

Shepway Local Development Framework Green Infrastructure Report



Elham Park Wood

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1. Green Infrastructure - definitions

1.1 A number of definitions of Green Infrastructure (GI) are in use including:-

PPS12 – "...a network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities."

1.2 South East Plan/South East GI Partnership – "For the purposes of spatial planning the term green infrastructure (GI) relates to the active planning and management of sub-regional networks of multi-functional open space. These networks should be managed and designed to support biodiversity and wider quality of life, particularly in areas undergoing large scale change."

1.3 Natural England – "Green Infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens."

1.4 The common features of these definitions are that GI:-

- involves natural and managed green areas in urban and rural settings
- is about the strategic connection of open green areas
- should provide multiple benefits for people

2. Components of GI

2.1 The South East Plan identified the following areas as being typical features of GI:-

- parks and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens
- natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits)
- green corridors - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way
- outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces, either publicly or privately owned) including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas

- amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively, in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens
- provision for children and teenagers - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters)
- allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms
- cemeteries and churchyards
- accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
- river and canal corridors
- green roofs and walls

2.2 Using this as a starting point and working with other authorities and bodies an East Kent GI typology has been agreed which provides a systematic approach to identifying the GI resource locally. This is discussed further in section 5 “GI Resource in Shepway”.

3. Functions and benefits of GI

3.1 GI is multifunctional and may serve a wide range of purposes, including:-

- creating a sense of place and opportunities for greater appreciation of valuable landscapes and cultural heritage
- increasing recreational opportunities, including access to and enjoyment
- of the countryside and supporting healthy living
- conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the need to
- mitigate the potential impacts of new development
- improved water resource and flood management and sustainable design.
- sustainable transport, education and crime reduction.
- making a positive contribution to combating climate change through adaptation and mitigation of impacts
- production of food, fibre and fuel

4. GI policy context

4.1 In producing Local Development Frameworks Local Authorities are required to have a 'sound' evidence base to ensure the effectiveness of current planning policies and inform decisions for future policies. This report comprises the evidence base in respect of Green Infrastructure (GI), which is essentially the network of multi-functional green space which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities (PPS12).

4.2 With regards to the scope of this report PPS12 requires that core strategies are supported with:-

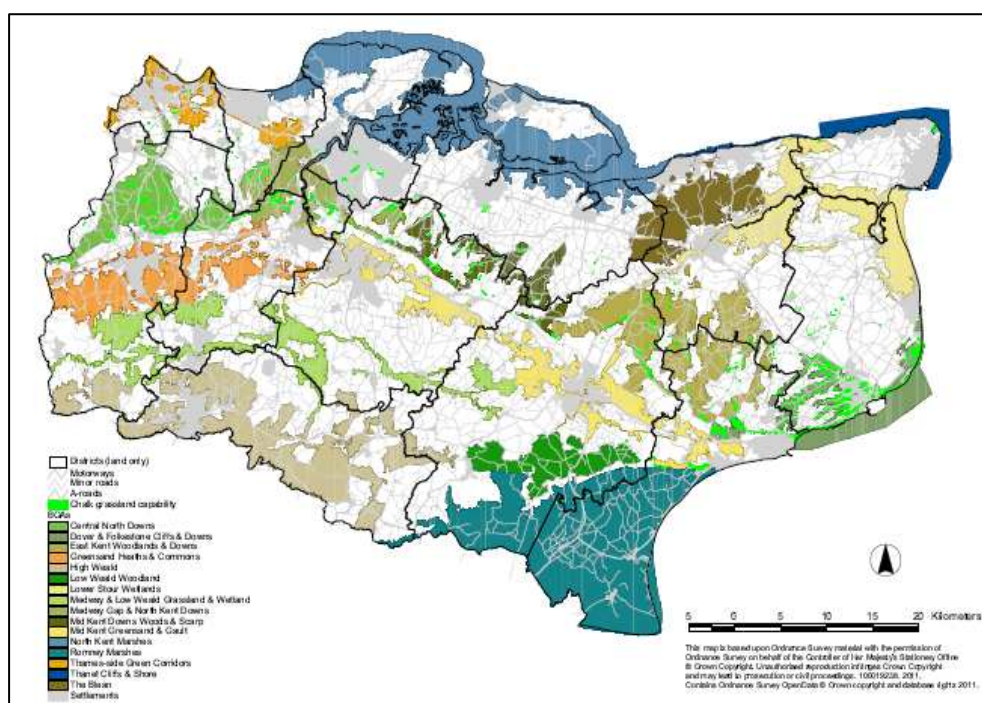
“...evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution.”

- 4.3 PPS12 also requires GI evidence bases to:-
- explain who will provide the GI and when it will be provided
 - draw on, and in parallel, influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations
- 4.4 This report identifies the national regional and local policy context for GI, maps out the GI found within the district and serves as a basis for the core strategy’s GI. This report also acts as a potential starting point for a GI DPD to follow on from adoption of the Core Strategy and which could set out a strategy for delivering improved and sustainable GI across Shepway and linking into neighbouring areas.
- 4.5 GI’s fundamental value in helping to achieve sustainable development is recognised in the government’s Natural Environment White Paper, “The Natural Choice”, which proposes the establishment of a national Green Infrastructure Partnership and actions which would help to improve the GI resource such as the identification of Nature Improvement Areas and the establishment of Green Areas.
- 4.6 GI’s importance is affirmed in the consultation draft PPS “Planning for a natural and healthy environment” which recommends a strategic approach to the creation, protection and management of GI networks, building on regional and sub-regional work. The draft PPS also recommends planning policies relating to:-
- the use of GI to combat climate change
 - avoiding fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats
 - enhancing GI through green corridors linking rural and urban fringe areas and urban green spaces
 - enhancing the GI functions of urban green spaces
- 4.7 PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation promotes GI’s role in contributing to rural renewal and urban renaissance by:-
- enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and among developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, recognising that healthy functional ecosystems can contribute to a better quality of life and to people’s sense of well-being; and
 - ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.
- 4.8 PPS9 also requires local authorities aim to maintain, protect and enhance networks of natural habitats through planning policies, protecting them from development and, where possible, strengthening them or integrating them within it.

