

Green Infrastructure

Natural England's definition of green infrastructure

'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.'

Green Infrastructure provides a range of benefits including, Access, recreation, movement and leisure, habitat provision and access to nature, landscape setting and context for development, Energy production and conservation, food production and productive landscapes, flood attenuation and water resource management, cooling effect. Green Infrastructure can also play a key role in place making.

Green Infrastructure is increasingly recognised as an essential part of sustainable spatial planning. This is due in no small part to the role of green infrastructure as a 'life support system', able to deliver multiple environmental functions, and to play a key part in adapting to and mitigating climate change.

Living Landscapes

Accessible Natural
Greenspace standard
(ANGSt)

INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY INTO DEVELOPMENT
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE 1

How much Green Infrastructure?

The amount of space to be provided for green infrastructure will depend on the circumstances of the location and its needs, however the Town and Country Planning Association Green Infrastructure Worksheet suggests that as a general rule 40% of the available area in an eco-town should be allocated for green infrastructure. At Freiburg in Germany one new development used only 70 hectares out of 320 hectares for development the rest becoming a nature reserve. Larger areas may be needed where there are already shortfalls of green infrastructure in an area, as revealed by an ANGSt analysis, or to contribute towards a Living Landscape goal.

Green infrastructure in policy

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, and accompanying the Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning
East of England Plan Policy ENV1 Green Infrastructure,
Local Development Frameworks

Green Infrastructure: Report to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

Place-Shaping: A Shared Ambition for the Future of Local Government (Lyons Inquiry Report)

Thames Gateway Green Infrastructure Guidance

DEFRA Guidance to Local Authorities on implementing the biodiversity duty (section 4.5.2 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/la-guid-english.pdf>)

The multi functional nature of green infrastructure means that a number of development plan policies can support its implementation (e.g. landscape policy, flood risk policy, open space policy). An overarching policy should ensure green infrastructure is prioritised in planning decisions, and proposals should be identified on the key diagram or proposals map.

In Essex, the Living Landscapes initiative, a part of the 2008 to 2011 Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA) identifies 80 strategic landscape corridors which are closely comparable in concept to Green Infrastructure planning and development. The map of the Living Landscape areas (1.0MB) can be seen at the [Essex Biodiversity Project](http://www.essexbiodiversityproject.org) website.

Further Information



Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guide

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransport/localgov/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx>

Natural England's ANGSt standard

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/greenspace/greenspacestandards.aspx>

And [Research Report 526](#)

Essex Local Area Agreement

<http://www.essexpartnership.org/vip8/com/Community/disc/content.jsp?channelOid=18399>

Eco Towns Worksheet (2008) 5 published by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) England.

<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/green-infrastructure.html>

DEFRA Guidance to Local Authorities on implementing the biodiversity duty (section 4.5.2 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/la-guid-english.pdf>)

Consultation Paper on a new PPS for the Natural Environment (recommends Policies for Green Infrastructure)
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1498981.pdf>

World Class Places (DCLG)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1229344.pdf>

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Accessible Natural Greenspace standard (ANGSt)

Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) standards were devised as guidance to address the spatial distribution of natural greenspace, its accessibility at different size limits and the hectarage of Local Nature Reserve per head of population with the aim of securing access to natural greenspace close to where people live. These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have an accessible natural greenspace: (ANGST) Of

- at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
 - At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
 - One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home;
- and
- One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home;
- plus
- Statutory Local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population

It is recognized that many Local Authorities refer to other standards, principally the Fields in Trust Six Acre standard, but the ANGSt standard is closely linked to the concept of provision of [Green Infrastructure](#).

The provision of green infrastructure in and around urban areas is now widely recognised as contributing towards creating places where people want to live and work. The concept of green infrastructure is embodied in the Government's Planning Policy Statements (PPS) 1 and 12. It is an essential component of good planning for urban and rural areas, particularly in the face of climate change. It is supported by the East of England Plan Policy ENV1 Green Infrastructure.

An ANGSt analysis can be used as a part of the preparation of the evidence base and strategic vision development of the plan making process to identify deficiencies and needs of an area. Taken with other information sources, the environmental characterisation and the deficiency and needs analysis can be used to identify creative opportunities for new green infrastructure provision, enhancement of existing green infrastructure and for the creation and

enhancement of green infrastructure linkages.

History of the ANGSt standard

The concept arose from work in the early 1990s on recognizing the importance of nature in an urban context. Research Report 153 published in 1995 launched the standard but despite the report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force in 2002 the standard appeared to be little known. Research Report 526 re-launched the standard in 2003 since when it has slowly become more widely used.

