

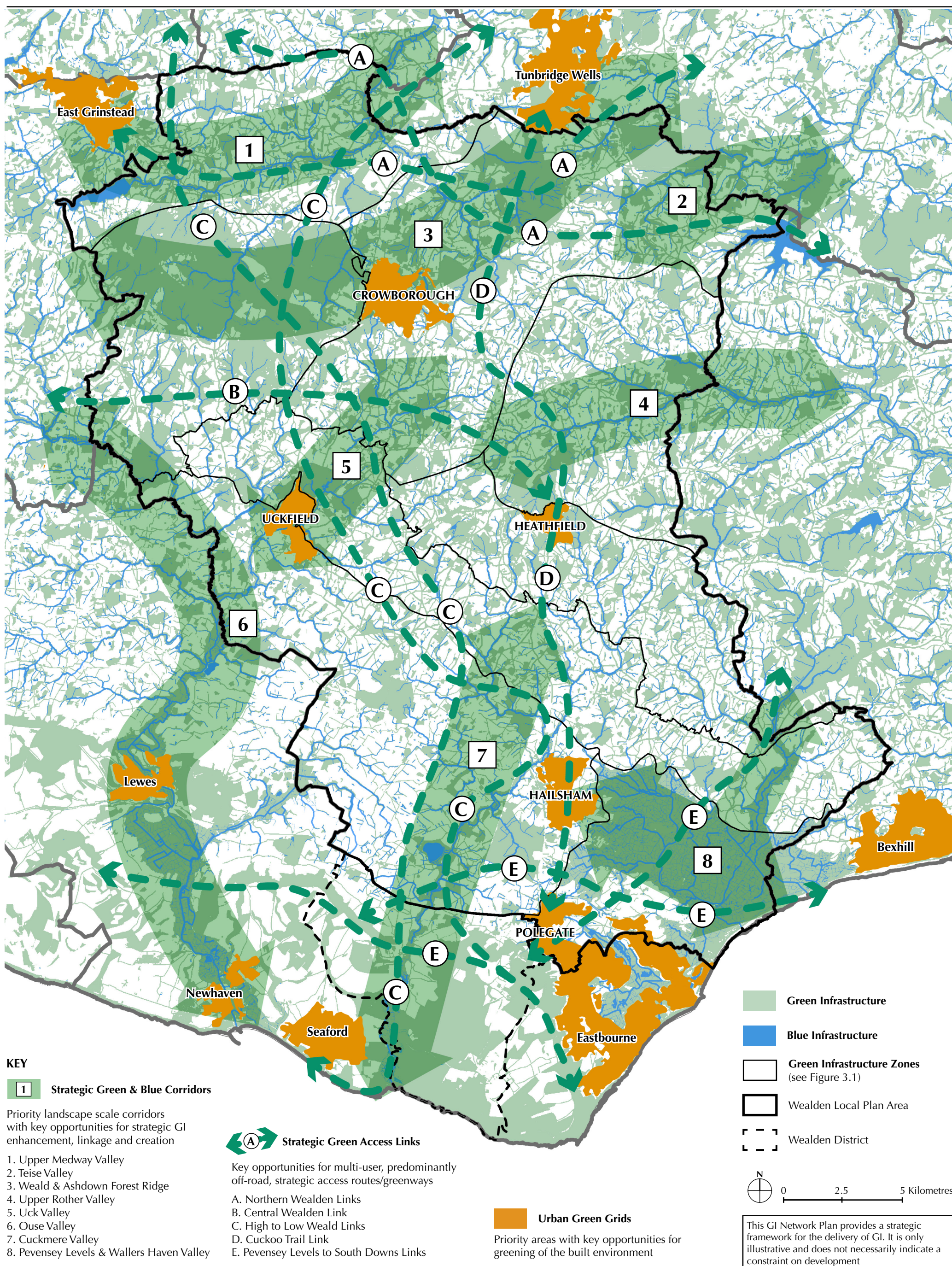
5.0 PROPOSED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 Based on the analysis of existing GI assets, needs and opportunities set out in **Sections 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0**, this section sets out a proposed GI network for Wealden at the district/sub-district and town scales. The proposed GI Network provides a framework for the delivery of GI to support the planning of sustainable development.

