

May 2008

Understanding the relevance and application of the Access to Natural Green Space Standard

**Prepared for
Natural England
by
Land Use Consultants**



**Understanding the relevance and
application of the Access to Natural
Green Space Standard**

**Prepared for Natural England
by
Land Use Consultants**

May 2008

43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD
Tel: 020 7383 5784
Fax: 020 7383 4798
luc@london.landuse.co.uk

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Introduction	11
3. Policy context for ANGSt	15
4. Current Practice in the regions	23
5. What options are available to enhance ‘ANGSt Plus’	40
6. Conclusions	53

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF STUDY

- I.1. In January 2008, Natural England commissioned Land Use Consultants (LUC) to undertake a study which considered the relevance and application of the Access to Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt). The study addressed the following objectives:
- Review the current policy context relevant to Natural England’s ANGSt;
 - Provide an up to date analysis of how the ANGSt have been incorporated into local authority green space strategies;
 - Evaluate the relevance of the ANGSt in the context of Natural England’s position on accessible natural green space, and its corporate objective to foster: *“More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often”*.¹
 - Identify ways in which Natural England can better encourage delivery of accessible natural green space, with particular regard to the potential of Local Area Agreements.

BACKGROUND

- I.2. The context for ANGSt has changed considerably since its original development through English Nature Research Report 153². The Urban White Paper (2000) encouraged an urban renaissance reflecting the principles of sustainable development, and prompted several initiatives which promoted access to nature for urban residents. The *Cleaner, Safer, Greener* initiative is one example of this, and aimed to put high quality public open space at the heart of regeneration plans. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17): *Planning for open space, sport and recreation* was republished in 2002, and encourages all local authorities to complete an open space audit, assess demand for green space, and produce a strategy for open space provision. Over 90% of local authorities in the English regions now either has an open space strategy, or is in the process of developing one.
- I.3. In 2006 the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act was the catalyst for the creation of Natural England, and defined the role of this new body in ensuring that the public enjoy, understand and connect with the natural environment. The same year saw the publication of the Local Government White Paper, which launched the concept of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) to ensure local priorities are recognised, and an important mechanism to deliver these priorities, the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Despite the green space opportunities introduced by this new legislation, many local authorities do not recognise, and are not acting to deliver accessible natural green space through the LSPs. As the government’s advisor on nature conservation, Natural England should advise and support local authorities to

¹ Natural England (2007) ‘Natural England’s Strategic Direction’.

² Harrison et al. (1995). Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review of Appropriate Size and Distance Criteria. English Nature Research Report 153. Peterborough.

encourage the delivery of accessible natural green space through these new mechanisms.

- I.4. A comprehensive discussion of the background to this study, and relevant policy is provided in **Section 2 and 3**.

CURRENT PRACTICE

- I.5. In order to determine the current application of ANGSt in professional practice, twenty green space strategies from across the nine English regions were reviewed. A set of bespoke criteria were employed, and the findings recorded in an Access database. Of the total sample, four strategies were labelled as green infrastructure strategies, and the rest (16) were green space strategies, with the latter generally following the requirements of PPG17. The research revealed that the scope of green space and green infrastructure strategies varies considerably and that in reality the distinctions between the two are blurred. Review and consolidation of national guidance on this subject could help to reduce confusion and make the scope of future strategies more consistent.
- I.6. The review provided insight into the extent to which ANGSt is currently being employed in professional practice, and the key mechanisms for delivery. The review indicated the many local authorities are not adopting ANGSt, whilst locally-derived distance standards are more popular, reflecting the approach promoted by PPG17. Concern about the applicability of ANGSt to rural and highly urbanised localities was raised by several local authority consultees. Some local authorities have adapted ANGSt based on the findings of local consultation, an approach supported by Natural England, although Natural England is keen to promote the 300m standard as a priority.
- I.7. Several local authorities prioritised the improvement of green space quality, rather than quantity, and Natural England advocates this approach. The extent to which green space is being delivered through Local Area Agreements was of particular interest, although there was little evidence that this is occurring.
- I.8. There is confusion in regard to the term *connectivity*, and the need to encourage an emotional connection between communities and local green space is not being addressed. ANGSt Plus defines 'connectivity' as both the physical ability of local residents to access natural green space, and also how equitable access to nature is for different socio-economic groups. Effective mechanisms for encouraging emotional connectivity with local green spaces include open days and other free events, local wardens to support access to nature by interacting with schools and community groups, and locating green spaces close to other community-focussed buildings where possible, to encourage links between the two. Strategies which recognised the need to encourage emotional connectivity between residents and their local green space include Bristol, Thetford and Wakefield.
- I.9. Little evidence on the delivery of green space strategies was available from local authorities. It was unclear whether this was due to lack of delivery, or information being unavailable as monitoring of green space delivery had not been carried out. Local authority monitoring of the delivery of green space tends to occur every five years. Feedback from consultees indicated that, where green space targets are not

being delivered, this was due largely to lack of funding, lack of staff skilled in securing funding, and lack of knowledge of the mechanisms available for delivering green space.

- I.10. Detailed analysis of the review of green space strategies is provided in **Section 4** of the report, with the full list of strategies reviewed provided as **Appendix 3**, and a copy of the review template provided as **Appendix 4**.

REVIEW OF ‘ANGST PLUS’

- I.11. Natural England’s new assessment framework for ANGSt, known as ‘ANGSt Plus’ (see **Appendix I**), was appraised against a suite of bespoke criteria, which were designed to reflect Natural England’s aspirations for ANGSt Plus, and the areas in which there is a clear need for guidance, as indicated through the review of existing strategies. The original ANGSt model was published specifically as a set of planning standards with which local authorities might assess the provision of accessible natural green space, whilst ANGSt Plus is simultaneously a method for implementing ANGSt and a technical planning standard.
- I.12. The appraisal of ANGSt Plus highlighted a number of areas of further work within the new framework, including the potential for additional guidance on assessing quality, accessibility and ‘connectivity’. In addition, this review identified considerable potential for Natural England to support ANGSt Plus through other actions. Key recommendations include inputting into an updated version of the CAGE Space Green Space Strategy Guidance, the creation of guidance on the funding streams available to support delivery of access to nature, and a promotional document highlighting the multiple socio-economic and environmental benefits of accessible natural green space, and how its delivery can contribute to the achievement of national indicators.
- I.13. Detailed findings of the ‘ANGSt Plus’ review are provided in **Section 5**.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- I.14. This study has identified a number of important conclusions and recommendations on promotion and delivery of accessible natural green space, a summary of which is provided below. More detailed conclusions and recommendations are provided in **Section 6**.

Policy and guidance

- I.15. There is currently a lack of guidance on both the treatment of access to nature in green space strategies, and on the scope of green infrastructure strategies. There is little guidance available on the effective implementation of green space proposals. Policy issues are discussed further in **Section 3**.

Recommendation: National policy framework

- Natural England should advocate and champion a national policy framework which clarifies how access to nature should be addressed at a national, regional and local level.

Current practice in the regions

- I.16. ANGSt was adopted by few of the green space strategies reviewed, and there is a lack of policy support for ANGSt, most importantly at a national level. The term ‘connectivity’ is not widely understood, and few actions to promote connectivity between residents and their local green space are being proposed. Current approaches to green space strategy preparation are discussed further in **Section 4**.

Recommendation: Current practice

- Natural England should work with relevant partners to secure recognition of ANGSt in national policy. This policy should require the creation of green space strategies which address access to nature, multi-functionality and connectivity, both physical and emotional.

Green space guidance

- I.17. There is a need for clear, comprehensive guidance on the purpose and scope of green space and green infrastructure strategies, and the links between them. Further information on current guidance is provided in **Section 3**, and the need for guidance as determined through our review of existing strategies is discussed in **Section 4**.

Recommendation: Green space guidance

- Natural England should:
 - Ensure local authorities are provided with support and advice on how to deliver access to nature and the range of mechanisms available;
 - Work with CABI Space to create clear, comprehensive guidance on planning for accessible natural green space;
 - Ensure Natural England guidance on green infrastructure strategies complements the revised CABI Space document.

ANGSt Plus

- I.18. There is potential to improve the content of ANGSt Plus, and a need to create an attractive and clear publication describing its application, as discussed in **Section 5**.

Recommendation: ANGSt Plus

- Natural England should seek to improve the ANGSt Plus framework, taking into account the suggestions provided in **Section 5**.

Regulation

- I.19. The Conservation (Natural Habitats and c.) Regulations provide an opportunity to secure funding for accessible natural green space, through financial contributions from development which may adversely affect a Natura 2000 site.

Recommendation: Regulation

- Natural England should utilise its powers under the Habitats Regulations to secure funding for accessible natural green space.

Partnerships and Local Area Agreements

- I.20. There is limited understanding within some local authorities of the potential for green space strategies to inform new delivery instruments such as Local Area Agreements (LAA), Multi-Area Agreements (MAA) and Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS). Local authorities can set LAA targets in respect to green space, and thus secure government funding for projects. There is also considerable potential to convince Local Strategic Partnerships of the numerous benefits of accessible natural green space, in order to secure increased investment in green space.

Recommendation: Partnerships and Local Area Agreements

- Natural England should advise local and regional authorities on the need to interact effectively with Local Strategic Partnerships, and the potential for green space strategies to inform LAAs, MAAs, and SCSs.
- Natural England should also support local authorities in gathering robust evidence on the need for, and benefits of, accessible natural green space, in order to convince LSPs of the benefits of investment.

National Indicators

- I.21. Investment in accessible natural green space can directly contribute to the achievement of National Indicator (NI) 197 (improved local biodiversity), although this strictly only applies to designated sites), and can indirectly contribute to a range of National Indicators including NI 5, 8, 50, 55, 56, 110, 119, 138, 175, 188.

Recommendation: National Indicators

- Natural England should create a promotional document to demonstrate the potential for accessible natural green space to support progress towards a range of National Indicators. A range of partners including NHS Trusts, crime partnerships and community organisations should be consulted in the creation of this publication.

Urban and rural areas

- I.22. There is no clear guidance on how ANGSt should be applied to rural and densely urban areas, and this has resulted in a range of interpretations of the standards, and in some local authorities perceiving them as inappropriate and not adopting them.

Recommendation: Urban and rural areas

- Natural England should develop and disseminate a view on how ANGSt can be applied to rural and densely urban areas where some parts of ANGSt may be unachievable in the medium term.

Funding

- I.23. Lack of funding was identified by consultees as a key barrier to the implementation of green space proposals across the regions.

Recommendation: Funding

- Natural England should provide current information on funding streams available for the creation and enhancement of green space, and include signposting to relevant websites for further information.

Green space delivery and mechanisms

- I.24. Feedback from consultees indicated that where green space targets are not being delivered, key barriers to delivery included lack of staff skilled in securing funding, and lack of knowledge of the current mechanisms available for delivering green space.

Recommendation: Green space delivery and mechanisms

- Natural England should support delivery of high quality accessible natural green space, by providing local authorities with information on appropriate skills and available delivery mechanisms for green space provision.

Perceptions of accessible natural green space

- I.25. Poorly designed, or inappropriately managed, natural green space can be perceived to be unmanaged or abandoned, which can discourage use by the local community. It is important to design and manage sites effectively, in order to encourage emotional connectivity between residents and their local green spaces.

Recommendation: Perceptions of accessible natural green space

- Natural England and CABE Space should consider the need for guidance on the appropriate design and management of accessible natural green space.

Advisory role

- I.26. Only a third of the green space strategies reviewed acknowledged the direct involvement of Natural England. This suggests that regional and local Natural England representatives could be more proactive in informing the creation of green space strategies.

Recommendation: Advisory role

- Natural England could be more proactive in informing the creation of green space strategies, and this should include the effective promotion and dissemination of 'ANGSt Plus'.

Further research

- I.27. There is potential for further research into existing Local Area Agreements, and what sort of indicators and targets have been used to deliver access to nature through these.

Recommendation: Further research

- Natural England should consider undertaking further research into existing Local Area Agreements, including indicators and targets employed, and examples of best practice.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

ANGSt:	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards
ANGSt Plus:	Natural England's new assessment framework for the development of the ANGSt (See Appendix I)
EN Research Report 526:	Handley et al. (2003). <i>Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation</i> . English Nature Research Report 526. Peterborough. English Nature.
EN Research Report 153:	Harrison et al. (1995). <i>Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review of Appropriate Size and Distance Criteria</i> . English Nature Research Report 153. Peterborough. English Nature.
Green infrastructure strategy:	These strategies look at the numerous functions of the natural environment, not just social/recreational functions. Currently green infrastructure strategies tend to be developed in areas where considerable growth is proposed, such as the Growth Areas and the Growth Points. They can be focussed at a sub-regional, local authority or sub-district level.
Green space strategy:	Green space strategies tend to be developed by local authorities and focus specifically on the provision of green space for recreation. Where they have been developed since 2002, these strategies often follow the guidance provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) either in part or in full.
LAA:	Local Area Agreement
LUC:	Land Use Consultants
LSP:	Local Strategic Partnership
MAA:	Multi-Area Agreement
NERC Act:	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act
NI:	National Indicator
NICE:	National Institute for Clinical Health and Excellence
PPG 17:	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation
SCS:	Sustainable Community Strategy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 1.28. Land Use Consultants would like to thank Lucy Heath (Natural England/CABE Space) and Peter Neal (CABE Space) for steering our research. In addition, we are grateful to the regional Natural England contacts for supporting our research through green space strategy recommendations, and to the local authority representatives who offered their time to discuss their green space strategies with us.

2. INTRODUCTION

Introduction and background – Summary:

- Natural England commissioned Land Use Consultants to assess the relevance and application of ANGSt, taking into account new policy, current practice and the new ANGSt Plus framework, and recommending next steps.
- ANGSt was developed in 1996 to demonstrate how size and distance criteria can help define the green spaces which provide greatest contribution to a sustainable community.
- Between 1996 and 2002 implementation of the ANGSt by local authorities was very low indeed. This was based on the fact that technical and institutional barriers limited application of the model. Also, no incentives were contained in planning policies to encourage use of the standards.
- Despite poor uptake by local authorities, English Nature Research Report 526 concluded that the basis of the ANGSt was reinforced by scientific evidence on the benefits of providing access to nature. It was argued that the ANGSt offered a means by which local authorities could adopt a strategic and holistic approach to greenspace management, which was previously lacking.
- A key objective of this study was therefore to elucidate whether development in government policy continues to support the role of ANGSt (its relevance). Also whether the application of ANGSt by local authorities is still hindered by the barriers identified by English Nature Research Report 526.
- A range of methods were employed to support the research, a summary of which is provided at the start of the relevant section.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

2.1. Natural England commissioned Land Use Consultants (LUC) to assess the use of the Access to Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) by local authorities, assess their relevance in the current policy climate, and provide recommendations for future development of the updated approach 'ANGSt Plus' (see **Appendix I**). The study addressed the following objectives:

- Review the current policy context relevant to Natural England's ANGSt;
- Provide an up to date analysis of how the ANGSt have been incorporated into local authority green space and green infrastructure strategies, and what delivery mechanisms are being employed;

- Evaluate the relevance of the ANGSt in the context of Natural England’s position on accessible natural green space, and its corporate objective to foster: “More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often”.³ This was undertaken through an appraisal of the ANGSt approach against Natural England’s aims for accessible natural green space, and the potential benefits of such green space;
- Identify ways in which Natural England can better encourage delivery of accessible natural green space, and the advice that should be provided to local and regional authorities for the next round of Local Area Agreements.

BACKGROUND TO THE WORK

2.2. The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) were originally developed in 1995 and are detailed in English Nature Research Report 153.⁴ The main distance standards are set out in **Box I.1**. The purpose of the ANGSt was to help local authorities develop policies which recognise and enhance the contribution that natural and semi-natural green space makes to sustainability, and to demonstrate how size and distance criteria can guide green space provision where it is most needed. English Nature Research Report 153 focused on four broad benefits associated with accessible natural green space:

- promoting human well-being and quality of life;
- conserving urban biodiversity;
- moderating urban micro-climates;
- attenuating pollution.

