Black Country

Environmental Infrastructure Guidance

Phase I

2009

Chapter 1: Introduction to Black Country Environmental infrastructure Guidance (EIG)

The importance of the Environment to Black Country Regeneration

The quality of the environment is recognised as an essential component in providing a quality of place for living, working and relaxing, both for existing residents and workers and for people looking to move into the Black Country. The term "Black Country" reflects its history as a centre of industry and it is not commonly known that the area has numerous sites which are nationally important for biodiversity and geodiversity with a large array of nature conservation sites and green areas.

Although the Black Country contains many of these environmental assets, most notably the canal network, these are often 'hidden' and are therefore not playing their full part in regenerating the Black Country. In the context of large-scale regeneration needed up to 2026 it is recognised that the Black Country needs radical environmental transformation to generate economic growth and to offer a quality of life that will attract people to live, work and invest in the area. The sub-region, which comprises the boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton, has suffered for many years in its attempts to attract and retain a highly skilled, high earning workforce and inward investment.

The notion of delivering environmental transformation underpinned the Black Country Study, which supplied the evidence base for Phase One review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and was subsequently adopted in 2008. The environmental element of this study was based around the concept of the Black Country as Urban Park. This introduced a number of initiatives to deliver a step change in the environmental quality of the Black Country based around core principles including strategic landscape corridors, beacons and communities. It also introduced the need for Environmental Infrastructure Guidance (previously termed Landscape Action Plan) to introduce a strategic approach to planning for environmental transformation.

Furthermore there is an overarching need to help prepare the Black Country to respond to the impact of Climate Change both through reducing activities which contribute to climate change and by preparing our local environment to become more resilient to its increasing impacts. The Black Country is a densely developed urban area located at the watershed of the Severn and Trent river catchment areas and therefore will be sensitive to the effects of increasing temperatures and more intense rainfall. Environmental infrastructure can provide the opportunity to adapt to climate change by influencing development and the use of land.

The Environmental Context of the Black Country

The biodiversity of the geological past helped to create the rich geology of the Black Country, which had a strong influence in shaping the Black Country that we have today. Limestone, coal and other raw materials allied to local

peoples' skills provided the foundation of the area's wealth. Technology developed from the first use of minerals and timber from woodlands to the use of water power and thence to the Industrial Revolution, the age of iron and steel and of machines and manufacturing.

The landscape has many reminders of the Black Country's evolution from farming, through the Industrial Revolution and into today's post-industrial society. The area's natural heritage is inextricably bound up with its cultural heritage and economic development. Farming continues, especially on the fringes of the conurbation, and there are many examples of encapsulated countryside with wetlands, woodland, meadow and hedgerows. Past and present infrastructure, such as disused railway lines and canals act as wildlife corridors as they wind their way through the urban area and provide distinctive character. Formal parks, public open spaces, the Black Country Urban Forest (the first urban forest to receive national/international recognition), allotments, gardens and water bodies complete the matrix. All of these features help to "loosen" the urban fabric.

The natural world helps to "green" towns and cities, offers vital opportunities to escape noise and pollution, protects from the elements and makes urban areas more attractive to live in. The well-being of an area's wildlife is a key indicator of the state of the environment for its people. Clean rivers and wetlands, safe and well-managed woodlands and grasslands, and diverse and stimulating parks and other formal open spaces are good for both people and wildlife.

The distinctive historic landscapes and buildings of the Black Country are also a vital element of the environment. They provide a focus for local identity, enhance the Black Country's image, provide leisure and recreation facilities, create jobs through visitor attractions, and can help set the standard for high quality design as regeneration progresses.

An attractive environment, or a clear strategy for environmental improvement, has also proved, time and again, to stimulate economic regeneration and increase investor confidence. Therefore, successful urban regeneration should be built on a proper appreciation of the values and functions of different elements of the environment in towns and cities.

Figure 1: Black Country Location Map

Chapter 2: What is Environmental Infrastructure?

The following definition of environmental infrastructure underpins the approach towards EIG for the Black Country:

Environmental Infrastructure is a framework of multi-functional spaces and places that in combination create a high quality local environment and define local communities. It consists of existing public and private assets, with and without public access in both urban and rural locations, together with new assets that will arise out of regeneration and development. In some instances these assets are physically or visually connected or are capable of being connected.

All features of the outdoor environment contribute to environmental infrastructure including natural and semi-natural habitats, parks and other open spaces, formal and informal recreation and sports facilities, historic buildings and landscapes, the public realm of spaces and streets, rivers, canals and drainage systems.

Once completed, the Black Country EIG will set out overarching principles for the delivery of environmental transformation at both the sub-regional and local level. It will act as an organising framework for integrating physical resources and natural systems with ecological, geological and historical assets, enabling environmental transformation and protecting and enhancing distinctiveness across the Black Country. The methodology underpinning its delivery will ensure that the Black Country EIG provides results that are relevant for all partners, fit for purpose, evidence-based, supported by partners and stakeholders and fully integrated within existing and proposed Black Country policies and initiatives. This approach corresponds with the main recommendations set out in the West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus and the accompanying Technical Mapping Paper (2007).

The EIG for the Black Country will both inform and be delivered through the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and other Local Development Framework documents; in particular Area Action Plans (AAPs), Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as well as supporting the Black Country Growth Point designation. The Black Country was awarded 'Growth Point' status in July 2008 through Round 2 of the Government's New Growth Points (NGP) programme. Through the NGP initiative, the Government is responding positively to local partners who are keen to pursue sustainable growth incorporating environmental infrastructure.

The EIG will assist with the implementation of these plans and initiatives by providing:

- Robust baseline evidence
- Informed spatial data for policy formulation
- Guidance for project development and delivery

Chapter 3: National Policy Context

Recent national guidance recognises the importance of 'green' infrastructure and how it can help to deliver many of the economic, social and environmental benefits required for sustainable communities.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS)12 'Local Spatial Planning' defines green infrastructure as "a network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities".

PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' highlights the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment as one of the key principles of delivering sustainable development. The PPS 1 Supplement on Planning and Climate Change sets out how planning can contribute to reducing carbon emissions and help to deliver sustainable development.

PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' requires local authorities' planning policy to be based on up to date information to maintain, enhance and restore the biodiversity and geodiversity of its local and wider area. Nature conservation sites and networks (such as wildlife corridors) should be preserved and strengthened by planning policy and subsequent development.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' recognises the importance of effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment and acknowledges its significance to quality of life, local distinctiveness, leisure and recreation.

PPG16 'Planning and Archaeology' recognises the importance of architectural remains and historic landscape both in their own right and in their role in education, leisure and tourism.

PPG17 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation' recognises the importance of open space and recreational areas in creating attractive urban environments and in improving quality of life. It recommends that local authorities carry out a "robust assessment of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities" and undertake an audit of quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. These can inform Green / Environmental Infrastructure plans at strategic and local level.

PPS 25 'Development and Flood Risk' recognizes the importance green infrastructure has to play in reducing flood risk by "using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding e.g. surface water management plans, making the most of the benefits of green infrastructure for flood storage, conveyance and SUDS, re-creating functional floodplain and setting back defences".

Chapter 4: Regional and Sub-Regional Policy Context

The need to prepare a Landscape Action Plan (the predecessor to the EIG) for the Black Country emerged early in the Black Country Study process and is now enshrined in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (2008), which states the following:

"Transforming the Environment of the Black Country
8.46A *Of central importance to the achievement of urban renaissance in the Black Country is the objective of transforming the environment. The general poor quality of the living and working environment has been a factor influencing the scale of net out-migration and low levels of investment. The environmental and historic assets of the Black Country provide a foundation to work towards a step change in environmental quality, and the aim of making the Black Country as a whole a more attractive place within which to live, work and invest will be reflected in the Joint Core Strategy and LDDs (QE1-9).*

8.46B *A key component in the process of improving the quality of the environment will be to give physical expression to the concept of the 'Black Country as Urban Park'. The Black Country local authorities will work on a Landscape Action Plan and measures to identify and implement a network of key landscape corridors for enhancement, informed by the approach set out in the Black Country Study, including proposals for waterways and canals, a network of open spaces, biodiversity enhancement areas, wildlife corridors and accessible natural greenspace, and the creation of new greenspace and water assets to connect the Black Country towns and communities with each other and to surrounding countryside via walkways and cycleways. Further work will promote vistas, gateways and historic assets and combine landscape improvement with sustainable management of drainage in the Stour and Tame River basins.*

8.46C *The Landscape Action Plan will interact with, and support, the promotion of World Heritage Status for the Black Country Canal Network and its environs and the promotion of an integrated tourism offer in the Black Country focused on Dudley Town Centre and its surroundings. It will examine opportunities to integrate the two Biodiversity Enhancement Areas identified in RSS within the Black Country. Efforts will be made to integrate the development and implementation of Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans with increasing accessibility to natural greenspace, developing opportunities for environmental / ecological tourism and promoting healthy lifestyles and education (QE1 - QE9, TA3).*

POLICY QE10: Transforming the Environment of the Black Country
Local Authorities and others will plan for the transformation of the environment by:
(i) giving physical expression to the concept of the 'Black Country as Urban Park' through identification of Beacons, Corridors and Communities;
(ii) preparing and implementing a joint Black Country Landscape Action Plan (incorporating a Canal Management Plan) based on the West Midlands'

