

# Bradford Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

**City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council**

Final report  
September 2026



| Version | Status            | Prepared                                                                   | Checked | Approved                                    | Date       |
|---------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1       | Draft – Chapter 2 | R Palfrey<br>L Jewitt<br>H Shayler<br>R Myerscough                         | J Baker | S Crewe (Chapter 2 only)                    | 15.06.2026 |
| 2       | Draft             | R Palfrey<br>L Jewitt<br>H Fowler<br>S Harris<br>R Myerscough<br>C Wardale | J Baker | S Crewe (All chapters except for Chapter 2) | 13.07.2026 |
| 3       | Final draft       | H Fowler<br>C Wardale<br>J Baker<br>S Crewe                                | S Crewe | S Crewe                                     | 24.08.2026 |
| 4       | Final             | J Baker<br>R Palfrey<br>C Wardale                                          | S Crewe | S Crewe                                     | 25.09.2026 |



### Land Use Consultants Limited

Registered in England. Registered number 2549296. Registered office: 250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD. Printed on 100% recycled paper

# Contents

|                                           |               |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Chapter 1</b>                          | <b>6</b>      |
| Introduction                              |               |
| Purpose of the Strategy                   | 6             |
| What is green and blue infrastructure?    | 6             |
| Why does Bradford need this Strategy?     | 10            |
| Methodology                               | 14            |
| How to use this Strategy                  | 16            |
| Document structure                        | 19            |
| <br><b>Chapter 2</b>                      | <br><b>20</b> |
| Baseline Context                          |               |
| Policy review                             | 20            |
| Introduction to the ‘themed’ approach     | 20            |
| Theme 1: Nature rich Bradford             | 23            |
| Theme 2: Active and healthy Bradford      | 33            |
| Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous Bradford | 44            |
| Theme 4: Water management in Bradford     | 52            |
| Theme 5: Climate resilient Bradford       | 62            |
| GBI assets in Bradford District           | 70            |
| <br><b>Chapter 3</b>                      | <br><b>72</b> |
| Vision and Strategic Objectives           |               |
| Vision                                    | 72            |
| Strategic objectives                      | 72            |
| <br><b>Chapter 4</b>                      | <br><b>75</b> |
| Local Needs Assessment                    |               |
| GBI provision in Bradford District        | 75            |
| Low provision and high need               | 77            |
| High provision and high need              | 77            |
| Low provision and low need                | 78            |

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| High provision and low need | 78 |
|-----------------------------|----|

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 5</b> | <b>79</b> |
| GBI Focus Areas  |           |

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| GBI Focus Area A: Bradford Inner City                   | 81 |
| GBI Focus Area B: Bradford Connections                  | 86 |
| GBI Focus Area C: Keighley                              | 89 |
| GBI Focus Area D: Keighley – Bingley – Shipley Corridor | 93 |

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 6</b>    | <b>96</b> |
| Delivery Mechanisms |           |

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Planning mechanisms | 96  |
| Partnership working | 122 |
| Training and skills | 124 |

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| <b>Chapter 7</b> | <b>125</b> |
| Action Plans     |            |

|                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Chapter 8</b>                    | <b>127</b> |
| Monitoring and Evaluation Framework |            |

|                                      |            |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Appendix A</b>                    | <b>134</b> |
| Datasets Used to Indicate GBI Assets |            |

|                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Appendix B</b>  | <b>137</b> |
| Communication Plan |            |

|                                                  |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Appendix C</b>                                | <b>147</b> |
| Datasets Used to Indicate GBI Provision and Need |            |

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| <b>Appendix D</b> | <b>152</b> |
|-------------------|------------|

## Tabulated Action Plans

## References

**153**

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Purpose of the Strategy

**1.1** LUC was commissioned by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (CBMDC) to prepare a comprehensive Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy (herein referred to as the 'Strategy'). The Strategy forms a key part of the evidence to support the preparation and implementation of the emerging Local Plan. The delivery of high-quality GBI will underpin the proposed Local Plan objectives by supporting sustainable development, addressing health and social inequalities, conserving and enhancing built and natural heritage, improving social cohesion, facilitating active travel and building environmental and climate resilience. Once adopted, the Local Plan will guide development to 2043 and act as a key delivery mechanism for GBI across the district.

**1.2** The Strategy meets the standards required of Level One: Foundation Accreditation for Nature Towns and Cities. This includes the use of a partnership approach, involving both internal and external stakeholders, to help deliver improvements to the quality of the GBI resource in the district.

**1.3** The Strategy has assessed the existing GBI network across the district, identifying gaps and opportunities as well as evidence-based recommendations to integrate GBI into future planning policies and development. The recommendations incorporate interventions which can be delivered as part of new development through the planning process, wider partnership working or other delivery mechanisms.

### What is green and blue infrastructure?

**1.4** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines GBI as “a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and well-being benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity” **[See reference 1]**.

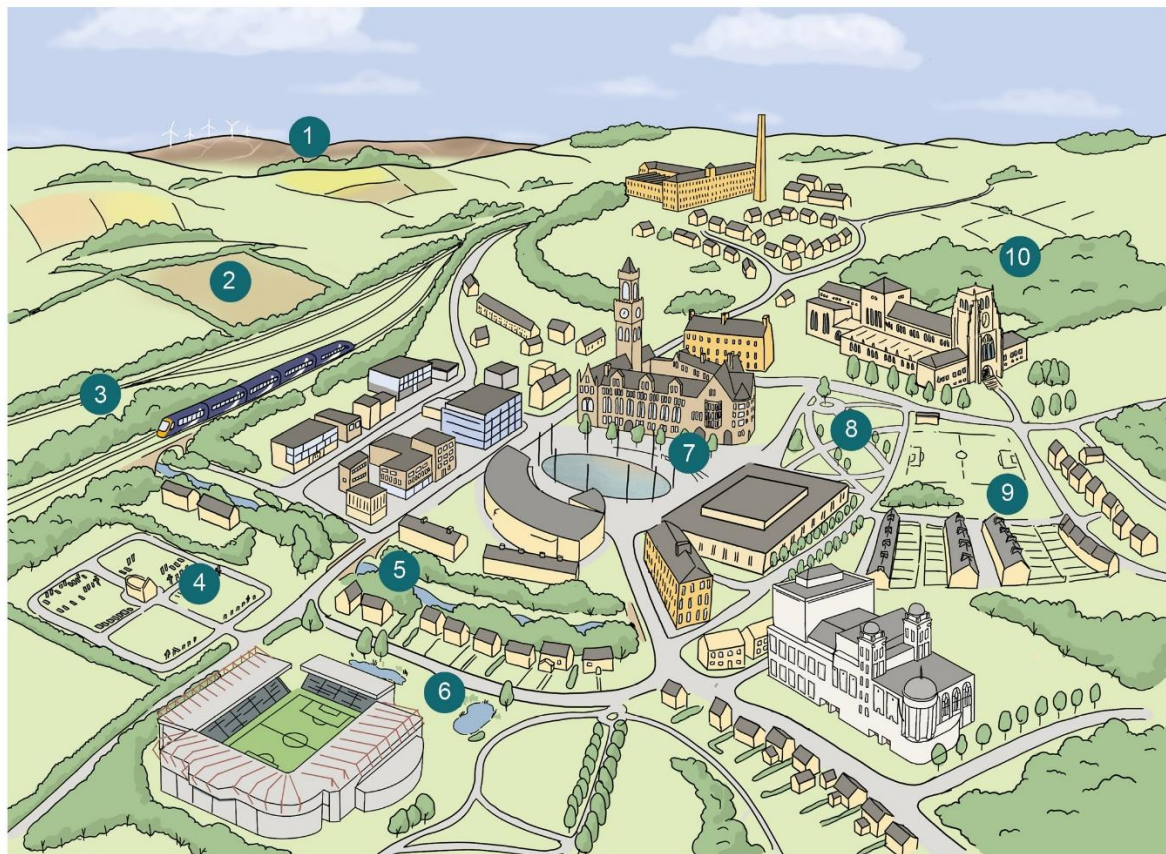
**1.5** GBI networks can include, but are not limited to:

- Managed and natural greenspaces – public parks and gardens, nature conservation sites, allotments, cemeteries and community gardens.

- Linear linkages and corridors – hedgerows, public rights of way (PRoW), walking and cycling routes and canal and river corridors.
- Elements of the built environment – roadside verges, street trees, public realm, private gardens, sustainable urban drainage systems (e.g. rain gardens) and greening features (e.g. green roofs and walls).
- Aspects of the wider landscape and countryside – farmland, wetlands/flood plains, and woodlands.
- Blue infrastructure – water elements of green infrastructure (GI); including rivers, canals, lakes, ponds and wetlands.

1.6 Elements of a GBI network, as relevant to CBMDC, are illustrated in **Figure 1.1**.

**Figure 1.1: Elements of the GBI network in Bradford District**



- |                              |                        |                      |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Moorland and heathland     | 5 Riparian corridors   | 9 Amenity greenspace |
| 2 Agricultural land          | 6 SuDS schemes         | 10 Woodland          |
| 3 Disused rail corridors     | 7 Street trees         |                      |
| 4 Cemeteries and churchyards | 8 Parkland and gardens |                      |

**1.7** GBI is defined by its multi-functionality, with a single asset having the ability to provide a number of benefits to people, place and nature. It is this variety of benefits that play an important role in the delivery of sustainable growth. A summary of the benefits of GBI are illustrated in **Figure 1.2**.

**Figure 1.2: Benefits of GBI**

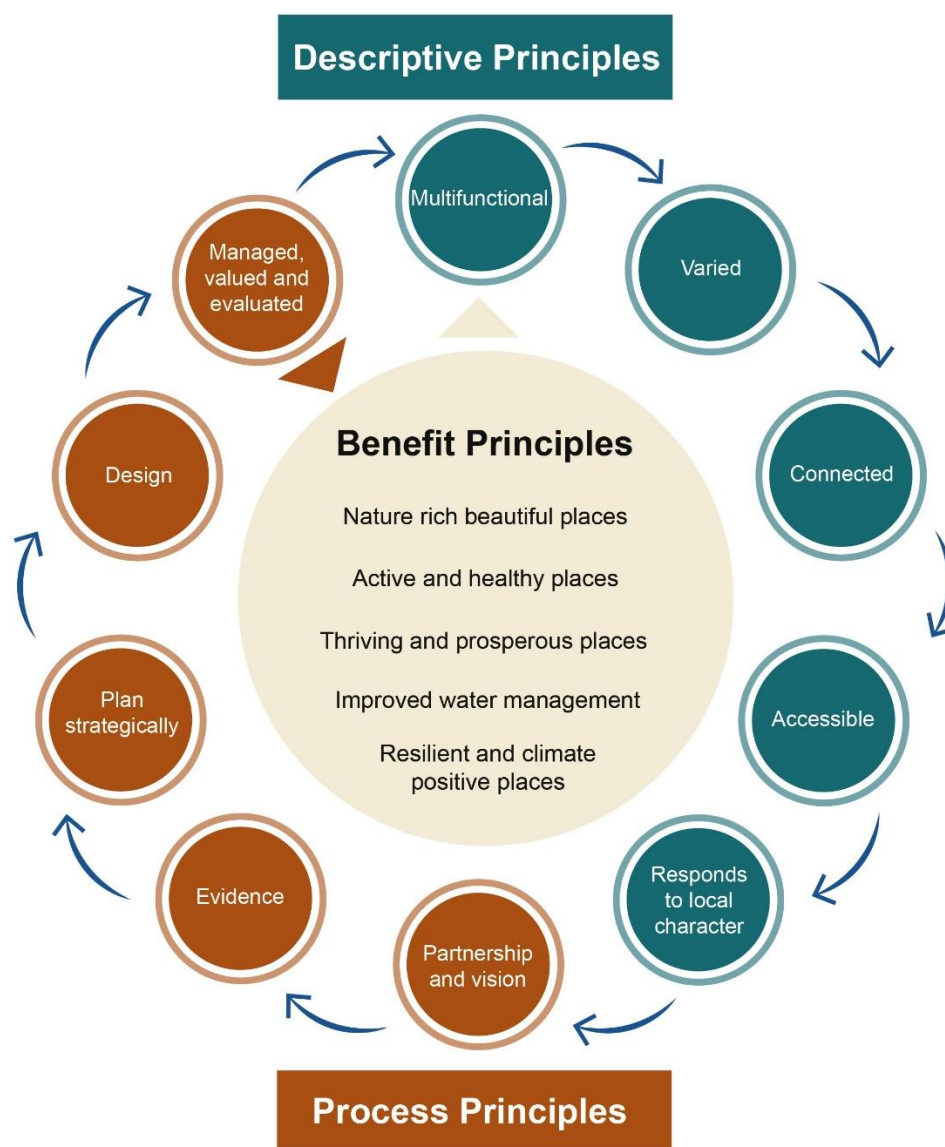


**1.8** The Natural England GI Framework [See reference 2], sets out 15 principles to promote the delivery of GBI. These are comprised of:

- Five benefits of GBI;
- Five descriptive principles; and
- Five process principles.

**1.9** The five benefit principles summarise the role GBI can play in the creation of high quality, attractive places by providing benefits to people, nature and the wider environment. This Strategy uses these five benefit principles to structure the baseline analysis of the existing GBI network in the district (see **Chapter 2**). **Figure 1.3** outlines all 15 principles in the Natural England GI Framework.

**Figure 1.3: Natural England GI Framework principles**



## Why does Bradford need this Strategy?

### Policy context

**1.10** The Bradford City Centre GI Study (2014) [\[See reference 3\]](#) was prepared to inform proposals for GBI in the Bradford City Centre Area Action Plan. The policy landscape for GBI has undergone significant change since 2014 and this new Strategy covers the whole district. Careful consideration has been given to the current policy context to ensure this Strategy is in alignment. Where relevant, key legislation, policy and strategy is referred to throughout the document.

### Nationally

**1.11** The 25-Year Environment Plan set the direction for the Environment Act 2021 [\[See reference 4\]](#), specifically the long term targets for environmental improvement; including:

- A requirement for the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) across England which identify priorities and actions for nature restoration at regional scales. The opportunities identified within this Strategy have sought to align with the opportunities of the West Yorkshire LNRS, published in March 2026.
- The implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for applicable development. This forms an important delivery mechanism for GBI.
- The introduction of the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty, calling on local authorities to both protect and conserve biodiversity. The delivery of GBI will be a key delivery mechanism for fulfilling this duty.

**1.12** In 2023, Natural England launched its GI Framework [\[See reference 5\]](#), with the aim of pushing GBI further up the planning agenda. The GI Framework provides a new mechanism to support local authorities and developers to deliver well planned, designed and maintained GI, including a 'strategy standard', which states that all local authorities in England should prepare a GI strategy. This Strategy is guided by the Natural England GI Framework Process Guide for Developing GI Strategies and Policies [\[See reference 6\]](#).

### Regionally

**1.13** The West Yorkshire LNRS includes mapped and non-mapped priorities and actions to restore nature across the sub-region [\[See reference 7\]](#). Priorities include

the built environment, farms and agriculture, grasslands, trees and woodland, uplands and water. The LNRS has five headline targets that align with the Strategy's priorities and will facilitate future evaluation of progress. These are increased canopy cover and peat formation, enhanced ecological status of rivers, improved access to greenspace, and a decreased number of species at risk in West Yorkshire. These priorities and headline targets have guided the formulation of opportunities to enhance GBI within this Strategy.

**1.14** West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) published the Leeds City Region Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy in 2018 which sets out how GBI will be created and enhanced across the region [\[See reference 8\]](#). The document aims for everyone in West Yorkshire to be within easy reach of multi-functional GBI. Actions in the report include planting more woodlands and trees, restoring the uplands, improving water quality and management, integrating GBI into new developments and enhancing green and blue corridors and networks. Actions and outcomes in the Leeds City Region GBI Strategy have guided the preparation of this Strategy.

**1.15** Other regional strategies include The West Yorkshire Plan 2040 [\[See reference 9\]](#), West Yorkshire Transport Strategy 2040 [\[See reference 10\]](#), West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan 2025-2028 [\[See reference 11\]](#), White Rose Forest Strategic Plan 2025-2050 [\[See reference 12\]](#) and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission – Climate Action Plan (Updated 2024) [\[See reference 13\]](#). These documents have policies, strategies and objectives linked to GBI provision in the district.

## Locally

**1.16** CBMDC has published several strategies and plans which refer to the creation and enhancement of GBI as a delivery mechanism to achieve their aims and objectives. These include the Bradford Council Plan 2025-2030 [\[See reference 14\]](#), Bradford Climate Action Plan 2025-2028 [\[See reference 15\]](#), Bradford Regeneration and Growth Plan [\[See reference 16\]](#), Bradford District Good Food Strategy [\[See reference 17\]](#) and Physical Activity Strategy [\[See reference 18\]](#).

## Operational context

**1.17** The district is characterised by a diverse GBI network. Approximately 19% of the district is priority habitat and approximately 21% is under some form of wildlife designation. Yet, the quality and distribution of GBI assets is highly variable. Many GBI assets are in ecologically poor condition and access to GBI assets is unevenly distributed. At the same time, Bradford District faces significant health and social

inequalities. Life expectancy varies by up to 10 years between the most affluent areas of the district and the least. Often lower life expectancy is correlated with lower access to GBI.

**1.18** CBMDC announced a climate emergency in 2019. Climate change will have significant impacts on the district; including urban heating and increased flood risk. Existing metrics also show the uneven distribution of climate impacts in the district, with more deprived areas being more vulnerable. The delivery of multi-functional GBI in the right places can help to mitigate these risks.

**1.19** Using funding provided by Nature Towns and Cities and building upon recent progress made by CBMDC; including the city centre regeneration and declaration of the Bradford Pennine Gateway National Nature Reserve (NNR), this Strategy sets a vision and suite of strategic objectives for the enhancement of GBI. This is accompanied by a delivery plan for GBI enhancements across a range of priority locations, along with a number of supporting opportunities.

## Nature Towns and Cities

**1.20** Nature Towns and Cities is a programme jointly run by the National Trust, Natural England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. The focus of the programme is to bring nature and greenspace to urban areas for everyone's benefit. In 2026, CBMDC was one of 19 local authorities awarded revenue funding (approximately £850,000) to develop partnerships, strategies and delivery plans to enhance urban greenspaces and increase the benefits they provide. The production of this Strategy is partly funded via Nature Towns and Cities.

**1.21** The programme also runs an accreditation scheme awarding towns and cities for putting nature at the heart of their plans. Having a GI strategy and meeting set criteria, is a requirement on Foundation Level Accreditation. This Strategy meets all requirements of the Foundation Level accreditation, as identified below in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Nature Towns and Cities – GI strategy requirements**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Analysis of data (e.g. GI mapping, environmental equity mapping)                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2 – Baseline context</li> <li>• Chapter 4 – Local needs assessment</li> </ul>                             |
| Objectives and targets relating to the distinct challenges and opportunities of the town or city                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3 – Vision and strategic objectives</li> <li>• Chapter 8 – Monitoring and evaluation framework</li> </ul> |
| How Natural England's GI Principles and Standards have been applied                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1 - Methodology</li> <li>• Chapter 6 – Delivery mechanisms</li> </ul>                                     |
| How the strategy has been co-designed with the partnership and communities                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1 - Methodology and throughout</li> </ul>                                                                 |
| Links to existing relevant strategies and policies                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1 - Introduction</li> <li>• Chapter 2 – Baseline context</li> </ul>                                       |
| Consideration of skills, training and development of staff and volunteers across the partnership for delivery  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6 – Delivery mechanisms</li> <li>• Chapter 7 – Action plan</li> </ul>                                     |
| Consideration of how the strategy will be funded and governed                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6 – Delivery mechanisms</li> <li>• Chapter 7 – Action plan</li> </ul>                                     |

## Methodology

**1.22** In accordance with the Natural England Process Guide for developing GI Strategies and Policies, this Strategy was prepared in several stages:

### Stage 1: Development of partnerships

- An inception meeting to finalise the scope and outputs of the project.
- Collation of national and local datasets.
- Formation of an engagement strategy to ensure consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Workshop with internal stakeholders to understand local needs and priorities.

### Stage 2: Baseline evidence and review

- Review of legislation, policy and guidance likely to impact on the future delivery of GBI within the district.
- Review of the existing Bradford City Centre GI Study (2014).
- Spatial analysis of national and local datasets using a ‘themed’ approach, based on the Benefit Principles set out in the Natural England GI Framework, to understand the pattern of GBI provision and its condition.
- Analysis of health, climate and socioeconomic factors to understand local needs.
- The formation of an aspirational, yet achievable vision and suite of supporting objectives for the Strategy.
- Workshops with internal and external stakeholders.

### Stakeholder engagement

This Strategy has been prepared through engagement with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. Three key methods were used:

- An internal workshop with Council officers to understand how GBI is currently delivered in the district, what the challenges are to its delivery and how the Strategy can respond to these issues.

- An external stakeholder workshop to test the findings of the baseline research on the GBI network and agree the vision and strategic objectives for GBI. Participants also identified potential opportunities for GBI enhancement which should be incorporated into the Strategy.
- An interactive collaborative whiteboard was used to collect comments from stakeholders unable to attend the workshop along with additional written submissions received throughout the duration of the Strategy preparation.

### Stage 3: Data analysis

- Identification of strengths and weaknesses of the existing network and emerging opportunities for enhancement.
- Bivariate analysis to highlight areas of low GBI provision and high GBI need to inform the identification of focus areas for new GBI provision and enhancement.

### Stage 4: Integration of standards

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the 'Headline' GI Standards included in the Natural England GI Framework and identification of locally bespoke standards for the Urban Greening Factor and Tree Canopy Cover standard (that are realistic and deliverable) for inclusion within the emerging Local Plan.
- A critique of emerging Local Plan policies to ensure their maximum effectiveness in securing good quality multi-functional GBI in new development.

### Stage 5: Alignment with wider strategies

- A detailed review of all relevant national, regional and local strategies to ensure consistency, alignment and integration of appropriate cross-referencing throughout the Strategy.

### Stage 6: Delivery and governance

- Preparation of a deliverable action plan, identifying GBI opportunities and key projects for implementation alongside governance and management arrangements, delivery partners, timescales, monitoring outcomes and potential funding opportunities.
- Preparation of a clear, public-facing communication plan to assist with future community engagement.

Stage 7: Reporting

- Preparation of the draft and final iterations of the Strategy.

How to use this Strategy

1.23 The Strategy can be used as a guide to the delivery and enhancement of GBI across the district. It is intended to be used by a range of audiences, including CBMDC, other delivery partners, communities, developers and planners. **Figure 1.4** to **Figure 1.7** below outline how each of these audiences should use the document.

Figure 1.4: User guide – CBMDC

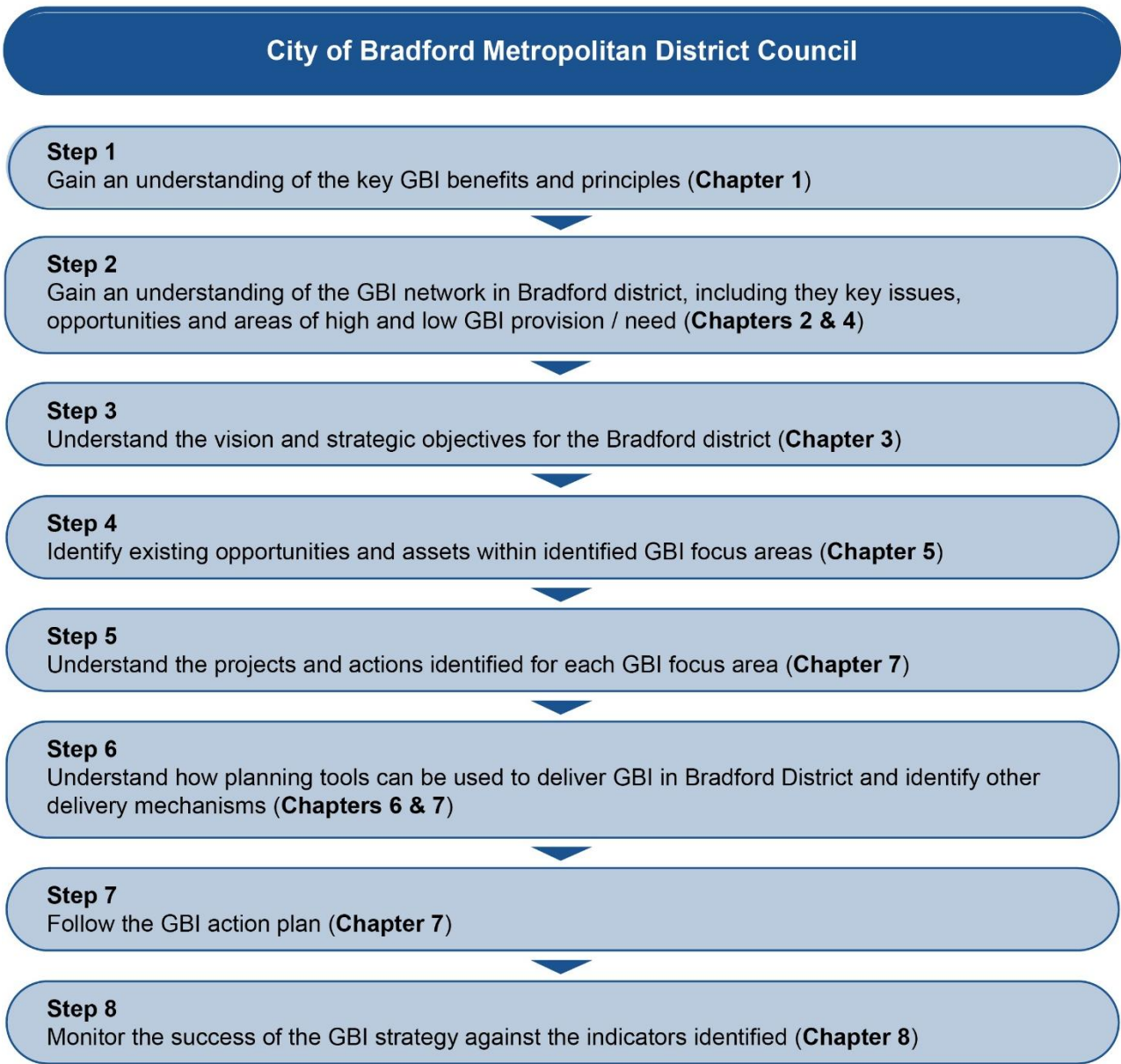


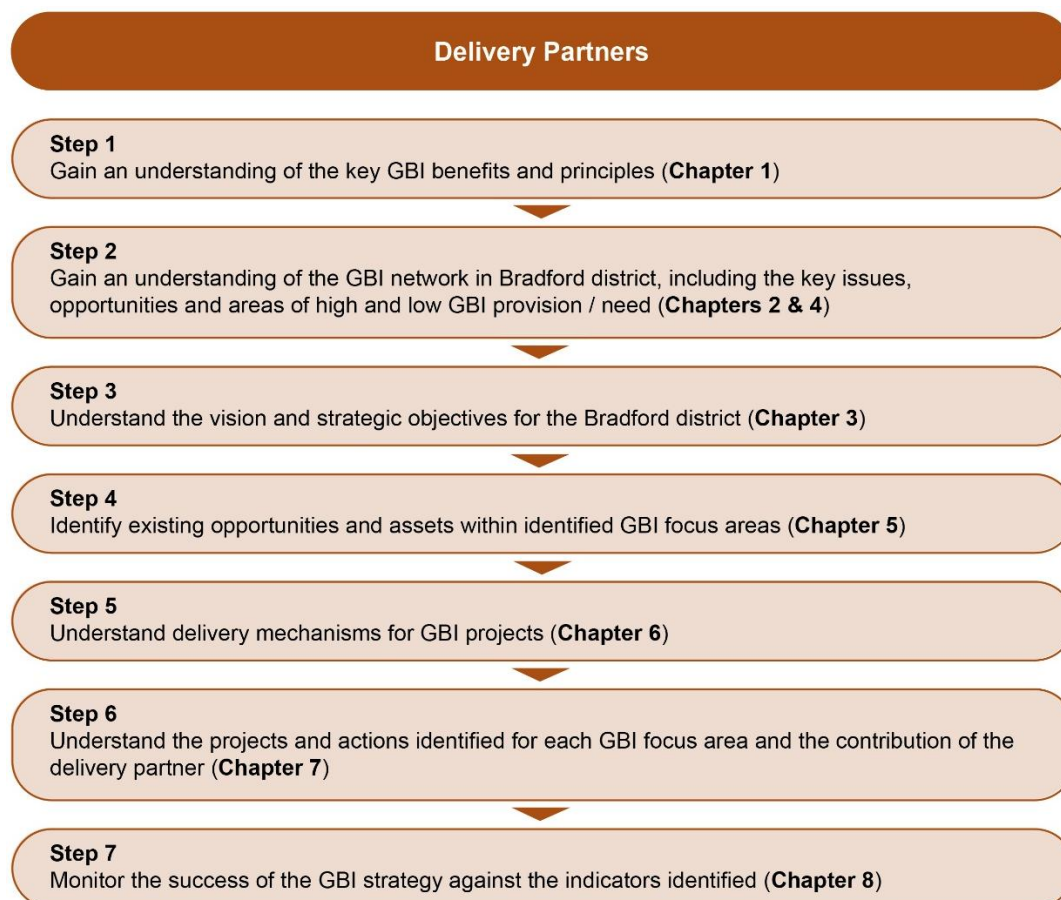
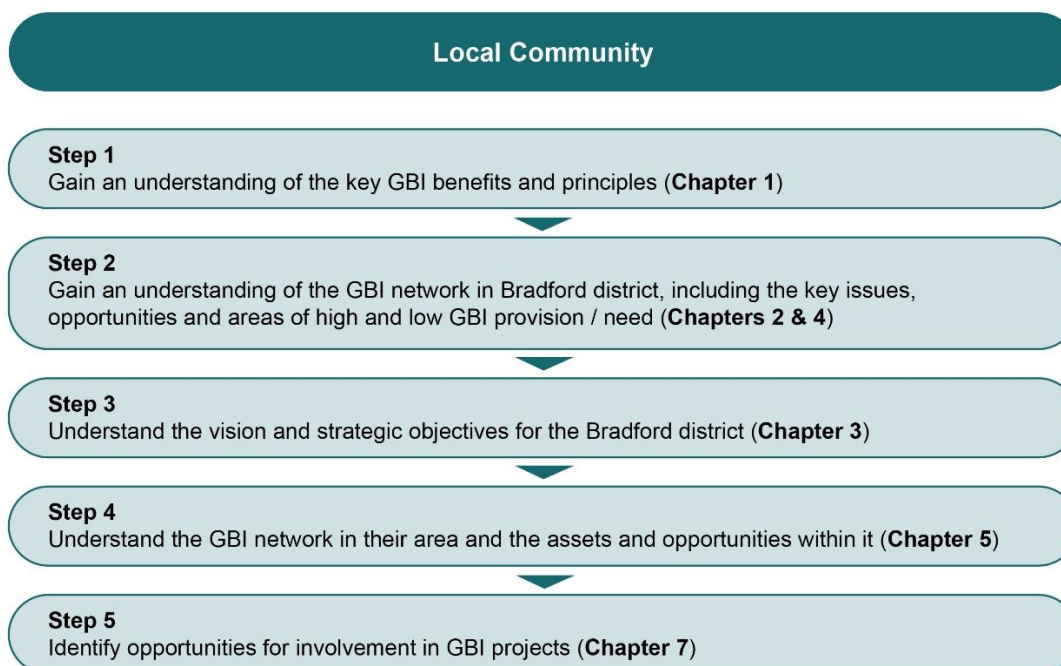
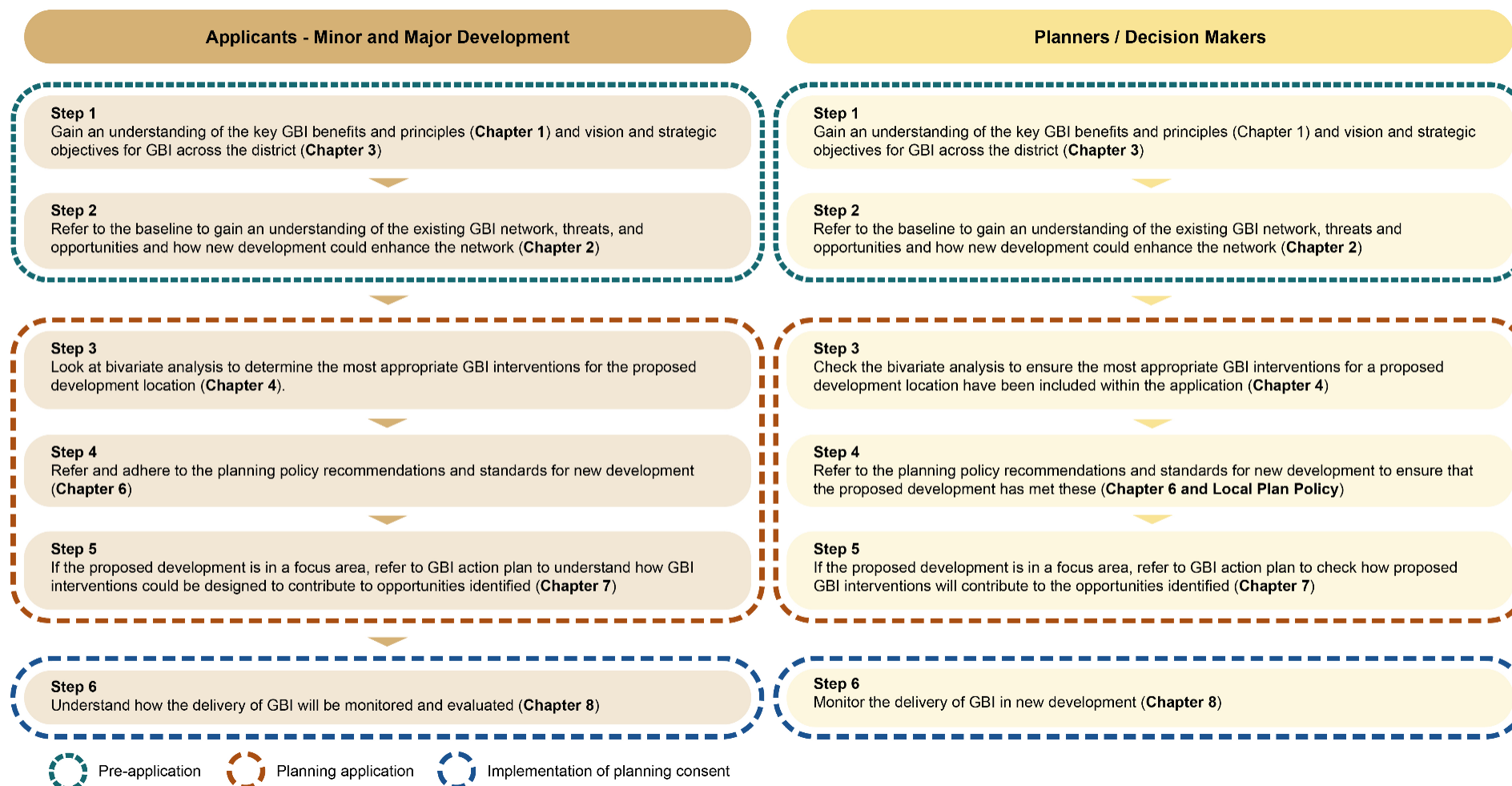
**Figure 1.5: User guide – Delivery partners****Figure 1.6: User guide – Local community**

Figure 1.7: User guide – Developers and planners



## Document structure

1.24 The Strategy is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1**, this chapter, outlines the purpose of the Strategy, key context, the methodology for its preparation and guidance on how different audiences should use the Strategy.
- **Chapter 2** presents baseline research on the existing GBI network in Bradford District, key assets, challenges and emerging opportunities.
- **Chapter 3** outlines the vision and strategic objectives for the GBI network.
- **Chapter 4** summarises the results of a bivariate mapping exercise to identify areas of high need and low provision of GBI in the district.
- **Chapter 5** outlines four GBI focus areas where there is high need and low provision of GBI, providing the focus for investment in the GBI network.
- **Chapter 6** outlines delivery mechanisms for GBI. It provides recommendations for planning policy and GBI standards and outlines other delivery mechanisms.
- **Chapter 7** provides an action plan for the delivery of GBI opportunities in each of the GBI focus areas.
- **Chapter 8** provides a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategy.
- **Appendix A** outlines the datasets used to prepare the overview of GBI assets in Bradford District.
- **Appendix B** provides a communication plan to support the Strategy.
- **Appendix C** outlines the datasets used to prepare the bivariate analysis of need and provision across Bradford District.
- **Appendix D** presents the action plan for each GBI focus area.