2.3. Based on this evidence, a set of distance criteria specifying how accessible natural green space should be spatially distributed to maximise these benefits or ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards’ (ANGSt) were derived (see **Box I.1**). The ANGSt were promoted to the public and local authorities by the publication ‘A Space for Nature’.⁵

³ Natural England (2007) ‘Natural England’s Strategic Direction’.

⁴ Harrison et al. (1995). Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review of Appropriate Size and Distance Criteria. English Nature Research Report 153. Peterborough.

⁵ English Nature (1996). A Space for Nature. Peterborough.

Box 1.1: Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

Natural England's ANGSt state that:

- that no person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of accessible natural green space of at least 2ha in size;
- there should be a least one 20ha accessible natural green space within 2km from home;
- there should be one accessible natural green space 100ha site within 5km;
- there should be one accessible natural green space 500 hectare within 10km;
- at least 1ha of statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR) should be provided per 1000 population.

- 2.4. Subsequent to the publication of the ANGSt in 1996, a number of significant developments have occurred in respect of government policy on urban areas and green space. Firstly, the House of Commons Environment Sub-Committee highlighted the value to human wellbeing of natural landscapes within towns and cities. It also broadly endorsed English Nature's position as expressed in Research Report 153⁶. In addition, the 2000 Urban White Paper⁷ explicitly recognised the importance of the environment in creating attractive and sustainable cities. The paper set a mandate for the creation of an 'Urban Green Spaces Task Force'. The white paper also recommended a revision of (former) Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17), to "give local planning authorities a clearer framework for assessing their needs for open spaces".
- 2.5. English Nature reviewed ANGSt in 2003 (English Nature Research Report 526), following numerous policy changes in the intervening years.⁸ This report referenced new research expanding the potential benefits of provision of accessible natural green space, including human health benefits, the value to biodiversity and function in urban climate amelioration of accessible natural green space. The report also identified a number of barriers to the adoption of ANGSt by local authorities, including technical issues such as a lack of clear concise guidance, and institutional barriers such as a lack of statutory recognition of the standard, and limited resources available with which to deliver ANGSt. A more detailed summary of the findings is set out in **Appendix 2**.
- 2.6. Since 2003 a number of further developments in government policy have occurred which have placed green space higher up the political agenda. In particular, the recommendation for local authorities to produce detailed open space strategies is contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 17.⁹ It is recommended that ANGSt

⁶ House of Commons Environment Sub-Committee (1999). Inquiry into Town and Country Parks. London.

⁷ DETR (Dept for Environment Transport and the Regions) (2000). Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance (The Urban White Paper). London.

⁸ Handley et al. (2003). Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation. English Nature Research Report 526. Peterborough.

⁹ ODPM [now DCLG] (2002). Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation. London.

be applied as a tool to benchmark the provision of 'natural and semi-natural green space' in the accompanying guidance to PPG17.¹⁰ Further, in 2006 Natural England was created as a successor body to English Nature and with broader statutory remit. Natural England is currently developing a revised "ANGSt Plus" framework in response to these two factors. This research examines the extent to which ANGSt is being applied in practice, and how access to nature can be better delivered by Natural England, local authorities and other delivery partners in the future.

- 2.7. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has recently issued guidance aimed at creating built or natural environments that encourage physical activity. The Guidance states that planning applications for new developments should always prioritise the need for people to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life, and that cyclists and walkers should be given priority when roads are developed or maintained.
- 2.8. NICE guidance must be taken into account by those procuring health care, i.e. Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and NHS Trusts. This guidance is likely to encourage planning authorities to recognise the importance of green space for health, via influence from health representatives on the local strategic partnerships.

METHOD

- 2.9. A range of methods were employed to support the research. The review of green space strategies and some green infrastructure strategies was completed through consultation with Natural England representatives in the regions, and with local authorities on the content of their strategies and plans for delivery of the key actions proposed by the strategies. A comprehensive review of each strategy against a standard set of considerations was also undertaken using an Access database. Appraisal techniques were employed to review the original ANGSt approach and the new ANGSt Plus framework against a set of bespoke criteria. Further consultation was also undertaken with a range of stakeholders at the Natural England National Conference, where attendees were consulted on potential targets within Local Area Agreements which could support the delivery of accessible natural green space.
- 2.10. A summary of the methodology for each stage of the research is set out at the beginning of each section.

¹⁰ ODPM (now DCLG] (2002). Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17. London.

3. POLICY CONTEXT FOR ANGST

Policy context – Summary:

- A policy review was completed in order to place ANGSt in the present context.
- The revision of Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG 17) included a recommendation that all local authorities complete an audit and strategy for local green space.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) led to the creation of Natural England, and the introduction of the ‘biodiversity duty’.
- The Local Government White Paper introduced a mechanism for delivering the high quality environment described in the Sustainable Communities Plan by outlining the requirement for Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships.
- There is now considerable evidence for the numerous social and environmental benefits of accessible natural green space, as recently summarised by the Sustainable Development Commission.

INTRODUCTION

- 3.1. To place the concept of Access to Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) in the present context, a summary of relevant policy since EN Report 526 is provided in **Table 3.1.**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

- 3.2. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) was the catalyst for the creation of Natural England. As well as creating Natural England, the NERC Act introduced the ‘biodiversity duty’, a statutory requirement for public authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in carrying out their duties. Whilst the Act gives statutory weight to nature conservation, the provision of access to nature is not required in national policy. The only reference to access to nature in national policy is the reference to the ANGSt standards in PPG17, which suggests that the ANGSt standards are employed by local authorities as a benchmark for the provision of access to nature.
- 3.3. In addition to the biodiversity duty above, three of the other key purposes set out in the NERC Act are about recreation and access to facilities including green space. These are:
- Promoting access to the countryside and open space and encouraging open air recreation;
 - Securing provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment
 - Contributing in other ways to social and economic wellbeing.

- 3.4. This is translated into the second strategic outcome of Natural England: *More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often.*

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER

- 3.5. The Sustainable Communities Plan recognises the importance of providing networks of accessible green spaces around towns and cities, in order to provide an attractive local environment. The Local Government White Paper (2006) provides a useful mechanism by which to deliver these high quality local environments, which incorporate access to nature, by proposing Local Area Agreements (LAAs). An LAA is an agreement adopted at a local level to ensure local priorities are met. The LAA is created and overseen by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which includes representatives of public bodies, non-governmental organisations and community groups. These groups work together to identify social, environmental and economic priorities for the local area, which, once included in the LAA, are eligible for public and external funding to support their delivery.
- 3.6. Whilst local authorities have a duty to lead the formulation and implementation of an LAA, Natural England is one of the public bodies which has a statutory duty, as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007), to support the formulation, and have regard to the targets set by the LAA¹¹.

BENEFITS OF ACCESS TO NATURE

- 3.7. The evidence demonstrating the significant contribution of accessible green space to the health of a community has also grown over the last few years. The Sustainable Development Commission has recently released a summary of evidence for the health benefits of the outdoor environment. This references research which demonstrates that those with access to nature are generally healthier than those without¹². Access to good quality open space has a link to reduced physical and mental health problems through increasing levels of physical activity and enabling the enjoyment of open space and nature. This can result in fewer working days lost due to ill health¹³ and is particularly important for children in deprived urban communities. A recent study has shown that the overall correlation between access to green space and health is particularly strong in young people and the elderly¹⁴.
- 3.8. The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) produced a matrix demonstrating the benefits of green space in relation to a number of health problems. 37% of chronic heart disease is attributable to physical inactivity and the risk of developing this illness is halved by undertaking regular physical activity¹⁵. The combined creation of green space and implementation of programmes to its use can combat numerous lifestyle-related health problems, including cardio-vascular disease, obesity, depression, coronary-pulmonary disease and diabetes¹¹.

¹¹ Communities and Local Government (2007) Developing the future arrangements for Local Area Agreements

¹² Sustainable Development Commission (2008) Health, Place and Nature - How outdoor environments influence health and well-being: A knowledge base

¹³ The value of Public Space. CABE Space, 2003.

¹⁴ Maas, J. *et al* (2006) Green Space, Urbanity and Health: How Strong is the Relation?

¹⁵ Prof. S. Atkinson (June 2006) Developing Health through a Green Gateway (Conference)

Table 3.1: Summary of relevant policy and legislation

Policy document	Key points
Urban White Paper (2000) ¹⁶	The Urban White Paper sets out the government’s proposals for an ‘urban renaissance’ based on the principles of sustainable development. Several policy initiatives have emerged in response to the white paper, and these are of direct relevance to provision of accessible natural green space in towns and cities.
The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000) ¹⁷	Section 60 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) states that <i>“Every local highway authority other than an inner London authority shall, within five years after the commencement of this section, prepare and publish a plan, to be known as a rights of way improvement plan.”</i>
Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener (2002) ¹⁸	<p>Cleaner, safer, greener states the government’s vision to place high quality public spaces at the heart of tackling ‘cross-cutting’ urban problems. With regard to parks and green spaces the document states that:</p> <p><i>“Good parks and green spaces are vital for a wide range of Government priorities, such as regeneration, renewal and housing programmes, supporting healthy living, fostering neighbourhood pride and community cohesion.”</i></p> <p>The document goes on to note that new ‘leadership structures and co-ordination of the policies’ will be necessary:</p> <p><i>“Several existing national bodies have responsibilities or programmes with impact on various aspects of urban green spaces – including English Heritage, Sport England, Groundwork, English Nature, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), the Countryside Agency, and the Forestry Commission. Each could do more to promote and support aspects of urban green spaces.”</i></p>
Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 - Planning for open space, sport and recreation ¹⁹ (2002)	<p>PPG17 is a significant development in government planning policy with respect to implementation of the ANGSt. It encourages local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • auditing the quantity (provision) and quality of different types of open space (included in the suggested open space typology are “natural and semi natural urban greenspaces”); • applying standards for the provision of different types of open space based on local public demand. <p>Guidelines describing how such assessments should be carried out are set out in a companion document which recommends that local</p>

¹⁶ DETR (Dept for Environment Transport and the Regions) (2000). Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance (The Urban White Paper). London.

¹⁷ HMSO. (2000). Countryside and Rights of Way Act

¹⁸ ODPM [now DCLG]. (2002). Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener. London.

¹⁹ ODPM [now DCLG] (2002). Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation. London.

Policy document	Key points
	authorities use Natural England's ANGSt to benchmark provision of accessible natural green space.
The Sustainable Communities Plan (2003) ²⁰	<p>The Sustainable Communities Plan sets out the government's approach to providing necessary additional housing and jobs in designated 'growth areas' and 'growth points' in a sustainable way. The document highlights the importance of the local environment and asserts that to ensure communities are sustainable 'a safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space' is required. The document makes the following specific comments in relation to green spaces:</p> <p>"We will promote more and better publicly accessible green space in and around our communities, for example through the creation of new country parks and networks of green spaces within towns and cities."</p>
Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005) ²¹	<p>PPS9 states that local authorities, when preparing local development documents:</p> <p>"Should ensure that policies in local development documents reflect, and are consistent with, national, regional and local biodiversity priorities and objectives including those agreed by local biodiversity partnerships."</p>
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) ²²	<p>In October 2006 the NERC Act outlined English Nature's amalgamation into a new body Natural England. The statutory remit of the new body is substantively different to that of its predecessor English Nature (with its greater focus on sustainable development) and this will likely affect the scope for how Natural England intends to pursue advocacy of accessible natural green space.</p> <p>Other specific provisions of the act which set a precedent for incorporating biodiversity (and natural green space) into the public realm include 'the Biodiversity Duty' (Section 40 of the NERC Act) which introduces a 'duty to conserve biodiversity' which stipulates that: "<i>Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.</i>"</p> <p>In addition to the biodiversity duty above, three of the other key purposes set out in the NERC Act are about recreation and access to facilities including green space, as outlined below. These are translated into the second strategic outcome of Natural England <i>More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting access to the countryside and open space and encouraging open air recreation; • Securing provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment • Contributing in other ways to social and economic wellbeing.

²⁰ ODPM (2003) Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future. London.

²¹ ODPM [now DCLG]. (2005). Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. London.

²² HMSO (2006). Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. HMSO. London.

Policy document	Key points
Natural England Strategic Objectives (2006 – 2009) ²³	<p>The promotion and advocacy of accessible natural green space will be pursued by Natural England under a much broader agenda guided by the following corporate objective:</p> <p>“More people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve, the natural environment, more often.”</p> <p>This objective is notable in that it appears to refocus the approach to promoting accessible natural green space on delivery to communities rather than just on the provision of a technical planning tool in the form of standards. ANGSt is also mentioned under the following corporate objective of Natural England “[to] promote sustainable management of the natural environment”²⁴, as follows:</p> <p>“[Natural England will] work with house builders in Growth Areas to accelerate the adoption of the Accessible Natural Green space Standards.</p>
Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) – Housing (2006) ²⁵	<p>The provision of accessible natural green space close to people’s homes is a guiding principle behind ANGSt. PPS3 asserts that borough housing plans should have regard to any local greening or design plans such as green infrastructure strategies. The document also sets out some clear principles to guide the consideration of the local environment in the design of new housing schemes. These principles include ensuring that the dominant landscape or ecological features of the area are retained in new development, as is any significant biodiversity value. The policy statement also reinforces the requirements of PPG 17 in terms of ensuring that existing and new residents are given adequate access to open space. The policy statement also requires that good practice in sustainable and environmentally friendly design is applied in all new development.</p>
Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper (2006) ²⁶	<p>The local government white paper sets out a number of proposals which will likely affect the institutional and decision making frameworks through which the delivery of accessible natural green space is now sought by <i>Natural England</i>. <i>The government’s position (as relevant to accessible natural green space) can be summarised under the following proposals outlined in the white paper:</i></p> <p><i>‘Responsive services and empowered communities’ – to devolve more decision making power to citizens and local communities including greater consultation over the running and quality of services. Specific proposals include managing services at the level of the neighbourhood and consideration of ways for communities to play a bigger part by managing or owning community assets.</i></p> <p><i>‘Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper’ – ‘strategic leadership’ is to be encouraged within local authorities by bringing together partners to improve local services delivery. For example: “issues such as community safety, health, or community cohesion require local authorities to align services provided by a number of agencies in their area.”</i>²⁷ Specific proposal outlined in the white paper include a new framework for strategic leadership in</p>

²³ Personal communication (February 2008). Lucy Heath, Natural England

²⁴ Natural England (2006). Strategic direction 2006-2009. Peterborough.

²⁵ DCLG (2006). Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing. London.

²⁶ HMSO (2006). Strong and Prosperous Communities: The local government white paper. DCLG. London.

²⁷ www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/currentagenda/strongprosperous/keypolicies/efficiencytransforminglocal/

²⁸ A local area agreement (LAA) is a contract between a local authority and central government for the allocation of central government funding. It is negotiated on a 3 year cycle. The LAA is based on both local service delivery priorities but also must contribute to ‘national indicator’ targets set by central government.

