

Hastings Local Plan

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

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1. Introduction

The purpose and aims of the Study

1.1 The purpose of this study of the Green Infrastructure Network in Hastings is to provide an evidence base in support of the Council's Development Management Plan. It has a number of aims:-

- To identify green spaces that contribute to Green Infrastructure in Hastings.
- To identify deficiencies in the Network, both in terms of accessible green space in different parts of the town and connectivity between them.
- To identify opportunities for addressing deficiencies and increasing the amount of green Infrastructure in Hastings.
- To examine sources of funding for the provision of Green Infrastructure and
- To make any appropriate recommendations for the management of the Network in Hastings.

What is Green Infrastructure?

1.2 Natural England sets out a definition for local authorities in its 2008 *Green Infrastructure Strategies* document:-

“Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.

Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should tread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.”

1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework contains a more concise definition:-

“Green Infrastructure: a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.”

1.4 Taking account of these definitions, the following types of area are identified as Green Infrastructure for the purpose of this study. This includes the so called “blue infrastructure”, such as the coast, rivers and lakes etc. The coast in particular is an important element of the network in Hastings:-

- Designated national, regional and local nature conservation sites
- Areas designated for their landscape, geological or historic value,
- Country Parks
- Historic parks
- Local parks

- Other local public open spaces, including amenity green spaces and greens
- Private open spaces, including historic gardens and heritage sites
- Playing fields and other outdoor sports facilities
- Accessible coastline
- Woodland
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Allotments
- Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
- Ghylls, lakes ponds and reservoirs
- Rail corridors

- 1.5 The extent of the Green Infrastructure Network in Hastings is shown in Appendix A. This also takes into account green spaces in the adjacent Rother District that are most accessible to Hastings residents.

The functions and benefits of Green Infrastructure

- 1.6 The Borough Council's *Hastings Planning Strategy Proposed Submission Version 2012* identifies a number of functions that Green Infrastructure performs and benefits that it provides:-

- Enhancement and protection of biodiversity, including opportunities to mitigate the potential impacts of new development
- Provision of a natural cooling effect to mitigate the “urban heat island” effect. This should reduce the need for energy hungry cooling systems and increase comfort levels in outdoor spaces.
- Providing space for sustainable drainage to absorb excess rainfall. Green spaces can provide an efficient and cost effective “soakaway” for rainwater and a reservoir for grey water storage.
- Providing local access to shady outdoor space.
- Increasing opportunities for healthy living e.g. allotments for food growing and space for recreation and exercise
- Supporting regeneration by making Hastings an attractive place to live and work in.
- Protecting historic landscapes, archaeological and heritage sites.
- Providing sustainable transport routes
- Delivery of ecosystem function benefits such as air purification, storm water drainage and reduced atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- Providing a barrier to and absorbing noise.
- Contributing to social inclusion by providing places and spaces for community activity.
- To provide young people with opportunities for creative and challenging play in a natural setting.
- Allowing for species movement, particularly in the face of climate change.
- Providing a network of footpaths and rights of way, and strengthening links between nature reserves and green spaces.

2. Policy Support for Green Infrastructure

National Policy

The Natural Environment White Paper

- 2.1 This Government White Paper *The Natural Choice; Securing the Value of Nature*, published in 2011, refers to the role of planning to protect and improve the natural environment and facilitate coherent and resilient ecological networks that reflect the value of natural systems. The aims of the White Paper include halting biodiversity loss by 2020, supporting healthy functioning ecosystems and establishing coherent ecological networks. Urban Green Infrastructure is identified as completing the links in our national ecological network and as one of the most effective tools available to manage environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.2 The NPPF provides national planning guidance and contains a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF supports the objectives set out in the Natural Environment White Paper by stressing a pro-active and strategic approach to planning for the natural environment. As much emphasis is placed on enhancing as conserving biodiversity. The Natural Environment Chapter states in paragraph 109 that:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment by

- *Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils,*
- *Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services,*
- *Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity, where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures,*
- *Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability, and*
- *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

- 2.3 The third bullet point is particularly relevant to this Study as green infrastructure provision will have a direct impact on biodiversity. Also very relevant is the statement in paragraph 114 that local planning authorities should “*set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure*”.

- 2.4 Paragraph 117 continues this theme stating that planning policies should, inter alia:-

Identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation

- 2.5 Finally paragraph 165 stresses that planning policies should be based on up to date information including an assessment of existing and potential components of an ecological network.
- 2.6 The important contribution that access to high quality open spaces can make the health and well-being of local communities is recognised in Paragraph 73 of the NPPF. Paragraph 99 highlights the role that the planning of Green Infrastructure can play in managing the risk where new development is proposed in areas vulnerable to impacts arising from climate change.
- 2.7 This study will address these requirements and therefore be in conformity with the evidence base requirements of the NPPF.

Regional Policy

South East Plan

- 2.8 The Localism Act grants powers to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to abolish regional spatial strategies. However, until this comes in to force, the South East Plan remains a statutory part of the Development Plan, and any subsequent Local Plan (which includes the Hastings Local Plan) needs to be in conformity. Policy CC8 of the South East Plan promotes the provision of networks of Green Infrastructure throughout the region:

Policy CC8: Green Infrastructure

Local Authorities and partners will work together to plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space. Networks should be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits including conserving and enhancing biodiversity as well as landscape, recreation, water management, social and cultural benefits to underpin individual and community health and “well-being.” They will be created and managed as a framework of green spaces and other natural features that will boost the sustainable development of settlements and increase the environmental capacity of the locality and region as a whole, helping communities to be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

The provisions of this policy apply region-wide. However, the successful designation and management of green infrastructure will be particularly important in areas designated as regional hubs, where growth may impact on sites of international nature conservation importance (14) or where there is a need to enhance the existing environmental capacity of an area.

