

Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 Publication Version

Green Infrastructure and Open Space Background Paper

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GOSPORT
Borough Council

Green Infrastructure and Open Space Background Paper

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Green Infrastructure and Open Space Background Paper

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is a background paper to the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 relating to green infrastructure and open space issues. It sets out the relevant national and local policy context and a summary of evidence and consultation responses related to green infrastructure and open space.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

- 2.1 The Government's planning guidance regarding development plans and their overall strategy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DCLG March 2012).
- 2.2 The NPPF sets out a number of core planning principles which are relevant to issues relating to green infrastructure and open spaces. Planning should:
- be genuinely plan-led setting out a positive vision for the future;
 - find ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live;
 - proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business, infrastructure and thriving local places that are needed;
 - always seek a high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of urban areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
 - support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate;
 - contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land should prefer land of lesser environmental value;
 - encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land);
 - promote mixed use development and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage or food production);
 - actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
 - take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all.
- 2.3 The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local 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;
 - preventing new and existing development from contributing to, or being put at unacceptable risk from being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of, soil, air, water or noise pollution and land instability.
- 2.4 The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that it is important to achieve high quality design for spaces around buildings including the incorporation of green and other public space which respond to local character.
- 2.5 In relation to promoting healthy communities high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the well-being of communities. Policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments.
- 2.6 It states that existing open space should not be built upon unless: an assessment clearly shows that the open space is surplus to requirements; the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision which clearly outweighs the loss.
- 2.7 Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. The NPPF states that local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users by adding to networks. The NPPF recognises that local communities should be able to identify open spaces for special protection.
- 2.8 The NPPF states that local plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. The Government recognises the role that green infrastructure can have to reduce risk and help development adapt to the consequences of climate change.

Sub-regional Policy

- 2.9 The formulation of the Local Plan has been informed by the work undertaken for the Preferred Options of the Core Strategy. It takes account of the considerable work conducted at the sub-regional level by a consortium of south Hampshire authorities, which came together to form the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). PUSH through local consultation produced its own sub-regional strategy for South Hampshire which was submitted to the former South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA) and was included (largely unchanged) in the soon to be revoked South East (SE) Plan (2009) following an Examination in Public.
- 2.10 This original sub-regional strategy has now been updated and is known as the South Hampshire Strategy (October 2012) and takes into account the changing economic conditions, new evidence and changes in national planning policy. It

has informed the proposals outlined in the draft Local Plan. Policy 14 of the latest South Hampshire Strategy requires that the local authorities and their partners work together to plan, provide and manage connected networks of multifunctional green spaces including existing and new green infrastructure. It adds that local plans should protect the value of existing green infrastructure and the integrity of the network and take opportunities to enhance the quality connectivity and multi-functionality of green infrastructure. To assist with this process the PUSH authorities have produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 2.11 Policy 20 relates to food production and states that PUSH authorities should facilitate an increase in locally grown food through protecting existing allotments and creating additional ones.

PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy

- 2.12 PUSH has produced a sub-regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (UE Associates 2010). A key aim of the Strategy is to identify sub-regional strategic initiatives and proposals to provide a high quality of life for the people who live and work in the sub-region. It seeks to maximise the multifunctional use of open space for a range of benefits including: providing opportunities for recreation; safeguarding the character of the landscape and townscape; supporting health and well-being; enhancing biodiversity; ameliorating the impacts of climate change; and encourage economic investment.

- 2.13 The Strategy proposes five sub-regional initiatives:

- 'The Green Grid initiative' seeks to establish a network of linear features and provide connectivity between assets that perform a variety of functions. It includes rivers, roads, recreational routes, hedges and other corridors;
- 'The Coast for People, Wildlife and Improved Water initiative' relates to recreational and nature conservation issues along the coast and the need to plan for sea-level rise;
- 'The Forest of Bere Land Management initiative' aims to take a comprehensive and integrated approach to the creation and management of a number of GI assets in this landscape area;
- 'The Country Parks and Woodlands initiative' seeks to identify a network of country parks and woodland sites; and
- 'The Greener Urban Design initiative' aims to enhance local assets which can improve the built environment and support local communities. It is likely to manifest itself as a series of smaller scale projects that seek to address identified deficits, opportunities and need.

- 2.14 The Strategy identifies a number of strategic projects across the sub-region including within Gosport that relate to one or more of the above strategic initiatives. In Gosport the following schemes have been identified.

- Alver Valley Country Park- the Strategy recognises the work the Borough Council has carried out to date and that a masterplan is in place to create a range of multi-functional facilities. It is also acknowledged that the site can be linked with adjoining areas;
- Gosport Ranges- the MoD sites at Frater and Bedenham have significant ecological value and that opportunities exist to manage these areas for wildlife;

- Forts recreational route- the Strategy recognises that any future opening of the HMS Sultan site for civilian uses could create opportunities for a new north-south pedestrian/cycle route which will link into existing routes and can form an element of a new recreational route which could link all (or most) of Gosport's forts.
 - Gosport Waterfront (Haslar to Priddy's Hard)- there are a number of projects along the Gosport Waterfront which link closely to the development of key strategic sites in the Borough. These have the potential to improve recreational opportunities for local residents, improve the management of sensitive habitats, protect historical features and improve the Borough's distinctive maritime heritage. Projects include:
 - Haslar Hospital- including reinstating the coastal walk along the Solent frontage as well as public access to the nationally important historic park and garden with measures to enhance biodiversity;
 - Extension of the Millennium Promenade in the Coldharbour area;
 - The creation of the Priddy's Hard Ramparts Park; and
 - Improve the appearance and quality of access around the creeks (Haslar, Workhouse and Stoke lakes) with improved interpretation of natural features with the involvement of local communities.
- 2.15 The Strategy then considers the delivery of the sub-regional initiatives and makes a number of recommendations relating to governance, incorporation into the LDF process and funding arrangements. These issues will need to be considered further by the PUSH authorities.
- 2.16 In October 2012 PUSH approved a Green infrastructure Implementation Plan which will aid the PUSH authorities to work together to deliver elements of the Plan including those which need particularly cross-boundary collaboration. The Plan includes a short-list of key projects of sub-regional importance which includes the Alver Valley Country Park.
- Solent Countryside Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- 2.17 Hampshire County Council's Countryside Access Plan for the Solent (HCC 2008) assesses local needs and identifies action required to improve access to the countryside and make it a welcoming place for everyone to enjoy.
- 2.18 Its Vision is to provide and maintain a sustainable network for access to the countryside, where local people and visitors can enjoy a range of recreational activities and appreciate the special qualities of this southern part of Hampshire. It aims to:
- strive for an access network that will meet the needs of a growing and diverse population as further development takes place in this part of Hampshire;
 - manage and promote the countryside access network in a strategic, coordinated way, in partnership with stakeholders;
 - provide a network that offers opportunities for promoting health and enhancing quality of life;
 - support the development of a wider range of transport options within the area for local people and visitors; and

- manage and develop the network in a way that takes account of landscape and wildlife conservation in the area.

2.19 Key issues identified include:

- the Rights of Way network is particularly fragmented in this part of Hampshire;
- there is an undersupply of access resources for horse riding;
- countryside users are forced to cross busy roads to link up off-road access and
- many Solent residents travel some distance to find accessible countryside and consequently there is a high reliance on cars;
- the Solent area offers good potential for cycling but improvements are needed to both the network and associated infrastructure;
- there is strong demand for access to the coastal areas, both by land and by water;
- lack of local greenspace and rights of way puts pressure on existing publicly accessible sites, which may be of high conservation value; and
- a coordinated approach to providing information is needed to facilitate and promote enjoyment of the countryside for all and to encourage responsible use.

2.20 As part of the consultation process for this Plan many people stated that they would like to get into the countryside directly from where they live. This would particularly benefit people with disabilities and parents of small children, who may not have access to a car, or for whom the use of a car transforms a short outing into a major expedition (particularly when combined with road congestion). Dog walkers would also welcome more local provision for short routine walks. The Plan sets out a number of proposed actions which relate to improving the rights of way network and also improving accessibility to countryside sites. Developer contributions could potentially be used for certain actions. The Plan highlights the importance of the creation of safe, welcoming, accessible and interesting sites.

Local Policy

Gosport Borough Council Corporate Plan

2.21 The Corporate Plan (GBC 2009a) sets out a number of strategic priorities which relate well to the provision of open space and green infrastructure including:

- enhancing Gosport's unique character and heritage;
- promoting health and well-being; and
- improving leisure opportunities and facilities

2.22 Other relevant priorities include:

- regenerating Gosport's town centre and Waterfront;
- delivering the Rowner regeneration project;
- tackling the congested road network;
- responding to the challenges of climate change;
- reducing crime and anti-social behaviour;
- attracting investment to Gosport's economy; and
- promoting tourism opportunities.