## Chapter 2

### Baseline Context

This chapter provides an assessment of the district's existing GBI network; including key assets, challenges and pressures. It sets the context for the vision, strategic objectives and opportunities identified in **Chapter 3** and **Chapter 4**.

### Policy review

**2.1** A review of relevant national, regional and local legislation, policy and relevant strategies has been undertaken to ensure that opportunities and policy recommendations reflect this context. A visual summary of the documents reviewed as part of this chapter are shown in **Figure 2.1a** and **Figure 2.1b**.

### Introduction to the 'themed' approach

**2.2** The five 'benefit principles' identified by Natural England in the GI Framework have been used to structure the 'themed' approach to the Strategy. This approach was adopted to explore the existing GBI assets within the district, consider key needs and explore deficiencies within the existing network. A summary of each theme is outlined at the beginning of each section.



**Nature rich  
Bradford**



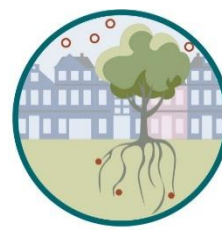
**Active &  
healthy  
Bradford**



**Thriving &  
prosperous  
Bradford**



**Water  
management  
in Bradford**



**Climate  
resilient  
Bradford**

Figure 2.1a: National and regional policy context

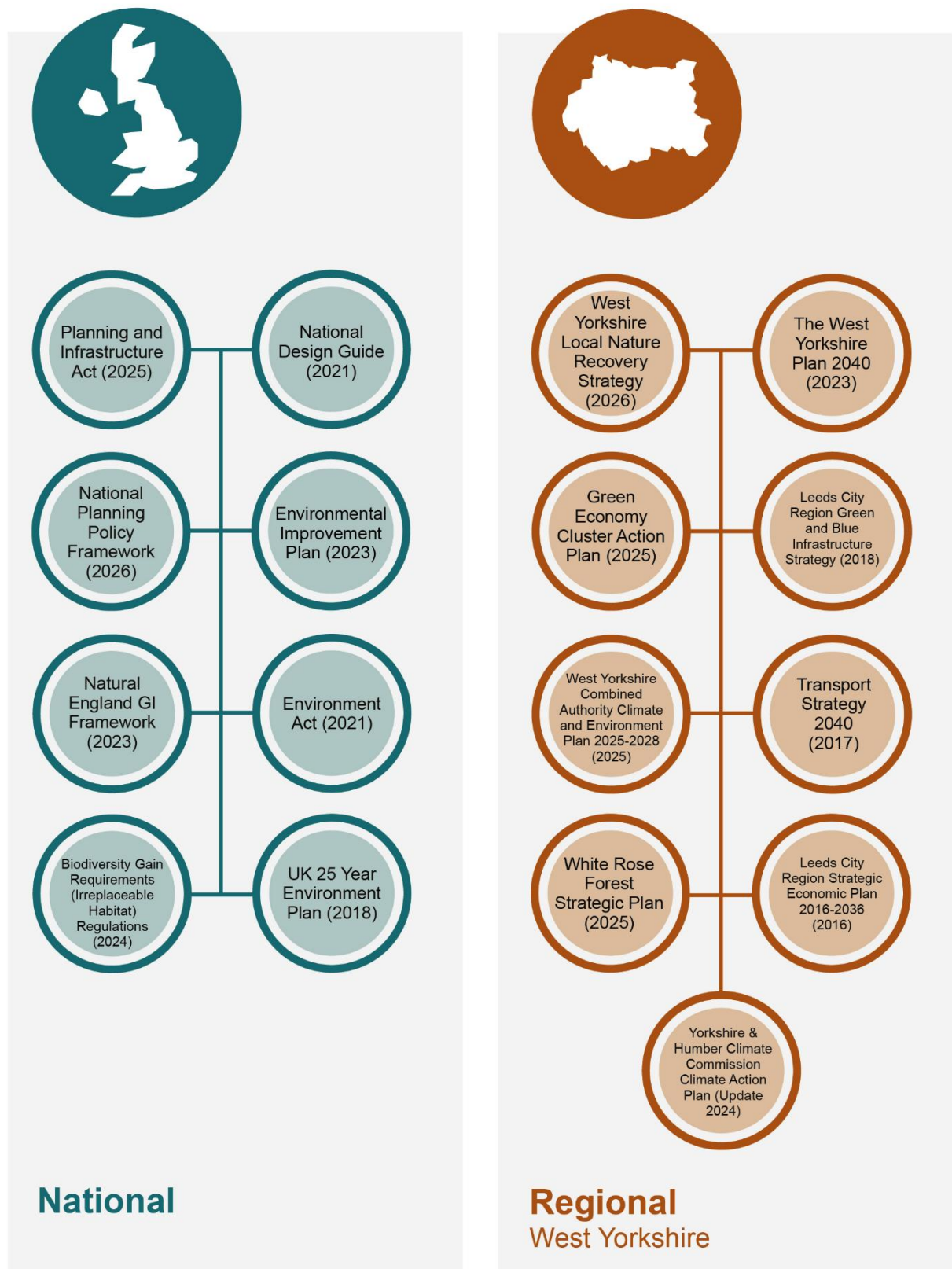
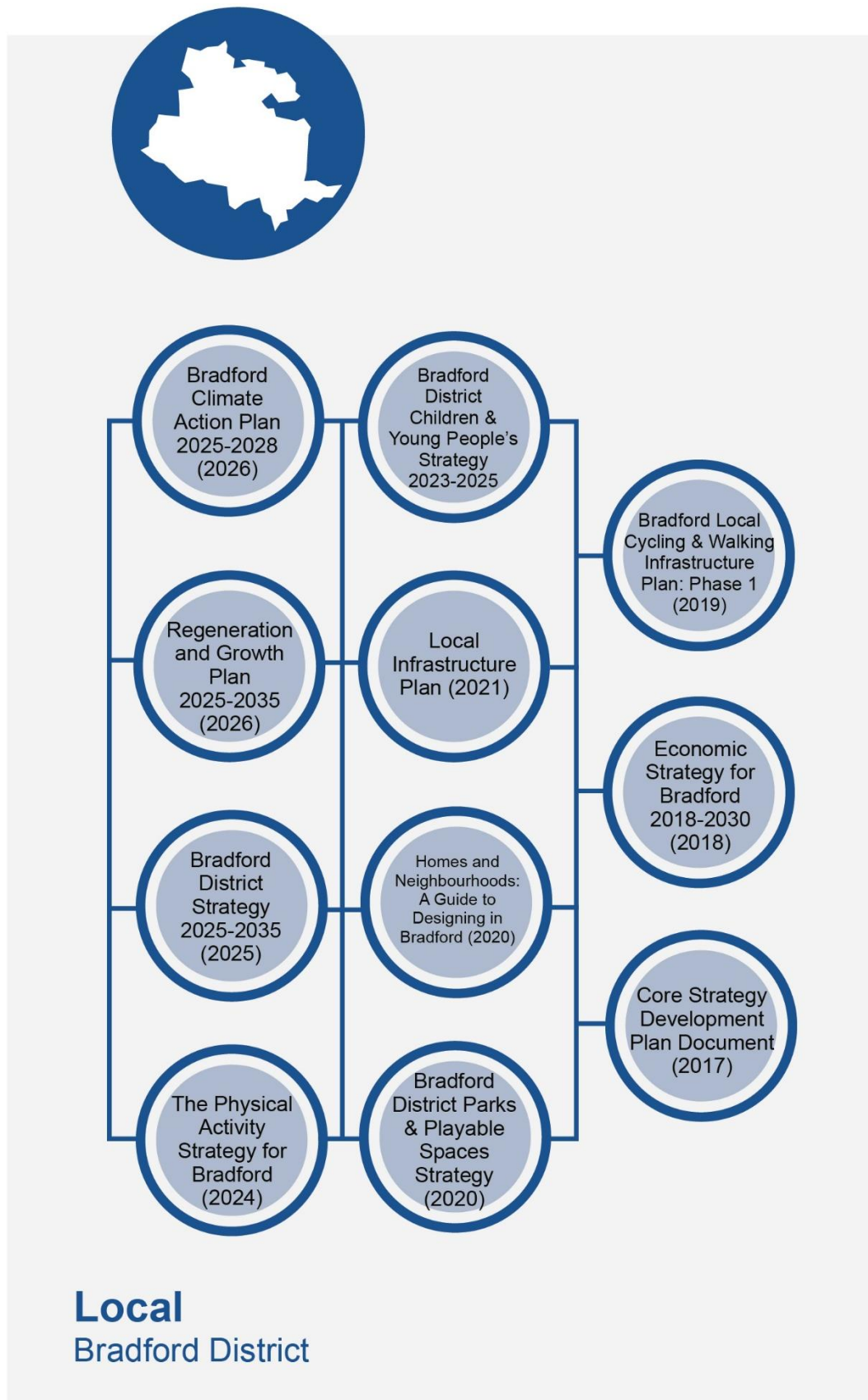


Figure 2.1b: Local policy context



## Theme 1: Nature rich Bradford

### Why is GBI important for a nature rich Bradford?

GBI plays a key role in supporting the preservation and enhancement of the district's habitats, wildlife, geology and soil. This includes the delivery of improved ecological connectivity within and beyond the district, including the South Pennines. Well-placed GBI can provide effective ecological corridors and stepping stone habitats. These enable wildlife to shelter, forage and move through the district's complex mosaic of moorlands, woodlands and grasslands, as well as its urban centres.

Biodiversity underpins many of the benefits of GBI and is essential for the delivery of an array of ecosystem services important to the district; including climate change adaptation, natural flood management, air and water quality improvements and pollination. These ecosystem services contribute to increased climate resilience, water quality, productivity as well as the health and well-being of the district's population.

Nature-rich GBI is also an important tool for strengthening everyday connections between people and the natural environment. GBI provides opportunities for people to directly learn about and connect with nature. These opportunities can inspire a sense of stewardship of nature, which in turn can deliver wider environmental benefits across the district.

### What are the assets, challenges and pressures in the district?

#### Assets

**2.3** Approximately 20% of Bradford District lies within the designated site network; with areas subject to international, national and local designations. The location of designated sites are shown on **Figure 2.2**. In some locations, designations can, and do, overlap.

#### Internationally designated sites

**2.4** Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated to protect internationally important, high-quality, and threatened habitats and species. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated for their importance to rare and vulnerable bird species.

In total, 12.5% of the district (4,489 hectares) is designated as an SAC or SPA. Relevant sites partly within Bradford District are described below:

- **South Pennine Moors SAC/South Pennine Moors (Phase II) SPA** – The area is designated as an SAC for wet and dry heaths, blanket bogs and old sessile oak woods and as a SPA for golden plover, merlin, short-eared owl and a breeding bird assemblage including twite, Eurasian curlew and snipe. Eurasian curlew is considered near-threatened globally. Merlin, twite and Eurasian curlew are classified in the UK as Red under the Birds of Conservation Concern 5: the Red List for Birds 2021 and snipe and short-eared owl are classified as amber. ‘High’ threats for this site are fire and recreational disturbance, drainage, air pollution and agricultural activities. More information on these habitats can be obtained via the Joint Nature Conservation Committee’s (JNCC) standard data forms [\[See reference 19\]](#) and [\[See reference 20\]](#). Consideration should also be given to functionally linked land on which species within the SPA rely.

Nationally designated sites

**2.5** Sites of Special Scientific Interest are considered areas of national importance for wildlife, geology, or landform features. 12.28% of the district is designated as SSSI, across four sites. 2.08% of SSSI are in favourable condition, significantly below the national average of 35% [\[See reference 21\]](#) and the Yorkshire average of 20% [\[See reference 22\]](#). **Table 2.1** provides an overview of the condition of SSSI in the district.

**Table 2.1: Current condition of SSSIs in Bradford District**

| Condition Status        | Area        | Percentage of SSSI in the District |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Favourable              | 93.45 ha    | 2.08%                              |
| Unfavourable recovering | 3,459.36 ha | 76.30%                             |
| Unfavourable no change  | 965.5 ha    | 21.46%                             |
| Unfavourable declining  | 6.65 ha     | 0.15%                              |
| Part destroyed          | 0.58 ha     | 0.01%                              |

**2.6** The Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR was declared in March 2025. It is the first NNR in West Yorkshire. It consists of eight component sites and covers 3.47% of the district (1,272 hectares). The NNR was declared for its potential for nature recovery, research and experimentation and access, engagement and inclusion of underserved populations [\[See reference 23\]](#).

## Locally designated sites

**2.7** Eleven Local Nature Reserves (LNR) sit within the Bradford District, covering 196 hectares (0.54% of the district). LNR are designated for their local nature interest, as well as their access and education value. The Natural England GI Framework includes a recommendation for 1 hectare of LNR per 1,000 population. Bradford District's population is approximately 563,600 (according to the mid 2024 estimate) [\[See reference 24\]](#) meaning the district should have a total of 563.6 hectares of LNR. With only 196 hectares of LNR, the district is suffering a shortfall of 367.6 hectares of LNR (equivalent to 65%).

## Non-statutory designated sites

**2.8** The district contains 119 local wildlife sites (LWS) covering 4.06% of the district (1,487 hectares). LWS are designated for their local nature importance. LWS designation criteria are determined independently by each local authority. Across West Yorkshire, all local authorities use the same West Yorkshire Wildlife Site Selection Criteria Guidelines [\[See reference 25\]](#). LWS provide critical stepping-stones and buffers to the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA/SSSI and other national sites. They are also included as Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB) mapped by the West Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

## Habitats

**2.9** The district contains a wide variety of habitats; including moorland, heathland, woodlands, grasslands, farmland, wetlands and rivers.

**2.10 Irreplaceable habitats** are those habitats which take a significant time to restore, recreate or replace once they are destroyed, as defined in the NPPF. The district's irreplaceable habitats include areas of blanket bog (3.27% of the district, 1,198 hectares) ancient woodland (1.1% of the district, 407.34 hectares), lowland fens (0.02% of the district, 7.6 hectares) and ancient and veteran trees.

**2.11 Priority habitats** are defined as habitats that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. Priority habitats are shown on **Figure 2.3**. 19.23% of the district (7,046 hectares) is classed as a priority habitat. The largest priority habitat by proportion is upland heath (8.46% of the district, 3,098 hectares), followed by deciduous woodland (4.26%, 1,558 hectares). Other priority habitats include grass moorland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland heathland and lowland meadows and purple moor grass and rush pastures. 71% of all priority habitats in the district are under a form of statutory designation, meaning 29% of priority habitats are not currently designated.

## Balancing public access and recreation with wildlife protection

**2.12** High levels of recreation can harm sensitive habitats and species. Recreational disturbance is a particular threat for the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA which hosts sensitive habitats and ground nesting birds. The main pathways for impact at this site are disturbance to sensitive habitats and species, dog walking, fire, contamination (litter, dog fouling and invasive species), trampling/wear, harvesting and grazing issues. Several large wildfires have occurred in the district, the latest in 2019 setting over 50 acres of Ilkley Moor ablaze.

## Inappropriate management

**2.13** Inappropriate management, in particular burning on the South Pennines Moors SAC/SPA, is having a detrimental impact on biodiversity. A review by Natural England in 2023 found that burning was recorded in sensitive areas; including on deep peat, on slopes and across grips and within 5 metres of water courses, in breach of High-Level Stewardship agreement and of the Heather and Grass Burning Code [\[See reference 26\]](#). The review also found that there are some areas of localised high grazing, giving rise to locally recessive characteristics on the dwarf shrub. Under-grazing at Trench Meadows SSSI was cited as a reason for its unfavourable condition.

## Farming and agriculture

**2.14** Farming and agriculture have a mixed impact on biodiversity within Bradford District. Agriculture has historically helped to create some of the area's valuable habitats (e.g. ancient hay meadows and in-bye pastures), but agricultural intensification has also contributed to declines in many species and habitats.

**2.15** Agricultural pressures in the district include loss of species-rich grasslands through reseeding, fertiliser use, and agricultural improvement. Nationally, 97% of species-rich hay meadows have been lost over the past 50 years [\[See reference 27\]](#). Habitat fragmentation has occurred where larger fields and the removal of hedgerows has reduced connectivity for wildlife. Nutrient enrichment and pesticide use can reduce plant diversity, affecting aquatic systems and water quality. Overgrazing in some upland areas can also damage sensitive habitats and reduce the structural diversity needed by wildlife.

## Historical moorland drainage

**2.16** 80% of Yorkshire's peatlands have been damaged or altered, greatly reducing biodiversity, carbon storage and flood control [See reference 28]. Moorland within the district underwent an historical period of intensive drainage, where "grips" and drainage networks were dug to "dry out" areas to encourage heather cover for grouse and to improve grazing. By lowering the water table, drainage caused the degradation of peatland ecosystems, which act as vital habitats for unique flora and fauna, as well as significantly impacting the role of peatland as a carbon store.

**2.17** Drainage reduces peat-forming plants such as *Sphagnum* moss and cotton grass, which thrive in wet conditions. Drier conditions also reduce the populations of aquatic macroinvertebrates that emerge in spring, which are a vital food source for young ground-nesting birds. The loss of vegetation and insect life severely impact wading birds such as Curlew, and Golden Plover, which rely on wet, vegetated upland sites for nesting and feeding. Drainage of the moorland has also led to a dominance of purple moor grass such as *Molina*. In recent years, natural flood management initiatives have filled in most "grips" and drainage networks on the moorland in the district. For example, on Ilkley Moor, 352 stone dams and 65 heather bale dams have been built and over 56,000 sphagnum moss plants have been planted [See reference 29] and [See reference 30]. See **Theme 4** for more information on natural flood management.

## Modification of rivers and watercourses

**2.18** The Bradford Beck is a small river system that flows through the district. The River Worth flows through Keighley and is canalised in sections and characterised by a number of weirs which restrict fish passage upstream. Both watercourses were heavily modified during the industrial revolution resulting in a legacy of hidden and culverted sections, a loss of natural banks and issues with poor water quality and the loss of aquatic ecosystems [See reference 31], [See reference 32]. Significant improvements in water quality occurred over the 20th century, but no significant improvements were made with the physical character of the rivers. As a result, both Bradford Beck and the River Worth are now classified as 'moderate ecological quality' under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). See **Theme 4** for additional information regarding water quality.

## Air pollution impacts on sensitive habitats

**2.19** The South Pennines is considered to have undergone some of the most intense atmospheric pollution in Europe, with 19th and 20th-century industrialisation leading

to blackened, bare peat and severely acidified soils and water [See reference 33]. The high levels of deposition, particularly nitrogen, have hindered the recovery of vegetation, such as *Sphagnum* moss, which is crucial for bog health. Nitrogen deposition also drives a shift in plant communities, reducing species richness and increasing nutrient-loving grasses across the district.

## **Habitat fragmentation, loss and impact of development**

**2.20** If not carefully managed, habitat loss and the associated impacts of habitat fragmentation and degradation are a major threat from development, intensive agriculture and recreational pressure. These impacts on wildlife are compounded by climate change (see **Theme 5**). Bradford District's lowland habitat network has been significantly fragmented by both development and agricultural intensification. Natural habitat distribution is uneven across the district. Whilst there are large areas of natural habitat in the north and west of the district, predominately the South Pennines Moors SPA/SAC, there is limited natural habitat in south and east Bradford, particularly in and immediately surrounding the city centre.

## **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) outcompeting native flora and fauna**

**2.21** According to the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat, INNS are among the top drivers of biodiversity loss in freshwater and terrestrial systems nationally [See reference 34]. Their control is particularly challenging in fragmented or linear habitats – such as river corridors – where coordination across multiple landowners is needed to prevent further spread and ecosystem degradation. INNS are an ecological pressure in the district, threatening native biodiversity by outcompeting local flora and fauna. Records on INNS Mapper show Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed are present in the district. Grey Squirrels, Parakeets and American Mink have also been recorded in the district.

**2.22** Native species can be invasive and damaging too. Stinging Nettle is known to respond strongly to nitrogen fertilisation and consequently is favoured by the high levels of atmospheric nitrogen pollution. It is the most widespread plant in Yorkshire and has increased its range by 35% in the last 20 years, crowding out other less aggressive species [See reference 35].

## Lack of conservation management in urban greenspaces

**2.23** Whilst the district has a high number of local ‘friends of’ groups to help with localised management [See reference 36], some sites (e.g. Myra Shay and Boars Well) are yet to develop a ‘friends of’ group who could help with conservation management.

## Summary of key issues

- Significantly lower proportion of SSSIs in favourable condition than the national and Yorkshire average.
- 65% (367.6 hectares) below the Natural England GI Framework standard of 1 hectare of LNR per 1,000 of the population.
- Uneven distribution of natural habitats and a distinct lack of semi-natural habitats to the south and east of the district.
- Some instances of inappropriate management on the South Pennines Moors SAC/SPA, including burning of sensitive areas.
- Over or under grazing on grassland sites, leading to a loss in biodiversity.
- Recreational pressure on the South Pennines Moors SAC/SPA causing accidental wildfires, erosion and disturbance to ground nesting birds. Disturbance from dogs and fouling is an increasing problem on the site.
- Legacy impacts of drainage on moorland sites leading to reduced carbon capture, higher flooding and wildfire risk and reduced biodiversity.
- Modification of Bradford Beck leading to moderate ecological quality and a loss of aquatic and riparian habitats.
- Historic instances of high levels of air pollution impacting upon sensitive habitats.
- Habitat fragmentation and loss reducing extent of wildlife rich areas and ecology connectivity.
- Spread of invasive species out-competing or preying upon native species, leading to a reduction in species diversity and abundance and habitat quality.

## Summary of key opportunities

- The declaration of the Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR and the requirement of a management plan, provides an opportunity for CBMDC to create a landscape scale management plan for its key natural assets.
- Continue to work with the Yorkshire Peat Partnership and Moors for the Future to develop and extend on-going moorland restoration. Emerging initiatives include funding from Natural England to conduct a *Molina* control research project on Penistone Hill.
- Working with farmers and landowners across the district to increase biodiversity on agricultural land including tree and hedge planting, heathland restoration, diversification of grasslands, good soil management and the reduction of pesticide and fertiliser use. This could be achieved through higher-level stewardship and agri-environment schemes, targeted woodland creation opportunities (via the Council's Woodland Creation Officer) or via other funding opportunities such as Landscape Recovery.
- Declare a series of LNR across the district to increase provision up to the Natural England GI Framework recommended standard.
- Implement initiatives to create riparian and aquatic habitats across the River Worth, Aire and Wharfe and Bradford Beck to provide wildlife corridors. Emerging initiatives include a grant of £247,000 to the Aire Rivers Trust for the "Roots in the Rivers project".
- Reduce recreational disturbance on sensitive sites by providing attractive sites of alternative natural greenspace (SANGs), creating clear footpaths to control erosion and divert visitors from areas with ground nesting birds, creating firebreaks to reduce wildlife risk, employ wardens and install interpretation boards to promote environmental awareness and the countryside code of conduct. This could be funded via the provisions put in place by the South Pennines Moors Strategic Mitigation Strategy.
- Work with initiatives such as Nature Towns and Cities and CBMDC's Public Health's Nature's Way programme to increase wildlife rich areas and traditional orchards in urban areas.
- Explore opportunities to support community land ownership as a mechanism to bring more land under management for nature conservation.
- Explore opportunities to create a CBMDC-owned habitat bank to capitalise on opportunities to deliver nature recovery via off-site biodiversity net gain.

This map illustrates the distribution of the UK's largest woodland, which is divided into several distinct areas. The woodland is primarily located in the western and northern parts of the Bradford area, with significant sections highlighted in green and brown. The map also shows the surrounding urban and rural landscape, including towns like Skipton, Ilkley, and Bradford, and features like the A629 and M606 roads. A scale bar at the bottom left indicates distances of 0, 2.5, and 5 km.

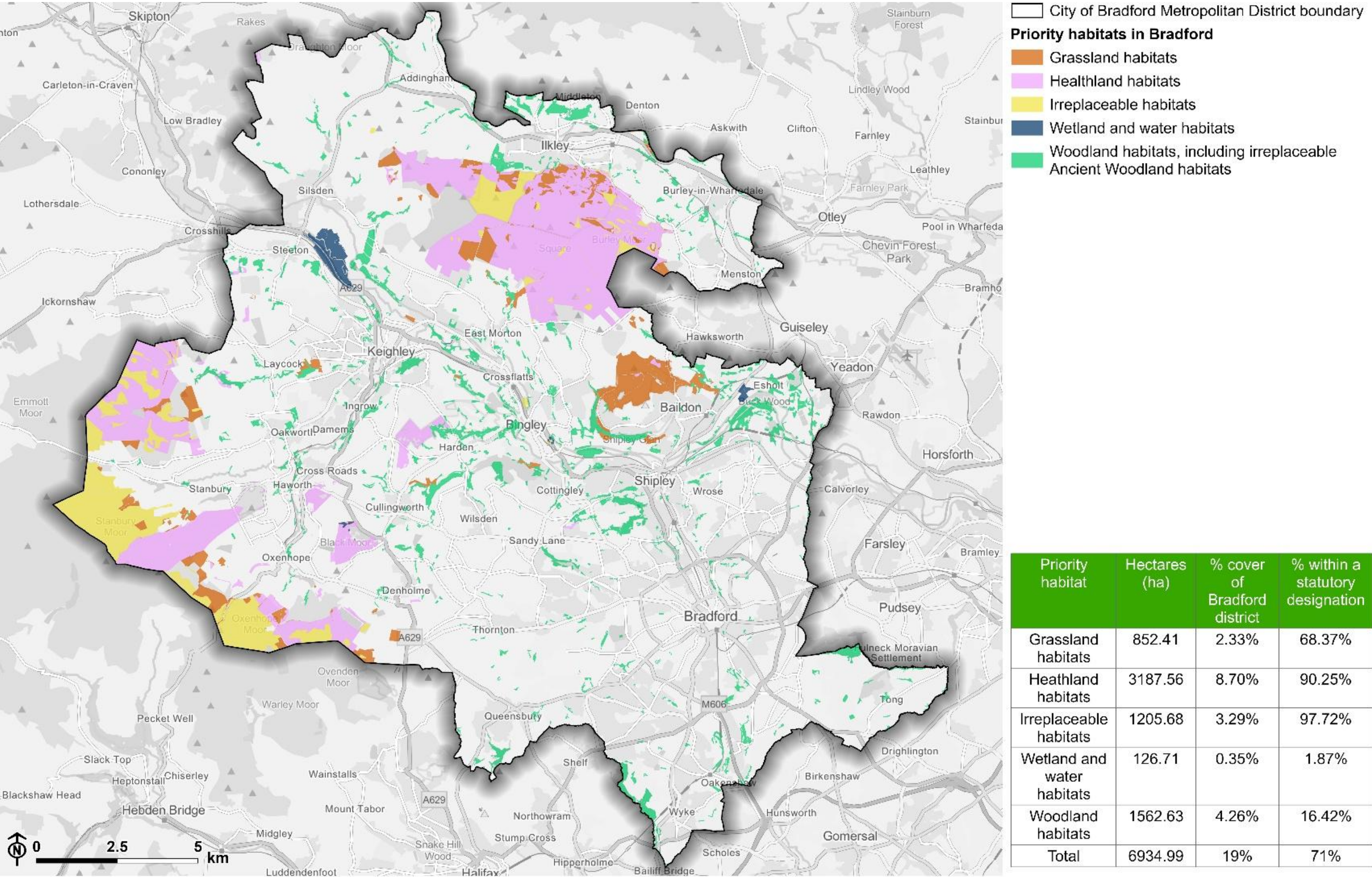
|                                                                                     |                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|  | City of Bradford Metropolitan District boundary |
|  | Special Area of Conservation (SAC)              |
|  | Special Protection Area (SPA)                   |
|  | Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)      |
|  | Ancient woodland                                |
|  | National Nature Reserve (NNR)                   |
|  | Local Nature Reserve (LNR)                      |
|  | Local Wildlife Site                             |

| Designated sites    | Hectares (ha) | % cover of Bradford District | % within a statutory designation |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| LNR                 | 192.64        | 0.53%                        | N/A                              |
| SPA                 | 4489.3        | 12.25%                       | N/A                              |
| SAC                 | 4489.3        | 12.25%                       | N/A                              |
| NNR                 | 1271.71       | 3.47%                        | N/A                              |
| SSSI                | 4499.12       | 12.28%                       | N/A                              |
| Local Wildlife Site | 1485.74       | 4.06%                        | N/A                              |
| Ancient woodland    | 644.23        | 1.76%                        | 28.70%                           |

© Natural England. Contains data from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority LNRS, OGL. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

Figure 2.3: Priority habitats in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/08/2026  
© Natural England. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

## Theme 2: Active and healthy Bradford

### Why is GBI important for an active and healthy Bradford?

Well-designed GBI plays a vital role in supporting health and well-being by creating safe, nature-rich spaces for exercise, social interaction, play and rest [See reference 37] [See reference 38].

Evidence states that regular activity in natural spaces helps prevent long-term health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers [See reference 39]. Increasing access to GBI supports long-term independence and well-being, as well as improved mental health. Outdoor activity is increasingly used as an alternative to medical interventions through 'green social prescribing'.

GBI also plays a crucial role in mitigating environmental challenges, such as reducing air pollution and heat exposure. Interventions such as green streets, urban planting and the prioritisation of active travel routes (for walking, cycling and wheeling) are key components of planning for health.

### What are the assets, challenges and pressures in the district?

#### Physical and mental health

**2.24** The district performs worse than regional and national averages across all 12 overarching indicators of the national Public Health Outcomes Framework [See reference 40].

