

5. Protecting and enhancing Oxford's green setting, open spaces and waterways

5.1 Objectives

- To protect and enhance a network of multi-functional green spaces and ensure easy access to high quality green space
- Enhance green spaces so they deliver multiple benefits to health and wellbeing, are rich in biodiversity, and help the city adapt to climate change

National Planning Policy says:

- 5.2 The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) is clear that local authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure (Paragraph 114). The *Planning Practice Guidance* (PPG) encourages a broad interpretation of green infrastructure, explaining that 'green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls'. The consideration of the different roles that green spaces and water (or blue infrastructure) can perform (such as drainage, recreation and enhancing sense of place), both individually and as a network, is at the heart of the green infrastructure policy approach.
- 5.3 The NPPF requires planning policies to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision (Paragraph 73). The NPPF is clear that existing open space should not be built on unless it has been clearly shown to be surplus to requirements (Paragraph 74). The NPPF also sets out that Local Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value for development (Paragraph 110) and identify land where development would be inappropriate (Paragraph 157).
- 5.4 The NPPF requires local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change (Paragraph 94). When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable to climate change, it is suggested that risks should be managed through suitable adaption measures including green infrastructure (Paragraph 99).
- 5.5 The NPPF is also clear that planning policies should plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale, identifying and mapping components of ecological networks, and promoting the preservation and restoration of priority habitats, ecological networks and priority species populations (Paragraph 117).



The Oxford story – background evidence and the Sustainability Appraisal:

- 5.6 Oxford benefits from a wide range of green spaces such as parks and gardens, amenity space, natural and semi-natural spaces, historic sites, functional green spaces (such as floodplain) and sites of importance to nature conservation. The Rivers Thames and Cherwell and the Oxford Canal (along with their tributaries) form important elements of blue infrastructure for the city. These green and blue spaces and features perform important functions both individually and as part of a wider network:
- Social Functions – contributing to health and wellbeing, heritage, sense of place and tranquillity
 - Environmental Functions – supporting biodiversity, water management and air quality
 - Economic Functions – supporting jobs, tourism and an attractive business environment
- 5.7 The benefits provided by green spaces in Oxford were evident throughout the sustainability appraisal assessments.
- 5.8 We need to think carefully about the current and future roles of Oxford's green spaces. There is a huge need for more homes, including affordable homes, and a need to support economic growth, but limited land available to deliver this. We therefore need to consider if there are any low value green spaces that may be suitable for development. We also need to make sure that Oxford is a healthy and attractive place to live, work and visit, that biodiversity is protected and enhanced where possible, and that the city is able to deal with the impacts of climate change. Green spaces play a very important role in helping to achieve this.
- 5.9 To help in thinking about the current and future roles of Oxford's green spaces, the City Council has produced a Green Infrastructure Study. The study identifies Oxford's green spaces and assesses their social, environmental and economic functions. This information is then used to identify a network of multi-functional green spaces that is likely to require protection through the Local Plan. In a compact city where development needs to be accommodated, it is the quality and accessibility of a network of spaces that will be important. The focus of the Local Plan's green infrastructure policies will therefore be on maintaining and enhancing a green infrastructure network rather than on setting (and then seeking to achieve/maintain) any particular quantum of open space across the city or a simple focus on individual sites of import.
- 5.10 The SA highlighted how a green infrastructure policy would have significant positive impacts across a range of sustainability objectives including flooding, vibrant communities, human health, green spaces, biodiversity, air and water quality and climate change. The SA identified a range of potential positive and negative impacts that could result from policies on specific aspects of green infrastructure (for example on biodiversity sites or playing pitches). It is clear that a careful balance will need to be struck in framing such policies.

We need to think carefully about the current and future roles of Oxford's green spaces.

Responses to first steps consultation:

- 5.11 It is clear from the consultation responses received that Oxford's green spaces are highly valued. The majority of respondents (454) agreed that it is important to protect a network of green spaces across the city for different needs such as recreation, biodiversity and flood protection. A large number of people (348 respondents) thought that the City Council should work with private landowners to increase access to existing green

spaces, and 195 respondents said that they felt it was important to have public open space in new developments.

