonal, healthy food. Ringmer Community Orchard provides members with training on correct pruning techniques, and free fruit at harvest time in return for yearly management tasks.
- 8.28 In the county, some estates are actively promoting "regenerative" approaches to agriculture, notably the Iford Estate's habitat banks in the SDNP and the Knepp Estate's rewilding project. Such approaches are also important to the local economy by virtue of the investment and interest they generate.
- 8.29 Healthy soils, robust ecological networks and pollinator populations are integral to the long-term success of all the above enterprises, in terms of commercial viability and resilience to the effects of climate change, such as summer drought, wildfire and increased pest mobility.
- 8.30 The role of good GBI in sustaining rural diversification can be promoted through the following measures:
- Planning policy for rural enterprise that promotes ecological networks, river and floodplain restoration, woodland planting, and BNG opportunity alongside commercial initiatives;
 - Practical support given to rural enterprises about funding and design of sustainability enhancements through case studies and expert advice; and
 - Encouragement of whole-farm adoption of Sustainable Farming Initiatives promoted by Defra.

Training, Skills and Volunteering

- 8.31 Various projects across the district are aimed at engaging young children with wildlife through school visits or community activities, including the introduction of rain gardens and ponds at Wivelsfield Primary School.
- 8.32 Plumpton College provides land-based training courses including Sustainable Land Management, and the Universities of Sussex and Brighton provide access at their

Falmer campuses to a huge range of courses as well as facilities to support local citizen science projects (e.g. water quality sample testing).

- 8.33 Many volunteer groups work locally across Lewes District, with differing areas of focus. Table 2 at Chapter 5 lists GBI-oriented initiatives. These initiatives can form the basis for increasing skills and volunteering opportunities in the wider community.
- 8.34 Some overarching organisations such as the Green Havens Network along the south coast work to coordinate local groups and resources.
- 8.35 The Settlement GBI Appraisals identify many examples of good local practice in deploying volunteers and increasing green skills and awareness.

Case Study: Community Orchard and Community Supermarket, Peacehaven

Peacehaven has two community projects which between them are intended to reduce food waste, support those in need of affordable food and provide locally grown food.

The Community Orchard in Centenary Park has been working with guidance from Brighton Permaculture Trust to provide a range of fruits and nuts. Volunteers have been working hard to establish different mixes of trees on a very exposed site, and eventually grow 100 species of apple as well as supporting wildlife.

The Community Supermarket is a membership organisation (not a food bank) which sources excess food stock working with FareShare and increasingly connecting with local businesses to reduce food waste and support local residents to supply necessities at whatever price they can afford to contribute.

9.0 Principle 4: Improved water management

Vision

- 9.1 Lewes District's GBI is managed to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and natural filtration, helping to maintain the natural water cycle and sustainable drainage at local and catchment scales. GBI is managed to reduce pressures on the water environment and infrastructure, bringing amenity, biodiversity, economic and other benefits.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve sustainable water management at a strategic level GBI should:

- Be based on an understanding of current and future catchment processes and needs and establish strategies for GBI to respond to these needs at a landscape scale;
- Contribute to the delivery of water management plans, including River Basin Management Plans, Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans and Surface Water Management Plans;
- Aim to reduce flooding risks using nature-based solutions;
- Create and connect new or enhance existing wetland habitats and watercourses;
- Protect and improve the quality of surface water and groundwater, including by reducing pressure on water infrastructure; and
- Improve Climate Change Resilience of freshwater habitats and species.

Insights from Policy Review

- The River Ouse does not have a statutory nature conservation designation but is still recognised as a key asset in the emerging LNRS and as a BOA.
- Functional floodplain areas should be targeted for GBI – referring to the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which identifies recreational/amenity areas.
- Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the development will not result in unacceptable risk to the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater and change the underground and surface water levels.
- Significant pollution from agricultural runoff and from sewage treatment discharges are the major water quality concerns, which contribute to all the waterbodies in the Middle Ouse catchment not achieving Good status, a statutory target under the Water Framework Regulations.

Insights from Stakeholder Engagement

- There is a strong crossover between improved water management and biodiversity recovery.
- Increasing interest in Environmental Net Gain (ENG), Natural Flood Management (NFM) and multifunctional solutions is evident from many stakeholder and policy reviews.
- It is widely felt by environmental practitioners that the emerging Local Plan should provide heightened and specific protection to the Ouse and its tributaries. At present, only the Lewes Brook system (a tributary of the Ouse in the SDNP) enjoys statutory protection for its biodiversity value i.e. it is an SSSI.
- The introduction of small local networks of ponds, temporary water storage features and urban wetlands (known as Natural Flood Management) through partnership with community groups has proved to be a successful and cost-efficient way of providing local scale water management whilst having a positive effect on biodiversity.
- The Ouse is already a showcase of good practice in river restoration e.g. the National Trust's Sheffield Park scheme.¹⁹
- Lewes District is in a water stressed area and must plan to alleviate pressures on water supply and the effects of increasing drought. The landscape should be used to store water close to areas where it falls as rain, to restore natural water cycles and re-charge aquifers. Whilst beyond the scope of a GBI study, there are concerns in the water conservation sector about the extent of groundwater abstraction under licence, which causes low flow problems to natural habitats.
- Increasing use of floodplains in the lower Ouse catchment may instigate a significant change in habitats as areas that have previously been considered as freshwater habitats convert to saltwater areas.
- The eroding coastline is presenting significant challenges, it is heavily used for recreation and has biodiversity protections that will impede some physical restoration.
- Engagement with strategic partners from the water industry, farming, house building and highways infrastructure sectors is proving beneficial to support long lasting effective nature-based solutions for improved water management.
- Lewes District has a lot of activity and enthusiasm for GBI initiatives involving water management at neighbourhood, local and regional levels. Whilst this is highly desirable, it can be challenging to coordinate funding and programmes across multiple administrative and corporate organisational boundaries, with the potential to cause frustration to local volunteers. Some have suggested a "water champion" might assist with implementation of a blue infrastructure action plan. The Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust have experience of championing natural flood management across several catchments.²⁰

¹⁹ <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/sheffield-park-and-garden/river-ouse-restoration-project-at-sheffield-park#rt-restoring-a-natural-river>

²⁰ <https://oart.org.uk/project/natural-flood-management/>

The Blue Infrastructure Resource

- 9.2 Almost all of the study area is in the catchment of the River Ouse which flows southwards from the Weald in mid-Sussex through Lewes, reaching the English Channel at Newhaven.
- 9.3 Maps 6 and 7 in the Map Catalogue show the statutory main rivers and Maps 31 and 32 show all the blue infrastructure, including tributary streams and waterbodies such as field ponds and floodplain pools.
- 9.4 Maps 33 and 34 show the watersides which are accessible to the public, including the coastal margin.

Improving Flood Risk Management

- 9.5 Flood zones 2 and 3 from Environment Agency (EA) data are shown at Maps 35 and 36. North of the SDNP, the Ouse and its main tributaries have a significant floodplain mostly occupying agricultural land.
- 9.6 South of the SDNP, the Ouse's floodplain includes urban areas of Newhaven, although the primary risk is from coastal and tidal flooding, which can be exacerbated by high flow in the Ouse.
- 9.7 Whilst most of the coastal urban areas benefit from engineered flood defences against coastal and tidal risks, the defended flood zones are also vulnerable to "pluvial" (surface water) flooding, whereby streets, open spaces and some private property can flood during high rainfall. At times of coastal or tidal flooding, tidal flaps in the flood defences are closed, which means surface water in the urban areas can back up and there is limited capacity to store these waters in open spaces.
- 9.8 Nevertheless, Lewes has an excellent track record in preparing for flood events and recently there have been many local adaptations to reduce flood risk upstream of settlements through landowners providing small attenuation wetlands – collectively known as NFM. The clay soils, unpredictable springlines and intense future rain events arising from climate change mean that local flooding will remain a source of concern.

Catchment Processes and Scope for Natural Flood Management in the North

- 9.9 A detailed analysis of the functioning of the Ouse tributaries has been carried out using Scalgo, an online surface flow modelling tool. Map 37 shows a division of the Ouse into sub-catchments. Maps 38 and 39 show the numerous micro-scale surface water flowpaths (based on Scalgo's "*glass surface flow model*").
- 9.10 There are several factors which influence the behaviour of water within catchments, notably land use, vegetation cover, topography, soil type and hydrological connectivity.
- 9.11 Excessive water movement through catchments can be exacerbated by these factors, leading to risks of flooding and pollution runoff. These risks can be managed using nature-based solutions to reduce the adverse effects of flooding and pollution runoff into property and habitats. Appropriate NFM responses include the creation of swales, re-meandering of water courses, alterations to habitat management, on and off-line pools, leaky dams, washlands and wet woodland planting.

9.12 Based on the following factors, the sub-catchments of the Ouse can be graded in terms of their risk to water quantity and quality; and by inference, their potential to benefit the wider catchment through NFM solutions:

- Land use and cover – land use with low or little vegetation cover (i.e. conventional arable) significantly increases the speed and amount of surface water, sediment and pollution runoff. Highly vegetated surfaces such as woodland, slow passage of water down, significantly reducing amount and speed of runoff, and also reduces the chances of soil erosion.
- Topography – steeper land increases speed and volume of runoff, because water has less chance to infiltrate soils.
- Soil type – infiltration rates of different soils can vary, leading to different runoff and infiltration rates.
- Hydrological connectivity – this is a function of topography and shows how quickly water can enter other water bodies from a particular point.
- Re-naturalisation – removing artificial straightening of channels which limit the ability of a river to interact with its floodplain.

9.13 Figure 18 shows the northern sub-catchments of highest risk to water quantity and quality where there is most opportunity to benefit from NFM. The Bevern Stream, Longford Stream and the Iron River catchments are shown as relatively high risk, and therefore most able to benefit from NFM and soil management improvements.

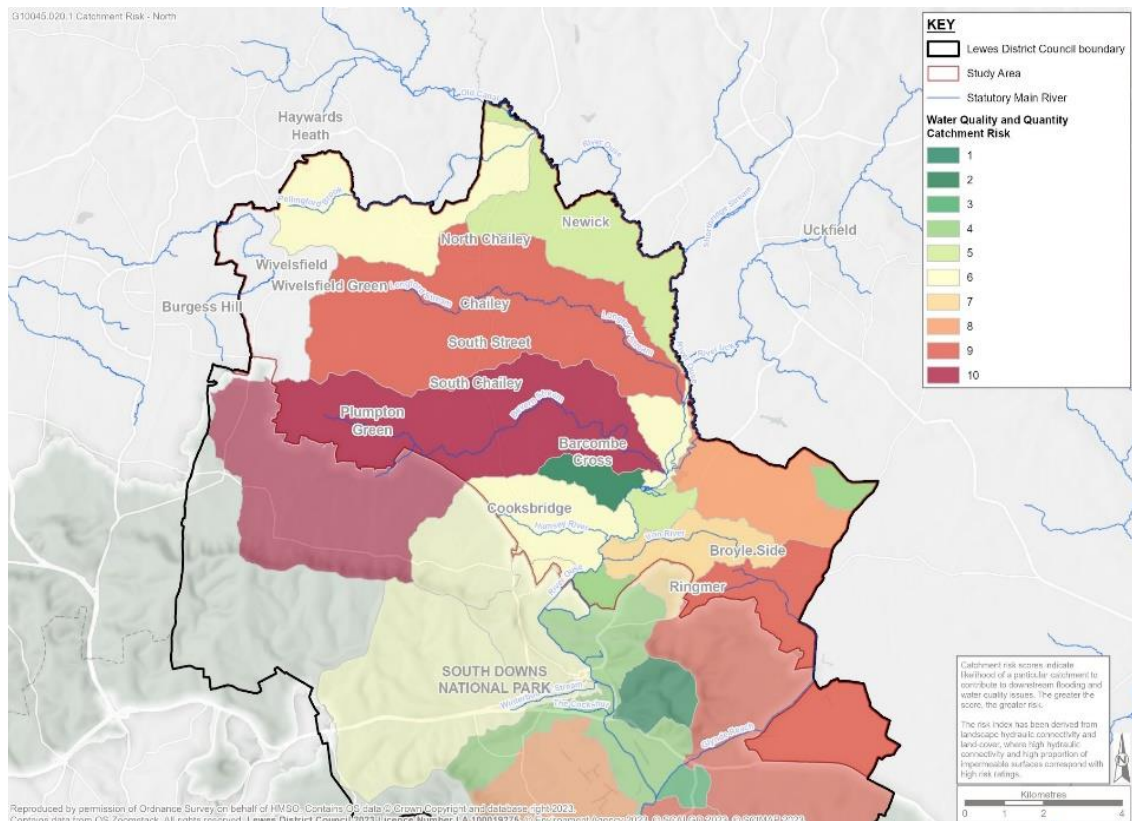


Figure 18: Catchment Risk - North Lewes (Map 40 in the Map Catalogue)

- 9.14 Figure 19 shows the relatively lower catchment risk in terms of water quality and quantity in south Lewes, thus NFM measures may not be so applicable here. However, there are some greenspace measures that can help mitigate surface water flooding – discussed later.

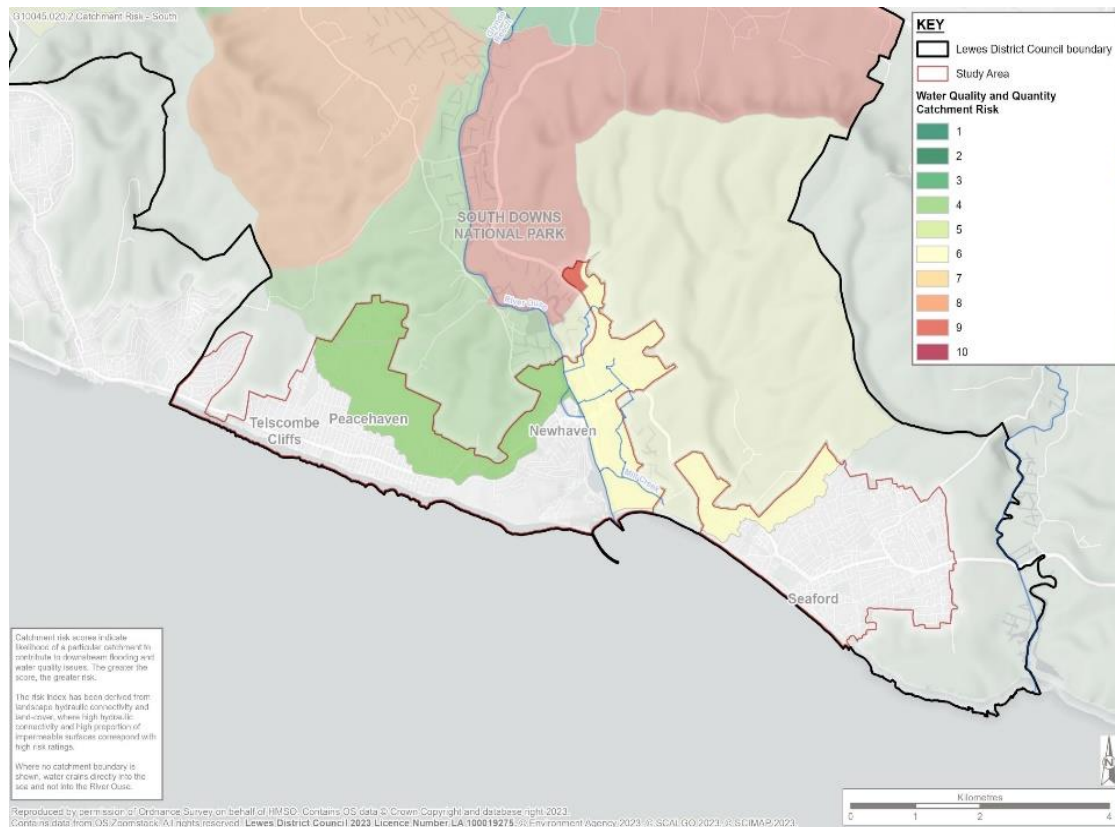


Figure 19: Catchment Risk in South Lewes (Map 41 in the Map Catalogue)

- 9.15 The assessment of sub-catchment risk aligns with a similar mapping exercise by the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (see case study).

Case Study: Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART) Mapping

The Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust have undertaken large scale mapping across the two river catchments to identify opportunities for natural flood management and improvement across the catchment.

This has provided evidence to support landscape scale NFM measures, ensuring they are effectively targeted where they are most needed. By ‘slowing the flow’ of water through the landscape using natural methods, NFM can help to reduce flooding, increase drought resilience and support biodiversity along the river corridor.

River Ouse - OART

- 9.16 Delivery of NFM will need commitment from landowners, farmers and open space managers; along with technical support from specialists such as the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust. The Ringmer Wetlands (see case study) is an example of a community-led initiative.
- 9.17 A catchment-focussed approach will enable the scaling and unlocking of finance for NFM, an example being the Wyre catchment in Lancashire where blended finance has led to over £2m investment.²¹
- 9.18 New development in and immediately upstream of these catchments can also create opportunities for installation of NFM measures.
- 9.19 NFM and associated habitat improvements will also provide improved supply of, and access to, water for priority habitats and species. Map 20 Biodiversity Connectivity (discussed in Chapter 6: “Nature-Rich and Beautiful Places”) shows the “nature-poor” river corridors in the north where habitats are currently most fragmented and most in need of the connectivity and water supply that NFM measures can deliver.
- 9.20 NFM measures in these sub-catchments will also improve the climatic resilience of the freshwater environment.
- 9.21 In the face of current and future droughts, it is also vital to sustain volumes of available water bodies throughout a landscape to provide a ‘pondscape’ of habitats. Ideally these should be a range of shapes, sizes, and pond status in order to provide maximum habitat variability.

Case Studies: WWT Mini- Wetlands Initiative and Community Urban Wetlands at Ringmer

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust has a national initiative to encourage gardeners, park managers and community groups to create “mini-wetlands”, primarily for biodiversity.

The village of Ringmer is impacted by surface water flowing from a number of springs. During heavy rainfall this water forms overland flows which cause flooding to properties and the sewer network. Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust organised a scheme which intercepts surface water flows, slowing their progress and reducing the impact of flooding. This has been achieved through the creation of a series of ponds with a capacity to hold 560,000 litres of water and controlling its flow into the sub-surface drainage system.

Local volunteers planted over 500 wetland plants on the pond margins and planted 150m of hedgerow. Great Crested Newts have been found in some of the new ponds, and they have supported other butterflies and local wildlife. This project delivers multiple benefits for flooding, water quality and biodiversity and shows how urban areas can benefit from wetland habitat creation.

²¹ [The Wyre Catchment Natural Flood Management Project \(greenfinanceinstitute.com\)](https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.com/)

Flood Management in the South

- 9.22 Central and riverside areas of Newhaven are vulnerable to tidal and coastal flooding, although the 2021 completion of a Flood Alleviation Scheme has reduced risk. Other areas of the coastal towns, notably in Seaford, are vulnerable to tidal flooding – see Map 36 in the Map Catalogue.
- 9.23 During winter months, particularly when ground water levels are high, rainfall run-off from the South Downs drains rapidly onto the coastal flood plain. This typically enters public sewers or piped (culverted) watercourses that drain via gravity to outfalls through the sea defences. These outfalls have a tidal flap to prevent seawater entering into the drains.
- 9.24 When the sea level is higher than the base of the tidal flap, the water in the drains begins to back up. To prevent flooding there needs to be storage in the drainage system to accommodate rainwater that would otherwise drain when the tidal flaps are not closed by high sea-level.
- 9.25 Sea-levels are also predicted to rise by 1.15m between now and 2115 as the climate warms; consequently, the period when the flap valves are closed and rainwater in the system backs up will increase significantly.
- 9.26 Areas where excess rain water can be stored inside the defended coastline are very limited. The growth of coastal towns over recent decades, in combination with the increased intensity of rain storms caused by climate change, has resulted in storm water flows entering the system at rates that exceed their capacity to drain. This has caused flooding.
- 9.27 Unfortunately, there are no GBI interventions that can significantly reduce the range of coastal and tidal flooding. Upstream natural flood management in North Lewes, in the non-tidal Middle Ouse catchment might reduce the peak flood levels in Newhaven in the circumstances where severe tidal and coastal surges combine with peak river flows.
- 9.28 Measures to increase rainwater storage on buildings, or discharge it “over the sea wall” may have some local benefits, but the key need is to increase rainwater storage above the level of the coastal floodplain.
- 9.29 Retrofitting of urban GBI measures into pluvial pathways in the coastal towns – see Map 39 Surface Water Flowpaths - can absorb and buffer flows from severe rainfall events e.g. diverting water from streets and rooftops into local greenspaces or attenuating surface water flows through measures such as raingardens, green roofs, blue roofs or swales. Although these measures may not reduce the impact of coastal floods, they will reduce the extent and frequency of surface water flooding at times when coastal floods are not occurring.

Water Quality Enhancement

- 9.30 Maps 42 and 43 show Waterbody Ecological Status (from EA data) in the north and south.
- 9.31 No rivers in the district currently have good ecological status. Much of the Ouse and the major tributaries in the north, such as Longford Stream and Bevern Stream are in Moderate condition, with the Iron River being in poor condition. Local volunteers have been collecting water for analysis at local universities to further understand the effects of agriculture, new development and local sewage treatment on water quality.
- 9.32 In the lower, tidally-affected reaches of the Ouse, condition is also Moderate.
- 9.33 Poor water quality has implications for human health and biodiversity. Offshore the coastal waters of Lewes are designated as a Marine Conservation Zone, with much Sussex-wide public interest in the restoration of a kelp forest in the near-shore water further west.
- 9.34 There is a designated bathing water beach at Seaford, but many of the other beaches are also widely used for swimming and paddling.
- 9.35 Poor water quality in the Middle and Lower Ouse is a concern, with many reaches of the river being accessible to the public and designated for biodiversity value. These sections are fast flowing and dangerous.

