

GROWING OUR FUTURE

WEST MIDLANDS
FORESTRY FRAMEWORK

Green Infrastructure Planning in the Black Country *Barrow Hill: The Dudley Volcano*



Introduction & Location

Barrow Hill, in Pensnett, Dudley, is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Barrow Hill is notable for its richness of wildlife and habitats, and significant geological and archaeological features. Together with outstanding views, Barrow Hill boasts a large and diverse area of grassland, ponds, ancient woodland, populations of Great Crested Newt and other important habitats and species. The area is thus of high recreational and amenity value for local people and is an excellent example of Green Infrastructure in practice.

Objectives:

- To give the Dudley volcano a new lease of life, Dudley MBC together with key stakeholders and other statutory agencies came together and drew up plans to improve the site

Actions:

- Improve the site's geological value by removing scrub for public enjoyment
- Way marked walking routes, with Action Heart Walking for Life scheme, to cater for ex-cardiac patients at the adjacent Russell Hall hospital and wider
- Employ a Community Liaison Officer to work with local people to encourage an active interest in using the site and improving its nature conservation value

Achievements:

- Barrow Hill delivers many benefits, Social, Economic & Environmental:
- Space for people to socialize
 - Health & well being – Action Heart initiative, active recreation (walking, cycling)
 - Creation of a sense of community
 - Opportunities for community involvement e.g. Barrow Hill Friends Group
 - Environmental education e.g. UKRIGGS Earth Science Project
 - Employment – Community Liaison Officers
 - Income from visitor centre & kiosk
 - Declaration of LNR
 - Preservation of bio & geo diversity
 - Development of management plan
 - Ancient Woodland management

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Background:

Green infrastructure is important because it provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people. Just like the built or 'grey' infrastructure, the green infrastructure should be carefully planned, designed and invested in far in advance of development. Although green space is often viewed as something that is 'nice' to have, the term Green Infrastructure implies something that we must have and must be actively maintained and, if necessary, restored. Green infrastructure is essential for sustainable communities providing 'liveability' for present and future generations

Quotes:

This case study highlights the need for a more strategic approach, framework and delivery program for Green Infrastructure Planning in the Black Country. It should be looked at in the context of the Black Country and its aspiration for environmental transformation. Green Infrastructure Planning will be key to the delivery of the BCUP and the realization of the 30 year vision to transform the Black Country
Mark Dixon, BBCWT

Partners:

- Dudley MBC
- the Black Country Geological Society
- Natural England (SSSI, Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, Wildspace!)
- Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust

WMRFF Objectives:

Main Theme & Others

- Green Infrastructure
- Health & Wellbeing
- Enhancing Biodiversity
- Fostering Social Inclusion

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