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1 Introduction

1.1 This paper provides background information to support the policies that form part of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out the vision and objectives for the Forest of Dean District, explaining how the District is expected to develop to 2026.

1.2 The concept of Green Infrastructure is developing in the United Kingdom, being gradually integrated into local policies and increasingly recognised as an essential part of sustainable spatial planning.

Definition of Green Infrastructure

1.3 Planning Policy Statement 12 states

'Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities.'

1.4 However, there is no universally accepted definition of Green Infrastructure, Natural England in its Green Infrastructure Guidance uses the following definition:

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

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

Natural England is promoting the concept of Green Infrastructure as a way to deliver a wide range of benefits for people and the natural environment together through the spatial planning system, as an integral part of new development everywhere and should also form a key part of proposals to regenerate existing urban areas.

What constitutes Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure is the network of multifunctional green spaces between and within our cities, towns and villages, as well as the links between them.

Enfusion's Discussion Paper On Green Infrastructure for the South West Regional Assembly, 2005 describes areas that form the Green Infrastructure Network and the benefits that arise from them as

a **strategic network of accessible**, multifunctional sites (including parks, woodland, informal open spaces, nature reserves and historic sites) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and floodplains, wildlife corridors and greenways). These contribute to people's **well being**, and together comprise a **coherent managed** resource responsive to **evolving** conditions. GI should look beyond existing designations, identifying opportunities to **enhance** the physical and functional connectivity of assets, and to extend the flow of **benefits** for people (recreation and sport, health and well being, economic), ecosystems, and natural ecological processes (air quality and sustainable water)."

The purpose of green infrastructure planning is to preserve the existing green spaces, to prevent their deterioration and to improve the quality and diversity of these areas. The aim is to interconnect adjacent greenspaces to provide a network of green spaces that are accessible and within a short distance of the local population. (See English Nature Green Space Standard)

Benefits and Functions

'The economic benefits of the green infrastructure' Ecotec (2008)

The assessment and provision of green infrastructure contributes to the use of the countryside for

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Green infrastructure provides natural air conditioning for urban areas reducing the need for power consumption for heating and cooling alongside its contributions towards greenhouse gas absorption and longer term benefits in managing the impact of climate change

Flood alleviation and water management

Increasing and maintaining the canopy cover together with providing an absorbent ground cover reduces and helps to control run-off. Green infrastructure increases water storage capacity resulting in less dramatic flood events

Quality of place

Green infrastructure provides for an improved living environment. This provides opportunities for recreation, empowerment through community action and ownership and improved visual amenity

Health and well-being

Green infrastructure provides multiple health benefits through improved air quality, reduced stress levels, increased opportunities for informal and formal physical activity and recreation. All these contribute to the reduction of limiting long term illness and cost to the health services, reducing days lost through illness and improving productivity.

Land and property values

Developing green infrastructure and undertaking environmental improvements in key locations within urban and semi-urban areas has significant benefits for housing and land values. Proximity to high quality and accessible green space directly impacts positively upon house prices.

Economic growth and investment

The creation and development of green spaces and landscaping can encourage and attract high value industry and workers to a locality or region. This can provide many benefits to urban areas in terms of improvements in quality of life and an improved green environment can increase opportunities for adding GVA to local economies.

Labour productivity

High quality accessible green infrastructure can provide opportunities to develop a more productive workforce for employers through improved health, stress alleviation and enhancing motivation/attracting and retaining motivated people.

Tourism

Green infrastructure plays a strong role in the generation of new tourism opportunities in town and country as well as stimulating economic activity within agriculture, forestry and public services. There is potential to invest in the maintenance of key environmental assets, the creation of new assets and greening city centres, attracting new visitors and in turn supporting urban retail and tourism sectors

Recreation and leisure

Green infrastructure generates the provision of new leisure and recreation opportunities, stimulating investment in rights of way and publicly accessible green space and woodlands. Community involvement in neighbourhood projects, including ownership/management of green infrastructure assets, can encourage cohesion and develop a renewed sense of local identity.

Land and biodiversity

Green infrastructure plays a strong role in supporting direct and indirect employment in agriculture, forestry, land management and conservation industries. The potential to create green spaces within built up areas reconnects urban communities with the land and improves opportunities for local food marketing.

Products from the land

The vast majority of green infrastructure takes the form of land in production located in the countryside. This includes land for agricultural, and horticultural uses and managed woodlands and moorland. Increased benefits may be realised through investment targeted at diversification activities and creating added value from land based products including renewable energy resources.

2 Guidance

National Guidance

Introduction

2.1 The following National guidance, Regional and Local policies provide the policy framework which informs the approach to green infrastructure.

Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Spatial Planning

Infrastructure

4.8 The core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The core strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.

Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development 2005

states that development should ensure an appropriate mix of uses, including the incorporation of green space.

Planning Policy 25 - Development and Flood Risk:

Development and Flood Risk refers specifically to making the most of the benefits of green infrastructure for flood storage,

using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding eg surface water management plans; making the most of the benefits of green infrastructure for flood storage, conveyance and SUDS; re-creating functional floodplain; and setting back defences;

Planing Policy Guidance 17

requires adequate provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities to be audited provided and maintained.

2.2 The GI approach to planning is a three stage process aimed at enhancing the physical and functional connectivity of each GI asset. The three stages are:

1. Identifying the needs, for example social, environmental and economic, of the area in question;
2. Assessing whether these needs are met by GI at present and in the future; and
3. Conserving or creating components of GI accordingly.

2.3 The GI approach is not about constraining development but rather its aim is to provide planners, developers and other professionals with a tool that enables them to create a powerful network of multifunctional GI assets that is essential for both existing and new sustainable communities and without which public resistance to development is likely to increase.

Local policies plans and strategies

2.4 Listed below are the recurring and key themes to emerge from relevant District Council plans, policies and strategies that are relevant to green Infrastructure. The documents have a vision for the Forest of Dean:

- Where the high quality of our environment is valued and enhanced for future generations and the causes and effects of climate change are addressed
- Where community life is strengthened and all individuals are confident, safe, feel part of their community and are proud of it
- Where the economy is vibrant and strong and people can access the services they need
- With a distinctive identity locally and nationally

2.5 The relevant documents include The Corporate Plan, The Sustainable Community Strategy and The Local Area Agreement. Green infrastructure directly addresses issues raised in these plans such as to protect and improve our environment through responding to and reducing our impact on climate change and ensuring that our built and natural environment is valued and that our towns and villages are well maintained, clean, pleasant and places for people to enjoy. The Core Strategy policies support this vision of the Sustainable Community Plan and Corporate Plan.

3 Core Strategy

3.1 Consideration of the above evidence has influenced the policy approach in the Core Strategy. Policy CSP.1 ensures that such assets will be retained and enhanced. In particular, the policy states the need to provide for the creation of strategic green infrastructure where appropriate.

Policy CSP 1

Design, environmental protection and enhancement (strategic objective: providing quality environments)

The design and construction of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment and conserve, preserve or otherwise respect them in a manner that maintains or enhances their contribution to the environment, including their wider context. New development should demonstrate an efficient use of resources. It should respect wider natural corridors and other natural areas, providing green infrastructure where necessary.

In achieving the above, the following will be considered:

- The effect of the proposal on the landscape and any mitigation/ enhancement that is necessary or desirable
- The impact on any protected sites (natural and historic) and potential for avoiding mitigating or enhancing the site concerned
- Whether the existing infrastructure is adequate- additional provision will be required where it is not.
- Whether the development is at risk from flooding, whether it can be permitted taking into account any risks, and any mitigation that may be necessary
- The impact of the development on any land contamination- whether it is necessary to provide mitigation or remediation
- The impact of the development on pollution including any scope to provide remediation
- The provision of water supply and the development's impact on groundwater and any protected abstractions-
- Proposals for waste minimisation and management

Development that is not able to be satisfactorily accommodated in respect of the above will not be permitted

The policy is intended to promote local distinctiveness as well as good design and conservation. Much of the strategy depends on the maintenance or enhancement of the quality of the landscape and the opportunity to use new development to do this is an important one. While recognising that change is inevitable, it seeks to ensure that new

development makes a positive contribution which may include environmental improvements. It also sets out some basic considerations which against which development proposals will be assessed. In assessing these the impact of the development concerned will be judged. The policy applies when the development is complete and during its construction. Implementation of the policy will be measured by the assessment of the positive impact of new development (including any enhancement) and by the lack of harmful impact on the environment. Where necessary developments will be regulated by condition and planning agreements. Monitoring will consider the incidence of development contrary to policy, especially in respect of the use of resources, impacts on protected habitats and areas of flood risk. Design will be considered in the light of any prevailing guidance.

6.1 Design is crucial to the appreciation and maintenance of the local distinctiveness of the area. A high quality environment is vital in promoting the economic future of the area and should be maintained for its own sake. This policy is intended to emphasise the need for new development to make a positive contribution to improving the quality of the environment. While some areas will not be suitable for any development others will be able to accommodate considerable change. Although the terms "high quality" and "appropriateness" are too vague without showing how they will be assessed they are the overriding principles in considering the impact and design of new development.