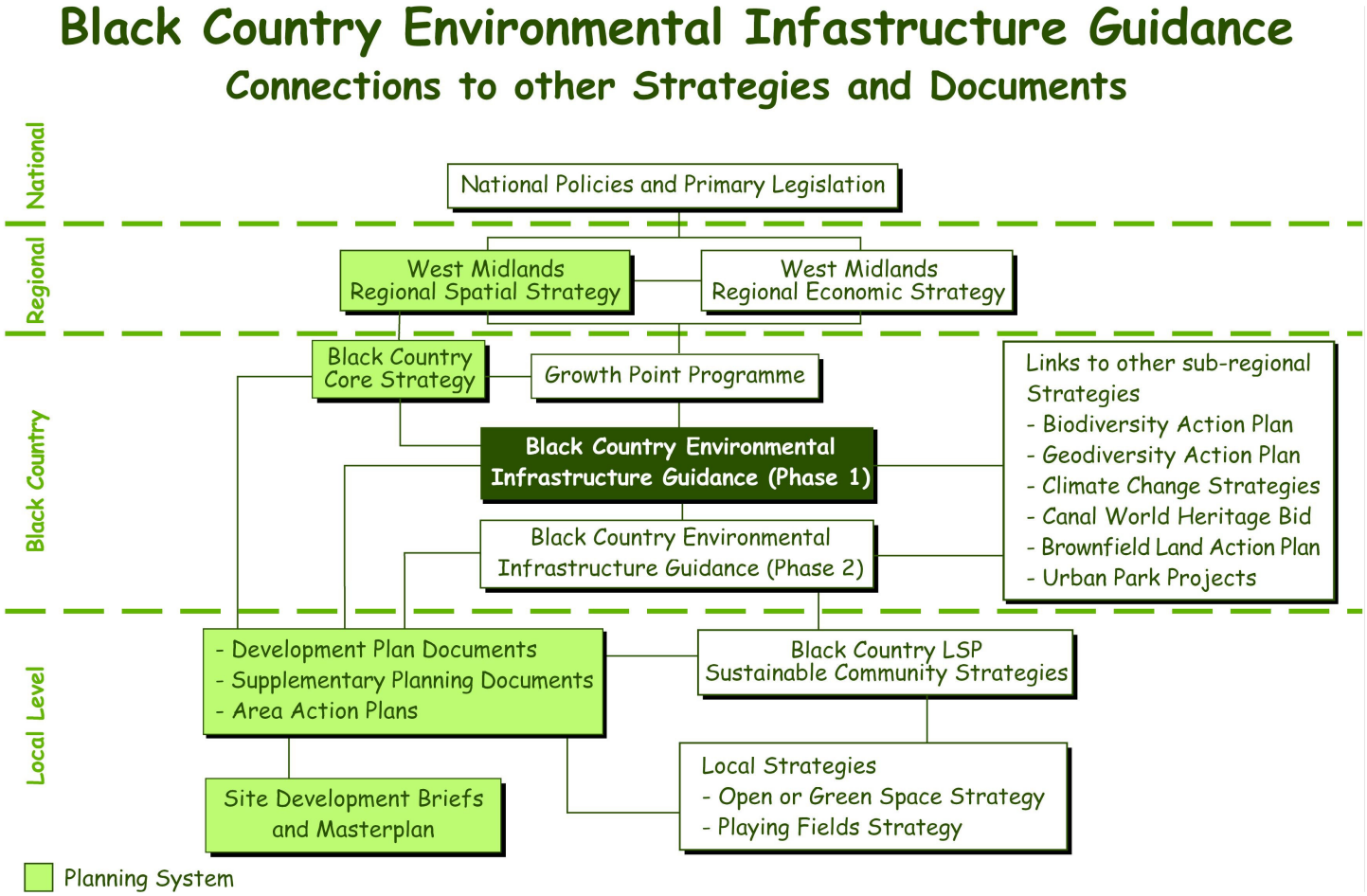
Green Infrastructure approach to define and deliver an integrated network of open spaces, waterways and canals; to protect and enhance topographical, biodiversity and historic assets; and to promote walking and cycling;
(iii) supporting the promotion of World Heritage Status for the Black Country Canal Network and its environs;
(iv) ensuring appropriate policies are included in the Joint Core Strategy to facilitate the above."

The Black Country Joint Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (March 2008) identified environmental transformation as a core policy area (16) which needed to be addressed in the form of policies. These would be Black Country wide policies but with an emphasis on the regeneration corridors, strategic centres and beacons. Reference was made to the preparation and implementation of the EIG as being the way forward.

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: 'Local Spatial Planning', the Black Country EIG, as a key piece of supporting evidence for the Black Country Joint Core Strategy, should also be closely aligned with the Sustainable Community Strategies (SCS) for each of the four Local Authorities. The Black Country JCS Environment Group has ensured that the objectives for EIG Phase 1 are in parallel with the environmental objectives of the four Sustainable Community Strategies.

- Walsall's SCS (2008) has a commitment to promoting sustainable transport and investing in climate change adaptation systems, for example measures to mitigate the challenges associated with increased incidents of flooding. It acknowledges that a high-quality environment improves the quality of life for all and that "the value of land, property and levels of investment are improved when the environment is improved".
- The Wolverhampton SCS (2008) aims to tackle climate change and promote environmental excellence through an Environmental and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. It emphasises the need to create clean and green neighbourhoods which local people take pride in and to use every available means of greening the City.
- Dudley's Community Strategy (2005) proposes the development of a 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan' to link walking and cycling routes between homes, workplaces, places for leisure and public transport stations in order to encourage sustainable movement around the borough. This is currently being reviewed and the Sustainability Appraisal has highlighted the need to minimise the Borough's contribution to climate change and to improve access to and between green spaces.
- The Sandwell Plan (2008) also includes a commitment to tackling climate change through a promise to "measure and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from Sandwell Council operations". In addition, it promotes the opening up of "difficult to access" environmental assets to make the borough's green infrastructure more accessible.

Figure 2: EIG links to other strategies



Chapter 5: The role of stakeholders in progressing the Black Country EIG

The approach to delivering the Black Country EIG has been developed with the continuous input of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy Environment Focus Group. This group was established in 2007 and consists of representatives from several statutory bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and English Heritage as well as from environmental organisations and the Black Country Consortium. A full list of the group's membership is included in Appendix B

The group's remit is to oversee and support the development of the EIG through offering expert advice and specialist input whilst ensuring EIG in the Black Country is aligned to their respective plans and priorities. It has met regularly and has received electronic updates as work on the EIG has progressed.

The approach to the EIG has been informed by the representations received on the environmental aspects of the Joint Core Strategy at its various consultation stages. It has also benefited from previous work carried out by consultants LDA Design on behalf of the Black Country Consortium in producing a Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Study (May, 2008).

In June 2008 the four Black Country Local Authorities appointed The Environmental Partnership (TEP), specialist consultants in environmental planning, to review options for progressing the EIG and this led to the publication of their 'Critical Review and Options Analysis' report (TEP, August 2008). After carefully assessing the merits of the various options put forward, it was decided that a two phase approach was the most appropriate. TEP identified this option as being the most achievable and appropriate in terms of identifying needs, opportunities and assets and setting out functional and geographic priorities.

The proposed approach was presented to the Environment Focus Group in August 2008 at a stakeholder workshop. Participants were invited to establish a set of EIG functions within a 'Function Wheel' (See Figure 3). These functions (see Chapter 8) have subsequently formed the basis of Phase 1 of the EIG.

Participants were also asked to identify threats, opportunities and constraints to delivering the Black Country EIG. These will be used to inform Phase Two as they refer to delivery issues that need to be addressed through subsequent work.

Chapter 6: Vision & Objectives

The vision for the Black Country EIG derives from the vision for environmental transformation as put forward in the Joint Core Strategy Preferred Options Report (March 2008). This vision was originally developed from the Black Country Study, which outlined the two major drivers for Black Country regeneration as being *lifting educational and skills performance* and *transformation of the environment*. The EIG vision is therefore wholly focused on delivering environmental transformation across the Black Country:

> "It's about creating a step change in the image and environmental quality of the Black Country to underpin social and economic transformation as it meets the challenges of growth by delivering high quality, livable and distinctive places, which respect and make the most of the existing diversity of the Black Country's natural and built environment, particularly its canals, open spaces, and industrial and architectural heritage''

Overall Objectives for EIG

The focus for environmental transformation, through the implementation of EIG, will be on the key areas for regeneration in the Black Country. To achieve this objective, EIG should:

> *identify priorities for the enhancement of environmental infrastructure in the regeneration corridors and strategic centres, which will contribute to the creation of high quality living and investment locations.*

To support our vision we also need to consider how we approach the challenges created by climate change. We are looking at proven methods to help meet these challenges, such as cutting carbon emissions by facilitating more sustainable transport, preventing flooding by prioritising areas for sustainable drainage techniques, ensuring new developments help reduce, rather than exacerbate, the urban heat island effect and strengthening wildlife corridors to help wildlife migrate more easily both in and out of their refuges within the Black Country. Due to the multi-functional nature of EIG, the Black Country should be in a better position to respond to these long term challenges through consideration of appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures. Therefore another primary objective for EIG is to:

> *ensure that the existing and newly created environmental infrastructure of the Black Country makes an important contribution to the action to tackle climate change and its impacts by helping to mitigate and reduce carbon emissions, and by helping the Black Country to prepare, adapt and become more resilient to climate change.*

Strategic Direction for EIG Functions

Nature: to make the Black Country a place with rich and sustainable wildlife and geology, which provides an attractive setting for living, working, recreation and learning, whilst helping the area adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Natural Processes: to make the Black Country an environment that works with and contributes towards natural processes ensuring that new developments and, wherever possible, existing areas take account of the impact of natural processes at the earliest stages of any new development.

Character, Identity and Landscape: to make the Black Country a place where the natural and built landscapes will create and maintain a vibrant, attractive, safe and healthy place in which people will wish to live and work. This will benefit the local population and help the region to adapt to the impacts of economic, social and climate change. The historic heritage and valued distinctive landscapes which define the identity of the Black Country as a whole will be celebrated and enjoyed by its diverse local communities.

Recreation and Well-Being: to make the Black Country a place where residents and workers have easy access to a network of high quality, multi-functional parks, enhancing quality of life, contributing towards better health and fitness and attracting people to work and stay in the area.

Sustainable Movement: to make the Black Country a place that is well connected by walking and cycling routes which are safe and easy for people to use. This will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of residents and visitors alike.

Objectives for Phase 2 - Delivery and Implementation

Phase 2 will identify what environmental infrastructure is needed alongside the amount of development proposed for the Black Country, predominantly in the JCS regeneration corridors and strategic centres, taking account of its type and distribution. This should include evidence of the location, mix, quantum and timing of environmental infrastructure to be provided.

As a result of the limit on resources for implementing significant environmental improvements across the entire area of the Black Country, there is a need to identify the priority areas for applying the policies and principles of EIG Phase 1. Phase 2 should highlight all potential delivery mechanisms for using EIG in these priority areas.

Chapter 7: Delivering the EIG

Following the recommendations of TEP in providing a Black Country EIG methodology, the following work has been acknowledged as necessary to be carried out through two interlinked phases:

Phase 1: sets the strategic foundations and establishes 'hooks' on which future, more detailed work will be delivered through Phase 2. Specifically, this phase identifies functions from which broad environmental infrastructure principles and priorities and initial environmental infrastructure standards can be established. Technical evidence is provided in the form of a series of maps identifying assets, needs and opportunities and setting out functional and geographic priorities in the context of the Black Country as a whole.

Phase 2: will focus on the main opportunities for environmental transformation. In particular this will involve providing a more detailed environmental strategy for the individual strategic centres and regeneration corridors which will be subject to major land use change up to 2026. There will also be a need to focus on other priority areas identified through Phase 1. As well as establishing principles and strategic priorities, this will also allow for the identification of localised standards and targets within a structured delivery framework.

This two-phase approach has been progressed to fit within the Black Country JCS submission timeframe by providing strategic guidance and baseline evidence for inclusion in the Joint Core Strategy, which can then be developed into more specific recommendations and actions at a later date. It is intended that the detailed delivery and implementation recommendations arising from Phase 2 of the EIG will be progressed through Development Plan Documents, specifically as Site Allocations DPD or Area Action Plans, produced as part of each of the local authorities' Local Development Framework.

The table below sets out the remit of Phases 1 and 2, and describes the work that is to be done in order to fit with the revised submission timeframe of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy. This was agreed by the Black Country Consortium (BCC) and the Black Country Local Authorities as the most suitable approach to be followed.

WORKSTREAM	Phase One	Phase Two
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	▪ Establish an Environmental Infrastructure vision and objectives for the Black Country ▪ Identify broad principles and priorities ▪ Identify functions and geographic priorities ▪ Identification of assets,	▪ Detailed spatial and statistical evidence at strategic centre and regeneration corridor level in addition to Black Country level ▪ Identification of localised standards and benchmarks within a structured delivery framework

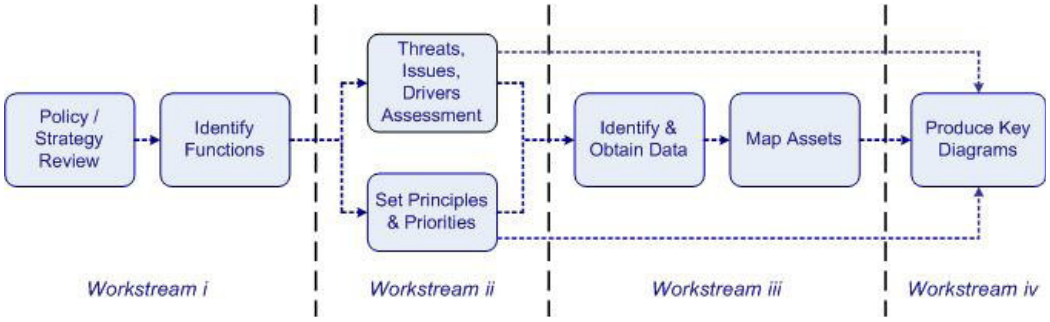
	needs and opportunities ▪ Identification and application of standards relevant at a sub-regional level ▪ Sub regional mapping to feed into key diagrams in the JCS	

Chapter 8: Approach to the Black Country EIG

Phase 1

In the 'Critical Review and Options Analysis' by The Environmental Partnership (TEP), a best practice methodology for producing Phase 1 of the EIG was identified and subsequently adopted for the process. Figure 2 below illustrates this approach.

Figure 3: Recommendations for an EIG Methodology for the Black Country



The EIG document looks at how environmental infrastructure contributes to a number of separate environmental functions. However it is important to remember that these functions are interlinked and the links between the functions are explored within the concluding chapter. Environmental Infrastructure is multi-functional, which means that different features of the environment may produce a variety of environmental (as well as social and economic) benefits. For example, a new tree-lined cycle route would not only contribute to sustainable movement but could also result in advantages for recreation and well-being through the health benefits of cycling as part of an active lifestyle, natural processes as a result of the trees creating shade to mitigate the urban heat island effect and improving drainage, and biodiversity through potential wildlife habitat creation in the newly-planted trees. There will still be certain people or places that benefit from, and thus place more value on, individual aspects of the environment and there will be occasions when existing green infrastructure has a particular priority function where it would be inappropriate to impose other functions on it, such as sites for breeding birds. However the purpose of the EIG is to address the multi-functionality of the environment, acknowledging that most functions are interrelated.

Figure 4: An example of multi-functional environmental infrastructure

While the EIG can be narrowed down to view these functions individually, it should be recognised that there are overarching themes, most notably the need to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, which will benefit from the application of EIG by way of a holistic approach. The following five functions include the environmental aspects most relevant to the people who visit, live and work in the Black Country, and were identified as part of '*Workstream I – Identify Functions*' from the above (see figure 3) methodology:

- **Nature**– naturally occurring features of the environment, which include both the geology and wildlife of the Black Country. It encompasses both site features and landscape scale nature conservation.

- **Natural Processes** – natural occurrences which happen as a result of changes to the physical environment. These events may occur due to human intervention and resulting impacts on the natural world, for example, climate change and the resulting potential for increased flood risk.

- **Character, Identity and Landscape** – historic aspects, both in natural and built form, of the Black Country including the buildings, townscape, landmarks, events, people and places which symbolise the culture and heritage of the Black Country. These can range from Scheduled Monuments (SM) and Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest to local features not protected by statutory designations.

- **Recreation and Well-Being** – the role of the environment in improving health and wellbeing to the people of the Black Country, including planning for open, green spaces and the provision of sport and community facilities.

- **Sustainable Movement** – improvements to the Black Country environment which can aid accessibility to homes, workplaces and leisure uses, in a sustainable manner through the reduction of transport-related carbon emissions.

These functions cut across many traditional disciplines. It is for this reason that climate change is not separated out into its own function; rather the aim is to fully integrate it into all relevant functions to ensure it is addressed through a comprehensive and holistic approach. While the Natural Processes function is acknowledged as covering important systems for tackling climate change, it would be incorrect to assume that the other functions will not significantly contribute towards the alleviation and adaptation to climate change.

In order to identify the key priorities for EIG, and following consultation with key partners and stakeholders, a series of datasets have been collected to display the present environment of the Black Country. This has involved mapping the environmental infrastructure assets which can currently be found in the Black Country against baseline data such as health data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in order to highlight areas of environmental deficiency to be addressed. As a result we will be able to identify opportunities for the creation, extension or improvement of environmental infrastructure, particularly in those areas shown to have an existing deficiency.

Use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) within the EIG methodology

The identification of existing environmental infrastructure assets has been achieved through the use of GIS mapping. The Black Country Local Authorities carried out the mapping work with assistance from EcoRecord and the Black Country Observatory. The Authorities already held a large number of datasets and there was potential to use these to identify where there were possible gaps in environmental infrastructure provision and which areas appeared to have sufficient existing assets.

The mapping was carried out on a Black Country scale and focused on looking at interconnections between the four local authority areas and, wherever possible, areas outside the sub-region.

For each of the functions the following components were identified as being important and have consequently been mapped. It should be noted that there is an overlap between the functions regarding certain mapped assets such as flood risk zones and canals.

Nature (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) – Biodiversity Enhancement Zones, Geodiversity Consideration Zones, accessible semi-natural greenspace, wildlife corridors, culverted watercourses and flood zones.

Natural Processes – Flood Zones, Rivers, Canals, Urban Area, Open Space Network.

Character, Identity & Landscape – Conservation Areas, Registered Parks & Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Centres, Ancient Woodland, Canals and Rivers, Greenbelt/Countryside areas, Beacon locations.

Recreation & Well-Being - Open Space Network (by type), Index of Multiple Deprivation and Sports Participation Data.

Sustainable Movement – Cycle Routes, Canals, Rivers, Open Space Network.

The functions and their components are displayed in the 'EIG Function Wheel' (See Figure 5).

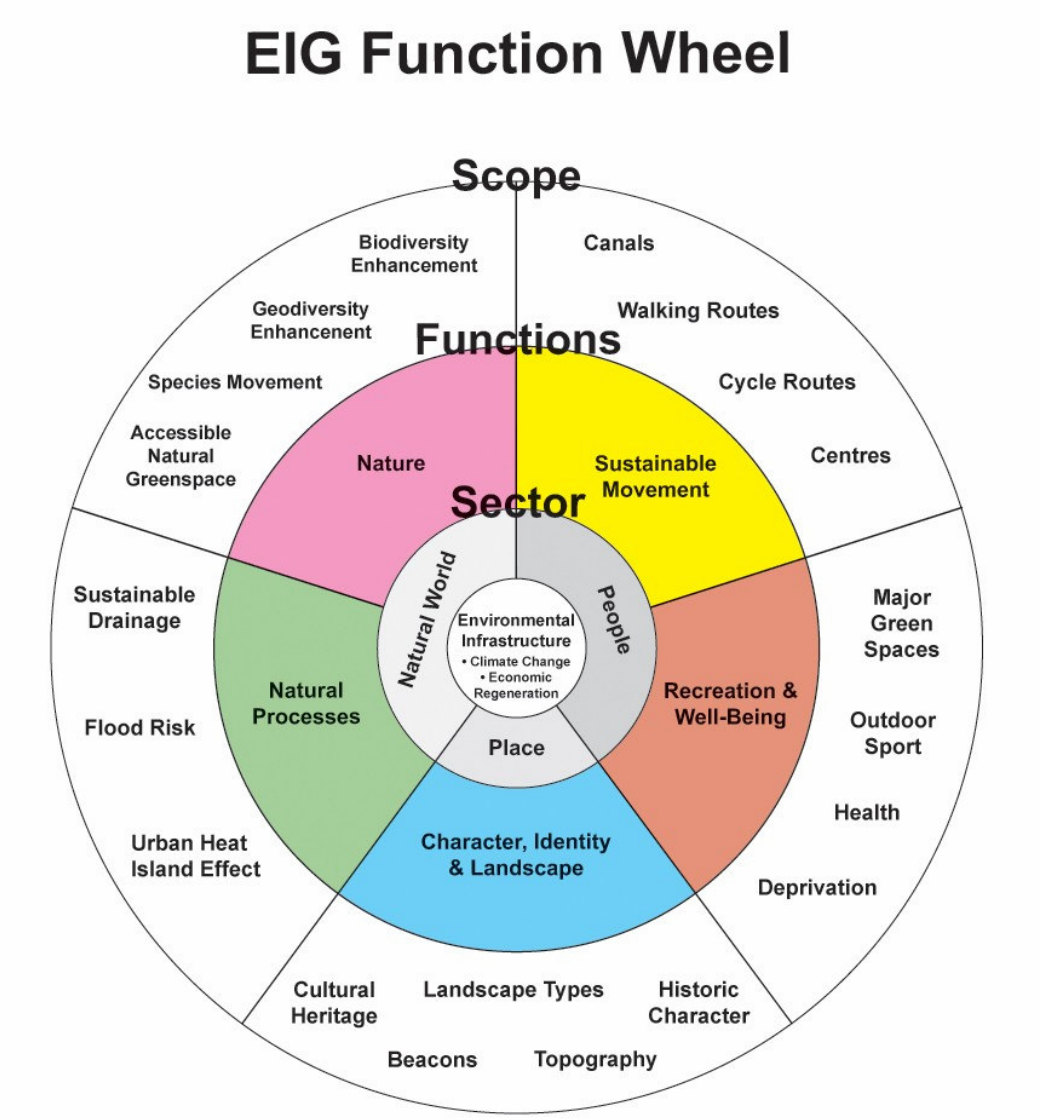


Figure 5: The components of EIG

Chapter 9: EIG Functions

9.1 Nature (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)

Context:
The Black Country has been long and famously described by nature conservationists as the “Endless Village”. It is also no exaggeration to state that on the doorsteps of its one million residents are some of the very best geological and wildlife sites in the world. The area is in central England and part of the Midland Plateau Natural Area and is at the watershed between the River Severn and the River Trent catchments.

For its size, the Black Country has the most diverse geology in the world. This has been combined with intensive and historical human activity to create a very special, if not unique, wildlife. The industrial activities of the past have created the internationally important rock exposures and caves, such as those at Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve which are also very important bat roosts. The canal system which enabled past industrial growth has helped to create and preserve internationally important geological exposures. This has led to the populations of great crested newts on the slopes which feed the balancing reservoirs at Fens Pool and floating water-plantain on the Cannock Extension Canal. The continued creation and recycling of brownfield habitats have allowed some species to thrive at a time when they have suffered heavily as agriculture has intensified in the surrounding countryside.

Despite its natural riches, the Black Country faces significant challenges which need urgent and sustained action if they are to be preserved. An example of this is the historic fragmentation of habitats, such as ancient woodland, which have isolated wildlife populations which are now becoming increasingly endangered by rising pressures, including climate change and recreation.

It is therefore now vital that we actively strengthen and reconnect our wildlife habitats, fully explore and celebrate our rich geology and help our residents to visit and enjoy these local and precious resources.

Strategic direction:
To make the Black Country a place with rich and sustainable wildlife and geology, which provides an attractive setting for living, working, recreation and learning, whilst helping the area adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Objective:
To identify priorities and set appropriate actions for the enhancement of wildlife and geology which support designated sites, create strong wildlife corridors and implement the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP) processes, including delivery, whilst improving access for people to nature and reducing the impacts of climate change.

Principles:
Listed below are the principles of the Nature function:

- Identify biodiversity and geological enhancement zones
- Improve and create network of wildlife sites and corridors
- Contribute to ecosystem functions (linking to water and heat island adaptation) and multi-functional management of sites (e.g. forestry and recreation)
- Improve access for people to wildlife (link to Wellbeing)
- Support designated nature conservation sites
- Contribute to the evolving BAP and GAP processes, including their delivery

Priorities:

From this list of principles the Nature function of EIG should deliver the following two key priorities:

Phase 1 Prioritize biodiversity and geological enhancement, restoration and protection by identifying areas important for:

• Wildlife and its movement
• Geodiversity discovery
• Designated nature conservation sites
• Areas with poor access to natural greenspace
• Climate change priority action areas
• BAP and GAP delivery

All of these areas will be highlighted for improvement through the planning system, however ones which are strategic or deliver multiple benefits will be prioritized.

Phase 2 Describe appropriate enhancement, restoration and protection actions for the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) regeneration corridors and centres.

Mapping:

Biodiversity Enhancement Zones and Wildlife Corridor Maps

Rationale:
The Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership have created these maps to describe the distribution of priority biodiversity across the Black Country landscape. This will identify what approach should be taken, at a more local level, to improve biodiversity across the landscape of the Black Country.

Method:

The base layer of the map is the Biodiversity Value Map for Birmingham and the Black Country. This was generated using a scoring system based on a grid of 1km squares.

Numerical values are given to areas of wildlife habitat (woodlands, grassland inventory sites, heathland inventory sites and ponds) based on their quality. The total score achieved by each 1km square has then been calculated. Therefore the more important habitats of good quality present, the higher the score that will be achieved by the 1km square. An interpolation algorithm was then used to place each square into one of three separate groups, based the total score it achieved and that of its neighbours. This method is described in more detail in Appendix A - N4.

This base layer should be interpreted using the following general principles:

- The highest scoring areas (in red) are core biodiversity areas (hotspots). These should be maintained in character and value. Management and buffering of key sites will be very important.
- The areas with medium scores (in orange) can often be seen as wildlife corridors and buffers to core areas. Restoring existing habitats and linking core areas will be a priority.
- The lowest scoring areas (in yellow) demonstrate significant opportunities for creation works which will improve the wider landscape. Enhancement of these areas will help to improve the general environment of the Black Country and aid the movement of more mobile species through the urban area.

This mapping has been carried out for Birmingham as well as the Black Country area. It is based on the current grading approach for the West Midlands region; however the datasets chosen for the Birmingham and Black Country maps are appropriate for the local area. The wider West Midlands Opportunity Map has been used to provide the context surrounding the Black Country.

Overlaying this base layer are areas which have some wildlife corridor function including greenbelt, canals, rivers, areas prone to flooding and linear open spaces. Known culverts are shown to indicate areas of opportunity for creating wildlife-rich water courses which help reduce flood risks associated with culverts.

Results:
Major hotspot areas include:

- Brownhills to Smethwick
- Sedgley to Halesowen
- Sedgley to Brownhills
- North to west Wolverhampton

These broadly link into biodiversity hotspot areas which surround the Black Country.

Conclusions and future work:

This has mapped known wildlife corridors, biodiversity hotspots and areas of opportunity. This enables a more tailored approach to biodiversity conservation, including enhancement, within the area.

Further work will be needed in Phase 2 to describe the character and functions of these zones and how development within regeneration corridors and strategic centres will deliver the actions needed to maintain, restore and create a sustainable biodiverse landscape.

The Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership will continue to collect data, refine priorities and set targets to maximise the area's wildlife resource.

Priority Geological Heritage Consideration Zones

Rationale:
The Black Country Geodiversity Partnership has mapped the distribution of priority geodiversity formations across the Black Country landscape which offer the best opportunities for new scientific discoveries.

Method:
Zones which demonstrate the best opportunities to create important geological exposures, or allow recording works which will be of significant scientific benefit, have been mapped on roughly a 1km square basis. These are based on the locations of known priority solid and drift geology.

Other geology of high value which has a patchy or less well known distribution, such as coal exposures, has not been included.

Results:
These zones are distributed throughout the Black Country however large areas fall within Dudley and Walsall boroughs.

Conclusions and future work:
Zones of priority geodiversity have been mapped. It is important that within (but not limited to) these zones that geological enhancement is considered as part of the development process. This could take the form of creating new exposures and/or enabling recording works.

Further work will be needed in Phase 2 to identify opportunities and describe actions within regeneration corridors and strategic centres. These should deliver the protection of key features as well as the enhancements and recording works needed in those areas.

The Black Country Geodiversity Partnership will continue to collect data, refine priorities and set targets to maximise the area's geological resources.

Accessible Natural Greenspace Maps

Rationale:

The maps demonstrate the areas within the Black Country already served by publicly accessible natural greenspace and highlight areas of poor supply, where its creation is needed to meet national benchmarks for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Method:
The Green Spaces Audits, carried out by each Local Authority, were used as the primary source of data. Sites with unrestricted access, whose lead typology was semi-natural vegetation, were selected first.

Due to differences in recording data across the sub-region secondary typologies could not be accurately compared. Therefore the distribution of designated nature conservation sites was mapped on top of the areas which did not have restricted access within the Green Spaces Audits. Where these overlapped the areas were selected and added to the map.

From these two sets of accessible natural greenspace, buffers were placed around them to corresponded with the Accessible Natural Greenspace Targets (ANGsT) set by Natural England (then English Nature). Those used are as follows:

- 300m from sites of 2ha or above
- 2000m from sites 20ha or above

Canals were added to the dataset; however it was decided to limit these to consideration only under the 300m buffer due to their very linear character.

Due to the low supply of large sites within or close to the Black Country the full set of ANGsT buffers were not mapped as they did not give useful results. It should therefore be noted that there is a general deficiency of these serving the area.

Severance effects (e.g. major roads) were not analysed due to the scale of mapping.

Results:
The Black Country is underserved by large continuous areas of semi natural habitat.

A much better coverage is present in the >2ha and >20ha categories, however certain areas are not well represented.

Conclusions and future work:
Large sites are especially valuable both within and outside of the Black Country due to their scarcity.

The supply of accessible natural greenspace had been mapped to nationally recognised standards. It shows areas which have an existing supply of smaller sites and where they are scarce. Areas with poor supply should be

investigated in future documents and Local Authority strategies to identify opportunities for new provision, either through habitat creation or improved public access to existing natural greenspace.

Further work will be needed in Phase 2 to describe the impact of development within regeneration corridors and strategic centres on the supply of this resource and how it can be increased, to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

9.2 Natural Processes

Context:
The Black Country is at the watershed of two major rivers. To the South West of the region the water flows into the River Severn via the River Stour, while to the North East of the region the River Tame carries water down stream to the River Trent. Many of the rivers, particularly in the River Tame catchment, are culverted or in concrete channels through the urban areas. The flood plain in the Black Country is generally narrow and well defined. The Black Country falls within two of Severn Trent's water resource zones with the supply coming from the Elan Valley and the River Severn. A further proportion of water comes from the South Staffordshire water resource zone. The high proportion of impermeable ground and high numbers of culverts however makes the risk of localised and sewer flooding a problem. New developments should take the opportunity to open up culverts and restore watercourses back to a more natural state.

Including rivers and water bodies in new development can have economic, social and environmental benefits. House prices are often higher, flood risk is reduced and there is added green space for people and wildlife.

There are great opportunities for the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) to be incorporated in to new developments. These surface water management techniques have multiple benefits including reduction of flood risk, diffuse pollution mitigation and aquifer recharge and provide opportunities for wildlife and recreation. The geology of the Black Country presents high levels of impermeable surfaces which may potentially limit the potential for infiltration SUDS.

Rivers and streams have for years been buried underground in the Black Country and are a forgotten asset. There is an opportunity through new development to open up culverted watercourses and return the rivers and streams to a more natural state. Developments can then be positioned to face these watercourses giving access to green spaces for local people and wildlife, whilst also helping to mitigate against the potential risks of flooding.

Strategic Direction:
To make the Black Country an environment that works with and contributes towards natural processes, ensuring that new developments (and wherever

possible existing areas) take account of the impact of natural processes at the earliest stages of any new development.

Objective:
To work with natural processes at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that these processes are taken in to account to improve the environment through contributing to and assisting these functions wherever possible.

Principles:
Listed below are the principles of the Natural Processes Function:

- Incorporate SUDS into new developments and integrate opportunities for the minimisation of surface water run off.
- To ensure that all future developments work with natural processes and systems and wherever possible incorporate opportunities for educational, cultural and recreational benefits without causing harm to sensitive habitats.
- Contribute to reducing the urban heat island effect, which is likely to develop in heavily built up parts of the Black Country in future years.
- To contribute to reducing flood risk, both within the Black Country and in areas downstream, in the context of future increases in heavy rainfall and waste water generation in some areas.
- Create additional benefits from flood defence and storage such as enhancing biodiversity and green spaces as SUDS features.
- Encourage planting of street trees and urban woodland in appropriate locations to mitigate the urban heat island effect, improve drainage and enhance the network of green spaces.

Priorities:
From this list of principles the Natural Processes function of EIG should deliver the following key priorities:

1. To ensure that all future developments work with natural processes and systems and where ever possible incorporate opportunities for educational, cultural and recreational benefits. It should also ensure that enhanced access as a result of mitigation schemes does not interfere or cause harm to sensitive habitats.

2. Where possible, provide a network of local green spaces, including urban woodland and street trees, which will help to reduce the urban heat island effect and improve urban drainage. This provision should be prioritised in areas which are heavily built up, with little existing vegetation and open space. This will also link to the sustainable movement function, thus helping to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve the health and well-being of communities.

3. Integrate opportunities for the minimisation of surface water run off through new development, including incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and opening up culverts where possible, in

line with the findings of the Water Cycle Study and Surface Water Management Plan currently being developed. This will provide additional environmental benefits, including enhancing biodiversity and green space.

Mapping

Rationale:
The maps show the areas of the Black Country that may be affected by flooding and how these relate to the green space network. The maps also show parts of the Black Country that currently have generally low provision of open space and therefore could be susceptible to the heat island effect.

Method:
A number of Rivers flow through the Black Country including the River Tame (the Oldbury & Wolverhampton Arms), the River Stour and the Smestow and Ford Brooks. There are however few open watercourses in the Black Country, as due to the history of development and industrialisation in the area many watercourses were culverted. Due to the heavily urbanised nature of the area there is a high susceptibility to localised surface water flooding during periods of intense rainfall. There is also a risk of culverts becoming blocked despite their generally sizeable capacity, which could result in localised flooding.

It was therefore felt that the Flood Zones and open spaces should be mapped to highlight areas that may be more at risk from flooding and how open spaces may be able to alleviate the impacts of flooding, and where possible help to reduce the urban heat island effect.

Results:
There are limited areas within the regeneration corridors and Strategic Centres which are currently identified as at risk from flooding. These may need to be priority areas for future work (see below).

Conclusions and future work
A Water Cycle Study and Surface Water Management Plan is currently being carried out and this will enable us to have a better understanding of flood risk from all surface water sources and identify surface water flooding “hot spots” in the Black Country. This will then enable the identification of opportunities to optimise the use of SUDS and de-culverting where appropriate. Level 2 Flood Risk Assessments will also be carried out where necessary to inform the potential allocation of sites which are at risk of flooding for development.

Green spaces throughout the Black Country have been mapped to illustrate the coverage of local green space networks which may protect against the urban heat island effect through shading, water retention and evaporation. The presence of water bodies is also likely to cool local areas. The heat island effect could increase energy use for cooling, create health problems for the vulnerable and adversely affect native wildlife. As this is a localised effect, the

analysis of areas at most risk of heat island effects needs further work at a local level through Phase 2 of the EIG. This could identify those high density residential areas with limited garden area which also suffer from low levels of public open space and tree coverage.

9.3 Character, Identity and Landscape

Context:
The historic heritage and landscape have helped to create the quality of place in the Black Country. The panoply of parks and gardens of historic interest, scheduled monuments, together with hundreds of listed buildings and dozens of conservation areas help to contribute towards the local distinctiveness of the area. Many of these historic features provide opportunities for integration within a wider environmental infrastructure network.

The Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation (BCHLC) project introduced a Black Country wide set of character areas which provide the broad, descriptive overviews of the modern day (and historic) character of the areas together with highlighting designated historic assets. The BCHLC is intended to be used to help protect and enhance the landscape, character and distinctiveness of an area when development proposals are being considered.

The first phase of work, completed in 2006, used desk-based research to produce a single, map-linked database. The database divides the Black Country into over 12,000 HLC parcels of land, describing the present (based on the year 2000) and past land uses of each parcel. This data has now been used to divide the Black Country into 51 larger Character Areas, using generalisations based on the smaller parcels of land. These Character Areas are designed to assist in the presentation and understanding of the distinctive landscape of the Black Country. A profile has been prepared for each Character Area. More in-depth studies have been carried out for certain Regeneration Corridors in Wolverhampton and the Brierley Hill Strategic Centre.

The Landscape Character Framework for the Black Country Regeneration Corridors (LCF) uses data from the Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation and applies it to the corridors. The LCF produced a typology of the elements within the Black Country townscape and identified which landscape types are more common in the corridors. These documents should be used as background for any future detailed historic landscape characterisation studies or heritage appraisals that may be required.

Although the Black Country is primarily urbanised as a result of its industrial background and associated housing there are a number of important topographical features including hills, valleys, canals, woodlands and Green Belt areas which contribute positively to the area. These create a series of green wedges of open land which connect the built up area to the open countryside and provide valuable green “lungs” for a range of recreation and

leisure activity. All these features help to create the character and identity of the Black Country.

Strategic Direction:
To make the Black Country a place where the natural and built landscapes will create and maintain a vibrant, attractive, safe and healthy place in which people will wish to live and work. This will benefit the local population and help the region to adapt to the impacts of economic, social and climate change. The historic heritage and valued distinctive landscapes which define the identity of the Black Country as a whole will be celebrated and enjoyed by its diverse local communities.

Objectives:
To identify priorities for the enhancement of the existing landscape of the Black Country, focusing on environmental improvement within the regeneration corridors and highlighting the importance of sub-regionally significant beacons.

To identify, protect and enhance those elements of the historic and natural environment which contribute positively to a locally distinctive sense of place

To encourage regeneration which realises the social, economic and environmental benefits of the retention and enhancement of the historic environment and recognises opportunities to reveal and reinforce these values to foster interest, enjoyment and involvement in cultural heritage.

Principles:
Listed below are the principles of the Character, Identity and Landscape function:

- Protect and enhance historic buildings, features and areas of archaeological, landscape and geodiversity value and ensure that their wider landscape setting and context is understood.
- Capitalise on the distinctive topography of the Black Country and promote landmark 'beacons'.
- Maximise opportunities for communities to access, enjoy and become engaged with and take pride in the Black Country's cultural heritage.
- Secure the regeneration and enhancement of the network of historic town and local centres that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the Black Country.
- Ensure that the canal network (existing and historic), and its associated structures and sites, is protected and enhanced in support of the bid for World Heritage Site status.
- Develop opportunities for protection and natural landscape enhancement particularly for ancient and other semi-natural woodland sites and river corridors in the Black Country.
- Promote and realise opportunities that the historic and natural environment makes to tourism, education and leisure in the Black Country.

Priorities:
From this list of principles the Character, Identity and Landscape function of the EIG should set out how we will deliver the following key outputs:

1. Establish broad management and policy considerations for the Landscape Types identified in the Landscape Character Framework for the Black Country Regeneration Corridors.
2. For area based DPDs to be informed by appropriate heritage appraisals to identify aspects of value and regeneration opportunities.
3. Ensure the protection of designated historic assets (e.g. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens) as well as valued aspects of local heritage interest identified in Historic Environment Records and identify priorities for enhancement .
4. Describe appropriate enhancement, restoration and protection priorities for JCS regeneration corridors and centres and designated 'beacons'.
5. Improve and/or create linkages between and throughout the urban core of the Black Country and the more rural hinterland, including the urban fringe, to enable sustainable access to a variety of landscapes.

Mapping

Rationale:
The map shows the areas of the Black Country where Green Belt and open countryside are well represented and the main areas designated as of historic interest.

Method:
There is a wealth of information available under this topic but it is not possible to represent it all on a single map due to the scale of the maps in the document and the danger of so much detail causing confusion. It was decided to concentrate on those features which are possible to map and which highlight the main features of the sub-region.

Under landscape, the areas of designated Green Belt and the primary green wedges and open countryside areas have been mapped. In addition particular features such as ancient woodland and registered parks are large enough to be depicted. Rivers and canals, important features of the landscape, are also shown.

As regards built heritage it is not feasible to map listed buildings on this scale but conservation areas and ancient monuments have been shown. However many of these scheduled monuments are very small and some are smaller than buildings e.g. medieval crosses. The historic centres mapped are those which were the centres of population in 1750. In most cases these are now designated as merely local centres. The beacons are either landmarks of the Black Country, such as Dudley Castle in its elevated location, or high hills or promontories such as Rowley Hills. They are examples of features which give the Black Country its identity.

Results:
The Green Belt and countryside areas are mainly to be found in Walsall and Dudley, although Sandwell Valley is a notable exception. Areas of ancient woodland and registered parks are well distributed and the canal network is present throughout the Black Country together with main rivers such as the Stour and the Tame and their tributaries. Historic centres and beacons are also well distributed throughout the sub-region.

Conclusions and future work:
There is a surprising amount of protected green belt mostly in the form of green wedges which provide "green lungs" and an open character within the built up conurbation that is the Black Country

Further work will be needed in Phase 2 to take full account of the important contribution that the historic and natural landscape make to the area and to recommend how best to preserve and enhance these features. This work could draw on detailed Historic Landscape Characterisation studies which have been carried out for Brierley Hill, the Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Area and the main regeneration areas within Wolverhampton.

9.4 Recreation and Well-Being

Context
There is an extensive network of recreational green space in the Black Country, ranging from doorstep greens to large parks which perform a variety of functions. All of these spaces are important to the well-being of local residents and visitors. Each local authority has recently carried out a local Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment, which sets local quantity, quality and accessibility standards for different types of green space by comparing existing provision against the needs and aspirations of local people.

Although there is a great deal of information currently available on green space which can be analysed at a Black Country level, it is important to focus on what is significant at a strategic level. Parks are particularly important to recreation and well-being as they have multiple functions. They provide large "breathing spaces" in the urban fabric, improving air quality and providing space and facilities for both gentle and active exercise for a variety of age groups. Parks also provide a community cohesion function, acting as landmarks, meeting places and a focus for events. They are one of the means by which residents judge the quality of their neighbourhood and can be a key attraction for new residents, especially where they include high quality heritage features and visitor facilities. Park catchments are also large enough to extend across local authority boundaries, and a limited number of parks provide a significant sub-regional function.

