Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Draft Green Infrastructure
Action Plan

Prepared for
Natural England by Land Use Consultants
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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Land Use Consultants was appointed by Natural England in February 2009 to prepare a draft Green Infrastructure (GI) Action Plan for the Cannock Chase to Sutton Park Biodiversity Enhancement Area (BEA). The draft Action Plan seeks to enhance existing Green Infrastructure and consider Green Infrastructure deficiency, and likely future need in light of the growth planned in surrounding areas. It is hoped that this work will stimulate debate and assist the development of a Masterplan for the area at a future stage.

PURPOSE OF THIS DRAFT PLAN

1.2. The study area is focused on the Cannock Chase to Sutton Park Biodiversity Enhancement Area (BEA) which covers approximately 670km² extending from the edge of Birmingham northwards into Staffordshire (see Figure 1.1). The landscape of the area is varied featuring a broad range of habitats including regionally and nationally important designated sites supporting significant areas of lowland heath whilst also including urban, suburban, urban-fringe and rural environments with a wide range of socio-economic characteristics. This area was selected as a pilot BEA in 2006 with the aim of demonstrating best practice in relation to planning and delivery of biodiversity enhancements. It was selected due to its peri-urban nature, diversity of socio-economic factors combined with the biodiversity importance linked to the heathlands which were formerly extensive and almost continuous between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park in the 1700s. Of the remaining lowland heath in the West Midland’s region nearly 40% falls within the BEA.

1.3. **Policy QE7 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy** supports the BEAs, recognising them as areas which ‘offer some of the best prospects for retaining environments with a rich and resilient biodiversity resource. Within these areas ecological integrity should be reinforced by:

- Supporting existing biodiversity and landscape enhancement projects
- Buffering habitats from adverse impacts
- Restoring and recreating locally characteristic habitats
- Expanding and linking isolated habitat patches, and
- Promoting social and economic benefits by investing in linked facilities for sustainable access, enjoyment and education, and in businesses that contribute to and capitalise on a high quality natural environment.’

1.4. There is increasing pressure on the Cannock Chase to Sutton Park BEA, particularly from the designated growth points of Black Country/Sandwell, Stafford and East Staffordshire/Burton-upon-Trent which is likely to have significant implications for the areas landscape and environmental assets and also highlights the need to achieve sustainable development with a clear sense of place within the BEA. As emphasised in **Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12): Local Spatial Planning**, it is critical to gauge the level and type of physical, social and green infrastructure needed to enable and support the
proposed amount of development in an area to take place. The production of a Green Infrastructure Action Plan at a sub-regional level is therefore a timely exercise which aims to respond to these pressures and to capitalise on any associated opportunities for environmental enhancement.

1.5. The draft Green Infrastructure Action Plan explores opportunities for delivering social, economic and environmental benefits across the wide spectrum of land uses within the BEA resulting in spatial guidance on the maintenance and development of a robust and coherent Green Infrastructure network across the study area that promotes:

- Sustainable tourism and the environmental economy
- A healthy active lifestyle through the provision of new, high quality accessible green space close to residential/urban areas
- A healthy and natural environment with enhanced biodiversity (e.g. expanding habitats through buffering and linking existing sites)
- Safeguarding the Cannock Chase AONB by promoting locations for sustainable recreation use within and surrounding the AONB
- Enhancements of the AONB through the development of landscape improvements
- The protection and enhancement of historical features
- A landscape that has increased capacity to adapt to climate change

1.6. Through the development of the action plan and its subsequent implementation the aim is to establish a sustainable network of multi-functional green spaces which will:

- Help improve quality of life for all
- Improve the natural asset base (with special attention being given to heathland)
- Encourage further investment from the private and public sectors

1.7. The resulting draft GI Action Plan aims to provide a platform for further debate on the priorities for action in the BEA to help ensure a joined up approach to delivery. It will in turn feed into the Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) of the local authorities in the area, in particular those authorities which include designated growth points. These authorities will be required to develop more detailed GI Strategies at a local level and with growth point funding are likely to be one of the main delivery bodies for Green Infrastructure in the area. The information arising from the draft GI Action Plan will help inform the development of these strategies in turn responding to Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12): Local Spatial Planning, which states that the local planning authority:

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

1.8. It will also assist local authorities in fulfilling their statutory duties under the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006** which requires local authorities ‘to have regard’ to the conservation of biodiversity, when carrying out their normal functions.

**A DEFINITION OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

1.9. For the purposes of this project and as set out in Natural England’s Guidance document¹ Green Infrastructure is defined as follows:

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

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

1.10. There are several policy drivers for Green Infrastructure at a national and regional level (further explored in section 2 of this report), including the government **Sustainable Communities Plan** which includes the following commitment:

‘**We will promote more and better publicly accessible green space in and around our communities, for example through the creation of new country parks and networks of green spaces within towns and cities.’**

1.11. At a regional level, a vision for Green Infrastructure has been set out in the **GI Prospectus for the West Midlands Region**:

‘**In the next two decades, we will plan, deliver and manage Green Infrastructure to create a high quality environment which makes the West Midlands vibrant, prosperous and sustainable.’**

1.12. The prospectus emphasises that GI is an essential component of sustainable development resulting in multiple benefits and that the proposed growth in the region provides the opportunity for strategic spatial planning of GI and its integration into policy.

¹ NE176 - Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Guidance, 2009
REPORT STRUCTURE

1.13.  To set the scene for the study, a summary of the relevant policy and strategic context follows this introduction. The remainder of the report is then set out in three parts as follows:

- **Part One: Characterisation and identification of existing Green Infrastructure assets** - This part of the report draws on the wealth of research and information that already exists for the study area as well as collating a broad range of map datasets to enable us to characterise the area and to carry out new spatial analysis.

- **Part Two: Green Infrastructure analysis, key issues and opportunities** - Through the characterisation work, analysis and liaison with key stakeholders we have been able to identify key issues and opportunities to be taken forward in the action plan.

- **Part Three: Draft Vision and Green Infrastructure Action Plan** –

  This part of the report sets out the draft vision and action plan for Green Infrastructure in the BEA. This includes consideration of how the actions can be implemented and explores suitable funding options.

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2 This study has been carried out as a desk based exercise. Future development of this draft GI Action Plan would require additional site based assessments.
Figure 1.1: Study area

Key
- **Study boundary**
- **County boundaries**
- **Borough/Metropolitan Borough**

Source: Ordnance Survey, Natural England

Date: 27/03/2009
Revision: C
2. POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

POLICY REVIEW METHOD

2.1. We undertook a rapid desk-based review of current national, regional and local planning policy to understand the context in which the study will sit. This included reviewing the following:

- West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (Phase 2 Revision) (RSS)
- Local Plans and LDFs (including evidence base documents)
- Local Area Agreements

2.2. This review helped to ascertain the extent to which existing policy supports the concept of Green Infrastructure and highlighted the range of challenges and opportunities posed by the significant level of proposed growth in and around the study area which are to be addressed by the draft Green Infrastructure Action Plan. The review identified the following types of information:

- The approach to Green Infrastructure as set out in current policy
- Existing Green Infrastructure projects and initiatives
- Development proposed within the emerging Local Development Framework, which will provide an understanding of pressures on Green Infrastructure and areas that may require additional Green Infrastructure
- Stakeholders involved in delivery of Green Infrastructure in the region

NATIONAL PLAN AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.3. Government policy is increasingly recognising the need to plan for and provide Green Infrastructure. For example, at a national level, the Sustainable Communities Plan in relation to the Growth Areas includes the following commitments:

- “We will promote more and better publicly accessible green space in and around our communities, for example through the creation of new country parks and networks of green spaces within towns and cities.”
- “We will encourage regional and local partners… to replicate the success of the 12 Community Forests around our major towns and cities.”
- “We will enhance green belt land by encouraging local authorities to identify ways to raise its quality and utility, for example by improving its accessibility, biodiversity and amenity value.”

2.4. Natural England, a statutory agency, similarly recognises in its Strategy Direction document that the natural environment is under pressure from development across the country, and that whilst new developments usually make some provision for
green space, it is often of limited natural value. Yet it is known that people prefer to live and work in areas with a high quality natural environment.

2.5. **PPS 3: Housing** requires that borough housing plans should have regard to any local greening or design plans such as Green Infrastructure strategies. The document also sets out some clear principles to guide the consideration of the local environment in the design of new housing schemes. These principles include ensuring that the dominant landscape or ecological features of the area are retained in new development, as is any significant biodiversity value. The policy statement also reinforces the requirements of PPG 17 in terms of ensuring that existing and new residents are given adequate access to open space. PPS 3 also requires that good practice in sustainable and environmentally friendly design is applied in all new development.

2.6. **PPS 12: Local Spatial Planning** states that the local planning authority ‘core strategy should be supported by evidence of what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed to enable the amount of development proposed for the area, taking account of its type and distribution. This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided. The core strategy should draw on and in parallel influence any strategies and investment plans of the local authority and other organisations.’

2.7. **PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation** requires that local authorities assess the needs of local residents, workers and visitors for open space, sports and recreational facilities as well as a qualitative and quantitative audit of current provision, usage and accessibility. Opportunities for new provision and potential for increased usage of existing provision through better design, management and maintenance should then be identified. The policy document also promotes the multi-functional nature of urban green space as an important environmental as well as social resource:

“Green spaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and biodiversity and by acting as ‘green lungs’ can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality.”

2.8. **Homes for the future**, the 2007 Government Green Paper on housing describes Green Infrastructure as an essential part of Growth Points, a key mechanism for delivering environmental improvements and confirms that it is central to plans for achieving sustainable new communities. The paper defines the value of Green Infrastructure in improving the urban rural fringe, protecting and restoring the countryside, providing better access to nature, and integration of green spaces into the urban environment.

2.9. **CLG, in partnership with the TCPA and Natural England** have produced guidance underpinning the importance of Green Infrastructure (GI) in the proposed new Eco-Towns. Although Eco-Towns are distinctive in being newly planned settlements and being surrounded by open countryside, the general principles of this guidance have wider application, namely that ‘GI should be designed and managed as a multi-functional

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The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is the key regional plan the main purpose of which is to provide a long term land use and transport planning framework for the Region. It determines (amongst other things) the scale and distribution of housing and economic development across the Region, investment priorities for transport and sets out policies for enhancing the environment. In turn, this framework guides the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans.

2.11. A number of regional policy priorities identified in the RSS relate to the key functions and associated benefits of Green Infrastructure, as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Green Infrastructure and Regional Policy Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green infrastructure functions</th>
<th>West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Objectives</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity preservation and enhancement</td>
<td>Support diversification and modernisation of the Region’s economy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of place and appreciation of landscape and cultural heritage</td>
<td>Provide sufficient employment space, housing and supporting infrastructure, particularly transport</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational opportunities and supporting healthy living</td>
<td>Promote the development of a network of strategic centres across the Region</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water resource and flood management</td>
<td>Ensure quality of the environment is conserved and enhanced</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change adaptation and mitigation</td>
<td>Mitigate and adapt to climate change</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable transport, education and crime reduction</td>
<td>Retain the Greenbelt but allow an adjustment of boundaries</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and fuel production</td>
<td>Promote sustainable communities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote health and well being by reducing social exclusion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.12. Policy CF3 Level and Distribution of New Housing of the West Midlands RSS proposes significant housing growth in the study area during 2006-2026. The minimum housing growth proposed over the plan period for the study area is shown in Table 2.2 and illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Table 2.2: Proposed housing growth 2006-2026

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District/sub-region</th>
<th>Proposed total no. of new homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>10,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
<td>5,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>50,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Country (incl. Walsall, Sandwell, Wolverhampton &amp; Dudley)</td>
<td>61,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for authorities overlapping the study area</strong></td>
<td><strong>88,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.13. Policy PA6A Employment Land Provision of the West Midlands RSS identifies district level requirements for employment land provision, which reflect the need to balance new housing and population change with new employment. The indicative long-term requirements for the study area are shown in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Proposed Employment Land Provision 2006-2026

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Long-term requirements (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Country (incl. Walsall, Sandwell, Wolverhampton &amp; Dudley)</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for authorities overlapping the study area</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,566</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.14. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the West Midlands RSS (Phase Two Revision) concludes that the Plan is likely to result in significant adverse impacts on Cannock Chase SAC. The site is identified as being under considerable pressure from recreational use, water abstraction, air pollution and the effects of surrounding land use. The RSS is likely to increase the adverse effects associated with these pressures, as increasing local or diffuse air pollution would alter the characteristic species composition of heathland vegetation and increase risks of invasion by non-characteristic species. This is also exacerbated by disturbance.
associated with increased recreational use, which is likely to occur as a result of RSS policy.

2.15. The HRA also concludes that significant adverse effects could occur on Cannock Extension Canal SAC if existing run-off issues are not addressed and if levels of use of the site by boats increased. However, both are more appropriately addressed through the Cannock Chase District Council’s Core Strategy.

2.16. The Phase Three Revision to the West Midlands RSS is currently underway and will involve further development of existing environmental policies in the RSS. Green infrastructure is currently covered by Policy QE4 Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces, which sets out the broad principles for ensuring the adequate provision of green space. However, draft options for the Phase Three Revision will propose this policy is re-titled as Green Infrastructure and will set out a number of issues that the revised policy is likely to cover, including:

- Advocating an integrated multi-functional approach to delivering Green Infrastructure
- Use of West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus definition
- Greater emphasis on sustainable benefits of Green Infrastructure
- Green infrastructure’s contribution to biodiversity and renewable energy enhancement
- Greater emphasis on delivering increased recreational resources (i.e. through PPG17 studies)
- Requirement for local authorities to produce Green Infrastructure studies
- Identify priorities for Green Infrastructure provision

2.17. The inclusion of BEAs within the RSS biodiversity policy (QE7) will also be subject to review. An alternative to the BEA approach is under consideration which is to refer to the regional 50-year biodiversity vision and opportunity map. This identifies the whole of the existing BEA as an opportunity area and also highlights strategic river corridors. Biodiversity targets for the region are also being revised as part of the Phase Three Revision.

2.18. It is recommended that the revised biodiversity policy should be re-titled ‘Protecting, Managing and Enhancing the region’s Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources’ and that to take account of the changing policy drivers the policy needs to;

- Refer to the need to develop resilient landscapes across the region
- Promote the need for biodiversity enhancements
- Emphasise the ecosystem approach
- Require that local opportunity maps are developed as part of the LDF process

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4 Habitats Regulations Assessment work is now being carried out on the core strategies of the local authorities within/bordering the BEA to determine impacts on the Cannock Chase and Cannock Extension Canal SACs. Similarly to the assessment of the RSS, this work is likely to highlight the need to divert activity away from the SAC.
- Consider the social and economic benefits of biodiversity across the region
- Promote delivery at a landscape scale
- Raise awareness of the statutory duty on local authorities to ensure biodiversity and geodiversity management on local sites
- Incorporate Geodiversity

2.19. Public consultation on the draft options for the Phase Three Revision, including Policies QE4 and QE7 above, was due to commence on 29th June 2009.

**Government Growth Points initiative**

2.20. The Government’s Growth Points initiative, announced in 2005, is aimed at communities who wish to pursue large scale and sustainable growth, including new housing, through a partnership with Government. These partnerships are based on the core principles of early and effective housing delivery, and working with local partners to coordinate infrastructure and service provision with growth (i.e. that the two occur in step with one another).

2.21. There are three designated Growth Points in the vicinity of the study area: Stafford, the Black Country/Sandwell and East Staffordshire – Burton-Upon-Trent (indicated on Figure 2.1). The key objectives for each Growth Point are set out below:

**Stafford**
- 5,000-6,000 new homes by 2016 with a further 6,000 by 2026 to create new communities supported by district centres, health and education facilities
- At least 4,500 new homes will be delivered in the County Town of Stafford by 2016
- At least 80 hectares of employment land by 2016 for new research and development facilities
- Provision of significant new Green Infrastructure including green links from the surrounding open countryside
- New mixed-use town centre proposals in the County Town of Stafford

**Black Country/Sandwell**
- A net increase of 32,850 dwellings between 2007 and 2016 (19% more than the minimum requirement in the RSS)
- New residential environments through the restructuring of former employment land in regeneration corridors served by rail and metro
- Maximising environmental opportunities of the Black Country’s 177km of canals and its extensive nature reserves
- Co-ordination of housing growth with the provision of new employment land
- Expansion of four strategic centres - Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich and Brierley Hill – as foci for jobs, shopping, culture and new homes
**East Staffordshire – Burton-Upon-Trent**

- An additional 5,000 high quality homes by 2016 with a further 7,000 by 2026
- Redevelopment of 282 hectares of high quality employment land
- Comprehensive Area Action Plans (AAPs) for Burton-upon-Trent Town Centre
- Preservation of the rural nature of the Borough through enhancement of natural environment, green spaces, canals and rivers

**STRUCTURE PLAN CONTEXT**

2.22. A number of policies in the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan have been ‘saved’ by the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) until they are eventually replaced by policies in the Districts’ Local Development Frameworks. Although ‘saved’ policies in the Structure Plan still form part of the ‘development plan’ for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, more reliance is now placed on national Planning Policy Statements and the Regional Spatial Strategy to help determine planning applications.