#### Life expectancy

**2.25** Life expectancy in the district has increased over recent years [See reference 41], however it is consistently lower than regional and national averages. Average male life expectancy in the district is 76.8 years, the lowest in the region. It is 1.3 years and 2.3 years lower than regional and national averages, respectively. Female life expectancy is higher than male life expectancy (81.4 years), but also lower than national and regional averages (82.1 years and 83.1 years, respectively) [See reference 42].

**2.26** Healthy life expectancy has worsened for both men and women in the district, now at 57.5 years for men and 58.1 years for women. This means that people may be living longer but spending more of those years in poorer health [\[See reference 43\]](#). There is a significant gap in healthy life expectancy across the district. Women in parts of central Bradford can expect around 49 years of healthy life, compared with 72 years in Wharfedale – a 23-year gap.

### **Disability and long-term health conditions**

**2.27** 8% of the district's residents have a disability or long-term condition which limits their day-to-day activities a lot [\[See reference 44\]](#). A further 9.1% are limited a little [\[See reference 45\]](#). The district also has high levels of long-term health conditions. 9.1% of the population aged 17 has diabetes, the highest in the region [\[See reference 46\]](#). Cardiovascular mortality in Bradford District is at a rate of 102.5 per 100,000, higher than the national average rate of 71.5 [\[See reference 47\]](#).

### **Weight and physical inactivity**

**2.28** In 2023/24, 69.7% of adults in Bradford District were classified as overweight or living with obesity, higher than the national average of 64.5%. Child obesity is also higher than average, 39.7% of year 6 children were classified as overweight or obese, compared with 36.2% nationally [\[See reference 48\]](#).

**2.29** The proportion of adults achieving the physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes per week in the district (56.6%) is 8% less than the national average (64.4%) [\[See reference 49\]](#). 50% of children are active for at least 60 minutes a day, broadly in line with national averages. There are marked inequalities in children's activity levels by gender and ethnicity [\[See reference 50\]](#). 32% of girls aged 7 to 11 meet physical activity guidelines compared with 55% of boys. 34% of Pakistani heritage children meet the guidelines compared with 54% of White British children.

**2.30** Despite a low baseline, there are signs that physical activity levels are increasing. For example, participation in leisure walking or cycling at least once a month increased by 5.9% in the years 2022-23 [\[See reference 51\]](#).

### **Mental health**

**2.31** Improved mental health is a district priority, particularly that of children and young people [\[See reference 52\]](#). 8.8% of secondary school pupils meet the clinical threshold for anxiety and 11% for depression [\[See reference 53\]](#). 14.5% of adults in

the district have recorded depression, while 19.5% of people aged above age 16 are estimated to have a common mental disorder [\[See reference 54\]](#).

### Green social prescribing

**2.32** Green social prescribing (GSP) is currently emerging across the district. The Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust's (BDCFT) has employed a green therapy development officer to embed GSP and nature therapy into patient care. BDCFT's Green Plan includes commitments to expand opportunities for service users to benefit from nature-based activities and therapy [\[See reference 55\]](#) [\[See reference 56\]](#).

### Demographic trends

**2.33** Bradford District's population is younger than both regional and national averages. In 2024, the district's median age was 36.9 years and 20.8% of residents were under 15 [\[See reference 57\]](#). However, over the last decade, the largest increase has been in older age groups, with the number of people aged 70-74, 75-79 and over 90 raising by 28.7%, 25.2% and 11.6%, respectively. It is important that GBI is designed to meet the needs of a range of ages so that all residents benefit from access.

### Access to greenspace

**2.34** The district is served by a diverse range of greenspaces. The 2021 Open Space Audit identified 1,693 open spaces covering over 2,700 hectares of the district [\[See reference 58\]](#). This includes 36 public parks, 10 of which are listed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest [\[See reference 59\]](#). Six parks within the district hold a Green Flag Award. However, residents have concerns regarding lack of safety, maintenance and attractiveness of open spaces [\[See reference 60\]](#).

**2.35** **Figure 2.4** illustrates areas which meet different levels of the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standard access hierarchy (which sets out how far people should have to travel to access accessible greenspaces of different scales) [\[See reference 61\]](#). Accessible greenspace are places near where people live that are open to the public without charge and without restriction, allowing physical and psychological contact with nature. This shows that areas in the north-east and south-west of the district have the best access to accessible greenspace. Conversely, areas in the south-east of the district, including Bradford city centre and smaller settlements in the centre of the district have the worst access to accessible

greenspace. The Open Space Audit (OSA) [See reference 62] also identifies a mixed picture in relation to access to greenspace across the district. The audit notes that poor open space provision is particularly acute in Bradford city centre, central Keighley, and parts of north-west and south-east Bradford, where this coincides with higher levels of deprivation. The recent city centre regeneration programme has increased the extent of accessible greenspace within the city centre.

**2.36 Figure 2.5** indicates the locations of accessible greenspace against the indices of multiple deprivation. Born in Bradford undertook a study in 2023 which explored inequalities in access to greenspace and the links between greenspace and health [See reference 63]. This study found that greenspace provision and use was not equal, with South Asian families having access to fewer greenspaces and were less satisfied with the greenspaces they did have access to than White British families. The study noted physical barriers to greenspace, for example the presence of amenities as well as other barriers including skills and confidence and community influence.

**2.37** The study found that health outcomes were higher in areas where there was better access to greenspace. It also found that the impact of greenspace on health tends to be stronger within more deprived groups, indicating that interventions which aim to improve the quality and/or use of greenspace in more deprived areas may reduce health inequalities. Notably they noted that increasing the quality of greenspaces was essential to encouraging increased use.

## Active travel

**2.38** The National Cycle Network routes 66 and 696 (NCN) provide continuous (largely off road) links between the settlements of Bradford, Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Silsden. The West Yorkshire Cycle Route provides an onwards connection to Ilkley. The NCN route 69 offers a link between Thornton and Queensbury, and Cullingworth and Harecroft. The NCN Route 66 links the city centre to the Spenn Valley Greenway via Bowling Park. Local cycle routes are more fragmented, with only a few continuous links available through urban areas.

**2.39** The district has over 1,000km of definitive public rights of way (as published by Natural England). There are additional established paths, particularly in the Keighley and Bradford areas which are not recorded on this definitive map. Despite this, areas of the network are still fragmented. **Figure 2.6** shows that the lowest density of definitive public rights of way can be found in and around Bradford, Keighley and Shipley. As noted, there are additional established paths not shown on this map, so this should be seen as a guide, with further local investigation undertaken before any proposals are developed for upgrades to the public right of way network. Provision is

relatively good between other settlements. Consultees noted that in general, there is a lack of safe pedestrian river crossings across the district.

**2.40** Phase 1 of Bradford District's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) [\[See reference 64\]](#) prioritises south Bradford for infrastructure investment. The Bradford city centre to Tong Street strategic corridor has been progressed through the proposed A650 Connect: Wakefield Road/Tong Street scheme [\[See reference 65\]](#). This scheme includes segregated two-way cycle tracks, improved crossings, better footpaths and enhanced bus infrastructure along the corridor. This will be accompanied by behaviour change programmes.

**2.41** The LCWIP [\[See reference 66\]](#) also identifies a Core Walking Zone in Keighley town centre, centred on key destinations including Keighley Station and Keighley College. Planned measures include widened and continuous footways, improved pedestrian crossings, and raised tables across side roads, as well other measures to reduce car dominance. The document identifies a number of priority corridors within the district. These include a series of radial corridors and an orbital route around the city. Corridors in more rural areas are also identified, including sections within Wharfedale and the route of the Great Northern Railway.

**2.42** Bradford District's Climate Action Plan [\[See reference 67\]](#) supports the continued expansion of high-quality active travel infrastructure. Key active travel infrastructure and schemes in Bradford which have been implemented or are being taken forward include:

- Bradford City Centre Walking and Cycling Improvement scheme [\[See reference 68\]](#) which has delivered new cycle lanes, pedestrianised streets, crossings and public realm improvements;
- Bradford-Leeds Cycle Superhighway;
- Canal Road cycleway/greenway;
- Saltaire Active Travel Neighbourhood trial [\[See reference 69\]](#) which introduced modal filters and traffic reduction measures to limit through-traffic and improve conditions for walking and cycling;
- Manningham Safer Neighbourhood Scheme [\[See reference 70\]](#) which introduced crossings, speed reduction measures, narrowed junctions and point closures;
- West Bradford Cycle Superhighway extension to Thornton; and
- Keighley Safer Neighbourhood Scheme.

**2.43** Despite investments in infrastructure, levels of walking (47.7%) and cycling (6.6%) for everyday travel are lower than national averages (53% and 11.3% respectively) [\[See reference 71\]](#). An analysis by Friends of the Earth has shown that 22% of commuter journeys in Bradford could be made by bike, as long as there is appropriate cycling infrastructure and increased use of e-bikes. Currently, only 1% of commuters in Bradford cycle to work [\[See reference 72\]](#).

**2.44** Alongside infrastructure, district-wide and community-based behavioural change initiatives include:

- School Streets schemes [\[See reference 73\]](#);
- Clean Air Schools Programme [\[See reference 74\]](#);
- Social prescribing initiatives [\[See reference 75\]](#) [\[See reference 76\]](#);
- E-Bike Library schemes [\[See reference 77\]](#);
- Community-based initiatives such as JU:MP (Join Us: Move Play) [\[See reference 78\]](#) and Living Well [\[See reference 79\]](#) programmes; and
- Eight active travel hubs acting as ‘one-stop-shops’ for people to access support to walk and cycle [\[See reference 80\]](#).

## Air quality

**2.45** GBI can serve an important role in mitigating air pollution. Carefully sited GBI interventions can provide traffic-calming measures, encourage alternative modes of travel such as walking and cycling, and act as physical vegetation barriers between people and traffic, locally reducing people’s exposure to pollutants.

**2.46** The district currently has four air quality management areas (AQMAs), although air quality has improved in recent years and only AQMAs at Manningham Lane/Queen’s Road and Shipley Airedale Road remain in exceedance of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective. The main pollutants of concern are nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter, with road traffic identified as a significant source of emissions, alongside contributions from industry, heat and power generation, domestic sources and agriculture [\[See reference 81\]](#).

**2.47** The Bradford Clean Air Zone (CAZ), introduced in 2022, has significantly reduced air pollution due to reductions in non-compliant vehicles driving in the zone. There has been a 25% monthly average reduction in visits to GP surgeries for respiratory health since the CAZ was introduced [\[See reference 82\]](#).

## Summary of key issues

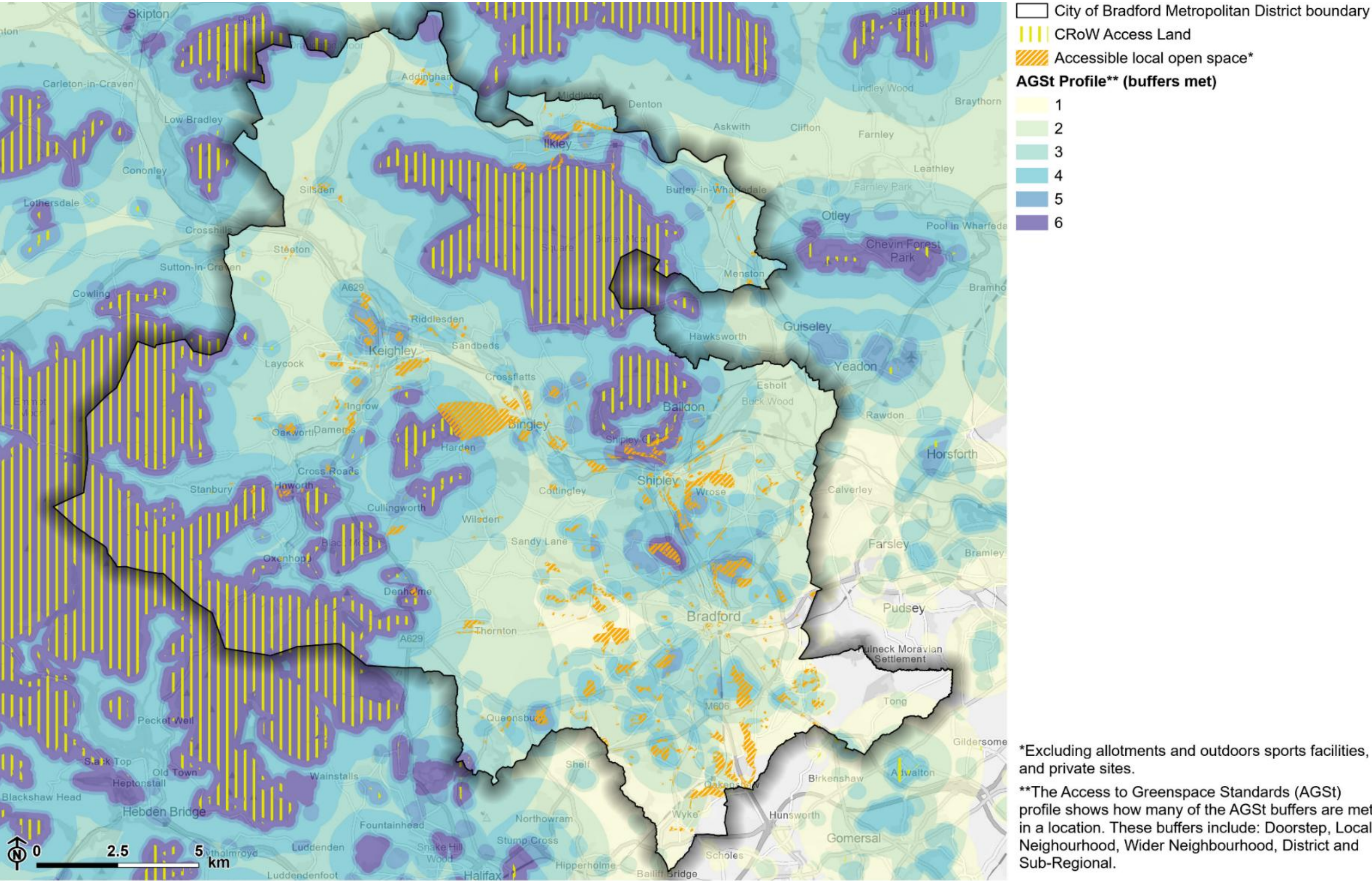
- Bradford District performs worse than regional and national averages across all 12 overarching public health indicators, with lower life expectancy and declining healthy life expectancy. There is also a high prevalence of long-term health conditions and mental health issues in the district.
- High levels of obesity and physical inactivity affect both adults and children, with rates exceeding national averages.
- There are significant inequalities in physical activity by gender, age and ethnicity, with lower activity levels among girls and some ethnic groups.
- Access to greenspace is uneven across the district, with strong provision in some areas but gaps in parts of urban Bradford, Keighley and several settlements with no park provision. Concerns regarding a lack of safety and inclusivity prevents use of greenspace in some areas.
- Health and greenspace inequalities overlap, with poorer access to greenspace in areas with higher levels of deprivation, particularly in parts of southeast Bradford and Keighley.
- Walking and cycling rates remain below national averages, with low levels of active travel contributing to continued reliance on private vehicles.
- Although air pollution is improving overall, harmful pollution remains concentrated along major roads.

## Emerging opportunities

- Continue to prioritise GBI investment in areas where health and open space deficits overlap, including Bradford city centre, Keighley and other parts of the district where poor provision coincides with higher levels of health deprivation.
- Improve access to greenspace in underserved neighbourhoods; including Thackley, Bierley, Low Moor, Chellow Heights and Sandy Lane, and in settlements with no park provision such as Addingham, Cullingworth, East Morton, Steeton and Thornton.
- Build on existing active travel programmes by expanding green streets, urban planting, and safer walking, cycling and wheeling routes, so that everyday journeys contribute more to physical activity.

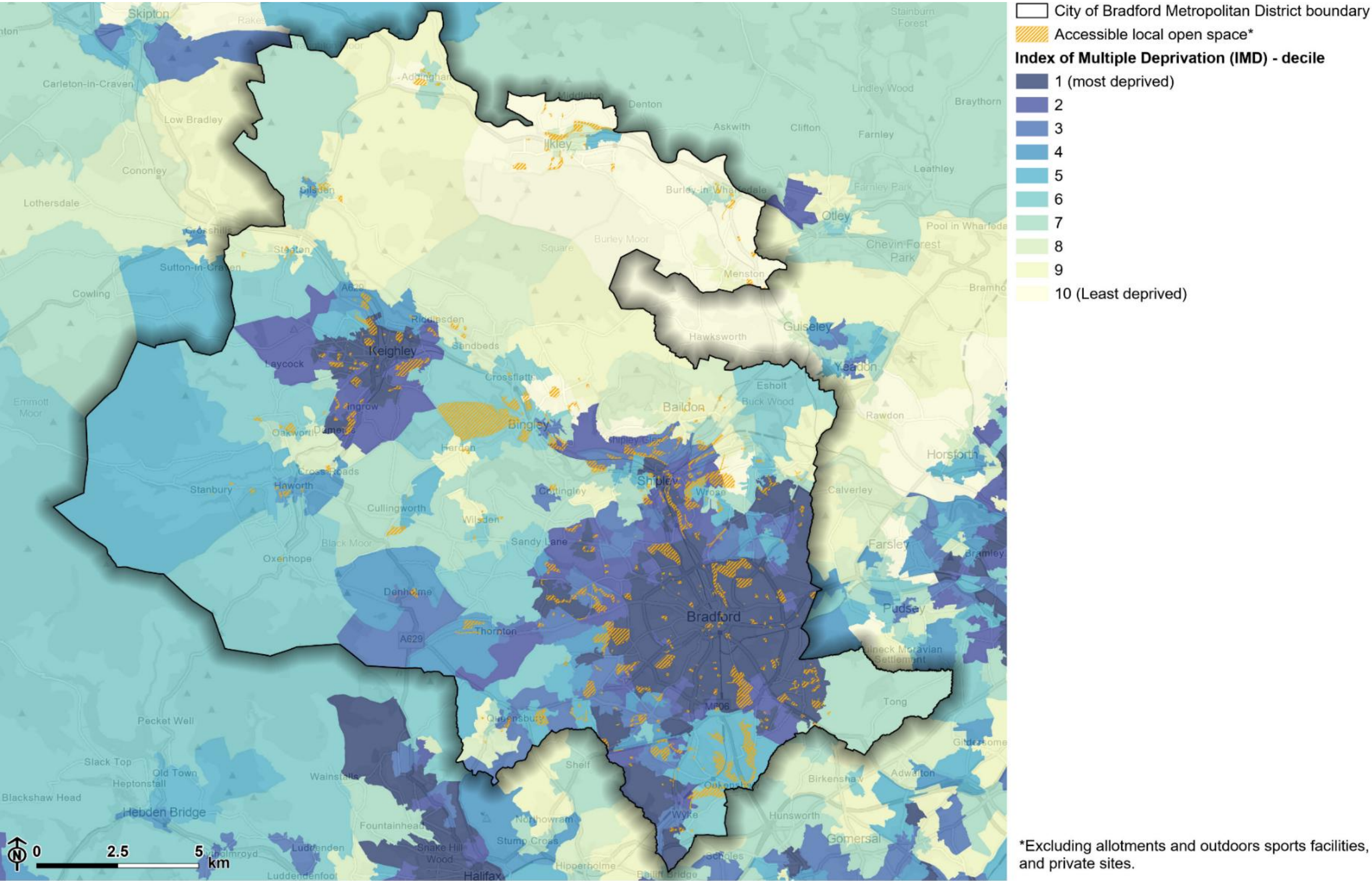
- Support and strengthen the role of GBI as part of a 'natural health service' by making the GBI network as attractive, accessible and inclusive as possible and support the scaling-up of ongoing green prescribing.
- Continue to improve access to Bradford's network of greenspace assets, including parks, woodland, the Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR sites and other strategic landscapes, so that more residents can benefit from them.
- Build on existing GBI investment helping to reduce health inequalities, including through the design of spaces and programmes that better support groups with lower activity levels, such as girls, some ethnic minority communities, older people and those with long-term health conditions.
- Focus tree planting, green corridors and active travel improvements in areas affected by poor air quality, including along main road corridors.
- Further strengthen the role of GBI to create attractive and inclusive spaces for children and young people that support play, social interaction, learning and mental well-being, helping to respond to local concerns around inactivity and poor mental health.
- Promote the use of the PRoW network across the district to increase physical activity levels among residents.
- Continue to support the JU:MP programme and integrate access to greenspace, active travel, sensory and community gardens into neighbourhood action plans.

Figure 2.4: Access to accessible greenspace in the district



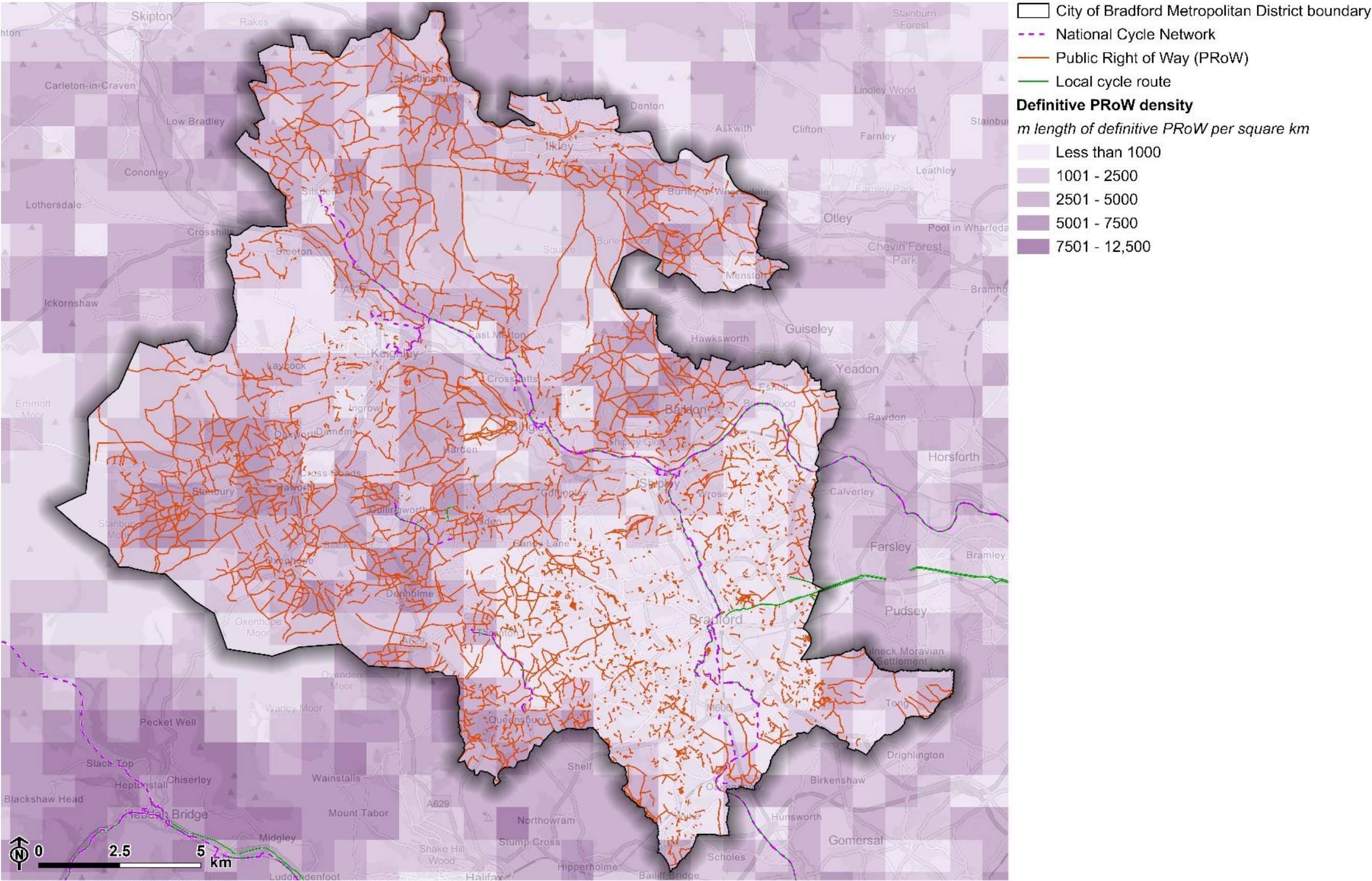
Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/04/2026  
© Natural England. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

Figure 2.5: Indices of multiple deprivation and location of accessible greenspace in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/04/2026  
Data produced by MHCLG. Boundaries used for data provided by ONS. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

Figure 2.6: Active travel routes and public right of way density in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/08/2026  
Contains Walk Wheel Cycle Trust data. Contains public sector information licensed under OGL v3.0. © Natural England. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

## Theme 3: Thriving and prosperous Bradford

### Why is GBI important for a thriving and prosperous Bradford?

GBI adds value to places by helping to create high-quality spaces which attract businesses, skilled workers and investors, support local high streets, increase property values, create green job opportunities and can act as a catalyst for regeneration [\[See reference 83\]](#).

Thriving places exhibit a strong sense of place, characterised by engaged communities and vibrant local economics. GBI also contributes to thriving and prosperous communities through good-quality placemaking which responds to local character, contributing to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, the landscape and historic environment.

Economies are embedded within nature, and therefore investment in GBI can bring economic benefit to communities by supporting and attracting both investment and visitors. In connection with 'Active and Healthy Places', the Institute for Public Policy Research's (IPPR) Commission on Health and Prosperity connects health and economic outcomes, asserting that a fairer society is a healthier society, and that a healthier population drives greater prosperity [\[See reference 84\]](#). Spending time in nature has also been seen to improve children's educational attainment [\[See reference 85\]](#), which can lead to a more prosperous and thriving society.

### What are the assets, challenges and pressures in the district?

#### Landscape and cultural heritage context

**2.48** The district has a rich and varied landscape, strongly influenced by its topography of hills and valleys and rivers which have been influential in its development. Bradford also has a rich cultural heritage strongly associated with industrial development during the 19th century, resulting in a strong and distinctive sense of place. The rural landscapes of the district are highly valued for biodiversity, recreation and inspiration, hosting nationally important habitats and species, and providing valued open space for access to and enjoyment of the outdoors. The recently designated Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR provides a vital link between the districts' urban and rural environments.

**2.49** The district's diverse landscapes are described in Natural England's National Character Areas (NCAs) [\[See reference 86\]](#). As shown on **Figure 2.7**, three NCAs cover the district:

- **NCA 36 Southern Pennines** covers the north and west of the district, taking in the upland moorlands of Ilkley Moor, Skipton Moor, Keighley Moor and Oxenhope Moor, as well as the valleys of the Rivers Aire, Wharfe and Worth. It is defined by large-scale sweeping moorlands with internationally important habitats, pastures enclosed by drystone walls, and gritstone settlements contained within narrow valleys. The NCA is valued for recreation with extensive open access areas and rights of way and has strong cultural associations with authors and poets.
- **NCA 37 Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe** covers a small area in the south of the district, taking in the western half of the City of Bradford, as well as Bingley, and its surroundings. It forms a transitional area between adjacent upland and lowland landscapes, defined by the combination of former industrial towns and villages built in gritstone and set within the strong valley landforms and pastoral agriculture of the Pennine foothills. The landscape is dominated by industrial buildings and structures such as factories, chimneys, railways and canals and includes Saltaire model village World Heritage Site.
- **NCA 38 Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield** covers a small area in the south-east of the district, taking in the east of the City of Bradford, including Baildon, Shipley, and part of the Aire Valley. It is generally a low-lying area, with hills and escarpments above wide valleys. Historically, coal and iron deposits, along with a reliable water supply brought mass industrialisation to the area, reflected in the presence of major industrial settlements. Now, it is a post-industrial landscape with some remaining areas of countryside.

**2.50** The landscape is further classified in the Bradford Landscape Character Assessment (2026) [\[See reference 87\]](#).

**2.51** The district has a number of heritage assets that make an important contribution to GBI; the Leeds-Liverpool Canal Conservation Area forms an important blue corridor and valued recreational resource. In addition, a number of Registered Parks and Gardens, such as Peel Park, Horton Park, and St Ives Estate contain important woodland and grassland habitats, and provide valuable pockets of greenspace within the dense urban landscape.

## GBI and regeneration

**2.52** Bradford city centre is identified as one of the weakest-performing high streets in the country, with close to one in five shops vacant in 2025, reflecting both national pressures on town and city centres and Bradford's more specific position within West Yorkshire. The evidence suggests that Leeds' role as the dominant regional centre constrains Bradford's catchment and draws spending away, while Bradford also struggles to retain expenditure from its more affluent neighbourhoods. Together, these factors have weakened the vitality and resilience of the centre [\[See reference 88\]](#). To combat some of these issues, there has been significant recent investment in regeneration schemes across the district with further investment planned. Future Bradford is a collection of projects to improve and transform Bradford [\[See reference 89\]](#). The programme includes a focus on the integration of new GBI and active travel as central elements of the regeneration of the district.

**2.53** The city centre transformation programme has recently created substantial new GBI, including around 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of new greenspace and a new 10,000m<sup>2</sup> park area at Norfolk Gardens, alongside 178 new trees, planting, seating and communal spaces. It has also created 2.4km of cycle lanes and 1.6km of pedestrianised streets. The same programme has also incorporated Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, helping to manage rainfall and improve the city centre's resilience to flooding, while contributing to a greener urban environment [\[See reference 90\]](#).

**2.54** GBI is also a key part of the Bradford City Village regeneration project. This is a 25-hectare city-centre scheme intended to diversify Bradford's core through the delivery of up to 1,000 homes, mixed commercial uses and a more walkable neighbourhood structure. The scheme places emphasis on new public realm and urban greening, including three new greenspaces, community greens, tree-lined streets and the proposed Darley Park, which is described as incorporating native planting, trees and water features to improve biodiversity and create a healthier urban environment [\[See reference 91\]](#).

**2.55** Significant future transport investment is secured; including a new city centre rail station and mass transit line. This is along with the Southern Gateway which is one of the UK's largest regeneration areas, planned for more than 5,000 homes, employment land and new public realm. The Transforming Towns programme is focused on Keighley, Shipley, Ilkley and Bingley through heritage-led renewal, housing, greener transport and digital improvements. A series of development frameworks have been prepared for Bradford, Keighley, Shipley and Bingley which all outline plans to enhance GBI.

## Tourism and historic environment

**2.56** The visitor economy makes a significant contribution to the economy of the district. The district attracts around 12 million visitors each year, generating around 14,000 jobs and an estimated £696 million in economic impact, with 54% of visitors coming for cultural purposes [\[See reference 92\]](#). The district's tourism and visitor economy is linked to a number of its GBI assets, particularly those that combine landscape, heritage and recreation. As seen in **Figure 2.8**, the district contains 50 Conservation Areas, 14 Registered Parks and Gardens, Adwalton Moor Registered Battlefield and several Scheduled Monuments [\[See reference 93\]](#).

**2.57** Key destinations include Saltaire World Heritage Site, where historic built form is integrated with riverside greenspaces along the River Aire, as well as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal corridor and Haworth and the surrounding moorland, which form part of the wider South Pennine uplands landscape. Ilkley Moor is another major natural asset in the district, offering access to semi-natural greenspace and panoramic views. In addition, large parks and gardens, such as Penistone Hill and St Ives Country Park, provide accessible recreational spaces that attract both residents and visitors. These assets are supported by green corridors and walking/cycling routes (including canal towpaths, the Dales Way Link and NCN 66) [\[See reference 94\]](#).

**2.58** Bradford Culture Company's greenspace heritage work, including events such as "Harmonic fields" is attracting visitors from across the region to key landscape designations across Bradford District.

## Community Needs Index

**2.59** The English Community Needs Index (CNI) is a national measure of community and social infrastructure, assessing local areas based on civic assets, local engagement and connectedness. It helps to identify areas with the weakest community support structures and support the targeting of investment and support. **Figure 2.9** shows the CNI for Bradford District. This identifies that the communities most in need in the district are located in the south and to the south-east of Keighley, the south of Shipley, the centre of Bradford, west of Allerton, around Beck Hill, Woodside and Holme Wood. While a more broad measure than just GBI provision, it is a useful dataset to help target investment in GBI as an asset to enhance community well-being.

