

**Hartlepool Borough Council**

# **Green Infrastructure**

## **Supplementary Planning Document**

**Adopted Version**



**September 2020**



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Image 1: Seaton Park

# 1 Introduction

## What is the purpose of this SPD?

- 1.1 The council's Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is split into two documents; the SPD itself and the accompanying Action Plan. This document provides information regarding the importance of Green Infrastructure (GI) within the borough and details the council's GI vision and what GI can be found within the borough, highlighting where there are any gaps which need to be addressed. The Action Plan builds upon this, setting out specifically where improvements are needed to enhance the GI network within the borough.
- 1.2 Once adopted, this SPD will form part of the Local Development Framework, to be used alongside the Local Plan to drive forward the development of GI in the borough. It will enable the council to seek funding to help achieve the enhancement and improvement of GI and inform the public of the GI strategy.

## Structure of this SPD

- 1.3 This SPD sets a number of objectives and an overall vision for the delivery of GI in Hartlepool. It sets out the strengths, weaknesses and functionality of GI within distinct areas of the borough. This will aid in highlighting areas of deficiency and where connections and improvements can be made in the future to further enhance the overall network of GI. This document considers relevant national, regional and local policies and guidance which will impact on the delivery of GI.

## What is Green Infrastructure?

- 1.4 The 2018 Hartlepool Local Plan defines GI as a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and environmental features including parks, open spaces, watercourses, trees and woodland and allotments.

## 2 The Importance of Green Infrastructure

### Why is GI so important?

- 2.1 With an increasing population and densification of the town, the urban environment is growing and planned GI needs to be developed alongside this. A dense built environment is considered to have a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the population, due to increased pollution and reduced opportunities to undertake physical activity, alongside detrimental environmental impacts, such as heat island effects and increased surface water runoff leading to potential flooding. Sport England's Active Design guidance highlights the lifestyle benefits which can be found from GI which encourages a healthier and active lifestyle.
- 2.2 Urban green space in particular provides accessible health benefits, therefore it is of key importance that within the borough all residents have access to green space close to where they live and work, as well as being able to reap the benefits of the wider network of GI within the borough.
- 2.3 GI is important for the people who live, work in and visit the borough, and is also critical for a multitude of species which are present and are at risk of displacement due to development.
- 2.4 An improved rights of way network will make it possible to move safely, easily and comfortably through the borough on foot or by bike. This will allow visitors and residents alike to explore the urban neighbourhoods, historical parks and village greens.
- 2.5 The rural character of the countryside will be protected and the open landscape aspect of the rural west will be maintained as far as possible.
- 2.6 The capacity of GI to accommodate protected and priority habitats and species will, where appropriate and possible, be enhanced in order to encourage valuable, healthy ecosystems to flourish, so that wildlife and plants can become more resilient to climate change.
- 2.7 Making the best use of existing and new greenspaces will provide greater opportunities for play, sport, recreation, relaxation and local food production, which in turn will promote active healthy lifestyles close to home. The hope is that the growing appreciation for the natural environment will be actively captured so people of all ages can value, manage and care for it.
- 2.8 A quality, distinctive and well connected GI network will help attract new investment, encouraging people to live and work in the borough because of its

exceptional ability to delivery healthy, safe and sustainable lifestyles. New green neighbourhoods will improve the quantity and quality of greenspace, habitats and trees for people and wildlife while integrating sustainable drainage and flood storage will help the borough mitigate the effects of, and help the natural environment adapt to, climate change.

2.9 To summarise, well planned and managed GI has the potential to deliver a wide range of benefits such as:

- Improved image; helping to attract businesses and inward investment
- Greater sense of place and pride in the local area
- Mitigation of the effects of climate change e.g. flood alleviation, carbon storage
- Improvements to air quality
- Health and wellbeing benefits through places for outdoor relaxation, play, recreation and exercise
- Encourages active and sustainable travel by providing cycle and walking routes
- Increased local food and renewal energy production
- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduction of the heat island effect.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and habitats.
- SANGs have the benefit of taking pressures off sensitive protected areas.

#### What does the council do?

2.10 Through the maintenance, enhancement and extension of these networks, multi-functional benefits can be realised for local communities, businesses, visitors and the environment. Appropriate strategies, plans and programmes led by the council and involving local partnerships and individual organisations can help to maintain existing GI, and promote solutions to remedy deficiencies and create new opportunities.

2.11 The council seeks to protect and enhance the GI network through its planning policies and by seeking developer contributions to fund projects and mitigate impacts of development, alongside actively improving the existing GI network through seeking external funding and grants to support projects.

#### What should developers do?

2.12 There are many benefits that come with development, including an expectation that it will contribute towards ensuring the borough is a healthy, attractive place to live, with abundant green space which brings with it social, environmental and economic benefits. This is to help mitigate the drawbacks from increased development which include increased pressure on GI resources such as footpaths and parks due to increased usage, environmental impacts and a

sense of overcrowding and overdevelopment due to a lack of provision of open space.

- 2.13 In order to ensure the sustainability of developments within the borough, it is required that on-site GI elements are factored into schemes. Where this is not possible or on-site provisions are not considered sufficient, financial contributions towards GI provision within the borough will be sought. This will ensure that development will mitigate any negative environmental impacts, and provide visual and amenity improvements to the site.



Image 2: Rossmere Park

### **3 National, Regional and Local Policy and Guidance**

- 3.1 This document has been prepared within the context of up to date legislation and reflects the key themes of policy guidance.
- 3.2 The importance of GI is recognised in a number of documents which help to highlight the benefit of the protection and enhancement of GI within towns and cities.

#### Natural Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature) (2011)

- 3.3 This paper refers to the role of urban GI as completing “the links in our national ecological network” and “one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and waves”.

#### Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England’s Wildlife and Ecosystem Services (2011)

- 3.4 This builds on the White Paper and sets out how international and European commitments are to be implemented and achieved. Action 3.4 sets out how the approach of the planning system will guide development to the best locations, encourage greener design and enhance natural networks.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

- 3.5 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF requires strategic policies to set out the quality of development and make sufficient provision for landscapes and GI. In Hartlepool, this has been achieved through the adoption of the 2018 Local Plan.
- 3.6 The benefits of access to high quality open spaces are highlighted in paragraph 95, which states that this can have a great impact on the health and well-being of communities. Local authorities have the duty to identify the specific needs of the area and what improvements are necessary.
- 3.7 Paragraph 150 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should plan for development in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change, including through the planning of GI.

#### Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014)

- 3.8 The PPG recognises the importance of open space in contributing to GI and providing health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby. It is key to the achievement of sustainable development.

### Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance (2009)

- 3.9 This publication considers the planning and delivery of GI, recognising it as part of sustainable spatial planning. It highlights the role of GI as a life support system, with the ability to deliver multiple environmental functions, and to play a key part in adapting to and mitigating climate change.
- 3.10 GI is recognised as an important tool in making the north east an attractive place to live, work and play, whilst also providing the benefits highlighted in national guidance.

### Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy (2008)

- 3.11 This sets out the strategic vision for the development of GI within the Tees Valley and identifies key strategic corridors including the coast from Crimdon Dene in the north to Cowbar in the south, and within Hartlepool borough, the town centre to Summerhill Country Park.