An ANGSt map for Essex

In Essex an ANGSt approach to the analysis of the existing distribution of accessible green space or Green Infrastructure has been published by Essex Wildlife Trust identifying areas where access is deficient. The report and its maps can be downloaded from www.essexwt.org.uk/news/angst

This is complemented by the [Living Landscapes](#) initiative of Essex Wildlife Trust to develop landscape scale ecological areas, and to write a Vision Statement for each of the 80 Living Landscape areas identified in Essex.

[Living Landscapes](#)

[Accessible Natural Greenspace standard \(ANGSt\)](#)



Further Information

English Nature (2003) Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their implementation (English Nature Research Report No 526)
<http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/product.aspx?ProductID=9d028d4b-eb27-4545-a1fe-3064f70c2f7a>

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx>

Essex Wildlife Trust ANGSt report for Essex
www.essexwt.org.uk/news/angst

A map of the Living Landscape areas (PDF 1.0MB) can be seen at
<http://www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk/Data/Sites/1/Living%20Landscapes%20map%201.0MB.pdf>

World Class Places (DCLG)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1229344.pdf>

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Living Landscapes

In Essex, the Living Landscapes initiative, was a part of the 2008 to 2011 Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA), local target LI 10.1, which identified 80 strategic landscape corridors and aimed to write a Vision Statement for about one-third of these. This initiative was canceled by the Coalition Government in July 2010 as a cost saving measure, but the writing of plans and promotion of their implementation is still being pursued by Essex Wildlife Trust.

Living Landscapes are an initiative spearheaded nationally by the Wildlife Trusts, who have a bold aim, to safeguard all our wildlife through an unprecedented period of climate change and in the face of huge changes in agriculture and industry. Living Landscapes are large landscape scale areas of the countryside like river valleys, estuaries, forested ridges, and grass and heath mosaics, which are ecologically stable and bursting with life. Their scale and stability provides a superb range of habitats for many species of wild plants and animals, bringing a quality of life for local people who are part of them. Their connected nature allows wildlife to move through them and makes them more resilient to threats such as climate change, floods, droughts, sea level rises and development pressure. All of this will have a huge impact upon wildlife and people.

For example, Epping Forest represents a good example of a woodland Living Landscape, containing areas of grassland and heath within it, or think of the Dedham Vale which provides a river valley living landscape, or the Colne estuary as an example of a good estuarine living landscape. All provide high quality habitats and the local community are proud of them.

Imagine if the current fragmented woods of the former Writtle Forest could be reconnected by newly planted woods, or if the heathland could be recreated to link Colchester to Maldon as it would have been 150 years ago. The vision of a Living Landscape seeks to provide ecologically vibrant areas that are valued by the local population who live and work there.

Essex Wildlife Trust has produced a map of Essex to identify 80 Living Landscape areas, based upon the existing ecological value of sites like SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, and existing habitat corridors, and based upon their potential to become even more vibrant. See the 'Further Information' section below to see the map of the areas

The vision can only be achieved by many organisations working together. Essex Wildlife Trust can provide expertise and advice. Private landowners will have an important role to play and farmers may find new opportunities to bring interest and resources to their farm. District and Borough Councils will have a role to play through their planning process, ensuring that their Local Development Framework has Core Strategy policy aimed at the provision of Living Landscapes, also known by the alternative name of Green Infrastructure. Natural England has produced a policy paper on the provision of [Green Infrastructure](#), and they can also provide advice. Other agencies such as the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, utility companies, Charitable Trusts and private businesses will also have their roles to play.

Co-operation gains the benefit of being part of a larger whole, for example an initiative on the Essex Coast and Rivers involves Colchester, Tendring, Maldon, Rochford and Essex County Councils, Essex Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Pioneer Trust, Dengie Farm and Food Trails and the Rural Community Council of Essex to try to bring together resources to benefit wildlife, rural landscapes and local communities of the Essex Coast. Working together can bring grants and support.

The process has begun through the Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA), a project that involved Essex local government, the Essex Wildlife Trust, Essex Biodiversity Project and many others to meet a wide range of environmental, economic and social targets agreed with National Government. Over the three-year period of the LAA terminated in July 2010, Living Landscapes formed one of the indicators (LI10.1) and plans (called Vision Statements) have been written for about one-third of the 80 Living Landscape Areas to set out the current ecological value of the area and proposals for the future enhancement of each area.

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These can then form the basis of a list of projects to be carried out by appropriate partners.

Living Landscape areas will not only benefit wildlife and the environment, but will deliver added value to other indicators, by reconnecting people with the landscape, improving their access and opportunities for education, promote recreation and volunteering, and hence improve physical and mental health, restore pride in the local area and overall improve quality of life.

Further Information

The map of the Living Landscape areas (1.0MB) can be seen at the [Essex Biodiversity Project](#) website.

Essex Local Area Agreement (Lists completed vision statements)
<http://www.essexpartnership.org/vip8/com/Community/dis/content.jsp?channelOid=18399>

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