Reasons for Not Achieving Good Water Quality

- 9.36 Analysis of 2022 and 2023 Catchment Data²² for the waterbodies in north Lewes District (Middle Ouse, Pellingford Brook, Adur (Burgess Hill), Longford Stream, Bevern Stream and Iron River) demonstrate the following challenges to water quality:
- Point source pollution incidents from intermittent and continuous sewage discharges – 11 locations with only the Longford Stream not affected. 5 locations are in the Adur downstream of Lewes District.
 - Diffuse pollution from poor nutrient, livestock and soil management in the agriculture and rural land management sector – 7 locations with most rivers affected.
 - Physical modifications to rivers inhibiting fish migration; challenges for riparian landowners – 6 locations with most rivers affected.
 - Urbanisation issues, contaminated land, transport-related discharges and domestic wastewater pipe misconnections – 7 locations, albeit mostly on the Adur downstream of Lewes District in Burgess Hill.
 - Natural challenges such as drought, low dissolved oxygen – 4 locations with 3 rivers affected.

²² Adur and Ouse Management Catchment | Catchment Data Explorer – “Challenges” data is available which lists Reasons for Not Achieving Good Status (RNAGS) and Reasons for Deterioration (RFD).

Case Study: Staplefield Wetlands, Sussex

Southern Water is pioneering an approach to improve water quality by using natural wetlands to filter wastewater effluent before it is discharged into rivers.

Staplefield lies upstream of Lewes District on the River Ouse. In 2022 Southern Water announced that they had converted fields around their wastewater plant into new wetlands to filter treated water before it entered the river system.

This trial is intended to improve habitats for birds and other wildlife. Southern Water is also trialling this as natural low carbon solution having analysed the risks and benefits using a natural capital calculation tool.

Improvements in water quality upstream could be expected to have a positive impact on water quality in Lewes District, and the Environment Agency will be monitoring the progress of the project with interest to see if it can be replicated elsewhere.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Action for Water Quality

- 9.37 Improving water quality will require action by the water industry, landowners, the planning system and the local community – partnership-working is essential to avoid a blame culture and to release the cross-cutting benefits of GBI projects (see the Cockshut Stream case study).

Case Study: Cockshut Stream Restoration, South Downs National Park

The Cockshut is a chalk stream that flows from springs at the foot of the South Downs in Kingston, eventually joining The River Ouse before flowing out to sea.

Following years of planning, consultation, survey and design, in 2023 part of the stream which had previously been artificially canalised was realigned into a new meandering channel flowing through a 6.8 hectare wetland habitat. The project aims to enhance biodiversity, help with flood management and carbon storage and restore the rights of the stream to flow unimpeded, unpolluted and with its native plants and wildlife protected.

The project is a partnership between Lewes District Council, the Ouse and Adur River Trust and Railway Land Wildlife Trust with support from the South Downs National Park Authority and funding from LDC and SDNP's Community Infrastructure Levy and the Veolia Environmental Trust.

GBI Interventions for Water Management – Categories and Priorities

- 9.38 GBI Interventions fall into various headings shown in Table 4. An indication of spatial priority, based on the analysis of opportunities and priorities for Principle 4 (Improving Water Quality) with reference to Principle 1 (Nature-rich and Beautiful Places) is provided. The fact that a specific watercourse is named as a spatial priority does not mean that interventions elsewhere have no value – the challenge of enhancing water is great and wide-ranging and action everywhere is valuable.

Table 4: GBI Interventions for Improved Water Management

GBI Intervention	Types of Activity	Spatial Priority in Study Area
Addressing Water Industry Discharges	Assisting the water industry to make capital improvements at treatment sites and discharge points, including deploying nature-based solutions such as bio-filters and biobeds to further cleanse water prior to discharge where feasible and beneficial.	Middle Ouse, Bevern Stream, Iron River – see Map 40 Catchment Risk.
Natural Flood Management	Deploying Natural Flood Management techniques on farmland, upland habitats and local green spaces to reduce pressure on waste water infrastructure during storm events (see Ringmer Wetlands case study.)	All waterbodies in North Lewes.
Green-Blue Infrastructure in New Development	Incorporating green-blue infrastructure in new developments e.g. SuDS, rainwater harvesting, NFM techniques, green/blue roofs.	All new development.
Retrofitting GBI in existing urban areas	Raingardens, SuDS-enabled civic trees, SuDS in local greenspaces and allotments, private householder actions such as water butts.	Coastal towns, notably Newhaven and Seaford where increasing upstream water storage capacity may mitigate against the adverse effects when coastal and pluvial floods coincide. All settlements are of some priority because of the water storage value of

GBI Intervention	Types of Activity	Spatial Priority in Study Area
		these interventions in drought. Other floodprone areas identified in settlement GBI appraisals.
Farm Infrastructure Renewal	Assisting farmers and landowners to make capital improvements to their facilities (eg washdown areas) to reduce phosphorus, nitrogen, nutrient, pesticide and sediment emissions (see agricultural support case study.)	All sub-catchments in North Lewes, but especially Bevern Stream catchment due to ongoing issues and proximity to SDNP. This also coincides with the aim of nature recovery along this stream.
Farmland Management	Promoting soil management plans to increase organic carbon, use of multi-species winter cover crops. Healthy soil management will also sustain agricultural productivity in the face of drought.	All sub-catchments in North Lewes, but notably Bevern Stream and Iron River which are predominantly used for arable and leguminous crops
River and Floodplain Restoration	Enabling landowners to implement river and floodplain regeneration techniques as part of their farming operations e.g. buffer strips, planting wet woodland, fencing-out riverbanks, removing weirs and other barriers to fish passage (see Cockshut Stream case study.)	All sub-catchments in North Lewes, but especially Middle Ouse, Iron River, Longford Stream and Bevern Stream due to multiple issues from fish barriers, low oxygen levels and compounding problems of poor water quality.
Local and district-wide drought resilience	Increasing understanding of and incentives for varied water storage and rainwater harvesting measures to reduce abstraction requirements for landowners and residents during droughts.	All areas in North Lewes, particularly in areas with planned commercial and residential development.

Case study: Support for the Agricultural Sector to implement capital works to improve soil and water quality

The UK's departure from the European Union and the Single Market in 2021, the subsequent change of the rules and regulations that govern export and imports as well as a shortage of labour, has put a financial burden on the farming community. These issues, coupled with rising global gas prices and unpredictable weather destroying crops means that it is now even more important that farmers receive the support needed to maximise food production whilst reducing harm to the environment.

Landowners and farmers can apply for grant assistance for environment-friendly farming practices. Natural England has a local farm adviser which supports landowners and farmers through one-to-one advice, group training and on-farm events, guidance on funding and associated agricultural transition schemes, help to get funding and visits from agricultural specialists.

Common capital items that farmers apply for grants from the Rural Payments Agency for include:

- Concrete yard renewal which reduces foul drainage volumes and run-off and therefore reduces the risk of air and water pollution.
- Roofing (for sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores) which reduces water pollution by preventing rainfall from getting into the areas listed.
- Sprayer or applicator load and washdown area which contains and collects washings from sprayers or applicators. These are then degraded in a biofilter or biobed, which will help reduce the risk of water pollution.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution>

10.0 Principle 5: Resilient and climate positive places

Vision

- 10.1 GBI makes Lewes District's settlements more resilient and well-adapted to climate change. In rural and urban areas, our GBI helps to meet zero carbon targets. GBI itself is designed and managed to adapt to climate change.

Natural England Strategic level goals

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

- Be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders to meet national climate change objectives
- Take account of and be planned to respond to the long-term climate change projections in the area
- Contribute to water and transport strategies, policies, and plans

Insights from Policy Review

- Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 004 advises that local planning authorities should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation and mitigation approaches and looking for 'win-win' solutions that will support sustainable development. One of the win-win solutions presented is the 'provision of multi-functional green infrastructure, which can reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change – as well as contributing to a pleasant environment which encourages people to walk and cycle'.
- LDC and ESCC have declared Climate Emergencies and have developed cross-cutting Climate Change Strategies.
- Some of the important priorities in the District and County Climate Change Strategies are covered by GBI Principles 1, 2 and 4 e.g. improving the resilience of biodiversity to adapt in the face of climate change, encouraging active travel to reduce fossil-fuel use and using nature-based approaches to flood risk reduction.
- LDC's target to reach net zero emissions by 2030 includes plans to deal with residual emissions by 'insetting' rather than 'offsetting', which means that instead of seeking to invest in carbon sequestration measures elsewhere there will be a focus on local tree planting and green energy projects within the district. This not only creates a funding mechanism for local GBI but also has the advantage that projects can be managed locally, monitored for effectiveness and providing other ecosystem benefits.
- The Lewes District Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan also records that 23.9 kt CO₂e is stored within soil and plants across the whole district (including SDNP).

Insights from Stakeholder Engagement

- Lewes District is a water stressed area and drought needs to be considered as well as flood risk.
- The landscape should be optimised to store water close to areas where it is needed.
- Woodland opportunity mapping has been undertaken at a wider regional scale.
- Barcombe Cross aspires to be the UK's first net-zero village.
- Many of the community and environmental initiatives listed at chapter 5 are driven in part by personal responses to the climate emergency.

10.2 In respect of the GBI Study, there are three opportunities for Lewes's GBI to be managed and enhanced to contribute to local net zero and climate resilience priorities:

- Increasing carbon stored in habitats;
- Urban Greening for climate resilience; and
- Future-proofing existing GBI.

Increasing Habitat Carbon Storage

10.3 Some of the most impactful changes that can be made to increase habitat carbon sequestration in the next two or three decades to 2050 are:

- establishment of new woodlands;
- conversion of tilled or intensively grazed land to permanent grassland, especially in floodplains and on clay soils; and
- creation of new wetland habitats such as floodplain meadows, reedbeds, wet woodland and scrub, and ponds²³.

10.4 Maps 44 and 45 show existing Woodland Cover in the north and south of the plan area. The north of the district provides much more woodland than the coastal urban areas, although there is less along the eastern border with the SDNP.

10.5 Map 46 shows Woodland Opportunity Areas informed by a detailed analysis of landscape and ecological sensitivity. This also shows much more opportunity for woodland planting in the north of the plan area, although the lighter green shades indicate sensitivity and there would need to be closer investigation for particular sites before undertaking planting projects.

10.6 Beyond new woodland planting, additional opportunities to increase habitat carbon and deliver wider GBI benefits are found in the following areas:

- Floodplain meadows, wet woodlands and wetlands can be readily established in floodzones 2 and 3, with a priority being the nature-poor watercourse corridors shown at Maps 20 and 21: Biodiversity Connectivity.
- Larger open spaces, such as district parks, golf courses and other outdoor amenity spaces offer opportunities to relax amenity mowing regimes e.g. No Mow May,

²³ [Carbon-and-habitats-paper-v3.pdf \(cieem.net\)](#)

planting new woodlands, establishing swales, or creating permanent wildflower areas; these can improve carbon sequestration, a measure that can contribute to the net zero strategies of the organisation owning or managing the open space. Maps 9 and 10: Open Spaces Most Relevant to GBI provide an “area of search” for habitat carbon storage opportunities.

- Lower grade, marginal and heavily sloping agricultural land: Food security and the rural economy place a priority on continued agricultural use of higher grade farmland. However marginal land such as slopes >10 degrees (Map 2) and lower grade farmland (Agricultural Land Class (ALC) 3b and 4) and field corners lend themselves to planting of new woodland, or permanent grassland/scrub matrices. District-wide mapping of ALC 3b and 4 is not freely available but as a proxy, the Crop Map of England (Maps 22 and 23) shows “grassland” which is more likely to be of lower ALC than cereal and leguminous crops.

10.7 All the above measures will enable a gradual increase in habitat-based carbon storage. A case study of “Trees for Seaford” is provided below.

Case Study: Trees for Seaford

Trees for Seaford launched in 2020 as a progression from the Seaford Tree Wardens Scheme which had successfully run for 10 years supported by the National Tree Council. The group is run by committed volunteers who engage with members of the public and local businesses wanting to help with tree planting, tree care and surveying.

They have an interactive map on their website plotting the trees planted by their volunteers across the town.

Regular ‘Tree TLC sessions’ and pruning workshops provide local volunteers with valuable skills to look after their local trees, while building a strong community network across a range of ages and backgrounds.

Urban Greening for Climate Resilience

- 10.8 LDC's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan records woodland coverage across the whole district as 24.9%, which is above the national average of 21%.
- 10.9 However, the coastal settlements, like many around Britain, have notably lower tree canopy cover than inland towns of equivalent size. In part this is due to the dense urban fabric and harsher growing conditions; there are many benefits from increasing cover e.g. shade, heat reduction local character and carbon storage.



Figure 20: Downland Fringe, near Harbour Heights nature reserve

- 10.10 Map 47 shows that most of the coastal urban wards have less than 10% tree canopy cover and Peacehaven West has only 3.7% cover. It would be a realistic goal to aim for a canopy cover of at least 10% by 2050. For example, Torbay had a canopy cover of 12% in 2008 and is targeting a cover of 20% by 2050. Consultees noted that existing underground utilities and services create a barrier to tree planting and this should be considered in project planning for this opportunity.
- 10.11 Tree-planting, raingardens and other habitat improvements in coastal towns are best achieved through numerous micro-scale initiatives, steered by the community but facilitated by the public sector with its access to land and expertise. Funding requires a blended approach of securing grants, developer contributions and sponsorship.
- 10.12 Householders and gardeners also have an important role to play, given the extent of private garden space in coastal towns (Map 5: Broad Habitats South). Support for rainwater harvesting, micro green roofs on sheds, mini-wetlands and garden trees can be provided through promotional campaigns, local leadership and business

sponsorship. Nervousness about tree-planting (subsidence, damage to drains, overshading) can be addressed through provision of information about selection of appropriate tree species.

- 10.13 The consultation exercise carried out for this study revealed the depth of local interest in urban greening across all the settlements, not just the coastal towns.
- 10.14 Development has an important role in delivering urban greening. Most developments in the urban areas will be minor (<10 houses) and/or infill schemes. The requirement for mandatory BNG will encourage developers to make some extra on-site provision for urban trees and raingardens, but a 10% net gain requirement is unlikely to “move the dial” in the greening of urban areas because of the low baseline value of developments.
- 10.15 Natural England advocates the use of the international standard known in the UK as the Urban Greening Factor (UGF)²⁴ as a policy for enhancing biodiversity, climatic resilience and place-making in new development.

Case Study – Lewes Climate Hub

Lewes Climate Hub is an independent alliance of community groups and organisations in and around Lewes in East Sussex. Together, they are taking local action to tackle the global climate and ecological emergency.

The Lewes Climate Hub is located in Lewes town but covers the whole of Lewes District and provides a welcoming place, staffed by volunteers, where anyone can learn about the climate and environmental challenges we all face – and what we can do individually and collectively to address them.

As well as education, the Lewes Climate Hub organises protests such as ‘Protecting Lewes from surface water flooding’, provides information on Green Finance/Investment, and advises residents on energy bills/usage, renewable energy and retrofitting homes.

²⁴ [Urban Greening Factor for England – Development and Technical Analysis - NERR132 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

Case Study – Urban Green Factor policy in action

Urban Greening Factors (UGFs) are increasingly being used as a planning tool to improve green infrastructure delivery through the process of development and regeneration. They were first developed in Sweden and Germany to combat the growing densification of urban neighbourhoods. Urban Greening Factors are increasingly being used in the UK by Local Planning Authorities in the revision of their local plans and have become a prominent policy tool for urban greening across Greater London through the adopted London Plan.

There are two main components of UGF:

- (a) a target factor score that sets a minimum proportion or percentage of greening for a particular site, area or land use; and,
- (b) a schedule of surface cover types and associated factor weightings that are used to calculate the score.

The Model UGF Standard for England includes both target scores for specific land uses and a set of weighted surface cover types. These have been developed from detailed research on international UGF applications and tailored to current UK planning policy and practice.

The Target Scores for Surface Cover Types comprise a familiar suite of green infrastructure elements including hedging, flower-rich vegetation, tree planting; green roofs and walls; sustainable drainage systems and water features; and paved surfaces.

Futureproofing GBI in the face of climate change

Pests and Diseases especially Ash dieback

- 10.16 Plant health and biosecurity are an increasing concern and pose a significant threat to the continued health of our ecosystems. In recent years fungal diseases like Chalara fraxinea (Ash dieback) and pests like Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) have been particularly concerning for native tree populations and/or public health.
- 10.17 Changing climate conditions can provide favourable conditions for imported pathogens, whilst putting stress on existing mature trees and other native plants, reducing their resilience.

Species choice

- 10.18 In protecting our valuable ecosystems there is a need both to conserve existing native species and ensure our landscapes are adapting to a warming climate. Areas that are in open spaces, close to nature reserves and LWSs should normally be enhanced with locally appropriate species that support the ecosystem and reflect local character.
- 10.19 In urban areas that are subject to more extreme temperatures and commonly include amenity space and privately owned gardens, there is more scope for using a wider variety of plants (like Mediterranean or steppe plant communities) that have evolved to deal with more extreme conditions on the continent alongside natives. These can provide extended flowering seasons for pollinators²⁵.

²⁵ [Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#)

Policy

10.20 The above considerations could trigger two responses:

- Ensuring that management of the district's civic trees is well-resourced in respect of disease inspections with rapid response where necessary, and appropriate tree replacement ratios; and
- Policy requirements for new landscaping that promote native species, but also take account of their future resilience to climate change and the opportunity to use a wider palette of well-adapted species in urban areas.

Case Study – Wilder Carbon

The Wilder Carbon initiative is a collaborative project that various Wildlife Trusts including Kent Wildlife Trust have undertaken with business and academic partners to explore how businesses can invest in nature restoration in a way that can effectively tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. A 'Wilder Carbon Standard' has been created to allow buyers to invest in 'units' to fund reliable and effective conservation projects that will lock up carbon for the long term and provide real improvements for biodiversity. Buyers must demonstrate that they are already substantially reducing their own emissions, and the scheme encourages an appreciation of the value of natural resources.

11.0 Settlement Appraisals

- 11.1 The GBI study includes an assessment of GBI in fourteen settlements in Lewes District – see Map 29.
- 11.2 The settlement GBI appraisals are provided as separate documents and are based on review of made neighbourhood plans, stakeholder consultation and a short field survey of selected open spaces in and around each settlement.
- 11.3 The settlement GBI appraisals are structured as follows:
 - A summary of the settlement's GBI and local priorities;
 - A statement of the local priorities for GBI, derived from Natural England's guidance;
 - Analysis of GBI provision in terms of the five GBI benefits (the "Why" principles);
 - Results of the field survey of selected open spaces, which assess quality and value, multifunctionality, variety and distinctiveness (the "What" principles); and
 - Maps including settlement location, GBI assets and typologies, and the open space survey sites.
- 11.4 The site surveys were intended to provide baseline information on the performance of current GBI assets by analysing a small number of sites spread across the different settlements.
- 11.5 Where multiple sites were selected within a settlement, they were chosen to represent different uses. Sites were selected from available data, and in line with 'GBI relevant typologies' from Open Space data on maps 9 and 10. This means there was a focus on the types of site more suited to multiple uses. For budgetary reasons, not all spaces could be audited, however the methodology for the audits is based on a tailored version of the Green Flag Award criteria and can be replicated by open space practitioners, including informed lay people.
- 11.6 The Settlement Appraisals provide a local level analysis on how GBI sites are serving the needs of their immediate community. They explain the local context in terms of current policy and local stakeholder insights and provide explanation of existing GBI.
- 11.7 The appraisals explain the site audit results and suggest opportunities to improve the quality, connectivity and community value of local GBI.

PART 3 – ANALYSIS



PART 3 – Analysis

12.0 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

- 12.1 A high-level SWOC analysis of the study area's GBI is set out at Table 5 reflecting on the key findings of the district-wide analysis of the "Why" Principles of GBI benefits (Chapters 6 to 10) and learnings from the settlement GBI appraisals (Chapter 11):

Table 5: SWOC Analysis of GBI in the Study Area

Strengths • SDNP is an internationally recognised landscape attractive to locals and tourists. • England Coast Path, the network of PRoW and increasing numbers of cycleway connections with SDNP. • Many settlements have historic landscape character and active civic groups. • Ecologically important areas of calcareous grassland and rare geology are present in the coastal downland fringe. • GBI is well referenced in local and county strategies and plans. • Catchment and landscape-scale thinking, and joining-up of environmental initiatives, is already well-established in the district and county. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is being drafted at County level. • Climate change, BNG and corporate natural capital strategies are creating funding streams. • The quality of the outdoor environment is widely recognised as critical to the visitor economy. • Coastal open spaces are valued by the communities as a “string of pearls.”	Weaknesses • Understanding of the value of GBI is concentrated in some parts of the community. • Lack of woodland connectivity and very low urban tree cover in coastal towns. • Moderate or Poor water quality arising from water industry and agricultural emissions. • Ongoing flood risk poses threat to existing GBI as well as property and community. • Relatively fragmented connectivity of existing cycleways, footpaths and PRoWs in north of the district. • Concerns over feelings of personal security in some green spaces hinder their use by girls, women and other vulnerable users; coupled with an increasing demand for spaces for women’s sport. • Lack of strong national policy or legislation on soil conservation and management in the rural environment and in the construction sector.
Opportunities • Build on existing work by ESCC and SDNP making active travel routes wider and more accessible. • Engage farmers and landowners who are interested in exploring sustainable farming techniques and new revenue streams. • Improve waymarking to enable more residents to enjoy existing GBI resources. • New development in urban areas offers opportunity to retrofit GBI into the urban fabric and showcase GBI in new built fabric. • Strategic development can lead to landscape-scale enhancements to accessible open space, natural flood management and nature networks. • Linking the open spaces between Saltdean and Seaford. • Increasing safe spaces, especially for girls, women and vulnerable groups.	Challenges • Management and adaptation of chalk habitats in a changing climate. • Major developments could create pressure on existing open spaces and water quality, and must also conserve and enhance the setting of the SDNP. • Maintaining soil quality in face of climate change. • Water Resource Stress and ongoing abstraction may impede ecological recovery and farm productivity. • Changes to flood defence regimes along the lower Ouse may replace freshwater habitats with salt water intertidal ecosystems. • Coordination of multiple issue-focused groups engaged with GBI. • Bringing together multiple opportunity maps for woodland, water quality improvement, biodiversity and access into a simple resource.