Policy document	Key points
	<p>local areas based on the preparation of ‘Sustainable Community Strategies’ and the obligation for local authorities to prepare a ‘Local Area Agreement’ (LAA).²⁸</p> <p>A new performance framework – the government intends to enhance the capacity of local authorities to respond to “<i>complex cross-cutting issues like climate change, social exclusion and anti-social behaviour.</i>”²⁹ It intends to do this by reducing the number of ‘national indicators’ each local authority has to measure service delivery against.</p> <p>Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships</p> <p>The Local Government White Paper (2006) introduced an obligation for local authorities to prepare a LAA. LAA are owned and administered through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP). The LSP is structured in such a way that priorities identified through consultation and community involvement at the neighbourhood level inform the setting of local priorities at the local authority level. LSP are usually organised in accordance with policy themes administered by sub-partnerships. For example, it is a statutory requirement for LSPs to convene sub-partnerships for health, safety, the economy and children and older people. Many LSPs also contain partnerships for certain local neighbourhood areas and the environment, however, this is not a statutory requirement. The majority of government funding (negotiated through a LAA) is dedicated to health, education, social and business support services. There is scope, however, to set targets in respect of green space/green infrastructure and thus draw down government funding for capital and revenue projects. This is only possible if a robust case can be made linking the benefits of accessible natural green space (e.g. improved community health) to the attainment of national indicator targets.</p>
Local Government and Public Involvement in Heath Act (2007)	<p>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Heath Act (2007) introduces statutory requirements designed to improve the extent of cooperation between public bodies and local authorities in formulating and implementing the Local Area Agreements. Natural England is listed alongside other public bodies, as an organisation which should support the development and implementation of the Local Area Agreement, and have regard to the targets set by the LAA.</p>
National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions – Draft for Consultation (2007) ³⁰	<p>The government issued a national indicator (NI) set for consultation in 2007. The set comprises 198 indicators designed to reflect “the Government’s priorities for delivery by local government working on its own or in partnership with other bodies.”³¹ For example, indicators will reflect national priorities such as climate change, social exclusion and anti-social behaviour. Each LAA must negotiate up to 35 targets for its area from the list which reflect local priorities. NI 197 (Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites) is directly relevant to ANGSt, but has the key limitation that this only addresses improvements to designated sites of biodiversity importance, which excludes the majority of natural greenspace sites within easy walking distance of people’s homes.</p> <p>Natural England considers³² that the following indicators are very relevant to the provision of accessible natural green space:</p> <p>NI 197 Improved biodiversity – active management of local sites;</p>

²⁹ DCLG (2006). Strong and Prosperous Communities: The local government white paper. London.

³⁰ DCLG (2007). National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions Draft for Consultation. London.

³¹ DCLG (2007). National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions Draft for Consultation. London.

³² Natural England (2007). Contract Brief: Understanding the relevance and application of Access to Natural Greenspace (ANGSt). Tender document supplied to LUC by Lucy Heath.

Policy document	Key points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI 5 Overall/general satisfaction with local area; • NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering; • NI 8 Adult participation in sport; • NI 11 Engagement in the arts; • NI 50 Emotional health of children; • NI 55 Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year; • NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6; • NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities; • NI 119 Self-reported measure of peoples overall health and wellbeing; • NI 138 Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood; • NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling; • NI 188 Adapting to climate change.
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Physical Activity and Environment Guidance (2008)	<p>The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has recently issued guidance aimed at promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage or support physical activity. The Guidance states that planning applications for new developments should always prioritise the need for people to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life and that cyclists and walkers should be given priority when roads are developed or maintained.</p>

4. CURRENT PRACTICE IN THE REGIONS

Current practice in the regions - Summary findings:

We can draw the following conclusions from the review of green space and green infrastructure strategies:

- The ANGSt distance standards are currently adopted to some extent in approximately 50% of the strategies looked at in this research. This is probably higher than the national average because of the way they were selected. None of the green space strategies, and only two green infrastructure strategies adopt the complete set of ANGSt as promoted by Natural England;
- Where they are applied, the distance standards are often adapted by local authorities to reflect local circumstances (See **Table 4.1**);
- Green space quality is addressed in most strategies, although the extent to which this is assessed and the methods used vary. Green Flag Award criteria are the most commonly used when assessing quality;
- Only half of strategies are looking beyond the recreational function to consider the multi-functionality of green space and its social, economic and environmental benefits. Those strategies that address multi-functionality tend to be more recent strategies and green infrastructure strategies covered this subject better than green space strategies;
- Connectivity is poorly addressed in most strategies, and there is ambiguity as to the meaning of this term in relation to green space.
- More comprehensive community consultation was undertaken to inform local green space strategies, whereas green infrastructure strategies focussed on expert consultation;
- Few details of delivery plans were provided in strategies, and little evidence was available from local authority representatives on the delivery of actions as a result of strategies;
- Lack of funding and staff resources were the most common reasons for lack of green space delivery;
- Planning contributions (Section 106) and local tariffs were most commonly referred to as possible funding sources;
- Very few local authorities referred to the Local Area Agreement as a potential mechanism for strategy funding and delivery.
- Rural strategies may elect to interpret PPG17 and ANGSt guidance differently, for example, the West Dorset PPG17 study developed an aspirational maximum journey time to a semi-natural green space, and translated the journey time into miles by foot and by car, highlighting the increased dependency on the car in rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1. This section summarises the findings of our review of twenty green space and green infrastructure strategies from around the country. This sample included four green infrastructure strategies and sixteen green space strategies, some of which follow the guidance provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17). A definition of each of these strategy types is provided in the Definition of Terms provided on page 9, and in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 below. This total includes at least two strategies from each of the nine regions, and a maximum of three strategies from any one region. All documents are listed in **Appendix 3**. The review of strategies was undertaken by two members of the project team, using an agreed review template (see **Appendix 4**). The findings of the review were recorded in an Access database, made available to Natural England.
- 4.2. Following review of each strategy, a telephone interview was conducted with a representative of the local authority responsible for the strategy. The findings of this consultation were also recorded in the Access database.
- 4.3. It should be noted that the sample was not randomly selected, and should not be considered to be fully representative of strategies around the country. Many of the strategies were selected following recommendations from staff in Natural England regional offices, so often tend to represent what they view as a good approach. It was considered important to find those that were using ANGSt, to understand how they were using it and learn lessons from this. The sample included a good range of strategies including those with a rural and urban focus, at a sub-regional and local scale, and of varying types, including:
 - Four green infrastructure strategies (e.g. Cambridge);
 - Seven PPG17 studies (e.g. Walsall);
 - One green space supplementary planning documents (e.g. Salford);
 - Eight green space strategies (e.g. Solihull).
- 4.4. Green infrastructure strategies are usually developed at a sub-regional level, tend not to be detailed, and are often developed in areas where significant growth is proposed (such as the Growth Areas). This strategic forward-planning approach allows green infrastructure plans to adopt the ANGSt standards more easily than green space strategies, which face the challenge of trying to incorporate green space into heavily developed urban areas where little potential remains for provision of additional greenspace.
- 4.5. Green space strategies tend to be developed at a local authority level, and may or may not take the form of a PPG17 study, which follows the approach set out in that guidance note. We came across few authorities who had adopted a Supplementary Planning Document on green space, but this is likely to become a more popular option in the future, as it provides a mechanism for giving statutory weight to green space proposals.
- 4.6. The age of the strategies is also likely to affect their scope, as policy on green space has progressed considerably over the past few years. We attempted to review a

sample of strategies which varied in age. This allowed a review of the extent to which strategies have been delivered, and allowed us to understand the latest approaches to green space/green infrastructure. As such, those strategies written in the last couple of years are likely to address a larger range of potential green space functions than earlier strategies. The publication dates of the strategies reviewed ranged from 2002 (Doncaster) to 2008 (Bristol).

Table 4.1: Summary of strategies reviewed and standards adopted

Strategy reviewed	Version of ANGSt adopted?	Other distance standards adopted?
Allerdale Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study	-	No bespoke distance standards for natural/semi-natural green space.
Bristol's Parks and Green Space Strategy	-	Applies a 700m distance standard for natural and semi-natural green space.
Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Study	Applies ANGSt as recommended by Natural England, although not applied specifically accessible natural green space.	Yes, the TCPA standard for a 20ha site (1.2km) is applied alongside ANGSt.
Charnwood Green Space Strategy	-	Recognises the importance of accessible natural green space but prioritises improved naturalness of existing spaces. No distance standards.
Croydon's Open Space Strategy 2005 - 2010	-	Applies a distance standard of 1km from a natural/semi-natural area, determined through consultation with the GLA.
Darlington Open Space Strategy	-	At least 0.1ha within 300m of 99% of dwellings. Also proposes a provision standard: 6.5ha per 1000 population, of which 6.2ha is accessible.
Doncaster Green Space Strategy	Applies the 1ha per 1000 population standard, but it is unclear whether any of the other standards have been considered.	-
East London Green Grid Framework	-	Applies a distance standard of 1km from a natural/semi-natural area, informed by GLA
Erewash Green Space Strategy	-	No bespoke distance standards for natural/semi-natural green space.
Green Infrastructure Strategy for Urban South Hampshire	Applies the 300m/2ha standard	Residents should live within 15 minutes walk or cycle of a locally-valuable green space.
Liverpool Open Space Study	Applies the 1ha per 1000 population standard, but not the distance standards.	-
Mid Devon Open Space and Play Area Strategy	-	No bespoke distance standards for natural/semi-natural green space.
Newcastle Green Space Strategy	-	Applies a walking time of 30 minutes to an accessible natural green space of over 2ha
Salford Green Space Strategy	Adapts the 20ha/2km standard only. Considers the 100ha/500ha standards unachievable.	Applies a standard for 1ha of semi natural green space within 500m (walking distance, not a straight line)
Slough Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study	-	Applies a distance standard of 0.72 miles for natural/semi-natural green space, based on public consultation.

Strategy reviewed	Version of ANGSt adopted?	Other distance standards adopted?
Solihull Green Space Strategy	Applies the 300m standard and the 2km standard, but reduces the 2km/20ha site down to 10ha. Considers 100ha/500ha standards unachievable.	-
Thetford Green Infrastructure Study	Applies ANGSt as recommended by Natural England	-
Wakefield District Green Space Strategy 2004	-	Applies catchments rather than distance standards, which for natural green space are as follows: 500m from a space over 2ha, and 2.5km from a space over 20ha.
Walsall Green Space Strategy	Applies 2ha and 20ha standards only.	-
West Dorset PPG17 Study	-	Applies a journey time/distance threshold: Residents should have access to semi-natural greenspace within 0.59 mile walk/3.94 mile drive, this equates to 11.81 minutes walk.

DEFINITIONS OF GREEN SPACE

- 4.7. Over two thirds of the documents reviewed offered a definition of ‘green space’. Owing to the fact many of the studies were designed to comply with PPG17,³³ the most common typology employed was the ten point typology presented therein.³⁴
- 4.8. Three quarters of the strategies provided some sort of definition of ‘accessible natural green space’ or the types of site that should be included in this category. However, only four of these strategies specifically referenced the definition provided by Natural England’s ANGSt approach, which is “*places where human control and activities are not intensive so that natural processes are allowed to predominate*”³⁵.
- 4.9. A further four strategies employed the definition provided by PPG17, and the remaining strategies did not reference the definition employed. West Dorset’s strategy explains its decision not to apply ANGSt as follows:

“It is important to recognise that the Accessible Natural Green Space Standards are very much set for urban areas and do not consider the role the wider countryside plays in compensating for this deficiency. West Dorset is primarily a rural area and, as such, people are on the whole surrounded by countryside: the beach and cliff tops also have a significant role to play and have to be recognised as potentially redressing this deficiency.”

³³ PPG17 = Planning policy guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation.

³⁴ PPG17 encourages local authorities to undertake an inventory of green space based on the following typology: 1) parks and gardens; 2) natural and semi-natural urban green spaces; 3) green corridors; 4) outdoor sports facilities; 5) amenity green space; 6) provision for children and teenagers; 7) allotments and community gardens and city (urban) farms; 8) cemeteries and churchyards; 9) accessible country side in urban fringe areas; 10) civic spaces.

³⁵ John Handley et al (2003) English Nature Report 526: Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation

- 4.10. The consideration of local need, and the perceived lack of scope to do so through application of ANGSt was also highlighted by some local authorities, including Salford, which states that:

“National standards [including ANGSt among others] are a useful guideline, but do not take account of local circumstances. They are based purely on the supply of sites rather than any assessment of demand, population characteristics, the quality of provision and accessibility. In the case of the Accessible Natural Green space Standard, it is considered impractical to create sites of 100ha and 500ha within the boundaries of a single local authority where they do not already exist.”

- 4.11. Natural England feels that the adaptation of ANGSt to reflect local need is appropriate, although this may not have been clearly communicated to local authorities in the past.

APPLICATION OF DISTANCE STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLE NATURAL GREEN SPACE

- 4.12. Three quarters of the documents defined accessible natural green space, and over half of the strategies reviewed applied some or all of the ANGSt distance standards, or an interpretation of these standards. Most local authorities did not apply accessible natural green space per 1000 standard, but developed their own standard as recommended by PPG17 and Natural England. Only a quarter of the strategies reviewed acknowledged the need to, and benefits of, increasing the *naturalness* of existing green spaces. In addition, only two of the strategies reviewed applied ANGSt in full, and both were green infrastructure strategies - Cambridge and Thetford. The Thetford strategy applied ANGSt in specific reference to accessible natural green space as recommended by EN Reports 153 and 526. The Cambridge strategy applied ANGSt more broadly so that residents should have access to some sort of green infrastructure within the recommended distance thresholds, although the green space provided would not necessarily be semi-natural (although there would be potential to secure semi-natural elements through design guidance).
- 4.13. A common approach was to adjust the exact ANGSt distance thresholds to ones more suited to local circumstances. This is the approach recommended by EN Report 526. For example, Slough Borough Council contacted local people on the distance they were prepared to walk to an accessible natural green space site. Based on this they derived a mean walking distance of 1.15km from a ‘good quality semi-natural green space’ as their standard. Similarly, in East London 1km is considered an acceptable distance from an accessible natural green space. The strategy for Salford recognises that there are only two accessible natural green space sites in the city greater than 20ha in size, and so this element of the ANGSt standard is not applied. In the case of West Dorset (a predominantly rural area), the community consultation revealed that driving is an important means of accessing an accessible natural green space. Based on consultation with the local community, it was proposed that all residents should have access to an accessible natural green space within 11.8 minutes of their home, which could be either a 3.94 mile drive, or a 0.59 mile walk. A summary of the locally adapted versions of ANGSt employed by each local authority is provided in **Table 4.1**.

- 4.14. Croydon and Walsall used green space hierarchies to rank different sites in accordance with their popularity. This was defined as average distance local residents were prepared to travel to visit different sites. Accordingly, sites higher up the hierarchy are presumed to attract people from further afield and hence are regarded as having larger catchment areas; this approach also permits the inclusion of sites outside of administrative boundaries.

Box 4.1: Bristol Parks and Green Spaces Strategy:

The Bristol strategy conforms with PPG17 in analysing sites based on the uses they provide to the community, but it does not allocate a primary function to individual parks and open spaces, as recommended by the national guidance. Bristol City Council determined that it was not possible to categorise parks in terms of primary uses in many instances, and that to do so would underestimate the value of the resource and therefore be poor green space management. The strategy proposes overall distance and quantity standards for all green space, based on the assertion that it is relatively easy to change the management of sites to incorporate different functions and facilities. The open space database that supports the strategy divides parks and spaces into sections, accommodating different uses in different parts of each park. The Bristol strategy sets a distance standard for accessible natural green space at 700m. This distance was based on consultation with local communities, who were asked how far they thought it would be reasonable to travel to access different types of green space.

