How can nature deliver better placemaking and placekeeping outcomes

Professor Alister Scott BA PhD MRTPI
Initial question

• National planning policy and guidance for placemaking and placekeeping has good principles in theory but is it evidenced in developments on the ground?

• Are you happy with the current quality and design of built development in NI Yes/No
Challenge(s) for this talk

• How can we tackle the disconnect between policy and practice?
  • How can we work with nature more effectively as an asset in policy and practice?
  • What does good policy actually look like?
  • What does good development actually look like?
Reframing nature as an asset to deliver placemaking and placekeeping
Valuing ecosystem services

Location determined by Market + Non-Market Values
  food
  + timber
  + greenhouse gases
  + recreation
  + water quality improvement
  + biodiversity improvement

Cost benefit value: + £546million p.a.
Derry City and Strabane GI Strategy

- GI network as the delivery mechanism for realizing NC and ES benefits
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

MESSAGE

FEEDBACK

SENDER

RECEIVER
Hooks for reframing nature with public/professional/political traction
Identifying Policy Hooks for natural environment

- Plan Led System
- Ecosystem services
- Climate change
- Placemaking
- Health and Well Being
- Green and Blue infrastructure
- Ecological networks
What does good policy for nature look like?
Tool Framework to assess good policy
Search the plan for policies relevant to GI

Assess the policies against the assessment criteria for coverage

Assign scores for coverage and strength to the relevant boxes in the Score Sheet. Repeat for all relevant policies

View the Overall Scores. Consider your options to fill gaps in policy coverage and where policy phrasing can be strengthened.
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<th>Policy Plan Mainstreaming</th>
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**Introduction 2.1**

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**Chapter 3 Furthering SD 3.13 3.14**

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**Chapter 4 Core planning principles 4.1 4.5 4.7 4.11 4.15 4.21 4.28 4.32 4.38**

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**Chapter 6 104 118 124 137 171 172 195 201**

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### String Council, Local Development Plan, 2014

**Policy 3.3: Green Network and Open Space**

All development proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on, and potential to contribute to, national Green Network principles and local Green Network and Open Space Strategy objectives in terms of the following:

... (b) Proposals adjacent to, encroaching upon, or in the vicinity of, existing open spaces and green corridors, should maintain or enhance functionality and connectivity (active travel routes, habitat networks, etc).

**Comment:**

This policy fully covers the criterion, and even emphasises the functionality of the GI network. Although ‘landscape scale’ isn’t explicitly mentioned in this policy, the reference to the ‘Green Network’ implies landscape scale.

**Coverage Score:**

- Full coverage = 3
- Most coverage = 2
- None coverage = 1
Core Policy SD2: Ecosystem Services

1. Development proposals will be permitted where they have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. This will be achieved through the use of high quality design, and by delivering all opportunities to:
   a) Sustainably manage land and water environments;
   b) Protect and provide more, better, and joined up natural habitats;
   c) Conserve water resources and improve water quality;
   d) Manage and mitigate the risk of flooding;
   e) Improve the National Park’s resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change;
   f) Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means;
   g) Conserve and enhance soils, use soils sustainably and protect the best and most versatile agricultural land;
   h) Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials;
   i) Reduce levels of pollution;
   j) Improve opportunities for peoples’ health and wellbeing; and
   k) Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities.

2. Development proposals must be supported by a statement that sets out how the development proposal impacts, both positively and negatively, on ecosystem services.
Jill’s actions

Replacing the dense, board-like fence with a native hedgerow helps to soak up excess water, improves air quality and is good for wildlife.

Installing bat boxes is an easy way for Jill to support the local bat population.

Planting wildflower mix is great for bees, which provide a food source for bats.

Replacing the concrete parking area with permeable surfacing helps reduce flood risk and surface water.

Solar panels are one way which can reduce Jill’s carbon footprint.
Setting the standard for green infrastructure

What does good practice look like?