6.2 All new development should make a positive contribution to an area by way of its design. It should be compatible with its surroundings and in achieving this may blend in with them, provide mitigation by way of landscaping or can provide a distinct feature. It is the overall quality that is important and this is not necessarily related to cost. The design of any structure will reflect its purpose and (increasingly) the need for it to be energy efficient while making an economical use of resources. None of these considerations should detract from the need to achieve designs that make a positive contribution to the area. Especially important will be the assessment of the context of the proposed development. For example the key justification for many agricultural buildings is that they are appropriate in the landscape, are necessary and are of an appropriate design. A structure's relationship with its landscape, any landscaping and possible mitigation should be fully evaluated. Minor developments may not require anything other than a very short statement when they are proposed but need to be considered because of their potential impact on their localities. Rural areas can be especially sensitive to small changes such as the redevelopment of dwellings or the conversion of rural buildings. Particular care will be taken to ensure that such proposals do not adversely affect the traditional, settled appearance of the many small settlements and of the countryside.

6.3 The means of travel to and from a development, and the infrastructure it needs have a direct bearing on the quality of the environment and will be considered as part of any proposals.

6.4 The Forest of Dean has a large number and variety of protected sites and landscapes. They include areas protected by European and national legislation and development within them is strictly controlled. Examples include the Special Areas for Conservation, Ancient Monuments and sites of Special Scientific Interest. There are also locally protected Key

Wildlife Sites and other areas of local interest. In addition it is essential to take proper account of the need to safeguard certain protected species which may be present throughout the district. As a general principle development in these areas or development which adversely affects protected species is very unlikely to be permitted. Enhancement will be sought either independently or as a part of new development. Combinations of sites forming larger general areas are of great importance in nature conservation and it is therefore important to assess the impact of proposals on the wider area using such considerations as the Gloucestershire Nature Map. All protected areas and others can form part of particularly important networks of "green infrastructure". This can be multi functional (eg recreational routes can be useful wildlife corridors).

6.5 Overall the variety of landscapes is an outstanding feature of the Forest of Dean District and it is vital that development proposals take account of this, as well as any nature conservation or archaeological and/ or historical interests. The impact of new development on the landscape will primarily be evaluated using the Council's Landscape Supplementary Planning Document and the Landscape Assessment. It will be a key consideration in the evaluation of any development proposal.

6.6 Some important landscapes are affected by statutory designations such as AONBs. These are generally protected from major development and there is legislation and planning guidance that sets out how development in these areas should be evaluated. Two AONBs affect significant parts of the Forest of Dean District, but much of the forest itself (the crown land and the freeholds within it) is not within an AONB (or other nationally recognised designation such as a national park). The Council have however agreed to Natural England further examining the case for the designation as AONB of additional land within the district. The statutory forest embraces a distinct and unique series of landscapes of national importance most worthy of conservation.

6.7 Individual features within the landscape also need to be taken into account in assessing proposals for development. These may vary from nationally important scheduled monuments or Listed Buildings to much more local items such as walls or open areas of forest waste. The impact of any development on these will need to be taken into account in assessing proposals for change. Much of the local distinctiveness of an area depends on the cumulative effect of features which may appear to have little individual significance. This is especially true in some of the Forest of Dean landscapes. It follows that the erosion of these should be resisted.

6.8 In assessing the impact of a development the considerations listed in the policy will be taken into account along with any necessary mitigation or remediation. Where a satisfactory environment cannot be achieved, proposals will not be acceptable. They should prevent pollution, must conserve and enhance water quality and may also bring other improvements by addressing existing problems of land contamination⁽¹⁾. Conservation of the environment should also be addressed through the careful management of waste, before, during and after the life of a building or other use. ⁽²⁾

1 see PPS 23, Planning and Pollution Control, ODPM 2004.

2 See SPD on Waste Minimisation, Gloucestershire County Council.

3.2 Policy CSP.2 requires that proposals take into consideration the issues of green infrastructure CSP.2 refers particularly in matters of biodiversity through reinforcing the protection of green corridors and their linkages.

Policy CSP 2

Policy - Climate Change Adaptation (Strategic objective: thriving sustainable communities)

Proposals for major development will be required to demonstrate that their design and layout will reduce the impacts of climatic change as identified in national, regional and local predictions over the lifetime of the development concerned. The following should be addressed in an integrated way, demonstrating that one element benefits another:

1 Water management

1. Improving water efficiency- proposals should demonstrate high levels of water efficiency as well as rain water harvesting and grey water recycling systems unless it can be demonstrated that it is not appropriate in a specific location
2. Managing surface run off- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and measures to reduce or avoid water contamination and safeguard ground water supply should be incorporated into all development unless it can be demonstrated that this is not appropriate in a specific location
3. Flood risk- ensuring that risks (including changing risks due to climate change) are taken account of in new development, including improving resilience and safety of the areas concerned.

