

Natural Woking

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy



The Basingstoke Canal and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) headquarters in central Woking (WBC)

www.woking.gov.uk

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Executive Summary

Biodiversity is a key element of the vision of a sustainable Borough. Through Natural Woking, the Council's first biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy, we want to promote and celebrate the Borough's diverse countryside and urban environments, while enhancing accessibility to our natural habitats and wildlife.

Parallel to this, we want to highlight the benefits that enjoying our green spaces can bring including to our own health and well-being. Ensuring biodiversity security and protection for the benefit of future generations are also essential.

Natural Woking is another piece in the jigsaw setting out the Council's strategic direction for a sustainable Woking. It is long term in its outlook and runs to 2050, defining the vision, aims and ambitions for the Council as well as the wider aspirations for the Borough that we think we can achieve by working together.

Throughout this 'living' Strategy we signpost to further information and technical details which can be found in the Strategy's accompanying Supporting Information document.

The Council cannot deliver this vision on its own – collaborative working with partners will be essential in achieving the objectives of the Strategy. In this way, we hope that the Strategy is a document that is accessible by the variety of readers for whom it is intended ranging from school children, to householders, to developers and land owners, to Council staff and Councillors. Together we can positively influence our natural environment of our Borough for generations to come.

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A Supporting Information document is also available, which provides more detail and guidance to deliver the aims of the Natural Woking Strategy.

This is available at www.woking.gov.uk/environment/greeninf/naturalwoking

Supporting Information - Appendices

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1 Introduction and Ambitions



Hoe Valley Scheme, Woking (WBC)

- 1.1 Biodiversity is a key element of the vision of a sustainable Borough. Natural Woking is another piece in the jigsaw setting out the Council's strategic direction for a sustainable Woking, with clear links to Woking 2050 and the Woking Core Strategy and policies.
- 1.2 Woking 2050 (the Council's Climate Change Strategy adopted in September 2015) provides an overarching vision to coordinate our efforts to create a sustainable Borough by reducing our impact on the environment. It looks at the type of place and community we hope Woking Borough will be and how we can all help shape and achieve it.
- 1.3 The vision for Woking in 2050 is a Borough:
 - that protects and enhances its **high quality natural environment**;
 - where resources are used wisely and **biodiversity is conserved**;
 - that has a built environment that is **developed sustainably**, which meets local needs and enables the local economy to prosper; and
 - that recognises, prepares and adapts to the socio-economic; environmental and demographic **changes that the future will bring**.
- 1.4 The Core Strategy (the local plan for development) says by 2027 the Borough will be: *'A green Borough where people will have easy access to good quality open spaces and infrastructure for recreation and leisure'*. Steps towards this include ensuring green infrastructure provision keeps pace with growth and preserving, enhancing and making accessible local biodiversity features. Both Woking 2050 and the Core Strategy sit within a wider context of county, national, European and international policy.

- 1.5 This Strategy looks to take forward these ambitions for the Borough with regards to Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure. It sets out how the Council will work with partners to ensure biodiversity protection and security while also enhancing accessibility to our natural habitats and wildlife and promoting the benefits that enjoying our green spaces can bring, including to our own health and well-being.
- 1.6 It sets out the Council's strategic approach to green infrastructure in the Borough by identifying the existing network and identifying gaps for potential new provision. It also looks to connect the individual elements to make strong recreational, ecological and environmental networks in Woking Borough.
- 1.7 Demographic and socio-economic changes will inevitably shape our environment and see changes to the local landscape. This is particularly relevant in the context of the growth and economic development agenda for Woking Borough. This may mean a change in approach to green space across the Borough. Inevitably we will need to move towards a whole view of Borough green space management and creation and away from preserving the status quo. This will enable us to proactively enable more high quality habitats and good physical connections between these; and to benefit wildlife and local people alike; as well as conserving biodiversity and maintaining existing species and their habitats. This approach will also better prepare for and respond to the inevitable changes in climate predicted for our area (see also [Woking 2050](#)).
- 1.8 The Core Strategy plans for the sustainable development of almost 5,000 additional homes, 28,000 sq. m of additional office space, 20,000 sq. m of warehouse floorspace, and 93,000 sq. m of additional retail floorspace between 2010 and 2027, supported by infrastructure including new natural and recreational assets. Natural Woking seeks to balance these environmental and ecological needs with the development and economic needs of the Borough.
- 1.9 This Strategy is for everyone – it aims to provide guidance for local residents, community groups, developers, land managers. It will also guide future initiatives of the Council and its partners and planning decision-making.