Gosport Local Plan Review

2.23 The current Gosport Local Plan Review (adopted 2006) includes a number of policies relating to open space and public access routes including:

R/OS1: Development outside the urban area including the possibilities for appropriate recreational uses;

R/OS2: Strategic Gaps;

R/OS3: Urban Gaps;

R/OS4: Protection of existing open space;

R/OS5: New open space provision;

R/OS6: Recreation allocation in the Alver Valley;

R/OS7: Additional open space allocations;

R/OS8: Recreational space for new residential development which includes the current open space standards and the basis for calculating developer contributions for open space;

R/OS9: Allotments;

R/OS10-R/OS14: A variety of policies relating to important habitats and species;

R/CH2: Pedestrian access along the coast; and

R/CF12: Cemetery provision.

A Cultural Strategy for Gosport 2004-2007

2.24 The Borough Council's Cultural Strategy sets out priorities to make the best use of available resources through partnership working. Open space priorities include:

- the creation of the Alver Valley Park for walkers, cyclists and horse riders;
- new play areas and parks to be associated with new housing development;
- enhancement of cycling opportunities through extensions of the cycle network;
- hosting of national and local events utilising the Borough's open spaces;
- preparation of relevant strategies specific to particular types of open spaces (e.g. playing pitches and other facilities);
- creation of multi-use games areas;
- continual improvements of the quality of services by the Borough Council and their partners;
- improving access for all (physical access to facilities, information about services, transport to facilities); and
- continued maintenance of facilities.

2.25 Much of the Strategy is still relevant and whilst many of the proposed actions have been delivered a number of key actions such as the creation of the Alver Valley Country Park and the development of a park at Priddy's Hard are on-going.

Gosport Play Strategy 2007-2012

2.26 The purpose of the Strategy is to enable the Borough Council to establish a clear six-year framework to provide a wide range of good quality, inclusive, safe accessible play, leisure and youth activities both in and out of doors for all children and young people to enjoy. Based on research and consultation findings the key objectives of the strategy are to:

- promote the importance of play;
- improve the quality, quantity and range of play provision for the enjoyment of children and young people;
- provide better information about play provision;
- improve the cleanliness and safety of play areas; and
- improve the access and inclusiveness of play provision.

2.27 The strategy outlines a number of actions that are required including identifying locations for additional youth provision such as multi-use games areas, shelters and skate parks and BMX courses, improvements to existing facilities, develop and promote appropriate natural play spaces, increase opportunities on school sites and improvements of cycle ways and paths.

National Guidance

2.28 In 2014 the Government produced its National Planning Practice Guidance¹ which provides comprehensive guidance on the natural environment including biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure. This recognises the importance of green infrastructure and cites Natural England's guidance² in being helpful in planning positively for networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure

2.29 The NPPG also includes specific guidance on open space, green space and rights of way including:

- A methodology for undertaking a needs assessment which has been provided by Sports England. The Council's Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Assessment 2014 accords with this methodology (Strategic Leisure 2014).
- Further information on the 'Local Green Space' designation as included in the NPPF. The Council's 'Existing Open Space' designation in the emerging Local Plan accords with the criteria outlined in the NPPG. Importantly the NPPG states that a Local Green Space does need to be in public ownership. It states that local authorities should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate such land as Local Green Space to give the landowner opportunities to make representations in respect of a draft plan. The Borough Council, as part of its Local Plan consultations, has consulted with the major open space landowners including the MoD and education providers as well as a number of relevant private landowners. The NPPG also states that land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access and it recognises that designation in itself does not confer any rights of public over what exists at presents. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with landowners.

¹ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/biodiversity-ecosystems-and-green-infrastructure/>

² <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx>

3.0 EVIDENCE

3.1 The following evidence relates to:

- * Sub-regional green infrastructure
- * Local landscape/townscape assessment
- * Local network of open space
- * Accessible Natural greenspace Standard
- * Open Space Monitoring Report
- * Setting open space standards

Sub-regional green infrastructure

3.2 PUSH's Green Infrastructure Strategy for the sub-region is informed by a Research Report (TEP July 2007) and a suggested strategy (TEP January 2008).

3.3 Green infrastructure includes the following:

| Local | Neighbour hood | Town | District | City region/sub regional |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Street trees/Home Zones | Local rights of way | Town parks | Country parks | Regional parks |
| Roof gardens/green roofs | Cemeteries | Waterways | Continuous waterfront | Rivers and floodplains |
| Pocket parks | Institutional open spaces | Green networks | Municipal plazas | Shoreline and waterfront |
| Gardens | Ponds and small woodlands | Multi-user routes | Major recreational spaces | Strategic and long distance trails |
| Urban plaza | Play areas | | Landmarks, vistas and gateways | Strategic corridors and gateways |
| Local greens | Local nature reserves | | | |

3.4 The TEP Study incorporates the findings of a number of other strategic studies including:

- Regional Analysis of Accessible Greenspace Provision (Forestry Commission and Natural England prepared by McKernon and Grose 2007); and
- Local Countryside and Greenspace Guidance (Hampshire County Council – April 2007).

3.5 The Study highlights a number of benefits arising from green infrastructure in urban south Hampshire which is set out in Appendix 1 of this Background Paper.

3.6 It states that the proposed population growth in South Hampshire will reduce the amount of greenspace per head of population by 15% in the Portsmouth urban area (including Gosport, Fareham and Havant) to between 156m²- 174m² per

head which is significantly below the current English city average of 414m² per head (ODPM State of the English Cities database (2006) cited by TEP 2007).

- 3.7 The regional assessment (Forestry Commission and Natural England 2007) shows that there are no large areas of Accessible Natural Green Space on the doorstep to 75% of households in the PUSH area and the proposed population growth will place additional pressure on these sites. The protection of existing open spaces which are accessible to the urban population are therefore critical green infrastructure issues.
- 3.8 However whilst these figures suggest existing and projected greenspace deficiency, a recent study carried out by Hampshire County Council (April 2007) identified that provision of open spaces and access networks is not as simple 'as more people equal more greenspace need'. The pattern, use and demand are much more complex, incorporating issues of demography, location and functionality. Consequently the Borough recognises that quality and accessibility are significant considerations when assessing supply and demand of open space rather than just focusing solely on the quantity issue.

Local landscape/townscape assessment

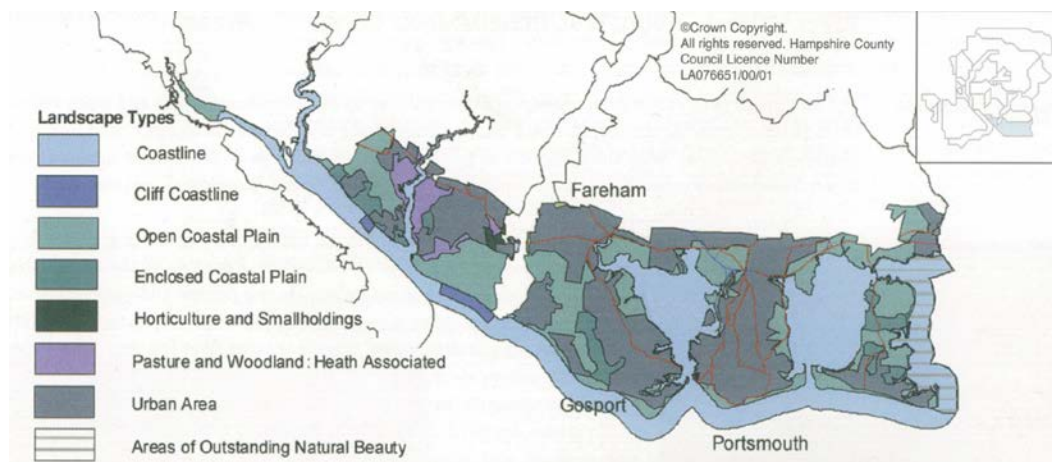
Character Assessment

- 3.9 The protection of, and/or the creation of, green infrastructure has a strong influence on the local landscape and townscape.
- 3.10 Hampshire County Council has produced a detailed landscape character study, Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future (2000). It identifies the whole of the Borough within the South Hampshire Coast Character Area (Figure 1) with four landscape types highlighted: coastline, urban area, open coastal plain and enclosed coastal plain. These areas within Gosport are shown below in the context of the wider South Hampshire Plan area.
- 3.11 The assessment sets out key characteristics of the landscape area including the following aspects:
- very gently undulating coastal plan –almost flat towards the east;
 - natural harbours including Portsmouth Harbour;
 - busy roads linking urban areas;
 - sites and monuments of significant historic interest
 - generally open character with small isolated woodlands; wooded valleys include the Alver;
 - views across the Solent and the Isle of Wight- Fawley power station and oil refinery increasingly prominent north west of Lee-on-the-Solent;
 - shingle beaches and spits, mudflats, creeks and estuaries and a wide range of wildlife habitats;
 - also sea defence walls and reclaimed land;
 - urbanising influences widespread;
 - characteristic coastal sailing facilities including marinas, moorings and buildings; and
 - good public access to coastline including Solent Way.