Although levels of health and well-being vary across the Black Country, there are some common trends. Work by Sport England has identified consistently low levels of participation in sports and physical activity across the Black

Country (16%) compared to both national (21%) and regional (19.3%) averages. Linked to this, health deprivation is also high, particularly in the traditional heart of the Black Country. Parks potentially have a major role to play in tackling these trends as they generally provide free resources with open access.

Strategic Direction

To make the Black Country a place where residents and visitors have easy access to a network of high quality, multi-functional parks, enhancing quality of life, contributing towards better health and attracting people to live and work in the area.

Objectives

- Ensure that high quality, strategic level opportunities for recreation and outdoor exercise are available in all parts of the Black Country and are best placed to attract new residents, particularly A/B households;
- Maximise the many functions that each park can provide, including play and sports facilities, natural greenspace and events venues;
- Contribute to a local network of high quality green corridors and greenspace that will maximize access for local communities suffering from poor health and deprivation;
- Maximize the many benefits that large open spaces can provide in the densely built-up heart of the Black Country, including acting as oases for wildlife and tranquil "breathing spaces" for people, absorbing floodwater and reducing the heat island effect;
- Enhance quality of place and environment for existing and future communities by ensuring high quality and distinctive design which relates well to local character and provides local landmarks.

Principles

- Draw on and complement local Open Space Audit and Needs Assessments, Parks and Green Spaces and Sports Strategies;
- Identify strategic level park enhancement priority areas, where there is a significant gap in provision or where new development will create a deficiency;
- Prioritise areas for new provision or enhancement which are strategic or will deliver multiple benefits, particularly where:
    - There are currently concentrations of poor health, low sports participation and deprivation;
    - Development will provide the opportunity to create new parks;
    - There is the opportunity to integrate new communities with existing neighbourhoods;
    - Ground conditions make other development unviable;
    - Existing open space is of poor quality;
    - There are opportunities to link into strategic footpath and cycleway networks, the canal network, metro and bus networks, and the wildlife corridor network;

- Opportunities to improve drainage and mitigate heat island effects will be maximized.

Priorities

The Recreation and Well-Being function of EIG should deliver the following key priorities:

1. Creating a comprehensive strategic park network by enhancing the distribution, quality and variety of functions that Black Country parks provide;
2. Ensure that opportunities for outdoor recreation are fully maximised, in particular through the design of new residential areas;
3. Outline appropriate priorities for JCS regeneration corridors and strategic centres in preparation for Phase 2.

Mapping

Rationale:
The main purpose of the mapping has been to identify built-up areas which are not currently well-served by parks. As parks provide many functions which contribute towards good mental and physical health, areas where existing residents are generally of poor health and take little part in sport and physical activity have also been highlighted. Areas where new housing is planned up to 2026 are also picked out. New housing will bring in new population, increasing pressure on existing parks, but also provide opportunities to create new parks to fill gaps in the existing network or to provide contributions to enhance facilities provided by existing open spaces.

Method:
Two maps have been produced:

1) Context

The following datasets are shown on this map:

- Black Country Parks (taken from local Open Space Audits) shown with a 600m catchment area (as the crow flies)
- Green Belt (a proxy for areas which are not "built-up")
- Major new housing areas (taken from Joint Core Strategy Preferred Options Report)
- Areas with high Index of Multiple Deprivation health indices (2007) i.e. 10% worst areas in England for health deprivation
- Areas with low sports participation rates (2007) i.e. less than 14% of residents taking part in 3 x 30 minutes exercise per week

The Local Open Space Audits use slightly different definitions of a "park". Therefore the audit data has been standardised to pick out green spaces which are truly multifunctional, providing play and sports facilities and acting as a local community focus. Parks which are significant at a sub-regional

level (termed Strategic Parks), which are of high quality and host facilities and events which attract visitors from across the Black Country, have been highlighted so that the distribution of these strategic level facilities can be analysed.

The intention has been to provide a broad brush picture of access to parks across the sub-region. The access standards currently set for parks vary in terms of distance, but all aim to achieve a 15 minute walk time. Using 2 miles per hour as an average walking pace (for families), 15 minutes equates to 600metres. 600m is also the standard generally used in sustainable communities research for the catchment area of small parks (<15 ha). The Dudley method also applies a severance effect to take account of major access barriers. This approach is too detailed to apply at a Black Country level for Phase 1 but severance effects should be taken into account through Phase 2 of the EIG. Likewise, issues relating to varying quality, size and variety of functions provided by different parks can only be effectively analysed at a local level, through Phase 2, with reference to local Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment reports.

2) Park Priority Areas

The following datasets are shown on this map:

- Deprivation Areas – built-up areas which fall outside the 600m park catchment and within an area with poor health or low sports participation (adjusted to remove non-residential uses).
- Growth Areas - Major new housing areas which fall outside the 600m park catchment
- Regeneration Corridor and Strategic Centre boundaries (to provide context)

Results:

Around a third (31%) of the built-up area of the Black Country does not have good access to parks, although this includes some non-residential areas. Some of the largest areas with poor access are located around Willenhall, to the north of West Bromwich and around Brierley Hill. There are 4 or 5 Town Parks of sub-regional significance in each local authority area. Although Town Parks are distributed unevenly, it is interesting to note that they tend to be located within or close to major new housing areas, providing some major opportunities.

Areas with poor health and low sports participation are generally concentrated within the traditional heart of the Black Country, which forms a cross running from Wolverhampton City Centre down to Smethwick and from Bloxwich down to Dudley. Although most of Dudley Borough is not a priority in terms of poor health and sports participation, there are a cluster of major new housing areas in and around Brierley Hill Strategic Centre where there is a major gap in park provision. The same applies to large housing proposals to the west of Blackheath, north of Kingswinford and to the east of Willenhall.

There are a number of areas where Deprivation and Growth overlaps, clearly indicating a priority for new park provision or creating improved linkages to existing parks and open spaces. These areas are concentrated in the Bilston, Tipton and West Bromwich areas, and also cover the east of Wolverhampton City Centre which will accommodate large amounts of new housing.

Conclusions and Further Work:

Although the Black Country has an extensive park network there are some gaps in this network which can only be filled by upgrading existing open space (where this exists), improving linkages, or through the creation of new parks through major redevelopment. It is important to identify these gaps at a Black Country level to provide an indication of the overall scale of investment likely to be needed in park infrastructure up to 2026. This is in addition to the need to invest in local level open space and play facilities and natural green space (see Nature Function). The provision of new parks has particular implications for new development, as they are large, resource-intensive and must be centrally located and accessible to existing and new residents.

However, PPG17 expects open space standards to be set at a local level and to vary from area to area, and the Joint Core Strategy will reflect this localised approach by adopting different standards for each local authority area. Therefore, it is important that local nuances in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility of different types of open space, inform the application of this approach at the local level through Phase 2 of the EIG.

9.5 Sustainable Movement

Context:
The Black Country has a comprehensive network of cycle routes and Public Rights of Way (PROW). The Network of Cycle routes across the Black Country links many of the regeneration corridors and strategic centres identified in the Black Country Core Strategy. The PROW network includes the Beacon Way, part of a Regional Path, and there are also many PROWs that cross boundaries to form links between local authorities. These include the River Stour and Mousesweet Brook Paths and Monarch's Way, a National path of some 980 km that follows canal towpaths within the Black Country. There are also links from Sandwell Valley to Handsworth Wood in Birmingham.

Based upon cycle use data from Sandwell it is fair to say that there is increased participation and this trend looks set to continue. However participation levels are also influenced by factors such as fuel prices and the weather conditions in any given year. Currently many people work close to where they live with great potential to increase sustainable transport. This would bring many benefits, linking to health and well being and helping to reduce carbon emissions. There may also be potential in providing safer

routes for schoolchildren with the added bonus of reducing the school run effect on traffic congestion.

There is an identified network of “greenways” in the Black Country, which provide access corridors both for people and wildlife. The extensive 177 km canal system forms a key part of this network, together with paths through green spaces and along disused railway lines. Although there is an extensive greenway network, there are areas where pathways are of poor quality. There are gaps in the network and parts severed by major infrastructure, such as roads and railway lines.

An excellent network of canals connects the varied parts of the Black Country together and also provides links outwards to the surrounding countryside and inwards to Birmingham. The network was originally developed to serve commerce and exclude public access, and access points and short-stop moorings are still limited in some places. However in the future the canal network will form an important focus for future regeneration and canals will need to be easily accessible to both local communities and the main town and tourist centres. To adapt to this role there is a need to open up new access points and frontages and to maximise the use of canals as important pedestrian, cycle and waterborne routes as well as rich and attractive recreational areas.

It is clear that the Black Country has existing sustainable links and, with the levels of growth that are proposed in the coming years, it is important to ensure that existing links are enhanced where possible and that the network is extended to serve new developments and promote more use of sustainable transport. Regeneration plans provide a major opportunity to improve the existing network, particularly through canal improvements, opening up access to strategic centres and making routes through industrial areas more attractive and safer to use.

Strategic Direction:
To make the Black Country a place that is well connected by walking and cycling routes which are safe and easy for people to use at all times of the year. This will help to positively benefit the health and well being of residents and visitors alike.

Objectives:
Identify priorities for improvement of cycling and walking routes that promote the sustainable movement of people across the Black Country and enable them to access places and services in a sustainable and healthy way. Promoting the use of sustainable transport routes will help the Black Country to reduce climate change effects and improve health & well being.

Principles:
Listed below are the principles of the Sustainable Movement Function

- Improve access across the cycle and Public Rights Of Way (PROW) network.
- Create better accessibility to and make more use of the canal network for pedestrian, cycling and waterborne traffic.
- Identify barriers to using cycle routes and PROW network.
- Develop links to the network of green spaces across the Black Country.
- Help to promote physical well being by encouraging use of sustainable transport.
- Target priority areas where investment/improvements are most needed.

Priorities:
From this list of principles the sustainable movement function of EIG should deliver the following key priorities:

1. Enhance the flow of sustainable movement by improving connectivity between designated cycle and pedestrian routes, canal towpaths, public transport interchanges and green spaces, particularly within and between regeneration corridors and strategic centres, to assist with day to day travel. This will be achieved by identifying barriers that impede access by sustainable modes and will require the restoration of towpaths, public rights of way, cycle and pedestrian links. Routes identified in Cycling and Walking Strategies and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans will be prioritised.

2. The enhancement, restoration and protection of cycling and walking networks will contribute towards improving air quality, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve the health and well being of communities.
3. Identify areas where accessibility onto the canal network needs to be improved and short-term moorings provided and where improvements to the basic canal infrastructure and environment are required, especially where there is major need for new investment to be attracted.