- 5.12 When asked if development on less sensitive green spaces should be allowed if it brings improvements to public open space, views were more mixed although more people agreed (122) with this approach than disagreed (79).

Potential policy responses:

- 5.13 **Green infrastructure protection and provision**
The range of benefits that open spaces and waterways provide, and their particular significance as part of Oxford's setting, and as a green lung in a compact city, means that the Local Plan must protect important spaces and ensure that new development contributes to improving the quality of provision. To maximise the benefits that these assets offer it is important to view them as a network operating collectively to provide wildlife corridors, pedestrian and cycle routes and areas of flood storage amongst other functions.

Opt 49: Managing the overall amount of Public Open Space in Oxford

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option: Focus on protecting green spaces that are important Green Infrastructure and improving the quality of green spaces. Do not set an overall target for the total quantity of public open space across the city.</p>	<p>Maintaining a range of high quality, accessible green spaces across the city, which blend with the built environment, is essential to ensuring that Oxford is a healthy and attractive place to live, work and visit. This approach focuses on the protection and improvement of Oxford's green spaces. New public open space would be delivered through new developments. Not having a fixed, quantity based standard (which would be somewhat artificial) allows greater flexibility to focus on providing high quality, accessible green spaces in the right locations where they can provide the most social and environmental benefits.</p>
<p>B) Rejected Option: Aim to maintain the existing ratio of accessible green space per 1,000 population.</p>	<p>The Core Strategy policy is to maintain an overall average of 5.75 hectares of accessible space per 1,000 population. This approach is based on the protection of existing spaces and the requirement for new developments over 20 dwellings to provide 10% of on-site open space. It is increasingly difficult to maintain a fixed ratio of green space to population in Oxford as the majority of developments are on small sites where the policy of on-site open space provision does not apply and would not be appropriate as it would result in very small unusable spaces. It is also difficult to maintain this ratio where the density of development is being increased, sites are being used more intensely, and there is a limited supply of land available. A more flexible approach is needed in the Local Plan to ensure that Oxford has appropriate high quality useable green space provision.</p>
<p>C) Rejected Option: Adopt the standard in the Green Space Strategy of maintaining or increasing the existing amount of accessible green space in Oxford.</p>	<p>The City Council's Green Space Strategy concluded that a ratio linked to population was becoming less helpful over time and instead opted for a target to maintain the total hectares of unrestricted open space at 785 hectares (adjusted slightly since set at Core Strategy) and seek opportunities to increase this. This option would involve embedding the Green Space Strategy target in planning policy. Whilst this approach would seek to maintain and potentially increase the amount of accessible green space in Oxford, the quality of green spaces is not considered. This approach may also be overly restrictive of new development given the limited land available in Oxford. Despite this option being rejected for the Local Plan, retaining an overall target or standard would continue to be an appropriate approach in the different context of the Green Space Strategy.</p>

Opt 50: Creating a green infrastructure policy designation

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Use the Green Infrastructure Study to identify the green spaces that are worthy of protection for their social, environmental and economic functions and create a new 'Green Infrastructure Network' designation.</p> <p>Include a policy which protects these spaces.</p>	<p>This would be a new approach to providing protection for green spaces in Oxford. Having a specific 'Green Infrastructure Network' designation and protection policy recognises the many benefits provided by Oxford's green spaces and their value as a network for biodiversity and recreation. A strength of this approach is that it prioritises the protection of Oxford's green spaces collectively on a multi-functional basis. Another benefit is that it would develop a network of linked spaces, providing a policy basis for not just the most important or significant sites but also those that link them.</p>
<p>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Continue to have separate policies and protections for some specific types of green infrastructure, for example playing pitches, biodiversity sites, allotments.</p>	<p>Separate policies and protections, instead of an overarching green infrastructure policy, would be unlikely to take into account the multi-functional nature of green infrastructure or its value as a network of green spaces. However, if separate topic based policies and protections were used in addition to an overarching green infrastructure policy, they could provide more detailed criteria and guidance where needed to take into account the specific issues relating to different types of green infrastructure.</p>
<p>C) Rejected Option: Include a policy to only afford protection to the larger or more strategic of the green spaces identified in the Green Infrastructure Study as having important green infrastructure functions.</p>	<p>By focusing on protecting only larger strategically important green spaces, this approach would provide little protection for smaller green spaces that may have important (or even more important) local social and environmental functions. Smaller green spaces can also have an important function in terms of providing connections between larger green spaces, particularly in terms of biodiversity and wildlife corridors but in other respects too. Taking this approach would miss the opportunity to build a network of spaces; it would mean that the focus is solely on the benefits of individual spaces, and would neglect the important additional functions that they provide collectively as part of a wider network.</p>