3.12 The Assessment sets out an overriding objective of the need to maintain and enhance the distinctive sense of place of the character area and each landscape type. In particular maintain and enhance:

- the significant recreational value of the whole coastline;
- the natural features of the undeveloped coast including the open character of the coastline and parts of the coastal plain;
- the broad and open views of the Solent and the Isle of Wight;
- wooded landscape of the Enclosed Coastal Plain including the well-wooded stream and river valleys that interrupt the coastal plain, notably the River Alver Valley;
- the diverse range of wildlife habitats particularly in Portsmouth Harbour and along the coastline including coastal heathland, grazing marshes, shingle beaches, saline lagoons, salt marshes, mudflats and creeks; also ancient woodlands, and rivers and streams.
- sea defences and coastal protection measures to reduce coastal erosion and prevent flooding where appropriate, but where practicable allow natural coastal process to continue;
- the historic character of the coastline including historic or archaeological coastal features and landmarks including ancient monuments, historic buildings and defence features;
- existing coastal recreational areas including coastal footpaths;
- the character of the landscape with new planting where appropriate, helping to reinforce existing landscape features and reduce the visual impact of new or prominent buildings or features including recreational facilities such as car parks;

Figure 1: South Hampshire Coast Character Area



Source: The Hampshire Landscape: A Strategy for the Future (HCC 2000a)

3.13 A detailed townscape assessment for the Borough is currently being prepared to support the forthcoming Design SPD.

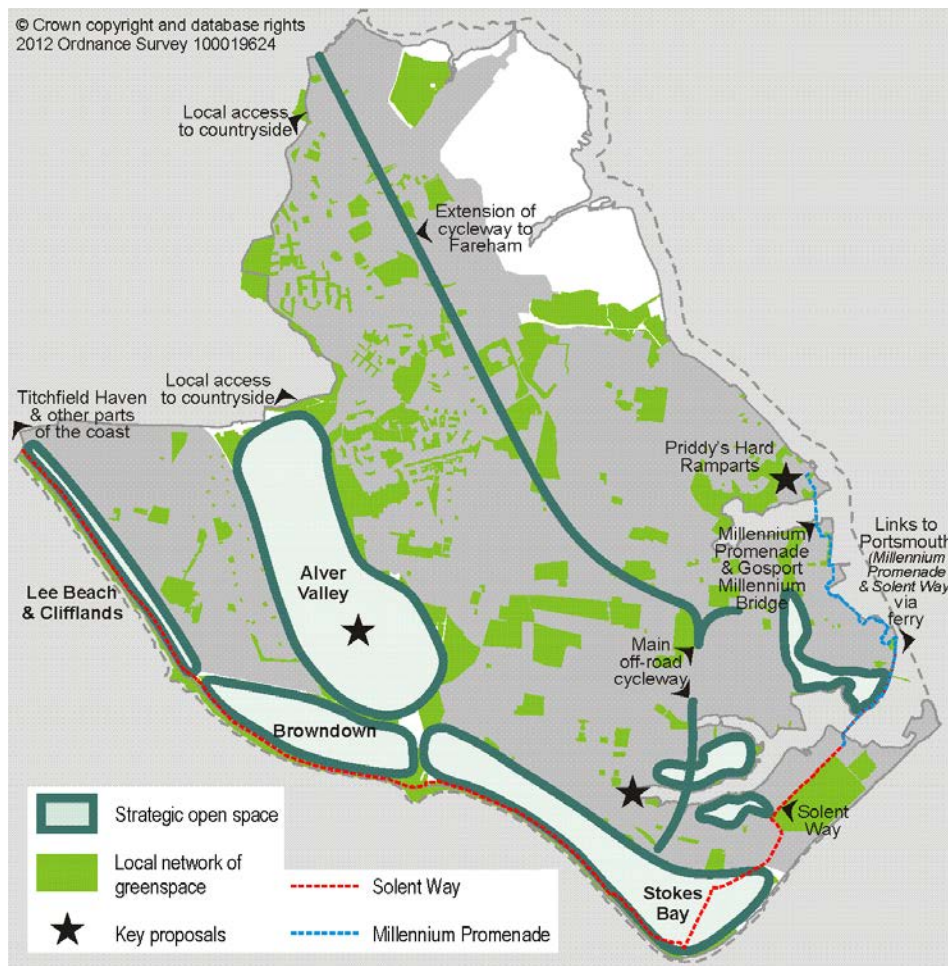
Local Network of Open Space

3.14 The Borough network of open space makes an important contribution to South Hampshire's green infrastructure. Features of strategic importance include:

- internationally and nationally important habitats including Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar, Gilkicker Lagoon (SAC), Browdown SSSI, and the Wildgrounds SSSI, together with Lee Beach which is noted for geological features and forms part of the Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI;
- the proposed Alver Valley Country Park;
- the beach and coastal areas at Lee-on-the-Solent and Stokes Bay;
- the Solent Way long distance path crosses the Borough and includes Falkland Gardens, Stokes Bay, Browdown and Lee-on-the-Solent sea front; and
- the Millennium Promenade which links the Submarine Museum to the Explosion Museum at Priddy's Hard via Falklands Gardens and continues along the Portsmouth waterfront via the Gosport Ferry.

3.15 Figure 2 below identifies the network of open space within the Borough

Figure 2: Key open space and proposals



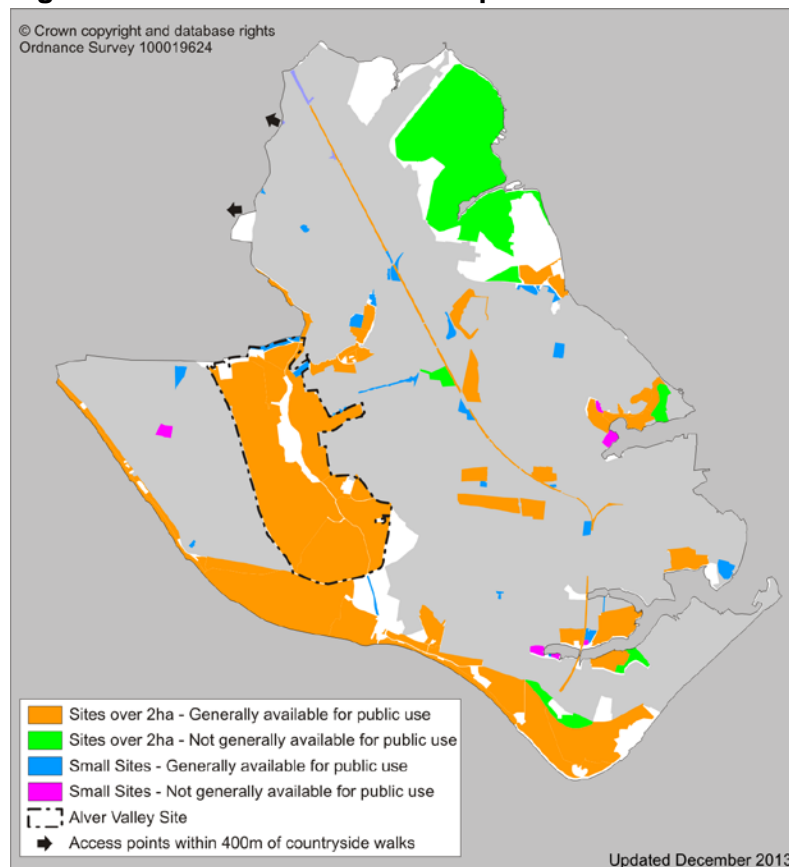
Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard

3.16 Accessible natural greenspaces provide a key component of the sub-regional green infrastructure. An assessment of natural greenspace as undertaken based on Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) has been undertaken³. The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards Model which provides the basis for this study sets out a system of tiers according to site size as follows:-

- No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace (however the Borough Council has chosen to adopt a 400 metre standard in line with other accessibility models)
- There should be at least one accessible 20ha site within 2km from home
- There should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km
- There should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km

3.17 Figures 3-6 highlight strategic and local accessible natural greenspaces at both the Borough level and sub-regional level. It is clear that Gosport has significant greenspaces within the Borough particularly along the coast. It is also clear that the Alver Valley Country Park, which is currently being created, will make a significant contribution for delivering local accessible natural greenspace. Figure 3 includes the natural greenspace within the Borough that has been identified through this study.

