

**Draft Feb 09**  
**CS22 Green Infrastructure Biodiversity and Open Space**

Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces will be retained, enhanced and protected where existing and required from any new development. These attributes provide a crucial element in delivering a quality of life for all, maintaining biodiversity [do we mention historic environment] and local distinctiveness within South Worcestershire.

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Strategic links and green corridors will be safeguarded by:

- Development only being allowed where it is shown that it does not degrade or reduce the role and function of Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.
- Development contributions/planning agreements being used to enhance or retain the Green Infrastructure Network and biodiversity.
- Consideration being given, to where there are opportunities to redevelop previously developed land (brownfield land), for green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement as a preference to redevelopment, in order to deliver a high quality built and natural environments.
- Decreasing fragmentation by providing and enhancing green infrastructure.

All development will be required to contribute to the aims of the Green Infrastructure<sup>1</sup>. To ensure a fully integrated approach, existing and new local links and green spaces created should be connected to the wider green space corridors of South Worcestershire.

Priority will be given to those areas where benefits can be best achieved in particular where these contribute to the Worcestershire BAP and AONB Management Plan.

Open Space

Existing open space should not be built on unless it can be determined that it is surplus or provides no alternative function. Consideration will be given to substitute open space, if developed to an alternative location.

New development will contribute to open space provision, either through development contributions/planning agreements, in accordance with local provision standards adopted by the South Worcestershire local authorities.<sup>2</sup>

[Insert text on about standards? – GI/open space – if to insert standards, GI to be referred to under GI section]

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<sup>1</sup> This will be defined in the supporting text – is it a study or strategy – or should it be referring to the Worc.BAP?.

<sup>2</sup> Are open space standards to be set in district's DPD. What standards should this policy refer to – if any? Or do we have an overall GI standard if any evidence – at mo, maybe not enough evidence for new GI standard, which could be put in Site allocations DPD or alternative.

## **Draft June 2009**

# **Green Infrastructure and the Historic Environment**

### Introduction

South Worcestershire comprises a range of distinctive characteristics that include biodiversity, geodiversity, open spaces, special landscapes and historic environment. These characteristics are crucial in delivering a quality of life for all and in creating a local distinctive character for South Worcestershire.

Green Infrastructure has a vital role to play in enhancing the places we live, work and enjoy, as well as providing an important network of wildlife habitats. It is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our towns and villages with the wider countryside including open spaces, formal parks, gardens, playing fields, children's play areas, registered commons, waterways, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees and open countryside. It provides for a whole range of uses including informal recreation and landscape character.

In terms of the historic environment, across South Worcestershire features of architectural, archaeological and cultural interest abound and contribute significantly to the distinctive character of the locality. There is a rich diversity in the historic environment, which reflects human interaction with the landscape from the earliest prehistoric settlements to the present. Also, the valued identity of the urban areas, villages, hamlets and farmsteads has developed as these settlements have grown and evolved. Buildings of successive periods form part of a familiar and cherished local environment.

### Reasoned Justification

National and regional guidance outlines the importance of having a green infrastructure policy to maintain, restore or add to networks of natural habitats and other environmental and historic landscape features. The Regional Spatial Strategy defines 'distinctive' features of environmental importance in South Worcestershire as the Severn and Avon Vales, Malvern Hills and Teme Valley. Others are the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Malvern Hills Geopark for example. To ensure links between such designations and undesignated sites are maintained, it is essential that green infrastructure is supported by policy and a Green Infrastructure Framework plan to highlight these connections.

It is now widely recognised that green infrastructure has a major role to play in providing for flood mitigation and adaptation measures, and enhancing and providing for biodiversity. This is seen as particularly important in the South Worcestershire area in the light of recent severe flooding experiences.

The physical impact and pressure of the Government's growth agenda upon the existing natural and historic environment needs to be minimised. Development should be integrated into the existing landscape and planned holistically from the outset to ensure that existing features of significance are retained and where possible enhanced. The Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Character Assessment and the integrated Historic Environment Assessment should help to draw out features and places that create the special character of the area and assist in this process.

New development will be expected to respect the unique townscape character and setting of the urban and rural settlements within the locality. Therefore the quality and character of South Worcestershire's historic environment and local townscapes should be considered as a creative resource to inspire good design. Emphasis should be on the positive management of change and how new development will be expected to fit with its surroundings, in turn helping to safeguard and enhance the historic environment.

It is essential that residents have nearby access to local high quality environmental and historic features. To achieve sustainable development however, requires policies that provide residents with access to such assets. These are important for their quality of life. Local communities should be encouraged to make use of green space and historical assets for example, rather than travel longer distances to alternative facilities in other communities. (this is also dependant on a policy, or policy content that actively promotes the cultural and amenity value of historic assets within a unified context that captures the links between historic environment, landscape and biodiversity.)

(The above paragraph has been promoted through officer comments but it's merits are questionable. The first part relates to CS objectives and does not need to be repeated, whilst the second part re: encouraging residents is inappropriate for the CS. – BRS opinion )

### **Policy CS22 Green Infrastructure and the Historic Environment**

**All new developments will be required to deliver multifunctional benefits, including sustaining local distinctiveness, improving the management of historic, semi-natural and natural assets, and enhancing quality of life, These will be delivered by maintaining, enhancing, restoring and/or adding to green infrastructure, in line with the aims of the Green Infrastructure Framework.**

**Green Infrastructure assets and connections will be safeguarded by ensuring that development:**

- a) Does not degrade or reduce the role and function of Green Infrastructure assets and connections, and ;
- b) incorporates existing and delivers new Green Infrastructure assets and connections.