Opt 51: Securing net gain in Green Infrastructure provision, particularly public access to open spaces

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Require larger developments (likely to be sites of 1ha or more) to provide public green space on-site that is at least of a size suitable to be a 'Small Park'. Require financial contributions from smaller developments towards the improvement of existing green spaces or the creation of new parks in identified locations.</p>	<p>This approach aims to deliver new public open spaces that are of a size that will provide real social and environmental benefits, particularly in terms of providing adequate space for play and recreation.</p>
<p>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Create new public open space by allowing development on parts of some private green spaces (those which have been assessed to have a minimal contribution to the green infrastructure network) to facilitate public access and improve the quality of the remaining open space.</p>	<p>There are many areas of private open space in Oxford which currently have no or only informal public access. Increasing public access to such private green spaces will be an important way to increase the amount of public open space available. This will be particularly important given the limited availability of land and the needs of a growing population. It will be essential that any permission which results in the loss of part of a private green space secures formalised and effective public access to those areas that remain undeveloped. Careful consideration would be needed in deciding the parts of private green spaces to be developed in order to avoid any potential negative impacts, for example on flood risk and character of an area.</p>
<p>C) Alternative Option: Continue to require on-site green space for residential development of 20 dwellings or more.</p>	<p>Where developments cannot provide public green space of at least a size suitable to be a 'Small Park', the green spaces can be difficult to manage and often provide few social and environmental benefits. A more efficient use of land would be to focus on delivering larger green spaces that can provide real benefits for local communities (as set out in option a).</p>

Opt 52: Ensuring that new developments improve the quality of Green Infrastructure

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Require developers to demonstrate (for example in the Design and Access Statement) how new or improved green infrastructure features will contribute to (for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access • Biodiversity • Soil protection • Climate change (including flood risk) • Sustainable drainage • Health and wellbeing • Recreation and play • Character/sense of place • Connectivity of walking and cycling routes • Creating linkages with the wider green infrastructure network (and the countryside) • Food growing 	<p>It is important that opportunities to maximise the benefits provided by new or improved green infrastructure are realised. New green infrastructure should be functional, well designed and contribute to wider aims such as enhancing biodiversity, managing flood risk and enhancing the character of an area. The Design and Access Statement may provide the best mechanism for requiring such information. These statements are required to be submitted as part of any major application (10 homes or 1,000m²), listed building consents and most development in a conservation area.</p>
<p>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Require developers to demonstrate how existing green infrastructure features not formally protected as green infrastructure through the Local Plan have been incorporated within the design of new development.</p>	<p>There will be natural features across Oxford that may not be formally protected through the Local Plan due to their size (for example hedgerows, small clusters of trees and very small public green spaces). Where appropriate these features should be retained and incorporated in the design of new developments.</p> <p>It would be important to be clear when drafting this approach that garden land developments will continue to be an important source of housing sites in Oxford. It may be beneficial to require such information for garden land developments in order to understand how the existing features have been considered in developing the design.</p>
<p>C) Rejected Option: Do not include a policy requiring developers to demonstrate how green infrastructure has been taken into consideration in the design of development.</p>	<p>There is a risk that natural features may be poorly incorporated or that new features will be poorly designed so that opportunities to contribute to wider aims such as enhancing biodiversity, managing flood risk and enhancing the character of an area may not be fully realised.</p>

5.14 Policy options for specific types of green spaces

These options would be applied in addition to the overarching policies on green infrastructure protection and provision outlined above. These policy options provide more detailed policy guidance for specific types of green infrastructure where needed (for example playing pitches, allotments and trees).