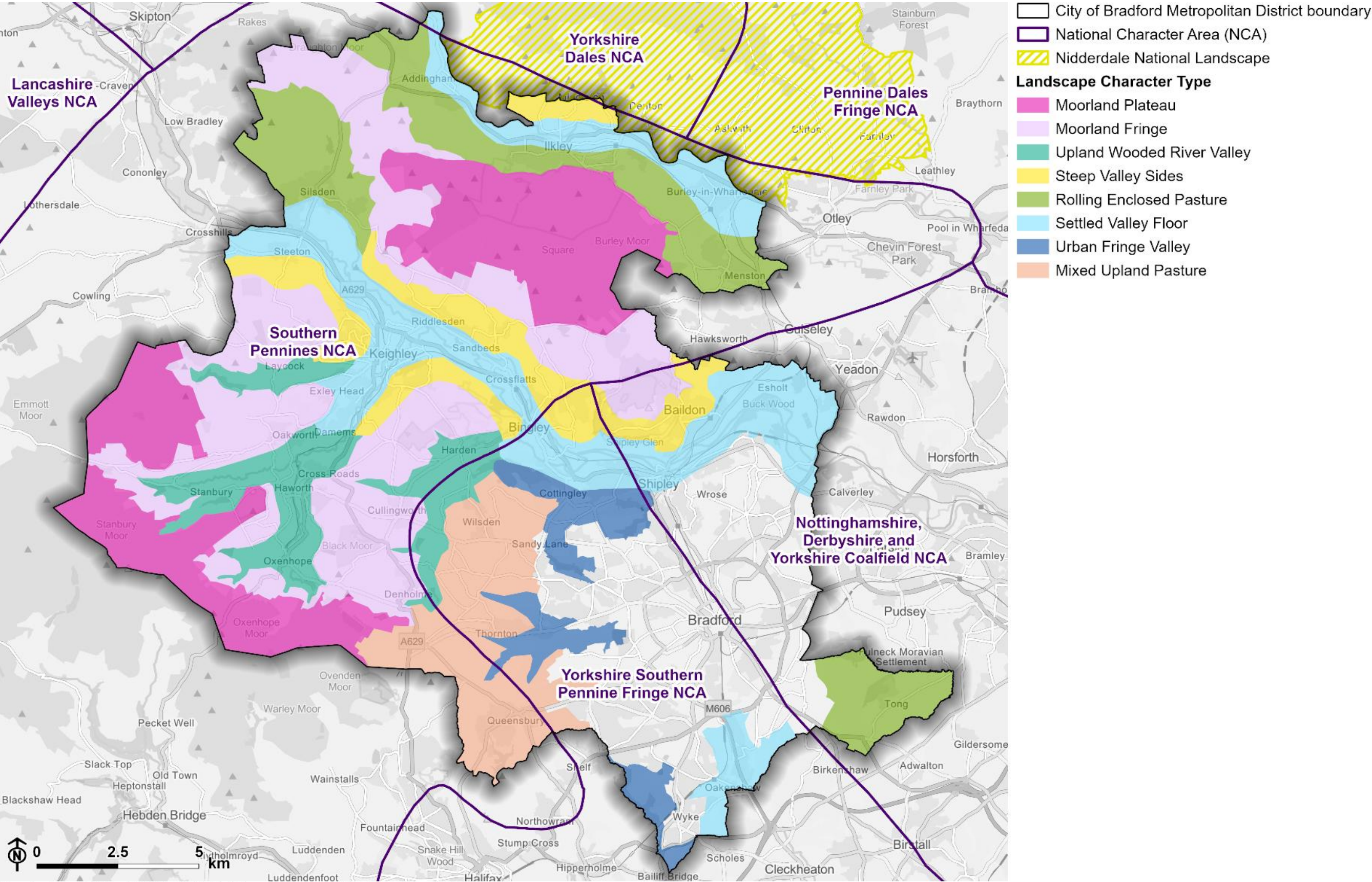
## Summary of key issues

- Weak performance of Bradford city centre, with high retail vacancy rates.
- Several heritage assets on the heritage at risk register.
- Several areas lie within the highest level of need within the CNI.

## Summary of emerging opportunities

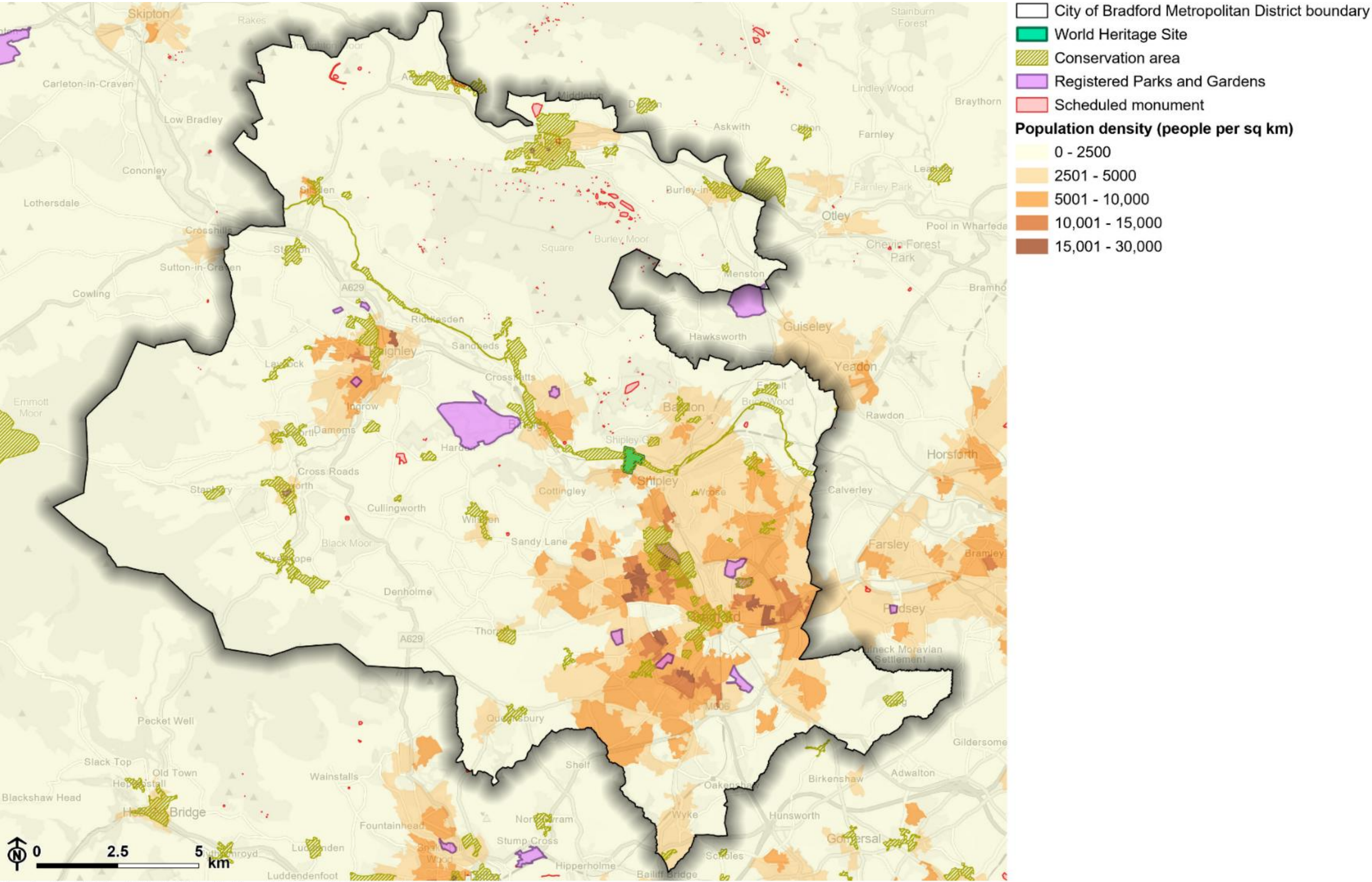
- Significant recent and planned investment in GBI improvements in Bradford city centre and other town centres to support regeneration, diversify high streets and strengthen visitor experience.
- Targeted investment to address identified shortfalls in green and civic space provision, especially in Bradford city centre, central Keighley and the wider urban area, to improve access, connectivity and overall placemaking.
- Leveraging major regeneration initiatives (including the Southern Gateway, City Village and Transforming Towns programme) to embed high-quality GBI as part of new development, enhancing liveability and supporting long-term economic growth.
- Capitalising on the district's strong visitor economy and cultural assets, such as Saltaire, Haworth and Ilkley Moor, through enhanced green settings and connected GBI networks to increase dwell time and tourism spend.
- Promote ecotourism to the Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR, capitalising on Condé Nast's declaration of the site as a 'Wonder of the World for 2026'.
- Supporting green job creation and skills development (e.g. in ecology, land management and green construction) to underpin the delivery and maintenance of GBI while strengthening Bradford's attractiveness to businesses and skilled workers.
- Investing in GBI assets located in priority locations, as identified within the CNI, could help to enhance community well-being.

Figure 2.7: Landscape Character Types in Bradford District



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 18/09/2026  
© Natural England. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459 Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

Figure 2.8: Designated heritage assets and population density in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/04/2026  
© ONS. © Historic England. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

**City of Bradford Metropolitan District boundary**

**Community Needs Index 2023**

- 1 (most in need)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 (least in need)

The map displays the City of Bradford Metropolitan District, with the Community Needs Index 2023 color-coded by ward. The index ranges from 1 (most in need, dark blue) to 10 (least in need, yellow). The map includes labels for various towns and villages, as well as major roads and geographical features. A scale bar and north arrow are located in the bottom left corner.

Local Trust, Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion. (2026). Community Needs Index, 2023. UK Data Service. SN: 9573, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-9573-1> © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

## Theme 4: Water management in Bradford

### Why is GBI important for Bradford's water environment?

GBI has a vital role to play in how the district manages water, both in everyday conditions and during extreme weather. Well-planned GBI can support a more sustainable water cycle, whilst delivering multiple benefits for people and nature.

At both local and catchment scales, GBI can act as a nature-based solution to address flood risk. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) interventions in urban areas such as swales, wetlands and rain gardens slow the flow of water, reducing pressure on drains, sewers and watercourses. This not only helps prevent surface water flooding and storm overflow incidents, but also allows more water to be stored, absorbed and put to positive use, such as providing accessible blue-greenspaces and supporting biodiversity.

GBI can also help to improve water quality. Natural planting and permeable surfaces encourage filtration, reducing pollutants before they reach rivers and streams. This supports healthier ecosystems, helping to build long-term resilience into the local water cycle.

Bradford District's rivers and watercourses, including the River Aire, River Wharfe and their tributaries, play an essential role in flood management. These blue infrastructure networks also form a vital part of the district's ecological networks, providing valuable assets for recreation, health and well-being. Enhancing Bradford District's water environment through GBI can therefore deliver an effective combination of environmental, social and economic benefits.

### What are the assets, challenges and pressures in the district?

**2.60** The district is located primarily within the Aire and Calder management catchment, with a small area in the north falling within the Wharfe and Lower Ouse management catchment. Both form part of the wider Humber River Basin District.

**2.61** Catchment partnerships have been established to manage the rivers through a Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) which promotes collaborative working at river catchment scale. The catchment partnerships are the Aire Catchment Network [\[See reference 95\]](#) (managed by the Aire Rivers Trust) and the [Dales to Vale River Network](#) [\[See reference 96\]](#) (led by Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust) which covers the River Wharfe.

**2.62** As shown on **Figure 2.10**, the main rivers within the district are the River Aire and the River Wharfe. The River Aire rises from its source in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and flows eastwards through the district. It is fed by a number of tributaries which primarily rise on the uplands of Ilkley Moor in the north and Keighley Moor in the south-west. There are two main tributaries of the River Aire, as outlined below:

- The River Worth is located in the west of the district. Rising in the west at the border with Lancashire, it runs through Haworth before meeting the Aire near Keighley.
- Bradford Beck is made up of a number of smaller streams including Pinch Beck, Pitty Beck, and Clayton Beck. It runs north through Bradford and is extensively culverted through the city centre. It meets the River Aire at Shipley.

**2.63** The River Wharfe rises from its source in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and flows eastwards along the north-east of the district around Addingham, Ilkley and Burley-in-Wharfedale. A section of the Wharfe near Ilkley was the first river in England to be designated as an inland bathing site in 2020 (designated led by The Ilkley Clean River Group). However, it has experienced poor water quality status since then due to pollution from sewage spills into the river [\[See reference 97\]](#).

**2.64** The Leeds-Liverpool Canal runs east to west through the centre of the district, passing through Shipley, Bingley, Riddlesden and Silsden. Managed by the Canal and Rivers Trust, it forms an important blue corridor and is a valued recreational resource for visitors and local communities alike, as well as contributing to landscape character and sense of place as an industrial heritage asset.

**2.65** A number of reservoirs are located in the upland areas of the district, particularly in the north and west, such as Silsden, Keighley Moor, Ponden, and Lower Laithe Reservoirs. They are primarily managed by Yorkshire Water, apart from Upper and Lower Chellow, Harold Park and Park Dam Reservoirs, which are managed by CBMDC.

## Water quality

**2.66** As shown on **Figure 2.10**, data from the Humber Catchment River Basin Management Plan indicates that most watercourses within the catchment are in 'moderate' ecological condition. Two are in 'good' condition (Gill Beck, Baildon, and the length of the Leeds-Liverpool canal). Red Beck in the south of the district is in 'poor' condition. This is primarily due to diffuse pollution from agricultural and urban runoff. In the wider management catchment, the main reason for not achieving 'good' status is due to physical modifications to watercourses such as culverting,

straightening channels, and vegetation removal, as well as industrial wastewater pollution [\[See reference 98\]](#). Under the Water Framework Directive, all water bodies should aim to achieve ‘good’ ecological condition status.

**2.67** As is the case with all rivers across the UK, all rivers within the district are failing their chemical classification since the monitoring of Ubiquitous Persistent, Bio-accumulative and Toxic substances (uPBTs) was introduced in 2019. However, if uPBTs are discounted, the majority of watercourses in the district have ‘good’ chemical status.

**2.68** Community action groups make an important contribution to monitoring and improving water quality within the district. The Aire Rivers Trust run a number of projects locally to improve river quality, promote community engagement and increase resilience to flooding. For example, the ‘Roots in the River’ project (as outlined in **Theme 1**) and the River Worth Restoration Project, which seeks to restore habitats, improve water quality, and enhance access to the river [\[See reference 99\]](#). The Aire Rivers Trust also supports several local action groups which work across the whole River Aire catchment. The Ilkley Clean River Group monitor water quality in the River Wharfe and are campaigning for the declaration of the river’s rights.

**2.69** Eyes on the Water is a citizen-science project delivered by WRC Group and Friends of Bradford’s Becks community group. Photographs collected by local volunteers were used to train artificial intelligence to detect visible indicators of river pollution, providing a cost-effective method for water quality monitoring [\[See reference 100\]](#).

**2.70** Efforts to improve water quality of the River Wharfe include Yorkshire Water’s Integrated Water Treatment project near Ilkley. The project will reduce storm overflow discharges and increase wastewater treatment capacity through the creation of an Integrated Constructed Wetland comprising a series of lagoons planted with wetland species which will naturally filter and treat wastewater before it is returned to the river [\[See reference 101\]](#).

## Flood risk

**2.71** According to the Bradford District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2023) [\[See reference 102\]](#), large-scale flood events in the district have occurred due to a combination of high river levels, excessive surface water runoff, saturated ground, groundwater fluctuations and exceeded capacity in sewer and highway drainage systems. This has significantly affected urban areas of the district; including Shipley, Bingley, Keighley and Bradford city centre. As outlined in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, recent flooding events have occurred following periods of prolonged

rainfall causing both fluvial and surface water flooding, notably during the winter storms of December 2015 and February 2020.

### Fluvial flooding

**2.72** Flood risk within the district is indicated on **Figure 2.11**. The main fluvial flood risk comes from the River Aire, River Wharfe and their tributaries through the north and centre of the district. Both are fed by a number of fast-flowing upland streams which can be a source of flood risk downstream in extreme rainfall events. These flow through the towns along the valley.

**2.73** Periods of heavy rainfall in the uplands and resultant high river flows are exacerbated in the heavily urbanised middle reaches of the River Aire, where the density of development within the valley has resulted in significant restrictions to the natural floodplain. Areas of Bradford city centre are at risk of fluvial flooding from Bradford Beck and Eastbrook Beck, which are heavily modified and extensively culverted.

**2.74** Canal flooding can occur as a result of high rainfall as well as interaction with other watercourses, resulting in overtopping or breaching of embankments. There are no recorded incidents of flooding on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.

### Surface water flooding

**2.75** Surface water flood risk is spread across the district, with areas surrounding the main river channels being the most at risk (see **Figure 2.11**). Historic surface water flooding as a result of heavy and persistent rainfall during storms resulted in flooding to properties and major transport corridors. Extensive areas of impermeable surfacing in urban areas exacerbates surface water flood risk.

### Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)

**2.76** SuDS mimic natural drainage processes to manage the rate of surface water run-off and provide a diversity of habitat for wildlife in urban locations. Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires all new development to include SuDS, however this has not yet come into effect in England. Non-statutory national standards for SuDS were published in 2025 [\[See reference 103\]](#). The most recent SuDS guidance for new housing developments in the district is outlined in the 'Homes and Neighbourhoods: A Guide to Designing in Bradford' [\[See reference 104\]](#). SuDS have been incorporated into greenspaces in the city centre, including as part of the recent City Centre Improvements Scheme [\[See reference 105\]](#).

## Natural Flood Management (NFM)

**2.77** NFM techniques replicate natural processes to manage water and reduce flooding. A number of natural flood management interventions have been implemented across the district. Chellow Dene Urban Wetland in Allerton is part of a wider flood alleviation programme across West Yorkshire, involving the creation of artificial wetlands to increase water storage capacity and reduce risk of flooding to nearby properties, as well as restoring the natural course of Chellow Dene Beck [\[See reference 106\]](#).

**2.78** The Aire Rivers Trust Better Becks programme [\[See reference 107\]](#) is seeking ways to integrate NFM into restoration of Northcliffe Dyke in Shipley to reduce flood risk by slowing the flow of water through the valley. Other emerging projects such as the Keighley and Stockbridge Flood Alleviation Scheme are exploring ways to integrate natural flood management techniques to reduce flood risk downstream. The trust is also delivering an improvement scheme at Pitty Beck.

**2.79** Land management practices on Bradford District's uplands, delivered in partnership with organisations such as Moors for the Future, focus on restoring blanket bog and peat, blocking drainage gullies, and restoring heathland vegetation to increase surface roughness all help to increase water storage capacity in the uplands, helping to manage and slow the flow downstream. A pilot project on Harden Moor includes interventions such as tree planting, wetland creation, blocking drainage features and creating leaky dams to slow the flow of water into Harden Beck, a major tributary to the River Aire. The wider project aims to reduce flooding downstream including in Bingley, Saltaire, Shipley, Esholt and Apperley Bridge [\[See reference 108\]](#).

**2.80** The Working with Natural processes (WWNP) data for the district identifies areas of potential for riparian woodland planting along the district's watercourses (see **Figure 2.12**). The data indicates where additional tree planting would most effectively attenuate flooding. Potential planting areas are particularly concentrated around tributaries of the River Wharfe in the north of the district and the River Aire near Silsden, as well as notable areas associated with uplands around Oxenhope and associated with the River Worth in the west. Creation of new areas of riparian planting would allow improved filtration of surface run-off before reaching the district's watercourses and could also help to reduce downstream flood risk by slowing the flow of water off the land.

**2.81** The WWNP data also identifies areas for floodplain reconnection potential, to reconnect watercourses with their natural floodplain to increase capacity for flood water storage and reduce downstream flooding. These areas are closely associated with the channel of the Wharfe and the Aire, particularly in the east.

## Summary of key issues

- Fluvial flood risk due to the steep-sided valley topography and fast-flowing watercourses in upper reaches of the catchment. Surface water flood risk is concentrated in urban areas as a result of extensive impermeable surfaces.
- Most rivers are in 'moderate' ecological condition as a result of current and former land uses in the catchment, including diffuse pollution from urban and agricultural runoff. Red Beck is in poor ecological condition.
- Heavily modified watercourses that have historically been culverted and straightened (such as Bradford Beck) have reduced habitat quality and ecological function and are more vulnerable to flooding.
- Landscape management in the wider catchment, such as peatland drainage, river channel modification, and tree removal reduce the hydrological function of the landscape, disrupt flow regimes and increase flood risk.

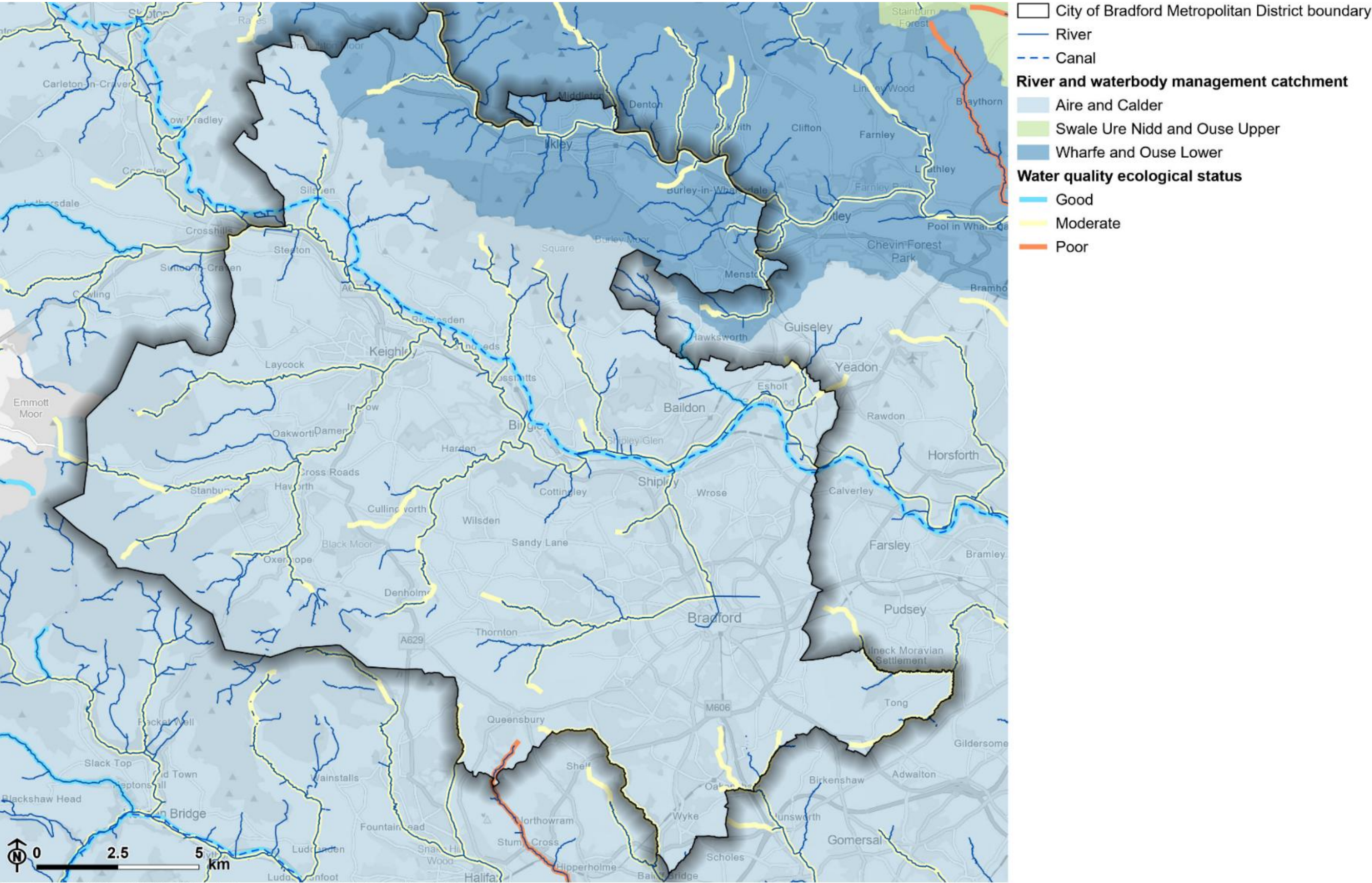
## Emerging opportunities

- Retrofit Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into existing spaces and increase their use in new developments, including the use of permeable surfaces such as pavements and car parking areas.
- Open up culverted sections of rivers in Bradford city centre, as proposed in the Bradford Beck Catchment Management Plan (2013) [\[See reference 109\]](#) through initiatives such as the 'Naturalising Bradford Beck' project.
- Support water quality improvement projects and catchment-scale initiatives to reduce water pollution and improve water quality. Expand and replicate existing successful projects.
- Build on proposals identified in the Shipley and Canal Road Corridor Area Action Plan (2017), including re-naturalising the course of Bradford Beck, creating new habitat and greenspaces to create a new green corridor in this area of the district.
- Maintain the Leeds-Liverpool Canal as an important green corridor and seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity, access, and recreation. Seek opportunities to create links to other blue corridors and create new ones.
- Support Natural Flood Management approaches at catchment scale, including increased tree and riparian planting and interventions on moorlands such as

leaky dams and blocking drainage gullies, to slow overland flow, increase water retention and improve water quality.

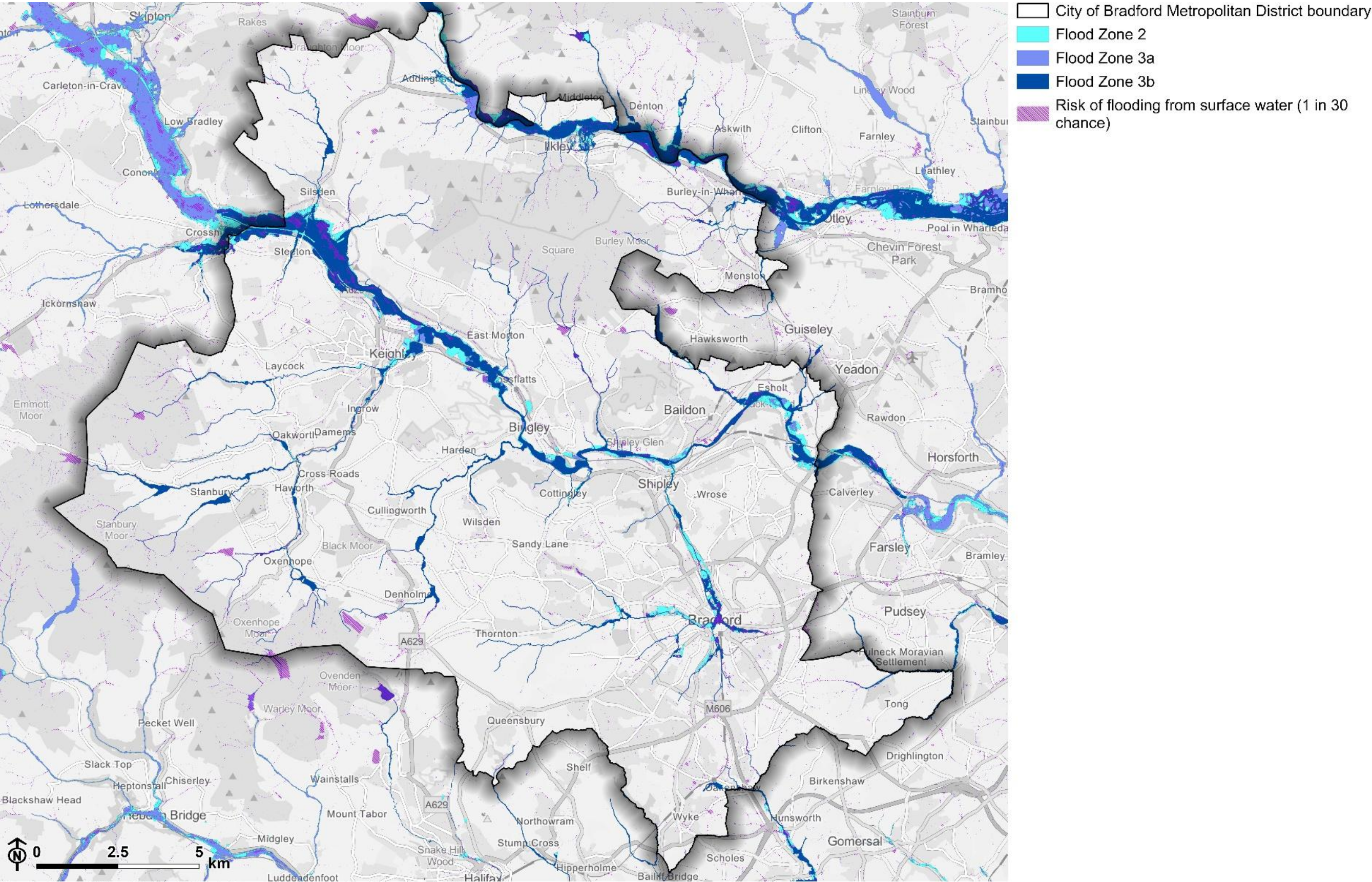
- Promote community involvement as a mechanism for education and long-term stewardship of rivers and watercourses and support the work of existing community action groups.
- Work with farmers and landowners to improve soil management; including the soil structure, organic matter, biology and ability to absorb and store water. Opportunities in Bradford District could include minimising soil compaction, maintaining continuous groundcover (e.g. use of cover crops), application of well-managed manure or compost to increase soil organic matter, protecting and restoring grasslands, establishing field margins, hedgerows and buffer strips and managing grazing.
- Work with CBMDC's Woodland Creation Officer to explore opportunities to introduce woodland to improve water management. Current initiatives include tree planting in cloughs on Ilkley Moor.

Figure 2.10: Blue corridors and condition in the district



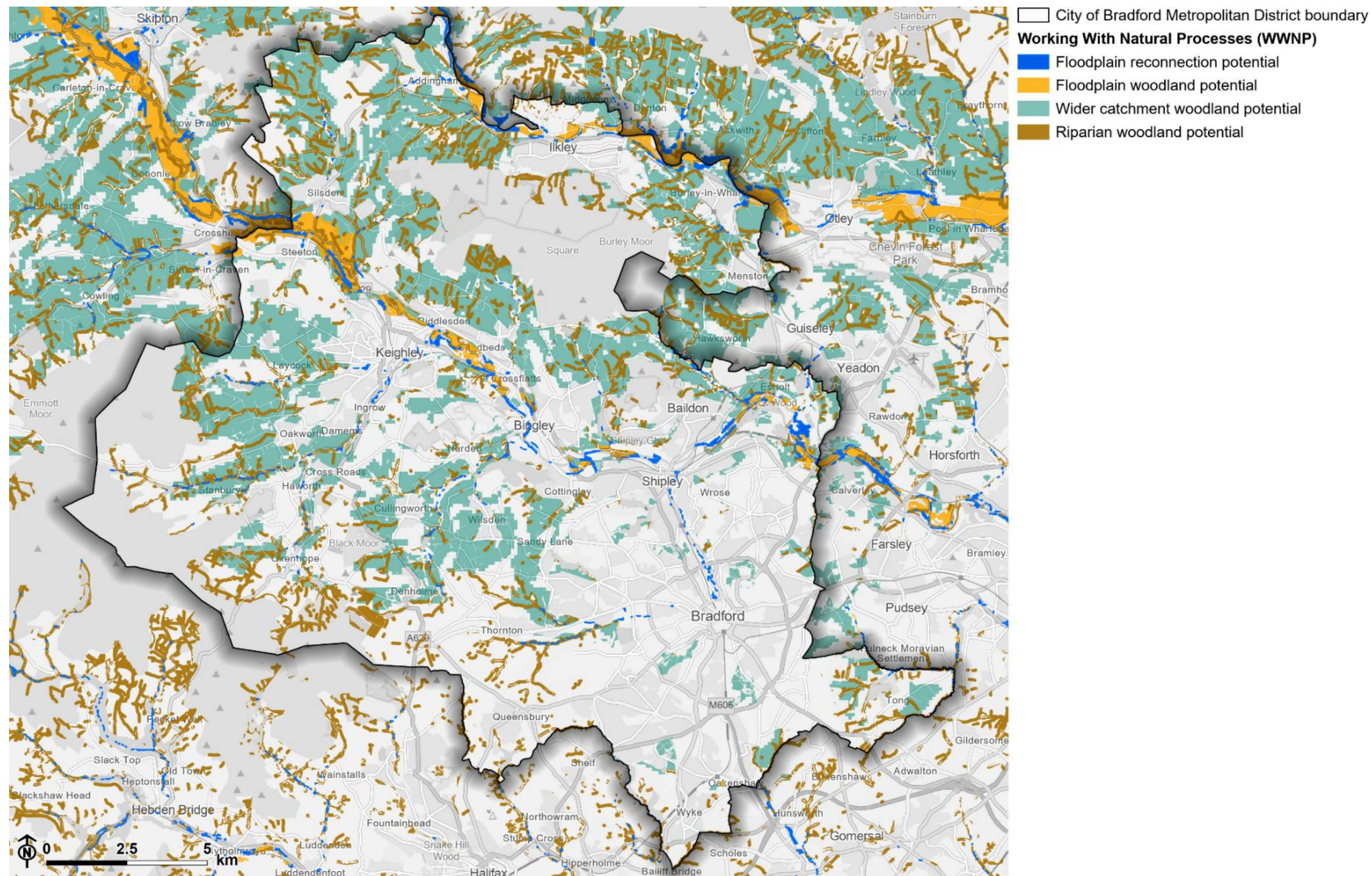
Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/04/2026  
Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2019. All rights reserved. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri  
Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

Figure 2.11: Flood risk in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 14/08/2026  
© Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2026. All rights reserved. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

**Figure 2.12: Natural flood management potential in the district**



Created by LUC - 16947 000 r0 ReportFigures/A3L Baseline 14/04/2026

© Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2015. All rights reserved. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

## Theme 5: Climate resilient Bradford

### Why is GBI important for climate resilience in Bradford?

To support climate mitigation, a well-designed GBI network can enhance carbon sequestration within habitats such as woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, whilst also reducing carbon emissions through supporting low-carbon travel via active travel routes and green-blue corridors.