### Hartlepool Local Plan (2018)

- 3.12 Chapter 16 within the Local Plan focuses on the Natural Environment and Green Networks and includes information not only on GI, but on the natural environment in general, something which forms a critical element of GI within the borough. The policies within this chapter will ensure the protection of designated nature conservation sites, woodland and other priority habitats.
- 3.13 Policy NE2 is dedicated to the safeguarding of GI and sets out the council's aim to support the development of existing GI links within the borough and the restriction of development on GI components that would lead to their loss. This policy sets out which areas fall under the GI allocation and the restricted circumstances in which the council may consider damaging or developing on elements of GI.
- 3.14 Policy QP1 (Planning Obligations) sets out that the council will seek contributions from development towards a number of elements of GI, to ensure their delivery over the plan period.

### Local Infrastructure Plan (2016)

- 3.15 Chapter 7 within this plan covers some of the key projects that the council is seeking to further develop and enhance. Many of the areas covered are the large strategic GI corridors however there are some others which form smaller, more discrete elements of the borough's GI which provide important open space in densely populated areas.

### Residential Design SPD (2019)

- 3.16 This SPD will play a critical role in the development of GI in the borough. It is important to consider the links between the built environment and the more natural greener spaces, and these areas need good design principles which

can be applied through the planning and development process. Working with developers to secure well designed new developments which protect key green areas, provides new GI which complements existing provision and ensure mitigation where GI is lost as a result of the development will be crucial.

#### Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit and Assessment (2015)

- 317 This document sets the standards for the various types of open space which it assesses. Moving towards the aspirational standards within this assessment will have a significant positive impact on the GI within the borough. The schemes highlighted in the associated Action Plan will aid in moving towards the open space standards in terms of both new provision and quality improvements in existing open space typologies, illustrating clearly the thread between the two documents.

#### Allotment Strategy and Action Plan (2018)

- 3.18 This document set out to review the current allotment provision within the borough. As a result of this review, it was found that there should be a more balanced distribution of allotment land across the town, which are geographically accessible to all communities and which include a range of plot sizes.

## 4 Vision and Objectives

**Vision of SPD:** *By 2029 Hartlepool will have a high quality, multifunctional, accessible green infrastructure network which enhances the community's quality of life and sustains wildlife.*

4.1 The following objectives link the vision to the rest of this Strategy. The projects identified in the accompanying Action Plan should achieve one or more of these objectives, to help deliver the vision.

Objective	Objective Description
1	Protect a high quality visual landscape and townscape, and enhance the unique character, heritage, function, intrinsic quality and sense of place of the borough's GI network to contribute positively to its distinctiveness.
2	Provide a network of interconnected GI and spaces rich in habitat and home to a diverse range of wildlife which also play a critical role in improving the health of residents through providing attractive opportunities for recreation and sustainable travel.
3	Minimise the impact of, and adapt to, the effects of climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the use of resources, the risk of flooding and pollution and provide for species adaptation by maximising the protection and creation of GI.
4	Promote the preservation, restoration, management and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and expanding and linking habitats together, including working across council boundaries where appropriate, to assist in restoring biodiversity and allowing species to respond to climate change.
5	Ensure trees and hedges are protected where appropriate throughout the borough and integrate planting schemes within all new developments and, on larger housing schemes, deliver new areas of woodland. The preservation of ancient woodland and veteran trees which are irreplaceable is imperative.
6	Protect and enhance a wide range of high quality opportunities for safe and accessible formal and informal sport, recreation and leisure facilities to encourage the community and visitors to undertake a variety of healthy exercise within attractive settings.
7	Involve users, including "friends of" groups, and neighbours in the design of GI where appropriate, ensuring usability and helping to create a sense of ownership and pride.
8	Support economic growth, attract inward investment and support redevelopment of brownfield land by improving the setting of industrial and commercial areas through the delivery and enhancement of quality, distinctive and attractive GI.

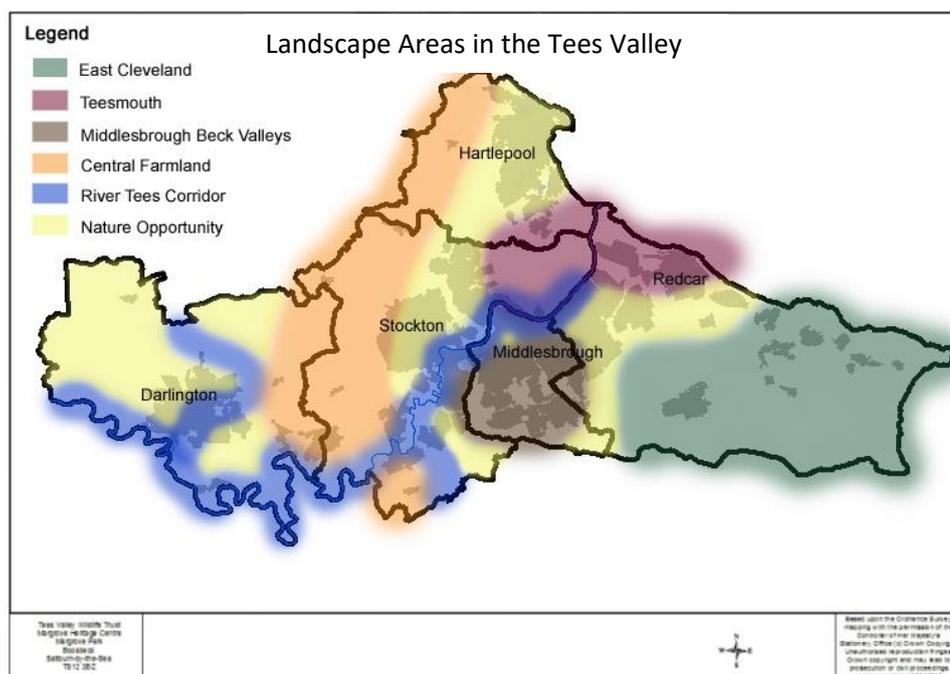
9	Create a quality, distinctive and productive GI network to support local food production, rural diversification and tourism to meet the needs of local businesses, landowners and to provide a diverse employment base.
10	Ensure key green hubs, such as parks, play spaces and woodlands, are, where possible, linked by means of safe and easily accessible green networks and rights of way that together form a high quality GI grid across the whole of the borough.



Image 3: Rossmere Park

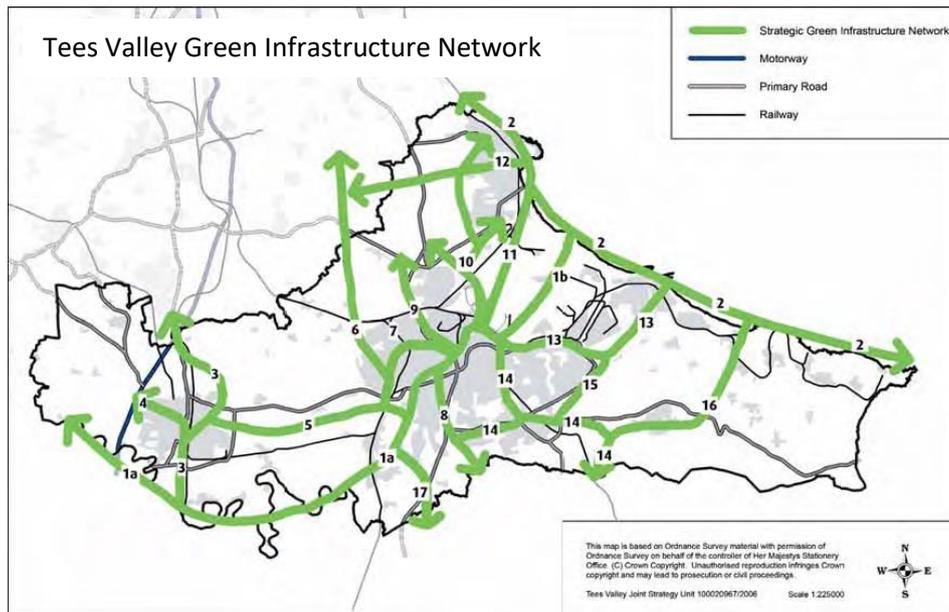
## 5 Strategic Green Infrastructure – Ensuring Sufficient Links within Teesside

- 5.1 Quality of place, quality of life and the well-being of communities is considered central to regional and sub-regional competitiveness, alongside relocation and investment decisions. It is recognised that the region's green spaces are a vital asset, particularly in the context of increasing development pressures, and that GI is increasingly acknowledged as being a key component of sustainable communities.
- 5.2 The Tees Valley Nature Partnership produced a diagrammatic map illustrating the six distinct landscape areas in the Tees Valley.



