

**Liz Pickering**

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**From:** Wendy Lutley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 22 February 2011 11:55  
**To:** Liz Pickering  
**Cc:** Geoffrey Swarder ; Marion Trotter  
**Subject:** RE: Mid Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy - Initial Consultation  
**Attachments:** LDF seminar - E green Infrastructure (Aug 2010).doc; CPRESW-Monitoring tranquility in the South West - finalFeb10.doc

Dear Liz - Many thanks for this information received via the South West GI network. I'm copying this so as to pass it on to our Devon branch - so that they are aware - and to make sure that you have the appropriate branch contact details. Marion or Geoffrey will, I am sure, pass on if necessary/appropriate to their more local district group.

I attach a copy of a CPRE South West briefing note on green infrastructure we produced last year - developed following a seminar we held to exchange best practice amongst branches in the South West re LDFs - and which you might find helpful. It is available on [www.cpresouthwest.org.uk](http://www.cpresouthwest.org.uk) . It includes some background briefing of which you will be aware, but there are one or two important issues/opportunities to flag from our discussions, eg:

- the importance of incorporating landscape and historic landscape character evidence base into the GI work;
- similarly with evidence base on tranquillity and light pollution (I also attach a background briefing on that - which forms a background paper to the State of the Environment report in the South West, 2010)
- the importance of thinking about walking and cycling opportunities – ie the multifunctional nature of green space creating opportunities to consider more sustainable approaches to transport, etc

Hope this is helpful

Wendy

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**From:** Liz Pickering [mailto:LPickering@middevon.gov.uk]  
**Subject:** Mid Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy - Initial Consultation

Dear All,

I have started work on a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Mid Devon. The Strategy will map existing green infrastructure such as playing fields, allotments, woodland and public rights of way, and will identify deficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

More information about the Council's vision, objectives and timetable for the Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy can be found on our website at <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8128> .

The Council is seeking the views and advice of statutory consultees and other relevant bodies, to ensure that the plans and responsibilities of other organisations are taken into account and incorporated into the Strategy where necessary. Further consultation will take place later this year once a draft document has been produced.

Comments received will be treated as public documents and should be received by **31 March 2011**. Please send any comments to me at this email address, and include your full postal address. Alternatively, you can write to me at:

Forward Planning & Conservation

22/03/2011

## E: Green Infrastructure in LDFs

*Notes from Workshop E: Green Infrastructure; incorporating information from the PowerPoint presentation<sup>1</sup>; and from our earlier Sept 2009 briefing note and discussions.*

### **Introduction**

- At our LDF seminar in March we agreed that strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) needs to be identified through appropriate policies in LDFs. Since then Government has announced its intention to revoke regional spatial strategies (July 2010), but the policy context (see below) still enables us to press for GI to be adopted in LDFs across the South West.

### **National policy**

- **PPS 12: Local Spatial Planning** sets out national planning policy support for GI policy in LDFs:

*The 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... and ..This evidence should cover who will provide the infrastructure and when it will be provided.*

- Draft PPS **Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment** (March 2010) also covers GI<sup>2</sup>, and is a material planning consideration:

#### **Policy NE4: Local planning approach for green infrastructure**

*Local development frameworks should set out a strategic approach for the creation, protection and management of networks of green infrastructure. In doing so, local planning authorities should build on work undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level. Policies should:*

*(i) provide for green infrastructure, particularly in locations here it will assist in reducing the impacts of climate change by providing flood water storage, sustainable drainage systems, urban cooling and local access to shady outdoor space*

*(ii) avoid development being located in areas which result in the fragmentation or isolation of natural habitat*

*(iii) identify opportunities to enhance green infrastructure and the natural habitats within it, by retaining, enhancing or creating a green corridors linking rural and urban fringe areas and urban green spaces; and*

*(iv) identify opportunities to enhance the functions urban green spaces can perform.*

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<sup>1</sup> Our thanks to Natural England for allowing us to further develop their GI training presentation.