Definitions

- 1.10 Biodiversity encompasses all living things and the rich variety of habitats, species and ecosystems of which they are a part. It is not restricted to rare or threatened habitats and species, but includes the whole of the natural world from the common place to the critically endangered.

“Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet. Biodiversity is important for its own sake, and human survival depends upon it.”

Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services

- 1.11 Priority species and habitats that are found in Surrey, and are therefore known to be or are potentially found in Woking Borough, are listed in Surrey Wildlife Trust's *Biodiversity and Planning in Surrey* Appendix II.

1.12 Conserving biodiversity is about not only maintaining existing species and their habitats but also proactively enabling more high quality habitats and good physical connections between these, to benefit wildlife and local people, now and in the future (biodiversity security). The Council wants to promote and celebrate our diverse countryside and urban environments while also enhancing accessibility to our natural habitats and wildlife, with the many benefits this can bring.

1.13 Green infrastructure is defined as:

“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.” National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, page 52)

1.14 Green infrastructure is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of natural and managed land uses. For the purposes of ensuring a comprehensive strategy with clear actions, the Council has broken green infrastructure into six broad categories:

- Biodiversity – ecology;
- Open Space and Recreation;
- Open countryside;
- Blue infrastructure (e.g. watercourses, ponds, lakes, sustainable drainage systems (SuDs), floodplains, wetlands);
- Food/crop growing; and
- Landscape.

Appendix 1 in the Supporting Information Document provides more information about these.

1.15 The Core Strategy defines green infrastructure to include:

Parks and gardens (including private gardens)	Cemeteries and churchyards
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Accessible countryside
Green corridors	River and canal corridors
Outdoor sports facilities	Green roofs and walls
Amenity greenspace	Trees
Provision for children and teenagers	SuDS
Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	Living roofs, walls, bird and bat boxes

1.16 Well-integrated and connected green infrastructure assets provide greater benefits both to the community and to wildlife habitats. The creation of priority habitats to link existing fragmented habitats is an important aspect of conservation action highlighted through initiatives such as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA).

1.17 There are a number of ways to make connections and create links between existing green infrastructure features. Multifunctional links and spaces are ideal. These could be new cycle ways, other green links such as amenity green space, tree lined avenues, or providing sustainable drainage systems. There is no one approach that fits all - the strengthening of an area’s green infrastructure network is a flexible and iterative

process. The most appropriate method or route for enhancement will depend on the circumstances of a site together with a clear vision for what is to be achieved.



This image shows how multi-functional green assets can be combined to create a network (Landscape Institute, Michael Wood)

- 1.18 Green infrastructure is made up of different landscape elements, which can often be considered as separate entities, but it is important that it is viewed as a whole landscape which exceeds the sum of the individual parts. This is an overarching principle of green infrastructure, alongside biodiversity connectivity and networks (Landscape Institute Position Statement Green Infrastructure: connected and multifunctional landscapes). The image above illustrates these principles, showing a combination of separate but linking landscape elements.
- 1.19 See the glossary at Appendix 6 of the Supporting Information Document for more definitions.

Benefits of Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 1.20 The complexity of biodiversity means that while every species and habitat has its unique benefits, each also has an important role to play in securing a healthy and secure ecosystem as a whole. It is generally accepted that greater diversity in species ensures an overall improved and more resilient natural sustainability for all species and habitats. This in turn results in healthier ecosystems which are better able to cope, adapt and recover from a variety of disasters or from the changing climate. There is a wealth of research available on evaluating diversity – stability relationships of biodiversity and ecosystems, some of which is available here <http://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/biodiversity-and-ecosystem-stability-17059965>

“Greater biodiversity in ecosystems, [species](#), and individuals leads to greater stability. For example, species with high genetic diversity and many populations that are adapted to a wide variety of conditions are more likely to be able to weather disturbances, disease, and [climate change](#). Greater biodiversity also enriches us with more varieties of foods and medicines”

Center for Biological Diversity

(http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/biodiversity/elements_of_biodiversity/index.html)

- 1.21 The *Making Space for Nature* report (2010) recommends taking proactive steps to support ‘more, bigger, better and joined up’ habitats, green ways and spaces. This approach can deliver a wide range of rewards. The environmental, biological, human and economic benefits of biodiversity and green infrastructure are captured in Appendix 2 of the Supporting Information Document.
- 1.22 This Strategy looks at ways to support and strengthen biodiversity and the green infrastructure network in Woking Borough to maximise these potential benefits. Map 24 of the accompanying Natural Woking Supporting Information document illustrates the geography of green infrastructure opportunities in the Borough.