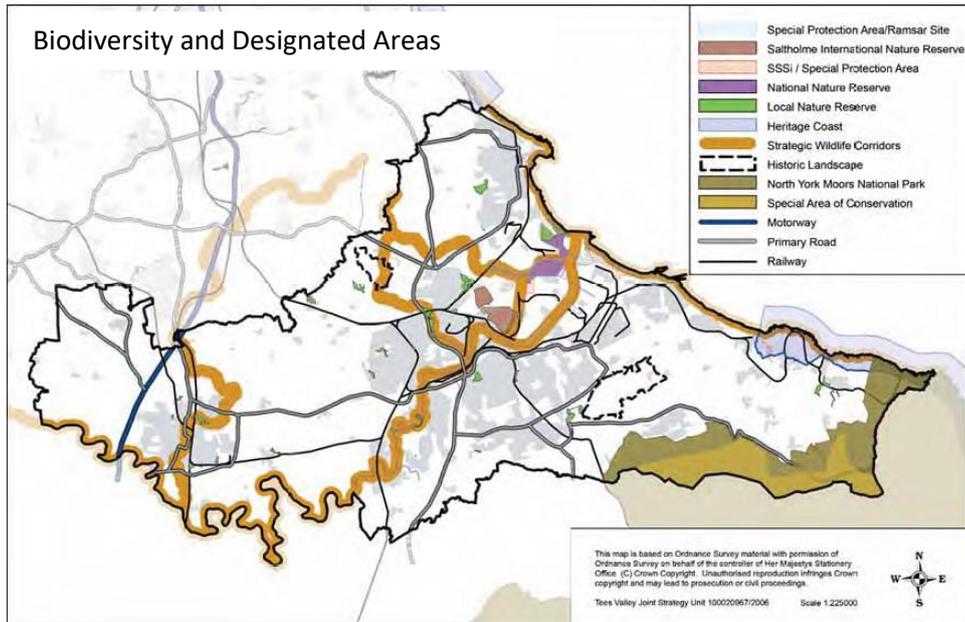
(Figure 1. Source: Tees Valley Nature Partnership)

- 5.3 The Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy (2008) helps to drive forward the development of a strategic network of GI across the Tees Valley and reflects links into neighbouring areas. It is important that, in developing a GI strategy, the wider aspirations of the Tees Valley and other neighbouring authorities are taken into account and reflected within Hartlepool. Figure 2, below, illustrates the key green networks in the Tees Valley.

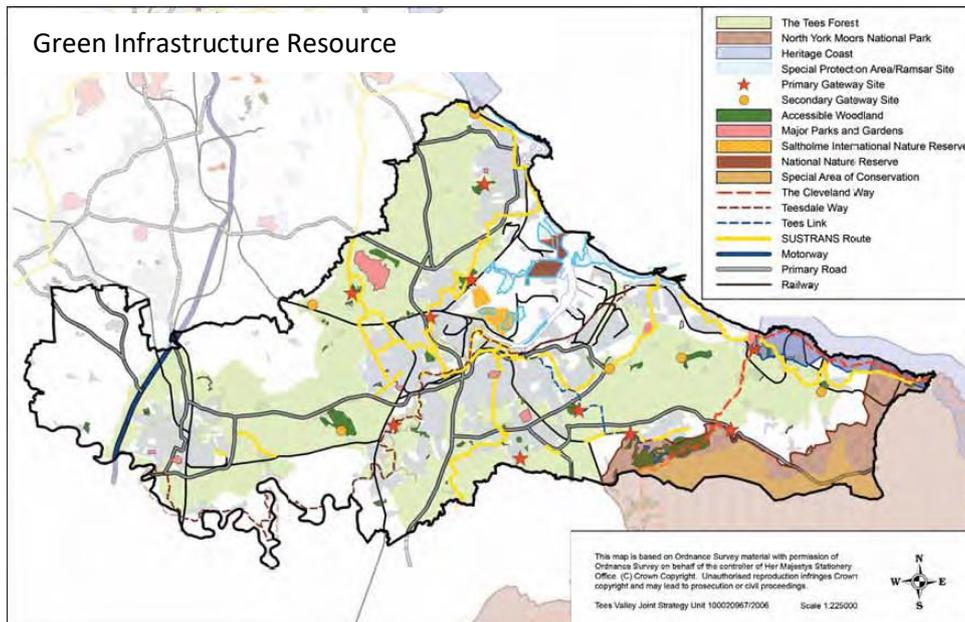


(Figure 2. Source Tees Valley GI Strategy 2008)

- 5.4 The key networks as illustrated above also fit together with many other elements of GI which help to create a Tees Valley which is rich in terms of all aspects of GI including biodiversity, landscape, habitat, green corridors, wetlands and more.
- 5.5 Figures 3 and 4 below help to illustrate the variety of GI which the Tees Valley benefits from. The continual protection and enhancement of GI must respect and complement the GI in the wider region. This strategic understanding of GI in the wider region enables recognition of any weaknesses in the network which could be improved in the future, and helps identify any opportunities to build new GI.



(Figure 3. Source Tees Valley GI Strategy 2008)