<sup>2</sup> Whilst welcoming the draft policy, we identified that the text currently undersells the benefits of GI to people (for health, etc) and for encouraging sustainable modes of transport, including walking and cycling.

*NB This seminar was held before the change of Government in May 2010. Please note that changes to the planning system may have been made since these notes were compiled.*

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Local Development Framework Seminar, March 2010  
August 2010 briefing**

- More recently, the Government has appeared to continue support for GI in its statement on revoking regional spatial strategies (July 2010) indicating, under para 18 on the natural environment, that:

*Authorities should continue to draw on available information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.*

**The policy in *Proposed Changes to draft RSS for the South West***

- In recent years we have strongly supported the Green Infrastructure (GI) policy in *Proposed Changes to draft RSS for the South West*<sup>3</sup>. This still provides context and is therefore a material planning consideration.

***Policy G11 Green Infrastructure***

*Development of networks of Green Infrastructure (GI) will be required to enhance quality of life in the region and support the successful accommodation of change. GI networks will comprise multifunctional, accessible, connected assets, planned around existing environmental characteristics.*

*Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should aim to deliver wider spatial outcomes that incorporate environmental and socio-economic benefits by:*

- *Conserving and managing existing GI;*
- *Creating new GI; and*
- *Enhancing its functionality, quality and connectivity.*

*GI is required as an integral part of development and should include the identification, development and management of new areas of open space, not just more intensive use of existing areas of open space. Local Authorities and partners will:*

- *Draw upon existing expertise and initiatives to take forward GI planning and identify priorities and partnerships for GI.*
- *Incorporate GI policies setting out broad locations for GI appropriate to the extent and distribution of development proposed, coordinated across administrative boundaries as appropriate*
- *Integrate proposals to improve GI in the delivery of new developments, particularly through area based regeneration initiatives and major development proposals*
- *Ensure that a key aim of green infrastructure is the maintenance and improvement of biodiversity*
- *Protect the integrity of sites of international importance and provide new areas of appropriate greenspace where development would otherwise cause recreational pressure on sites of international ecological importance*
- *Maximise the role of GI in mitigating and adapting to climate change*
- *Develop a GI Plan with a delivery programme to support GI policies.*

***What is Green Infrastructure (GI)?***

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<sup>3</sup> See addendum to this briefing note for the supporting text.

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- GI is about providing networks of high quality accessible and linked green space within existing urban areas; in association with new development; and out into the surrounding countryside. The key concept is **multi-functionality** - combining different functions (sometimes expressed as providing different eco-systems services) on the same piece of land, for example:
  - conserving and enhancing important landscape, historic and cultural features;
  - improving opportunities for recreation, particularly close to where people live with new open space, and better footpath and cycleway links which can also provide a local transport function;
  - conserving, enhancing and linking wildlife habitats;
  - and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation.
  
- The idea draws on experience from Europe and the United States and builds on the community forests programme in England set up by the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission in the early 1990s. In the South West the Great Western Community Forest surrounding Swindon and the Forest of Avon around Bristol are still operating, although with much depleted resources.
  
- It builds on initiatives from Victorian times onwards. The Parliamentary Select Committee for Public Walks (1883) considered: *the best means of securing open spaces in the vicinity of populous towns as public walks and places of exercise, calculated to promote the health and comfort of the inhabitants*. The Garden City movement at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries emphasised the importance of green spaces, while the post-war new towns had generous provision of parks and greenery - an expression of modernity in a situation coping with a housing shortage and moving people out of city slums (eg Milton Keynes' network of linear parks).
  
- **Natural England's definition** - The key words are strategically planned, multi-functional, ecological services and quality of life benefits. Respecting local character and distinctiveness is also important.

