



CIRENCESTER GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2011

to

SEPTEMBER 2021



Prepared by the Green Spaces
Strategy Working Group on
behalf of the Cirencester
Development Partnership,
delivering 'Our Future
Cirencester'.



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1. Overview

- 1.1 Cirencester is blessed with a mosaic of green spaces which until now, have not been considered or managed with holistic foresight. Few towns of its size boast such a collection of potentially accessible, varied and multi-purpose sites within their boundaries. These green spaces form part of the local heritage and have added to the quality of life for the local community over many generations.
- 1.2 In 2008, the Town Council began a Community Planning exercise called ‘Our Future Cirencester’ (OFC).
- 1.3 This resulted in the publication of a Community Plan to ensure that:
- ‘Our Future Cirencester’ will be:
- a sustainable market town;
 - a good place in which to grow up;
 - an attractive town to live in, visit and where we can enjoy a vibrant culture;
 - a better place to do business.
- 1.4 Sustainability is very much at the heart of the Community Plan. Sustainability is seen both in terms of the need to protect the rich natural and cultural environment and in saving resources, but also in terms of sustaining a thriving market town, economically and socially.
- 1.5 Recent consultations showed that local people wanted green spaces to be enhanced and managed better. Through the Strategy it is hoped to engage volunteer support, encourage better and more co-ordinated management between landowners, and to seek funding for improvement.
- 1.6 Through this Strategy Cirencester Development Partnership, which is delivering ‘Our Future Cirencester’, is working with landowners and local people to provide better land management across Cirencester. Initial inquiries to funding bodies suggested that OFC’s bids for financial support would be more successful if they were grounded in a robust and professional Strategy that set out clearly what is needed and why.
- 1.7 The Community Plan as well as other strategic documents both local and national have provided a firm basis upon which to plan. Cirencester Development Partnership has engaged in extensive public consultation and many local people have given their views on what needs to be done. A full résumé of relevant legislation and policy advice can be found within Appendix 1 of the Annex.
- 1.8 The Strategy has been prepared by the Green Spaces Strategy Working Group under the auspices of the Cirencester Development Partnership Steering Group. The Working Group was comprised of professionals and experts, all of whom lived in Cirencester.

- 1.9 This green space strategy is first and foremost a land management strategy. The strategy has been developed to improve Cirencester's green space for wildlife and local people alike.
- 1.10 This strategy will be reviewed in five years time and if required an amended green space strategy drafted.



Norman Arch, Abbey Grounds, Cirencester

2. Approach and Methodology

- 2.1 The 'Our Future Cirencester' Project Manager involved landowners and the local community in the development of the Strategy, the latter through consultations and establishment of the Green Spaces Strategy Working Group.
- 2.2 The Group worked with the Project Manager to develop the Strategy between January 2010 and April 2011.
- 2.3 The methodology used for producing the Strategy was CABE Space's advice on Open Space Strategies¹. Open Space strategies are normally prepared by the District Council, however, the Town Council has sought to take a lead role in the management of open spaces within its boundary and in doing so refers to other relevant strategic documents such as those prepared in line with the requirements set out in PPS 17 on Open Space, Sport and Recreation².
- 2.4 The Group modified this to reflect the five guiding principles, (of Section 8; page 13 refers) which formed the framework for the Strategy.
- 2.5 The Group then compiled a list of all the major, publicly accessible, green spaces within the administrative boundaries of Cirencester. The majority of sites are in public ownership, or, where they are privately owned, some element of public access is permitted. Each of the sites was assessed against the five guiding principles, taking into account the results of the 'Our Future Cirencester' public consultations.
- 2.6 The Objectives of the Strategy are as follows:
- to improve the quality of Cirencester's green infrastructure for the benefit of all residents and visitors, for current and future generations;
 - to review the green infrastructure contribution of all Cirencester's green spaces, which includes the River Churn, and their inter-connection;
 - to provide an overarching framework for the capital investment required to enable the contribution to be realised;
 - to provide an overarching framework for individual site landscape management plans and the co-ordination of strategic benefits ;
 - to describe the resources required, whether external funding, direct or volunteer labour, to deliver the Green Spaces Strategy.

¹ CABE and GLA, 2009.

² Planning Policy Statement 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, 2006, DCLG.

3. The Green Spaces Strategy Working Group

- 3.1 This Strategy has been prepared by a hard Working Group of local professionals who have volunteered their time and expertise over many months.
- 3.2 The Cirencester Development Partnership which is delivering 'Our Future Cirencester' and the Town Council wish to note their thanks to these people, without whom the Strategy could not have been developed. This is the first step in obtaining funding and further volunteer support for Cirencester's green and open spaces.
- 3.3 The Working Group membership is outlined below and additional information can be found in Appendix 2 of the Annex:

NAME	SPECIALISM
Jacqui Stearn	(Chair) Environmental Policy
Mike Barker	(Vice Chair) Water and Flooding
Royston Clark	Archaeologist
John Conway	Sustainability
Elliott Gill	Water and Flooding
Lesley Greene	Arts, Community
Ray Hawes	Trees, Woodland Management
Georgie James	BREEAM
Palmer Newbould	Ecology
Jenny Phelps	Funding, Farming
Sophie Piebenga	Heritage Landscape
Martin Portus	Landscape Design
Hannah Sturman	Social Regeneration
Andrea Pellegram	(Project Manager) Town Planning

4. Our Partners

4.1 The “Our Future Cirencester’ Community Plan has been working with a wide range of committed partners and stakeholders since its inception in January 2008 and these have grown in number in the preparation of this Strategy. This Strategy is a tool to assist the partners to work more effectively together.

4.2 An example of the range of partners with whom the Cirencester Development Partnership and Town Council engaged with throughout the preparation of this document is listed below:

- Bathurst Estate
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV);
- Chester-Master family;
- Churn Project, Neighbourhood Partnership & Community Groups;
- Colt Car Company;
- Cotswold District Council;
- English Heritage;
- Environment Agency;
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG);
- Gloucestershire County Council;
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust;
- Great Western Ambulance Trust;
- Natural England;
- National Health Service;
- Opportunity Group;
- St John’s Alms House Trust;
- And the residents of and visitors to Cirencester.



Cirencester’s rich cultural signature

5. The Local Population

5.1 In 2001, Cirencester had a population of 18,000. Two large urban extensions have been built since that time which will increase the population by around 2,000 once fully occupied post 2011.

Ward	Under 19 years old	Total population	Households without a car ³
Beeches	1189	4030	289
Chesterton	1105	4019	231
Park	427	2991	533
Stratton-Whiteway	826	3457	250
Watermoor	846	3841	547
Total	4393	18338	1850

5.2 Around 4,400 people under the age of 19 and 1,850 households did not have access to a car in 2001. Both these groups rely particularly heavily on open space provision that is within walking distance of their homes.

5.3 Cirencester is widely seen as an affluent market town. However, there are pockets of deprivation where local people are in need of improved educational and environmental facilities. The Green Spaces Strategy can make a real difference to the standard of living by offering more opportunities to interact positively with the local natural environment.

5.4 In the three wards of Watermoor, Beeches and Chesterton, there are pockets of deprivation in terms of health, education, skills and poor living environment that are amongst the worst in Gloucestershire⁴.

5.5 Indicators⁵ also show that:

- Parts of Chesterton and Watermoor wards have indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) in the lowest 25% of all wards in Gloucestershire;
- Parts of the Beeches and Chesterton wards have some of the lowest incomes and highest unemployment in Gloucestershire; and parts of Watermoor are in the UK's lowest 10% for income;
- Parts of Watermoor ward are amongst the lowest 10% of all wards in the County for health and deprivation; and

³ 2001 Census, Table KS17 – cars or vans.

⁴ This means that these wards have scores in the top quartile in Gloucestershire according to MAIDen, the County's statistical repository.

⁵ MAIDen, 2011 [www].

- Parts of Watermoor, Beeches and Chesterton rank in the worst 40% for health indices of multiple deprivation.

5.6 Other parts of Cirencester within Stratton, Park Ward and Chesterton, are in the highest 10% nationally and in the County, in terms of the quality of the living environment. Parts of Stratton Ward are in the UK's wealthiest 10% income band.

5.6 Figure one shows a map of the national indices of multiple deprivation in Cirencester.

6. Public Consultation to Inform the Strategy

6.1 This Strategy has its origins in the Cirencester Community Plan, 'Our Future Cirencester'. Since the Community Plan was adopted in 2008, literally hundreds of local people's views have been considered. A summary of the consultations undertaken is provided in Appendix 3 of the Annex.

6.2 The first draft of the strategy was put out to consultation in July and August of 2011. The strategy was sent out to a list of 115 key stakeholders, agencies, organisations and local community groups. The consultation also included an Open Meeting for Cirencester residents at the end of July that was well attended. Figure 2 shows images from the open meeting. The feedback from the consultation was used to redraft the strategy before being adopted by the Town Council.

