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Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy

Final Report

Prepared by LUC
July 2017



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Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy

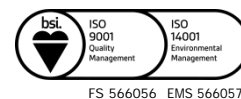
Final Report

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 On behalf of Hart District Council, East Hampshire District Council commissioned LUC to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District. The Strategy and the evidence underpinning it will inform the Council's emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 The structure of this report is as follows:
- **Section 1** – Introduction: includes the aim of the Strategy, relevant planning policy and the Hart context.
 - **Section 2** – Approach to the Strategy: describes method used and summarises the stakeholder consultations and workshop findings.
 - **Section 3** – Key GI themes: includes one page summaries of strengths and weaknesses of key themes relating to GI in Hart.
 - **Section 4** – Recommendations: sets out priority projects in specific locations and more general District-wide priorities.
 - **Section 5** – Delivery Plan: includes project costs, potential funding, lead partners and timescales.

What is Green Infrastructure?

- 1.3 National Planning Practice Guidance¹ defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as:
- “A network of multifunctional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls.”*
- 1.4 GI can be in public or private ownership and be various sizes and be in any condition.
- 1.5 The multifunctional nature of GI refers to the range of benefits it affords to human health (both physical and mental wellbeing), biodiversity, landscape, reducing local temperatures, the decreasing the impact of climate change and alleviating flood risk. The benefits of GI can be felt at a local, regional and national scale.
- 1.6 As well as offering environmental benefits, GI affords economic benefits through increasing the attractiveness of the local area which is an asset to employers and employees, supporting the tourism sector and reducing healthcare costs.

¹ DCLG 2016 Planning Practice Guidance for the Natural Environment – Green Infrastructure
<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/green-infrastructure/>

Benefits of Green Infrastructure

Water Assets

Of the 31 urban areas assessed in Hart, 22 are subject to surface water flood risk². New development, particularly on greenfield sites, often results in the introduction of impermeable surfaces thereby reducing infiltration rates leading to increases in surface water runoff during storm events resulting in a higher risk of flooding. Incorporating GI in new development, enhancing creating GI in urban areas, including the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can help mitigate this.

Access, Recreation and Transport

Attractive, safe walking and cycling routes increase the number of people involved in activity such as walking and cycling. Inactive people have:

- 38% more days in hospital
- 5.5% more GP visits
- 12% more nurse visits³.

The World Health Organisation has concluded that there is a causal relationship between exposure of children to lead particulates from exhaust fumes, and cognitive impairment⁴. Increased walking, cycling, and better routes to public transport hubs also contribute to improved air quality by reducing car use.

Health, Wellbeing and Inequality

Evidence also shows that living in greener environments (high presence of natural features around the residence), delivers benefits for: mental health and wellbeing; development and maintenance of a healthy immune system; reduction of inflammatory based diseases; and a reduction in health inequalities experienced by lower socio-economic groups⁵. It is estimated that the improvements to mental and physical health offered by GI in urban areas would reduce the associated health treatment costs to the NHS by £2.1 billion⁶.

Biodiversity

The GI network contains a range of biodiversity designations and habitats and plays a key role in connecting these areas to ensure that the movement of organisms and biological processes continue to function⁷.

Woodland and Associated Habitats

Ancient woodland is considered to be the most biodiversity asset within the UK⁸ and even urban forests provide air purification functions, provide noise mitigation. At a local level, street trees provide urban wildlife corridors⁹.

Landscape

GI provides a multifunctional landscape¹⁰ that creates a balance between the built and natural environment. The components of the GI network add environmental and social value whilst also contributing to landscape quality.

² Hart District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016)

³ Department of Health (2009) Let's Get Moving

⁴ World Health Organisation (2005) Effects of Air Pollution on Children's Health And Development: A Review of the Evidence

⁵ DEFRA (2017) Evidence Statement on the links between natural environments and human health

⁶ Natural Capital Committee (2015) Natural Capital Investing in a Green Infrastructure for a Future London -The Green Infrastructure Task Force Report

⁷ Institute for European Environmental Policy (2011) Green Infrastructure Implementation and Efficiency Final Report

⁸ John Lockhart (2009) Green Infrastructure: The Strategic Role of Trees, Woodlands and Forestry, *Arboricultural Journal*, 32:1, 33-49,

⁹ Trees, people and the built environment. Proceedings of the Urban Trees Research Conference 13-14 April 2011

¹⁰ Landscape Institute (2013) Green Infrastructure: An integrated approach to land use

Aim of the Strategy

- 1.7 The overall aim of the Strategy is to guide future investment in Hart's Green Infrastructure (GI). It also provides up-to-date evidence to inform the Hart Local Plan, which will be a key vehicle for securing GI enhancement. The Strategy will be supported by feedback from key stakeholders, as well as an analysis of the key opportunities and threats associated with each of the following themes:
- Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place
 - Biodiversity
 - Woodlands and Associated Habitats
 - Water Resources
 - Access, Recreation and Transport
 - Local Awareness
 - Health, Wellbeing and Inequality
 - Sustainability
 - Delivery
- 1.8 This Strategy works in tandem with the Hart Open Space Study (2016) as both documents will be used to inform policies of the District's emerging Local Plan and guide the outcome of planning applications. In addition, these studies provide recommendations for how Hart District Council should coordinate the protection, enhancement and creation green spaces in Hart.

National, Regional and Local Policy

- 1.9 This section outlines the key national, regional and local policies that have influenced the approach to this study.

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the relevance of GI to the development of a Local Plan.
- 1.11 Paragraph 73 highlights that 'planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities'.
- 1.12 The NPPF provides a mechanism by which local authorities can protect some open spaces under a 'Local Green Space' designation (paras.76-77), and provides high level criteria for such a designation.
- 1.13 The NPPF (para. 74) sets out the only circumstances in which an open space can be developed for different uses. It clarifies that existing open space should not be built on unless:
- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements; or
 - the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
 - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- 1.14 Paragraph 99 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. Care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of GI.

- 1.15 Paragraph 114 explains how GI should be addressed in Local Plans, including 'planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure'.
- 1.16 Paragraph 117 addresses the importance of planning for biodiversity at a landscape scale, through mapping the components of ecological networks within and beyond local authority boundaries.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 1.17 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) encourages a strategic approach to implementing GI into Local Plans through an evidenced based approach. It states that local authorities are required to provide suitable mitigation for potential impacts on European sites of nature conservation and recommends the provision of open space such as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) either directly or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)¹¹.
- 1.18 The purpose of SANG is to divert recreational impacts away from the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) on to purpose built public open spaces that meet a number of specific criteria. Large developments usually provide bespoke SANG to mitigate the effects of that particular development on the SPA. Smaller developments that need SPA mitigation rely on 'strategic' SANG whereby multiple developments effectively pay towards the provision and maintenance of an off-site SANG.
- 1.19 To mitigate future developments additional SANG will be needed, some bespoke to certain large developments and some new strategic SANG, such as that being provided Bramshott Farm. The provision of strategic SANG in Hart and its capacity to mitigate smaller developments coming forward is a continually changing picture, but it clearly constitutes a significant source of new GI in the district.
- 1.20 This study, combined with the findings of the Hart Open Space Study (LUC, 2016) will provide an evidence base for the purpose of Hart District Local Plan.

Regional policy and guidance

South East Green Infrastructure Framework

- 1.21 Published in 2009, this document was developed by a partnership of regional governmental and non-governmental organisations in the South East and sets out the policy context and other resources needed to deliver high quality GI in the South East region. It provides guidance on how GI might be delivered effectively through the Local Plan process from the establishment of an evidence base, to policy development and delivery. The framework highlights the significance of an evidence base formed with diverse partner organisations (e.g. private and public landowners, expertise and specialisms) to provide GI in a specified area.
- 1.22 The Hart GI Strategy has been informed by external organisations through stakeholder consultation and a stakeholder workshop.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

- 1.23 Although the majority of the South East Plan was revoked in March 2013, Policy NRM6 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)) was retained. Policy NRM6 states that any new residential development which is likely to have significant adverse effect on the Thames Basin SPA will need to set out avoidance or mitigation measures (the former being the preferred option) which are to be agreed with Natural England. Guiding mitigation principles are listed in the policy including the allocation of exclusion zones and zones of influence. SANGs are suggested as the appropriate mitigation measure for development proposals within the zone of influence but outside of the exclusion zone as

¹¹ "The Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area." Planning Portal https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/70/community_infrastructure_levy

they can provide biodiversity enhancement, GI and potential new recreational facilities. The policy requires a minimum of eight hectares of SANG to be provided for every 1,000 new heads of population.

- 1.24 This form of biodiversity offsetting has been explored in this Strategy and recommendations are identified in the context of the wider GI network.

Local policy

SANG allocation and delivery

- 1.25 The primary purpose of the SANG in Hart is to divert existing recreational uses away from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The recent guidance note for applicants (2016)¹² for the provision of SANGs forms part of the Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The latest SANG monitoring report¹³ found that there is 'significant' SANG capacity within the District but there is minimal council-managed SANG capacity. As the council receive no privileges in delivering SANGs and have no duty to be the sole provider, developments that are to be located within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA zone of influence, will need to contribute to SANGs administered by alternative providers.
- 1.26 The guidance note document lays out the delivery of SANG provision which is expected to be only applicable to schemes delivery 60 dwellings or more through the Section 106 mechanism. Proposals that are to deliver less than 60 dwellings would enter a transaction agreement with the council and thereby financially support a Council managed SANG.
- 1.27 This report will take into account the allocation and delivery of GI, including SANGs.

Loss or replacement of open space

- 1.28 In Hart District, it is expected that the new Local Plan will include an open space policy that protects, maintains and enhances open spaces and this is likely to set out stringent criteria in which development proposals would result in the loss of open space (similar to that outlined in Policy URB 21 of the extant Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996–2006¹⁴).
- 1.29 The Open Space Study observed that not all parishes within Hart have good access to all typologies of open space yet the creation of new open space would be limited to the availability of land. To ensure that those parishes which experience some open space deficiencies have improved access to open spaces, the Open Space Study recommended the enhancement of existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network to ensure the open spaces are more connected and accessible.
- 1.30 This Strategy identifies a number of priority projects that relate to specific locations, and more general District-wide priorities that are designed to deliver a number of enhancements to GI across Hart.

New development

- 1.31 Hart's new Local Plan will set out the open space requirements to be provided by new developments. The area, type and whether the open space needs to be provided on-site or off-site are expected to be determined by the number of proposed dwellings and local need within a locality, in line with the provision standards set out in the Open Space Study.
- 1.32 This Study will identify the need for GI functions in different parts of the District, and highlight priority locations towards which the creation of off-site open space contributions could be channelled. This should be considered in conjunction with the Hart Open Space

¹² SANGs allocation and delivery – procedure and advice for Applicants note (2016)
http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Planning_policy/SANGs%20allocation%20procedure%20note.pdf

¹³ Joint Chief Executive Annual Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) Monitoring (2016)
http://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Council_meetings/F_June/16%2006%2002%20SANG%20Monitoring%20Cabinet%20report.pdf

¹⁴ Following Hart District's withdrawal of the Local Plan: Core Strategy 2011-2029 in September 2013, the District is currently using policies from Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996–2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 Saved Policies.

Study, which provides evidence of open space quality and accessibility deficiencies in the District.

Existing Strategic Gaps

- 1.33 The new Local Plan for Hart is expected to follow a similar stance to Policies CON 19, 20 and 21 of the extant Local Plan by identifying both strategic and local gaps and set out specific criteria in which new development will be permitted. The criteria are likely to protect both the physical and perceived separation of settlements as well as maintain their setting.

Biodiversity

- 1.34 Hart District adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2012. This states that: *“The BAP will work in conjunction with the broad conservation aims of the core strategy and also a green infrastructure plan to deliver the biodiversity targets in Hart”*.
- 1.35 It is expected that there will be a policy within the new Local Plan that will prevent developments from having adverse effects on biodiversity and key habitats. In addition, it is likely that Hart’s new Local Plan will dedicate a specific policy to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA that will reflect Policy NRM6 in the South East Plan (see para 1.23 above).
- 1.36 To achieve best practice guidance, developments should result in biodiversity net gain whereby proposals should deliver greater levels of biodiversity compared to that before development. The UK’s first and latest guidance¹⁵ sets out ten principles which provide a framework for development projects to follow to help improve the UK’s biodiversity. As already mentioned, biodiversity enhancements are one of the benefits of GI and can therefore be integrated into developments as a mitigation strategy to minimise biodiversity loss or it can even contribute to biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity offsetting is discussed further in Section 4: Recommendations.

Allotments

- 1.37 Although there is no specific policy of allotments Hart’s extant Local Plan, it is likely that allotment provision will be a requirement of the new Local Plan, through policies which refer to specific new large planned development sites.

Play

- 1.38 Policies relating to specific development sites in the Hart’s new Local Plan are likely to outline the provision for children’s play facilities. Furthermore policies relating to infrastructure provision would be expected to outline that large development proposals are required to provide appropriate infrastructure, including children’s play, either on site, off site or through financial contributions.

The Hart context

Current population and projection

- 1.39 In 2015, the population of Hart was approximately 93,900 and was almost evenly split between females (50.4%) and males (49.6%)¹⁶. The District’s population is expected to increase to 102,000 by 2039¹⁷.
- 1.40 The 2011 Census data indicates that Hart’s population is mainly concentrated Fleet which has a population of 37,760 representing 41.5% of the total population of the District. The other smaller urban settlements in Hart include Yateley which has a population of 14,829 (16.3%), Blackwater with a population of 10,115 (11.1%), Hook has a population of

¹⁵ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) and Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development.

¹⁶ Nomis Labour Market Profile - Hart

¹⁷ ONS 2014-based Subnational Population Projections with Components of Change (Births, Deaths and Migrations) for Regions and Local Authorities in England

8,334 (9.1%), Hartley Wintney has a population of 4,999 (5.5%) and Odiham (including North Warnborough) has a population of 4,610 (5.1%). The remaining 10,386 (11.4%) of Hart's population live in rural villages and areas. This data contrasts with the 2004 Rural and Urban Classification for Hart¹⁸, which shows that 19% of the District is classed as urban and 81% of the district is classed as rural.

- 1.41 In 2011, the mean age of the Hart population was 40.0 years¹⁹ which is a slightly younger average population than the Hampshire average of 41.1 years and England and Wales as a whole, where the average is 39.4 years. The census data also shows that, 16.5% of the resident population in Hart²⁰ was of retirement age (65 and over) compared with 18.5% in Hampshire and 16.6% in England and Wales. By 2027 it is predicted that 28% of the District's population will be over 65²¹.
- 1.42 In 2011, Hart had a population density of 4.2 persons per hectares²², which is above the Hampshire figure of 3.6 persons per hectare²³. The population density of Hart is comparable with that of South East England with 4.5 persons per hectare yet much higher than the England and Wales average (3.7 persons per hectare), reflecting the large proportion of residents living in the District's urban settlements.
- 1.43 It is estimated that 88.1% of households within Hart are likely to have access to a garden. It will be important that those communities which do not have access to gardens are enabled to access Hart's GI network as a result of this strategy.

Social context

- 1.44 The English Indices of Deprivation 2015²⁴ is a measure of multiple deprivation in small areas or neighbourhoods, called Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), in England. Seven domains of deprivation are measured: Income Deprivation; Employment Deprivation; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education, Skills and Training Deprivation; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment Deprivation. Each domain contains a number of indicators. The seven domains are combined to give a multiple deprivation score. There are 57 LSOAs in Hart²⁵ and 32,844 LSOAs nationally.
- 1.45 In the most recent available data, Hart is ranked as the least deprived area in England, at rank 326th out of the 326 local authority areas (where 1 is most deprived and 326 is least deprived)²⁶. However, there is evidence of disparity between the different parts of the Borough when looking at the assessment at small area level. The District has a low proportion of children (under 16) living in poverty (11.1%) compared to that of England (18.6%)²⁷.
- 1.46 The health of the population in Hart is generally the same or better than the England average. The main health priorities for Hart include promoting active healthy lifestyles and preventing the number of falls experienced by older people²⁸. The latest statistics²⁹ show that the percentage of physically active adults in the District is 66.3% which is higher than the England average of 57.0%.
- 1.47 Hart also has a lower proportion of obese children (11.1%) compared to the rest of England (19.1%), however it has a large percentage of overweight adults (63.3% in Hart and 64.6% in England). Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the

¹⁸ Hampshire County Council. 2004 Rural & Urban Classification for Output Areas - Hart (including ward boundaries)

¹⁹ ONS (2011) Table KS102UK Age Structure

²⁰ ONS (2011) Table KS102UK Age Structure

²¹ Hart District Council (2015) Hart Economic Development Strategy August 2015

²² ONS (2011) Table KS101UK Usual Resident Population

²³ ONS (2011) Table KS101UK Usual Resident Population

²⁴ DCLG (2015) The English Indices of Deprivation

²⁵ DCLG (2015) The English Indices of Deprivation: File 1: Index of multiple deprivation

²⁶ DCLG (2015) The English Indices of Deprivation: File 10: Local authority district summaries

²⁷ Public Health England (2016) Health Profile 2016 – Hart (E07000089)

²⁸ Public Health England (2016) Health Profile 2016 – Hart (E07000089)

²⁹ Public Health England (2016) Health Profile 2016 – Hart (E07000089)

England average at 82 years for males and 87 years for females in Hart, compared to 80 years for males and 83 years for females in England³⁰.

Economic context

- 1.48 The most recent statistics show that between April 2015 and March 2016³¹, 84.7% of Hart's residents aged 16-74 were economically active; this is above the South East average of 80.6% and well above the national average of 77.8%. Of this 2.7% were unemployed, which is below the South East average of 4.1% and national average of 5.1%. The main employment sector in Hart during the same period was professional occupations (25.8%).
- 1.49 The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance as a percentage of the working age resident population was 0.4% in Hart as of February 2016, which is lower than both the regional average (0.9%) and national average (1.5%).
- 1.50 In 2015, the average gross weekly pay for residents of ages 16 and above in full time work in Hart was £624.30. This figure is higher than the regional average of £552.10 per week and considerably than the national average of £529.60 per week.
- 1.51 Of the 4,850 enterprises within Hart in 2016, 91.4% were considered as 'micro' size (0-9 employees), 7.0% were considered to be 'small' (10-49 employees), 1.2% were considered to be 'medium' (50-249 employees) and 0.4% were considered to be 'large' (250+ employees). This reflects the District's highly qualified workforce and dynamic small business base³².

Provision of green infrastructure

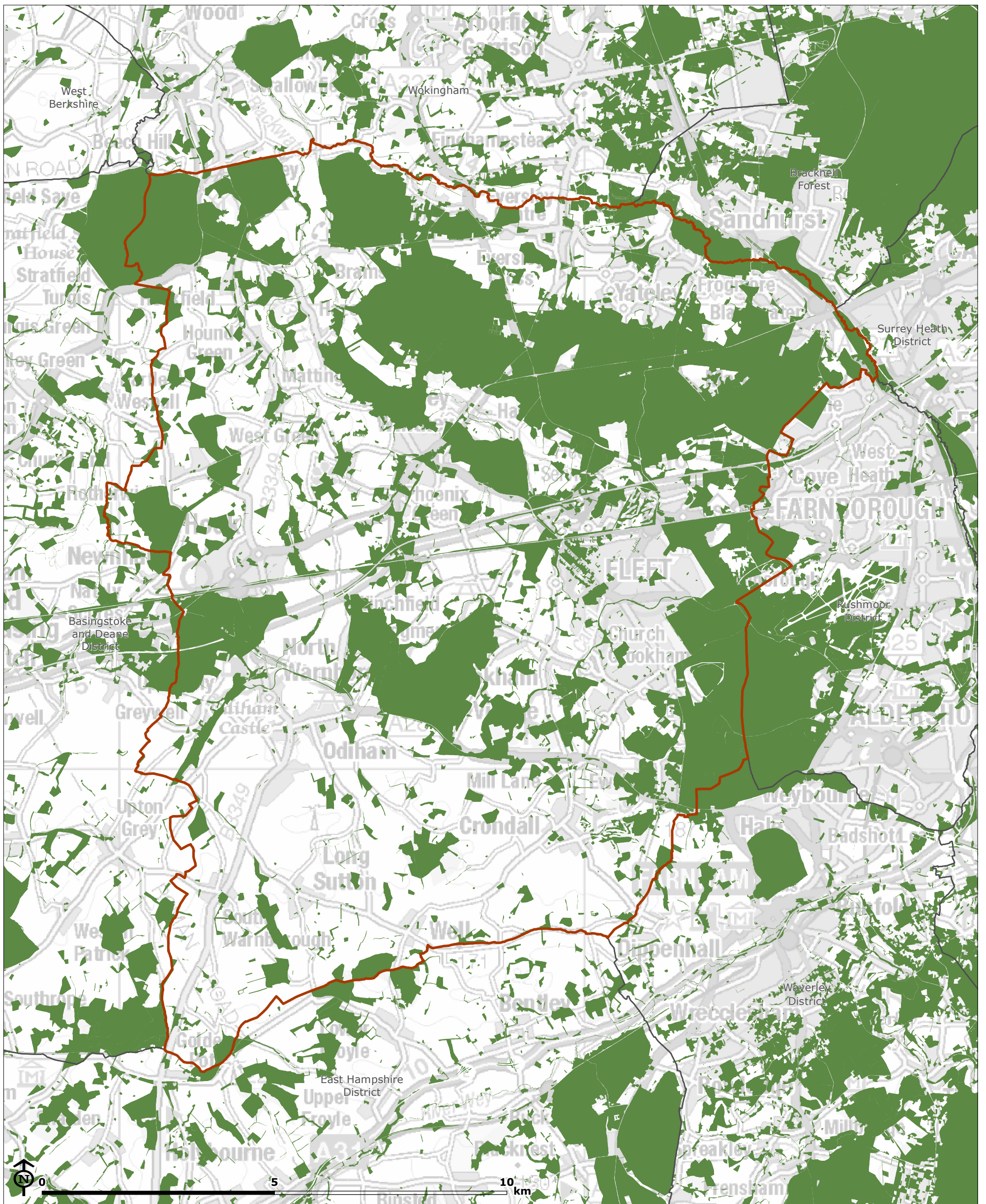
- 1.52 The extant Draft Vision and Strategic Priorities³³ for Hart sets out that GI provision should reflect the needs of the District's population and that GI in Hart needs to be protected and enhanced.
- 1.53 **Figure 1.1** shows that Hart has a high coverage of GI that contains a wealth of biodiversity designations, watercourses, woodland and open space. However, the GI network is fragmented as there are very few green corridors in the District linking these designations. Creating and enhancing hedgerows and woodland planting would help improve connections between the designations, and incorporating green corridors along linear access features such as PRoW and cycle paths could also strengthen the GI network.
- 1.54 Furthermore, the GI network lies partly within private ownership and so some areas are not accessible to the public and there are areas of the GI network that are of low quality and need more active management.