Greening our urban environment

- 1.23 Urban environments can provide a surprising abundance of wildlife and species. It is not just wide open spaces that support our wildlife. The towns and cities in which we live provide a thriving home for many species of trees, plants, mammals, birds...the list goes on. This in turn highlights the diversity of habitats needed for a range of species.
- 1.24 The urban environment, with its variety of buildings and activities, provides many opportunities for species to inhabit:

“Many urban habitats are areas dominated by human activities and human constructions. These include towns, cities and associated landscapes, such as landfill sites. It can almost be described as a patchwork of other habitats where buildings are artificial cliffs, sewers and drains are waterways, and parks, gardens and brownfield sites provide forests and meadows. Animals which have adapted to the urban environment are tolerant of the light and noise generated by human activity, and take advantage of the heat and the abundant food sources.”

BBC Nature (www.bbc.co.uk/nature/habitats/Urban_ecosystem)

- 1.25 Behind the scenes, these urban species and habitats hold many unseen benefits. These are captured in Appendix 2.
- 1.26 Between 2012 and 2014, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives’ (ICLEI) UrbRes project studied the links between urbanisation and biodiversity and its many benefits. Details of the project are available here www.cbc.iclei.org/about-urbes.
- 1.27 Sometimes, however, nature needs a helping hand. To enable our urban wildlife to continue to thrive, there are some positive measures we can take. The action plan accompanying this strategy holds further detail but some examples of how we can help include:
- The way we manage our urban spaces can positively impact many different species. Allowing trees to fall naturally (where appropriate), and dead wood to remain, can provide microhabitats for many species of fungi, lichen, invertebrates and birds. Dead wood is also extremely important for nutrient cycling.

- Urban trees are “increasingly regarded as vital components of urban ecosystems” (Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), 2015) as they provide benefits including cleaning the air we breathe by trapping pollution; supporting wildlife; carbon storage; and insulation of buildings.
- Integrating biodiversity into the built environment is an increasingly important element of sustainable design. For example, installing boxes in new development can provide homes for many species of bats.

1.28 The urban environment is however under pressure too. Ipsos MORI polls commissioned by the RHS in 2005 and 2015 showed that around three times as many front gardens are now completely paved over compared to ten years ago equating to a total increase of 15 square miles.

“With 90 per cent of UK residents living in built-up areas, the need to green our cities and towns has never been more important” (*RHS The Garden November 2015*)

1.29 The RHS launched their Greening the Grey campaign in April 2015. The aim of the campaign is to “transform soulless grey areas into living, planted places that enrich lives”. Whether you have a large garden or a modest window box, the RHS has a wealth of ideas and inspiration available on their website at www.rhs.org.uk/ggb.

1.30 The RHS promotes the benefits of gardens for people, plants, wildlife and the environment. In addition to the benefits outlined earlier in this section, gardening also offers mental and physical health benefits and can increase the visual appeal of your property.

1.31 RHS launched the Promise to Plant campaign with the aim of transforming 6,000 grey spaces into planted areas by the end of 2017.

Wider Context

1.32 These ambitions are shared, endorsed and in some cases enforced by other plans, policies, regulations and processes.

1.33 These are already helping the Council to build a network of connected natural spaces for local people and wildlife to use and enjoy. These are summarised in Appendix 3 within the Supporting Information document.

Baseline

1.34 The Borough’s current biodiversity status and green infrastructure provision is summarised in Appendix 4 of the Supporting Information Document. This represents a baseline from which we will be able to gauge the effects of this Strategy.

Threats and Pressures

1.35 There are many factors which threaten the area’s biodiversity and green infrastructure network. Some of the key issues are summarised below:

- Climate change and pollution.

- Habitat loss or damage through development, directly or indirectly.
- Habitat loss, degradation or decline through lack of management.
- Habitat fragmentation.
- Invasive species.
- Lack of knowledge about species and habitats.