Local Policy

Hastings Local Plan 2004

- 2.9 The adopted Local Plan recognises that the most appropriate way to regard Hastings’ nature conservation resource is to view it as a holistic interdependent system of habitats and green spaces, some of which stretch outside the Borough. This resource is seen as a green network of different habitats and areas of land, water and landscape features. The Plan identifies a green network and Policy NC7 protects it:-

Policy NC7: The Green Network

A Green Network is indicated on the Proposals Map. Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would sever or intrude into it, or otherwise cause harm to its nature or purpose.

- 2.10 Policy NC7 and the Green Network indicated on the Proposals Map will be superseded by *Hastings Planning Strategy Policy EN2* set out below and by the Green Infrastructure Network shown on the Development Management Plan Policies Map. The Local Plan Proposals Map (2004) also identifies an Amenity Footpath Network comprising existing and proposed footpaths, with the aim of creating circular and linear walks taking in various areas of open space. The Network is protected by Policy OS5.

The Hastings Planning Strategy Submission version

- 2.11 The Hastings Planning Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2012. Objective 3(c) of the Strategy involves “identifying, protecting and improving a strategic Green Infrastructure network of green spaces, cycle and pedestrian routes, water and other environmental features, recognising the unique character of its functions.” The Strategy points out that the protection, management and enhancement of the network is particularly important in a dense urban area like Hastings. Policy EN2 states:

POLICY EN2: Green Infrastructure Network

By properly valuing nature and the benefits that arise from our natural environment and green spaces, we will establish and protect a green network comprising open space and nature conservation areas, to conserve and enhance priority natural areas, and the connections between them.

The green network will ensure that everyone has access to natural, semi-natural and managed open space, and will maximise opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. New development will contribute to this network.

The extent of the network will be established in the Development Management Plan and will be clearly shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

- 2.12 Policy EN5: Open Spaces – Enhancement, Provision and Protection sets out the strategic policy direction for the provision and management of open spaces as set out in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2006 (see paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 below). This policy provides for the progressive enhancement of existing open space provision rather than the creation of new provision, with priority given to sites within or adjacent to deprived neighbourhoods.
- 2.13 Policy CI2 protects existing planning fields and sports pitches in the town.

Policy CI2: Sports and Leisure facilities

Major sports and leisure facilities should be centrally located, or easily accessible to all of the community. Provision for casual recreation, such as multi-use games areas should be locally based within communities and where possible built in school partnership developments, which can maximise daytime use as well as community use outside school hours.

Playing fields and sports pitches will be identified as part of the green infrastructure network (see Policy EN2), and planning permission for the reduction in size or number of playing fields or sports pitches will only be granted where :

- a) existing facilities are of a poor and unsustainable quality and surplus to requirements; or**
- b) the proposal would serve to upgrade the sports facilities or re-instate them elsewhere on the site; or**
- c) the proposed development is necessary to meet an important national, regional or local need and alternative provision is made that enhances, or is equivalent to existing recreational facilities; or**
- d) in the case of an operating school site, the proposal is for educational purposes that are essential and cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere.**

2.14 Policy CI3 deals with children's play spaces. It provides that

Policy CI3: Children's play provision

The Council will require developers to design housing environments in which children have space to play informally and safely and where they have priority over vehicles, and where such spaces contribute to the provision of open space. Developer contributions will be sought to improve existing provision in proximity to the development, but where no good playgrounds exist within 600 metres or a 15-20 minute walking distance, new play facilities will be required.

In some neighbourhoods where it is not appropriate or viable to provide further equipped play areas, developers may be required to enhance community green spaces as an alternative.

The Development Management Plan Proposed Submission Version

2.15 The Development Management Plan (DMP) is scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State in July 2013. The Proposals Map will identify the extent of the Green Infrastructure Network in Hastings. The Plan will contain policies to protect Private Open Space, allotments and local green spaces. The Plan will also provide Design Briefs for significant development sites, which will identify where enhancements to the Green Infrastructure Network will be sought, taking account of the results of this study.

2.16 It can therefore be concluded that there is strong support at national, regional and local level for the creation, protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure Networks.

3. Standards applicable to Green Infrastructure

Introduction

- 3.1 It is important to make the distinction between open space standards and standards for green Infrastructure. At one level the National Playing Fields Association Standards measure the area of playing fields per head of population. The Borough Council's *Parks and Open Space Strategy 2006* took a different approach and was based on an Audit of whether existing public open space provision was adequate, having regard to quality and value to the community of individual sites. It placed each site in one of four categories from high quality/high value to low quality/low value. The Strategy concluded that the Community Strategy target of providing accessible open space within 300m of 90% of the household in the Borough has been met. The main focus of future work will be to improve the quality and value of existing open spaces, rather than creating new ones.
- 3.2 The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy provides a good starting point. It is however not comprehensive in its coverage of the green spaces which make up the Green Infrastructure Network, concentrating mainly on sites in Council control. Natural England provides the most widely used standards for assessing the adequacy of a Green Infrastructure Network.