³⁰ Public Health England (2016) Health Profile 2016 – Hart (E07000089)

³¹ Nomis (2016) Labour Market Profile - Hart

³² Hart District Council (2015) Hart Economic Development Strategy August 2015

³³ Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996–2006 and First Alterations to the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 Saved Policies.



- Hart boundary
- Surrounding local authority boundaries
- Green infrastructure

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 1.1: Hart's Strategic Green Infrastructure Network



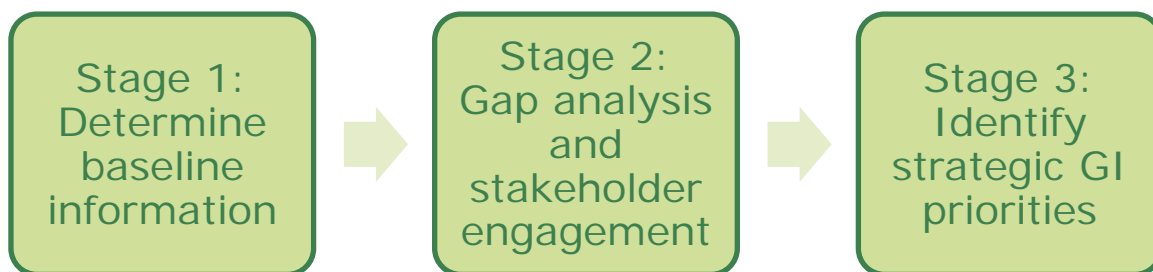
Source: OS, HE, HDC, National Trust, NE

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

2 Defining Hart's Green Infrastructure

Approach to the Strategy

- 2.1 The overall aim of the Strategy is to guide future investment in Hart's Green Infrastructure (GI). It will provide an understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the current GI network and the functions it contributes to the residents of Hart and neighbouring boroughs, in order to prioritise parts of the District for investment and enhancement alongside planned growth.
- 2.2 The approach involved three broad stages, which are described briefly below:



Stage 1: Research baseline information

- 2.3 This stage involved the review of relevant policy and the collection of relevant datasets. The policy review included national policy, in addition to a range of relevant evidence base and guidance documents available for this study including:
- Hart Open Space Study
 - Hart Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - Updated Hart Thames Basin Heaths Avoidance Strategy
 - South East England GI Framework
- 2.4 The baseline assessment involved the collection of mapped information relevant to the 'GI themes'. Mapped data was gathered not only for Hart itself, but where available also for neighbouring authorities and other authorities up to 10km from the District boundary. The benefit of this was to enable us to determine the demand for and provision of strategic accessible green spaces, in line with Natural England's 'Accessible Natural Green Space Standards' (ANGSt). The list of datasets used for this study, and the mapping data sources from which it was gathered are listed in **Appendix 1**.

Stage 2: Gap analysis and stakeholder engagement

- 2.5 The second stage of the study involved the review of relevant mapped information to reveal the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) associated with the GI network in Hart. This was initially a desk-based study, utilising the extensive mapped information and relevant studies available. In addition stakeholder consultation has been critical to the SWOT analysis. Stakeholder consultation was undertaken in two stages, and has involved the initial email consultation of all relevant stakeholder organisations, which were asked about the:

- The main pressures and threats to GI in Hart;
- The key opportunities for GI creation and enhancement in Hart over the next five years; and,
- Any initiatives underway which might be relevant to the project.

The responses to this consultation can be found in **Appendix 2**.

2.6 Once the initial SWOT analysis was complete, a stakeholder workshop was held on 30 November 2016. The agenda and full write up of the stakeholder workshop can be found in **Appendix 3**. The purpose of the workshop was to agree the key issues and opportunities in the District, and to gather stakeholder perspectives on:

- How to address the identified challenges and threats.
- The priorities for funding/investment in Hart's GI.

2.7 The workshop participants agreed that, while Hart already has good overall GI provision, there is a lack of awareness of these assets amongst the District's residents. Co-ordination of better signage, online mapping and use of social media were suggested to increase awareness. Enhancements to existing GI provision were also suggested, particularly with regard to upgrading the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network to ensure that all forms of active transport (namely cycles) can use entire routes, as they are currently fragmented. As well as improving connections to SANGs, these upgrades should include connecting urban areas to the countryside as well as providing commuting links to railway stations and schools.

2.8 The important environmental roles of GI were recognised by participants, including the need for upstream flood risk management and producing strong flood management policies for new developments. Biodiversity and landscape enhancement opportunities through improved connectivity were identified, however concerns were voiced in relation to pressures from urban sprawl and associated potential visitor increases on designated sites and sensitive habitats, thereby identifying the conflict between conservation and recreation.

2.9 As well as general enhancements to GI throughout the District, key locations were also suggested, including the Basingstoke Canal and the Blackwater Valley.

Stage 3: Identify strategic GI priorities

2.10 The findings from stages 1 and 2 informed the identification of strategic GI priorities. This stage pulled together the evidence base and consultation feedback, and focused in on the key GI priorities for the District. Identified GI priorities fit into two categories, either location-specific or District-wide. Those which are location-specific are mapped in **Figure 4.1**. For each priority, a one page summary has been prepared, which outlines the purpose, benefits, potential partners and deliverability of the project or initiative. The strategic priorities reflect the key issues and opportunities within Hart itself, alongside the wider context and the role the District should play in creating healthy accessible countryside for those residents of more urban areas nearby, including Aldershot, Farnborough and Sandhurst.

3 Key Themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place

- 3.1 The Hart Landscape Assessment (1997) notes the District's varied landscape that 'contains notable contrasts'. On a broader scale, the Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (2012) divides the District into three landscape classifications (as shown in **Figure 3.1**) which can be utilised to inform the design and management of GI:
- North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath (1b) comprise mainly of heathland and commons interspersed with woodland and conifer plantations.
 - Loddon Valley and Forest of Eversley West (2c) is mainly defined by the valley and tributaries of the River Loddon with small scale Lowland mosaic with backdrop of the raised plateau gravel which is interspersed with small settlements with high historical value.
 - North East Hampshire Open Downs (8c) comprises mainly of lower lying heaths, and rolling chalk landscape with broad sweeping hills and ridges and dry valleys.
- 3.2 The District's historical and cultural assets (also shown in **Figure 3.1**) create Hart's unique sense of place. Almost all of the major settlements within Hart have designated Conservation Areas which contain a number of Listed Buildings. More information is required to determine how this Strategy can help enhance historic assets and their setting.



The rural landscapes within Hart are varied.



Odiham Castle is located along the River Whitewater.

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

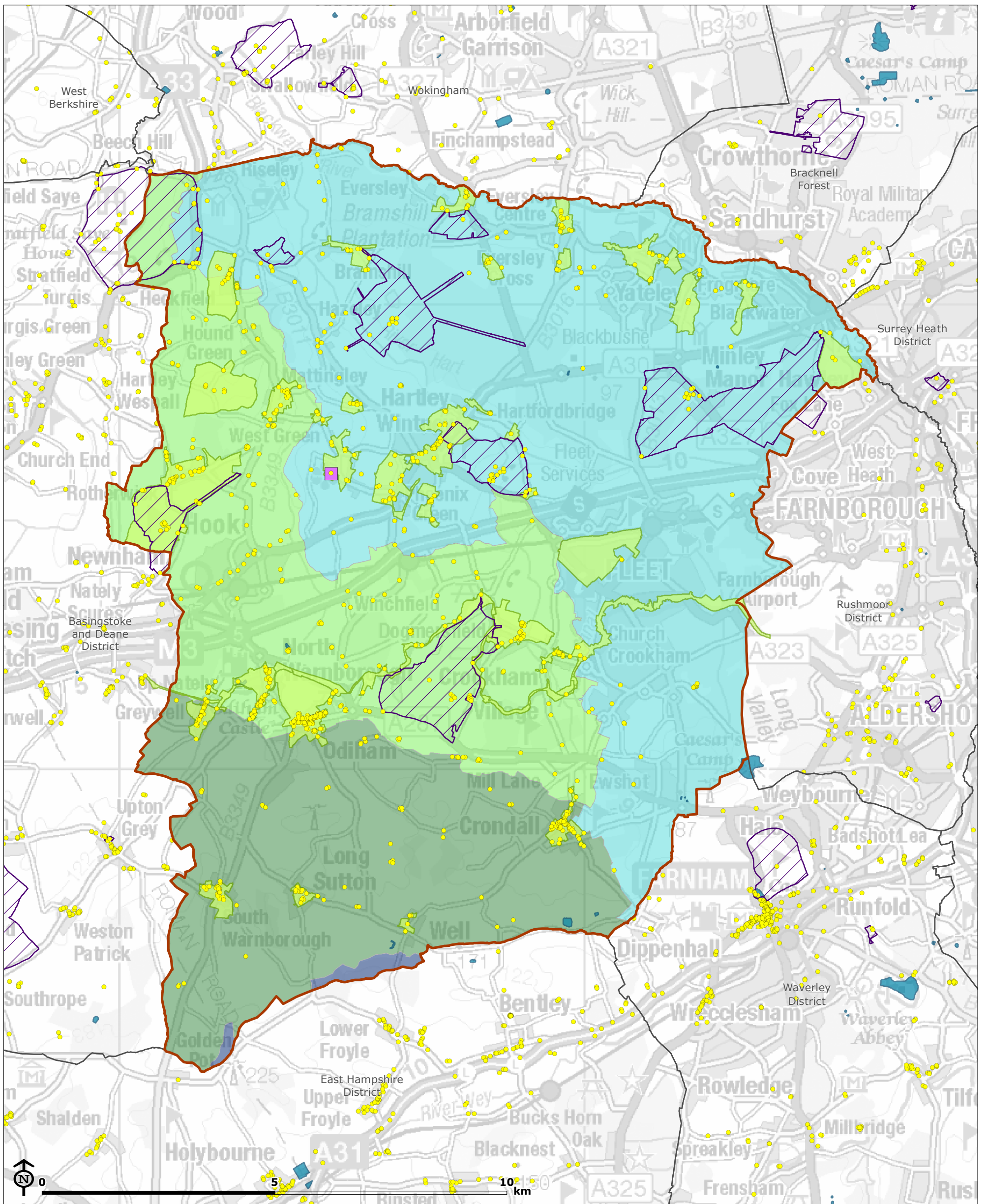
- The three landscape character areas could be enhanced through using locally sourced vegetation and materials.
- Through enhancing the river corridors, there is scope for the Strategy to link urban areas with rural the countryside.
- The Living Landscapes Project³⁴ aims to restore and enhance valuable habitat and landscape features and the wildlife associated with them by offering advice on restoration and holistic land management to landowners.
- GI provides opportunities to strengthen or restore historic links between heritage assets.
- GI can help enhance the setting of historic assets as well as provide access for people to enjoy them.
- PATHH³⁵ (Providing Access To Hampshire's Heritage) aims to help find and restore historical routes in Hampshire to help complete the County's PRoW network. Hart has 43 routes that will be taken forward into Phase 2.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Implemented GI will need to reflect the local character areas to ensure there is no loss or dilution of character.
- Emerging development proposals have the potential to erode the character of Hart and could therefore have adverse impacts on the setting of historic assets.
- Although there is significant SANG capacity in Hart, there is limited District managed capacity. Alternative SANG providers have the potential to mismanage the designation and not cooperate with monitoring regimes.
- There is pressure to fit more buildings into developments at the expense of GI.
- Development has the potential to result in the fragmentation of green spaces and loss of its connectivity, GI needs to be planned both at a strategic and at site levels. Gaps need to be maintained between developments.
- Hedgerow removal, especially in the south of the District, erodes the agricultural landscape.

³⁴The Wildlife Trusts <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/living-landscape/living-landscape-schemes/scheme-directory/loddon-and-oversley-heritage-area>

³⁵ Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology <http://pathh.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/>



- Hart boundary
- Surrounding local authority boundaries
- Listed buildings
- National Trust property: West Green House Garden
- Conservation areas
- Scheduled monuments
- Registered parks and gardens

- Hampshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)**
- North East Hampshire Plantations and Heath
 - Loddon Valley and Forest of Eversley West
 - North East Hampshire Open Downs
 - East Hampshire Wooded Downland Plateau

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.1: Landscape, Heritage Assets and Sense of Place



Source: OS, HE, HDC, National Trust

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

Biodiversity

- 3.3 As a predominantly rural District, Hart has a mosaic of habitats that are linked with its varied landscapes (see **Figure 3.2**). The habitats around Hazeley Heath, Eversley, Yateley and Hawley Commons and in the area to the east of Fleet are comprised predominantly of grassland, scrub and woodland. Yateley Common supports more open heathland. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA dominates the District's north eastern area which consists of heathland, woodland, mire and grassland habitats.
- 3.4 The flat and low lying pasture land associated with river corridors is peppered with ditches that frequently flood and are lined with willow and alder. Even manmade intervention such as gravel extraction along the Blackwater Valley has created wetlands. The Greywell Tunnel situated along this canal (which itself is a SSSI) is a nationally important bat roost.
- 3.5 In addition, there are 270 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) that cover around 1920ha in Hart. The total hectares of just the area of these SINCs that fall within the Hart boundary is 1921 hectares.
- 3.6 Aside from the rivers and canals, also known as blue corridors that connect the wider rural areas, there are few green corridors linking the biodiversity designations. Biodiversity is potentially at threat from the extensive planned development that will be outlined in the Local Plan if suitable mitigation or compensation is not implemented; this is particularly applicable to residential development which will occur mainly on greenfield land. It is important that the Strategy promotes GI within new development sites as well as looking at biodiversity offsetting opportunities.



There is a lack of green corridors linking biodiversity designations.



Image: Hart District Council

Blackwater Hawley Meadows.

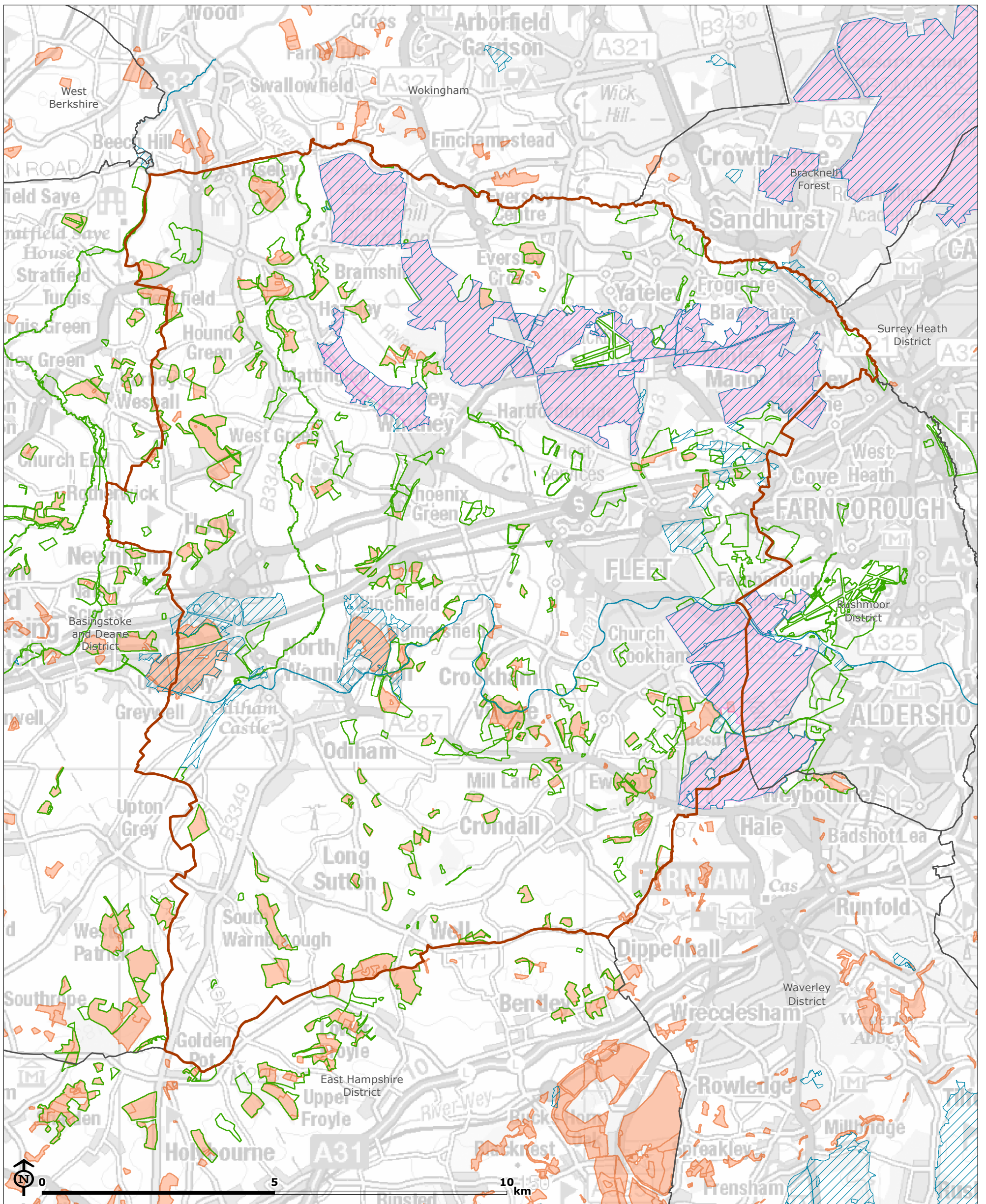
Biodiversity: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- There are opportunities to enhance designated sites, especially SINCs.
- As the majority of development is likely to occur on greenfield land, there are opportunities for biodiversity off-setting to fund creation of suitable habitats.
- There are opportunities to create green corridors along roads, the railway line, rivers, the canal, footpaths, and also to enhance ecological connectivity through hedgerows
- There are diverse habitats already in existence in urban areas. For example, Ashwell's Copse in Hook, the Basingstoke Canal and Basingbourne Heath in Fleet. The chalk landscapes to the south contain many woodland blocks and smaller fields that have a strong hedgerow structure which are vital for connecting habitats.
- Brownfield sites have the potential to contain areas of high ecological value that have the potential to be linked.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Future development could result in a reduction in the amount of accessible green space in the District. It is important to ensure that ecological receptors are not compromised to provide green space for residents. Sufficient areas should be provided for the less resilient species.
- Developments often incorporate non-native planting schemes and lighting designs that impact on the dispersal and foraging habits of nocturnal species.
- In light of an increasing population, disturbance on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA is likely to rise and recreation activities such as off road trial biking are on the increase, particularly in the absence of any mitigation. Access to the SPA and component SSSI sites should not be enhanced due to their sensitivity.
- Funding challenges facing non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to manage recreation on their sites, which are generally sites of the highest ecological value.
- Poor or inappropriate management of sites can lead to adverse effects on habitats and species.
- Appropriate management needs to be considered and site specific when balancing biodiversity and recreation.



- Hart boundary
- Surrounding local authority boundaries
- Ancient woodland
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.2: Biodiversity Designations



Source: NE, OS, JNCC, HDC

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

Woodlands and Associated Habitats

- 3.7 Hart has a rich tapestry of woodland, particularly in the north which reflects the Landscape Character Area (see **Figure 3.3**). Although the woodland in the District is home to a wide variety of species, there are two main categories: coniferous woodland plantations; and broad-leaved woodland, some of which is semi-natural and ancient.
- 3.8 Much of the Forestry Commission land falls within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Small pockets of ancient woodland can be found in the north east and south west of the District. Woodland is a key component of GI and if well-located, contributes substantially to alleviating flood risk. However, some sites, particularly those within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, support ground nesting birds and other species associated with heathland habitats. The Strategy should therefore support the retention of existing woodland and promote the creation of new woodland sites in appropriate locations outside the SPA, whilst encouraging the heathland restoration at suitable sites. Ecological expertise should be engaged when identifying these interventions.