1.36 Surrey Wildlife Trust has explored these issues more fully in the context of their A Living Landscape for Surrey BOA work, see www.surreywildlifetrust.org/

Working Together

1.37 It will be important to work together to make these things happen, joining up agendas and organisations and embedding these aims in all day to day decisions affecting our homes, businesses and public services.

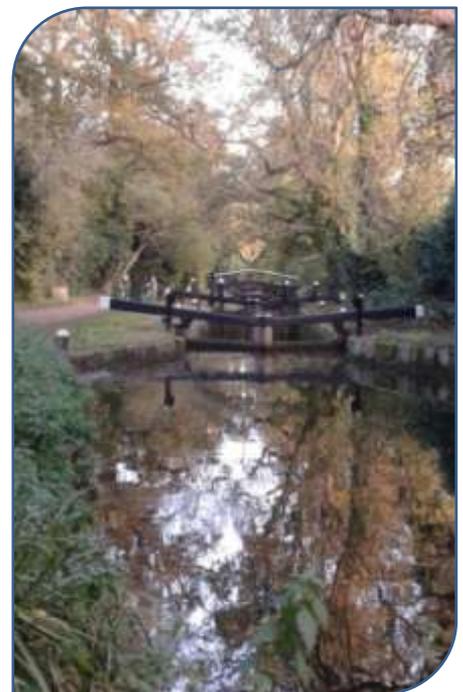
1.38 Appendix 5 outlines some of the achievements that the Council, together with its partners and stakeholders, has made to date including the Hoe Valley scheme.

1.39 The Council will support partners' projects to protect and grow biodiversity in the Borough. Examples of these include the Great Crested Newt pilot with Natural England; former Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan, Surrey Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) and work with the Wey Landscape Partnership (WLP) on projects to improve the water environment). It will also ensure a joined up green infrastructure network that links places within Woking Borough with surrounding areas, regardless of administrative boundaries.

This Strategy

1.40 To achieve the green habitats and accessible routes set out in the Council's long-term visions for the area we need to plan and act now. This introduction has highlighted the Borough's current biodiversity status and green infrastructure provision, the threats and pressures these face, and the positive steps already being taken.

1.41 This Strategy provides a framework for action. The rest of this document explains what we are aiming to achieve between now and 2050 (see Aims and principles) and how we will work to deliver these, through an action plan and progress monitoring (see Delivery). The Appendices in the accompanying Supporting Information Document provide additional information, including a glossary of terms (Appendix 6), links to more information (Appendix 7) and guidance for a range of readers (Appendix 8).



Basingstoke Canal (WBC)

2 Aims and principles

- 2.1 The Council is committed to achieving a Borough with high environmental quality where people will choose to live, work and visit. Woking 2050 and the Core Strategy are tenacious in their long-term efforts to reduce our impact on the environment and to plan for sustainable growth.
- 2.2 Ensuring excellent quality, connected green spaces and a richness of wildlife habitats will contribute strongly to making this vision a reality. The previous section outlined the key issues and challenges we face to deliver these.
- 2.3 This Strategy is driven by clear long-term ambitions for Woking Borough. However it is not just talk, it is a statement of intent.
- 2.4 The Strategy is about how we can all do things differently – individually and together – to make a difference to our places and people, habitats and the species which live there. The Council will work to the following guiding principles.

Guiding principles

Living spaces: Restore and expand habitats for priority species enhancing the links between these (reducing fragmentation).

Access: Build a publicly accessible, ecologically sensitive, strategic network of open spaces, green and waterways, especially to and from our urban centres'.

Urban life: Adapt and increase biodiversity and green space in our urban centres and surrounds (as well as in villages and the countryside).

Productive places: Make the most of our buildings, streets, watercourses and landscapes, taking opportunities for multifunctional use and capitalising on all funding sources.

Responsive: Protect natural resources, proactively adapt to the direct and indirect changes in climate and population, ensure appropriate estate management and support new development.

Wild about Woking: Promote knowledge of the value and beauty of all faces of Woking Borough's natural environment (town and countryside) and the benefits of getting involved, as a responsible individual, a community group or a business (green economy).

Legacy: Protect and strengthen the resilience of the green infrastructure network and biodiversity, now and for future generations to enjoy.

- 2.5 The following are specific objectives to help to focus action to achieve these aims and inform the specific actions in the Woking Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan.

Living Spaces

Restore and expand habitats for priority species enhancing the links between these (reducing fragmentation).