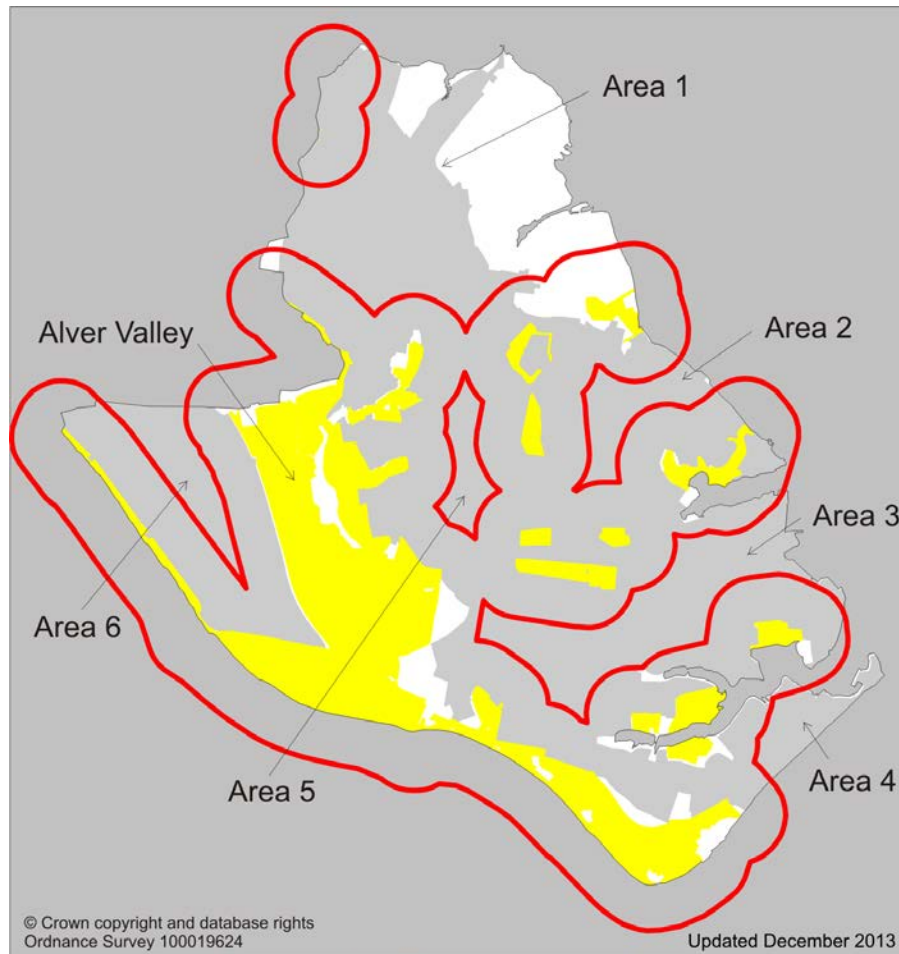
Figure 3: Areas of Natural Greenspace



³ This work first appeared in the Borough Council's Open Space Monitoring Report (GBC 2010). The plans will be updated to take into account a reappraisal of what land is available for public access in the Alver Valley.

- 3.18 Figure 4 shows the areas of accessible natural greenspace that are over two hectares in size as well as the surrounding 400 metre catchment zones. The map shows that the Borough has a good level of provision of accessible natural greenspace with the majority of the Borough falling within the 400 metres catchment areas. There are six areas that are currently further than 400 metres of an accessible natural greenspace of 2ha or more with the largest area in Bridgemarky. In many cases few opportunities exist to improve this provision given the character of these parts of the Borough.

Figure 4: Accessible areas of natural greenspace over 2ha with catchment areas



- 3.19 Figure 5 shows that the coast and the Alver Valley Country Park will ensure that most of the Borough will be within 2km of a 20 hectare natural greenspace in accordance with Natural England's ANGSt standards. It also shows that the entire Borough is within 5km of a 100ha site given that both the Alver Valley and the combined connected coastal areas of Lee beach, Browndown and Stokes Bay are over 100 hectares. It is clear that the Country Park will ensure that residents in the Peel Common, Bridgemarky, Elson and Forton areas will be within 2km of a natural greenspace. It will be important to ensure that good cycle and public transport links are provided to the Country Park.

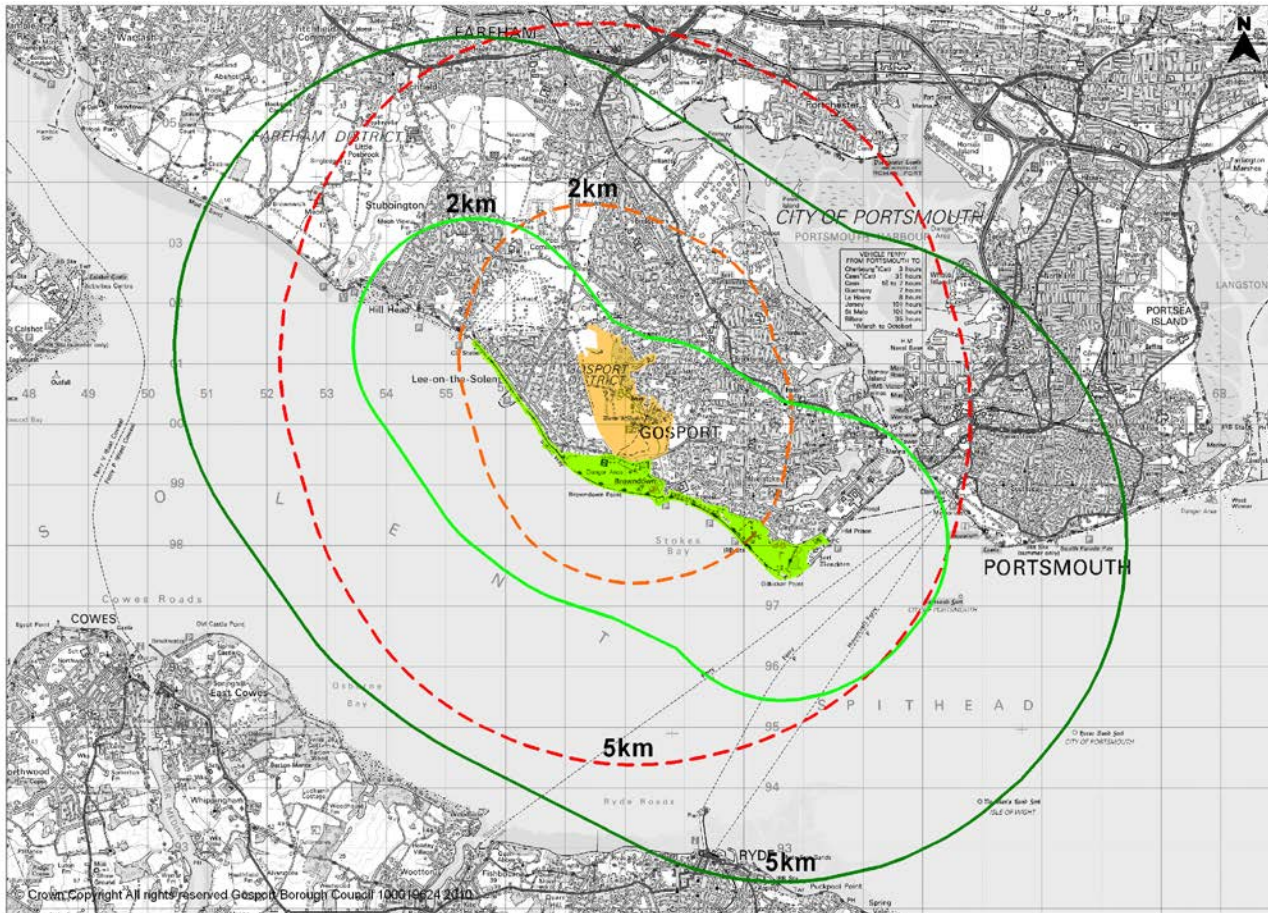
Figure 5: 2 km and 5km catchment areas of the Alver Valley and accessible coastal areas

Alver Valley:

2km catchment –orange line 5km catchment –red line

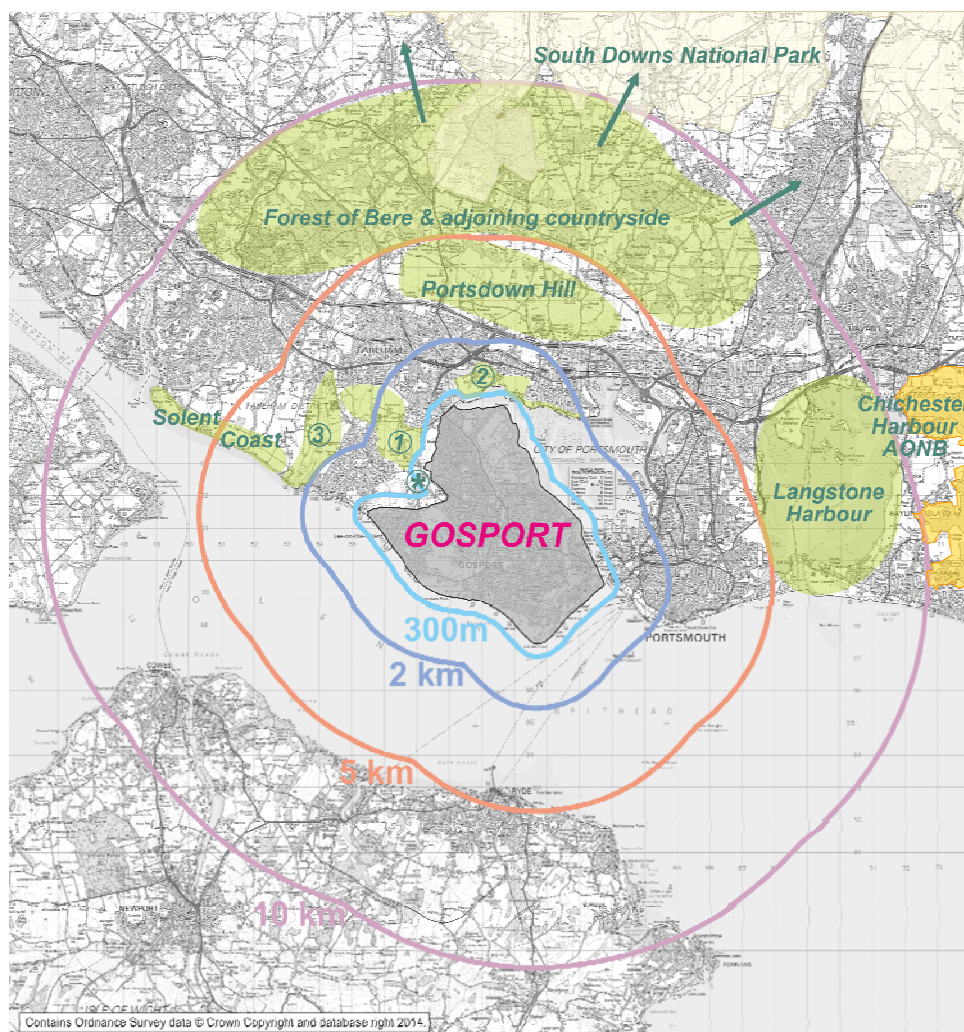
Accessible Solent coast (Lee-on-the-Solent and Stokes Bay)

2km catchment- light green 5km catchment –dark green



- 3.20 In relation to large sites over 500 ha within 10km (Figure 6) there are a number of areas of countryside with some form of public access This could include: farmland with public rights of way; nature reserve with public access; countryside sites managed for public access (country parks etc) or coastal areas with natural characteristics.
- 3.21 Within 2 km of the Borough boundary is the countryside between Gosport/Fareham and Stubbington/Lee. This area contains a network of footpaths where people can access natural greenspace. Opportunities to improve linkages should be investigated. Part of this area adjacent Peel Common roundabout is proposed to form a Suitable Natural Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) as part of proposal for Daedalus in order to mitigate impacts on more sensitive habitats on the coast. This will create opportunities to enhance links between the Alver Valley and the wider countryside.
- 3.22 Within the 5km buffer there are areas of natural greenspace at Titchfield Haven and the surrounding areas in the Lower Meon Valley. This area is a National Nature Reserve and is home to nationally and internationally important wildlife . The area is readily accessible to visitors with facilities including car parking, a tea room and a shop as well as a space for exhibitions and displays. There may be potential to improve cycle links from Gosport and Lee to the site.
- 3.23 A wide area of natural greenspace including areas of woodland can also be found in the Portsdown Hill area north of Fareham and Portchester. There are a number of rights of way where people are able to take walks to access the wider countryside. The area has a number of woodland sites including the Forest of Bere. Much of the woodland is managed by the Forestry Commission and some sites incorporate facilities such as toilets, car parking, barbeque and picnic sites, play areas and refreshments as well as clearly marked paths and trails for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- 3.24 The area surrounding Langstone Harbour falls within the 10km buffer; this includes the eastern shoreline of Portsea Island, the western part of Hayling Island as well as areas to the north of the Harbour including Farlington Marshes. Langstone Harbour is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The area is designated for a variety of habitats and in particular its importance for its bird populations.
- 3.25 Some areas of natural greenspace were excluded from this study despite falling within the criteria set out above. There were areas of natural greenspace in northern parts of the Isle of Wight between Cowes and Ryde that fell within the 10km boundary; however, these areas are not readily accessible to Gosport residents as there are no direct ferries to the Isle of Wight from Gosport. Furthermore, parts of the New Forest fell within the 10km boundary and these sites were also excluded due to issues relating to access. As the New Forest is separated from Gosport by Southampton Water the actual distance required to travel in order to access these areas significantly exceeds 10km (30 km via M27).

Figure 6: Large areas of countryside within 10km of Gosport Borough



- ① Local countryside between Gosport/Fareham & Stubbington/Lee-on-the-Solent
- ② Proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)
- ③ North shore of Portsmouth Harbour
- ④ Titchfield Haven & Lower Meon Valley

Conclusion of Local ANGST assessment

3.26 Overall there is good provision of accessible natural greenspace at the local level with most of the Borough falling within 400 metres of a site of over 2 hectares. The establishment of the Alver Valley Country Park will improve access for many residents in the Borough and beyond. Nevertheless, there are issues relating to fragmentation with some notable pockets of deficiency at a local scale.

3.27 At a sub-regional level there are also a number of large areas of natural greenspace outside of the Borough including the Strategic Gap between Gosport/Fareham and Stubbington/Lee, the Meon Valley, as well as areas of woodland north of Fareham and Portchester. Further afield there is also the South Downs National Park. Whilst many of these sites are readily available to visitors with good facilities such as toilets, cafes and visitor centres, access to the sites themselves can be an issue. Many of the sites are not easily

accessible to Gosport residents without access to cars because they require car travel as they are too far away to cycle or walk and they are difficult to access using public transport. There may be opportunities to improve accessibility to certain sites beyond the Borough such as Titchfield Haven by providing improved cycle routes. These issues will need to be considered through the implementation of Hampshire County Council's Solent Countryside Access Plan, the PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging Gosport Borough Local Plan.

Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Assessment (2014)

3.28 This latest update produced by Strategic Leisure (2014) contains the following conclusions in relation to sports pitches:

Football

- All existing pitches as well as those used until very recently such as the Civil Service Sports Ground need to be retained for football.
- The small identified surplus needs to be retained:
 - to deal with quality deficiencies in the Borough whereby such pitches require more resting particularly during wetter parts of the season;
 - To address the particular high demands of Sunday morning senior football;
 - The likely growth of this demand through the likely expansion of the newly formed Sunday league;
 - To mitigate for the fact that a significant proportion of pitches in community use are provided by the MoD or schools/colleges and that this community use can be withdrawn at fairly short notice.
- It is necessary to ensure that the best pitches are retained given that the Borough has a number of poorer facilities which cannot be used as intensively, are not so popular and do not provide such a good playing surface for games
- The need to improve a number of changing facilities.
- No additional sites are required at this stage although there may be scope to reorganise pitches on existing sites to suit latest demand.

Cricket

- Current and estimated future demand is met by the available pitch supply (theoretical surplus of 2.5 in 2013 and 2.3 in 2021)
- Quality is generally good or standard although some issues exist on the outfield of one of the sites.
- Ancillary facilities have improved and are generally good.

Rugby

- There is a moderate theoretical surplus of 2 senior pitches and 0.5 junior pitches to meet peak demand in 2013
- From 2021 there is a deficit of 2 junior pitches and a surplus of 2 senior pitches.
- There is scope for some growth at Bay House School (particularly from 2021).

Hockey

- Current demand is met by existing provision but the existing artificial grass pitch will require replacing as it becomes worn
- There will be a future requirement for an additional sand based AGP as the Hockey Club develops. This requirement is likely to be beyond 2021.

Tennis

- Retain the current provision which appears to meet current and projected demand
- Need to maintain the quality of existing facilities including appropriate fencing, quality nets and posts.