4.9 Regionally South East Plan Policy CC8 supports joint working to manage GI to maintain and improve biodiversity, deliver recreational and cultural benefits and ensure an improved and healthy environment. The South East Green Infrastructure Framework also promotes GI as an integral component of sustainable communities and provides guidance on its delivery. Regionally too the South East Biodiversity Strategy highlights priorities for protection and enhancement of “bio-diverse” GI through its identification of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), four of which are present in Shepway:-

- Romney Marsh
- Mid-Kent Greensand & Gault
- Dover & Folkestone Cliffs and Downs
- East Kent Woodlands and Downs

4.10 BOAs present in Kent and the district are shown below.



4.11 At a sub-regional level while there is no “Kent GI Strategy” the Kent Biodiversity Action Partnership identifies priority habitats and species as a component of GI and promotes the application of BOAs to this end. The East Kent Sustainable Community Strategy also recognises the contribution that GI makes to quality of life, recognising that GI is under threat and that development must be carefully balanced to ensure that its value is not lost. To this end interagency work has taken place to identify and plan for GI across Shepway, Dover, Canterbury and Thanet districts and much of this report is based on this joint working.

4.12 Discussions have also been held with Rother District to the south and west of Shepway to consider the important GI of Dungeness and

Romney Marsh which flows between the two districts, particularly that of the Romney Marsh Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). As part of this work a joint Habitats Regulation Assessment has been commissioned with Rother.

4.13 Within Shepway the protection and enhancement of local GI can be clearly shown to help achieve two of the district council's Strategic Objectives:-

- Improving the appearance of the district
- Creating places where people want to live and work

5. The GI resource in Shepway

5.1 GI's multi-functional nature means that it includes a wide range of urban and rural open space "types" and the council has worked with partners to identify GI, not just within Shepway but also where links exist, or could exist, across local authority boundaries. This work has taken into account the BOAs and national and regional guidance together with partnership work.

5.2 Much of this work has been undertaken with partners in East Kent working to the following definition of GI:-

"For the purposes of spatial planning the term Green Infrastructure relates to active planning and management of sub-regional networks of multi-functional open space. These networks should be managed and designed to support biodiversity and wider quality of life, particularly in areas undergoing large scale change."

5.3 The East Kent GI Working Group has identified an East Kent GI Typology and which encompasses the following GI types:-

- Biodiversity e.g. Natura 2000 sites, SSSIs, LNRs, Local Wildlife Sites
- Civic Amenity e.g. parks, allotments, cemeteries
- Linear features e.g. the Royal Military Canal, railway corridors

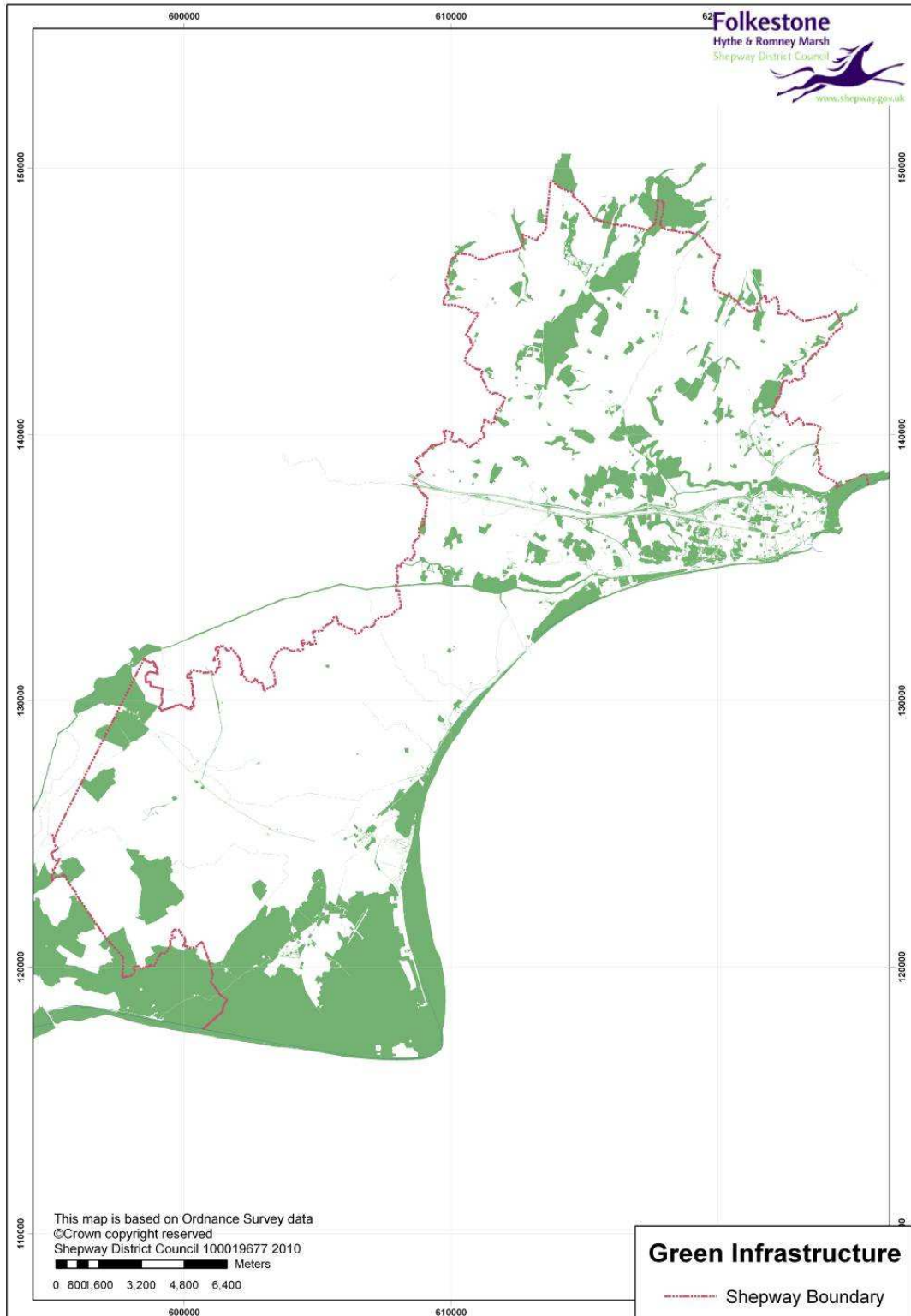


Bio-diverse, amenity and linear GI at Park Gate Down, Hawkinge Allotments and the Royal Military Canal