5.2 District Green Infrastructure Network

- 5.2.1 In line with the NPPF, investment in a connected and multi-functional GI network is considered to be necessary in order to support sustainable development within the study area. The proposed GI network for Wealden District (excluding the South Downs National Park) is illustrated on **Figure 5.1**.
- 5.2.2 The spatial representation of the overall GI Network is illustrated through corridors and linkages, which together provide a 'bigger picture' and strategic framework for the delivery of GI in Wealden. It is intended to help focus attention or priority on land that needs to be safeguarded, managed or secured in positive ways to create a multi-functional network of greenspaces, links and environmental assets for which investment can deliver the greatest range of benefits. It is not a rigid approach. The GI Network is intended to be flexible and responsive to opportunities and constraints - such as land ownership, community aspirations, access to funding, land drainage requirements, development opportunities, nature conservation policy considerations, etc.
- 5.2.3 The GI concept applies across the whole of Wealden District, and it can operate at any scale. However, the proposed Green Infrastructure Network identifies locations where targeting investment in GI is most likely to deliver multiple benefits across a range of national and local environmental, social and economic policies. Broadly defined strategic corridors are identified, within which investment in enhanced GI provision can be prioritised and delivered over the next 10 years or so. These corridors reflect the identified needs and opportunities for enhancing the connectivity of habitats and greenspaces for biodiversity and public benefit. They provide the context for the delivery of GI initiatives and projects that would provide, in many cases, multiple functions and benefits to meet a range of needs. GI interventions within and adjacent to these corridors would focus on the enhancement of existing GI assets, as well as the creation and restoration of new assets where there is an identified need.



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- 5.2.4 It is important to ensure that the integrity of the overall GI Network is not compromised by inappropriate development and/or land management. This means that there needs to be flexibility in how the GI Network is protected and managed. In cases where there is an unavoidable harm to existing GI assets in order to meet social and economic needs, this should be offset by mitigation and compensation measures to enhance the functionality of other environmental assets elsewhere within the GI Network. However, some habitats, such as ancient woodlands, are irreplaceable and need protection. Where development is planned within or in close proximity to a GI assets, it should become an integral feature to the design and 'identity' of the development site to ensure that the connectivity of the network for both public benefit and biodiversity is retained and enhanced.
- 5.2.5 The proposed GI Network encapsulates a range of GI assets within varied landscape settings. With investment and appropriate management over time, the GI Network will offer more diverse uses, experiences and functions to deliver increased economic, environmental and social benefits within Wealden District (see **Box 5.1**).

Box 5.1 – The Key Benefits of GI for Wealden District

- Contributing to health improvements and well-being through schools, hospitals and health centres promoting opportunities to access greenspaces for exercise.
- Linking housing, schools and bus/train stations to the access network and connecting with accessible greenspaces in the wider countryside.
- Providing an improved image, experience and sense of place through investment in an improved environmental quality for the public realm.
- Opportunities to provide environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities.
- Helping address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks.
- Recognising the key role of the agricultural sector in local food production, processing of local produce and provision of farm shops.
- Increasing awareness of, and celebrating, historic environment assets and how they contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- Ensuring that future development around settlements are well integrated into their landscape settings, and address issues such as indistinct boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented urban fringe landscapes, etc.
- Providing opportunities for local community involvement through volunteering and gaining new skills through GI project delivery, particularly within deprived communities.
- Strengthening management of wildlife habitats for sites experiencing recreational pressures.

- 5.2.6 The proposed GI network for Wealden District illustrated on **Figure 5.1** encompasses a range of GI types, functions, locations, sizes and levels of accessibility and use, and operates at every spatial scale and in all geographic areas within the area, both rural and urban. However, the

proposed GI Network identifies locations where targeting investment in GI is most likely to deliver multiple benefits. The main areas for investment are highlighted in **Box 5.2**.

Box 5.2 – Priorities for GI Investment

- To focus investment on GI provision and management to address current deficits of provision and meet needs identified by this Study.
- To meet the GI needs of communities in Wealden District who are likely to experience growth-related pressures.
- To protect and conserve existing valuable GI assets that are under pressure from land use changes, inappropriate management and/or climate change, in particular core biodiversity areas/sites; river valleys; watercourses and wetlands; woodlands, trees and hedgerows; heritage assets; and accessible natural greenspaces.

5.2.7 In response to the above, the proposed GI Network defines specific areas within which it is recommended that investment in enhanced GI provision is prioritised. The main areas for investment and action were identified through an interpretation of the interplay between broad patterns and opportunities arising from the analysis of the existing GI assets, particularly in relation to developing access networks for health and well-being objectives and also green corridors for wildlife. These provide the framework for development of strategic GI initiatives and projects that can provide multiple functions and benefits.

5.2.8 The principal components of the proposed GI Network for Wealden District are outlined below. These should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI at the District Scale (**Section 2.0**), Sub-District Scale (**Section 3.0**) and Town Scale (**Section 4.0**).

