

MEDWAY GREEN GRID ACTION PLAN – DRAFT

April 2007

Foreword

Chief Executive / Leader

The Green Grid aims to link urban and rural neighbourhoods with a network of quality green spaces and corridors of landscape, recreational and ecological value. There is a real need to ensure that green grid in Medway are safe and accessible to everyone, *especially*, children, young people and excluded groups and as such can make a contribution to people's well-being and health. To achieve this it is important that Green Grid is integral to Medway Council's planning policy framework, to ensure adequate provision when new development is being planned.

This Action Plan, complements the Countryside and Open Space Strategy and sets out a vision to inform the Local Development Framework and demonstrates synergy with the MRDU's Regeneration Framework. It provides high-level strategic and spatial thinking to illustrate how individual components of the grid come together to form a coherent whole. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) is promoting the establishment of a high quality, functional green space network throughout the Thames Gateway such as the Thames Gateway Parklands – this is Medway's locally informed response.

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Section 1: Set up

1.1 Why a Green Grid?

The concept of green grid is simple and attractive and its benefits wide ranging and long lasting. Green Grid aims to achieve added benefits by managing all elements of the open space resource (parks, play area, allotments, urban countryside areas) as a series of linkable sites rather than in isolation.

Medway's diverse range of open spaces includes an extraordinarily high proportion of internationally and nationally significant landscapes – on the estuary and its associated marshes, the River Medway and its estuary, the chalk grasslands of the Kent Downs and in ancient woodland. The Countryside and Open Space Strategy (January 2007) recognises the value of these key habitats. Medway is fortunate to have a relatively large number of urban parks within densely built up areas, as well as a series of rural valleys (the Capstone, Horsted and Darland Banks) which extend far into the urban neighbourhoods and which provide a physical link to the countryside beyond.

Medway Aerial view - highlighting valleys and key 'fingers' of open space

This means the majority of valued habitats and landscapes occur within easy reach of people at home and at work. Examples include the chalk grasslands of Horsted Valley and Darland Banks, the marshes at Halling and North Gillingham, the River Medway and the ancient woodlands at Park Wood, Walderslade and Upnor.

In the simplest sense, such areas are places to play, relax, walk the dog or enjoy a Sunday afternoon stroll, but collectively they can be regarded as a network, or grid, of open spaces, habitats and landscapes.

With better promotion, investment and management the Medway Green Grid could provide:

SUGGEST WE REGROUP THESE ACCORDING TO PRIORITY _ SIGNIFICANCE>

1. 5) Safer routes to work and schools, including dedicated cycle advantage routes and more integrated public transport. Green Grid can provide a real alternative to the car, with obvious benefits for health and quality of life.

- 2. 4) Access to nature** – Just knowing that there are opportunities to get out and enjoy contact with nature is valuable, even if it involves a short walk.
- 3. 3) Linear urban nature reserves** – many of Medway's green spaces already support important habitats such as orchid rich grassland or ancient woodlands carpeted with bluebells and wood anemone. We want to make sure that such habitats are kept healthy and that they can even expand, providing local people with access to wildlife on their doorstep. Joining habitat increases its value for wildlife. For instance, green grid will help promote the idea of connecting fragmented SSSI woodland on the Hoo Peninsula and, through improved management and grazing, it could connect existing chalk grassland in the Capstone and Horsted Valleys. Planting native trees along key green grid roads will encourage wildlife, as well as improving the local environment street scene and green grid could also encourage urban residents to garden with wildlife in mind.
- 4. Outdoor Classrooms and Gyms** – not all learning needs to take place behind closed doors. We want to provide safe physical links to schools and colleges so that teachers

and students can visit open spaces without having to hire coaches and leave the school for a day. These doorstep classrooms might be used for art classes, literacy hour, neighbourhood geography, environmental studies, sports, photography, drama and practical tasks.

5. **6) A focus for local heritage and culture** – accessible green spaces encourage social interaction, cultural events and can provide a focus for interpretation and art.
6. **8) A creative response to climate change**, by making sure that green spaces designed for nature conservation and recreation double up as areas for water retention and flood alleviation and by encouraging extensive native planting.
7. **2) A catalyst for investment** – high quality attractive landscapes, designed to reflect Medway's distinctive identity, will raise property values, provide a setting for new development and encourage new investment.
8. **7) A visitor attraction** – we all want to be able to show off a little and be proud of our neighbourhood; to have access

to wildlife and people-friendly green spaces within a 5 minute walk from your home. Visitors will be pleasantly surprised to discover what Medway has to offer.