At the same time, GBI is key to climate adaptation – enhancing flood resilience and water retention, providing cooling and shading in urban areas and improving habitat connectivity to allow wildlife to move and adapt as conditions change.

Both CBMDC and the wider Leeds City Region have declared a Climate Emergency and have formed a Climate Coalition which aims to achieve a net zero carbon region by 2038, with significant progress being made by 2030.

Bradford's Climate Action Plan 2025-2028 [\[See reference 110\]](#) aims to address climate change and drive progress towards achieving net-zero across the district, in line with the regional West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Climate and Environment Plan 2025-2028.

### What are the assets, challenges and pressures in the district?

#### Carbon storage and sequestration

##### Trees and woodland

**2.82** Tree canopy cover across the district equates to 10.1%. This canopy cover provides shading to reduce heat risk and contributes to reduced flood risk by intercepting rainfall, as well as sequestering carbon. The distribution of tree canopy cover is shown in **Figure 2.13**.

**2.83** Trees and woodland make a significant contribution towards capturing and storing carbon. Working with the White Rose Forest and partners, CBMDC aims to increase tree and woodland cover from 10.1% to 17% across the district by 2050 [\[See reference 111\]](#). A report produced on behalf of the White Rose Forest [\[See reference 112\]](#) estimates carbon sequestration and storage for the White Rose Forest area; including statistics for the district under various planting scenarios. In the

maximum planting scenario (planting on 75% of suitable land), woodland creation could sequester up to 123 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, making a significant contribution to offsetting Bradford District's carbon emissions.

**2.84** Local priorities for the district, as set out in the White Rose Forest Strategic Plan 2025-2050 [\[See reference 113\]](#) Action Plan are as follows:

- Increase tree and woodland cover from 10.1% to 17% by 2050 (an increase of approximately 2,500 hectares).
- Prioritise urban planting such as street trees and pocket parks to connect people to nature providing long term benefits to communities and the natural environment.
- Increase wood pasture planting in rural areas to increase landscape-scale ecological connectivity and carbon sequestration. Targeted low-density planting on grazing land will enhance farmed landscapes whilst also preserving productive land.
- Increase planting throughout the River Aire catchment to slow the flow of water and reduce flooding in affected communities.

**2.85** Existing initiatives include the Green Streets programme, which aims to increase street tree planting in urban areas to improve air quality and promote active travel [\[See reference 114\]](#). The Tree for Every Child initiative between CBMDC Council and Trees for Cities planted 55,000 trees and four new woodlands for urban communities during 2021-2023, delivering benefits for climate including rainwater attenuation, shade provision and urban cooling [\[See reference 115\]](#).

**2.86** In rural environments, the Landscapes for Water Programme [\[See reference 116\]](#) is a collaborative partnership between White Rose Forest, Yorkshire Water, the National Trust, and West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The programme supports landowners in the Aire and Calder catchments to deliver targeted woodland planting, helping to reduce flood risk downstream.

## Peatland

**2.87** Peatlands represent the largest terrestrial carbon store, covering around 10% of UK land area and storing approximately 3.2 billion tonnes of carbon [\[See reference 117\]](#). Upland moorlands within the district, such as Ilkley Moor and Keighley Moor support blanket bog and deep peat soils and are an important carbon store.

**2.88** The Ilkley Moor Management Plan 2016-2026 [\[See reference 118\]](#) recognises the role the area plays in climate change mitigation and the increased risk of flooding

and wildfires as a result of climate change. This is supported by the Ilkley Moor Resilience project [See reference 119], a collaborative project between Moors for the Future and CBMDC. It aims to prevent carbon loss, reduce downstream flooding, increase resilience to wildfires, and maintain peat as a net carbon sink through peat re-wetting and other measures (including *Sphagnum* moss planting) to slow overland flow.

## Heathland

**2.89** Restoration of heath on agricultural acid grassland within the district also represents a mechanism to capture carbon and to prevent flood risk.

## Climate risks

### Flood risk

**2.90** As shown on **Figure 2.11**, fluvial flood risk is concentrated along the River Aire and River Wharfe and their tributaries, as well as along Bradford Beck through Bradford city centre. Surface water flood risk (1 in 30 year) is correlated with urban areas including Ilkley and Keighley, and along transport corridors where they run close to rivers, such as the A629 and A65.

### Urban heat

**2.91** As shown on **Figure 2.14**, the same areas that experience ‘extremely high’ and ‘acute’ heat vulnerability are those areas with 80-100% manmade surfaces. Key areas of vulnerability are associated with the most built-up areas of the district in Bradford city centre, Shipley, Bingley and Keighley. This pattern strongly correlates with data from Natural England’s Greenness Grid, which highlights those areas with greatest area of manmade surfaces across the district.

**2.92** Expanding canopy cover is an effective way to manage urban heat. The Tree Equity Score Map [See reference 120] identifies where tree cover is needed most by combining data on canopy cover with social and environmental factors. The aim of the data is to target urban tree planting to help improve health, climate resilience and equity in underserved communities. The tool highlights several gaps where urban tree planting should be prioritised in the district; including in Bradford city centre, Shipley, Bingley and Keighley.

**2.93** Within the district, street tree planting must be retrofitted where possible and included in all new developments and significant transport schemes.

## Air quality

**2.94** According to the Bradford Climate Action Plan, 25% of the district's greenhouse gas emissions are from transport. A well-planned GBI network can support sustainable transport policies to provide high quality options that reduce car dependency, and as a result, carbon emissions. GBI interventions such as green roofs and green walls, urban tree and hedge planting can help to improve air quality by absorbing and dispersing pollutants.

## Wildfires

**2.95** Wildfires on Bradford District's moorlands are an increasing risk as a result of prolonged periods of hotter, drier weather, particularly in summer months. Wildfires release locked up carbon and damage habitats, as well as impacting water quality and air pollution. Ilkley Moor experienced large wildfires in 2006 and 2019. Wildfires are predicted to increase in frequency and severity in the UK [\[See reference 121\]](#).

## Climate adaptation measures

### Bradford Climate Action Plan

**2.96** Bradford's Climate Action Plan (2025-2028) sets out how the district will work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2038, with significant progress by 2030. The plan provides a clear, measurable pathway that combines emissions reduction with wider social, economic and environmental benefits, aiming to create a healthier, cleaner, and more resilient district. The plan covers mitigation and adaptation measures, focused on eight priority areas: transforming travel and transport; increasing renewable energy and fuels; decarbonising industry; growing a sustainable and inclusive economy; improving the energy efficiency and comfort of buildings; enabling community-led climate action; managing land and nature; and reducing consumption and waste.

**2.97** Community engagement and co-design are embedded throughout the document, reflecting extensive consultation and research to ensure climate action is fair, locally relevant and supports a 'just transition', especially for more vulnerable communities. The plan also links climate action to economic regeneration, skills development and job creation, positioning net zero as an opportunity for clean growth, improved public health and enhanced biodiversity across the district rather than a purely technical approach to climate adaptation.

## Life CRITICAL Project

**2.98** The 2019 Life CRITICAL (Climate Resilience Through Involvement of Local citizens) [\[See reference 122\]](#) is a community-based project in Bradford's parks and greenspaces to help local communities adapt to the impacts of climate change. The project delivered multi-functional benefits, reduced surface-water flooding, addressing urban heat stress, and improving air quality, as well as enhancing biodiversity and delivering social benefits by strengthening community ownership and stewardship of greenspaces.

**2.99** Building on work originally developed in the Netherlands, the project focused on Horton Park integrating nature-based solutions to address flooding through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), wetlands, ponds, and re-naturalised landscapes. The project has a strong community focus with local schools and community groups involved in co-design, and local volunteers contributing to data monitoring activities to improve access to high quality greenspace in one of Bradford's most densely populated inner-city neighbourhoods.

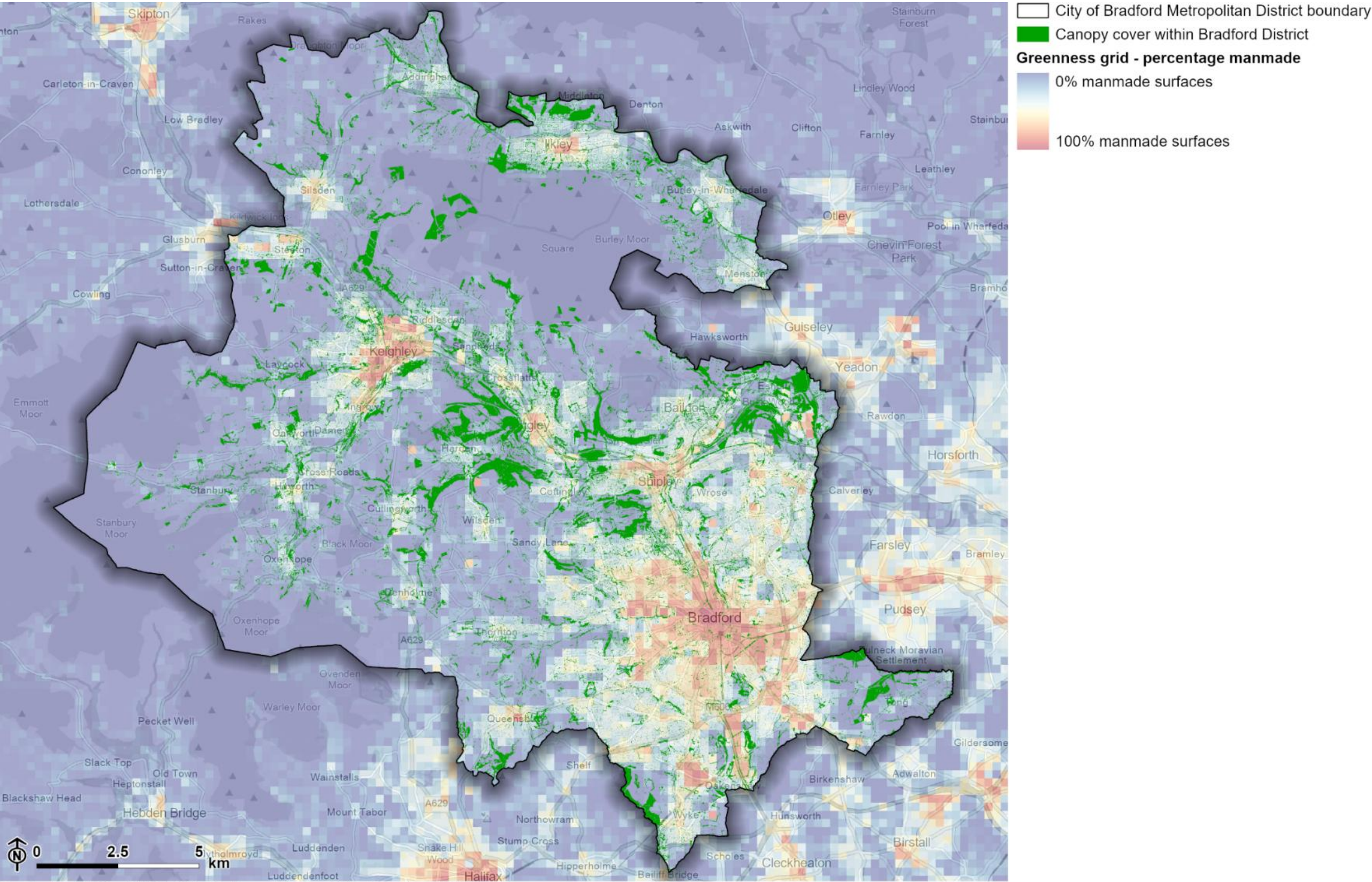
## Key issues/challenges

- Flood risk concentrated along the River Aire, River Wharfe, and Bradford Beck, whilst surface water flooding is a major issue in urban areas and along transport corridors where impermeable surfaces dominate.
- Communities with existing deprivation face greater exposure to climate impacts and have fewer resources to adapt.
- Transport emissions make a significant contribution to overall greenhouse gas emissions in the district, impacting on air quality.
- Urban heat vulnerability is concentrated in Bradford's most built-up areas with the greatest extent of man-made surfaces, and typically lower density of urban greenspace and tree canopy cover.
- Inequalities in quality, quantity, and distribution of tree canopy cover (as indicated by tree equity score mapping). Urban areas with higher levels of deprivation often have lower tree canopy cover.
- Degraded peatlands have reduced ability to sequester carbon and retain water, leading to increased flood risk in downstream areas. Drier peatland has increased wildfire risk, impacting on air pollution.

## Emerging opportunities

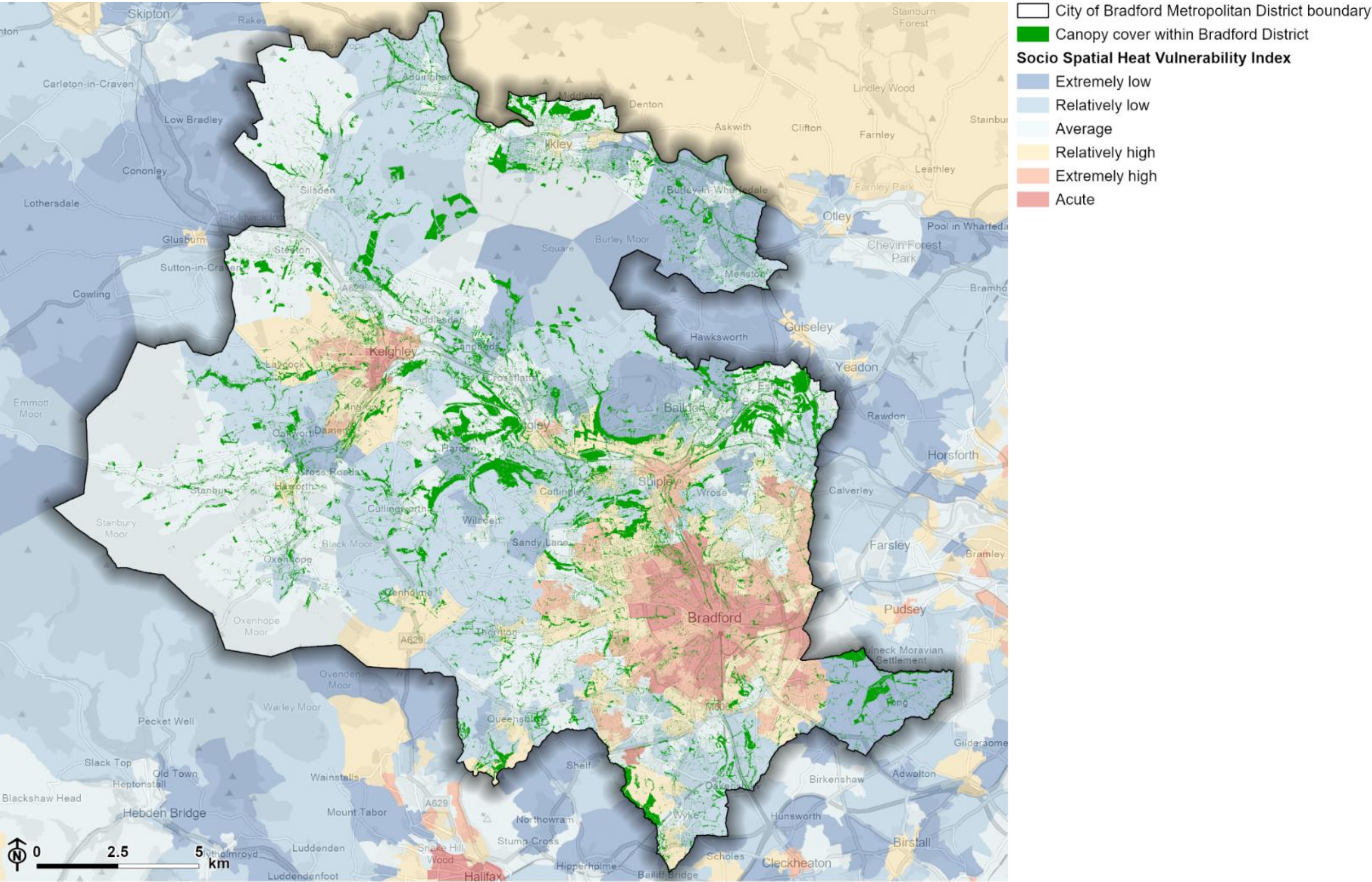
- Promote the active removal of greenhouse gases through GBI provision in urban settings through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), wetland creation and tree planting to address flood risk, heat stress and air quality issues. Current examples in the district include the Keighley Towns Fund which supports public realm improvements on Cavendish Street, including planting street trees and installing rain gardens.
- Increase urban tree planting – target planting schemes using the Tree Equity Score mapping and utilise existing delivery mechanisms where appropriate.
- Promote appropriate landscape management approaches in rural landscapes such as peatland and wetland restoration and tree planting, to reduce flood risk, promote carbon sequestration, and improve air and water quality.
- Work with farmers to encourage the uptake of nature friendly farming practices, including the restoration of species rich grasslands and the establishment of field margins and buffer strips.
- Increase habitat connectivity to aid species movement. Actions could include hedgerow restoration, tree planting along field boundaries, creation of species rich grassland corridors and riparian habitat enhancement.
- Integrate climate adaptation with urban regeneration and placemaking schemes to promote economic regeneration and deliver benefits for climate and communities, as set out in the Climate Action Plan.
- Ensure community involvement throughout to encourage behavioural change, sense of ownership and stewardship, and to reduce inequalities linked to the impacts of climate change.
- Promote the transition to low-carbon transport and enable active travel through provision of safe, accessible green corridors and active travel routes to reduce car dependency.
- Promote partnership working across the district to ensure a coordinated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Figure 2.13: Tree canopy cover and Greenness Grid in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 19/05/2026  
© Natural England. National Tree Map – © Bluesky International Limited. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri  
Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

Figure 2.14: Social heat vulnerability index in the district



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Baseline 19/05/2026  
National Tree Map – © Bluesky International Limited. LSJ et al (2011) "Climate change, justice and vulnerability", Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report, York. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

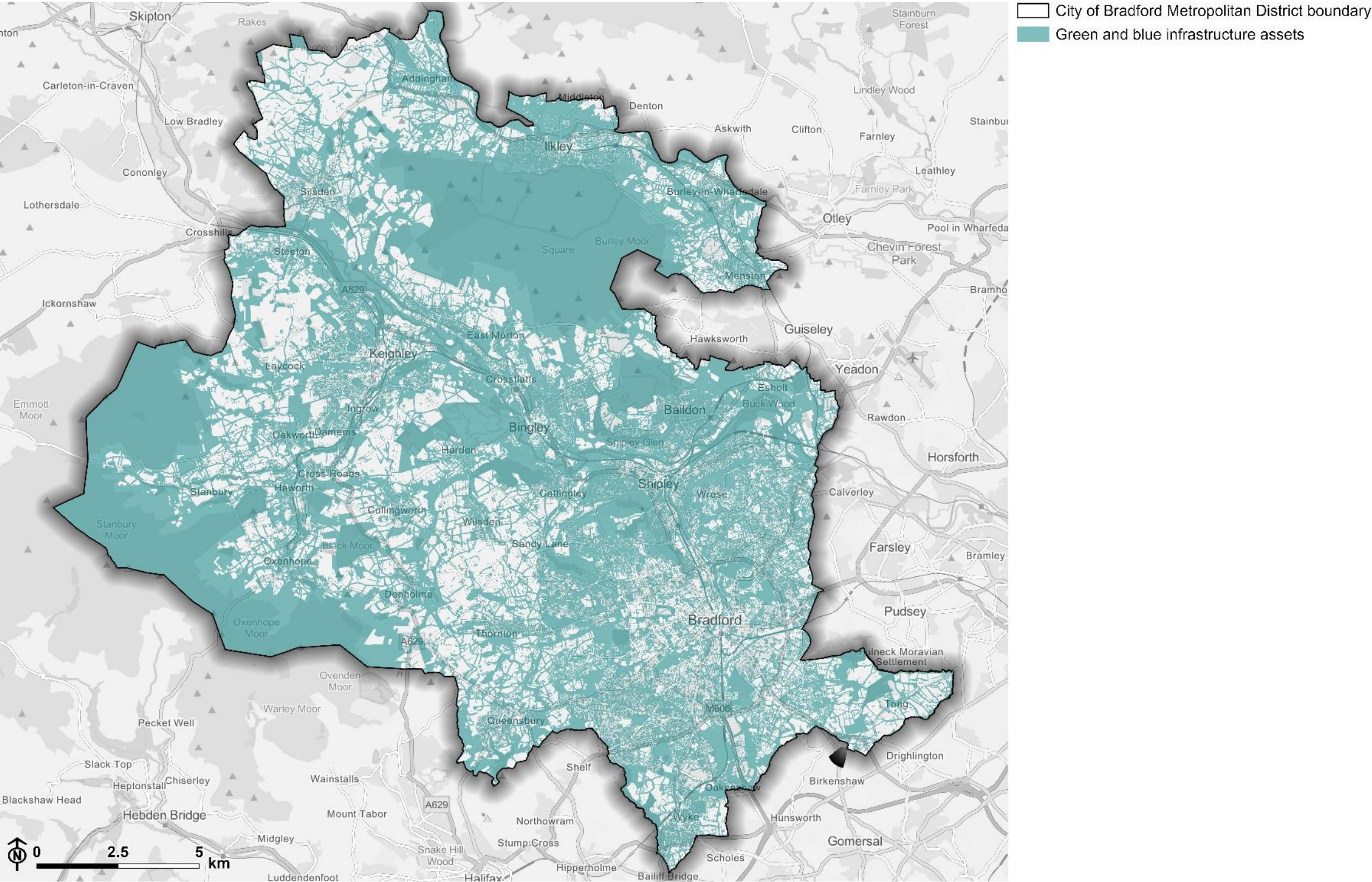
## GBI assets in Bradford District

**2.100** Several key GBI datasets have been combined to provide an overview of GBI assets across the district, as shown in **Figure 2.15**.

**2.101** The full list of datasets used in this figure can be found in **Appendix A**. Overall, **Figure 2.15** shows a high coverage of GBI assets across the district, though with notably fewer assets in the far north-west, south of Steeton, around Keighley, between Wilsden and Thornton and within Bradford city centre.

**Chapter 4** explores the current provision of GBI against needs in order to identify priority areas for investment.

Figure 2.15: Green and blue infrastructure assets in Bradford District



© Natural England. © Historic England. © Environment Agency. © Forestry Commission. © Bluesky International Ltd. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains data supplied by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Licence number AC0000813459. © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri. Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Green and Blue Infrastructure Assets 21/08/2026

## Chapter 3

### Vision and Strategic Objectives

#### Vision

In 2050, Bradford District will have a well-integrated, diverse and connected GBI network. Urban areas will be thriving places with equitable access to wildlife rich green and blue spaces which support biodiversity, health and well-being, and provide opportunities for social activities and increased community cohesion. A re-naturalised water environment will improve access, water quality, reduce flood risk and be rich with aquatic habitats and species. All communities will benefit from an environment which is resilient to the effects of climate change. Existing GBI will be protected, and new development will have further enhanced and expanded the network with associated benefits.

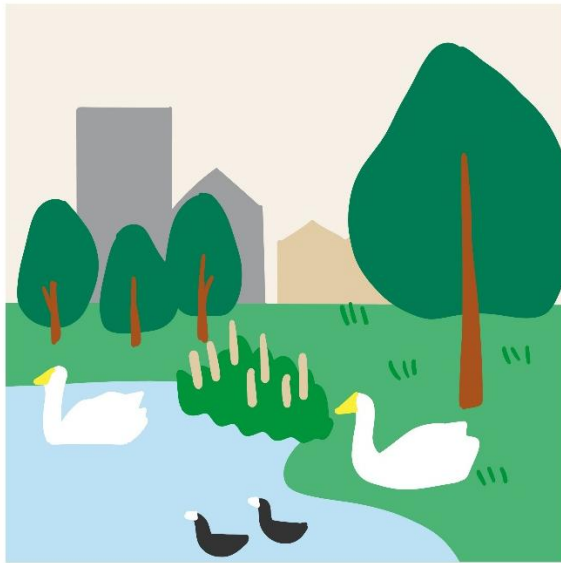
#### Strategic objectives



1. Increase the amount of important habitat protected through local designation, targeting areas where this could also improve access to nature.



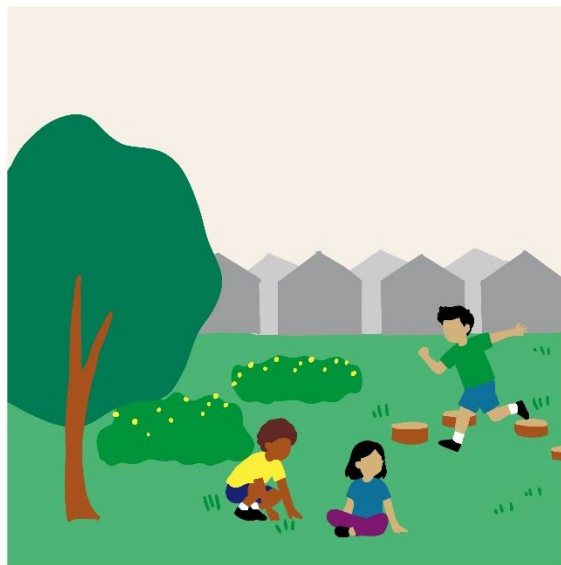
2. Improve the condition of existing designated sites through habitat restoration, and the implementation of enhanced management practices.



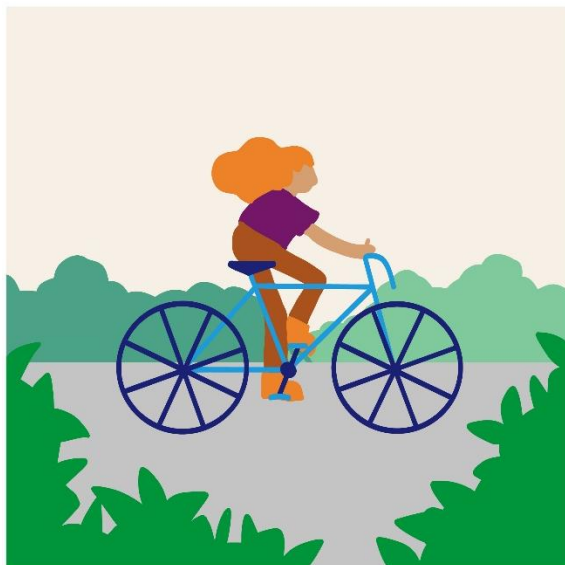
3. Create new areas of wildlife rich habitat within urban areas.



4. Increase tree canopy cover across the district, targeting areas where it will provide environmental justice benefits for underserved communities.



5. Target the provision of new accessible greenspace and play in areas of deficiency and where there are high levels of deprivation.



6. Expand the Greenway network, improve access to GBI and enhance the attractiveness of routes to encourage active travel, improving health and well-being.



7. Capitalise on the success of city centre regeneration, focus on increasing use of greenspaces and learn from success to roll out to other areas.



8. Support river restoration efforts, including re-naturalisation of heavily modified watercourses and removal of invasive non-native species to enhance water quality and reduce flood risk.



9. Build on and expand the existing partnership working across the district to ensure a coordinated approach to GBI delivery and management.



10. Deliver good quality GBI in all new development which contributes to the multi-functionality of the wider network.

## Chapter 4

### Local Needs Assessment

**4.1** This chapter sets out an assessment of current GBI provision based on a bivariate mapping exercise which has enabled the identification of highest priority locations for GBI investment in the district.

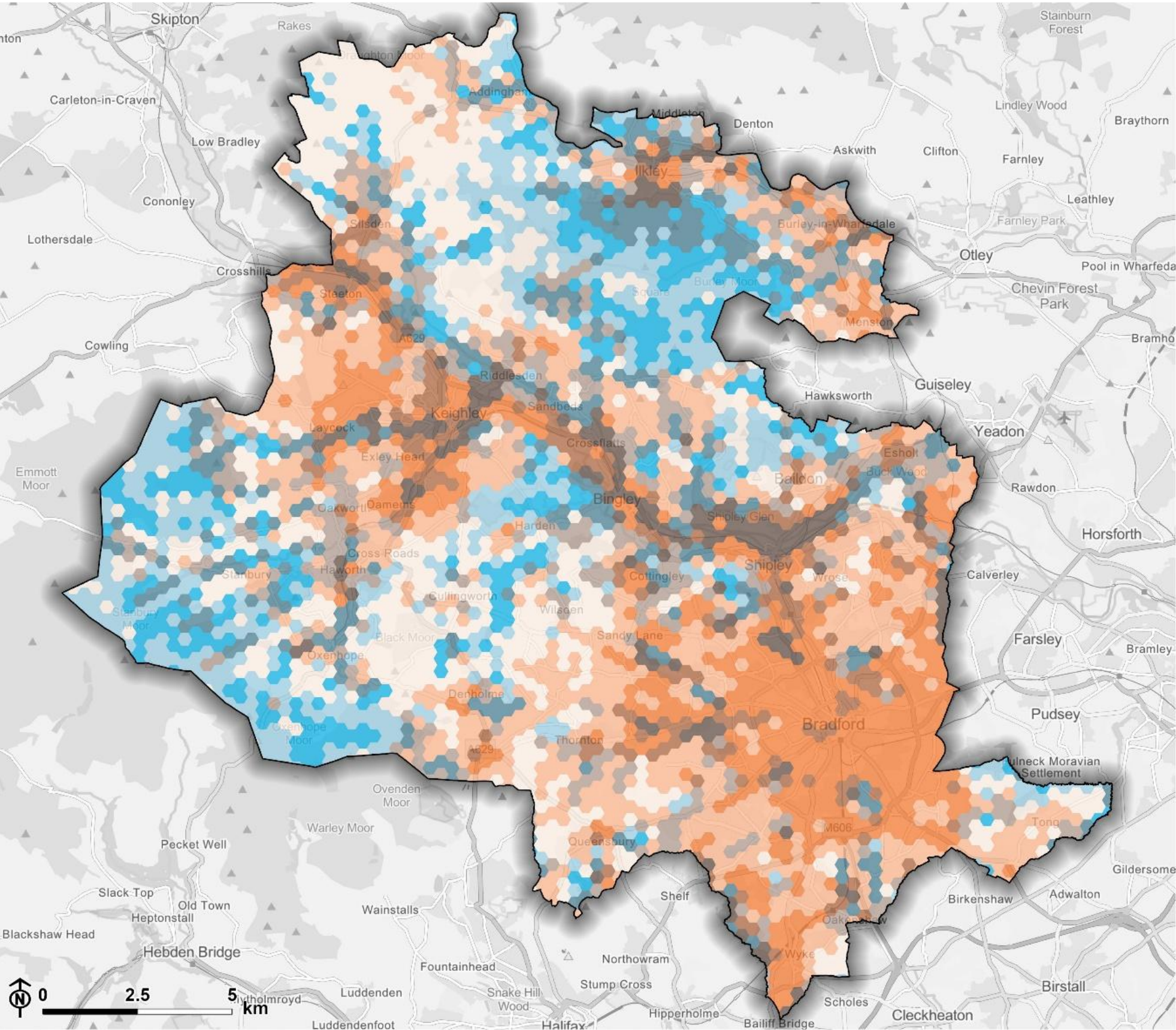
#### GBI provision in Bradford District

**4.2** Baseline spatial data was gathered using geographical information systems (GIS) to understand and guide future GBI enhancements across the district. Using a 50m hexagonal grid, overall GBI need and GBI deficiency across the district was calculated. **Appendix C** outlines the datasets used to prepare this analysis. GBI need examines the existing environmental and social issues within the district which GBI could help alleviate. GBI deficiency refers to an absence of green and blue multi-functional assets which make up the GBI network.

**4.3** Mapping of different combinations of GBI need and deficiency can act as a high-level guide to help prioritise where GBI is most required and indicate spatially any gaps in the existing GBI network. Both need and deficiency have been plotted on a bivariate map, as shown on **Figure 4.1**. The four corners of the legend indicate different priorities for GBI investment, as outlined below.

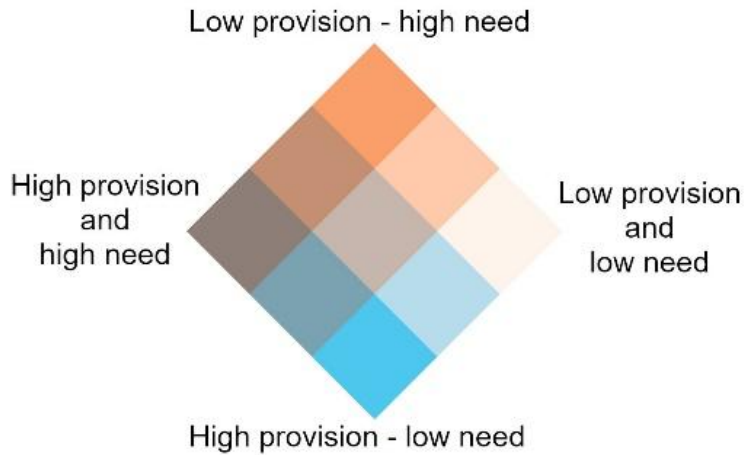
- **High need for GBI and low existing provision** – These areas should form the priority for GBI investment. Proposals should focus on GBI creation, carefully designed to contribute towards site-specific issues e.g. flood mitigation, urban cooling etc.
- **High need for GBI and high existing provision** – Proposals should focus on GBI enhancement or connectivity to ensure GBI is performing multiple functions.
- **Low need and high existing provision** – These areas should form a low priority for GBI investment. Proposals should focus on protection and conservation of existing GBI.
- **Low need for GBI and low existing provision** – These areas should focus on GBI creation, albeit are lower priority than those areas identified as high need and low provision.