Strategic Green and Blue Corridors

5.2.9 A network of Strategic Green and Blue Corridors, priority areas with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation, provide the backbone of the GI Network for Wealden District (see **Box 5.3**). They are broadly defined, landscape-scale corridors comprising a mosaic of land uses, natural features and habitats, built heritage, archaeological resources and settlements, and are intended to be fully multi-functional zones with the potential to deliver a wide range of economic, environmental and social benefits. The Strategic Green and Blue Corridors include core areas of designated natural and semi-natural wildlife habitats, opportunities for restoring and re-creating habitats outside of core areas, and provide corridors or stepping stones for the dispersal of wildlife between habitats. These Corridors provide key strategic linkages with GI networks in adjoining areas as defined by the following GI studies:

- East Sussex Green Infrastructure Study¹⁷²
- South Downs National Park Green Infrastructure Framework¹⁷³
- Rother Green Infrastructure Background Paper¹⁷⁴
- Sevenoaks Green Infrastructure Topic Paper¹⁷⁵
- Tunbridge Wells Green Infrastructure Plan¹⁷⁶

5.2.10 The Strategic Green and Blue Corridors within the study area are described in **Box 5.3**:

Box 5.3 - Strategic Green and Blue Corridors

- **1: Upper Medway Valley** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB includes the River Medway valley floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Tunbridge Wells Borough and Mid Sussex District. It comprises key GI assets such as Ancient Woodland, Weir Wood Reservoir and other freshwater and grassland habitats. Opportunities include habitat creation and linkages, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Forest Row, Hartfield and Withyham.
- **2: Teise Valley** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB includes the River Teise valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Tunbridge Wells Borough. It comprises key GI assets such as a large Site of Special Scientific Interest, numerous Local Wildlife Sites and grassland habitat, large areas of Ancient Woodlands, part of Bewl Water and two Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements (including grassland restoration), historic environment enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Frant and Rotherfield.
- **3: Weald & Ashdown Forest Ridge** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB comprises an extensive mosaic of wooded heathland along a major ridge, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Mid Sussex District and Tunbridge Wells Borough. It comprises key GI assets such as the Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation/Site of Special Scientific Interest, numerous Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodlands and Scheduled Monuments, and a Registered Historic Park and Garden. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and management of the extensive areas of statutory open access land within and around Ashdown Forest that provides accessible natural greenspace for the parishes of Forest Row, Danehill, Hartfield, Maresfield and Withyham; and also opportunities for the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Rotherfield and Frant.
- **4: Upper Rother Valley** – this corridor within the High Weald AONB includes the River Rother valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Rother District. It comprises key GI assets such as numerous Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodlands and grassland habitat. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Mayfield & Five Ashes and Hadlow Down.

¹⁷² East Sussex Green Infrastructure Study, East Sussex County Council (2014)

¹⁷³ South Downs National Park Draft Green Infrastructure Framework, SDNPA (2016)

¹⁷⁴ Rother Green Infrastructure Background Paper, Rother District Council (2011)

¹⁷⁵ Sevenoaks Green Infrastructure Topic Paper, Sevenoaks District Council (2013)

¹⁷⁶ Tunbridge Wells Green Infrastructure Plan: SPD Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (2013)

- **5: Uck Valley** – this corridor includes the River Uck valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Lewes District, and strategically links the High Weald AONB to the Ouse Green Corridor (6) within the Western Low Weald, providing a connection between Uckfield and Lewes. It comprises key GI assets such as two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, numerous Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodlands and grassland habitat, and the two Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, historic environment enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Buxted, Uckfield, Isfield and Little Horsted.
- **6: Ouse Valley** – this corridor includes the valley and floodplain of the River Ouse, which runs along the boundary between Wealden District and Lewes District connecting with the coast at Newhaven via Lewes. The Ouse corridor strategically links to the Usk Green Corridor (5), providing a connection with Uckfield and the High Weald AONB. Within Wealden District, it comprises key GI assets such as Ancient Woodland and freshwater/wetland habitats. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Isfield, Little Horsted and Fletching.
- **7: Cuckmere Valley** – this corridor includes the River Cuckmere valley, floodplain and its tributaries, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within the South Downs National Park connecting with the coast at Cuckmere Haven. It comprises key GI assets such as two Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and numerous Ancient Woodland, freshwater and grassland habitats. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements, strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Horam, Chiddingfold, Arlington, Berwick and Long Man.
- **8: Pevensey Levels & Wallers Haven Valley** – this corridor includes extensive low-lying wetlands and floodplains, and provides a major strategic connection to GI in adjoining areas within Rother District. It comprises key GI assets such as the Pevensey Levels Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation/Ramsar/Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Pevensey Levels National Nature Reserve. Opportunities include landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements (including re-establishment of wetland habitats), strategic access route improvements and the provision of accessible natural greenspace to address identified deficiencies in the parishes of Pevensey, Westham and Hailsham.

5.2.11 The width of the Strategic Green Corridors illustrated schematically on **Figure 5.1** are indicative; they are not intended to be rigid, and should be responsive to local circumstances. For example, wherever possible it will be important for the Strategic Green Corridors to provide adequate space in order to reduce the potential negative “edge effects” on wildlife from surrounding intensive land uses by buffering and extending existing habitats.

Strategic Green Access Links

5.2.12 Within and connecting the Strategic Green Corridors, a network of largely existing Strategic Green Access Links provide multi-user, predominantly off-road, strategic access routes (or “greenways”) for pedestrians and cyclists, linking and integrating residential and business communities to key services, leisure destinations and greenspaces across the District. The Strategic Green Access Links are described in **Box 5.4**.