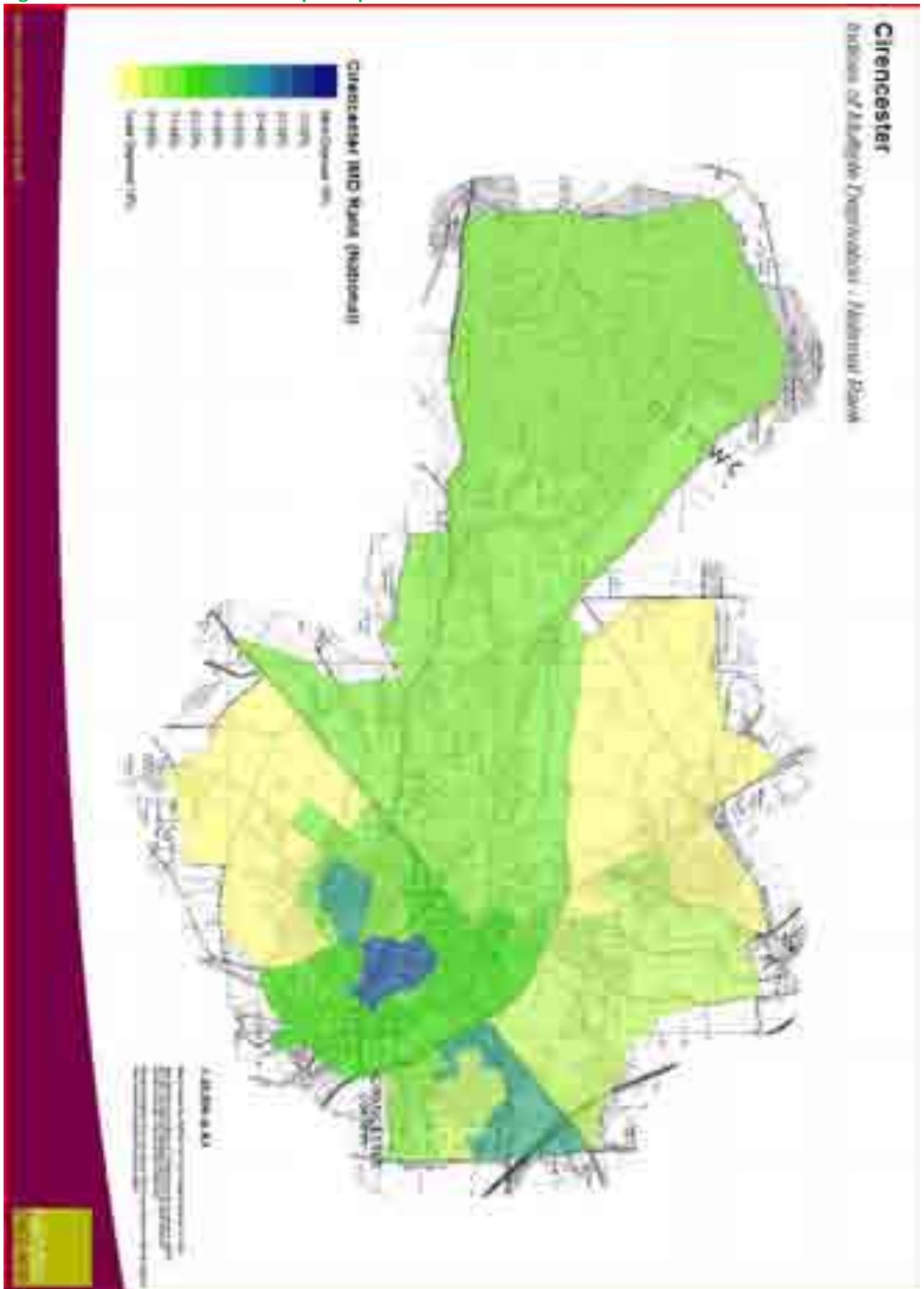
6.3 The Working Group itself served as another form of consultation since the report was written by resident experts whose local knowledge was able to draw fine-grained and relevant conclusions.

Figure 2: Images from Open Meeting



Local residents discuss Cirencester's Green Space Strategy at an Open Meeting

Figure 1: National Indices of Multiple Deprivation in Cirencester



7. The Long List of Sites

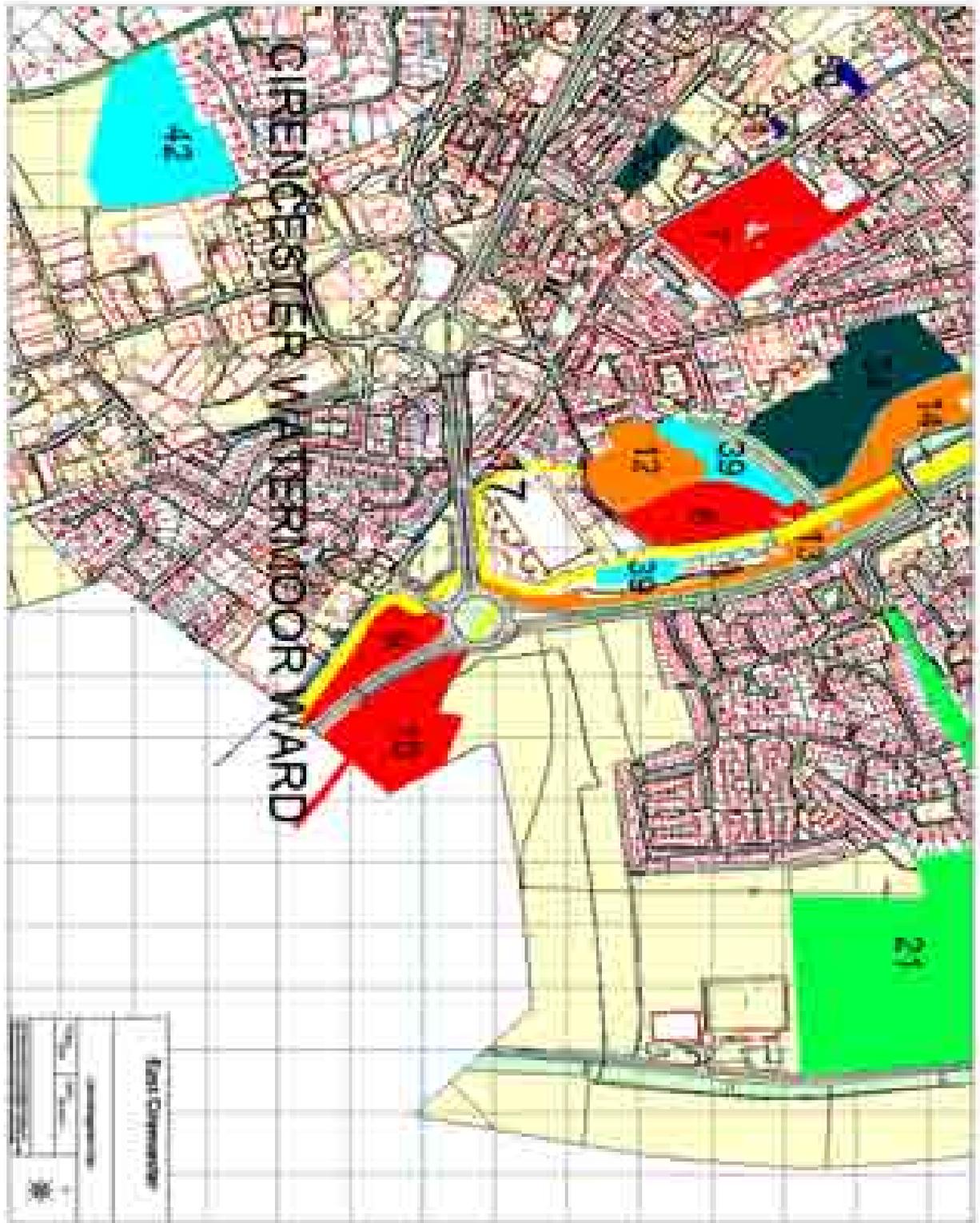
- 7.1 The Working Group commenced by compiling a list of all the major publicly accessible green spaces within the administrative boundaries of Cirencester. These sites are mainly in public ownership, or in some cases are privately owned but with some form of permissive access.
- 7.2 All landowners are considered as key stakeholders who will be treated as partners wherever the Strategy is delivered.
- 7.3 The typology of open spaces as suggested in Planning Policy Statement 17 was used as part of this process and the following table served as the long list for further study. Since some of the sites are not in public ownership, change cannot be directly affected. For this reason, recommendations were not made for all sites.
- 7.4 Figure 3 outlines the long list of sites included in the study.

