

Folkestone and Hythe Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

First Draft February 2022

v1.0

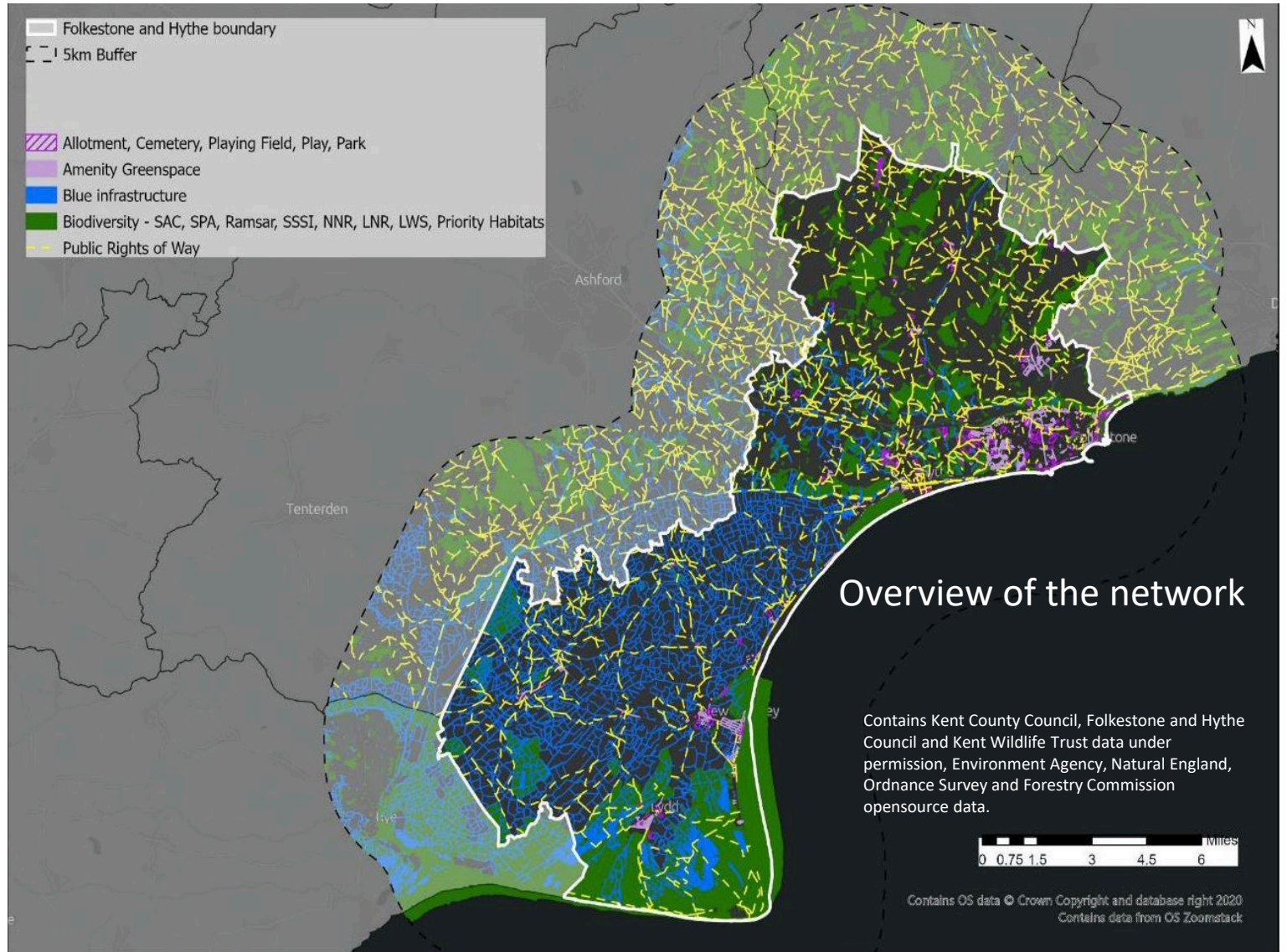
About the Strategy

Folkestone and Hythe's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy is an analysis of the strategic network of green and blue infrastructure across the district.

Green and blue infrastructure planning takes a multidisciplinary approach to seek opportunities which address issues across many areas.

A comprehensive study of GBI across the district included:

- All relevant national and local planning policy
- Impacts of climate change
- Consultation with many stakeholders
- Reports, studies and initiatives relevant to the district's strategic green and blue infrastructure now and in the future
- GIS mapping to analyse and visually 'layer' data in detail across the district



Why is a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Needed?

- Positive planning for green infrastructure is required by the National Planning Policy Framework. This underpins the Core Strategy and PPLP.
- Environment Bill 2021 brings in a range of measures to improve the natural environment including:
 - Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategies
 - Strengthened Biodiversity Duty on local authorities
- It supports delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan which includes priorities for green infrastructure including Green Infrastructure Standards, which local authorities will need to apply.
- It provides a robust, well-evidenced and comprehensive strategy to underpin future FHDC policy including climate change.



Analysis of Evidence...

Five detailed evidence areas were described and assessed:

- Biodiversity, trees and woodlands
- Access, recreation and active travel
- Health and wellbeing
- Blue infrastructure and the coast
- Landscape character and heritage

The areas of the district are also described in more detail

- Folkestone and Hythe towns;
- Romney Marsh; and
- The North Downs

It provides an assessment of the needs and opportunities, strategic priorities and future actions.



