

6Cs Growth Point Green Infrastructure Strategy



Stage 1: Baseline Audit of Strategic GI Assets

Stakeholder Workshops, 30th January 2009

BIODIVERSITY/ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS - KEY FINDINGS OF THE DISCUSSION GROUPS

OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING STRATEGIC ASSETS MAPPING

Objectives

- To identify existing assets of biodiversity value at the sub-regional scale
- To identify existing assets that provide ecosystem services at the sub-regional scale
- To provide a known baseline showing the spatial extent and distribution (connectivity) of existing biodiversity / ecosystem assets
- To identify concentrations of and gaps in the extent and distribution of existing biodiversity assets

What is included and why?

- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) key habitat data supplied by the Wildlife Trusts for Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and Natural England (each supplied as a separate dataset). These datasets provide the best available knowledge relating to the extent and distribution of semi-natural habitats considered to be the most valuable for biodiversity, as defined by the UKBAP.
- The Environment Agency's indicative floodplain mapping to provide a geophysical context for the 6Cs growth point area (soils and geology maps are being used separately as part of the opportunity mapping process).

What is not included and why?

- No species data is included because the selection of key habitat types includes criteria relating to their structural and functional role in supporting key biodiversity species.
- No data specifically relating to (statutorily or non-statutorily) designated sites, as this data does not differentiate between habitat types.

OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES MAPPING

Objectives

- To identify where and what opportunities exist to create new biodiversity assets or to enhance existing ones
- To identify where new or enhanced key biodiversity assets could be provided to address deficiencies in the quantity or distribution of key biodiversity habitat types.

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- To identify opportunities to link existing fragmented habitats and develop larger, more robust habitat networks.
- To develop functional networks of natural greenspace that operates both within the 6Cs growth point area as well as connecting to adjoining areas.

How were the opportunities defined?

- Opportunities have been identified by mapping the existing biodiversity resource.
- Using the methodology set out in Natural England and the Wildlife Trust's "Green Infrastructure for the Three Cities: A Methodology For Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping" as the basis for analysing existing the data.
- Adding 1km buffers around existing assets, to indicate the degree of connectivity between them.
- Soil and geology maps were inspected to inform the identification of appropriate general opportunity areas. The use of geophysical data to further refine the extent of appropriate habitat opportunity areas is ongoing.

BIODIVERSITY/ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS – QUESTIONNAIRE

EXISTING STRATEGIC ASSETS MAPPING

Are there any key data sets missing from the mapping of existing strategic biodiversity/environmental systems resources or assets at the sub-regional scale?

- *Phase 1 habitat survey data*
- *LBAP data*
- *River Sence corridor*
- *Grand Union Canal*
- *Woodland (NIWT data)*
- *The National Forest – areas of new planting*

If so, where can this data be sourced from?

- *Forestry Commission - new planting in the Forest area.*

Where are the main existing strategic biodiversity corridors and natural resources/environmental systems in and around the Growth Point that need to be recognised in the development of the GI Strategy?

- *Rivers and river corridors*
- *Wetlands*
- *Calcareous areas (North Nottinghamshire)*

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- *Sandstone Ridge – Ilkeston*
- *Geodiversity assets - RIGS*

Which features, sites/habitats and species are the most valuable and need to be recognised in the development of the Strategy?

- *Rivers*
- *Wetlands*
- *Charnwood Forest*
- *Woodland*

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES MAPPING

Looking at the preliminary opportunity mapping, and taking into account the principles attached, which areas/corridors do you think have the greatest potential to address key gaps in the strategic biodiversity network in and around the Growth Point?

- *Wetlands*
- *Calcareous areas (North Nottinghamshire)*
- *Sandstone Ridge – Ilkeston*
- *Geodiversity assets - RIGS*
- *Great Crested Newts – South East Nottingham*

What do you think are the three main challenges for the management of existing features, sites/habitats and species of nature conservation importance in and around the Growth Point that need to be recognised in the development of the GI Strategy?

- *Funding*
- *Safeguarding existing assets*
- *Restrictions arising from land ownership*
- *Lack of sufficiently robust planning policies*
- *Winning political support*

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

- *Difficulties can arise with multifunctional use of some GI assets due to conflicts that can arise between management objectives.*

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PRINCIPLES

Biodiversity

- Seek to halt and reverse habitat fragmentation and species isolation of existing biodiversity assets by buffering existing sites and creating new wildlife corridors between them
- Identify areas for habitat restoration and re-establish them at a landscape scale (taking into account the historical dimension of the landscape)
- Consider the appropriate management of wildlife corridors that are important for the migration and dispersal of wildlife and for the linking of habitats
- Promote the restoration and reestablishment of habitats and species in accordance with Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement zone maps for the Region
- Balance the conservation and enhancement of the environment with increasing accessibility and use of natural and cultural assets
- Consider delivering landscape scale biodiversity corridors by linking local schemes and/or flagship projects

Natural Processes and Environmental Systems

- Green Infrastructure (GI) should, as far as possible, work with and contribute to natural processes and systems.
- Creative enhancement of water courses as features for recreation and biodiversity can also benefit flood storage capacity, e.g. wetlands
- Opportunities should be taken to improve local environments and contribute to sustainable development through providing GI, e.g. create new woodlands to improve air quality, reduce noise and light pollution and to act as long term carbon sinks to offset carbon emissions and reduce the impact of global climate change

(principles adapted from East Midlands Green Infrastructure Guide, EMRA 2007)