1. Identify measures to affect the recovery of specific priority wildlife species populations, including by reducing habitat fragmentation and ensuring their favourable condition.
2. Protect and, where possible, enhance designated sites, protected and priority species, and wildlife in the wider environment.
3. Create new green infrastructure, designed to enhance linkages within and outside developments and to maximise their value for species.
4. Ensure ecologically important greenspaces, routes and nature reserves are well managed, including to support biodiversity and improve connectivity.
5. Encourage and support a voluntary network of recorders and recording groups.



Woodland mice (James Sellen)



Brookwood Country Park meadow (liz freemont landscape architecture)

Access

Build a publicly accessible, ecologically sensitive, strategic network of open spaces, green and waterways, especially to and from our urban centres.

6. Create opportunities for green features, walkable / cyclable by all, to permeate into our towns and villages from surroundings countryside (green corridors / greenways).
7. Improve the condition of existing cycle ways (particularly towards Bisley, Woodham/ New Haw and south of Woking town), public rights of way and bridleways.
8. Create and encourage new cycle networks that avoid busy fast roads, are well-signposted and with ample cycle parking.
9. Expand green space and outdoor recreational opportunities for people and wildlife.
10. Protect existing green and open spaces except where justified or outweighed by other clear benefits to the Borough (see [Core Strategy policies](#)).
11. Improve the condition and expand the use of existing Council owned and other public open spaces and facilities.
12. Seek opportunities to provide more new open space, particularly where existing provision is limited (see the [Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Audit](#)).
13. Make improvements to promote greater use of the main waterway corridors and other water assets (lakes, ponds) as wildlife and recreational assets (blue corridors).
14. Maximise access to green space within and in reach of new developments.
15. Encourage the beneficial use of the Green Belt open countryside through improved access, creating opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, retaining and enhancing landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity, or improving damaged or derelict land (see [NPPF](#)).



Brookwood Cemetery (WBC)



Horsell Common (WBC)

Urban Life

Adapt and increase biodiversity and green space in our urban centres and surrounds, as well as villages and the countryside.

16. Retaining existing and maximising opportunities for new green landscape features (such as trees, green roofs and walls) to enliven our urban areas (retrofitting in town and village centres and suburbs).
17. Promote opportunities for integrating biodiversity into the built environment.
18. Encourage innovative provision for biodiversity through greening new developments and improving existing and/or creating new connections or provision to the network.
19. Introduce more open space and recreation into urban environments.
20. Protect and, where possible enhance, the Borough's watercourses in the urban area, for both wildlife and recreation.



Green walls, Paris (WBC)



Peregrine falcon in Woking Town Centre (James Sellen)

Responsive

Protect natural resources, adapt to the direct and indirect changes in climate and population, ensure appropriate estate management and support new development.

21. Reduce flood risk to people, wildlife and property in the Borough through flood risk management and by identifying and bringing forward opportunities for Flood Alleviation Schemes.
22. Manage water as a finite natural resource.
23. Improve the water quality and ecology of the main water channels and their tributaries in the Borough: the River Wey, Hoe Stream, the Basingstoke Canal, River Bourne and The Wey Navigation.
24. Support planned sustainable development of some Green Belt countryside in accordance with the Core Strategy (and other Local Development Documents).
25. Ensure all development incorporates a well designed and maintained SuDS and other water management solutions.
26. Integrate well-maintained SuDS, flood and other water management solutions in existing and development, and design these to maximise their ecological value by incorporating a variety of habitats.
27. Help to retrofit well designed and maintained SuDS and other water management solutions where suitable to existing developments.
28. Protect and, where possible, enhance, watercourses and their associated habitats as a water resource.
29. Protect and, where possible, improve the Borough's soils for food production and water quality protection.
30. Encourage and support opportunities to include responsible environmental practices during site development e.g. habitat creation during and post development through hibernacula, ponds, corridors/pathways etc.



Blue infrastructure (WBC)



Comma butterfly (WBC)

Productive Places

Make the most of our buildings, streets, watercourses and landscapes, taking opportunities for multifunctional use and capitalising on all funding sources.

31. Encourage full use of existing allotments and increase capacity if there is significant unsatisfied high demand within the Borough.
32. Maximise opportunities to recycle soil during construction projects, in situ or for alternative re-use off site.
33. Supporting edible landscapes - community food growing and orchards.



Arable agriculture (WBC)



Orchard produce (WBC)

Wild about Woking

Promote knowledge of the value and beauty of all faces of Woking Borough's natural environment (town and countryside) and the benefits of getting involved, as a responsible individual, a community group or a business (green economy).