Mapping

Rationale:
Maps have been created to show the network of cycle routes across the Black Country, including national and sub-regional proposed and existing cycle routes. The canal network is also shown as many cycle routes follow the canal network.

Method:
The Black Country has a comprehensive cycle network traversing the area. This includes many miles of local routes and two national cycle routes which also converge on the area, providing good opportunities for long distance cycling. These are National Cycle Network (NCN) 81 which runs from

Wolverhampton to Galton Valley and NCN 5 which runs from Birmingham, thorough Sandwell Valley to Walsall.
The Black Country Authorities are working together to ensure that common standards and approaches are adopted in relation to cycle routes

Results:
The map shows how the two national cycle routes meet in the Galton Valley area of Smethwick and how many local routes connect to this. Many areas within the Black Country appear to be well served by existing routes areas that have little coverage are the west of Dudley and Wolverhampton and the east of Walsall. There are some proposed cycle routes in these areas and improvements are being considered for the west of Wolverhampton. Funding for the development of on and off road routes predominantly derive from the annual Local Transport Plan budget allocated to each local authority. The local authorities also work closely with British Waterways, Groundwork West Midlands and Sustrans in developing cycle routes. These partnerships are important in securing additional funding from various sources, such as from the landfill trust, lottery, and ERDF funding. Additional cycle facilities can be incorporated into new developments, as part of a planning condition or Section 106 agreement. All of the four local authorities have published cycling strategies.
The issue of common design standards for a Black Country cycle network was raised at the Examination in Public for the Regional Spatial strategy Phase 1 Review. The four local authorities initially worked together to draft a common cycle network design standards document for the Black Country. However the Department for Transport published Local Transport Note 2/08 "Cycle Infrastructure Design", which the four local authorities have agreed to adhere to.

Conclusions and future work:
Cycling and Walking Officers (or their equivalents) meet on a regular basis with officers from Centro at the West Midlands Metropolitan Cycling Walking and Powered Two Wheeler Sub Group. The meetings are held to examine whether officers are meeting their proposed Local Transport Plan outputs and expenditure in regards to walking and cycling. The meeting also gives the officers an opportunity to pool resources to promote cycling and walking across the West Midlands Metropolitan area, determine where joint up working can provide cross boundary cycling and walking routes and discuss best practice.
Joint working between the four local authorities needs further development to ensure that the Black Country has an integrated cycle network rather than four cycle networks that sit in isolation.

Chapter 10: Main Findings, Policy Considerations and the Way Forward

Main Findings

It has been possible to draw out a number of strategic, Black Country level findings from the work carried out for Phase 1. Appendix A provides a more fine-grained assessment of function priorities for each Regeneration Corridor and Strategic Centre, which adds to the overall picture. Figure 6 gives further information for each corridor and centre under the various sub-topics identified in the Function Wheel (Chapter 8, Figure 5).

A significant amount of work has been carried out to assess priority areas for Biodiversity and Geodiversity. Priority geodiversity formations which offer the best opportunity for new scientific discoveries have been identified. Many of these lie within regeneration areas in the traditional heart of the Black Country, providing opportunities to record data or create new exposures. Biodiversity hotspots and areas where people have good access to wildlife sites have been identified, but also the many regeneration areas where new habitat creation is a priority {ref maps for any broad distribution}. The work has highlighted the need for a more sophisticated methodology to assess the importance and function of existing wildlife corridors for different species and this will need to be picked up in Phase 2.

In the future, it is anticipated that the climate of the Black Country will become wetter and warmer, with more extreme weather events. The majority of future flood risk will be from surface water run-off and domestic drainage so it is important that new developments increase surface water drainage and provides sufficient sewer capacity. Fluvial flooding will continue to be a localised problem which can be minimised by maintaining culverts and flood defences in good condition. Opening up of culverts may also be possible in some areas, helping to create new wildlife corridors and recreational areas. A Water Cycle Study incorporating a Surface Water Management Plan is due to be completed in May 2009. This will provide detailed guidance for Phase 2. Phase 2 should also investigate the impact that a warmer climate will have in creating urban heat islands within the Black Country by 2026. These are likely to be concentrated in densely developed areas with an absence of greenery, and can be tackled through the introduction of local networks of green space, street trees and green roofs incorporated into new developments and into existing areas where possible.

The Black Country is of international importance for its industrial heritage. A great deal of work has been carried out through the Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation project to move beyond the protection of designated historic assets to record, value and respect the wider historic character of local areas. Locally distinctive elements of the Black Country historic landscape have been identified, including the canal network and a complex pattern of historic centres, although further work will be required to expand on this at the local level. The Black Country Study recognised that key landmarks can provide vital legibility and distinctiveness in a continuous

built-up area like the Black Country. Phase 1 has taken this approach to produce a list of key Beacons, many of which are located on the hills which characterise the Black Country landscape.

A great deal of information is now available on the wide range of green spaces scattered throughout the urban area of the Black Country, through Local Authority Open Space Audit and Needs Assessments. These in-depth reports provide the main guidance for Phase 2 in terms of identifying priorities for green space improvement and creation. However, Phase 1 has provided a wider, strategic view of the strength of the Black Country park network as a whole. A good quality park network is a key component to tackling the poor health and low sports participation rates prevalent in the industrial heart of the Black Country, and will also help to attract new residents.

The Black Country is served by a sustainable transport network which links into surrounding areas. However, quality and linkages could be improved. Regeneration will provide many opportunities to promote more use of this network and to extend and improve it. This is important to ensure that new development does not exacerbate the current congestion problems and poor air quality suffered by many parts of the Black Country.

Policy Considerations

The Phase 1 findings have particular policy implications for the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (JCS), which are summarised below:

- JCS policies should provide protection of important areas for nature conservation including sites, corridors and features. They should require an improvement of the Black Country environment and enable partnership input to contribute to this.
- JCS policies should set out the sequential approach adopted when selecting areas for development, in accordance with PPS25: Development and Flood Risk. In the limited cases where flood risk affects areas identified for development the text for the relevant Regeneration Corridor or Strategic Centre should explain the nature of this risk, why development is required in this location and how the risk is capable of mitigation.
- JCS policies should adopt a Black Country-wide approach to promoting sustainable drainage which requires full consideration of any potential for deculverting and the use of systems best suited to Black Country ground conditions & underlying geology..
- JCS policies should highlight the importance of localised green space and water bodies to protect communities from the urban heat island effect. The use of gardens, woodland, street trees and green roofs should particularly be promoted.
- JCS policies should establish protection for designated historic assets but also list the locally distinctive elements of the Black Country Historic Landscape which should be taken account of and respected in any development.

- JCS policies should map, protect and promote the proposed Beacons.
- JCS policies should list and adopt local standards for different types of open space and sports facility as established through Open Space Audit and Needs Assessments for each Local Authority. The importance of the park network at a sub-regional level and the need to address gaps in this network should be emphasised.
- JCS policies should require seamless, high quality, sustainable transport networks to be embedded in all types of new development – particularly where linking home and work and contributing towards a recreational open space network.

The Way Forward

The purpose of the Environmental Infrastructure Guidance is to provide a vision for the environmental transformation of the Black Country. Phase 1 of this work, which is the subject of this report, has been developed at a strategic level. This will be reflected in policies in the Joint Core Strategy.

For most functions, an attempt has been made to identify geographical priority areas or locations, for example areas where there is a gap in park provision, high flood risk areas, or gaps in the cycle network. It would be difficult to show all of these priority areas on one plan. However, where two or more priority areas overlap this is an indication that:
(1) environmental infrastructure should be an overarching priority in any redevelopment ;
(2) particular care should be taken to ensure that new or improved environmental infrastructure is designed to serve all relevant functions.

It is the purpose of Phase 2 to take on board the approach adopted in Phase 1 and to develop this work in further detail. Phase 2 will provide the framework for more detailed plans and strategies, including Area Action Plans, Site Allocation Documents and other Development Plan Documents.

In summary Phase 2 will need to look at the following issues on a Black Country wide scale but with special emphasis on the Regeneration Corridors and Strategic Centres.

Nature

Biodiversity

- Identify how all development will add positively to improve the biodiversity of the area using the Biodiversity Enhancement Zones and wildlife corridor map.
- Further work will be needed to accurately describe the improvements needed, especially for wildlife corridors as different species will have different requirements.

Geodiversity

- Identify opportunities and sites in Geological Heritage Consideration Zones.

Accessible Natural Greenspace

- Identify opportunity sites for plugging “gaps” and improving the supply of sites

Natural Processes

- Investigate opportunities for deculverting watercourses and for improving the management of culverts.
- Provide guidance and standards for provision of SUDS in future developments
- Describe the impact of urban heat island effect on the Black Country and make recommendations to mitigate this

Character, Identity and Landscape

- Provide value assessments at Regeneration Corridor and Strategic Centre level using detailed Historic Landscape Characterisation techniques
- Identify the main landscape features of the Black Country and recommend how to preserve and enhance these features.

Recreation and Well Being

- Identify gaps in park network and in local open space, sport and play provision and recommend how best to address deficiencies in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

Sustainable Movement

- Identify opportunities for cycleway/footpath provision and linkages for a network to serve the Black Country and beyond. This should be done in conjunction with existing working groups.

An Implementation Plan will need to be prepared to set out how the EIG will be delivered. It will need to show who the key agencies and partners are and how they can contribute to the aims of the EIG. It has to be accepted that public sector funding on its own will not be able to provide the necessary investment required. The development process will be able to deliver much of the environmental infrastructure through redevelopment in the corridors and centres and by direct developer contributions.

The Core Strategy for the Black Country will produce an Implementation Plan on delivery and will look at funding. Phase 2 of the EIG will also need to look at this issue. The outcomes from Phase 2 will be developed further through the plans and strategies of the four individual Black Country authorities.

Through the EIG it is the aim to provide a high quality environment for the Black Country which will achieve the vision of the Black Country Core Strategy of delivering economic regeneration and creating vibrant and sustainable communities.

Appendix A – Individual EIG Function Appendices

Function: Nature

N1. Function and principle setting:

EIG partners were asked during a workshop in August 2008 to identify the key functions they wanted the EIG to address and to suggest elements which would help create a scope for each of those functions.

The results for the Nature function are as follows:

Under Biodiversity and Geodiversity function - Ecological network mapping - Canal network - Green corridor along rivers - Opening up culverts where practicable and as part of new development	 C C C E
Under Design function - Naturalization of river corridors	 E/C
Under Climate Change function - Species migration	 C
Under Urban Green Spaces function - SLINCs - Forestry/woodland management	 P M

These have been interpreted as falling under four themes:
C. Wildlife corridors
E. Enhance/restore value
P. Protect quality sites
M. Management

These suggestions have been combined and expanded to provide a robust set of priorities for the Nature function.