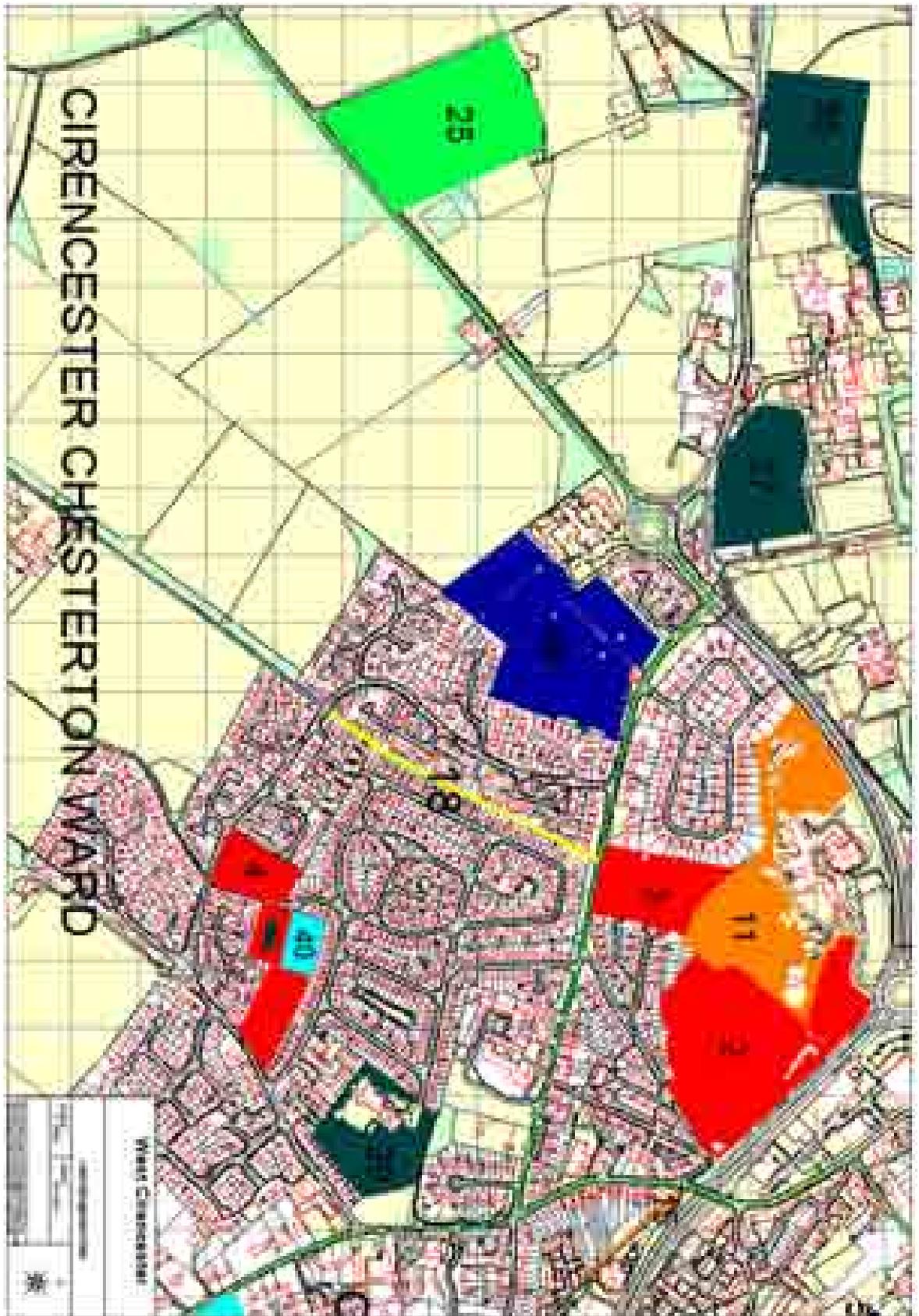
Figure 3: Long List of Sites included in the Study and illustrative maps

Type	Map ref.	Occurrences in Cirencester	Owner and/or manager	Site size in ha.
Parks and gardens	1.	Cirencester Park	Bathurst Estate	
	2.	Cirencester Amphitheatre	Cirencester Town Council English Heritage Bathurst Estate	5.2
	3.	4 Acre Field	Cirencester Town Council	1.7
	4.	2 Acre Fields	Cirencester Town Council	2.2
	5.	Abbey Grounds	Cirencester Town Council Cotswold District Council	8.44
	6.	Jack Gardiner	Cirencester Town Council	1.87
	7.	St Michael's Park	Cirencester Town Council	2.72
	8.	City Bank Recreational Ground	Cirencester Town Council	1.56
	9.	Cricklade Road picnic area	Cotswold District Council	1.21
	10.	Kingshill Country Park	Private	2.34
Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces	11.	Cirencester Hospital & Ambulance site including the Hospital's green gym/ orchard	NHS	6.76
	12.	Nursery Site at City Bank	Cotswold District Council	1.45
	13.	City Bank Depot and other land	Cirencester Town Council	0.81
	14.	Opportunity Group land	Opportunity Group	2.57
	15.	Former railway land at Somerford Road	Gloucestershire County Council	0.1
	16.	Hare Bushes	Chester-Master estate	26.8
Green corridors	17.	River Churn and embankments	Various	
	18.	Chesterton Farm Track	Cotswold District Council	0.31
Outdoor sports facilities	19.	Open Air Swimming Pool	Cirencester Open Air Pool	0.15
	20.	Humpty Dumps	Cirencester Town Council	0.28
	21.	Kingshill Recreation Area	Cirencester Town Council	12.92

Type	Map ref.	Occurrences in Cirencester	Owner and/or manager	Site size in ha.
	22.	Baunton Lane Playing Field	Cirencester Town Council	1.68
	23.	Cirencester Rugby Club	Cirencester Rugby Club	4.86
	24.	Ashcroft Road Bowls Club	Bowls Club	0.14
	25.	Royal Agricultural College fields	Royal Agricultural College	4.85
	26.	Churn link walking and cycle route	Various	
Amenity green space	27.	Various Grass Verges	Cirencester Town Council Cotswold District Council Gloucestershire County Council Private land owners	
Provision for children and teenagers	28.	Powell's school playing field	School	2.41
	29.	Chesterton Primary School playing field	School	3
	30.	Abbey Grounds Play Area	Cirencester Town Council	0.09
	31.	Chesterton Teen Shelter and multi-purpose goal posts	Cirencester Town Council	0.6
	32.	Watermoor Primary School	School	0.43
	33.	Stratton Primary School	School	1.04
	34.	Cirencester Primary School	School	3.58
	35.	Deer Park Secondary School	School	2.9
	36.	Kingshill Secondary School	School	7.08
37.	Cirencester College fields	College	2.42	
Allotments and community gardens	38.	Barton Lane Allotments	St Johns Alms House Trust	0.92
	39.	City Bank Allotments	Cirencester Town Council	1.02
	40.	Chesterton Allotments	Cirencester Town Council	0.4
	41.	Purley Road Allotments	Cotswold District Council	0.17
	42.	Somerford Road Allotments	Bathurst estate	3.4
	43.	Bomford Allotments	Chester-Master estate	2.14
	44.	Cheltenham Road Allotments	St Johns Alms House Trust	2.63
	45.	Abbey Farm Allotments	Chester-Master estate	
46.	Barn Way Allotments	Bathurst estate	0.59	
Cemeteries and churchyards	47.	Stratton Cemetery	Cotswold District Council	1.1
	48.	Chesterton Cemetery	Cotswold District Council	4.57
	49.	St John the Baptist Church	Cirencester Town Council	0.26
	50.	Church of the Holy Trinity (garden of remembrance)	Cirencester Town Council	0.08
	51.	Cemetery on Watermoor Road	Cotswold District Council	0.03
	52.	Quakers Meeting House cemetery	Quakers	0.02
Civic Spaces	53.	Market Place	Cirencester Town Council	0.1
	54.	Cricklade Street seating area	Private	
	55.	Catalpa Square	Private	0.04
	56.	Brewery Court	Multiple Private	0.08
	57.	Seating area west of Brewery Court (Tesco site)	Private	0.09

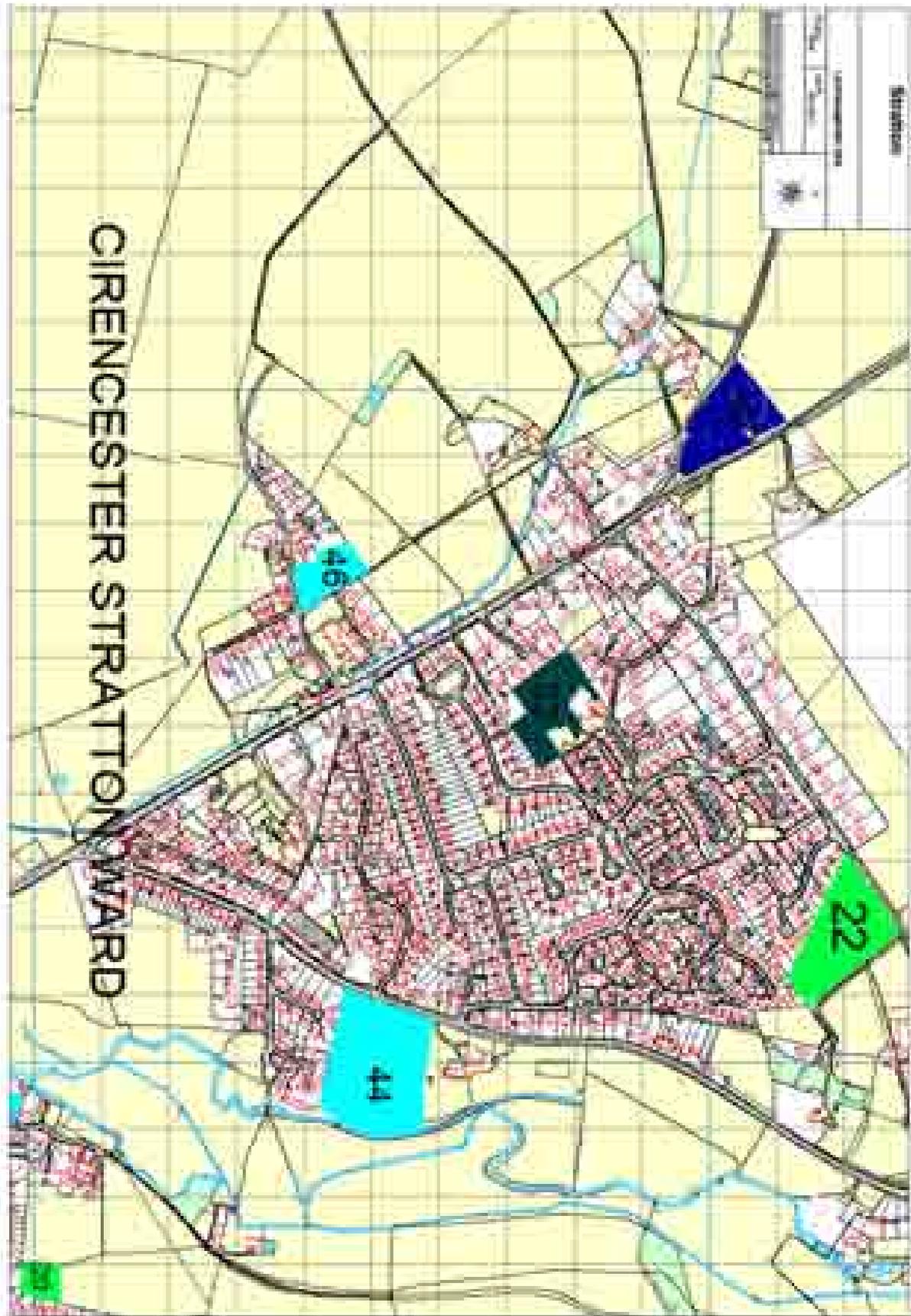
The maps on the following pages illustrate the location of the sites from the table. The colours represent the type of open space depicted.