2 Heating and cooling

Proposals will be required to demonstrate how the development comprehensively utilises passive solar gain and provides cooling for buildings, gardens and communal areas at the appropriate times of the year.

3 Biodiversity

1. Developments must support green infrastructure corridors that link to existing habitat features and networks. They must show that the integrity of any affected nature conservation sites is not compromised by the development proposed. Proposals that prevent or restrict network connections will not be supported.
2. Developments will be required to make long lasting biodiversity enhancements which should support existing features (trees, ponds, hedgerows etc), provide and manage public open space and should also provide additional features for a wide variety of species and habitats in appropriate locations throughout the development. Additional features provided should be consistent with the characteristics of the surrounding area.

Note major development refers to the DCLG definition used in defining planning applications

This policy looks to the future and ensures that new development takes account of the impacts of changes in climatic conditions over its lifetime. It addresses key issues including those raised by the UK Climate impacts programme of water management, shading, exposure, biodiversity, landscaping and heat regulation. The policy requires the issues it considers to be dealt with in an integrated manner and this will benefit both the development concerned and the wider environment. SUDs for example should be designed to deliver landscape and also biodiversity benefits and the choice of planting can help with temperature regulation, contributing to wider networks of green infrastructure. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how they meet the challenge of adapting to a changing climate.

Implementation will be through developers and by the Council, in partnership with the LSP which will also bring forward further guidance during the life of the Core Strategy. Monitoring will include already established national indicators, or their equivalent.

6.9 Climate change issues can be divided into two strategic areas, adaptation and mitigation:

Adaptation – It is now generally agreed that our climate will change now due to past Greenhouse Gas emissions. Adaptation, developing ways of preparing to cope with those changes, is therefore necessary.

Mitigation – Action to reduce CO₂ emissions and therefore reduce the rate and significance of change.⁽³⁾

6.10 The Core Strategy is required to address both mitigation and adaptation. It does this in the consideration of the strategic locations for development and in the two specific policies CSP 2 and 3. In addition, renewable energy development will be supported where it meets national guidance.

6.11 The Code for Sustainable Homes will be implemented by government through building regulations⁽⁴⁾. As these address energy efficiency the climate change policies in the Core Strategy focus on energy generation within development and on adaptation. The policy requirements set out may be substituted by meeting at least code level four or BREEAM excellent rating for commercial development.

6.12 Planning has a key role for preparing for climate change⁽⁵⁾. All development will be required to adapt to climate change and in doing so will need to show that the appropriate considerations have been taken into account. These include Strategic Flood Risk Assessments which can influence the location of development. Climate Change, including adaptation, is a core priority within both Community Plans and the Council's corporate plan. Associated risks are identified on the council's risk register in terms of the both council operations and potential impacts on the community. Following on from the objective

3 Forest of Dean Local Strategic Partnership's Climate Change Strategy, 2010

4 Greener Homes for the Future, 2008

5 See PPS1 including Climate Change Supplement, and PPS 25

in the community plan, the Local Strategic Partnership has developed a climate change strategy which requires all sectors of the community to take action in addressing the impacts of Climate change. The Local Area Agreement identifies (presently through National Indicator 188) climate change impacts as a clear challenge facing the district.

6.13 The above policy enables the work of the Community Strategy through the LSP to be implemented in spatial planning. The policy is concerned with new development, which can include proposals to adapt buildings. Much of the adaptation needed is however outside the planning system and here the Core Strategy can provide examples of good practice and influence change over a period of time. Other legislation (eg building regulations) will play an important part and it is important that the LDF is compatible with this.

3.3 Policies CSP.4 and CSP.9 requires that proposals take into consideration the issues of green infrastructure where proposals are able to enhance existing sites or make provision for new green infrastructure.

Policy CSP 4

Development principles, development at settlements (strategic objectives: to promote thriving sustainable communities, facilitate regeneration)

New development must contribute to reinforcing the existing settlement pattern in a manner which emphasises the importance of the towns, especially Lydney and Cinderford where most change will take place. The following principles will be applied:

Most changes in towns and villages will be expected to take place within the existing settlement boundaries, unless or until they are replaced by other LDF documents (for example an Area Action Plan). Exceptions to this may include affordable housing for local persons and building conversions and (rarely) new buildings for employment uses on the edge of settlements. Areas outside settlement boundaries will be treated as part of the open countryside.

