



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth

Executive Summary

ECOLOGY

STEWARDSHIP

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

LANDSCAPE & URBAN DESIGN

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

A Report by:



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A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth: Executive Summary

Green infrastructure describes the network of green spaces, landscapes and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages to each other and to neighbouring rural areas. In addition, it provides a holistic approach to viewing the natural environment which acknowledges the *multiple benefits* and *vital functions* GI provides for the economy, wildlife, local people and communities alike – including important environmental functions such as local climate and air quality amelioration, and floodplain management.

Why Have a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy?

The quality of the environment is an essential component in providing a quality of place for living, working and relaxing. Hinckley & Bosworth has some outstanding urban and rural landscapes, however the growth agenda for the Borough brings the need to provide additional homes and associated and improved built (or 'grey') infrastructure facilities, and over time will become increasingly under threat from the implications of climate change.

Planning for green infrastructure will inform the development of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's (HBBC's) local plans and strategies such as Local Development Framework documents and Area Action Plans, and in addition assist the implementation of those plans by providing baseline evidence and information for policy formulation and project development and delivery.

This green infrastructure study is based around three main outcomes:

- Identification of existing natural spaces and corridors within and between the urban areas, other settlements and the surrounding countryside, forming the basis for developing a green infrastructure strategic sites and networks plan;
- Identification of policy and deliverability issues, including possible funding, delivery mechanisms and main actors for implementing green infrastructure in the Borough (i.e. the strategy will be grounded in deliverability);
- Development of an aspirational strategy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of green spaces, corridors and environmental resources of Hinckley & Bosworth, taking growth projections into consideration and setting a clear vision for meeting the Borough's needs and opportunities for both development and nature conservation.

Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy: Methodology

The methods used considered green infrastructure resources and assets, current and future demands and opportunities, and the potential benefits a multifunctional greenspace network can deliver, particularly in relation to proposed growth and major developments. It also considers implementation issues and deliverability to produce a Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth that is distinctive, safeguards key assets, enhances quality and secures asset management.

Green Infrastructure in Hinckley & Bosworth

The distribution of green infrastructure assets within Hinckley & Bosworth are identified and mapped using a variety of datasets and sources of information, considering green spaces, access networks and areas under management regimes, as well as tourism assets with a significant natural element. These are put into context against the socio-economic and demographic conditions within the Borough. (Chapter 3)

Specifically considering the findings of several critical pieces of research and proposed and existing initiatives, several key issues affecting the provision, protection or delivery of Borough’s green infrastructure are examined and a number of drivers for change affecting green infrastructure in Hinckley & Bosworth are identified (Chapter 4), including:

- Growth & Development
- Climate Change
- Population Demands for Greenspace
- Land use & management
- Protection & Enhancement of Natural Resources
- The Planning System
- Biodiversity & natural resources
- Funding regimes

These drivers formed the basis for the Public Benefit Assessment (Chapter 5), helping to identify those areas that can deliver multiple public benefits in Hinckley & Bosworth.

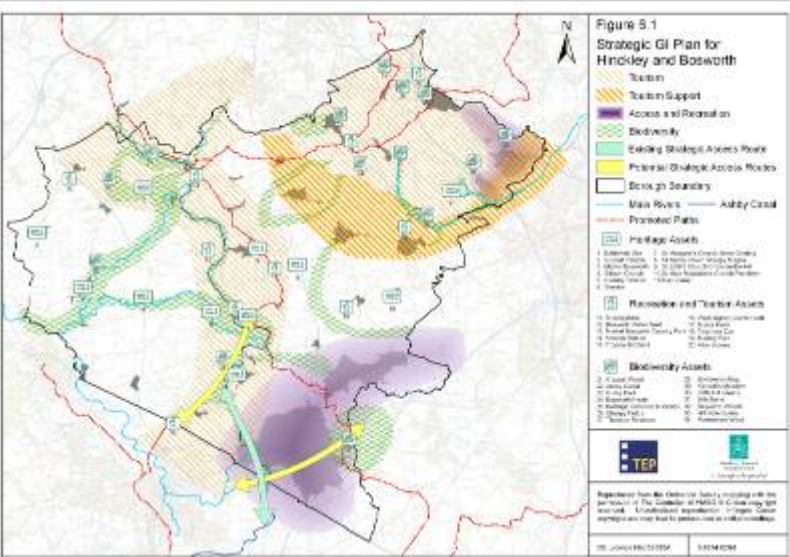
A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth (Chapter 6)

At the core of the Strategy lie three key principles, and it is the intention that each of the recommendations and identified opportunities should:

- Respond to specific local needs, which differ markedly across the Borough;
- Safeguard and enhance the core environmental networks and improve human connections with their neighbourhood environments; and
- Be capable of informing development control decisions and targeting funds and activity.