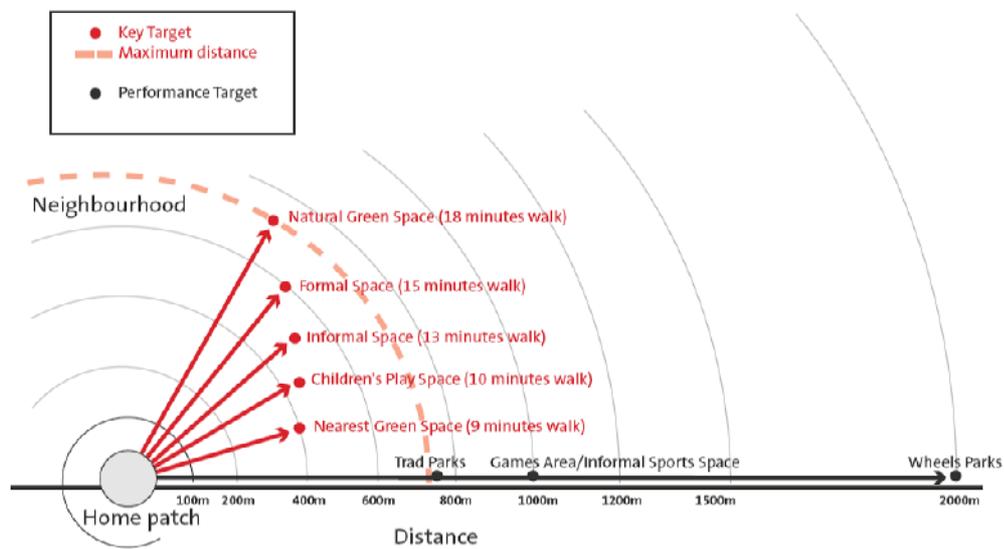


Fig. 4.1: Maximum distance standards for each green space type

MAPPING ACCESSIBLE NATURAL GREEN SPACE

- 4.15. There was some variability in how ANGSt was mapped. Some strategies quantified the provision of different green spaces according to the PPG17 green space typology.² Using this information the provision of Accessible Natural Green space was determined by quantifying the provision of 'natural and semi-natural green spaces' and 'green corridors'² (e.g. Walsall). Other strategies recognised that green spaces perform multiple purposes simultaneously, for example, 'amenity green spaces' may also contain accessible natural green space. This approach was employed by Bristol (see **Box 4.1**.)

Green space quality

- 4.16. Encouragingly, three quarters of the strategies reviewed were informed by an assessment of green space quality. Many of these strategies employed the Green Flag Award criteria or an interpretation of them, although the Tidy Britain Campaign criteria and ILAM Parks Management Practice criteria were also used (e.g. in West Dorset). The Slough strategy employed an innovative approach involving a combination of Green Flag Award, Tidy Britain Campaign and other criteria, whilst other local authorities preferred to develop their own suite of criteria for quality assessment. The Liverpool Open Space Study employed a comprehensive survey form to assess green space quality based on all the above factors. This study also developed a detailed set of quality survey guidelines to ensure different surveyors surveyed sites to the same standard.

Box 4.2: The Wakefield Green Space Strategy

The Wakefield strategy highlights the declining quality of parks due to reduced funding available for park maintenance. Consultation carried out in the district indicated that local communities have high expectations for the quality of parks, particularly for cleanliness and maintenance. The consultation also indicated that improvement of the quality of existing green space was viewed as a priority over increasing provision. The strategy therefore focuses on improving the quality of green space and the number of functions each sites provides, and this will be achieved in partnership with local environmental groups such as BTCV and Groundwork.



Figure 4.2: Public consultation in Wakefield highlighted quality as a priority

Multi-functionality

- 4.17. Just over half of the strategies reviewed considered the multi-functionality of green space in any detail. The green infrastructure strategies developed at a sub-regional or growth point level were much more successful in identifying the various functions and benefits of green space provision. This is to be expected, as green infrastructure strategies are currently only encouraged by national and regional government in areas where significant growth is proposed, and where the purpose of green infrastructure

is to support development by providing a number of social and environmental functions. There is clearly scope for improvement here, and Natural England should promote the consideration of green space multi-functionality by all local authorities. Multi-functionality should be addressed through a green infrastructure study, which should, where possible, be completed alongside the open space audit, to allow cross-cutting issues to be addressed.

- 4.18. The green space strategies tend to mention non-recreational functions of green space as a secondary issue, or not at all. This reflects the guidance provided by PPG17, which recommends the categorisation of green spaces according to their 'primary function'. Bristol applies an alternative approach to the allocation of functions to sites, determining that many open spaces have a range of primary functions and cannot robustly be allocated one primary function (See **Box 4. 1.** above)

Connectivity

- 4.19. Most strategies alluded to the notion of 'connectivity'. Treatment of this issue ranged from cursory inclusion based on the requirement for consideration of 'green corridors' as part of PPG17 guidance (e.g. Doncaster). Other documents addressed the issue more thoroughly. For example, the strategy for Darlington draws links between the green space and local strategic transport plans. The Salford strategy notes that, by increasing physical connectivity between different parts of the city (in the form of 'Green Access Corridors'), spatial discrepancies in provision can be overcome. The strategies for Bristol and Wakefield identify the need to link green space strategies with 'Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans', and Wakefield's overarching objectives include the need to: "*promote 'connectivity' and ensure green space sites complement and enhance the surrounding environment.*"
- 4.20. The strategy review has revealed confusion on the meaning of this term in relation to green space provision. Natural England suggests that *connectivity* should be defined as '*an emotional and physical association between the community and local accessible natural green space, which encourages involvement, engagement and ownership of accessible natural green space*'. However, most of the strategies which refer to connectivity do so in terms of physical links, i.e. links connecting green spaces to each other, or to communities. Strategies which address this element of connectivity include Bristol, Thetford and Wakefield.
- 4.21. With the exception of the initial public consultation, very few of the strategies reviewed considers ways to promote emotional connections with green spaces or to encourage engagement with green spaces. This is significant as many of the local authorities received consultation feedback which highlighted the value which residents place on access to nature. It suggest that the current lack of consensus on the meaning of 'connectivity' is leading to a lack of actions proposed by local authorities to support better connectivity between communities and their local green space. There is a need for local authorities to identify ways in which they can improve emotional connections with green space and the natural environment in the longer term.
- 4.22. Effective mechanisms for encouraging emotional connectivity with local green spaces include open days and other free events, local wardens to support access to nature by interacting with schools and community groups, and locating green spaces close

to other community-focussed buildings where possible, to encourage links between the two.

- 4.23. Strategies which do consider emotional connectivity to some extent include the Thetford Green Infrastructure Strategy, which highlights the need for funding to support green space wardens. The purpose of the warden would be to overcome perceptions of lack of safety in green spaces, and to facilitate understanding of and involvement in green spaces by hard to reach sections of the community. The centre piece of the proposed green infrastructure network for Thetford is the Thetford River Valley Park. This park would incorporate a visitor centre, which would be used as a base for the warden and educational staff, and would provide information promoting the green infrastructure assets in and around the town.
- 4.24. The Bristol strategy also considered the need for participation, education and outreach in relation to green space planning, and cites Oke Park Wood as an example of community involvement supporting the success of the site. Oke Park Wood was one of the first community woodlands, and the involvement of residents and school children in the planting of several acres of woodland reduced the amount of vandalism experienced on site.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- 4.25. Community consultation was common place in the preparation of strategies. Methods employed include household questionnaires, focus groups, citizens' panels and consultation with 'Friends of...' groups. Just over half of the strategies attempted to determine distance thresholds for provision of accessible natural green space based on this data.
- 4.26. Only one quarter of the strategies reviewed sought to determine public demand for *natural* green space (as opposed to more intensively managed green space) as a reason for visiting different green spaces. Examples of where this was considered include Slough, Doncaster and Newcastle. Whilst about half of the strategies reviewed consulted the community on the extent to which they felt they have access to green space, only a quarter undertook any consultation on the communities' enjoyment of green space. Consultation on community enjoyment of green space can provide useful insight into management priorities, which may vary between different sites.
- 4.27. Liverpool City Council observed that areas most in need of greater green space provision are often the most socio-economically deprived areas. The experience was that people living in such areas don't want more accessible natural green space or 'wilder' vegetation as it creates a perception that the area is abandoned or unmanaged, and exacerbates the image of urban degradation.

Box 4.3: Quality Spaces, Quality Places: A Green Space Strategy for Doncaster

Doncaster Council adopted a comprehensive and innovative approach to community consultation. Over a period of six months the council consulted local residents using a three-pronged approach, which included:

- A children's questionnaire, sent to one school in each ward;
- A public questionnaire, sent to community centres, made available in public libraries etc; and
- A stakeholder group questionnaire, which was sent to parish councils, community groups and environmental groups within the borough.

The approach allowed Doncaster Council to obtain a detailed understanding of the needs and aspirations of residents in relation to access to nature.

Comprehensive consultation also provides a good basis for policies which result from the study, and may allow the council to adopt the strategy as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).



Figure 4.3: Comprehensive consultation allowed Doncaster Council to understand the needs of the local community in relation to green space

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 4.28. One third of the strategies, including all four of the green infrastructure strategies, acknowledged the direct involvement of Natural England or one of its predecessor bodies. The level of involvement ranged from informal consultation (e.g. Bristol) through to membership of a formal steering group (e.g. Cambridge and Thetford). The local level strategies tended not to consult Natural England or other national level bodies, focussing more on consultation with the local community. This is the approach recommended by PPG 17, which promotes locally-developed open space standards. Natural England and other key government bodies and stakeholders have tended to be involved in sub-regional green infrastructure studies such as Cambridge, Thetford and East London Green Grid.
- 4.29. Most of the strategies allude to the necessity for partnership working. The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure approach in particular is designed to operate as a partnership organisation drawing together a range of stakeholders including local authorities, national government agencies and NGOs. The Croydon Open Space Strategy provides a good example of a strategy where actions, likely partners and responsibilities

for delivery are all tied together. Croydon also sought to embed the green space strategy in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) structure through the establishment of a 'Natural Environment Strategy Group'. Only a quarter of the strategies reviewed highlighted an interest in developing partnership working with the LSP.

INCREASE IN PROVISION OF GREEN SPACE

- 4.30. In terms of the physical amount of green space delivered, many local authorities commented that it was too early to determine whether an increase in the amount of green space had been secured (e.g. Cambridge). Local authorities tend to review plans on a five year basis, and this is when an assessment is made of to what extent a plan has been delivered. Several local authorities highlighted that an increase in green space provision was not a recommended action in the strategy, and that increasing the quality of existing green space was a priority over site acquisition (e.g. Walsall and Wakefield). In only two instances was an increase in green space documented. In Darlington, it is estimated that provision of green space has increased by 150ha in the last ten years, due largely to the local Community Forest, but also in part to the creation of a nature reserve as a planning condition of a road development. In Doncaster the creation of access to large areas of Hatfield Moors in combination with the creation of community woodlands on former collieries provided a significant increase in provision of accessible green space.

DESIGN OF GREEN SPACE

- 4.31. Less than a quarter of the strategies reviewed addressed accessible natural green space in their approach to the design of green space. The strategies that address this issue do so in a number of ways. For example, the Solihull Strategy refers to the CABE Space green space design principles³⁶ and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for guidance on design, whilst the East London strategy defines separate principles for the inclusion of biodiversity and accessibility in green space. The Bristol strategy provides a Green Space Design Guide alongside the strategy, which addresses various green space functions and includes a chapter on 'Natural Green Space'.

Policy and planning

- 4.32. A third of the strategies have led directly to specific green space policies within LDF/Local Plan documents or supplementary planning documents. In addition, another third of the documents were prepared in order to provide evidence for future policies for green space. Both Solihull and Salford propose to use planning conditions imposed on new development in urban regeneration zones to deliver increases in green space. Bristol is an example of where an attempt has been made to deliver accessible natural green space through the LAA on the basis of 10 priority sites across the city.
- 4.33. The Bristol strategy is unique amongst our sample, in being accompanied by a specific 'Green Space Design Guide' including requirements for biodiversity. The Greater London Authority and Natural England have also recently published similar guidance

³⁶ CABE Space (2005). Start with the Park. London.

on how to enhance natural habitats in London's parks and green spaces³⁷. Two thirds of the strategies state one or more green space design principles and of this number half of strategies contain design principles specifically relating to accessible natural green space. Mention is made of the CABE Space park design principles and Biodiversity Action Plans in the Solihull strategy. The East London strategy outlines a requirement for multi-functionality to be considered in all future green space design. It also details a requirement for ecological survey and habitat enhancement where appropriate.

DELIVERY OF PROPOSALS

4.34. The majority of strategies provide information on the planned delivery of green space, but most are not comprehensive. Where delivery approaches are identified, they tend to focus on the planning system, and funding linked to planning. Partnership with local voluntary groups and environmental trusts is also central to many delivery plans. A number of different delivery mechanisms were identified in different areas depending on the scale at which the strategy was designed to operate. These include:

- policy and planning;
- partners;
- funding;
- timed action plans;
- targets and indicators.

Funding

4.35. Lack of funding was identified by many consultees as being a key barrier to the delivery of green space. A number of funding options were identified, although many strategies only provided a generic list of options and few referred to secured sources of funds. Common examples include:

- Growth Area Funding;
- Regeneration Zone funding;
- Section 106;
- National Lottery funding (such as Heritage Lottery Funding);
- Agri-environment schemes (e.g. Higher Level Stewardship, Woodland Grant Scheme).

4.36. Of these, Section 106 and external grants such as the Heritage Lottery Fund were the most popular sources. Very few local authorities related sources of funding to types of project. The strategy for Thetford is an exception and provides a detailed

³⁷ Greater London Authority (2008) Parks People and Nature: A guide to enhancing natural habitats in London's parks and green spaces in a changing climate.

list of suitable funding sources for all green infrastructure projects which are proposed (see Box 4.4). Feedback from relevant authorities suggests that funding, and lack of resources particularly skilled staff, are the key barriers to delivery of green space strategies, and that guidance is needed from government on the options and processes for securing funding to support implementation of strategies.

Box 4.4: Thetford Green Infrastructure Study

Thetford is a confirmed Growth Point and as such will experience considerable growth in the form of urban extensions over the coming years. The Thetford study provides a good example of a costing and implementation plan to support the proposals set out in the green infrastructure study. In addition to a list of suggested green infrastructure creation and enhancement schemes, the Thetford study identifies the most appropriate funding sources, suitable delivery partners and an approximate cost for each scheme. This approach will facilitate prioritisation and allocation of funding by the local authority in delivering the plan.

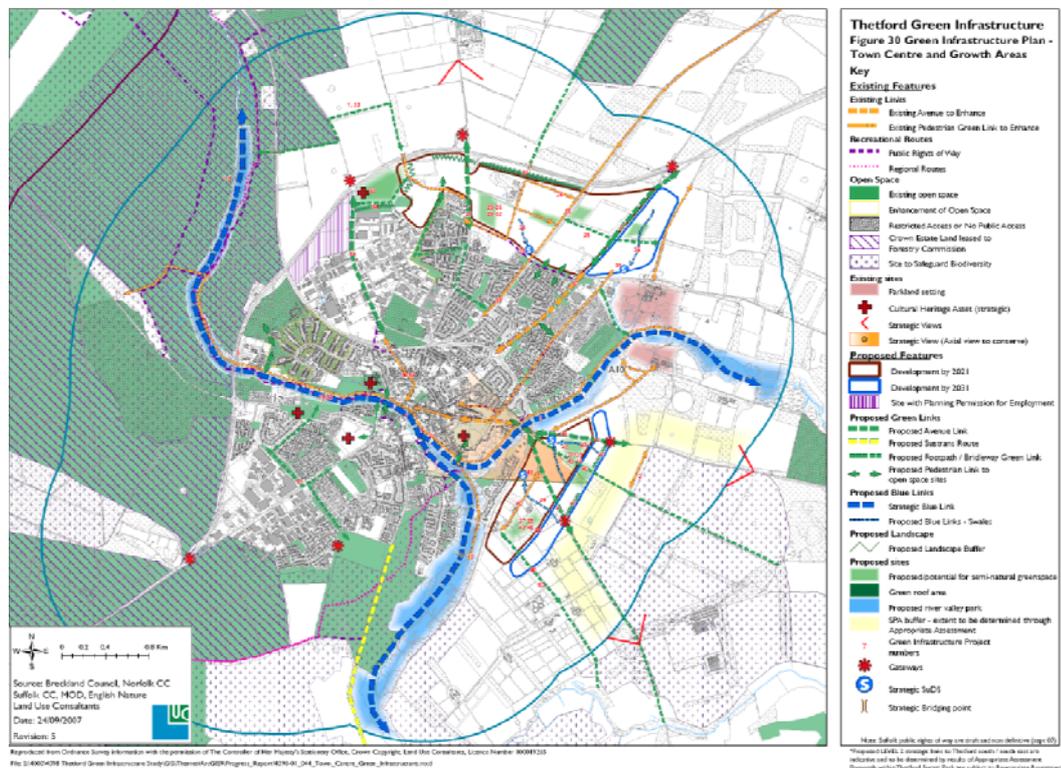


Figure 4.4: Proposed green infrastructure network for Thetford

Staff resources

- 4.37. After funding, the second most commonly identified barrier to delivery of green space was lack of appropriately skilled staff. This human resource shortage includes a lack of staff with the skills and knowledge to secure funds for green space delivery. In addition, there is a lack of suitably skilled countryside and land managers with the capacity to effectively maintain and manage green space once it is created.