2.23. With this in mind, saved Policy E1 Employment Land Provision and Distribution of the Structure Plan identifies the amount of employment land provision to be distributed throughout the County between 1996 and 2011. However, as this policy was adopted some time ago, the emergence of more recent figures identified through Policy PA6A of the West Midlands RSS means that these figures will be afforded considerable weight over figures identified in Policy E1 of the Structure Plan.

2.24. The Structure Plan is supported by Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)\(^5\), which provides additional guidance on saved Policy NC2 Landscape Protection and Restoration. The guidance is aimed at planning officers, developers and others for achieving the conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the rural landscapes within the County and aids in informing other decisions relating to land use and land management. The guidance is based on the quality of identified landscape types (i.e. landscape character areas) within the County.

**SUB-REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

2.25. There are several sub-regional initiatives that will have implications for the delivery of Green Infrastructure throughout the study area, including:

- Cannock Chase to Sutton Park Biodiversity Enhancement Area;
- Cannock Chase AONB.

2.26. The four Black Country Local Authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) are working together as the Black Country Partnership to produce a Black Country Core Strategy DPD, which will form the basis of the Local Authorities’ Local Development Frameworks.

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\(^5\) The Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document originally developed in the early 1990s is now due to be updated by Staffordshire County Council in 2010/11.
2.27. Several preferred options in the Joint Core Strategy identify the need to enhance and expand a network of Green Infrastructure throughout the Black Country. The need to provide Green Infrastructure is identified in the following preferred options:

- **Core Spatial Policy Area 2**: The Role of Regeneration Corridors and Free-Standing Employment Sites
- **Core Spatial Policy Area 3**: Approach to Development outside the Strategic Centres and Regeneration Corridors
- **Core Spatial Policy Area 11**: Promote the Sustainable Location of Community and Sports Facilities
- **Core Spatial Policy Area 14**: Ensuring High Quality Design in all New Development
- **Core Spatial Policy Area 16**: Delivering Environmental Transformation

2.28. The provision of Green Infrastructure is also identified through two of the Core Strategy’s spatial objectives:

- Model sustainable communities on redundant employment land in the Regeneration Corridors
- A first-class transport network providing rapid, convenient and sustainable links between the Strategic Centres, existing and new communities, and employment sites.

**LOCAL PLAN AND POLICY CONTEXT**

**Local Area Agreements**

2.29. The new National Indicator Set (NIS) announced as part of the Chancellor’s 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review provides a streamlined and unified method of measuring local authority performance against Government priorities. There is scope for local authorities to link Green Infrastructure delivery to a variety of the national indicators in addition to setting local priorities to support Green Infrastructure planning and delivery.

2.30. There are five national indicators that are relevant to the key functions of Green Infrastructure. These are:

- **175** - Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling;
- **186** - Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area;
- **188** - Planning to adapt to climate change;
- **189** - Flood and coastal erosion risk management, and;
- **197** - Improved local biodiversity.

2.31. These national indicators are identified in the following Local Area Agreements (LAAs) for the study area as a means of contributing towards local and regional targets and national priorities:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>175</th>
<th>186</th>
<th>188</th>
<th>189</th>
<th>197</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire CC</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy Support**

2.32. The following Local Authorities have specific policies relating to the delivery of Green Infrastructure within their development plans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Specific planning policies on Green Infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
<td>Preferred Options in the CCDC Core Strategy identify the need to emphasise the protection and improvement of Green Infrastructure in future policy (Policy Area 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall</td>
<td>Preferred Options in the Black Country Joint Core Strategy identify the need to enhance and expand a network of Green Infrastructure (Core Spatial Policy Area 2, 3, 11 and 16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data to Identify Need for Green Infrastructure**

2.33. A key requirement of the planning system is to demonstrate how and why plans have been produced. As such, a number of reports have been prepared which form the evidence base to inform Local Authorities’ Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Much of this evidence base identifies the need for Green Infrastructure, notably the studies set out in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Evidence Base Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>PPG17 Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leisure/Play Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Landscape &amp; Biodiversity Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Country</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covered by the Black Country
Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.34. The following local authorities have drafted/adopted supplementary planning guidance which is of relevance to the planning and delivery of Green Infrastructure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Developer Contributions</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Natural Environment</th>
<th>Open Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire CC</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>✓*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Draft Supplementary Planning Documents
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 2.1: Growth in the study area

Key
- Study boundary
- Green Belt
- Planning Areas

Housing growth in the RSS
- 3500 - 4000
- 4001 - 10000
- 10001 - 15000
- 15001 - 50000
- 50001 - 61200

Growth Points

Source: Ordnance Survey, West Midlands RSS, West Midlands Regional Assembly

Date: 15/07/2009
Revision:
PART ONE: CHARACTERISATION & IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS
3. CHARACTERISATION THEMES & APPROACH

3.1. This part of the report sets out the map based data review and thematic socio-economic and environmental characterisation which has been used to establish the baseline Green Infrastructure assets within the study area. This will form part of the framework or the 'hooks' on which to hang the proposed draft Green Infrastructure Action Plan. The analysis highlights key issues/sensitivities and theme-based opportunities for Green Infrastructure creation.

3.2. The characterisation is structured around a number of themes. For each theme a short description establishes the baseline situation for the study area, accompanied by a bullet point list of issues and outline Green Infrastructure opportunities which are then drawn together in Part Two of this report and will be taken forward to inform the draft Green Infrastructure Action Plan in Part Three. The socio-economic and environmental characterisation covers the following themes:

- Socio-economic character;
- Biodiversity;
- Landscape character and cultural heritage;
- Open space;
- Access;
- Existing initiatives and partnerships.
4. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTER**

4.1. This section reviews regional economic objectives and describes the socio-economic character of the study area. By examining the economic and social context we are able to build a greater understanding of how Green Infrastructure can contribute to the local and regional economy and how a network of high quality green space can help to tackle some aspects of socio-economic deprivation.

4.2. Areas of socio-economic deprivation often contain the most neglected and under-used areas of public space\(^6\) and therefore the most vulnerable communities currently gain the least benefit from the many opportunities that Green Infrastructure has to offer. Investment targeted in these areas would help to redress this imbalance.

4.3. People want to live, work and shop in attractive areas and this helps to increase property prices and stimulate the local economy in areas with good quality green space. In a recent MORI poll, the government found that liveability issues (including improved parks) were one of the top four responses to the question ‘what would improve quality of life in your area?’\(^7\) Attractive surroundings also encourage businesses to relocate in a region, which in turn provide employment and attract customers.

4.4. The good management of public space helps to improve an area by reducing both the perception of crime and crime itself, as well-used public spaces ensure the natural surveillance of public areas\(^8\). The rehabilitation of a park in a deprived area is often seen as a metaphor for the rehabilitation of the entire community\(^9\).

4.5. Play is crucial to a child’s development and green spaces are also excellent outdoor classrooms, providing learning experiences for children in urban locations\(^10\), and fulfil a vital role in fostering community links, acting as a democratic social forum, open to all.

4.6. Inadequate physical exercise is a significant contributor to poor health in the UK\(^11\) while accessible, attractive green space has been shown to increase levels of informal exercise.\(^12\) Opportunities for outdoor play support healthy lifestyles for children who are then more likely to become healthy adults. Green infrastructure also offers the opportunity for people to use cheap, healthy and sustainable modes of transport by creating accessible pedestrian and cycle routes linking homes, workplaces and services\(^13\). A number of studies also show that simply viewing a natural scene can

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\(^6\) Sustainable Communities: Building for the future. ODPM, 2003
\(^7\) Sustainable Communities: Building for the future. ODPM, 2003
\(^8\) Sustainable Communities: Building for the future. ODPM, 2003
rapidly lower anxiety and stress-related physiological symptoms\textsuperscript{14} and is therefore likely to improve both mental and physical health.

4.7. The West Midlands Health and Well-Being Strategy\textsuperscript{15} identifies support for the development of Green Infrastructure as a priority for action in achieving a more sustainable environment that promotes health and well-being.

\textbf{REGIONAL ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES}

\textbf{West Midlands Regional Economic Study}

4.8. The West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy is underpinned by three underlying principles:

- Pursuing equality, reaping the benefits of diversity
- Valuing the natural environment
- Supporting urban and rural renaissance

4.9. With regards to valuing the region's natural environment the Strategy states that 'understanding and enhancing the value of our natural capital in the form of parks, landscapes and the region's wildlife is vital as it supports our wider quality of life and wellbeing. The natural environment also performs many important economic functions such as food and energy production, flood storage, carbon and heat sinks, retention and attraction of businesses'.

4.10. The Strategy also recognises the business opportunities the natural environment presents through high-growth markets and low-carbon opportunities, whilst taking account of the quality and type of land, built environment and infrastructure in the West Midlands.

4.11. The natural environment is also referred to in a number of the Strategy's strategic objectives:

- Improving infrastructure
- Sustainable communities
- Sustainable living

4.12. With regards to improving the region's infrastructure, the Strategy identifies the need for more effective management and use of infrastructure, as well as more efficient use of resources including the natural environment, water and energy. In order to maximise the region's cultural offer and natural assets the Strategy identifies the need to accelerate the attraction, relocation and retention of visitors, people and businesses to the region by promoting the strong heritage, natural environment and cultural offer, as well as tourism and rural assets, to deliver sustainable communities.


\textsuperscript{15} West Midlands Health and Well-Being Strategy, West Midlands regional Health Partnership, 2008.
4.13. A key theme throughout the Strategy is the need for the region’s economic growth to be sustainable within environmental limits, particularly through progress towards a low-carbon economy.

**West Midlands Economic Strategy – Rural Dimensions**

4.14. The Purpose of this study is to comment on the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) from a rural perspective to identify opportunities for rural areas and communities, as well as barriers to success. It seeks to achieve this by scrutinizing the vision and strategic approach of the WMES and provides detail of how each of the WMES objectives and priorities could play out in a rural context.

4.15. In order to achieve the Strategy’s strategic objective on improving infrastructure in rural areas, the study identifies the need for investment in the natural assets of the region, including its finest landscapes as well as Green Infrastructure in towns.

4.16. With regards to maximising the region’s cultural offer and natural assets, the study states that the region’s rural areas contain many of the region’s cultural and heritage assets and most of its natural assets. Actions to improve the management and enhancement of these are important for the region’s economy (particularly the visitor economy) and the quality of life for its residents.

**West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy**

4.17. The Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) identifies the key role the visitor economy can play in delivering the objectives of the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy. As such, the focus of the Strategy is to:

- To deliver Birmingham as a premier European city break destination that celebrates its contemporary culture and further enhances its role as an international leader in the conference and exhibitions sector;
- To capitalise on the region’s world-class business tourism venues and fully exploit its location and established high profile as a business destination;
- To place contemporary culture and the cultural heritage of the West Midlands at the heart of the visitor experience and to use it to drive visitors to the region and to grow the short break market, capitalising on the opportunities of the Cultural Olympiad;
- To deliver a high quality food and drink experience that captures the very best of the English countryside and for our shire and market towns to delight their visitors with a distinctive experience and a warm welcome, and;
- To make the West Midlands a region of celebration throughout the year, led by a high profile events and festivals programme that attracts visitors from across Britain.

4.18. The VES also acknowledges that the visitor economy can create demand for additional cultural, sports and leisure facilities that help improve the quality of life for people living in the region. As such, the VES can support the care and management of the historic and natural environments.
4.19. Achieving sustainable tourism is central to the VES, and identifies the need to encourage sustainable growth in order to conserve special environments and protect sense of place in the region’s countryside. The accessibility of the region also presents an opportunity to promote sustainable travel.

4.20. The following datasets were used to build up a picture of the socio-economic character of the study area:

- 2001 Census statistics and subsequent population projections
- Indices of Deprivation 2007
- CLG Index of Child Well-being

**DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT**

4.21. There are spatial variations in the demographic make-up of the study area which includes the densely urban towns and cities of the Black Country and Birmingham to the south of the study area and the more rural Staffordshire towns to the north. Although not within the BEA study area itself, there are a number of Staffordshire towns on the eastern and western edges of the study area which also need to be considered when drawing together a picture of the context of this study, and the population pressures that are put on the existing green spaces.

4.22. The wider context of the study area can be divided into the Black Country (including Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley), Birmingham and the more rural Staffordshire areas and towns that are directly within the study area or immediately adjacent to it (Cannock, Lichfield, Rugeley, Tamworth and Stafford).

4.23. The projected populations from the Office of National Statistics 2006-based sub national population projections for the local authorities in the immediate vicinity of the study area are shown in **Table 4.1**. The table shows that over the period 2008 to 2026, each of the local authorities can expect a population increase, with the largest increases in Lichfield, Birmingham and Stafford.

**Table 4.1: 2006-based sub national population projections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>2008 population</th>
<th>2016 population</th>
<th>2026 population</th>
<th>Population increase 2008-2026</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cannock Chase</td>
<td>95,500</td>
<td>100,400</td>
<td>105,900</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield</td>
<td>98,200</td>
<td>104,300</td>
<td>111,600</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire</td>
<td>106,400</td>
<td>107,700</td>
<td>109,900</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>124,800</td>
<td>131,000</td>
<td>138,600</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth</td>
<td>75,900</td>
<td>78,600</td>
<td>82,100</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>1,018,800</td>
<td>1,078,200</td>
<td>1,148,100</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell</td>
<td>289,500</td>
<td>301,000</td>
<td>316,100</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall</td>
<td>255,600</td>
<td>261,800</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Office of National Statistics 2006-based sub national population projections*

4.24. The study area can expect large housing growth as a result of being in close proximity to the three designated Growth Points of Stafford, Black Country/Sandwell and East Staffordshire-Burton-on-Trent combined with the housing allocations set
out in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (refer to section 2 for summary). The associated population growth will place greater pressure on the existing green space resources.

4.25. In terms of population density, there are large spatial variations within the wider study area. Birmingham City Council and the four unitary authorities within the Black Country are the most densely populated and with the exception of the towns of Stafford, Rugeley, Cannock, Burntwood, Tamworth and Lichfield, the remainder of the study area enjoys the relatively low population densities associated with rural Staffordshire. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

4.26. In order to examine the spatial variation in socio-economic factors across the study area we have analysed the English Indices of Deprivation 2007 (ID 2007) which provide a relative ranking of areas across England according to their level of deprivation. The ID 2007 covers seven dimensions of deprivation:

- Income
- Employment
- Health and Disability
- Education, Skills and Training
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment
- Crime.

4.27. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides a composite view of deprivation across all these aspects and spatial variation in this has been described below and illustrated in Figure 4.2. Other aspects of deprivation in the study area are shown in Figure 4.3. In addition the following paragraphs highlight where individual dimensions of the ID show particularly high levels of deprivation.

4.28. Examining the IMD 2007 data, the majority of the area of interest enjoys low levels of multiple deprivation. The exception to this is in the Black Country to the south west of the study area and parts of Birmingham, where pockets of multiple deprivation exist which are amongst the 10% most deprived in England. Concentrations of multiple deprivation are an urban phenomenon in the study area. Whilst the most deprived LSOAs lie mainly on the outskirts of the study boundary, the highest levels of multiple deprivation found within the study area are located in the Kingstanding, Erdington and Stockland Green wards to the south of Sutton Park in Birmingham and there are moderate levels of multiple deprivation in Cannock, Brownhills and Rugeley.

4.29. Disaggregating the ID 2007 reveals the following spatial patterns (illustrated in Figure 4.3a-g).

- The highest levels of income deprivation (Figure 4.3a) are found in the south of the study area with the exception of Cannock North ward, parts of which are in

16 Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)
the 10% most deprived LSOAs in England. Oscott, Kingstanding, Stockland Green and Erdington wards in Birmingham and parts of St Matthew’s and Palfrey wards in Walsall also experience high levels of income deprivation.

- High levels of employment deprivation (Figure 4.3b) are found in parts of Littleworth ward in Stafford, Castle ward in Tamworth, Brownhills and St Matthew’s wards in Walsall and Kingstanding, Stockland Green, Erdington and Tyburn wards in Birmingham. Within the wider region, the highest levels of income deprivation are concentrated in the more urban areas to the south and south west of the study boundary.

- High levels of health and disability deprivation (Figure 4.3c) are found in parts of Oscott, Kingstanding, Erdingham, Stockland Green and Tyburn wards in Birmingham. There are pockets of moderate levels of deprivation in Cannock Chase. Beyond the BEA boundary, high levels of deprivation are found in parts of Littleworth ward in Stafford.