5.4 The components of these GI types are shown in the following table:-

“Simplified” East Kent Generic GI	GI type identified in the South East Green Infrastructure Framework based on PPG17 typology	Components
Biodiversity	Natural & semi-natural urban & rural greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Natural & semi-natural urban & rural greenspace • Local Wildlife Sites • SSSI • Local Nature Reserves • National Nature Reserve • Ancient Woodlands • Woodland Trust • Special Protection Areas • Special Area for Conservation • RSPB Reserves • Wildlife Trust Reserves • Forestry Commission • Open Access Land • Registered Commons and Greens • Areas of local landscape importance
Linear Features	Green Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Green Corridors
	Rivers and Canal Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Green Corridors • SDC GIS - Major Water Courses
Civic Amenity	Outdoor Sports Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Outdoor Sports Facilities
	Amenity Greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Amenity Greenspace
	Provision for children & teenagers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Provision for children & teenagers
	Allotments, community gardens, city farms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Allotments, community gardens, city farms
	Cemeteries and churchyards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Cemeteries and churchyards
	Parks & Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDC Open Space Audit – Parks & Gardens

5.5 The three GI types from which the Greenwash has been built up are described in sections 6, 7 and 8. The three GI types have been combined to form a single “greenwash” which represents the totality of the GI resource and Shepway’s GI is shown below:-



- 5.6 Key features of Shepway's Greenwash include for example:-
- the four BOAs and 23 BAP Habitats
 - internationally designated wildlife habitats on the Romney Marsh/Dungeness and in the Kent Downs
 - linear features including extensive beaches, cliff-tops and the Royal Military Canal
 - major accessible woodlands managed by the Forestry Commission
 - the Folkestone and Sandgate "Green Chain" linking urban and urban fringe sites including the Seabrook Valley, Folkestone Downs, Sandgate Escarpment, the Leas and Coastal Park and the East Cliff and Warren
 - Folkestone and Hythe's urban GI including parks, gardens and boulevards and Green Flag award winning open spaces at the Coastal Park, Folkestone and Royal Military Canal Hythe
- 5.7 As a measure of the overall levels of GI in Shepway consideration has been given to the use of Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt) standards promoted by Natural England, and in this context the district appears to be generally well resourced in terms of quantity and quality of provision. The ANGSt standards recommend that everyone wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:-
- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home
 - at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
 - one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
 - one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
 - a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.
- 5.8 ANGSt standards define fairly widely what types of resource can be counted as "accessible natural green space". ANGSt "Level 1, 2, 3 and 4" types are shown below. While beaches are not specifically identified through ANGSt they are an important natural recreational resource in Shepway adding greatly to the quantity and quality of local GI provision.
- Level 1
- Nature conservation areas, including SSSIs, local sites (local wildlife sites, RIGs), LNRs, NNRs
 - Woodland
 - Remnant countryside (within urban and urban fringe areas).
- Level 2
- Formal and informal open space, Country Parks
 - Open access land, unimproved farmland and unimproved grassland
 - Rivers and canals
 - Disused/derelict land, mosaics of formal and informal areas scrub
- Level 3
- Allotments
 - Church yards and cemeteries

- Formal recreation space.

Level 4

- Improved farmland

5.9 Looking at each of the standard's components in turn in the context of Level 1 and 2 GI alone it does appear that with the possibility of the more aspirational first component (spaces of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres 5 minutes walk from home) the District is well provided for. This first component is recognised by Natural England as being hard to achieve, particularly in older more densely developed urban settings such as central and east Folkestone although these areas do have good access to large spaces such as Folkestone Downs, East Cliff and Warren, the Leas and Coastal Park, Radnor Park, Cheriton Road Sports Ground etc..

5.10 The second standard seeks provision of at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home and the principal settlements appear to achieve this standard through:-

Folkestone

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| • East Cliff & Warren Country Park | 93 ha |
| • Folkestone to Etchinghill SSSI | 267ha |
| • Royal Military Canal | 24ha |

Hythe

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| • Royal Military Canal | 24ha |
| • Brockhill Country Park | 23ha |

Romney Marsh

- Romney Marsh Beaches

5.11 The third standard which seeks the provision of one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home appears to be met through:-

Folkestone

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| • Folkestone Warren SSSI | 360ha |
| • Folkestone to Etchinghill SSSI | 267ha |

Hythe

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| • Lympne Escarpment SSSI | 140ha |
|--------------------------|-------|

Romney Marsh

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| • Lympne Escarpment SSSI | 140ha |
| • Ham Street Woods NNR | 97ha |
| • Rye Harbour LNR | 325ha |

5.12 The fourth standard which seeks the provision of one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home appears to be met through:-

Folkestone

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| • Park Wood/Elham Park Wood | 485ha |
|-----------------------------|-------|

Hythe

- | | |
|-----------------|--------|
| • Dungeness NNR | 1023ha |
|-----------------|--------|

Romney Marsh

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SSSI | 9090ha |
|--|--------|

5.13 The fifth ANGSt standard seeks a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population, which in Shepway's case would equate to 100ha LNR provision and within Shepway 94ha of LNR are already designated as follows:-

- Folkestone Warren LNR 83ha
- Romney Warren 11ha

5.14 An additional 15.3ha LNR are proposed in saved policies of the Shepway District Local Plan as follows:-

- Royal Military Canal 15ha
- Encombe Woods 1ha
- Paraker Woods 0.3ha

5.15 In addition to this the Kent Wildlife Trust has two publicly accessible reserves in Shepway covering 12ha, the RSPB Dungeness Reserve covers nearly 1,000 hectares and there is a further 379ha LNR present within 5km of the district as follows:-

- Park Gate Down (KWT) 7ha
- Yocketts Bank (KWT) 5ha
- Dungeness RSPB appx. 1,000ha
- Rye Harbour LNR 325ha
- Larkey Valley Wood LNR 44ha
- Poulton Wood LNR 10ha

5.16 The following table illustrates the extent of Level 1/2 accessible natural green space in hectares within and close to the district as outlined above.