New development will be concentrated at the towns in a manner that relates closely to the intended role of each, taking advantage of the individual characteristics of each and in keeping with the settlement policies. Proposals will be expected to improve the quality of their environment with special regard being paid to the quality of the town centres, the general rural character of the district and any protected environments such as Conservation Areas.

All proposals, whether at settlements or not, should be resource efficient and make the best use of available infrastructure. Where their needs cannot be met, additional infrastructure provision arising from the needs of the development will be sought by way of developer contributions. This includes social, and community infrastructure, such as

library or health provision, or facilities for emergency services; green infrastructure such as recreation space, protected landscapes and natural areas; and physical infrastructure which includes roads, sewers etc.

Most changes in the south forest will take place at the towns with other development in villages in accord with their size and function as set out in the hierarchy (7.57). New housing will be concentrated where there is already good access to employment and where additional employment can be provided. In the north forest, development will be centred around Newent and to a lesser degree the villages.

Development and the provision of services will be supported where it leads to the maintenance and enhancement of the functions of the towns and larger villages. Particular support will be given through assistance to the implementation of community-led regeneration plans. Within town centres, new development will be encouraged that reinforces the role of the towns and provides a more diverse and better quality service or retail offer.

This policy is concerned with how development will contribute to the overall aims of the strategy. It sets out the principle that development should be concentrated at settlements and that it should be of a scale and nature which is compatible with the role of the settlement concerned. It relates to all development, and the requirement for it to be located in accord with the existing settlement pattern and hierarchy. There will be cases where development is not located at settlements because of its nature but these will need to be justified (for example agricultural development and some tourism development is appropriate away from settlements). Where necessary for the development concerned, additional infrastructure will be sought. This may take the form of physical, social and green infrastructure. The policy draws attention to the south and its three towns as the area likely to experience most change. It will be enabled through allocation of land and by development management. It will be monitored by following the numbers of permissions granted and development completed, and implemented by the public and private sector carrying out development that is in accord with it.

6.20 The Core Strategy directs most change to the towns. This is in keeping with national policy and provides scope for concentrating the benefits of additional development. The way in which different towns are expected to develop is considered in their individual sections of this strategy and the intention is to use their different characteristics and capabilities in a manner that contributes to the overall aims of this strategy. The aim is to reinforce the economic and social networks especially in the south forest, and improve each towns' self containment while developing them in a complementary rather than competitive manner.

6.21 There are active local partnerships or the equivalent in each of the four towns and there are plans for the development of each that the partnerships are seeking to implement. The LDF will enable important elements of these either through the support of this strategy and through the more specific AAPs that are being drafted. Major changes are likely in

Cinderford arising from the Business Plan and Area Action Plan. Likewise in Lydney, the emphasis is on change in order to achieve the necessary revitalisation. Improvements to each of the town centres are planned with the overall aim of making the shopping environments more attractive, safe and free from crime. The physical appearance of the centres is central to their attractiveness and they have been found in need of further enhancement in recent surveys. ⁽⁶⁾

6.22 Clearly there will also be costs arising from the new development that takes place and there will be demands on new infrastructure. The latter can be minimised by the general concentration of new development in areas able to accommodate it without major new infrastructure (for example using existing settlements and their public transport networks). Developer contributions will then be sought as necessary to meet the requirements arising from each individual site. These may include items such as roads, sewerage, subsidies for transport services, social and health facilities and contributions in order to provide for emergency services ⁽⁷⁾. New development will be assessed against its impact on existing local infrastructure, services and resources and where necessary, new provision should be made as part of the development in order to meet or fund any infrastructure impact. In some cases, the phasing of development in step with the availability of infrastructure may be necessary. In others, and especially in rural areas the lack of available infrastructure or the problems (including cost) involved in providing it may mean that development is not able to proceed.

6.23 The use of greenfield land can be minimised first by the use of previously developed land where possible and then by careful selection of location. Whatever the site, it will be necessary to ensure that wildlife habitats and recreation opportunities are safeguarded or enhanced by the use of green spaces within the development concerned. All development should make good use of resources and should be designed so as not to lead to waste during construction or use. Any site may have archaeological interest which will need to be considered.

6.24 Beyond the towns, there is a complex settlement hierarchy. It is set out later in the strategy where the role of individual villages is considered. The larger villages and groups of villages will be expected to continue to provide services and employment and existing and new development will be supported where it is compatible with the role and function of the village or group of villages concerned. The settlement boundaries will be used as a guide to the way in which the settlements will be expected to develop. Some saved policies in the Local Plan will remain until they are replaced by other LDF documents. Included in these allocations are areas safeguarded for employment uses. The larger of these are of much more than local importance and their continued support is vital to the strategy. At a more detailed level, the Local Plan identifies many of the features that are important to the character of individual settlements and these will continue to need to be taken into account.