9. **1) Somewhere safe, quiet, clean and green to relax** – the south-east's largest urban area (outside London) demands somewhere for people to relax, to meet and to socialise as an antidote to the occasional stresses of living and working in a vibrant and prosperous city. From town centre to countryside, the grid must offer a continuous, high quality green and pleasant route –from trees in urban squares, to green walkways along roads, to paths through parks and in the urban countryside areas. Benches, waymarking and crossing points will all add to a feeling of confidence in the route and an enjoyable experience.

So how will this change the way we live in Medway?

Well, just think of the benefits of being able to get to your local school, the shops or your doctor's surgery via high quality greenspaces – away from traffic noise but close to wildlife.

Imagine being able to use primarily greenspaces to walk or cycle from the orchards of Capstone Country Park to the marshes at Riverside Country Park.

Imagine being able to walk from the wildflower-rich Great Lines in central Chatham across and down to the river at St Mary's Island.

Imagine living in a city where you can cycle from Upnor through to Chattenden and then on to High Halstow through continuous native woodlands and newly planted hedges.

Medway's Green Grid can make a vital contribution to Medway's emerging identity - as a sustainable green city and an attractive place to live, work and invest.

1.2 Vision & principles

Medway's Green Grid Vision

Medway's Green Grid will forge connections between local communities and their local environment, encouraging a step change in the quality and quantity of accessible green space and demonstrating Medway's credentials as a dynamic, sustainable green city in the making.

Medway is considered by many as an urban authority, with 21% of its land area classified as 'urbanised'. This figure compares to an average of 10% for the rest of England, although the urban communities of Chatham, Strood, Gillingham and Rochester are all dissected by rural valleys, so are particularly well placed to benefit from the establishment of a Medway Green Grid.

Situated in the Thames Gateway, a national priority for regeneration, Medway is experiencing unprecedented levels of

change – recent examples are the development of a number of brown field sites along the River Medway including Rochester Riverside and Temple Marsh.

Core principles

Green Grid is essentially a best practice approach to sustainable landscape and access management. The Grid's detailed planning and implementation will vary from area to area, reflecting local needs, the diversity of the Borough and urban regeneration initiatives. Nevertheless the concept of Green Grid is based on the following core principles, which should be reflected in every Green Grid scheme. Green Grid projects will:

- complement the existing landscape, habitats and access network.
- foster and promote local distinctiveness.
- enhance and buffer designated sites
- promote access for all.
- encourage community engagement.
- be environmentally informed

Progress to date

Medway is at a relatively early stage in the development of its Green Grid programme. The recently published *Medway Countryside & Open Space Strategy (January 2007)*, which is currently out to public consultation, sets out an ambitious vision for improving the quality, quantity and management of Medway's countryside and open spaces and is supported by a delivery framework which maps out resources and timetabling for driving the strategy forward. This important document provides the high-level planning framework for the establishment of Medway's Green Grid. A description of the range of documents which provide the overall policy context for Medway's Green Grid is provided in *Annex A*.

In setting out the framework, principles and preliminary strategy for the Green Grid, this *Medway Green Grid Action Plan* will be a working document, designed to inform stakeholders and guide the gradual development of a logical, agreed plan of action.

1.3 Delivery

The Green Grid will be delivered through a number of mechanisms - the planning system, countryside management, the regeneration agenda, transport planning and, most importantly – by people and organisations working together in an integrated fashion.

We need to anticipate and accommodate a lengthy and disjointed delivery timeframe. Green Grid, in its entirety, will not be delivered in one phase, through a single project, by one organisation or with a single funding source. The ‘art’ of delivering Green Grid will be to ensure that the on-going and future piece-meal activities are managed so that they cumulatively contribute to the Green Grid as a whole. This *Green Grid Action Plan* aims to drive forward this approach.