Forestry Commission managed forest at Bramshill.



Image: Hart District Council

An access track through West Green Common, west of Hartley Wintney.

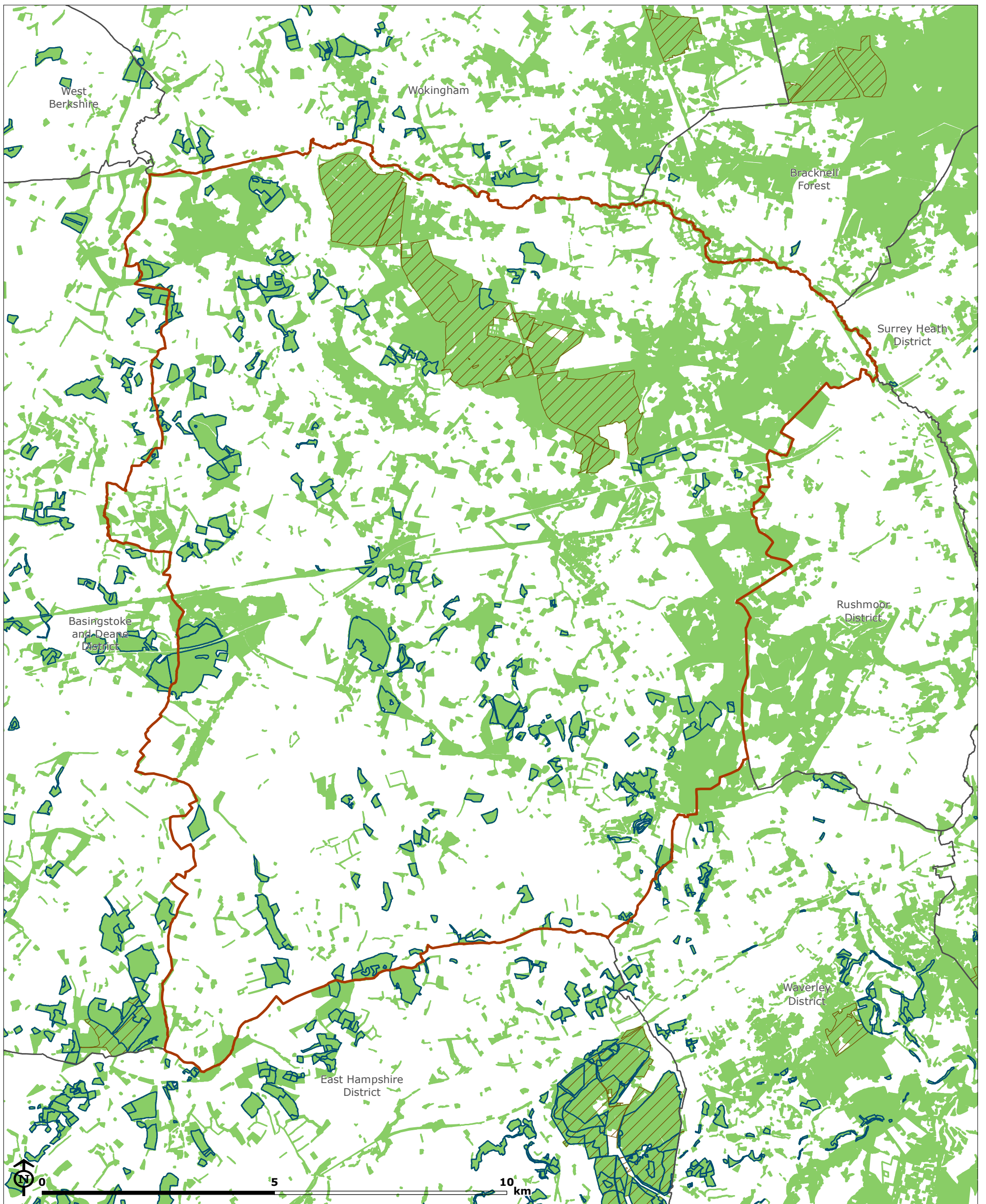
Woodlands and Associated Habitats: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- The heathland habitats within the Thames Basin Heaths SPA are of international importance and should be protected and enhanced.
- The management of existing woodland can play a key role in equipping these spaces to deliver a range of ecological and environmental benefits whilst at the same time contributing to the local economy.
- There may be opportunities to extend woodland cover within Hart's open space network, including SANGs, however this needs to be done sensitively, to ensure biodiversity and recreational functions are considered.
- The Forestry Commission is carrying out management of the Public Forest Estate within Hart, and administering the system of grants available (Countryside Stewardship grants supporting woodland creation and management).
- Catchment flood alleviation could also occur through appropriately sited woodland creation.
- The high value of ancient woodlands and their diversity needs to be retained.
- Woodland could be utilised to create buffer zones along the main arterial transport routes in Hart, to buffer nearby communities from air pollution.

Weaknesses and Threats

- New development puts pressure on sensitive woodland and associated habitats, both directly through decreasing coverage and ecological viability, and indirectly through the potential for increased recreational use.
- Forestry management needs to take into account climate change implications (higher average temperatures, greater frequency of intense storms, and a wider range of pests and diseases) to ensure it remains economically viable.
- Natural succession into woodland is discouraged on SPA sites due to importance of lowland heath and associated ground nesting birds.
- Woodlands need to be actively managed to be self-sufficient in funding terms.
- Woodland is at risk from the spread of invasive species such as Cherry Laurel, bamboo, Spanish bluebells.



- Hart boundary
- Surrounding local authority boundaries
- Ancient woodland
- Forestry Commission owned woodland
- Woodland*

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.3: Woodland and Associated Habitats (April 2017)

*Sourced from Ordnance Survey VectorMap District and the Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory

Source: OS, FC, NE



Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

Water Resources

- 3.9 There are three main rivers that flow through Hart (the Blackwater, Hart and Whitewater). Hart District Council has recently updated its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which confirms that all three main rivers flood along their urban stretches on a regular basis, and shows that significant areas of Blackwater, Yateley and Fleet are in flood zones 2 and 3, and parts of Hook and Hartley Witney are in Flood Zone 3 (see **Figure 3.4**). The report also indicates that there is extensive surface water flooding in all of the main settlements during periods of heavy rainfall.
- 3.10 It is identified that development and urban creep can exacerbate flood risk if not mitigated, particularly where this is upstream of an existing or planned settlement. To reflect this issue, the GI Strategy includes strategic natural flood alleviation schemes. These should focus on protecting the flood plain in rural areas of the catchment upstream of the main settlements.



The Blackwater Valley – a recognised water management and recreational resource which should be better protected.



Fleet Pond – A natural reservoir where sensitive management of surrounding land is required.

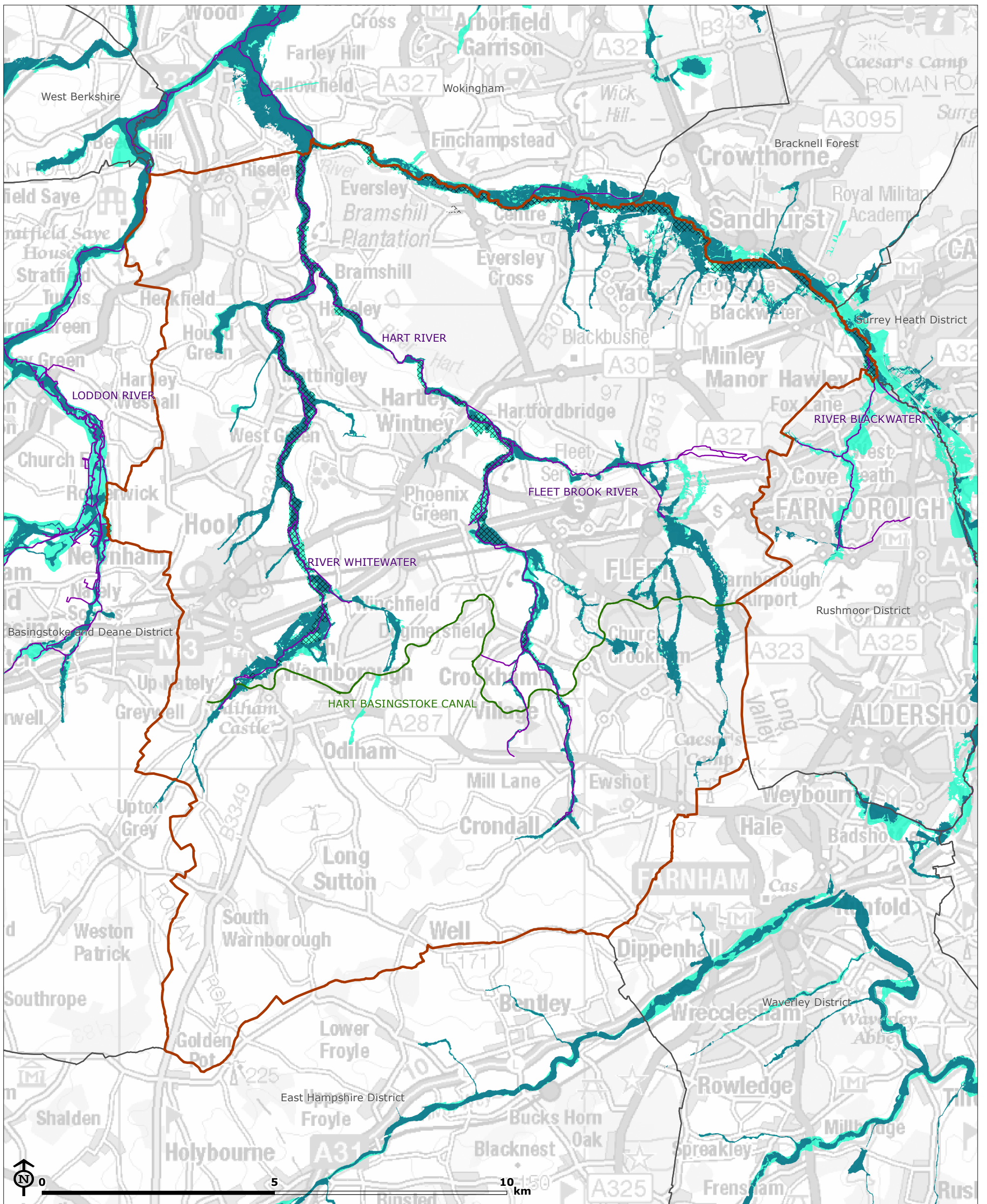
Water Resources: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- There is potential to reduce flood risk by protecting the flood plain upstream of existing or planned settlements.
- Access to the rivers and canal for recreation should be promoted; the Blackwater Valley should be protected; and footpath along this river should be joined up and designated.
- The Whitewater and Hart river valleys should also be protected from development, and managed to promote natural flood alleviation.
- Where possible, a green buffer should be retained either side of the Basingstoke Canal and watercourses; an 8 metre buffer for main rivers and 5 metres for other watercourses respectively.
- Fleet Pond is an important natural reservoir and should be protected and better maintained through restoring natural routes of streams and ditches and restricting development, especially on embankments.
- There are a number of proposed flood alleviation schemes within Hart which are currently in the design phase: Phoenix Green, Mill Corner (North Warnborough), Tudor and Cricket Hill Stream (Yateley), Kingsway (Blackwater), Fleet Brook and Sandy Lane Ditch (Fleet), Griffin Stream (Hook), and Southwark Brook and Dungells Stream (North Yateley). All these areas and the areas listed below are to remain open as part of the flood alleviation schemes:
 - Yateley Green.
 - Existing balancing ponds where Holt Lane meets Pantile Drive in Hook.
 - All existing parks in Fleet.
 - The recreation ground and open green space next to Church View in Phoenix Green.
 - SSSI Wetland meadow in Mill Corner next to Mill Lane; and
 - The Wooded area behind the Royal Oak Pub in Yateley upstream of Reading Road.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Parts of all the main settlements experience regular fluvial and surface water flooding, which affects residential properties on a regular basis.
- Flooding frequencies will increase significantly with climate change.
- Planned development located upstream of existing settlements can exacerbate flood risk if not mitigated.
- Some of Hook is unlikely to be suitable for infiltration (site specific tests are needed) so more strategic protection of the flood plain will be necessary.
- Much of the development in Hart will occur on greenfield land therefore increasing the area of impermeable surfaces can exacerbate flood risk if not mitigated.
- Additional hydrological surveys should take place, to improve understanding of the water assets of Hart District.
- SANGs need proper design and management to ensure that water features are protected and managed and avoid repeating the problems experienced at Swan Lake.
- There is often a lack of attenuation in development, especially smaller/infill development.
- Many smaller watercourses are often culverted and diverted from their natural route. This has contributed to the flooding issues and they should be restored where feasible to better contribute to sustainable water management.



- Hart boundary
- Surrounding local authority boundaries
- Rivers
- Hart Basingstoke canal
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- Historic flood zone

Source: EA, OS, HDC

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.4: Water Resources



Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

Access, Recreation and Transport

- 3.11 Hart is a rural District with a relatively small population and access to some excellent quality countryside. Green spaces offer a destination for community activities and many areas of the District are located within 2km of freely accessible open spaces, country parks, registered parks and gardens (see **Figure 3.5**). However, some urban areas are deficient in access to a green space within walking distance.
- 3.12 The District has a good network of green features, including river corridors, a canal and local and strategic gaps, which could be enhanced to better provide access and recreation for a range of users (see **Figure 3.6**). There are some major physical barriers, including the rivers and also the major roads, including the M3, A30 and A287 (see **Figure 3.7**).
- 3.13 In contrast, there is limited provision of sustainable modes of transport throughout the District. The major arterial routes through the District are a barrier to access to open space in some locations (see **Figure 3.7**). The Canal is a valuable feature, but needs adequate investment to maximise its potential. There are a number of areas which experience frequent flooding.
- 3.14 Public consultation undertaken to inform the Hart Open Space Study (2016) indicates that there is generally good provision of facilities for recreation, but highlighted the following areas where provision could be enhanced: some open spaces are dominated by sport pitches; some respondents felt that there are insufficient facilities to support sport activities; there should be a greater diversity of spaces for children and young people; there could be better links with schools to share playing fields and open spaces; there is a need for more allotment sites, and planned new provision at Edenbrook Country Park would help address deficiency.
- 3.15 Stakeholders which were engaged in the Open Space Study prioritised the following opportunities to enhance access and recreation:
- Raise awareness of the open space network in Hart.
 - Increase connectivity to open spaces through signage and use of green corridors.
 - Improve accessibility to open spaces by providing safe crossing points.
 - Introduce a ranger service to liaise with community groups and oversee the appropriate management of wildlife areas.
 - Ensure new open spaces provide suitable facilities for the local community and are fully accessible for public use.



A narrow path along the Basingstoke Canal causing a conflict between walkers and cyclists.



Image: Hart District Council

There is a lack of cycle path provision in Hart.

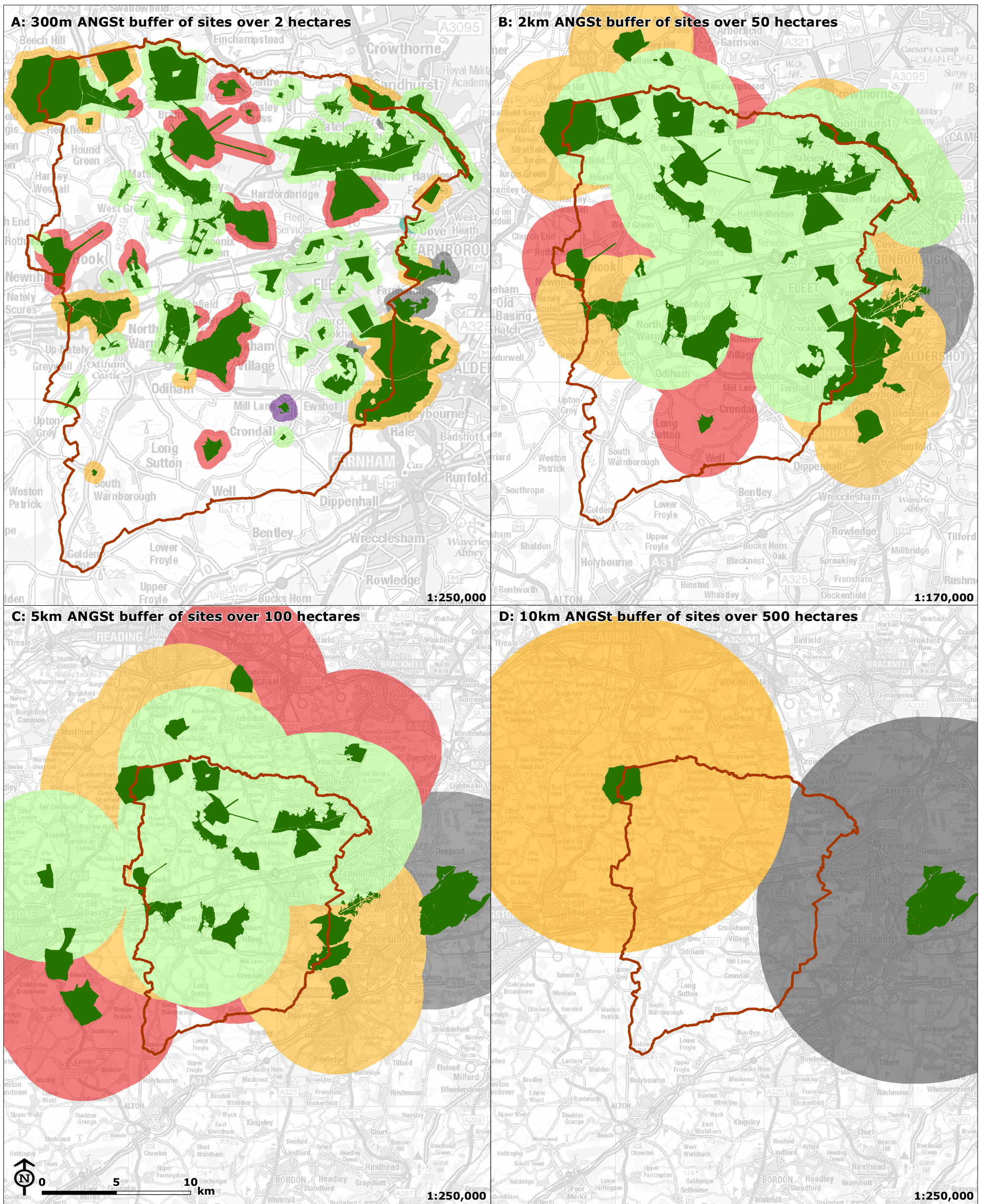
Access, Recreation and Transport: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- Hart is a very green District with good access to the countryside. There are three Green Flag sites (Elvetham Heath, Hartley Wintney Common and Fleet Ponds). Edenbrook Country Park has potential to achieve this award.
- The Hart and Basingstoke Canal and Whitewater Valley are valuable resources but are fragmented in some locations. There are opportunities to increase connectivity enhancing the recreational value of these river corridors.
- There is potential to partner Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to ensure the Canal's potential is realised for both commuting and recreation. Opportunities include upgrading the surface, and enhancing access to the canal.
- Work with the Forestry Commission to enhance recreational offer at less sensitive sites (e.g. plantations) around the Thames Basin Heaths.
- Provision of informal cycle routes is good, but more could be created such as along the Blackwater Canal. Additionally, sign posted off road cycle ways finding would be beneficial.
- There is scope to engage with children and young people and create more play areas, youth facilities close to urban areas.
- Recreational features which are accessible via sustainable transport should be prioritised and promoted.

Weaknesses and Threats

- There is a lack of transport infrastructure to support healthy sustainable transport choices, particularly cycling; there is no designated national cycle route in Hart and there are difficulties finding off road cycle routes.
- There are few significant open spaces and PRow serving Fleet and the south of the District has very little public open space.
- The appeal and promotion of SANGs to visitors should be assessed.
- Access to MOD land is diminishing thereby reducing the amount of open space accessible to the public.
- Land sales can lead to removal of permissive PRow, as has recently happened in the Blackwater Valley. These permissive footpaths should be formally designated to ensure they are protected.
- PRow coverage is fragmented and some footpaths should be promoted to bridleways to facilitate cycling.
- There are a number of major arterial routes through the District (e.g. M3, A30, A287), and these sever ecological networks and act as barriers to accessing open space.
- There is poor provision of public and community transport throughout the District. The Hook Hopper, for example, has a very low patronage.
- There is limited parking at some open spaces and SANGs.
- Poorly maintained pavements are a challenge for those with limited mobility of buggies.



