

Green Infrastructure

Pre-application Advice Note

June 2019

Status of this advice note

Cotswold District Council (CDC) is committed to providing a high standard of pre-application advice to assist customers with the preparation of their applications.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This advice note explains CDC's development plan objectives for green infrastructure. Responding positively to this advice will increase the likelihood of your application meeting the green infrastructure requirements of the development plan.

What is green infrastructure?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines green (or blue) infrastructure 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."

This network connects the towns and villages of our District and County, enhancing the character and appearance of our rural and urban environments. It can improve water management, air quality and public health and wellbeing. It provides opportunities to protect and increase biodiversity, improve food and energy security, facilitate community development, and build resilience to the effects of climate change.

This is why our adopted Local Plan highlights the importance of green infrastructure. Depending on scale, use and location, proposals for development must contribute to the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure and/or to the delivery of new green infrastructure.



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

What are the key things to consider when designing green infrastructure?

1 Delivering multi-functional benefits

Green infrastructure should be provided and managed as a network.

As many elements as possible should be multi-functional. For example, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) serve a drainage role, but can also contribute to visual amenity and habitat creation. Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) uses surface water as a resource in creating beautiful, successful and resilient places.

Street trees help to define the identity of an area and enhance its character and appearance, as well as providing shade and shelter. They also contribute to our wellbeing, improve air quality and provide habitats for wildlife.

Green roofs on buildings can slow surface water runoff, improve insulation and provide habitats for wildlife.



The network and as many of its assets as possible should be multi-functional

2 Character and quality of the area and the way it functions

Proposals should enhance existing landscape, ecological and historical features. Existing stone walls, hedgerows, trees and ponds should be successfully integrated.

Where development will affect heritage assets, green infrastructure should help conserve and enhance those assets and their settings. For example, by preserving key views.

Interfaces between new and existing development should respect the amenity of existing properties, while also bringing new and existing communities together.

New on-site green infrastructure should be linked physically with the off-site network, taking opportunities to create or improve ecological connections and the movement network. Where practicable, improved management of off-site wildlife areas in the locality should also be achieved.



Existing, mature trees can be successfully integrated within new green infrastructure

3 Successful implementation and future management

Early implementation is critical. Where implementation is phased over years, green infrastructure should be delivered as an integrated part of each phase of development.

Implemented schemes should clearly distinguish between the public realm and private spaces.

Private spaces should be suitable for the development in terms of size, natural lighting and degree of privacy.

Planting schemes should reflect the function of the green infrastructure, favour native species and improve resilience to climate change.

Management plans should set out arrangements and responsibilities for subsequent long-term maintenance and monitoring. Where practicable, they should take opportunities to enhance biodiversity assets and networks.



Implemented schemes should clearly distinguish between the public realm and private space

4

Ensuring accessibility and usability

Green infrastructure enhances the quality of our environment. It should be accessible to as many people as possible, encouraging and facilitating healthy lifestyles.

Designers should consider the needs of all users carefully, including small children, the elderly, and those with impaired mobility or senses.

Proposals should be informed by the appropriate standards: e.g. Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard; Fields in Trust benchmark guidelines; and the National Allotment Society's recommendations.

Where possible, enhancements to off-site green infrastructure assets should promote greater public access.



Green infrastructure in the public realm should be accessible to as many people as practicable

Is green infrastructure an issue for all planning applications?

All applicants should consider how their proposals can contribute to the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure and/or to the delivery of new green infrastructure. This will depend on the location of the site and the nature of the proposals. However, there may well be opportunities to enhance the existing network, irrespective of the scale of development proposed.



Building scale

At the individual building scale, it may be possible to incorporate features such as green roofs. Bird or bat boxes can help to achieve net gain in biodiversity on a site.



Infill scale

Where infill development is proposed, the network can also be enhanced by retaining existing trees and hedges. There may also be opportunities to provide new planting and stone walls.

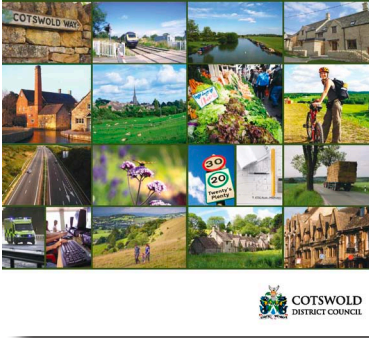


Neighbourhood scale

Where larger-scale development is proposed, the network can be enhanced and extended through the retention of existing and the provision of new assets, including green spaces, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and street trees.

The adopted Local Plan provides further guidance. In particular, refer to relevant policies in chapters 10 and 11, together with the Cotswold Design Code and Strategic Principles for Green Infrastructure in Gloucestershire (appendices D and H respectively).

COTSWOLD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2011-2031 (Adopted 3 August 2018)



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Will I need to submit extra information with my planning application?

Providing new and/or enhanced green infrastructure as part of your proposals will not necessitate the submission of extra information with your planning application. For most applications proposals for green infrastructure can be described and illustrated by material that would be required in any case: e.g. design and access statement; layout and landscaping plans; planting schemes; and drainage details, etc. For more complex applications, green infrastructure proposals can also be described and illustrated within supporting documents and assessments, which again would be required in any case; e.g. Environmental Statement - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Applicants proposing large-scale development may wish to provide a discrete green infrastructure strategy document in support of their application. However, this could equally form part of a framework master plan document, or an appropriately structured design and access statement.

Should I consult others before submitting my application?

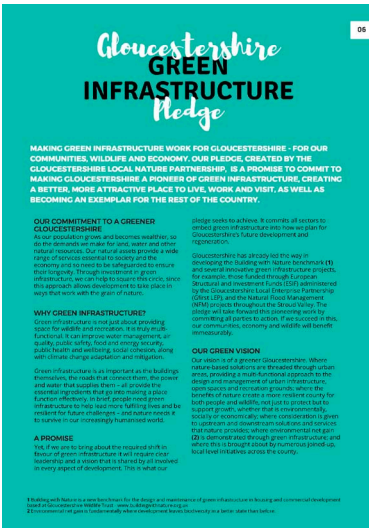
CDC encourages all applicants to consider whether pre-application consultation with others would be beneficial. If so, applicants should engage with the local community and with statutory and non-statutory consultees, as appropriate, before submitting their applications.

Gloucestershire has already led the way in developing the Building with Nature framework of standards, which enables prospective developers to have their proposals assessed for accreditation, including at the pre-application stage.

Where can I find further information?

In addition to providing advice notes, CDC offers site-specific advice - see the ['Pre-application advice and guidance'](#) page on CDC's website. There is likely to be a charge for this service, depending on the complexity of your proposals.

Click on the documents opposite and on the links below for further information about design and delivery of green infrastructure.



- Natural England - Publications, maps and data
- Landscape Character Assessment
- The Landscape Institute - green infrastructure
- Green Infrastructure Partnership
- Fields in Trust guidance
- Play England
- The SuDS Manual (C753)
- Sport England