

St Stephen in Brannel NDP Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity Evidence Report

Planning Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Key messages from the NPPF are that Planning policies should aim to:

- Achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places (para 92) and should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (Para 174). They should:
- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, biodiversity, geological or soils;
- Recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services (ie green infrastructure)
- Minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, and establish coherent ecological networks ;
- Avoid unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability, and
- Encourage remediation and mitigation of despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land (Para 174).
- Designate green areas of particular importance to local communities to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances (Para 101).
- Take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure [Para 175];
- Allocate only land with the least environmental or amenity value [Para 175].
- Not permit development where it is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest or result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland (Para 179),
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them [Para 179a].
- Protect Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation and ‘Ramsar’ wetlands sites from harm (Para 181)
- Take into account the effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution (Para 180).
- Take into account ground conditions and land instability, including from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and contamination (Para 183).

NPPF 2021 defines Green infrastructure as ‘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.

Cornwall Local Plan.

Key messages from the Cornwall Local Plan include:

- The CLP (Policy 16) aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Cornwall’s communities, residents, workers and visitors, by:
 - requiring that development should protect, and alleviate risk to people and the environment from unsafe, unhealthy and polluted environments by avoiding or mitigating against harmful impacts and health risks;
 - not causing increased risk to human health from air pollution or exceeding EU standards;

- maximising the opportunity for physical activity through the use of open space, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities and providing or enhancing active travel networks that support and encourage walking, riding and cycling;
 - encouraging provision for growing local food in private gardens which are large enough to accommodate vegetable growing or greenhouses or through the provision of allotments; and
 - providing flexible community open spaces that can be adapted to the health needs of the community and encourage social interaction.
- The CLP also reflects the NPPF requirements that the needs of the local community are met, including through affordable housing provision.
 - Good quality well planned and appropriately located green infrastructure is critical to Cornwall's future. Not only does it help us to live more healthily, sustainably and self-sufficiently, it helps to increase resilience and adaptation to climate change and supports ecosystems services providing for food production, flood control and wildlife and their component parts: water, soil, nutrients and organisms (Para 2.190).
 - Open space and Green Infrastructure can play an important role in improving health and wellbeing by providing accessible space for recreation (Para 2.192);
 - New developments should use the environmental features of sites as the foundation of their design.... The impact of new development on green infrastructure assets will be assessed as part of determining planning applications (Para 2.194).
 - Existing green infrastructure ... which is important to recreation, leisure, community use, townscape and landscape quality and visual amenity will be protected and enhanced. New development should retain and enhance the most important assets...take in to account and show how GI assets have positively contributed to place making and influenced the proposal....provide buffers to natural spaces with GI significance...restore or enhance the connections of nature and people through physical integration and links with GI assets...provide accessible and quality open space...include arrangements for maintenance of GI assets...mitigate any losses by provision elsewhere (Policy 25).

Other plans and studies

Natural England - Green Infrastructure Guidance - <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/94026>

Natural England's 'Green Infrastructure Guidance defines green infrastructure as:

'...a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types. Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently, it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.'

National Planning Practice Guidance on Natural environment - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' - aims to 'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>

The Natural Environment White Paper 2012 - says that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, and a vital support for our well-being and security. The White Paper is intended to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity and signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a wider and more inclusive approach at 'a landscape scale' to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. It also aims to create a 'green economy' in which economic growth and the health of natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better understand and reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf

'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, includes policies within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Goal 6 'Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment' which directly relate to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme.

The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out the Government's environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to *'tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation...improve social justice by tackling the pollution suffered by those living in less favourable areas.... and by opening up the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world to people from the widest possible range of ages and backgrounds'*. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change – *'still perhaps the most serious long-term risk to the environment given higher land and sea temperatures, rising sea levels, extreme weather patterns and ocean acidification, which harms marine species.'* These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:

- Using and managing land sustainably;
- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- Protecting and improving the global environment. (Executive Summary, P9 and 10)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

The Natural Recovery Network - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network>, and <https://lagas.co.uk>

Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england>

The Water White Paper, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf>

The Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plan is presented in 4 volumes:

- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 1: Audits and Priorities
- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 2: Action Plan
- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 3: Action Plans 2004
- Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 4: Priority Projects 2010-2015

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/30918968/cornwalls-biodiversity-action-plan-cornwall-wildlife-trust>

‘Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 1: Audits and Priorities sets recommendations for Action Plans, which were produced for the Cornish priority habitats and species and published in ‘Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 2: Action Plans’. A further volume, ‘Cornwall's Biodiversity Volume 3: Action Plans 2004’ was produced in line with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) process, highlighting the 25 UK BAP priority habitats and 127 BAP priority species occurring in Cornwall. In light of a progress review, Cornwall's BAP was reviewed and updated, taking into consideration the new UK list of priority habitats and species, and the England Biodiversity Strategy (EBS) delivery framework. This document is ‘Volume4: Priority Habitats’ 2010 identifies priority project areas.