- Education, skills and training deprivation (Figure 4.3d) is more prevalent within the study area. A number of areas have deprivation levels amongst the 10% most deprived – including parts of Hagley, Cannock North and North Canes wards in Cannock Chase, parts of Brownhills ward in Walsall and Kingstanding, Oscott and Erdington wards in Birmingham. Immediately adjacent to the study area, there are high levels of deprivation in parts of Tamworth, Walsall and Birmingham.

- Barriers to housing and services (Figure 4.3e) is the most widespread form of deprivation in the study area. Milford and Chatterley wards in Stafford, Rawnsley ward in Cannock Chase, Bourne Vale ward in Lichfield and Huntington and Hatherton ward in South Staffordshire are all amongst the 10% most deprived in England. Within the broader area, Stafford and East Staffordshire Districts have high levels of deprivation.

- High levels of living environment deprivation (Figure 4.3f) are largely focused around the edges of the study area – most notably in parts of Forebridge ward in Stafford and parts of Oscott, Kingstanding, Stockland Green, Tyburn, Erdington and Perry Barr wards in Birmingham. Within the wider context, Birmingham and the Black Country are most affected by this type of deprivation.

- Few areas within the study area are affected by crime deprivation (Figure 4.3g). Small pockets of deprivation are found to the south and south west of the area in Birmingham and the Black Country.

4.30. In terms of household types in the 2001 Census, the vast majority of the study area is comprised of houses as opposed to purpose built flats. This is illustrated in Figure 4.3h. A corollary of this is that a similar proportion of people are likely to have access to their own private garden. Within the more populated centres of Birmingham, West Bromwich and Stafford, the percentage of flats to houses increases and it is more unlikely that residents will have access to their own private garden, making the need for accessible green space of greater importance.
4.31. The CLG produced a local index of child well-being (CWI) in January 2009. Similar to the Index of Deprivation, the CWI is made up of seven domains: material well-being, health, education, crime, housing, environment and children in need. Both Birmingham and Sandwell feature in the list of 20 Local Authorities with the lowest average score on child well-being\(^{17}\).

**DELIVERING SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS THROUGH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

4.32. A range of visitor attractions can be found across the study area with many relating directly to the landscape and cultural heritage values described in section 6. Figure 4.4 illustrates the distribution of key features which include country parks with associated facilities; historic sites; nature reserves; golf courses and picnic sites amongst others.

4.33. In addition to the economic benefits that recreation and tourism brings into the area, there are multitudes of other ways in which Green Infrastructure (GI) does already, and can contribute more to the local economy and quality of life including:

- **By-products of sustainable land management techniques appropriate to the BEA.** There are many ways in which producers could ‘add value’ to raw products either through targeted marketing campaigns or further processing. Activities might include food production and associated outputs e.g. the sale of beef or lamb from stock used to graze heathland or wood pasture which can be geographically linked to the area, or use of harvested timber to produce charcoal, wood chips for boilers, or furniture amongst many other possibilities. Any such products can then be sold at the farm gate or through other outlets such as shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants etc. An example of such an approach is being assessed at Sutton Park where graziers are examining the possibility of marketing Sutton Park Beef which could be sold at retail outlets in the park which receives more than 2 million visitors per year.

- **Training and employment.** Creating and managing GI can deliver an infinite number of training and educational opportunities. For example, enhancement of existing or creation of new GI sites might create a demand for new wardens or rangers to carry out management/maintenance operations and provide information etc. to members of the public. Training through work placements or apprenticeships could help address local levels of unemployment through providing training and employment opportunities.

- **Education.** The educational benefits that GI can provide are numerous and might include work experience with local organisations responsible for managing various aspects of GI through to providing outdoor classroom opportunities. A wide range of syllabus topics could come

\[^{17}\text{Local Index of Child Well-Being, CLG January 2009}\]
alive by enabling students to experience the unique qualities of the BEA first hand. Particular focus could be given to the historic features and the biology/geography/geology of the area.

- **Other community involvement.** There are many social benefits that GI delivers ranging from involvement through ‘friends of’ groups for particular open spaces through to activities organised by volunteer groups. Such opportunities encourage participation and cohesion and help build relationships. More can be done to overcome real or perceived economic or cultural barriers to encourage use of the GI by underrepresented audiences who might include those with lower incomes or people from ethnic-minority communities. Positive examples of community involvement in the area include the possibility of establishing a goat herding scheme with the local Somali community in Sutton Park.

- **Health, well being and quality of life.** As identified above, the West Midlands Health and Well-Being Strategy recognises the links between GI and health and well-being. GI delivers a host of opportunities for informal recreational activities including walking through to formal sports provision which can promote activity and therefore improve the health of the local population. An attractive and well maintained network of green spaces, including semi-natural green space, significantly contribute to quality of life as it provides an important respite from pressures of everyday life.

- **Providing an attractive environment for business.** Attractive environments attract and retain businesses to an area and the BEA has great potential to encourage businesses by making the most of its good transport links and unique character. Some types of businesses, e.g. land management related enterprises, may be incorporated into the GI and some aspects of GI may be created to attract business into the area.

**KEY ISSUES**

- The review of socio-economic character highlights areas in greatest need of access to high quality Green Infrastructure:
  - The densely urban areas of Birmingham, Walsall and Sandwell to the south and south west of the study area have the greatest concentration of deprivation coinciding with high existing and projected population density.
  - High levels of employment deprivation are apparent in Birmingham, Walsall, Stafford and Tamworth with education, skills and training deprivation occurring in Cannock Chase, Walsall, Birmingham and Tamworth.
  - High levels of disability deprivation occur in Birmingham and Stafford.
  - The most widespread form of deprivation is barriers to housing and services with wards in Stafford, Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire being amongst the 10% most deprived in England.
High levels of living environment deprivation occur most notably to the south of the area in Birmingham and to the north in Stafford.

- Projected population growth in settlements around the study area will increase the need/demand for GI and its associated functions/benefits.

- The West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (WMRES) identifies the strength of the heritage, natural environment and cultural offer, combined with tourism and rural assets and their role in delivering sustainable communities.

- The WMRES rural dimensions identifies that actions which improve the management and enhancement of the region’s cultural offer and natural assets are important for the region’s economy and the quality of life of its residents.

- The WMRES identifies the importance of progressing towards a low carbon economy, many aspects of which can be incorporated in a GI.

- The West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy places culture and cultural heritage at the heart of the West Midlands visitor experience and considers protecting the conservation of special environments and protection of sense of place in the region’s countryside a priority.

- Existing elements of GI in the BEA deliver a multitude of socio-economic benefits ranging from food production, training and employment, education, community involvement, recreation and provision of a high quality environment.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- There is significant potential for the GI to reinforce and create new links with the local and regional economy e.g. through food production and the creation of geographically based marketing campaigns to add value to by products of land management.

- Incorporate key visitor attractions and heritage features within the GI and enhance physical linkages between them, paying particular attention to the creation and enhancement of sustainable movement.

- Target areas of deficiency in order to address areas of deprivation. Opportunities might include new provision of GI, provision of enhanced access and provision of activities/services associated with GI such as education and training.

- Conserve and enhance the “special environment” and “sense of place” which also relates to issues and opportunities identified in sections 5 and 6.

- Highlight the socio-economic benefits of GI to lever in additional funding.

- Encouragement of businesses into the area to facilitate use of products or outputs from the BEA e.g. forestry hubs incorporating saw milling, log/timber storage and workshops etc.; and local abattoirs/butchers for processing grazing animals.
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 4.1: Population density (2001)

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough

Population density (people / hectare)
- 0.108 - 2.00
- 2.01 - 10.0
- 10.1 - 50.0
- 50.1 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1330

Source: Office for National Statistics
Date: 30/03/2009
Revision:
Figure 4.2: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

Key

- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough
- IMD percentile of England wide rank
  - 0 - 10 (most deprived)
  - 10 - 20
  - 20 - 40
  - 40 - 60
  - 60 - 80
  - 80 - 100 (least deprived)

Source: Office for National Statistics (2007)

Date: 15/07/2009

Revision:
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 4.3a-d: Indices of Deprivation 2007

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough

Percentile of England wide rank
- 0 - 10 (most deprived)
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 40
- 40 - 60
- 60 - 80
- 80 - 100 (least deprived)

a) Income deprivation
b) Employment deprivation
c) Health and disability deprivation
d) Education, skills and training deprivation

Source: Office for National Statistics (2007)

Date: 15/07/2009
Revision:
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 4.3e-h: Indices of Deprivation 2007 and percentage of households that are flats (2001)

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/Metropolitan Borough

Key for e-g)
Percentile of England wide rank
- 0 - 10 (most deprived)
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 40
- 40 - 60
- 60 - 80
- 80 - 100 (least deprived)

Key for h)
Percentage of households that are flats (%)
- 0 - 10%
- 10 - 20%
- 20 - 40%
- 40 - 60%
- 60 - 80%
- 80 - 100%

Source: Office for National Statistics (2001 (% of flats) & 2007 (Indices of Deprivation))

Date: 15/07/2009
Revision:
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 4.4: Key visitor attractions

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough
  - Abbey/Cathedral/Priory (open to the public)
  - Camping or caravan site
  - Country Park (open to the public)
  - Golf course
  - Historic house (open to the public)
  - Landmark/antiquity
  - Museum (open to the public)
  - Nature reserve
  - Nature or forest trail
  - Other tourist attraction (open to the public)
  - Picnic site
  - Preserved railway
  - Tourist info centre (open all year)
  - Viewpoint (limited)

Source: Ordnance Survey
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision: 20090715
5. BIODIVERSITY

5.1. This section:

- sets out relevant policy and legislation underpinning biodiversity conservation in the BEA;
- describes the ecological character of the study area (including geodiversity) and highlights trends and pressures on biodiversity within the BEA; and
- develops a set of key issues and opportunities for biodiversity conservation within the BEA which will inform production of the draft GI Action Plan in Part Three.

POLICY CONTEXT

Key legislation

5.2. The **Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994** transposes the requirements of European Directives such as the Habitats Directive (1992) and Birds Directives (1979)\(^\text{18}\) into UK law, enabling the designation of protected sites and species at a European level. The UK government is also a signatory to the Convention on Wetlands 1971 (the **Ramsar Convention**) enabling the designation of wetland sites of international conservation importance (Ramsar sites). Sites designated under the Birds Directive (Special Protection Areas - SPAs), the Habitats Directive (Special Areas of Conservation - SACs) and Ramsar sites are collectively referred as Natura 2000 sites.

5.3. The **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended) forms the key piece of UK legislation relating to the protection of habitats and species. The **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** provides additional support to the 1981 Act, for example, increasing the protection of select reptile species. Specific protection for badgers is provided by the **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**. **Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)** may be designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as sites fulfilling a nature conservation function and/or ecological education role, defined at the district level.

5.4. The **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006** requires the Secretary of State, under **Section 41** (S41), to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (this translates as BAP listed species and habitats\(^\text{19}\) – see below). The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under **Section 40** of the NERC Act; to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.


5.5. The Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities (2006) directs local authorities to adopt national indicators against which their performance will be measures by central Government. Of direct relevance to biodiversity is National Indicator 197 (NI 197): Improved Local Biodiversity – proportion of Local Sites where active conservation management is being achieved. Within the study area this indicator has been adopted by Staffordshire County Council and is applicable to all district councils within the county.

**Biodiversity and the planning system**

5.6. Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and accompanying DEFRA Circular 01/2005 seek to ensure all planning policies and decisions should aim to maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, with the intention that harm to these resources shall be prevented. Additional emphasis is placed on habitats and species not subject to specific legal protection, such as BAP priority habitats and species, landscape features of importance for wildlife as corridors or stepping stones for movement, and local wildlife sites.

5.7. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands contains two policies relevant to biodiversity conservation in the BEA:

- **Policy QE7: Protecting, managing and enhancing the Region’s Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources** states that all local authority plans and programmes should prioritise the protection and enhancement of specific species and habitats of international, national and sub-regional importance (including legally protected species and Biodiversity Action Plan [BAP] species and habitats). It also promotes plans and programmes which take a ‘common approach to nature conservation’ crossing administrative boundaries. Cannock Chase to Sutton Park BEA is listed as an ‘Area for Concentrated Biodiversity Enhancement’ and the River Trent (which crosses the north east of the BEA) is identified as a ‘Strategic River Corridor for Enhancement’. As referred to in paragraph 1.3 of the introduction to this report, the BEAs are considered to ‘offer some of the best prospects for retaining environments with a rich and resilient biodiversity resource’.

- **Policy QE4: Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces** encourages local authorities to undertake audits of the green space resource in urban areas (paying regard to Natural England’s ANGSt standards) and to plan for urban greenspace networks which among other functions, establish links to the wider countryside to encourage the spread of species.

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22 Government Office for the West Midlands (2008). The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands. TSO. London. As noted in section 2 of this report, policies QE4 and QE7 are likely to be revised as part of the RSS Phase Three Revision.
5.8. The West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership working with Natural England have developed a document called ‘Enhancing Biodiversity Across the West Midlands (2008)’. This regional guidance document aims to demonstrate to local planning authorities how the enhancement of biodiversity can contribute to achieving a range of national and regional policy objectives and meeting statutory requirements and therefore how it should form an important component of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). In particular it sets out to demonstrate the value of developing biodiversity opportunity mapping at a local level, as part of the spatial planning process, together with an associated vision for landscape scale habitat connectivity. This mapping should consider regional and local habitat targets and identify areas both for restoration as well as creation of new habitats. The document emphasises that this local opportunity mapping and Green Infrastructure planning are complementary with integral links between the two processes.

5.9. Non-statutory or local nature wildlife sites are designated within the local planning process and receive protection under Local Development Frameworks. These sites support many species and habitats of high conservation value as defined at the district level, however, they do not receive legal protection. Within the BEA two tiers of local nature conservation sites exist. Table 5.1 outlines the differences between these different designations. It should be noted that, the names given to local sites in Birmingham and the Black Country and in Staffordshire differ. However, designations in higher and lower tiers are directly comparable, between administrative areas.

Table 5.1: Types of local nature conservation site within the BEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative nature conservation importance</th>
<th>Local designations in Staffordshire part of the BEA</th>
<th>Local designations in Birmingham, Walsall and Sandwell part of the BEA</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher (slightly below SSSI)</td>
<td>Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) / Natural Heritage Sites</td>
<td>Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)</td>
<td>The best remaining examples within the County/ City/ District of different habitats. These sites are frequently the remnants of larger areas of semi-natural vegetation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower (important at the district scale)</td>
<td>Biodiversity Alert Sites (BAS)</td>
<td>Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC)</td>
<td>These sites are of lesser significance on a County basis. Nevertheless they collectively form a significant part of the nature conservation resource.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biodiversity Action Plans

5.10. At the national scale the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies Priority Habitats and Priority Species which are of high ecological interest or of conservation
concern and list actions required to conserve and enhance them. The UK BAP informs the preparation of regional, county and district BAPs.

5.11. The West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy establishes broad priorities for the conservation of biodiversity at the regional scale. Within the Study Area, two Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) exist:

- **Staffordshire BAP**: the BAP is currently being reviewed with the aim of aligning it with the UK BAP priority habitats and using an ‘ecosystem approach’ rather than the traditional habitat and species action plans (HAPs and SAPs). The revised BAP includes the BEA as one of the ‘Ecosystem Action Plan’ areas. The previous BAP contained action plans for 28 habitats and 15 species relating to the northern two thirds of the BEA.

- **Birmingham and the Black Country BAP**: this BAP is due to be fully updated and re-published in 2009. It is anticipated that the new BAP will depart from the current plan by highlighting biodiversity ‘hot-spots’ across Birmingham and the Black Country. This will be accompanied by aspirational conservation actions and spatial guidance for conservation measures rather than numerical targets for habitat/species restoration. The previous plan established action plans for 20 habitats and 23 species, however, no information is available on the progress towards achieving targets.

5.12. The distribution of habitats within the BEA and associated draft LBAP targets are described in more detail later in this section.

**OVERVIEW OF THE ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THE STUDY AREA**

5.13. The Cannock Chase and Sutton Park BEA shares the rough boundary of National Character Area (NCA) 67: Cannock Chase and Cank Wood. In terms of its ecological character, Natural England have classified this NCA on the basis of the following features:

- A transition zone between ‘upland’ ecosystems to the north and ‘lowland’ ecosystems to the south of the BEA.

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A strongly contrasting settlement pattern. Some areas are densely populated, with a flora and fauna adapted to dense human occupation. In contrast, others areas are unpopulated and ‘wild’ (e.g. Cannock Chase and Sutton Park).

Birmingham and the Black Country (located to the south of the BEA) represent the most extensive urban area within the BEA. This area is distinctive comprising a mosaic of developed land, former industrial land, patches of farmland and patches of remnant semi-natural habitat such as ancient woodland.