Building with Nature

Setting the standard for green infrastructure
UK’s First Benchmark for Green Infrastructure

• Voluntary scheme that helps developers raise the bar for nature in developments

• Standards developed from research evidence and good practice experience

• 23 qualitative standards

• Applies through ALL stages of the development process (design to planning to post development).
Accreditation and Award

• Awards at pre-planning and post-construction stages
• Highlight what good looks like at each stage of the development lifecycle.
• For schemes of 10 units or more.
CORE STANDARDS
Distinguish green infrastructure from a more conventional approach to provision for open and green space.

WELLBEING STANDARDS
Secure health and wellbeing benefits through the delivery of green infrastructure features close to where people live.

WATER STANDARDS
Managing water quantity and quality, and maximising opportunities for amenity and biodiversity.

WILDLIFE STANDARDS
Create places where nature can flourish, both within the boundary of the scheme, and at a landscape scale.

1. Multi-functional network
2. Contextual
3. Policy-responsive
4. Climate-resilient
5. Future-proof

1. Accessible
2. Inclusive
3. Seasonal enjoyment
4. Locally relevant
5. Socially sustainable
6. Distinctive

1. Quantity
2. Quality
3. Amenity and biodiversity
4. Innovative
5. Resilient
6. Locally distinctive

1. Bigger and better
2. More joined up
3. Locally-relevant
4. Nature-rich development
5. Ecological networks
6. Sensitive construction
CORE Standards

CORE1: The green infrastructure forms a multifunctional network.
CORE2: The scheme identifies important local character features as a starting point for the green infrastructure proposals and incorporates them into the scheme to reference, reflect and enhance the local environment.
CORE3: The type, quality and function of green infrastructure respond to the local context.
CORE4: The green infrastructure is resilient to climate change; and minimises the scheme’s environmental impact with respect to air, soil, light, noise, and water; and enhances the quality of air, soil and water.
CORE5: Provision is made for long-term management and maintenance of all green infrastructure features post-development.
Development: Forth Valley Royal Hospital and Larbert Woods

Developers: NHS Forth Valley (NHS Scotland), Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage

Landscape Architects: Raeburn Farquhar Bowen

Scheme: Hospital development of 860 inpatient beds, 25 wards, and 16 operating theatres. At the point of completion in 2010 it was Scotland's largest ever NHS construction project.

Location: Larbert, Scotland
ELDERBERRY WALK SOUTHMEAD

NUMBER AND TYPE OF UNITS
160 homes in total comprising of:
42 one-bed flats; 42 two-bed flats;
43 two-bed houses; 25 three-bed houses; 8 four-bed houses

% AFFORDABLE
25% affordable, 7% shared ownership
and 25% private rental sector

SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTION
Upgrading the nearest bus stop, traffic
regulation orders to improve safety of
road users and preserve or improve the
character and amenity of local roads.

DENSITY
Medium/high: 55 dwellings per hectare

CONNECTIVITY
Short walking distance to local shops,
schools and community facilities.
Regular buses to city centre. In
catchment area for shared ride-to-work
services. Pedestrian and cycle routes
linking into existing networks. Car club
to be provided on site.

KEY DESIGN FEATURES
Additional grant funding will enable
improved sustainability and reduced
running costs for the Affordable Rent
Units through upgrades to airtightness
and building envelope performance, and
the installation of highly efficient space
and water heating systems; all homes
will deliver real savings in energy usage.

"ELDERBERRY WALK DRAWS ON THE GARDEN CITY PRINCIPLES
THAT UNDERPIN THE URBAN DESIGN OF THE SURROUNDING AREA -
AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LEGIBLE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND EASY ACCESS
TO OPEN SPACE. OUR AIM IS TO CREATE A RESIDENTIAL QUARTER
WHICH SITS COMFORTABLY WITHIN ITS CONTEXT BUT RESPONDS TO
CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGIES, LIFESTYLES AND TASTES."

ISABEL ALLEN, HAB HOUSING
Future Challenges for the natural environment

- Getting the right evidence to shape policy/practice
- Using hooks to mainstream nature in development
- Raising standards of policy and development at all scales.
- Political short-termism vs nature's long-termism
- Constantly changing policy and administration context (issue attention cycle)
- Securing effective and meaningful public involvement

(adapted from Waters, 2012)
Thank you.

Alister.scott@Northumbria.ac.uk
Further Reading


• Building with Nature [https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/](https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/)