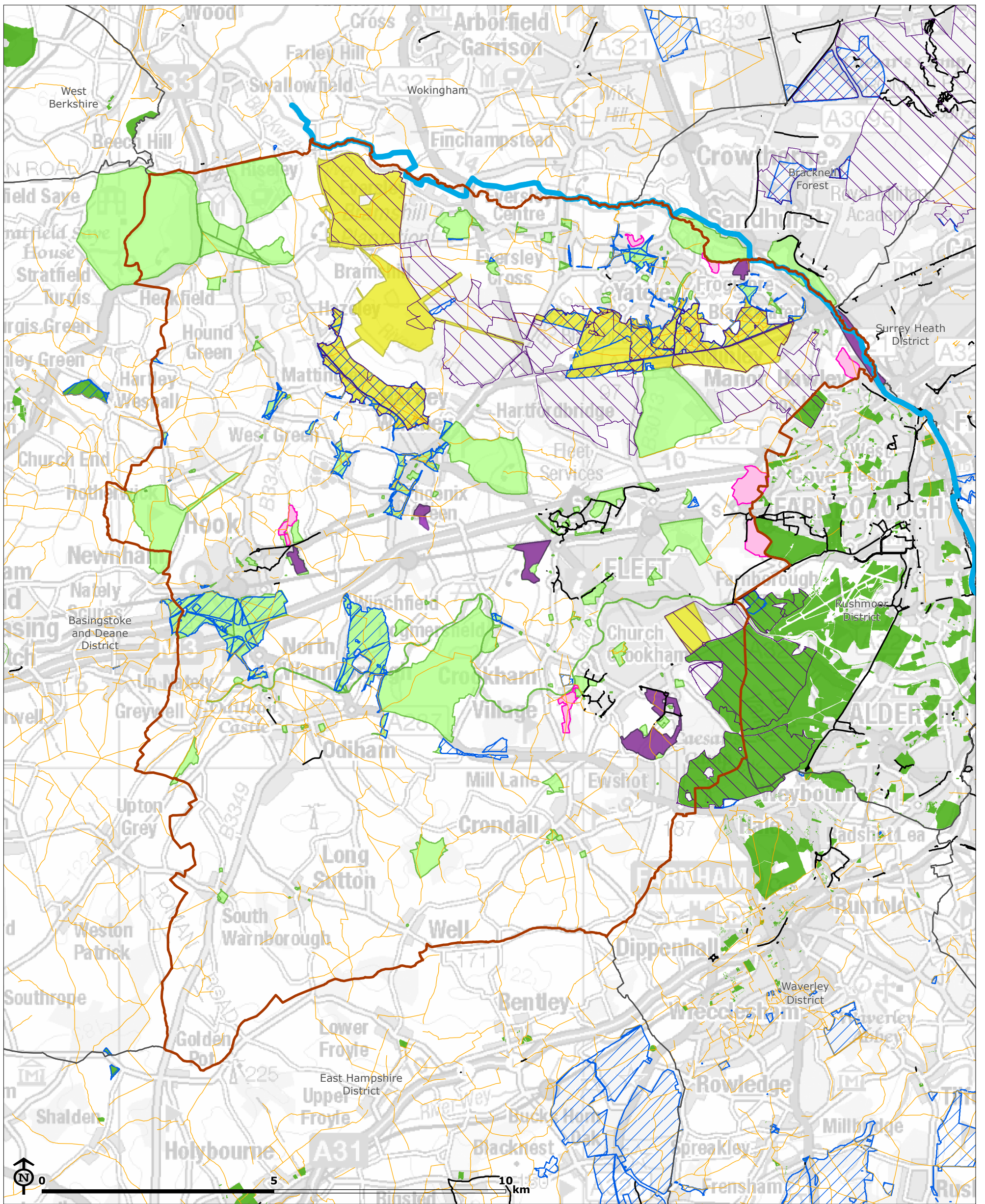
- Hart boundary
 - Open space, country parks, registered parks and gardens
- Access**
- Freely accessible
 - De-facto public access
 - Restricted access
 - No public access
 - Other
 - No access information

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

**Figure 3.5: Local Awareness:
Accessible Natural Greenspace
Standard (ANGSt)**



Source: OS, HE, NE, LUC, Hart DC, Rushmoor BC, Basingstoke and Deane BC, Guildford BC
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017



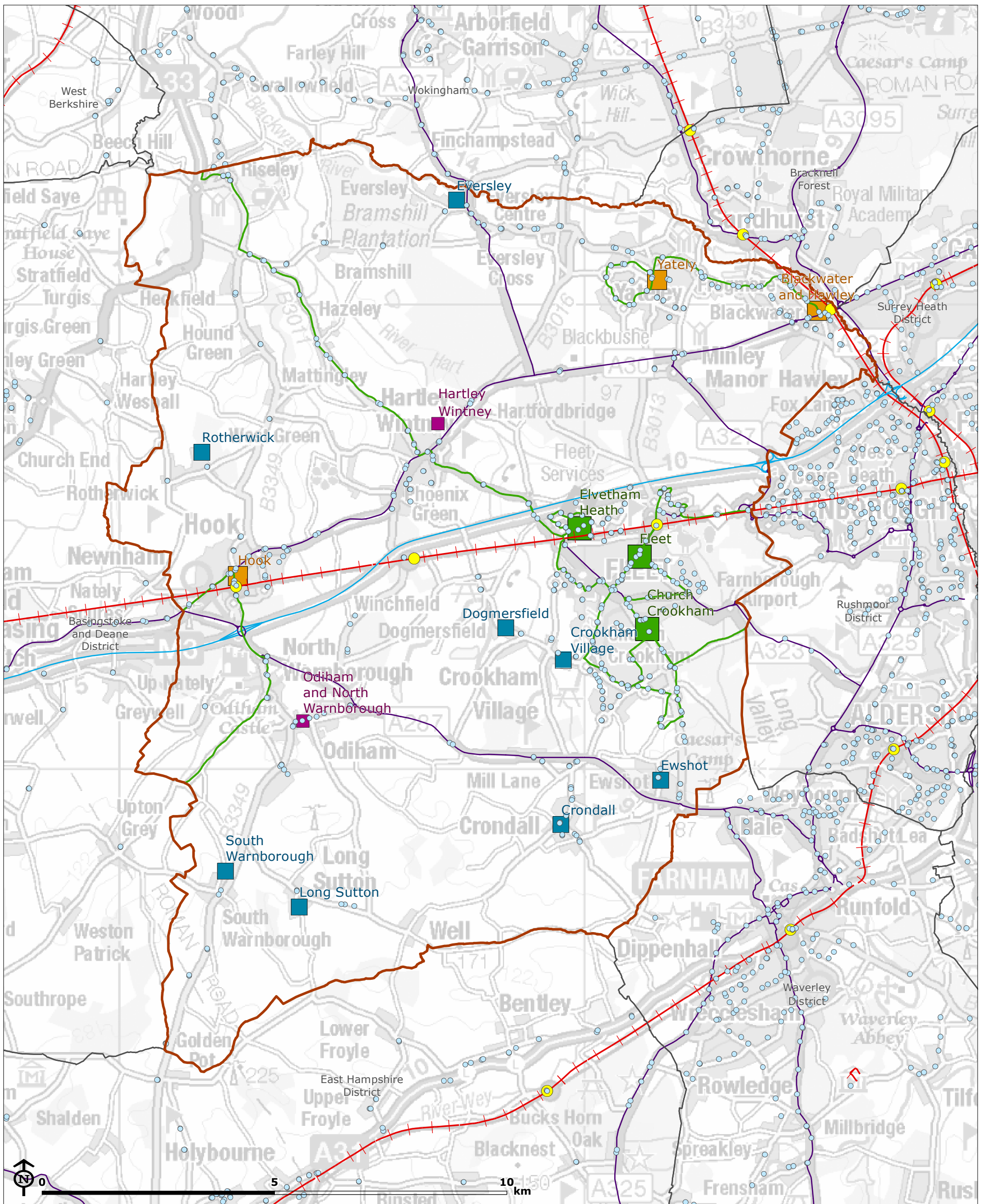
- Hart boundary
- Surrounding local authority boundaries
- Public rights of way
- Blackwater Valley
- Cycleways
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)
- Proposed SANG
- Open access land
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA)

- Open space**
- Hart open space
 - Hart open space within/partially within Thames Basin Heath SPA
 - Open space in surrounding local authorities

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.6: Access and Recreation





- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Hart boundary | Hart settlements |
| Surrounding local authority boundaries | Main Urban Area |
| Train stations | Primary Local Service Centres |
| Bus/coach stop | Main Villages |
| Railways | Secondary Local Service Centre |
| A Road | |
| Motorway | |
| Bus routes | |

Hart Green
Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.7: Infrastructure



Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

Source: OS, HDC, NaPTAN

Local Awareness

- 3.16 Hart has a wealth of green spaces and many of the accessible spaces are poorly signposted; until recently there was no online resource for information. The lack of awareness results in Hart's extensive green spaces being underutilised.
- 3.17 This was recognised in the workshops as part of the consultation for this Strategy and the Hart Open Space Study which revealed that there is often little awareness of the range of open spaces available in the District³⁶.



An example of clear signage.



Poorly maintained signage.

³⁶ Hart Open Space Study, LUC (2016)

Local Awareness: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- There are good opportunities for better promotion of the District's green spaces, health and wellbeing initiatives and activities. Hart District Council has recently formed a Visitor Service department to its Countryside Service who are able to support and advise on matters regarding GI. A live, up to date interactive map or mobile app could show:
 - Accessible sites and routes
 - Good sites
 - Strategic cycle routes
 - Walking routes and circular walks
 - Activities and health and wellbeing initiatives
 - All the above should be also provided in a paper format for those without internet access.
- Effective promotion of Hart's GI and activities using these areas could be extended to residents of nearby urban areas including Aldershot, Farnborough and Sandhurst.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Hart's high quality open spaces could be more effectively promoted through better signage from key community locations such as schools, shops and the train station.
- There is a need to increase awareness of the accessible GI in Hart and any activities that occur in these spaces. This could be achieved through one central interactive active map.
- There is a need to engage with young people and children to understand their needs, as noted by the Open Space Study which identified that children and young people needed a greater diversity of facilities in open spaces.
- New residents moving into the District could be signposted to advice on nearby green spaces and sustainable transport options in order to influence their patterns of behaviour at the outset.

Health, Wellbeing and Inequality

- 3.18 Hart's resident population is one of the healthiest in England. However, there are a number of communities where health deprivation is an issue in the east and north of the District, in Aldershot, Farnborough and Sandhurst (see **Figure 3.8**). Despite the relatively good current health of the District, there are some indicators of future health problems. These include:
- 20% of adults in Hart are inactive³⁷;
 - 61% of adults are above a healthy weight; and,
 - 17% of 4-5 year olds and 24% of 10-11 year olds are above a healthy weight³⁸.
- 3.19 It is well documented that the provision of green spaces in urban areas can improve mental health and wellbeing in both the long and short term³⁹. Recognising these benefits, nature-based treatment and therapy interventions are being explored⁴⁰, however more specific research is needed to explore mental health issues experienced by Hart residents and how GI in Hart can be utilised.
- 3.20 Strong policies should be adopted to ensure that the health and wellbeing of all communities is enhanced, and adequate access to open spaces for healthy recreation is incorporated within all development proposals. Hart already has a Health and Wellbeing Partnership and one of its priorities is to increase active lifestyles including through enhancing and promoting accessible outdoor spaces and active transport options.
- 3.21 Although there are no Air Quality Management Areas within the District, there are higher levels of particulate matter and nitrogen oxide along the M3 corridor (see **Figure 3.9**).
- 3.22 Hart is the least deprived local authority in England, according to the DCLG Indices of Deprivation (2015). However, there are pockets of the District which experience lower quality of life in relation to living environment, health and access to open space and/or gardens (see **Figure 3.8**).
- 3.23 There are also several neighbouring communities in Basingstoke and Aldershot where health and social challenges could be improved through greater access to open space. Hart Council should adopt strong policies to protect the high quality environment from potential impacts of development, including visual impacts and the creation of physical barriers, and ensure that the future population of new communities are afforded the same high quality environment. The Blackwater Valley is actively encouraging community engagement and may be able to provide advice and support.



Image: Hart District Council

Buggy Fit at Elvetham Heath.



Allotments at Crookham Park.

³⁷ Categorised as less than 30 minutes exercise per week.

³⁸ Hart District Council website: <http://www.hart.gov.uk/health-wellbeing>

³⁹ White MP., Alcock I., Wheeler BW. And Depledge MH. (2013) Would you be happier living in a greener urban area? A fixed-effects analysis of panel data. Psychological Science Jun; 24(6):920-8

⁴⁰ BRAGG, R. and LECK, C. Good practice in social prescribing for mental health: The role of nature-based interventions. Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number 228. York.

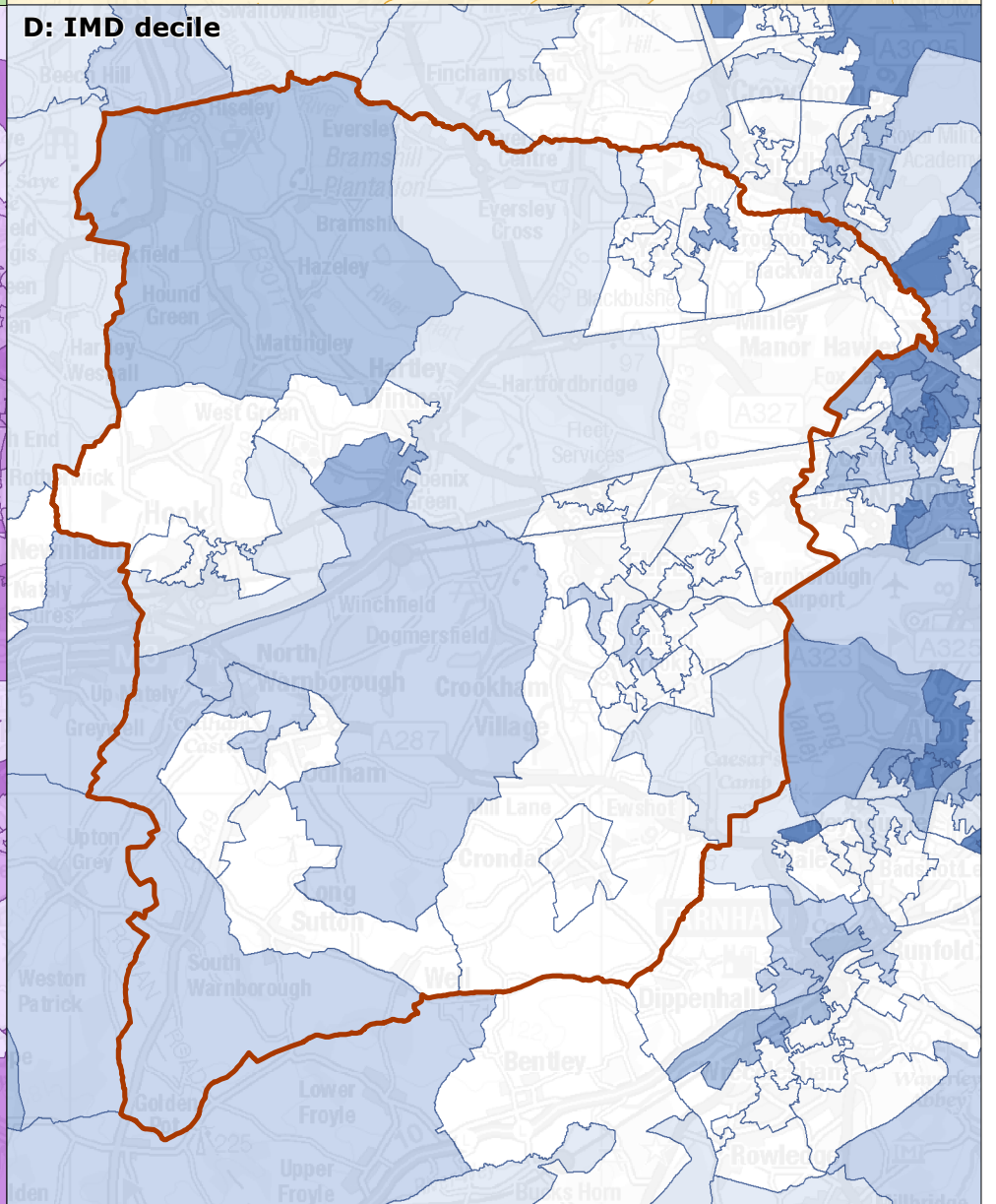
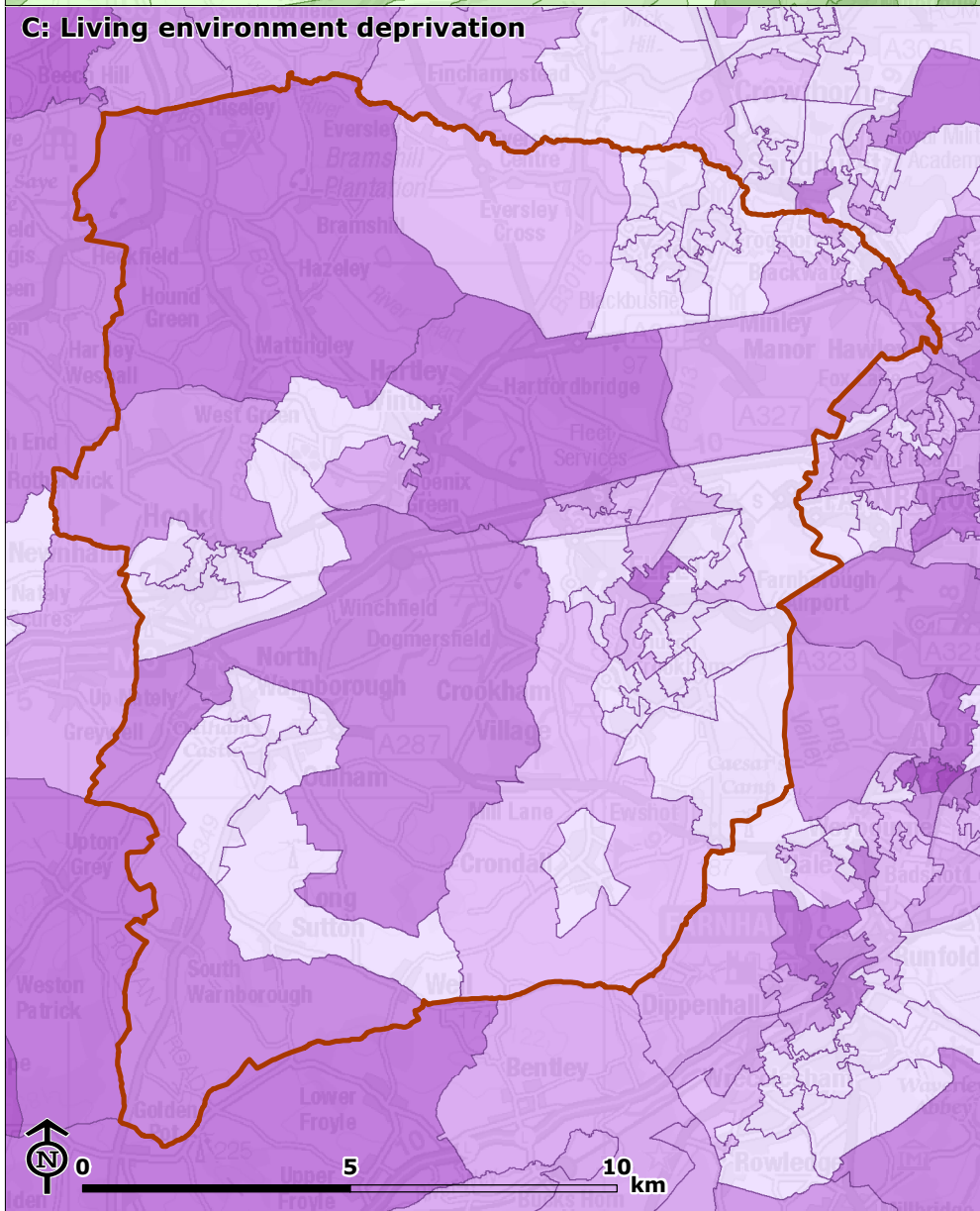
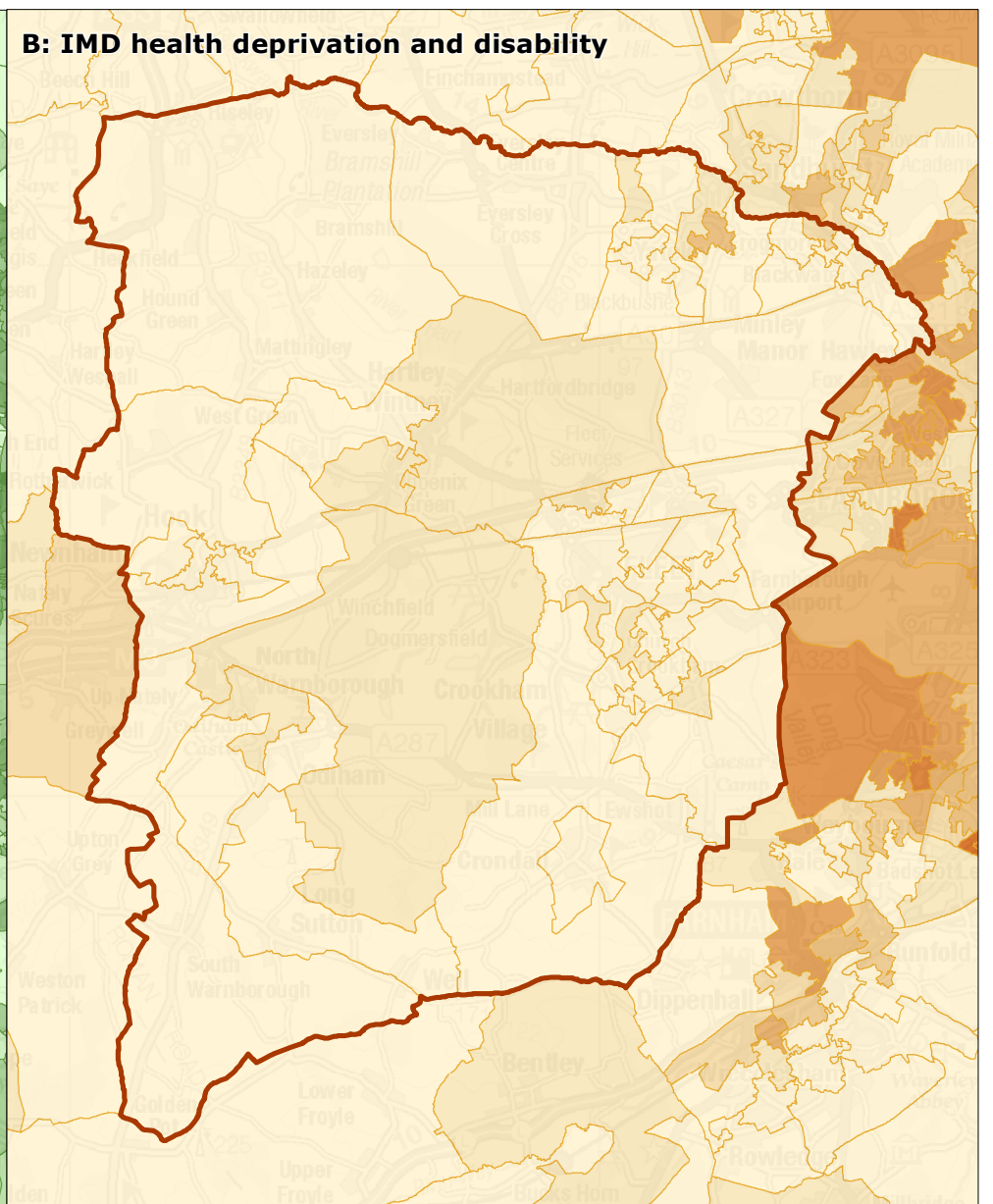
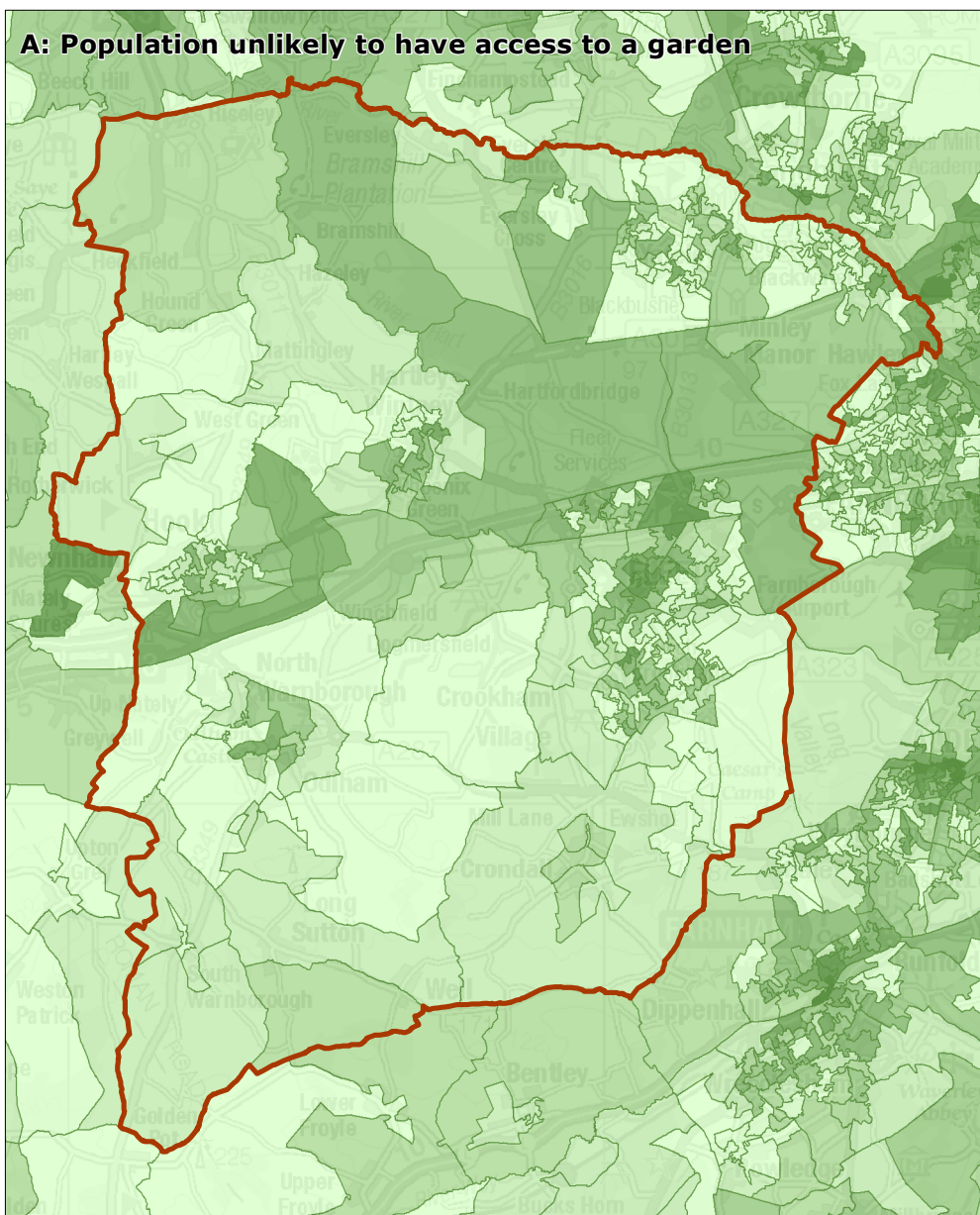
Health, Wellbeing and Inequality: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- There is generally good quality of life in Hart, and residents are generally healthy, and there are no areas of health deprivation.
- The number of inactive adults is lower than the national average, however it is 61% of the population.
- SANGS offer an opportunity to create new open space and increase provision of facilities for healthy recreation.
- Hart District Council has a Health and Wellbeing Partnership which engages partners in delivering health priorities.
- It is estimated that 88.1% of households within Hart are likely to have access to a garden.
- There is potential to alleviate poor health and living environments of in parts of neighbouring boroughs through access enhancements, including partnering with Basingstoke and Deane Council.
- Strong policies are needed to ensure new communities are afforded the same high quality environment as existing ones.
- There is good GI provision, but better access and awareness needed.
- There is significant disparity in the access to services and quality of the living environment. For example there are pockets of poor air quality and communities vulnerable to flooding.
- There are opportunities to promote GI as the 'natural health service'.

