

SWDP 5: Green Infrastructure



A. Housing development proposals (including mixed-use schemes) are required to contribute towards the provision, maintenance, improvement and connectivity of Green Infrastructure (GI) as follows (subject to financial viability⁽²⁰⁾):

- i. For greenfield sites exceeding 1ha (gross) - 40% Green Infrastructure (GI)⁽²¹⁾.**
- ii. For greenfield sites of less than 1ha but more than 0.2ha (gross) – 20% Green Infrastructure (GI)⁽²²⁾.**
- iii. For brownfield sites – no specific Green Infrastructure (GI) figure⁽²³⁾.**

20 Provision of Green Infrastructure at a lower level than that required by this policy will need to be justified by a robust viability assessment.

21 Excluding private gardens.

22 Excluding private gardens.

23 Proposals will need to satisfy other SWDP policies, e.g. SWDP 21: Design, SWDP 22: Biodiversity & Geodiversity, SWDP 29: Sustainable Drainage Systems, SWDP 39: Provision for Green Space and Outdoor Community Uses in New Development and in most cases this will necessarily mean parts of the site performing a Green Infrastructure (GI) function.

- B. The precise form and function(s) of GI will depend on local circumstances and the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy's priorities. Developers should seek to agree these matters with the local planning authority in advance of a planning application. Effective management arrangements should also be clearly set out and secured. Once a planning permission has been implemented, the associated GI will be protected as Green Space (SWDP 38 refers).**
- C. Other than specific site allocations in the development plan, development proposals that would have a detrimental impact on important GI attributes within the areas identified as "protect and enhance" or "protect and restore", as identified on the Environmental Character Areas Map, will not be permitted unless:**
 - i. A robust, independent assessment of community and technical need shows the specific GI typology to be surplus to requirements in that location; and**
 - ii. Replacement of, or investment in, GI of at least equal community and technical benefit is secured.**

Reasoned Justification

1. The Framework (paragraph 9) recognises that sustainable development requires improvements in the quality of the natural environment. Green Infrastructure can deliver benefits with respect to each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions to sustainable development, e.g.
 - i. helping to mitigate extreme temperatures;
 - ii. flood mitigation;
 - iii. habitat protection and creation;
 - iv. pollution reduction;
 - v. property value enhancement; and
 - vi. stimulating inward investment.

In most cases, planning for the protection, enhancement or inclusion of GI can deliver multiple benefits simultaneously. With regard to the overall quality of life, the promotion of active lifestyles and the stimulation of business investment, the availability of accessible high-quality GI is a positive and significant factor.

2. When considering GI on brownfield sites no specific figure has been set as such sites can be relatively constrained by development viability. Therefore any GI provision will be as a direct consequence of development proposals having to meet other policy

requirements as necessary in order to make the development acceptable in planning terms, e.g. SWDP 21, SWDP 22, SWDP 29 and SWDP 39.

3. The policy is supportive of the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013), which in turn is informed by the published Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Framework (2012) and the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (2012). Together these documents identify the most appropriate actions (protect, enhance and / or restore) deemed necessary to maximise the multi-functional benefits of GI in those areas where this is most critical. The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy also shows where and what investment in strategic GI is needed.
4. The GI Environmental Character Areas have been developed for Worcestershire⁽²⁴⁾. They are a synthesis of detailed evidence bases for each of the main GI attributes, including access and movement, landscape character, historic environment, blue infrastructure and biodiversity. They set an overall strategic approach for interventions within the areas based on the quality of the existing GI:
 1. Protect and enhance
 2. Protect and restore
 3. Restore and create

Each Environmental Character Area is also complemented by evidence highlighting overarching principle and primary objectives for each of the contributing GI characteristics. Environmental Character Areas inform the appropriate provision of GI, including its type and functionality.

24 See Chapter 4 of "Planning for a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Framework in Worcestershire – Green Infrastructure Framework 2" (Worcestershire County Council, Natural England and the Forestry Commission England, July 2012). For individual Environmental Character Areas (ECA) profiles see www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/download/84/environmental_character_areas.