Local Nature Reserves within Shepway	
Folkestone Warren LNR	83
Romney Warren LNR	11
Total (hectares)	94

Proposed Local Nature Reserves (Policy C010)	
Royal Military Canal	14
Encombe Woods	1
Paraker Wood	0.3
Total (hectares)	15.3

Other nature reserves	
RSPB Dungeness	appx.1000
KWT Park Gate Down (Hector Wilks)	7
KWT Yocketts Bank	5
Total (hectares)	1,012

Local Nature Reserves within 5km of Shepway	
Rye Harbour	325
Larkey Valley Wood	44
Poulton Wood	10
Total (hectares)	379

National Nature Reserves within Shepway	
Dungeness NNR	1023
Total (hectares)	1023

National Nature Reserves within 5km of Shepway	
Wye	140
Ham Street Woods	97
Total (hectares)	237

“Country Parks” within Shepway	
East Cliff & Warren	93
Royal Military Canal	24
Brockhill	23
Lower Leas Coastal Park	11
Peene	5
Total (hectares)	156

Accessible Forestry Commission land within Shepway	
Park Wood/Elham Park Wood	485
Total (hectares)	485

SSSI	
Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay	9090
Folkestone Warren	316
Folkestone to Etchinghill	267
Lympne Escarpment	140
Alkham Lydd and Swingfield Woods	30
Seabrook Stream	24
Lynsore Bottom	23
Great Shuttlesfield Down	22
Gibbins Brook	17
Otterpool Quarry	10
Parkgate Down (Hector Wilks)	7
Yockletts Bank	5
Total (hectares)	9,951

Local Wildlife Sites	
Syngate Wood, Stone Street	10.29
Bavinge Wood, Hastingleigh	37.56
Covert Wood and Pasture, Kingston	366.06
Denton Valley Woods	81.84
Tolsford & Summerhouse Hills	131.47
Pillars Wood near Paddlesworth	18.95
Garden & Parsonage Woods, Near Acrise	17.02
Acrise Wood and Park	95.19
Reinden Wood, Densole	86.56
Spong Wood, Edards Wood and Petham Valley Grassland	31.62
Harringe Brooks Wood, Sellindge	29.16
Upper Lydden Valley	17.76
Postling Down	21.49
Postling Wood	25.67
Wood At Ridge Row, Acrise	6.96

Chesterfield Wood, Sandling Park	17.25
Stowting Rough & Stowting Hill Pasture	38.92
Sibton Wood, Rhodes Minnis	42.70
Horton Wood, Stowting	13.65
Stony Lane Wood, Selsted	23.21
Folks Wood, Pedlinge	40.87
Postling Wents Woods	44.32
Lyminge Forest	494.78
Combe Wood, Brabourne	6.80
Round Down & Round Down Wood, Stowting	11.69
Royal Military Canal	107.91
Paraker Wood and Seabrook Stream, Shorncliffe	24.92
Asholt Wood Pasture and Pond	12.76
Stelling Minnis Common	29.70
Saltwood Valley	45.89
Hythe Ranges	171.94
Midley Chapel Pasture Hawthorn Corner	28.28
Brockhill Country Park, Saltwood	25.64
Pasture & Woods Below Court-At-Street Lympne	44.42
Lydd Common & Pastures	10.28
Baldock and Palmtree Down, Wingmore	21.94
Pasture, Ditches and Pond, Dymchurch	5.23
Hills Reservoir	2.08
St George's Churchyard, Ivychurch	0.44
St Augustine's Churchyard, Snave	0.22
Total (hectares)	2,243.44