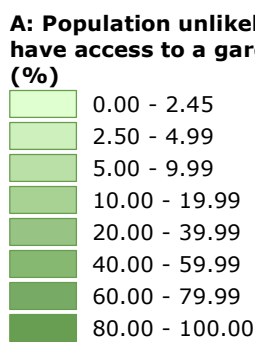
Weaknesses and Threats

- There are significant parts of Fleet that have low open space provision.
- Enhancing sustainable transport network could support more deprived communities.
- Poor air quality around heavily used roads will adversely affect the mental and physical health of nearby communities, particularly children and those with respiratory problems. This could also discourage local people from adopting healthy transport options such as cycling and walking. Creating green buffer zones along these transport routes could be a mitigation measure.
- There is a preference of driving amongst the community leading to high car dependence amongst Hart residents.
- There are small pockets of relative social deprivation in the north of the District, at Yateley and Blackwater.
- There are parts of Fleet that have limited open space provision and low access to gardens.
- There is a waiting list for all allotment plots. Phase 2 of the Edenbrook development proposal incorporates allotments provision; however it is unknown when these will become available.
- There is minimal community garden provision in Hart and the 'Minding the Garden' scheme supported by Hart Voluntary Action is now longer operating.
- Hart's high quality countryside could be better promoted to residents of more urbanised communities nearby, e.g. Aldershot, Farnborough and Sandhurst.
- Access to some facilities is expensive and therefore not accessible to everyone, e.g. golf courses.

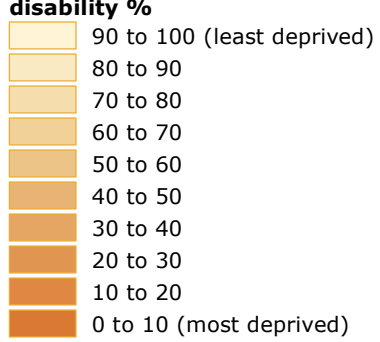


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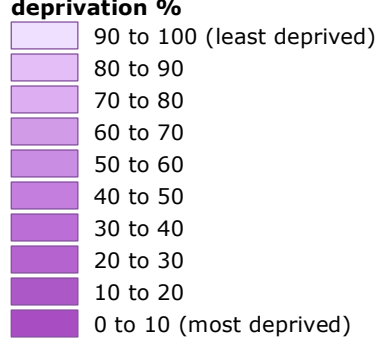
A: Population unlikely to have access to a garden (%)



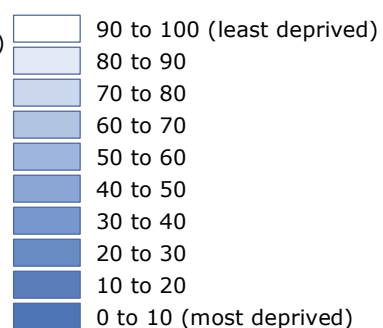
B: IMD health deprivation and disability %



C: Living environment deprivation %



D: IMD decile %



Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.8: Inequality

LUC

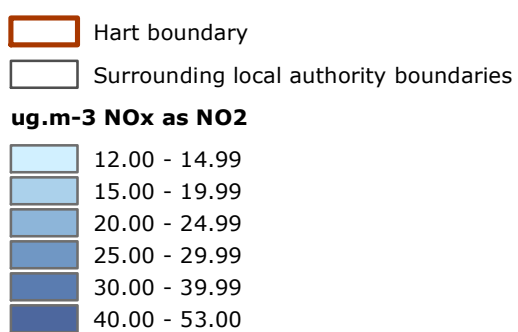
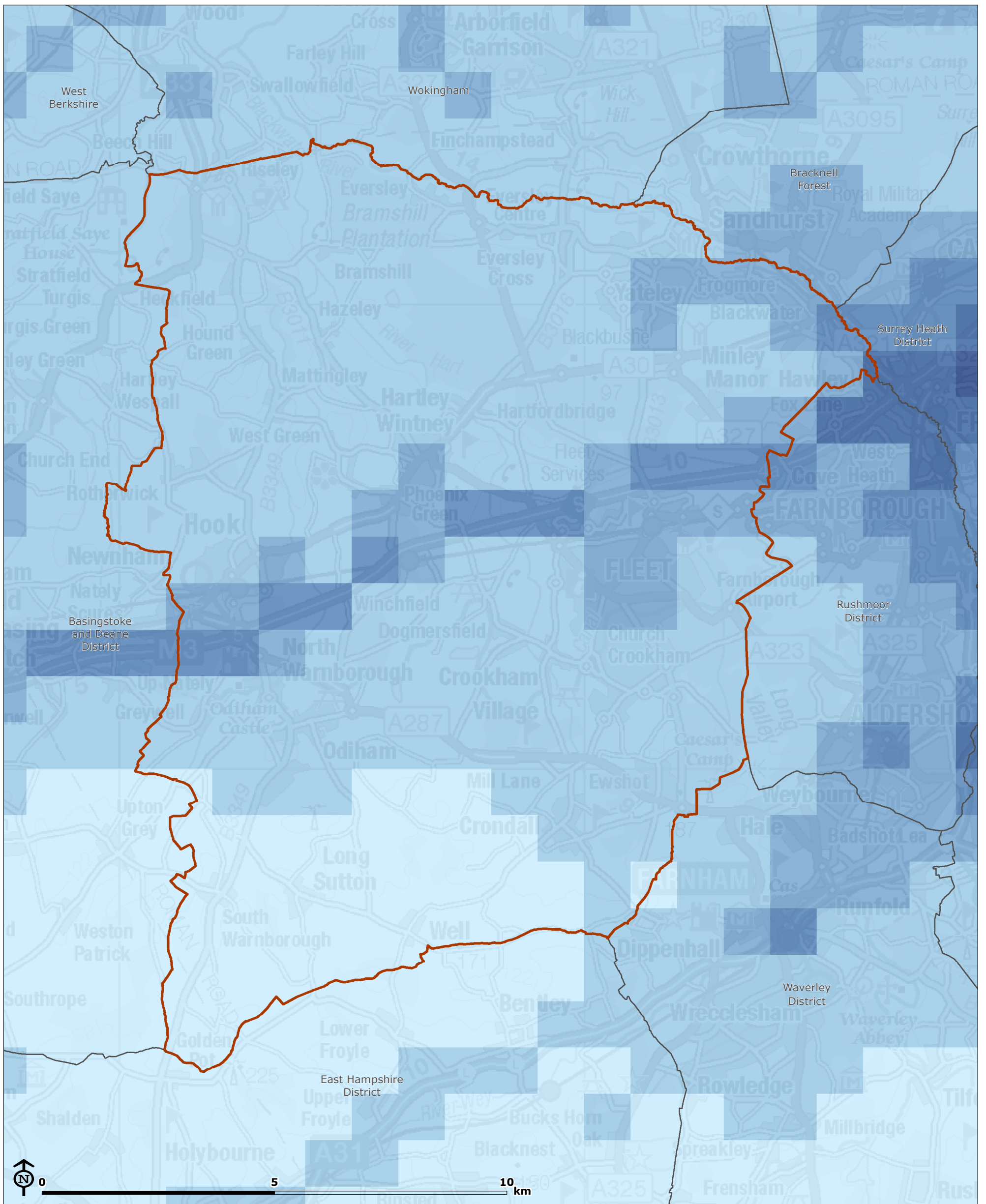


Source: OS, ONS, Department for Communities and Local Government

Map Scale @ A3: 1:140,000

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017

CB:KS EB:Stenson_K LUCBRI FIG3_8_6903_r1_Inequality_A3P 06/06/2017



Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy

Figure 3.9: Air Quality (NOx)



Source: OS, DEFRA

Map Scale @ A3: 1:80,000

Sustainability

- 3.24 As a rural District, much of Hart should be fairly resilient to the effects of climate change, due to the multiple ecosystem services that the natural environment affords. The District includes a large amount of green space and has generally good air quality. However, sustainability challenges within the District include: the current car dependence of much of the population; the regular fluvial and surface water flooding incidents experienced in a number of locations; and the poor air quality along major arterial routes, particularly the M3. The GI network should be designed to alleviate these issues, but will need to be supported by other actions, including an improved public transport network, lower traffic levels and a commitment to flood plain protection and natural flood alleviation, as well as appropriately designed new development.



Image: Hart District Council

Fluvial and surface water flooding occur throughout the District. To help reduce the risk of flooding new developments should Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and natural flood management schemes could be implemented.



Image: Hart District Council

High car dependency in Hart is a sustainability challenge. Providing safe and attractive routes and places to walk and cycle will help reduce car use in the District.

Sustainability: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- Link bus routes with open and spaces so residents have the options to take a sustainable mode of transport to recreational areas.
- Improve GI links within larger settlements to shops, schools, community hub and train stations, and create GI links where new settlements are planned.
- Air quality in Hart is generally good.
- Some flood alleviation schemes underway, such as that at Phoenix Green and North Warnborough.
- The existing SANGs policy means that in the north of the District, new green space is already created alongside new development.
- Hart's range of natural habitats, particularly the extensive woodland coverage is a valuable resource which will help adapt to the effects of climate change.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Regular flooding in a number of locations, including parts of all the main settlements highlights the need for more functional GI features in river catchments, and reinstatement of natural river flood plains where feasible.
- Poor air quality along the M3 and in the immediate vicinity of other major roads is detrimental to local residents and wildlife sites.
- Car-dependency amongst Hart's population is a key issue, and more sustainable transport choices should be promoted. Promote walk to school initiatives and school travel plans.
- The location of new residential areas in proximity to public transport hubs should be a priority.
- The planned population growth could exacerbate the existing pressure on the environmental capacity of the District, and should be properly managed and designed incorporating well-placed GI to minimise the negative impacts of development.
- The Open Space Strategy highlights that the capacity of existing open spaces to support the recreational increases as a result of population growth should also be considered through the development management process. There is a lack of green routes to employment and transport hubs.
- The M3 is a barrier to cycling.

Delivery

- 3.25 Delivery of GI opportunities is likely to occur through adaptation of the current approaches of land managers, alongside the creation of new GI features. Due to limited public funding, the majority of these new features are likely to be delivered through new development, via funding mechanisms including Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGs), Biodiversity Offsetting and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This study explores options for ensuring strong links with the Development Management process, and recommends how this should seek to maximise the delivery of high quality GI.



Bramshott new SANG provision in Hart.



Dated children's play facilities in The Views, Fleet.

Delivery: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Strengths and Opportunities

- A range of organisations engaged in positive land management.
- Seven strategic gaps within the District provide good structure for GI network.
- A range of natural green corridors which can be enhanced to deliver a range of functions.
- Council's intention to adopt CIL should provide strong mechanism for development funding.
- This study will explore and recommend how to best deliver GI through Development Management.
- Potential for biodiversity offsetting to be adopted.
- Work with neighbourhood partnerships and adjoining authorities to deliver local needs.
- Utilise what Hart already has to offer by increasing signage and social media presence.
- Increase partnerships with external bodies and agencies, including delivering the Living Landscapes Project at Loddon.

Weaknesses and Threats

- Need for clarity on location and scale of development to allow for GI investment to be prioritised.
- Ongoing reductions in funding for environmental projects resulting from current Government-led austerity.
- Risk of reduced range of external funding streams for environmental and social investment if Britain leaves the EU.
- Number of different organisations engaged in managing Hart's GI network means that joined up approach will be essential.
- Enforcement of developer contributions.
- Parish and town councils will need support from other agencies and Hart DC in order to help deliver GI.
- No overarching body to co-ordinate GI in Hart, there is opportunity to create a GI forum that holds regular meetings to support the delivery of the GI Strategy and allocate responsibilities. This could also help increase awareness of funding opportunities.
- The Open Space Study noted that various organisations managed the various open spaces within the District and recommended that, "*future management and delivery of open spaces should therefore be coordinated to meet the aims and aspirations of each organisation as well as the residents of Hart*".
- Stronger policy is needed to ensure that the GI is protected and defined alongside other grey infrastructure.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 This section sets out a number of recommendations to support Hart District Council in the next steps for green infrastructure (GI) planning and implementation in the District. This section includes:
- The Priority Projects and District-wide GI Projects in Hart;
 - The recommended approach to embedding GI within the Local Plan;
 - The recommended approach to delivering GI through future development; and,
 - Suggested next steps for Hart District Council.
- 4.2 Please note that numbering used for projects is for ease of reference and does not correspond to the importance or significance of a project.

Priority Projects and Associated GI Themes

- 4.3 This study has identified six Priority Projects for which the approximate locations in the District have been defined and are shown in **Figure 4.1**. Further work will be required to determine the exact location and extent of these projects.
- 4.4 In addition, seven other projects for the District have been identified. These are District-wide projects which should be coordinated by Hart District Council and should help to mitigate the impacts of future development at many locations within the District.
- 4.5 **Table 4.1** shows how these identified priorities link to the themes identified in Chapter 3 and **Appendix 4** contains preforms for these priority projects outlining likely timescales, potential partners and risks. When considering the delivery of these priorities, reference should be made to the Open Space Study which sets out recommendations as well as quantity and accessibility standards relating to certain GI spaces.

1. River Hart Natural Flood Management

- 4.6 The SFRA confirms that Fleet is the urban area which is most at risk from fluvial flooding, with over 52% of properties within the town within either flood zone 2 or 3. As such, areas of the catchment upstream of the town should be the priority for a natural flood management scheme. This should involve protecting the rural areas from development, and promoting habitat creation such as woodland and wetland in line with the natural character of those areas, in order to further slow water flow through the catchment. There may be potential to secure external funding for a pilot project here, through engaging with Defra on the natural flood management funding initiative that has been recently announced. Specific locations for natural flood management have been suggested by local flood management advisors, including the Environment Agency and the Hart District Council Flood Risk Engineer. The preferred interventions include woodland planting at Crondall, improvements along the Fleet Brook Channel upstream of Fleet, and reducing soil compaction at Phoenix Green.