Bowling Green

- The quantity of greens appears to be appropriate for current and future demands
- Key issue relates to retaining the quality of existing facilities including the quality of the greens and in some cases improving facilities such as car parking.

3.29 From a Local Plan perspective it would appear from the above evidence that no new sites need to be allocated for sports pitch as the small requirements post 2021 could be met on existing open spaces through the reorganisation of the type of pitches or the incorporation of new facilities. This situation will need to be reviewed through the Plan period to deal with any unexpected changes in demand for all of the above sports or others that become popular.

Open Space Monitoring Report

3.30 Information regarding the quality, value and quantity of the Borough's open spaces as well as local needs and priorities are included in the Council's Open Space Monitoring Report (GBC 2014). The latest Open Space Monitoring Report brings together research and findings of detailed studies relating to specific types of open spaces including:

- South Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (JE Associates for PUSH June 2010) and various supporting evidence
- Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Assessment (Strategic Leisure 2014);
- Gosport Children's Play Strategy 2007-2012 (GBC June 2007).
- Council's latest figures on that availability of allotment plots and plots;

3.29 The 2014 Open Space Monitoring Report identifies 236 open spaces representing 618 hectares (24.4% of the Borough's land area). Table 2 below provides a summary of the quality and quantity of the surveyed open spaces. Appendix 2 sets out the Council's policy response to the combined assessment of quality and value. Over a third of open spaces are considered to be of High Quality/High Value (38%). This compares to 31.2% that was recorded within the 2004 Report. The total number of High Quality/High Value open spaces has also increased from 67 to 90 since the publication of the 2004 Report. Furthermore, almost a fifth of the open spaces are classed as Medium Quality/High Value (19.5%) therefore indicating that there are still a large number that may be potentially close to achieving a high quality assessment.

Table 2: Quality/Value Matrix: Number of Open Spaces

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| High Quality/ Low Value | High Quality/Medium Value | High Quality/ High Value |
| 2 open spaces (0.8%) | 7 open spaces (3.0%) | 90 open spaces (38.1%) |
| Medium Quality/ Low Value | Medium Quality/ Medium Value | Medium Quality/ High Value |
| 55 open spaces (23.3%) | 24 open spaces (10.2%) | 46 open spaces (19.5%) |
| Low Quality/ Low Value | Low Quality/ Medium Value | Low Quality/ High Value |
| 1 open space (0.4%) | 5 open spaces (2.1%) | 6 open spaces (2.5%) |

* Percentage figures subject to rounding

- 3.30 Table 3 shows the provision of open space per 1,000 of the population for each of the assessed open space typologies. Natural/semi-natural greenspace is the dominant form of open space that serves the Borough. This is due to the significant areas of existing natural/semi-natural greenspace such as the Alver Valley, Stokes Bay, Lee Clifflands and Browdown.

Table 3: Open Space Typologies – Existing Provision per 1,000 of the Population

| Open Space Typology | Existing Provision (ha.) | Ha. Per 1,000 of the Population |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Parks and Gardens | 73.77 | 0.89 |
| Natural/Semi-Natural Greenspace | 340.68 | 4.12 |
| Green Corridors | 16.85 | 0.20 |
| Amenity Greenspace | 44.29 | 0.54 |
| Cemeteries and Churchyards | 18.77 | 0.23 |
| Provision for Children and Young People | 7.42 | 0.09 |
| Sports Pitches | 85.88 | 1.04 |
| Other Sports | 3.93 | 0.05 |
| Civic Space | 3.40 | 0.04 |
| Allotments | 22.50 | 0.27 |
| Borough Total | 617.49 | 7.47 |

- 3.31 Section 6 of the Open Space Monitoring Report (GBC 2014) identifies a number of key findings relating to identified needs, quality, value and quantity. Some key conclusions to arise from the Report include:

General

- It is clear that the Borough has a large number of quality open spaces which are highly valued by local residents and visitors and that these form an integral part of the character of the Borough.
- It will be necessary to continue to maintain and improve the quality of open spaces for the benefit existing and new residents as well as visitors to the Borough.
- There are a large number of medium quality open spaces. Many of these have the potential to be of a high quality with a limited amount of improvement.

- Priority should be given to improve lower quality open spaces, particularly in areas where there may be a limited number of, or no, high quality/high value open spaces as illustrated on the catchment area maps.
- There should also be an increased emphasis for linking the Borough's existing and future open space provision to the wider green infrastructure network.
- A significant proportion of supply is in MoD ownership, particularly sports fields, which could potentially be taken out of public use at short notice.
- Efforts should continue to build upon the successes of securing the public use of sports facilities at school and MoD sites throughout the Borough and policies should ensure that such facilities are retained even if no longer required by the organisation in order to serve the wider public.

Parks and Gardens

- There are a variety of parks within the Borough. A large proportion of these are of high value and form a key focal point for local communities. Developer contributions should be used to improve such facilities where necessary to serve the new development. However in the case of large residential development new parts will need to be created to serve the new development

Natural and semi-natural greenspaces

- The protection of natural and semi-natural greenspaces is considered to be an important priority including the features of internationally important sites. In such cases it will be important ensure recreation does not compromise these sites.
- The possibility of incorporating biodiversity within other types of open spaces should be explored.
- The Alver Valley Country Park is a critical element of green infrastructure providing a range of informal recreational opportunities and safeguarding important habitats.

Green Corridors

- There are a number of green corridors which form part of the Borough-wide strategic cycle network which will need to be maintained and enhanced.
- They play an important role in linking various types of open space and add value to the green infrastructure network of the Borough.
- Accessibility has been improved along northern sections of the former railway line as part of the proposals for developing the Bus Rapid Transit. This has also helped to enhance cycle linkages within the Borough and to Fareham.
- Accessibility can also be improved by investigating the potential for additional cycle routes. It is possible that making such extra provision could help to provide further linkages between the Borough's parks and other open spaces.

Outdoor Sports Provision

- The relevant findings are set out in the latest Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Assessment (Strategic Leisure 2014) as set out above.

Amenity Greenspaces

- There are numerous amenity greenspaces within the Borough.

- Simple measures can be taken to increase the use of a number of these amenity greenspaces, including seating areas in appropriate locations, enhanced planting and additional features.

Provision for Children and Young People

- There is a range of children's play facilities located across the Borough. The quality of play spaces is varied with a need to improve those that scored low or medium in the assessment.
- There may be further scope to modernise and enhance children's play facilities at a number of neighbourhood parks/recreation grounds across the Borough.
- There may also be opportunities to provide further MUGAs throughout the Borough such as within larger parks and gardens.
- There is scope to provide additional play areas for young children close to home by exploring the use of appropriate amenity areas.
- The catchment area analysis shows that there may be opportunities for improving the provision of children's play facilities particularly in locations such as Stokes Bay. It also shows that there may be scope for improving the quality of children's play facilities and informal areas of play in more northern parts of the Borough.
- A replacement children's play area will be provided as part of the Gosport Leisure Park. This will help to improve accessibility to high quality children's play provision in this part of the Borough.

Allotments

- Allotment use has increased over recent years. In 2002, 28.4% of allotment plots within the Council's control were vacant. However, by October 2011 there were no vacant plots.
- Since 2006 the Borough Council has increased the number of plots by 34% to 1,070 plots (April 2014) largely through reducing plot sizes to suit modern demands. However the waiting list remains high at over 400 people.

Cemeteries and Churchyards

- Research has been undertaken to assess options for additional cemetery provision within the Borough.

Civic Space

- There is a potential for the waterfront walkway to be extended as part of the wider proposals to redevelop Gosport Waterfront.

3.32 In the light of the above it is clear that the Local Plan should provide the basis to enable improvements for each type of open space function to be implemented.

Local Open Space Standards

3.33 Based on the findings of the Open Space Monitoring Report the Borough Council is proposing to set new local open space standards in terms of quantity and quality. These are set out in the Council evidence study *Local Open Space Standards* (GBC 2014) outlining a step by step process which are included in the Appendices of the Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Strategy (GBC 2014).

Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project

- 3.34 In recognising the numerous local and sub-regional accessible greenspace outlined above it is clear that many sites are, or adjacent to, internationally important habitats. As part of the obligations under the Habitats Regulations the Borough Council is required to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of likely significant impacts arising from the proposals and policies included in the Local Plan. As a result of this work the Borough Council has been working closely with a number of other local authorities in the Solent area as well as Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and local harbour organisations to understand the issue of recreational disturbance on internationally important habitats. The work has investigated the potential impacts arising from new development around the Solent, both individually and in-combination. This work is known as the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation project and has been coordinated by the Solent Forum.
- 3.35 The project has included three phases. The first two phases involved the gathering of evidence and the third looking at mitigation. Phase 2 of the project involved the collection of primary data, including bird surveys to look at levels of disturbance, and visitor and household surveys to gather an understanding of the level of recreational use of the Solent coast and identify the catchment area for visitors. This data was fed into a computer model simulating the impact of disturbance on bird survival rates to enable predictions to be made of the likely effects of additional recreational use of the Solent coast in the future as a result of additional residential development (based on the South East Plan housing figures). The modelling showed a likelihood that additional bird deaths would arise as a result of additional development in the area surrounding the Solent coast. All the detailed reports of the SDMP have been published on the Solent Forum website⁴.
- 3.36 Natural England⁵ have concluded that the SDMP work represents the best available research and therefore measures are required in order to ensure a significant effect, in combination, arising from new housing development around the Solent, is avoided.
- 3.37 As a result of the need for mitigation a broad level suite of mitigation measures has been produced. These measures will form the basis of a fully-costed action plan produced by a delivery officer which will identify priorities for action. This could include education and awareness initiatives, a range of access management as well as the possibility of suitable alternative natural green spaces (SANGs) to deflect pressure from sensitive coastal sites. In the short term it is likely that a number of wardens and the implementation of a dog project will be the first set of initiatives prior to the implementation of the action plan (in 2-3 years). Mechanisms for securing funding and a continued collaborative approach are still to be decided. The latest details are outlined on the Solent Forum's website⁶. The Project is likely to have an impact on the provision and management of green infrastructure in the Borough and the

⁴ http://www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Natural_Environment_Group/Disturbance_and_Mitigation_Project/

⁵ The letter to local planning authorities can be viewed at http://www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Natural_Environment_Group/Disturbance_and_Mitigation_Project/Advice_to_PUSH_and_Solent_Forum%20310513.pdf

⁶ http://www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Natural_Environment_Group/Disturbance_and_Mitigation_Project/

wider sub-region and this issue is to be included in the relevant policies of the emerging Local Plan.

CONSULTATION

Main Consultations to date including:

- Consultation at each plan-making stage:
 - Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: Consultation Draft (Dec 2012- Feb 2013);
 - Core Strategy : Preferred Options (GBC December 2009);
 - Core Strategy: Issues and Option (GBC December 2006);
 - The Community Strategy and Local Development Framework: Make Your Mark December 2006 events (held in December 2006 Gosport Partnership); and
- On-going meetings with key stakeholders

Protection of Open Space

- 4.1 Whilst there have been a number of various consultations over recent years on the emerging Local Plan, this section focuses primarily on the most recent consultation that took place between December 2012 and February 2013 as well as any subsequent liaison with relevant stakeholders.
- 4.2 It is important to recognise, however, that from the earlier consultation which included the Vision for Gosport (Making Your Mark 2006) that the protection of existing open space has been considered to be very important. When asked what facilities are important when choosing a new home, the close proximity to open space was the 2nd most popular response (1,324 respondents). When asked how important parks and open spaces are, 94.3% (1,165 respondents) stated that they are very or fairly important, only 1.2% (15 respondents) considered them, fairly unimportant or not at all important. Important qualities of open space identified by respondents include: good views and natural features; clean and well-maintained; located close to home; and safe and secure.
- 4.9 Key issues relating to the consultation that took place on the draft Gosport Borough Local Plan between December 2012 and February 2013 raised a number of issues which are outlined below. The full details of each representation and the Council's consideration of it can be found in, 'Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: Consultation Draft (December 2012)- Summary and Analysis of Consultation Responses.'

Evidence base

- 4.10 In relation to open space issues one of the key objections was received from Sport England which considered that the evidence work conducted in 2008 and 2011 could be out-of-date. The Borough Council has therefore commissioned a further update to its Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Assessment and the results are set out above. The findings support the Borough Council's overall approach of protecting existing open space including playing pitches and securing developer contributions to improve the quality of these existing facilities.

Open space standards

- 4.11 Sport England considers that developers should be encouraged to provide outdoor sports facilities within larger development sites as part of the open space standards. However due to the compact nature of the Borough it is considered that normally outdoor facilities would be better placed in strategic locations and could be provided out of CIL. However smaller outdoor sport

facilities such as a Multi-Use Games Area could be provided as part of the 'local park' on appropriate developments of 50 or more dwellings and it is proposed to amend the Local Plan text to be clearer on this issue.

- 4.12 One developer of later living retirement housing disputed element of the proposed open space standards. The Borough Council's Summary and Analysis of Consultation Responses (ref A39/2) provides a full justification of when and why some form of provision is required.

Protection of open space

- 4.13 Sport England also considered that the policy on the protection of open space does not provide adequate protection for outdoor sports facilities. Sport England requested that the policy is amended with regard to outdoor sports facilities to more closely reflect the text of Paragraph 74 of the NPPF. However the Borough Council considers that the policy provides some flexibility to provide community uses within existing open spaces which in some instances may assist in the greater usage of the open space and maintain its viability in terms of maintenance.

- 4.13 Hampshire County Council suggested that the policy included reference to Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which provides a justified mechanism to enable surplus school playing fields to be sold subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, with any proceeds of sale being reinvested in local education or re-provision of open space elsewhere. The Borough Council instead considers that whilst Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides a justification mechanism for schools to release playing fields in terms of managing their estates it is not however a justification in planning terms. The Borough has a finite amount of open space and aims to retain such important facilities and consequently the Borough Council would still require the education authority to justify the loss of any playing fields in terms of the tests set out in the relevant Local Plan policy.

- 4.14 A small number of comments were made to site specific designations to retain open space. The Borough Council's Summary and Analysis of Consultation Responses (ref A27/6, A18/22, A43/3) provides a full justification relating to each one.

Green Infrastructure policy

- 4.15 Natural England, Hampshire County Council and the Environment Agency strongly support the proposed green infrastructure policy. English Heritage considered that certain heritage assets could also be included as green infrastructure which has subsequently been amended as part of the latest version of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity policies

- 4.16 Key biodiversity issues arising from the consultation are included in the Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Background Paper.

5.0 Key issues addressed by the Local Plan

- 5.1 As a result of the available evidence, policy framework and comments received from consultation it is clear that the Local Plan needs to include policies which protect existing and enhance green infrastructure and take opportunities to provide additional high quality open space that can contribute to the local and sub-regional network of green infrastructure. The open space and green infrastructure policies in the Local Plan therefore needs to protect existing, and provide additional high quality multi-functional green infrastructure for a variety of purposes.
- 5.2 As mentioned in the Local Plan and the NPPF green infrastructure including open spaces provide multiple benefits for the local residents and visitors as well as the wide environment including:
- Defining and separating urban areas;
 - Providing linkages between settlements and the countryside;
 - Enhancing the quality and visual amenity of urban areas;
 - Providing opportunities for formal sports, children's play and other leisure activities;
 - Helping to improve people's physical and mental well-being;
 - Providing important habitats for flora and fauna;
 - Providing a venue for community contact and events;
 - Providing flood water storage;
 - Assisting to ameliorate the impacts of climate change;
 - Reducing the impacts of pollution and noise; and additionally
 - Provides a setting that encourages inward investment.
- 5.3 The following policies in the emerging Local Plan aim to address this issue through a variety of proposals and policy provisions.

Policy LP2: Infrastructure- This policy aims to ensure that new development is served by appropriate level of infrastructure including green infrastructure including open spaces which can perform a number of recreational and/or amenity functions as well specialist functions such as allotments and cemeteries or sustainable drainage systems.

Policy LP3: Spatial Strategy- This policy aims to ensure that existing open spaces are protected and opportunities are taken to enhance them. It specifically identifies the Alver Valley as a Regeneration Area for Green Infrastructure which includes a Country Park; and that this facility forms part of the Borough's strategic green infrastructure together with Browndown, Stokes Bay and Lee-on-the-Solent seafront.

The policy also safeguards the character and function of the settlement gap between Gosport/Fareham and Lee-on-the-Solent/Stubbington which performs a number of functions.

Policies LP4-LP9:- These are site specific policies which include elements ensuring there is sufficient green infrastructure associated with the development including open space for recreational provision.

Policy LP8 is of particular note as it relates to the Alver Valley Regeneration Area for Green infrastructure including proposals for a Country Park. The Country Park represents the largest element of green infrastructure in the Borough with potential linkages to other strategic open areas such as the coastal areas of Stokes Bay, Browndown and the Lee-on-the-Solent seafront. It will also be able to link to the wider countryside areas within Fareham Borough between Gosport, Fareham,

Stubbington and Lee-on-the-Solent. The Alver Valley is identified by PUSH as being of sub-regional significance representing a strategic element of the South Hampshire green infrastructure network. It has the potential to store significant floodwater thereby reducing flood risk elsewhere including residential areas and a new balancing pond has been created to reduce flood risk within the new Cherque Farm residential development. There has been a major tree-planting programme and a number of reed beds have been created to help filter-out leachate from former landfill in order to improve the water quality of the River Alver.