13.0 What good GBI looks like in Lewes

The “What” Principles

13.1 The “What” Principles set out what ‘good’ should look like.

The five descriptive “What” Principles in the Natural England GI Framework are:

- **Multifunctional:** GBI should provide a variety of functions that are relevant to local needs. This is particularly important in urban areas or places where green spaces are scarce and in high demand.
- **Varied:** the wide range of possible spaces, routes and features that can make up a GBI network should provide for specific local needs in appropriate places.
- **Connected:** GBI networks need to join up to function well at small and large scale. They need to connect all the benefits of nature with those that need them.
- **Accessible:** everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy green and blue spaces. GBI needs to create places that are safe, welcoming and inclusive.
- **Responds to Local Character:** good quality landscapes will use GBI to protect, enhance and conserve distinctive local spaces which make people feel proud of their local community and identity.

Multifunctional GBI in Lewes

Good GBI should be multifunctional, as set out in the Natural England GI framework. At a strategic level this means:

- Combining evidence from a wide range of sources
- Highlighting how enhancements can be delivered across relevant strategies and delivery plans
- Identifying inequalities in provision which need addressing
- Bringing together expertise and ensuring that goals are shared by stakeholders
- Being planned as a network of features which work together in combination and across areas

- 13.2 Much of the study area's GBI serves more than one function. Nevertheless there are common themes for optimising use of precious green and blue space. Table 6 below lists how functionality of different types of GBI can be improved. Of course, not every space is large enough to be multi-functional and some spaces have particular sensitivities (ecology, tranquillity, flood risk) which limit their functionality.

Table 6: Opportunities for increasing functionality in different types of GBI

GBI typology	Primary functions	Further GBI opportunities
Parks	Recreation Wellbeing Community space	- Water sensitive design features - Ecological enhancements – wildflowers, hedgerows, unmown grass
Footpaths and cycleways	Active travel Wellbeing Sustainable transport	- Biodiversity enhancement - Tourism
Nature reserves and natural spaces	Biodiversity enhancement	- Flood mitigation - Water quality improvement - Wellbeing - Education
Watercourses	Flood management Water quality Ecological connectivity	- Recreation - Active travel - Health & wellbeing - Restoring river/floodplain connections through full restoration
Woodlands	Biodiversity Carbon sequestration	- Air quality improvement - Wellbeing - Food production - Passive cooling
Ponds and wetlands	Flood Management Habitat creation	- Drought resilience - Education and engagement
Farmland	Food production	- Biodiversity corridors - Water quality improvements - Soil ecosystem improvements

- 13.3 The above overview of additional opportunities for some common types of GBI in Lewes can be explored further with relevant stakeholders as the district develops a GBI Strategy and Action Plan.
- 13.4 For example, in northern Lewes it will be critical to work with the farming community to achieve catchment scale nature recovery, improved water management and enhanced active travel across the Low Weald and in the Ouse valley. The National Farmers Union's target of net-zero agriculture by 2040 should be explored further with the local farming community. SDNP's resources and groups for farmers are a good example of positive engagement.
- 13.5 Figure 21 shows how a management action, in this case for sowing winter cover crops, can help to improve various ecosystem services from flood mitigation and decreased water consumption to better soil structure and carbon capture.

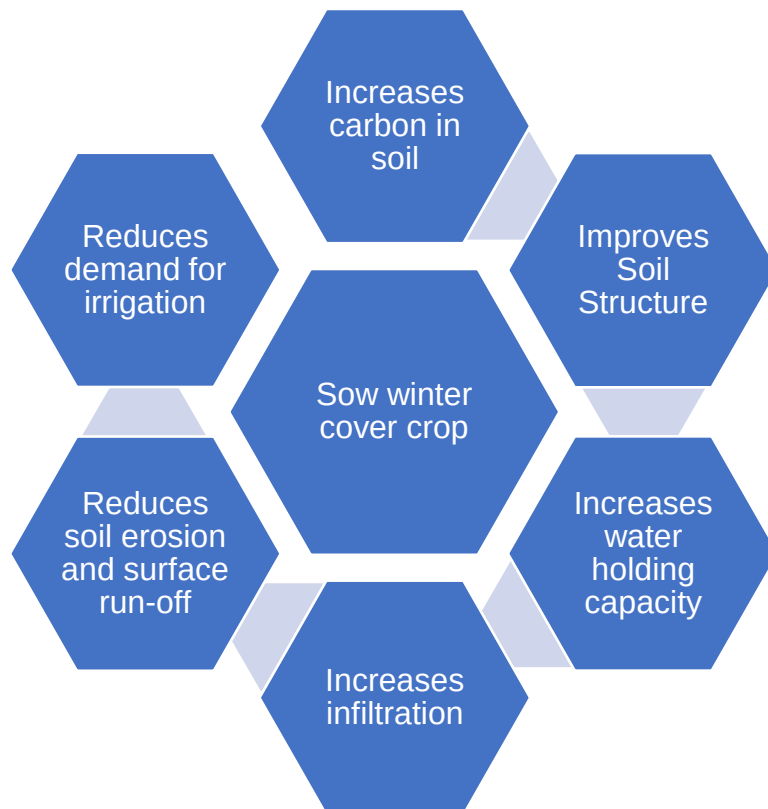


Figure 21: Examples of multiple benefits from farmland management – in this case using winter cover crops for improved soil and water conservation

Varied GBI in Lewes

At a strategic level good GBI should:

- Aim to create variation in the types and sizes of space to meet strategic needs;
- Strengthen networks and their variety to create more interest for users;
- Maintain and enhance a mix of significant GBI assets;
- Reduce the loss and degradation of habitats and geodiversity;
- Increase the diversity of habitats and species; and
- Avoid loss of, and increase the variety of, recreational facilities.

- 13.6 GBI must work with the grain of local variety and distinctiveness. A “silver bullet” solution that may work for increasing urban tree canopy in a coastal town may not be appropriate for other settlements.
- 13.7 A future GBI Strategy and Action plan for Lewes could promote a wide range of approaches and encourage practitioners to consider how effective they would be in different contexts.
- 13.8 Lewes District already boasts good examples of varied approaches to GBI management:
- A variety of natural flood management methods employed by the OART which help reduce the impact of flooding;
 - Increasing the use of ‘urban wetlands’ by creating new pond networks that enhance biodiversity and improve the resilience to drought by storing water in the landscape close to where it is needed. Within a pondscape there can be a wide variety of designs and uses; and
 - Using wet woodland to support new habitats and provide natural flood management.

Case Study – Sussex Flow Initiative

The Sussex Flow Initiative was a pioneering project that delivered Natural Flood Management across the Ouse catchment, working with and restoring natural processes to reduce flood risk. The project was formed in 2012, as a partnership between the Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency, with further support from Lewes District Council. In 2023 the project became the Wilder Ouse project which builds upon the incredible work of the Sussex Flow Initiative.

Working with landowners, local people and others, it investigated, promoted and created natural features that slowed and stored water in the landscape, to help reduce flood peaks. Sussex Flow Initiative's aim was to deliver multiple benefits for people and wildlife, as well as to show how NFM can be used to support traditional flood management methods to help reduce flooding.

Natural Flood Management work carried out by the project included:

- Introducing Large Woody Debris - leaky dams
- Ditch blocking
- Flood storage areas
- Recreating and restoring washland meadows
- Managing and creating riparian corridors
- Cross-slope hedge planting
- Riparian tree planting (along riverbanks)
- Woodland planting and management
- Soil management to improve capacity to absorb water (infiltration)

Connected GBI in Lewes

- 13.9 Nature and water do not operate in discrete units, nor stop at administrative boundaries.

In order to function in a successful manner at a strategic level, GBI should:

- Achieve a measurable increase in ecosystem services through the creation, enhancement, and connectivity of new and existing sites;
- Identify and describe how investment will form an integrated network to provide multiple benefits;
- Use up to date information on the quality and condition of open space and natural capital assets to establish connections across stakeholder interests that will make GI planning more effective and integrated;
- Be clear where and how GI needs enhancing, who it benefits and inequalities in provision which need addressing;
- Demonstrate how land allocation and regeneration priorities connect and contribute to the delivery of GBI;
- Show how and where the mix of GI functions and services are provided and relate to each other as part of a network; and
- Provide strong policy protection for the existing GI network.

- 13.10 GBI needs to provide connections across the landscape for wildlife to live, forage and breed successfully. It also needs to allow people to move around for business and pleasure, in a way that is practical and healthy.
- 13.11 The LNRS led by East Sussex County Council is in progress at the time of writing and is expected to advise local priorities for habitat networks and produce a statutory local habitat map.
- 13.12 The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan provides district-wide planning for active travel and connectivity throughout Lewes District and the SDNP.

Case Study – Egrets Way

The Egrets Way links Newhaven with Lewes using new and existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW), bridleways, South Downs Way and National Cycle Route.

When completed, the Egrets Way will comprise a safe, largely off-road network of walking and cycling paths linking the towns of Lewes and Newhaven with the villages in between.

The Egrets Way aims to tackle income deprivation, which is linked to notably high density of obesity, smoking and mental health in Newhaven. The linkages which the Egrets Way promotes are based around sustainable transport, walking, running and cycling. The positive impacts of physical exercise on health and well-being are well proven.

- 13.13 The Nature for Health project will look at the broader social picture to help make sure that communities and residents are being well served by their local spaces in a way that particularly suits their needs.

Accessible GBI in Lewes

At a strategic level good GBI should:

- Respond to the needs of less mobile users and those with long term health conditions
- Encourage inclusive use and consider the needs of different under-represented groups including older people, people living with disabilities, low-income families, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Feel safe for all non-motorised users
- Overcome barriers particularly through inclusive detailed information and design
- Offer opportunities to interact with the natural world for recreation, education, or relaxation
- Connect different communities together
- Support local community pride and cohesion

- 13.14 GBI is a valuable resource for everyone, but not everyone has the same ability, capacity or enthusiasm to take advantage of it. It needs to effectively serve all community members.
- 13.15 Lewes needs to provide healthy outdoor spaces for an older population with complex health and mobility issues by making it easy and inviting to spend time outdoors.
- 13.16 Some of the less affluent households on the south coast may be time-poor and less aware of the green spaces available on their doorstep.
- 13.17 As many local green spaces are national and international tourist attractions that can usually be accessed at no cost, other than for car parking; access by local residents and communities should be signposted and encouraged.

Responding to Lewes' Local Character

13.18 GBI is an integral part of the landscape and therefore needs to reflect local character.

At a strategic level GBI needs to:

- Take account of the Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA) – see Map 24 and narrative at Chapter 6 above under Principle 1: Nature-rich and beautiful places;
- Aim to strengthen overall existing character, historic and landscape assets.
- Help achieve targeted enhancements in character in areas of poor quality.

13.19 A future GBI Strategy and Action Plan would take account of the following guidelines and priorities:

- Landscape Management and Development Guidelines set out in the LCA; and
- Any settlement-specific recommendations emerging from the settlement GBI appraisals and their GBI site audits.

Case Study – Castle Fort, Newhaven

Castle Fort, Newhaven occupies the site of a Bronze Age fort and provides evidence of more recent military history. There are public information boards providing historical education for visitors as well as space for valuable local wildlife, local sports and play facilities and space to enjoy the views out to sea. It is situated on the England Coast Path, and easy access to the military museum (closed for renovation at the time of writing). It is multifunctional, in a way that is appropriate for local needs and particularly sensitive to local culture and history.



14.0 “How” Principles

The “How” Principles

The five descriptive “How” Principles in the Natural England GI Framework are:

- **Partnership and Vision;** GBI should be designed and delivered according to a vision that has been formed through collaboration between a diverse range of citizens from different backgrounds, and professionals across different sectors and disciplines.
- **Evidence;** scientific evidence and good land use practice should be followed when planning GBI. Sound understanding of the benefits of current assets and data on local environmental, social and economic needs will enable resources to be used effectively.
- **Plan Strategically;** GBI assets should be secured in local strategy and policy at all scales as a mainstream consideration in environmental, social and economic policy. This should address inequalities in GBI provision and create sustainable places for current and future generations.
- **Design;** GBI should form part of beautiful, well-designed places that are designed to enhance the natural, historic and cultural character of the landscape or townscape.
- **Managed, valued and evaluated;** there should be a strong business case for GBI assets to secure funding for long-term management and maintenance. Good governance needs to be in place, monitoring and evaluation of asset performance which can be understood and celebrated by local communities.

The “How” Principles provide themes to guide how good GBI should be achieved. This GBI study provides evidence and ideas on how to develop a GBI strategy

Partnership and Vision

GBI involves many partners so collaboration for a shared vision is essential. It should:

- Use a partnership approach to establish a long-term vision for how green infrastructure will address core challenges;
- Have an inclusive engagement and consultation strategy based on thorough stakeholder mapping;
- Aim to strengthen communication networks to build knowledge sharing and joint outcomes
- Promote a GI approach to strategic outcomes in the policies of contributing organisations
- Provide information which promotes sustained involvement of stakeholders

- 14.1 In Lewes, there is a strong and diverse mix of professionals, landowners, businesses, communities, politicians and residents already committed to delivery of GBI, as illustrated at Chapter 5: Local Initiatives.
- 14.2 As a GBI Strategy and Action Plan is developed, continued development and co-ordination of this network of partners will be essential, helping to draw in revenue and local delivery. Networking events and pledge maps (such as Weald to Waves and farming clusters) can foster a sense of partnership towards a wider goal and can encourage individuals to become involved.
- 14.3 It will be essential to demonstrate how GBI can support the objectives of parallel initiatives, notably in the economic regeneration, health and wellbeing, climate response and water industry sectors. Their buy-in to the GBI vision will help to secure more interest and investment in GBI.
- 14.4 ESCC's Climate Change Strategy and Roadmap have been co-designed by the Environment Board, including representatives from local farming industry and business groups. By following this model for GBI, or bringing GBI increasingly to the fore in these existing collaborations, there will be increased opportunities to solve the many interconnected challenges highlighted in this study.

Case Study – Biodiversity training for council officers and decision makers

The loss of biodiversity is a global environmental issue which threatens to cause devastating impact to life on earth if action is not taken.

This is now being recognised across the world, as governments, organisations and individuals are including biodiversity in their pledges to make changes that will help to improve our environment and ultimately save our planet.

Councils, council officers and local councillors all have a role to play in ensuring these pledges are carried out at a local level, so it is important to understand the issues and what can be done to tackle them.

Lewes' Climate Change Strategy Update (Nov 2023) records action B4 to include biodiversity training from Sussex Wildlife Trust as part of carbon literacy training. This would help local planners and decision makers to understand sensitivities and conflicts between different GBI themes and help them deliver multiple benefits using resources efficiently.

If this is completed successfully it could be reviewed and expanded to other local and regional councils.

Evidence-Based

Strategic GBI needs to be based on evidence to ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible:

- Evidence should be used to establish a baseline for quantity and provision of GI in an area;
- The current functions and benefits those assets are delivering should be identified;
- The priorities and needs of communities should be mapped;
- Evidence is developed to support conservation of assets currently providing important services;
- Enhancement of those assets that could deliver better services is evidenced; and
- Creation of new assets in areas of identified deficiency is supported by evidence.

- 14.5 This study provides a firm evidence base to identify priorities for action in terms of the five principles of GBI benefit – Figure 8 at Chapter 3 summarises the district-wide priorities covered in detail at Chapters 6 to 10. Chapter 11 refers to the Settlement GBI Appraisals which include evidence on local needs and opportunities for uplifting quality and value of local GBI assets.

- 14.6 For some priorities, further evidence on needs and best-practice is required. The narrative at Chapters 6 to 10 refers to some evidence gaps, for example:
- Attitudes to, and increasing access to green space for minority ethnic groups and people of all abilities;
 - Improving the management of open spaces and active travel networks so they respond to the specific requirements of women and girls who are significantly lower users of open space;
 - Collecting evidence from the People and Nature Surveys and applying it to management of GBI;
 - Guidance on best practice for managing the district's trees in the face of climate change, pests and diseases; and how best to engage coastal communities in the mission of increasing canopy cover to a target of, say, 10%; and
 - Securing and blending funding streams to enable farmers and landowners to implement healthy soil and natural flood management practices.

Strategic Planning

- 14.7 GBI is already included in the NPPF and Local Plan policy and its value is recognised in many other strategies (see Appendix A). However, GBI is still a relatively new concept and its fundamental importance as planetary life-support is not necessarily understood or valued in the same way as built infrastructure, or healthcare and education services are widely recognised to be.
- 14.8 To integrate GBI into the fullest range of policies, it can be useful to develop a simple map of relationships or “policy wheel” for making, maintaining, or strengthening links between GBI and wider policy and strategy.
- 14.9 The “policy wheel” can help to develop specific elements of a “supportive policy list”. This can set out what role GBI can play, map out stakeholder interests and links and help to communicate the relevance of GBI to the widest range of policy makers and businesses.
- 14.10 In relation to Lewes’ priorities, it is suggested that stronger linkages are needed to economic and town centre practitioners and to funders and regulators of the agriculture and water sectors, to raise standards and secure investment in GBI.
- 14.11 Better understanding of GBI across relevant decision makers could be promoted further through networking and advocacy at Local Government and Business Sector events.
- 14.12 Natural England has established five standards which can be applied to GBI – see Table 7 below.

Table 7: Consideration of the five headline national GI standards in Lewes District planning policy

Standard	Description
Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard	This GBI study has been drawn up in accordance with the Standard. As Lewes develops a full GBI Strategy, it can continue to follow the Natural England process.
Accessible Greenspace Standard	This standard is effectively included in current Local Plan policy, by reference to the Open Space Strategy. The Local Plan could go beyond this by highlighting specific local priorities for access to neighbourhood and local natural greenspaces that have been identified in this study.
Urban Nature Recovery Standard	Depending on the outcome of the LNRS process, this standard could be adopted for the larger settlements.
Urban Greening Factor Standard	This could be relevant for developments in the coastal towns, particularly on brownfield or infill sites where there is little or no baseline biodiversity, and hence little scope for mandatory BNG to trigger a step change in local greening.
Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard	This would be relevant in the coastal towns where urban tree canopy cover is currently significantly below national averages, even for coastal settlements.

- 14.13 Support for organisations that are already in a position to collaborate at landscape scale, such as the River Catchment Partnership, should be increased and resourced to enable connection between higher level strategic partners like highways infrastructure and commercial developers, and feed through to ‘grass roots’ organisations and charity work.
- 14.14 The Lewes Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan includes biodiversity, air quality, active travel, food, agriculture and water management themes. This provides an effective way to embed GBI into existing activity. There are opportunities that could take this even further:
- Consider widening the themes to bring in more community wellbeing and social engagement actions, and link clearly to the local economy; and

- Consider diving deeper into cross-cutting themes like soil management for carbon capture, water management and food production.

14.15 There is good integration of environmental and sustainability themes as noted in 14.13, and references to GBI in many local policies (detailed in Appendix A). The next step could be to ensure local transport, economic, and health action plans build GBI into their strategies and plans from an early stage.

Case Study – Blackpool’s GBI Strategy and Action Plan integrated with local Town Centre Regeneration

Blackpool is a coastal town balancing a thriving tourism industry, local community needs and space for wildlife in its busy urban centre.

The first GBI strategy was published in 2019 and was accompanied by an action plan providing details on how the strategic objectives would be achieved. Tasks were assigned to lead council departments and stakeholder groups. Progress was reviewed in 2023/24 and a refreshed strategy and updated action plan provided SMART measurable objectives with defined timescales. The GBI strategy is a collaborative effort, supported by department representatives across the council and is referred to in many of the town’s local policies and strategies. Notably it feeds through into the Town Centre Strategy for growth and regeneration.

Appendix A of the Town Centre Action Plan includes a whole section (1B) on environment, which builds in GBI and other environmental considerations to the integral development of the town.

[Appendix A Town Centre Action Plan - 6th February 2023.xlsx \(blackpool.gov.uk\)](#)

Design

14.16 Good design will successfully weave GBI into new developments and spaces in a way that reflects local character, values and needs and is engaging for users and residents.

14.17 This is where the linking of the social, environmental and economic benefits of GBI will be realised. For example, to enable active healthy lifestyles GBI must combine with design guidance on heritage, social value and commerce to achieve:

1. Co-location of community facilities
2. Network of multifunctional open space
3. High quality streets and spaces
4. Appropriate infrastructure
5. Active buildings
6. Management, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation
7. Activity promotion and local champions

14.18 There is an increasing number of resources available to support good GBI design. Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide is a useful reference source for GBI design at catchment, neighbourhood and development-scales.

- 14.19 Where the district allocates major developments in the emerging Local Plan, policy should include the requirement for a robust development framework informed by GBI Design Principles.
- 14.20 Building with Nature provides planners and developers with a framework of 12 design principles and evidence-based guidance on delivering high quality green infrastructure²⁶.
- 14.21 There are existing themes in the playing pitch strategy recognising the need to make sports more inviting to women and girls. There are further resources available from Make Space for Girls²⁷.
- 14.22 It can be difficult to design in street trees without conflict with underground services, particularly in populated urban areas. The Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) explores ways to combat air pollution with clever planting design on congested roads²⁸.
- 14.23 Whether development is planned in an already congested urban space or expanding into more sensitive rural locations, green roofs can provide a way to take advantage of otherwise vacant space on the top of buildings to provide ecosystem services. GRO guidelines²⁹ are regularly updated to support industry professionals achieving BNG and local ecological objectives with well-considered biodiverse roofs.
- 14.24 The design themes and principles mentioned here can be built into the Local Design Code, as required by the National Model Design Code.

Case Study – Design Guides and Standards

Design guides and standards are tools which local planning authorities can use to embed good GBI practice in local developments from an early stage.

Ebbsfleet Design Guide is easily accessible online and provides a clear overview of its 'Garden City' themes according to local priorities. This format could be adapted by LDC if appropriate and could easily incorporate stronger biodiversity themes and cover issues discussed in this study, with sensitivity to the National Park. Each theme then provides a checklist for designers to help them create good quality plans and increase the likelihood of successful planning outcomes.

[Design for Ebbsfleet](#)

Essex Design Guide also provides easy online access covering relevant themes but has gone a step further and created Green Infrastructure Standards. This was part of a trial exercise for the development of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards, which can also be referred to in planning policy (described in 14.12 and table 7 above). Essex County Council gained a Building with Nature Policy Award for these standards.