Opt 53: Biodiversity sites, wildlife corridors. Species protection independent ecological assessment (accounting)

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Protect a hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, including connecting wildlife corridors.</p>	<p>Sites with international importance (such as the Port Meadow SAC) and national importance (such as SSSIs) must be protected. However there are also local sites with biodiversity interest (such as Local Wildlife Sites and other sites designated for their local biodiversity interest) that can provide important social and environmental benefits. These sites can also have important network functions in terms of providing connections between larger areas of habitat, supporting biodiversity across the city and should be protected.</p>
<p>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Protect other sites with</p>	<p>There are sites in Oxford that do not have specific designations but that are of biodiversity interest, for example sites where there are records of protected</p>

biodiversity interest. The use of a biodiversity calculator will be required to demonstrate net gain for biodiversity. The principle of the 'avoid, mitigate, compensate' hierarchy will be expected, and where damage is unavoidable, offsetting may be considered as long as overall net gain is demonstrated.	species. It is important that this biodiversity interest is protected. Following the hierarchy of 'avoid, mitigate, compensate' is the best practice approach to take; it is likely that in the vast majority of cases it will not be necessary to work right through the hierarchy, and that off-setting will only be appropriate in those cases where the City Council agrees that damage is unavoidable.
C) Rejected Option: Protect biodiversity sites of national and regional importance only.	This approach offers no protection for sites of local biodiversity interest. There is a risk that these sites could be lost which would have a negative impact on Oxford's biodiversity.

Opt 54: Playing pitches

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
A) Preferred option: Have a criteria based policy to protect playing pitches, allowing loss under certain limited circumstances which are clearly set out in the policy. These might include replacement nearby or improvement to nearby facilities, or demonstration they are surplus to requirements.	It is important that playing pitches are protected as they support health and wellbeing by providing opportunities for organised sport and other recreational activities. Playing pitches may also provide a range of other green infrastructure benefits. This approach provides strong protection for playing pitches whilst also providing flexibility to respond to changes in playing pitch supply and demand over time where specific criteria are met in line with national policy requirements. Where playing pitches are no longer required and assessments show that they are unlikely to be required during the plan period, identifying them as having development potential through the Local Plan will help to encourage a more efficient use of land.
B) Alternative Option: Protect playing pitches as part of the Green Infrastructure protection, rather than as a separate policy and protection.	In some cases playing pitches may be identified as forming part of Oxford's green infrastructure network. However, this may not apply to all playing pitches. Therefore an overarching Green Infrastructure policy may not provide sufficient protection for all of Oxford's playing pitches. In addition, an overarching policy may lack specific detail relating to playing pitch provision. A specific playing pitch policy will likely be required in addition to an overarching policy to deal with topic specific issues.
C) Rejected Option: Have a policy of blanket protection of all playing pitches.	Whilst this approach provides strong protection for Oxford's playing pitches, it provides no flexibility to respond to changes in playing pitch supply and demand over time. It would prevent development on playing pitches even where it can be demonstrated that playing pitches are surplus to requirements and therefore may result in an inefficient use of land and loss of opportunities that may arise.

Opt 55: Allotments

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
A) Preferred option: Have a criteria based policy to protect allotments, considering the loss of allotments or parts of allotments only under certain very exceptional circumstances such as them being disused or having substantial areas unused for a long time suggesting they are too large for demand in the area, replacement nearby and improvement to nearby facilities.	Allotments provide a range of social and environmental benefits such as encouraging physical activity, supporting biodiversity, and reducing food miles. This approach provides strong protection for allotments whilst also providing flexibility to respond to changes in allotment supply and demand over time where specific criteria are met in line with national requirements. Where allotments or parts of allotments are underutilised or surplus to requirements, identifying them as having development potential through the Local Plan may help to encourage a more efficient use of land.
B) Alternative Option: Have a policy of blanket protection of all allotments, except any sites that area specifically identified as surplus and allocated.	This approach provides no flexibility to respond to changes in allotment supply and demand over time. It would prevent any development on allotments, even where it can be demonstrated that all or part of the allotments are surplus to requirements. Therefore this approach may result in an inefficient use of land.