Natural England – Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGst)

- 3.3 ANGst is a method of addressing the spatial distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace, in terms of its distribution at different size limits. The aim is to secure access to natural green space close to where people live. The standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have an accessible natural green space:-
- Of at least 2ha in size, no more than 300m from home;
 - At least one accessible 20ha site within 2 kilometres of home;
 - At least one accessible 100ha site within 5 kilometres of home;
 - At least one accessible 500ha site within 20 kilometres of home
 - Statutory Local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of 1 ha per 1000 population

Woodland Trust Woodland (WT) – Access Standard

- 3.4 These standards, developed partly from ANGst, aspire to increase public access to woodland :-
- That no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size,
 - That there should be also at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes
- 3.5 For the purposes of this study the Natural England Standards have been adopted. They are more comprehensive and, having been applied before in the South East, are capable of comparison. This is also consistent with Policy EN5 in the Hastings Planning Strategy.

Previous ANGst Assessments

An Analysis of Natural Greenspace Provision in the South East

- 3.6 In 2007, the Forestry Commission and Natural England undertook an assessment of greenspace provision in the South East using the ANGst standards, as part of the South East AONBs Woodlands Programme. The results allow a comparison to be made between provision in Hastings, East Sussex and the South East as a whole:-

	Hastings	East Sussex	South East
Within 300m of a 2ha+ site	43%	20%	20%
Within 2km of a 20ha+ site	88%	74%	66%
Within 5km of a 100ha+ site	99%	79%	77%
Within 10km of a 500ha site	2%	61%	45%
Meeting all ANGst standards	2%	6%	8%

Table 1: Assessment of Greenspace provision in the South East

- 3.7 On the basis of this analysis, Hastings performed better than East Sussex or the South East in three of the four standards. In particular the percentage of homes within 300m of a 2ha green space was more than double the county and regional average and is the second highest percentage for any council area in the South East. The poor performance in relation to the 10km standard has now been addressed and is discussed further below.

East Sussex County Council Strategic Open Space Study Final Draft 2011

- 3.8 This study looks at ANGst in terms of strategic open space of County wide significance. The three higher categories of the ANGst standards were considered. The 2ha sites were excluded as being of local importance. The results were very similar to those from the Forestry Commission Study. Hastings was found to meet the 20ha and 100ha standards but did not meet the 500ha standard. The Study does however point out that this is being addressed by the development of the Pebsham (now Combe Valley) Countryside Park, which is mainly in the neighbouring Rother District. Hastings will therefore meet all of the higher level standards. It is also interesting to note that the Study identifies Hastings as meeting the Woodland Trust standard of a 20ha woodland within 4km of every household.

4. Hastings Borough Council's ANGst Assessment

Landscape Character

- 4.1 The Natural England ANGst guidance stresses the importance of landscape character in determining the form of a Green Infrastructure Network. The County Council's *East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment* updated in 2010 identifies Hastings as being situated to the west of a series of sandstone headlands, which provide an interesting backdrop to the town. The bold landform of Hastings is recognised with substantial woodland exerting influence on the development of the town and providing dramatic views. The Assessment identifies a strong network of parks, open spaces and sheltered ghylls eroded into the sandstone landform.
- 4.2 The predominant landscape form of Hastings is a series of steep sided north - south valleys with intervening ridges leading to the sea. It is this landform that particularly influences the form of the Green Infrastructure Network in Hastings. Most green corridors lead north to south with cross town movement more difficult both for people and wildlife.

The ANGst Assessment

- 4.3 In order to inform this Study a new ANGst based assessment of Hastings has been undertaken. As its name suggests, an ANGst Assessment is primarily concerned with accessible natural and semi-natural green space. It does not therefore include all of the spaces that make up the Green Infrastructure Network. Cemeteries and playing fields for example have been excluded. The position is complicated by the fact that many of the green spaces in Hastings are multi-purpose and have therefore been included. The ANGst includes the following categories of green space:-
- National and local nature conservation sites
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Other Woodland
 - Country Parks
 - Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Accessible Institutional land
 - Open spaces
 - Multi-functional green spaces
 - Local green spaces
 - Accessible private open spaces
 - Accessible coast
- 4.4 These areas are indicated in Appendix B.
- 4.5 The results of the assessment confirm previous findings that Hastings is a town well endowed with green spaces. There are three large parks accessible to the local community. To the east is the 350ha Hastings Country Park; to the west the 500ha Combe Valley Countryside Park and in the centre of the town is Alexandra Park. Smaller green spaces and ecological sites are located throughout the town. An added bonus, not found in inland towns, is provided by the several miles of natural beaches and adjacent seafront in Hastings and St Leonards. This not only provides for summer recreation but can be enjoyed in winter by pedestrians and cyclists from the seafront promenade. Its inclusion in the ANGst assessment is therefore considered to be fully justified.

4.6 It is therefore not surprising that Hastings meets all of the higher level ANGst standards. Every home is within 2km of a 20ha site and within 5km of a 100ha site. As the Combe Valley Countryside Park develops every home will also be within 20km of a 500ha site.

4.7 The proportion of areas and homes within 300m of a 2 ha green space have been assessed on the basis of the Focus Areas first introduced through the Planning Strategy. The results are set out in tables 2 and 3. It can be seen that almost 90% of the total borough and 88.63% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha site. There are however areas of deficiency and these are shown in Appendix C.