[Essex Green Infrastructure Non-Technical Standards 2022 \(essexdesignguide.co.uk\)](#)

[Essex Green Infrastructure Standards 2022 \(essexdesignguide.co.uk\)](#)

²⁶ [Planners — Building with Nature](#)

²⁷ www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk

²⁸ [First Steps in Urban Air Quality - Trees and Design Action Group \(tdag.org.uk\)](http://tdag.org.uk)

²⁹ [Downloads | Green Roof Organisation](#)

Management and Evaluation

- 14.25 Long term management is essential to ensure that the multiple benefits of GBI are delivered to local communities. It is necessary to consider:
- Governance;
 - Management;
 - Valuation;
 - Funding; and
 - Monitoring and evaluation.
- 14.26 There are differing models of stewardship and governance across Lewes with an increasing focus on community ownership and stewardship arrangements where possible. Some local town and parish councils (e.g. Newhaven) are taking on more direct management of local green spaces, although in Telscombe a stewardship agreement has recently ceased.
- 14.27 Local stewardship has the advantage of enabling local communities to ensure that green spaces are serving their needs. It is important that these projects are well resourced and informed, and connected with the wider picture of GBI activity. Smaller community spaces can be more challenging to manage than larger tracts of land but are no less important as they provide vital community space.
- 14.28 The Sussex Natural Capital Investment Strategy published by Sussex Local Nature Partnership is building an understanding of local natural assets and how best to focus efforts and resources to protect and enhance them. This will feed into the ongoing work on nature recovery strategies.

15.0 GBI Opportunities

Summary of GBI Opportunities in Lewes District Local Plan area

Collaboration

- Engage with local initiatives (see section 5.0) to see whether any can broaden their scope to include a wider range of GBI benefits; joining forces to deliver projects and secure funding.
- Support communities in the north of the district to engage with local landowners to ensure PRoWs are easily accessed and well maintained, accessing the support of existing proactive volunteer groups (some specific opportunities are noted in the settlement GBI appraisals).
- Support groups like the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust and the Catchment Partnership to unlock finance for Natural Flood Management projects and engage with regulators, infrastructure providers and major developers to deliver projects that improve water quality and flood resilience (see 9.38 and Table 4 for examples of where action can be co-ordinated).
- Ensure that the farming and rural enterprise communities are actively engaged in GBI planning (see 6.20, 6.31, 6.33, 7.15, 7.22, 8.11 to 8.16, 8.23 to 8.30, 9.16 to 9.21, 9.36 to 9.38, 10.3 to 10.7, for examples of where collaborations are needed to enhance GBI and bring value or reduce risk for the landowner).
- Consider convening a regional GBI steering group to deliver a strategic vision and roadmap for GBI. This might be achieved by including GBI as a major theme of the existing ESCC climate change strategy and roadmap, or by replicating a similar structure for GBI, nature recovery and climate adaptation (see 14.4).
- Engage with active groups along the south coast such as 'GreenHavens' to gauge interest in opportunities for improvements in green and blue coastal open spaces for local communities (see 8.17).
- Engage with town centre managers and Newhaven port and business area managers to support them with GBI enhancements (see 8.6 to 8.10 and 14.15).
- Work with all environmental practitioners to compile user-friendly opportunity mapping for LNRS priorities, biodiversity, new woodlands, natural flood management and enhanced access.

Summary of GBI Opportunities in Lewes District Local Plan area

Communication

- Consider appointing a GBI Champion and/or GBI Development Manager to help devise the GBI Strategy and Action plan and enable grassroots initiatives to connect with each other and with funding opportunities – see chapter 14.
- Support local parish councils with communication and engagement activities appropriate for their local community needs, particularly regarding council owned or managed sites. This may include wayfinding, maintenance or promotion of volunteering opportunities (some specific opportunities are noted in the settlement GBI appraisals).
- Coordinate marketing and communication of successful GBI initiatives across the district so that good practice can be celebrated and replicated. Communication resources can be targeted so that they support local grass-roots initiatives to see collective progress from their local efforts.
- Work with girls, women and vulnerable park user groups to identify their priorities for more and better-managed GBI (see chapter 7)
- Consider appointing a water 'champion' to help grassroots initiatives connect productively with wider regional NFM schemes and access funding (see chapter 9 for a range of topics where a water champion can communicate priorities).
- Communicate with householders and gardeners to promote measures that can help enhance biodiversity, water resources, flood resilience, tree and shrub planting, pollination, local food-growing etc (see paragraph 10.12)

Summary of GBI Opportunities in Lewes District Local Plan area

Policy and Evidence

- Consider expanding the range and extending the management timeframe of existing ecological designations where they could i) contribute to the 30 by 30 goal, ii) enhance connectivity between sites, and/or iii) provide accessible green and blue spaces in areas where they are deficient (see 6.17 to 6.20, 6.21 to 6.27 and 7.2 to 7.8 for examples).
- BNG policy can refer to the spatial priorities listed in table 3, paragraph 6.31.
- Promote restoration of rivers, floodplains and use of natural flood management techniques, particularly in the nature-poor corridors highlighted at chapter 6 and in the land-use scenarios highlighted at 9.38 and Table 4.
- Ensure the emerging Lewes District Local Design Guidance and Coding incorporates GBI Design Principles from this study and Natural England's general guidance (see 14.16 to 14.24)
- Require development to provide a GBI assessment showing that the priorities identified in this study are incorporated into the scheme design, proportionate to scale and impact of development.
- Consider a requirement for developers to use the Building with Nature standard for large-scale new development (threshold to be determined in the Local Plan) (see 14.20). Refer to GBI Management Guidelines applying to key landscape character types (6.40 onwards)
- Adopt GBI standards such as the Urban Greening Factor, particularly for major development in the coastal towns (see 10.15 and Chapter 14 Table 7).
- Promote soil conservation and management in rural settings (see 6.33) and in the urban areas and construction sectors, setting standards for new open spaces and gardens (see 6.38).
- Build GBI features such as raingardens and wildflower verges into planned active travel routes such as those detailed in the LCWIP.
- Consider policy requirements for new landscaping that promote native species, but also take account of their future resilience to climate change and the opportunity to use a wider palette of well-adapted species in urban areas (see 10.20).
- Address gaps in evidence about GBI needs and best-practice (see list at 14.6).
- Bring together the emerging LNRS with other opportunity maps for species, new woodland, NFM and improved access into an easily-accessible environmental opportunity / natural capital map(s) to inform Local Plan and county strategies
- Develop policy for maximum inclusivity in access to public open space (see 7.22)

Summary of GBI Opportunities in Lewes District Local Plan area

Landscape action and management

- Bring as many of the District's open spaces as possible into a form of management which has biodiversity as a primary or secondary objective (see 6.20).
- Support leisure managers (notably parks, gardens, golf, cemeteries) to manage their estates so as to increase habitat carbon, reduce pesticides, improve water resilience and increase tree canopy cover.
- Create further floodplain habitats where possible, investigating opportunities with local farmers and farmer clusters where the Sustainable Farming Incentive or Stewardship arrangements could be appropriate (see 10.6).
- Consider zoning in larger GBI assets where there are sensitive wildlife areas.
- Prioritise creation of relevant green spaces close to people's homes, particularly in areas where there is mapped evidence of inequality of access to greenspace and health deprivation.
- Adopt site management practices that create safe spaces for girls, women and vulnerable park users.
- Create more connected networks of PRoW and quiet lanes in GBI, that are wide enough to allow access for wheelchairs / mobility scooters etc (see 7.23).
- Support small and medium enterprises wishing to make use of GBI assets, for example by assisting with guidance on zoning, trading restrictions and setting standards for insurance, inclusivity and signage.
- Audit larger open spaces in and around coastal towns to assess their suitability for storage of pluvial waters (see 9.29).
- Support the water quality enhancements noted at paragraph 9.36 e.g. by setting aside land and resources to improve waterside buffer strips and create filtration wetlands.
- Establish a habitat/carbon "bank" on Council-owned land to assist meeting the district's BNG and net-zero commitments (see chapter 10).
- Ensure that management of the district's civic trees is well-resourced in respect of disease inspections with rapid response where necessary, and appropriate tree replacement ratios (see 10.20).
- Enable community and neighbourhood groups to adopt the Green Flag Award system to audit and enhance their spaces (some examples are in the Settlement GBI Appraisals).

Glossary

Allotments: An area of land leased from a local authority or private landlord for growing fruit and vegetables. The land may also be used to grow ornamental plants and keep hens and bees etc.

Amenity: Positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.

Assarting: The act of clearing woodland or forest for arable use.

Benefits: Positive impacts for people and wildlife derived from green infrastructure and natural capital.

Biodiversity: The variation among living organisms in all environments, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part. Includes diversity within and between species, and ecosystems.

Biodiversity net gain (BNG): Development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. It is also an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support priorities for nature conservation.

Blue infrastructure: Riverine and coastal environments, and canals and other strategic water features within a green infrastructure network.

Carbon sequestration: The uptake and storage of carbon, for instance by absorption of carbon dioxide by trees and plants which then release oxygen.

Climate change: The large-scale, long-term shift in weather patterns and average temperatures across the world due to the release of greenhouse gases (most notably carbon dioxide) into the air since the mid-1800s by humans – causing temperatures to rise and resulting in permanent changes to the climate, affecting people through flooding and damage to ecosystems.

Climate change adaptation: Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing the sources of, or enhance the sinks for, greenhouse gases.

Community orchard: A collection of fruit trees planted among grass for the use of local residents, which provide places in which people can meet and plant/cultivate local food.

Conservation: The protection, improvement and use of natural resources in line with principles that assure the highest economic or social benefits for people and the environment.

Designated biodiversity sites: International sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Ecosystem: A dynamic community of living organisms – animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms – and their physical environment that interact as a functional unit.

Ecosystem services: The functions of the natural environment that directly or indirectly provide benefits for people. Ecosystem services include:

- **Provisioning services:** The products obtained from ecosystems, for example food, fibre and fresh water
- **Regulating services:** The benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes, for example, the regulation of climate, water, air quality, human diseases and erosion control
- **Cultural services:** The non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems for instance through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, recreation, and aesthetics
- **Supporting services:** Ecosystem services that are necessary for the production and maintenance of all other ecosystem services. For example, soil formation and retention, nutrient cycling, water cycling, and provisioning of habitat. These services often reflect the function and condition of natural capital stock.

Environmental net gain: Improving all aspects of environmental quality through a scheme or project. Achieving environmental net gain means achieving biodiversity net gain first and going further to achieve net increases in the capacity of affected natural capital to deliver ecosystem services.

Green corridor: A strip of green land that connects green areas or hubs and allows the movement and dispersal of wildlife, usually through urban landscapes. Green corridors can also be used to link housing areas to, for example, cycle networks, places of employment, town centres and community facilities, thus promoting walking and cycling.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity (National Planning Policy Framework, 2023).

Green (or living) wall: A vertical wall (partially) covered in greenery, often planted in soil at the base, but sometimes using wall-mounted boxes or special panels. Green walls offer several benefits such as contributing to heat retention and cooling, storm water retention and capturing pollutants.

Green roof: A vegetative roof system that hosts plants in a growing medium installed over a waterproof membrane. Green roofs can be designed as wildlife habitats and to optimise temperature regulation and/or for aesthetic value. They can also capture and slow the flow of storm water.

Green space: Patch of vegetated land within the urban fabric ranging from pockets of amenity grassland to large parks.

Green space creation: The creation, from space that was previously not green at all, of public open space comprising areas of grass, trees and other vegetation, set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes in an otherwise urban environment.

Green space enhancement: Improvement to existing green space to make it more attractive, safer and/or of increased biodiversity value. Better management and stewardship can often allow green spaces to flourish so that they can be enjoyed by more people.

Landscape: An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of their natural and/or human factors (e.g. geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement).

Landscape-scale conservation: The pursuit of multiple benefits from enhancing nature across a defined area that make links to wider economic and social priorities (e.g. water quality, access to nature).

Mental health benefits: Connecting people to a healthy environment is a powerful tool for combatting mental health issues such as chronic stress, depression and anxiety. Access to green space, outdoor exercise and green activities, such as gardening or habitat conservation, can have positive impacts on people with mental ill health.

Multi-functionality: The ability to provide multiple functions by integrating different activities and land uses on individual sites and across a whole green infrastructure network.

Natural capital: The stock of natural ecosystems that yields a flow of valuable ecosystem goods or services, directly or indirectly, to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions. Natural capital includes many different components of the natural environment, as well as the processes/functions that link these and sustain life.

Natural capital asset: A natural resource that provides a flow of ecosystem services and benefits over time

Natural flood management: Managing flood and coastal erosion risk by protecting, restoring and mimicking the natural 'regulating' function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts.

Nature-based solutions: Actions that are inspired or supported by natural processes and which simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits. Such solutions bring natural features and processes to cities, landscapes and seascapes.

Nature recovery network: An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. Includes the existing network of designated sites and priority habitats, as well as landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity

Park: A publicly accessible area of natural, semi-natural or planted space intended for human enjoyment and recreation and often for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats. Parks often host facilities for play and rest.

Physical health benefits: Access to green space for regular exercise can significantly reduce the impacts of cardiovascular disease and other serious health problems. Regular exercise,

including walking, can reduce the negative effects of health threats such as obesity, coronary heart disease and respiratory disorders.

Priority habitats and species: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Rewilding: A form of ecological management which aims to support nature recovery by restoring natural processes that allow the natural succession of habitats and species to occur. In some cases, it may be considered necessary to reintroduce missing keystone species to re-establish natural processes.

Right Tree Right Place: ensuring the right tree is established in the right place, using the right method, for the right reasons, and with the right aftercare. This means increasing tree cover whilst protecting and enhancing what is special and valued in the landscape and keeping the environmental benefits already being delivered. New trees in the wrong locations could result in unintended negative consequences for biodiversity, landscape character and heritage assets, and also reduce resilience to climate change.

Soil organic matter (SOM): All living or once living material added to soil. SOM improves soil structure, fertility and resilience to drought and flooding. It is more than half carbon, so is closely related to 'soil organic carbon' which is more often used as a research term.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Sustainable drainage system (SuDS): An approach to managing surface water run-off from rainfall close to where it falls that replicates natural drainage by slowing and holding back run-off, reducing pressure on existing piped systems and reducing risk of flooding. Where designed as vegetated/green systems, SuDS can help to moderate microclimate, benefit ecology, improve water quality and provide amenity spaces with opportunities for recreation.

Sustainable transport: Environmentally sustainable modes of travel, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Swales: Linear grass covered depressions which lead surface water overland from the drained surface to a storage or discharge system, typically using road verges.

Urban Green Factor (UGF): A policy tool which sets a target for greening the surfaces of a development, promoting increased use of measures with higher provision of environmental surfaces. It is also known as Green Space Factor.

Urban tree planting: The process of planting young trees in towns and cities. As urban sites may not be the natural habitat for trees, tree choice and location are vital if trees are to grow and flourish. Planting trees in urban areas can yield many benefits in addition to their aesthetic value, such as reductions in air pollution and noise levels.

Wellbeing: The state of being happy and healthy. Being in or close to nature can reduce anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only make us feel better emotionally, it can also contribute to our physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.

Wetland creation: The creation of a distinct wetland ecosystem inundated by water, either permanently or seasonally, where aquatic vegetation thrives. Wetlands can be used for water purification, water storage, sequestration of carbon and other nutrients, the stabilisation of shorelines, and in support of unique plants and animals.

Wildlife corridor: linear features that enable migration and dispersal or otherwise act to link habitats in ways that reduce the isolation of wildlife populations.

Woodland creation: The planting of new trees to form woodland or low-density forest, providing open habitats with plenty of sunlight for inhabitants and some limited shade at ground level. It can help in urban cooling, in providing shade and shelter, in minimising run-off from fields, and in reducing the impact of flooding.

Appendix A: Review of Policy and Strategy

APPENDIX A - Policy and Document Review

This Policy and Document Review identifies national and local issues that green and blue infrastructure (GBI) can help with. It considers where opportunities may arise for GBI to address these issues alongside Natural England's 15 principles for green infrastructure³⁰ ('why' do good infrastructure, 'what' good infrastructure is and 'how' to do good infrastructure) which are shown in Figure 1 on Page 4.

The following documents are included in this review:

National

- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023);
- Planning Practice Guidance
 - Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way; and local green space (March 2014);
 - Natural environment (updated February 2024);
 - Air quality (updated November 2019);
 - Climate change (updated March 2019);
 - Flood risk and coastal change (updated August 2022);
 - Healthy and safe communities (updated August 2022);
- A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018); and
- Community Infrastructure Levy (updated March 2019).

Local

Lewes District Council

- Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016);
- Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020);

³⁰ [Home \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

- Neighbourhood Plans:
 - Chailey Neighbourhood Plan (2019);
 - Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan (2018);
 - Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016);
 - Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019);
 - Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015);
 - Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023);
 - Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2018);
 - Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2015);
 - Seaford Neighbourhood Plan (2019); and
 - Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan (2016).
- Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023);
- Community Infrastructure Levy. Regulation 123 List (2015);
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020);
- Lewes Biodiversity Strategy (2021-2025);
- Open Space Strategy (2020);
- Outdoor Playing Space Study (2014);
- Playing Pitch Strategy (2020);
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (October 2009);
- Lewes District Council Interim Land Availability Assessment (Feb 2022);
- Lewes District Council Planning Technical Advice Note BNG (February 2021);
- Lewes Capacity Study (2012);
- Public Realm Framework (2013);
- Lewes Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2021 (with updates in 2022);
- Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (May 2023)
- Lewes Pesticide and Pollinator Strategy (October 2019); and
- Newhaven Port Masterplan (2012).

South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)

- South Downs Local Plan (2014-2033);
- South Downs Local Plan Ecosystem Services Map;
- SDNPA Climate Change Strategy, Action Plan and Net Zero for Nature;

- SDNPA Climate Change Adaptation Plan;
- SDNPA Walking and Cycling Strategy (2017-2024);
- Natural Flood Management Measures: A practical guide for farmers and landowners of the Solent and South Downs;
- SDNPA - Partnership Management Plan (2020-2025);
- People and Nature Network: Green Infrastructure in the South Downs National Park (March 2020);
- SDNPA People and Nature Network: The Evidence and Action Report; and
- South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework (March 2016).

Regional

East Sussex County Council

- Environment Strategy 2020;
- Climate Emergency Plan (2023-2025);
- Climate Change Road Map (2022-2025);
- South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2020); and
- ESCC Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Other Key Stakeholder Documents

- Sussex Flow Initiative;
- Natural Capital Investment for Sussex;
- Sussex Biodiversity Partnership; and
- Shoreline Management Plans.

Neighbouring Local Authorities

- Wealden District Council - Core Strategy Local Plan (2013); and
- Mid-Sussex District Council – District Plan (2014-2031).