Box 5.4 - Strategic Green Access Links

- **A: Northern Wealden Links** – these east-west Strategic Green Access Links connect communities and facilities in the north of the District to the wider countryside and destinations within the High Weald AONB, including East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells, via the High Weald Landscape Trail and the Sussex Border Path. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **B: Central Wealden Link** – this east-west Strategic Green Access Link connects communities and facilities in the central parts of the District to the wider countryside and destinations within the High Weald AONB, including Heathfield and Ashdown Forest, via the Sussex Diamond Way. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **C: High to Low Weald Links** – these north-south Strategic Green Access Links connect communities and facilities in East Grinstead, Tunbridge Wells, Uckfield, Hailsham, Seaford and Eastbourne with the wider countryside and destinations in the High Weald AONB and the Low Weald (and the South Downs National Park), via the Wealdway and Vanguard Way. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **D: Cuckoo Trail Link** – this north-south Strategic Green Access Link connects communities and facilities in Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Heathfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne with the wider countryside and destinations in the High Weald AONB and the Low Weald. Whilst this Link follows the route of the Cuckoo Trail for much of its length, new access and connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.
- **E: Pevensey Levels to South Downs Link** – this east-west Strategic Green Access Link connects communities and facilities in Polegate within the south of the District to the wider countryside and destinations in the Pevensey Levels and the South Downs National Park, via the 1066 Country Walk, the National Cycle Network Route 2 and the South Downs Way National Trail. New access connections along some sections of the Link would need to be established and existing access upgraded where appropriate to accommodate cycle use.

5.2.13 With investment, the network of Strategic Green Access Links have the potential to link with public transport services to provide an integrated sustainable movement network for Wealden District that will help reduce reliance on car-use. While the Strategic Green Access Links have the primary function of providing access and recreational route linkages, with appropriate management they can also provide important ecological corridors for the dispersal of wildlife. The route alignments of the Strategic Green Access Links illustrated on **Figure 5.1** are indicative, and their specific configuration should respond to their intended uses and local circumstances.

Urban Green Grids

5.2.14 As illustrated on **Figure 5.1**, Urban Green Grids are priority areas within Wealden District with key opportunities for greening of the built environment. The Urban Green Grids comprise multifunctional networks of green (and blue) infrastructure links and spaces threading through

the built environment, weaving together areas where people live and work with public transport networks and the wider countryside. The Urban Green Grids provide urban communities with green areas for recreation and access to nature, a sense of place, education opportunities and help to contribute to sustainable travel by providing safe routes for walking and cycling, and also contribute to improved health and well-being through exercise and access to natural greenspaces. Street trees and greenspace help counter the 'heat island effect' of urban areas by providing shade to regulate the micro-climate, and domestic gardens and green roofs/walls provide linkages for wildlife through the built-up areas. These GI assets also help with managing surface water runoff in urban areas and hence mitigate flooding and conveyance of pollutants to watercourses. With investment and appropriate management, the urban green grids could deliver a range of benefits for the urban communities such as those highlighted in **Box 5.5**.

Box 5.5 – Urban Green Grids GI Benefits

- Reinforcing local identity and enhancing physical character by shaping existing and future development.
- Maintaining visual amenity and increasing the attractiveness of a locality to create a sense of pride.
- Raising property values and aiding urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.
- Boosting the economic potential of tourism, leisure and cultural activities.
- Providing a wide variety of cultural, social and community facilities, including seasonal activities such as fairs, festivals and concerts.
- Protecting historical, cultural and archaeological heritage.
- Contribution to health and well-being agendas – e.g. reducing stress levels by providing spaces for formal and informal recreational facilities.
- Providing popular outdoor educational facilities for schools and academic institutions.
- Improving physical and social inclusion including accessibility, particularly for young, disabled and older people.
- Offering networks for walking and cycling and safer routes to schools.
- Raising air quality and moderating extremes of temperatures.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and ecological habitats.
- Incorporating environmental infrastructure to improve water quality and flood control.

5.2.15 The Urban Green Grids are an integral element of the proposed town scale GI networks for Crowborough, Uckfield, Heathfield and Hailsham & Polegate set out in **Section 5.3** below.

