

Gloucestershire GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE Pledge

MAKING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE WORK FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE - FOR OUR COMMUNITIES, WILDLIFE AND ECONOMY. OUR PLEDGE, CREATED BY THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP, IS A PROMISE TO COMMIT TO MAKING GLOUCESTERSHIRE A PIONEER OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, CREATING A BETTER, MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT, AS WELL AS BECOMING AN EXEMPLAR FOR THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

OUR COMMITMENT TO A GREENER GLOUCESTERSHIRE

As our population grows and becomes wealthier, so do the demands we make for land, water and other natural resources. Our natural assets provide a wide range of services essential to society and the economy and so need to be safeguarded to ensure their longevity. Through investment in green infrastructure, we can help to square this circle, since this approach allows development to take place in ways that work with the grain of nature.

WHY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

Green infrastructure is not just about providing space for wildlife and recreation. It is truly multi-functional. It can improve water management, air quality, public safety, food and energy security, public health and wellbeing, social cohesion, along with climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Green infrastructure is as important as the buildings themselves, the roads that connect them, the power and water that supplies them – all provide the essential ingredients that go into making a place function effectively. In brief, people need green infrastructure to help lead more fulfilling lives and be resilient for future challenges – and nature needs it to survive in our increasingly humanised world.

A PROMISE

Yet, if we are to bring about the required shift in favour of green infrastructure it will require clear leadership and a vision that is shared by all involved in every aspect of development. This is what our

pledge seeks to achieve. It commits all sectors to embed green infrastructure into how we plan for Gloucestershire's future development and regeneration.

Gloucestershire has already led the way in developing the Building with Nature benchmark **(1)** and several innovative green infrastructure projects, for example, those funded through European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) administered by the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (Gfirst LEP), and the Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects throughout the Stroud Valley. The pledge will take forward this pioneering work by committing all parties to action. If we succeed in this, our communities, economy and wildlife will benefit immeasurably.

OUR GREEN VISION

Our vision is of a greener Gloucestershire. Where nature-based solutions are threaded through urban areas, providing a multi-functional approach to the design and management of urban infrastructure, open spaces and recreation grounds; where the benefits of nature create a more resilient county for both people and wildlife, not just to protect but to support growth, whether that is environmentally, socially or economically; where consideration is given to upstream and downstream solutions and services that nature provides; where environmental net gain **(2)** is demonstrated through green infrastructure; and where this is brought about by numerous joined-up, local level initiatives across the county.

1 Building with Nature is a new benchmark for the design and maintenance of green infrastructure in housing and commercial development based at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust - www.buildingwithnature.org.uk

2 Environmental net gain is fundamentally where development leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.

Gloucestershire GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE Pledge

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE SHARED RESOURCES ON WHICH WE RELY. WE UNDERSTAND WE MUST MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE ABILITY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS. EACH OF US WILL PROMOTE, CREATE AND ENHANCE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL, WORKING IN CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO DELIVER THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

01

We will commit to working in favour of sustainable development, delivering against the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018) where it states development and policies should make sufficient provision for “conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.” [para. 20].

02

We will aim to utilise appropriate, high-quality green infrastructure, wherever possible, to protect lives, communities, wildlife and economic growth from the likely effects of development and climate change – including flooding and pollution – through such methods as natural flood management systems, street trees and sustainable drainage systems.

03

We accept to delivering healthy, inclusive and safe places as required in chapter 8 of the revised NPPF, acknowledging the importance of green and blue spaces as essential components to health and happiness of our communities. We seek to utilise tools that help us identify what ‘good’ green infrastructure looks like and ensure sufficient thought is put into providing relevant, high-quality, safe and accessible green space for people that encourages active lifestyles, social inclusion and community engagement with nature.

04

We will take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, minimising impacts on the natural environment, whilst providing net gains for biodiversity and enhancing natural capital on a landscape scale – as outlined within the revised NPPF [para. 170/171]. In doing so we will also contribute to the ‘Nature Recovery Network’ outlined within the 25 Year Environment Plan, utilising green infrastructure to link habitats for the recovery of our wildlife and the wider range of public benefits this network will provide.

05

We will seek to apply high quality green infrastructure principles to the retrofit of buildings as well as to new developments. We understand that green infrastructure can help build a strong, competitive economy whilst positively impacting lives through regeneration initiatives. Green infrastructure can make properties more sustainable, increase housing value, boost climate resilience, promote social inclusion, and improve desirability of local areas.



To support the progression and delivery of this pledge, we will establish a Gloucestershire leadership group for green infrastructure. This group will meet regularly, with the aim of reporting in 12 months' time in order to share progress, exchange best practice and demonstrate measurable positive action. It will work with public, private and third sector bodies to align this green infrastructure initiative with the emerging conclusions of the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision, whilst taking on board developments in national policy, such as the revised National Planning Policy Framework, Clean Growth Strategy, Industrial Strategy and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.