

Landscape, Heritage and Ecology Design Principles

The following principles are proposed by the Landscape, Heritage and Ecology Working Group (LHEWG) to adopt on all GCP transport schemes. The objective of the principles is to ensure GCP projects go above and beyond minimum requirements in scheme development and delivery. The principles are not presented in any order of priority and are considered to have equal merit, but they may need prioritisation within the context of individual schemes.

Principle 1 – multiple benefits

Each scheme design should incorporate design elements that provide multiple environmental benefits where ever practical. There is a risk that some mitigation solutions can have second order negative impacts, in such cases mitigation will only be adopted where essential to manage a significant primary effect and where some form of public benefit arises to landscape, heritage and ecology.

Principle 2 – biodiversity gain

The biodiversity net gain for each scheme should be a target of a 20% gain, with a minimum of 10%. In the situation where a 20% gain cannot be reached for a specific scheme any shortfall in net gain will be met by achieving a 20% net gain across the GCP programme of transport schemes.

Principle 3 – creating connected habitats

Each scheme design will be based on recognised ecological principles that seek to avoid creating isolated areas of habitat that are of limited scale and connectivity, or difficult to manage. The key objective of biodiversity mitigation should be to expand existing quality habitat and improve habitat connectivity where ever possible.

Particular importance is to be given to habitat connectivity which may require GCP schemes to look beyond the scheme's immediate footprint. GCP will seek to make provision on linear schemes to provide extended linear habitat connectivity (which may require a slightly wider corridor for the scheme in places, or some other provision off line).

Principle 4 – fitting into the landscape

Each scheme's design should seek to enhance landscape character and the significance of heritage assets by delivering a scheme that takes account of the local and wider landscape pattern and, where appropriate, lost landscape features (including heritage assets). Special attention should be paid to the historic setting of the Cambridge area when designing the scheme, particularly in areas of high visibility.

Principle 5 – reducing noise and light pollution

Each scheme design should consider screening the new infrastructure in appropriate locations. This principle refers specifically to ways of limiting the impact of the development on noise levels and ambient light, especially in rural areas.

Principle 6 – effective maintenance

When designing mitigation the maintenance regime required to ensure long term success needs to be included in decision making. Maintenance requirements must be clearly identified and be both practical and financially realistic.

Principle 7 – wider benefits to local communities

Scheme designs should aim to provide benefits to the local communities as well as to the users of the scheme itself.