The Wider Countryside

5.2.16 While the proposed GI Network for Wealden District gives particular emphasis to the spatial priorities discussed above, investment in GI provision within other areas that may also have the potential to deliver benefits should be considered where appropriate. Beyond the strategic

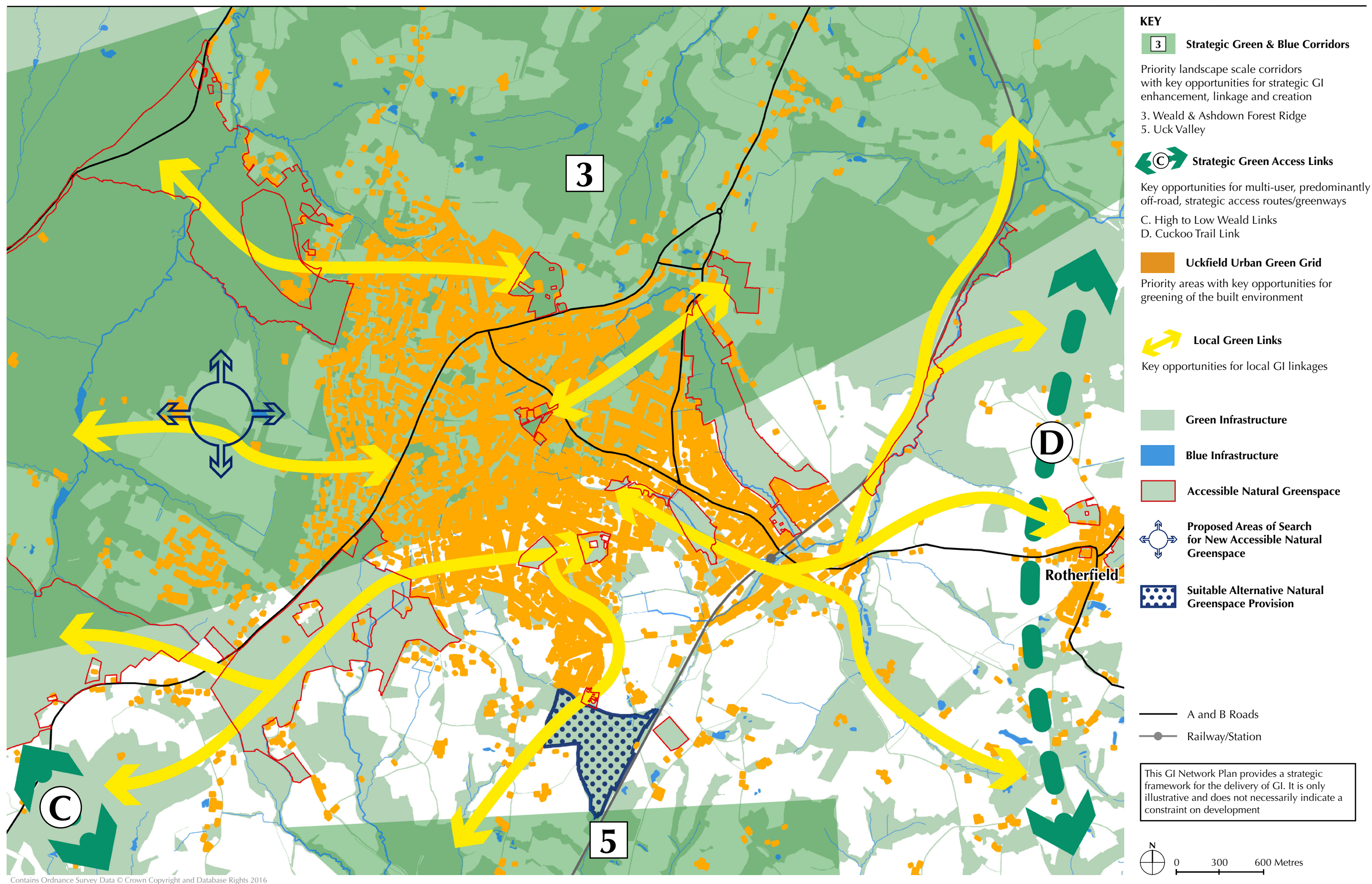
corridors, opportunities for targeted environmental and access improvements in the wider countryside should be considered to strengthen the multi-functionality of the countryside as part of the overall GI Network. These improvements would complement and support the priority areas for investment within the GI Network, by focusing environmental land management schemes on addressing the needs and opportunities identified in the relevant GI Zones set out in **Section 3.0**. For example, these aims could be achieved through:

- Conservation and enhancement of landscape character.
- Enhanced management, protection, accessibility and interpretation of the historic environment and geodiversity resources.
- Habitat enhancement, linkage and creation – including woodlands, wetlands, roadside verges and farmland BAP habitats and species.
- Enhanced connectivity of the local rights of way network to the strategic access route network (including public transport) and to accessible natural greenspaces to promote sustainable modes of travel.
- Increased opportunities for sustainable local food and renewable energy crops production.