There is a need to secure additional financial resources to undertake capital works and to support on-going maintenance. It is very important that the development of a Medway Green Grid is mainstreamed as a key regeneration tool as this will assist the concept’s inclusion in the *Medway Regeneration*

Framework. The *Medway Waterfront Renaissance Strategy* already promotes the benefits of Green Grid. Once embedded within these core documents, the Green Grid concept will be promoted for inclusion within the Project Framework for investment in Medway. Additional funding will be sought from developer contributions, through Transport for Medway, Heritage Lottery Fund bids and European funding streams.

The Medway Green Grid must respond to the increasing pace of regeneration. This *Action Plan* establishes the long term strategic vision for Green Grid in Medway and will enable an informed and proactive response to change.

Overcoming the hurdles

No one organisation will be able to deliver every aspect of Green Grid. Even within Medway Council it will be important to ensure that the appropriate directorates and services understand their capacity and responsibility to assist in delivering the Green Grid vision. Highways, Planning, Health, Greenspace Services are just a few of the services that will be required to contribute to this process. Ultimately, the

establishment of a Green Grid Forum will foster internal and external co-ordination of priorities, issues and costs.

Perceived links to anti-social behaviour – the Green Grid Forum will need to address the long term negative perception that increasing activity and access to open spaces will lead to increased experience of anti-social behaviour. Key issues for local communities and the Community Safety Team are illegal motorcycling and vandalism. People want a safe, clean, green environment and local communities are unlikely to welcome the concept of Green Grid unless these problems are addressed up front.

Fragmented patterns of land ownership – a single non-participating landowner can block or hold to ransom the establishment of a meaningful and attractive Green Grid. Recent mapping (can we identify which mapping) indicates the pinch points or potential blockages within the network and officers from across the council will be working proactively with land owners and developers to address the relevant issues.

Current inappropriate land management – It is essential that Green Grid is associated with high standards of land management and that different types of greenspace, from

wildlife-rich habitats to the more formal open spaces – are managed appropriately.

Medway Council is working in partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust and others to establish appropriate regimes for land management on key conservation sites in Medway's urban neighbourhoods. This work is addressing issues such as the grazing of grasslands and sustainable woodland management.

Establishing a Green Grid Forum

Delivery of Medway's Green Grid requires a dedicated Green Grid Cross Directorate Project Team supported and guided by a wider Green Grid Forum of key stakeholders.

A preliminary stakeholder workshop (held in late February 2007) identified a range of potential projects for inclusion in a future Green Grid programme. Additional stakeholder workshops will evaluate and prioritise and co-ordinate the delivery of these potential projects so that an agreed Green Grid action planning framework is in place when the Green Grid team is appointed.

The key stakeholder organisations to be represented on Medway's Green Grid Forum are listed in *Annex B*, along with

the participants who attended the preliminary stakeholder workshop in February.

1.4 Objectives

Not sure this is required here! Delivering the Green Grid is likely to be a protracted and reactive process so it will be important to have a dedicated Green Grid team to champion the cause and deliver key Green Grid objectives.

Green Grid Objectives

Planning & delivery

- Ensure all masterplans, development briefs and Section 106 Agreements are developed with knowledge of Green Grid aspirations.
- Minimise the loss of any open space, however small, which contributes to the Green Grid by delivering access, landscape or ecological benefits.
- Establish, agree and promote an annual programme and budget setting out the capital and revenue works required to establish and maintain the Green Grid network.
- Establish and support a cross directorate team to ensure the co-ordinated delivery of short and medium term Green Grid activities.

PHOTO

Promotion and Access

- Within 3 years, ensure that all existing Green Grid strategic routes have standard way marking (both within and outside the route) promoting walking to schools, shops and other community facilities.
- Within 1 year, identify (through surveys and mapping) access points and crossing which need improvements.
- Within 2 years, establish a programme of walks and events targeted at the strategic Green Grid routes.

Health and Community

- Within 2 years, establish a Green Gym task force to facilitate a range of voluntary community activities which encourage exercise and social interaction.
- Within 1 year develop a partnership with the Healthy Living Programme to establish a *Walking your Way to Health* programme.
- Within 2 years, commence the second phase of the Three Valley Youth Partnership to ensure that youth have an active involvement in Green Grid.