Planning Focus Area	Total Area in Ha	Area in Ha within 300m	% Area within 300m	Area in Ha outside 300m	% Area Outside 300m
1: Little Ridge & Ashdown	420.4	383.86	91.31%	36.54	8.69%
2: Greater Hollington	340.94	323.7	94.94%	17.24	5.06%
3: Filsham & Bulverhythe	471.83	441.74	93.62%	30.09	6.38%
4: St Helen's	429.03	350.19	81.62%	78.84	18.38%
5: Silverhill & Alexandra Park	249.36	226.9	90.99%	22.46	9.01%
6: Maze Hill & Burtons' St Leonards	92.6	70.01	75.60%	22.59	24.40%
7: Central St Leonards & Bohemia	106.96	104	97.23%	2.96	2.77%
8: Hastings Town Centre	70.87	68.27	96.33%	2.6	3.67%
9: Old Town	43.55	43.55	100.00%	0	0.00%
10: West Hill	68.9	67.32	97.71%	1.58	2.29%
11: Hillcrest & Ore Valley	144.58	85.74	59.30%	58.84	40.70%
12: Clive Vale & Ore Village	160.4	142.56	88.88%	17.84	11.12%
13: Hastings Country Park	479.55	455.49	94.98%	24.06	5.02%
Total	3078.97	2763.33	89.75%	315.64	10.25%

Table 2: Area of the Borough accessible to green space of over 2Ha

Planning Focus Area	Total Homes	Homes within 300m	% of Homes within 300m	Homes outside 300m	% of Homes outside 300m
1: Little Ridge & Ashdown	3275	2700	82.44%	575	17.56%
2: Greater Hollington	4837	4613	95.37%	224	4.63%
3: Filsham & Bulverhythe	3554	3198	89.98%	356	10.02%
4: St Helen's	5056	4111	81.31%	945	18.69%
5: Silverhill & Alexandra Park	4721	4130	87.48%	591	12.52%
6: Maze Hill & Burtons' St Leonards	3108	2640	84.94%	468	15.06%
7: Central St Leonards & Bohemia	5893	5667	96.16%	226	3.84%
8: Hastings Town Centre	2341	2171	92.74%	170	7.26%
9: Old Town	1140	1140	100.00%	0	0.00%
10: West Hill	2540	2421	95.31%	119	4.69%
11: Hillcrest & Ore Valley	2180	1621	74.36%	559	25.64%
12: Clive Vale & Ore Village	3810	3298	86.56%	512	13.44%
13: Hastings Country Park	159	59	37.11%	100	62.89%
Total	42614	37769	88.63%	4845	11.37%

Table 3: Number of homes accessible to green space of over 2Ha

- 4.8 The Council's analysis indicates a much higher percentage of homes meeting the 300m standard than the earlier Forestry Commission Study in 2007. This adopted a narrow definition of natural green space, only including those areas that were wholly natural. The accessible coast was however included. As the purpose of the present study is to assess the accessibility and adequacy of the Green Infrastructure Network, a less rigorous view has been taken and it is considered that the inclusion of green spaces that contain both natural and more formal recreational areas is justified. A prime example of this is Alexandra Park, which combines the usual seaside attractions with natural areas of woodland and a lake. The accessibility of some green spaces has also improved since 2007. Summerfields Wood is an example of this.
- 4.9 Hastings also performs extremely well in terms of the number of statutory Local Nature Reserves in the Borough. On the Natural England standard of 1ha per 1000 population, 90ha of local reserves would be required (based on 2011 Census data). Hastings does in fact have 476ha.
- 4.10 The analysis has also been re-worked on the basis of including sites of less than 2ha to see what effect this has. This is due to the urban nature of the town, and the volume of smaller green spaces. The results are shown in table 4 and 5 and Appendix D. It can be seen that the percentage of areas of the town within 300m of a green space increases to nearly 98% and homes to 98.47%.

Planning Focus Area	Total Area in Ha	Area in Ha within 300m	% Area within 300m	Area in Ha outside 300m	% Area Outside 300m
1: Little Ridge & Ashdown	420.4	420.21	99.95%	0.19	0.05%
2: Greater Hollington	340.94	340.66	99.92%	0.28	0.08%
3: Filsham & Bulverhythe	471.83	454.09	96.24%	17.74	3.76%
4: St Helen's	429.03	405.09	94.42%	23.94	5.58%
5: Silverhill & Alexandra Park	249.36	244.67	98.12%	4.69	1.88%
6: Maze Hill & Burtons' St Leonards	92.6	90.26	97.47%	2.34	2.53%
7: Central St Leonards & Bohemia	106.96	106.96	100.00%	0	0.00%
8: Hastings Town Centre	70.87	70.53	99.52%	0.34	0.48%
9: Old Town	43.55	43.55	100.00%	0	0.00%
10: West Hill	68.9	68.9	100.00%	0	0.00%
11: Hillcrest & Ore Valley	144.58	132.49	91.64%	12.09	8.36%
12: Clive Vale & Ore Village	160.4	158.7	98.94%	1.7	1.06%
13: Hastings Country Park	479.55	478.32	99.74%	1.23	0.26%
Total	3078.97	3014.43	97.90%	64.54	2.10%

