



Working together to secure the value of nature in Sussex

Local Plan Guidance

Sussex Local Nature Partnership Vision

'The purpose of the Sussex Local Nature Partnership is to work across sectors and organisations to secure the healthiest ecological system possible thereby protecting and enhancing the natural environment and all that it gives us.'

Sussex Local Nature Partnership Objectives

The LNP has set two high-level objectives, consistent with this vision to determine the nature and trajectory of the LNP's activities. These are:

1. **Conserve, enhance and expand Sussex's Natural Capital.**
Growth in Natural Capital is the fundamental pre-requisite for enhancing the services provided by ecosystems and so underpins the economic and social well-being of Sussex. The LNP will promote the greening of the economy including the need to invest in nature because of the many benefits and essential services it provides.
2. **Ensure that Sussex residents have access to and share in the benefits provided by healthy, well-functioning ecosystems.**

The LNP will aim to improve the connection between people, their environment and the benefits they get from the environment. This will cover a broad spectrum of activities including health, well-being, social and economic areas.

Why has the Sussex LNP produced guidance on Local Plans?

Government has made it clear in the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) that it *“expects the planning system to deliver homes, businesses, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs, while protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment.”* This forms the backdrop to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Government’s ambition to achieve ecologically coherent planning. The NPPF makes it clear that local authorities should be engaging with Local Nature Partnerships;

“planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including drawing for example, from the River Basin Management Plans. Working with Local Nature Partnerships where appropriate” (paragraph 165)

“...local planning authorities should work collaboratively on strategic planning priorities to enable delivery of sustainable development in consultation with Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Nature Partnerships...” (paragraph 180)

Duty to Cooperate

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning (England) Regulations as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 place a duty to cooperate on Local Planning Authorities and other public bodies in the preparation of Local Plans. The relevant bodies must have regard to the activities of both Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships, so long as those activities are relevant to local plan making.

What does the Sussex LNP wish to see Local Plans deliver?

Objective 1) Growth in Natural Capital

'Natural capital is the stock of our natural assets, including biodiversity. It is comprised of ecosystems - dynamic complexes of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment acting as functional units. The benefits that flow from this stock are described as ecosystem services. Natural resources (such as food, timber and water) and functioning natural systems (such as healthy, fertile soils; clean water and air; and a regulated climate) are vital supporting ecosystem services for our well-being and security, and are themselves sustained by biodiversity (from NEWP, page 7 and 11).'

Objective 2) Benefits provided by ecosystem services

What are Ecosystem Services?

We all benefit from a multitude of resources and processes that are supplied by nature. Collectively, these benefits are known as ecosystem services and include water to drink, the decomposition of wastes, trees to sit under for shade in the park, timber production to help create our homes and wetlands to absorb rainwater runoff. Ecosystem services are divided into four broad categories support, regulatory, provisioning and cultural.

Current thinking on categorising the benefits provided by ecosystems, and therefore how a plan could provide these, is articulated in the [National Ecosystem Assessment](#). Appendix one provides information about the types of ecosystem services your local plan should provide.

Soundness of Local Plans

The advice of the Sussex LNP on the soundness of strategic plans will relate to how well local plans deliver each of the Sussex LNP's objectives. Therefore key questions the Sussex LNP would like see answered through the Local Plan are:

- **How well does the plan deliver growth in Natural Capital?**
- **How well does the plan support the benefits provided by healthy, well-functioning ecosystems?**

How do you know if your Local Plan is delivering the Sussex LNP objectives?

The following table indicates the questions that need to be addressed and answered in order to assess whether the objectives of the Sussex LNP are delivered through your Local Plan. The table highlights paragraphs in the NPPF & NPPG relevant to the question. Further references to useful guidance can be found at the bottom of the page. ¹

Table 1: Questions to be addressed by Local Plans

Questions	NPPF Reference	NPPG Reference
Has the plan collated sufficient ecological information in order to have adequately characterised the area under consideration and on which to base any further decisions?	117, 157, 165, 166, 181, 192, 158	Ecological information
What biodiversity will be lost as a result of the plan and what will be gained? Will the net gain more than compensate for any loss?	109, 115, 117, 157, 181	Net gains in biodiversity
Has the plan identified and presented policies on how it will protect, enhance and expand sites of international, national and local ecological importance?	109, 113, 115, 117, 157, 166	Hierarchy of sites
Is the plan adequate in its protection of legally protected species?	109, 115, 117	Protected Species
Does the plan have adequate provision for the protection, enhancement and expansion of locally important wildlife sites and priority habitats, including Ancient Woodland?	109, 113, 115, 117, 157	Priority Habitats
Does the plan have adequate provision for priority species that are not legally protected (Biodiversity Action Plan species)?	109, 115, 117	Priority Species
Does the plan include provision for enhancing the area's ecological network? - By identifying and targeting action on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). - By preparing Green Infrastructure strategies including the identification and enhancement of Multi-functional green space in and around urban areas.	76, 77, 99, 109, 114, 117, 157, 165, 181	Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure

¹ [SWT planning guidance](#)
[RSPB Planning Naturally](#)
[Campaign to Protect Rural England- Planning guidance](#)
[Planning for a health Environment: good practice for green infrastructure and biodiversity TCPA](#)
[Sustainable drainage systems: maximising the potential for people and wildlife RSPB & WWT](#)
[Natural England standing advice on ancient woodland and veteran trees](#)

Producing a sound evidence base

To produce a Local Plan that can deliver the objectives of the Sussex LNP guidance, there needs to be a sound evidence base. The Sussex LNP suggests that the following documents and information is used to inform your Local Plan. The Sussex LNP also highlights the value of utilising the BS42020 – Biodiversity – Code of Practice for planning and development.

Table 2: Evidence base for a Local Plan

Information required	Has this formed part of the evidence base to inform your Local Plan through to delivery?
Study of open space, habitats and designations within your LPA boundaries or that may be affected by activities within your boundaries.	
Mapping of the ecosystem services within your LPA boundary.	
Identification of the ecosystem service utilised by your LPA that may fall outside your LPA boundaries.	
SHLAA – which demonstrates consideration of natural capital growth needed to support housing numbers.	
Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Plan.	
Green Infrastructure Strategy* to inform site allocations and district spatial plans.	
Assessment of how your Green Infrastructure Strategy* compliments/fits with other adjoining LPAs.	
Preliminary Ecological Impact Assessment to accompany site allocation documents to allow for a more informed consideration of the sites.	
Local Plan to deliver policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in Natural Capital • Green Infrastructure strategic delivery* • Green Infrastructure delivery at development scale • Water Resource management • Climate Change Adaptation 	
Identification of mechanism that can be employed to utilise the multifunctional benefits of green infrastructure* with other disciplines i.e. flood risk planning.	
CIL Schedules – which identify and allocated monetary value to green infrastructure*/ecosystem services .	
Infrastructure Development Plan with projects identified to deliver growth in natural capital.	

* 'Green Infrastructure' includes 'Ecological Networks'

In summary

The purpose of the Sussex Local Nature Partnership is to work across sectors and organisations to secure the healthiest ecological system possible, thereby protecting and enhancing the natural environment and all that it gives us.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Conserving, enhancing and expanding Sussex's Natural Capital, and by
- Ensuring that Sussex residents have access to and share in the benefits provided by healthy, well-functioning ecosystems.

Key tests we will apply to any strategic plan will be:

- How well does the plan achieve growth in natural capital?
- How well does the plan support the benefits provided by healthy, well-functioning ecosystems?

This is done against the backdrop of England's ecosystems and the ecosystem services that flow from them, and in the context of government's ambition to reverse biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and deliver ecologically coherent planning.

Appendix One - Information about the types of ecosystem services your local plan should look to provide

How does the plan support or enhance the basic ecological functions on which all other benefits to society are based, including:

- Soil formation including nutrient and mineral cycling
- Water cycling and hydrology
- Primary production (plant growth) and ecological interactions

How does the plan enable and enhance the ability of ecosystems to regulate our environment to the benefit of people, including:

- Climate, including carbon budgeting and sequestration
- Impact on hazards form, for example, flooding and erosion Impact on risk from pests and diseases
- Pollination of plants
- Noise impact
- Light impact
- Air and Water quality

How does the plan improve the cultural experience of the location that it covers, including:

- Enhanced environmental settings to create a sense of place and to underpin activities like leisure, recreation and tourism
- Generate wild species diversity as part of the cultural experience of the place covered by the plan

How does the plan support the provision of materials for human use such as:

- Food from crops, livestock and wild species
- Timber, wood fuel and fibre
- Water
- Genetic resources