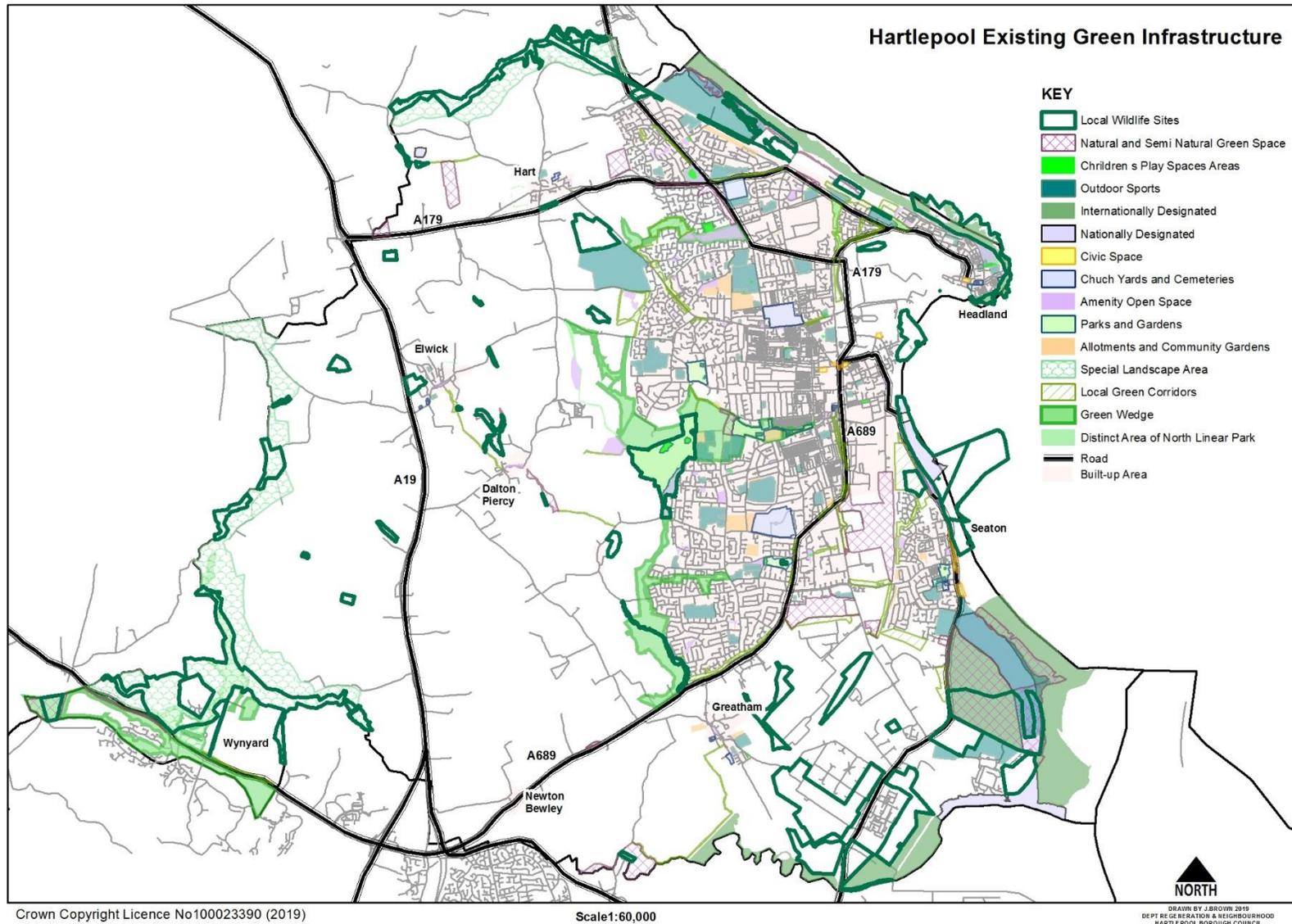


(Figure 4. Source Tees Valley GI Strategy 2008)

## **6 Existing Green Infrastructure in Hartlepool**

- 6.1 This section provides a brief introduction to existing GI within Hartlepool. More information on areas that are in need of investment can be found within the accompanying Action Plan.
- 6.2 Hartlepool currently benefits from a wide range of GI spread across the borough. This ranges from traditional parks such as Ward Jackson and Rossmere, to significant green wedges running from the countryside into the town, to individual gardens.
- 6.3 Individual elements of GI are protected under policy NE2 of the Local Plan, and the accompanying policies map identifies GI components as being; green wedges, parks and gardens, children's playing space/areas, outdoor sport including playing fields, local green corridors, civic spaces, churchyards and cemeteries, allotments and community gardens, amenity open space and natural and semi-natural green space.
- 6.4 Map 1 presents the borough-wide GI network and the larger individual elements which it comprises of.

Map 1 (borough wide GI network)



## The Coast

- 6.5 Hartlepool has around 15km of coastline that faces the North Sea, with another 2km along its southern border at Seaton Channel. Access to the coastal areas is a priority as they are used by large numbers of people for various recreational purposes throughout the year. The section of the England Coast Path (designated as a National Trail) through the entire borough has been completed and was officially opened in September 2019.
- 6.6 Much of the coastline can be accessed along beaches or through the dunes, although dunes are dynamic systems which can easily be damaged. Currently there is limited access around Victoria Harbour and Seaton Channel due to industrial and commercial uses.

## Ward Jackson Park

- 6.7 The park was provided by public money in 1883 to commemorate one of Hartlepool's greatest entrepreneurs, Ralph Ward Jackson. It is an important example of a Victorian public park and strongly linked to the buildings surrounding it, which sets the tone and reinforces the Arcadian principles of the area. Ward Jackson Park continues to play a crucial role in the provision of attractive green space in the west of the town, acting as a focal point for residents and visitors to enjoy. This is a Registered Park and Garden which, as a designated heritage asset, gives it extra protection.

## Rossmere Park

- 6.8 This park forms an important element of the Owton Manor Green Wedge. Set in an urban residential area, the park incorporates open-grassed areas, trees, a lake, an all-weather pitch and fixed equipment playground (for toddlers and teenagers). The park is used for both formal and informal sport and recreation. This park is locally listed and therefore identified as a heritage asset, which highlights the significant positive impact that this park has on the surrounding area.

## Seaton Carew

- 6.9 Seaton Park is 16 acres in size and provides a range of facilities for users including a play area, tennis courts, a bowling green, flower gardens and open grassed areas. The large areas of informal open space provide the setting of the Seaton Carew Conservation Area forming a green swathe separating the buildings from the coast.

- 6.10 There are other less formal areas of public open space in Seaton Carew that play an important part in offering different types of green space in the area. For example areas such as the Green, which is a formal green space within a residential area and provides an amenity space for those in surrounding houses and also contributes to the setting of a number of heritage assets in the area.

#### Owton Manor Green Wedge

- 6.11 This green wedge runs from the rural fringe at Owton Manor through to Rossmere Park in the east. The eastern edge of the wedge, including the Park and the recreation ground on Rossmere Way are major assets to this area of the town and provide space for recreational and sporting activities.
- 6.12 The western end of this green wedge is predominately green open space with some recently planted woodland. This area suffers from anti-social behaviour, including use by motorbikes and quad bikes, which causes significant damage to amenity grassed area. However, due to the general lack of GI in the south of the town, it is of great value to the residents.

#### Burn Valley Green Wedge Inc. Summerhill Country Park

- 6.13 The Burn Valley Green Wedge runs from the centre of town out to the countryside. This 19 acre park includes three bowling greens, a bowling pavilion, Ornamental gardens, and playground. It provides a walk from the town centre to Family Wood and on to open countryside. Summerhill Country Park is recognised as an area of local importance and provides a valuable space for residents and visitors. Burn Valley Gardens is recognised as having great importance in the borough and thus has been locally listed.
- 6.14 Previous work on the site saw the improvement in the environmental quality and landscape of the upper stretch of the Burn Valley Green Wedge through habitat creation and restoration thereby creating more “wild places and natural spaces” within easy reach of the urban population.

#### Middle Warren Green Wedge

- 6.15 This green wedge is an integral element of the Middle Warren housing development that has built out over the past 20 years. This forms a green corridor running through to Easington Road. The east of the green wedge is more natural with mature trees, which leads into the section that has been formed as part of the development. A stream forms an attractive feature, and its course has been diversified in order to help form wetland areas and to slow water flow in times of high rainfall.

- 6.16 Extensive tree planting has taken place over the years and a network of footpaths allows users to enjoy a variety of routes through the green wedge, and partake in walking, cycling and running. A children's play area to the south of Merlin Way has provided further recreational provision within the area.

#### Wynyard Woods Green Wedge

- 6.17 The green wedge at Wynyard Woods helps to provide an attractive setting for the executive housing at Wynyard. It provides green space with some tree planting, which provides recreational space including for dog walking. In line with future development in the area there is an aspiration to extend the green wedge through to link with the Castle Eden Walkway.