8. The Five Guiding Principles

- 8.1 The Working Group developed 5 principles to assess Cirencester’s green infrastructure. The term, ‘green infrastructure’ summarises the services that environmental networks and systems within the landscape provide to support the social, economic and environmental futures of settlements of all sizes. Green infrastructure complements the ‘grey infrastructure’ of transport, communications, utilities etc. These were originally used by Natural England but have been adapted to suit bespoke circumstances and environment.
- 8.2 The Working Group endorsed these principles as complementing the overarching priorities of the Community Plan, providing a better method for assessing the value and potential of the green spaces, more so than the generic typology (as proposed in PPS17 for instance).
- 8.3 The principles are summarised in the table below:
- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Natural Signature | The natural landscape, geology, ecology and the plants and animals these features support. |
| 2 | Cultural Signature | Archaeological, historic and cultural features. |
| 3 | Natural Connections | Emotional and physical access and links to nature. |
| 4 | Natural Health Service | Access to nature in many forms adds to people’s health and wellbeing. |
| 5 | Natural Resilience | Natural physical features and environmental characteristics that make Cirencester more resilient to extreme events and climate change. |
- 8.4 The principles are not presented in order of priority; each principle is as important as the others.



St Micheals Park, Cirencester

9. Natural Signature

- 9.1 Cirencester's geology has had an enormous impact on the town's architecture, economy and habitats. The fertile soils, some as downwash from scarp slopes, enabled Cirencester to become a medieval centre for the export of grain and wool. The result is relatively reduced biodiversity since the lime-rich geology restricts the types of habitats that can develop and the fertile soils encourage the growth of vigorous grasses crowding out other species. The conditions are perfect for grazing sheep.
- 9.2 Cirencester's major habitats are woodland, scrub, grassland and rivers. The wooded areas such as those found by the Hospital have lost much of their biodiversity and require better management such as the creation of more clearings, coppicing and leaving fallen trees to provide habitats for small animals and insects. Grasslands are heavily mown and it may be desirable to consider mowing less frequently to increase the numbers of plants and animals that live there.
- 9.3 More information is needed about Cirencester's biodiversity, whether this is in the professional or scientific sense, or in the popular sense. A baseline of existing species and their occurrence is needed so that it can be possible to assess the state of their health.
- 9.4 Obtaining this baseline will be one of the recommendations from this study whether this will be by commissioning professionals, accessing local information or using trained volunteers to gather information. Once a baseline has been established, it will be necessary to introduce a regular monitoring regime to measure change.
- 9.5 Popular environmental programmes that raise awareness about important local species, and endangered species that are resurging such as otters and water voles, should also be introduced to increase people's appreciation and care for their local natural resources.
- 9.6 The water quality of the river Churn is generally very good but low summer flows can be a problem. The Churn has high populations of signal crayfish and probably no native crayfish. It should be possible to improve the habitat provided by the Churn and its embankments to encourage growth in water vole and otter populations. The Abbey Lake is fed by the Churn and there are a number of large pike which control the population of small fish. There is some scope for limited river restoration, though this will be constrained by the need for flood alleviation and the requirements to preserve the archaeological deposits found across Cirencester. Too much of the river bank is shaded and some tree clearance would enhance the growth of flowering river plants.
- 9.7 Figure 4 shows Cirencester's Natural Signature in map forms.

10. Natural Signature Success Indicators

- 10.1 Increased populations of key local UK Priority Species in Cirencester.
- 10.2 Reduction of invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam.
- 10.3 Increase in lengths of river with emergent/ aquatic vegetation.

- 10.2 Establishment of monitoring programs that utilise community involvement.
- 10.3 Number of management plans operating in publicly accessible green spaces in Cirencester to enhance biodiversity and visitor experience.

11. Natural Signature Recommendations

11.1 Realise the potential for Cirencester's green spaces to contribute to national biodiversity targets for the conservation of UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) act.

11.2 Establish a baseline of key local UK Priority Species under the NERC act and monitor every 5 years. The baseline can be created using existing data from sources such as the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) done for Cirencester's Higher Level Stewardship funding application, using professionals to gather new data, or using trained local volunteers in partnership with BTCV or similar organisations. Below are priority species of most relevance to Cirencester at the current time (these will be reviewed periodically):

- Water voles
- Otters
- Bats
- Bees
- Trout
- Kingfishers
- Dippers
- Spotted woodpeckers
- Green woodpeckers
- Tree Sparrow
- Butterflies
- Amphibians
- Orchids
- BAP species

11.3 Map and assess biodiversity of woodland areas against the following categories:

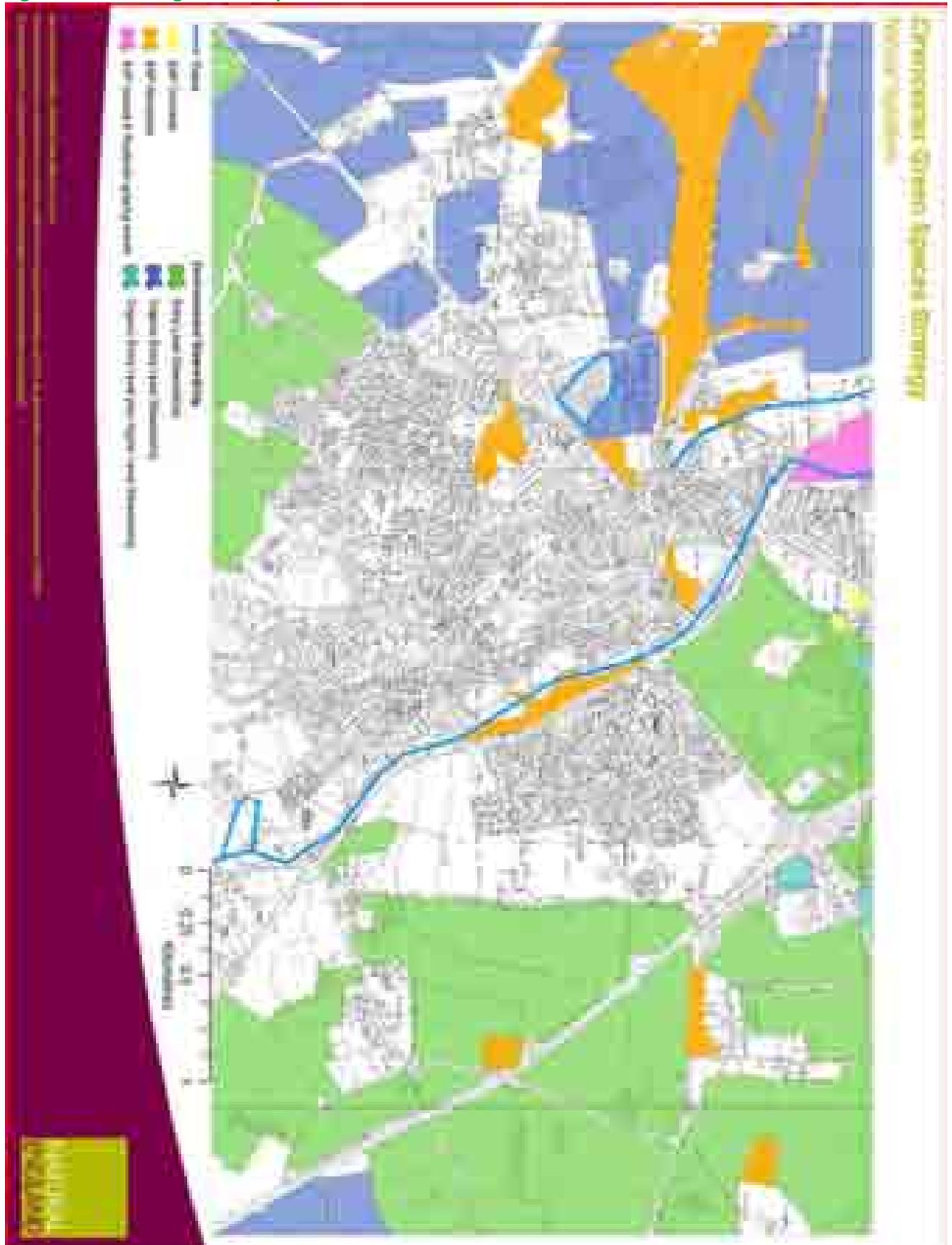
- Tree species
- Shrub species
- Climbers (Ivy, Clematis)
- Ground flora species
- Structure of woodland (coppice with standards, open grown trees, plantation trees)
- Condition of trees, size, vigour, coppice, pollard
- Standing dead, fallen dead
- Closed canopy, clearings, rides
- Tree and shrub regeneration
- Fungi, bracket fungi
- Birds,
- Bats
- Area of site