Reclaimed and active open-cast coal sites and spoil tips from abandoned deep mines are numerous across the BEA.

Intensively farmed agricultural land with low hedges occupies the majority of the eastern half of the BEA.

DESIGNATED SITES WITHIN THE BEA

Statutory nature conservation sites

5.14. All statutory designated sites are mapped in Figure 5.1. There are no sites with Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar status within the BEA. Two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the EC Habitats Directive occur within the BEA:

- Cannock Chase SAC: designated on account of the occurrence the most extensive area of European dry heath Habitat (approximates lowland heathland BAP Priority Habitat) in the West Midlands. Cannock Chase also has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry *Vaccinium intermedium* and important populations of butterflies and beetles, as well as European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and five species of bats.

- Cannock Extension Canal SAC: this site is designated on account of floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*. The site also supports a diverse aquatic flora and rich dragonfly fauna, indicative of good water quality.

5.15. Appendix 1 lists all 18 SSSIs which occur within a 2km buffer of the BEA. These include Cannock Chase SSSI, Cannock Extension Canal SSSI (both these SSSIs overlap with the SACs above) and Sutton Park SSSI, which is also designated as a National Nature Reserve - NNR. NNRs represent the best SSSIs on a UK basis. A further three of these SSSIs are notified on geological grounds.

5.16. By area, SSSI land forms a relatively small percentage of the BEA at 2497 ha (6.3%)\(^\text{30}\). The distribution of SSSIs across the BEA is uneven. The majority occur within a band running north-west from Sutton Park to slightly beyond Cannock Chase. SSSIs are largely absent from the east of the BEA, only a single SSSI occurs in this area within the bounds of Lichfield. Most of the SSSIs within the BEA are also fairly small; excluding Cannock Chase and Sutton Park, only five SSSIs are greater than 20 hectares in size.

5.17. The largest SSSIs are generally heathland sites and the smaller sites are made up of wetland, fen and unimproved grassland. Excluding geological SSSIs nine sites (including both SACs) were assessed as being in favourable or favourable recovering condition\textsuperscript{31}. Comparing Figures 5.1 and 5.3 it is evident there is a large overlap between statutory protected sites and the distribution of UK BAP Priority Habitats (principally in the Cannock and Sutton areas).

5.18. Ten \textbf{Local Nature Reserves} occur within the BEA occupying 266 ha. These are generally secondary woodland/grassland mosaic habitats. Several LNRs occupy former industrial areas. All ten sites are listed in \textbf{Appendix 1}, together with a summary of habitats which are present.

\textbf{Non-statutory nature conservation sites}

5.19. There are around 170 local wildlife sites within the BEA, 119 of which are in Staffordshire (see Figure 5.2). Collectively the local wildlife sites amount to around 2175ha or 5.4\% of the BEA\textsuperscript{32}.

5.20. The distribution of non-statutory nature conservation sites or local wildlife sites mirrors that of statutory sites. Local wildlife sites are mainly distributed along an axis between Cannock Chase and Walsall and are scarce from the area bounded by Burntwood and Lichfield in the north and Aldridge in the south.

5.21. A number of the local wildlife sites cover relatively large areas, for example:

- Chasewater and Norton Bog a 200ha site west of Burntwood
- Whittingdon Heath Golf Course a 61 ha heathland/grassland mosaic site south of Lichfield
- Hopwas Hays Wood a 159 ha woodland north of Tamworth

5.22. There is a certain degree of overlap between local wildlife sites and statutory protected sites, in the main however, local wildlife sites protect different areas of land. Local wildlife sites are also noticeably more abundant to the east of the BEA where only one SSSI exists.

\textbf{DISTRIBUTION, EXTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HABITATS WITHIN THE BEA}

5.23. The distribution and extent of habitats within the BEA is illustrated in Figure 5.3 and described in the paragraphs below. This figure and description draws on the regional BAP habitat data for the West Midlands provided by Natural England\textsuperscript{33}. Using this data, \textbf{Appendix 2} details the extent and broad distribution of BAP priority habitats


\textsuperscript{32} This figure has been calculated from available GIS data. It is apparent that there is some duplication of site boundary data across local authority boundaries. In addition, data corruption issues prevented calculation of habitat areas for several local wildlife sites. As such the figures presented in this section should be treated as best estimates.

\textsuperscript{33} This map data is derived from the dataset developed by WGB Environment/Local Records Centres in 2008 as part of the West Midlands Regional Habitat Data Project. It should be noted that this dataset has some known data quality issues but is currently the most comprehensive dataset for the region. More detailed data may be available at a local level.
within the study area. Of those detailed, heathland, woodland and grassland stand out as being the most significant habitats within the BEA, these three key habitats are described in more detail below.

**Heathland**

5.24. In terms of national and regional importance, heathland forms the most significant semi-natural habitat within the BEA. Its distribution is mainly focused on Cannock Chase and Sutton Park (see Figure 5.3c). The regional BAP habitat inventories indicate there to be 2497ha conforming to BAP Priority Habitat type - Lowland Heathland. This equates to approximately 6.2% of the BEA by land area.

5.25. Heathland within the BEA is broadly characterised as **lowland heathland**, however, given that the midland plateau forms a zone of transition between upland and lowland England, the heaths within the BEA are distinctive in that they contain a number of plants representative of upland habitats.

5.26. In terms of its historical area, it is estimated that heathland within the BEA underwent an 86% decline between 1775 and the present day. Significant habitat loss has continued until relatively recent times with the main drivers being agricultural improvement and the planting of conifers on areas of heathland for forestry purposes. Despite this, Cannock Chase still forms the largest area of lowland heathland in the Midlands and accounts for 65% of all lowland heathland habitat in Staffordshire. In turn, Staffordshire is highlighted as containing a significant amount of lowland heathland on a UK basis. It is also noteworthy that internationally, the UK holds around 17% of heathland habitats in NW Europe.

5.27. A large proportion of present day cover of heathland within the BEA is protected by national and international designation (i.e. SAC, SSSI). Despite this, many characteristic heathland species which once occupied the area are no longer present or are present in small numbers. For example woodlark and nightjar have in recent times established pioneer populations in Sutton Park but do not currently occur as self sustaining populations whilst selective clear-felling on Forestry Commission land around Cannock Chase is proving effective in consolidating numbers of these species. A number of future trends threaten the ecological integrity of these protected sites. Namely:

- Continued fragmentation through development (housing/ infrastructure).
- Housing growth in the area and the expected increase in the numbers of visitors who will be using areas of heathland for recreational purposes.

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34 Natural England (no date). The Midlands Plateau [on-line]

35 Ibid.

36 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (no date). Habitat action plan – Lowland Heathland. [on-line]

• Climate change may cause range shifts in a number of key heathland species thus there may be a need to strengthen the network of heathland sites within the BEA to facilitate species movement.

• Changes in agricultural management practice, specifically, the lack of appropriate management such as grazing leading to loss of open habitats and reversion to woodland.

**Woodland**

5.28. Woodland forms an important feature of the BEA and in terms of mapped BAP priority habitat occupies the largest land area covering 5668ha or 14% of the BEA (refer to Figure 5.3a and appendix 2). This is predominantly composed of **Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland** (2117ha or 5.3% of the BEA) which is distributed between Cannock and Rugeley and on Cannock Chase itself. **Wood Pasture and Parkland** is also a prominent woodland habitat amounting to 1559ha (3.9% of the BEA) mainly located to the north of the BEA at Shugborough Park and to the south within Sutton Park. In terms of biodiversity value, Wood Pasture and Parkland support a large proportion of the ancient and veteran trees which occur within the BEA. In addition, a range of rare dead-wood invertebrate and bird species depend upon this habitat.

5.29. In addition to these principal areas of mixed deciduous woodland and wood pasture, the regional BAP habitat inventories indicate numerous patches of **unclassified UK BAP Priority Woodland** amounting to 1221ha (3% of the BEA) these are mainly clustered between Stafford and Burntwood. It is likely that some of these habitat patches incorporate areas of coniferous plantation woodland (of relatively low biodiversity value) in addition to heathland mosaic habitats which is evident from comparison of the woodland and heathland habitat maps (Figure 5.3a and c).

5.30. Other BAP woodland habitats occurring within the BEA include 408ha of upland oak woodland concentrated in Cannock Chase, Sutton Park and Hopwas Hay Wood (in the southeast of the study area) together with 366ha of wet woodland which is mainly distributed around Cannock Chase.

5.31. By comparing Figures 5.3 and 5.1 it is evident that sizeable areas of woodland habitat are not covered by statutory designation. Only 560ha of the BEA is made up of **ancient woodland** sites of more than 2ha in size which is of relatively high biodiversity value38. This is predominantly distributed within Sutton Park, to the east of the BEA north of Tamworth, and south east of Cannock Chase. The Forestry Commission and Natural England have identified the following generic threats to woodland habitats in the wider countryside which may be relevant within the BEA39:

• Overgrazing - particularly by deer, leading to changes in woodland structure, ground flora impoverishment and lack of regeneration.

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• Changes in woodland/forestry management - in particular cessation of traditional management practices such as coppicing / pollarding and neglect leading to successional changes in woods that were formerly managed.

• Inappropriate development – indirect and direct effects of housing, quarrying, tourist/recreation facilities leading to increased trampling, disturbance and pollution.

Grassland

5.32. Grassland is the third important habitat type found within the BEA, however it is present in much smaller quantities; as illustrated in Figure 5.3b the mapped BAP grassland habitats cover 423ha, just 1% of the BEA. These areas predominantly comprise lowland meadows (143ha) and lowland acid grassland (112ha), in addition the wetland grass habitat of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (CFGM) occupies 164ha. As Figure 5.3b shows, the grassland habitats are fairly fragmented across the BEA. CFGM is distributed almost entirely in the north of the BEA in the valleys of the Trent (to the north east) and the Penk including the fringes of Stafford (to the north west). Lowland acid grassland has been recorded mainly in and around Cannock Chase whilst lowland meadows are mainly distributed to the south of the BEA on the fringes of the Black Country.

5.33. Natural England have classified the main threats to grassland habitats nationally as follows:

• Changes in agricultural management practice including undergrazing and subsequent encroachment into grasslands by scrub.

• Agricultural intensification such as abandonment of marginal land, drainage, conversion to arable and intensive management of grasslands, (particularly from agricultural herbicide/fertiliser use).

Heathland, woodland and grassland habitat targets

5.34. Habitat targets are in the process of being developed for each LBAP and for the Region as a whole; these are separated into targets for maintaining the extent of existing habitats, restoring areas of lost habitat and expanding habitats. The draft targets for heathland, woodland and grassland in the Staffordshire LBAP and Birmingham and the Black Country LBAP are summarised in Table 5.1 below and are shown in comparison to the draft regional targets for this habitat type (see full list of targets in Appendix 3). It should be noted that these targets are not geographically specific to the BEA but give an indication of the likely targets, and in turn opportunities, for habitat retention, restoration and expansion within the study area.


41 Data provided by Natural England, sourced from Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Regional Habitats Targets Review, Draft Supporting Text for Annex B Revised Version 23 February 2009, Prepared for West Midlands Regional Assembly by Treweek Environmental Consultants. Land Use Consultants have summarised the targets which affect the BEA which includes Birmingham and Black Country LBAP and Staffordshire LBAP.
Table 5.1 Draft heathland, woodland and grassland habitat targets to 2026

(All figures in hectares)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heathlands</td>
<td>Lowland Heathland</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>482</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upland Heathland</td>
<td>5146</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlands</td>
<td>Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland</td>
<td>30500</td>
<td>8504</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5732</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1188</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upland Mixed Ashwoods</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upland Oakwood</td>
<td>3352</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>218</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wet Woodland</td>
<td>9359</td>
<td>2610</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1365</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wood-Pasture &amp; Parkland</td>
<td>20595</td>
<td>1561</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>1548</td>
<td>4343</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasslands</td>
<td>Lowland Calcareous Grassland</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lowland Dry Acid Grassland</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lowland Meadows</td>
<td>3492</td>
<td>2160</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upland Calcareous Grassland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.35. As highlighted in the table, the (draft) aim is to expand the lowland heathland habitat by 482ha in Staffordshire and 84ha in Birmingham and the Black Country by 2026. As shown in Figure 5.3 and described in earlier paragraphs, there were historically significant areas of heathland linking the remaining concentrations at Cannock Chase and Sutton Park, and therefore these targets are of particular relevance to the landscape of the BEA. There are also significant targets affecting both LBAPs in terms of restoration and expansion of woodland habitats which are likely to affect the BEA including creation of up to 1838ha of lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Of the grassland habitats the biggest target is for expansion of lowland meadow habitats, mainly concentrated in Staffordshire.

Other habitats

5.36. In addition to the three main habitats described above, there are a number of other habitats which, although smaller in area of coverage, contribute to the BEA’s biodiversity value. These can be summarised as follows:

5.37. As indicated within the regional BAP habitat inventories (Figure 5.3d), wetland habitats, including reedbeds, eutrophic standing waters, fens and rivers occupy a very small proportion of the BEA (cumulatively less that 1% of the BEA by area). In addition to these habitats, there are likely to be ponds located across the BEA potentially on farmland and former industrial sites, however no information was available as to their distribution (they have only recently been added as a Priority Habitat type to the UK BAP). Such habitats can support a wide range of wetland plants and associated species e.g. amphibians such as Great Crested Newts.
5.38. **Rivers, streams and canals** are recognised as providing linear connections which facilitate wildlife movement across landscapes. They also support a number of BAP Priority species, for example, otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola terrestris*. As illustrated in Figure 5.3d, few riverine BAP habitats are currently recorded within the BEA, however it is clear from Figure 5.4 that there are a number of watercourses which are likely to contribute to the area’s biodiversity conservation. The main watercourses within the BEA include:

- The River Penk which flows through Stafford to join the River Trent in the north of the BEA
- The River Trent which flows along the north eastern border of the BEA
- The Black Brook located in the east of the BEA above Shenstone – this water course is fed by a network of smaller brooks including the Crane and the Fotherley
- The Shropshire Brook and the Bilson Brook which drain eastwards from Cannock Chase towards the Trent Valley

5.39. In addition, the canal network represents a freshwater habitat intermediate between flowing riverine and lacustrine (lakes and ponds) systems. The main canals within the BEA are:

- The Rushall canal which traverses the BEA from Walsall to Chasewater
- The Wyrley and Essington Canal which runs from Bloxwich Walsall and links with the Rushall Canal at Brownhills
- The Staffordshire and Worcester Canal which exits Stafford and traverses the northern part of the BEA north of Cannock

5.40. **Farmland** may be considered relatively impoverished in wildlife, however within the BEA this habitat type supports a range of key BAP species such as a suite of farmland seed-eating birds and mammals e.g. brown hare.

5.41. **Ancient species rich hedgerows** provide vital refugia for wildlife in areas which are intensively farmed.

5.42. **Urban green spaces and private garden** habitats within urban areas may contain a high diversity of ornamental and exotic flowering plants supporting a high abundance and diversity of invertebrates. Similarly these areas offer habitats for common species which may have undergone recent declines such as common toad, house sparrow and song thrush.

5.43. A recent addition to the UK BAP list is **Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land** in recognition of the fact these sites may be of extremely high value to biodiversity. The industrial history of the area means this former land use is relatively common within the BEA.

**Geodiversity and sites of geological interest**

5.44. The Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCA is an area of high diversity in relation to the number of geological features which are present including a number of protected
sites, summarised below. Geodiversity underpins the biodiversity of the BEA, the underlying geology influencing soil type and therefore intrinsically linked to the vegetation and associated species that have established and the overall character of the landscape. The diversity and value of this geological interest and its influence on the BEA landscape is acknowledged in the two Local Geodiversity Action Plans (LGAP) for Staffordshire and the Black Country.

5.45. The Staffordshire GAP\(^\text{42}\) aims to ‘develop a countywide strategy for the conservation of geological diversity and the sustainable use of geological resources for amenity, education and research’. The objectives and targets of the plan are centred around partnership and involvement, evaluation and geo-audit, conservation and management along with education and site use. In terms of the BEA, Cannock Chase itself is a notable geological area as it sits on a plateau of hard red sandstone from which all the main watercourses in the BEA drain. Processes of geological folding, tilting and faulting have acted to expose a range of rocks of very different ages within a relatively small area around Cannock Chase. As such the area offers large potential for geological education and earth heritage based tourism.

5.46. The diversity of minerals in the Black Country gave the area a wealth of industries including mining, glass manufacture and brickmaking. The Geodiversity Action Plan\(^\text{43}\) aims to integrate this natural and cultural heritage and identifies associated opportunities for education, environmental enhancement and tourism whilst ensuring the geodiversity resource continues to be protected.