2. Connecting and protecting the Blackwater Valley

- 4.7 The achievements of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership should be secured through designation of the permissive footpaths along the river as Bridleways. This would provide protection of public access when land is sold, and would also enable use by cyclists and horse riders. The aspiration should also achieve connectivity along and into valley from nearby communities/settlements. This part of the District is prone to flooding and flood risk which could be better managed through restoration of the flood plain where

feasible in rural areas, and the integration of sustainable drainage features connecting to the River Blackwater. Heritage, biodiversity, access and health and wellbeing functions would also be achieved through this opportunity.

3. Whitewater Riverside Park

- 4.8 This project would involve the protection and enhancement of the River Whitewater, its associated habitats and flood plain, through the creation of a riverside park. It would provide an important recreational asset to residents of Hook and beyond, as well as delivering essential flood management functions. There is already a SANG along this river valley, with a further one proposed, so there is potential to connect these sites together, utilising the current SANGs policy, alongside other potential mechanisms such as a net biodiversity gain/offset policy. Future developments in proximity to this river valley, or which would benefit from enhanced natural flood management here should be expected to contribute to the creation of the Riverside Park.

4. Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal

- 4.9 There is significant potential to enhance the Basingstoke Canal, to maximise its contribution to access and recreation, plus water management and Hart's heritage. Green buffers either side of the Canal should be maintained where possible to help with water management, and contribute to biodiversity through connectivity. There is potential to increase the quality, appeal and use of the Canal, including widening the towpath to enable better sharing of space so that walkers and cyclists can pass each other, and signposting between the Canal towpath to nearby community hubs such as schools, shops and other community centres. This should be secure through nearby development, particularly that along the Canal, which should also be required to contribute positively to the Canal setting and sense of place.

5. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Installation

- 4.10 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has highlighted the potential to alleviate some of the fluvial and surface water flooding issues within Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater/Hawley and Crondall through the installation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The SFRA identifies the following opportunities for the delivery of SuDS within these four key areas, which include:
- Use of permeable surfaces for parking areas and hard surfacing (with the exception of the public highway);
 - Ensure brownfield development delivers a net reduction in surface water runoff; Minor new builds should be providing surface water storage and ensuring discharged rates do not increase; and,
 - Major developments should incorporate a wide range of SuDS.

6. Connecting Hart's new Leisure Centre

- 4.11 Hart's new leisure centre is located within close proximity to the Edenbrook SANG, which brings opportunities for the leisure centre to offer outdoor classes and activities such as buggy fit, cross country running and personal training sessions. These potential GI opportunities would promote health and wellbeing which would be beneficial to Hart's residents as a fifth of adults are inactive and over 60% of adults are above a healthy weight.

District-wide Projects

- 4.12 In addition to the priority projects highlighted above, this strategy has identified a number of District-wide projects, which will together help to mitigate the impacts of future development in the District. Funding for these projects should be secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy alongside other funding opportunities which may arise.

7. Walk and Cycle Hart

- 4.13 There are relatively low levels of cycle commuting in Fleet, Hook, Odiham, Hartley Wintney and throughout Hart generally, and high levels of reliance on the car. Sustainable methods of commuting should be promoted, especially for shorter commutes, for example the creation of a segregated cycle path between Hook and Hartley Wintney. Attractive walking and cycling routes which are either off-road or along quieter roads should be promoted where feasible. Key destinations should include schools, shops, community centres and the train station. Clear signposting in situ should be combined with online maps and apps which provide guidance on routes.

8. Connecting Hart's valuable ecological features

- 4.14 Hart is endowed with an extensive and diverse range of ecological features. The Council already has some useful mapped data relating to important habitats and ecological networks, however there is potential to expand knowledge of natural habitats and the functions they offer through an ecological network mapping study. The purpose of this priority would be to maintain and restore connectivity between habitats, increasing the resilience of the District's biodiversity to climate change and other pressures, and addressing habitat fragmentation. This could provide a useful tool for highlighting biodiversity priorities in the District, identifying vulnerable sites which need buffering, and gaps where adapting land management could achieve District-wide benefits. There are already some initiatives underway which this initiative could support and expand, including the Living Landscape initiative at Loddon. The ecological network mapping could inform the location and design of new SANGs, for delivery alongside future development.

9. Promote access to the countryside, woods and SANGs

- 4.15 Hart has a wealth of existing GI, including river corridors, woodland, heaths, parks and gardens. Many of these are not effectively promoted to the local community however, and are not as well valued and utilised as they could be. One impact of this is that many Hart residents tend to drive to more well-known destinations, which may be sensitive to this visitor pressure, including Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Fleet Pond. Additional studies should explore the locations to which increased access should be promoted, and those which are more sensitive to visitor pressure. A range of promotional strategies should be utilised, including online guidance (potentially through an interactive map), and more traditional promotion targeting Hart's more elderly residents. Signposting to SANGs and other recreation destinations needs to be improved. The Public Rights of Way network should be enhanced where possible, replacing footpath designations with bridleways where appropriate, thereby allowing cyclists to use entire routes.
- 4.16 An online map and associated smart phone app should be developed for public use. This would provide an easy-to-use interface, guiding local residents to nearby destinations and recreational resources, plus the options for accessing these sites (by sustainable transport where possible). Furthermore, the online map should also be available in a printable format for those who do not have access to the internet as this is likely to be the case in the older generations, this resource should be promoted in local groups.

10. Maximise the environmental benefits of Hart's woodlands

- 4.17 Woodland areas deliver a range of environmental functions, including flood alleviation, air filtering, pollution absorption and acting as a carbon sink. In addition, they have potential to be managed to deliver economic benefits to the local community, including sustainable woodland products and produce, alongside social benefits as an attractive destination. They are also an invaluable wildlife resource, particularly pockets of ancient woodland, which should be buffered and connected to other woodland sites to increase resilience. Whilst some of Hart's woodlands are already managed to deliver a range of these benefits, there is potential for this positive management to be extended across the woodland resource. There is also potential to increase the visitor appeal of Hart's woodland, through the creation of a new visitor destination within north Hart. This would be a countryside recreation destination similar to that at Alice Holt in East Hampshire, and should be accessible to schools and community groups as well as the wider public. If

properly promoted, this could also help to deflect visitor pressure away from the Thames Basin Heaths, which are sensitive to visitor pressure due to the ground-nesting bird populations.

11. Create woodland buffer zones around major transport routes and new developments

- 4.18 Areas of woodland act as an excellent buffer for noise disturbance and air pollution. Where possible, blocks of woodland should be planted alongside major transport routes, particularly the M3 corridor, to reduce the noise and air pollution experienced by residents near this major road. This approach may also be appropriate along stretches of the railway through Hart.

12. Use GI to connect communities to existing green spaces

- 4.19 New development is expected to put increasing pressure on the green spaces in Hart, which are already regarded as being fragmented with poor connectivity. There are concerns that new proposals will continue to exacerbate these problems and in particular within the sites themselves. Green corridors and links need to be integrated into the master plan of the site to ensure that biodiversity network remains interlinked and remove the risk of fragmentation and 'green islands' forming.

13. Engage schools, young people, children and new residents to the District

- 4.20 The Open Space Study found that there is a lack of traditional playgrounds and natural play spaces in Hart, so GI provision, particularly at larger sites, will need to consider integrating a diverse range of play opportunities for the younger generation. Children and young people should be consulted during the planning and option stages. In addition to play, there are high levels of car dependency amongst Hart residents and school commutes are often undertaken in cars. To help mitigate this, school travel plans should encourage pupils to use sustainable modes of transport for commutes and in particular promote the use of active transport (walking and cycling). As well as assisting with alleviating traffic congestion in the District, the schemes could help reduce the number of children who are above a healthy weight. Furthermore, efforts should be made to promote open space and accessible GI provision to new residents arriving in Hart. This could help direct residents to SANGs opposed to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and also encourage healthy and active lifestyles with the District.

14. Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.21 New development often has an adverse effect on ecology, especially without mitigation. District-wide biodiversity compensation policies can be a particularly effective approach in rural areas such as Hart, where a large proportion of future development will be delivered on greenfield sites. The biodiversity net gain principle is a hierarchical approach that requires negative impacts to biodiversity:
- To be firstly avoided;
 - Then reduced or mitigated;
 - Finally reduced through compensation (offsetting) and should only be considered if avoidance and mitigation measures have been applied to development proposals⁴¹.
- 4.22 A District-wide biodiversity net gain policy would ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity following a development, and deliver a net gain (around 10%) off site. Hart District Council should develop a biodiversity net gain policy which enables the delivery of the priorities set out in this GI Strategy, through targeting any compensation investment at the locations identified above. This will ensure that other beneficial functions of habitat creation can be delivered alongside biodiversity compensation, including flood management, access to nature and air quality improvements.

⁴¹ Biodiversity Net Gain – A new role for infrastructure and development in improving Britain's wildlife (2016) WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff

Table 4.1: Benefits which could be delivered through each Priority Project/District-wide Project

[Note: The delivery theme is omitted from this table as all projects (if taken forward) are to be subject to the delivery process and therefore benefit from this theme.]

Theme	Description	Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands	Water Resources	Access and Recreation	Infrastructure	Health and Wellbeing	Inequality	Local Awareness	Sustainability
Priority Projects											
1. River Hart Natural Flood Management	Provide natural flood management schemes upstream of Fleet to reduce flood risk in the town.	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
2. Connecting and protecting the Blackwater Valley	Designate permissive paths and integrate flood restoration connecting to the River Blackwater.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
3. Whitewater Riverside Park protection and enhancement	Provide recreation areas, flood management schemes and connect SANGs around Hook.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal	Maintain green buffers, widen and improve towpath and install signposts.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Theme												
Priority	Description	Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands	Water Resources	Access and Recreation	Infrastructure	Health and Wellbeing	Inequality	Local Awareness	Sustainability	
5. Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Installation	Reduce flood risk through use of permeable surfaces in parking areas. Ensure brownfield developments deliver reduced runoff and SuDS are incorporated into all developments.		✓		✓						✓	
6. Connecting Hart's new Leisure Centre with the Edenbrook SANG	Using GI to create a link will increase the diversity of activities the leisure centre could offer.		✓					✓		✓		
District-wide Priorities												
7. Walk and Cycle Hart	Provide off-road cycling and walking routes with clear signage linking communities to key destinations.						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8. Connecting Hart's valuable ecological features	To maintain and restore connectivity between habitats and buffer vulnerable sites.		✓									

Theme												
Priority	Description	Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands	Water Resources	Access and Recreation	Infrastructure	Health and Wellbeing	Inequality	Local Awareness	Sustainability	
9. Promote access to the countryside, woods and SANGs	Create an online map with an associated smart phone app to increase local awareness of GI provision in Hart. Undertake studies to determine sites less sensitive to visitors.					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
10. Maximise the environmental benefits of Hart's woodlands	Pockets of ancient woodland should be buffered and connected to other woodland sites, promote good woodland management and encourage visitors.	✓	✓	✓								
11. Create woodland buffer around major transport routes	Plant woodland strips along junctions and major transport routes, particularly in areas with poor air quality.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
12. Use GI to connect communities to existing green spaces	Ensure new proposals maintain GI links and use funding from these developments to link disconnected GI.	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	

Theme	Description	Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands	Water Resources	Access and Recreation	Infrastructure	Health and Wellbeing	Inequality	Local Awareness	Sustainability
Priority											
13. Engage schools, young people, children and new residents	Promote walking and cycling to school initiatives that encourage the use of GI.					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
14. Adopt Biodiversity Net Gain	Adopt a policy to deliver biodiversity net gain through off site compensation where impacts cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated sufficiently.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	

1. River Hart Natural Flood Management

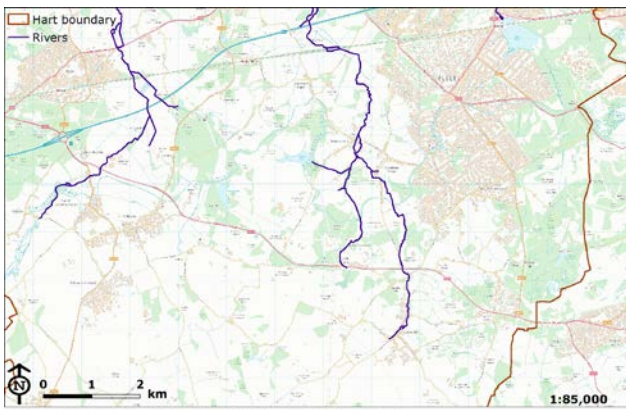


Image: Hart District Council

Project overview

Fleet is at risk of fluvial flooding and this project would implement natural flood alleviation schemes upstream of Fleet including creating new habitats such as woodlands and wetlands, which can significantly reduce the speed and volume of flow during peak times. Specific locations for natural flood management have been suggested by local flood management advisors, including the Environment Agency and the Hart District Council Flood Risk Engineer. The preferred interventions include woodland planting at Crondall, improvements along the Fleet Brook Channel upstream of Fleet, and reducing soil compaction at Phoenix Green. There are opportunities for this to be funded by Defra as a pilot project. This investment could also deliver new habitats supporting associated woodland and wetland species in Hart, as well as providing a carbon sink. If well designed, it could provide landscape enhancement.

Contribution to themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands and Associated Habitats	Water Resources	Access, Recreation and Transport	Local Awareness	Health, Wellbeing and Inequality	Sustainability	Deliverability Likelihood
	✓	✓	✓				✓	High

Potential challenges and risks

Land ownership:

- It is unclear at this stage whether the land owners and managers have been engaged in this proposal.

Planning permission or other consents needed:

- The Environment Agency will need to be contacted for any work undertaken in watercourses.

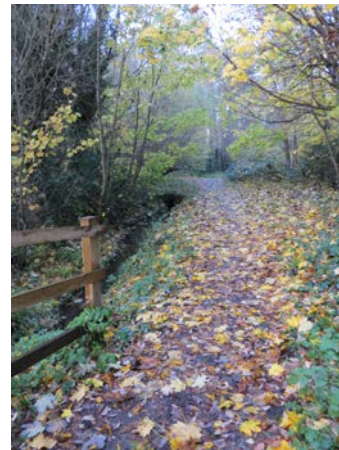
Timescale

Quick win (next 2-3 years)	
Medium term (3-10 years)	✓
Longer term (10-20 years)	

Potential Partners

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Town and parish councils
- Defra
- Forestry Commission
- Reading University

2. Connecting and Protecting the Blackwater Valley



Project overview

This project would enhance connectivity between the Blackwater Valley and communities through designating permissive footpaths. This would provide protection of public access when land is sold, and would also enable use by cyclists and horse riders. The aspiration should also achieve connectivity along and into valley from nearby communities/settlements. This part of the District is prone to flooding and flood risk which could be better managed through restoration of the flood plain where feasible in rural areas.

Contribution to themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands and Associated Habitats	Water Resources	Access, Recreation and Transport	Local Awareness	Health, Wellbeing and Inequality	Sustainability	Deliverability Likelihood
	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Medium

Potential challenges and risks

Land ownership:

- A linear river corridor like this is likely to be in the ownership and management of multiple individuals/organisations.
- The route of a continuous path along the Blackwater also crosses local authority boundaries, which could cause challenges for joined up delivery and funding.

Planning permission or other consents needed:

- The Environment Agency would need to be contacted regarding water consents.
- A Public Path Creation Order is needed to create a new PRoW or to upgrade a permitted path along with agreement of both Hampshire County Council and the landowner⁴².

Timescale

Quick win (next 2-3 years)	
Medium term (3-10 years)	
Longer term (10-20 years)	✓

Potential Partners

- Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership
- Hart District Council
- Environment Agency
- Wildlife Trust
- Natural England
- Town and parish councils
- Developers of sites along the river corridor

⁴² It is possible to create a PRoW without the landowner's permission through Compulsory Powers for the creation of a public path, but this can be a lengthy and costly process.

3. Whitewater Riverside Park



Image: Hart District Council

Project overview

This project would involve the protection and enhancement of the River Whitewater, its associated habitats and flood plain, through the creation of a riverside park. It would provide an important recreational asset to residents of Hook and beyond, as well as delivering essential flood management functions. There is already a SANG along this river valley, with a further one proposed, so there is potential to connect these sites together, utilising the current SANGs policy, alongside other potential mechanisms such as a net biodiversity gain/offset policy.

Contribution to themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands and Associated Habitats	Water Resources	Access, Recreation and Transport	Local Awareness	Health, Wellbeing and Inequality	Sustainability	Deliverability Likelihood
✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Medium

Potential challenges and risks

Land ownership:

- A linear river corridor like this is likely to be in the ownership and management of multiple individuals/organisations

Planning permission or other consents needed:

- Environment Agency would need to be contacted regarding water consents
- Planning permission would be required for the installation of structures e.g. toilet blocks and other visitor facilities

Timescale

Quick win (next 2-3 years)	
Medium term (3-10 years)	
Longer term (10-20 years)	✓

Potential Partners

- Hart District Council
- Environment Agency
- Wildlife Trust
- Natural England
- Town and parish councils
- Developers of sites along the river corridor

4. Enhancing the Basingstoke Canal



Image: Hart District Council

Project overview

There is significant potential to enhance the Basingstoke Canal, to maximise its contribution to access and recreation, plus water management and Hart's heritage. Green buffers either side of the Canal should be maintained where possible to help with water management, and contribute to biodiversity through connectivity. There is potential to increase the quality, appeal and use of the Canal, including widening the towpath to enable better sharing of space so that walkers and cyclists can pass each other, and signposting between the Canal towpath to nearby community hubs such as schools, shops and other community centres. This should be secured through nearby development, particularly that along the Canal, which should also be required to contribute positively to the Canal setting and sense of place.

Contribution to themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands and Associated Habitats	Water Resources	Access, Recreation and Transport	Local Awareness	Health, Wellbeing and Inequality	Sustainability	Deliverability Likelihood
✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Medium

Potential challenges and risks

Land ownership:

- The Canal has multiple ownership and management of multiple individuals/organisations.

Planning permission or other consents needed:

- Natural England will need to be contacted as the Canal is a SSSI.

Timescale

Quick win (next 2-3 years)	
Medium term (3-10 years)	
Longer term (10-20 years)	✓

Potential Partners

- Basingstoke Canal Authority
- Canal and Rivers Trust
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Town and parish councils
- Sustrans
- Developers of sites along the Canal corridor

5. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Installation



Image: Hart District Council

Project overview

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has highlighted the potential to alleviate some of the fluvial and surface water flooding issues within Fleet, Yateley, Blackwater/Hawley and Crondall through the installation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The SFRA identifies the following opportunities for the delivery of SuDS within these four key areas, which include:

- Use of permeable surfaces for parking areas and hard surfacing (with the exception of the public highway);
- Ensure brownfield development delivers a net reduction in surface water runoff; Minor new builds should be providing surface water storage and ensuring discharged rates do not increase; and,
- Major developments should incorporate a wide range of SuDS.

Contribution to themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands and Associated Habitats	Water Resources	Access, Recreation and Transport	Local Awareness	Health, Wellbeing and Inequality	Sustainability	Deliverability Likelihood
	✓		✓				✓	High

Potential challenges and risks

Land ownership:

- Permission from the landowners will be required where the SuDS schemes re to be retro fitted.
- Suitable locations for these should be informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and overseen by a qualified hydrologist.

Planning permission or other consents needed:

- Health and Safety assessments will need to be undertaken prior to installation
- SuDS within new development should be secured through clear policy requirements and planning conditions. The Environment Agency should be engaged in defining these.

Timescale

Quick win (next 2-3 years)	✓
Medium term (3-10 years)	
Longer term (10-20 years)	

Potential Partners

- Developers
- Environment Agency
- Hart District Council
- Town and Parish Councils

6. Connecting Hart's New Leisure Centre

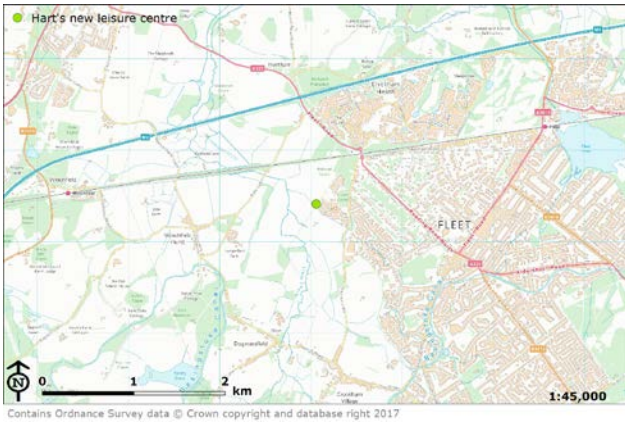


Image: Hart District Council

Project overview

Hart's new leisure centre is located within close proximity to the Edenbrook SANG, which brings opportunities for the leisure centre to offer outdoor classes and activities such as buggy fit, cross country running and personal training sessions. These potential GI opportunities would promote health and wellbeing which would be beneficial to Hart's residents as a fifth of adults are inactive and over 60% of adults are above a healthy weight.

Contribution to themes

Landscape, Heritage and Sense of Place	Biodiversity	Woodlands and Associated Habitats	Water Resources	Access, Recreation and Transport	Local Awareness	Health, Wellbeing and Inequality	Sustainability	Deliverability Likelihood
				✓	✓	✓	✓	High

Potential challenges and risks

Land ownership:

- Permission from the Edenbrook landowner and management would need to be sort before any activities commence.