**Within the AONBs their conservation and enhancement will be given great weight. Outside the AONBs development will not be permitted which would damage their natural beauty, character and special qualities.**

**The delivery of Green Infrastructure should be in keeping with the local landscape character and should reduce the fragmentation of habitats and cohesive historic landscapes. Where appropriate, priority will be given to delivery on aspects where benefits can be best achieved, such as contributions to the achievement of Worcestershire BAP targets, the AONB Management Plan or the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, or to adopted local strategies for the historic environment or biodiversity. Development contributions will be used to retain and/or enhance off-site Green Infrastructure assets and connections.**

**Provision of green infrastructure should have regard to the Green Infrastructure Framework, the environmental characteristics of the area, including landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment, open space provision standards, existing and potential access links and the degree to which the green infrastructure provided can be multifunctional. New provision should be well connected with existing green infrastructure and appropriate to site size. In all instances developers will be required to make appropriate arrangements for the long term maintenance of green infrastructure and any associated equipment.**

**Existing open space with a sport, recreation or amenity value will be improved through the protection and enhancement of existing areas, and will be defined in the Site Allocations DPD. Proposals for development that would result in the loss of open space, or facilities which meet the recreational needs of the community, or affect its open character will only be permitted where :**

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which demonstrates that the open space, building or land is surplus to requirements; or
- b) alternative provision of an equivalent community benefit can be provided in a convenient and accessible location; or

- c) the existing open space, sports or recreational facility can be enhanced through the development of a small part of the site; and
- d) the development is for recreational and/or community purposes, and
- e) the proposal does not compromise the essential character of the space, building or land.

Development should ensure the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment, individual, or groups of historic assets and their settings. Development should also ensure the built heritage of South Worcestershire guides the local distinctiveness of new development in historic areas.

Proposals will be supported which have regard to South Worcestershire's historic environment, particularly those that:

- a) preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and do not have any adverse impact on historic assets and their setting;
- b) respect the unique townscape and character that exists in different settlements across the locality;
- c) does not have any adverse impact on historic buildings, their setting, or views of the skyline;
- d) respect the historic grain in the landscape characterised by locally distinctive historic field patterns, woodlands, designed landscape features and the pattern of lanes, footpaths and watercourses;
- e) respect the differing patterns of existing settlements and the scale of buildings within them, including farmsteads, that contribute to local character.

## **Draft Jan 10 Green Infrastructure**

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and managed network of green spaces and related environmental features that intersperse and connect cities, towns and villages. It is the open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside. Green infrastructure can provide an integrated infrastructure and provide multiple benefits for the economy, environment and people.

Provision of green infrastructure is essential to delivering a high quality of life for existing and new communities and may also be seen as part of the life support system of an area. It can provide functions and environmental services to a community such as employment, recreation, physical health and mental well being, social interaction, contact with nature, drainage and flood management, climate change adaption and pollution control. Furthermore, it can create local distinctiveness, a high quality built environment and improve the quality and utility of the built environment and public realm assets.

It is now widely recognised that green infrastructure has a major role to play in providing for flood mitigation and adaptation measures, and enhancing and providing for biodiversity. This is seen as particularly important in the South Worcestershire area in the light of recent severe flooding experiences.

South Worcestershire incorporates a range of distinctive landscape characteristics that include biodiversity, geodiversity, open spaces, special landscapes and historic environment. These characteristics are crucial in delivering a quality of life and underpin the unique character for South Worcestershire.

The Regional Spatial Strategy defines 'distinctive' features of environmental importance in South Worcestershire as the Severn and Avon Vales, Malvern Hills and Teme Valley. Other examples include the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Malvern Hills Geopark.

Features of architectural, archaeological and cultural interest abound in South Worcestershire and contribute significantly to the distinctive character of the locality. There is a rich diversity in the historic environment, which reflects human interaction with the landscape from the earliest prehistoric settlements to the present. Also, the valued identity of the urban areas, villages, hamlets and farmsteads has developed as these settlements have grown and evolved. Buildings of successive periods form part of a familiar and cherished local environment.

The physical and visual impact of new development upon the existing natural and historic environment needs to be minimised. Development should be planned to be holistic and sustainable from the outset, integrated into the existing landscape and ensure valuable features are retained and enhanced.

The green infrastructure requirements of new development will be informed by the South Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework which provides an analysis and interpretation of the landscape, biodiversity and historic environment assets of the area. In addition reference will be made to local evidence documents including the following :

- Worcestershire County Landscape Character Assessment
- South Worcestershire Historic Environment Assessment
- Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation
- County Historic Farmsteads Study
- Worcestershire Habitat Inventory
- Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan

- Conservation Areas, and any accompanying appraisals
- Historic Environments Record
- AONB Management Plans
- Supplementary Planning Documents

Policies and standards for the provision of open space with a sport, recreation or amenity value, and the protection and enhancement of existing areas, will be set out in the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.

### **Policy CS22 Green Infrastructure**

**New development proposals will be required to address the safeguarding and improving of existing green infrastructure, and enhancement by further provision, in line with the aims of the Green Infrastructure Framework. New provision will be required to deliver multifunctional benefits which promote recreation and tourism, public access, green education, biodiversity, geodiversity, protection and enhancement of the local landscape and historic assets and contribute to climate change objectives.**

**New provision should be well connected with existing green infrastructure, be appropriate to site size and reduce the fragmentation of habitats and cohesive historic landscapes. Where appropriate, priority will be given to delivery on aspects where benefits can be best achieved, such as contributions to the achievement of Worcestershire BAP targets, AONB Management Plans or the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, or to adopted local strategies for the historic environment or biodiversity. Development contributions will be used to retain and/or enhance off-site Green Infrastructure assets and connections.**