Figure 4.1: GBI provision and need in Bradford District



City of Bradford Metropolitan District boundary

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) provision and need in Bradford District.



**Low provision/high need** - These areas should form the priority for GI investment. Proposals should focus on GI creation, carefully designed to contribute towards site-specific issues e.g. flood mitigation, urban cooling etc.

**High provision/high need** - Proposals should focus on GI enhancement or connectivity to ensure GI is performing multiple functions.

**High provision/low need** - These areas should form a low priority for GI investment. Proposals should focus on protection and conservation of existing GI.

**Low provision/low need** - These areas should focus on GI creation, albeit are lower priority than those areas identified as low provision/high need.

Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Green and Blue Infrastructure Provision and Need 17/09/2026  
Please refer to the appendices for a full list of data used in this analysis. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026. Basemap: © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Esri  
Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri.

## Low provision and high need

**4.4** These areas are characterised by a high need for GBI and currently exhibit a low provision of assets to meet this need. Within the district, areas within this category are mostly found surrounding urban centres. Particular locations falling within this category in the district include:

- Bradford city centre and surrounding suburbs;
- Keighley;
- Wyke; and
- East Ilkley.

**4.5** There is low canopy cover and a high percentage of manmade surfaces in all areas of land in this category. Most of these areas (excluding East Ilkley) are in Decile 1 of the IMD (East Ilkley is in Decile 5). Areas surrounding the River Wharfe in Ilkley, River Aire in Keighley and Bradford Becks in central Bradford are at high risk of flooding.

**4.6** The opportunity exists to explore the introduction of GBI interventions such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to increase the percentage of natural surfaces and to alleviate localised flood risk in these areas. The introduction of street trees, shrub planting, community growing spaces or amenity grass will help to increase localised greening in these urbanised contexts. Opportunities could also be explored in Keighley and Bradford city centre to improve access to paths, including tow paths, along watercourses to encourage active travel and enhance health and well-being benefits.

## High provision and high need

**4.7** Investment in GBI in these areas should aim to increase the benefits provided by existing GBI assets, through enhancement and improved connectivity. The types of functions should be designed to meet local needs. Locations characterised by high need and high provision are mostly centred upon river corridors. Specific locations falling within this category within the district include:

- Sections of the River Aire Corridor running between Steeton and Shipley;
- The River Worth Corridor to the east of Keighley;
- Sections of the River Wharfe north of Ilkley;
- Land south of Ilkley immediately adjacent to Ilkley Moor; and

- Land on the Leeds/Bradford border between Greengates and Upper Fagley, surrounding Fagley Beck.

**4.8** The high need in these areas is typically characterised by a high flood risk due to the proximity of watercourses. The role of GBI in reducing flooding is limited for large rivers in the middle and lower courses. However, there may be opportunities to work with upstream partners to reduce the flood risk within urban centres. Where the opportunity arises, introducing SuDS interventions within these areas would increase flood resilience. Areas of high flood risk surrounding Middle Brook and Fagley are also located within the 10% most deprived areas across England. Therefore, creation of new GBI within these areas should focus on greenspaces which offer spaces for people to socialise and connect with nature near to their homes. Access to waterways could also be improved.

## Low provision and low need

**4.9** GBI investment in these areas should focus on the creation of new GBI, albeit this would be at a lower priority than those areas exhibiting existing high need and low provision. Areas of the district falling within this category include:

- Rural areas to the north and east of Silsden; and
- Rural areas in the south of the district including Oldfield, Cullingworth, Harecroft and Wilsden.

**4.10** Whilst these areas demonstrate a lower need for GBI, they have low canopy cover and limited access to local open space. The PRoW network is limited in areas near Silsden and is heavily fragmented in areas to the south of the district. Interventions should focus on improving tree canopy cover to build climate resilience, increasing access to open spaces, or by improving access to the PRoW network.

## High provision and low need

**4.11** These areas represent the lowest priority areas for the introduction of GBI interventions. Investment in GBI in these areas should focus on protecting and conserving existing assets. Land located within this category is mostly located within designated sites. Larger areas include the South Pennines Moors SPA/SAC and Baildon Moor. Smaller extents are located within the St. Ives Estate (Bingley) and Goitstock Wood and Grassland Local Wildlife Site. In order to maintain the high provision of GBI in these areas, existing greenspaces within these areas should be protected and enhanced. Ongoing management and maintenance should be managed within the guidelines of existing management plans (where applicable).

## Chapter 5

### GBI Focus Areas

**5.1** The results of the local needs assessment outlined in **Chapter 4**, along with the results of the baseline analysis in **Chapter 2**, have been used to identify priority focus areas for new GBI provision and enhancement within the district. These are areas where there is a concentration of identified high need and low provision, although all focus areas also include areas of high provision and/or low need.

**5.2** Four primary focus areas have been identified due to the extent of the area within the high need and low provision category. The four focus areas are listed below and displayed visually on **Figure 5.1**:

- GBI Focus Area A: Bradford Inner City;
- GBI Focus Area B: Bradford Connections;
- GBI Focus Area C: Keighley; and
- GBI Focus Area D: Keighley – Bingley – Shipley Corridor.

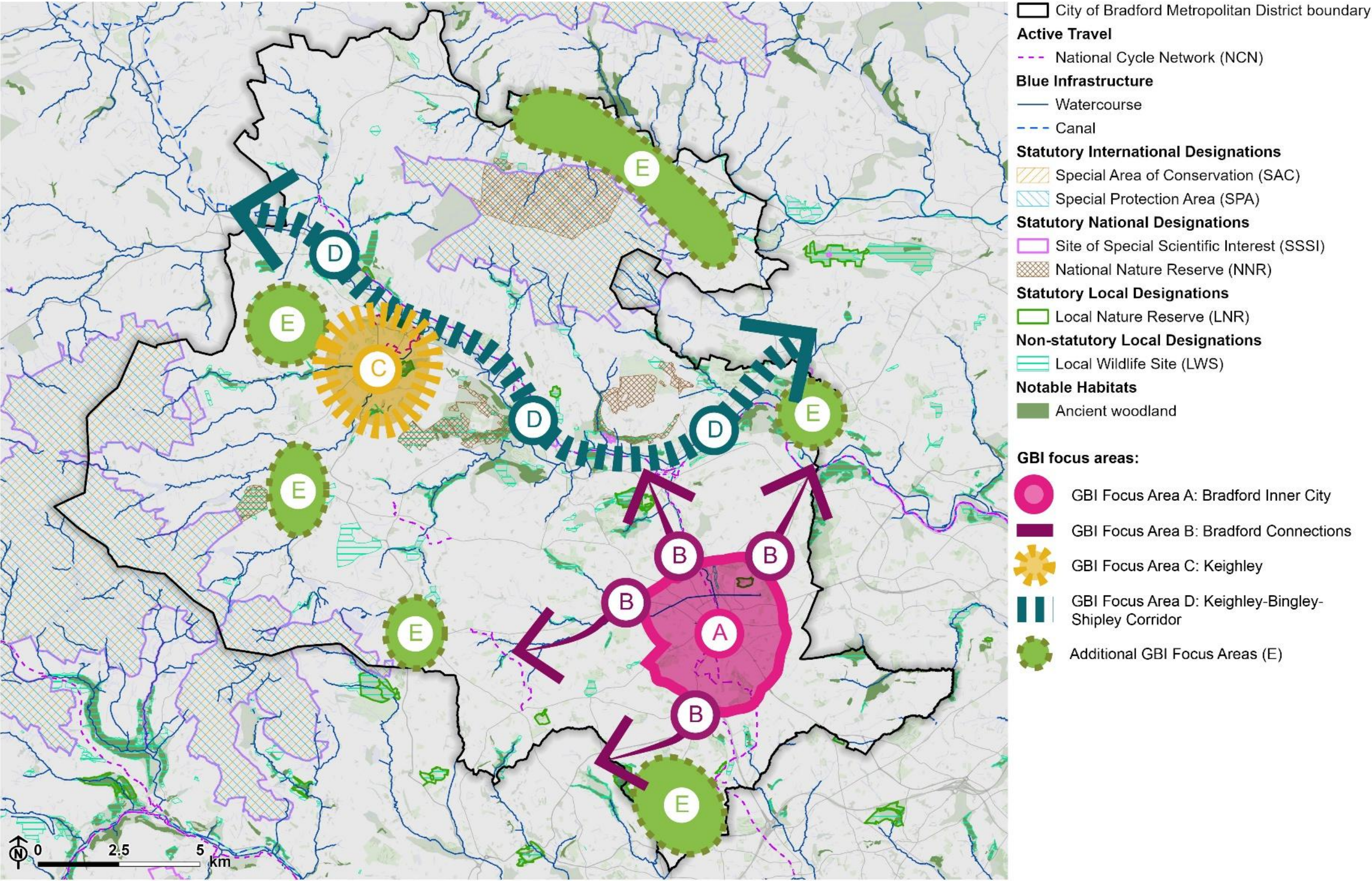
**5.3** Additional focus areas have also been identified which are smaller in scale but still require consideration. These have been labelled 'E' on **Figure 5.1** and include:

- The southern extent of Bradford District around Wyke;
- Denholme and the surrounding area;
- Areas between Oakworth and Haworth;
- Areas to the west of Keighley, including Braithwaite and Laycock; and
- Wharfedale corridor.

**5.4** This chapter provides an overview of each of the GBI focus areas, including the existing GBI assets in the area and key needs. A series of emerging opportunities are identified for each GBI focus area which are then expanded upon in the action plan in **Chapter 7**. Opportunities within the GBI focus areas have been tailored accordingly to the relative level of provision and need, recognising the overall need for a well-connected network.

**5.5** Whilst the opportunities in the action plan are focussed on GBI Focus Areas A-D, these opportunities should also be considered for the additional focus areas where they can be tailored and adapted to enhance the GBI network in these areas.

Figure 5.1: GBI focus areas



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Opportunities 17/09/2026  
© Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. Contains public sector information license OGL v3.0. © Natural England. Contains data from West Yorkshire Combined Authority LNRs and City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459.

## GBI Focus Area A: Bradford Inner City

This focus area is located in the south-east of the district and comprises the urban conurbation of Bradford inner city within the A6177 ring road. The inner centre is focussed around key civic and retail spaces, including City Park and Centenary Square. The city is served by two central stations; Bradford Forster Square and Bradford Interchange.

### Summary of key GBI assets

**5.6** Urban greenspaces and parks make an important contribution to GBI provision in this focus area, including City Park and Norfolk Gardens Park, and larger parks such as Bowling Park, Horton Park, as well as Lister Park and Peel Park which have achieved Green Flag Award status. Smaller community greenspaces such as cemeteries, recreation grounds and playing fields, make a further contribution to greenspace provision for Bradford's inner-city communities. There are a number of allotments and community food growing sites; including Prism City Farm and Horton Community farm. Bradford Manor Golf course contributes further to greenspace provision, although it is not publicly accessible.

**5.7** Tree canopy cover is relatively low and is largely concentrated within the larger parks, notably Peel Park, Bowling Park, and Horton Park, alongside Undercliffe Cemetery (Local Wildlife Site) and Boars Well Urban Nature Reserve. Bradford Beck runs through the north-west of the city centre. It is heavily channelised and culverted, running underneath buildings and road corridors for much of its length.

**5.8** There has been significant recent investment in public realm and GBI schemes in the inner city; including the City Centre Transformation Programme which has delivered a number of public realm improvements, enhanced active travel routes, new areas of planting, and SuDS provision. In addition, the Bradford City Village regeneration project will deliver a new mixed-use neighbourhood in the north of the inner city, providing a walkable neighbourhood with a strong emphasis on urban greening with community greens, tree-lined streets and creation of a new public park. Furthermore, the Southern Gateway regeneration project will deliver infrastructure, homes, offices, retail and leisure spaces alongside a new city centre rail station and the Bradford to Leeds tram scheme. All new development will integrate new accessible greenspaces.

**5.9** A number of local recreation routes provide key walking and cycling access within the inner city, including links to the wider district. There is a relatively dense but

fragmented network of PRoW, including the Dales Way Link long distance footpath which starts at Bradford Cathedral and runs north towards Shipley and Saltaire. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 66 runs from the Shipley Canal Road corridor in the north to Bowling Park in the south. The Leeds Bradford Cycle Super Highway and the West Bradford Cycle Superhighway both pass within this area.

## Summary of local needs

**5.10** There is a clear inequity in greenspace distribution across Bradford District, with affluent areas benefiting from significantly more provision than deprived neighbourhoods. This disparity is most acute in Bradford inner city, which has both some of the poorest access to greenspace and the highest levels of deprivation. Large areas of high-density terraced housing with limited outdoor space for enjoyment or food growing are a key contributing factor to lack of greenspace in Bradford city centre. Whilst neighbourhoods in the north and south around Peel Park and Bowling Park meet Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standard (AGS), neighbourhoods in the west (Lister Hills), east (Barkerend and Swain Green) and city centre do not.

**5.11** Bradford inner city has strong civic provision but lacks other greenspaces, especially parks and children's facilities. Active travel links vary in density, distribution and connectivity. However, recent regeneration schemes in the inner city are increasing the connectivity of active travel routes, for example City Park and Norfolk Gardens, whilst links from suburbs such as Beech Grove Greenway provide green corridors into the city centre.

**5.12** Areas in Bradford inner city have some of the lowest tree cover in the district (Between 5-17%, lower than national average). Tree equity scores are also low across the inner city, with the lowest in the south, in Broomfields (48) and north-west, in Lister Hills (45) indicating areas of highest priority. This is exacerbated by the lack of gardens in back-to-back terraced housing in inner-city areas, as well as competing priorities in urban and residential areas, for example car parking space, impacting on space available for on-street interventions such as tree planting. Conversely, Undercliffe in the north-east (near Peel Park) has high tree equity (96-100), indicating adequate canopy cover in this area.

The findings of the stakeholder consultation highlighted that pressure for development in the inner city may put pressure on existing greenspace in urban areas, although it also presents opportunities to enhance canopy cover and greenspace provision. Concerns around perceptions of safety in greenspaces in inner city areas were also noted in the consultation, linked to a rise in social

tensions and cultural disparities in access and use of greenspaces, all of which limit their usability for some groups.

**5.13** Bradford city centre is identified as having one of the weakest-performing high streets in the country with high vacancy rates (more than double the UK average), although the City Centre Transformation Programme aims to address this issue.

**5.14** The Climate Just Social Heat Vulnerability Index indicates that the highest levels of heat-related socio-spatial vulnerability are concentrated in the inner city. Much of the city centre, including Eastbrook, Broomfields and Lister Hills and the Canal Road corridor have acute vulnerability. The whole area within the A6177 ring road is identified as having 'extremely high' or 'relatively high' vulnerability. The inner city is also at risk of surface water flooding due to the extent of impermeable surfaces, as well as fluvial flooding from Bradford Beck (as indicated by Environment Agency flood risk mapping on **Figure 2.12**). Furthermore, access to blue space (river, ponds and lakes) in the city centre is very limited.

## Summary of existing projects and partnerships

**5.15** Existing projects and partnerships in Bradford inner city include:

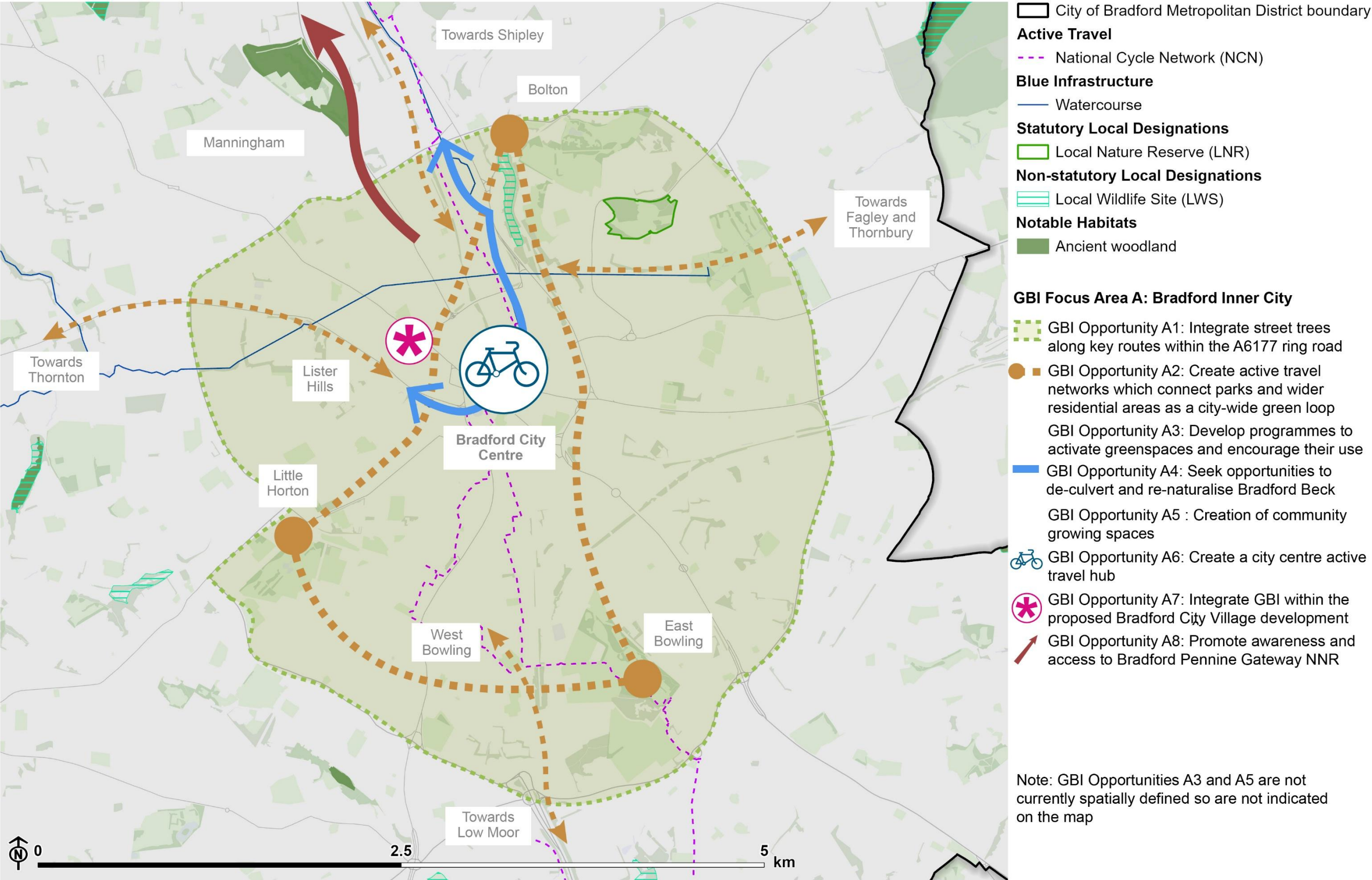
- JU:MP neighbourhood action plans keen on community gardens, developing play spaces and access to greenspaces.
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – deliver Nature's Way, supporting residents to restore urbanised areas to a healthier ecological state, for the benefit of nature and people's health. Funded by Public Health.
- The Leap's 'Dream, Act, Inspire' project. Funded by Climate Action Fund.
- Nature towns and cities funding 'Green Blue steppingstones' project.
- Life Critical-funded project at Horton Park.
- Better Place, part of Better Start Bradford to improve greenspaces for under 3s.
- Bradford Southern Gateway Development.
- Bradford City Village regeneration scheme.

## List of emerging opportunities

A summary of emerging GBI opportunities is shown on **Figure 5.2**.

- Integrate street trees and pocket parks along key high streets and commuting routes to improve the public realm and enhance the setting of active travel routes.
- Create a joined-up network of active travel routes linking inner city parks.
- Develop new programmes to activate greenspaces and encourage their use by a wider audience.
- Seek opportunities to de-culvert and re-naturalise sections of Bradford Beck through the inner city.
- Explore opportunities to create more community growing spaces (including community orchards) in parks and public spaces (as well as schools, healthcare settings and places of worship).
- Create a city centre active travel hub as part of the proposed Southern Gateway Project (linked to the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system (Bradford Line)), as a central meeting point of key active travel routes.
- Ensure GBI is fully integrated within designs for the proposed Bradford City Village development.
- Promote awareness of and access to Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR.

Figure 5.2: GBI Focus Area A: Bradford Inner City



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Opportunities 17/09/2026  
© Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. Contains public sector information license OGL v3.0. © Natural England. Contains data from West Yorkshire Combined Authority LNRS and City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459.

## GBI Focus Area B: Bradford Connections

Bradford Connections focuses on linear corridors in the suburbs of Bradford, identified as having high need for GBI and low provision, which offer linkages into the city centre. It includes the areas of Manningham, Undercliffe, Bradford Moor, Holme Wood, West Bowling, Little Horton and Girdlington.

### Summary of key GBI assets

**5.16** Two watercourses flow into the city centre from the north and west. Bradford Beck runs parallel to the A6037 starting at Shipley and terminates in the city centre. Clayton Beck merges into Middle Brook and then into Bradford Beck before following the B6145 into the city centre.

**5.17** Two corridors of existing woodland delineate the approach to the city from the north and south. The northern corridor follows the A650 and includes woodland at Northcliffe Park, Heaton Woods and Lister Park. The southern corridor follows the M606 and includes Bierley Woods and woodland at South Bradford Golf Course.

**5.18** Larger publicly accessible greenspace is concentrated within the north and east; including Lister Park, Scholemoor Cemetery and Horton Park. The east and south are serviced by smaller spaces including Pit Hill, Bradford Moor and Knowles Park.

### Summary of local needs

**5.19** Tree canopy cover in wards in the outer edges of Bradford varies between 16 - 21%, in line with UK averages. However, the wards of Bradford Moor to the east and Little Horton to the south-west have some of the lowest ward canopy cover in the district, 9.91% and 12.67% respectively. Woodland Trust Tree Equity Scores above 80 are recorded in the north and south, suggesting adequate canopy cover. Tree equity scores are lower in the east and west, with the lowest in Thornbury (60) and Holme Wood (65).

**5.20** Across the area there is a lack of easily accessible blue space (rivers, ponds and lakes). This is most pronounced in the north-east (Bradford Moor) and south-west (Little Horton).

**5.21** Most areas within close proximity of the A6177 lie in decile 1 and 2 of the IMD. Pockets in the north and south (Bolton and Bierley) are in deciles 3-5. Prevalence of obesity in Year 6 children is high across all areas (~30%). Furthermore, the number

of people out of work per thousand is the highest in the district (1.5 per 1,000). This level reduces as you move further away from the city. Emergency hospital emissions for all conditions is consistently higher than average across the focus area.

**5.22** Areas of high fluvial flood risk (Flood Zone 3b) surround Bradford Beck and Clayton Beck. Areas at risk of surface water flooding follow Bradford Beck and Clayton Beck or are concentrated in areas of open space (e.g. Bowling Pak).

**5.23** Heat socio-spatial vulnerability increases towards the city centre. Areas on the outer limits (e.g. Tong, Bierley and Bolton) have an average risk, whereas areas alongside the A6177 have a relatively high risk (e.g. Bowling, Little Horton, Holme Wood and Manningham). Girlington has an acute risk.

**5.24** Existing partnerships include:

- JU:MP neighbourhood action plans focus on community gardens, play spaces and improving access to greenspaces;
- Better Place, part of Better Start Bradford to improve greenspaces for under 3s;
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – deliver Nature’s Way, supporting residents to restore urbanised areas to a healthier ecological state, for the benefit of nature and people’s health. Funded by Public Health;
- The Leap’s ‘Dream, Act, Inspire’ project. Funded by Climate Action Fund. Opportunity to engage less heard voices in urban Bradford; and
- Nature Towns and Cities funding – opportunity to support local groups to improve awareness and engagement with nature.

### List of emerging opportunities

- Introduce a programme of future urban tree planting with a focus on Little Horton and Bradford Moor where canopy cover is currently low. Deliver a replenishment programme to address the diminished tree stock within these settlements.
- Connect heavily fragmented woodland between Northcliffe Park and Peel Park in the north and Bowling Park and Bierley Woods in the south.
- Creation of community growing spaces, including community orchards throughout the city.
- Create and restore accessible blue spaces (e.g. lakes and ponds) particularly in the north-east to south-west (e.g. Bradford Moor, Holme Wood and Little Horton).

- Develop active travel corridors into the city centre from outlying suburbs in the west of the district.
- Create links and awareness to Bradford Pennine Gateway NNR.

## GBI Focus Area C: Keighley

Keighley is a market town and civil parish in the north west of the district, with a population of 57,000. The town centre is centred upon civic and retail spaces. The town is serviced by a direct railway link to Bradford and the A650 from the east and A629 from the west.

### Summary of key GBI assets

**5.25** Keighley is intersected by waterways to the north, east and south. The River Aire and Leeds and Liverpool Canal run parallel to each other, passing through the north east of the town. The River Worth follows from its source above Haworth alongside the east of Keighley, connecting with the River Aire at Stockbridge. North Beck flows south to east through the south of the town, connecting with the River Worth at Park Wood.

**5.26** The town is surrounded by evenly dispersed yet fragmented deciduous woodland. Park Wood forms a larger parcel of ancient and semi-natural woodland located to the east of the town centre. There are three traditional orchards on the outer limits of the town to the north and west.

**5.27** The town has four large formal parks; Cliffe Castle Park and Gardens and Devonshire Park to the north, Victoria Park to the north-east and Lund Park to the south. Clusters of allotments and community growing spaces are concentrated in the south-west and north-east of the town.

**5.28** Keighley is also home to East Riddlesden Hall, a National Trust owned property, which sits to the north-east of the town.

### Summary of local needs

**5.29** Tree canopy cover within Keighley is low. Keighley Central and Keighley West are characterised by a canopy cover of 15% and 9% respectively, lower than the UK average of 17.3% for an urban ward. Keighley has a Tree Equity Score of 52 out of 100. A score below 70 generally indicates a high priority for planting. Low tree canopy cover is exacerbated by a lack of private gardens in back-to-back terrace housing.

**5.30** Active travel options are limited within Keighley. The PRoW network is largely fragmented, concentrated alongside watercourses.

**5.31** The wards of central and west Keighley lie in Decile 1 on the IMD. Areas towards the north of Keighley surrounding the River Aire increase to Decile 4. 45% of Year 6 children are overweight or obese in Keighley Central, which is higher than the district average. The estimated depression prevalence for Keighley central is 10.8%, slightly lower than the district average (12.6%). 9.3% of working age adults in Keighley Central are unemployed, higher than the district average of 8.2%.

**5.32** Areas of high fluvial and surface water flood risk (Flood Zone 3b) buffer all rivers surrounding Keighley. Larger expanses of flood risk are located along the River Aire and its floodplain.

**5.33** The Climate Just Social Heat Vulnerability Index indicates that levels of heat-related socio-spatial vulnerability are relatively high in central and north Keighley.

## Summary of existing projects

**5.34** Existing partnerships include:

- JU:MP neighbourhood action plans focus on community gardens, play spaces and improving access to greenspaces.
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – deliver Nature’s Way, supporting residents to restore urbanised areas to a healthier ecological state, for the benefit of nature and people’s health. Funded by Public Health.
- The Leap’s ‘Dream, Act, Inspire’ project. Funded by Climate Action Fund. Opportunity to engage less heard voices in urban areas across Bradford District.
- Nature Towns and Cities funding – opportunity to support local groups to improve awareness and engagement with nature.
- River Worth Friends – volunteer group focused on improving the River Worth.

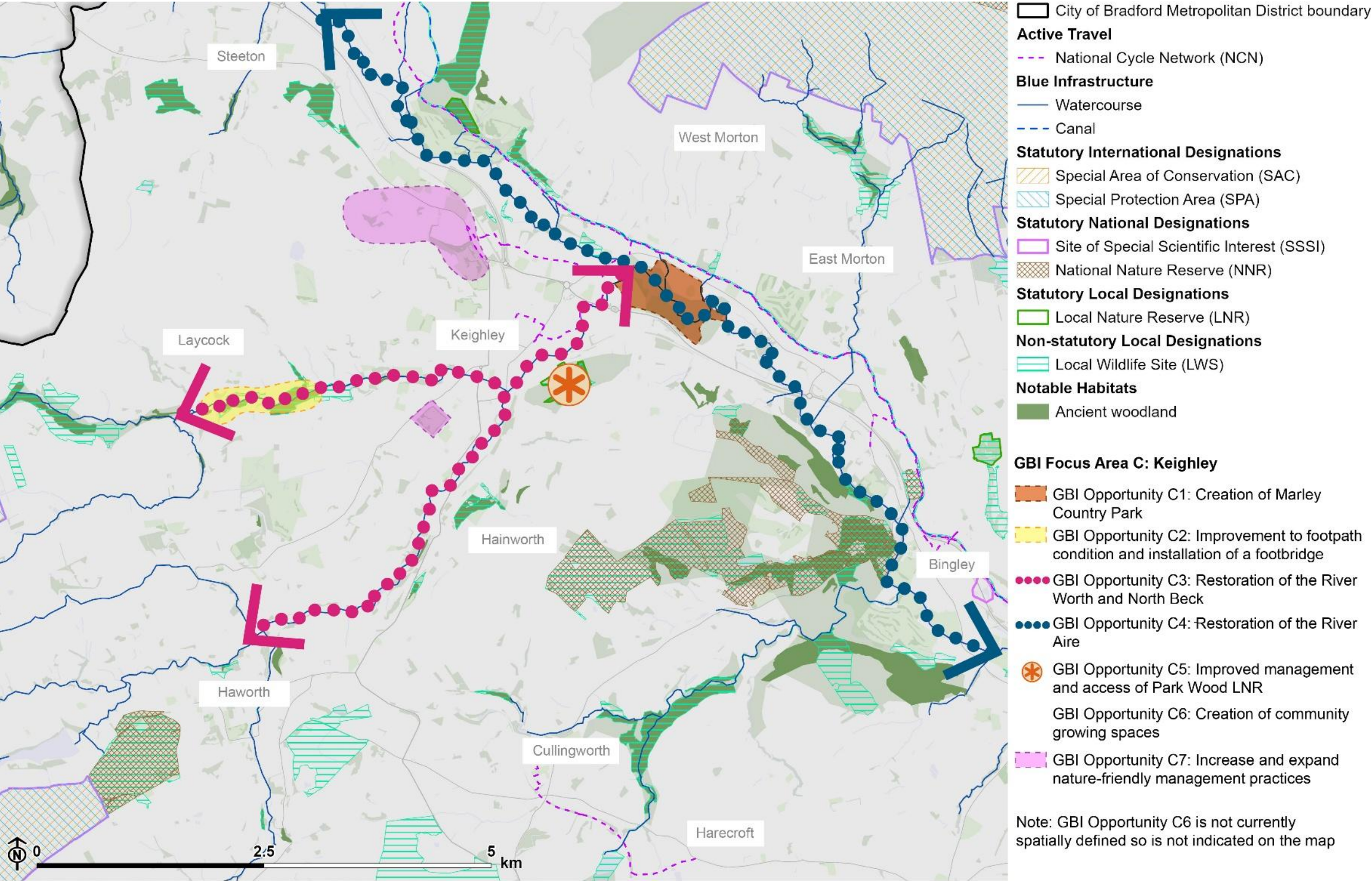
## List of emerging opportunities

A summary of emerging GBI opportunities is shown on **Figure 5.3**.

- Working with the National Trust (East Riddlesden Hall) and Yorkshire Water, explore opportunities to create Marley Country Park.
- Improve the condition of footpaths within Higher and Lower Holme House Wood, including the installation of a footbridge.
- Restore sections of the River Worth and North Beck.

- Restore sections of the River Aire.
- Improve the management and access of Park Wood LNR.
- Create a network of community growing spaces, including community orchards throughout the town.
- Increase and expand nature-friendly management practices and provision of habitats (e.g. ponds, nest boxes, wildflower meadows and bug hotels) across parks, road verges and open spaces in Keighley.
- Role of the newly recruited Nature Towns and Cities Project Manager to lead and coordinate nature-based programmes across the town to maximise impact.

Figure 5.3: GBI Focus Area C: Keighley



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Opportunities 17/09/2026  
© Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. Contains public sector information license OGL v3.0. © Natural England. Contains data from West Yorkshire Combined Aut Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459.

## GBI Focus Area D: Keighley – Bingley – Shipley Corridor

This GBI focus area incorporates a long section of the Leeds Liverpool Canal, connecting the three towns of Keighley, Bingley, and Shipley, broadly parallel to the meandering route of the River Aire. Low Wood LNR, an ancient woodland to the north of Keighley, abuts the canal to the north. Located along the carriageway of the A650, the area incorporates sections of the urban fabric of Keighley, Bingley, and Shipley.