Policy CSP 9

6 Marketing and Workspace study, 2008

7 see definition in glossary

**Recreational and amenity land including forest waste- protection and provision
(Strategic objective: Providing quality environments)**

Protection of Amenity land

Except where allocated in a development plan, land which is identified as being of amenity value and all forest waste whether so identified or not, will be protected from development. This includes land which is part of the forest landscape and other protected areas identified in Development Plan Documents and /or on the proposals map.

Exceptionally, the change of use or other development of land that does not contribute to the character of an area and is therefore of little amenity value may be considered. In this case enhancement of the area concerned, or compensatory provision of an equivalent area may be sought (especially in the case of the loss of forest waste). There are some areas of forest waste which contain buildings. Proposals for these will be treated on their individual merits, having regard to the landscape, historic and cultural importance of the site.

Protection of Recreational use

Development involving the loss of existing recreational land and buildings will not be supported. Exceptions may be made where it can be shown that the use is no longer required or where the development secures satisfactory replacement or improvement of the recreational use(s) which outweighs any loss.

Recreational provision for new development

Where there is an established need, new development will be expected to make provision, or a contribution towards provision, of open space and other facilities including those required for children's play and youth/adult recreation.

In considering the provision of new space and the contribution of any that exists, the need to retain and further develop a network of green infrastructure will be taken into account.

The purpose of the policy is to protect recreational and amenity land and to ensure that any recreation space that may be lost is replaced. It also ensures that there is adequate provision made for new development. Implementation will be through development management and monitoring by audit of facilities.

6.54 Amenity land, (not necessarily used for formal recreation) is an important asset in any area. It is especially important as part of the distinctive forest fringe landscapes, where built and open areas meet. It is often of visual, historical, natural and/or cultural importance. Many such areas are crossed by paths and tracks and provide access to the forest itself. Amenity land, in the form of important open areas, including Forest Waste is protected in

the out going Local Plan and will continue to be protected under the LDF, both generally in the Core Strategy and by being identified in subsequent DPDs. For such land to be protected it would be expected to be of cultural, historic, visual and/ or functional importance. ⁽⁸⁾

6.55 Within the Forest, land not suitable or used for tree production may be sold or exchanged for other land by the Forestry Commission on the principle that equivalent or better land is taken into the forest. ⁽⁹⁾Changes of use or other development of land which is forest waste but is of little amenity value which is permitted in exceptional circumstances may be subject to these requirements.

Box 1

The Statutory Forest

The area covered by the Statutory Forest is shown on the key diagram. Within it there are a variety of landscapes and land uses but all are dominated by the physical, historic and cultural Forest of Dean. There are important wooded landscapes associated with the Forest itself (notably Highmeadow Wood and the Kidnalls) which are accorded the same protection in the Core Strategy but are not part of the statutory forest.

Forest Waste is a term given to mean the land within the statutory forest which is not legally enclosed at any one time, including the unplanted areas which are not currently growing trees. Many areas of waste are important amenity areas on the edges of settlements.

The areas capable of planting will always be protected from development. These areas will change from time to time. The crown land of the statutory forest together with its associated settlements and other freeholds forms a unique landscape. Overlaying the landscape and partly explaining it is the cultural and historic background of the Forest of Dean. It has its own governance, laws and customs which are an integral part of the whole. The Core strategy therefore strongly supports the protection of the physical, cultural and historic landscape of the statutory forest.

Some change is inevitable, and should take place in harmony with the landscape and the working of the forest. The Core Strategy allocates land which it considers can be developed in a way compatible with its policies. The one allocation which involves crown land within the statutory forest is part of the Northern Quarter in Cinderford.

6.56 Land or buildings used for recreation will be protected from development. This is in order to protect the facility as a community asset and not as a site for its own sake. Where they are not protected by other designations or requirements of the development plan, therefore, land or buildings used for recreation can be used for alternative purposes. The equivalent land or buildings (or a combination) which provide for the function lost must

8 Keynote Green Infrastructure

9 This is provided for in the 1981 forestry Act and is independent of any planning consideration

however be provided elsewhere in a convenient location. If this is not done then the lack of need for the facility concerned must be clearly established. Other protection may apply to recreational land which may constrain or prevent its development. With the exception of planned schemes with appropriate mitigation, the loss of public access land will be unlikely to be supported

6.57 New development which generates a need for open space will be required to provide this to an appropriate level where there is a shortage. This includes the provision of play space and youth adult play space which is presently required to meet the standards of the NPFA⁽¹⁰⁾. Casual open space for amenity, wildlife and visual purposes will also be required as an integral part of development proposals and this and other more formal space can make a valuable contribution to green infrastructure.