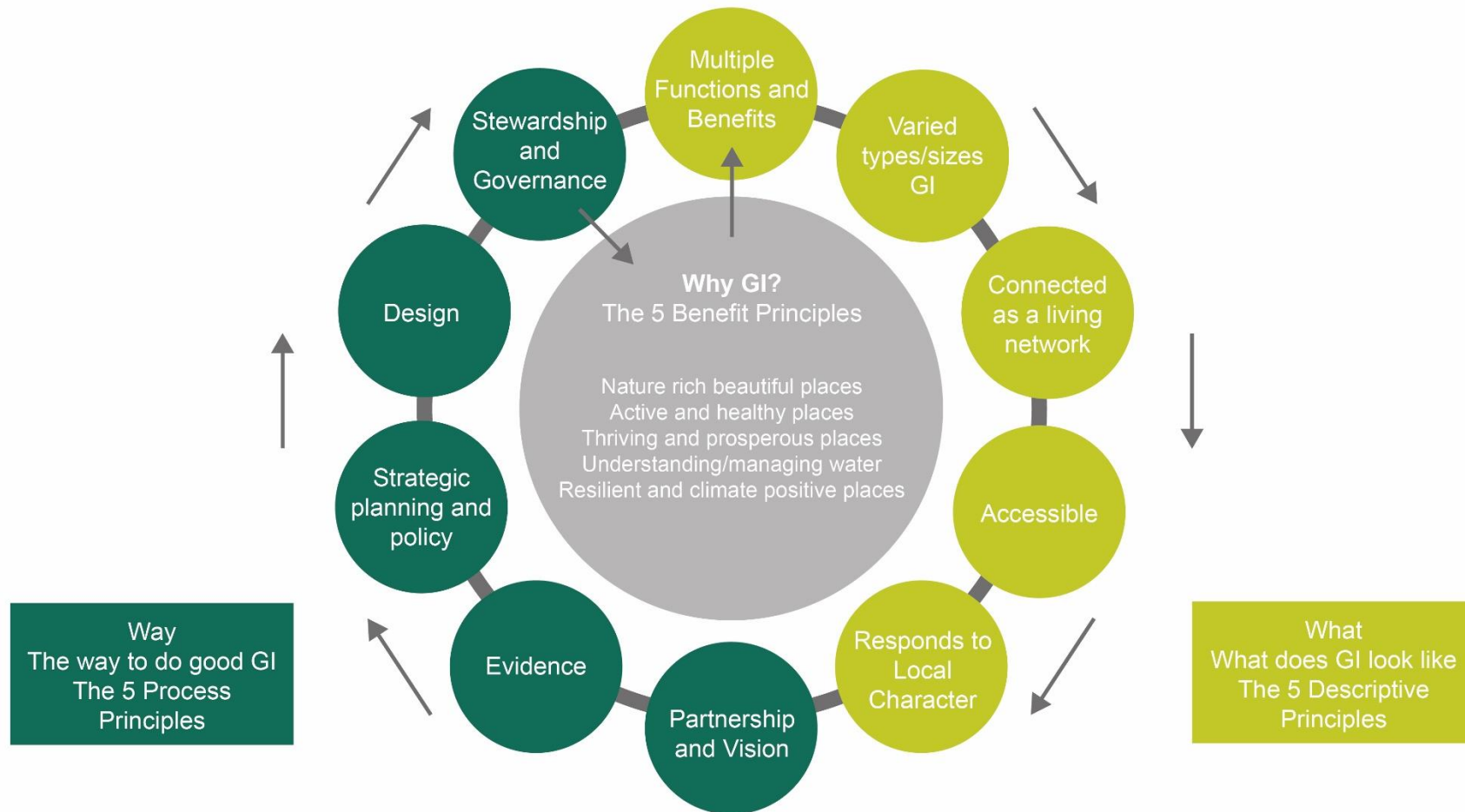


Figure 23: Natural England's Principles for Green Infrastructure

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
National Planning Policies		
<u>NPPF 2023 (DLUHC)</u> Section 3 – Strategic Policies	Paragraph 20 outlines that Strategic Policies, as set by local authorities, should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of places, 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.’	Establishes national policy context.
<u>NPPF 2023 (DLUHC)</u> Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities	Paragraph 96 to 101 outlines that Planning Policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promotes social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other and enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.	Establishes national policy context.
<u>NPPF 2023 (DLUHC)</u> Section 8 – Open Space and Recreation	Paragraphs 105 to 107 in the NPPF set out that Local Green Space (LGS) designation is a way for communities to identify and protect green space of particular importance to them through local and neighbourhood plans. In order for the LGS designation to be used, the green space must be in a reasonably close proximity to the community it serves and be demonstrably special to the local community with a particular local significance (aesthetical, historical, recreational or environmental); and in a local character and now an extensive tract of land. The NPPF states that local policies for managing development within the LGS should be consistent with those for Green Belts.	Establishes national policy context.
<u>NPPF 2023 (DLUHC)</u> Section 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places	Under paragraph 135, planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting,	Establishes national policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change and establish a strong sense of place. Paragraph 136 states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.	
<u>NPPE</u> 2023 (DLUHC) Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	Section 14 of the NPPE, 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, considering 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 158). Paragraph 159 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.’ In accordance with Paragraph 167, plans should manage flood risk by using improvements in green infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.	Establishes national policy context.
<u>NPPE</u> 2023 (DLUHC)	Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing	Establishes national policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment	coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; and wherever possible, make improvements to the local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, considering relevant information such as river basin management plans (Paragraph 180). Paragraph 181 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.	
<u>Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC)</u> Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Local Green Space (March 2014)	The value and benefits of open space is outlined in the PPG, Paragraph 001 which states that ‘it is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas.’ PRoW’s form an important component of sustainable transport links and should be protected or enhanced. Paragraph 004 states that the DEFRA Rights of Way circular (1/09) gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing PRoW.	Establishes national policy context.
<u>Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC)</u> Natural Environment (February 2024)	<i>Biodiversity</i> Paragraph 009 reinforces the NPPF which is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution – Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC) for Biodiversity Net Gain provides further detail on BNG specifically. Paragraph 009 also states that Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all	Establishes national policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	public authorities in England to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This should embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector. Paragraph 010 states that local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning bodies should therefore seek opportunities to work collaboratively with other partners, to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local priorities and evidence. It is advised in paragraph 018 that biodiversity in and around development should be led by a local understanding of ecological networks and should seek to include improved links between existing sites, habitat restoration and expansion, buffering of existing important sites, new biodiversity features within development and securing long term management. <i>Green Infrastructure (GI)</i> After paragraph 004 introduces the concept of GI, paragraph 007 outlines what is meant by a strategic approach to planning for GI. It states that an authority-wide GI framework or strategy should be evidence-based by, for example including an assessment of current green infrastructure provision that identifies gaps in the network and the components and opportunities for improvement. This strategic approach to GI may cross administrative boundaries. Therefore, neighbouring authorities, working collaboratively with other stakeholders including Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), may wish to consider how wider strategies for their areas can help address cross-boundary issues.	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	Paragraph 008 states that arrangements for managing GI, and for funding its management over the long-term, should be identified as early as possible when planning GI and factored into the way that it is designed and implemented.	
<u>Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC)</u> Air Quality (November 2019)	In reference to encouraging sustainable transport and the location of proposed development, Paragraph 002 states that in plan making, it is important to consider air quality management areas and other areas where there could be specific requirements or limitations on new development because of air quality. Paragraph 008 cites the use of GI (particularly trees) to absorb dust and other pollutants, to be an appropriate mitigation technique to ensure that new development prevents unacceptable risk. In addition, the PPG promotes transport with low impact on air quality.	Establishes national policy context.
<u>Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC)</u> Climate Change (March 2019)	Local planning authorities should ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered alongside the broader issues of protecting the global environment. Planning can also help increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development. Paragraph 003 advises that providing sustainable transport is an example of an approach to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions. A further example provided of adapting to climate change relevant to GBI is stated to include the availability of water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality. Paragraph 004 advises that local planning authorities should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation and mitigation approaches and looking for 'win-win' solutions that will support	Establishes national policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	sustainable development. One of the win-win solutions presented is the 'provision of multi-functional green infrastructure, which can reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change – as well as contributing to a pleasant environment which encourages people to walk and cycle'. GI is presented as a way of dealing with uncertainty of climate risks. Local planning authorities are advised to identify 'no or low cost responses to climate risks that also deliver other benefits, such as green infrastructure that improves adaptation, biodiversity and amenity.'	
<u>Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC)</u> Flood Risk and Coastal Change (August 2022)	Paragraph 050 presents GI as an opportunity to reduce overall flood risk in a development area and beyond, as well as the use of SuDS. SuDS provide opportunities such as combining water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife (Paragraph 051).	Establishes national policy context.
<u>Planning Practice Guidance</u> Healthy and Safe Communities (August 2022)	The Healthy and Safe Communities PPG sets out key advice on accounting for health and wellbeing in the planning process: - Creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles; and - Identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care and the wider health and care system. The PPG states that planning can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce excess weight amongst local communities. The PPG also covers the promotion of benefits of estate regeneration and supporting safe communities.	Establishes national policy context.
<u>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment</u>	Key policies include: • Using and managing land sustainability; • Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;	Establishes national policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
(HM Government) (2018)	- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing; - Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste; - Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and - Protecting and improving the global environment.	
Local Planning Policies – Lewes District Council		
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy</u> <i>District Wide Vision</i>	By 2030, in the whole District of Lewes: - Residents will have made every effort to respond to climate change, through a reduction in carbon footprints and adapting to the consequences of climate change; this will be done by increasing sustainable travel, sustainable construction and utilising other alternative travel e.g. the former Lewes to Uckfield railway; - Air quality will have improved and risks to the district from the increased frequency and severity of flood events will have reduced. Increased recreation opportunities presented by environmental features will have been realised; - The area within the district owned by the SDNPA will be enhanced and conserved to be enjoyed by residents; - There will have been efforts to increase and preserve the built heritage of the area and coastal strip; - Enhancements of biodiversity of the district, including further creation of high quality network of habitats will be established and enjoyed by many parts of the district; - Appropriate new housing will be delivered to contribute to the housing need which has resulted from an increase in households in the district and a change in demographic profile; and - Delivery of appropriate affordable housing in appropriate locations will have enabled those who wish to live in the district to do so.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy</u> <i>Newhaven</i>	By 2030: - Newhaven will have undergone significant regeneration to strengthen its economic base; - The town will focus enterprise and training within the district with links to the university in Brighton; - The tourism industry will have increased with the town acting as the continental gateway to the adjacent National Park;	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• The regeneration of Newhaven will have resulted in a revitalised and more accessible town centre, with an improved public realm and a greater range of uses and activity, including those to meet local needs; • The improved accessibility of the town centre will have been aided by an improved highway network, greater connectivity to the town's railway stations and a high quality sustainable transport corridor along the A259; and • The natural asset of the river through the town will have been maximised through redevelopment opportunities, thereby enhancing this unique area of the town for residents and visitors alike.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy</u> <i>Peacehaven and Telscombe</i>	By 2030: • The regeneration of Newhaven will directly and indirectly improve the vitality of Peacehaven and Telscombe; • Peacehaven will improve the high quality sustainable transport corridor, thereby improving the accessibility to this part of the district and neighbouring coastal towns and cities; • There will be increased provision and quality of recreation and community services; and • The retail provision within the town will also have been improved by development and there will be a diverse mix of shops.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy</u> <i>Seaford</i>	By 2030: • Seaford will have made great use of its coastal location through a regenerated seafront, which is easily accessible, via key transport hubs such as the railway station; • The retail opportunities will have been improved, by developments which will increase a diverse range of shops and other town centre uses; and • Seaford will improve the provision of tourist facilities and accommodation that will have widened the town's economic base as valued by residents.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy</u> <i>The rural area of Low Weald</i>	By 2030: • Low weald villages and wider countryside would have retained, where possible, enhanced their character and identity; • Recent development areas are being sensitively accommodated particularly in settlements with the best range of community services and facilities and ease of access into employment areas; • Low Weald are looking to further opportunities for sustainable transport particularly to and from Plumpton and Cooksbridge; and • There will be progress towards achieving lower speed limits in the villages to ensure travelling by car is undertaken in the safest possible manner.	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy</u> <i>The rural area of South Downs National Park</i>	By 2030: • The highly valued character of the South Downs National Park will have been protected and enhanced; and • Development to meet the social and economic needs of the existing communities, including the provision of affordable housing and community facilities will have been met sensitively, acknowledging and responding to the special qualities of the National Park.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Strategic Objectives</i>	The strategic objectives related to this GBI Study are:- • To stimulate and maintain a buoyant and balanced local economy; • To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the District's centres; • Deliver homes in a sustainable way; • To take advantage of the richness and diversity of the District's natural and heritage assets; • To improve the accessibility to key community services and facilities; • Conserve and enhance the high quality and character of the district; • conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; • New development in the highly sustainable locations; • Reduce the need for travel and to promote a sustainable system; and • Reduce causes of climate change and is proactive regarding climate change initiatives, including flood risk and coastal erosion.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 1 – Affordable Housing</i>	Core Policy 1 relates to Affordable Housing. Lewes aims to deliver the homes and accommodation for the needs of the district to ensure the housing growth requirements are accommodated in the most sustainable way. The Core Strategy suggests that much of the housing need is generated from the internal migration	Establishes local policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	pressures and such pressures will not significantly subside as a result of not being accommodated. Delivering affordable housing is one way to address and meet the need of those in deficit. This also aligns with priorities shared by the SDNPA.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 4 – Encouraging Economic Development and Regeneration</i> & <i>Core Policy 5 -Visitor Economy</i> & <i>Core Policy 6 – Retail and Town Centres</i>	Core Policy 4 relates to Encouraging Economic Development and Regeneration. This policy aims to stimulate and maintain a buoyant and balanced local economy through the regeneration of coastal towns. The richness and diversity of the district natural and heritage assets should be promoted to achieve sustainable tourism in and around the district. Core Policy 5 relates to the opportunities for sustainable development of the visitor economy. It aims to encourage rural tourism and accessibility to the National Park for year round relaxation, local crafts and enjoyment of nature. Core Policy 6 promotes the vitality and viability of retail and town centres. The main town centres will be the focus of retail, culture and tourism.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 8 – Green Infrastructure</i>	Core Policy 8 aims to enhance existing GBI networks utilising the significant natural assets of the region. The objectives of Core Policy 8 include: - Working with other agencies to improve the accessibility to community and facilities and to provide new and upgraded green infrastructure to support sustainable communities; - To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; - To take advantage of the richness and diversity of the districts natural and heritage assets to promote and achieve a sustainable tourism industry; - To conserve and enhance the high quality and character of the district's towns, villages and rural environment by	Establishes local policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	ensuring that all forms of new development are designed to a high standard and maintain and enhance the local 'sense of place' of individual settlements.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 9 – Air Quality</i>	Core Policy 9 relates to air quality. There are two specific strategic objectives. One is to reduce the need for travel and promote the sustainable system of transport and land use for people who live in, work in and study in and visit the district. The other objective is to be proactive in tackling climate change. In general, the air quality in the district is good. However, there are concerns about with regard to nitrogen dioxide emissions in certain areas including specially Lewes and Newhaven.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 10 – Natural Environment and Landscape Character & Core Policy 11 – Built and Historic Environment and High Quality Design</i>	Core Policy 10 relates to the natural environment and landscape character and Core Policy 11 relates to the built environment and historic environment and quality design, both of these policies emphasise the preservation of the District's character and high quality natural environment and the importance of ensuring all new development meets the highest standards.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 12 – Flood Risk, Coastal Erosion, Sustainable Drainage and Slope Stability</i>	Core Policy 12 relates to Flood Risk, Coastal Erosion, Sustainable Drainage and Slope Stability. This policy looks to address a number of environmental issues experience within the District and wider region by using GBI to help mitigate issues such as: - Steering development away from flood risk areas; - Requiring new developments to provide flood protection, resilience, resistance and mitigation; - Liaising closely with Environment Agency and East Sussex County Council; and - Avoiding development of coastlines and preventing development on unstable coastlines.	Establishes local policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 13 – Sustainable Travel</i>	Policy 13 relates to sustainable travel which identifies the aim for more sustainable travel in and around the District by investing in this infrastructure to have a beneficial impact on a number of primary issues.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 1 Joint Core Strategy (2016)</u> <i>Core Policy 14 – Renewable And Low Carbon Energy and the Sustainable use of Resources</i>	Core Policy 14 relates to Renewable Energy, Low Carbon Energy and Resources. In order to reduce locally contributing causes of climate change, including through the implementation of sustainable construction techniques in new developments the local authority will; Encourage low carbon energy in all developments, Development and design which takes in advantage of opportunities for renewable, low carbon energy. Support applications for low carbon and renewable energy installations but protect special qualities of the District, including the South Downs, landscape impact and ecology impact.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM14: Multi-functional Green Infrastructure</i>	Policy DM14 seeks to ensure that green infrastructure is delivered as an integral part of the design of new development proposals and achieve multiple environmental, social and economic benefits where appropriate.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM15: Provision for Outdoor Playing Space</i>	Policy DM 15, related directly to provision for outdoor playing space. It seeks to provide outdoor playing space, which is available for public use. The following minimum standards should be followed: 1.6 ha per 100 population for outdoor sports, including playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens, 0.25 per 1000 population for equipped/designated children's play space and 0.3 ha per 1000 population for other outdoor provision (this includes multi-use games areas and skateboard parks).	Establishes local policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	In areas where deficiency of outdoor playing areas is identified, the Community Infrastructure Levy will be used to secure the provision of new or the enhancement of existing outdoor play facilities.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM16 – Childrens Play Space in New Housing Development</i>	Policy DM 16 states that housing developments of more than 20 dwellings will be required to provide children's play spaces on site. The space in the new development for children's play should be integral to the overall development, sited safe, open and welcoming locations, provided with seating for adults and have additional amenity space.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM 17 – Former Lewes/ Sheffield Park Railway Line</i>	Policy 17 relates to the Lewes/Sheffield Park Railway Line. Informal recreation routes such as walking, cycling and horse riding will be permitted along the undeveloped part of the Lewes/Sheffield Park railway line where it can be demonstrated that such uses would maintain or enhance biodiversity along the route. Development which would prejudice such uses will not be permitted nearby unless proposals are made for alternative routes.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM18 – Recreation and Rivers</i>	Policy 18 relates to recreation and rivers. Development proposals for recreational use of the River Ouse, its margins and associated wetland will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse environmental impact. The River Ouse provides potential as a recreational resource, for walking, cycling and horse riding.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM20 –Pollution Management</i>	Policy 20 relates to pollution management. The aim of this policy is to provide safe and healthy environment for those who live and work in the district. Development which may create or be adversely effected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise or light pollution will be restricted.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u>	Policy 22 directly relates water resource and water quality. The protection and enhancement of water quality in rivers and other waterbodies is important in terms of sustaining the supply of water, the ecology and general amenity of the district. All new	Establishes local policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<i>Policy DM22 – Water Resource and Water Quality</i>	developments will ensure that there will be no adverse impacts on the water environment within the site and the surrounding area. Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the development will not result in unacceptable risk to the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater and change the underground and surface water levels.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM23 – Noise</i>	Policy 23 relates to noise. The planning system has sought a role in ensuring that new noise sensitive development do not impact the local communities. Where appropriate proposals will mitigate noise impacts through careful planning but also if noise is going to be a problem within a development, then a Noise Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken to mitigate adverse impacts.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM24 – Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>	Policy 24 relates to protecting biodiversity and geodiversity. Development which may adversely impact protected sites will be only permitted if adverse impacts can be avoided and or mitigated.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM25 - Design</i>	Policy 25 relates to design. Design should be carefully undertaken to contribute to the local character of Lewes District and ensure adequate consideration has been undertaken to all criteria set out in the policy.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy 33 – Heritage Assets</i>	Policy 33 relates to heritage assets. Sensitive management of the historic environment is a key component in the delivery of sustainable development and adds value to regeneration, business and the growing tourism sector.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u>	Policy 35 relates to footpaths, cycleways and bridleways. Development that would have a harmful impact on the convenience, safety or amenity value of the existing footpath,	Establishes local policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<i>Policy DM35 – Footpath, Cycle and Bridleway Network</i>	cycleway or bridleway will only be permitted where the impact can be mitigated, or an alternative facility can be delivered.	
<u>Lewes District Local Plan: Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2020)</u> <i>Policy DM37 – Former Lewes to Uckfield Railway Line</i>	Policy 37 relates to the former Lewes to Uckfield railway line, which has the potential to provide an additional rail link between Brighton and London. Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former Lewes to Uckfield railway line, as shown on the Policies map, will not be permitted.	Establishes local policy context.
<u>Chailey Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	The vision of Chailey NP seeks to capture the purpose and aspirations for the village “<i>Chailey will continue to be a thriving community which protects and retains its quiet, rural character and enhances its built and natural heritage. Sustainable development that respects its countryside setting will be supported and infrastructure improvements will be encouraged. The most highly valued countryside areas in the Parish will be recognised and conserved.</i>” Environmental objectives to achieve the vision are: - • Objective 4: To enhance and protect the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Parish, including the vicinity of Chailey Common; • Objective 5: To enhance and protect the countryside setting of the main residential centres of the Parish; • Objective 6: To protect and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Parish.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Chailey Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy ENV5: Conservation of the environment, ecosystems and biodiversity</i>	Development will be expected to protect and retain well-established features of the environment, ecosystem and biodiversity, including mature trees, species-rich hedgerows, watercourses and other ecological networks together with the habitats alongside them including ponds. All development should consider the existing nature conservation resource of the site, identify significant impacts and assess the need for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and new benefits for biodiversity,	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	including the potential to create and/or strengthen connectivity between existing habitats	
<u>Chailey Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy ENV6: Protection of open views</i>	All development should be considered with regard to the need to protect the open landscape character of the countryside and the natural rural views into and out of Chailey.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Parishes Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>CONS 10: Protect local green spaces</i> <i>CONS 11: Protect community open spaces</i>	In areas designated as LGS, development will only be permitted in very special circumstances. In areas designated as Community Open Spaces, proposals will be expected to enhance the existing use and community value of these sites, while safeguarding and where possible enhancing their landscape and biodiversity value.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Parishes Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>CONS 12: Safeguard and enhance green infrastructure</i>	The existing GBI network will be safeguarded from adverse effects of new development, which should seek to enhance and connect to the local network. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless they include suitable replacement green infrastructure, so the community gains equivalent benefit.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Parishes Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>CONS 13: Protect and enhance links to the countryside</i> <i>COM 2: Improve Ditchling Recreation Ground</i> <i>TRANS 11: Provide for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists</i>	Proposals for development which lie on or adjacent to footpath and bridleway links should not prejudice the retention and enhancement of these routes and should contribute to new routes as appropriate. Links to Ditchling Common Country Park should be promoted through cross-boundary co-operation and linked network of foot, cycle and equestrian paths. Development proposals will be supported where the proposal will enhance facilities and contribute to a linked network of active travel routes.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<u>Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Parishes Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>CONS 17: Promote cross-boundary working to create better green links</i>	Ditchling Country Park and Ditchling Common, Purchase Wood, West Wood and interconnecting green corridors provide important areas of accessible green areas for the adjacent communities of Burgess Hill, Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green. The creation of new footpaths and bridleways between new developments and these green spaces will be supported.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	Hamsey community vision sets out: <i>To maintain and improve the quality of the rural natural environment, with protection in place for green spaces and woodland.</i> <i>To improve the infrastructure and therein the opportunity for non-motorised travel and increase the frequency of public transport.</i> <i>to evolve and grow sustainably whilst promoting the rural local character.</i> <i>To help provide an outstanding quality of life for future generations, whilst improving opportunities for all residents including younger adults to be able to afford to live and work within the Parish.</i> <i>To plan sustainable development using available natural resources to reduce our ecological footprint and minimise the need for fossil fuels.</i> <i>To continue to respect and reflect the views of the whole community Steering.</i> The objectives of Hamsey Neighbourhood Plan which link to GBI are: - To protect the high quality natural environment of valued green spaces, ancient trees, wooded areas, hedgerows and watercourses. - To conserve wildlife through maintaining the countryside and improving biodiversity	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	- To improve the connected network of wildlife habitats and appropriate farm management to ensure that - natural resources, habitats and species can adapt to the impacts of climate change, flooding and other pressures. - To ensure developments protect and enrich the landscape and rural setting - To prioritise local character in every element of change and growth. - To campaign for on-going improvements to transport, to utility infrastructure and for digital connectivity. - To create an effective network of footpaths and new cycle paths linking the communities across the Parish - with improved public transport provision to encourage increased movement by sustainable means and - reduced car dependency. - To improve local facilities and amenities in readiness for projected community growth. - To protect cultural heritage assets and shared common land, namely Beechwood Rural Park, that enhance and contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.	
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy EN2 - Local Green Spaces</i>	Policy EN2 related to the Hamsey Neighbourhood Plan designates the following sites as LGS as shown in the Local Greenspaces Map and Cooksbridge Settlement Boundary: LGS1 The Platt (Map H) LGS2 Kiln Woods (Map I) LGS3 Field South of Beechwood (Map J) LGS4 Old Hamsey Church Graveyard (Map K)	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u>	Policy EN3 relates to developments, which should protect and enhance existing local ecological corridors, landscape features and habitats (such as trees, water courses, all ancient trees and all hedgerows). Development proposals	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<i>Policy EN3 - local ecological corridors, landscape features and habitats</i>	that result in materially adverse impacts will not be supported.	
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy EN6 - Reduce emissions</i>	Policy EN6 relates to reducing emissions. Development that would result in high levels of pollution, or noise, or traffic congestion, will not be permitted.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy EN8 - Protection of Views</i>	Policy EN 8 relates to the Protection of Views. Development that would adversely affect the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built up area and the Rural Park will not be supported.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy H3 - SDNP character and ecology protected</i>	Policy H3 relates to the protection of SDNP character and ecology. Development sites shall not adversely affect the landscape character of the SDNP or reduce the ecological capacity of the site without appropriate mitigation.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Hamsey Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy TT2 - Sustainable Travel.</i>	Policy TT2 relates to sustainable travel. Developments will maximise opportunities to walk and cycle, including between Hamsey School, Cooksbridge station, Beechwood Hall and the SDNP by providing footways and cycleways where appropriate.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	The vision statement for Newhaven Towns Neighbourhood Plan includes references to walking and cycling networks and the importance of making the coast and SDNP easily accessible for recreation, providing a good quality of life for residents. There is an aspiration to tackle flooding, pollution and congestion and to revitalise the town centre, improving links across the river. The town will be promoted as a gateway to the National Park and beyond, welcoming visitors and inspiring pride in residents. The Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan which relate to GBI include the following: - Objectives 1: Town Centre Improvements including adding planting and improving cycle and foot access - Objective 2: Transport and access prioritising sustainable travel and disabled access	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	- Objectives 3, Open Space, health and wellbeing identifying multifunctional GI linked by green and blue recreation corridors - Objective 5, Natural Environment and Biodiversity including water management, wildlife corridors and cultural heritage of the SDNP - Objectives 6: Sustainable Development, good quality design and image contributing to new or enhanced multifunctional GI	