**Protected geological sites**

5.47. In addition to protected sites designated on account of biodiversity there are also a number of geological SSSIs and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) which occur within the BEA. RIGS are the geological equivalent of local wildlife sites and are designated by locally developed criteria. They are important as an educational, historical and recreational resource. The following geological sites occur within the BEA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geological site name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daw End Railway Cutting</td>
<td>SSSI</td>
<td>Excellent exposures of Wenlock Shale (Coalbrookdale Formation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Head Quarry</td>
<td>SSSI</td>
<td>The type locality for the Barr Limestone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milford Quarry</td>
<td>SSSI</td>
<td>3D exposures of the Lower Triassic Bunter Pebble Beds (Cannock Chase Formation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etching Hill, Rugeley</td>
<td>RIGS</td>
<td>Topographical feature produced by a local variation in the hardness of the sandstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satnall Hills Quarry, Berkswich</td>
<td>RIGS</td>
<td>Well-exposed example of the Cannock Chase Formation pebble beds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brocton Gravel Pit (west), Brocton</td>
<td>RIGS</td>
<td>Well-exposed example of Triassic pebble beds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Slade Wood, Teddesley Hay</td>
<td>RIGS</td>
<td>Example of irregularly bedded sandstones and pebble beds with manganese deposits in cavities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{43}\) The Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan, BCGAP Steering Group Partnership, 2006/7
CURRENT BIODIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Numerical targets for biodiversity conservation within the BEA

5.48. As indicated earlier in this section and summarised in Table 5.1, numerical targets for habitat protection, restoration and expansion in the West Midlands and within the associated LBAP areas are currently being reviewed. The draft targets relevant to the BEA are set out in Appendix 3 of this report and once confirmed will form part of the Phase Three Revisions to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), updating those currently included in Annex B of the RSS, and will also result in revisions to the LBAPs.

Regional habitat opportunity mapping

5.49. The West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership established the Landscapes for Living (LfL) project in 2006. The project aims to encourage a holistic ‘landscape scale’ approach to restoring and enhancing biodiversity throughout the region. The LfL prospectus published early in 2008 sets out the following fifty year vision for biodiversity in the West Midlands:

‘Imagine… a vibrant, diverse and natural West Midlands, where we are connected to our wildlife and landscape; healthy, sustainable communities and local livelihoods, working with nature and securing the future…’

5.50. Since publication of the prospectus work has progressed on the development of a Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Map to identify the best prospects for the creation and maintenance of good quality semi-natural habitat. The early stages of this work have been based around five broad zones (illustrated in Figure 5.5) representing different conservation strategies which should be adopted based on a range of ecological criteria:

- **Zone 1 (maintain and extend habitat):** Extensive areas of semi-natural habitat remain. These areas should be maintained and extended as the core areas of future ecological networks. Within the BEA Zone 1 incorporates both Cannock Chase and Sutton Park.

- **Zone 2 (restore habitat):** Large patches of semi-natural habitat remain, options for strategic linking and buffering between patches and enhancement should be prioritised. Within the BEA Zone 2 overlaps the area between Cannock, Burntwood and Brownhills.

- **Zone 3 (recreate habitat):** Generally smaller, more isolated patches of habitat exist, often in highly modified landscapes (e.g. intensive agriculture), supporting mixed uses and providing ecosystem services. Within the BEA Zone 3 overlaps most of the area east of Burntwood including Lichfield and as far south as Sutton Park.

- **Strategic river corridors:** The River Trent is the only ‘Strategic River Corridor’ identified on the West Midlands biodiversity map which occurs within the BEA. However, in reality, all rivers provide important wetland habitats and connect rural and urban landscapes.
- **Urban areas**: Include valuable biodiversity habitats and features and play a vital role in providing access to nature for urban dwellers. Within the BEA these include Sutton Coldfield, Walsall, Cannock, Stafford, Rugeley, Brownhills, Burntwood and Lichfield.

5.51. These zoned areas are overlaid by the BEAs or broad ‘landscape areas’ which are considered to have the best opportunity to enhance biodiversity at a landscape scale. The regional opportunity map is in the process of being further refined and once finalised will be incorporated into the Phase Three Revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

**Habitat potential and network maps (draft 2009)**

5.52. To inform the development of the revised regional habitat targets Treweek Environmental Consultants have been working for the West Midlands Regional Assembly on preparing a series of habitat potential maps. To date these have been developed for 19 of the 28 BAP habitats believed to be present in the region. In addition, a series of network maps have been developed which highlight the regionally important networks of specific habitats in the region and look at potential for improved habitat connectivity. The following areas within the BEA have been included in this mapping work:

- Priority **heathland** networks - Cannock Chase and Sutton Park
- Priority **woodland** network – Cannock Chase
- Priority **grassland** network – Cannock Chase and Gentleshaw Common
- **Heathland networks** with most potential for linkage - Cannock Chase
- **Wetland networks** with most potential for linkage – Staffordshire Washlands (at the northern tip of the BEA)

**Local habitat opportunity mapping (draft June 2009)**

5.53. Leading on from the regional opportunity mapping, the Local Biodiversity Partnerships are being encouraged to develop county/sub-regional opportunity maps. Initial work was undertaken at this more local level in 2006 by Penny Anderson Associates (PAA) exploring the most suitable locations for re-creation of key semi-natural habitats and their associated faunas. This resulted in indicative opportunity areas for re-creation of heathland, grassland and woodland. Building on this work and in the context of the various stages of regional mapping that have taken place, local habitat opportunity mapping is now being taken forward by Staffordshire and Birmingham and Black Country LBAPs in coordination with the local authorities and Natural England. This is being developed with reference to the regional guidance document ‘Enhancing Biodiversity Across the West Midlands (2008)’ (refer to paragraph 5.8 for details).

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5.54. Early drafts of the resulting local habitat opportunity mapping within the BEA are included as Figure 5.6. The draft mapping shows the most prominent and extensive opportunity to be the potential for creation and/or restoration of heathland habitats through the core of the BEA. This reflects the underlying ‘sandstone’ geology and historic precedent for heathland in these areas, and highlights the significant potential to improve habitat connectivity between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park. The area to the south east of the BEA maintains acidic ground conditions but is more suited to acidic woodland/heathland opportunities reflecting the existing habitats in this area.

5.55. The BAP habitat opportunities on the eastern and western edges of the BEA are quite different as a result of the change in geology and character of the landscape. Opportunities on the eastern edge are focused on lowland meadow habitat whilst on the western edge feature a matrix of wetland, wet grassland, swamp communities and wet woodland. In addition, the draft mapping identifies a particular opportunity for floodplain river corridor habitats which follow the course of the Black Brook in the south east of the BEA.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.56. The following issues and opportunities for biodiversity conservation in the BEA were identified based on a review of available literature relating to biodiversity in the BEA (mostly cited above), through consultation with the LBAP co-ordinators for both Birmingham and the Black Country and Staffordshire and through consultation with Natural England through the project Steering Group:

Issues

5.44. Habitat fragmentation: Fragmentation and isolation of habitats is a key threat to sustaining viable populations of species which are of conservation interest across the BEA. As patches of habitat become further isolated from one another by barriers to species dispersal, species are not able to re-colonise formerly occupied areas if they become locally extinct through chance events (e.g. fire, drought, flooding etc.). As such, populations are not sustained in the long term. Examples of factors causing habitat fragmentation include road construction, dense urban development and land uses which are inhospitable to wildlife such as intensive agriculture. In relation to Cannock Chase SAC, this threat was highlighted by the HRA of the Phase II Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (refer to paragraph 2.14).

5.57. Deterioration of existing nature conservation sites: A key issue across the BEA is deterioration of local wildlife sites through lack of appropriate nature conservation management. Outside of statutory protected sites, local wildlife sites form the highest quality habitat patches across the BEA. As such they provide source

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45 Figure 5.6 shows the results of early draft mapping developed by the LBAPs in coordination with Natural England made available for this study in June 2009.
populations of threatened species which could colonise newly created habitats in any future ecological network. In contrast to Natura 2000 sites and SSSIs, for local wildlife sites there is no comparable legal requirement for site monitoring and the subsequent undertaking of remedial action to address unfavourable condition. Among the factors involved in deterioration of site quality are lack of appropriate grazing (for grasslands and heathlands) and cessation of cutting/pollarding in woodlands\textsuperscript{48}. A particular management issue within the BEA is difficulty in sourcing appropriate grazing animals to carry out conservation management. In addition, the growth in ‘horsiculture’ is effecting the quality of many local wildlife sites whereby overgrazing and poaching of sites by domestic horses occurs. A large proportion of local wildlife sites are in local authority ownership and it is often the case that local authorities lack the resources to carry out appropriate management. In addition, conflicts occasionally arise between management of key nature conservation sites for amenity purposes at the expense of biodiversity interests.

5.58. **Management of increased visitor numbers**: Along with housing growth, it is expected that there will be an increased demand for outdoor recreation facilities near to urban centres and an associated increase in the numbers of visitors journeying to key semi-natural open spaces within the BEA. Heathland habitats are particularly susceptible to degradation through excessive visitor numbers. For example, human activities such as dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering may result in erosion and physical damage to vegetation and lead to disturbance and reduced breeding success of sensitive fauna (particularly ground nesting birds\textsuperscript{49}). Visitor pressure is a key vulnerability that has been identified for both Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC within the HRA of the Phase II Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands\textsuperscript{50}.

5.59. **Climate change**: Broadly, climate change is expected to bring about hotter, drier summers, milder, wetter winters and increased incidence of extreme weather events\textsuperscript{51}. The ‘climate space’ (northern and southern boundaries of a species’ distribution) which a species occupies may shift in accordance with its tolerances of new climatic conditions. As noted above the BEA contains a distinctive mix of species adapted to upland ecosystems and lowland ecosystems. It is possible that species adapted to cooler climate may be lost from the BEA. Additionally, a warmer climate may bring about opportunities for colonists from southern England to occupy habitats within the BEA. Critically, however, this depends on species being able to overcome barriers to dispersal (see above).


\textsuperscript{50} URSUS Consulting Ltd & Treweek Environmental Consultants (2007). *Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Phase II Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands*. [on-line] 

5.60. It has been noted that the highest quality nature conservation sites (e.g. SACs, SSSIs, local wildlife sites) offer the best opportunities for making ecosystems resilient to climate change. Broadly this is because they contain a range of wildlife friendly features (e.g. heterogeneous habitat mosaics, complex water cycles and less polluted soils). It is critical that these sites are maintained/restored to ensure they are in good condition and where possible to expand, buffer and link them with other comparable sites. By maximising habitat connectivity/reducing fragmentation the scale of the threat posed by climate change may be partly ameliorated.

5.61. **Regional and local BAP habitat targets:** There are a number of different numerical targets for each BAP habitat established at both regional and local level. As indicated earlier in this section, these are currently under review and are subject to consultation this year; the review of the RSS is the most important as this sets the regional policy that other plans and programmes should follow. A number of these targets are of relevance to the BEA, particularly as the area supports the region’s major concentration and networks of lowland heath and presents one of the major potential locations within the region for creating new lowland heath. The BEA also supports important concentrations and networks of woodlands and grasslands but is less important as a potential location for creation of these habitats. The greatest challenge in achieving these targets will be to identify suitable locations and delivery mechanisms for habitat creation whilst ensuring these areas can be protected and maintained in the future. (The draft revised regional BAP habitat targets to 2026 are presented in Appendix 3 alongside the disaggregated targets for relevant LBAP areas.)

5.62. **Lack of significant nature conservation interest of farmland to the east and agricultural intensification:** Concentrations of BAP habitat and protected nature conservation sites are notably absent from a sizeable portion to the east of the BEA. However, numerous habitats and species of nature conservation interest depend on this part of the BEA. For example, this area contains much of the small river and hedgerow habitat resource. Further the largest populations of farmland birds and mammals such as brown hare may be situated here. A key issue for biodiversity conservation in this area may be the future effectiveness of agri-environment interventions and changing farming practices.

5.63. **Institutional and cultural barriers to habitat restoration:** It is clearly stated within the PAA study that the biodiversity opportunity map does not incorporate socio-cultural or economic factors in seeking to locate the most suitable areas for restoration of habitats. It is likely that the actual areas of opportunity for habitat re-creation will be a resolution of the most ecologically suitable locations set against the public acceptability/demand for habitat re-creation schemes. In addition, there is an existing deficit of institutional capacity to manage local wildlife sites (see above). Areas of opportunity for habitat re-creation will need to be guided as much by ecological criteria as where organisational capacity for ongoing conservation management exists.

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Opportunities

5.64. **Utilise opportunity mapping work to expand priority BAP habitats, develop an ecological network and in turn meet regional and local targets:** The draft regional and local opportunity mapping summarised under paragraph 5.49 can be utilised to determine priorities for creation and restoration of BAP habitats in specific geographic areas of the BEA. The scope, scale and specific location for these opportunities will be influenced by a range of considerations including proximity to existing sensitive or fragmented sites (i.e. potential buffering/linking benefits), availability and suitability of land for creation of a particular habitat, site size, secondary benefits/GI functions (e.g. flood attenuation), funding and existing/future management.

5.65. **Potential for heathland creation on former mineral sites:** The BEA contains many current and former minerals sites. Often these sites provide good opportunities for restoration of heathland and wetland ecosystems based on their often low nutrient status and varied topography. In addition, on-going management of many of these sites is often supported by planning covenants for their restoration from former industrial uses.

5.66. **Potential to create new natural/semi-natural accessible sites:** As highlighted in the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) of the West Midlands RSS (refer to paragraph 2.14), the expected increase in demand for recreational opportunities caused by housing growth presents a real concern in terms of future impacts on the ecology of key designated sites, in particular Cannock Chase SAC. There may be opportunities to create new sites or areas within existing sites which are of sufficient quality and appropriate type to draw people away from the most sensitive sites. This concept is already being trialled within the BEA. In Birmingham, the council are actively seeking to increase numbers of people visiting Sutton Park whilst avoiding conflicts with wildlife. They aim to do this by providing a greater range of facilities for visitors within certain areas of the park thereby focusing visitor pressure away from areas of high ecological sensitivity. Identification of a network of appropriately located sites within the BEA could offer a pragmatic way of delivering green space of suitable quality to be appealing to people, whilst simultaneously increasing habitat which is available for wildlife.

5.67. **Providing access to nature in urban areas:** Large areas of the BEA are highly urbanised, in addition the urban population neighbouring the BEA is set to increase significantly in coming years. Urban habitats in themselves support a high diversity of species and should be conserved in their own right. However, importantly, they also offer a range of benefits to urban residents. For example, benefits to people’s well being and health and the provision of environmental services such as pollution attenuation and summer cooling. Natural England’s Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) model has been developed to assist in the targeting of high quality and well maintained ‘natural green spaces’ close to people’s homes. A key opportunity for biodiversity conservation is therefore maximising the biodiversity

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value of urban habitats including gardens, green spaces and linear habitats such as railway corridors and urban canals. The provision of high quality urban green space may also contribute to reducing visitor impacts on SSSIs and SACs by satisfying demand locally and reducing the requirement to travel to these areas.

5.68. **Linking biodiversity conservation with business opportunities:** Linking conservation of semi-natural green spaces with generation of economic returns may offer a range of opportunities for conservation within the BEA. An example of this provided by Advantage West Midlands is the Birches Valley Forest Centre (a Forestry Commission facility) situated in the Cannock Chase AONB in Staffordshire. The development of a community cafe, a network of cycle paths and a cycle hire business combine measures for the provision of rural jobs, targeting of visitor pressure away from areas vulnerable to disturbance, provision of high quality accessible natural greenspace and funding for ongoing conservation management.

5.69. **Reversing declining condition in local wildlife sites:** The adoption of National Indicator 197 (‘Improved Local Biodiversity: proportion of Local Sites where active conservation management is being achieved’) offers a robust mechanism for securing appropriate management of local wildlife sites. A key objective within the BEA should be to ensure adoption of the national indicator by all relevant local authorities and that subsequent reporting against NI 197 is carried out in a consistent way between local authority districts. In this way the condition of the local wildlife site resource, as a core component of a future ecological network, can be monitored effectively across the BEA.

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Figure 5.1: Statutory nature conservation sites

Key:
- Study boundary
- Borough/Metropolitan Borough
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Ancient Woodland Inventory site

Source: Ordnance Survey, Natural England
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision: A
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park Green Infrastructure

Figure 5.2: Non-statutory nature conservation sites

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough
- SINC/ SBI
- SLINC/ BAS

NOTE:
- Birmingham/Black Country designations:
  - SINC = Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
  - SLINC = Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
- Staffordshire designations:
  - SBI = Site of Biological Importance
  - BAS = Biodiversity Alert Site


Date: 15/07/2009
Revision: A
Figure 5.3a-d: Distribution of UK BAP Priority Habitats

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough

**NOTE:** Inland rock and scree habitats BAP type are excluded from the maps as the area represented is too small to display at this resolution.