<p>C) Rejected Option: Do not include a policy to protect allotments (other than any that are identified as part of a green infrastructure network) but rely on national protection.</p>	<p>Allotments already benefit from strong protection in law and the Secretary of State's consent is required where the loss of allotments is proposed. Where the loss of an allotment is proposed it must be shown that alternative allotment provision will be provided, the allotments are no longer needed, or it is no longer feasible to use the land for allotments. To not include a Local Plan policies would mean that these sites were not then identified on the proposals map. It would also miss the opportunity to provide criteria for assessing the importance of allotments and whether they might be suitable for moving or replacement.</p>
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Opt 56 Protecting and promoting watercourses – Making more of blue infrastructure

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Where development is proposed adjacent to watercourses, require developers to demonstrate (for example in the Design and Access Statement) how they will protect and positively promote the watercourse.</p>	<p>The Rivers Thames and Cherwell and the Oxford Canal run through the city and are an important part of Oxford's character, as well as providing a range of other social and environmental benefits. The rivers connect with a network of smaller watercourses. It is important that we make best use of these resources, taking opportunities to improve and enhance watercourses whenever possible. A watercourse policy could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presumption against culverting • A design requirement that development should face watercourses and make them a feature, rather than turning their back on them • The potential for re-profiling and re-naturalising of watercourses.
<p>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Identify potential improvements in access to blue infrastructure such as towpath links or increased accessibility through policy.</p>	<p>Opportunities to improve and enhance access to and along Oxford's watercourses should be identified and promoted where possible and appropriate. For example towpaths and other paths along watercourses can provide valuable walking (and in some cases) cycle routes; identifying any gaps in the network or additional connections onto such routes would be beneficial and help make the most of these sometimes hidden assets. The benefits of access to watercourses are not limited simply to linear journeys; providing access to areas of green space alongside waterways can be very valuable for people seeking a quiet space or a pocket of natural landscape in an urban setting.</p>
<p>C) Alternative Option: Incorporate watercourses as part of green infrastructure network protection, and do not have any specific policy details relating to watercourses.</p>	<p>Watercourses can be important assets in this context and where appropriate, they will likely be protected by an overarching Green Infrastructure Network policy or other policies protecting specific natural features such as biodiversity. However, these policies may not provide sufficient detail on watercourse related issues. A policy focused specifically on watercourses is likely to be required in addition to an overarching green infrastructure network policy and other protections of natural features.</p>

5.15 Policy options that help to support green infrastructure objectives

As well as identifying and protecting valuable green open spaces and biodiversity, it is important that opportunities are taken to ensure that new development implements green infrastructure features in the most beneficial way. This is particularly important in Oxford where land is scarce and all opportunities should be taken to support green infrastructure objectives.

Opt 57: Species enhancement in new developments

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option: Integrated ecological enhancements such as bird, bat and invertebrate boxes and planting of native species (particularly those which provide rich sources of nectar for pollinators) will be required in all developments.</p>	<p>This approach supports and provides for species enhancement within the built development. New buildings and their associated landscaping offer opportunities for habitat creation, to provide for native planting, and to support birds, bats and pollinators. It will be important that any requirements for species enhancement are appropriate to the scale and location of development.</p>

B) Rejected Option: Do not include a policy requiring habitat creation in new development.	Opportunities for increasing species provision may be missed. This could result in gaps in ecological networks and could have a negative impact on overall levels of biodiversity.
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Opt 58: Trees affected by new development