Implementation of Core Strategy Policies

The provision of and policies relating to Green infrastructure will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report.

10 National Playing Fields Association, now known as FIT (Fields in Trust)

4 Green Infrastructure: Forest of Dean

4.1 The Forest of Dean Green Infrastructure network is made up of existing and proposed multi functional green spaces that contribute to the high quality of the natural and built environment of the district. It consists of both public and private owned areas not all with public access. Green infrastructure is increasingly seen as essential infrastructure and a positive way of protecting and enhancing green spaces and providing environmental social or economic benefits

4.2 The Core Strategy's aim is to protect, conserve and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure Provision within the District and to ensure that additional green infrastructure is created to accompany new development especially in areas where there is a deficit or areas where significant development is planned and additional provision is needed.

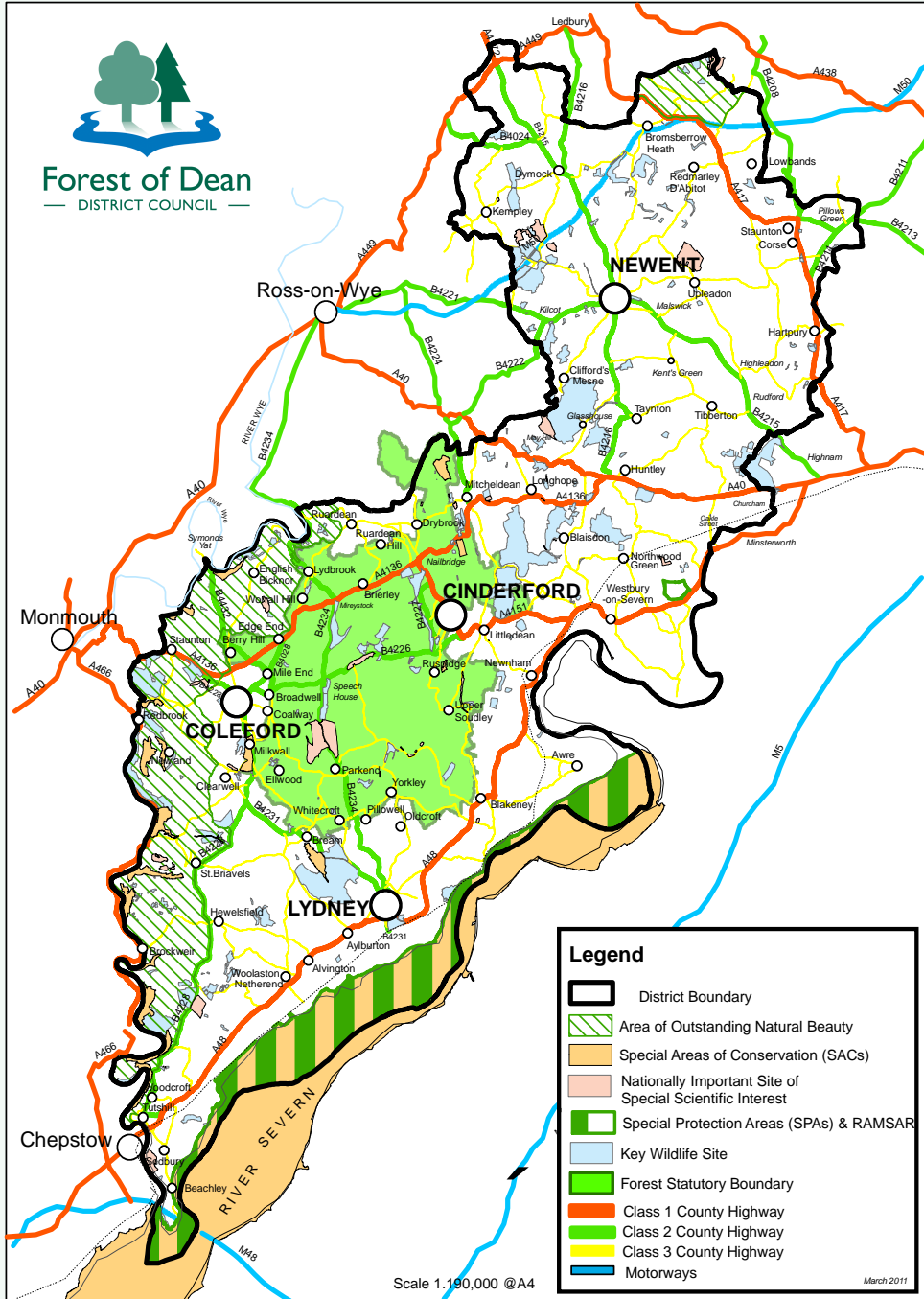
4.3 The Forest of Dean District is essentially rural in nature and has a dispersed settlement pattern with four main towns plus many smaller rural settlements where the majority of the population live. The Forest of Dean District Covers 526 square kilometres with over 11000 hectares of the district being woodland managed by the Forestry Commission