34. Promote the benefits of enjoying the outdoors, for our health and spirits (simply making us feel better).
35. Embed biodiversity in decision making throughout the Council and encourage partners to do the same.
36. Support communities to engage with the landscape and with nature: build and share widely knowledge of opportunities to learn about, conserve, restore and connect biodiversity.
37. Support the Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre to gather, share and make available comprehensive high quality biodiversity data.
38. Encourage movement between green spaces by active modes of travel (such as walking or cycling).
39. Make links with healthcare activities and prevention programmes.



Kingfisher Bank, Goldsworth Park (WBC)



Goldsworth Park visitor group (WBC)

Legacy

Protect and strengthen the resilience of the green infrastructure network now and for future generations to enjoy

40. Maximise opportunities to secure external funding for short to medium-term improvements and ensure long-term management and maintenance.
41. Protect and value the Borough's best landscape and townscape character and features, whilst ensuring well-designed development that sits comfortably in its context.
42. Conserve and enhance the locally distinctive character of historic built environment as Conservation Areas whilst supporting well-designed new development.



Horsell Common (WBC)



Commercial Way, Woking (WBC)

3 Delivery

- 3.1 The Strategy will enable the Council and its partners to plan for specific projects and actions and to direct resources to delivering biodiversity and green infrastructure gains in the Borough.
- 3.2 This section explains how biodiversity and green infrastructure improvements will be delivered and how the results of these efforts will be monitored, to ensure overall positive benefits for both wildlife and local people.

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan

- 3.3 Woking Borough Council will develop a Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan with Woking Local Action 21 and partners to maintain and enhance green spaces and local biodiversity.
- 3.4 The Plan will identify clear actions and priorities for local habitats and green infrastructure and will outline what action is required.

Implementation

- 3.5 In the main, the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan will focus on habitats within the Council's land holding since this is where the Council can have more of a direct impact. It is however important that the Council seeks to work in partnership with other organisations, residents, landowners and developers to coordinate action for biodiversity across the Borough as a whole and, beyond the Borough boundaries. Making the ambitions of this Strategy a reality will require the cooperation of many organisations and individuals.
- 3.6 The need to identify and conserve distinctive natural features that are of special value to local communities is integral to the UK's own Biodiversity 2020 strategy. While much can be achieved at a national level by, for example, setting the frameworks for policy and expenditure, it is the enthusiasm and support of people, in their local communities and work places that will bring about a truly sustainable society.
- 3.7 In this way, we recognise the importance of working in partnership to achieve these aims with organisations including Horsell Common Preservation Society; Surrey Wildlife Trust; the Basingstoke Canal Authority; the WWF; Woking Local Action 21; and Surrey County Council.
- 3.8 Developers will play a significant role in delivering green infrastructure and biodiversity gains. In particular the strategic development sites proposed through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) are an important opportunity to introduce new natural and formal spaces, greenways and habitats on site, connecting these to surrounding existing and other new provision. Smaller development proposals will bring forward smaller, incremental improvements or may be required to pay towards off-site provision via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 legal agreements.

3.9 The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan will identify who the main responsible bodies are and the potential funding streams that could help to fulfil these objectives.

Work in hand

3.10 There are a wealth of existing projects that will assist us in developing the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan. The Council and local organisations have already delivered a number of biodiversity and green infrastructure improvements in the Borough and more are underway.

3.11 Appendix 5 provides case studies on the existing projects and initiatives already in hand to support biodiversity and strengthen the green infrastructure network:

- Hoe Stream.
- Wildflowers.
- (BOA) - work to embed the concept of BOAs across the county.
- Improvements to Walking and Cycle network.
- Brookwood Country Park Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).
- Operation Owl.

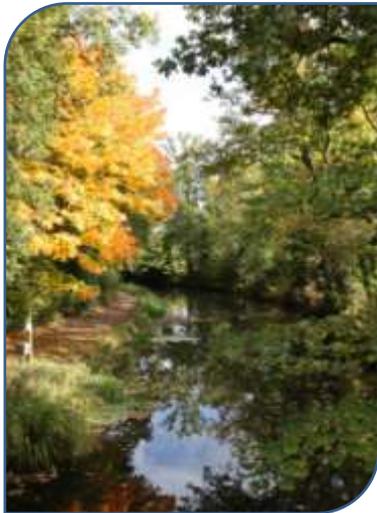


Hoe Valley scheme (WBC)

3.12 The Council also provides a range of public services, which work towards the aims of this Strategy. Examples include:

- Provision, maintenance and improvement of parks, playing fields and other green spaces.
- Green waste recycling - green waste, such as wood chippings collated from maintenance work in council owned public spaces are reused in various allotments in Woking Borough.
- Public realm improvements - incorporating more green infrastructure into the urban fabric - for example: Commercial Way, Woking Town Centre.
- Tree planting programme along public highways.