### Summary of existing GBI assets

**5.35** The River Aire and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal form important blue corridors linking the three towns. The Leeds-Liverpool Canal is designated as a conservation area and forms a valued recreational resource, contributing to the local landscape character and sense of place as an industrial heritage asset.

**5.36** National Cycle route 69 follows the Leeds-Liverpool Canal along its towpath and connects to each of the three towns, supplemented by a network of PRoW which provide connectivity within the settlements.

**5.37** This GBI focus area incorporates two SSSIs located to the east of Bingley. Bingley South Bog SSSI supports a range of important sedges and wetland plants, as well as wetland fauna. Trench Meadows SSSI, between Bingley and Shipley and north of the River Aire comprises lowland meadow, noted for its high plant diversity.

### Summary of local needs

**5.38** Some of the most deprived communities in Bradford are located within this GBI focus area, specifically within Keighley and Shipley. Keighley's centre is one of the UK's most deprived areas according to the IMD, specifically within the domain of health deprivation and disability, often linked to poorer access to greenspace. The compact urban form which characterises each of the three towns reduces an individual's access to greenspace, compounded by poor provision at the local level.

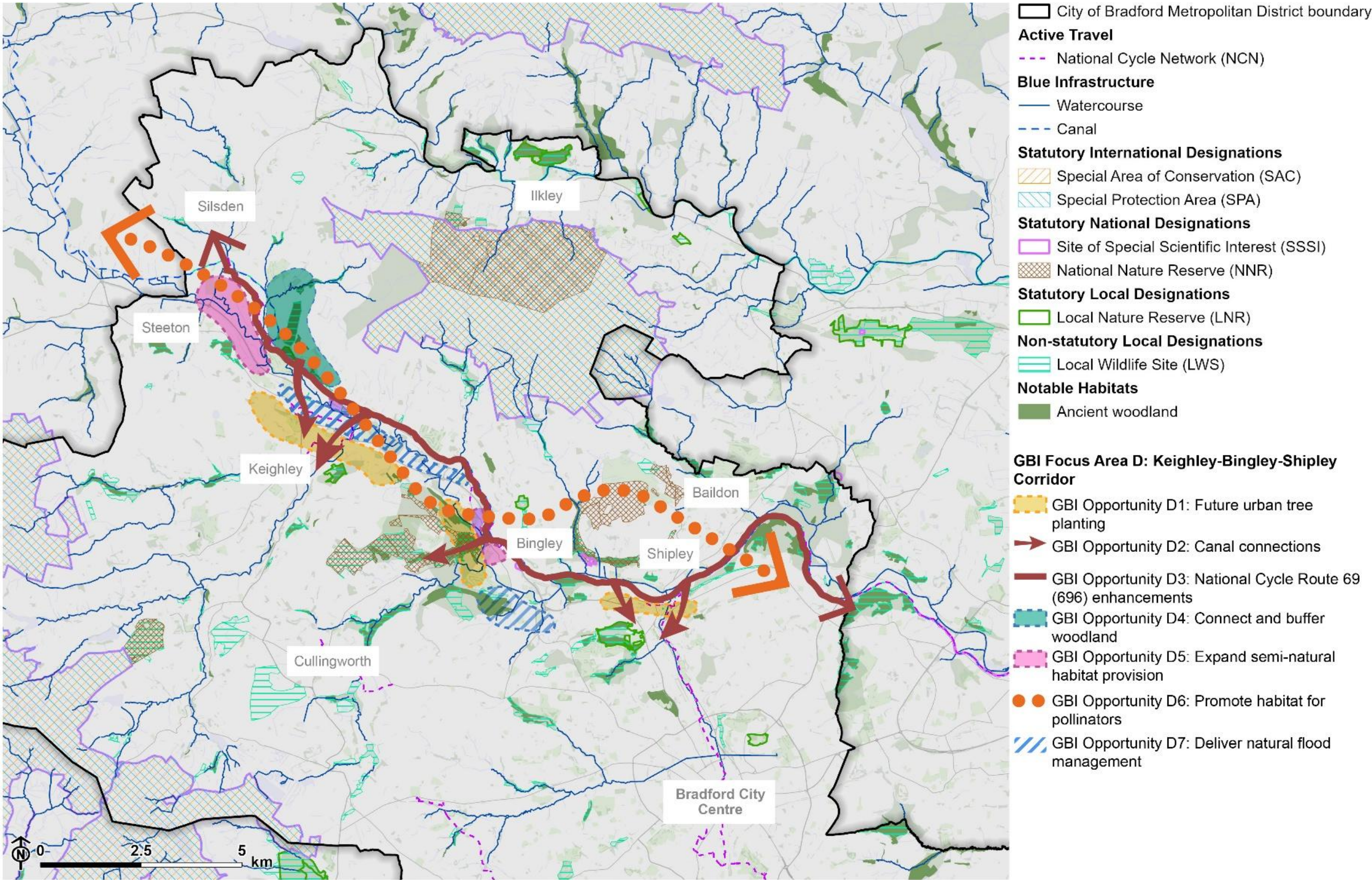
**5.39** Large sections of the GBI focus area along the River Aire corridor are included within Flood Zones 3a and 3b (as defined by the Environment Agency and CBMDC). LSOAs covering the area form high priority areas for tree investment (Tree Equity Scores of 56-78).

## Emerging opportunities

A summary of emerging GBI opportunities is shown on **Figure 5.4**.

- Introduce a programme of future urban tree planting across Keighley, Bingley and Shipley. Deliver a replenishment programme to address the diminished tree stock within these settlements.
- Improve connections from the Leeds-Liverpool Canal to adjacent urban areas, providing more opportunities for access and sustainable travel.
- Introduce improvements along National Cycle Route 69 (and 696) with the aim of enhancing condition, functionality and accessibility.
- Expand, buffer and connect fragmented deciduous woodland to the north of Keighley, including Low Wood LNR, to improve habitat connectivity and resilience of irreplaceable ancient woodland habitat.
- Expand and buffer valuable semi-natural habitats; including lowland fen to the north of Bingley and floodplain grazing marsh to the north of Keighley.
- Promote habitat enhancements for pollinators within Buglife's B-network corridors, following the route of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.
- Support landowners to deliver natural flood management across the GBI focus area as well as efforts to improve water quality.

Figure 5.4: GBI Focus Area D: Keighley-Bingley-Shipley Corridor



Created by LUC - 16947\_000\_r0\_ReportFigures/A3L\_Opportunities 17/09/2026  
© Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. Contains public sector information license OGL v3.0. © Natural England. Contains data from West Yorkshire Combined Authority LNRs and City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database rights 2026, licence AC0000813459.

## Chapter 6

### Delivery Mechanisms

**6.1** This chapter outlines the various delivery mechanisms which can be used to deliver new and enhanced GBI in the District. It covers planning mechanisms which can be used to secure GBI through new development and wider delivery mechanisms which can be accessed through partnership working.

#### Planning mechanisms

**6.2** Planning policy and tools play a critical role in the delivery of GBI. This section provides CBMDC with recommendations for the enhancement of their draft GBI Policies for inclusion in their new Local Plan.

**6.3** The chapter provides an overview of best practice in relation to GBI planning policy, provides an assessment of Bradford's draft policies against this and finishes with a series of recommendations on how these could be enhanced.

#### Natural England GI Process Journey for Local Authorities

**6.4** Natural England's Guide for Developing GI Strategies and Policies **[See reference 123]** sets out a six-stage approach to help local authorities strategically plan, embed, and deliver high-quality GBI. It supports integration into Local Plans and wider strategies by guiding authorities through the following steps:

- Stage 1: Partnerships;
- Stage 2: Vision informed by strategic context;
- Stage 3: Evidence;
- Stage 4: Plan strategically and develop GI policy and targets;
- Stage 5: Integrating the GI strategy; and
- Stage 6: Managed, valued, monitored and evaluated.

**6.5** This chapter focuses on Stage 4, providing policy recommendations for the Local Plan.

## What does good GBI policy look like? (summary of best practice)

**6.6** The Natural England GI Framework identifies key principles that should be reflected in policy on GBI and urban greening. These include:

- Setting out a vision for GBI: To enable developers and their design teams to understand how their proposal can contribute or 'plug-in' to the wider strategic network.
- Providing a good evidence base: Enable developers and their design teams to deliver meaningful contributions by being able to access or commission the most appropriate information.
- Developing clear strategy and policies: The need to give developers certainty over what GBI is needed on a site, including by defining quantitative standards/targets and site-specific requirements in site allocation policies.
- Influencing the design process: The need for developers and their design teams to consider multi-functional GBI design from the pre-application stage onwards through engagement with relevant stakeholders and analysis of the site and wider context. GBI should be multi-functional, varied, connected (for people and nature), designed to be accessible for all and responsive to an area's landscape/character.
- Ensuring long-term management, maintenance and monitoring: The need for developers and their design teams to provide sufficient information about long-term management and maintenance to ensure new GBI provides the long-term benefits desired. The importance of local authority monitoring and evaluation of GBI delivery is also emphasised.

**6.7** In addition to Natural England guidance, the 'GI Planning Policy Assessment Tool' developed by Max Hislop of Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network sets out an assessment process based on a content analysis of Local Plan wording [\[See reference 124\]](#). It includes a set of criteria related to supporting the integration of GBI into development, specific GBI functions and aftercare. It also identifies seven key areas to address in a 'good' GBI planning policy, some of which overlap with those outlined above:

- Design process: It is important to emphasise the need to consider multi-functional GBI design from the pre-application stage onwards, including through engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- Wider context: GBI design should be informed by analysis of the site and wider context, including local needs, wider habitat networks, open space provision

and public access. A strategic policy can set certain performance standards for GBI based on this evidence.

- Biodiversity: GBI policy should link to policy on biodiversity net gain (mandatory BNG is a new driver of funding for GBI) and be designed to protect and enhance on-site biodiversity and habitat networks within and adjacent to the site.
- Water management: SuDS should form an integral part of multi-functional GBI design, maximising amenity and biodiversity benefits alongside flood management (and public access where safe and appropriate).
- Access networks: GBI design should retain and enhance active travel routes (linking key destinations such as housing to town centres and schools) to encourage walking and cycling.
- Greenspace: GBI should meet the quantity, quality and accessibility standards for open space in Bradford, seeking to address deficiencies in access and be designed to cater for all in the community.
- Stewardship: Appropriate management and maintenance agreements for GBI, supported by clear and long-term mechanisms for funding.

**6.8** The policy assessment tool and Natural England GI Framework guidance also emphasise the importance of strong policy wording. This includes the use of ‘should’ and ‘must’ rather than ‘is advised’ to provide strong direction and clarity to developers on what the requirements for GBI in development are.

## GBI policy assessment (strengths and weaknesses of policy)

**6.9** The inclusion of robust strategic GBI policies within the Bradford Local Plan offers an opportunity to positively influence GBI delivery and ongoing maintenance. As the next Bradford Local Plan develops, it is recommended that it incorporates robust strategic GBI policies to act as the key driver in securing high-quality GBI.

**6.10** A number of environmental policies are being prepared for the next Bradford Local Plan which reference GBI. These include but are not limited to:

- Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows;
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Biodiversity and Development;
- The Water Environment;

- Landscape;
- Climate Resilience;
- Flood Risk; and
- Site allocation policies which set out site specific requirements for GBI.

**6.11** Two draft GBI specific policies have been prepared for Bradford's Local Plan. These focus on:

- An overarching initial statement which requires development proposals to use a design-led approach to integrate GBI which is “multi-functional, varied, connected, accessible, nature-based, climate-resilient and responsive to the local character, contributing to biodiversity enhancement, ecological connectivity and nature recovery, and, where relevant, support the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy”;
- A requirement for all major developments to submit a GBI Plan with their planning application, and a list of requirements for the content of the GBI Plan;
- Policy on Urban Greening Factor, setting target scores for different types of major development; and
- Guidance on nature based solutions and a sustainable drainage policy.

**6.12** The following section reviews the key strengths and weaknesses of Bradford District's draft key strategic GBI policies, drawing on best practice guidance.

## Key strengths of draft policy

- Clear protection principle: Commitment to protection, enhancement, restoration and creation of the GBI network.
- Lists GBI components: Provides GBI examples, including greenspace, tree planting, green roofs/walls, wildlife habitats, SuDS, walking and cycling networks, greenways, swales, rain gardens, wetlands, attenuation basins and permeable surfaces.
- Strength of language: Uses phrases like “must meet”, “must maximise” and “must demonstrate”, particularly in relation to Urban Greening Factor standards and coordinated approaches to flood risk and drainage.
- Integrates ‘blue’ infrastructure: Integrates requirements for SuDS and water management, including specific features such as; swales, rain gardens, wetlands, attenuation basins and permeable surfaces through the policy.

- Clear on multi-functionality of GBI: Recognises the role of GBI for biodiversity, ecological connectivity, nature recovery, climate resilience, water management, public realm quality, health and well-being, landscape, amenity, placemaking, accessibility and local character.
- Accounts for long-term protection, management and maintenance: Requires GBI Plans for all major developments to arrange for the long-term management and maintenance of new GBI.
- Connectivity: Recognises the importance of GBI connectivity and strengthening links by requiring new connections and enhancements to the existing GBI network, including filling gaps in the network through on-site provision or off-site connections.
- Integrates active travel and access: Supports inclusive, safe and convenient access to greenspace by connecting to existing walking and cycling networks and greenways.

## Key weaknesses of draft policy

- Inclusion of some softer language: Includes wording such as 'should' rather than must throughout.
- Design process: Refers to a 'design-led approach' but does not clearly require early design integration, pre-application consideration, site/setting appraisal, or engagement with key stakeholders at the pre-planning stage.
- Long-term management, maintenance and monitoring: Requires arrangements for long-term management and maintenance for major developments, but could set a specific time frame for this, e.g. 30 years.
- Strategy references: Requires GBI provision in new development to support the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, where relevant but does not link back to the Strategy (including consideration of the emerging GBI opportunities) or other key documents such as the emerging Greenspace Strategy.

## Recommendations for policy

**6.13** The adoption of robust strategic GBI policies within the Bradford Local Plan offers the opportunity to positively influence GBI. The following section sets out recommendations for the new strategic GBI policies. These are as follows:

- Strength of wording and proactive tone: Robust GBI policies should use strongly worded policies, preferring terms like ‘must’ and ‘require’ over weaker language such as ‘should’, ‘consider’ or ‘where possible’.
- Early design integration and placemaking: The inclusion of an introductory statement that GBI should be ‘design-led’ is a good practice approach. This could be enhanced further through the inclusion of text setting out clearly how GBI must be integrated as a core element of placemaking, considered at pre-application stage, and guided by any relevant Design Codes. This should include appraisal of the site and wider setting, informed by the next recommendation.
- Strategic GBI network map: GBI network and opportunity mapping prepared for the Strategy should be included in the Policies Map and referenced in policy. Proposals should be encouraged to look beyond the ‘red line boundary’ and consider wider GBI assets and area of need/opportunity as identified in the Strategy.
- Clarify management, maintenance and monitoring requirements: Policy should require long-term management, maintenance and monitoring agreements for GBI to be set out and agreed for a minimum of 30 years.
- Biodiversity: The policy should more explicitly link GBI delivery to the dedicated biodiversity and BNG policy, given that mandatory BNG is a key delivery mechanism for GBI.
- Incorporation of quantified standards: The inclusion of Urban Greening Factor standards is positive, but to further help officers formulate a clear ‘ask’ of development proposals, policy could include other relevant requirements to meet adopted Natural England GI Framework ‘headline’ standards, e.g. Tree Canopy Cover Standard and link to Accessible Greenspace Standards in open space policy.

## GBI mainstreaming

**6.14** The strategic policy should be complemented by “mainstreaming” of GBI throughout the whole Local Plan, including via the integration of explicit references to GBI into other policies. This has already been completed to a large extent, with GBI referenced throughout several of Bradford District’s draft environmental policies. This is a positive approach and will allow GBI to move outside of any environmental policy “silo” and interact with other agendas including health, economic and social policy areas.

## Site-specific policies

**6.15** Beyond strategic policies, site allocation policies within the Local Plan should incorporate guidance on the GBI to be provided at these sites. These should draw on the vision and strategic objectives presented in **Chapter 3**, baseline data provided in **Chapter 2** and specific actions identified within GBI focus areas (if appropriate). Where development briefs for proposed site allocations are developed, these should incorporate expectations for GBI provision; including type, location and ongoing maintenance requirements.

## Application of the Natural England GI Framework Standards

**6.16** Published in 2023, the Natural England GI Framework includes five headline GI Standards for local planning authorities to consider in relation to major development (with specific standards based on local evidence), alongside area wide standards. A high-level overview of each major development standard is provided below:

- **S1: GI Strategy Standard aims** to ensure that GBI is strategically planned for the context of the local area to ensure it will achieve maximum benefits. It is recommended that local authorities should incorporate the requirement for the provision of a GBI plan as part of applications for any major development proposal (this could be a standalone document or incorporated into a Design and Access Statement (DAS)). It should set how GBI will be managed, maintained and monitored for at least 30 years (in line with BNG).
- **S2: Accessible Greenspace Standard** aims to ensure that everyone has access to good quality GBI, setting quantitative standards for the amount, size and location of greenspace. The major development standard requires that proposals ensure access to a specified quantity, size, capacity and quality of greenspace within certain distances of the site using Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards or other locally adopted open space standards. The Green Flag Award criteria [\[See reference 125\]](#) is recommended as a quality standard [\[See reference 126\]](#).
- **S3: Urban Nature Recovery Standard** seeks to increase the proportion of GBI designed and managed for nature recovery. The major development standard requires developers to demonstrate contributions to nature recovery through the GI plan (or DAS), including the creation/enhancement of Local Nature Reserves or Local Wildlife Sites.
- **S4: Urban Greening Factor Standard (UGF)** is a tool to increase the amount and quality of green land cover within urban environments. The major development standard recommends target UGF scores for commercial (0.3),

residential (0.4) and residential greenfield (0.5) proposals, although these can be amended based on local assessment.

- **S5: Urban Tree Canopy Standard** aims to increase urban tree canopy cover by an agreed percentage, based on a locally defined baseline and consideration of local needs, opportunities and constraints. The major development standard sets local targets for tree canopy cover within development sites. It requires new and existing trees to be incorporated into new developments and that all new streets are tree lined (as per NPPF requirements).

**6.17** Two of the Natural England GI Framework Standards (Urban Greening Factor and Tree Canopy Cover Standard) have been specifically tested as part of this Strategy and recommendations prepared on how these could be incorporated into Local Plan policy. The next section of the Strategy provides a summary of each of the standards and their purpose. It then uses the assessment of nine previously approved schemes in Bradford District to provide recommendations on whether each standard could be adopted and if so, what the specific standard should be.

## Urban Greening Factor

### Overview of UGF

**6.18** The Urban Greening Factor (UGF) aims to improve the delivery and provision of on-site GBI in urban environments. This is chiefly based on the type of surface cover, with a broad distinction being made between ‘grey’ built surfaces and ‘green’ natural surfaces.

**6.19** The major development standard for UGF, as set out in the Natural England GI Framework, is set as a minimum score which should be achieved within new major development. The score is calculated based on the proportion of GBI across the development site area, based on a list of ‘surface cover types’. Different surface cover types are assigned a numeric ‘factor’ based on the value of the ecosystem services they provide. The UGF is calculated based on the area of the site which has each surface cover type, to provide a final score between 0 (no urban greening) and 1 (highly functional urban greening on all surfaces).

**6.20** Whilst the UGF is not a tool to measure biodiversity *per se*, the surface covers with the highest scores tend to correlate with the habitats with the most potential to support biodiversity.

**6.21** The UGF is comprised of a menu of 22 surface cover types describing a range of GBI interventions, structured around four key headings as outlined below:

- Vegetation and tree planting;
- Green roofs and walls;
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and water features; and
- Paved surfaces.

**6.22** Each surface cover type has a weighting factor between 0.0 and 1.0 that is used to calculate the UGF score. The UGF surface cover types that score highly include retained or created semi-natural vegetation, trees, native hedgerow, orchards and allotments, intensive and extensive green roofs, flower rich herbaceous planting, and rain gardens. Additional information regarding each surface type and its application can be found in the UGF for England User Guide [\[See reference 127\]](#).

**6.23** The option of combining solar panels and green roofs, known as bio-solar roofs, is a GBI intervention recognised in the UGF surface cover types. In this scenario, the green roof creates an optimal microclimate for solar panels to run efficiently all year, with the addition of panels resulting in variations in shade and moisture which supports a greater diversity of vegetation. The success of this approach, however, is dependent on the correct design and installation of both elements.

**6.24** Natural England recommends the following minimum UGF scores, advising that these should be reviewed based on local circumstances:

- 0.3 for commercial development;
- 0.4 for urban residential development; and
- 0.5 for residential development on greenfield land.

**6.25** Natural England proposes that while local authorities should identify their own target scores, the allocated scores given to different surface types in their user guide should not be changed.

## Current approach in Bradford

**6.26** Strategic Core Policy 6 (SC6): GI of the adopted Bradford Council Core Strategy Development Plan (adopted 2017) outlines the strategic priorities for the maintenance, enhancement and extension of GI. No quantitative standards are set for GBI, therefore a UGF standard is not currently integrated into Local Plan policy for Bradford.

Testing the UGF standard

6.27 To test whether the adoption of a UGF standard would be both beneficial and viable in increasing the amount and quality of greenspace provided in new development, the UGF score has been calculated for a sample of previously consented schemes in Bradford. This was calculated using the Natural England UGF User Guide and User Guide Spreadsheet [See reference 128], based on surface cover types shown in the detailed landscape plans submitted with the planning application for each development.

6.28 The list of consented developments are presented in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 along with the UGF score achieved in each scheme.

Residential

Table 6.1: UGF scores achieved in example consented residential schemes

| Development | Application Reference | Application Location                                             | UGF Score |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1           | 21/05853/MAR          | Shetcliffe Lane, Bierley, Bradford                               | 0.21      |
| 2           | 22/01184/MAF          | Land off Bolton Road, Silsden                                    | 0.31      |
| 3           | 23/02989/MAF          | Land at Kings Drive, Bradford                                    | 0.50      |
| 4           | 20/04591/MAR          | Former Station Yard, New School Lane, Halifax Road, Cullingworth | 0.42      |
| 5           | 21/05850/MAR          | Land at Sun Lane and Ilkley Road, Burley-in-Wharfedale           | 0.39      |

Development 1

6.29 Development 1 is a residential development of approximately 106 dwellings on a 3.66 hectare greenfield site in the south east of Bradford. The site previously comprised open grassland used for grazing horses. Around a third of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF (as opposed to sealed surfaces which would have an UGF factor of zero). The main features of the consented development which contribute to the UGF score are:

- Semi-natural vegetation retained on site (including retention of existing/mature trees at the site boundaries) (around 8% of the total site area);

- New tree planting (standard/semi-mature trees planted in individual tree pits) (6% of total site);
- Semi-natural vegetation established on site (e.g. native wildflower grass planting in disturbed areas) (around 2.5% of total site); and
- Amenity grassland including formal lawns (front gardens and open areas along Shetcliffe Lane) (13% of total site).

**6.30** Other minor contributions to UGF are associated with hedge planting and amenity shrub planting.

**6.31** The scheme achieved a UGF score of 0.21, falling below the suggested UGF score of 0.4 for residential developments in the Natural England GI Framework. Some relatively minor changes to the site design would improve the UGF score without impacting the overall residential capacity or layout of the development. These may include additional tree planting at Shetcliffe Lane site boundary and within private gardens; substituting amenity grassland areas for species-rich wildflower, native grassland or shrub planting; and incorporating other urban greening features where appropriate, such as natural SuDS features (as opposed to attenuation tanks), green roofs/walls on built development, and permeable paving to paved areas. However, as there is limited public open space within the consented development, opportunities for enhanced greening are relatively constrained and it may be challenging to achieve the Natural England target of 0.4.

## Development 2

**6.32** Development 2 is a residential development of 128 dwellings with open space, landscaping and other ancillary infrastructure, located on a 5.9 hectare site to the east of Silsden. The site comprises greenfield agricultural land with existing woodland belts running along field margins. Approximately 40% of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF (as opposed to sealed surfaces which would have an UGF factor of 0). The main features of the consented development which contribute to the UGF score are:

- Semi-natural vegetation retained on site (including woodland belts) (around 6% of total site);
- Semi-natural vegetation established on site (including areas of native mixed woodland and scrubland copse and species rich wildflower and grassland meadow) (approximately 9%);
- New standard/semi-mature trees planted in individual tree pits (approximately 15% of total site); and

- Amenity grassland (5% of total site).

**6.33** Other features which contribute to the UGF include a vegetated SuDS feature in the north-west of the site, native hedge planting, garden hedging, and ornamental planting. The scheme achieved a UGF score of 0.31, which is below the suggested UGF score of 0.4 for residential developments in the Natural England GI Framework. The consented scheme generally makes efficient use of available open spaces within the site, with majority of open space and access routes accommodating retained and additional tree planting. Some relatively minor changes to the site design could be incorporated to improve the UGF score, without impeding on the overall residential capacity or layout of the development. These may include use of permeable paving on hard surfaces, additional tree planting in residential gardens and some areas of open space, and integration of urban greening features such as green roofs/walls. While a target UGF score of 0.4 may be feasible, a target of 0.5 proposed for greenfield development is likely to be challenging within the context of the consented layout.

### Development 3

**6.34** Development 3 comprises a residential development of 26 affordable housing units (within apartment blocks) with associated landscaping and parking. The site is approximately 0.7 hectares and is located on previously undeveloped, vegetated urban land in the north of Bradford. Around 80% of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF (as opposed to sealed surfaces which would have an UGF factor of 0). The key features of the consented development which contribute to the UGF score are:

- Individual tree planting along access roads and site boundaries (approximately 20% of total site);
- Semi-natural vegetation introduced on site (proposed wildflower meadow, native shrub mix) (23% of total site);
- Amenity grassland (13% of total site); and
- Areas of partially sealed semi-permeable paving (paving for footpaths surrounding built development) (17% of site).

**6.35** Overall, the consented scheme achieved a UGF score of 0.50, which exceeds the suggested Natural England benchmark of 0.4 for residential development. This also meets the suggested Natural England benchmark of 0.5 for residential development on greenfield land. However, it is noted that the consented development comprises apartments as opposed to individual dwellinghouses and

therefore the footprint of built development is lower, aiding the achievement of the UGF with limited impact on viability.

## Development 4

**6.36** Development 4 comprises residential development of 53 dwellings with associated car parking, landscaping and areas of public open space. The site is approximately 1.9 hectares and is located on brownfield commercial land located in the west of Cullingworth. Around 60% of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF (as opposed to sealed surfaces which would have an UGF factor of 0). The key features of the consented development which contribute to UGF include:

- Semi-natural vegetation retained on site (largely comprising woodland belt running along site's western edge) (8% of total site);
- Areas of flowering lawn and wildflower mix (approximately 7% of total site);
- Individual planted trees (compensatory planting along woodland belt and individual trees along access road) (around 25% of total site); and
- Amenity grassland (front lawns) (11% of total site).

**6.37** Other features which provide minor contributions to UGF include native hedgerow planting and partially sealed paving (block paving). A UGF score of 0.42 is achieved on the site, which exceeds the recommended Natural England score of 0.4, demonstrating the ability for brownfield development to achieve the recommended target for residential development.

## Development 5

**6.38** Development 5 comprises a residential-led scheme of a maximum of 500 dwellings along with educational facility, public space, landscaping, parking and other ancillary infrastructure. The 25.6 hectare site is located on greenfield land, previously comprising open fields and grazing land, located to the west of Burley in Wharfedale. Approximately half of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF (as opposed to sealed surfaces which would have an UGF factor of 0). The main features of the consented development which contribute to UGF include:

- Semi-natural vegetation established on site (green belt buffer woodland planting, native shrub planting and wildflower meadow) (20% of total site);

- Semi-natural vegetation retained on site (existing trees/hedges along field margins) (5% of total site);
- Individual tree planting on site (within areas of public open space and along access roads) (10% of total site); and
- Amenity grassland areas (7% of total site).

**6.39** Other features which contribute to UGF include areas of native hedgerow planting, other hedgerow planting, SuDS features and areas of partially sealed permeable paving. The consented development achieved a UGF score of 0.39, which falls marginally below the recommended Natural England target of 0.4. Therefore, with minor design adjustments to landscape proposals, it is considered highly likely that the scheme could achieve a target of 0.4 without any major design or layout changes to the proposed development. It may, however, be challenging to achieve the suggested uplifted target of 0.5 UGF for residential development on greenfield land.

## Commercial

**Table 6.2: UGF scores achieved in example consented commercial schemes**

| Development | Planning Application Reference | Planning Application Name/Location                              | Development Type      | UGF Score |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 6           | 20/00323/MAF                   | Land between Church Street and Beck Street, Keighley            | Industrial            | 0.18      |
| 7           | 2003358MAR                     | Unit 7, Land at Gain Lane and Woodhall Road, Bradford           | Industrial            | 0.23      |
| 8           | 2302588MAF                     | Land West of Legrams Mill, Woodhead Road, Bradford              | Commercial/Industrial | 0.25      |
| 9           | 2304496MAF                     | Former Site of Fairweather Green Mills, Thornton Road, Bradford | Industrial            | 0.31      |

## Development 6

**6.40** Development 6 is located within the market town of Keighley, close to the town centre on derelict, post-industrial brownfield land. The application was for four warehouses and industrial units with car parking and servicing with a development area of 0.55 hectares. Around a quarter of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF (as opposed to sealed surfaces which would have an UGF factor of 0). The main features which contribute to the UGF score are:

- Trees with deep tree pits (13% of the total area);
- Species-poor amenity grassland (15% of the total area);
- Shrub and groundcover planting (just over 5% of the total area); and
- Permeable paved parking bays (7% of the total area).

**6.41** The UGF score for this development is 0.19, which is below the suggested UGF score of 0.3 for commercial development set out in the Natural England GI Framework. Whilst some urban greening features, such as permeable paving are included within the design, there would be scope to increase the UGF score by including green roofs or walls without compromising the overall built capacity of the development. Extending the area of permeable paving and replacing the proposed walls with hedging could also improve the UGF score.

## Development 7

**6.42** Development 7 is located on the eastern edge of Bradford on existing industrial land. The application sought reserved matters approval for an industrial and warehousing unit with office, gatehouse, substation, parking and service yard with landscaping within a development area of 2.7 hectares. The site covers about a quarter of the area of the site that gained outline approval. The main features which contribute to the UGF score are:

- Shrubland and woodland to be established on site (16% of the total area);
- Mixed species native hedgerow (0.5% of the total area);
- Trees with deep tree pits (5.5% of the total area);
- Shrub and groundcover planting (2% of the total area);
- Species-poor, regularly mown amenity grassland (just over 1% of the total area); and
- Open aggregate paving (1.5% of the total area).

**6.43** The UGF score for this development is 0.23, which is below the Natural England target score of 0.3 for commercial development but meets the suggested UGF score of 0.2 for industrial development proposed in Bradford's draft Local Plan policy. This is largely due to the constrained red line boundary of the Reserved Matters Application (RMA), which excludes areas of planting and GBI proposed as part of the wider outline consent (17/02463/MAO). As a result, it is challenging for individual RMA parcels within the masterplan to consistently meet the UGF target in isolation. In instances such as this it is recommended that compliance with any adopted UGF score is secured across the outline site. The approved UGF Plan should then be implemented in full and managed and monitored accordingly through subsequent Reserved Matters submissions. Within the RMA site boundary, interventions such as tree planting around the car park, green roofs and green walls could be included in the design to help reach the target of 0.3. These points highlight the potential for the Natural England UGF score for industrial development (0.3) to be achieved in the Bradford District.

## Development 8

**6.44** Development 8 is located to the west of Bradford city centre on brownfield land. The application requests approval for 17 industrial units with parking and landscaping with a development area of 1.8 hectares. Around a quarter of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF. The main features which contribute to the UGF score are listed below:

- Existing trees (1.5% of the total area);
- Meadow grassland (just over 15% of the total area);
- Trees with deep tree pits (10% of the total area); and
- Single species native hedgerow (1.5% of the total area).

**6.45** The UGF score for this development is 0.25, which meets the suggested UGF score of 0.2 for industrial development which CBMDC have proposed in their draft policy. The narrow shape of this site makes it difficult to increase urban greening on the ground without compromising the layout. The size of trees introduced into this area would need to be small and so the increase in UGF would be modest. The inclusion of green walls and green roofs could be used to increase the UGF score. However, given site specific constraints, meeting the target may not be fully achievable. As such some flexibility should be retained in the application of the UGF, especially for constrained sites where it can be demonstrated that the layout changes required to meet the target score may impact viability. It should be noted that the UGF serves as an aspirational benchmark to guide design rather than a strict

requirement in all circumstances. This indicates that, while the Natural England UGF benchmark of 0.3 for industrial development is not achievable in this instance due to site constraints, it remains a valuable target to inform and guide design.