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy T1 - Sustainable movement</i>	Policy T1 relates direction to Sustainable Movement. Planning applications which encourage active travel and reduce traffic and pollution will be supported.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy T2 - Accessibility to and within the town centre</i>	Policy T2 relates to accessibility to and within the town centre of Newhaven. Proposals within the town centre which seek to improve accessibility and wayfinding will be supported.	
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy R1 - Recreation leisure and local green spaces</i>	Policy R1 relates directly to recreation leisure and local greenspaces. It supports new and improved formal and informal areas for recreation, with reference to local requirements for playing spaces, allotments and LGS sites.	
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy NE1 - Biodiversity protection and enhancement</i>	Policy NE1 relates directly to Biodiversity protection and enhancement. New developments should protect existing natural assets, prevent negative impacts and enhance ecological value with reference to local biodiversity action plans and SuDS advice.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy D1 - Promoting good design</i>	Policy D1 relates to good quality design. This means considering local context to create appropriate, multifunctional GBI that responds to local character.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<u>Newhaven Town Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy D2 - Design and climate change</i>	Policy D2, relates directly to design and climate change. GI should always be developed with climate change and biodiversity in mind, reducing use of fossil fuels, promoting zero/low carbon behaviour and ensuring resilience to a changing climate. 1.	
<u>Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	The Vision for Newick is detailed below: <i>The Parish Councils vision for the future of Newick is that its centre will retain its essential 'village feel' and that the whole parish will remain a vibrant, thriving and sustainable rural community. The built and natural heritage of the Parish will have been retained and protected. The most highly valued countryside areas in the Parish will have been recognised and conserved. Newick will become a healthier, more inclusive community for those of all ages equally.</i> The Objectives for this Neighbourhood Plan which directly relate to GBI include the following: Objective 1: To protect and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Parish; Objective 2: To protect and enhance the countryside setting of the main residential area of the Parish; Objective 5: To ensure development does not take place in areas at risk of flooding, or where it may cause flooding elsewhere; Objective 6: To reduce the Parish's impact on climate change and prepare the community and environment for its impacts. Objective 7: Address highway congestion issues in Newick Parish (as an environmental objective); Objective 8: Address highway congestion issues in Newick Parish (as a social objective); Objective 11 (Accessibility and Wellbeing) – Seek to maintain and improve areas to retain and community services (including health and schools) and recreation and leisure facilities.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<u>Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Policy EN 1 – Conservation Areas</i>	Policy EN1 states that all new developments in the Parish should respect the local landscape character and be designed to blend well with the existing built environment. The Conservation Areas should be respected.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Policy EN 2 – Protection of Wildlife</i>	Policy EN2 supports 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.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Policy EN 3 – Existing footpaths and cycle paths</i>	Policy EN 3 states that the any extension of the existing network of footpaths and twittens will be supported.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Policy EN 4 - Cycle paths</i>	Policy EN 4 suggests that the provision of cycle paths will be supported.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Newick Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Community Action EN 6</i>	The Community Action Policy EN 6 describes where the Parish Council spends the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), saying that consideration should be given to providing measures that will preserve and enhance Newick's green spaces and roadside verges.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	The vision for Peacehaven and Telscombe is to be sustainable, with clean air and healthy environment providing a good quality of life for all inhabitants and visitors. The objectives for Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Plan which relate to GBI are: - All new developments will be designed to deliver better quality environment or the area; - Access through the National Park and along the England Coast Path will be improved as multifunctional routes for tourism, travel and recreation, further linking the areas within Peacehaven and Telscombe to surrounding areas.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	- New developments will provide and create well connected, attractive cycling and pedestrian routes, providing seamless integration with the existing town facilities and public greenspaces to encourage a reduction in car travel. - Existing habitats and green infrastructure networks are to be protected and enhanced through sensitive development, to encourage local habitat improvement and creation. - To improve local air quality and provide reductions in carbon emissions by supporting local energy generation.	
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT1: High Quality Design	Policy PT1 relates to High Quality Design for developments within this area. It states that all proposals for development and public space should be designed to be accessible and safe to use by people of all ages and for those whose mobility may be impaired and should have a positive impact considering the local context, the landscaping and longer views of the SDNP. Proposals should incorporate opportunities to address climate change including enhancing biodiversity, using green roofs and walls, green technology, water saving and SuDS in accordance with LDC and SDNP.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT5: Sustainable Design	Policy PT5 relates to Sustainable Design. It suggests that all developments should seek to achieve high standard of sustainable development and where appropriate promote the use of natural resources, use SuDS, and show how proposals will be resilient to the impacts of climate change.	
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT11: Promoting All-inclusive Travel	Policy PT11 relates to promoting all-inclusive travel. Where new walking and cycling paths are proposed as part of the new development, they must be made safe and convenient. Proposals for new developments are encouraged to demonstrate how they link to the existing pedestrian and cycle network providing connections between schools, employment and green spaces.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u>	Policy PT12 relates to enhancing accessibility to the SDNP and coastal area. Improvements may include new links and junctions for pedestrians and cyclists and horse riders.	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
Policy PT12: Enhancing Accessibility to the South Downs National Park and Coastal Areas		
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT14: Protection of Green Space within the Neighbourhood	Policy PT14 states that all development should contribute to a connected recreational green network and provision of new spaces, playing fields and urban greening. Developments reduce green space should show that the green space is surplus to requirements and that there are enough other local green spaces within the wider local area.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT15: Amenity Green Space	Policy PT15, relates to amenity green spaces this policy in summary will support developments which create new wildlife habitats, connects, enhances and retains existing habitats and water features, or improves the public realm with street planting, SuDS and green spaces for social activity.	
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT17 – Protection of Biodiversity and Habitats	Policy PT17, relates directly to the protection of biodiversity and habitats, and states that any proposal which is likely to have a negative impact on protected habitats and species should be accompanied by an ecological assessment which sets out a clear mitigation strategy.	
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT18 – Biodiversity Net Gain	Policy PT18, relates directly to BNG. Developments should seek to incorporate safe nesting spaces for bat and birds and insects' houses and pollinators. Proposals should be in accordance with the LDC BNG guidance.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Peacehaven and Telscombe (Consultation March 2023)</u> Policy PT19 – Urban Greening	Policy PT19, relates to urban greening. To ensure that green assets are technically feasible and commercially viable and can thrive over the long term major applications should include appropriate watering systems. Schemes should be designed to ensure maximum visibility from the public realm to maximise well-being benefits for the whole community.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	The vision for Plumpton Parish in 2023 is:- <i>The parish of Plumpton will have retained its character and identity as a rural village with a strong sense of community</i>	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	<i>and strengthened its relationship to the landscape setting through improved public access, the development of new open space amenities and the enhancement of its biodiversity and landscape assets.</i> <i>Community facilities will have expanded and become more varied to meet the changing needs of residents, creating a stronger village centre. The parish's natural assets will provide benefits for pedestrian and cycle movements through improved connectivity and additions to the network of footpaths, bridleways and public rights of way, many of which will directly connect to the new developments. The parish will have a strong, positive and supportive working relationship with Plumpton Racecourse and Plumpton College.</i> <i>The parish will also enjoy a positive relationship with the SDNP, which will have become more accessible to the community for recreation and leisure. The parish and SDNP will have worked together to protect their shared setting and to define a role for the parish as a gateway to the park.</i> <i>There will be a modest growth in housing to meet local needs and will not detract from the character and setting of the parish.</i>	
<u>Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> Policy 3: Landscape and Biodiversity	Layout and landscape schemes of new development should be informed by the landscape character of the area and seek to achieve landscape and biodiversity enhancements.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> Policy 4: Sustainable Drainage and Wastewater Management	The development of SuDS as part of new developments will be supported. These should be designed to manage the risk of flooding, groundwater flooding, flash flooding, surface water run-off over	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	land, and the impact on the sewerage network. They should be naturalised in design terms wherever possible as part of a network of multi-functional landscapes.	
<u>Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>Policy 5.1-5.4</i>	Proposed development during plan period:- • Riddens Lane, Plumpton Green – 1.1ha/16 dwellings allocated • Wells Close, Plumpton Green – 0.69ha/12 dwellings (older people provision) • The Glebe, Plumpton Green – 1.5ha/20 dwelling (to inc. landscape buffers and respect the historic environment) • Land to the rear Oakfield, Plumpton Green – 1.63ha/20 dwellings (inc. landscape buffers and respect protected species)	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Plumpton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2018)</u> <i>Policy 11: Local Green Spaces</i>	Five open spaces with the Neighbourhood Plan area are designated as LGS. The development of LGS is ruled out other than in very special circumstances.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Vision and Objectives</i>	The vision for Ringmer Neighbourhood Area is that by 2030, • the Low Weald village of Ringmer, Broyle Side settlement and the wider countryside within the parish will have retained, and where possible enhanced, their attractive character and identity; • Ringmer village will continue to meet the demand for local services, including informal recreation and leisure facilities, for a wider area than just Ringmer itself. Where possible such services and facilities will be enhanced, and new ones created resulting in better facilities for the community; • The present network of rural lanes and footpaths heavily used for informal recreation will have been preserved and enhanced; • Ringmer will retain the essential 'village feel' of a sustainable rural community. The built and natural heritage of the parish will have been protected and retained. The	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	most highly valued countryside areas in Ringmer parish will have been recognised and conserved. Ringmer will have become a healthier, more inclusive and more sustainable community. The four key principles are:- - Retaining a 'village feel' is important to residents including landscape and social aspects; - Sustainability; - Ensuring a balanced, health and inclusive community; - Working collaboratively with the SDNP authority.	
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 4.3</i>	Any development proposals for Plashett Wood SSSI, Plashett Park Farm & Clay Hill Farm protected area must maintain or enhance the integrity of this highly valued and richly biodiverse Wealden ancient woodland and parkland landscape.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2015)</u> <i>Policy 4.4</i>	Development of measures that encourage recreational use of the River Ouse bank between Chalkham Farm and Barcombe Mills will be supported, provided that the rural beauty of the area is conserved or enhanced, and that appropriate measures are taken to mitigate any detrimental impacts.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Community Action 4.5</i>	Ringmer Parish Council will seek to maintain public footpath network and if possible, further improved through the creation of new licensed footpaths. Enhanced access to the SDNP will be particularly encouraged.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 4.5</i>	The development of accessible natural or semi-natural green space, including a community-managed woodland, in Ringmer parish will be supported.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 4.9</i>	Where appropriate new green corridors will be included within new development sites. Where a new development site intervenes between open countryside and an existing wildlife habitat in a developed area, new green corridors will be required to allow passage of wildlife.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 4.10</i>	Development proposals should consider their impact on biodiversity and include provisions to ensure biodiversity is maintained or enhanced.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 6.3</i>	All new proposals for development within or extending the village planning boundaries should respect the village scale. Only developments that respect the village scales appropriate to Ringmer village or the Broyle Side will be permitted.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 7.2</i>	There are twelve areas of managed open space in Ringmer village and three areas in the Broyle Side, ranging in size from Ringmer Green to small, grassed areas. Development that harms the character of the village green at Ringmer Green will not be permitted. The development of Ringmer's other managed open spaces, (as detailed in the Plan) will be permitted only where any harm arising is outweighed by community need for their use for other purposes.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 7.7</i>	The number of allotments available to Ringmer residents will be maintained at a level commensurate with demand. Proposals to extend the community orchard will be supported provided that they comply with other Neighbourhood Plan policies.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 8.4</i>	High priority will be given to the completion of the cycleway/mobility scooter route between Ringmer village and Lewes, and to the creation of a new route between Broyle Side and the main service sites in Ringmer village. Employment and leisure sites should be linked to Ringmer village by routes safe for bicycles and mobility scooters. New development should contribute to achieving these objectives.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> Village Design Statement (Chapter 9)	New development of all types shall conform with the Village Design Statement.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Seaford Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u>	Vision Statement for Seaford. By 2030:-	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
<i>Vision and Objectives</i>	• <i>Seaford will have retained its strong sense of community, made greater use of its seafront and heritage assets, including conserving and enhancing the character of its heritage coast, as well as promoting sympathetic development respecting the tranquil character of its historic nature to improve the economic, environment and social wellbeing of residents and visitors.</i> • <i>Seaford's location as a gateway to the SDNP with its green open spaces, seafront and spectacular views will have been retained, protected, enhanced and promoted, to benefit future generations. An improved transport infrastructure will have made the seafront, town centre, railway stations and outlying areas of the town readily accessible for all.</i> • <i>Expanding the rich and diverse mix of independent shops, light industrial services, businesses, community and tourist facilities, while simultaneously addressing the shortfall in visitor accommodation, will have widened the town's economic base.</i> <u>Environmental Objectives:</u> • Objective 1 - To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan area has robust, accessible and sustainable rail and road transport systems for its residents and businesses that encourage sustainable economic development. • Objective 2 - To promote sustainable tourism using the town's natural assets and regeneration of the seafront. • Objective 4 - To promote an active community by retaining and enhancing the economic and physical infrastructure including green infrastructure and facilities. • Objective 5 - To preserve and enhance the environment and countryside both within and around the town, including the historic environment and heritage assets and important	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	views as identified in the Statement on Seaford's Local Landscape Character and Views and the SDNP. • Objective 6 - To protect, preserve and expand on the LGS in Seaford and to maintain and enhance connectivity for wildlife throughout the town through the conservation and enhancement of green infrastructure, by seeking to achieve BNG and by connecting people (both residents and tourists) to the natural environment. • Objective 10 - To improve the existing, and develop new, walking and cycling routes which reduce reliance on vehicular use, reduce carbon emissions, and which improve the health and well-being of residents and visitors.	
<u>Seaford Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>Policy SEA1 -Development within or affecting South Downs National Park</i>	Development within or impacting upon the SDNP should have a landscape led approach to design, having regard to the setting of the National Park in terms of its landscape and visual amenity. Development within or impacting upon the SDNP must respect: • The landscape setting of Seaford, including the SDNP; • National Park and protecting the character of the Heritage Coast; • The key views as identified in the Statement on Seaford's Local Landscape Character and Views and shown on Map 2; • Tranquillity and dark night skies; • The natural, locally distinctive and heritage landscape qualities and characteristics of Seaford including trees and hedgerows, particularly in areas which are currently deficient in such natural assets; • Features of biodiversity, geological and heritage interest.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Seaford Neighbourhood Plan (2019)</u> <i>SEA 7 - Recreational Facilities</i>	The development of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, will not be supported unless:	Contributes to settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; • The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; • The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.	
<u>Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Aims and Objectives</i>	<u>Environmental Priorities in Wivelsfield</u> • To maintain and protect the rural character of the Parish and its landscape features; and • To establish, maintain, protect and enhance local green spaces.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
<u>Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> <i>Policy 6 – Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity</i>	Policy 6 relates to Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity. It • encourages the productive use of viable farmland; • encourages landowners to maintain and manage woods, hedges, ditches and habitats; • encourages landowners and other responsible organisations to maintain public footpaths and bridleways and encourages the public to use them; • requires that developments should not significantly affect habitats for flora and fauna and wildlife corridors and if they do appropriate mitigation measures should be undertaken in agreement with the relevant authorities; • expects developments to use natural Sussex post/rail fencing or hedges for boundaries and not close boarded fencing in order to preserve wildlife corridors; and • requires that developments should not affect ponds and lakes (natural and manmade), streams and rivers (surface and underground) and adequate measures, in consultation	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	with appropriate authorities, should be undertaken to prevent localised flooding.	
<u>Wivelsfield Neighbourhood Plan (2016)</u> Policy 7: Local Green Space	Policy 7, relates to Local Green Space. It designates land west of Wivelsfield Primary school as LGS which will resist development, as it is an important break in the developed area, adjoining ancient woodland, backdrop to a war memorial and important culturally for the parish.	
Settlement Hierarchy Review (July 2023)	The aim of this study is to review and update the existing district settlement hierarchy to inform the preparation of the new Lewes District Local Plan (2020-2040), for the area outside of the South Downs Nation Park (SDNP). <i>There are no Primary or Secondary Regional Centres in the District</i> District Centre – Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven & Telscombe – Accessible settlements by road and public transport containing a range of shops, employment and facilities. Rural Service Centre – Newick & Ringmer - Sustainable locations with sufficient services and facilities meet day to day needs of their residents in the wider rural hinterlands. Service Village – Barcombe Cross, Plumpton Green and Wivelsfield Green – Villages with basic services and limited employment opportunities. Local Village - Broyle Side, Cooksbridge, Chailey North, Chailey South, South Street, South Highton – Very few services and poor accessibility to higher order settlements. Hamlet – Settlement with less than 100 residents with a historic core but no social infrastructure.	Contributes to settlement appraisals.
Community Infrastructure Levy. Regulations 123 Lists (2015)	Lewes and Eastbourne Council have produced a Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 123 List which restricts the use of planning obligations that will be funded in whole or part by the	Contributes to local GBI delivery.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The following list which will not be secured through planning obligations secured through s106 agreements. • Strategic and Local Transport Infrastructure and facilities, excluding specific improvements needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms. These exclusions can include (but not limited to): ○ Highways crossover to access the site and local junctions; ○ Deceleration and turning lanes; ○ Measures to facilitate pedestrian, public transport and cyclist improvement; ○ Lighting street furniture needed to mitigate impact of development; ○ Mitigations works remote from the development where the need for such works is identified in a Transport Assessment; • Education Provision; • Library Facilities; • Childrens Play Space, Open Space and Sports Playing Fields; • Flood Storage and Water Management Infrastructure; • Police Facilities.	
Lewes Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Jan 2020)	The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been produced to support the Lewes District Local Plan. The IDP sets out the key strategic infrastructure which is required to support the objectives and spatial strategy of the Local Plan and identifies where and at what time that infrastructure is required and who is responsible for delivering it. The following key infrastructure groups and types of facilities and services within each group is set out below relating specifically to green infrastructure:	Contributes to local GBI delivery.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Outdoor sports facilities, • Outdoor children's play spaces, • Parks and gardens, • Amenity green spaces, • Allotments and community gardens, • Green corridors, • Natural and semi natural urban green spaces, and Accessible countryside.	
Lewes Biodiversity Strategy (2021-2025)	Lewes District Council is planning to scale up efforts to defend the local biodiversity, reduce carbon emission and improve air quality. The purpose of this strategy is to set out ambitious yet achievable aims and objectives to better tackle biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation across the district and the wider landscape. The main aims of the Biodiversity Strategy are: • to seek nature-based solutions; • to promote ecosystem services and re-naturing rewilding opportunities; • to maintain and increase biodiversity on council owned and managed land; • to engage and enable community-led nature based projects and to be involved in partnerships that promote natural capital and biodiversity across the district; and • to ensure that all development maximises the opportunities for well-considered gains in biodiversity.	Contributes to Principle 1: Nature Rich, Beautiful Places.
<u>Open Space Strategy (2020)</u>	An Open Space Strategy was written and adopted in November 2020. The Open Space Assessment assessed the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces in Lewes District (including SDNP). Of the 545 designated open spaces 110 sites were audited for quality and value. The Strategy concludes that	Contributes to Principle 2: Active, Healthy Places and settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	accessibility to open space is generally higher in the urban areas of Saltdean, Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford. Where there are standards for provision at the time of writing the Strategy identifies surplus and deficits by parish and overall across Lewes District. Deficiencies in both current and future provision were found in allotments, community gardens and city farms; parks and gardens; and provisions for children and young people. Deficiencies in future provision were also found in amenity greenspace. Surplus in current and future provision was identified in natural and semi-natural greenspace across the whole district, which includes the National Park.	
<u>Outdoor Playing Space Study (2014)</u>	An Outdoor Playing Space Study was written in September 2014 covering Lewes District. It aimed to ensure the adequate provision of outdoor playing space within the district and does not include blue infrastructure. The provision of appropriate and accessible outdoor playing space, both for children and for youth and adult supporting activities, is a critical component of the infrastructure necessary to support housing growth. The Study identifies that there were deficiencies in the provision of outdoor playing spaces, when measured against the councils' adopted standards, existing in all of the towns and many of the rural areas of the district. With the exception of Lewes, all the towns are deficient in outdoor sports facilities and there is a significant shortfall in the provision of equipped children's play spaces across the district.	Contributes to Principle 2: Active, Healthy Places.
<u>Playing Pitch Strategy (2020)</u>	The Lewes Council Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was written in July 2020 and covers the whole district including the SDNP. A PPS is a strategic assessment that provides an up to date analysis of	Contributes to Principle 2: Active, Healthy Places.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	supply and demand for playing pitches (grass and artificial) and outdoor sports facilities in the local authority. The assessment focuses on facilities used by the following sports: • Football (deficiency identified particularly in coastal towns) • Rugby Union (deficiency identified) • Cricket • Hockey (deficiency identified) • Athletics • Stoolball • Outdoor Tennis • Outdoor Bowls (deficiency identified) The strategy recommends increasing public use of pitches owned by educational facilities and notes the need for improved drainage and maintenance of sports pitches generally. It identifies increased demand for more women's sports teams and appropriate facilities particularly in football, cricket and rugby.	
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (October 2009)	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was completed in October 2009. The assessment suggested that most of the flooding problems in the District can be attributed to the River Ouse or the sea. Other flood sources such as groundwater, surface water and infrastructure failure have been suggested to have a limited impact. The Assessment suggested that due to the underlying chalk aquifer, groundwater flow is a real concern in the Lower Ouse. When groundwater flooding does occur, it can last for months and damages can be significant, however this is reduced in urban areas.	Contributes to Principle 4: Improved Water Management.
Lewes District Council Interim Land Availability Assessment (LAA) (February 2022)	The Lewes Land Availability Assessment was published in February 2022. This Assessment provides evidence of whether there is an adequate supply of housing land to meet the district locally assessed housing need. The sites identified below are	Contributes to local context for settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	identified as suitable for housing development, this does not mean that planning permission will be granted for development straight away. Out of the 193 sites that the LAA assessed, 15 of them are classified as being deliverable, 30 sites are considered to be potentially deliverable. Two sustainable urban extensions have already been identified in the Local Plan these include 900 dwellings in Ringmer and 3000 dwellings in East Chiltington.	
Lewes District Council Planning Technical Advice Note BNG (February 2021)	This technical advice was written in 2021, to provide advice for developers, landowners and the local community/public concerning LDC's expectations of BNG by developments in the area of the District outside the SDNP. The report states that climate change and biodiversity are interconnected and will advise on how to reduce the loss of biodiversity within the local area to Lewes District.	Contributes to Principle 1: Nature Rich, Beautiful Places.
Lewes Capacity Study (2012)	The Capacity Study for Lewes District Council was written in 2012 to identify where development might be accommodated within the District without unacceptably impacting on the landscape. The urban towns considered to have the greatest potential for growth, and are outside of the SDNP were: • Peacehaven and Telscombe (focusing on the areas around Lower Hodder Farm and Valley Road Area –outside of the National Park and provides an opportunity to strengthen the surrounding landscape through improving the hard urban edge. • Newhaven – west of Meeching has been identified as having very little opportunity for substantial growth. The one area within the urban towns in Lewes for greatest growth would be the land west of Meeching quarry. The following villages were considered to have reasonable scope for new developments: • Ringmer and Broyle Side – north of Bishop Lane;	Contributes to local context for settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Wivelsfield and Wivelsfield Green. • Newick – south of Allington Road; and • Plumpton – east of Station Road.	
Public Realm Framework (2013)	The Public Realm Framework for Lewes District was written in 2013. The Framework is a strategic document which sets out the vision, principles and general interventions for the public realm in Lewes District. Public realm collectively forms the spaces with which people interact and gather in towns and villages. It includes a wide range of spaces that provide places to visit, shelter, connect with and identify with, and this includes spaces between and within buildings which are accessible to the public. The framework identified priorities for public realm in Lewes which are relevant to GBI across the District: • Promote the character of the SDNP through all aspects of current and new public realm; and • Promote connection to the countryside.	Contributes to Principles 1, 2 and 3.
<u>Lewes Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2021</u> (with updates in 2022)	LDC produced a Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy in 2021, which was updated in 2022. This evidence and action plan was split into seven key priorities including: sustainable transport and air quality, biodiversity, agriculture and food, reducing emissions from waste, water and circular economy and community wealth.	Contributes to Principle 5: Resilient and Climate Positive Places.
Lewes Landscape Character Assessment (May 2023) Landscape Character Area – Downland Fringe (Landscape Character B) B1 – Peacehaven, Newhaven, Seaford and Saltdean Dowland	Downland Fringe includes areas around Peacehaven and Newhaven. Forces for Change • Development encroaching into areas of open space between settlement areas, which provides a setting to the South Downs National Park and separate sense of settlement identity.	Contributes to Principle 1 and settlement appraisals