5.3 Town Green Infrastructure Networks

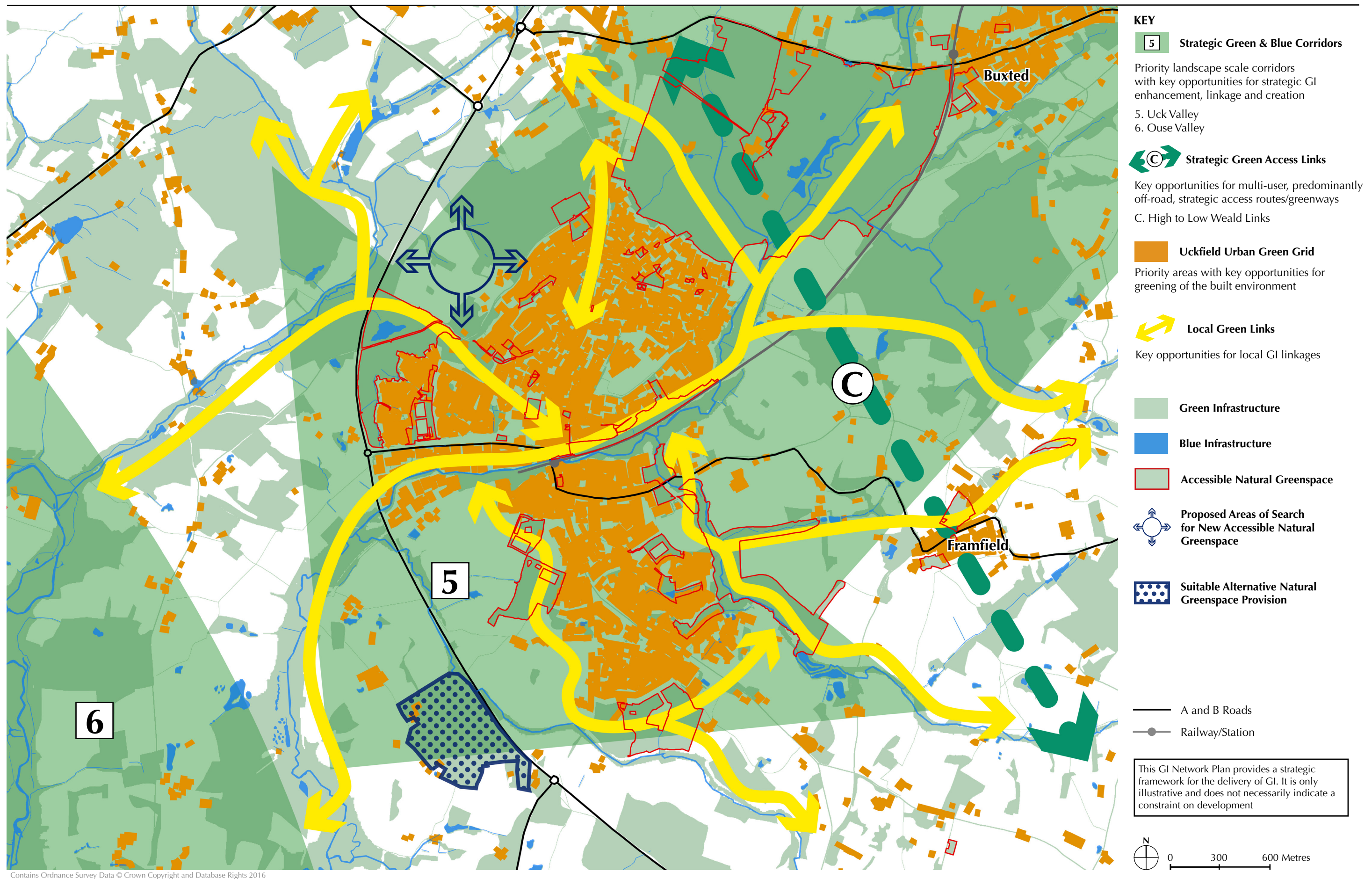
Crowborough Green Infrastructure Network

- 5.3.1 The proposed GI Network for Crowborough is illustrated on **Figure 5.2**. This should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI in and around the town set out in **Section 4.2**.
- 5.3.2 The town within the Weald & Ashdown Forest Ridge Strategic Green Corridor (3), a priority area with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation. The Uck Valley Strategic Green Corridor (5) lies to the south. The following Strategic Green Access Links in the local area connect communities and businesses within Crowborough, and in nearby Rotherfield, to local leisure opportunities/destinations (such as Ashdown Forest), greenspaces and public transport services:
- C: High to Low Weald Links
 - D: Cuckoo Trail Link
- 5.3.3 A network of Local Green Links connects the Crowborough Urban Green Grid to the Strategic Green Access Links, green infrastructure and blue infrastructure within the countryside in and around the town. This network includes local GI linkages connecting the town centre with open spaces throughout the built-up area and in the surrounding countryside, (such as the Jarvis Brook Country Park and Crowborough Common) including the Weald & Ashdown Forest Ridge Strategic Green Corridor (3) in particular. In addition to providing a network of greenspaces and access links, the Crowborough Urban Green Grid concept seeks to promote the provision of green roofs and walls to provide habitats and linkages for wildlife. A proposed area of search for new accessible natural greenspace is also shown to the west of the town on **Figure 5.2**. New accessible natural greenspace in this location is required to address existing deficiencies in the provision of neighbourhood scale accessible natural greenspace identified by the ANGSt analysis (see **Section 2.7** for details).
- 5.3.4 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity sites, landscape/townscape character and historic environment assets, in line with the needs and opportunities identified for GI Zone 3 (Central High Weald) set out in **Section 3.4**, are intended to support the GI Network for Crowborough.