- 11.4 Establish baseline of vegetation and indicative plant species.
- 11.5 Set up a regular monitoring system to determine trends in the indicator species and establish a programme to train volunteers to take part;
- 11.6 Develop environmental programmes aimed at education, stewardship and management that build resources in the local community to seek to improve the natural signature. Develop a programme to train volunteers to monitor indicator species. Partners could include BTCV and the Neighbourhood Partnership and community groups.
- 11.7 Work in partnership with the Royal Agricultural College to deliver Natural Connection projects through their Heritage Foundation Degree and Countryside Management Degree.
- 11.8 Use the Town Council website to make information about Cirencester's natural signature available to the public and to encourage involvement in environmental programmes.
- 11.9 Monitor national and local policy initiatives and make linkages to these where appropriate to improve the natural signature.
- 11.10 A comprehensive river restoration programme to improve the quality and biodiversity of the River Churn focussing on key species of:
- Water voles (improved habitats)
 - Otters (improved habitats and food supply)
 - BAP species
- 11.11 Improve biodiversity and the natural signature on an ad hoc basis on smaller sites where the opportunity arises, for example establish a wildlife meadow.
- 11.12 Work in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council to help deliver the biodiversity vision for the county as outlined in the Gloucestershire Nature Map.



Abbey Grounds, Cirencester

Figure 4: Natural Signature Maps



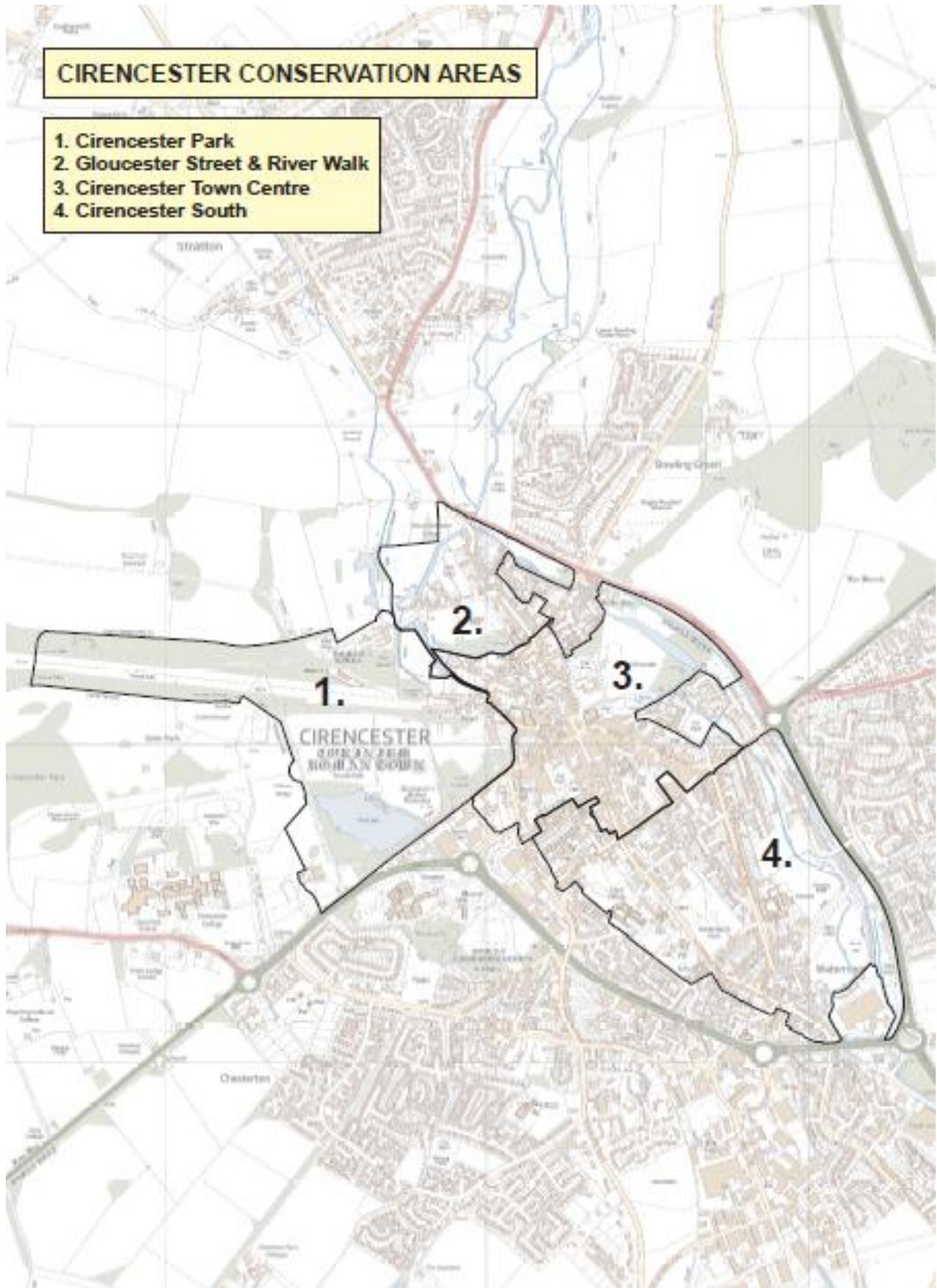
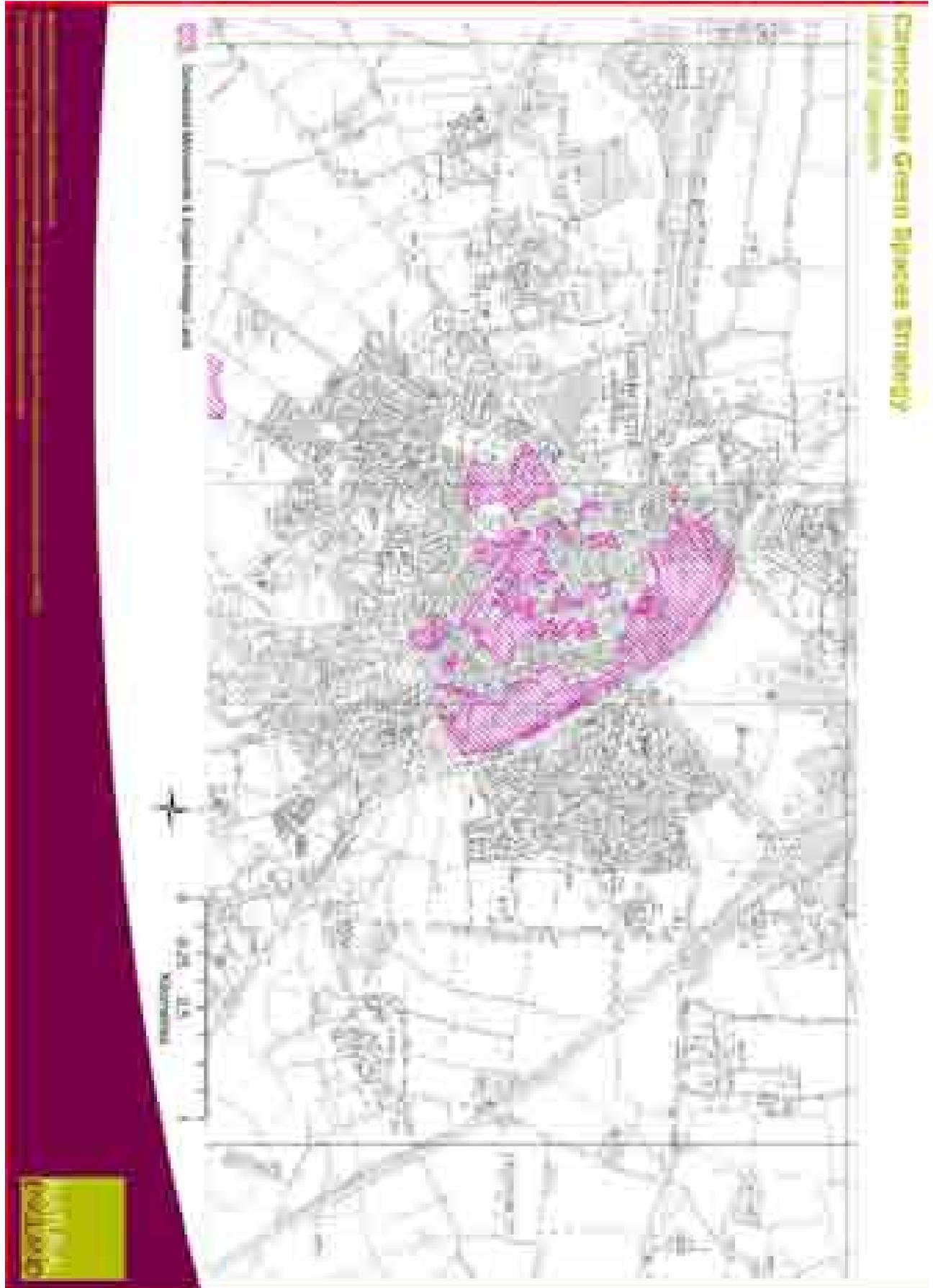
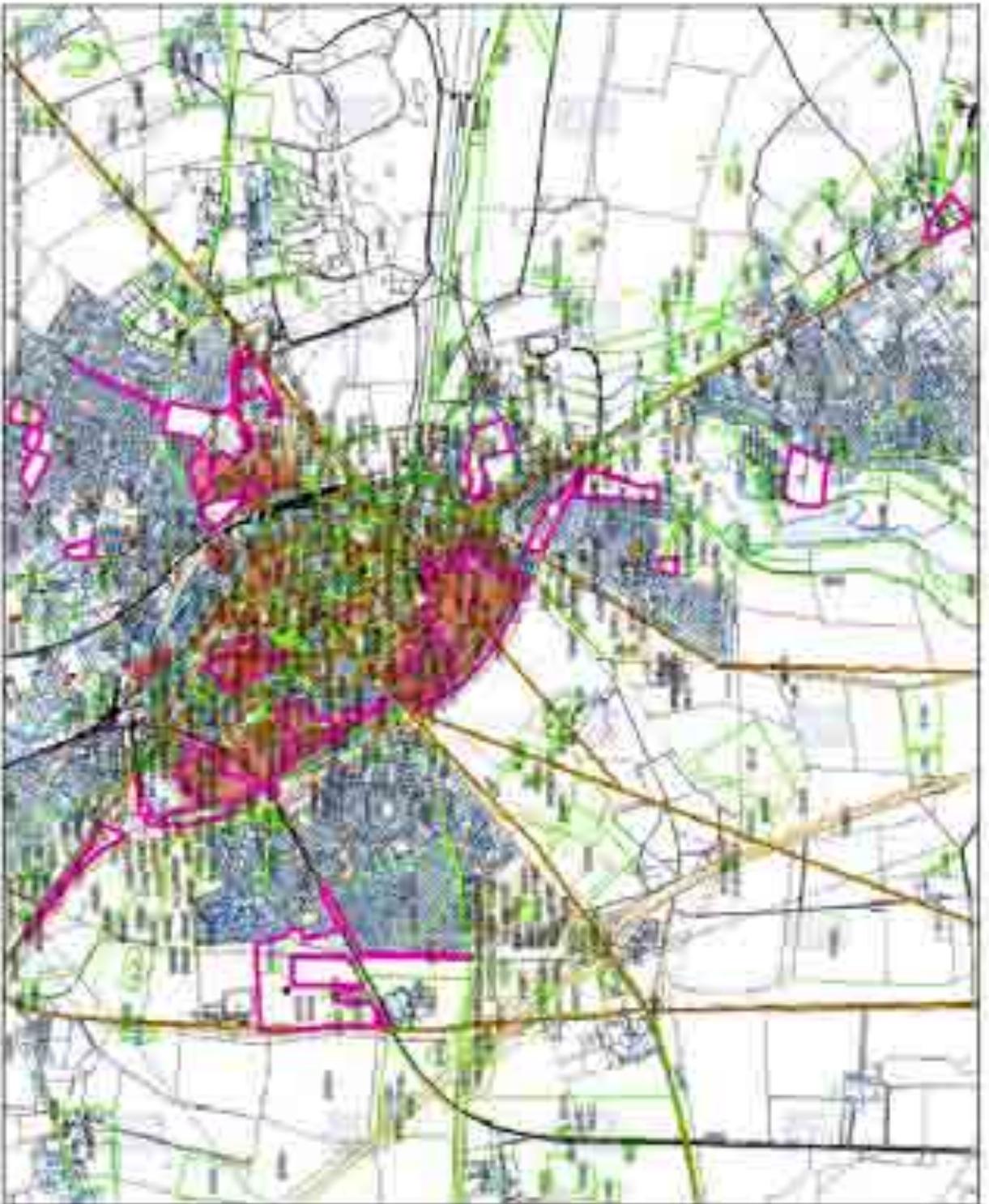