Policy LP10: Design- This policy aims to ensure a good standard of design and that opportunities are taken to improve the character and quality of the area. New development should respect the Borough's natural environment and have a high quality appearance in terms of scale, massing, landscaping and appearance. Development should provide or be accessible to high quality open space and incorporate measures to protect and enhance biodiversity and landscape features. It should minimise its impact on climate change and be resilient and adaptable to its effects which could include the incorporation of green infrastructure within new development.

Policies LP11-LP13: Heritage asset policies- It is important to recognise that protection of heritage assets can in itself protect important green infrastructure in the Borough including Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, attractive open spaces within a Conservation Area or those that contribute to the setting of a Listed Building or scheduled ancient monument. The protection of green infrastructure also has the potential to safeguard archaeological features.

Policy LP24: Housing- The policy recognises that due to the highly urbanised nature of Gosport it is important to retain the existing areas of open space for the benefit of the community and therefore priority will be accorded for housing development on previously developed land. It is important that new development schemes should provide open space for amenity and recreational purposes.

Policy LP34: Provision of New Open Space and Improvements to Existing Open Space- This policy identifies a number of specific proposals for open space including the Alver Valley, the Ramparts at Priddy's Hard and Stokesmead. It aims to ensure that open spaces are provided at the GBC's 'good' standard and incorporate features to enhance biodiversity. It provides a standard for securing new open space in association with new residential development.

Policy LP35: Protection of Existing Open Space- This policy aims to protect existing open spaces and sets out the exceptional circumstances when development could be acceptable.

Policy LP36: Allotments- This aims to protect existing allotment sites and sets out criteria for permitting new sites. There is currently a shortage of allotment sites within the Borough and consequently there is a need to identify new sites when opportunities arise.

Policy LP39: Water Resources- This policy includes the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which forms an important element of green infrastructure provision assisting in flood alleviation including surface water flooding by slowing down water run-off.

Policy LP41: Green infrastructure- This policy sets out the Council's overall approach to green infrastructure including: the need to maintain and enhance the network in association with new development; achieving a net gain in biodiversity; the encourage the use of SuDS. It recognises the importance of partnership working and cross-boundary cooperation including on such issues as the protection of internationally important habitats.

Policies LP42-44: Nature Conservation policies- These policy aims to protect internationally, nationally and local important species and habitats as part of the wider green infrastructure network.

Policy LP45: Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion- This policy recognises the important role of SuDS as part of a wider approach to flood management.

Policy LP46: Pollution Control- This policy aims to prevent adverse environmental impacts through air, noise and light pollution. The text recognises the role that green infrastructure can have in mitigating the effects of air pollution including the use of trees to absorb dust and other pollutants. The text also recognises the importance of protecting existing 'dark areas' in the Borough by limiting light pollution and the need to ensure noise-emitting uses do not detract from nature conservation interest.

- 5.4 The Local Plan therefore addresses the need to protect and improve green infrastructure and provide additional elements for recreational, ecological, amenity and environmental reasons.

Appendix 1:

What are the Green Infrastructure functions in Urban South Hampshire?

Through consultation with stakeholders, 9 green infrastructure functions were identified as being critical, each of which delivers several public benefits:

Recreation & Health

- Improves physical and mental well-being
- Provides opportunities to exercise, play and engage in sport
- Provides accessibility (permeability) through the landscape, especially for walking, cycling & riding

Biodiversity & Natural Resources

- Increases opportunities for sustainable land management
- Safeguards priority habitats and species
- Restores ecological networks
- Conserves and improves soil quality
- Reduces the impact of poor air quality

Landscapes

- Safeguards the distinctive character and openness of "Strategic Gaps", "Local Gaps" and key views and vistas
- Safeguards the distinctive character of protected landscapes
- Safeguards and encourages beneficial use of local landscape resources (country parks, major urban parks, accessible woodlands, nature reserves, greenspaces of recognized amenity value)
- Creates attractive and distinctive settings for roads, transport and other infrastructure corridors, mitigating adverse visual impact

Coast & Water

- Improves Water quality
- Provides Coastal & Waterside recreation
- Protects Water resources & abstraction sites and brings them into multi-functional use

Climate Change

- Provides opportunities for renewable energy production

- Buffers/brakes flooding (fluvial & coastal); providing space for SUDS
- Provides shade and cooling to densely populated areas, especially those with vulnerable communities

Cultural & Historic Environment

- Conserves historic landscapes, archaeological assets, built heritage, cultural heritage
- Contributes to local distinctiveness through providing a setting for valuable cultural / historic environments

Economic Development

- Provides a setting to encourage inward investment
- Encourages retention of entrepreneurs and graduates
- Provides a setting and market for land-based tourism and social enterprises

Social Inclusion

- Provides a setting for community engagement & informal education
- Stimulates increase in training and skills
- Provides an outlet for community instincts for stewardship of the environment

Productive Environments

- Sustains a diverse land-based industry (farming, forestry, fisheries, tourism, equestrianism) where the quality of produce is welcomed by the large urban market nearby

Appendix 2: Policy response to value and quality assessment

| High Quality/ Low Value | High Quality/Medium Value | High Quality/ High Value |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible the preferred policy approach is to enhance its value in terms of its present purpose. • If this is not possible, the next policy approach is to consider whether it might be of higher value if converted to some other form of open space. • Only if this is not possible will it be acceptable to consider a change of use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preferred approach is to enhance its value but in most circumstances there is less priority than the low value sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally all spaces should come into this category and the planning system should seek to protect them in perpetuity. |
| Medium Quality/ Low Value | Medium Quality/ Medium Value | Medium Quality/ High Value |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These sites are of a fair standard and therefore ways to improve their value should be explored. In many cases this is likely to include measures to encourage greater use and/or adding features of interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preferred approach is to enhance its value and quality but in most circumstances there is less priority than the low value and quality sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many cases a small number of measures can be taken to improve their quality to ensure that it becomes a high quality/ high value site. It is important that these sites are protected. |
| Low Quality/ Low Value | Low Quality/ Medium Value | Low Quality/ High Value |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, the policy approach for these spaces should be to enhance their quality, provided it is also possible to increase their value. • If this is not possible, for whatever reason, the space or facility may in due course be considered surplus to requirements in terms of its present purpose. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By improving quality it may be possible to increase its value by encouraging greater use. This may be a lower priority than low quality/low value sites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy approach to these spaces should always be to enhance their quality and therefore the planning system should seek to protect them. |

Appendix 3: Background Papers and References

National Guidance

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)(2012) National Planning policy Framework

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)(2014) National Planning Practice Guidance <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

Regional Planning Documents

Forestry Commission & Natural England (2007) – An Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace Provision in the South East

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf/\\$FILE/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf/$FILE/accnatgreenrep-report.pdf)

Sub Regional Planning Documents

PUSH (October 2012)- South Hampshire Strategy: A Framework to Guide Sustainable Development and Change to 2026

www.push.gov.uk/south_hampshire_strategy_-_oct_2012-2.pdf

Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) / UE Associates (2010) - Green Infrastructure Strategy

www.push.gov.uk/push_gi_strategy_adopted_june_10-3.pdf

Hampshire County Council (HCC) (2008) - Solent Countryside Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2008-2013

www.hants.gov.uk/rh/countryside/access/solent.pdf

Hampshire County Council (HCC) (April 2007) - Local Countryside and Greenspace Guidance

Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) / TEP (July 2007) - Towards A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Urban South Hampshire

www.push.gov.uk/towards_a_gi_strategy_-_advice_to_push_jul_08.pdf

Local Planning Documents

Gosport Borough Council Annual Monitoring Reports

www.gosport.gov.uk/annual-monitoring-report

Gosport Borough Council (2014)- Open Space Monitoring Report

www.gosport.gov.uk/localplan2029-evidencestudies

Gosport Borough Council (GBC 2014) – Local Open Space Standards included in Appendices to the Draft Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Strategy

www.gosport.gov.uk/localplan2029-evidencestudies

Strategic Leisure for Gosport Borough Council (2014) Playing Pitch and Sports Facility

Assessment

www.gosport.gov.uk/localplan2029-evidencestudies

Gosport Borough Council (GBC 2007) - Gosport Children's Play Strategy 2007-2012

Gosport Borough Council (2006) – Gosport Borough Local Plan Review

www.gosport.gov.uk/localplanreview

Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

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in Braille or in another language, please ask.**

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