## Development 9

**6.46** Development 9 is located to the west of Bradford city centre on brownfield, post-industrial land. The application sought hybrid planning approval for 16 industrial units (7 in detail, 9 in outline) and ancillary offices with a development area of 4.06 hectares. Around a third of the total development area includes green surfaces which contribute to the UGF. The main features which contribute to the UGF score are:

- Existing trees and vegetation retained on site (3% of the total area);
- Meadow grassland to be established on site (14% of the total area);
- Trees with deep tree pits (just over 11% of the total area);
- Flower-rich perennial and herbaceous planting (10.5% of the total area); and
- Species-poor, regularly mown amenity grassland (just over 10% of the total area).

**6.47** The UGF score for this development is 0.31. This is above the Natural England recommended target score of 0.3 for commercial development and significantly above the suggested UGF score of 0.2 for industrial development proposed in Bradford's draft Local Plan policy. This highlights the potential for the Natural England score of 0.3 to be achieved for all commercial and industrial development in Bradford.

## Recommendations for UGF

### Conclusions and recommendations

#### Residential

**6.48** The testing has shown that the suggested UGF scores set out in the Natural England GI Framework are achievable for residential developments in Bradford District. Three schemes (Developments 3, 4 and 5) demonstrate where the target score (0.4) was attained (or almost attained). The other two residential schemes (Development 1 and Development 2) fell below the target score with UGF scores of 0.21 and 0.31 respectively.

**6.49** Where schemes do not currently achieve the target UGF scores, the analysis suggests that there is scope for them to do so without reducing the overall quantum of residential units delivered on site. However, it is important to note that there may be a need for flexibility in the implementation of the UGF on constrained residential sites in some limited circumstances.

**6.50** CBMDC could consider an uplifted minimum score of 0.5 for new development on greenfield sites. However, the sample of case study examples indicate this could be challenging to achieve and may impact viability. Therefore, a target score of 0.5 is not recommended at this stage.

**6.51** The draft GBI policy developed by CBMDC suggests that UGF standards would only be applicable to major development proposals within the Regional City and Towns listed in the settlement hierarchy. While the greenfield target score of 0.5 is not considered achievable in Bradford District, it is recommended that the residential target score of 0.4 is made applicable to all major development proposals in the district, including those in rural areas.

## **Commercial**

**6.52** Overall, the findings of the testing indicates that the Natural England target UGF score of 0.3 for commercial development is achievable within Bradford District. While not all schemes currently meet this threshold (Developments 6, 7 and 8), the assessments show that relatively minor design interventions – such as increasing tree provision, incorporating green roofs or walls, and expanding permeable and planted surfaces – could enable compliance without fundamentally altering development capacity.

**6.53** Importantly, the results also demonstrate that where site-specific constraints limit the ability to fully achieve the target score – such as operational requirements, viability considerations, or spatial limitations – developers can still make meaningful contributions to urban greening. In such cases, proposals can demonstrate a clear commitment to maximising GBI provision and provide a robust justification where the target cannot be fully met, in line with a flexible, policy-led approach. This supports the delivery of increased green cover across schemes while recognising the practical constraints associated with different site contexts.

**6.54** The draft GBI policy developed by CBMDC suggests that UGF targets of 0.2 for industrial development and 0.3 for commercial development. The majority of the sites tested as part of this review are industrial in nature, with one scheme comprising a mix of commercial and industrial uses (Development 8). As the findings show that most of the assessed schemes meet or exceed the 0.2 target, there is evidence to

suggest that a higher target could be achievable in many cases. On this basis, it is considered reasonable to align more closely with the Natural England GI Framework by seeking a target of 0.3 for all commercial development, including industrial, recognising that many sites can accommodate this level of urban greening without compromising their function.

## Recommendations for UGF

It is recommended that the following UGF target scores are applied in Bradford District:

- Major residential development proposals – minimum score 0.4.
- Major commercial/industrial development proposals – minimum score 0.3.

This is in line with the draft GBI policy developed by CBMDC. However, it is recommended that this applies to all major developments in the district, as opposed to just those within the Regional City and Towns listed in the settlement hierarchy.

Compliance with UGF scores for outline and hybrid planning applications should be secured across the outline application through a coordinated strategy and the approved UGF Plan should then be implemented in full and managed and monitored accordingly through subsequent Reserved Matters submissions.

For residential schemes, the assessment of previously approved schemes suggests that this is in line with what some of the existing developments are providing but will provide an uplift in greening in some cases.

Standards for UGF, along with a strong strategic GBI policy will work together to provide a robust basis for the delivery of good quality, multi-functional GBI in new development.

## Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard

### Overview of UTCC

**6.55** The Urban Tree Canopy Cover (UTCC) standard aims to increase tree canopy cover in urban environments. Tree canopy cover is the layer of leaves, branches and tree stems that cover the ground. This standard recognises the specific range of

ecosystem services which large-canopied trees provide compared to other GBI interventions. This moves beyond targets based on the number of trees.

**6.56** The major development standard for UTCC is set as a percentage of the development area which is under tree canopy cover. Natural England does not set an expected minimum percentage of tree canopy cover. Guidance instead recommends that targets for major development should be set in line with a locally defined baseline and based on an understanding of local needs and constraints. However, other guidance does provide some guideline figures to gauge local targets against:

- The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network suggest a target of 20% in 2022 across urban areas [\[See reference 129\]](#); and
- Woodland Trust has advocated for a minimum of 30% tree canopy cover on new development sites [\[See reference 130\]](#).

## Current approach in Bradford

**6.57** Policy EN5: Trees and Woodland of the adopted Bradford Council Core Strategy Development Plan (adopted 2017) outlines requirements for the protection of trees and woodlands, including ancient and semi-natural woodland and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The policy states that planting of additional trees and woodland will be encouraged and proposals for development should result in no net loss of woodland.

**6.58** The White Rose Forest (2026) White Rose Forest Strategic Plan 2025-2050 states that the estimated Tree canopy cover for the district is 10.1%. This is below the national canopy target cover of 16.5%, demonstrating that further tree and woodland planting is required, where appropriate.

## Testing the UTCC standard

### Residential

**Table 6.3: UTCC scores achieved in example consented residential scheme**

| Development | Application Reference | Application Location                                             | Tree Canopy Coverage |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1           | 21/05853/MAR          | Shetcliffe Lane, Bierley, Bradford                               | 12.1%                |
| 2           | 22/01184/MAR          | Land off Bolton Road, Silsden                                    | 24.6%                |
| 3           | 23/02989/MAR          | Land at Kings Drive, Bradford                                    | 21.3%                |
| 4           | 20/04591/MAR          | Former Station Yard, New School Lane, Halifax Road, Cullingworth | 30.6%                |
| 5           | 21/05850/MAR          | Land at Sun Lane and Ilkley Road, Burley-in-Wharfedale           | 22.6%                |

**6.59 Development 1** is a residential development of approximately 106 dwellings on a 3.66 hectare greenfield site in the south east of Bradford. The consented scheme achieved an expected UTCC of 12.1% which is comparatively lower than the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group advised target of 20%, and the Woodland Trust target of 30%.

**6.60** The consented landscape plan incorporates retention of existing woodland belts along site boundaries, as well as new tree planting along access roads within the site. There are a range of species proposed within the landscape plan, including field maple (*Acer campestre* 'Streetwise'), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), cherry (*Prunus* 'Pink Perfection') and others. While there is potential to marginally increase canopy cover across the site, it is likely to be challenging to considerably increase canopy cover without potential layout or design amendments. However, there are some opportunities to include additional planting to open grassland areas along Shetcliffe Lane, as well as individual planting within private residential back gardens.

**6.61 Development 2** is a residential development of 128 dwellings with open space, landscaping and other ancillary infrastructure, located on a 5.9 hectare greenfield site to the east of Silsden. The site achieved an expected UTCC of 24.6%, with the most common proposed species including Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine'), Young's weeping birch (*Betula pendula*) and Horse chestnut (*Aesculus*

*hippocastanum*). The landscape plan includes retention of existing trees within the site, tree-lined streets and, in some cases, individual trees planted within residential back gardens. The site achieved above the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group advised target of 20%, although below the Woodland Trust recommended target of 30%.

**6.62 Development 3** comprises a residential development of 26 affordable housing units (within apartment blocks) with associated landscaping and parking. The site is approximately 0.7 hectares and is located on undeveloped, vegetated urban land in the north of Bradford. The site achieved an expected UTCC of 21.3%, which is higher than the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group advised target of 20%, but below the Woodland Trust recommended target of 30%. While limited arboricultural impact information was provided within the planning application, it is understood that development of the site resulted in the loss of trees and shrubs which were established on the site (although no protected trees). Therefore, it is unclear whether the 21% results in an uplift in UTCC overall. The landscape plan incorporates tree planting along the site's southern and eastern boundaries, and some smaller ornamental trees within parking areas.

**6.63 Development 4** comprises a residential development of 53 dwellings with associated car parking, landscaping and areas of public open space. The site is approximately 1.9 hectares and is located on brownfield commercial land located in the west of Cullingworth. The site achieved an expected UTCC of 30.6%, which is higher than both the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group advised target of 20% and the Woodland Trust target of 30%.

**6.64** The site contains a pre-existing area of woodland belt along its western edge. The most common new species include Field maple (*Acer campestre*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). While the consented development meets the recommended targets for canopy cover, much of the new proposed planting within the site is likely to represent compensatory planting for that lost to built development (including the public footpath and private garden areas). Therefore, the overall canopy cover for the site is likely to represent only a marginal uplift in canopy cover overall.

**6.65 Development 5** comprises a residential-led scheme of a maximum of 500 dwellings along with educational facility, public space, landscaping, parking and other ancillary infrastructure. The 25.6 hectare site is located on greenfield land, previously comprising open fields and grazing land, located to the west of Burley in Wharfedale. The baseline canopy cover on the site primarily comprised woodland belts along field boundaries. The consented development achieved an expected UTCC of 22.6%. This is higher than the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group advised target

of 20%, but below the Woodland Trust suggested target of 30%. Several trees across the large site were lost to development of the site. Therefore, the overall uplift in canopy cover may be marginal.

## Commercial

**Table 6.4: UTCC scores achieved in example consented commercial schemes**

| Development | Planning Application Reference | Planning Application Name/ Location                             | Development Type       | UTCC  |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| 6           | 20/00323/MAF                   | Land between Church Street and Beck Street, Keighley            | Industrial             | 13.0% |
| 7           | 20/03358/MAR                   | Unit 7, Land at Gain Lane and Woodhall Road, Bradford           | Industrial             | 12.0% |
| 8           | 23/02588/MAF                   | Land West of Legrams Mill, Woodhead Road, Bradford              | Commercial/ Industrial | 11.5% |
| 9           | 23/04496/MAF                   | Former Site of Fairweather Green Mills, Thornton Road, Bradford | Industrial             | 28.2% |

**6.66 Development 6** comprises four buildings with parking and landscaping. Overall, canopy cover across the development is calculated at 13.0%. The number of proposed trees is fairly low and include a limited palette. The UTCC of 13.0% is below both the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group target of 20% and the Woodland Trust target of 30%. However, the percentage is above the existing average tree canopy cover across Bradford District, which is 10.1%, but below the national tree canopy cover target of 16.5%. Increasing tree canopy cover on this site would be possible if trees were introduced into the planting along the northern and western boundaries, on the embankment. The size of trees introduced into this area would need to be small and so the increase in tree canopy cover would be modest.

**6.67 Development 7** has a total site area of 2.7 hectares, comprising a single building with parking and landscaping. Overall, canopy cover across the development is calculated at 12.0%. The tree cover includes both proposed trees and existing

trees retained on site. The UTCC of 12.0% is below both the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group target of 20% and the Woodland Trust target of 30%. Increasing tree canopy cover on this site would be possible if trees were introduced into the car parking area, on the embankment. The size of trees introduced into this area would need to be small due to site constraints and so the increase in tree canopy cover would be modest.

**6.68 Development 8** has a total site area of 1.8 ha, comprising 17 industrial units with parking and landscaping. Overall, canopy cover across the development is calculated at 11.5%. The UTCC of 11.5% is below both the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group target of 20% and the Woodland Trust target of 30%. The narrow shape of this site makes it difficult to increase the tree cover without compromising the layout.

**6.69 Development 9** has a total site area of 4.1 hectares, comprising 16 units with parking and landscaping. Overall, canopy cover across the development is calculated at 28.2%. The retention of existing trees and vegetation alongside proposed planting helps to increase overall tree canopy cover. The UTCC of 28.2% is above both the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group target of 20% and the Woodland Trust target of 30%. It is also nearly three times the average tree canopy cover across Bradford District (10.1%) and nearly double the national tree canopy cover target of 16.5%. Increasing tree canopy cover on this site would be possible if trees were introduced into the car parking area, on the embankment.

## Recommendations for UTCC

### Residential

**6.70** The sample of consented residential schemes which were tested achieved tree canopy covers ranging from 12.1% to 30.6%. Only one scheme (Development 1) fell below the Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Group recommended target of 20%, with the remaining schemes scoring marginally over 20% and one scheme (Development 3) above 30% (Woodland Trust recommended target).

**6.71** Therefore, based on guidelines of 20% and 30% by national bodies, a 20% local target for Bradford District would be both reasonable and achievable based on the test developments. However, to provide uplift to canopy cover in future consented development, a score between 20% and 30% (for example 25%) would result in enhanced canopy cover for most sites. However, UTCC should also be based on a principle of no net loss (whichever is greatest) as a first principle.

**6.72** Testing identified there may be opportunities to enhance canopy cover on some sites without impacting the overall design or layout of consented development, with opportunities to accommodate additional planting within open space and private gardens. Tree canopy cover can also be influenced by several factors, including the tree species, configuration of tree planting and the number of trees. This offers opportunities to increase tree canopy cover without impacting the number of units in a residential development. However, species selection should be mindful of the full range of potential benefits provided by species, and their individual suitability for the site context (e.g. soil type, water availability).

## Commercial

**6.73** The assessment indicates that space is often more constrained on commercial and industrial development sites compared to residential schemes, where higher tree canopy targets may be more readily achievable. As such, a reduced but still meaningful canopy target may be more appropriate for these typologies. Aligning with the national tree canopy cover aspiration of 16.5% would represent a realistic and proportionate benchmark for commercial and industrial sites within Bradford District.

**6.74** Evidence from Development 9 demonstrates that this level of canopy cover can be achieved where site layout and design allow; however, Development 8 highlights that some sites – particularly those with narrow or constrained footprints – may have limited capacity to fully meet such targets. In these instances, it is important that proposals seek to maximise tree planting and urban greening opportunities wherever feasible, while providing clear, robust justification where targets cannot be fully achieved, consistent with a flexible and policy-led approach to delivery.

## Recommendations for UTCC

It is recommended that the following UTCC target scores are applied in Bradford District:

- Major residential development proposals – minimum tree canopy cover of 25% (or no net loss, whichever is greater).
- Major commercial/industrial development proposals – minimum tree canopy cover of 16.5% (or no net loss, whichever is greater).

The assessment of previously approved schemes suggests that this is in line with what some of the existing developments are providing but will provide an uplift of canopy cover for some developments.

The policy should allow some flexibility in places where tree planting may not be appropriate given other ecological and landscape constraints, and with reference to local priorities for nature recovery. Tree planting within new development should be guided by the principle of ‘right tree, right place’.

Compliance with UTCC scores for outline and hybrid planning applications should be secured across the outline application site as a whole through a coordinated strategy and the approved UTCC Plan should then be implemented in full and managed and monitored accordingly through subsequent Reserved Matters submissions.

In addition, the policy should emphasise the importance of retaining mature and veteran trees where possible, which already have a full canopy cover and provide ecosystem services. Planting of new trees will take time to deliver the full range of benefits. Where loss is unavoidable, replacement trees of equivalent sufficient size and value should be proposed as part of the development. Clear-felling of existing trees on development sites and replacement with smaller stock (e.g. whips/transplants) should be avoided.

## Other planning delivery mechanisms

**6.75** Beyond planning policy and GI standards, there are several other planning tools which can be used to enhance the delivery of GBI. These are summarised below.

**6.76 Developer Contributions** for infrastructure can be a source of funding to support GBI. CBMDC Infrastructure Funding Statement [\[See reference 131\]](#) provides an overview of the latest developer contribution mechanisms and figures within the district. Key mechanisms include:

- **Section 106 (S106)** Agreements [\[See reference 132\]](#) allow a planning authority to enter a negotiated agreement (or “planning obligation”) to mitigate the impact of a specific development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Where a development fails to meet local criteria, such as any adopted Natural England GI Framework major development standard, S106 agreements could be used to secure financial support for local BNG projects. It will be essential to have clear and transparent GBI policy requirements so that the tests for S106 agreements can be met (that they are necessary, relevant to planning, directly, fairly and reasonably related to the proposed development).
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** [\[See reference 133\]](#) is a locally based development tax. CBMDC has charged a CIL to certain new developments to fund GBI and to support the delivery of the Local Plan and other Development

Plan Documents. The council should consider identifying some of the appropriate opportunities outlined in this Strategy within their Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to facilitate the use of these funds for GBI.

**6.77 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)** was introduced nationally in February 2024 and requires all major development to deliver an uplift of at least 10% in biodiversity. This uplift is to be delivered onsite however, if it can be evidenced that this is not possible, off-site contributions may be accepted. On-site BNG provision should enhance the GBI on a development site while off-site BNG contributions will be an important source of funding for strategic GBI opportunities [\[See reference 134\]](#).

**6.78 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)** have been produced at the regional scale, and cover all of England. The West Yorkshire LNRS was published in Spring 2026 [\[See reference 135\]](#). It identifies and maps priorities and actions to create, enhance and restore nature and provide wider environmental benefits across the region. The LNRS also sets a series of targets for environmental delivery. Any GBI proposal should consider both this Strategy and the LNRS.

## Partnership working

**6.79** The planning system and local authority resources alone cannot be relied upon to deliver the requirements and aspirations of this Strategy. Much of the new and improved GBI will be taken forward, funded and maintained by a range of partners external to CBMDC, working in multi-partner arrangements through a range of delivery mechanisms.

**6.80** There are a range of other funding sources which can be drawn upon to deliver GBI. A summary of these are provided below and more detail about specific sources and to which opportunities they may apply is provided in the action plan in **Chapter 7**.

**6.81 Grant funding:** Several public bodies and third sector organisations provide grant funding for natural capital, local and cultural heritage and community benefit investment opportunities. Grants vary significantly by value and criteria and often they are only available to public or third sector organisations. Grant funding opportunities are usually competitively allocated and often several grant funds can be stacked to fund larger scale projects.

**6.82 Nature Towns and Cities (NTC)** is a programme jointly run by the National Trust, Natural England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. The focus of the programme is to bring nature and greenspace to urban areas for everyone's benefit. In 2026, CBMDC was one of 19 local authorities awarded capital funding

(~£850,000) to develop partnerships, strategies and delivery plans to enhance urban greenspaces and increase the benefits they provide. NTC funding can contribute to developing investible projects and establishing partnerships to deliver the opportunities identified within this Strategy.

**6.83 Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS):** Some of the opportunities for Bradford District's GBI network are located with rural areas of the district. The new ELMS replaces the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Progress on ELMS lies fully outside the planning system and under the governance of DEFRA. However, uptake of ELMS funding for environmental measures by farmers/landowners will be central to achieving the vision for the GBI network; particularly addressing issues of habitat fragmentation and water quality within agricultural areas.

**6.84 Payment for ecosystem services (PES):** PES involve financial payments to land managers to voluntarily maintain or improve ecosystems, above and beyond what is required by regulations. Buyers of these services may be public bodies or private companies that benefit from these ecosystem services (for example, businesses that need to offset carbon emissions). Currently, payment for ecosystem services in the UK generally focus on regulating services, with a particular focus on carbon sequestration and storage. The voluntary carbon market includes two accredited schemes: the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) and the Peatland Code (PC):

- At a regional scale several water quality markets have been established. Water companies paying farmers within specific catchments to change land management practices to reduce diffuse water pollution, leading to reduced water treatment costs. Various voluntary "carbon+" markets are also emerging. These offer carbon offsetting bundled with wider benefits, such as biodiversity (for example, Wilder Carbon from the Wildlife Trusts [\[See reference 136\]](#)).
- BNG can also be considered as an example of a payment for ecosystem services, in situations where developers cannot deliver onsite BNG and are required to purchase BNG credits for off-site mitigation. The applicable landowner could consider creating 'habitat banks' as part of GBI interventions. These BNG units could then be sold to developers, providing a further funding mechanism for ecological enhancements.
- If large scale tree planting or peatland restoration was taken forward, then the possibility of selling WCC or PC credits or similar could also be explored.

**6.85 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** CBMDC may also wish to explore other opportunities with local businesses. Some organisations may be willing to

sponsor improvements to existing greenspaces as part of their CSR strategy, rather than paying for a specific ecosystem service benefit.

## Training and skills

**6.86** Developing a strong programme of training, education and skills development is essential to the successful delivery and long-term management of the Strategy. Investment in GBI opportunities will only achieve its full potential if there is a workforce and volunteer base with the knowledge and practical skills required to plan, create, maintain and monitor these assets. Building local capacity can also generate wider social and economic benefits by creating pathways into employment, supporting apprenticeships and helping communities develop a greater sense of ownership and stewardship of their local environment. A skilled workforce will be critical in areas such as habitat management, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage, environmental monitoring, community engagement and landscape maintenance.

**6.87** To achieve this, a coordinated skills and training framework should be developed in partnership with CBMDC, colleges, universities, delivery partners and community groups. This could include accredited training courses, apprenticeships, volunteering programmes, work placements and targeted upskilling opportunities for existing staff. Volunteer development programmes could provide hands-on experience in habitat restoration, citizen science, conservation management and community-led environmental projects, helping to build confidence and long-term engagement. By creating clear progression routes from volunteering into training and employment, and by promoting GBI careers to young people and underrepresented groups, the Strategy can help ensure a sustainable pipeline of skilled individuals capable of delivering and maintaining high-quality GBI in the long-term.

## Chapter 7

### Action Plans

**7.1** Each of the four GBI focus areas offer a streamlined approach to the identification and delivery of GBI interventions. Their aim is to provide a framework for action to help policymakers, developers, community groups and residents to deliver appropriate, multi-functional and resilient GBI across the district. Within each GBI focus area, a number of emerging GBI opportunities have been identified, providing a variety of project types, scales and costs, and are intended to be taken forward by various partners as and when funding becomes available. These projects are structured within a series of action plans (see **Appendix D**) to promote their future delivery. Whilst some projects are spatially specific, the principles of other key projects offer the opportunity to be replicated across the district.

**7.2** The action plans are structured as set out below:

- Name of GBI opportunity;
- Overview and justification for inclusion;
- Benefits of delivery;
- Potential delivery partners;
- Governance arrangements;
- Funding mechanism(s);
- Indicative cost;
- Indicative timescale;
- Measurable outcomes; and
- Next steps.

**7.3** The rationale for identification of the key GBI opportunities is outlined below:

- Multi-functionality and range of benefits: Projects that provide multiple benefits that align with the 15 principles to promote the successful delivery of GBI within the district.
- Meeting identified need: The degree to which the project meets an identified gap in the existing GI network within the district.

- **Timescales:** A range of timescales, including quick wins, medium-term and long-term projects, to allow for a variety of scales, delivery mechanisms and achievement of aspirations.
- **Deliverability:** Opportunities that were deemed to be ‘more deliverable’ were put forward, for example, those in receipt of existing stakeholder support, relating to a clear funding stream, or alignment with other existing initiatives.
- **Professional judgement:** The finalised list of key GBI opportunities were compiled using professional judgement to ensure the above criteria provide a representative list of projects.

**7.4** To help contribute towards the forward-planning of the GBI opportunities, outline cost bands and timescales have been devised based on professional judgement. The categories are outlined below in **Table 7.1** and **Table 7.2**:

**Table 7.1: Indicative cost categories for GBI opportunities**

| Cost Category | Value                 |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Low           | <£250,000             |
| Medium        | £250,000 – £1 million |
| High          | >£1 million           |

**Table 7.2: Indicative timescale categories for GBI opportunities**

| Timescale Category       | Number of Years               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Quick win                | Up to 3 years                 |
| Medium-term              | >3 years to 6 years           |
| Long-term (aspirational) | >6 years to 10 years or above |

## Supporting GBI opportunities

**7.5** Beyond locationally specific opportunities to enhance the GBI network, there are several wider opportunities which CBMDC and other delivery partners could take forward to deliver wider benefits. These opportunities are presented in **Appendix D**. Unlike the place-based opportunities these do not have information on governance, costs or funding as it is likely in many cases that these could be facilitated through existing partnerships and programmes.

## Chapter 8

# Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

**8.1** Effective monitoring and evaluation will ensure that policies and any adopted standards are monitored and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness in protecting, maintaining and enhancing the GBI network over time.

**8.2** Monitoring and evaluation also matters for the reasons outlined below:

### ■ Learning

- Understanding whether actions are working;
- Discovering any unintended consequences; and
- Improving future decision making.

### ■ Delivery

- Adapting projects and priorities over time; and
- Keeping the Strategy up to date.

### ■ Communication

- Demonstrating value;
- Maintaining stakeholder support; and
- Strengthening future funding bids.

**8.3** A communication plan to support the delivery of the Strategy is provided in **Appendix B**.

**8.4** Evaluation of the Strategy, policies and standards can be carried out at two levels:

- Development level: To assess whether the design, delivery and maintenance of GBI was carried out in accordance with policy and standards.
- Policy level: To assess the cumulative benefits of policies and standards across the district.

**8.5** The development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategy is also an essential criterion for achieving Nature Towns and Cities accreditation – Foundational Level. The accreditation requires a monitoring framework which includes:

- The overall approach for measuring progress against the Strategy;

- Desired outcomes and goals; and
- Outcome indicators to measure progress towards the outcomes/goals.

**8.6** When designing indicators, it is important that these are both locally relevant, to monitor progress against local need, and specific to the Strategy, policies and standards set. Indicators also need to measure outputs (what has been delivered) and outcomes (the impact of that delivery). The indicators and outputs should be realistic and measurable without significant resource impacts. Potential data sources/datasets have been suggested for the monitoring of each indicator, drawing on existing datasets wherever possible. Where additional data collection is likely to be required, this is clearly indicated and an organisation responsible for collecting the data is suggested. Regardless of the data source, the implementation of this monitoring framework will require a central point of coordination to collect and record monitoring data.

**8.7** Specific outcomes and indicators have been identified for each of the opportunities within the action plan (see **Chapter 7**). **Table 8.1** outlines the monitoring framework for the Strategy.

**Table 8.1: Monitoring and evaluation framework**

| Outcome                                                                                                                             | Indicator(s)                                                                                                                      | Existing Dataset/Source                                      | New Data Collection Required/Source | Frequency                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Increased area of land (hectares) protected through land designation, particularly in areas of traditionally low 'access to nature' | Increased area of land (hectares) protected through designation, particularly in areas of traditionally low 'access to nature'    | Natural England designated site network mapping              | Not applicable                      | Every two years (or in line with mapping updates if less frequent)                                 |
| Increased area of land (hectares) protected through land designation, particularly in areas of traditionally low 'access to nature' | Area (hectares)/ percentage of land designated in areas of low access to nature (defined by Natural England GI Framework mapping) | Natural England GI Framework mapping                         | Not applicable                      | Every two years (or in line with mapping updates if less frequent)                                 |
| Improved condition of existing designated sites, including restored habitats and enhanced management practices                      | Condition of SSSIs and South Pennines Moors SAC/SPA                                                                               | Natural England designated site condition assessment reports | Not applicable                      | In line with Natural England designated site condition assessments (approximately every six years) |
| Improved condition of existing designated sites, including restored habitats and enhanced management practices                      | Area (hectares) of restored habitat on designated sites                                                                           | Natural England designated site condition assessment reports | Not applicable                      | In line with Natural England designated site condition assessments (approximately every six years) |

| Outcome                                                                                                             | Indicator(s)                                                                                                                                                                   | Existing Dataset/Source                          | New Data Collection Required/Source | Frequency                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Improved condition of existing designated sites, including restored habitats and enhanced management practices      | Number of active site improvement or management plans for designated sites                                                                                                     | Natural England designated site portal           | Not applicable                      | Search to be undertaken every two years                  |
| Increased provision of 'wildlife rich' habitat in urban areas                                                       | Area (hectares) of urban habitat (including orchards) in urban areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Created;</li> <li>■ Maintained; and</li> <li>■ Lost.</li> </ul> | Natural England Urban Habitat Map                | Not applicable                      | Every two years                                          |
| Increased tree canopy cover across the district – particularly in areas of high flood and heat risk                 | Percentage tree canopy increase per ward                                                                                                                                       | Bluesky canopy cover dataset                     | Not applicable                      | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |
| Increased tree canopy cover across the district – particularly in areas of high flood and heat risk                 | Percentage tree canopy cover in areas identified as having high flood/heat risk                                                                                                | Woodland Trust Tree Equity Score dataset         | Not applicable                      | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |
| Improved provision of new accessible greenspace, particularly in areas of deficiency and high levels of deprivation | Area (hectares) of new accessible greenspace created                                                                                                                           | Open Space Audit and Needs and Demand Assessment | Not applicable                      | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |

| Outcome                                                                                                             | Indicator(s)                                                                                                                                     | Existing Dataset/Source                           | New Data Collection Required/Source                                       | Frequency                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Improved provision of new accessible greenspace, particularly in areas of deficiency and high levels of deprivation | Area (hectares) of new accessible greenspace created within areas not currently meeting district open space quantity and accessibility standards | Open Space Audit and Needs and Demand Assessment  | Not applicable                                                            | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |
| An expanded and more accessible and attractive active travel network                                                | Length (km) of active travel networks created                                                                                                    | Local cycle route mapping                         | Not applicable                                                            | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |
| An expanded and more accessible and attractive active travel network                                                | Number of accessibility improvements made to active travel network (e.g. number of stiles removed, number of additional bridges built)           | LCWIP                                             | Not applicable                                                            | Every five years (in line with LCWIP update)             |
| An expanded and more accessible and attractive active travel network                                                | Length (m) of enhanced active travel network                                                                                                     | LCWIP                                             | Not applicable                                                            | Every five years (in line with LCWIP update)             |
| An expanded and more accessible and attractive active travel network                                                | Number of residents using active travel as a mode of travel for everyday journeys                                                                | National Travel Survey (Department for Transport) | Not applicable                                                            | Annually                                                 |
| Greater use of greenspaces in towns and cities, including increased                                                 | Area (m2) of greenspace provided within urban regeneration projects                                                                              | Not applicable                                    | CBMDC to keep record of all greenspace delivered in regeneration projects | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |

| Outcome                                                                                                              | Indicator(s)                                                                                                         | Existing Dataset/Source                                                                                                    | New Data Collection Required/Source             | Frequency                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| provision of greenspace in regeneration projects                                                                     |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                 |                                                          |
| Greater use of greenspaces in towns and cities, including increased provision of greenspace in regeneration projects | Number of users of greenspaces                                                                                       | Open Space Audit and Needs and Demand Assessment consultation                                                              | Not applicable                                  | Every five years (in line with Local Plan Review period) |
| Improved chemical and ecological quality of rivers including re-naturalisation of water courses and removal of INNS  | WFD classification of rivers (Chemical and Ecological)                                                               | Environment Agency classification datasets                                                                                 | Not applicable                                  | Every six years in line with WFD management cycle        |
| Improved chemical and ecological quality of rivers including re-naturalisation of water courses and removal of INNS  | Progress against River Aire and Dales to Vale Rivers Catchment partnerships objectives relevant to Bradford District | The Aire catchment network monitoring and evaluation plans<br>Dales to Vale rivers network monitoring and evaluation plans | Not applicable                                  | In line with monitoring reports                          |
| Increased partnership working across the district to deliver GBI and secure ongoing management                       | Number of co-delivered GBI projects both internally and with external partners                                       | Not applicable                                                                                                             | CBMDC to create centralised log of GBI projects | Annually                                                 |
| Increased partnership working across the district                                                                    | Amount (£) of council funding given to fund community GBI projects                                                   | Not applicable                                                                                                             | CBMDC to create centralised log of Council      | Annually                                                 |

| Outcome                                                                                        | Indicator(s)                                                                                      | Existing Dataset/Source | New Data Collection Required/Source                             | Frequency |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| to deliver GBI and secure ongoing management                                                   |                                                                                                   |                         | funds being distributed to GBI projects                         |           |
| Increased partnership working across the district to deliver GBI and secure ongoing management | Number of active 'friends of' or other community groups involved in the management of greenspaces | Not applicable          | CBMDC to create log of active 'friends of' and community groups | Annually  |
| Good quality GBI delivered in all new developments                                             | Number and % of new developments meeting the urban tree canopy cover standard                     | Not applicable          | CBMDC through Local Plan annual monitoring report               | Annually  |
| Good quality GBI delivered in all new developments                                             | Number and % of new developments meeting the urban greening factor standard                       | Not applicable          | CBMDC through Local Plan annual monitoring report               | Annually  |
| Good quality GBI delivered in all new developments                                             | Number of BNG units delivered as part of new development                                          | Not applicable          | CBMDC through Local Plan annual monitoring report               | Annually  |