Table 4: Area of the Borough accessible to green spaces of all sizes

Planning Focus Area	Total Homes	Homes within 300m	% of Homes within 300m	Homes outside 300m	% of Homes outside 300m
1: Little Ridge & Ashdown	3275	3267	99.76%	8	0.24%
2: Greater Hollington	4837	4835	99.96%	2	0.04%
3: Filsham & Bulverhythe	3554	3343	94.06%	211	5.94%
4: St Helen's	5056	4895	96.82%	161	3.18%
5: Silverhill & Alexandra Park	4721	4676	99.05%	45	0.95%
6: Maze Hill & Burtons' St Leonards	3108	3079	99.07%	29	0.93%
7: Central St Leonards & Bohemia	5893	5893	100.00%	0	0.00%
8: Hastings Town Centre	2341	2317	98.97%	24	1.03%
9: Old Town	1140	1140	100.00%	0	0.00%
10: West Hill	2540	2540	100.00%	0	0.00%
11: Hillcrest & Ore Valley	2180	2064	94.68%	116	5.32%
12: Clive Vale & Ore Village	3810	3753	98.50%	57	1.50%
13: Hastings Country Park	159	159	100.00%	0	0.00%
Total	42614	41961	98.47%	653	1.53%

Table 5: Number of homes accessible to green spaces of all sizes

- 4.11 The section which follows analyses deficiencies in respect of access to sites of over 2ha and considers opportunities to address them for each of the Focus Areas. These are shown in Appendix C. Appendix E relates the areas of deficiency to the main development sites to be identified in the Development Management Plan.

5 Focus Areas

Focus Area 1: Little Ridge and Ashdown

- 5.1 Little Ridge and Ashdown Focus Area covers the north western part of the Borough adjacent to Rother District and countryside within the AONB. It is a mixed area of good quality housing and contains two of the town's main employers, the Conquest Hospital and the Child Support Agency. 91.31% of the area and 82.44% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha green space. The western part of the area is well provided, with the 40ha Marline Valley SSSI extending from the borough boundary southwards. Beyond this are extensive areas of open farmland.
- 5.2 The main area of deficiency is in the eastern part of the Focus Area, on both sides of Harrow Lane extending towards Battle Road. The northern part of the area of deficiency will benefit from the creation of open space at Holmhurst St Mary (development sites LRA1, 2 and 3 to be shown on the DMP Policies Map). The southern part of the area is relatively highly developed and there are no apparent opportunities for creating additional green space. The area is however only marginally outside the 300m boundary, is predominantly housing with gardens and is close to Silverhill Park, a green space of less than 2ha.
- 5.3 The DMP should flag up the opportunities for greater walking and cycling connectivity and for enhancing the Green Infrastructure Network in the area when the three sites at Holmhurst St Mary referred to above are developed. These opportunities should be fully exploited, particularly a connection with the open space to the east. This could allow a possible connection to the proposed strategic footpath/cycle route from the Town Centre to the Conquest Hospital (see section 6.3).

Focus Area 2: Greater Hollington

- 5.4 Greater Hollington contains a broad mix of housing, factory estates, retail and protected open space. Right at its heart is Church Wood and the neighbouring Robsack Wood, both ancient woodland, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves. There is also Hollington Park (comprising Ponswood and Gillsman's Wood) and many smaller green spaces. 94.94% of the area and 95.37% of homes are within 300m of a 2 ha green space. The main area of deficiency is within the Castleham industrial estate. A small number of homes on the eastern side of the area are outside the 300m boundary but they are close to school playing fields.
- 5.5 DMP development site GH1 offers opportunities to protect and enhance the ancient woodland at Church and Robsack Woods, through the provision of woodland buffers on boundaries and through a financial contribution to the management of these woods. The woodland buffers should be identified on the design brief for the site. The remaining development sites in Greater Hollington are smaller in scale and only offer very limited opportunities for green infrastructure.

Focus Area 3: Filsham and Bulverhythe

- 5.6 Extending from West Marina in the east and Queensway in the north, to the western boundaries of the borough, this is an area of contrast between C20 housing, commercial depots and wetlands. North of Bexhill Road there are two important Local Nature Reserves, South Saxon Wetlands and Filsham Reedbeds, within the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The southern part of the area has access to the coast, with a cycle route running the length of the Focus Area to

beyond the Borough boundary. The western part of the area is also adjacent to the Combe Valley Countryside Park. There is less green space in the eastern part of the Focus Area.

- 5.7 Overall 93.62% of the area and 89.98% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha green space. The main area of deficiency is in the north eastern part of the area. This is however an area of predominantly housing with generous gardens. The redevelopment of the Westerleigh School (site FB4) to the west will provide an opportunity to partly redress the balance by provide additional green space accessible to this area and this should be identified in a design brief for the site.
- 5.8 In the southern part of the Focus Area, the development of the site at Seaside Road (FB3) will provide opportunities to improve connectivity along the seafront, as well as providing some green space. Bulverhythe is not well endowed with green spaces but proximity to the coast and to the emerging Combe Valley Countryside Park will compensate for this. The development of the former West St Leonards Primary School (FB2) will provide a significant area of green space accessible to Bulverhythe and to areas to the east. Design briefs for sites FB2 and FB3 should identify opportunities for green space enhancement.
- 5.9 The re-development of the Grove School at the northern end of the Focus Area (site FB1) will also present a significant opportunity for green space enhancement and this should be identified in a design brief. Unfortunately this site will not benefit any of the areas of deficit.