#### Golden Flatts Green Wedge

- 6.18 Currently this area is a semi-natural area of land which acts as a buffer between housing on Seaton Lane and the steel pipe mill. This area incorporates sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) ponds associated with housing development on Seaton Lane. This area is seen as one of great opportunity and there are aspirations for a development which would incorporate new woodland, new ponds, walking routes, play space and pitch provision.

#### North Linear Park

- 6.19 Within the northern area of the borough there are a number of elements of individual green space, such as the Town Moor on the Headland, Central Park, a green corridor on Central Estate and Clavering play area, alongside areas of accessible coastline and countryside. These all contribute towards the overall GI within the northern area of the town and are collectively known as North Linear Park. There needs to be better connectivity to ensure the individual elements of the North Linear Park can be used in conjunction.

#### Rural Hartlepool

- 6.20 The rural area covers more than half of the borough's total area, with the majority of the public and permissive rights of way path network located there. These paths are relied upon for leisure as well as access to and from work and local amenities. A major issue with the rights of way network in the rural area is the A19 dual carriageway, which severs many routes and adds a degree of danger to those walking routes where they need to cross this road.

6.21 The majority of these pathways link into a wide range of the borough's green spaces infrastructure and these vital links provide access to and from the open spaces and form part of a wider network.

#### Allotments

6.22 There are a number of allotments spread throughout the town which provide a valuable amenity for local residents, allowing for the production of fresh fruit and vegetables. This is not only beneficial in health terms but also helps economically. The allotments across the town vary in quality and maintenance, however on the whole the spaces are well cared for by tenants and considered to be an asset to those who use them.

#### Cemeteries

6.23 The principle role of cemeteries is clear and must be respected and pre-eminent in their use, however it is also acknowledged that they provide extensive areas of attractive green space which can have important secondary benefits. It is noted that there are active cemeteries, which include Stranton and West View, and those which are predominantly full such as North Cemetery. Spion Kop cemetery is of sub-regional importance for the coastal grassland that is found there and this has been recognised in its designation as a Local Nature Reserve in 2004. North Cemetery is a 12.6 hectare area of wooded greenspace in an area that is surrounded by dense housing and is very well used by local residents for walking. Seaton Cemetery is a popular birdwatching site due to mature trees creating a migrant staging post on the coast.

## 7 Natural Environment

- 7.1 This chapter of the SPD details the natural environment features that are present within the borough. Some elements of the natural environment form informal, crucial parts of the GI network and their conservation is essential.

### Biodiversity

- 7.2 The borough contains several priority habitats and species as defined by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, Section 41 list of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, and the Tees Valley Nature Partnership priority habitats and species. The potential for development to impact on these species is a material planning consideration and should where appropriate be considered during pre-planning investigations and planning application validation.
- 7.3 Many non-designated areas of green space have wildlife value, but these are generally small, isolated and widely dispersed. Expanding and linking these areas is a key objective in restoring biodiversity and allowing species to respond to climate change. The potential for development to impact on these areas is a material planning consideration.

### Nature conservation site designation

- 7.4 The most valuable wildlife sites are protected by legal and planning designations, from European Special Protection Areas to Local Wildlife Sites, as detailed in Local Plan policy NE1. Many species of plant and animal have legal protection in their own right. Important geological sites are also protected. Sites are in both public and private ownership. Information on designated sites can be found in Appendix 3 and on the Natural England and council websites. The potential for development to impact on these areas is a material planning consideration.

### Priority Habitats

- 7.5 There is a concentration of priority habitats within the Tees estuary (Teesmouth) all along the coastline and in the extensive dene complex in the north of the borough. There are fewer (generally smaller) sites scattered across open farmland. A number of sites are within the town and urban fringe. The potential for development to impact on these areas is a material planning consideration.

- 7.6 Teesmouth contains areas of estuary-related habitats such as mudflats, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and sand dunes. It includes sites of international importance for over-wintering and breeding wildfowl and wetland birds. There are several areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, the largest being at Greenabella Marsh and Seaton Common. The Hart Warren and Seaton Dunes areas have extensive sand dunes. Mudflats are found along the north banks of Greatham Creek and Seaton Channel and in West Harbour. Remnants of saltmarsh occur along the north bank of Greatham Creek.
- 7.7 'Previously used' brownfield (or open mosaic) habitat is centred upon areas which were formerly subject to industrial use around the town and these support plant, butterfly and amphibian species.
- 7.8 There are extensive woodland complexes along the northern and south-western boundaries of the borough. Semi-natural ancient woodland is found in the Nesbitt, Thorpe Bulmer and Crimdon Denes complex on the northern boundary with Durham and at the Howls in Dalton Piercy. The Wynyard Woodland Park Complex in the south west of the borough contains some semi-natural ancient woodland, along with broadleaved mixed woodland and wet woodland.
- 7.9 Habitats found scattered across the open farmland include grasslands, fens, ponds and hedgerows. Some hedgerows are 'species-rich'. Semi-natural grasslands are mostly associated with slopes. Within the farmed hinterland of Hartlepool there are six fens and bogs, the most important being Hart Bog, which has a glacial origin.
- 7.10 Priority habitat ponds are mostly found in the urban and industrial areas of the borough, with a few isolated ponds scattered across farmland. The majority of these ponds meet the priority pond criteria and often support amphibians such as common toad, smooth newt and great crested newt.

### Geological features

- 7.11 The coastline has several important geological features: Hartlepool Submerged Forest, Hartlepool Headland and Long Scar and Little Scar. Inland, there are notable geological sites at Dalton Batts and West Crimdon Dene and in four quarries. The potential for development to impact on these areas is a material planning consideration.

## Priority species

- 7.12 The northern denes and Crookfoot Reservoir support good numbers of bats and harvest mouse is present near Hart Village and probably elsewhere. There is a population of harbour seal centred upon Seal Sands and they often move along Seaton Channel and haul out along Greatham Creek. Grey seals occur but do not breed. Brown hares occur on both brownfield sites and in farmland, but badgers are scarce. Once widespread, the water vole is now scarce within the borough, however otters have become more common.
- 7.13 Breeding populations of bird species of key importance in the Tees Valley are present within the farmland to the west of Hartlepool. Most of these species are also UK Biodiversity 2020 conservation priority species. Over recent years the Teesmouth population of little egrets has increased substantially, with birds roosting in Rossmere Park and the species now breeds in the borough. Most of the coastline is important for non-breeding/overwintering bird populations, and there are international and national designations to protect these. A colony of protected little terns annually nest on the beach.
- 7.14 Small populations of great crested newts are scattered across the borough. Common toads and frogs are widespread and smooth newt is abundant in some ponds.
- 7.15 Common Lizard is the only reptile found in the borough, though this species has not been recorded for over ten years.
- 7.16 A number of priority butterflies occur, especially those dependent on grasslands and brownfield sites, such as dingy skipper, small heath and grayling. Several woodlands with elm trees support white-letter hairstreak butterflies and some with oaks support purple hairstreaks. Recent butterfly colonists include brown argus, silver-washed fritillary and dark-green fritillary, demonstrating how insects are responding to climate change.

## Environmental education and green tourism

- 7.17 Local Nature Reserves are specifically places that the public can access to appreciate or learn about wildlife, and other publically accessible sites add to people's experience of nature. The coastal network of wildlife and publically accessible sites continues northwards into County Durham and southwards to RSPB Saltholme.

