



University of the
West of England

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Building with Nature – a new benchmark to support the design, delivery and long-term maintenance of public health infrastructure

- **Format:**

Presentation (in-person)

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) and University of the West of England (UWE)

- **Abstract (300 words):**

Over recent years Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) have taken an increasingly active role in influencing and advocating for preventative models of health and social care which work to prevent and reduce health inequalities through access and enjoyment of high quality green infrastructure. GWT's work with public health colleagues at the county and local level, and sub-nationally through their contribution to the level to the South Regional Sustainability and Health Network, reflects a widening recognition that establishing a connection to nature, and creating opportunities for volunteering and environmental stewardship, have on contributing to emergent social prescribing models especially in areas with high levels of deprivation.

Thinking more strategically about how to influence public health interventions was the key driver in GWT pursuing a collaborative project with the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments at the University of the West of England (UWE) who host the WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Built Environments. This opened up an opportunity to work with public health colleagues, as well as drawing on experts from planning, urban design and environmental sciences. The Building with Nature green infrastructure benchmark emerged from this collaboration. With funding from Innovate UK via a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), and with support from the Natural Environment Research Council, the team across GWT and UWE set about developing a benchmark for high quality green infrastructure which could be used as a voluntary mechanism by local planning authorities, developers, public health professionals, construction professionals, and citizens to raise the standard of green infrastructure being delivered through residential and commercial development.

The outcome of the project is a model for joint working between the stakeholders engaged in delivering health and wellbeing outcomes, sustainable water management and wildlife habitats through the planning and the development system; and a certification mechanism that can be awarded to developments and policy documents. The benchmark brings together existing guidance and standards relating to high quality green infrastructure and sustainable development, and provides 23 standards across three themes: wellbeing, water and wildlife. This presentation will focus on the standards that aim to guide the design, delivery and long-term management of green infrastructure features that contribute to health and wellbeing outcomes through a high quality built environment. It will provide an insight into application of the benchmark through a selection of case studies highlighting the period of pilot testing of the benchmark in Gloucestershire and the West of England.

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Gemma Jerome (GJ) is an environmental planner with a research and practice specialism in the delivery, management and maintenance of green infrastructure. Through her doctoral studies she has examined the role of community groups and the health and social outcomes of green infrastructure delivery at the residential and community scale. GJ has been working as the Knowledge Transfer Partnership Associate and project lead for KTP between GWT and UWE.

Dr Danielle Sinnett (DS) is an environmental scientist with over ten years' research experience in green infrastructure establishment on restored sites. DS is the Lead Academic on the KTP. In September 2016, DS was part of the WHO Expert Panel for green spaces and health, and is providing academic input to IBI Group who are the support partner to NHS England's Healthy New Towns.

Roger Mortlock (RM) is the Chief Executive of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. He joined in 2013 from the Soil Association where he was Deputy Director and Chair of the Food for Life Partnership. Previously he worked in policy and communications roles with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal College of Nursing and the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers. He chairs the Soil Association Land Trust which holds productive land in trust for future generations. RM has a particular interest in land management, and programmes that connect people and nature, especially in relation to health and wellbeing.

Sarah Burgess (SB) is a qualified town planner and senior lecturer with over 15 years' experience in private and public sector planning in England and Australia. SB has produced national guidance for CABE, and recently edited an international textbook on *Planning for Health and Well-being*. She is a member of the Academy of Urbanism and a Built Environment Expert for the Design Council CABE.

Dr Tom Calvert (TC) is a social scientist with a track record in examining the experiential aspects of city life, green infrastructure and active transport, particularly related to wellbeing.

Nick Smith (NS) is a chartered town planner and head of planning at UWE. He started his career 15 years ago at a large multidisciplinary consultancy, gaining specialist expertise in the promotion and delivery of large-scale housing, and commercial and infrastructure (including green infrastructure) projects. NS is actively involved with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) serving on a number of national and regional committees. He was Chair of the RTPI South West in 2013 and is the RTPI representative on the cross-professional group Construction Industry Council South West.

Dr Colin Studholme (CS) is Director of Policy and Research at the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. CS has worked with GWT for 21 years, and is responsible for developing conservation policy and research to establish the evidence base for the work GWT lead on.

Steven Bloomfield (SB) is the Planning Officer for Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (WWT). After spending the early part of his career carrying out practical habitat management and studying seals and seabirds Steve became the Sites and Species Officer for WWT in 2001. During this time SB led work on Local Wildlife Sites and BAP priority species he spent much of his time working with landowners and partners delivering management on sites of high biodiversity value across the county. Since 2004 SB has been the lead for all aspects of WWT's planning work with local authorities, developers, other partners and the public, including green infrastructure. He chairs the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Partnership.