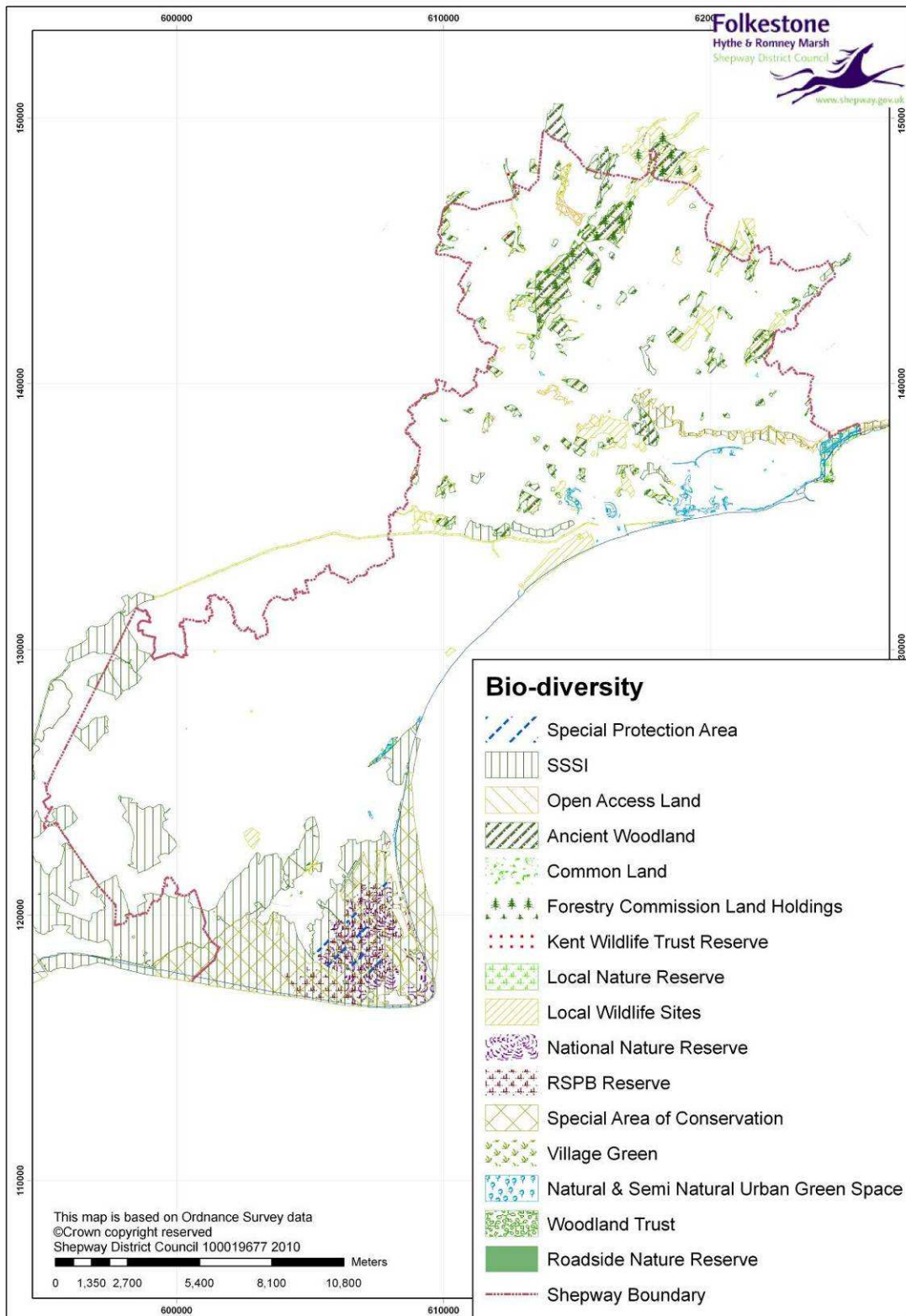
Folkestone Warren SSSI



Dungeness SSSI

6. Biodiversity GI in Shepway.

6.1 The distribution of this GI type in Shepway is shown below.



6.2 The district is host to extensive tracts of GI with biodiversity value ranging from internationally designated sites on the Romney Marsh/Dungeness and in the North Downs to roadside nature reserves and areas of natural and semi-natural urban green space. Key features include:-

- the four BOAs present in Shepway
 - Romney Marsh
 - Mid-Kent Greensand & Gault
 - Dover & Folkestone Cliffs and Downs
 - East Kent Woodlands and Downs
- 15 BAP Broad Habitats and 23 BAP Habitats
- four Natura 2000 sites:-
 - Dungeness Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Dungeness to Pett Level Special Protection Area (SPA) which is expected to be extended and renamed Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SPA during 2011
 - Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC
 - Parkgate Down SAC
- 12 SSSIs covering 9,951ha (28% of the district's land cover) of which only 7ha is described by Natural England as in an unfavourable declining condition (Unit 4 Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment)
- 40 Local Wildlife Sites covering 2,243ha (6% of the district's land cover) of which 26 sites are in "positive management"
- one 1,023ha NNR (Dungeness) and a further 237ha (Ham Street Woods and Wye Downs) in close proximity to the district
- 485ha Forestry Commission land at two conjoined sites (Park Wood and Elham Park Wood)
- two declared Local Nature Reserves (Folkestone and Romney Warren LNRs)
- two Kent Wildlife Trust Reserves, Park Gate Down (Hector Wilks) and Yockletts Bank
- One RSPB Reserve (Dungeness)
- 11 KWT Roadside Nature Reserves

6.3 In terms of planning for this resource national and regional policy has been outlined above and the aims and objectives of the Kent Biodiversity Action Partnership (below) capture these well and could be usefully reflected at the Shepway level:-

KBAP Aim:-

To conserve and enhance biological diversity in Kent and to contribute to the conservation of national and global biodiversity

KBAP Objectives:-

1. To maintain and, where practicable, to enhance:
 - the overall populations and natural ranges of native species and the quality and range of wildlife habitats and ecosystems;

- internationally and nationally important and threatened species, habitats and ecosystems;
- species, habitats and natural and managed ecosystems that are characteristic of Kent; the
- biodiversity of natural and semi-natural habitats, where this has diminished recent decades.

2. To increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity.

3. To identify priorities for habitat and species conservation in Kent and set realistic targets and timescales for these.

6.4 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats and species, as well as the policies of the England Biodiversity Strategy can be material considerations when preparing regional spatial strategies and local development documents. Hence the potential impact of development on UK BAP priority habitats and species can be a consideration in planning decisions.

6.5 The Kent Biodiversity Partnership has made habitats (rather than species) its focus for conservation in the Kent BAP. In doing so, the Partnership aims to provide a range of sites for many different kinds of wildlife in Kent. 15 BAP Broad Habitats and 23 BAP Habitats are present in Shepway as follows:-

BAP Broad Habitat	BAP Habitat	Location
Sublittoral Sediment	Blue Mussel Beds	Abbots Cliff to Sandgate
Sublittoral Sediment	Subtidal sands and gravels	Abbots Cliff to Sandgate
Sublittoral Rock	Fragile sponge and anthozoan communities on sub-tidal rock habitats	Abbots Cliff to Sandgate
Sublittoral Rock	Sabellaria spinulosa reefs	Abbots Cliff to Sandgate
Littoral Rock	Intertidal Chalk	Abbots Cliff to Sandgate
Littoral Rock	Intertidal Boulder Communities	Abbots Cliff to Sandgate
Supralittoral Rock	Maritime Cliffs Slopes	Folkestone Warren SSSI
Supralittoral Sediment	Coastal Vegetated Shingle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dungeness SAC, SSSI • SH31 Hythe Ranges • SH35 Lydd Common and Pastures
Supralittoral Sediment	Coastal Sand Dunes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romney Warren • Greatstone
Littoral Sediment	Coastal Salt Marsh	Romney & Walland Marshes
Improved Grassland	Coastal/Floodplain Grazing Marsh	Romney & Walland Marshes
Sublittoral Sediment	Saline Lagoons	Lydd Ranges
Standing Open Water/ Canals	Aquifer Fed naturally fluctuating Water-bodies	Open Pits Dungeness
Standing Open	Eutrophic Standing Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH26 Royal Military

BAP Broad Habitat	BAP Habitat	Location
Water & Canals		Canal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH33 Brockhill Country Park • SH13 Chesterfield Wood
Standing Open Water & Canals	Ponds	SH37 Pasture Ditches and Pond, Dymchurch
Rivers and Streams	Rivers & Streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltwood Valley • Gibbins Brook SSSI,
Fen, Marsh & Swamp	Lowland Fens	Saltwood Valley
Calcareous Grassland	Lowland Calcareous Grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltwood Valley • Dover and Folkestone Cliffs and Downs BOA • East Kent Woodlands and Downs BOA
Neutral Grassland	Lowland Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltwood Valley • SH08 Upper Lydden Valley
Acid Grassland	Lowland Dry Acid Grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltwood Valley • SH01 Tolsford and Summerhouse Hills
Dwarf Shrub Heath	Lowland Heathland	SH29 Stelling Minnis and Church Woods
Broadleaved Mixed and Yew Woodland	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Kent Greensands and Gault BOA • Dover and Folkestone Cliffs and Downs BOA • East Kent Woodlands and Downs BOA
Broadleaved Mixed and Yew Woodland	Wet Woodland	Saltwood Valley

6.6 Kent Wildlife Trust has provided a draft Biodiversity Action Plan for Shepway and it is suggested that this be further developed in support of a district-wide GI Strategy.