Focus Area 4: St Helens

- 5.10 This Focus Area stretches from Parker Road in the east to the Conquest Hospital and from St Helens Road in the south up to the northern edge of the borough at The Ridge. It is dominated by St Helens Wood, a Local Nature Reserve, with meadowlands, woodlands, ponds and streams. Rather surprisingly it has one of the areas of greatest deficiency in the Borough with 81.62% of area and 81.31% of households within 300m of a green space. The deficit is mainly concentrated in the southern part of the Focus Area. It does not appear that this can be addressed because of the built-up nature of the area. The development opportunities in Focus Area 4 are mainly on The Ridge and would not benefit the southern part of the area. There is however a recreation ground on Elphinstone Road in the eastern part of the area of deficiency, which is marginally below the 2ha standard and school grounds in the western part. These provide some compensatory green space.
- 5.11 The development of sites SH1, SH2 and SH3 on The Ridge will provide opportunities for additional green space. Equally important, the DMP should point out that through site allocation details or design briefs, links on the Green Infrastructure Network with St Helens Wood to the south and Sandhurst recreation ground to the north west should be retained.

Focus Area 5 Silverhill and Alexandra Park

- 5.12 This Focus Area extends from the edges of the Town Centre to the Silverhill shopping centre in the north, following the course of Alexandra Park. The area is characterised by urban green spaces. To the west is Summerfields Woods, a Local Nature Reserve in a steep sided wooded valley, and to the south Linton Gardens. Alexandra Park runs along the northern and eastern boundaries of the Focus Area.

- 5.13 90.99% of area and 87.48% of homes are within 300m of a green space. The main area of deficiency is in the northern part of the Focus Area to the west of Sedlescombe Road North. Apart from the Silverdale Primary School at the northern end, the area of deficiency is fully developed and does not present any opportunities to enhance green space provision. The area is however relatively close to Alexandra Park.

Focus Area 6: Maze Hill and Burton St Leonards

- 5.14 This is one of the smallest Focus Areas. Burton St Leonards in the south is of great architectural and historic interest forming the core of the Regency New Town. Although 75.60% of area and 84.94% of homes are within 300m of a green space, the area is not particularly well endowed with open spaces, particularly in Maze Hill. The only green space of any size is the historic park on Quarry Hill. The southern part of the area does of course have ready access to the seafront and this improves the percentage rating of the Focus Area as a whole.
- 5.15 There are quite extensive areas of deficit in the northern and north eastern part of the Focus Area at St Leonards Green. This area is built up and does not present any opportunities for additional green space. It is however predominantly developed with houses with gardens and there is an open space of a size marginally below 2ha to the south of Markwick Terrace, accessible to the area of deficit. The development of the Westerleigh School (site FB4) in Focus Area 3 will also have some benefit.

Focus Area 7: Central St Leonards & Bohemia

- 5.16 Extending from White Rock Gardens in the east to Grand Parade in the west and inland to the Bohemia Road shopping area, this is the most densely populated of the Focus Areas and the second most deprived part of the Borough. Despite the population density, the Focus Area has some significant open spaces notably Warrior Square Gardens, White Rock Gardens and Gensing Gardens. 97.23% of area and 96.16% of households are within 300m of a 2ha green space. There is a small area of deficit in the centre of the Focus Area but this is close to Warrior Square Gardens, which is marginally below the 2ha standard. The southern part of the Focus Area enjoys good access to the coast.

Focus Area 8: Hastings Town Centre

- 5.17 This Focus Area extends from The Old Town in the east to White Rock in the west and inland as far as Summerfields Wood. There are no green spaces of 2ha or over in the town centre but the area has good access to the seafront. It is also ringed by open spaces – White Rock Gardens to the west, Summerfields Woods and Linton Gardens to the north, Alexandra Park to the north east and Hastings Castle to the east. Consequently 96.33% of area and 92.74% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha green space. There is a very small area of deficit around Devonshire Road but this is only marginally outside the 300m distance. Improved pedestrian/ cycle access to Alexandra Park would benefit this area (see section 6.3).

Focus Area 9: The Old Town

- 5.18 Hastings Old Town is the oldest part of the Borough, extending between the East and West Hill and between the beach and the head of The Bourne. It contains the densest housing in the Borough and has few green spaces of its own. It does however have good access to the seafront and is very close to the Hastings Country

Park and West Hill. 100% of area and 100% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha green space. No development sites have been identified in this area.

Focus Area 10 West Hill

- 5.19 This Focus Area stretches from the West Hill open space in the east to Mount Pleasant in the west and from the Castle to the edge of the Torfield Estate in the north. The area is well served by green spaces, most notably West Hill itself, which affords spectacular views across the town and sea, and the Castle grounds. These green spaces are however mainly in the south and east of the area. Nevertheless 97.71% of area and 95.31% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha green space. There is a small area of deficiency in the north western part of the area, which is only marginally outside the 300m distance. There are no development opportunities within this area.