Timed action plans

- 4.38. Whilst a third of the strategies reviewed contained a broad action plan, only three strategies provided a timescale for delivery of the actions, all of which were local green space strategies. In general, where an action plan was included, targets were very broad and did not identify in any precise way how delivery on the ground would occur.

Targets

- 4.39. Less than half the strategies reviewed provided any details of indicators to be used to measure green space delivery. The green infrastructure strategies tended not to propose indicators, as they are strategic documents which should be implemented by more detailed local authority strategies or area action plans, where indicators would be more appropriate. The Salford strategy is an example of a strategy which developed indicators based on the distance and per population standards set out in the strategy, for example one indicator is: 'the percentage of households within 500 metres walking distance of a local semi-natural green space'. Several other local authorities, including Newcastle and Doncaster, state an intention to employ the distance and provision standards developed through the strategy as indicators of green space delivery.
- 4.40. The Darlington strategy employs a number of measures including the number of Local Nature Reserves, the area of council land managed as green space and the total area of land managed for nature conservation. In Bristol, the parks and green space department monitors satisfaction with green space annually through the Quality of Life survey. Bristol Council will also employ the Green Flag Award criteria to monitor the quality of their parks. Wakefield Council has developed the 'Greenspace Assessment Procedure', which will identify high value sites as a priority for quality improvements; monitor improvements in quality and value; guide development control decision-making with regard to planning applications for green space sites; and inform the decision process on disposal of council land. Liverpool Parks Strategy is an example of a strategy which has developed measurable three year, five year and ten year targets, as set out in **Box 4.5** below.

Box 4.5: Liverpool Parks Strategy Targets

Within 3 years:

- Establish a 'Friends group for every High Level Park
- To have a site management plan in operation for every High Level Park
- Produce and implement an Annual Parks Improvement Plan derived from Park Management Plans and key priorities for the Service
- Achieve Green Flag Status for 14 parks and green spaces.

Within 5 years:

- Reduce annual revenue losses to vandalism by 20% and this sum to be reinvested in park improvement programmes, based on 2005/06 figures
- All Liverpool citizens to live within 1000m of a children's play area
- A Liverpool Parks handbook/leaflet to be available including a synopsis of the Strategy and promoting the city's parks and open spaces.

Within 10 years:

- 50% of Liverpool citizens to live within 1000m of a Green Flag rated park (in 2005 around 25% of the city's population live this close to a Green Flag site).



Figure 4.5: Liverpool has long term goals for high quality green space

Resources

- 4.41. The strategies for Salford, Slough and Darlington propose the development of 'parks action groups' and community engagement as a means of improving the management of green space. The strategy for Bristol proposes the production of 'area green space plans' or 'green prints' to better direct management of the green space resource. In the Erewash strategy the appointment of green spaces staff and

production of site management plans is proposed as a key means of delivering the green space strategy.

- 4.42. The issue of green space maintenance contracts was raised by two local authorities. In the case of Solihull, delivery of the green space strategy was held back by the renegotiation of the Council's environmental maintenance contract with an external contractor. Maintaining ongoing revenue funding of green spaces is seldom mentioned, only a third of strategies address this in any depth.

IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

- 4.43. Most strategies reviewed did not identify Local Area Agreements (LAAs) as a potential mechanism for delivery of actions, and in most cases the actions identified in green space strategies were not translated into the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) or Local Area Agreements. A quarter of the local authorities consulted outlined plans to secure green space provision through the SCS or the LAA, and those that did were Solihull, Darlington, Walsall, Bristol and South Hampshire.
- 4.44. Local authorities' use of the SCS and LAA to secure green space provision varies considerably. For example, Walsall are currently aiming to have a member of the council green space department elected onto the Local Strategic Partnership, and recognise the need for suitable targets to be set in the Local Area Agreement to support delivery of the green space strategy objectives. Darlington have progressed a stage further and have secured recognition of the importance of green space in the Sustainable Community Strategy. At a sub-regional level, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) concluded that Local Area Agreements would be impractical for the delivery of the green infrastructure strategy, due to the number of local authorities covered by the study area and therefore the number of LAAs which would need to reflect the aims of the strategy. Instead, PUSH plan to deliver the strategy through a Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) which is effectively a cross-boundary version of an LAA. This should support the allocation of funding for green space improvements.
- 4.45. One issue that became apparent through consultation with local authorities was that those involved in developing the green space strategy are often not aware of the Local Area Agreement. Better communication is required at a local level to ensure that green space strategy authors are aware of the potential that LAAs have to deliver the aims of such strategies.

5. WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ENHANCE 'ANGSt PLUS'

Options to enhance and supplement ANGSt Plus - Summary

- ANGSt Plus represents Natural England's latest revisions to the original ANGSt, and is currently being piloted;
- LUC reviewed ANGSt Plus and the original ANGSt against a range of criteria, in order to identify potential for improvement;
- ANGSt Plus addresses many of the technical and institutional barriers identified by English Nature Report 526;
- ANGSt Plus is currently being used internally by Natural England, and further work will be required to make the ANGSt Plus framework user-friendly if it is to be disseminated to a wider audience;
- ANGSt Plus introduces an approach to assessing 'naturalness', but does not provide advice on how to deal with large sites which contain a mosaic of natural and non-natural areas;
- ANGSt Plus could be improved by:
 - Advice on assessing and mapping accessibility
 - Additional guidance on how to assess the quality of natural green space;
 - Additional guidance on how to consider 'connectivity';
 - A full menu of options for delivery mechanisms should be provided;
 - Guidance on funding streams and securing funding should be provided;
 - Guidance on the LSP and relevant organisations could be added.
- ANGSt Plus could be supplemented by:
 - Natural England and partners working to collate data on naturalness, which should be made available to local authorities;
 - Signposting to useful publications such as those produced by CABE Space;
 - Natural England and partners actively promoting the use of natural green space;
 - In urban areas where achievement of ANGSt is unrealistic, time thresholds promoting public transport could be considered;
 - Natural England could provide specialist access to nature input into the updated CABE Space green space strategy guidance;
 - Natural England should develop detailed guidance on funding and delivery.

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1. Natural England has recently revised its approach to implementing the ANGSt in order to address some of the limitations identified by EN Research Report 526. This is to be trialled in several pilot areas across England (mainly in the London area). The new ANGSt national assessment framework³⁸ (referred to as ‘ANGSt Plus’, see **Appendix I**) offers both guidance for implementing the ANGSt as originally conceived.³⁹ It is also designed to act as a framework for monitoring the efficacy of ANGSt (as implemented in the pilot areas) with respect to Natural England’s corporate objective on fostering access to nature (see **Section 2**). In order to assess whether ANGSt Plus represents a significant improvement to the original ANGSt approach, both approaches have been appraised against a suite of bespoke criteria. The criteria employed to review ANGSt, and the findings of the appraisal are set out below.

APPROACH TO APPRAISAL

- 5.2. In order to assess the potential impact of the revised ANGSt Plus framework, we have assessed its content against a range of criteria. These criteria are influenced by:
- Natural England’s aspirations for the new ANGSt Plus framework;
 - The functions and benefits which Natural England would like to help achieve through ANGSt Plus; and
 - The areas in which there is a need for guidance, as identified through our review of green space strategies (see **Section 4**).

Natural England’s aspirations for the new ANGSt Plus

- 5.3. By reviewing the new ANGSt Plus framework, we have identified that it aims to achieve the following:
- define accessibility and naturalness;
 - provide guidance on assessing quality, quantity, accessibility and connectivity;
 - provide guidance on mapping provision, population, accessibility and connectivity;
 - identifying appropriate delivery tools and partners; and
 - collect information on the role of accessible natural green space in improving quality of life and reducing negative impacts of climate change.

Functions and benefits of accessible natural green space

- 5.4. Accessible natural green space can provide a range of environmental, social and economic functions and benefits. For the purpose of this appraisal we have attempted to focus on those which fall within Natural England’s remit:

³⁸ Natural England (2007). Contract Brief: Understanding the relevance and application of Access to Natural Greenspace (ANGSt). Tender document supplied to LUC by Lucy Heath

³⁹ English Nature (1996). A Space for Nature. Peterborough.

- health and well-being;
- recreation and enjoyment;
- biodiversity;
- climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- sustainable transport;
- air quality;
- landscape quality.

The need for guidance

- 5.5. Through consultation with the twenty local authorities interviewed during the green space review, a number of areas in which further guidance is required were identified. This finding matches the conclusions of EN Research Report 526, which also highlighted a need for better guidance on *planning, funding and implementation*.
- 5.6. A number of local authorities commented that the ANGSt approach was not adopted for their green space strategy, as they were unsure of how to define and map the extent of accessible natural green space in their borough. In addition, we also identified that most strategies had not been delivered, and that an appropriate approach for delivery was often not provided by either the strategy or the local authority consultee. As such, we have included the need to provide advice on delivery mechanisms, securing funding and working with partners as key areas on which Natural England should aim to provide advice in the future.

APPRAISAL

- 5.7. In order to evaluate the extent to which ANGSt Plus builds on the previous ANGSt model, we have appraised both approaches against the criteria outlined above. Where the ANGSt Plus approach doesn't meet a criterion, we have attempted to identify ways in which the approach could be improved, or other mechanisms or actions which could supplement the framework to achieve NE's aims and effectively promote access to nature in the future. Our findings are summarised in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Extent to which the ANGSt approach meets Natural England’s aims and potential to improve ANGSt

Criteria	Original ANGSt ⁴⁰ (Yes/no)	ANGSt Plus ⁴¹ (Yes/no)	Options to improve ANGSt Plus?	Options to supplement ANGSt Plus?
Define:				
Accessibility	Partly	Partly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categories for the extent of access should be included (see ‘assessing accessibility’ below). DEFRA’s ‘Outdoors For All’ programme is noted as a source of information within ANGSt Plus. 	
Naturalness	Partly	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of recognised land use categories is good, as it allows mapping to take place using national datasets to some extent. Local knowledge would be the most efficient way of identifying whether or not a Level 3 site (churchyard, allotment) was being managed to promote semi-natural habitats. However, where this is not available, this issue would need to be clarified through a site survey. ANGSt Plus could refer to the comprehensive implementation guidance document prepared for English Nature (now Natural England) by CURE (2003)⁴². It is unclear why a new typology for ‘naturalness’ has been proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England should work with partners to collate data and map naturalness and accessibility as far a possible. Datasets should be made available to local and regional authorities for use in their mapping work.
Provide comprehensive guidance on assessing:				
Quality	No	Partly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More guidance is needed as to how to undertake an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CABE Space has produced a range of publications for

⁴⁰ The original ANGSt model was presented in English Nature. (1996). A Space for Nature. Peterborough.

⁴¹ This methodology for ANGSt Plus is outlined in the contract brief document supplied by Natural England to Land Use Consultants: Natural England (2007). Contract Brief: Understanding the relevance and application of Access to Natural Greenspace (ANGSt). Tender document supplied to LUC by Lucy Heath

⁴² Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology. (2003). Providing accessible natural green space in towns and cities: A practical guide to assessing the resource and implementing local standards for provision. Peterborough. Natural England.

Criteria	Original ANGSt ⁴⁰ (Yes/no)	ANGSt Plus ⁴¹ (Yes/no)	Options to improve ANGSt Plus?	Options to supplement ANGSt Plus?
			assessment of site quality using criteria such as those employed by 'Green Flag'/'Green Pennant Awards'.	assessing the quality of green spaces, the organisation also provides advice on green space management. Signposting to this key source of information is recommended.
Quantity	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be useful if ANGSt Plus included a caveat about the limitations of PPG17 data (i.e. reliance on 'Primary Purpose' overlooks the multipurpose nature of most green spaces) 	
Accessibility	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No categories for levels of access are suggested. These may be useful as an option, as some sites are fully accessible (e.g. common land) whilst some parks and gardens are locked at night, and therefore only partly accessible. In addition, some green spaces require an entry fee to be paid, limiting access for some potential users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England should also play a role in promoting use of accessible natural green space, and should partner local authorities and other access groups such as Groundwork in promoting its use. In inner city areas where it is not likely that all the ANGSt standards can be met, Natural England should consider promoting the adoption of time thresholds for reaching an accessible natural green space via public transport. London would be a good location to pilot such an approach.
'Connectivity'	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details are needed as to how to review the contribution of ANG to 'connectivity' beyond monitoring site user profiles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion will play a key role in improving connectivity, and as for accessibility, Natural England should work with relevant partners to identify ways to improve connectivity. In addition, funding is likely to be required to support additional 'wardens/rangers' who can encourage communities to use accessible natural green spaces. NE should support local authorities and other green space managers in the identification of funding sources for such wardens/rangers.
Provide comprehensive guidance on mapping:				
Provision	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See comments under 'assessing quantity' (above). 	

Criteria	Original ANGSt ⁴⁰ (Yes/no)	ANGSt Plus ⁴¹ (Yes/no)	Options to improve ANGSt Plus?	Options to supplement ANGSt Plus?
Population	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detailed information on different approaches to mapping population is needed. 	
Accessibility	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See comments under 'assessing accessibility' (above) 	
Encourage consultation with:				
Community	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANGSt Plus should provide guidance on consultation methods. Guidance for incorporating distance thresholds or quality elements (based on community consultation) in the identification of areas of deficiency in accessible natural green space would be an advantage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England could input into the revised CABE Space Green Space Strategy Guidance, to highlight the importance of consultation regarding access to nature.
Stakeholders	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ANGSt Plus framework could cross reference useful guidance documents and list potential consultees organisations for input on specific issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England could input into the revised CABE Space Green Space Strategy Guidance, to highlight the importance of consultation regarding access to nature.
Advise on implementation including:				
Delivery mechanisms	No	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery mechanisms are only covered at a very generic level. More detail including a full menu of options or a best practice guide would be useful here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England should develop a detailed guidance document or web pages providing information on how to approach delivery.
Securing funding	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance materials would be useful here, particularly on the new funding streams available from Natural England/Big Lottery Fund, Groundwork/Big Lottery Fund and the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England should produce a support document providing information on the main funding streams available, as well as advice on how to secure developer contributions to provision of accessible natural green space.
Working with partners	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is currently quite vague. Guidance materials would be useful here, including a list of the main organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ANGSt Plus framework should be supplemented by guidance on the numerous social, economic and

Criteria	Original ANGSt ⁴⁰ (Yes/no)	ANGSt Plus ⁴¹ (Yes/no)	Options to improve ANGSt Plus?	Options to supplement ANGSt Plus?
			represented in Local Strategic Partnerships and where to find out more about the local LSP.	environmental benefits of access to nature, evidence to support these benefits, and how to apply the evidence to secure greater provision of accessible natural green space through the LAA.
Promote benefits of ANG for:				
Health and wellbeing	Partly	Partly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits associated with accessible natural green space are considered in much of the literature commissioned by English Nature (as was), for example ENRRs 153 and 526. However, the ANGSt standards have only ever been presented to local authorities as a technical planning tool. ANGSt Plus introduces the need to monitor the benefits of accessible natural green with respect to a number of social/environmental factors, however, this is not done in a comprehensive manner. ANGSt Plus could be improved by providing greater clarity on this topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANGSt Plus might well be supplemented by a technical tool which allowed those implementing the model to first identify and perhaps also map the varying benefits accorded to accessible natural green space
Recreation and enjoyment	Partly	Partly		
Biodiversity	Partly	No		
Climate change adaptation and mitigation	No	Yes		
Sustainable transport	No	Partly		
Air quality	Partly	No		
Landscape quality	No	No		

FINDINGS OF OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.8. A summary appraisal of each of the elements of the new ANGSt Plus framework (See **Appendix I**) against the criteria present in **Table 5.1** is provided below.