Cornwall's Environmental Growth Strategy <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environmentalgrowth>

The Environment Act and The Cornwall Planning for Biodiversity and Net Gain Supplementary Planning Document

The Environment Act includes an intention to require ‘Net Biodiversity Gain’ in all new development. Cornwall Council are now seeking a net gain requirement of up to 10%. [See

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/biodiversitySPD#:~:text=The%20Council%E2%80%99s%20net%20gain%20approach%20The%20Environment%20Bill,Gain%20in%20advance%20of%20the%20Environment%20Bill%202019-2021>

Concepts.

Green Infrastructure Network. NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as ‘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’. Natural England go further to say that it is ‘a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability’ which ‘needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.’

Net Biodiversity Gain. National Government and Cornwall Council intend to introduce a requirement that all developments which require planning permission should deliver a Net Biodiversity Gain [NBG], through a draft new NBG policy in the Climate Emergency DPD, although this may be limited to larger developments. NBG means that a site should deliver more biodiversity opportunities after development than it did before development.

Baseline

The natural environment baseline data has been commissioned from Cornwall wildlife Trust and can be accessed here: [CWT Data](#)

In summary, there are:

Four **Sites of Specific Scientific Interest** (SSSI) most associated with legacy mining industry: St Austell Clay Pits SSSI (Ref.1007376), Tregargus Quarries SSSI (Ref.1000625), South Terras Mine SSSI (Ref.1000995) and Crowhill Valley SSSI (Ref.1001325).

A **Special Area for Conservation (SAC)** St Austell Clay Pits SAC (Ref. UK0030282).

An **Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)** The Fal Valley.

Four **County Wildlife Sites (CWS)** Bodinnick Wood (R29), Harvose & Ventonwyn Wood (R32), Lanjeth Heath (R50) and Longstone Downs (R35).

Three '**Ancient Woodlands**' Bodinnick Wood (Ref.1114016), woodlands close to Crow Hill (Ref.1417675) and Harvose/Ventonwyn Woods (Ref.1114017), alongside various stretches of "Deciduous Woodlands" and two "Traditional Orchards" at Bodinnick Farm (Ref.SW9497152026) and Court Farm (Ref.SW9533752392) - identified in the Priority Habitat Inventory.

Outside the Parish but nearby there are:

The Mid Cornwall Moors Sites of Specific Scientific Interest SSSI (Ref.1468007) located approximately 1.2km north of Treviscoe, whilst the **St Mewan Beacon SSSI** (Ref.1001559) is located approximately 1.2km east of Hornick.

The Goss Moor National Nature Reserve (Ref.1006062) is located approximately 1.4km north of Whitemoor;

Trenowth Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) across the Fal valley and Arrallas Farm (AGLV) located 3.5km west;

Numerous **Ancient Woodlands**, including those just west of the River Fal and further afield close to Ladock;

Several County Wildlife Sites (CWS)

Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) Breney Common and Goss & Tregoss (Ref: UK0030098);

[Related Community Engagement Feedback](#)

When asked what three things people most liked about the Parish, they rated the highest as the rural nature and countryside. Protecting the landscape, countryside and open/green spaces was thought to be the most important issue to consider when looking at development proposals.

[Key issues and implications for the NDP](#)

In the light of the preceding data, the following provisions should be reflected in the Neighbourhood Development Plan:

Proposed NDP Objectives

- Reduce the environmental impact of development, protect and increase biodiversity and protect wildlife corridors.

[Considering Policy Options](#)

- Designate a Green Infrastructure Network and a linked NDP policy to ensure that developments do not harm and help build the biodiversity network. The Network can be drawn up by mapping the data referred to above.
- Include a policy calling for a net biodiversity gain in all developments.
- Include a policy to protect existing trees, Cornish hedges and hedgerows in support of landscape and biodiversity.
- Including policy criteria ensuring that new developments do not contribute to a negative cumulative impact on Air Quality Management Zones.