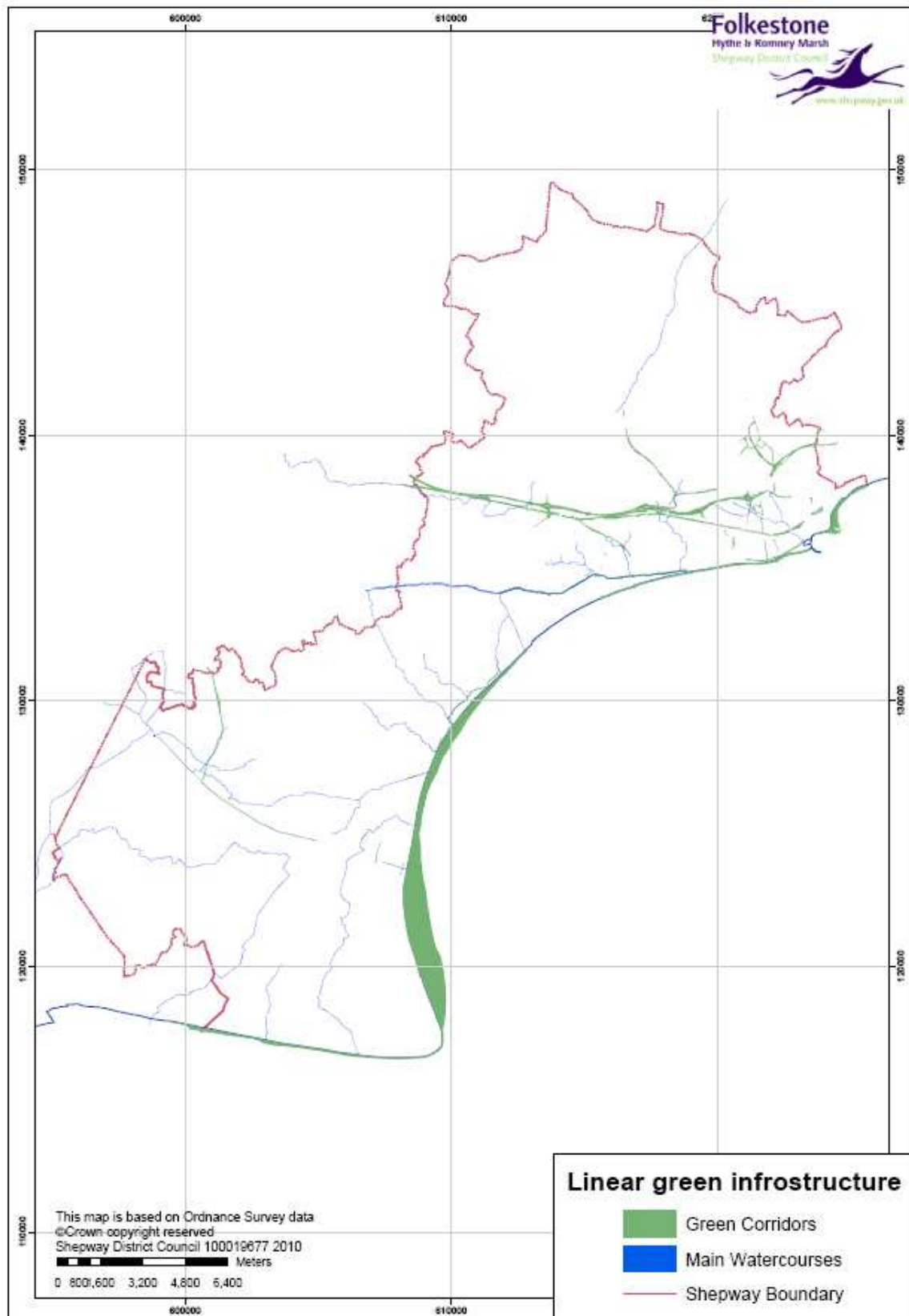
6.7 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) have been identified as a spatial reflection of the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the BOA maps indicate where the delivery of Kent BAP targets should be focused in order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits. The BOA maps also show where the greatest gains can be made from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation, as these areas offer the best opportunities for establishing large habitat areas and/or networks or wildlife habitats. As such, they are promoted to local planning authorities in the development and delivery of positive nature conservation policy.

6.8 The BOA maps are supported by statement documents which provide guidance on the conservation priorities which should be adopted in each area.

- 6.9 The Shepway Core Strategy Green Infrastructure Policy should make explicit reference to the protection and enhancement of BOAS or BAP habitats.
- 6.10 Shepway district hosts the following Natura 2000 sites:-
- Dungeness Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Dungeness to Pett Level Special Protection Area (SPA) which is expected to be extended and renamed Dungeness, Romney Marsh & Rye Bay SPA during 2011
 - Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC
 - Parkgate Down SAC
- 6.11 Natural England is also currently consulting on the designation of a Ramsar site within the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye SSSI with designation expected during 2011.
- 6.12 Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the Core Strategy has been carried out and has highlighted a range of issues in relation to Natura 2000 series habitats, and these have been addressed in the Core Strategy. The spatial strategy's specific proposals avoid substantial impacts on ecologically sensitive land, but HRA has identified that indirect implications through potential increases in recreational pressure, must be addressed especially for Dungeness's Natura 2000 series habitats. For the Dungeness/Romney Marsh complex the HRA suggests that a Sustainable Access Strategy is required.
- 6.13 Within Shepway the responsibility for attaining the various biodiversity GI objectives outlined above falls principally to public and private landowners with regulation and support being provided by Natural England and DEFRA. However, much work is also done through partnerships of organisations including, for example, the White Cliffs and Romney Marsh Partnerships, more recently the Romney Marsh Living Landscape, Kent Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership, Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee.
- 6.14 Notable successes for biodiversity have been achieved through this type of joint working. For example at Folkestone Downs orchid populations have been helped to recover through work carried out by the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership and generally SSSI condition across the district is favourable or recovering.
- 6.15 Suggested areas of focus for the future would include:-
- implementing BOA objectives
 - enhanced management of the Dungeness/Romney Marsh complex including possible designation of a Nature Improvement Area
 - urban fringe areas of Folkestone Warren, Downs and Seabrook Valley