Background

- 5.9. As indicated by **Table 5.1**, ANGSt Plus represents a considerable improvement on the original ANGSt. This assessment is based on the fact that ANGSt Plus addresses many of the ‘technical barriers’ and some of the ‘institutional barriers’ to implementation of Natural England’s ANGSt identified by ENRR 526 (see **Section 1** of this report). Specifically, it offers a methodology for defining ‘naturalness’ and ‘accessibility’, introduces qualitative criteria for rating sites, and recommends sources of data to be used and offers some guidance on mapping and implementation. In terms of institutional barriers, ANGSt Plus also makes mention of several delivery tools and policy approaches which might be used to redress areas identified as being deficient in accessible natural green space.
- 5.10. The original ANGSt model was published specifically as a set of planning standards with which local authorities might assess the provision of accessible natural green space. ANGSt Plus, by way of contrast, is simultaneously a method for implementing ANGSt and a technical planning standard. In view of the criteria used to review the two approaches (**Table 5.1**), ANGSt Plus is inherently more likely to be viewed as effective and this must be borne in mind.
- 5.11. It is clear that the ANGSt Plus document is primarily aimed at Natural England staff and not local authorities. The ANGSt Plus framework is currently being piloted in several areas around London and is not yet in a form which could be readily implemented by local authorities. Further work on making the document user friendly will be required if it is to be used by a wider audience.

Definitions

- 5.12. ANGSt Plus offers a rationale for defining both ‘Accessibility’ and ‘Naturalness’. It is noted by the framework that the term ‘access’ refers specifically to ‘physical access’, in terms of accessible walking distance to a green space. ANGSt Plus alludes to the fact that there are many non-physical barriers to site access but notes that these are beyond the scope of the pilot project to address. A finding of the telephone interviews (see **Section 3**) was that different socio-economic groups commonly express different requirements for accessible natural green space sites. Further, Natural England’s future aspiration for the ANGSt is to promote ‘access to nature’ in its broadest sense. Addressing non-physical barriers to accessing natural green space should, therefore, be a long term objective for development of ANGSt Plus.
- 5.13. ANGSt Plus also offers a methodology for defining ‘Naturalness’ which enables sites to be categorised into one of four ‘levels’ based on a number of criteria.⁴³ It is not made clear by ANGSt Plus why this system has been introduced, particularly as it appears to be a novel approach to mapping ‘naturalness’ which local authorities may not be aware of. It also appears to be insensitive to large sites which may contain

⁴³ Natural England (2007) Contract Brief: Understanding the relevance and application of Access to Natural Greenspace (ANGSt). Tender document supplied to LUC by Lucy Heath

both semi-natural and other vegetation types. The four level system is flexible, however, as it enables sites which are not 'natural' (Levels 3 and 4) to be upgraded to 'natural' sites (Levels 1 and 2) if appropriate management is known to be in operation or subsequently put in place.

Guidance on assessing and mapping

Quality

- 5.14. A requirement of PPG17 is to consider both the provision and quality of different green spaces. As identified by the review of green space strategies (**Section 3** of this report), a common approach to assessing green space quality is use of the Green Flag/Green Pennant Award⁴⁴ systems. A finding of our review (**Section 3**) was that that Green Flag Award criteria may not always be applicable for assessing wholly semi-natural sites where issues like signage, provision of site interpretation and safety may be of a greater importance to site users in determining site 'quality' than for example, the presence of children's play facilities. In the context of guidance provided within PPG17 and current practice (see **Section 3**) the inclusion of the Green Flag Award as a quality benchmark in ANGSt Plus is appropriate. ANGSt Plus could be supplemented, however, by providing greater guidance on what quality issues are more prevalent in accessible natural green space sites. ANGSt Plus might also include an accompanying quality assessment template for local authorities to use. This would also encourage standardised monitoring of site use related to site quality both within and between local authorities.

Quantity

- 5.15. The approach recommended by ANGSt Plus for assessing 'quantity' (provision of accessible natural green space sites) is subject to the comments made with respect to how 'accessibility' and 'naturalness' are defined (see above). The logic being that, if the definition/mapping process is insensitive, the assessment of provision will be inaccurate.
- 5.16. ANGSt Plus recommends that PPG17 audit information is relied upon to map quantitative provision of accessible natural green space sites. The review of green space strategies (**Section 3**), however, found this information to be insensitive in identifying semi-natural areas within large multi-purpose green spaces.
- 5.17. In terms of mapping accessible natural green spaces, ANGSt Plus offers little guidance on suitable Geographical Information Systems (GIS) methods particularly in the case of mapping populations around accessible natural green space sites. GIS was used by nearly all local authorities consulted in this study. Whilst the recommended inclusion of post code data and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) information is useful, ANGSt Plus provides little further guidance on how these data sets are to be integrated or manipulated within a GIS. This information may be crucial to local authorities. In addition, in the absence of a standard approach to mapping population, accessible natural green space deficiency data cannot be compared between local authorities.

⁴⁴ Green Flag website (Accessed April 2008): <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk>

Accessibility

- 5.18. As noted above, ANGSt Plus defines ‘access’ as the ‘physical accessibility’ of a green space to an able-bodied pedestrian on foot. To accurately map ‘accessibility’ ANGSt Plus will need to consider various other socio-economic factors affecting site access.
- 5.19. With regard to physical accessibility, ANGSt Plus only takes account of whether a site is ‘accessible’ or not. It does not consider the effect of the site entry point location on the spatial variability of access around individual sites. Likewise it does not consider the barriers to site access presented by roads and railways. Furthermore, physical accessibility can be subdivided into ‘full’, ‘conditional’ and ‘remote’ access as suggested by the Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology (CURE, 2002).⁴⁵ Different policy responses might be needed to enhance the provision of each type of accessible natural green space and ANGSt Plus should consider this.

‘Connectivity’

- 5.20. ANGSt Plus defines ‘connectivity’ as both the physical ability of local residents to access an accessible natural green space and also how equitable access to nature is between different socio-economic groups. ANGSt Plus recommends that monitoring is undertaken to collect demographics on site visitors. It also recommends the assessment of the contribution of accessible natural green space to qualitative issues such as visitor ‘well being’. Our strategy review (**Section 3**) revealed that very few local authorities had attempted to identify what qualities visitors were seeking and whether these qualities were being provided across the green space resource. Without this information the evidence base for providing accessible natural green space is limited, and it is clearly something which needs addressing within an ANGSt framework.
- 5.21. To address the complex issue of ‘connectivity’, however, a best practice guide or a consultation toolkit would be needed to supplement ANGSt Plus. In addition, the term ‘connectivity’ has a specific scientific meaning amongst ecologists and nature conservationists.⁴⁶ Care should be taken to fully define what is meant by this term within ANGSt Plus, particularly as many local authority ecologists and nature conservationists will likely be involved in implementing access to nature.

Encourage consultation

- 5.22. Our review of green space strategies found community consultation to be a key source of information in the setting of local distance standards for accessibility and local quality benchmarking. Beyond the monitoring of site visitors, community consultation is not discussed by ANGSt Plus.
- 5.23. It is the intention of Natural England to more fully utilise the Local Area Agreement (LAA) framework for the delivery of greater accessible natural green space. However, ANGSt Plus does not consider any of the potential stakeholders who may be critical to securing LAA funding.

⁴⁵ Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology (2002). Providing Accessible Natural Green space in Towns and Cities: A practical Guide to assessing the resource and implementing local standards for provision. Manchester

⁴⁶ See for example; Dawson, D. (1994). Are habitat corridors conduits for animals and plants in a fragmented landscape: A review of the scientific evidence. English Nature Research Report 94. Peterborough.

Advice on implementation

General approach to green space management

- 5.24. The ANGSt Plus framework recommends that green spaces be divided into one of four categories for the purposes of site management policy:
- natural/inaccessible sites;
 - natural/accessible sites;
 - non-natural/accessible sites;
 - non-natural/inaccessible.
- 5.25. Accordingly, ANGSt Plus lists a range of generic prescriptions for increasing the ‘naturalness’ of currently ‘non-natural’ sites and the accessibility of currently inaccessible sites. ANGSt Plus is lacking any detailed guidance on how this could be achieved, the guidance provided by the GLA⁴⁷ or CABE Space⁴⁸ provide examples of where this has been done.
- 5.26. Lastly, ANGSt Plus offers no guidance on how deficiencies in accessible natural green space should be prioritised. If ANGSt Plus is to be promoted to external partners then Natural England should provide clear guidance on how to prioritise sites and areas for investment. This should be based on the most deficient areas, local needs identified through community consultation, alongside practical considerations such as opportunities to gain funding for certain sites.

Delivery mechanisms

- 5.27. A key finding of review of green space strategies undertaken by LUC (see **Section 3**) was that very few local authorities were able to provide examples of working delivery mechanisms or indeed demonstrate if delivery was underway at all. Whilst ANGSt Plus outlines a number of ‘delivery tools’⁴⁹ very little additional detail is provided. Further, no evidence of how these tools operate in practice is given. ANGSt Plus also recommends that monitoring of successful delivery tools be undertaken, however, it does not provide any criteria by which different delivery methods might be assessed.

Securing funding

- 5.28. Other than listing ‘financial incentives’ as a possible delivery tool, ANGSt Plus provides no information on funding. A key funding source for the provision of accessible natural green space is the BIG Lottery Fund ‘Access to Nature’ and ‘Community Spaces’ award schemes. It would improve the utility of ANGSt Plus if fuller information on potential funding sources was provided.

⁴⁷ GLA (2008). Parks, People and Nature: A guide to enhancing natural habitats in London’s and green spaces in a changing climate. London

⁴⁸ CABE Space (2006) Making contracts work for wildlife: how to encourage biodiversity in urban parks. London

⁴⁹ These include: regulatory powers; financial incentives; advice, advocacy; and direct action

- 5.29. A key objective of Natural England's is to form closer links between the setting of local improvement targets in LAAs and greater provision of accessible natural green space. Mechanisms for funding accessible natural green space through the LAA framework are not, however, considered by ANGSt Plus.

Working with partners

- 5.30. ANGSt Plus includes the recommendation that the types of partner organisations who are able to assist with mapping and those able to assist in the delivery of accessible natural green space should be recorded. No further details on working with partners are provided.

Promoting the benefits of accessible natural green space

- 5.31. Several of the green space strategies reviewed by LUC (**Section 3**) demonstrated the importance of recognising the wider benefits or functions of green space. In addition, the green infrastructure strategies reviewed adopt holistic approaches towards green space management. Whilst the importance of accessible natural green space in ameliorating the effects of climate change is partly recognised by ANGSt Plus, the other environmental benefits of green space are not. The focus of the tool should remain on the benefits of accessible natural green space to the local community. If the wider environmental benefits of green space are to be highlighted then the following benefits should also be included alongside amelioration of higher temperatures in urban areas: flood risk management, air pollution dispersal, water storage, linking wildlife habitats, production of biofuels, food and renewable energy, and carbon storage.

General comments on ANGSt Plus

- 5.32. In response to the findings of ENRR 526, English Nature (now Natural England) commissioned a guide for identifying and mapping accessible natural green space and implementing ANGSt (CURE, 2003). In defining and mapping accessible natural green space, the CURE document is arguably more comprehensive than ANGSt Plus. Further, the CURE guide appears to be more amenable for use by those with little knowledge of accessible natural green space. However, the CURE guidance document does not address institutional aspects of delivery, whilst ANGSt Plus does. The range of delivery options and policy approaches provided is very broad however, and ANGSt Plus does not include any specific case studies or evidence to support the application of different methods.
- 5.33. ANGSt Plus is primarily aimed at Natural England staff and not local authorities. However, within the current document there is some ambiguity as to whether ANGSt Plus is to be a monitoring framework for use in pilot projects or a guidance document for implementation of ANGSt, and there is potential for this to lead to confusion. There is a need to clarify whether ANGSt Plus is intended to be a technical planning tool, a source of guidance for providing accessible natural green space in towns and cities, or both.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions – Summary:

- The policy context has changed considerably since the creation of ANGSt through EN Report 153. New policy initiatives promote integration of access to nature within urban regeneration and provide new mechanisms for its delivery, significantly the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Local Area Agreements (LAAs).
- Our strategy review indicates that many local authorities are not applying ANGSt through their green space strategies. Locally-adapted versions of the standards are more popular, reflecting the principle of locally-developed standards promoted by PPG 17. Natural England supports this locally-informed approach, but advocates meeting the 300m standard as a priority where possible.
- The term connectivity is poorly understood, and the concept should be better promoted, in order to encourage actions by local authorities to improve emotional connectivity between residents and their local green space.
- ANGSt Plus represents an improvement on the original ANGSt model, but there is potential for Natural England to enhance and supplement ANGSt Plus through a number of actions.
- Recognition of ANGSt and the benefits of access to nature in national policy is key to ensuring access to nature is delivered in the future.
- The multiple social and environmental benefits of accessible natural green space should be promoted, especially to partners in Local Strategic Partnerships. Local Area Agreements represent a valuable mechanism for securing investment in accessible natural green space.
- Provision of high quality accessible natural green space can contribute to the achievement of a range of the government's National Indicators. This potential needs to be highlighted to encourage delivery of green space.
- Clear, comprehensive and current guidance on planning for accessible natural green space in strategies is lacking, and Natural England should champion the creation of such guidance.
- As the government's advisor on nature conservation, Natural England should promote delivery of access to nature and provide advice on strategy creation, funding and delivery.
- Further research could focus on existing Local Area Agreements and indicators used to deliver access to nature through these.

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1. This study has identified the strengths and weaknesses of existing green space and green infrastructure strategies in the English regions. It has provided an update on policy initiatives relevant to the provision of access to nature, and policy instruments and principles that have been introduced through these initiatives. Finally, this study has sought to review Natural England's revised approach to promoting access to nature, and provide suggestions to enhance and supplement Natural England's approach. This section provides a summary of the key conclusions arising from this study. Specific recommendations for Natural England are also provided.

KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and guidance

Policy framework

- 6.2. The current lack of clear policy guidance on treatment of access to nature in green space strategies means that strategies vary considerably in scope and content. In addition, there is currently no national guidance on the scope of green infrastructure strategies. Whilst theoretically green space strategies and green infrastructure strategies are distinct, in reality the boundaries are blurred. Several green space strategies have emerged with a wider scope than that suggested by PPG 17, and green infrastructure strategies often consider issues which are the subject matter for green space strategies, i.e. access for recreation. Evidence for delivery of accessible natural green space is also currently very limited.

Recommendation: National policy framework

- Natural England should advocate and champion a national policy framework which clarifies how access to nature should be addressed at a national, regional and local level.

Current practice in the regions

- 6.3. ANGSt was adopted in few of the green space strategies reviewed. This is probably due largely to the lack of policy to support ANGSt, and the PPG 17 guiding principle that distance and provision standards should be developed locally. Several local green space strategies adapted ANGSt following local consultation, an approach which is supported by Natural England, although it is keen to promote the 300m standard. Green infrastructure strategies have a more strategic focus and, as locally-derived standards are not usually developed at this level, ANGSt is adopted more often by these high-level strategies.
- 6.4. There is a current lack of understanding of the meaning of 'connectivity' in relation to green space, and a resulting lack of actions proposed by local authorities to support better connectivity between communities and their local green space. Through ANGSt Plus, Natural England needs to promote its interpretation of 'connectivity', encouraging local authorities to consider emotional connectivity between residents and their local green space, as well as physical connectivity.