4.4 The District is bordered by two principal rivers the Rivers Severn and Wye both of significant environmental importance. The Forest of Dean has a specialness that is important to local people arising from its cultural identity and natural environment.

4.5 The existing green infrastructure assets of significance for the Forest of Dean District include:

- Accessible greenspace of strategic significance
- Access routes of strategic significance such as Gloucestershire Way , Offas Dyke National Trail
- Designated sites of biodiversity value, Special Areas of Conservation
- Principal river corridors of the
 - River Severn, much of which forms a Special Area of Conservation
 - River Wye
- National Landscape designations
 - The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - The Statutory Forest of Dean

4.6 In addition Green Infrastructure assets include the many parks, childrens play spaces and playing fields, amenity and communal spaces within housing areas, Public Rights of Way, cycleways and other recreational routes.



5 New Initiatives and Opportunities

5.1 The Forest of Dean District Green Infrastructure Network is made up of existing and potential spaces and green links that contribute to the high quality natural and built environment required for existing and future sustainable communities. The Green Infrastructure Network also includes areas which have been identified as having potential to enhance the GI network

5.2 Within the Forest of Dean District there are a number of developments that will provide the opportunity to supplement the existing green Infrastructure or have the potential to improve and enhance the links between areas of existing green infrastructure. In some cases the contribution that these will make has been set by planning permissions that have been granted, but in others it will be the LDF policies including those in the Core Strategy that will govern how the provision is made. It will be assessed against the LDF as a whole but principally against the policies outlined in section 3 above.

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal

5.3 A project centred on the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal in the North of the District. Through the restoration of the Canal the project has the potential to enhance the landscape, waterscape, nature conservation and provide access to the canal corridor for recreation purposes.

Wye Valley AONB

5.4 A nationally important protected landscape

Malvern Hills AONB

5.5 A nationally important protected landscape

Cinderford AAP and Cinderford Developments

5.6 The purpose of the Cinderford AAP is to provide an appropriate context for the regeneration of the Northern Quarter, it will provide detailed site specific guidance in relation to urban design, landscape, environmental, transport, delivery and phasing and will also ensure that proposed land uses and activities contribute to the comprehensive and sustainable regeneration of the Northern Quarter.

5.7 The Cinderford AAP amongst other things aims to strengthen the connection to the forest via physical links and providing strategic views, create pleasant safe and walkable environments to ensure connectivity with existing neighbour hoods and provision of recreational routes focused on the lake leading to the recreational areas and forest.

5.8 The Northern Quarter presents the following opportunities:

- Enhance the relationship with the Forest in terms of setting, character and ecological value;
- Link the new development to Steam Mills and Newtown
- Integrate existing facilities and assets, such as the school, sport pitches

- Improve the links from the site to its surroundings through clear gateways, new streets and cycle and pedestrian links;
- Integrate and enhance the high quality landscape setting, in particular the lake
- Protect and enhance key areas of nature conservation interest including the local wildlife sites such as species-rich grassland, wetland and woodland habitats;

5.9 The residential development proposed for Land at St Whites for 169 houses will allow for green infrastructure provision in the form of parks and recreation areas.

Lydney AAP and Lydney Development

5.10 The development of an Area Action Plan for Lydney will provide the opportunity to protect existing green space within the town, establishing linkages between them, especially between the docks and the town itself and also provide the opportunity for increasing the provision of such space.

- Cycle /footpath between town centre and Harbour
- Cyclepath /footpath link along Naas Lane
- East of Lydney development, provision of linear park
- East of Lydney links to town centre and surrounding countryside

Coleford

- upgrade Cycle Track between Milkwall and Coleford
- Provision of open space within Coleford (related to Lords Hill and Angel Farm developments)
- Provision of Adult/Youth Recreation (agreement for Angel Farm development)
- Provision of Play areas for children (agreement for Angel Farm development)

Newent

- Recreation provision (agreement for Broad Street, Newells Garage and Onslow Road development)