In addition to a set of overarching aspirations for all green infrastructure planning and interventions across the Borough, the following spatial and place-specific proposals have been developed to inform possible improvements to future green infrastructure standards:

- i. A Borough-wide Strategic Plan: setting the overall spatial framework and key interventions for green infrastructure in Hinckley & Bosworth, setting out the following strategic interventions:



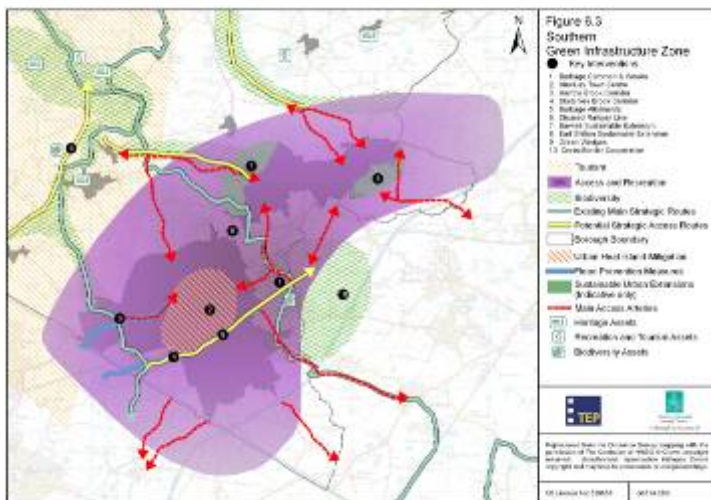
Tourism: taking into account the wealth of tourism assets that exist within the National Forest / Charnwood Forest / Stepping Stones area and the central Ashby Canal / Market Bosworth corridor. The aim is to enhance and protect existing assets, as well as encouraging the sustainable use of the natural tourism resource, promoting local and out of town use.

Access & Recreation: ensuring that existing and potential green infrastructure assets are retained and enhanced to provide for population demands and community needs for green and open space through the retention, improvement and - where possible - expansion of strategically important sites (such as Burbage Common), maintaining landscape gaps such as Green Wedges, and enhancing the quality and expanding the distribution of access routes.

Biodiversity: protecting natural and semi-natural habitats through the planning system, reconnecting habitats and reducing fragmentation through encouraging sensitive management practices particularly along river and canal corridors.

Potential Strategic Access Routes: introducing Borough-scale access routes such as enabling cycle and pedestrian access between the Weddington Country Walk and the Ashby Canal tourism corridor and another bisecting Hinckley and Burbage – both joining population centres to major recreational and tourism assets.

- ii. Green Infrastructure Zones: defined by the spatial structure of the settlements, landscape character, socio-economic character and land use, as well as the evidence and conclusions drawn from the public benefit assessment, three distinct parts of the Borough are addressed in detailed plans to provide a clear and relevant set of strategic interventions appropriate to local needs, respecting the local character and protecting assets:

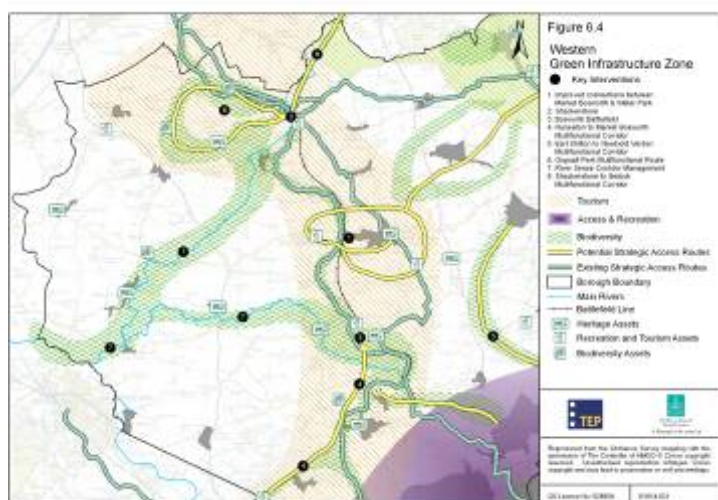


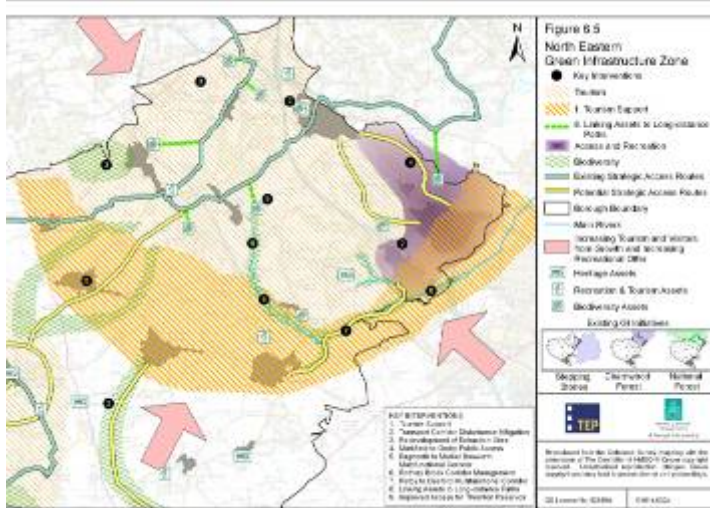
Southern Zone Interventions:

1. Burbage Common & Woods
2. Hinckley Town Centre
3. Harrow Brook Corridor
4. Sketchley Brook Corridor
5. Burbage Allotments
6. Disused Railway Line (Nuneaton – Shenton)
7. Barwell SUE
8. Earl Shilton SUE
9. Hinckley – Barwell Green Wedge
10. Cross-boundary Co-operation

Western Zone Interventions:

1. Improved Connections: Market Bosworth / Bosworth Water Trust
2. Shackerstone
3. Bosworth Battlefield
4. Disused Railway Line: Nuneaton / Market Bosworth
5. Earl Shilton / Newbold Verdon Multifunctional Corridor
6. Gopsall Park Multifunctional Route
7. River Sence Corridor Management
8. Shackerstone to Ibstock Multifunctional Corridor





North Eastern Zone Interventions

1. Tourism Support
2. Transport Corridor Disturbance Mitigation
3. Redevelopment of Extraction Sites
4. Markfield / Groby Public Access
5. Bagworth to Market Bosworth Multifunctional Corridor
6. Rothley Brook Corridor Management
7. Ratby to Desford Multifunctional Corridor
8. Linking Assets to Long-distance Trails
9. Improved Access at Thornton Reservoir

Together, these form a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth that is able to respond appropriately and specifically to the particular circumstances experienced across the Borough, thus providing the various green infrastructure functions and benefits within the context of growth and sustainable prosperity.

Implementation of the Strategy (Chapter 7)

The various interventions recommended under the strategic plans consider successful and innovative projects from throughout the UK and further afield, and several of these present particular 'best practice' learning opportunities for implementation of green infrastructure in Hinckley & Bosworth.

Assessing this range of approaches against the particular needs of Hinckley & Bosworth, five key areas are identified detailing where HBBC can develop its approach for implementing the recommendations laid out in this Strategy. These are:

- i. Partnerships and co-provision;
- ii. Community and voluntary sector engagement;
- iii. Existing programmes and initiatives;
- iv. Planning Conditions, Obligations and Tariffs;
- v. Funding.

Taking Forward Green Infrastructure Policy

HBBC's LDF needs to adopt this Strategy to ensure a strong positive promotional policy for green infrastructure that clearly advocates the need to safeguard and uplift green infrastructure functions during the course of all developments. HBBC's Core Strategy Preferred Options paper clearly sets out the importance of green infrastructure, and has stated that the key recommendations of this Strategy will feature in the forthcoming Core Strategy Submission Document.

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