- 6.5. Effective mechanisms for encouraging emotional connectivity with local green spaces include open days and other free events, local wardens to support access to nature by interacting with schools and community groups, and locating green spaces close to other community-focussed buildings where possible, to encourage links between the two. The proposed Thetford River Valley Park provides a good example of where emotional connectivity has been considered in planning green infrastructure.

Recommendations: Current practice

- Natural England should work with other government agencies and non-governmental organisations to secure recognition of ANGSt and the benefits of access to nature in national policy. This policy should require the creation of green space strategies which address:
 - access to nature;
 - multi-functional green spaces; and
 - connectivity, both physical and emotional.
- Natural England should partner with key organisations managing and promoting natural green space, to promote active use of, and connectivity between green space and local communities.

Green space guidance

- 6.6. Current national guidance provided for green space/open space and green infrastructure strategies is not fully integrated, nor comprehensive. CABE Space previously published a useful document on green space strategies; CLG has published PPG17 guidance on open space strategies; and there is no existing national guidance for green infrastructure strategies. The overlap in the scope of these guidance documents can be misleading, and despite the useful elements of the CABE Space guidance, PPG17 tends to be used by local authorities as it has some policy weight as policy guidance. There is a need for clear, current and comprehensive guidance on the purpose and scope of both green space/open space and green infrastructure strategies, and the links between them.

Recommendations: Green space guidance

- Natural England should ensure that local authorities are provided with the support and advice they require on how best to deliver access to nature, and the range of mechanisms available.
- Natural England should work with CABE Space to create clear, comprehensive and current guidance on planning for accessible natural green space. This could take the form of an updated version of the CABE Space Green Space Strategy Guidance. Natural England is also planning to develop guidance on the creation of green infrastructure strategies, and this should complement the revised CABE Space guidance.

ANGSt Plus

- 6.7. There is potential to improve the content of ANGSt Plus. In addition, for the new approach to be adopted by local authorities and green space managers, it should be presented in a clear and attractive document that facilitates its use by both parks and planning department staff.

Recommendation: ANGSt Plus

- Natural England should consider the suggestions for the improvement of ANGSt Plus, as set out in Section 5, and should seek to incorporate changes to the framework as appropriate.

Regulation

- 6.8. The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations provide an opportunity to secure funding for the creation of accessible natural green space, through securing financial contributions from development which may adversely affect a Natura 2000 site. This approach was pioneered by Natural England for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, however, it can be costly and disruptive to the planning system, and the benefits and disadvantages will need to be considered for each Natura 2000 site.

Recommendation: Regulation

- Natural England should utilise its powers under the Habitats Regulations to secure funding for accessible natural green space. These powers are likely to be particularly relevant to green infrastructure planning in areas of significant planned growth, as many of the Natura 2000 sites protected by these regulations are located in close proximity to areas where significant urban growth is planned.

Partnerships and Local Area Agreements

- 6.9. Natural England should advise local and regional authorities on the potential for green space strategies to inform the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Multi Area Agreements (MAAs). There is limited understanding within some local authorities of the potential to inform these delivery instruments, meaning that these useful new instruments for securing green space funding are not being utilised.
- 6.10. There is scope to set LAA targets in respect of green space, and thus secure government funding for projects. A robust case should be made linking the benefits of accessible natural green space (e.g. improved community health) to the attainment of national indicator targets. LAAs often have a specific theme, to which proposals should relate, so it will be important to demonstrate the full range of benefits of accessible natural green space, in order to ensure that its delivery can occur under a range of LAA themes. Local authorities could also secure funding from LAAs and developer contributions through evidence of the need for green space, which is

provided through the completion of a green space strategy. Guidance produced by CLG includes an Annex of funding streams that can be negotiated into the LAA⁵⁰.

Recommendations: Local Strategic Partnerships

- Natural England should advise local authorities on the need to understand and interact with LSPs effectively in order to take advantage of the opportunities for green space delivery. In addition, better communication is required between council departments to ensure that those involved in production and implementation of the green space strategy are aware of the potential that the LAAs have to deliver green space aims.
- Natural England should encourage partnership working both between the local authority and the LSP, and also cross-boundary working with neighbouring authorities as well as partnerships with environmental groups in the area.
- Natural England should support local authorities in gathering robust evidence on the need and benefits of accessible natural green space, in order to convince the LSP of the benefits of investment.
- Natural England should provide guidance on the range of bespoke targets that can be developed by local authorities to guide the delivery of accessible natural green space through LAAs.
- Natural England should provide guidance to local authorities on the four approaches to securing public space improvements through LAAs, as identified at the 2006 Safer Stronger Communities Conference (www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/4348485), which are:
 - 1) Safer, Stronger Communities theme which provides explicit reference to improving open space;
 - 2) Identifying public space outcomes as a cross-cutting issue;
 - 3) Tie public space outcomes to complement outcomes for all themes;
 - 4) Use the single pot structure.

National Indicators

- 6.11. Investment in accessible natural green space can directly contribute to the achievement of NI 197 (improved local biodiversity), although this strictly only applies to designated sites) but can indirectly contribute to a range of NIs including 5, 8, 50, 55, 56, 110, 119, 138, 175, 188. This potential needs to be highlighted so that local authorities can set targets to encourage the delivery of green space to contribute to these indicators.

⁵⁰ Communities and Local Government (2006) Local Area Agreements Guidance for Round 3 and Refresh of Rounds One and Two.

Recommendation: National Indicators

Natural England should develop a promotional document to demonstrate the potential for the delivery of accessible natural green space to support local and regional authorities' progress towards achievement of a range of National Indicators. Natural England and CABI Space should consult with and secure the support of a wide range of partners in the creation of this promotional document, including the NHS Trusts, crime partnerships, community empowerment networks and other organisations with objectives which could be supported by an increase in accessible natural green space.

Urban and rural areas

- 6.12. There is no clear guidance on how ANGSt should be applied to rural and densely urban areas. The effect of this was highlighted through our review of existing green space strategies, which revealed that in rural West Dorset the journey time to a natural green space was converted into both walking distance and driving distance. This also reflects the varying transport considerations encountered by urban and rural areas.
- 6.13. Similarly, our review of existing strategies revealed that some urban local authorities (Salford, Solihull) did not consider the ANGSt standards to be feasible due to a lack of potential sites for green space creation, and this was the reason given for not adopting them.

Recommendation: Urban and rural areas

Natural England should develop a view on how ANGSt can be applied to rural and densely urban areas where some standards are unachievable in the medium term. This may involve considering the potential for journey time standards to be developed in relation to public transport. This could create more incentive for primarily urban/rural local authorities to adopt ANGSt. There is capacity on train routes out of London and other major cities, and the promotion of the green belt and other peripheral green spaces could be supported by rail companies, who could benefit from increased use of trains to peripheral areas.

Funding

- 6.14. Lack of funding was identified as a key barrier to the implementation of green space proposals across the regions. If Natural England wishes to see access to nature delivered effectively by local and regional partners, they need to provide clear and current advice on the range of public and private funding sources available, and support regarding how to secure funding from these sources.

Recommendation: Funding

Natural England should provide current information on funding streams available for the creation/enhancement of green space, and include signposts to the relevant websites for further funding information. Recently announced national funding streams include the Access to Nature Fund and Community Spaces Fund from the Big Lottery Fund, and the Local Food Fund administered by the Wildlife Trusts. Information on current funding streams should be available on Natural England's website, and an information leaflet should also be drafted and circulated to local and regional authorities.

Green space delivery and appropriate mechanisms

- 6.15. There is a shortage in appropriately skilled staff in some local authorities, as well as a lack of awareness of the range of mechanisms available to support accessible natural green space delivery.

Recommendation: Green space delivery and appropriate mechanisms

Natural England should support local authorities' provision of high quality accessible natural green space, by providing information on the appropriate skills and available delivery mechanisms to support green space provision.

Perceptions of accessible natural green space

- 6.16. People can sometimes perceive natural green space to be unmanaged and abandoned, and this can be associated with lack of safety and discourage the community from using the site. This is primarily a quality and design issue, and the high quality design of accessible natural green space can overcome this issue. However, the design of high quality green space would also need to be supported by campaigns and events which encourage the community's involvement in, and connectivity with the site.

Recommendation: Perceptions of accessible natural green space

Natural England and CABE Space should consider the need for design guidance which provides best practice guidance on the appropriate design and management of accessible natural green space.

Advisory role

- 6.17. Only a third of the strategies we reviewed acknowledged the direct involvement of Natural England in strategy creation. This suggests that regional and local Natural England representatives could be more proactive in advocating accessible natural green space to local and regional authorities, and in informing the production of green space strategies.
- 6.18. In addition, the recent promotion of ANGSt at a national level needs to be supported by active promotion of the new ANGSt Plus approach at a regional and local level, to

encourage its use by local and regional authorities, developers and green space managers.

Recommendations: Advisory role

- Natural England regional and local representatives should be more proactive in advising and informing green space strategies and green infrastructure strategies.
- Promotion and dissemination of the ANGSt Plus will also be required when it is ready for circulation.

Further research

- 6.19. Natural England's recommendations on the potential to deliver access to nature through Local Area Agreements could be supported by further research into existing LAAs, and what sort of indicators and targets have been used to deliver access to nature through these. Such research would uncover best practice examples, and could be used to promote consideration of a similar approach by others.

Recommendations: Further research

- Natural England should consider undertaking further research into existing Local Area Agreements and the indicators and targets employed to deliver access to nature through these.

Land Use Consultants, May 2008

APPENDIX I
ANGSt Plus Framework

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

Monitoring Framework for Accessible Natural Greenspace Pilot

Introduction

This paper provides guidance to those working on the pilot project to connect people to the natural environment and deliver the Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (Target 2.3.4.1).

Accessible natural greenspace can be delivered through a range of tools available to Natural England: the pilot projects in London and across the regions need to meet local needs, as envisaged in PPG17. To learn lessons across the organisation we need consistent data collection and a national monitoring framework to facilitate analysis of the effects of different approaches, partnerships and resource levels.

This framework will:

- Define Accessible Natural Greenspace for the pilot programme:
 - i. Define how to measure the supply of accessible space
 - ii. Define how to assess natural and identify proxy indicators which may be mapped
- Give guidance on the social data required by the pilot programme to assess use.
- Identify categories of delivery mechanisms used by the pilot projects
- Identify data to assess the ANGSt standard

Please note that this framework is focusing on accessibility in terms of accessible distance for walking to greenspace so it can easily be part of everyday life. There are a range of other physical and social barrier to access which are being progressed through Defra Outdoors for All programme.

Key Principles and their application within the ANGSt Pilot

- 1. Assessing supply – identifying opportunities to improve supply**
- 2. Assessing use - connection**
- 3. Assessing the ANGSt standards**
- 4. Assessing a range of delivery models**

1. Assessing supply

1.1 The process

There is a four stage process to go through in assessing the supply of accessible natural greenspace.

- a. Assessing accessible greenspace – using PPG17 definitions plus refinement for corridors and edges for water bodies
- b. Mapping other greenspaces – Getting the whole picture of areas that are open but not currently accessible.
- c. Mapping the natural spaces – using either survey or proxy measures
- d. Mapping together identifying accessible greenspace (not natural), accessible natural greenspace, natural greenspace (not accessible), other greenspaces (not accessible or natural).

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

1.2 Mapping all accessible greenspace

It is recognised that all accessible greenspace has the potential to provide a natural experience. It is therefore important that mapping exercises within the pilot include all accessible greenspace over 0.25ha to help identify opportunities to reduce deficiency. For many local authorities data based on or similar to the PPG 17 land use categories is likely to be available.

- i. parks and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
- ii. natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downland, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (eg cliffs, quarries and pits);
- iii. green corridors - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way.

For ANG pilot projects a nominal width of ANG should be applied to such corridors, i.e. 5m for public rights of way and up to 10m width for beaches and green corridors. **Only** use this where the corridor is green. Situations where this applies include:

- coast (from the nearest urban development feature to high tide mark)
- rights of way through or alongside permanent pasture
- rights of way through or alongside woodland
- green lanes/green corridors
- rights of way alongside open water features such as reservoirs, lakes, rivers, canals and estuaries

- iv. outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned) - including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas;
- v. amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) - including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens;
- vi. provision for children and teenagers - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (eg 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters);
- vii. allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms, where access is available;
- viii. cemeteries and churchyards;
- ix. Open access land, common land with access (not all Commons are mapped as open access)

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

x. civic spaces, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians;

xi land owned by Government agencies where access is available

xii land owned by utilities and other businesses where access is available

xiii land owned by NGOs where access is available.

1.3 Mapping other green spaces

Wherever possible data sets such as private gardens, open spaces in business grounds or other private institutions, intensive farmland and other green open spaces with no public access should be recorded. They do not directly affect Accessible Natural Greenspace but are important in providing a context for prioritising areas of deficiency and need for action. Also, areas such as derelict land may provide opportunities for creating natural space.

1.4 Mapping naturalness

Within this framework the definition of natural within the ANG standard is:

Places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate

When using the definition above for natural, actually deciding at which point a feeling of naturalness predominates may be difficult to determine and it can be argued that there is considerable room for interpretation. Therefore, in practice some form of proxy for a feeling of naturalness will be necessary particularly where GIS is used for identifying ANG.

Recent research by Aleksandra Kazmierczak of Salford University has used land use categorisation as a proxy measure for naturalness creating a four stage rating, all land should be mapped to indicate its “naturalness” using the four categories below:

Level 1

Nature conservation areas, including SSSI, Wildlife Sites (SNCI's), LNR's, NNR's
Woodland
Remnant countryside (within urban and urban fringe areas)

Level 2

Formal and informal open space
Unimproved farmland
Rivers and canals
Unimproved grassland
Disused/derelict land, mosaics of formal and informal areas scrub etc.
Country Parks
Open Access Land

Level 3

Allotments
Church yards and Cemeteries

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

Formal recreation space

Level 4

Improved farmland

Level 1 and 2 is a proxy indicator of **natural** greenspace. The distribution of land use types has been adapted for Natural England purposes. It is important that the groupings of land use types are adjusted to account for local management regimes. For example, if local policy/management regimes manages areas of church yards and cemeteries for nature conservation, this would move these areas into Level 2. This is particularly true of many closed cemeteries and also disused/abandoned allotments.

The ideal situation is that full ground surveys are available so that an accurate measure of natural greenspace can be mapped. In practice most greenspace managers have sufficient knowledge of their sites to be able to classify them into the above levels through a desktop exercise supported by habitat surveys where available. Where this is not the case a proxy measure (adjusted using local knowledge, site management plans and policy) should be used.

1.4 Mapping Accessible Natural Greenspace

The categories for accessible greenspace (1.2) and naturalness (1.4) should be compared to identify Accessible Natural Greenspace. This analysis will also identify two further categories of land: accessible greenspace which does not meet the “naturalness” criteria; and, natural greenspace which is not “accessible”. Both categories indicate possible areas for improving people’s accessibility to natural greenspace.

1.4.1 Applying the tools - Making accessible greenspace natural

The improvement in provision of accessible natural greenspace can be achieved through habitat improvement and creation. The mapping of all accessible greenspace (as in 1.1 above) should help to identify these opportunities.

Pilot projects can implement strategies to improve the management of existing open space to increase the biodiversity of the site without compromising the amenity e.g. naturalising streams, creating meadow areas on slopes, differential mowing of field edges (eg GLA Strategy).

1.4.2 Applying the tools - Making natural greenspace accessible

The improvement in provision of accessible natural greenspace can be achieved through measures which improve accessibility. This is about more than providing gates. The mapping of all natural greenspace (as in 1.2 above) should help to identify these opportunities.

Pilot projects can implement strategies to improve the management of existing natural areas to increase the accessibility of the site without compromising the biodiversity e.g. improving paths and signing, removal of barriers such as locked gates and fences, provision of information either on or off site, visitor days, guided walks, activities to promote the use of the site by under represented groups, other outreach work.

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

2. Assessing use - Connection

2.1 Use and Connection

Greenspace provision should be equitable so that everyone including the most disadvantaged and under-represented communities in both urban and rural areas has easy access to natural greenspace close to home.