Source: Natural England

Date: 15/07/2009

Revision:
Figure 5.4: Main waterways in study area

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/Metropolitan Borough
- Main River
- Secondary River
- Minor River
- Canal
- Lakes and waterbodies

Source: Ordnance Survey
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision: A
Figure 5.5: Regional Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/Metropolitan Borough
- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3

Note: See main report for description of Zones.
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 5.6: Local Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping (Draft)

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/Metropolitan Borough
- Floodplain river corridor
- Heathland
- Native acidic woodland/heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Parkland
- Farmland habitat connectivity
- Wetland, wet grassland, wet woodland & river restoration
- Woodland, grassland, wetland

Source: Natural England
Date: 17/07/2009
Revision: A
6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

6.1. This section reviews the landscape character and cultural heritage of the BEA to aid analysis of relevant key issues and opportunities in relation to Green Infrastructure provision throughout the area.

A. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

6.2. The following datasets were used to build up a picture of landscape character in the study area:

- National Character Areas descriptions
- Character area descriptions from the Staffordshire County Landscape Character Assessment
- National landscape designations - Cannock Chase AONB

National level landscape character

6.3. National Landscape Character Area 67 Cannock Chase and Cank Wood broadly corresponds with the BEA boundary (Figure 6.1). The landscape character of the area is defined by its history as a former royal forest and chase and by the presence at its centre of the South Staffordshire coalfield. Key characteristics include:

- Varied landscape with a wide range of industrial, residential, agricultural and recreational land uses.
- Some unpopulated and wild areas – some densely populated.
- Rounded central plateau dominated by heathland and coniferous woodland.
- Strong reminders of industrial past – mining settlements/sites of former workings
- The Black Country contains a mosaic of urban areas, former industrial land and patches of farmland – extensive urban fringe.
- The historic development of the landscape evident through parks, industrial archaeology, and monuments.
- Mix of open arable areas with low hedges and areas of small hedged fields, scattered farmsteads and small holdings.

County level landscape character

6.4. The current Staffordshire County Council landscape assessment appears in Planning for landscape change: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, 1996 – 2011, Volume 3. It should be noted that this document originally developed in the early 1990s is now due to be updated by Staffordshire County Council in 2010/11. Until this is updated, the 1996-2011 SPG is the key reference for landscape character in Staffordshire.

6.5. The assessment identifies a number of landscape character types/ sub-types (Figure 6.2). The key landscape types that appear within the BEA include coalfield farmlands; sandstone estatelands; sandstone hills and heaths; and settled farmlands.
**Coalfield farmlands**

6.6. This landscape type is found in just one area of the BEA to the south of Cannock Chase in between Cannock, Burntwood and Bloxwich. The subtype present within this landscape type is minerals working and restoration.

6.7. The coalfield farmlands are sparsely wooded landscapes of former mining villages and small to medium sized hedged fields on undulating plateaux close to large population centres. These areas have previously supported acid grassland and wet heath. The predominant land use is now mainly stock rearing. Many areas have been subject to extensive opencast coal mining and clay winning and the distinction between these areas and those that have been less abruptly modified forms the basis of a subdivision into landscape character sub-types.

6.8. Key characteristics include flat landform, mixed arable and pasture farming; heathy pioneer woodlands; commons; medium scale hedged field pattern; hedgerow oaks; well treed brook courses; narrow winding lanes; canal.

6.9. Considerations for this study include the decline in the condition of some of the characteristic landscape features and the poor survival of historic elements that contribute to landscape character, such as field, settlement and road patterns. In addition there is poor representation of characteristic semi-natural vegetation such as acid grassland and wet heath.

**Sandstone estatelands**

6.10. There are two areas of this landscape type within the BEA. Firstly, a substantial area to the south of Burntwood and Lichfield stretching towards Sutton Park in the south and secondly, the sandstone estatelands encircle the eastern side of Stafford, defining the northern tip of the BEA. The subtypes present within this landscape type are farmland and parkland.

6.11. The woodlands and parklands of traditional rural estates characterise the more intact parts of this rolling lowland landscape type, which has a wide geographic range in those parts of the county where Triassic sandstones are not obscured by drift deposits. Acid sands and brown earths predominate and, whilst some significant remnants of the original heathlands survive, the major land use is now arable cropping in large hedged or open fields of a regular pattern. Settlement is sparse, and characterised by expanded hamlets and wayside cottages.

6.12. Key characteristics include flat to gently undulating landform; intensive arable farmland; broadleaved and mixed woodlands; plantations and game coverts; parkland; hedged field pattern.

6.13. Considerations for this study include loss of characteristic landscape features, the poor condition of those features that remain, and the relatively poor survival of characteristic semi-natural vegetation, in particular heathland. The area around Salt Heath, near Hopton, has been identified as a ‘landscape at risk’ of sudden loss of quality and measures to restore and enhance key landscape characteristics (see opportunities) will be important in preventing such a loss.
**Sandstone hills and heaths:**

6.14. The most substantial area of this landscape type includes Cannock Chase, although the boundary is not an exact match. The second, smaller area lies to the west of Tamworth. The main subtypes present within this landscape type are estatelands, parkland, heathlands and forest. The Cannock Chase AONB is further sub-divided into the following character areas:

- Farmed Sandstone Hills and Heaths
- Settled Plateau Farmlands
- Sandstone Estatelands
- Clay Estatelands
- Trent Valley Floodplain
- Designed Parklands

6.15. The sandstone hills and heaths occur at rather higher elevations than the sandstone estatelands: it has the same underlying geology and range of soils but the landform is more pronounced, comprising hills and dissected plateaux. Significant areas of this type in Staffordshire – in particular Cannock Chase - have the original heathland vegetation or coniferous forests established on heathland.

6.16. Key characteristic of this landscape type include small winding lanes; irregular hedged field pattern; stunted hedgerow oaks; pronounced rounded landform.

6.17. Considerations for this study include the relatively poor survival of characteristic semi-natural vegetation, in particular heathland, the loss of characteristic landscape features, and a decline in the condition of those features that remain. Significant parts of the areas falling within this landscape type are also within the boundary of the Cannock Chase AONB which is subject to intensive visitor use. An area to the west of Etchinghill, another to the north of Upper Longdon, and a small area to the north-west of Wombourne have been identified as a ‘landscape at risk’ of sudden loss of quality and measures to restore and enhance key landscape characteristics (see opportunities below) will be critically important in preventing such a loss.

**Settled farmlands:**

6.18. There is one area of the settled farmlands landscape type to the south east of Cannock Chase and west of Lichfield.

6.19. The settled farmlands are landscapes of undulating lowlands and hills, with non-calcareous brown soils overlying Triassic mudstones. The land use has undergone a change in recent years, from predominantly dairying towards mixed farming with intensive arable cropping. There is generally a varied pattern of small to medium sized hedged fields with a scatter of small woodlands, often of ancient origin.

6.20. Key characteristics include busy main roads; evidence of commuter pressures; horticulture; introduced exotic tree species; inappropriate property improvements; fencing; power lines; urban expansion; railway; industrial estates.

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57 Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2009 - 2014
6.21. Considerations for this study include the loss of characteristic landscape features, a decline in the condition of those features that remain, and the relatively poor survival of characteristic semi-natural vegetation (i.e. ancient woodland and hedgerows, and semi-natural grasslands).

6.22. Potential for tree and woodland planting and very high and high priorities for habitat provision are provided for each key landscape type and sub-type at Appendix 4.

6.23. Additional landscape types that occur within the BEA but cover small land areas include:

- Lowland village farmlands (very small section west of Tamworth)
- Riparian alluvial lowlands (small area north of Cannock Chase)
- Settled plateau farmland slopes (small area north of Burntwood)

**Designated sites**

**Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

6.24. The areas in England and Wales considered to be most valuable in terms of their scenic or landscape quality are designated as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

6.25. Cannock Chase was designated as an AONB (Figure 6.1 and 6.2) in 1958 because of its beautiful landscape, its wildlife and its history. Cannock Chase is the largest surviving area of lowland heathland\(^{58}\) in the Midlands. The AONB also has extensive areas of forest and woodland along with areas of designed parkland, sand and gravel quarrying and mixed agriculture.

6.26. The AONB is protected by law\(^{59}\) and managed to maintain its special character now and in the future. The AONB Management Plan has recently been reviewed. The vision and high level objectives of the 2009-2014 Management Plan\(^{60}\) are set out below.

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\(^{58}\) Lowland heath is an internationally scarce and threatened wildlife habitat.

\(^{59}\) The CRoW Act 2000 highlights the importance of AONBs in section 85, placing a duty on all public bodies to 'have regard' to the 'purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.'

A Vision for the Future of Cannock Chase AONB

By 2029, Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be an enhanced area of national and international importance in terms of landscape beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, centred on its heaths and woods. Improved management of both habitat and public access will bring conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity and contribute towards a better quality of life both for local communities and visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Objectives</th>
<th>AONB Management Plan Theme</th>
<th>Chapter where related issues are considered in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLO 1 Develop the sense of Cannock Chase AONB as a special place for everyone who lives in, works within or visits the area.</td>
<td>Landscape (Defined as everything relating to the visual and physical aspects of the area and its biodiversity).</td>
<td>6. Landscape Character and cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLO 2 Conserve and enhance the distinctive and nationally important landscape of Cannock Chase AONB and the locally, nationally and internationally important biodiversity it supports.</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>6. Landscape Character and cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLO 3 Develop a place valued and understood by everyone who comes into contact with Cannock Chase AONB, so that they can contribute positively to the shaping of its future.</td>
<td>People (Defined as everything relating to those who visit and use the area, as well as those who are delivering the Management Plan).</td>
<td>4. Socio-economic character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLO 4 Ensure a safe, clean and tranquil environment that can contribute to a high and sustainable quality of life.</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>4. Socio-economic character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLO 5 Support a working landscape where prosperity and opportunity increase, natural life flourishes and pressure upon natural resources is diminished.</td>
<td>Economy (Defined as all financial factors and links affecting the work of the Management Plan).</td>
<td>4. Socio-economic character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLO 6 Create a place of enjoyment for everyone, providing opportunities for quiet recreation, that contributes positively to physical and mental well being.</td>
<td>Recreation (Defined as everything relating to those who come to enjoy activities within the area and those who provide services to support those activities).</td>
<td>8. Access/ 7. Open Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLO 7 Maintain and develop a successful partnership, working together to manage Cannock Chase AONB effectively.</td>
<td>Support (Defined as infrastructure and external factors that we must respond to for Plan delivery).</td>
<td>9. Existing initiatives and partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.27. The Management Plan identifies 22 key issues relating to the ‘landscape’ theme which are of relevance to this study:

- **KI1** Heathland habitats form the core of the AONB designation.
- **KI2** It is an intensive long term task to maintain heathland in favourable condition.
- **KI3** Woodland habitats are an important large scale integral landscape element within the AONB, linking to the heathland areas.
- **KI4** Woodlands need to be managed to support nature conservation.
- **KI5** The publicly owned forest areas need to be managed for multi-purpose public benefits.
- **KI6** Ancient woodland needs to be protected and managed to secure its long term future.
- **KI7** Some inappropriate landscape elements are being introduced as a result of land use change to horticulture and resulting in some poor quality.
- **KI8** Field patterns and habitats continue to deteriorate due to lack of hedgerow maintenance.
- **KI9** Loss of key parkland features such as trees, boundary walls.
- **KI10** Fragmentation of habitats is a risk.
- **KI11** Maintaining historical features within the landscape.
- **KI12** Groundwater and its impact on the AONB habitats - abstraction.
- **KI13** Rising mine waters - potential to pollute.
- **KI14** Streams and valley mires - quality of aquatic environment.
- **KI15** Floodplain maintenance.
- **KI16** Encroachment of urban elements into landscapes.
- **KI17** Pressure for development, its quality and impacts may change the character of the AONB landscapes.
- **KI18** Mineral extraction.
- **KI19** Protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- **KI20** Maintaining views.
- **KI21** Climate change will continue to impact land management and other activities in the AONB.
- **KI22** Other formal designations exist within the AONB that must be addressed for long term management.

**B. CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Historic Character**

6.28. The study area has a rich and varied history. There is evidence of prehistoric activity across the BEA from a small number of Mesolithic flint finds and Bronze Age barrows on Cannock Chase, to the Iron Age hillfort of Castle Ring, Bronze Age burnt mounds and a number of sites discovered and excavated as part of the M6 Toll construction.

6.29. There is also evidence of Roman activity including the roads of Watling Street running east west through Cannock and Ryknild Street running between Birmingham and Lichfield in the central part of the BEA. The Roman town of Wall lies to the
south west of Lichfield. Further Roman sites were also discovered and excavated as part of the M6 Toll construction.

6.30. The BEA approximates to the site of the Cannock (or Cank) Forest, a royal hunting forest believed to have been in existence by the reign of William the Conqueror. The area was heavily wooded, but piecemeal assarting or bringing new land into cultivation began during the medieval period along with the creation of medieval chases of Cannock and Sutton together with a number of medieval deer parks, including Sutton, Shenstone and Weeford. The more productive land over the sandstone to the edges of the area were cleared for agriculture and there is some evidence of open field cultivation. In addition, there are other areas such as the land around Chorley, which provides evidence of medieval colonization through field patterns and place names.

6.31. During the later Middle Ages the industries of coal mining, iron and glass working, charcoal burning and quarrying had developed and it is suggested that much of the woodland on Cannock Chase was felled over a period of 20 years at the end of the 16th century. Coal extraction exerted a greater influence on the area from the 16th century and has contributed to the character of the landscape to the south of the area.

6.32. The high plateau of Cannock Chase had been cleared by 1650 and was heathland, and woodland cover was mainly restricted to the deer parks including Teddesley, Wolseley, Beaudesert and Haywood which lie to the edge of the high ground of the Chase. The 18th and 19th centuries saw the layout of more formal parks, notably Shugborough, to the north of the area on the edge of the Trent Valley.

6.33. The 19th century saw the decline of the exposed coalfield and large scale coal-mining began in the concealed coal measures beneath Cannock, Hednesford and Burntwood. Existing settlements expanded rapidly and new ones followed the strongly rectilinear pattern of recent enclosures. In the 1850’s, the coal had been worked out in the Black Country and the emphasis shifted to engineering leaving behind large areas of derelict and despoiled land in its wake. By the first part of the 20th century Cannock Chase was used for military purposes and from 1921 onwards planting of coniferous trees on the heath began.

6.34. Change since the Second World War includes the expansion of residential settlement and of industrial estates; reclamation of mining tips; development of open cast mines and sand and clay pits; the construction of the M6 and the intensification of agriculture.

Designated sites

6.35. The rich history of the area is evidenced by the heritage designations found across the BEA including 8 Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, 21 Scheduled Monuments and one Registered Battlefield as shown in Figure 6.3 and summarized in the table below.
### Registered Parks and Gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 6.3 reference</th>
<th>English Heritage reference</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2208</td>
<td>GREAT BARR HALL</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2359</td>
<td>SUTTON PARK</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4178</td>
<td>WALSALL MEMORIAL GARDEN</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2171</td>
<td>SHUGBOROUGH</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4899</td>
<td>WALSALL ARBORETUM</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5091</td>
<td>WITTON CEMETERY</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5269</td>
<td>GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4057</td>
<td>CATHEDRAL CLOSE AND LINEAR PARK, LICHLFIELD</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scheduled Monuments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 6.3 reference</th>
<th>English Heritage reference</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21570</td>
<td>HLAEW 12M NORTH WEST OF RUSHALL HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>13507</td>
<td>MAPLE HAYES MOATED SITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ST198</td>
<td>NE corner tower, wall and ditch of close defences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>30056</td>
<td>HILLFORT KNOWN AS THE CASTLE FORT AT CASTLEBANK PLANTATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ST241</td>
<td>Moated site and bloomerly in Courtbanks Covert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>22423</td>
<td>SAUCER BARROW ON SPRING HILL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>30041</td>
<td>BOWL BARROW AT KING'S STANDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>21598</td>
<td>CHURCHYARD CROSS, ST LUKE'S CHURCHYARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>21574</td>
<td>MEDIEVAL FORTIFIED HOUSE AT RUSHALL HALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>21560</td>
<td>GREY FRIARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>21635</td>
<td>CASTLE RING, A MULTIVALLATE HILLFORT AND MEDIEVAL HUNTING LODGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>21532</td>
<td>ST THOMAS’ PRIORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>22437</td>
<td>SHENSTONE PARK MOATED SITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>30085</td>
<td>MEDIEVAL DEERPARK AND OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SUTTON PARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>21565</td>
<td>MOATED SITE, 15M SOUTH OF MOAT FARM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>30085</td>
<td>MEDIEVAL DEERPARK AND OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SUTTON PARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>30085</td>
<td>MEDIEVAL DEERPARK AND OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SUTTON PARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>35861</td>
<td>WORLD WAR I INSTRUCTION MODEL OF A TRENCH SYSTEM, AND ASSOCIATED EARTHWORK AND BUILDING REMAINS 850M NORTH WEST OF FAIROAK COTTAGES, CANNOCK CHASE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>ST50</td>
<td>Conduit head in High Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>35875</td>
<td>PRINCE RUPERT'S MOUND: A 17TH CENTURY FIELDWORK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>ST15</td>
<td>Roman site, Letocetum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Registered Battlefields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 6.3 reference</th>
<th>English Heritage reference</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Battle of Hopton Heath, 1643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.36. In addition to the sites highlighted in the table above, there are also numerous Listed buildings designated for their historic interest and contribution to the character of the area. It should also be noted that there are many other archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes of interest in the BEA which are not recognised by formal designation but which are documented on the Historic Environment Record.