Figure 5: Cultural Signature Maps



All boundary workshading is shown on this map. Only workshading relevant to the H.L.S. application will be listed on the provisional table



TITLE Overview	
All	
PROJECT: EEP April 2011	
SITE: Cirencester Green Spaces	
LEGEND:	
Working Applications Listed Buildings	
Working Boundaries	
Scheduled Monuments	
Authorisation Service: Development Director David Lee, Wiltshire Council Planning, GL1 2TF Tel: 01292 42000 www.gov.wiltshire.gov.uk	
DRAWN BY: J.Fradette SCALE: 1:10,000 DATE: 15/03/11 (SOW/MS) 01/1	
<small> This map is a copy of the original map. It is not a substitute for the original map. It is not to be used for any purpose other than the one for which it was prepared. It is not to be used for any purpose other than the one for which it was prepared. It is not to be used for any purpose other than the one for which it was prepared. </small>	

12. Cultural Signature

- 12.1 Cirencester's green spaces have been shaped by a long history of cultural processes beginning in the pre Roman period. Very little in the town reflects the original natural landscape. The town is fed by the River Churn whose course has been so fundamentally changed, adapted and re-channelled, that its original path is no longer known and could never be restored. The Churn has provided water for homes and power for industry, whether in the form of mills or as a method of transport through supplying water to an abandoned canal system. These things have disappeared with only a few structures remaining as reminders that they ever existed.
- 12.2 The geology has largely determined the built environment, creating the quintessential Cotswold style of stone buildings that often features in modern media as the essence of Englishness. The soil also determines the type of vegetation found in Cirencester's green spaces.
- 12.3 The town's urban form has been shaped by its inhabitants over the centuries. Roman street patterns and place names sit alongside the remnants of the mediaeval wool trade, and ancient buildings made way for Georgian, Victorian and modern buildings. Land patterns that date back to the Reformation determine where green and urban land exists within the town, reflected in the land ownership patterns. Two major estates form the town boundaries dating from this time: the Bathurst Estate and the Chester-Master estate. Cirencester Park, part of the Bathurst Estate is a registered historic park. The influence of these families remains obvious today.
- 12.4 Cirencester's green spaces can be likened to a palimpsest - a manuscript on which more than one text has been written over time, each one removed to make room for the next, but each leaving a trace that can just barely be detected.
- 12.5 Figure 5 shows Cirencester's Cultural Signature in map form.

13. Cultural Signature Success Indicators

- 13.1 Improved condition of archaeological sites and historic landscape features.
- 13.2 Number of legacy plans in place for the long term protection and management of archaeological sites.
- 13.3 Number of educational opportunities given on Cirencester open spaces.
- 13.4 Number of guided walks available.
- 13.5 Number of people participating in guided walks.
- 13.6 Number of people participating in community archaeology.
- 13.7 Number of people participating in stewardship schemes.

13.8 Number of 'hits' on the Town Council Website pages relating to green space.

13.9 An increase in interpretation at key sites.

14. Cultural Signature Recommendations

14.1 Collect up-to-date baseline archaeological and historic environment record data through the County HER in order to provide an informed basis for future management work and for educational and community involvement.

14.2 Monitor emerging national and local planning policy and other guidance in relation to the archaeological and heritage agenda, and take appropriate action to respond accordingly; especially where public engagement with the past is being promoted.

14.3 Improve the range and type of popular information about Cirencester's heritage and archaeology in its green spaces and make this more available to all residents and visitors using a range of media and methods.

14.4 Work closely with relevant bodies to relieve conflicts between the need to preserve Cirencester's unique archaeology and other uses of Cirencester's green spaces.

14.5 Work in partnership with the Corinium Museum to deliver projects linked to Cultural Signature. These could include historical interpretation and rural skills projects.

14.6 Create opportunities for community archaeological projects possibly linked into schools and Cirencester College and led by relevant professionals.

14.7 Create and publish of a map of Cirencester's green spaces for visitors.

14.8 Publish dedicated web pages about Cirencester's green spaces on the Town Council website.

14.9 Identify brochures about local/guided walks for inclusion on the Town Council website.

14.10 Promote walking buses and encourage children to walk in the countryside.

14.11 Get children involved in stewardship.

14.12 Work with schools, cubs, scouts, girl guides, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT).

14.13 Use volunteers to monitor number of users on green routes.

14.14 Look to expand the use of Wayteller technology (currently at the Amphitheatre) or similar to other green spaces in Cirencester.

14.15 Consult with Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in regards to management plans, proposals or developments.

15. Natural Connections

- 15.1 Cirencester has a number of beautiful and well-managed parks such as the Grade 1 listed Cirencester Park owned by the Bathurst family, the Abbey Grounds and St Michaels's Park, plus many other smaller green areas such as cemeteries and playing fields.
- 15.2 There are also a number of areas that would benefit from significantly improved management such as City Bank, the woodlands adjoining the amphitheatre, and the River Churn. There are many opportunities to improve people's connections with the natural environment by using the outdoors as an extension of the classroom and encouraging local people to become involved in the design of open spaces and their management.
- 15.3 Good natural connections in Cirencester would mean that children would have the opportunity for imaginative and safe play outdoors in a stimulating and wildlife-rich environment. Outdoor activities should be planned for all ages and abilities and being outdoors should reinforce people's senses of place and community.
- 15.4 Figure 6 shows Cirencester's Natural Connections in map form.