7. Linear Feature GI

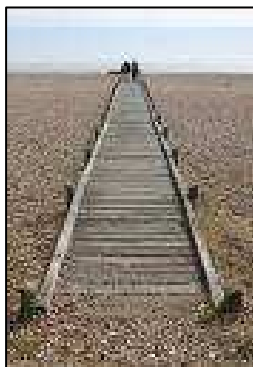
7.1 Within Shepway Linear Feature GI is characterised by green, river and canal corridors, and beaches. Its distribution through the district is shown below:-



7.2 Key features include:-

- 23 miles of coastline, the majority of which is publicly accessible and which includes key GI sites such as:-
 - East Cliff, and Warren and Sunny Sands
 - The Leas and Coastal Park
 - The seawall promenade and beaches between Folkestone Harbour and Hythe
 - Dymchurch, St. Mary's Bay, Littlestone, Greatstone and Lade beaches
 - Dungeness Point
- extensive network of drainage ditches including the Royal Military Canal on the Romney Marsh
- the source of the Stour and a network of streams draining the Strategic Corridor including the Seabrook and Pent Streams
- a much drier environment in the chalk downs with dominated by the Nailbourne in the Elham Valley
- long distance off-road recreational routes including:-
 - North Downs Way
 - Saxon Shore Way
 - Elham Valley Way
 - Royal Military Canal Footpath and bridleway
 - Chalk & Channel Way
- published and waymarked walks and cycling packs on and off-road:-
 - Royal Military Canal
 - Magic of the Marsh
 - Marsh Meanders
 - Lyminge Forest Cycle Route
- National Cycle Route 2 of the National Cycle Network
- green corridors, principally of visual amenity and wildlife benefit alongside main transport routes

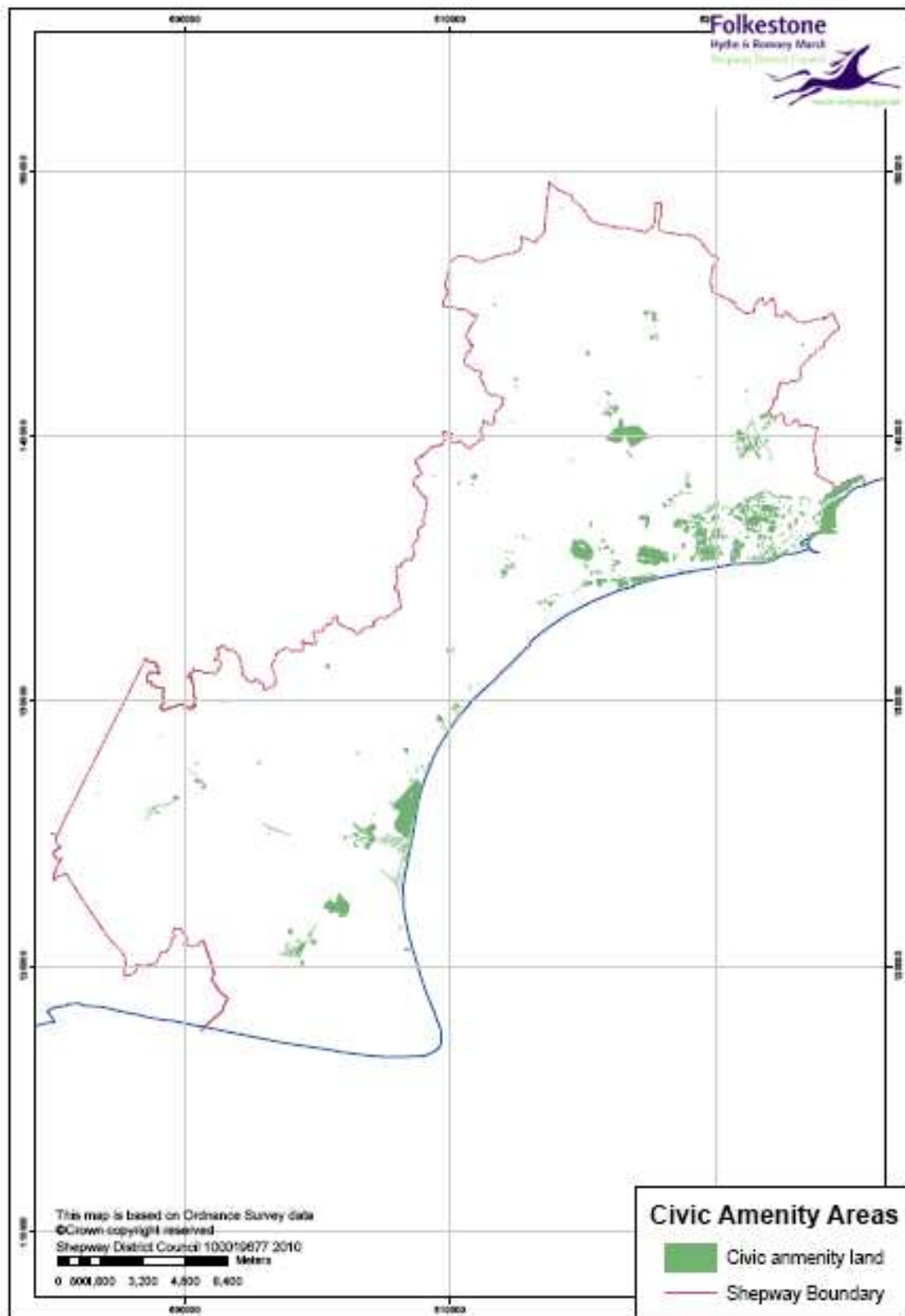
7.3 Key issues for the planning of Linear GI will be to ensure that the existing resource is protected and improved and that new developments link in with and add value to the network, for example by extending opportunities for people to move around on foot, bicycle or public transport. In this context both the Seafront and Shorncliffe sites provide good opportunities to protect and enhance the Linear GI resource.