- Wildflower areas along verges and selected roundabouts.
- Collaborative working with local environmental groups on various biodiversity projects e.g. Surrey Heathland Project; Surrey Wildlife Trust on Westfield Common; Woking Local Action 21 Biodiversity Partnership projects.



Basingstoke Canal between St John's and Woking (WBC)



Gresham Mill, Old Woking (WBC)



River Wey through Gresham Mill (WBC)

- 3.13 Natural England's Favourable Conservation Status pilot project is an example of an external project with which the Council is pleased to be a part, trialling an innovative approach to assist biodiversity and green infrastructure in the Borough (see Appendices 9 and 10).

How YOU can make a difference

- 3.14 Everyone can make a difference, even the smallest action of the right kind will help towards a more biodiverse and accessible natural environment in Woking Borough.
- 3.15 Appendix 8 provides guidance for a variety of readers - for local people, land managers and community groups, developers, Planning Committee members and officers – on what you can do to help. If you have any questions, please contact us at [<greeninfrastructure@woking.gov.uk>](mailto:greeninfrastructure@woking.gov.uk)

Monitoring

- 3.16 The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan will be monitored by the Climate Change Working Group, which also monitors Woking 2050.
- 3.17 A number of indicators will be closely monitored to assess success in delivering the aims of this Strategy and individual actions identified in the Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Action Plan. An indicative list of possible indicators and information sources is set out below.
- Surrey County Council statistics on Local Biodiversity Sites where there has been positive conservation management NI 197.

- Water Framework Directive (for example, re-naturalisation of banks, reduction of flood risk resulting from natural flood risk management).
- Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan monitoring on targets.
- Natural England published data on the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- Surrey Wildlife Trust surveys on Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) (rolling programme of surveys).
- Information on the progress of the countryside works programme.
- Number of planning applications permitted against the advice from Natural England or Surrey Wildlife Trust.
- The percentage of major applications permitted incorporating specific measures to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- Net change in amount of green infrastructure.
- Developer contribution secured towards green infrastructure provision.
- Delivery of Open Space items listed in the infrastructure schedule.
- Amount of formal and informal open space.
- Monitoring linked with the open space audit.
- Status of three protected birds species: Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler.
- Amount of SANG land available.
- Amount of developer contributions secured towards [Strategic Access Management and Monitoring \(SAMM\)](#) and SANG.
- Condition of Special Protection Area (SPA) land monitored by Natural England.
- Number of new bike parking facilities.
- Visitor monitoring survey.

- 3.18 Opportunities will be taken to share data throughout the Council and with its partners, to efficiently obtain a comprehensive picture of biodiversity and green infrastructure in Woking Borough. This could include shared indicators with the monitoring process for the Core Strategy, the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 3.19 A full review of this Strategy will take place after ten years, however, if there are signs of significant change within that period then a review will be considered after five years.



Brookwood Country Park (Iiz freemont landscape architecture)



Bees on foxglove (WBC)

4 Thank you

4.1 To ensure that the Natural Woking biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy is an effective tool delivering real outcomes on the ground for wildlife, their habitats and the quality of life of local people, we consulted with a range of residents, organisations, partners and special interest groups.

4.2 Thank you to those who responded with comments and feedback on Natural Woking, which we incorporated where possible.

- Brookwood & Bridley Neighbourhood Forum.
- Climate Change Working Group.
- Countryside Access Team, Surrey County Council.
- Countryside Management & Biodiversity, Surrey County Council.
- Environment Agency.
- Horsell Common Preservation Society (HCPS).
- Natural England.
- Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum.
- Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group (SARG).
- Surrey County Council (Ecology).
- Surrey County Council Countryside Group.
- Surrey Wildlife Trust.
- Woking Borough Council officers and Councillors.
- Woking Local Action 21.



Short-eared Owl (James Sellen)