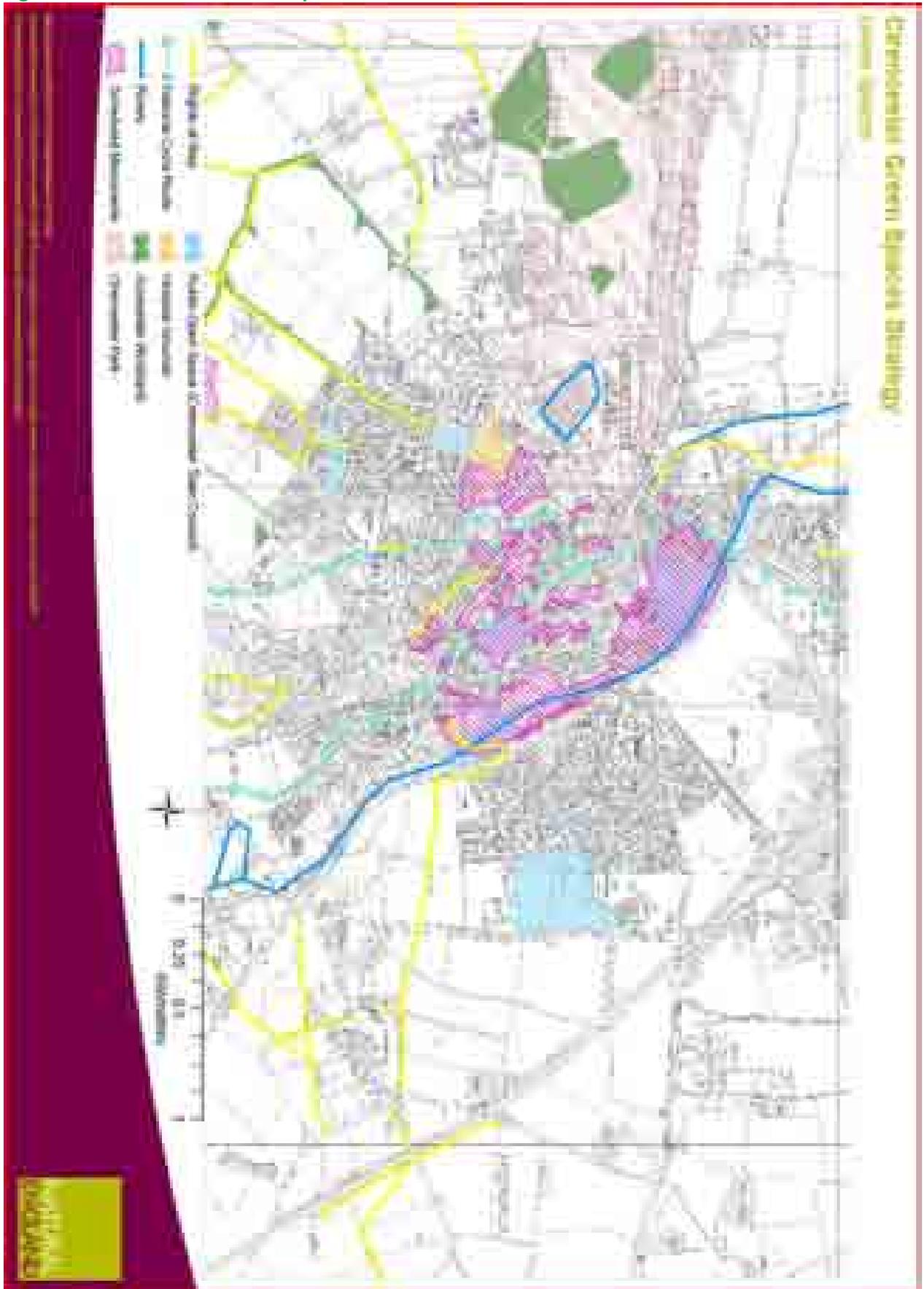
16. Natural Connections Success Indicators

- 16.1 Metres of Green Routes improved.
- 16.2 Metres of new Green Routes created.
- 16.3 Length of circular routes.
- 16.4 Number of after school clubs using the outdoors.
- 16.5 Incidence of use of open space by clubs and informal groups.
- 16.6 Year on year increase in the number of primary and secondary schools creating dedicated green spaces and integrating them into their learning programs.
- 16.7 Number of primary and secondary school visits using the outdoors.
- 16.8 An increase in the number of people using or visiting green space.
- 16.9 An increase in the number of additional public events offered on sites.
- 16.10 An increase in the number of satisfied visitors to sites.
- 16.11 Number of people involved in community monitoring and surveying

17. Natural Connections Recommendations

- 17.1 Create a walking and cycle route around Cirencester in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council and community groups. The route could start at the Amphitheatre, using the Watermoor underpass, follow the River Churn from City Bank to the Open Air Pool, and end at the Leisure Centre.
- 17.2 Work with local education providers (public and private) to develop more and better ways for local people to access nature in Cirencester.
- 17.3 Identify new links and improve existing links to enable better access for all within Cirencester’s green spaces, between them, and linking to the wider countryside and the Cotswold Waterpark.
- 17.4 Work with local primary and secondary schools to develop a “natural laboratory” and learning package to deliver the curriculum, working with local community organisations and key stakeholders.

Figure 6: Natural Connections Map



18. Natural Health Service

- 18.1 Having access to nature for walks, play and the opportunities for health and well-being that they provide are part of what makes life in Cirencester so enjoyable.
- 18.2 The residents of Cirencester have a number of good local surgeries and more importantly, a local hospital that offers accident and emergency and a range of out-patient facilities. The hospital grounds themselves which comprise an orchard, woodland and access to the amphitheatre, offer opportunities for walking, play and even volunteer events to help in land management. The hospital recently received Big Lottery funding for their Green Gym which is a programme that seeks to get hospital staff, volunteers and patients involved in restoring and using the apple orchard in the grounds.
- 18.3 Other sites around Cirencester offer opportunities for physical exercise and provide routes through and around town so that people have ample opportunity to keep fit close to home and at no cost. This Strategy seeks to make the most of these existing opportunities to get even more people involved.
- 18.4 Figure 7 shows Cirencester's Natural Health Service in map form.

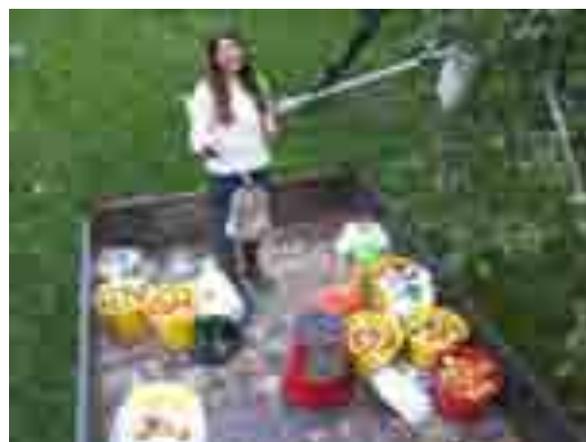
19. Natural Health Service Success Indicators

- 19.1 Diversity of user groups.
- 19.2 Lower obesity levels.
- 19.3 Number of GP patients being prescribed exercise.
- 19.4 Number of walking routes displayed on the Town Council website.
- 19.5 Number of hits on website for walking routes.
- 19.6 Numbers of care homes providing walking into green spaces.
- 19.7 Number of hospital staff that get fresh air during the day.
- 19.8 Number of children walking to school.
- 19.9 Number of organised activities arranged on Cirencester green spaces such as green gyms, buggy fit, outdoor yoga, etc.

20. Natural Health Service Recommendations

- 20.1 Undertake an accessibility audit of all Cirencester's green spaces with disability representative groups.
- 20.2 Work with healthcare providers, educators and the general public to encourage more people to adopt a healthy lifestyle using Cirencester's green spaces.

- 20.3 Work with Cotswold District Council, strategic healthcare providers (including GPs) to expand the Walking for Health initiative.
- 20.4 Develop a pilot project linking a retirement home to neighbouring green spaces to benefit residents' health.
- 20.5 Develop a pilot project linking GPs' surgeries to local green space and 'walking on prescription'.



Cirencester's Fruit Group Apple Days 2011

21. Natural Resilience

- 21.1 Cirencester has been subjected to recent flooding events. Most notable of these occurred in December 2000, when due to the exceptional winter rainfall, basements in Gloucester Road and Dollar Street were flooded, and Powells School was closed due to flooded grounds and non-functioning toilets. The Environment Agency reported 27 properties flooded by this event, believed to represent a 1 in 33 year event (or more properly a 3.33% annual probability).
- 21.2 Records show that the River Churn caused flooding in 1929 and in 1947, and that the River was near full capacity and close to breaking its banks in 2003 and July 2007. The latter event caused problems in Mill Place and Beeches Road as well as flooding properties downstream in South Cerney.
- 21.3 Surprisingly, during the July 2007 flooding event, the more significant problems related to the failure of surface water drainage systems rather than the Churn breaching its banks.
- 21.4 Much of Cirencester's Watermoor ward lies in the floodplain and it is now rightly difficult to obtain planning permission for new dwellings or other such developments. This will ensure that a number of sites that were previously earmarked for housing are now available as part of Cirencester's green infrastructure. These sites in the floodplain can serve the dual purposes of providing recreation and offering opportunities for resilience to flood, drought and extreme weather incidents.
- 21.5 The Environment Agency has identified a number of strategic measures for the Churn which will need to become part of any future management of the river in, and feeding into, the town. Some local measures to provide slight enhancements to levels of flood protection in the town have already been implemented by the Environment Agency during 2010. However, climate change will lead to future increases in flow in the Churn, leading to more extreme river flooding events.
- 21.6 There will also be opportunities for using or creating natural features along the River Churn such as wetlands and bank treatments that can add to Cirencester's natural resilience. Some measures, such as the development of pools and riffles can help the survival of aquatic species during drought events.
- 21.7 There are other opportunities afforded by our more mundane green spaces as well. It might be possible to better manage highways and road verges to offer greater biodiversity but also as SUDS (sustainable drainage systems) that will help us avoid the problems we saw in July 2007.
- 21.8 Rainfall falling on paved surfaces and roofs in Cirencester town are immediately converted into storm runoff. Usually, this runoff is safely conveyed through underground sewer pipes to the River Churn. However, in heavy rainfall the capacity of this underground system is easily exceeded which can cause surface water flooding in low points or where bottlenecks occur. This is disruptive and can damage properties. Sometimes, it can be mixed with foul sewage which then presents a health risk.