Biodiversity and Awareness

- Increase levels of sustainable woodland management and woodland connectivity by extensive new woodland planting
- Actively manage linear habitats such as hedges and grass verges.
- Continue a programme of landscape / habitat management targeted at enhancing chalk grassland habitats.
- Within 2 years produce a Green Grid guide to increase awareness of existing access opportunities and wildlife

Section 2: Mapping

2.1 Where is the Grid?

Green Grid is an over arching vision which can and should be applied throughout Medway wherever and whenever there are opportunities to connect people, places and wildlife.

But targeting funds and action to strategic Green Grid routes will

- demonstrate what Green Grid means 'on the ground' where it is most needed;
- capture the Green Grid vision in a simple, wholistic way so that local people can understand

So how can priorities for investment be identified? The combination of Medway's natural topographic structure and the geography of its existing open spaces suggests an obvious pattern. Map **M1 – Principal open spaces & connections** - shows the principal existing public open spaces and demonstrates how these might be connected along seven strategic corridors:

- Star Hill to Motney Hill
- St Mary's Island to Riverside Country Park
- Great Lines to Capstone Valley
- Great Lines to Horsted Valley
- Great Lines to Wouldham
- Whitehall Creek to Upper Halling

- Whitewall to Hoo Peninsula

Some initial GIS mapping has been undertaken and a series of maps show the spatial relationship between the proposed strategic Green Grid routes and:

- natural habitats;
- points and corridors of access;
- educational establishments;
- environmental designations;
- geology
- greenspace assets
- natural habitats
- leisure & health facilities; and
- planning designations

This comparative analysis has informed the location of the strategic Green Grid routes. They are shown on the following maps, which begin to suggest how these proposed strategic Green Grid routes can maximize opportunities to achieve Green Grid benefits.

- M2 Conservation / landscape designations & the Grid**
- M.3 Kent BAP Habitats & the Grid**
- M.5 Open Spaces & the Grid**
- M.6 Community Facilities & the Grid**
- M.7 Destination points & the Grid**
- M.8 Regeneration sites & the Grid**

The strategic Green Grid routes can be promoted as a network of links between key greenspace destinations; all connect Medway's core urban neighbourhoods to the wider countryside, where they merge with existing rural public rights of way. But they also function on a micro-scale, encouraging local people to get out and walk or cycle as part of their daily routine. Maps promoting the strategic Green Grid routes will demonstrate how they provide attractive links urban neighbourhoods to key facilities - schools, the library, the doctor's surgery and the shops.

The starting points and destinations (as described in Section 3) are for promotion and signposting purposes – each route can be joined or left at any point along its length.

It will not be possible to promote routes that make sole use of open spaces and inevitably users of the Green Grid will pass through built up areas within Medway . These areas will need good signage to illustrate the line of the route. Attention could also be given to developing ideas such as additional street tree plants, the use of unique green grid paving slabs to help way-mark the route and providing advice and incentives to householders regarding the greening of the gardens.

Green Grid Facts:

- Total length of the entire green grid:
- Total area (green or soft landscaping =) (urban or hard landscaping =)
- Current length of footpaths
- Proposed increase
- Number of people living with 500m or 5 minutes walk of the Grid =
- Number of educational establishments within 500 metres =
- Amount of wildlife rich habitat – chalk grassland, woodland, scrub =
- Amount to be increased =

Section 3: Action planning

Action planning

Benefits of having a GG action plan

1. To sell the idea and to provide supporting national and local planning policy
1. To encourage thought about the relationship between individual greenspaces and works to maximise synergy.
2. To undertake the task of thinking ahead to ensure important linkages are not lost and that opportunities to create new linkages are realised.
3. To increase our awareness of how we can work together to help deliver a green grid.
4. To help inform development briefs on key regeneration sites ensuring the provision of well designed linkages and adequate multi-use open space
5. To maximise links to existing and proposed strategic routes such as National Cycle Route with local network of pedestrian routes and cycleways
6. To support the aims of Local Transport Plan, Walking and cycling strategy, safer routes to schools project, community safety plan, LA21
7. To help deliver the targets and aims of Kent Biodiversity Action Plan by establishing appropriate wildlife corridors linking open spaces and the rural and urban areas