6.37. Staffordshire County Council has carried out an Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) of the County to define historic character in the present day landscape. The results are presented in Figure 6.4. Similar work is being undertaken in the southern part of the BEA; the Black Country HLC includes Walsall and Sandwell whilst the northern parts of Birmingham are captured as part of the Warwickshire HLC. The mapping for these areas has not been obtained for this study but should be referred to in any future development of the Green Infrastructure Action Plan.

**KEY ISSUES**

- Loss and condition of characteristic landscape features and semi-natural vegetation types that define the character of the area.
- Relic or regenerated heathland that survives outside the Cannock Chase AONB is vulnerable to fragmentation and erosion and surviving areas of heathland are vulnerable to intensification of agriculture.
- Archaeological and other historic sites are vulnerable to land use/land management changes.
- Lack of appropriate land management including hedgerow management, woodland management and grazing.
- Areas of poorly restored land and un-restored mine workings and change brought about by open cast mining and sand and gravel extraction.
- Derelict pasture and other pressures associated with the urban fringe.
- Pressures from housing growth, aggregates extraction, waste disposal and stone quarrying.
- Pressures arising from heavy recreational use within Cannock Chase AONB particularly relating to traffic.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Maintain and expand coverage of the characteristic ‘wild’ heathland landscape (see point below).
- Maintain, restore and enhance key landscape characteristics as an integral part of the BEA’s Green Infrastructure whilst considering the biodiversity benefits and ensuring associated changes in land management do not have an adverse effect on the BEA’s archaeological and historical sites. Opportunities include the following identified by Staffordshire County Council in *Planning for landscape change: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 1996 – 2011*:
  - Protect existing lowland heaths from development and damaging activities and re-create/ create new heathland
• Maintain, enhance, restore and buffer lowland acidic grassland
• Restore degraded Ancient/ semi-natural broadleaved woodland and recreate/ regenerate similar habitats where appropriate
• Maintain, safeguard and restore areas of lowland wood pasture and parkland
• Maintain, enhance and restore areas of wet woodland
• Maintain and safeguard existing areas of unimproved neutral grassland whilst exploring opportunities to create new areas and provide links through habitat creation
• Maintain and enhance existing areas of lowland wet grassland
• Maintain and manage ancient hedgerows and hedgerow trees
• Plant new species rich hedgerows
• Maintain, improve and restore arable field margins
• Maintain and enhance the quality of canals, lakes and ponds and their catchments
• Maintain the quality of all natural existing river and stream features and maintain and improve the quality and quantity of water

- Incorporate historic features within the GI to conserve their integrity and add to the rich sense of place ranging from prehistoric remains, Roman interventions, through to the creation of Deer Parks up to the industrial archaeological sites.
- Seek to promote appropriate traditional land management methods to conserve the landscape character and heritage resource whilst providing economic benefits. Such approaches might include grazing and a variety of woodland management approaches.
- Use existing landscape character assessments to draw out the most appropriate types of GI provision for specific geographic locations.
Cannock Chase to Sutton Park
Green Infrastructure

Figure 6.1: National Character Areas

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough
- Cannock Chase AONB

National Character Areas
- Arden
- Cannock Chase and Cank Wood
- Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield
- Mease/Sense Lowlands
- Melbourne Parklands
- Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
- Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands
- Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain
- Trent Valley Washlands

Source: Ordnance Survey, Natural England
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision: 0246 1K m

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Figure 6.2: Staffordshire County Council Landscape Character Types

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough
- Cannock Chase AONB
- Most sensitive landscapes

Landscape Character Types
- Ancient clay farmlands
- Coalfield farmlands
- Lowland village farmlands
- Riparian alluvial lowlands
- Sandstone estatelands
- Sandstone hills and heaths
- Sandstone terrace estatelands
- Settled farmlands
- Settled heathlands
- Settled plateau farmland slopes
- Terrace alluvial lowlands

Source: Ordnance Survey, Staffordshire County Council, Natural England
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision:
Figure 6.3: Historic designations

Key
- Study boundary
- Borough/Metropolitan Borough
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Listed Buildings
- Parks and Gardens
- Battlefields

Source: Ordnance Survey, English Heritage
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision: A

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File: S:\4500\4582 Cannock Chase to Sutton Park draft GI action plan\GIS\Themes\ArcGIS9\4582-01_007_Heritage_RevA.mxd
Figure 6.4: Staffordshire County Council Historic Landscape Character

Key

- Study boundary
- Borough/ Metropolitan Borough

Historic Landscape Character (broad types)

- Communications
- Fieldscapes
- Industrial and Extractive
- Military
- Ornamental, Parkland and Recreational
- Settlement
- Unenclosed Land
- Water and Valley Floor Fields
- Woodland

Source: Ordnance Survey, Staffordshire County Council
Date: 15/07/2009
Revision:

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7. OPEN SPACE

7.1. Open space has a wide range of functions and benefits, providing essential formal and informal recreational space for people to enjoy whilst also providing habitats for wildlife. Sites may be small and simple serving an immediate local area or large and complex, perhaps providing a wider range of experiences or habitats and therefore serving a more strategic role and wider catchment area. Having considered the wider open space areas of the countryside in previous sections of this report in terms of the character and habitats of the study area, and with access considered later, this section focuses primarily on open space which is generally accessible to the public and managed by local authorities. As with all the characterisation themes, open space does not exist in isolation and will be considered together with the other themes, in drawing out the overall distribution of Green Infrastructure assets and determining areas of deficiency and opportunity.

7.2. This section describes open space provision within the study area in terms of the type of provision, its quantity, accessibility and quality, drawing on existing studies, audit and map data. Key areas of deficiency are identified, alongside potential issues and opportunities related to open space.

7.3. The following references and data supplied by the local authorities within the study area were used to identify and map existing open space assets. This mainly consists of audits and assessments which have been carried out in compliance with Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17) and the associated Companion Guide. This generally means open space provision has been categorised by typology reflecting a site’s primary purpose. This then allows analysis of like-with-like sites in terms of the quantity, accessibility and quality of provision (where the assessments address these factors).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Key open space references</th>
<th>Map data used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford Borough Council</td>
<td>PPG17 Assessment and Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy, Consultation Report: October 2008</td>
<td>Local plan green network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Staffordshire Council</td>
<td>Open Space Audit, April 2008</td>
<td>PPG17 audit data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichfield District Council</td>
<td>Open Space Assessment, December 2007</td>
<td>PPG17 audit data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council</td>
<td>Walsall Green Space Strategy 2006-2011 (Draft for consultation July 06) Urban Open Space SPD, April 2006</td>
<td>PPG17 audit data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham City Council</td>
<td>The Future of Birmingham’s Parks and Open Spaces (SPD), Nov 2006</td>
<td>PPG17 audit data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council</td>
<td>Sandwell Green Space Audit, Executive Summary 2006</td>
<td>PPG17 audit data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4. In addition, Staffordshire County Council countryside sites have been mapped together with other open space managed by the Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and National Trust to build up a picture of the overall open space network.
EXISTING OPEN SPACE PROVISION

7.5. Existing open space provision is described and mapped (see Figures 7.1a-g) by local authority summarising provision by typology where data available, with information about the standards applied in analysis and the resulting key issues and deficiencies. This data is then drawn together in Figure 7.2 to give an overview of the open space network across the study area.

**Description of provision in Stafford Borough**

7.6. Stafford Borough Council has developed a PPG17 Assessment and Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy, Consultation Report: October 2008 which provides information about current open space provision in the Borough. The assessment groups the main open space typologies into ‘multi-functional green space’ which forms their ‘green network’. This is composed of 294 sites divided into typologies as summarised in Table 7.1 below.

**Table 7.1: Current open space in Stafford Borough**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space type</th>
<th>Existing quantity (no. of sites)</th>
<th>Existing quantity per 1000 population/ per person</th>
<th>Quantity standard</th>
<th>Accessibility standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and gardens*</td>
<td>9 sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 mins walk, 900m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural green spaces*</td>
<td>30 sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 mins walk, 600m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity green spaces*</td>
<td>180 sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 mins walk, 300m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors*</td>
<td>11 sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 mins walk, 300m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchyards and cemeteries*</td>
<td>46 sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 mins walk, 600m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open access playing fields*</td>
<td>18 sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 mins walk, 900m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-functional green space (MFGS)</td>
<td>294 total sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other provision:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>42ha</td>
<td>0.34sq m per person</td>
<td>5 mins walk, 300m for younger children (up to 8yrs), 450m for older children (up to 12yrs).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>32ha</td>
<td>2.64sq m per person</td>
<td>Maintain current amount of provision, though not necessarily on the existing sites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.7. The distribution of open space in Stafford Borough is shown in Figure 7.1a, with a total mapped area of 1192ha. The majority of open space sites, including the Borough's main parks, fall within the towns of Stafford and Stone. Stone is approximately 10km north of the study boundary whilst Stafford town importantly adjoins the northwest tip of the study area. Smaller concentrations of open space, particularly play areas are scattered across the rural village settlements of the Borough.

7.8. The four main parks and gardens in Stafford town are Victoria Park, Wildwood Park, Rowley Park and Littleworth Park. In addition there are three local nature reserves in the town contributing to the area’s natural green space, namely Kingsmead Marsh, Kingston Pool Covert and Astonfields Balancing Lake.

7.9. The green corridor walkway along the River Sow provides a well used and important link between the town and the surrounding countryside with access facilitated by the Way for the Millennium promoted walking route.

Cannock Chase and Shugborough Park

7.10. In addition to those open space sites included in Stafford Borough Council’s PPG17 Assessment a large proportion of Cannock Chase AONB falls within Stafford Borough. Extensive areas of the AONB are accessible to the public including the area of country park owned by Staffordshire County Council, Forestry Commission woodland and Shugborough Park owned by the National Trust (see Figure 7.1a and 7.2). In such close proximity to Stafford town, this vast accessible area provides a major recreational resource for the Borough and beyond.

Key areas of deficiency/issues in Stafford Borough

7.11. Key conclusions from the open space assessment (consultation draft) relevant to the study area and the potential future enhancement or development of Green Infrastructure are as follows:

- There is no overall open space quantity deficiency based on current population; any future strategy should focus instead on enhancing quality and adapting function of existing provision.

- With considerable recreational pressure already exerted on Cannock Chase and with the projected growth, the need to create a country park in the Borough has been identified (there is currently no Stafford Borough Council provision). One of two possible locations to be considered is in the vicinity of the River Penk/Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal which could be planned and developed as part of any significant expansion of Stafford; the waterways would provide useful linear access routes.

- Adaptation of existing spaces is needed to provide more park-like spaces (including Wildwood Park and Charnley Road in Stafford).

- Need to establish strategic network of larger play and teen facilities in Stafford town, preferably in key green space sites (and smaller local facilities in some areas). New/enhanced sites to have a ‘natural play’ focus.
Need to identify opportunities to create linked network for walking and cycling e.g. links with Sustrans routes and routes beside rivers and canals.

Description of provision in South Staffordshire

7.12. South Staffordshire Council’s Open Space Audit, April 2008 details current open space provision as summarised in Table 7.2 and illustrated in Figure 7.1b. The recommendations of the audit (including associated Playing Pitch Strategy and Supplementary Consultation Report) have been taken forward into an Open Space Strategy and Action Plan (consultation draft, September 2008).

Table 7.2: Current open space in South Staffordshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space type</th>
<th>Existing quantity (ha)</th>
<th>Existing quantity per 1000 population</th>
<th>Quantity standard</th>
<th>Accessibility standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historic parks and gardens</td>
<td>1084.07ha</td>
<td>10.24ha per 1000</td>
<td>No standard recommended (mainly private sites).</td>
<td>70%+ score (range of scores assessed to gauge standard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and semi-natural green spaces</td>
<td>781.85ha</td>
<td>7.383ha per 1000</td>
<td>No standard recommended although existing level of provision (7.383ha per 1000) to be maintained.</td>
<td>70%+ score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity green spaces</td>
<td>169.4ha</td>
<td>1.6ha per 1000</td>
<td>1.6ha per 1000</td>
<td>70%+ score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>4.66ha</td>
<td>0.044ha per 1000</td>
<td>0.2ha per 1000 (formal play space)</td>
<td>70%+ score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>31.33ha</td>
<td>0.296ha per 1000</td>
<td>No standard recommended.</td>
<td>70%+ score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>12.37ha</td>
<td>0.117ha per 1000</td>
<td>0.25ha per 1000</td>
<td>70%+ score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchyards and cemeteries</td>
<td>27.51ha</td>
<td>0.260ha per 1000</td>
<td>No standard recommended.</td>
<td>70%+ score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.13. The majority of the district falls outside the study boundary only the eastern most wards listed below overlapping:

- Penkridge North East and Acton Trussell Ward
- Huntington and Hatherton Ward
- Cheslyn Hay North and Saredon Ward
- Cheslyn Hay South Ward
- Great Wyrley Town Ward
- Great Wyrley Landywood Ward
- Essington Ward
7.14. The key open spaces in these wards include the large historic park and garden estate of Teddesley Hall and the smaller estate of Hatherton Hall. It is assumed access is limited to public footpaths rather than these being fully accessible spaces.

7.15. There is a cluster of three natural and semi-natural green spaces within or close to the study boundary located to the northwest of Cannock town and concentrated in just two of the seven wards which overlap the study boundary. The largest of these is Shoal Hill Common, together with the smaller sites of Cavan’s Wood and Littleton Leisure Park. In addition there are large woodland areas bounding Cannock Chase (to the east of Teddesley Hall) and smaller patches to the northwest of Cannock town which are owned and managed by the Forestry Commission.

7.16. Amenity green space together with provision for children and young people is concentrated in the village settlements of Huntingdon, Great Wyrley and Cheslyn Hay. These spaces include larger recreation grounds and playing fields as well as small incidental spaces within housing areas. This general open space provision is supplemented by four churchyards/cemeteries and one allotment site within the study area.

7.17. There is some kind of provision for children and young people within all the wards overlapping the study area except for Cheslyn Hay South ward which currently has none. Provision in Essington ward is limited to one LAP and in Huntington and Hatherton ward to one skate park.

7.18. Important green corridors which connect up with the study area include the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Towpath, Wyrley and Essington Canal (disused) and a spur of the Shropshire Union Canal towpath.

Key areas of deficiency/issues in South Staffordshire

- There are no formal publicly accessible parks and gardens in the district, reflecting its rural character with no major settlements.

- There is no audited natural and semi-natural green space in Penkridge North East and Acton Trussell, Cheslyn Hay North and Saredon, Cheslyn Hay South, Great Wyrley Town, or Great Wyrley Landywood Wards. (Some of these deficiencies may be addressed by the presence of Forestry Commission woodland, where potential for access enhancements may exist.)

- The majority of sites of all typologies met the districts quality standard but a few key points noted in relation to the natural and semi-natural green spaces in the study area included lack of appropriate or clear signage and poor access by walking or public transport.

- The quantity of amenity space provision in Penkridge North East and Acton Trussell ward is particularly low with only 0.082ha per 1000 population (compared to 1.6ha per 1000 average across district) however the assessment highlights that resident’s proximity and access to open countryside could be seen to reduce demand for local provision and therefore any deficiency.

- Cheslyn Hay North and Saredon ward is the only ward of the seven overlapping the study area to feature a local allotment site. This reflects the overall deficiency
in quantity of provision across the district which will need to be considered in the future against the demand for this type of provision.

- Deficiency in quantity of play provision is an issue across the district but in relation to the study area this is most marked in Cheslyn Hay South ward which currently has no facilities but has one of the highest percentages of under 19 year olds in the district. Older children may be able to travel to facilities in the neighbouring ward but this leaves a deficiency in provision for younger children. There is also a lack of play provision for younger children in Huntington and Hatherton ward and Great Wyrley. There are inconsistencies in the quality and accessibility of play facilities across the district highlighting a general need for regular inspections, improved maintenance and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance particularly in the more densely populated areas such as Great Wyrley where demand and pressure on facilities is greatest.