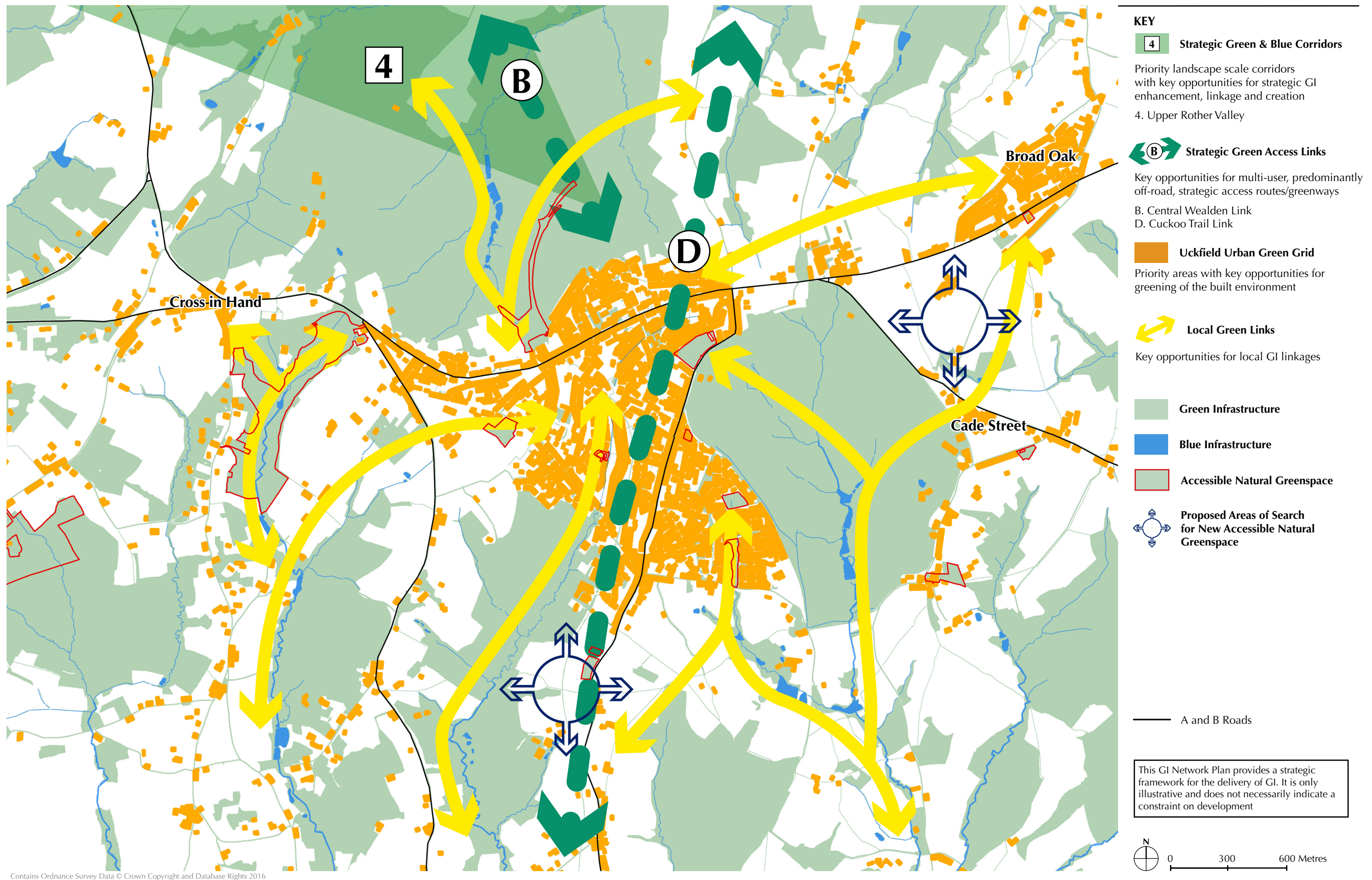
Uckfield Green Infrastructure Network

- 5.3.5 The proposed GI Network for Uckfield is illustrated on **Figure 5.3**. This should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI in and around the town set out in **Section 4.3**.
- 5.3.6 The town lies within the Uck Valley Strategic Green Corridor (5), a priority area with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation. The Ouse Valley Strategic Green Corridor (6) lies to the south-west. The High to Low Weald Strategic Green Access Links (C) connect communities and businesses within Uckfield, and in the villages around the town, such as Framfield to local leisure opportunities/destinations, greenspaces and public transport services.
- 5.3.7 A network of Local Green Links connects the Uckfield Urban Green Grid to the Strategic Green Access Links, green infrastructure and blue infrastructure (such as the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream) within the countryside in and around the town. This network includes local GI linkages connecting the town centre with open spaces throughout the built-up area and in the surrounding countryside (such as the West Park Nature Reserve and Buxted Park), including the Uck Valley Strategic Green Corridor (5) in particular. In addition to providing a network of greenspaces and access links, the Uckfield Urban Green Grid concept seeks to promote the provision of green roofs and walls to provide habitats and linkages for wildlife. A proposed area of search for new accessible natural greenspace is also shown to the north-west of the town on **Figure 5.3**. New accessible natural greenspace in this location is required to address existing deficiencies in the provision of neighbourhood scale accessible natural greenspace identified by the ANGSt analysis (see **Section 2.7** for details).
- 5.3.8 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity sites, landscape/townscape character and historic environment assets, in line with the needs and opportunities identified for GI Zone 6 (High Weald Fringes) set out in **Section 3.7** and GI Zone 7 (Low Weald) set out in **Section 3.8**, are intended to support the GI Network for Uckfield.



Heathfield Green Infrastructure Network

- 5.3.9 The proposed GI Network for Heathfield is illustrated on **Figure 5.4**. This should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI in and around the town set out in **Section 4.4**.
- 5.3.10 The town lies south of the Upper Rother Valley Strategic Green Corridor (4) a priority area with a range of opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation. The Central Wealden Strategic Green Access Link (B) and the Cuckoo Trail Strategic Green Access Link (D) connect communities and businesses within Heathfield, to local leisure opportunities/destinations, greenspaces and public transport services.
- 5.3.11 A network of Local Green Links connects the Heathfield Urban Green Grid to the Strategic Green Access Links, green infrastructure and blue infrastructure (tributaries of the River Rother and Cuckmere River) within the countryside in and around the town. This network includes local GI linkages connecting the town centre with open spaces throughout the built-up area and in the surrounding countryside (such as Heatherden Wood). In addition to providing a network of greenspaces and access links, the Heathfield Urban Green Grid concept seeks to promote the provision of green roofs and walls to provide habitats and linkages for wildlife. Proposed areas of search for new accessible natural greenspace are also shown to the south and east of the town on **Figure 5.4**. New accessible natural greenspaces in these locations is required to address existing deficiencies in the provision of accessible natural greenspace at a range of scales identified by the ANGSt analysis (see **Section 2.7** for details).