Section 2: The Routes

2.1 Route 1

Whitewall Creek to Cliffe and Grain

Start

Arethusa Car Park – Lower Upnor
Park and Ride – B&Q

End

Cliffe Nature Reserve
High Halstow (Northward Hill)
Grain Foreshore

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key Regeneration sites

RSME Upnor
Chattenden Village
Isle of Grain brownfield development
A228 improvement
Thames and Medway Canal

Key habitat influence

Ancient Woodland (buffer- address fragmentation)
Grazing Marsh (use of ditches to control access)

Existing Access

Saxon Shore Way
Hoo Peninsula Circular Walks (Cliffe, Cooling,
Allhallows)
Hidden Britain
Heron Trail

Proposed Initiatives

City to Sea Trail – TEP

Grain Foreshore Country Park

Environment enhancement to Upnor riverside

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport (Tom)

Train stations (None)

Length

Residents within 500m

Phase 1 Activity 05 - 06

- 1: Undertake detailed mapping of the proposed route
- 2: Liaise with Holdfast regarding green grid network at Chattenden and Upnor
- 3: Explore Manor Barn, Frindsbury Corridor through Hog Marsh Valley ALLI.

Total cost £15,000

Phase 2 Activity 06 - 08

- 1: Seek opportunities to undertake access / habitats work through Chattenden to Upnor
- 2: Investigate opportunities to increase access from Stoke and Allhallows to Grain
- 3: Work up ideas for Grain brownfield site combining SUDS, access and wildlife

Total cost £

Phase 3 Activities 07 -

- 1: Create continuous safer access corridor from Whitewall Creek to Cliffe and Grain via Northward Hill
- 2: Maximise all opportunities for planting new woodland, managing Hog Marsh Valley as a wet woodland
- 3: Establish Cliffe Reserve and Grain Foreshore as greening the gateway signature destinations.
- 4: Support development of City to Sea route
- 5: Marketing programme

Total cost £m

2.2 Route 2

Whitewall Creek to Upper Halling

Start Whitewall Creek / Strood

Finish Ranscombe Farm and Halling Marsh/Common

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key Regeneration sites

Whitewall Creek

Medway City Estate

Riverside Walk and pedestrian river bridge

Strood South

Civic Centre

Temple Marsh

Common Marsh

Halling Cement Works (RMC)

Halling pedestrian river bridge

Key habitat influence

Riverside Habitat – intertidal area

Chalk grassland

Ancient woodland

Brownfield habitat

Existing Access

New routes at Ranscombe Farm

North Downs Way

Cuxton & Halling Circular walks

Saxon Shore Way (in part)

Proposed Initiatives

Valley of Vision HLF bid – access, gateway,
habitat management

KWCA – management of Halling Marsh

Lafarge release Halling Common to parish council

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport

Train stations at Strood, Cuxton and Halling

Length

Residents within 500m

Phase 1 Activity 05 - 06

- 1: Undertake detailed mapping of the proposed route
- 2: Promote understanding / inclusion of green network through Temple Marsh
- 3: Explore access round Halling Marsh and Common and pursue Halling pedestrian river bridge

Total cost £4m

Phase 2 Activity 06 -08

- 1: Cuxton enhancements - seek improvements to path condition along riverside at Cuxton and improve land management between A228 and River Medway.
- 2: Work with AONB, Trenport and landowners to improve access management and abuse within Halling Woods
- 3: Seek environmental improvement to Medway City Estate – riverside habitat and access, tree / hedge planting

Total cost £4m

Phase 3 Activity

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:

Total cost £4m

2.3 Route 3

Great Lines to Wouldham

Start

Finish

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key regeneration sites

Great Lines (RSME)

Chatham Waterfront

Start Hill to Sun Pier

Rochester Riverside

Shorts Way improvements

Key habitat influence

Neutral and chalk grassland

Riverside intertidal / saltmarsh

Existing Access

Medway Valley Walk

Centenary Walk

Saxon Shore Way

Existing Initiatives

Lower Brook Lines Community Consultation

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport

Length

Residents within 500m

- 3: Explore promotion of Fort Borstal as a key green grid destination

Total cost £4m

Phase 1 Activity

- 1: Undertake detailed mapping of the proposed route
- 2: Scope Great Lines open space and establish common vision for Great Lines
- 3: Shorts Way enhancements (sports, access and biodiversity)

Total cost £4m

Phase 3 Activity

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 2 Activity

- 1: Plan route through Rochester Riverside
- 2: Explore cycle route to Wouldham Marshes to Maidstone

2.4 Route 4

Great Lines to Horsted Valley

Start

Finish

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key development sites

Link to Historic Dockyard – World Heritage Site status and development of Great Lines Garden Park

Key habitat influence

Restore and enhance through grazing / cutting chalk grassland – orchid / butterfly route – Link to Kent Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.