### Waterways and Wetlands

- 7.18 Some small watercourses run along the public right of way network or are otherwise accessible. There are also several artificial ponds and wetlands which have been created, adding to the visual appeal and wildlife value of the areas where they are located. These waterbodies are one of the ways in which the GI in the borough links together and they play a vital part in the setting and quality of green spaces, corridors and natural habitats.
- 7.19 Opportunities to improve the quality and accessibility of watercourses will be sought, and the creation and enhancement of features will be promoted for the benefit to wildlife and also to assist with flood alleviation. Opportunities to diversify watercourses, particularly within the urban areas, as part of the redevelopment of sites will be sought where it is considered the benefits of this are justified.

### Alleviating Flood Risk

- 7.20 There is the potential for GI to include planned new water management facilities, which can include balancing ponds and water storage areas. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can provide GI elements as well as addressing surface water drainage issues.

## **8 Historic Environment**

- 8.1 The historic environment not only provides a valuable resource, but many tangible and intangible benefits to GI. It can help define a place and connect people to traditions and values. Such concepts can be used to animate areas and help to create or regenerate neighbourhoods and communities. The historic environment can provide “ready-made” GI that underpins other benefits/agendas. For example, the formal space of Ward Jackson Park acts as an essential element of GI to local residents, but also allows for people to experience the historic environment, and is listed as a Registered Park and Garden in recognition of this.
- 8.2 GI can be an important mechanism for protecting heritage assets and their landscape settings and for increasing public access to and appreciation of them. Heritage assets are considered as being irreplaceable resources and GI can be planned appropriately in order to sufficiently safeguard and enhance them. At the same time, the historic environment can add greatly to the richness, scope, diversity and physical extent of GI networks.

## **9 Regeneration and Green Infrastructure**

- 9.1 GI will play a role in the regeneration projects in Hartlepool through improving people's experience of the town centre. This will be through interventions or improvements in small-scale green spaces, urban trees and green public spaces, as well as contributing to 'experience lines' that will reinforce connectivity and movement throughout the town. This is deemed as being valuable in increasing economic activity and investment in the town.
- 9.2 Through these improvements, GI is expected to support the development of people's sense of community through extending dwell times and providing spaces for community congregation for events and activities.
- 9.3 An example of a regeneration project with integrated GI is at the Brenda Road corridor. The utilisation of landmark features, the treatment of external estate boundaries and improved wayfinding into the numerous industrial estates is an opportunity to develop GI in this area. Addressing the quality of this GI would be aimed at retaining and attracting businesses, encouraging private sector investment and improve the sense of place between estates and throughout this area.

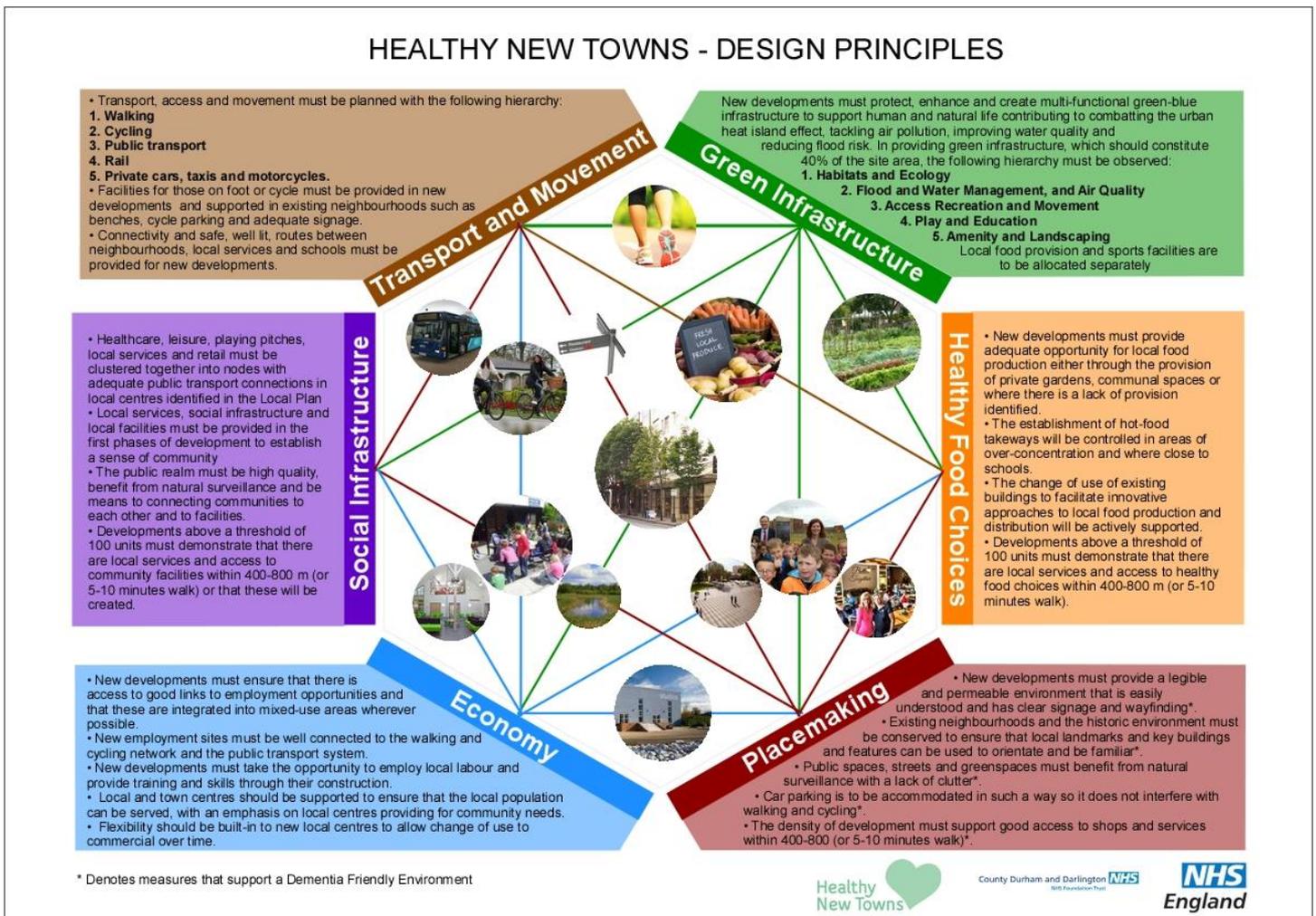
## 10 Innovative Ideas for Green Infrastructure

- 10.1 GI can be incorporated in a way that is not always seemingly obvious. Although provisions for parks and large green spaces are very important, it is possible to be innovative regarding small pockets of space within the borough.
- 10.2 Successful ideas are ones which make the most of space which may currently be run down, lacking attention or may be unsuitable for alternative uses. There are potential opportunities to develop areas like these to make them an asset to the community, and to improve the overall aesthetic and visual amenity of the area.
- 10.3 Areas with pockets of green are considered as being more desirable, and pockets of green can be developed and enhanced in easy ways such as tree planting, creation of community gardens, multisensory gardens, green roofs, green walls etc. An example of a 'pocket park' in the borough is at Thornton Street, where a small area has been transformed through using trees, grass and pathways. This acts as a welcome burst of green within a predominantly residential area.
- 10.4 Some ways in which GI can be incorporated into specific areas include:
- Urban areas: boulevards, green roofs and walls, street trees
  - Community centres/hubs: sustainable buildings with green roofs, rainwater collection, community gardens, green provision for relaxation and socialising
  - Green wedges: trees, green spaces, waterways, pedestrian and cycle routes
  - Small holdings: allotments, shared gardens, learning zones
  - Parks: accessible habitats and green spaces, activity zones, tree, shrub and flower planting
  - Housing developments: spaces for relaxation and healthy living, neighbourhood gardens, on-site fruit/vegetable patches, tree lined streets and garden space
- 10.5 There are many different opportunities for the provision of GI in the borough, and developers are encouraged to use their initiative to enable the creation of places which are healthy, attractive and desirable to users.