Linear GI

8. Civic Amenity GI

8.1 The distribution of this GI type in Shepway is shown below.



8.2 Unsurprisingly the bulk of Amenity GI is found in urban areas in the form of parks and gardens and amenity greenspace at housing estates.

However, large areas also exist in rural locations including golf courses.

- 8.3 During the last 15 years there has been a major investment in improving the quality of Amenity GI in the district with key projects including the Heritage Lottery Funded supported improvements at the Coastal Park, Folkestone, and the Royal Military Canal, Hythe, both of which sites have secured Green Flag Awards. The council's Play Strategy has also secured major investment from the Big Lottery Fund and the Roger de Haan Charitable Trust for play spaces in urban and rural Shepway, including for example projects at Cheriton, Dymchurch Lydd, east Folkestone, Radnor Park, and New Romney.



Coastal Park Amphitheatre

- 8.4 In terms of planning for Amenity GI the key requirement will be to ensure that adequate provision is made in relation to the provision of new housing development, both strategic and other, and this issue is dealt with in part through the saved "Leisure and Recreation" policies of the Local Development Framework, but also through negotiation in relation to the strategic housing site allocations, each of which offer major opportunities for the provision of new Amenity GI.
- 8.5 The provision of allotments has also been identified as a key issue for some communities and while in recent years some new provision has been made, e.g. Eaton lands at Hythe and the Hawkinge Allotment Society site, loss has also been experienced, as at Roman Way Cheriton. In Folkestone and Hythe demand greatly outstrips supply. Folkestone Town Council is actively looking for sites and currently reports that it has 157 plots in use, no vacant plots and a waiting list of 150 people with an estimated waiting time of 10 years for a plot. Hythe Town Council is also considering requesting land for use as allotments from Kent County Council in the Seabrook Valley. Again the strategic housing sites may offer an opportunity, either within or off-site, to help meet this demand.
- 8.7 Given its role as a transition zone between settlements and the wider scale GI the countryside around urban areas is a key focus of interest features found in the open countryside. PPS7 requires planning authorities to secure environmental improvements and maximise a range of beneficial uses of this land, whilst reducing potential conflicts

between neighbouring land uses. PPS7 also requires improved public access and the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities.

- 8.8 Traditionally this issue has been considered in terms of landscaping, and the principles of Local Plan Review policy CO24 will remain relevant, but urban/rural fringe is better not considered in isolation but in multi-functional terms. Special account will need to be taken of urban fringe issues in relation to strategic site allocations as for example at Shorncliffe and where significant development has already taken place, such as Hawkinge.



**Low-key bio-diverse GI at an urban fringe location
Cheriton Primary School Wildlife Garden**

9. Key issues and opportunities in relation to strategic development sites.

9.1 The table on the following pages gives an initial appraisal of the impacts on and opportunities for creating new GI in relation to the proposed strategic site allocations.



GI on the outskirts of Folkestone

Site	Biodiversity GI	Linear GI	Civic Amenity GI Issues	Opportunities
Folkestone Seafront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natura 2000 sites not affected but Folkestone Warren SSSI in close proximity People pressure on coast, air quality, litter, disturbance, marine aquatic environment Possible loss of nesting sites for seabirds, if not compensated for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach and coastline impacted but access maintained and improved in respect of harbour People pressure on coast air quality, litter, disturbance etc. Loss of nesting sites for seabirds, if not compensated for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach and coastline, parks and gardens and amenity greenspace impacted but access maintained and improved in respect of harbour People pressure on coast air quality, litter, disturbance etc. with need for enhanced maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of major new public spaces within development site Natural England Coast Path project Extension of/join with Coastal Park Provide Linear, Biodiversity, Civic Amenity GI towards the East Cliff and Warren and into east Folkestone via reconstructed Tram Road railway Extension of Coastal Park and amenity space linking site with wider town and coastline
Shorncliffe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natura 2000 sites not adversely affected but some recreational pressure likely to accrue in Seabrook Valley (e.g. Seabrook Stream SSSI and Paraker Wood & Seabrook Stream LWS are in close proximity) Some loss of existing open space (net 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “People pressure” on landscape, habitats and PROW system in Seabrook Valley. Loss of open space within development site with consequent loss of wildlife and landscape links between town and country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of outdoor sports facility/park at North Road with proposed school building and playing field. Substantially Increased demand from new dwellings on available civic amenity space in locality, if not met on-site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat creation within development site linking the Seabrook Valley with Cheriton – bringing the country into the town Creation of Seabrook Valley “Greenspace” with appropriate management of PROW systems, habitats and landscape Improvement and

Site	Biodiversity GI	Linear GI	Civic Amenity GI Issues	Opportunities
	increase) and older buildings within development site with potential loss of immediate wildlife and landscape links between town and country.			<p>extension of existing open space at “The Stadium”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of new amenity space including allotments to address shortage issue within development site • Creation of Seabrook Valley “Country Park” with appropriate management of PROW systems, habitats and landscape
Folkestone Racecourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No adverse impact on Natura 2000 sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROW footpath and bridleway within Racecourse site • East Stour River management required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impact on existing amenity GI. • Substantially increased demand from new dwellings on available civic amenity space in locality, if not met on-site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Biodiversity and Civic Amenity GI within development site e.g. a green for the neighbourhood, SUDS opportunities ‘within’ the new racetrack. • Opportunity to improve links with surrounding PROW system including links to North Downs Way, Saxon Shore Way, Royal Military Canal
Land to north of New Romney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impacts on sites • May be limited additional recreational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site connects with PROW system • Water environment will need close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impact on existing amenity GI. • Increased demand from new dwellings on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Biodiversity and Civic Amenity GI within development site, in particular

Site	Biodiversity GI	Linear GI	Civic Amenity GI Issues	Opportunities
	<p>impact on Natura 2000 sites (see HRA)</p>	<p>consideration in due course.</p>	<p>available civic amenity space in locality , if not met on-site.</p>	<p>opportunities within flood management eg swales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sustainable access strategy linking to PROW system
<p>Land in central Sellindge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impacts on sites • Potential to consider and address any relationship with the Gibbins Brook SSSI depending on exact nature of proposals that emerge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site connects with PROW system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will provide amenity GI through delivering a village green. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Biodiversity and Civic Amenity GI within the site around the green and ponds. • Emphasis on improving pedestrian environment of Ashford Road can improve integration within local PROW network.