- Accessibility and quality of green corridors was generally assessed to be good but a number of issues were identified through the audit including the need to ensure sites have a degree of open aspect so they feel safe, increased provision of benches to promote enjoyment of the scenery, provision of appropriate signage ensuring surfaces and entranceways enable disabled access. In relation to sites close to the study area, the quality of the disused Wyrley and Essington Canal in the south of Essington ward could be enhanced. Littering was identified as a particular issue.

- Footpath networks could be enhanced to link up the existing green corridors and open space and to establish circular walks linking village centres.

**Description of provision in Cannock Chase District**

7.19. Cannock Chase District Council is in the process of preparing an up to date PPG17 compliant open space assessment from which the data is not yet available. For the purposes of this study, in order to gain an understanding of open space provision in Cannock Chase District we have drawn upon data from the previous Green Space Strategy, March 2005 and referred to the more recent Developer Contributions SPD, November 2008.

**Table 7.3: Current open space in Cannock Chase District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space type</th>
<th>Existing quantity (ha)</th>
<th>Existing quantity per 1000 population</th>
<th>Quantity standard (NPFA)</th>
<th>Accessibility standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major parks</td>
<td>27ha</td>
<td>1.1ha per 1000</td>
<td>2.4ha per 1000 (NPFA)</td>
<td>0.53miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local parks</td>
<td>75ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens</td>
<td>0.08ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-natural sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological</td>
<td>493ha (excl. AONB)</td>
<td>5.35ha per 1000 (excl. AONB)</td>
<td>2ha per 1000 (NE ANGSt)</td>
<td>0.53miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green link</td>
<td>26ha</td>
<td>0.28ha per 1000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity green spaces</td>
<td>Green/ common</td>
<td>9ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open space type</td>
<td>Existing quantity (ha)</td>
<td>Existing quantity per 1000 population</td>
<td>Quantity standard</td>
<td>Accessibility standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing amenity land</td>
<td>12ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadside</td>
<td>18ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>Playgrounds/ kickabouts/ skateparks</td>
<td>4ha</td>
<td>0.8ha of play space</td>
<td>0.4miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments</td>
<td>Allotment</td>
<td>5ha</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchyards and cemeteries</td>
<td>Churchyard/ cemetery/ closed cemetery</td>
<td>19ha</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports ground</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>92ha</td>
<td>various standards for different types of sport provision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports ground</td>
<td>Sports ground</td>
<td>172ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownfield land</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>13ha (19 sites)</td>
<td>0.3ha per 1000</td>
<td>These sites have restricted access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>17ha (4 sites)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.20.
Cannock Chase District covers a significant central part of the study area, the majority of the district encompassed within the study boundary.

### 7.21.
Open space provision is summarised by typology in Table 7.3 above. As illustrated in Figure 7.1c provision is concentrated in the settlement areas centred around Cannock town and Rugeley.

### 7.22.
The quantity and distribution of parks and gardens varies greatly across the district with for example 4.6ha per 1000 population in Hagley ward (south area of Rugeley) but only 0.12ha per 1000 in Etching Hill and the Heath ward (north area of Rugeley). The resulting district average for parks and gardens is 1.1ha per 1000 population. Although there is this variance there is still however a park and garden in each main settlement centre, including the following key sites:

- Cannock Park (assessed to be most popular amongst young people and achieved Green Flag Award in 2008)
- Heath Hayes Park
- Hednesford Park (the most popular amongst the citizen’s panel)
- Elmore Park
- Ravenhill Park (the least used according to consultation)
- Norton Canes Recreation Ground
- Old Hednesford Park

### 7.23.
The provision of semi-natural sites is extensive in the district covering 493ha of ecological sites and 26ha of green links, the greatest total area covered by any of the open space typologies. This total excludes the extensive area of Cannock Chase AONB which was not included in the 2005 assessment calculations, the report focusing instead on the more local level of provision (the strategic role of Cannock
Chase is noted below). The greatest concentration of semi-natural sites is in Hednesford North and Rawnson wards to the northeast of Cannock town including the key sites of Hednesford Hills Common, Hednesford Brickworks, Hazelslade nature reserve, and Castle Ring.

7.24. Amenity green space is unevenly distributed across the district with 46% of the total area concentrated in just four wards. Sites in this typology include small scattered housing amenity spaces which mainly provide visual amenity; similarly roadside amenity spaces offer limited scope for informal recreation. The greens/commons offer the greatest scope for recreation but total a relatively small 9.12ha area across the whole district and 20% of this total is concentrated in two greens in Norton Canes.

7.25. Provision for children and young people is similarly unevenly distributed and does not tie in with the population of children and young people living in a particular ward and averages 0.8ha per 1000 population. Hagley ward has the most facilities. Through the council’s Play Improvement Strategy a rolling programme of capital investment (begun in 2003) has seen improvements to the quality and safety of provision for children and young people.

7.26. In addition to these main types of open space provision considered most relevant to this study, the 2005 assessment also identifies allotments (5ha), churchyards and cemeteries (19ha) and sports grounds (264ha) which contribute to the green network across the District.

7.27. Table 7.3 shows that national standards were referenced to analyse the current quantity of provision however, in terms of standards for future provision, the Developer Contributions SPD refers back to the local plan saved policy H4 which sets an overall quantity standard of 2.8ha per 1000 population consisting of 2ha formal and informal open space (including outdoor sports provision) and 0.8ha of play space. These quantity standards will be applied in future in combination with the accessibility standards set out in the 2005 report (see Table 7.3).

7.28. Aside from the main PPG17 typologies, the 2005 assessment identifies brownfield land either vacant sites or sites which are subject to some kind of operational service and currently have restricted access. The vacant sites (13ha, 19 sites) offer potential for creating new open space sites. (These are not shown on the map, Figure 7.1c.)

**Cannock Chase and Beaudesert Old Park**

7.29. In addition to those open space sites considered in the 2005 Green Space Strategy, a large area of the northern half of the district is covered by Cannock Chase AONB. This includes large areas of accessible Forestry Commission woodland, including Beaudesert Old Park and areas of country park owned by Staffordshire County Council (see Figure 7.1c and 7.2). In close proximity to the settlements of both Cannock and Rugeley these accessible areas provide a significant recreational resource for the district and beyond.
Key areas of deficiency/issues in Cannock Chase District

- Quantitative and access deficiencies to parks and gardens were identified in Hednesford Green Heath ward which has no formal parks and gardens and in parts of Cannock Wood and Norton Canes.

- Qualitative issues were highlighted regarding parks and gardens provision in Hagley where the average for sites of this typology only just achieved a ‘good’ rating. Specific quality issues identified across the district included 77% of sites were found to be lacking in basic park furniture such as seating, bins or provision of dog bins nearby, there was also significant variance in scores for main site entrances and quality of roads and paths. At the local park level 44% of sites were audited to have no or very poor quality signage.

- To assess deficiencies in quantity and accessibility of semi-natural sites in the district the ANGSt (Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard) was used. This highlighted quantitative and accessibility deficiencies in Cannock North, Cannock West, Rugeley and Brereton and Ravenhill. In addition further accessibility deficiencies were found in Cannock South, Cannock East (Chadsmoor), Norton Canes (Norton East), Rawnley (Cannock Wood) and Western Springs. The extensive area of Cannock Chase (excluded from ANGSt analysis) together with sites outside the district e.g. Shoal Hill to the northwest of Cannock may partially address these deficiencies.

- Although the quality of semi-natural sites was generally good issues were apparent on a number of sites in Etching Hill and the Heath, Norton Canes and Rawnley. Dog fouling, the need to address anti-social behaviour, lack of seating and signage were key issues which arose on a number of sites.

- The uneven distribution of amenity green space results in overall quantitative deficiencies in Hednesford South and Rawnley wards (including areas of Prospect Village and Cannock Wood). These two wards together with Cannock South, and Hawks green wards specifically have no greens/commons within their amenity green space provision. A full quality assessment was not carried out but it was noted that lack of seating and signage could be addressed.

- Hednesford Green Heath and Hednesford South lack any provision for children and young people and in a number of other wards there is not a full range of provision for all ages. Quality scores averaged a high standard overall but varied significantly between wards. Overall conclusions from the assessment included the need to address the following issues:
  - Lack of benches and bins.
  - Control of dogs, vandalism and graffiti.
  - Need to review the level and type of provision for young people and for children with disabilities across the District
  - Limited circulation routes and need to clearly define age separation
  - The Council will need to plan long term for the replacement of infrastructure and equipment as the economic life expectancy reaches a point whereby it is no longer cost effective to repair and their has to be complete replacement.
- The 2005 report highlights that a number of **key open spaces outside the district** are visited by Cannock Chase residents including Chasewater Park and Beacon Park (both Lichfield DC), Walsall Arboretum (Walsall MBC), and Shoal Hill Common (South Staffs).

- The 19 vacant sites are largely concentrated in Hawks Green and Cannock South wards. Due to the small scale of these sites they have limited opportunity for any largescale development but could help address local level deficiencies in certain typologies e.g. amenity green space or provision for children and young people.

**Description of provision in Lichfield District**

7.30. Lichfield District occupies the largest proportion of the study area, overlapping the eastern edge of the study boundary. Open space provision is described by typology in Lichfield’s *Open Space Assessment, December 2007*. The approximate provision in each typology is summarised in **Table 7.4** below.

**Table 7.4: Current open space in Lichfield District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space type</th>
<th>Existing quantity (ha)</th>
<th>Existing quantity per 1000 population</th>
<th>Quantity standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban parks and gardens</td>
<td>79.17ha urban parks</td>
<td>1.43ha per 1000 (based on Lichfield City &amp; Burntwood only)</td>
<td>1.43ha per 1000 (based on population of Lichfield City &amp; Burntwood only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>307.19ha country park</td>
<td>3.22ha per 1000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and semi-natural green spaces</td>
<td>1983.32ha</td>
<td>20.77 ha per 1000</td>
<td>21ha per1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity green spaces</td>
<td>143.63ha</td>
<td>1.53ha per 1000</td>
<td>1.5ha per 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for children and young people</td>
<td>3.86ha</td>
<td>0.04ha per 1000</td>
<td>0.042ha per 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments &amp; community gardens</td>
<td>8.59ha</td>
<td>0.09ha per 1000</td>
<td>No standard, demand led.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchyards and cemeteries</td>
<td>25.54ha</td>
<td>No recognised standards.</td>
<td>No recognised standards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Green corridors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space type</th>
<th>Existing quantity</th>
<th>Existing quantity</th>
<th>Quantity standard</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ha)</td>
<td>per 1000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green corridors</td>
<td>680.7km in length, incl rights of way (455.2km), cycle (187.7km) and canal networks (37.8km).</td>
<td>No standards will be set in relation to this typology, but areas that have obstructions that limit their accessibility and those that have poor quality will be identified through consultation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.31. Similarly to the other district authorities in the study area, open space provision in Lichfield District is centred around the main settlement areas including the larger built up areas of Lichfield City and Burntwood as well as the more peripheral villages.

7.32. There are 15 parks and gardens in total, nine in Lichfield City and Six in Burntwood which equates to 1.43ha per 1000 population (based on the settlement populations only). The sites are generally larger in Lichfield City, Beacon Park the largest covering 28.57ha. A Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid encompassing restoration of Beacon Park, Minster Pool and Garden of Remembrance in Lichfield City is being progressed. These sites form part of the area identified in the local plan saved policy L.37 for a linear park, which aims to link up the corridor of open space through the city.

7.33. In addition, Chasewater Country Park is included under the parks and gardens typology but treated slightly separately as it is the only country park in the district, covering a significant 307ha. Development of Chasewater Country Park is supported by saved policy B.24 in the local plan which promotes the development of the recreation and leisure potential of the country park and surrounding area.

7.34. Together with Chasewater Country Park, Lichfield District has a number of other natural and semi-natural green spaces which are managed and often locally or nationally designated for their habitat value. The key larger sites within the study area which are likely to play a strategic role include Hopwas Hayes Wood (a large SBI to the southeast of Lichfield city, on the eastern edge of the study area) together with the following SSSI:

- Stowe Pool SSSI (Lichfield City)
- Chasewater Heaths SSSI (Chasewater Country Park, west of Burntwood)
- Gentleshaw Common SSSI (north of Burntwood)
- Biddulph Pool SSSI (to the north of Chasewater Country Park, just overlapping district boundary)

7.35. Amenity green space accounts for nearly 146ha of open space provision in the district. These spaces are generally smaller local open spaces and are concentrated in Lichfield and Burntwood with a small number of sites in the outlying villages of Longdon, Upper Longdon, Stonnall, Shenstone and Hint within the study boundary.
7.36. Provision for children and young people totals 3.86ha and is similarly focused around Lichfield and Burntwood together with sites in Stonnall, Shenstone, Little Aston and Armitage with Handsacre. Sites vary in size and provision in terms of ages catered for and variety of equipment and as a result are categorised in the assessment in Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) including Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs).

7.37. The 2007 assessment has also identified green corridors (not shown on the map) which include 455km of rights of way and nearly 38km of canal networks. These strategic routes are considered further in the access section of this report. Other open space provision in the district is made up of allotments and churchyards and cemeteries.

7.38. The Lichfield District Local Plan contains saved policy R1 relates to future open space provision and open space standards stating 2.83ha open space per 1000 population will be provided in urban areas in association with new housing development. Open space provision will be assessed individually on developments of less than 50 dwellings. Where new open space is proposed in villages by Parish Councils or local community groups this will be approved providing the land is suitably located is in accordance with other policies in the local plan.

7.39. In addition to the sites included in the 2007 assessment, the Woodland Trust owned site of Pipe Hall Farm located between Burntwood and Lichfield (see Figure 7.1d) provides nearly 45ha of accessible woodland and is therefore an important site, completing the picture of open space provision in Lichfield District.

**Key areas of deficiency/issues in Lichfield District**

- Overall the 2007 assessment concludes that the current quantity of open space provision of all typologies is sufficient but with projected population growth new open space will be needed to maintain the current level of provision. The assessment specifically identifies that the council’s desire is to increase the provision for children and young people by 0.58ha over the coming years to address the deficiencies in certain types of play provision. The standard for play has therefore been set slightly higher than the current level of provision to reflect this increase.

- In terms of accessibility to the key types of open space the following issues where identified in the assessment:
  - Central and southern areas of Burntwood are deficient in access to parks and gardens. Sites in Lichfield City are more accessible, the city better served by sustainable transport links including cycle networks and rights of way (assessed as green corridors) than Burntwood.
  - The rural settlements of Stonnall and Shenstone and parts of Hammerwich are deficient in access to 20ha natural/semi-natural green space within 2km and to lesser extent in access to 100ha sites within 5km. Sutton Park, over the boundary in Birmingham helps reduce deficiency in access to 100ha sites in this area.
Little Aston, in the south of the study area, is deficient in access to amenity green space however there is a NEAP play area and adjacent sports pitch to provide amenity to local residents.

There is currently no access to play provision in Longdon, Upper Longdon, Hammerwich or Drayton Bassett villages within the study area. The assessment identified a specific need for new MUGAs to be created in south Burntwood to address the deficiency in access to larger, varied play provision (NEAPs).

- The district does not currently hold any Green Flag Awards but aspires to obtain the award for the restored group of sites in Lichfield City should the HLF project be successful. The 2007 quality assessment scored parks and gardens in Burntwood slightly more highly than those in Lichfield City. Bins, seating, lighting, information and events programme were issues identified in the lower scoring sites which need addressing to enhance the quality of parks and gardens provision.

- In terms of the quality of natural and semi-natural green space, the SSSI within the study area could all be enhanced to achieve favourable condition using sustainable management methods, the condition ratings were as follows at the time of the 2007 assessment:
  - Stowe Pool SSSI **Unfavourable**
  - Chasewater Heaths SSSI **Unfavourable recovering**
  - Gentleshaw Common SSSI **Unfavourable recovering**
  - Biddulph Pool SSSI **Favourable/ unfavourable recovering**

- A number of plans have been developed for improving Chasewater Country Park including *Chasewater Hub: A Draft Regeneration Strategy for Chasewater Country Park 2002-2008*. This document identified a number of issues and opportunities as part of a SWOT analysis, including the following:
  - Need for improved visitor information
  - Need to enhance sense of ownership and broaden usage by the local community
  - Broaden the range of activities and amenities available to visitors
  - Enhance the parks visual attractiveness
  - Improve links with surrounding developments
  - Respond to the tourist market e.g. heritage, canals, cycling
  - Build on the site’s role as the gateway to the Forest of Mercia

- Some of the highest but also poorest quality scores for amenity green space were recorded in North Lichfield and Burntwood. Bins, seating, lighting, & information were all issues raised together with the condition of planted and grassed areas.

- Quality issues highlighted in relation to provision for children and young people included lack of or inappropriate provision of seating, bins, lighting, and information together with a need for enhanced presentation of main entrances. Maintenance of equipped play areas could generally be improved and site records kept to ensure resources are allocated effectively to achieve the required standards.