- 5.3.12 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity sites, landscape/townscape character and historic environment assets, in line with the needs and opportunities identified for GI Zone 4 (Upper Rother Valleys) set out in **Section 3.5** and GI Zone 5 (Southern High Weald Slopes) set out in **Section 3.6**, are intended to support the GI Network for Heathfield.



Hailsham & Polegate Green Infrastructure Network

- 5.3.13 The proposed GI Network for Hailsham & Polegate is illustrated on **Figure 5.5**. This should be read in conjunction with the analysis of needs and opportunities for provision of GI in and around the town set out in **Section 4.5**.
- 5.3.14 The towns lie between the Cuckmere Valley Strategic Green Corridor (7) and the Pevensey Levels & Waller's Haven Valley Strategic Green Corridor (8), priority areas with key opportunities for strategic GI enhancement, linkage and creation. The High and Low Weald Strategic Green Access Links (C), Cuckoo Trail Strategic Green Access Link (D) and the Pevensey Levels to South Downs Strategic Green Access Link (E) connect communities and businesses within Hailsham & Polegate, and in the villages around the towns (such as Hellingly and Westham), to local leisure opportunities/destinations (such as Michelham Priory), greenspaces and public transport services.
- 5.3.15 A network of Local Green Links connects the Hailsham & Polegate Urban Green Grid to the Strategic Green Access Links, green infrastructure and blue infrastructure within the countryside in and around the towns. This network includes local GI linkages connecting the town centres with open spaces throughout the built-up areas and in the surrounding countryside (such as Wilmington/Abbot's Wood and Arlington Reservoir). In addition to providing a network of greenspaces and access links, the Hailsham & Polegate Urban Green Grid concept seeks to promote the provision of green roofs and walls to provide habitats and linkages for wildlife. Proposed areas of search for new accessible natural greenspace are also shown between Hailsham and Polegate, and between Polegate and Stone Cross, on **Figure 5.5**. New accessible natural greenspaces in these locations is required to address existing deficiencies in the provision of accessible natural greenspace at a range of scales identified by the ANGSt analysis (see **Section 2.7** for details). Protection of corridors of undeveloped land/countryside as green wedges between the built-up area of Hailsham & Polegate and the surrounding villages, to safeguard the towns' character and landscape setting, provides the opportunity to locate accessible natural greenspace in these areas.
- 5.3.16 The protection and enhancement of biodiversity sites, landscape/townscape character and historic environment assets, in line with the needs and opportunities identified in for GI Zone 7 (Low Weald) set out in **Section 3.8** and GI Zone 8 (Pevensey Levels) set out in **Section 3.9**, are intended to support the GI Network for Hailsham & Polegate.