Focus Area 11 Hillcrest and Ore Valley

- 5.20 This Focus Area stretches from West Hill in the south right up to and beyond The Ridge. It is an area of severe deprivation and has a concentration of social housing. It is also the Focus Area with the second highest percentage of green space deficiency, 59.30% of area and 74.36% of properties meet the 300m standard.
- 5.21 The majority of the existing and proposed green space in the Focus Area is concentrated in the southern, most highly populated part of the area. It is here that opportunities will arise to enhance the Green Infrastructure Network particularly with the development of sites HOV1, 2 and 3. Opportunities to help protect and enhance open spaces in the area should be identified in Design Briefs for these sites.
- 5.22 It is in the northern part of the area that the major deficiency occurs. A high proportion of this is within the Ivyhouse Lane Industrial Estate but there are two pockets of housing, one on Malvern Way just to the south of The Ridge and one pocket to the east of the A259 close to the borough boundary at Rock Lane.
- 5.23 There would not appear to be any obvious ways of addressing these deficiencies. The area on Malvern Way is only marginally outside the 300m distance and potential green spaces in the Ore Valley referred to above will be of some benefit. If the permission on site HOV4 should lapse, the opportunity to create additional green space within the development should be explored.
- 5.24 The area north of The Ridge does have access to open countryside. The submitted Rother District Core Strategy identifies an area between Ivyhouse Lane and Rock Lane as having the potential to provide a valuable amenity for surrounding areas, especially if access opportunities were improved. Policy HF1 of the Strategy seeks to treat the area in a holistic way, to secure environmental and access improvements in association with any development. This would benefit the area of deficit based on Rock Lane.

Focus Area 12: Clive Vale and Ore Village

- 5.25 Focus Area 12 extends up the Old London Road from the Old Town to Ore Village. 88.88% of area and 86.56% of homes are within 300m of a green space. On its eastern edge the area is bounded by the Hastings Country Park. The western part is more densely populated and has few open spaces. It is here that the Council is working towards a sustainable future for an area of heavily wooded valley in the

Upper Ore Valley that is in multiple ownership. This is potentially an important part of the Green Infrastructure Network, linking with green spaces in the Ore Valley to the south. It is important that this area retains its natural form, both to provide green space for the local community and to provide a wildlife corridor. The development of DMP sites CVO3 and 4 can also contribute towards achieving this aim. These opportunities should be identified in a design brief in the DMP.

- 5.26 There are two significant areas of deficit in the Focus Area. One is at the south western end of the area centred on Halton. This is primarily an area of housing with gardens and has a large allotment site at its centre, which provides some compensatory green space. A smaller second area of deficiency occurs at the northern end of the site. This is a heavily developed area and there are no obvious opportunities for enhancement. There is however a small recreation ground close by and this area will gain some benefit from the development of green spaces in the Ore Valley.

Focus Area 13: Hastings Country Park

- 5.27 The Hastings Country Park is the most important element of the Green Infrastructure Network in the town. It is made up of farmland, wooded glens and crumbling cliff tops and enjoys international designations for its wildlife and ecology. It is a special area providing a major resource for the people of Hastings to enjoy quiet recreation. Rather surprisingly, 98.70% of area and only 37% of homes are within 300m of a 2ha green space. This is because the Focus Area includes an area at Bachelor's Bump on the northern boundary of the Borough outside the County Park. This area does however mainly comprise housing with gardens and has good access to open countryside.

Conclusions of the ANGst analysis

- 5.28 This more detailed look at the Focus Areas re-enforces the conclusion that Hastings is a town which is well provided with green spaces. It is doubtful whether there are any other towns which have two major Country Parks on their doorstep, a variety of green spaces located throughout the built-up area and several miles of accessible coast. There is however no room for complacency and the ANGst based analysis does identify parts of the town which do not meet the 2ha standard. Unfortunately in a town as heavily developed as Hastings it is not easy to find opportunities to address this and the development sites identified in the DMP are not generally in the right areas to assist. However the areas identified as being deficient are only marginally outside the 300m limit and it is concluded that there is no part of the town sufficiently far from an accessible green space to require action through the DMP. Should opportunities arise to address deficiencies during the Plan Period they should be considered at the time.

6. Connectivity

- 6.1 The corridors which connect the green spaces are important both to people and wildlife. Wildlife mainly use the river and rail corridors that run north to south from the sea to The Ridge. They can also use domestic gardens as a means of moving between areas.
- 6.2 Hastings has a network of rights of way extending out into open countryside, which is shown in Appendix F, and many green spaces are served by public footpaths. The network is however fragmented and does not always link green spaces effectively. There is an excellent cycleway running the length of the Seafront but other parts of the town are not as well served.
- 6.3 In 2008 a report, commissioned by Hastings Borough Council – *Clean, Green and Safe Pedestrian/Cycle Routes in Hastings & St. Leonards*, was completed by Hastings Urban Bikes and the Ramblers Association. This report looked in depth at the existing pedestrian and cycle routes in the town and proposed a network of cycling and walking routes, many of which followed similar directions to the Hastings Greenway routes but also included a number of new links to parks and green spaces. The Study recommended that four strategic routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be pursued:-
- Seafront – eventually linking Bexhill to the west with Hastings Country Park to the east,
 - Northern – linking Hastings Town Centre with Conquest Hospital to the north,
 - North-eastern – linking Hastings Town Centre to Ore via the Ore Valley, and
 - North-western – linking Hastings Town Centre with the Hollington Area and potentially Combe Valley Countryside Park.
- 6.4 The *Hastings Planning Strategy Submission Version* recognises the importance of this network and it is indicated on the Key Diagram. Policy T3 states that particular priority will be given to, inter alia, “*supporting the provision of new and enhanced cycle routes in the town and, in particular, supporting the implementation of the strategic cycle network as identified on the Key Diagram*” and “*improving walking routes for pedestrians.*” The DMP Policies Map will show the existing and proposed strategic network in more detail.
- 6.5 In 2012 East Sussex County Council submitted a Local Sustainable Transport Fund Bid to Government, which included the strategic cycle network in Hastings. The bid was not successful but the County intends to implement the strategy from its own resources. The County will engage external consultants to undertake design work from April 2013 with a potential delivery over the next 3 to 5 years. The most challenging route is the one using railway land at the rear of the Sussex Coast College Hastings in the Town Centre.
- 6.6 It can be seen from Appendix G that the four strategic routes will link many of the major green spaces within the town and have the potential to link these with the two Country Parks either side of the town. If this network can be achieved it will be a significant contribution to the connectivity of the Green Infrastructure Network. It is however important that in undertaking the detailed design the Consultants appointed by the County Council take every opportunity to link green spaces in with the network and where possible the network is available to walkers as well as cyclists. It must be recognised however that some nature conservation sites are sensitive to increased recreational access and this needs to be taken into account. Otherwise more local