The District's valuable habitats

- 5 of UK's 7 rarest bumblebee species present in Kent, making it the most important county in the UK for bumblebee species diversity – in Folkestone and Hythe the shorthaired bumble bee
- Turtle dove - the UK's fastest declining bird species.
- At Dungeness 94% of the county's vegetated shingle habitat is found in Folkestone and Hythe district
- Folkestone and Hythe district has 20.3% of Kent's lowland calcareous grassland
- Late spider-orchid on the chalk downland is unique to Kent



The district provides an outstanding landscape to live and work

- A unique and diverse coastline
- Glorious grasslands
- Valuable woodlands and trees
- Exceptional recreational facilities
- Important rivers and streams
- Outstanding heritage assets
- Green and blue infrastructure is important in supporting a landscape-scale or 'nature network' approach, through securing biodiversity value in a planned way. Green infrastructure also helps to bring nature into urban centres, which also connects people with wildlife.



Photo credits top left Sustrans National Cycle Route Way Post at Hythe credit Nigel Small (Unsplash); top right Folkestone Warren, credit Diamond Geezer under Creative Commons; bottom right Sugar Loaf Hill, Folkestone, credit Residents_parking under Creative Commons; bottom left Dungeness credit Kai Bossom (Unsplash)

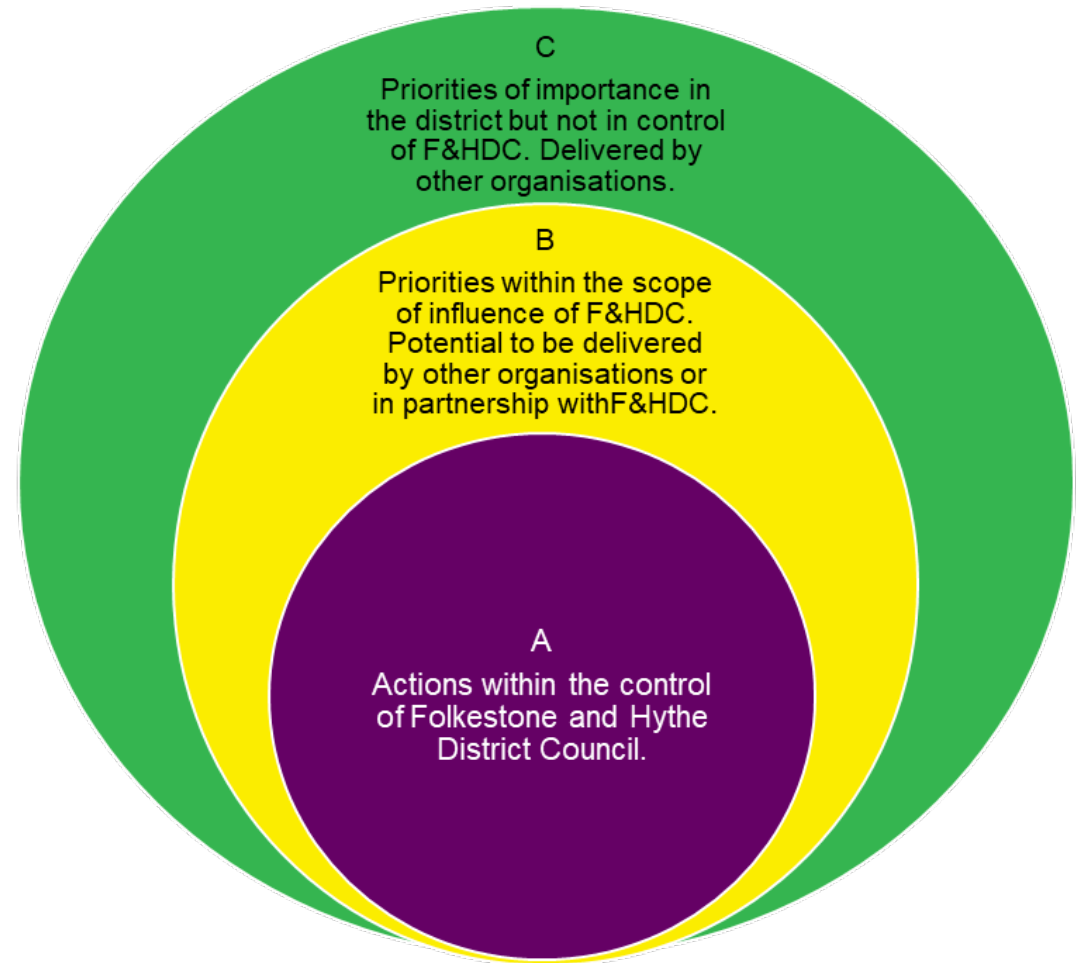
Draft Action Plan

A summary of the **needs, opportunities and priorities** for the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy has been drawn together in an Action Plan from the five evidence areas and the three spatial areas.

The Action Plan should be seen as an initial long list. Not all of which are within the direct control of the council, or which can be delivered by the council alone.

The graphic on the right explains the colour coding in the chart for delivery.

Initially priorities for delivery have been coded A B or C, although these may change after further consultation





Next Steps

- That the Council should carry out a four week targeted consultation of expert and other environmental groups on the Green Infrastructure Strategy and proposed action plan.
- That the Council then carry out a period of wider public consultation on the Green Infrastructure Strategy proposed action plan for four weeks.
- The Strategy and results of consultation be presented to members at Cabinet.