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Tourism and recreational pressure along the coastline, potentially reducing biodiversity levels. • Climate change increasing extreme weather events, such as flooding due to increased rainfall patterns, heat stress relating to the landscape and further erosion to the coastline. • Continuing sea defences which may cause the southern coastal edge to have a higher urban influence. • Increased agricultural pressure, potentially causing degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses. • Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers. GBI Management Guidelines • Support the Ouse Valley Climate Action goals, including carbon capture with new tree planting and wildlife habitats, creating water habitats and encourage greener travel initiatives. • Management of recreational and tourism pressures along the coastline to ensure that existing biodiversity levels and species-rich habitats are retained and enhanced, including chalk grassland and wildflower vegetation cover. • Continue to preserve and enhance the local ProW network. • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park.	
Landscape Character Area – Downland Fringe – B2 Peacehaven Residential	Force for Change • Higher density of development within the Landscape Character Area as an extension of this context of Peacehaven immediately to the south, in an area which provides a setting to the South Downs National Park.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Climate change increasing extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape. • Increased agricultural pressure with further degradation of hedgerows. • Improvements to the PRow network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers. GBI Management Guidelines • Support the Ouse Valley Climate Action goals, including carbon capture with new tree planting and wildlife habitats, creating water habitats and encourage greener travel initiatives. • Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRow network. • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park.	
Landscape Character Area – Western Low Weald (C) C1 - Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey Western Low Weald	Forces for Change • increased agricultural pressure leading to hedgerow degradation and watercourse runoff, • expanding settlements, larger development in farmsteads, and linear development along road networks with urbanising effects, • improved PRow networks with increased recreational pressures, • challenges posed by climate change, including extreme weather events and pressure for renewable development. GBI Management Guidelines • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network within the broader High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and South Downs National Park's ecosystems.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Avoid adverse impacts on the SDNP's and High Weald AONB's indicators of natural beauty and their setting. • 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. • Conserve and enhance recreational access, particularly along watercourses. • Protect and retain existing vegetation, especially ancient woodland. • Implement new developments within a robust landscape framework • Retain and aim to restore historic patterns of field enclosures and settlement, particularly where lost to amalgamation.	
Landscape Character Area – Western Low Weald (C) C2 - Barcombe, Plumpton and Cooksbridge, Western Low Weald	Force for Change • Increased agricultural pressure, further degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses. • Expansion of settlement areas and further linear development along road networks, which would expand urbanising influences in the generally rural character of the Landscape Character Area. • Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing, heat stress relating to the landscape and pressure for increased renewable development. • Disease to trees, including the oak processionary moth.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	- Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers and increased recreational pressures from visitors. GBI Management Guidelines - Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park. - Support the Ouse Valley Climate Action goals, including carbon capture with new tree planting and wildlife habitats, creating water habitats and encourage greener travel initiatives. - Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements. - Encourage improvements to vegetation including hedgerows in varying condition. - Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRoW network. - Support the aims and objectives of relevant designations, including rare species conservation. - Refer to relevant South Downs National Park Authority guidance for any other relevant guidelines to preserve the setting of the South Downs National Park.	
Landscape Character Area – Western Low Weald (C) C3 - Ditchling Common Western Low Weald	Force for Change - Increased agricultural pressure, further degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses. - Pressure for improvements to recreational access across the area, including along historic routes such as Theobalds Bridleway. - Disease to trees, including the oak processionary moth.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape causing pressure on existing woodland cover. • Further expansion of development in a landscape typically with little relationship to the built form due to mature woodland vegetation. • Colour of new development in relation to the wooded backdrop. • Improvements to the PRow network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers and increased recreational pressures from visitors. GBI Management Guidelines • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park. • Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements. • Encourage improvements to vegetation including hedgerows in varying condition. • Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRow network. • Support the aims and objectives of relevant designations, including heathland and rare species conservation.	
Landscape Character Area – Eastern Low Weald (D) D1 Glyne and Ringmer Eastern Low Weald	Forces for Change • Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape. • Expansion of settlement areas and further linear development along road networks, which would expand urbanising influences.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Increased agricultural pressure, further degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses. • Improvements to the PRow network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers. GBI Management Guidelines • Enhance recreational access, notably in the southern part of the Landscape Character Area. • Encourage improvements to vegetation including hedgerows in varying condition. • Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements. • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park. • Support local initiatives to increase wildlife and biodiversity, including wildlife verges. • Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRow network.	
Landscape Character Area – Eastern Low Weald (E) E1 Wivelsfield Ouse Catchment	Force for Change • Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing, heat stress relating to the landscape and erosion to the river bank. • Urban expansion and development in the wider area reducing tranquillity. • Increased agricultural practises in the wider study area and increased run-off into the stream. • Improvements to the PRow network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers. GBI Management Guidelines • Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRoW network and expand where possible to increase recreational access alongside the stream, with the use of wooden fencing to denote routes where needed, rather than more urbanising materials such as metal fencing. • Encourage management techniques, such as coppicing, to retain the mature tree vegetation cover alongside the bank of the stream and regenerate growth. Especially to screen views towards existing detracting features, such as electricity pylons. • Retain the rural and generally tranquil character via new green and blue infrastructure initiatives.	
Landscape Character Area – Eastern Low Weald (E) E2 Lewes Ouse Catchment	Forces for Change • Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing, heat stress relating to the landscape and erosion of the river bank. • Urban expansion and development in the surrounding landscape reducing the sense of tranquillity and remoteness within the Landscape Character Area. • Increased agricultural pressure, further degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses. • Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers and increased recreational pressures from visitors. GBI Management Guidelines • Enhance recreational access to the River Ouse, its floodplain and across the Landscape Character Area. • Encourage improvements to vegetation including hedgerows in varying condition and long-term succession of woodlands. • Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Support the Ouse Valley Climate Action goals, including carbon capture with new tree planting and wildlife habitats, creating water habitats and encourage greener travel initiatives. • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park.	
Landscape Character Area – Eastern Low Weald (E) E3 Newhaven and Seaford Ouse Catchment	Force for Change • Development encroaching into areas of open space between settlement areas, which provides a setting to the South Downs National Park. • Tourism and recreational pressure along the coastline, potentially reducing biodiversity levels. • Climate change increasing extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing, heat stress relating to the landscape and further erosion to the coastline. • New and repairs to sea defence works may increase the urban influence along the southern coastal edge. • Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers and increased recreational pressures from visitors. GBI Management Guidelines • Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park. • Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements. • Support the Ouse Valley Climate Action goals, including carbon capture with new tree planting and wildlife habitats,	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	creating water habitats and encourage greener travel initiatives. • Management of recreational and tourism pressures along the coastline and within the country park to ensure that existing biodiversity levels and species-rich habitats are retained and enhanced, including the distinctive vegetated shingle and wildflowers between Newhaven and Seaford. • Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRoW network.	
Landscape Character Area – Scarp Footslope (F) F1 Plumpton Scarp Footslope	Force for Change • Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape. • Increased agricultural pressure, resulting in the degradation of hedgerows and surface run-off into watercourses. • New development altering existing field patterns and increasing the influence of the racecourse and railway line. • Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers. • Potential expansion of racecourse, resulting in further alteration of the field pattern. • Potential change in land use at the golf club and pressure for redevelopment. GBI Management Guidelines • Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRoW network. • Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements. • Retain the small to medium-scale fields and avoid further loss of field boundaries.	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park.	
Landscape Character Area – Scarp Footslope (F) F2 Glynde Scarp Footslope	Force for Change - Climate change resulting in more extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat stress relating to the landscape. - Increased agricultural pressure, further degradation of hedgerows and run-off into watercourses. - New development altering existing limited development pattern. - Pressure of renewable development, noting existing solar farms in close proximity to the north of the Landscape Character Area. GBI Management Guidelines - Encourage improvements to vegetation including hedgerows in varying condition. - Encourage local natural flood management initiatives in combination with ecological initiatives and requirements. - Retain and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network including as part of the wider ecosystem of the South Downs National Park.	See above
Landscape Character Area – Scarp Footslope (G) G1 Chailey Common Heathland	Force for Change - Increased recreational pressure which may degrade biodiversity and nature value and result in further erosion of the land cover. - Loss of management resulting in damage to the heathland habitat and species within the commons. - Climate change resulting increasing extreme weather events, such as flooding due to rainfall patterns changing and heat	See above

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	stress relating to the landscape causing pressure on existing habitats and species. • Further urbanisation in surrounding Landscape Character Area resulting in a further decline in tranquillity and impact to key views from elevated parts of the Landscape Character Area. • Improvements to the PRoW network by local Sussex voluntary rights of way workers. GBI Management Guidelines • Support the aims and objectives of relevant designations and Code of Conduct on Chailey Common, including heathland and species management, and ecological designations. • Support the management programmes associated with each common, including heathland restoration through silver birch removal and grazing. • Conserve the history of the commons, including ancient cattle and sheep grazing. • Continue to preserve and enhance the local PRoW network.	
<u>Lewes Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Strategy</u> (October 2019)	LDC manages a number of green assets including downland and nature reserves sites; parks, gardens and cemeteries. LDC was one of the first councils to adopt a Pesticide Reduction Plan in 2016, following a petition from local residents on the issue. The strategy sets out how the council will continue to achieve pollinator friendly landscape management, building on good practice. The aim is to stop using pesticides through a phased reduction plan, using alternatives wherever possible. Policies include pesticide-free parks, and promotion of them through signage and publicity.	Contributes to Principle 1: Nature Rich, Beautiful Places.
<u>Newhaven Port Masterplan</u> (NPP, 2012)	NNP have developed the Port Masterplan (PMP) for the port of Newhaven to form a strategic framework which the port will develop over the next 20 to 30 years. Its starting point was a recognition that Newhaven needs a higher level of economic	Contributes to the settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	activity, leading to long term job creation, in order for both the town and the port to have a sustainable future.	
South Downs National Park Authority		
<u>South Downs National Park Authority Local Plan (2019)</u> <i>Strategic Policy SD4: Landscape Character</i>	Core Policy SD4 relates directly to Landscape Character, proposals emphasising the importance of creating and connecting GBI through development whilst restoring landscapes through the conservation and enhancement of local character.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of local character and connectivity.
<u>South Downs National Park Authority Local Plan (2019)</u> <i>Strategic Policy SD5: Design</i>	Core Policy SD 5 relates directly to design. This policy makes recommendations for effective green infrastructure design to connect routes for people and wildlife including the provision of new high quality amenity space to meet the requirements of the local users.	
<u>South Downs National Park Authority Local Plan (2019)</u> <i>Strategic Policy SD17: Protection of the Water Environment</i>	Policy SD 17 relates to the protection of the water environment and highlights the importance of incorporating public access along waterways, with increased opportunities for recreation.	
<u>South Downs National Park Authority Local Plan (2019)</u> <i>Strategic Policy SD19: Transport and Accessibility</i>	Policy SD 19 relates to transport and accessibility which aim to improve sustainable transport infrastructure including footpaths, cycle routes and parking.	
<u>South Downs National Park Authority Local Plan (2019)</u> <i>Strategic Policy SD20: Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes</i>	Policy SD20 relates to walking, cycling and equestrian routes, promoting enhancement of historic routes or corridors whilst providing links to new development sites and footpath networks.	
<u>South Downs Local Plan Ecosystem Services Map</u>	The SDNP have produced an interactive map of ecosystem services. The map shows in spatial form the relative capacity and demand for the following services: • Accessible nature; • Air purification;	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of connectivity.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• Carbon storage; • Education; • Green travel; • Local climate regulation; • Noise regulation; • Pollination; and • Water purification.	
SDNPA Climate Change Strategy, Action Plan and Net Zero for Nature (2020)	The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) produced a Climate Change Strategy in 2020. It supports local community based action and aspires to lead by example with its working practices.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of climate change, Principle 5.
SDNPA Climate Change Adaption Plan	The adaptation report is about identifying the risks relating to climate change and how they might impact upon environmental, social and economic assets of the National Park.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of climate change, Principle 5.
SDNPA Walking and Cycling Strategy (2017-2024)	The SDNPA produced a Cycling and Walking strategy, published in 2017. The ambition for the cycling and walking strategy is to be a National Park home to a network of largely traffic free routes providing recreation and daily travel opportunities for a range of users of differing abilities and ages.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of active travel, Principle 2.
Natural Flood Management Measure: A Practical Guide for farmers and landowners of the Solent and South Downs (SDNPA, Environment Agency and Sussex Flow Initiative)	• The SDNPA produced a guide for natural flood management measures as a practical guide for farmers and landowners.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of collaboration and communication.
<u>SDNPA – Partnership Management Plan (2020-2025)</u>	The SDNPA produced a Partnership Management Plan in 2020 which lasts for 5 years up until 2025. The Partnership Management Plan has been written to create thriving communities in an inspirational landscape. There are 5 major issues that have been identified for the SDNP which are:	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of long term management.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• The Climate Emergency; • Economy; • Wellbeing; • Biodiversity; and • New Housing Development. 10 outcomes have been set out to tackle the above issues. • Outcome 1: Landscape & Natural Beauty • Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience • Outcome 3: Habitats and species • Outcome 4: Arts and Heritage • Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences • Outcome 6: Lifelong Learning • Outcome 7: Health and Wellbeing • Outcome 8: Creating custodians • Outcome 9: Create a great place to live • Outcome 10: Great places to work and live	
<u>People and Nature Network: Green Infrastructure in the South Downs National Park and wider South East (March 2020)</u>	This report was written in March 2020, and focuses on Green Infrastructure in the SDNP. The aim of this report is to protect, enhance and create a connected nature network of green and blue spaces which sustainably meet the needs of local communities, supports natural ecosystem services and respects the special qualities of the National Park. It describes natural capital investment areas and proposes the strategic principles for planning, delivery and management of natural capital assets in the area.. This report has a section which focuses directly on the Lewes area where the River Ouse provides an opportunity for a north-south corridor for an integrated approach to green infrastructure, incorporating water resources, access improvement and habitat connectivity.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of district-wide connectivity.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	It mentions enhancement to the green-blue corridor towards Uckfield and south Newhaven by realising the recreational potential of the river and access improvements to the Uckfield disused railway line.	
<u>SDNPA People and Nature Network: The Evidence and Action Report (2022)</u>	The People and Nature Network have produced an evidence and action report which aims to deliver benefits not only to the environment but also to the development of better places to live, work and invest. The action report emphasises the importance of collaboration across administrative boundaries for successful GBI planning.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of district-wide connectivity.
South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework (March 2016)	The South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework: A road map for Green Infrastructure was published in 2016. This roadmap and framework sets out to connect urban and rural areas, bringing greater a greater understanding of the synergies and interactions between them. This framework covers the whole National Park. The following opportunities have been identified as potential opportunities within the Lewes District to improve Green Infrastructure: • Enhance the blue-green corridor towards Uckfield and south Newhaven; • Explore natural solutions to flood issues – as identified in the EA Catchment Flood Management Plan – upstream flood management and habitat enhancement, tree planting and net wetlands; • Realise the recreational potential of the river; • Improve access to the disused railway line to Uckfield; and use Ouse Valley Egrets Way cycleway as a key to strategic route.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of district-wide connectivity.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
Regional - East Sussex County Council		
<u>Environment Strategy (2020)</u>	ESCC and East Sussex Environment Board produced an Environmental Strategy in 2020. The purpose of the Strategy is to describe the transformational change that is required and why. The evidence set out in this plan shows that there needs to be far more co-ordinated local action to ensure that the environment and landscape are protected. The following actions were prioritised: • Develop a road map for cutting carbon emissions; • Develop a pipeline of projects that can deliver a reduction in carbon emissions; • Develop and implement an electric vehicle strategy for East Sussex; • Develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan; • Deliver advice and home visits to reduce water usage; • Establish a network to reduce food waste from businesses in East Sussex.	Contributes to wider policy context and discussion of district-wide connectivity.
Climate Emergency Plan (2023-2025)	ESCC produced a Climate Emergency Plan from 2023 – 2025. It was developed in consultation with a working group of elected Members who sit on the Place Scrutiny Committee, as well as with representatives from all Council departments that sit on the Climate Emergency Board. A new Climate Emergency Plan will be developed in 2024 to continue from where this plan ends in March 2025.	Contributes to overall policy review and discussion of district-wide connectivity.
Climate Change Road Map (2022-2025)	ESCC produced a Climate Change Road Map for the dates between 2022 and 2025 to ensure that the actions named in the Environment Strategy (2020) are addressed suitably.	Contributes to overall policy review and discussion of district-wide connectivity.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	The Strategy set out the rationale for urgent action on climate change and committed to the aim of ensuring that East Sussex remains within its science-based carbon budget, which requires halving emissions approximately every 5 years. This road map has been put together by the organisations represented on the East Sussex Environment Board, which is accountable to Team East Sussex. These are: The Country Land & Business Association and the National Farmers Union, South East Water and Southern Water, Sussex Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, The University of Brighton, the University of Sussex and Plumpton College, Eastbourne and Lewes Councils, Rother District Council, East Sussex County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority and the Environment Agency and Natural England.	
South Downs National Park Authority Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2020)	The SDNPA produced a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in 2020. This LCA was written to provide a more updated and practical tool which can be used to inform and guide positive landscape change, supporting a 'landscape led approach' to planning and design within the National Park. The main output of this LCA is a web map hosted on the South Downs National Park Authority website.	Contributes to overall policy review and discussion of district-wide connectivity.
<u>ESCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020 - 2030</u>	ESCC have produced a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which focuses on how the council will deliver more cycling and walking infrastructure initiatives. The LCWIP aims to create a long-term approach to increasing the number of cycling and walking trips across local authorities. To deliver this ESCC have planned an initial tranche of 132km of cycling and walking routes alongside a number of complimentary measures, to expand the existing network, improve the places where people live, work, and play and support development.	Contributes to Principle 2 and the settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	The main coastal urban areas are linked east to west by parallel roads of the A27 and the A259, with the National Cycle Network running along sections of these routes including the NCN2 and NCN21 and Regional Route 90. The coastal areas within the County are prioritised within this cycling and walking infrastructure plan, as they offer the greatest opportunities to increase levels of cycling and walking. Priority towns within the project scope are Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford.	
Other Key Stakeholders/Organisations		
Exploring the Social and Natural Capital Impacts of the Sussex Flow Initiative (Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, EA and Lewes DC, May 2020)	This report explores the social and natural capital impacts of the Sussex Flow Initiative (SFI). The SFI was a natural flood management project in the River Ouse catchment, and it's current name is 'Wilder Ouse'. It is a partnership between Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and the Environment Agency and LDC. The project was initially set up to see in natural flood management can create positive benefits for flooding, the environment, and society in a lowland river catchment. This report captures and values the range of positive societal benefits that the SFI achieved through its natural flood management activities. The societal benefits: one of the most notable impacts was improved connectivity to nature for participants who started off with low skills and less connection to the natural environment. The economic benefits: through just seven key ecosystem services (timber provision, air pollution removal, carbon sequestration , flood regulation, water quality improvement, biodiversity and volunteering), the SFI accrued public and natural capital benefits of nearly £1million in eight years.	Contributes to understanding of local initiatives and district-wide collaboration.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
Ouse Valley – South Downs Project	In October 2022 Ouse Valley Climate Action (OVCA) was awarded £2m from the National Lottery Community Fund – the largest funder of community activity in the UK – aiming to make the region a national pioneer in tackling the climate emergency. The East Sussex partnership covers 10 organisations, including the South Downs National Park Trust and Authority and Lewes District Council, and focuses on empowering local people to fully embrace climate action. The project area follows the River Ouse downstream from the village of Barcombe – which is aiming to be the UK’s first net-zero village – through to Lewes, the National Park’s largest town, and further south to the coastal towns of Seaford, Peacehaven, and Newhaven. The river valley is a fragile landscape that has already felt the effects of climate change this millennium, including flooding, storm damage, coastal erosion and biodiversity loss. The funding will focus on three key areas: nature recovery and climate resilience; people’s knowledge and skills; and, finally, greener energy and travel.	Contributes to understanding of local initiatives and district-wide collaboration.
Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Sussex (Sussex Nature Partnership, 2019)	In October 2019, the Sussex Local Nature Partnership produced a comprehensive ‘Natural Capital investment Strategy’ which is a guide to investing in nature, across the terrestrial, coastal and marine environment, for the next 5 years and beyond. This strategy provides an initial understanding (based on the best available data) of the natural capital of Sussex. It provides an initial strategic assessment of how to best focus effort, resources and funds to protect and enhance the stock of natural capital to deliver specific outputs, such as clean water, accessible nature, carbon storage and flood risk reduction. This strategy also provides	Contributes to understanding of district-wide investment priorities.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	guidance on the steps needed to take this broad strategy forward into action and outcomes on the ground.	
<u>Sussex Biodiversity Partnership - Biodiversity Opportunity Areas:</u> Lewes Brooks and the Ouse Valley;	Lewes Brooks and the Ouse Valley has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. This is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 1976 hectares. Much of the area falls within the SDNP, it also reaches towards the coastal settlements at the Ouse Estuary. <u>BAP Habitats:</u> Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh Coastal saltmarsh Coastal vegetated shingle Intertidal mudflats Reedbeds Wood-pasture and Parkland Woodland <u>BAP Species:</u> 62 species recorded within the past, 10 years. <u>Newhaven Refuse Tip SNCI</u> - The site consists of disturbed ground, meadows and brackish pools and ditches. The site includes 17 vascular plant species that are rare or uncommon in East Sussex. <u>Tidemills SNCI</u> - An important feeding ground for a number of ducks and wading birds, the site is made up of a shingle beach with a good variety of shingle flora, saltmarsh, ditches and marshy meadows. <u>Opportunities Identified:</u>	Contributes to Principle 1 and settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	Coastal habitat management, restoration and creation Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation Education and community engagement Policy integration Landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes Floodplain restoration and reconnection Working with and attracting new businesses Chalk grassland butterfly interest Volunteer opportunities Ecological networks Water quality improvement	
<u>Sussex Biodiversity Partnership</u> <u>- Biodiversity Opportunity</u> <u>Areas:</u> Mid Ouse Flood zone	Mid Ouse Flood Zone: Mid Ouse flood zone Biodiversity Opportunity Area lies on Weald clay mudstone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone to the north with chalk and marly chalk influence in the south. The mid Ouse floodzone has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. It is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 663 hectares. This area, upstream of Lewes is severely affected by flooding. The River Ouse is heavily embanked here with some historic meanders still evident in the landscape. The area is agricultural with some existing wet grassland. <u>BAP Habitat:</u> Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh Reedbeds Wood-pasture and parkland <u>BAP Species:</u> 45 species recorded, within the last 10 years.	Contributes to Principle 1 and settlement appraisals.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	Designated Sites: <u>Barcombe Reservoir SNCI:</u> a large fresh water body on which 150 bird species have been recorded including rare species such as Osprey and Slavonian Grebe. <u>Opportunities Identified:</u> Policy integration Education and community engagement Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation Floodplain restoration and reconnection Water quality improvement	
<u>South East River Basin District River Basin Management Plan -</u>	<u>Adur and Ouse Management Catchment:</u> There are 46 water bodies within the Adur and Ouse Management Catchment area. The Ecological status for surface water within this catchment is shows 24 scoring Moderate, 18 scoring Poor and 4 scoring Bad - Classifications data for Adur and Ouse Management Catchment Catchment Data Explorer <u>South East TRaC:</u> There are 34 waterbodies within the South East TRaC catchment. Out of the 34 waterbodies, 10 are in good quality status, 23 are in moderate condition for ecological status and 1 is in poor - Classifications data for South East TraC Management Catchment Catchment Data Explorer The updated South East RBMP provides a summary of the extent of Significant Water Management Issues (SWMIs), as follows: • physical modifications • pollution from wastewater • pollution from rural areas • changes to the natural flow and level of water	Contributes to Principle 4: Improved Water Management.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• pollution from towns, cities, and transport • negative effects of non-native invasive species • there are no water bodies affected by pollution from abandoned mines Further details of the measures proposed to address the Significant Water Management Issues for the South East RBD are described in section 4.1.	
<u>Adur and Ouse Catchment Management Partnership (Ouse catchment relevant to much of Lewes District)</u>	The Adur and Ouse Catchment Partnership brings together a range of organisations, groups, agencies and individuals all committed to working together. Their aim is to work together to improve the water environment and surrounding landscape for both people and wildlife. Their shared vision has been compiled as a management plan to achieve GBI objectives which are to: • ensure that freshwater and marine environments are clean, productive and biologically diverse • enable rivers to function naturally and are able to support a wide range of native species • meet the challenge to improve water quality and the demand for supply • promote and deliver natural solutions to flood risk management across the catchment • ensure community enthusiasm and knowledge is sought as part of decision making processes. Current Challenges: • <u>Pollution from waste water: Water quality is severely impacted by high levels of phosphate from waste water</u>	Contributes to Principle 4: Improved Water Management.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	• <u>Pollution from agriculture and rural areas</u> Water quality is severely impacted by run-off from land and infrastructure due to agricultural activities • <u>Physical modifications</u> Fish passage is excessively restricted by in-channel structures Future Challenges: • <u>Pollution from waste water</u> • <u>Changes to the natural flow and water levels</u> • <u>Invasive Non-native Species</u>	
<u>Shoreline Management Plans</u> (2005, Environment Agency)	Shoreline Management Plans identify the most sustainable approach for managing the risk from coastal flooding and erosion over the short (0 to 20 years), medium (20 to 50 years) and long (50 to 100) term, from 2005. Local Authorities and the Environment Agency have developed these plans, working together in regional Coastal Groups. The SMP related to this GBI study includes: • Beachy Head to Newhaven Harbour 1 – 4D01, 4D02, 4D03, 4D04, 4D05 and 4D06 • Newhaven Breakwater to Brighton to Marine 2 – 4D07, 4D08, 4D09, 4D10	Contributes to Principle 4: Improved Water Management and settlement appraisals.
• <u>Cuckmere Haven 4D02</u>	Management Approach - Manage the existing defences with decreasing investment to enable the coastline to realign and allow the creation of a naturally functioning estuary and mouth. The long-term policy is to continue to allow natural cyclic processes to take place and ensure that Cuckmere Haven will be a free functioning system.	
<u>Seaford Head 4D03</u>	Management Approach - To continue to allow the cliffs and wave-cut platform to erode, which will continue into the long term. The	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	long-term policy is to continue to allow the chalk cliffs to erode, and the wave-cut platform to widen and lower.	
<u>Seaford 4D04</u>	Management Approach - Protect the town frontage through maintaining existing defences. This is dependent on funding.	
<u>Seaford (Tide Mills) to Newhaven Harbour 4D05</u>	Management Approach - Short term do not intervene with the coastline, medium term - realignment will take the form of set back flood embankments, designed to manage the extent of flooding that is expected to occur as a result of sea level rise during the medium term. Long term - continue to realign.	
<u>Newhaven Harbour and River Ouse 4D06</u>	Management Approach - Protection of residential properties & businesses. Protection of town important to regional economy. History of the Ouse seems to suggest that a blocked estuary causes extensive inland flooding in Lewes.	
<u>Newhaven Harbour to Peacehaven Heights 4D07</u>	Management Approach - Continue to allow the cliffs to erode but continue to maintain a terminal structure. The frontage is dominated by high cliffs, that are of great geological value (SSSI, GCRS, RIGS), but is also rich in environmental and archaeological assets. Maintain/Replace and Local Activity refers to the harbour breakwater system not the cliffs.	
<u>Peacehaven 4D08</u>	Management Approach - Hold the Cliff Base in the short to medium term, Monitor, Manage & Review in the long term. There is nothing in the SMP to suggest that new defences should be built.	
<u>Telscombe Cliffs 4D09</u>	Management Approach - Protection of important infrastructure serving a large conurbation and connecting towns and cities along the south coast. Manage the Portabello Marine Treatment Works through appropriate management of its current position.	
<u>Saltdean to Rottingdean 4D10 (only area to the east)</u>	Management Approach - Hold the Cliff Base in the short to medium term, Monitor, Manage & Review in the long term. Continue to defend the cliff base from marine erosion through maintaining the existing seawall, rock revetment, concrete and	