Pilot projects should endeavour monitor the use, or change of use, of accessible natural greenspace. Some pilot projects will seek to address the use of sites by particular under-represented communities, e.g. certain age groups, ethnic groups, people with disabilities. The full range of survey techniques and questions cannot be covered fully here. Where a project is intended to improve or creates accessible natural greenspace, check with the evidence team for the most appropriate survey and questions to use so we can maximise effectiveness and comparability of results

The following categories should be used to survey both users and non-users:

2.1.1 Gender

How many men/boys and how many women/girls use the site

2.1.2 Age groupings

It is recommended that where age is required in surveys, actual age is obtained. However, where grouping is necessary Office of National Statistics groupings of age are used. They are:

0 to 15, 16 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 49, 50 to 64, 65 to 74 and 75 +

The age grouping for children and young people may need to be sub divided for particular studies (e.g. 0-10 and 11 to 15). However, surveys of children require care and advice should be sought from within a local authority on accepted survey methods.

2.1.3 Ethnicity

The Commission for Racial Equality has a set of categories that should be used to collect information about ethnic background. This will allow comparison users with the wider population and assess success in reaching target populations.

The categories are as follows:

A White

British

Irish

Any other White background,

please write in

B Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background,

please write in

C Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

Any other Asian background,
please write in

D Black or Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background,

please write in

E Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other,

please write in

Where surveys are conducted through observation rather than interview it may be necessary to simplify the categories as follows:

A White

B Mixed

C Asian or Asian British

D Black or Black British

E Chinese or other ethnic group

2.1.4 Disability

Recording of disability usage is vitally important. The following question, or wording very close to it is used by a wide range of organisations to record use of facilities by people with a disability.

Do you have a long-standing (i.e. for more than 12months and likely to continue) illness or disability which affects (or limits) your day to day activities"

2.2 Sustainable access options

Sustainable access options to local greenspace should be available by wheelchair, pushchair, foot, bike, and public transport.

Pilot projects may monitor how far people travel to sites and their mode of travel. This will further support our assessment of the size/distance criteria within the ANG standards.

Essential information to gather will be the green space location, where travelled from on that visit (postcode would allow identification of distance as the crow flies and actual route distance) and mode of transport.

2.3 Improving the Quality of life

Daily opportunities should be available for everyone to improve both their health and overall quality of life through contact with the natural environment. Some of the pilot projects may contribute to improvements in health. This will be assessed in some pilot projects, this may be contributions to physical or mental health.

2.4 Assessing Greenspace quality

Greenspace quality should meet visitor expectations as measured by a national standard such as Green Flag Award or Green Pennant Award. Increased intensity of management where density of population is high might

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

allow for larger numbers using sites. Installing quality measures such as Green Flag Award standards would ensure sites are fit for purpose. This may go along with targeting resources e.g. in Nottingham, Green Flag Award applications are currently focused on the most deprived areas (this includes a prospective LNR). It may not be necessary for all areas to formally apply for a Green Flag Award but parts of the standard can usefully be applied to informal spaces. Natural England will continue to work towards better application of the Green flag Award Criteria to natural sites.

2.5 ANG and climate change

Accessible Natural Greenspace has a role in reducing the predicted negative impacts of climate change on people within urban environments.

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report on the urban Environment identifies urban areas as especially vulnerable to climate risk e.g. areas of London where the elderly are at increased risk during heatwaves. Accessible greenspace can provide an important respite from the highest temperatures.

Pilot projects may seek to assess the beneficial impacts of greenspace for cooling.

**DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT
PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION**

3. Assessing the ANGSt standards

3.1 Mapping site provision (size)

Within PPG 17 the ANSt standard is stated as:

Every home should be within 300 m of an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 ha, plus:

At least one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km

At least one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km

At least one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km

Within the original ANGSt model as set out in EN 153 the standard also included:

Provision of at least 1 ha LNR per 1000 population

From the mapping in section 1.2 and 1.4 it should be possible to identify the sites which meet the four size groups. It should be noted that if people live within 300m of a 20ha, 100ha, or 500 ha site it is important to recognise that the 2ha standard has been achieved, and so on.

3.2 Mapping population/homes

To map population (and so the potential intensity of use) surrounding a greenspace the most straightforward measure is a count of the postcodes within a catchment area. Postcode data contains a residential address count (for each postcode) that can be used to allocate population based on applying an average population per household derived from the Census. A regional (or finer) headcount could be measured from the Census to account for denser inner city dwellings and other variations. The data set that can be used for this analysis is Ordnance Survey's Codepoint and may be available from Natural England regional GIS colleagues. Codepoint data contains a point feature for each postcode, this represents a 'centre' point of the postcode area i.e. the centre point of the collection of dwellings that fall in the postcode.

There are a number of other indicators that it may be useful to investigate over the coming months such as social indicators (worst 5 & 10% of the population using Index of Multiple Deprivation for urban and rural areas, or social categories).

4. Assessing a range of delivery models

4.1 Delivery tools

A range of delivery models which support the achievement of the Accessible Natural Greenspace standards can be applied to the delivery of all of the key principles. Delivery tools for Natural England include:

- **Regulatory powers** - e.g. enforcement of Habitats Regulations, SSSI regulation, protected species laws, access legislation, management agreements
- **Financial incentives** – e.g. the agri-environment schemes; the partnership and innovation fund (includes the ANGSt budget provided)

DRAFT FOR USE BY THE NATURAL ENGLAND ANGST PLUS PILOT PROJECT – NOT INTENDED FOR CIRCULATION

to each region); and delegated grant schemes, where the funds are provided by external funders.

- **Advice** – e.g. advice on the application of PPG17 within development plans, land management advice, NERC duty; statutory consultee on strategic policy and EIA; Local Area Agreements,
- **Advocacy** – Natural England has a duty to articulate the role of the natural environment in relation to sustainability and well-being
- **Direct Action** – the skill-set available to us and on offer to our stakeholders.

In addition projects should indicate where the use of one tool, such as grant giving, results in the use of another tool by the recipient eg a grant is given to a local council which then runs workshops for its employees or community groups.

4.2 Delivery partners

Pilots should identify where they are working with partners, local authorities, parish councils, eNGOs, other NGOs, Regional Development agencies, business, community groups, schools, Primary care trusts, registered social landlords etc. The number, type and characteristics of partners should be identified.

4.3 Mapping partners

Pilots should identify the partners who have contributed to mapping studies – either through the provision of data or provision of other resources.

5 Further information

Further background information to the origins and development of ANGSt into this framework can be found in the supporting ANGSt discussion document available from Chris Gordon in Natural England's Science and Evidence Team.

APPENDIX 2

Summary findings of EN Research Report 526

SUMMARY FINDINGS OF ENGLISH NATURE RESEARCH REPORT 526

A2.1 In 2002 English Nature published Research Report 526⁵¹ which reviewed the validity of the ANGSt and implementation of the standards by local authorities. Some of the specific findings included:

- The report highlighted the absence of an adequate basis for the provision of accessible natural green space within (the then) planning policy. Notably, specific reference to English Nature's (as was) ANGSt was absent from any national planning guidance documents.
- Awareness of and application of the ANGSt was very low among all local authorities surveyed. In fact, the report found that two thirds of the local authorities surveyed reported no knowledge of the ANGSt.
- Local authority respondents in the study suggested that a supporting standard for promoting accessible natural green space in the development process would be very useful.
- A number of 'barriers' were identified, preventing greater adoption of ANGSt by local authorities. These included 'technical' barriers:
 - local authorities expressed difficulties defining which green spaces were 'natural' and identifying which were 'accessible';
 - a lack of information on the locations and types of greenspace with which to take a strategic overview;
 - an absence of any guidance for implementing ANGSt;
- A number of 'institutional' barriers were also reported:
 - ANGSt lacked any official policy status and therefore local authorities had little incentive to use it;
 - resources for green space management were limited and the uptake a new standard was not considered a priority;
 - many Local Development Plans were reviewed on a 5 year cycle and therefore ANGSt was not adopted (in 2003) as it was published too late for incorporation.

A2.2 The report produced a number of recommendations for furthering implementation of ANGSt by local authorities:

- ANGSt should be supported by practical implementation guidance;

⁵¹ **Handley et al. (2003)**. Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation. English Nature Research Report 526. Peterborough. English Nature.

- ANGSt should be incorporated into a comprehensive approach to green space planning where accurate and up to date information is held on the green space resource within a local authority;
- flexibility should be built into ANGSt to enable local authorities to set and define standards locally according to existing levels of provision and community demand for accessible natural green space;
- ANGSt needs to incorporate other quality measures beyond physical accessibility to more accurately identify which accessible natural green space people wish to visit.

A2.3 A key conclusion of the report was that:

“...the English Nature ANGSt model is perhaps of higher relevance now than at the time of its first publication” (p. iii).

Further, that:

“...the [ANGSt] model has great potential utility to local authorities, but must receive ongoing support through information dissemination, implementation guidance and with some measure of recognition at the national level.”

A2.4 Based on the recommendations of Research Report 526, English Nature (as was) commissioned the same authors to produce practical implementation guide for the ANGSt.⁵²

⁵² **English Nature (2002)**. Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A practical guide to assessing the resource and implementing local standards for provision. Peterborough. English Nature.

APPENDIX 3
Green Space Strategies reviewed

TABLE A1.1 DETAILS OF ALL DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AND THE TYPE OF DOCUMENT REVIEWED.

Region	Local authority/document title	Telephone contact(s) interview	Document type
East Midlands	Charnwood Borough Council: Charnwood Green Space Strategy	Mark Grahams, Charnwood Borough Council; 01509 263151	PPG17 ⁵³ strategy
	Erewash Borough Council: 'Draft Green Space Strategy'	Mr I McHugh, Development Manager, Erewash Borough Council; 0115 907 2206	PPG17 strategy
East of England	Cambridgeshire: Cambridgeshire Horizons	Helen Wright, GI Development Officer, Cambridge Horizons; 01223-717-049	Green infrastructure strategy
	Breckland Council: Thetford Green Infrastructure Study	Andrea Long, Environmental Planning Manager, Thetford Borough Council; comments received through Andrew Tempany, Land Use Consultants.	Green infrastructure study
London	London Borough of Croydon: Croydon's Open Space Strategy 2005 - 2010	Emma Wiggins, London Borough of Croydon; 020 8726 6000 ext. 62183.	PPG17 strategy
	East London: The East London Green Grid Framework (Post consultation draft)	Jamie Dean, Greater London Authority; 0207 5938815	Green infrastructure strategy
North East	Darlington Borough Council: Darlington Open Space Strategy	Rob George, Darlington Borough Council; 01325 380651	PPG17 study + ⁵⁴

⁵³ PPG17 = Planning policy guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation.

⁵⁴ 'PPG17 +' denotes that the strategy goes beyond the requirements of a PPG17 and contains additional analysis, information or research.

Region	Local authority/document title	Telephone contact(s) interview	Document type
	Newcastle City Council: Green spaces - Your spaces: Newcastle's Green Space Strategy	Edwina Symmons, Newcastle City Council; Edwina.symmons@newcastle.gov.uk	PPG17 study +
North West	Salford City Council: Salford Green space Strategy	Liz Dickson, Planning Officer, Environmental Projects; 0161-779-6049	Green space strategy/ Supplementary Planning Document
	Liverpool City Council: Liverpool Parks Strategy	Tom Duckworth Greenspace development team leader/Mike Eccles Develop. Ctrl., Liverpool City Council; 0151 225 5917	PPG17 study
	Allerdale District Council: Allerdale PPG17 Audit	Richard Wood (re. audit work) 01900 702768 or Ian Payne (re. strategy development) 01900702565	PPG 17 study
South East	Slough Borough Council: Slough Borough Council Sport, Recreation and Open Space Study	Bruce Hicks, Community Parks Officer, Slough Borough Council; 01753875514	PPG17 study
	South Hampshire: A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Urban South Hampshire	Vicky Fletcher Hampshire County Council; 01962- 846-802	Green infrastructure strategy
South West	Bristol City Council: Bristol's Parks and Green Space Strategy (5th consultation draft)	Richard Fletcher, Bristol City Council; 0117 922 3719	PPG17 study +
	Mid Devon District Council: Open Space and Play Area Strategy	Steve Densham, Mid Devon District Council, steve.densham@middevon.gov.uk	PPG17 study+

Region	Local authority/document title	Telephone contact(s) interview	Document type
	West Dorset District Council: Audit and Assessment of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	Anne Chard, Senior Planning Officer, West Dorset District Council; 01305252417	PPG17 study
West Midlands	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council: Solihull Green Space Strategy	Morris Barlow, Principle Planning Officer, Solihull MBC; 01217046393	PPG17+
	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council: Walsall Green Space Strategy	Sam Mills, Greenspace Improvement Co-ordinator, Walsall MBC; 07921404297	PPG17+
Yorkshire and Humber	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council: Quality Spaces, Quality Places: A Green space Strategy for Doncaster	Tim Kohler, Darlington MBC; 01924 334500	Green space strategy completed prior to PPG17
	Wakefield Council: The Wakefield District Green Space Strategy 2004 - 2009	Richard Pipkin, Wakefield District Council; 01924 307259	PPG17+

APPENDIX 4

Green space strategy review template

Part 1: General Information

Reviewer Name:

Date Reviewed:

Document Title:

Document Date:

Location:
(region and/or district)

Lead Contact - Name:

Position:

Address line 1:

Address line 2:

Town:

County:

Postcode:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

Natural England Contact:

Role of Natural England
in formation of the
strategy:

Part 2: Treatment of green space and ANG

Does the strategy provide a definition of green space?:

Details:

Does the strategy provide a definition of accessible natural green space?:

Details:

Does the strategy use ANGSt or and interpretation of ANGSt?:

In which ways are the ANG Standards are reflected/interpreted:

Application of the distance standards or a similar standard for accessible natural green space

Increasing naturalness of green spaces

Increasing access to green spaces

Acknowledging the benefits of accessible natural green space

Considering what connections the community have the local green space

Other - Please specify:

If not, does the strategy use an alternative approach to assess green space provision?:

Is Accessible Natural Greenspace defined and assessed within the approach?:

Details:

Does the strategy employ any approach to the assessment of green space quality?:

Details:

Does the strategy address other green space functions/multi-functionality?:

Details:

Does the strategy address connectivity between green spaces and propose green links between residential and employment areas to encourage access to the natural environment whilst commuting to work?:

Details

Part 3: Approach to Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Which stakeholder groups were involved in consultation and at what stage in the strategy formulation were they consulted?:

Government Agencies: Date:

National non-government agencies: Date:

Local authorities: Date:

Local community organisations: Date:

Other:

Was community consultation undertaken?:

What community engagement mechanisms are employed?:

Within the community consultation, has access to, and enjoyment of, natural green space been addressed?

Access to natural green space

Enjoyment of natural green space

Provide details. (Note to reviewer: Review consultation questions. Particular issues which may have been covered include the community's use of natural green spaces, to what extent naturalness is identified as a reason for visiting green spaces, and what would encourage increased use of local green space.):

Where community needs and aspirations for accessible natural green space have been considered, have actions to address these been identified?:

Details:

Was this study: (a PPG17 strategy, or has one been undertaken alongside or prior to the study?)

Details:

Part 4: Approach to Delivery and Management

Has delivery of the strategy commenced?:

Details:

What broad types of delivery mechanism are proposed in the strategy?:

Is there an action plan within the strategy with timed targets to achieve?:

Details:

Are delivery partners identified in the strategy?:

Details:

Has ANGSt been incorporated through delivery targets?:

How?:

Has an increase in the physical amount of green space been secured?:

Details:

How will delivery of the strategy be funded?:

How will ongoing management of green space be funded?:

Have local policies for green space management been amended?:

Details:

Have any indicators or measures of green space delivery been defined?:

Details:

Does the strategy define any principles for green space design?:

If so, do they address ANG?:

Details:

Does the strategy employ GIS to map green space?:

Details: