

Appendix 5 - Definitions

The definitions below are relevant to this paper. For a full glossary of terms relevant to the Green Infrastructure Framework, please see the [Green Infrastructure Framework website](#).

Accessible Greenspace

Accessible Greenspaces are available for the general public to use free of charge and without time restrictions (although some sites may be closed to the public overnight and there may be fees for parking a vehicle). Accessible greenspaces are available to all, meaning that every reasonable effort is made to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2020.

Accessible Greenspaces are areas of vegetation set within a landscape or townscape, often include blue space (i.e. lakes, rivers and wetlands). There are a range of types of greenspaces included within the definition of publicly accessible greenspace (shown in the diagram below).

The Green Infrastructure Mapping Database User Guide sets out how Accessible Greenspace has been interpreted in developing the Green Infrastructure Mapping.

Accessible Natural Greenspace

Greenspaces meeting the definitions of accessible greenspace and natural greenspace. The Green Infrastructure Mapping Database User Guide sets out how Accessible Natural Greenspace has been interpreted in developing the Green Infrastructure Mapping.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a process of measuring the performance of an organisation's products, services, or processes against those of another organisation considered to be the best in the sector, aka "best in class." The point of benchmarking is to identify internal opportunities for improvement. Benchmarking will help to set local targets.

Example of a benchmark:

- For local authorities in the top quartile for this indicator, X% of people who have access to good quality parks, green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing, to meet the Accessible Greenspace Standards,

with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home

Green infrastructure

A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity. ([National Planning Policy Framework](#), 2021)

It includes both green and blue infrastructure such as:

- Parks and Gardens – urban parks, country and regional parks, formal gardens
- Amenity Greenspace – informal recreation spaces, housing greenspaces, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space
- Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground
- Green corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, green bridges, field margins, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way
- Vegetated sustainable drainage systems, (SuDS), (please see definition of SuDs later in this glossary). Includes: green roofs, blue roofs, rainwater harvesting and smart controls, downpipe disconnection planters, rain gardens and biofiltration strips, swales, ponds, detention basins
- Features for species such as bird and bat boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog holes
- Other - street trees, allotments, community gardens and orchards, private gardens, city farms, green walls, cemeteries and churchyards

Green Infrastructure Standards

The Green Infrastructure Standards are the Standards component of the Green Infrastructure Framework. They comprise the 5 Headline Green Infrastructure Standards and the Menu of Green Infrastructure Standards, accompanied by a Signposting Table which includes a wide range of green infrastructure standards, guidance and best practice checklists, matched to the 15 Green Infrastructure Principles and different area types.

Green Infrastructure Framework: the abbreviation for the Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles and Standards for England, which Natural England has developed to fulfil a commitment in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan, and which comprises:

- [15 Principles of Green Infrastructure](#)
- An on-line [Green Infrastructure Mapping Database](#) and [User Guide](#)
- A [Green Infrastructure Design Guide](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Process Journeys](#)
- Case Studies
- A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Greenspace

There are many definitions of greenspace in use. The definition of greenspace for the Green Infrastructure Framework is as follows:

Greenspace is an area of vegetation that is set within a landscape or townscape. Greenspace can include blue space (i.e. lakes, rivers and wetlands), and may include built environment features.

Greenspace is not necessarily accessible to the public e.g. greenspaces include allotments (that are normally locked and only accessible to key holders), and golf courses (which may require club membership and or payment of a fee to access). Such greenspace has a significant role to play in the overall provision of greenspaces for recreation and enjoyment.

High quality greenspace is designed and managed to deliver its intended functions and to meet defined needs. Greenspace may be urban or rural.

Greenspace Quality

Meeting the needs and expectations of both the staff and users of a site and the wider community and neighbourhood. Such sites are visually stimulating and attractive, safe and welcoming to all sections of society, managed and maintained to the highest standards of sustainability, and provide an enjoyable and inspirational visitor experience. The Green Flag Award® is the nationally accepted standard for the management of parks and greenspaces, and other recreational outdoor spaces in England and is included in the Green Infrastructure Framework’s Accessible Greenspace Standards.

Headline Green Infrastructure Standards

These are the top level of standards in the Green Infrastructure Framework and comprise:

- Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard
- Accessible Greenspace Standards
- Urban Nature Recovery Standards
- Urban Greening Factor Standard
- Urban tree canopy Cover Standard

Indicator

Indicators inform and measure progress against those standards and targets. As used in agriculture and forestry, indicators are variables that reflect the “health” of something (Ott, 1978). Indicators identify what conditions will be monitored, while the standards define when those conditions are acceptable or unacceptable. Although any number of variables could be monitored, it is important to identify those indicators that are most linked to issues of concern (Graefe et al. 1990).

Example to illustrate how this definition operates in practice:

% of people who have access to good quality parks, green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing, to meet the Accessible Greenspace Standards, with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes’ walk from home.

Natural Greenspace

Places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate. Natural and semi-natural greenspace exists as a distinct typology but also as discrete areas within the majority of other greenspace typologies. The Green Infrastructure Standards User Guide sets out how has been interpreted within the Green Infrastructure Standards; the Green Infrastructure Mapping User Guide sets out how natural greenspace has been interpreted in the Green Infrastructure Mapping.

Open Space

Open Space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground. Open space can include greenspaces and

civic spaces. Civic Spaces are hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, e.g. for community events.

Standard

'A Standard is an agreed, repeatable way of doing something. It's a published document that contains a technical specification or other precise criteria designed to be used consistently as a rule, guideline, or definition'. This definition is based on the [British Standards Institution's](#) definition of standards⁴.

The Green Infrastructure Standards define criteria and attributes for good green infrastructure and how to plan and deliver it. They include criteria/attributes relating to quantity, size, proximity, capacity, quality, accessibility, type and process (planning and management of green infrastructure), and are designed to be used consistently as a guideline.

Example to illustrate how this definition operates in practice:

Everyone has access to good quality parks, green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing, to meet the Accessible Greenspace Standards, with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.

Sustainable Drainage Systems, SuDS

Sustainable drainage systems slow the rate of surface water run-off and improve infiltration, by mimicking natural drainage in both rural and urban areas. This reduces the risk of "flash-flooding" which occurs when rainwater rapidly flows into the public sewerage and drainage systems. SuDS use natural features wherever possible.

Target

A target is a result that you are trying to achieve. ([Collins Dictionary](#)).

Example to illustrate how this definition operates in practice:

The local authority will aim for x% of people to have access to good quality parks, green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing, to meet the Accessible Greenspace Standards, with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home by 2030, and y% by 2040 and 100% by date z.

Urban

Areas that form settlements with populations of over 10,000 are urban, as defined by the Office for National Statistics. Urban area boundaries are based upon land use. These include suburban areas.

The following Census definitions have been used to define urban for the Green Infrastructure Framework in terms of Geographic Information System information: i.e. the LSOA rural-urban classification dataset (Census 2011) has been used including the following RUC 2011 classifications;

- Urban Major Conurbation.
- Urban Minor Conurbation.
- Urban City and Town.

This created an Urban Mapping Domain of about 25,000 km² across England (approximately 20% of the country).