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	rock groynes. The cliff face and base are important environmentally designated sites.	
Neighbouring Local Authorities - Mid-Sussex District Council - Wealden District Council		
<u>Mid Sussex District Plan (2014-2031)</u> Policy DP22 – Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes	This policy aims to promote, create and maintain easily accessible GBI, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes. This should encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities, informal leisure space and the opportunity to walk, cycle or ride to common destinations.	Contributes to wider policy context.
<u>Mid Sussex District Plan (2014-2031)</u> Policy DP37– Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	This policy aims to protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities, protect valued characteristics of the built environment for historical and visual qualities, and create and maintain easily accessible GBI. Green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.	Contributes to wider policy context.
<u>Mid Sussex District Plan (2014-2031)</u> Policy DP38 – Biodiversity	This policy aims to promote and protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and to create and maintain easily accessible GBI, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and recreational routes.	Contributes to wider policy context.
<u>Mid Sussex District Plan (2014-2031)</u> Policy DP7 – General Principles for Strategic Development at Burgess Hill	Strategic development will be designed in a way that integrates it into the existing town providing connectivity, improve public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and access to Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield railway stations and Burgess Hill Town Centre. This includes providing new and improved community, retail,	Contributes to wider policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	cultural, educational, health, recreation, play and other facilities to create services and places that help to form strong local communities and encourage healthy lifestyles. New and/or improved and well connected sports, recreation and open space in and around Burgess Hill may contribute to the 'Green Circle' of linked areas of informal open space around the town along with its associated network of multi-functional paths and links into the town centre and support the delivery of a multi-functional route between Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath.	
<u>Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (2013-2027)</u> WCS12 – Biodiversity	This policy relates directly to contributing to the biodiversity targets provided in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan. It will prevent a net loss of biodiversity, ensure a comprehensive network of habitats and achieve BNG. Appropriate compensatory measures will be required to contribute to Wealden's overall biodiversity resource. In order to avoid the adverse effect on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation it is the Council's intention to reduce the recreational impact of visitors resulting from new housing development within 7 kilometres of Ashdown Forest by creating an exclusion zone of 400 metres for net increases in dwellings and requiring provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space and contributions to on-site visitor management measures.	Contributes to wider policy context.
<u>Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (2013-2027)</u> WCS13 – Green Infrastructure	This policy states that the existing network of green infrastructure will be protected, improved and enhanced by the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, ensuring a multifunctional, accessible network which maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character, increases opportunities for healthy living and contributes to healthy ecosystems and climate change objectives.	Contributes to wider policy context.

Reference	What does it say?	What does this mean for Lewes GBI Study?
	Development proposals will not be permitted which would result in the loss of existing open space or harm to Wealden's network of green spaces without appropriate mitigation measures. All new residential development will be required to contribute to the green infrastructure network and where appropriate to make provision for new or enhancement of existing open space.	

Appendix B: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Appendix B – Full Stakeholder Consultation Analysis

As part of the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Study, TEP consulted with key stakeholders. Consultation included interviews with several key stakeholders, and an online round table discussion with Lewes District Council (LDC) officers.

In September 2023 interviews were undertaken with stakeholders to understand key opportunities and challenges they face with regards to GBI, current and future GBI initiatives and current strategies in place. The stakeholder consultees were:

- Environment Agency (EA);
- Natural England (NE);
- Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT);
- Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART);
- Sussex Nature Partnership (SxNP);
- South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA);
- East Sussex County Council (ESCC); and
- Parish and town councillors and representatives.

Information gathered from both parts of the consultation process has been summarised below and informed the GBI Study. Consultation is summarised against each of the Natural England Why Principles.

As the district covers two distinct geographical zones – the rural inland area north of South Downs National Park (SDNP), and the urban coastal settlements to the south – some of the information is summarised accordingly. Very specific information relating to individual settlements is covered in the settlement appraisals.

Consultation Analysis

Nature Rich and Beautiful Places

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Protect and improve existing open spaces to provide opportunities for all;
- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is being developed over the next 12-18 months led by ESCC;
- Target species will be analysed on a catchment scale rather than district scale;
- Ability to migrate will be a key consideration for species climate adaptation – the chalk grasslands are geological and non-migratory;
- A local pollinator strategy is expected to be produced in spring 2024;
- Nature Recovery Network including core sites, buffers and priorities will be produced by spring 2024;
- It is important to consider the impact of human access, and maximise interaction with nature in urban areas to engage people with the story;
- SDNPA has detailed webmaps of nature recovery opportunity areas; and
- Several Parish Councils have purchased land from LDC to create new and enhanced open spaces.

North Lewes

The information relevant to north Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Suitable walking routes are often limited within large rural areas. Existing provision is dependent on a good relationship between interested parties including ramblers, dog-walkers and landowners;
- Local level biodiversity enhancement initiatives that can be matched with the need for habitats will be particularly valuable;
- Most villages have a conservation area at the centre of the village, which protects the character of the village (Chailey residents are pushing for the Commons to be protected); and
- Villages under pressure from development want to maintain character and green space.

South Lewes

The information relevant to south Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Few understand the richness of biodiversity on their doorstep or make the most of access to the SDNP;
- There is a need for wildflower verges and community engagement on the topic; and
- The re-wilding project in the heart of Seaford should look to achieve Fields in Trust protection.

Active and Healthy Places

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Although there is an ageing population it is important that facilities for children and young people are not neglected or reduced;
- Access to nature for people with health and mobility problems is hugely important;
- Although physical health issues like obesity and asthma remain important, there is an increasing focus on healthy communities and tackling loneliness;
- There needs to be safe spaces for women and girls, and any vulnerable user groups including those with mobility issues;
- GBI needs to be accessible, welcoming and inspiring – something people are excited about rather than worried about;
- It is important that people feel connected to their local scenery and associate it with their memories and identity;
- It is important that local people can enjoy the nature on their doorstep and that tourists can travel to visit;
- The People and Nature networks evidence from SDNP ecoserve data is being used to form a Nature for Health Strategy which is emerging from the Health and Wellbeing Working Group from the Local Nature Partnership. The project is funded by ESCC and SDNPA and aims to start a conversation on how best to collaborate to achieve best value for people and nature;
- Increasing the potential footpaths, cycleways and green travel routes would increase connectivity between villages and towns and limit the use of private cars; and
- Increase the quality of footpaths for people with limited mobility.

North Lewes

The information relevant to north Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Car use is seen as essential to get around, and many households have more than one car;
- Limited bus services increase reliance on cars and communities would benefit from improved bus schedules;
- Most villages have footpaths around the villages, but these do not reach beyond the village limits or are often too dangerous to walk on;
- Footpaths are often not maintained, meaning people with mobility issues cannot easily use them (example: Ouse Valley Way is well used but could be improved with ongoing maintenance and improvements);
- Most villages don't have cycle routes, however Ringmer has cycling provision to Lewes;
- People do not always use the Public Right of Way (ProW) network around the villages to access the countryside, even though most villages mentioned have signage to footpaths;
- Most larger villages with a playing field have sports clubs, however residents of more rural areas such as East Chiltington travel to nearby Plumpton (via car) for sports clubs; and
- Parking provision is needed for visitors in villages in close proximity to the SDNP.

South Lewes

The information relevant to south Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Seaford's roads require safety improvement;
- Dog walkers and cyclists access the SDNP from Newhaven but this could be encouraged further;
- The Coastal Estuary cycle path would benefit from improvements to make it accessible again; and
- Seaford's population is generally aging which makes public transport and easy walking routes of even more interest – there is a need to improve public transport and walking routes.

Thriving and Prosperous Places

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- There is an opportunity to increase tourism throughout the whole district;
- There are opportunities to increase green travel routes, including cycle and walking paths throughout the villages and towns; and
- As local town and parish councils take on responsibility for local green spaces, they will be able to ensure that they serve the particular needs of their communities.

North Lewes

The information relevant to north Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Most villages have some small businesses such as pubs and village shops, but this is limited and varies depending on how large the village is and how many other smaller hamlets also use the village for services;

- In north Lewes hospitality, tourism and arts are generally well linked with the natural environment, and increasing sustainable camping and ecotourism initiatives are appearing;
- Chailey is highlighted as a tourism hotspot;
- Some larger villages have primary schools, pharmacies and other facilities, but many people travel to Lewes or further afield;
- Agriculture is a big employer in the northern area of the District and there is an Agricultural College in Plumpton;
- The majority of people commute to Lewes and the south coast (Newhaven, Peacehaven, Seaford) or out of the District to Haywards Heath, Crawley (Gatwick Airport), Uckfield and Burgess Hill;
- There is a rise in people working from home post-covid;
- Stewardship schemes for farmers have had mixed success;
- All villages have community groups but most of these are organised by older residents and are aimed at retired residents, there are limited groups for younger people;
- New development has brought in families and younger people in areas such as Ringmer; and
- Existing tourism opportunities should be protected and enhanced e.g., Bluebell Railway and the National Trust Site.

South Lewes

The information relevant to south Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Many local micro businesses and traders along the south coast rely on commercial van transport and efforts to relieve congestion and promote active travel should work in tandem with practical local needs.
- Regeneration in Newhaven is expected to have a positive impact on neighbouring coastal towns including Telscombe, Peacehaven and Seaford and reduce the necessity for outwards commuting to the larger employment hubs in Brighton and Eastbourne;
- There is great potential to increase green tourism by making the wildlife, green spaces more attractive with signposting for directional way finding;
- There is good use of the playgrounds around Newhaven but the anti-social behaviour associated with the larger green spaces should be addressed;
- Seaford is becoming increasingly attractive for tourists;
- A wooden plank makes the beach at Seaford accessible for those with limited mobility;
- Seaford's walking and cycling opportunities within the town could be addressed with road safety at the forefront of the design; and
- Health facilities in Seaford specially seem to be very stretched with residents having to travel to nearby towns.

Improved Water Management

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- The River Ouse does not have a designation but should still be recognised as a key asset in Local Plans;

- There is a strong crossover between improved water management and biodiversity recovery;
- Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Environmental Net Gain (ENG) are being considered increasingly as understanding of multifunctional natural solutions develops;
- LDC has purchased land in order to manage flood risk, and more green spaces are also passing on to local parish council management;
- Engagement with strategic partners from farming, house building and highways infrastructure would be beneficial to support long lasting effective solutions;
- Lewes District has a lot of activity and enthusiasm for GBI from a wide range of organisations at local and regional level which can be challenging to coordinate; and
- Flooding is a problem throughout the whole district and Sussex Wildlife trust are talking with schools to educate pupils about climate change adaptation; and

North Lewes

The information relevant to north Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Each area has different challenges with regards to flooding and pollution challenges;
- Areas with sewage treatment works have had recent pressures due to new development and there have been leaks into the rivers, most of which are tributaries to the River Ouse;
- Most villages have areas of farmland which flood to ensure limited flooding of houses and businesses, however East Chiltington is often cut off by the river;
- The Bevern Stream often floods and has had pollution incidents; and
- Due to an increase in development, sewage systems have been impacted leading to pollution breaches into nearby streams and rivers (especially in Ringmer).

South Lewes

The information relevant to south Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Increasing use of floodplains in the lower Ouse catchment may instigate a significant change in habitats as areas that have previously been considered as freshwater habitats convert to saltwater areas;
- The eroding coastline is presenting significant challenges, it is highly used for recreation and has biodiversity protections that will impede some physical restoration;
- Some open ditches have been used in Newhaven converting grey infrastructure to green, and more urban SuDS measures could be retrofitted are more appropriate for these coastal conurbations;
- There is an opportunity to develop 'Satellite Ponds' around the border of the SDNP.

Resilient and Climate Positive Places

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Lewes District is a water stressed area and drought needs to be considered as well as flood risk;

- The landscape should be optimised to store water close to areas where it is needed; and
- Woodland opportunity mapping has been undertaken at a wider regional scale.

North Lewes

The information relevant to north Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- Less rainfall in recent years and more hosepipe bans;
- The extremes of weather i.e., long dry spells followed by storms, impacts mature trees;
- 'Dark skies' initiative – reduce light pollution near to the SDNP; and
- EV charging points to be installed in North Lewes.

South Lewes

The information relevant to south Lewes highlighted by the consultation is:

- There is an opportunity to utilise the Woodland Trust's free street verge trees along the exposed A259 to increase shade and encourage walkers and cyclists (although there are some restrictions from underground services);
- There are serious coastal erosion issues at Seaford Head, the Environment Agency has put erosion procedures in place;
- In some places biodiversity protection areas may prevent coastal erosion measures from being implemented; and
- South Hill Barn is currently abandoned but plans are being explored to create a net-zero activity/education centre.

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