# Planning for Green Infrastructure

Development Planning Policy

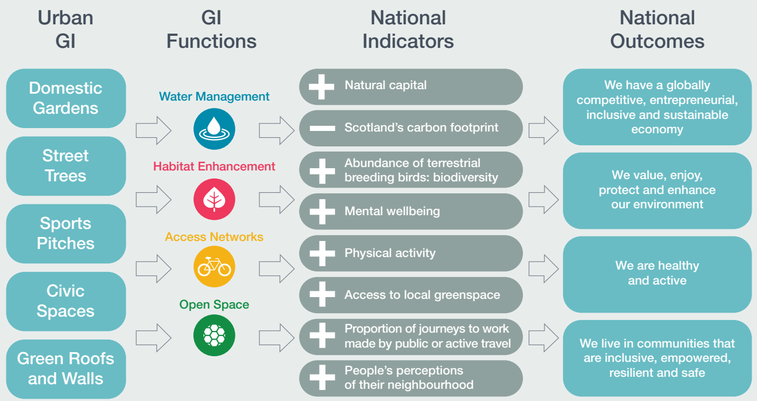
# What is Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure (GI) is green and blue space which has been planned, designed and managed to provide identified functions. In urban areas these GI features include domestic gardens, street trees, sports pitches, civic spaces, green roofs and green walls.

## Green Infrastructure and Placemaking

Scottish Planning Policy states that: “Planning should protect, enhance and promote Green Infrastructure, including open space and green networks, as an integral component of successful placemaking”.

Development that maximises the benefits of Green Infrastructure is essential to achieving the Scottish Government’s purpose and National Outcomes.




# A Guide to Exemplar Green Infrastructure Policies for Development Plans

This guide provides exemplar Green Infrastructure policies based on an analysis of Development Plan policies in Central Scotland[1] and is designed to maximise the benefits of GI to contribute to a successful place.

## Exemplar Green Infrastructure Policies

### Four Functional Policies

#### Water Management Policy

Development proposals should integrate naturalised SuDS features into the design of green infrastructure, and, where they are part of open space obligations, should be safe and accessible creating an attractive and distinctive setting for new developments.

#### Habitat Enhancements Policy

Development proposals should conserve and enhance on-site biodiversity and habitat networks within and adjacent to the site.

#### Access Networks Policy

Development proposals should maintain and enhance the quality and connectivity of access networks, integrating active travel routes (linking work places, schools, community facilities and public transport hubs) and recreation routes into green infrastructure.

#### Open Space Policy

Development proposals should meet local accessibility, quality and quantity standards for open space, and be designed to cater for the needs of the community.

### Principal Policy

GI is integral to placemaking and therefore, must be part of the design process from the outset, providing water management, habitat enhancements, access networks and open space functions.

### Stewardship Policy

Developers must provide details of the GI functions, and the maintenance requirements, and the party responsible for these, and demonstrate funding arrangements for their long-term delivery to the satisfaction of the local authority before construction starts.

1: Green Infrastructure Policies in the CSGN: www.gcvgreennetwork.gov.uk/publications

# Principal Policy

**Green infrastructure is integral to placemaking underpinned by the qualities of successful places, and therefore must be part of the design process from the outset, providing water management, habitat enhancements, access networks and open space.**

## Design GI Early

The Principal Policy statement emphasises the need for GI to be part of the earliest design considerations for a development. Too often what is referred to as GI is actually just the grassed land that’s left over once all other land uses (roads, utilities, buildings) have been considered. This ‘left-over’ space is often functionless, or only acquires a function by default, rather than through design. Early GI design provides the opportunity to integrate GI into the development to deliver valuable functions that potentially lowers the cost and increases the attractiveness of the development.

## Named Functional Policies

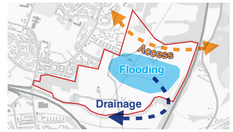
Naming the four primary functions of GI at the outset provides clarity for the applicant about what development management will be looking for when assessing planning applications.

## Applying the Principal Policy

### Early Engagement

Developers should discuss what GI is appropriate for the site at pre-application meetings with Development Management and relevant stakeholders.

### Site Appraisal




Developers should appraise the site context for GI functions, and demonstrate how this has influenced their design, and where requested undertake a full habitat and hydrological assessment of the site.

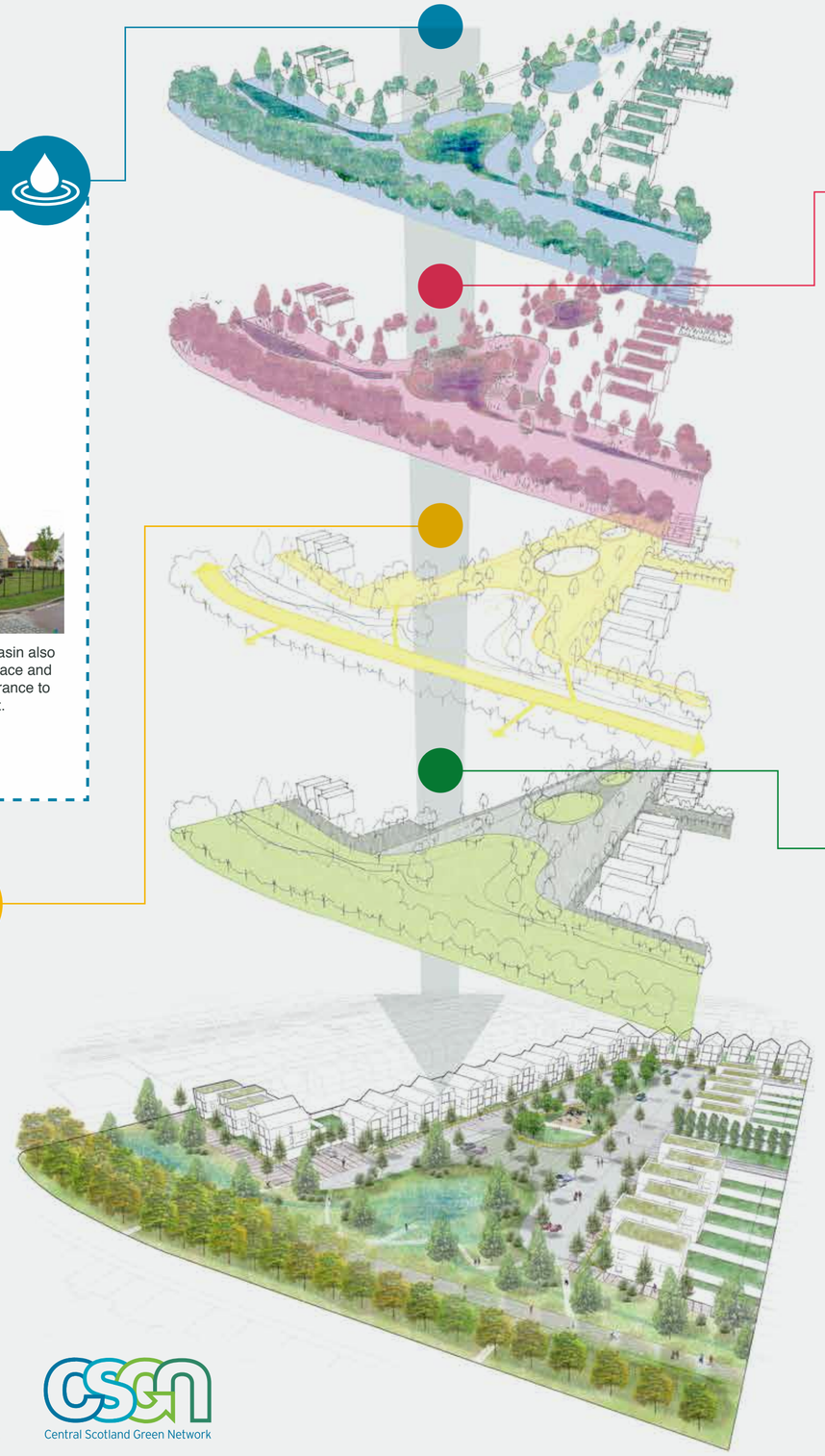
### Multifunctional GI

Developers should take opportunities to achieve multi-functionality by bringing GI functions together.

# Multi-functional Green Infrastructure

GI should be well-designed, appropriately managed and, wherever possible, it should be multi-functional (i.e. performing several functions in the same space).

When designing a new residential development that requires open space provision, it should be located and designed to provide a range of benefits for people and wildlife. Open spaces should be designed to accommodate off-road walking and cycle paths, temporary flood storage and permanent naturalised sustainable drainage features, while also providing habitat for wildlife and a range of features for use by communities.



## Water Management Functional Policy

**Development proposals should integrate naturalised SuDS features into the design of GI, and where they are part of open space obligations should be safe and accessible creating an attractive and distinctive setting for new developments.**

### SuDS as part of GI

This policy requires SuDS features to be part of GI within the development and not set apart from it and in so doing providing additional functionality (habitats, open space).

#### Increasing Habitat Value

All Photos: susdrain/CIRIA

This naturalised SuDS pond has gently sloping banks and marginal planting, which increases habitat value and reduces access risk.

#### Addressing Safety Concerns

This naturalised wetland has a simple wooden railing to make the feature obvious and reduce the risk of accidental access to the water.

#### Enhancing Aesthetics

This swale provides habitat and an attractive feature in the heart of this development.

#### Enhancing Amenity

This detention basin also provides play-space and an attractive entrance to the development.

## Habitat Enhancement Functional Policy

**Development proposals should conserve and enhance on-site biodiversity and habitat networks within and adjacent to the site.**

### Site and Context Analysis

This policy requires the design of GI to enhance habitats and biodiversity based on an understanding of both what is already on site and adjacent to the site.

#### Biodiversity Gain

Darwin Ecology Ltd

Sites should be assessed for habitats & biodiversity and proposals should deliver relevant enhancements.