*A strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. Designed and managed as a multi-functional 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 – regional, sub-regional, local and neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.*

*The difference between Green Infrastructure and Green Belt*

- For strategic GI, the emphasis needs to be on identifying networks of varied multi-functional green space, mapped through evidence base from a range of sources. Best and Most Versatile land might be included, for example, for its potential for local food production through market gardening and allotment provision, and lower grade agricultural land for its biodiversity value, rather than including all agricultural land.
- In contrast Green Belt is defined in PPG2 (1999) as land covered by such policy to *prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of green belts is their openness*. There are five purposes to such designation: to check unrestricted sprawl; to prevent neighbouring towns merging; to assist with safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist urban regeneration and encourage recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- Mapping GI might therefore provide evidence-base to assist with a campaign to designate new Green Belt (but it would still need to meet the formal green belt purposes). Or it might assist with improved management of strategic areas within an existing Green Belt. The approaches can therefore be complementary.
- In the South West there is Green Belt: around Gloucester and Cheltenham; Bristol and Bath; and Bournemouth and Poole; but none around other cities and towns such as Swindon, or historic cathedral cities, such as Salisbury, Exeter and Truro. Both GI and Green Belt policy are therefore potentially useful in the South West.

*Evidence base*

- A range of spatial evidence needs to be mapped in order to identify GI. It can include:
  - parks and gardens – urban parks, Country and Regional Parks, formal gardens; amenity green space – informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space, green roofs; allotments, community gardens, city farms, cemeteries and churchyards; natural and semi-natural urban areas - woodland and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland and meadow), heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground), bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs and quarries); green corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, rights of way, etc.
- Check that information from landscape character studies, maps of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, and from green transport strategies has been included.

*Spatial portrait, Vision and objectives*

- GI needs to be incorporated as a 'golden thread' within the LDF core strategy. The Spatial portrait might summarise the existing strategic resource, with the Vision and Objectives ensuring both maintenance and additional provision to match any built development proposed.

### *Policies*

- Policies need ideally to cover the aspects set out in the policy in *Proposed Changes to draft RSS*, in particular: 'setting out broad locations for GI appropriate to the extent and distribution of development proposed'. They should also make the link with transport objectives to encourage walking and cycling.
- An example of a city-region GI policy (from *North West RSS*, 2008):

#### *Policy CLCR 3 Green City*

*The unique 'green' character of the Central Lancashire City Region, and the advantages it offers for recreation and for attracting people and investment, will be protected and further enhanced by:*

- a. maintaining the general extent of the Green Belt in accordance with Policy RDF4;*
- b. protecting the Forest of Bowland AONB, in accordance with Policy EM1;*
- c. the further development of the City Region's three Regional Parks (East Lancashire, Ribble Estuary and Morecambe Bay) in accordance with Policy EM4, through:  
improving access to open space networks, enhancing the urban fringe,  
reclaiming derelict land, enhancing recreational and educational facilities, and  
providing public art;  
promoting the conservation, protection and enhancement of the physical and  
natural environment, and supporting biodiversity; and  
the inclusion of appropriate policies and projects, and the delineation of  
Regional Park boundaries in Local Development Frameworks in line with  
strategic frameworks as set out in EM4;*
- d. the greening of urban areas, through measures including the renovation of existing  
parks; the reclamation of derelict land for 'soft' end uses; the utilisation of open space  
adjacent to waterways, such as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal; and the creation of green  
wedges extending into the countryside.*

### *Delivery*

- More detail may then be in a separate plan or strategy. A good strategy should:
  - identify existing green spaces and assets that must be protected and enhanced;
  - identify the ecological and other services that need to be delivered;
  - identify the range of new green infrastructure components to be created;
  - set out an implementation plan – including a funding strategy;
  - forge links with other relevant strategies and plans;
  - be formally adopted within the Local Planning Framework;
  - be applied 'on the ground' through site level master planning.
- Urban expansion is a challenge, but also an opportunity. The first priority is to protect is environmental assets and ability for people to access and enjoy green spaces and the natural world. But there is also an opportunity to create new habitats and landscapes through GI planning. In our workshop discussion we agreed that:

*NB This seminar was held before the change of Government in May 2010. Please note that changes to the planning system may have been made since these notes were compiled.*

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- there needs to be a GI strategy for each major urban area in the South West;
- and for smaller towns;
- mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure delivery;
- there needs to be long-term protection for areas identified;
- there needs to be a lead organisation to co-ordinate and manage delivery;
- this may or may not be the local authority/local authorities;
- funding issues are likely to be critical, given constrained public finances;
- contributions will need to be sought through developer contributions;
- long term maintenance is a key issue, particularly with this being a discretionary area for local authority spending;
- community /voluntary involvement should be encouraged, eg friends groups.

We noted that the extensive network of linear parks in Milton Keynes is managed by a charitable parks trust.

*Useful ammunition*

- **Eleven key benefits of GI** ([www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk](http://www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk)): supporting economic growth; enhancing land and property values; supporting labour productivity; providing tourism assets; enhancing quality of place; providing space for biodiversity; aiding climate change adaptation; aiding flood and water management; providing recreation and leisure opportunities; supporting health and well-being; providing products from the land.
- **Natural England** has published best practice guidance: Natural England, 2009: *Green infrastructure guidance* available on [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk). There is also useful information on its web site.
- Some local authorities in the South West Work have commenced work - with Plymouth, for example, having already consulted on a draft GI Strategy covering multi-functional green space (with a Green Space strategy covering more specific recreational requirements.). Devon has a GI officer. A South West conference on GI was held in Jan 2010. See [www.swcouncils.gov.uk](http://www.swcouncils.gov.uk): *Delivering sustainable communities using the natural environment*, 28 Jan 2010.
- Green Infrastructure South West [www.ginsw.org.uk](http://www.ginsw.org.uk) is a web portal providing a range of background information. Its strategic activity table provides links to more local activity in the South West, but note that this information may not be up-to-date. If in doubt, contact your local authority direct.
- Town & Country Planning Association, 2008: Eco-towns Green Infrastructure work sheet.
- See also our national cpre web site [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk) for information our publications and campaign material on Green Belt.

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**Addendum: the supporting text to the GI policy in *Proposed Changes to draft RSS for the South West, 2008***

6.2.16 Careful management will be required to ensure that development contributes to, rather than detracts from the quality of life in urban areas. Green Infrastructure (GI) is an important component of ensuring development provides positive benefits for the region. GI consists of strategic networks of accessible, multifunctional sites (including parks, woodland, informal open spaces, nature reserves and historic sites) as well as linkages (such as river corridors and floodplains, wildlife corridors and greenways). These contribute to people's well-being, and together comprise a coherent managed resource responsive to evolving conditions.

6.2.17 In order to achieve a distinctive approach for the South West, it will be important to plan GI around existing environmental and cultural characteristics. GI networks should consist of a series of features (both existing and new), appropriate at various spatial scales, preferably with links connecting smaller, more local sites with larger, more strategic ones. Networks can provide links between town and country, between different parts of an urban area, and between existing and new development. Linear GI (greenways and 'blue infrastructure' such as rivers, streams, canals etc) is integral in securing connectivity for wildlife and accessibility for people (though it may not always be appropriate to combine these two roles).

6.2.18 Continual improvement of GI must be based on a sound understanding of existing assets (including location, size, functions, accessibility, user groups and intensity of use). PPG17 requires adequate provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities to be provided and maintained. This may be most effectively understood at a strategic or sub regional level, and there are significant benefits to partnership working over GI between authorities.

6.2.19 Identification of 'areas of opportunity' or 'GI demand' will be necessary in order to provide clear objectives and priorities. These should then be mapped and disseminated such that they can be proactively incorporated within spatial strategies and development proposals at the earliest possible stage. Considerable work has already been undertaken in the identification of areas of opportunity and targets (for example South West Regional Nature-Map and Rebuilding Biodiversity Initiative, Biodiversity Action Plans, Catchment Flood Management Plans, and Forest Plans) and should be drawn upon.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the RSS identifies a number of international nature conservation sites which are particularly vulnerable to harm from recreational activities as a result of their proximity to urban areas or their attractiveness for recreation to local residents or tourists.