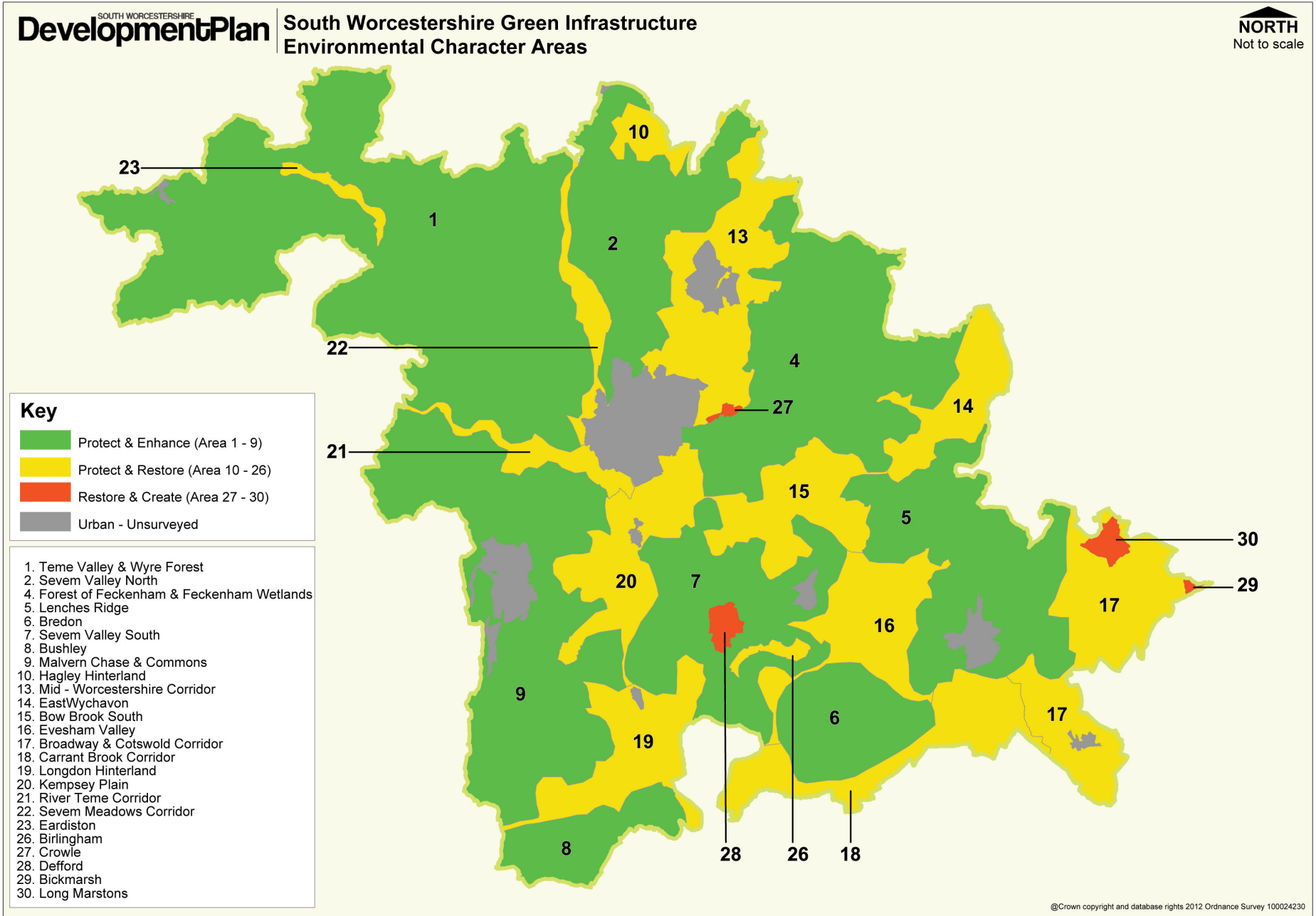


Figure 3 - South Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Environmental Character Areas