Planning permission or other consents needed:

- Health and Safety assessments will need to be undertaken for all classes and activities

Timescale

Quick win (next 2-3 years)	✓
Medium term (3-10 years)	
Longer term (10-20 years)	

Potential Partners

- Sport England
- Hart District Council
- GP Surgeries
- Personal Trainers
- NHS
- Everyone Active

Embedding Green Infrastructure within Hart Local Plan

- 4.23 GI forms part of the overall mitigation for planned development and associated population increases, which will result from the emerging Local Plan. Local authorities have a duty to promote sustainable development under the Local Government Act, as well as in planning policy terms, and the GI enhancements proposed in this strategy will help achieve this aim. This section provides recommendations on how to enhance and expand the GI network and deliver this alongside other planned development.
- 4.24 To ensure that appropriate, multi-functional GI is incorporated within planned development, Hart District Council should incorporate strong policies within the Local Plan, particularly in relation to any locations of significant new housing development. These will need to specify:
- what type of GI is required;
 - how much should be provided and where (in line with the priorities in this report); and
 - the micro-GI features which are expected to be integrated within new development.

GI Policy in the Hart Local Plan

- 4.25 Hart's emerging Local Plan already includes a policy on GI, and this policy will be updated following the Regulation 19 consultation on the Submission Draft.
- 4.26 It is recommended that the GI Policy should be an overarching policy, cross referencing more specific policies on related topics such as biodiversity, landscape and flooding. This would give additional weight to these policies and clearly demonstrate the need for the Priority Projects within this Strategy.
- 4.27 The existing GI network should be clearly defined in the Local Plan to ensure that these GI features are protected and integrated within future development. It is recommended that the Strategic GI network and links within the District are included in the Key Diagram. A digital version of this should be included on the Council's website, so that it can be updated as new GI features are created.
- 4.28 In addition, the Priority Projects set out in this document should be included in the Key Proposals map in the Local Plan, to ensure they are considered and delivered alongside other infrastructure and development. Further work will be required to explore the feasibility issues highlighted in the project summaries, including land ownership, exact locations for proposals, and timescales.
- 4.29 The Hart Local Plan should also provide guidance on the GI features which are expected to be incorporated within a new development. These will vary depending on the nature and type of development, however some examples of what is expected include:
- street trees;
 - space for nature, e.g. meadow/long grass on verges;
 - swales and SUDs;
 - space for natural play;
 - permeable surfaces;
 - enhancement of streams and other water features; and,
 - green roof systems and roof gardens.

Delivery Mechanisms

Recommendations for securing funding through development

- 4.30 There are two main mechanisms by which financial contribution to GI can be secured from new proposed development through the planning process. Section 106 (of the Town and Country Planning Act) is used when it can be reasonably demonstrated that a development directly affects a community or GI feature, therefore investment in GI is needed as part of the mitigation package. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced through the Planning Act (2008) as a levy payable by developers towards the cost of local and sub-regional infrastructure to support development. This can apply to strategic District-wide projects, and does not need to be directly related to the proposed development.
- 4.31 It is recommended that Hart District Council utilises both of these mechanisms for securing future investment in GI. Those GI priorities which are located in proximity to a site allocation or significant development proposal should be secured through a Section 106 agreement as part of the planning conditions. This will help to ensure a focus on the largest developments where new GI features are most needed. It will also help to mitigate the challenge that local authorities have in promoting the need for GI, which may be in competition for CIL funding against core social infrastructure such as schools and surgeries. Development should be required to deliver GI features on site wherever possible, and off site where not appropriate.
- 4.32 In parallel, the Council should seek to fund some of the GI priorities by utilising a District-wide tariff on development, through the CIL. This will help to ensure that the wider GI network can be enhanced, connected and promoted, beyond the doorstep of new development. New green infrastructure is essential in light of the limited number of brownfield sites in Hart, and the likely need for greenfield development. The associated loss of environmental functions currently provided by this greenfield land should therefore be mitigated through provision of strategic GI enhancements.
- 4.33 It is recommended that the infrastructure towards which CIL will be used, and consequently listed in the Council's Regulation 123 list is carefully considered to ensure the Council maximises the benefit from development in the Borough. The infrastructure types included on the Regulation 123 list should not be too generic, as this can limit the Council's ability to secure investment through Section 106.

Section 106

- 4.34 Developer contributions under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provide a key mechanism for securing funding for Hart's GI priorities. Section 106 agreements are a tool which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, which would not otherwise be acceptable. There are three legal tests which must be met, in order for a Section 106 agreement to be appropriate:
- Must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - Must be directly related to the development; and,
 - Must be reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 4.35 The limitation of Section 106 is that contributions cannot be pooled (beyond 5 developments) to invest in a strategic site. So whilst Section 106 could deliver specific strategic GI priorities in Hart, it could not be used to enhance or promote the wider network, and it would not fund the District-wide opportunities such as promoting access to the countryside, or engaging schools young people and new residents, as listed in Section 3, above. Similarly, Section 106 cannot be used for on-going revenue costs / maintenance of the Green Grid, so it would be appropriate for the Council to also consider an alternative source of funding for this.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.36 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced through the Planning Act (2008) as a levy payable by developers towards the cost of local and sub-regional infrastructure to support development. GI is included in the types of infrastructure that are eligible for CIL funding. The NPPF states that the CIL should 'support and incentivise new development' and encourages local

authorities to test the feasibility of proposed CIL charges alongside the Local Plan. As stated in the National Planning Practice Guidance:

“The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.”

- 4.37 Hart District Council should use the findings of the GI Strategy to inform where investment is targeted in the future, both in terms of on-site GI integrated within new development, and also developer contributions in the form of CIL and/or S106. Consideration of the type, size, and function (including multi-functionality) will all be important in ensuring investment alleviates existing and future deficiencies.
- 4.38 Two thirds of English planning authorities are in the process of, or have adopted CIL, and it is recommended for areas where property prices are comparatively high, such as in Hart, as the land value uplift justifies the tariff on development. Hart District Council has already commissioned research to inform its approach to CIL, including the *Whole Plan and CIL Viability Study*⁴³ published in December 2016. As the process for adopting and altering CIL is complex and onerous, it is recommended that the adoption of CIL by the Council is carefully considered, with expert advice where appropriate, to reduce the need for future amendments.
- 4.39 Hart’s adoption of CIL could contribute to both delivery of opportunities, and also to maintenance as outlined in the Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance document⁴⁴. To ensure the District’s GI benefits from new development through CIL, it will be important to ensure that the funding required for strategic GI is highlighted so that it can be considered in the wider CIL process.

Biodiversity Net Gain

New development often has an adverse effect on ecology, especially without mitigation. Biodiversity Offsetting seeks to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity following a development, but biodiversity net gain goes one step further and seeks to create a net gain (around 10%) off site. The biodiversity net gain principle is a hierarchical approach that requires negative impacts to biodiversity:

- To be firstly avoided;
- Then reduced or mitigated;
- Finally reduced through compensation (offsetting) and should only be considered if avoidance and mitigation measures have been applied to development proposals⁴⁵.

Offsetting works through using a quantitative metric to calculate the biodiversity of a site before and after development. If biodiversity loss is calculated after development, and avoidance and mitigation have been considered, there may be opportunities to compensate for the loss through habitat creation/restoration projects offsite in strategic areas to be managed in the long term and funded by the developer⁴⁶.

Biodiversity net gain can be applied to Hart, as much of the residential development is to occur on greenfield sites. Where the first two options of the mitigation hierarchy cannot be applied, there may be opportunities for biodiversity gains to be made off site or through the developer contributing to GI priority projects identified in this strategy.

⁴³ Adams Integra for East Hampshire District Council (2016): Whole Plan and CIL Viability Study for the use of Hart District Council https://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Planning_policy/Hart%20Final%20Report%20Resi%20and%20Non-resi.pdf

⁴⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/197687/Community_Infrastructure_Levy_2013.pdf

⁴⁵ Biodiversity Net Gain – A new role for infrastructure and development in improving Britain’s wildlife (2016) WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff

⁴⁶ Guide to Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Biodiversity Offsetting Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator v18 (2014) Warwickshire County Council

Delivery of SANGs

- 4.40 It is recommended that Suitable Accessible Natural Green Spaces (SANGs) within the 5km zone around the Thames Basin Heaths SPA continue to be delivered separately from other types of GI, as the approach to delivering these is led by specific guidance from Natural England, and guided by the Local Government Act. However, as it is likely that SANGs will be the largest new areas of GI delivered within the District, it is important to consider their delivery in a strategic manner. This is best achieved through mapping future SANGs alongside and connecting them to other GI features within the Key Diagram in the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.41 In order to ensure that SANGs deliver their function of alleviating visitor pressure on the SPA, it is also recommended that SANGs are designed to be attractive places to visit, for each SANG to have its own identity and there is enhanced sign-posting and promotion of these sites. It is important that any proposed SANG must provide a Visitor Strategy in order to be considered as a welcoming, safe and suitable public open space.
- 4.42 Further to access and recreation improvements, there are opportunities to create new woodland and improve the management of existing woodland within SANGs. Woodland can play a key role in equipping these spaces to deliver a range of ecological and environmental benefits whilst at the same time contributing to the local economy. These requirements along with are achieved in partnership with developers and SANGs managers.

Other funding options

- 4.43 The Heritage Lottery Fund 'State of UK Parks' report⁴⁷ (2014) highlights the risks posed to GI assets by public sector funding cuts. To manage this risk, there will be a need for alternative funding sources for GI provision and maintenance, as well as new forms of governance. The Nesta Rethinking Parks report⁴⁸ is a good starting point for options on alternative forms of management and income, including utilising volunteers, encouraging users and businesses to pay a small annual membership with associated benefits, or and increasing the events and activities on offer that can secure an income for management.

Partnership

- 4.44 The District could explore partnership approaches to open space management, including Community Asset Transfer by which community groups can take on ownership and maintenance of their own local space. The Localism Act (2011) provides other opportunities for the transfer of land or community assets from statutory bodies to communities, the right for communities to list land as being a community asset and then bid for it should it come up for sale and the right to reclaim underused land from the Local Council or other public bodies.

Next Steps

- 4.45 This GI Strategy represents a key step in Hart District Council's delivery of GI in the District. The following next steps are recommended in order to secure effective, high quality and timely delivery of the priorities identified in this report:
- **Feasibility studies:** A feasibility study and implementation plan for the Priority Projects could include a masterplan for projects in proximity to site allocations and other locations where major development is anticipated, which would need to be reflected in plans for housing and other development.
 - **Training on GI for Council Members:** Decision makers, such as members, have a vital influence over the outcome of a planning application, and therefore need to be informed of all the elements that make up a planning application. Hart officers should therefore prepare a training session to members and an online guide to the importance of GI in relation to all its social, environmental and social benefits. The training sessions should include site visits with one of the ranger team to at least one SANG that functions well, and to one that does not

⁴⁷ <https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2014>

⁴⁸ http://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/learning_to_rethinking_parks_report.pdf

meet standards. Information to the members should also cover the need for maintenance, and why costs should be met by the developer.

- **Build partnerships:** Engage relevant internal and external partners to further scope and progress the Priority Projects and District-wide Projects.
- **Embed GI within the Local Plan:** Ensure the GI network and projects are embedded within the Local Plan (as described above)
- **Adopt CIL and incorporate GI within the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule:** Ensure selected GI projects are included in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule, including approximate costs and funding gap (as described above).

Appendix 1

Mapping Data Sources Used

Data source	Data
Ordnance Survey	OS Open Raster
	OS Boundary Line Open Data
	OS VectorMap District Vector
Sustrans	National Route
	National Cycle Network Link
Natural England	National Trails
	Open Access Land
	Ancient Woodland
	SSSI
	LNR
	NNR
JNCC	SPA
	SAC
	Ramsar
	TBH SPA
DEFRA	NOx Concentrations 2013
	NO2 Concentrations 2013
	PM2.5 Concentrations 2013
	PM10 Concentrations 2013
Forestry Commission	Forestry Commission Woodland
Historic England	Listed Buildings
	Scheduled Monuments
	Registered Battlefields
	Registered Parks and Gardens
Environment Agency	Flood Zone 2
	Flood Zone 3

Data source	Data
Department for Communities and Local Government	IMD
NaPTAN	Transport stops/stations
HBIC	Notable Species
	RVEIs
	Priority habitats
	Non Native Invasive Species
	Broad Habitats
	Biosites
National Trust	Website
OpenStreetMap	England Data

Local Authorities who contributed with data:

Hart District

Basingstoke and Deane District

East Hampshire District

Winchester District

Rushmoor District

Waverley District

Woking District

Surrey Heath District

Guildford District

Bracknell Forest

Reading

West Berkshire

Windsor and Maidenhead

Wokingham

Hampshire County Council

Surrey County Council

Appendix 2

Stakeholder Email Consultation Responses

Stakeholder	Contact	What are the main pressures and threats to GI in Hart in the future?	Where you consider the key opportunities for green infrastructure creation and enhancement in Hart over the next 5 years and beyond? Which of these are a priority?	Are you aware of any initiatives underway which might be relevant to the project (e.g. green space creation/enhancement, access improvements, habitat creation or flood alleviation)?	Other comments
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	Paul Johnston, Natural Environment Team Leader	One of the key interfaces between BDBC and Hart is the Loddon Catchment Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA), which the council has refined further and identified the Loddon Biodiversity Priority Area (BPA), an area within which it is acknowledged that there are likely to be greater opportunities for extending the biodiversity network. The approach to dealing with BOAs and BPAs is outlined in the GI strategy (link in my earlier email) at pages 54-56, with the Loddon BPA shown within the appendices on plan 26. Clearly, as the BPA abuts the Hart boundary, it is likely that there will also be opportunities within Hart.	<p>The GI Strategy also outlines a number of opportunities for improvement on a landscape scale, and where these exist between the two areas, they are generally contained within existing corridors. Page 71-74 provide more details for these, although the River Loddon, London-Winchester rail, Line, M3, A30 and the numerous footpaths that cross the borders appear to provide the greatest opportunities for GI development.</p> <p>In addition to these, there are also a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) close to the eastern boundary of BDBC, which could potentially link to form a wider network when compared to those within Hart.</p> <p>The council is also involved with the Living Landscapes Project (formerly the Loddon-Eversley Project) alongside Hampshire Wildlife Trust, which extends into Hart. Details about this can be found here http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/loddon-and-eversley-heritage-area. Finally, the Thames Basin Heath SPA buffer zone also crosses into BDBC and will also provide GI opportunities.</p>	<p>In terms of active projects, one of the actions within the GI Strategy is to look into developing GI opportunities along the Basingstoke Canal and so clearly, if there is anything that arises within Hart, then it will clearly be worth taking this forward. Furthermore, there are housing allocations to the north-east of Basingstoke close to the River Loddon, and therefore GI opportunities may arise as these develop. Details of the allocation sites can be found here http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/planningpolicy.</p> <p>Finally, we will shortly be scoping the extent of the 5 year review of our GI Strategy and therefore I would be more than happy to be kept involved in the development of the Hart GI Strategy. If you feel that you would benefit from meeting up to discuss any issues then I would be more than happy to do so.</p>	<p>BDBC GI Strategy, which can be found here: -</p> <p>https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/27401/1%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Strategy%20-%20Final%20Adopted%20Version.pdf</p> <p>This is supported by plans that can be found here: -</p> <p>http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/ENV09#elem_27396</p>
Hart District Council, Neighbourhood Plans	Katie Bailey, Corporate Strategy and Policy Development Manager	The main pressures and threats, in relation to areas I am involved in is the ability to ensure the delivery of appropriate green infrastructure on large new developments, when balanced against other land uses and viability. However, this can also be an opportunity if an integrated green infrastructure strategy can be agreed on large developments.	<p>Opportunities arise through neighbourhood plans where local communities can identify and develop planning policies for very local green infrastructure issues beyond those which a local authority is likely to prepare. So far, all of our NP's have taken the opportunity to identify Local Green Spaces for protection and include policies relating to green infrastructure facilities.</p> <p>Opportunities are also generated by the creation of new SANG - these provide opportunities for large areas of managed public open space which wouldn't otherwise occur - an example is the Council has recently obtained funding from the Enterprise M3 LEP to purchase and set up a SANG of about 30 hectares at Bramshot Farm.</p>		<p>In my role, the most relevant part of my job for green infrastructure is in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the management of neighbourhood plans prepared by local communities - corporate SANG projects - corporate involvement in major development sites such as Hartland Park - designation of assets of community value

Stakeholder	Contact	What are the main pressures and threats to GI in Hart in the future?	Where you consider the key opportunities for green infrastructure creation and enhancement in Hart over the next 5 years and beyond? Which of these are a priority?	Are you aware of any initiatives underway which might be relevant to the project (e.g. green space creation/enhancement, access improvements, habitat creation or flood alleviation)?	Other comments
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	Trevor Codlin, Strategy Lead for Planning & Development	<p>The scale of development is such that we are seeing a gradual reduction in the amount of Greenspace in the District, and the corridors connecting areas of Greenspace are shrinking.</p> <p>Disturbance on the important nature conservation sites, particularly SPA's is increasing and recreation activities such as off road trial biking, are increasing.</p> <p>Developments often have inappropriate planting schemes using non-native species, poorly designed and often unnecessary lighting schemes impact on the dispersal and foraging habits of nocturnal species.</p> <p>Restrictions placed on users of public open space and SANGs often deter them from using such sites and they seek out other areas where the same restrictions don't apply, often this is on sites that are of the highest ecological value</p> <p>Insufficient protection for non-statutory sites of nature conservation value (SINCs) and the inappropriate use of these sites as SANGs with a promise to implement appropriate management.</p> <p>The lack of funding for NGO's such as the Trust to manage on-site recreation on our reserves, which are generally sites of the highest ecological value.</p>	<p>It is our considered opinion that the theme running through this strategy should seek to establish the creation and maintenance of functioning ecological networks as this is a key mechanism through which the biodiversity of the District can be protected and enhanced. Ecological network mapping is about taking a strategic spatial approach to the natural environment, identifying areas of existing value such as Local Wildlife Sites and high value brownfield land, and looking for opportunities to create connections with new habitats that will benefit people and wildlife.</p> <p>The same approach applies to SANGs, which we also consider should be linked together providing users with better access to the suite of specifically designed sites; better promotional activity, such as signage and maintenance of paths will help users enjoy a better experience and deflect activity away from the important nature conservation sites.</p> <p>Opportunities for green infrastructure creation could be present through targeted management of habitats such as non-designated conifer plantations, and better recreational management of these sites.</p>	<p>The Wildlife Trust is involved in numerous projects which include Thames Basin Heaths SPA, management of SANGs, Water Catchment Partnership for Loddon, managing SSSI's and a flood alleviation project on Warnborough Greens.</p>	<p>As a general comment we would support the proposal to provide high quality, well-connected and multi-functional Greenspace, but it is important to ensure that ecological receptors are not compromised to provide green space for residents. Some species and habitats are more resilient to pressures that result from increased recreation and where a resource is to be multi-functional it is likely that only the most adaptable will survive. It is therefore essential that sufficient areas are provided for the less resilient species</p>
North Hampshire and West Berkshire, Woodland Officer, Forestry Commission	Andy Brunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effect of continuing development on existing greenspaces and sensitive habitats (people pressure from both social and anti-social use particularly on sensitive sites; increased levels of particulate pollution from more vehicles which may degrade the ability of existing greenspace to ameliorate the effect of pollution on the health of local populations; effects of development on local drainage in flood prone areas, on both the quantity and quality of water. The implications of climate change for the resilience of GI (to higher average temperatures, greater frequency of intense storms, and a wider range of pests and diseases) and its continuing ability to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services; and in particular from a forest management point of view, to remain economically viable. 	<p>A key opportunity for GI creation lies in within Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces. Our view is that the creation of new woodland and management of existing woodland within SANGs can play a key role in equipping these spaces to deliver a range of ecological and environmental benefits whilst at the same time contributing to the local economy. These benefits can also be derived from non-SANG areas by bringing unmanaged woodland into management.</p>	<p>In support of these points, the Forestry Commission is carrying out management of the Public Forest Estate within Hart, and administering the system of grants available (Countryside Stewardship grants supporting production of management plans, woodland creation and woodland management), as well issuing felling licenses and carrying out other regulatory work.</p>	