The relevant authorities will need to work jointly and with Natural England to secure and implement appropriate and deliverable measures to avoid or mitigate adverse effects from recreation at these sites, such as the use of planning obligations to secure provision of alternative greenspace or improve habitat management. Providing new areas of appropriate greenspace (as set out in Policy GI1) is likely to mitigate potential adverse effects in many locations. However, management of activities and access on these sites may also be required. If following investigation of mitigation options by local authorities and partners, provision of appropriate greenspace and/or management measures is not possible, restrictions may need to be put in place on the type, scale and/or location of development (e.g. through implementation of 'no development' buffer zones) within LDDs in proximity to these sites. Particular sites at risk from recreational pressure are:

Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site	Chesil and the Fleet SPA/Ramsar site
Dartmoor SAC	East Devon Pebblehead Heath SAC and East Devon Heaths SPA
Exe Estuary SPA and Ramsar site	Fal and Helford SAC
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC	Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar
Salisbury Plain SAC	Severn Estuary pSAC, SPA and Ramsar site
The New Forest SAC	*****



**Supporting information for the chapter on Landscape in  
Report on the State of the Environment in the South West, 2010:  
Evidence base on tranquillity, light pollution and settlement pattern**

- **Relevant policy in *Proposed Changes to draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): SD3:***  
*.... respecting landscape ... thresholds of settlements ... and ... planning ... to reduce pollution and maintain tranquillity*

### Summary

Monitoring of tranquillity to date shows a steady decline in the South West in countryside undisturbed by proximity to main roads and towns. In the early 1960s the percentage of 'disturbed' countryside was 14%, by 2007 it was 42%. The light shining up at night from each square kilometre in the region also rose by 17% in the seven years between 1993 and 2000. Since then, development has continued at similar and sometimes higher levels, so it seems reasonable to assume that this decline in the tranquil character of the region is continuing. More rural areas are also likely to have suffered a decline in their tranquillity due to increased traffic on minor roads and lanes. This will have had an adverse impact in relation to both enjoyment and safety when such routes are used for walking and cycling.

However, the South West still retains a substantial area of sparsely settled, relatively tranquil countryside with dark skies. In 2003 20% of the region still had truly dark skies. The main area stretches across the northern parts of Cornwall and Devon to West Somerset and there are other smaller but still very important areas, such as, for example, the Lizard in West Cornwall.

The methodology associated with DEFRA's rural:urban definition identifies areas of sparsely settled countryside. In the South West these correspond broadly with tranquil areas and areas with dark skies. The methodology has particular potential for modelling future landscape change as a result of built development.

### 1. Tranquillity - areas disturbed by noise and visual intrusion

In 2007 the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) published regional maps of areas *disturbed by noise and visual intrusion*. The mapping uses the same methodology as the tranquil areas maps that CPRE published jointly with the former Countryside Commission in the early 1990s and that showed loss of tranquillity between then and the early 1960s. The maps for the South West for all three dates, and now referred to as '*areas of intrusion*' maps, are available on CPRE's website [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk). The 2007 map of the South West shows a continued decline in '*undisturbed countryside*'. In the early 1960s the percentage of '*disturbed*' square kilometres in the region was 14%. This had risen to 30% by the early 1990s and 42% by 2007.

The methodology assumes a zone of disturbance ranging from a half to 3 km width adjacent to roads and towns, according respectively to average traffic flow per day and population. 'A' roads with an average of less than 5,000 vehicular movement per day, 'B' roads and smaller lanes and settlements of less than 2,500 population are excluded. It is therefore important to realise that there is also likely to have been a considerable decrease in the tranquillity of those areas that are shown as '*undisturbed*' over the monitoring period - due to the continued increase in traffic on minor roads and lanes.