## 11 Green Infrastructure within Future Developments

- 11.1 There are several large and mid-sized up and coming housing developments that are factored into the Local Plan. It is of key importance that these contribute where necessary towards the borough's GI and factor it into their design when necessary.
- Urban Local Plan sites: GI within these sites will aid in reducing the appearance of crowded urban areas through the provision of street trees, hedges etc.
  - South West extension: approx. 48.22 ha of multifunctional GI will be provided within a strategic wedge within the development.
  - High Tunstall: 12.00 of multifunctional GI will be provided within a strategic green wedge within the development.
  - Quarry Farm: 3.00 ha of multifunctional GI will be provided on this site.
  - Wynyard developments: The Wynyard Masterplan sets out a green network within the area which will be delivered by developments as they come forward.
  - Elwick village: 0.40 ha of GI, informal open space and recreational and leisure land is required to be provided.
  - Hart village: the remainder of undeveloped land at both Nine Acres and Glebe Farm developments will be used for GI.
- 11.2 This provision for GI has been factored in to provide visual, social and environmental benefits, ensuring that the communities who live in these new developments can boost their quality of life and benefit from easily accessible greenspace close to their homes. It will also avoid overdevelopment within these areas, eliminating the potential for undesirable and overcrowded estates.
- 11.3 It is of key importance that all these developments deliver these GI requirements. Further information on this can be found in Chapter 10 of the Local Plan, with each housing site having its own relevant policy.
- 11.4 It is expected that GI is factored in at the earliest design stage of all developments, which will encourage it to be incorporated organically into designs.
- 11.5 Developers should be aware of the benefits that come from taking initiative in relation to making provisions for GI on-site. Successful developments are considered as those which are aesthetically pleasing, with plenty of amenity green space built into the development and adequate paths alongside provision of cycle lanes. These small enhancements to a site, if factored in from the earliest stage, will in turn lead to the site becoming a much more

desirable place to live, and will improve the physical and mental health of the residents, as well as contributing to the sustainability of the site.



(Figure 5. Source: NHS England)

11.6 This diagram was produced by the Healthy New Towns pioneering project, which aims to work with the NHS and local authorities to shape the health of communities. It provides a clear vision of how GI links into other factors which contribute towards healthy and thriving places which include healthy food choices, place making, economy, social infrastructure and transport and movement. It is evident that GI plays a crucial role in mitigating environmental impacts but also its provision can lead to many multi-functional benefits such as opportunities for local food production, an increased pride of place, sustainable links to employment and improved health of residents.

11.7 Although these design principles were engineered for the Healthy New Towns project, they provide a good basis for things which developers can factor into schemes in order to make them a better place in general for residents and visitors.

## 12 Planning Obligations and Green Infrastructure

- 12.1 Related council documents which developers are encouraged to read regarding planning obligations are:
- 2018 Local Plan
  - Emerging Public Rights of Way & other Access SPD
  - Planning Obligations SPD
- 12.2 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF highlights that any obligations sought by the council are required to be:
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
  - Directly related to the development; and
  - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development
- 12.3 The council will seek to ensure that any GI contributions that are requested of the developer meet these criteria.
- 12.4 Residential development of 5 units minimum are expected to contribute £250 per dwelling towards the provision of green infrastructure.
- 12.5 Developments falling within an A1 use class in planning terms are expected to contribute £20,000 for the initial 500sqm of A1 retail space, and an increase of £1,000 per additional 100sqm of A1 floor space. This applies for new build and change of use.
- 12.6 Developments falling within a B1 use class in planning terms are expected to contribute £5,000 for the initial 1000sqm of B1 floor space and an increase of £1,000 per additional 100sqm of floor space. This applies for new build and change of use.
- 12.7 Any other developments are assessed on a case by case basis, and an officer will determine whether GI contributions are considered necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development, or to make the development sustainable.
- 12.8 Advice on proposed development can be obtained from the council for a small charge through its One Stop Shop pre-application advice service.

## **13 Investment in and Management of Green Infrastructure**

- 13.1 Ongoing investment is critical to GI to ensure that all forms are provided to the best possible standard. The council continues to work with a wide range of stakeholders in order to access various sources of funding, alongside council funding, in order to aid in the provision, enhancement and maintenance of GI.
- 13.2 The information and records held by the council help to identify areas of greatest need and are used to help inform the Action Plan for investment in GI.
- 13.3 Contributions which can be secured as part of the planning process on applications for development, particularly housing, can be used, within the vicinity of those developments, to seek improvements to GI which are considered necessary as a result of those developments and to ensure their sustainability.
- 13.4 For most forms of publicly accessible GI in the borough, the council is the main organisation with the responsibility for the maintenance and management of these spaces including parks and gardens, play areas, the beaches and coastal margins and the green wedges. The delivery of new GI must be considered against the long term maintenance liabilities it will bring. Less intensive management regimes, such as wildflower meadows or woodland planting can deliver cost savings as well as being of great benefit to biodiversity and should be considered where appropriate. Sometimes in new development the land owner may put in place a management organisation which maintains areas of green infrastructure within developments and residents pay an annual fee towards the running of the management company. The long term management of GI in a development where appropriate will be secured through a relevant planning obligation.

## **14 Monitoring and Review**

14.1 It is important to the success of this Strategy that measures are put in place to:

- Evaluate the impact the Strategy is having;
- Monitor delivery of the Action Plan; and
- Use this information to review both the Strategy and Action Plan in the medium and long term.

14.2 This SPD contains a number of priorities and actions which will contribute to the achievement of this SPD's vision and objectives. The success of GI projects will be based on if they can meet any/all of the objectives in the document, and if the benefits of such schemes can be openly recognised.

## Appendix 1      Glossary of Key Terms

**Accessible greenspace:** space for the public to use free of charge and without time restrictions; some spaces may be closed overnight.

**Ancient woodland:** woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before.

**Biodiversity:** variety of life including different plants, animals and micro-organisms, and the ecosystems which they are part of.

**Climate change:** effect of global warming on weather conditions and unpredictable variations in temperatures.

**Conservation area:** area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Ecosystem:** interactions between living organisms and their physical environment.

**Green corridor:** linear green space connecting different types of greenspace, can incorporate walking and cycling routes. Most are also wildlife corridors.

**Green infrastructure:** strategically planned and delivered interconnecting, visually linked network of public and private multifunctional green spaces, landscapes and natural environments in the urban and rural area used for recreation, biodiversity and food production, which supports natural, cultural and ecological processes, with benefits for people, wildlife and place.

**Green wedge:** open area between neighbourhoods which helps to maintain their separate distinctive qualities.

**Heritage asset:** a building, monument, site, place or area of landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.

**Landscape:** consistent, distinct pattern of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and settlements.

**Local Nature Reserve (LNR):** designated by the council and Natural England for its special local wildlife or geological value and which provide people with opportunities to learn about nature or enjoy it.