opportunities should be taken to improve access to the Green Infrastructure Network as and when they arise through development proposals (see 7.4 below).

7. Sources of Funding

- 7.1 This chapter examines ways in which the planning system can help to fund enhancements to the Green Infrastructure Network
- 7.2 Given the heavily built-up nature of Hastings, opportunities for the provision of new green infrastructure will be limited and are most likely to be associated with new development. The DMP will indicate where opportunities arise through Design Briefs for development sites and developers will be expected to make the necessary provision within their developments as part of the normal planning application process. Planning conditions may be used to achieve this.
- 7.3 The use of Agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (“Planning Obligations”) may be appropriate in certain circumstances to secure off-site enhancement of the Green Infrastructure Network. Planning Obligations can however only be used in limited circumstances where it is not possible to use planning conditions. They need to be directly related to the development, necessary to make the development acceptable and reasonably related in scale to the development. This could for example be the case where Hastings Planning Strategy Policy E13 applies and a developer is required to enhance an existing community green space.
- 7.4 Policy CI1 of the Planning Strategy requires development contributions in appropriate circumstances. The Council has adopted a Development Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) requiring developments of 15 or more dwellings to make appropriate contributions to open space provision and management. Such contributions can assist towards the enhancement of the Green Infrastructure Network. The County Council also require contributions towards “Sustainable Transport” from most developments. These should, in appropriate circumstances, be used to improve the pedestrian/cycle network linking green spaces and the County Council should be encouraged to do this.
- 7.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tariff based method of securing development contributions, which is intended to largely replace the existing Planning Obligations regime. It allows Councils to seek contributions to a wider range of infrastructure, not as closely related to individual sites. The Council has not yet made a decision to implement CIL. It has undertaken a Stage 1 Assessment with other East Sussex Districts and the results of Stage 2 are awaited. The early indications are however that, because of poor market conditions and difficult sites in Hastings, CIL is not likely to generate significant resources for infrastructure provision.

8. Management Considerations

- 8.1 The management of green spaces are not normally a planning consideration. However in the case of Hastings, where opportunities for creating new green infrastructure are limited, the management of the existing network assumes a greater importance. It is considered that the policies of the Planning Strategy and the DMP provide sufficient protection for existing green spaces and will ensure their retention. The Council policy contained in the *Parks and Open Space Strategy 2006* of improving the quality of existing green spaces, rather than providing new ones, would also appear to have been successful. It is important that Council controlled green spaces should be managed as much for their biodiversity as for their more formal recreational value and opportunities should be taken where practical to introduce natural ecological features. Owners of private green spaces should also be encouraged to increase the ecological value of their sites.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Hastings is relatively well provided with green spaces compared with many other towns. The ANGst based assessment has identified areas of deficiency in terms of the lower order green spaces (those between 2ha and 20ha) but it is not considered that any area of the town is sufficiently far from a green space to merit action in the DMP. In terms of the higher level green spaces (20ha, 100ha and 500Ha), Hastings performs extremely well with 100% of homes within the specified distance.
- 9.2 An appraisal of the development sites to be identified in the DMP indicates that some will present significant opportunities to enhance the Green Infrastructure Network when development takes place, but these are not generally in areas of deficiency. The following sites have particular potential to benefit the network:
- Focus Area 1 Sites LRA 1, 2 and 3.
 - Focus Area 2 site GH1.
 - Focus Area 3 sites FB1, 2 and 3.
 - Focus Area 4 sites SH1, 2 and 3.
 - Focus Area 11 sites HOV1, 2 and 3.
 - Focus Area 12 sites CVO3 and 4 and adjacent woodland
- 9.3 The opportunities for green infrastructure enhancement on each of these sites should be identified in design briefs in the DMP.
- 9.4 The corridors that link the Green Infrastructure Network are very important and the decision of the County Council to fund the four strategic cycle routes in Hastings is very welcome. The Consultants that undertake the detailed investigation of routes should be encouraged to seek to link as many green spaces as possible and to ensure that the routes are as far as practicable also available to pedestrians.
- 9.5 Finally the existing Council policy of improving the quality of existing green spaces should continue, with emphasis being given to increasing their biodiversity.

Appendices

Appendix A – Green Infrastructure Network

Appendix B – Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) over 2Ha

Appendix C – Homes within 300m of an Accessible Natural Greenspace over 2Ha

Appendix D – Homes within 300m of an Accessible Natural Greenspace (all sizes)

Appendix E – Homes within 300m of an Accessible Natural Greenspace over 2Ha (including DMP development sites)

Appendix F – Green Infrastructure Network and Rights of Way

Appendix G – Green Infrastructure Network and cycle routes