Existing Access

None promoted.

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport

Train stations

Length

Residents within 500m

Phase 1 Activity

- 1: Input to RSME/PPP proposals for the Great Lines and Fort Amherst.
- 2: Undertake detailed mapping of the proposed route
- 3: Plan and communicate cycle route from ?? Road access point to –
- 4: Undertake works to enhance access points – 3 valley gates
- 5: Support partnership delivery of 2nd phase of 3 valleys youth partnership
- 6: Undertake habitat enhancement to Horsted, Daisy and Coney Banks – KBAP
- 7: Green the streets through street tree planting along

Total cost £4m

Phase 2 Project

- 1: Create 4Km of off road cycle route linking?? And ??
- 2: Continue habitat enhancement to Daisy and Coney Banks - KBAP

- 3: Promote crossing point at Snodhurst bottom

4:

Total cost £4m

Phase 3 projects

Site 1: Complete continuous walking and cycling route from Great Lines to Horsted

Site 2: Complete habitat works at Coney, Daisy and Horsted Valley sites

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

2.5 Route 5

Great Lines to Capstone Valley

Start / End

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key development sites

Key habitat influence

Existing Access

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport

Train stations

Length

Residents within 500m

Phase 1 projects

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 2 Project

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 3 projects

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

2.6 Route 6 St Mary's Island to Riverside CP

Start / End

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key development sites

Key habitat influence

Existing Access

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport

Train stations

Length

Residents within 500m

Phase 1 projects

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 2 Project

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 3 projects

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

2.7 Route 7 – Star Hill car park to Motney Hill

Start / End

Developed / Undeveloped ratio

Key development sites

Key habitat influence

Existing Access

Community Facilities

Schools

Pubs

Health Centres

Public Transport

Train stations

Length

Residents within 500m

Phase 1 projects

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 2 Project

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Phase 3 projects

Site 1:

Site 2:

Site 3:

Total cost £4m

Generic obstacles to be overcome:

The need to secure massive income both to create and to maintain the resource – Greenspace

Development officers will be working to secure new income specifically to help create and maintain the Green Grid – this could be via ODPM Sustainable Communities Fund, Developer contributions, Heritage Lottery Funds and European Union Funds.

Annex A: Policy Context

This Action Plan is informed by and helps to deliver the policy, standards and targets contained in the **Medway Countryside and Open Spaces Strategy**. It is one of six Action Plans which together constitute Medway Council's aspiration for promoting an open spaces and countryside resource that fulfils the demands of 21st century living.

The Government's **Sustainable Communities Plan** and the supporting **Greening the Gateway Strategy** highlight the importance of well managed open space to ensure healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities which have a sense of pride as well as place. Another key message from these documents and from the Thames **Gateway Regional Planning document (RPG9A)** is the need for a functional network of greenspace. These networks or grids could support ecological systems, access, recreation and landscape.

Local Plan - add

Kent and Medway Structure Plan - add

Greening the Gateway - add

'Living Places, cleaner, safer, greener'

The government is committed to the creation of a network of accessible, high quality parks and diverse greenspaces in all our towns and cities. Achieving these aims will require imaginative, new approaches that integrate policy and action for parks and green spaces with the Government's agendas for improving public spaces, neighbourhood renewal and an Urban renaissance."

Planning Policy Guidance 17 – Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation promotes the importance of well-planned and maintained green spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities as a tool to achieving social inclusion,

community cohesion, health and well-being. The importance of quality green space and recreation facilities within easy walking or cycling distance of peoples' homes supports the government's sustainable development agenda and lies at the heart of the guidance note.

Reducing crime and anti social behaviour –

scrambling, arson, fly tipping, vandalism to fences and furniture and noise