- 21.9 Two trends are increasing the likelihood of surface water flooding occurring in Cirencester. First, climate change is predicted to result in wetter winters and a smaller number of heavier rainfall events in summer. Second, uncontrolled permitted development (urban creep) on properties is increasing the paved or roofed area generating storm runoff.
- 21.10 There are currently a number of measures in place to reduce the risk of flooding resulting from increased development. A flood risk assessment (FRA) is required if a site for new development is larger than 1ha (or in smaller than 1ha in a critical drainage area) by Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk. The FRA focuses on the management of surface water run-off and ensures run-off from the site does not increase and surface water can be safely stored (attenuated) on site.
- 21.11 New development in the town will shortly be subject to the measures provided in the 2010 Flood & Water Management Act. The Act will give Lead Local Flood Authorities responsibility for the management of local flood risk, which includes surface runoff, groundwater and flooding from ordinary watercourses (smaller rivers and streams). This will put in place controls that ensure that flows are infiltrated (lost) or attenuated (stored) within developments such that the runoff from the site as a whole mimics that of the undeveloped landscape. This will result in more sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that often entail swales and ponds in multi-use green space.
- 21.12 Notwithstanding the above improvements, runoff in the existing urban environment will still present a problem and if Cirencester is to be made a more resilient and 'climate change proof' town the existing drainage infrastructure will require adaptation. One progressive strategy is to implement a programme of 'retrofit SuDS' whereby urban runoff is routed to, or intercepted by, green space features prior to discharge to either sewers or direct to the River Churn. Retrofit SuDS programmes are commonplace in Germany, Scandinavia and North America.
- 21.13 Our vision for good drainage in Cirencester is to promote a programme of retrofit SuDS which takes advantage of existing green spaces in the town (especially parks, recreation areas and grass verges) to 'slow down' storm runoff prior to discharge to sewers and the river. In addition, measures such as green roofs and water butts can also be applied to control runoff from individual properties.
- 21.14 Increased green spaces in the town might also contribute to urban cooling during hot summers by providing greater natural shade and reduced reflective surfaces that can sustain high temperatures in hot summers.
- 21.15 It should be noted that this strategy is a land management strategy. It highlights the importance of flood mitigation actions and recommends continuing to develop a flood risk strategy. It is not however a flood risk strategy in itself.

22. Natural Resilience Success Indicators

- 22.1 The continuing development of flood risk strategy for the River Churn and implementation of appropriate measures.
- 22.2 Introduction of drought resilience measures and implementation of measures within the Churn.

- 22.3 Number of verges converted to SuDS and integration of retrofit SuDS into larger green spaces.
- 22.4 Number of hectares of green infrastructure that integrates SuDs in new developments.
- 22.5 Number of green space management plans that seek to alleviate the impacts of extreme weather.
- 22.6 A reduction in co2 levels year on year in Cirencester's green spaces.

23. Natural Resilience Recommendations

- 23.1 Liaise with the Environment Agency in the development and implementation of both flood risk and drought resilience measures in the River Churn to create a flood mitigation strategy for the town.
- 23.2 Create a management plan for all Cirencester's mown and managed highways strips to assist in better drainage (SuDS) and improved biodiversity.
- 23.3 Work in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Department to assess the archaeological impact of SuDs projects.
- 23.4 Continue to work with the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council to complete Community Emergency Plans (CEPs) for all of Cirencester's wards using the GRCC's Toolkit. Use the Cotswold District Council's Riparian Ownership Toolkit as appropriate for waterways.
- 23.5 Map/collate data on failure of surface water drainage and develop further recommendations on resilience.
- 23.6 Look for opportunities to remove culverts to improve flood risk and river habitat.
- 23.7 Explore opportunities to retrofit SuDs.
- 23.8 Explore flood mitigation options for the town including the Stratton Meadows site.

24. Strategic Sites

- 24.1 The Group considered each of the long listed sites against the each of the 5 criterion, looking first at their existing condition and then considering how they might be improved. Numeric values were assigned to each site and those sites with the greatest scope for improvement were identified as priority sites. This analysis is set out in detail in Appendix 4 of the Annex.
- 24.2 Some sites did not demonstrate great potential for improvement but were nonetheless very important to local people as evidenced in our consultations. The strategic sites are either major open spaces where people felt that something major needed to be done, or complexes of smaller sites that together presented a tremendous opportunity for improvement.
- 24.3 The Group considered both public and privately owned land in this strategy. However, the strategic sites identified are all predominantly in public ownership as the Town Council have control over their future direction and development.
- 24.4 The Working Group took all these factors into consideration and drew up the short list of sites where specific recommendations were developed (see figure 8).

Figure 8: The Short List of Sites

AMPHITHEATRE COMPLEX

Amphitheatre and Burial mound
4 Acre Fields
Cirencester Hospital and Ambulance sites

CITY BANK COMPLEX

Nursery Site
Opportunity Group land
City Bank Depot
Recreation Ground

ABBEY GROUNDS PARK

KINGSHILL COUNTRY PARK

RIVER CHURN COMPLEX

MARKET PLACE

CATALPA SQUARE

- 24.4 Consultation on this strategy has shown that the City Bank Complex and Amphitheatre are seen as priority areas along with the River Churn Complex. These areas will form the core of the strategic sites.

- 24.5 The Market Place and Catalpa Square are urban spaces in character and are best dealt with through urban design principles rather than green infrastructure principles. The Town Council already has plans in place for dealing with Cirencester's urban environment, particularly for the Market Place improvements. This study will therefore not make recommendations on the Market Place or Catalpa Square.
- 24.6 The Kingshill Country Park is a major project that is being undertaken as planning gain from the Kingshill North and Kingshill South developments. This project will therefore not be considered further in this report.
- 24.7 The Working Group evaluated the main remaining sites (the Amphitheatre, City Bank, Abbey Grounds and the River Churn) against the principles. This is set out in Appendix 5 of the Annex.
- 24.7 Cirencester has been invited to bid for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding by Natural England. Though the coalition government's budgetary cuts have impacted upon these funds, it is still likely that Cirencester will succeed in obtaining some level of support. Around ten landowners are involved in this project from the government and private sectors. If successful, HLS funding will support many of the recommendations for Strategic Sites.

25. Recommendations for Strategic Sites

- 25.1 The main recommendations for strategic sites are set out below. More detailed recommendations can be found in Appendix 6 of the Annex.
- 25.2 Amphitheatre
- Create a better visitor experience by providing improved interpretation and facilities.
 - Encourage better use of existing green spaces and the linkages they provide.
 - Better manage all land and improve biodiversity where possible.
 - Market the amphitheatre as a reason to come to Cirencester.
- 25.3 City Bank
- Create a better visitor experience by providing improved interpretation and facilities.
 - Encourage better use of existing green spaces and the linkages they provide.
 - Better manage all land and improve biodiversity where possible.
 - Work with education providers to create opportunities for learning about the environment.
- 25.4 Abbey Grounds
- Produce a Management Plan for the Abbey Grounds that balances the need to protect the underlying archaeological deposits that are a Scheduled Ancient Monument with the need to preserve and enhance the amenity value of the area.
- 25.5 River Churn
- Use better management of the river to increase biodiversity generally and improve habitats for target species.

- Create a better visitor experience by providing improved interpretation and facilities.
- Create better cycling and walking routes alongside the Churn.
- Work with education providers to create opportunities for learning about the environment.

26. Recommendations for other Sites

26.1 The Working Group devised a number of other recommendations for strategic and other sites. All site specific recommendations are set out in Appendix 6 of the Annex.

27. General Recommendations

27.1 Regularly monitor the success indicators to judge direction and speed of travel.

27.2 Seek to develop better management techniques and strategies based on CABE's 'Managing green spaces seven ingredients for success'.

27.3 Seek funding in support of these recommendations by working with partners and applying to major grant funds.

27.4 Create and implement a Stakeholder Management Plan.

27.5 Ensure all larger sites have an up-to-date Management Plan in place.

27.6 The Green Spaces Strategy Working Group will be consulted on the responses to the formal consultation ahead of the Strategy being considered by the Town Council for formal adoption. The Group will then be dissolved.

27.7 The Cirencester Development Partnership, in consultation with its partners will consider the establishment of new Working Groups to deal with specific projects set out in the Strategy, particularly for:

- Site specific issues;
- Land owners involved in the Higher Level Stewardship Bid;
- Monitoring;
- Funding.

27.8 Consultation with all sections of the local community will be undertaken in regards to all future projects and developments. Where ever possible the local community will be included from the outset in the planning process. Consultation with children and young people will be of particular importance.

27.9 Strive to deliver 'best practice' standards on all green spaces, consider guidance such as English Heritage's 'Streets for All' and CABE publications when designing or improving spaces.

27.10 Cirencester Development Partnership's Management Group to discuss and implement the future delivery framework and governance arrangements.