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Only allow the loss of trees where it is clearly justified and where possible mitigated. Require developers to demonstrate how the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees has been considered in the design and layout of new development and outside spaces. This should include consideration of how tree canopy cover can be protected or enhanced.	Trees can perform a number of important functions such as helping to improve air quality, supporting biodiversity and contributing to the character of an area. It is important that, where possible, developments are designed to enable the retention of established trees and to incorporate the planting of new trees. Where the loss of trees is proposed this should be clearly justified and, where possible, mitigated by the planting of new trees. Consideration should be given to connection with the wider green infrastructure network. Rather than the number of trees, it is tree canopy cover that often has the biggest impact on setting and that correlates to the benefits that trees can bring. Therefore, developers should measure existing tree canopy cover and predict what future tree canopy cover on the site will be after development.
B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Expect developers to have considered options for mitigating against any tree loss, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of tree removed • Additional tree planting • Protection of tree canopy cover • Where trees cannot be replaced, instead provide green roofs or walls 	These requirements would ensure that developers consider other options if tree retention is not feasible. The listing of a variety of potential mitigations would help consideration of feasible measures even on small sites and infill developments. It may not always be possible to replace trees, protect all tree canopy cover or to provide additional trees on sites and therefore these mitigations will ensure policies are not overly restrictive of new development.
C) Rejected Option: Do not include a policy on trees.	Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are used to protect highly valued trees. TPOs provide strong protection and prevent works to trees without the written consent of the City Council. However, not all trees are protected by TPOs. Not having a specific policy means that the benefits provided by trees may not be fully considered by developers and that opportunities to retain existing trees or to plant new trees may be lost.

Opt 59: Green/brown roofs and walls

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Introduce a policy in support of green/brown roofs and green walls.	Green roofs and walls which incorporate planting, can provide a range of environmental benefits such as improving a building's energy efficiency, supporting biodiversity and reducing the impacts of noise, as well as the possibility of additional amenity space on roofs. Brown roofs are a variation which specifically aims at reinstating the ecology that was present prior to development using some of the materials removed through the building process. This policy approach would encourage developers to consider incorporating green/brown walls into new developments.
B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B): Introduce a policy requiring green/brown roofs for all developments with a flat roof over a certain size.	Requiring the provision of green/brown roofs on developments with large flat roofs will make a positive contribution to Oxford's green infrastructure network. Having a specific policy requirement will help to ensure that green/brown walls are delivered where the need for planning permission can encourage this. It will be important to make it clear that encouraging incorporation of green/brown roofs where flat roofs are proposed, does not infer that flat roofs are typically the best design solution in Oxford (particularly on large schemes) due to wider skyline considerations.
C) Alternative Option: Do not include a policy on green/brown roofs or green walls.	Opportunities to encourage or require green/brown walls or roofs would be missed.



Opt 60: Enhanced walking and cycling connections

Policy approach	Consequences of approach/discussion
<p>A) Preferred option (Combination of A + B + C): Identify potential new routes for cycle and footpaths across open spaces such as public parks, particularly where links would be created to other parts of the network, or major destinations would be joined.</p>	<p>This approach would help to increase opportunities for journeys by walking and cycling. It would help to provide attractive walking and cycling routes in a green setting, separate to cars and buses. It would also help to increase levels of activity and natural surveillance in public open spaces, increasing perceptions of safety. It will be important to ensure that increased access does not conflict with the management of open spaces.</p>
<p>B) Preferred option (Combination of A + B + C): Identify new routes for cycle and footpaths across private open spaces and deliver by negotiating landowner interest or enabling development</p>	<p>This approach would help to increase opportunities for journeys by walking and cycling. It would help to provide attractive walking and cycling routes in a green setting, separate to cars and buses.</p>
<p>C) Preferred option (Combination of A + B + C): Ensure new development does not bisect cycle ways/public rights of way/bridleways/ecological corridors</p>	<p>It is important that new development does not harm existing cycle ways/public rights of way/bridleways/ecological corridors. Maintaining these connections (even if this involves some adaptations to the route) must be prioritised when planning the layout and design of new development.</p>