N2. Datasets:

The following information was collated for use in the mapping process of this function. Partners who provided the information are given in brackets.

- Biodiversity enhancement zones (Birmingham and the Black Country Biodiversity Partnership)
- Canals (EcoRecord)
- Culverted rivers (Environment Agency)
- Designated wildlife sites (EcoRecord)
- Extent of built up areas (EcoRecord)

- Extent of open space (EcoRecord)
- Flood Risk Zone 2, Regional 2007, Local Nov 2008 (Environment Agency)
- Geodiversity consideration zones (Black Country Geodiversity Partnership)
- Indicative Fluvial Floodplain (Environment Agency)
- Open Space Audits (Local Authorities)
- Regeneration corridors (Local Authorities)
- Rivers (EcoRecord)
- Strategic River Corridors (Environment Agency)
- West Midlands biodiversity opportunity map (West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership / Environment Agency)
- Wildlife corridors & function (Local Authorities / EcoRecord)

N3. Relevant Policies and Strategies:

- Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Circular 06/*2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Statutory Obligations and their impact within the planning system* - ODPM
- Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation *A Guide to Good Practice* - ODPM
- Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands
- Dudley MBC's Unitary Development Plan
- Sandwell MBC's Unitary Development Plan
- Walsall MBC's Unitary Development Plan
- Wolverhampton CC's Unitary Development Plan
- Dudley MBC Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document
- Conserving Walsall's Natural Environment Supplementary Planning Document
- Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan
- Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan
- The Black Country Nature Conservation Strategy
- The Nature Conservation Strategy for Birmingham
- Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Targets
- West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership's Enhancing Biodiversity Across the West Midlands
- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework

N4. Biodiversity Value Map of Birmingham and the Black Country

A simple scoring system was applied to the distribution of known wildlife habitats across Birmingham and the Black Country, to provide a map of biodiversity value. The datasets used to inform the mapping were:

- Good quality grasslands inventory for Birmingham and the Black Country
- Woodlands
- Heathlands inventory for Birmingham and the Black Country
- Ponds

A 1km grid was mapped over the Birmingham and Black Country area. The habitats present within each of these 1km squares (1kmx1km) were scored on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being of lower biodiversity value and 3 being of high biodiversity value). The following guidelines were used to allocate scores to the habitats present:

- Good quality grasslands inventory for Birmingham and the Black Country
    - Habitat within a sub-regionally, nationally or internationally designated nature conservation site (SINC, SSSI or SAC) scores 3 points.
    - Habitat within a locally designated nature conservation site (SLINCs) scores 2 points.
    - Other habitat scores 1 point.

- Woodlands
    - Ancient woodland scores 3 points.
    - Woodland within a sub-regional, national or international designated nature conservation site (SINC, SSSI or SAC) scores 3 points
    - Woodland within a locally designated nature conservation site (SLINCs), is a Millennium Forest, or is classified as being broadleaf on MasterMap scores 2 points.
    - Woodland classified as being coniferous on MasterMap scores 1 point.

- Heathlands inventory for Birmingham and the Black Country
    - All heathland sites score 3 points.

- Ponds
    - Ponds that contain at least 1 Red Data Book species and/or meet the requirements of a priority pond (as identified in Section 41 of Natural Environment and Rural Community Act 2006) score 3 points.
    - Ponds which have ecological survey data, but do not meet the threshold for priority pond status score 2 points.
    - Ponds present on MasterMap, which currently have no ecological data at present, score 1 point.

Within every 1km square each habitat category is only scored once, giving a maximum of 3 points. The total score for each 1km square is therefore a cumulative score for each of the habitats that it contains.

Each 1km square was then placed into one of three groups (Create, Restore or Maintain) by a Triangulated Irregular Network (TIN) interpolation algorithm, which uses the square's total score and those that surround it. By acknowledging the value of neighbouring 1km squares, the method has ensured that the more fluid and mobile character of biodiversity is represented whilst continuing to use a robust mathematical analysis of the data. The groupings reflect the following:

- Low scores = Create (shaded yellow)
- Medium scores = Restore (shaded orange)
- High Scores = Maintain (shaded red)

These groupings broadly describe the most appropriate approach to prioritize biodiversity conservation action and are described in more detail in the Nature function section.

Function: Natural Processes

NP1. Function and principle setting:

EIG partners were asked during the workshop to identify their key functions for EIG to address and provide elements, which would create a scope for each of those functions. These functions have been combined and expanded to create a comprehensive set. The results for the sustainable movement function are as follows:

The functions below have been interpreted as falling into three key themes:
W. Water
CC. Climate Change
ES. Enhancement Schemes

Under Water function	
Sufficient water supplies	**W**
Flood Risk	**W** / **CC**
SUDS	**CC**
Under Urban Green Spaces function	
Canal Network	**ES** / **W**
Under Climate Change function	
Reduce urban heat island effect	**ES**
Reduction in flood risk – use of green spaces as SUDS features	**W**
Provision of green roofs	**ES**

NP2. Datasets:

To achieve the above outputs mapping will be needed. The following information is seen as being useful in the process and potential holders of data listed.

- Flood Maps (LA/EA)
- Rivers (LA/EA)
- Canals (LA)
- Urban Area (LA)
- Open Space Network (LA)
- The Woodland Opportunities Map (FC)

NP3. Relevant Strategies:

Black Country Draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
River Tame Flood Risk management Strategy
Black Country Authorities PPG17 Audits

Function: Character, Identity and Landscape

C1. Function and principle setting:

EIG partners were asked during the workshop to identify the key functions for EIG to address and provide elements that could create a scope for each of those functions.

The results of the Character, Identity and Landscape function are as follows:

Under Cultural and Historic function	
Detailed Historic Landscape Characterisation	**L C**
Canal Network	**L**
Historic buildings – including historic canal-side industries	**B**
Archaeology and archaeological sites – including scheduled ancient monuments	**A**
Local identity	**C Cu**
Heritage assets – sites, places, areas, landscapes	**LCAB**
Under Landscape	
Townscape character	**L C A**
Local distinctiveness	**C B**

These have been interpreted as falling under five key themes:

L. Man made landscape
A. Archaeological sites and remains
B. Buildings
Cu. Culture
C, Character

These elements have been combined and expanded to provide a robust set of priorities for the Character, Identity and Landscape function.

C2. Datasets:

The following information was collated for use in the mapping process. Partners who provided the information are given in brackets.

- Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest Schedule of Ancient Monuments (LA/EH)
- Designated Conservation Areas (and proposed?) (LA/EH)
- Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (LA)
- Lists of Locally Listed buildings/Building of Local Historic Interest (LA)
- Lists of locally designated archaeological site, parks and gardens (LA)
- Dudley Borough Landscape and Townscape Character Study (LA)
- Black Country Historic Landscape Characterisation (LA)
- Brierley Hill Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation (LA)
- Areas of Ancient Woodland (FC/LA)
- The Woodlands Opportunity Map (FC)
- Designated Green Belt (LA)
- Beacons (LA)
- Rivers (LA/EA)
- Canals (LA)

C3. Relevant Strategies:

- Dudley Canals Strategy (LA)
- Designing Walsall SPD (LA)
- Landscape Character Assessment : Guidance for England & Scotland (NE)
- The Keepers of Time – a statement of policy for England's ancient and native woodland (FC)

Function: Recreation and Well-Being

RW1.Function and principle setting

EIG partners were asked during the workshop to identify the key functions they wanted the EIG to address and to suggest elements which would help create a scope for each of those functions.

The results for the Recreation and Well-Being function are as follows:

Under Design function

New development should be sympathetic to the surrounding environment and make space for green infrastructure
Under Sport, Recreation and Health function
Contributes to physical and mental well-being
Under Urban Green Spaces function
Parks
Private and Public Realm
Incidental green space

These elements have been combined and expanded to provide a robust set of priorities for the Recreation and Well-Being function.

RW2. Datasets:

The following information was collated for use in the mapping process. Partners who provided the information are given in brackets.

- Current Park boundaries (LA)
- Green Belt (LA)
- Health element of Index of Deprivation 2007 (Black Country Observatory)
- Sports Participation Rates 2007 (Sport England and Black Country Observatory)
- Major New Housing Areas (Joint Core Strategy Preferred Options Report)

RW3. Relevant Strategies:

Wolverhampton Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2008)
Wolverhampton Playing Pitch Study (2008)
Walsall Playing Pitch Study (2003)
Walsall Urban Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (2006)
Walsall Green Space Strategy 2006-11 (2006)
Sandwell Greenspace Audit (2007)
Dudley Playing Pitch Study (2003)
Dudley Parks and Green Space Strategy - Draft for Consultation (2009)

Function: Sustainable Movement

SM1. Function and principle setting:

EIG partners were asked during the workshop to identify their key functions for EIG to address and provide elements, which would create a scope for each of those functions. These functions have been combined and expanded

to create a comprehensive set. The results for the sustainable movement function are as follows:

The functions below have been interpreted as falling into three key themes:

A. Accessibility
PW. Physical Well-being
JR. Joining up routes

Under Sustainable Movement function	
Accessibility	**A**
Canal network	**JR**
Cycle routes (including former railways)	**JR**
Pleasant walkways	**A**
Promoting regional recreation by joining up existing green routes and parks	**JR**
Walking	**A/PW**
Cycling	**A/PW**
Under Sport, Recreation & Health function	
Cycle routes (including former railways)	**A**
Relates to physical well being	**PW**
Under Climate Change function	
Species migration	**JR**
Under Urban Green Spaces function	
Urban fringe, countryside access	**A**

SM2. Datasets:

To achieve the above outputs mapping will be needed. The following information is seen as being useful in the process and potential holders of data listed.

- Cycle Routes (National and Local) (LA)
- Public Rights of Way (LA)
- Canals (LA)
- Open Space Network (LA)

SM3. Relevant Strategies:

Black Country Authorities Walking and Cycling Strategies (LA)
Rights of Way Improvement Plans (LA)

Appendix B – Acknowledgements

Black Country Joint Core Strategy Environment Focus Group

We wish to express our thanks to the members of the focus group for their contribution to the work associated with the EIG. The organisations involved are listed below.

Black Country Consortium
Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Partnership
Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust
Black Country Geodiversity Partnership
Black Country Local Authorities
British Waterways
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
Groundwork
Inland Waterways Association
I.D.Architects
Natural England
Sport England

We would especially like to thank EcoRecord for their valued advice and hard work in producing the maps within the Nature function.