**Multifunctionality:** the ability of a space to perform more than one greenspace function at the same time.

**Priority habitats and species:** protected by national legislation because of their vulnerable status.

**Public Rights of Way:** includes public footpaths, bridleways and byways where the public have a right to use them at any time.

**Registered Historic Parks and Gardens:** protected by English Heritage as being of special historic interest.

**Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs):** this is green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation for development likely to affect special protection areas.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** protected by the Government it is of national importance for wildlife, geology or geomorphology.

**Special Protection Area (SPA):** internationally designated wildlife site.

**Surface water run-off:** excess rainwater, or from drains that flow over land.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** reduce and slow the quantity and rate of surface water run-off from new development, dealing with it as close to the source as possible.

**Wildlife corridor:** linear greenspace that provides links for wildlife dispersal and movement, can have wider amenity benefits.

**Wildlife friendly greenspace:** space where naturalness dominates.

Below is a list of some GI projects that have been secured or implemented across the borough as a result of money pooled from Section 106 planning obligations, or conditions that have been imposed on developers.

- Surface track, woodlands planting within Golden Flatts Green Wedge
- Contributions toward Ward Jackson Park
- Provision of GI at various small sites in the borough adjacent to development
- Greatham Village allotment improvements
- Two new footpaths near Quarry Farm
- Croft Gardens improvements
- Coastal footpath improvements between Newburn Bridge and Marina
- Chester Road Thornhill Gardens Allotments
- Development of public footpath between South Valley Drive and Summerhill

### **Appendix 3      Designated statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites in Hartlepool**

<b>Hartlepool Local Authority: Designated Sites</b>		
<b>Statutory designated sites (National)</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Reason for Designation</b>
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast	Non-breeding populations of knot, redshank and sandwich tern and a breeding population of little tern. Also designated for waterbird assemblage of 20,000 birds.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Teesmouth	Covers two areas: North Gare, an area of dunes and grazing marsh north of the power station and Seal Sands, one of the largest areas of intertidal mudflats on England's north-east coast.
Ramsar site (Wetland of international importance)	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast	Populations of redshank and knot occurring at levels of international importance; assemblages of waterfowl of international importance with peak counts in winter.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SSSI	This site was notified in 2019 and amalgamated 7 existing SSSIs in the borough and the wider Tees Valley.
<b>Local non-statutory designated sites</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Reason for Designation</b>
Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	Hartlepool Power Station Grassland and Wetland	Common Lizard
LWS	Black Wood Marsh	Fens, Flushes
LWS	Hart Warren Railway Embankment Grassland	Neutral Grasslands; Coastal Grasslands
LWS	Hart-Haswell Walkway	Butterflies; Common Lizard; Neutral Grasslands; Calcareous Grasslands
LWS	Crimdon Road Verge	Calcareous Grasslands; Common Lizard
LWS	Pawton Hill Gill Grassland	Neutral Grasslands, Fens, Flushes
LWS	Beacon Hill Flush	Fens, Flushes

LWS	Crookfoot Reservoir	Water Body
LWS	Amerston Gill Woodland	Broad-leaved Woodland and Replanted Ancient Woodland
LWS	Thorpe Bulmer and West Crimdon Denes	Ancient Woodland
LWS	Greenabella Marsh	Water Vole; Common Lizard
LWS	Close Wood Complex	Ancient Woodland; Broad-leaved Woodland and Replanted Ancient Woodland; Breeding/Wintering Birds; Important Butterflies
LWS	North Burn Marsh	Fens, Flushes
LWS	The Howls Woodland	Ancient Woodland
LWS	Carr House Sands and West Harbour	Wintering population of birds
LWS	West Carr Plantation	Wet Woodland
LWS	Greatham Creek North Bank Saltmarsh	Saltmarsh
LWS	Crimdon Road Verge	Neutral Grasslands
LWS	Tilery Gill Grassland	Fens, Flushes; Neutral Grasslands
LWS	Phillips Tank Farm Grassland	Urban Grassland; Great Crested Newt; Important Butterflies; Water Vole
LWS	The Slake Saltmarsh	Saltmarsh
LWS	Bellows Burn Marsh	Fens, Flushes
LWS	Greatham Beck	Water Vole
LWS	Elwick Hall Grassland	Neutral Grasslands
LWS	Hart Quarry	Breeding/Wintering Birds
LWS	Brierton Quarry Grassland	Neutral Grassland
LWS	Saltern Saltmarsh	Saltmarsh
LWS	Gunnersvale Marsh	Fens, Flushes

LWS	Tot Fenny's Meadow	Neutral Grasslands; Fens, Flushes
LWS	Queen's Meadow Wetland	Amphibians
LWS	Rossmere Park Island Heronry	Breeding/Wintering Birds
LWS	Brenda Road Brownfield	Great Crested Newt; Urban Grassland
LWS	Zinc Works Bird Field	Wintering Population of Birds; Breeding/Wintering Birds
LWS	Spion Kop Cemetery Grassland	Coastal Grasslands
LWS	Hart Cutting Grassland	Calcareous Grasslands
LWS	Hartville Meadow	Neutral Grasslands
LWS	Craddon Bank Grassland	Neutral Grasslands; Fens/Flushes
LWS	High Stofold Meadow	Neutral Grasslands
LWS	North Hartlepool Dunes	Coastal Grasslands
LWS	Char Beck Grassland	Neutral Grasslands
LWS	Butts Lane Field Margins	Harvest Mouse
LWS	Summerhill Country Park	Urban mosaic of hay meadows, hedgerows, ponds and planted trees
LWS	Central Park Grassland	Urban Grassland
LWS & Local Geological Site (LGS)	Naisberry Quarry Grassland	Neutral Grassland; disused quarry
LWS & LGS	Whelly Hill Quarry Grassland	Neutral Grassland; disused quarry
LGS	Long Scar & Little Scar	Two exposures of wave-washed scars consisting of Sherwood sandstone, from the Triassic period.
LGS	Hartlepool Headland	A wave washed platform, revealing exposures of Magnesian Limestone in a coastal zone environment.

LGS	Dalton Batts	A large river-cliff that reveals an excellent exposure of glacial sands, gravels and clay from the last glaciation.
LGS	West Crimdon Dene	Exposure of Magnesian Limestone in a river gorge environment.
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Hart to Haswell Walkway	Former railway line with a rich mix of magnesian limestone grassland, ponds, semi-mature and mature woodland.
LNR	Hart Warren	The only magnesium limestone dune system of any significance in the British Isles; supports a rich variety of both flora and fauna.
LNR	Spion Kop Cemetery	A mix of coastal, limestone and industrial heritage habitats that produces rich dune grassland unique in Hartlepool and rare within the Tees Valley.
LNR	Summerhill	This site combines recreation and conservation. The site has hay meadows, hedgerows, ponds and over 65,000 trees.
LNR	Greatham Beck	A small site providing a haven and wildlife corridor for many species including the Water Vole.
LNR	Seaton Dunes and Common	Seaton Common is a wet grassland which attracts large numbers of passage migrants over winter and is a breeding ground for birds in the summer months. Seaton Dunes is the largest sand dune system between Lindisfarne to the north and Humber to the south.
<b>Other non-statutory designated sites</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Reason for Designation</b>
Country Park	Summerhill Country Park	Managed Country Park and visitor centre (also a LWS)
RSPB Reserve	Saltholme	Managed reserve and visitor centre (in Stockton but links intrinsically with sites within Hartlepool)
Heritage Coast	Durham Heritage Coast	Extends down to the Headland. Landscape, biodiversity, heritage and public enjoyment.