

Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

1. Green Routes and Green Route Enhancement Areas are defined on the Policies Map.
2. Development proposals should demonstrate how they have considered and achieved the following criteria within scheme proposals:
 - a) Provide new or protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure networks, including the need to mitigate potential impacts of new development
 - b) Promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways
 - c) Promote the integration of the scheme with any adjoining public open space or countryside
 - d) Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features
 - e) Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.
3. Development proposals which would result in the loss, fragmentation or isolation of areas of green infrastructure will not be acceptable.
4. Development proposals within the River Valley areas shall improve or contribute toward:
 - a) The establishment of a Loddon/ Blackwater riverside footpath and bridleway, as defined on the Policies Map, to accommodate dual use
 - b) The establishment of a riverside footpath and cycleway to accommodate dual use along the Emm Brook
 - c) Opportunities for improvements to green infrastructure to help minimise flood risk

2.10 Policy CP1 – Sustainable Development of the [Core Strategy](#) seeks to maintain the high quality of the environment. Policy CP3 – General principles for development of the Core Strategy recognises the importance of sites both to maintain or enhance the ability of a site to support fauna or flora including protected species and policy CP4 – Infrastructure requirements also refers to the improvement or provision of infrastructure, community and other facilities. Policy CC03: Green Infrastructure enhances these Core Strategy policies in setting out how these criteria can be met by providing for or enhancing green corridors in developments.

2.11 Proposals shall comply with Policy TB23: Biodiversity and Development and be consistent with the [Borough Design Guide SPD](#) (2012).

2.12 Green infrastructure networks include the natural and managed green areas in urban and rural settings. Green infrastructure networks include countryside; open spaces; river valleys, corridors and wetlands; Sites of Urban Landscape Value (SULVs); Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS); landscape features; 'green' corridors, including ecological corridors; Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG); allotments; amenity areas within developments; green routes and green route enhancement areas; country parks and public rights of way, including footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.

2.13 Green infrastructure can achieve a number of objectives, including:

- i. Contributing significantly to the quality of life by creating a sense of place and wellbeing
 - ii. Providing health benefits by enabling access to opportunities for recreation
 - iii. Providing opportunities for sustainable transport and access, such as through the provision of public rights of way
 - iv. Combating climate change
 - v. Minimising flood risk, as recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework
 - vi. Creating an ecological network that encourages the movement of wildlife along green corridors.
- 2.14 Improving accessibility to existing green corridors must be considered in the layout of proposals. Proposals shall be consistent with the Borough's [Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan \(ROWIP\)](#) that identifies ways to improve access on public rights of way for all, especially those with visual and mobility impairments and to extend the accessibility of the network.
- 2.15 The establishment of the Loddon/Blackwater riverside footpath and bridleway will provide for informal recreation links to connect with the River Thames National Trail and the Blackwater Valley footpath. It is the Council's intention to create a riverside footpath along the Rivers Loddon and Blackwater.
- 2.16 The establishment of the riverside footpath and cycleway along the Emm Brook will provide for informal recreation links to connect in with Wokingham Town and Dinton Pastures Country Park at Winnersh.
- 2.17 Landscaping, tree planting, hedges and the protection of trees, woodlands and hedges in both the short and long term will be promoted and secured through the planning process and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 2.18 Proposals must be supported by a landscaping scheme. This must demonstrate which features are to be retained and how they will be retained. The landscaping scheme must also provide information on the additional landscaping required to enhance the visual quality of the development and to integrate it into the locality.
- 2.19 A landscape and visual impact study will be required where the site is located on or adjacent to the development limits or where the proposal may have an impact on the townscape around it. This helps to assess the impact of the proposals on the surrounding landscape features and other land uses such as residential properties, roads and public rights of way. The landscape and visual impact study shall include:
- i. Baseline information – what is on site already, i.e. topography; site context; vegetation; land use; landscape features and site character
 - ii. Description of the proposals
 - iii. Visual assessment of the proposals including impact on surrounding landscape features and other land uses
 - iv. Landscape assessment of the proposals and how the proposals will affect the landscape features within and outside of the site, including landscape character.

- 2.20 Conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to secure implementation of landscaping schemes and the replacement and protection of trees, hedgerows or other natural features.

Policy Background

National

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) (2012), i.e. under heading 8 - Promoting healthy communities, such as paragraph 75; heading 10 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, such as paragraph 99, and heading 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment such as paragraph 114

Regional

[South East Green Infrastructure Framework](#) (July 2009)

Local

[Core Strategy](#) (2010) policies CP1 - Sustainable Development; CP3 – General principles for development; CP4 – Infrastructure requirements; CP7 – Biodiversity; CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

[Strategic Development Locations SPDs](#) (2011)

[Wokingham PPG17 Open space, Sport and Recreation Study Standards paper](#) (2012) (KKP)

[Wokingham PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit Update - Final Amended Open Space Assessment Report](#) (2012)

[Wokingham PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit Update - Final Amended Sport Assessment Report 1b](#) (2012) (KKP)

[Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) (2009)

[Blackwater Valley Countryside Strategy](#) (2011-15)

[Thames Waterway Plan](#) (2006-2011)

[Thames River Basin River Management Plan](#)