#### Habitat Connectivity


GI should be designed to retain and expand habitat networks.

## Access Network Functional Policy

**Development proposals should maintain and enhance the quality and connectivity of access networks, integrating active travel routes (linking work places, schools, community facilities).**

### Off-road routes within GI

This policy requires designers to locate off-road active travel and recreational routes within GI, providing safe and pleasant places for walking and cycling.

#### Active Travel Routes

Active travel routes should be off–road and link to community facilities and transport hubs.

#### Recreational Routes

GI should be designed to provide recreational walking and cycling routes.

gcv green network

Central Scotland Green Network

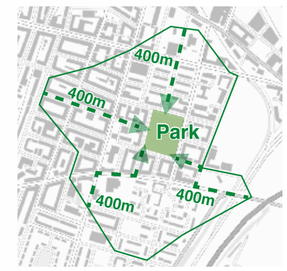
## Open Space Functional Policy

**Development proposals should meet local accessibility, quality and quantity standards for open space, and be designed to cater for the needs of the community.**

### Achieving the Standards for Open Space

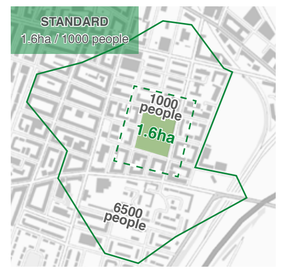
This policy requires the design and delivery of GI to meet the open space standards as set by the local authority. When designing the open space consideration must be given to the potential users of the space and their particular needs. The needs of young children are usually well considered, but recreational open space doesn't amount to just a play park. What are the needs of people of different ages, genders, and physical abilities?

#### Accessibility




Developers should ensure that all homes in their proposals are within the distance threshold to usable open space set by the local authority.

#### Quantity




Developers should ensure that there is access to sufficient quality compliant open space to meet the quantity standard set by the local authority.

#### Quality

Heyburn Playpark Association

Developers should exceed the threshold score for open space quality set by the local authority.

#### User Needs

GI should be designed to provide recreational facilities for different user and age groups.

# Stewardship Policy

**Developers should provide details of the GI functions and maintenance requirements, the party responsible for these, and demonstrate funding arrangements for their long-term delivery to the satisfaction of the local authority before construction starts.**

## Sustaining the benefits of Green Infrastructure

Well designed and delivered GI provides an array of benefits, but like all infrastructure these benefits will only continue to be enjoyed if the GI is appropriately managed and maintained. This section of the policy requires developers to: document the designed functions of the GI within their development; the maintenance regime required to sustain the functions; the organisation that will assume the maintenance regime upon completion of the development; and how the management and maintenance will be funded.

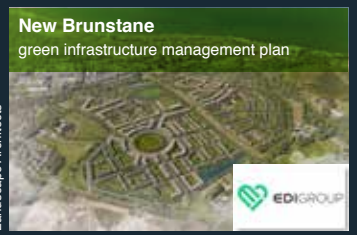
Local authority planners should scrutinise these documents to ensure that adequate and effective plans are in place so that the quality of the GI is sustained and doesn't become a future liability for the local authority or others associated with the development.

### Management & Maintenance Plans

Ian White Associates Landscape Architects

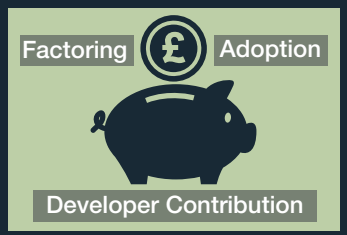
Management & maintenance arrangements should be documented and agreed with the local authority.

### Maintenance Regime




The function and maintenance regime of all GI components should be documented.

### Funding Mechanisms

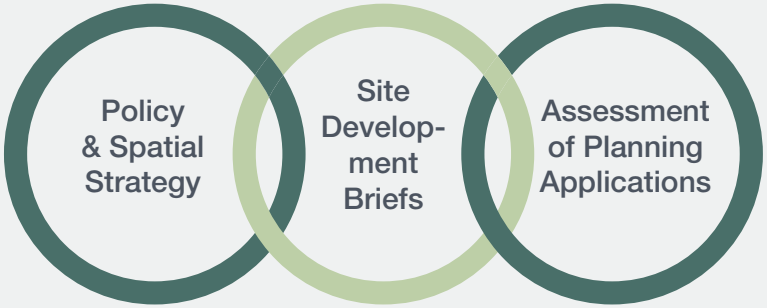



Mechanisms to fund the management and maintenance regime should be identified and agreed with the local authority.

## Delivering GI through Planning

The planning system has an important role to play in safeguarding existing GI and securing delivery of connected, accessible and well designed new GI within areas of change.

Policy alone doesn't necessarily deliver good functional GI. Policies and strategies should also inform site development briefs and provide a structure for the assessment of planning applications and on site delivery by Development Management.




These are all crucial 'links in the planning system chain' which together ensure that the benefits of GI in urban areas are secured and sustained.

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