Stakeholder	Contact	What are the main pressures and threats to GI in Hart in the future?	Where you consider the key opportunities for green infrastructure creation and enhancement in Hart over the next 5 years and beyond? Which of these are a priority?	Are you aware of any initiatives underway which might be relevant to the project (e.g. green space creation/enhancement, access improvements, habitat creation or flood alleviation)?	Other comments
Basingstoke Canal Authority	Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager	<p>Lots of pressure particularly in Hart for housing developments. Very difficult on top of already large workloads to deal appropriately and comment on these developments as they arise. If you don't get in on this at the right time we lose hope of any benefit or mitigation works from them. Sometimes difficult to get in at the early stages.</p> <p>Funding is a massive threat to us, especially as we rely on LG authority funding for the canal which is being reduced every year with revenue pressures on everyone.</p> <p>Lack of land is an issue. This means we lack opportunities to develop small business alongside the canal to help support our finances and thus become less reliant of LG funding.</p> <p>Need planning policy to ensure structures like the canal are considered right from the start in planning processes. Noticed one housing development in Hart this week had consulted Canal and Rivers Trust instead of us (C&RT do not own the canal or have anything whatsoever to do with it!)</p>	<p>Businesses tend to turn their back on the canal physically, not cashing in on their beautiful waterfront positions which could enhance their business.</p> <p>The canal could be an even bigger Jewel for Fleet business if landowners along the canal recognised its opportunities.</p> <p>Lots of opportunities to link new SANGs to the canal and link in new housing estates to the canal to provide green corridors for commuting and leisure, but these need adequate funding and improvements to the links and the canal to ensure it can withstand the additional pressures.</p>	<p>All of these things are very relevant to the canal. We are always trying to enhance the towpath (but lack funding and rely heavily on volunteers) The canal is a SSSI and managed appropriately for this. The canal provides some drainage functions for the local area and is managed very carefully 24hrs/day 265 days /year to ensure there is low risk of flooding.</p> <p>The canal provides fantastic opportunities for volunteering and currently in monetary value brings in approx. £161,000/year plus direct income from them running business for us on the canal such as trip boats.</p> <p>We ran last summer a 'share the space drop your pace' campaign to deal with issues particularly in Woking of towpath users clashing. This area has particularly high levels of commuters on cycles and generally very high use. This is excellent and really important link through Woking for the residents, however additional use of the towpath can lead to negative issues that then have to be dealt with as a consequence. We are planning to bring this campaign to Hart soon.</p>	
Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership	Steve Bailey, Manager		<p>As well as these site based proposals we will be intending to carry out work where opportunities arise to meet what I imagine are standard green infrastructure objective we express these as 5 themes</p> <p>Landscape: To enhance the River Corridor to create a continuous area of naturalistic countryside and maintain the important open gap between urban areas</p> <p>River Blackwater To improve riparian habitat and the water quality of the River Blackwater and its tributaries, and maximise the flood protection role of the river and its floodplain</p> <p>Recreation To realise the full potential of the Blackwater River Corridor as an outdoor recreation resource</p> <p>Wildlife Conservation To improve the Valley for wildlife by enhancing existing habitats, expanding the areas of ecological value by the creation of new habitats, and developing links between habitats</p> <p>Community Empowerment To maximise participation from all sections of the community in decision making and practical action</p>	<p>For instance we are just starting a programme of pond restoration for habitat and amenity in the Yateley area and will be identifying more ponds in the next few years</p>	

Stakeholder	Contact	What are the main pressures and threats to GI in Hart in the future?	Where you consider the key opportunities for green infrastructure creation and enhancement in Hart over the next 5 years and beyond? Which of these are a priority?	Are you aware of any initiatives underway which might be relevant to the project (e.g. green space creation/enhancement, access improvements, habitat creation or flood alleviation)?	Other comments
Natural England	Miranda Petty, Lead Adviser Thames Valley Team	Natural England would suggest that you speak to Hart District Council to get this information.	Natural England believes the key opportunities for this area could come from Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) as these provide important areas for recreation and also give opportunities to create, restore and enhance habitat to be managed in perpetuity. Outside of the zone of influence of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) it is expected that bio-gain and Green Infrastructure will be embedded within large-scale developments, in line with existing Green Infrastructure policy. For example, this was the case for the Odiham development.	I am not aware of any current initiatives that Natural England is delivering in these areas. Other teams may have more information though e.g. land management officers.	<p>Information on the SANGS delivery can be found in the Hart Avoidance Strategy for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Supplementary Planning Guidance, the joint Delivery Framework and saved Policy NRM6. Our most recent records indicate there were 6 established SANGS in the Hart district as of August 2015. Where residential developments are 400m – 5km from the TBH SPA it is important to secure appropriate mitigation of the potential impacts that could occur through SANGS with a minimum size of 8 ha per 1,000 residents.</p> <p>Natural England's approach to biodiversity offsetting has been previously set out in a response to the Biodiversity Offsetting in England Green Paper. This notes that we support biodiversity offsetting in principle when it is suitable designed.</p>
Hart District Council	Susanna Hope, Flood Risk Infrastructure Engineer	Development and urban creep	Where large strategic development are coming forward- watercourses (of all sizes), ditches and surface water overland flow routes should be encouraged to be left as open green space to provide flood risk, bio diversity and amenity benefits. This is important in both greenfield and brownfield development. These are a priority in any area that are within or upstream of an existing or planned urban area.	<p>There are a number of Flood alleviation Schemes being looked at in Hart. Most are in the early stages so will not have determined the likely design yet. Flood Alleviation schemes are being looked at for : Phoenix Green, Mill Corner (North Warnborough), Tudor and Cricket Hill Stream in Yateley, Kingsway in Blackwater, Fleet Brook and Sandy Lane Ditch in Fleet, Griffin Stream in Hook, and North Yateley (Southwark Brook and Dungells Stream).</p> <p>At this stage key areas to be kept open include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any open areas along the above mentioned watercourses 2. Yateley Green, 3. existing balancing ponds where Holt Lane in Hook meets Pantile Drive, 4. All existing parks in Fleet, 5. The recreation ground and open green space next to Church View in Phoenix Green, 6. SSSI Wetland meadow in Mill Corner next to Mill Lane 7. The Wooded area behind the Royal Oak Pub in Yateley upstream of the Reading Road <p>Please note that there is an existing Hart DC owned Flood Storage area in the woodland adjacent to Beacon Hill Road and Upstream of Aldershot Road, Fleet.</p>	

Appendix 3

Stakeholder Workshop

Agenda

Hart Green Infrastructure Strategy



www.landuse.co.uk

Purpose Final Report

Project number	6903
Date and time	30 November 2016, 10:30 – 13:00
Location	The Function Room, The Harlington, 236 Fleet Road, Fleet, Hants, GU51 4BY.

1. Coffee and tea served from 10:00
2. **Introduction** (HDC/EHDC) 10:30
3. **Brief presentation on the aim of workshop** and Green Infrastructure in Hart (LUC) (10:40 – 11:00)
4. **Workshop session 1:** Attendees divided into small groups to discuss the current green infrastructure issues and opportunities in Hart (LUC to facilitate) (11:00 – 11:40)

Following points to be discussed:

- Existing green infrastructure features and opportunities in the District
- Current challenges and future threats to green infrastructure in the District

5. **Tea Break** (11:40-12:00)
6. **Workshop session 2:** Attendees return to groups to prioritise the GI issues and opportunities in Hart (LUC to facilitate) (12:00 – 12:40)

Following points to be discussed:

- How should we address the identified challenges and threats?
- What are the priority opportunities to enhance existing green infrastructure features, or to create new ones?

7. **Conclusions and next steps** (LUC & HDC/EHBC) (12:40 – 12:50)

Findings

Landscape Heritage and Sense of Place

Opportunities and Issues

Opportunities	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between major developments and areas of deprivation • Linking important habitats/ designated sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development sites achieving a net gain. • Protect SPA and designated species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make SANGS the best we can • Existing biodiversity value of incidental open spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green corridors in themselves • Basingstoke Canal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain green “Gaps” between developments • Strategic approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must consider adjoining areas. Blackwater valley & Bracknell developing GI strategy • Impacts of sprawl in the countryside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oldham Deer Park • “Heritage of the ordinary” • “Landscape Scale” schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linking them together • “Site specific GI” is also important (Tree planting etc.) • Soft engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using water environment to create resilient GI (constant fix between flood/ drought) • How can the historic environment contribute to multifunctional GI • Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking a holistic approach - Partnership working to create links • Agricultural landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hedgerow removal (Esp. in south) ? Commercial Dev – how does this fit in, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor Planning - Poorly devolved development and infrastructure • Policy Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of joined up thinking / or shared experience between local plans and neighbourhood plans- we should have the same goals. - Pressure for development – Economic and Housing - Policy priorities – Regarding neighbourhood plans - Balancing priorities • Population increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban pressures onto greenspace, such as litter, fly tipping, arson, vandalism - Disturbance through recreation pressure of all wildlife, not just SPA • Development Pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inappropriate development - Built infrastructure not account for GI - Development: concentration of diversification (Sprawl) - Threats - Development in non-strategic manner; SHLAA- puts onus on developer to promote site rather than evidence base • Land Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inappropriate land management • Invasive species • Population increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need housing - More people recreating - More people commuting etc • Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flooding - Species conservation - Pest / disease etc - Lack of resilience in habitats

<p>what are the opportunities</p> <p>? Should we be looking at net gains – priorities enhancement</p> <p>? Understanding the heritage of Hart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible review of policy - Review of sites, nationally NE, locally HDC, HCC, WT - Quality of areas- can we improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact on P&D, rate of growth/ performance of existing trees - Drought - Waterlogging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development encroaching on Green Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of strategic approach to SANG delivery and monitoring: too small, wrong location, lack of monitoring. - Unplanned development; Appeals (lack of 5yr supply) - Inappropriate development - Poor management or lack of management (deliberate or ignorance) • Green Islands – no connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in GI through development as it is not being effectively mitigated/replaced - Losing local gaps is a major threat - Loss of green space (however small) will not protect important sites and /or species - Pressure to fit more buildings into developments at the expense of GI - Connecting SANGs or not - Fragmentation/ isolation - Fragmentation due to development - Fragmentation Green Spaces • Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education of importance of greenspace and biodiversity - Failure to promote heritage of the ordinary - Lack of awareness of; resource; importance/ role/ opportunities; management • Loss of heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence/knowledge - Heritage protection
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Priorities

Development

Strategic approach

National and Local Planning policy

Aspirations must be deliverable

Strategic Biodiversity Offsetting

Management of Existing Sites

- Reserving
- Protecting the ordinary

- Fragmentation- Green networks
- Understanding what's there
- What is sustainable and deliverable
- Holistic approach
- What are the funding opportunities and existing
- Partnership working
- Who has which key responsible areas

Water Assets

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths = <u>Protect</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers are a great resource for people = Access to nature, e.g. • River Whitewater • River Hart (some parts) • Canal • Fleet pond • “Water walkers” – an initiative used in Blackwater Valley to monitor rivers, with members of the public providing updates to Council on good and bad experiences 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrology surveys needed • Need to know assets • Limited surface water • Sewage- foul discharges • SANGs need proper design and management, e.g. Swan lake, fleet pond • Historic treatment of smaller watercourses • Lack of attention in development- especially small infill development, as larger strategic sites are better regulated by the Council
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve path, Fleet Pond, Blackwater Valley - enhance and promote for people. • Protect rural areas in flood zones • More SuDS in urban areas • See catchment areas (highlighted by SH) • CIL contribution for water management and sewers • Connecting smaller watercourses to canal 	<p>Threats</p> <p>Black Water Valley:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land being sold affecting permissive rights of way. Need these to be formally designated as PROW. Access limited • Smaller watercourses: Not designated as flood zone • Traffic congestion in Blackwater – as a result of Meadows gyratory works • Junction 4a @ Fleet: congestion = poor air quality • Need better management of canal water levels • Culverting smaller watercourses is exacerbating flood risk • Fleet pond – need better management and maintenance of egress points • House building

Priorities

- **Open up diverted/culverted watercourses**
 - Increased capacity for wildlife
 - Across district, e.g. like Cricket hill flood management initiative
- **Upstream flood risk management**
 - **Naturalistic: HDC & EA preparing list of suitable approaches – Susanna Hope can provide updates on this.**
- Incorporate flood management in SANGs: Clear specification for SANGs
 - Locate in areas that can also contribute to flood alleviation - e.g. Swan Lake – delivery
- **Strategic Green Corridors of SANGs**
 - **Can deliver biodiversity, access and flood management – use river corridors as basis for these.**
- **Strong clear policy for flood management on site (S106) and off (CIL)**
- Secure appropriate investment to respond to SFRA- protect up stream flood plains

- Would benefit from more hydrological surveys
 - Flood plains
 - Surface overload
 - Flow routes
 - Thorough GI strategy
 - Access for people
- Air quality
 - Cross boundary partnership
 - Traffic management to reduce congestion
- Woodland
 - Upstream of urban areas
 - Balance with health management

Location-specific:

- **Fleet pond**
 - De diverting streams and ditches
 - Improving paths and access
 - Limit development especially on embankments
 - Sympathetic upstream management
- **Black water valley**
 - Proactive planning policy, deliver access and continuous path through designating PRoW.
 - Riverside park- create holistic feature here
 - Partner with key authorities
 - Designate park – e.g. like the Lea Valley Regional Park
- **Whitewater Valley**
 - has good potential and access/wildlife management should be enhanced, potentially through SANGs mechanism
- **River Hart and Royal Oak valley**
 - Naturalistic management
- Rivers
 - Protect river valleys
 - Access
 - Wildlife
 - Flood management
 - Landscape
- Canal
 - Green strips either side
 - Connect to green spaces and watercourses

Transport

Opportunities and Issues

Opportunities	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basingstoke council – commuters and recreation • Green links to public transport (stations, bus routes) • Green routes to employment locations • Main housing areas to green assets/links • Need areas for people to walk to local space • Links to schools – signage from Basingstoke Canal. • Signage- some assets underused • Awareness of what is there at the moment- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information promotion - Where is available ? - Walking/cycling marketing • Sustrans – can we work with them ? • Gaps/SANGs – raise quality of SANGs • Black water valley park • Layout of housing estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M3 barrier to cycling • Poor public transport • Very high car ownership. • Hook hopper- patronage very low • On a survey people say they will use public transport, but then don't • Buses provided with new destination, have been withdrawn- waste of money • Sustainable transport routes should be routes to the train • Bus service not frequent enough or tied to train times, Rushmoor Gold service (No.1) every 10 mins = good frequency. • People close to station will walk • Lack of cycle routes • Where there are cycle routes they are poor • Basingstoke canal is a key commuter route <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need sufficient width and surface quality, don't own land to add the width - Opportunity to link area within and outside - Fleet pond is constraint (SSRI) – concerns around over use of canal • Main employment areas in Fleet, Ancalls Business Park, waterfront, Potters Industrial Park • MOD owned land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could be opportunities - Would be problems - Public ownership • Can we connect up the SANGs ? • Poor parking provision at some public areas • Difficulties finding routes for off road cycle routes.

Priorities

- 1 Make the most of GI that we already have through the use of:
 - Social media
 - Signage, promotion
 - Co-ordination of the information held by different organisations
- 2 Developer contributions to improve Basingstoke canal
 - Take opportunities as they arise
 - Add it into HCC transport schemes list
- 3 Schools
 - Get kids out of cars- prioritise secondary schools?
 - Link to / support school travel plans
- 4 Blackwater valley path - potential for increased use for commuting
- 5 Connectivity to spaces/ SANGs from housing
- 6 Identify where footways can be upgraded to allow cycling
- 7 Green routes to stations.

Access and Recreation

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of Green Infrastructure in the District including SANGs • Bramshill offers opportunities for horse riding and cycling • A network of informal footpaths and cycle routes 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making people more aware of provision in the District • Improve links to open spaces from urban areas • More formal play space • Link bridleway routes • Increase access to open spaces • Increase links to Forestry Commission land • Basingstoke Canal – cycle improvement • Improve access to large tracts of land in private ownership • Increase play provision in natural environment to encourage access to nature • Increase youth provision • Encourage local community to management open space – e.g. informal BMX trails in open spaces • Deliver formal open space provision along SANGs • Encourage greater buy in from all bodies/ agency
<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overuse/misuse of open space • Parish and developers own many of the open spaces in the District there are some concerns over ability to secure long term provision. • Future management of GI • Funding- concerns over long term support from Hart DC & Hampshire CC • Overuse of sensitive sites including the TBH SPA sites. • Many footpaths within the Blackwater Valley only offer permissive access. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANGs- Access requirement to drive, small unsuitable for walking • Much of the woodland in the District falls within private ownership and is not always publicly accessible. • There are no links over the River Hart • People in the District are reliant on cars and will frequently drive to site. • Enforcement of developer contributions to ensure the delivery of good quality open spaces. • There needs to be greater support from local organisations/ bodies. • Rights of way / links to surrounding authorities is fragmented • SANG sites are usually small and limiting attractiveness for walkers • People not aware of cycle routes in the District.

Priorities

- 1 Interactive map showing
 - Accessible sites and routes
 - Live map to keep up to date
 - Good sites
 - Strategic cycle routes
 - Local routes
- 2 Regular GI forum meetings to support delivery of GI strategy
- 3 Improve access to facilities for youth and children close to urban areas (Alice Holt provision in north Hart)
- 4 Parish and town councils will need support from other agencies and Hart DC
- 5 Engage with young people and children to understand need.
- 6 Off road cycle ways- not formal cycle ways- earth paths but joined up with way finding
- 7 Fleet pond – good site
- 8 Edenbrook – poor site
- 9 Elvetham heath- good example of development set within GI

Opportunities

- 10 Basingstoke canal
 - Funding
 - Private ownership of adjoining land
 - Multiple ownership- various local authorities
- 11 Waterways
 - Improve access to waterways for recreation instead of reliance on the delivery of SANGs
- 12 Forestry Commission woodlands

Health and Wellbeing

SWOT analysis

The group undertook a SWOT analysis in relation to Green Infrastructure and Health and Wellbeing as shown below.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are generally high levels of health in communities in Hart, with some levels of communities being really engaged. • Good provision of PRow and Open Access Land. • Healthy walks are oversubscribed (HVA) • New SANGs • New Leisure Centre to be opened soon. • One Activity Centre (owned by a London Borough Council) is to be expanded. • Active running, cycling, fitness, yoga, badminton. 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote what facilities and features already exist, e.g. signage to existing spaces and maps of cycle routes. • Not all communities in Hart are engaged. • FTAP (e.g. bridge over canal). • There are missing gaps in the provision of PRow and open spaces, including lack of bridleways (no cycling on footpaths). Need to learn from previous projects. • The older generation are often excluded so there needs to be outreach for their inclusion (e.g. not everyone is computer literate). • Access to some facilities is expensive and therefore not accessible to everyone, e.g. golf courses. • Soon the old leisure is going to be vacant – could be used as a community centre • Work with developers to provide GI (e.g. Pyestone). • Inclusion of buffer zones along M3 and A30.
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low availability of GPs, need to access in Farnborough. • Lack of community transport. • Traffic. • Lack of awareness of existing resources. • Flooding. • Car mind set. • Poorly maintained pavements so it is hard for buggies and wheelchairs to use, and therefore discourages walking as people use the car. • Piecemeal provision/interrupted • Shortage of sports pitches, many are being developed. • Dog waste – lack of responsible owners (dog volunteers). 	<p>Threats/Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development increasing traffic – not just in Hart, threats from neighbouring authorities. High traffic levels are off putting for cyclists and pedestrians – feedback loop. • Commuters – poor links generally and to railway station. • Cuts to PRow • High levels of air pollution along M3 and A30. • MOD land. • No railway station in Yatley. • Stewardship schemes e.g. HLS provide permissive access, but these are ending or are continuing on a 5 year contract opposed to 10 years which are unattractive to landowners.

Priorities

Using the key issues identified in the SWOT analysis, the group devised four priorities for the GI strategy in relation to Health and Wellbeing:

1. Enhancing GI that Hart already has to offer

The group recognised that the District already has a wealth of GI as well as a number of health and wellbeing initiatives, however there is no one 'directory' or co-ordinator who was aware of all what there is to offer and therefore GI was not reaching its full potential in term of health and wellbeing. Measures to alleviate this problem included:

- Improve signage to existing green spaces (STP – Sustainability and Transformation).
- Create a directory which takes the form of an interactive map to identify what spaces and activities occur in Hart. It was noted that this should also be able to be printed in order for those who do not have access to the internet or are computer illiterate. The group noted that the [Hart Access to Advice Website](#) is a current resource).
- Publically promote the 'natural health service'.
- Improve links through removing gaps, including augmenting public footpaths to bridleways so that cyclists can use the length of the network. The railway stations also need to be better connected. All route ways should be accessible to all (including commuters, buggies, wheelchairs and the visibly impaired). It was recognised that pavements were not being maintained and so buggy cannot pass, therefore discouraged from walking and change mode to car. NB: the group thought it important that 'commuters' include those that travel to the workplace and those who travel to school.
- Include dog training areas to be provided in some green spaces.

2. Expand existing opportunities and initiatives that utilise GI in Hart

To improve health and wellbeing as well as increase social inclusion, the group thought it would be good to expand the programme of activities already provided:

- Increase the number of health walks and initiatives such as buggy fit, the daily mile. The group noted that there were a number of 'walk leaders' who ran the activity and they thought there is scope to train/engage more walk leaders and address other groups.
- Include dog walking campaigns/dog training events.
- Provide people/ officer capacity to develop and deliver wellbeing activities in green spaces.

3. Buffer zones along road corridors

There is evidence that shows that prolonged health issues when living next to motorways. Buffer zones in the form of woodland would be good along these corridors and would prevent development occurring along these vulnerable areas as these areas adjacent to the motorway are usually allocated for affordable housing.

4. The provision of access to gardening

Formalised allotments were first suggested but other members of the group described the 'minding garden' scheme where people who do not have a garden look after someone else's garden. This is noted to bring social advantages. In addition, there is little provision of community gardens and therefore there is the lack of ownership. Community space could be located in SANGs.