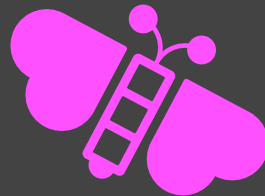
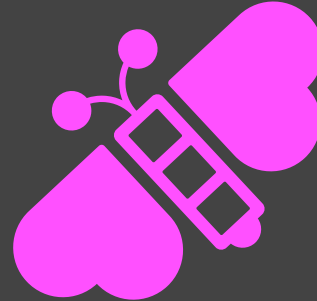




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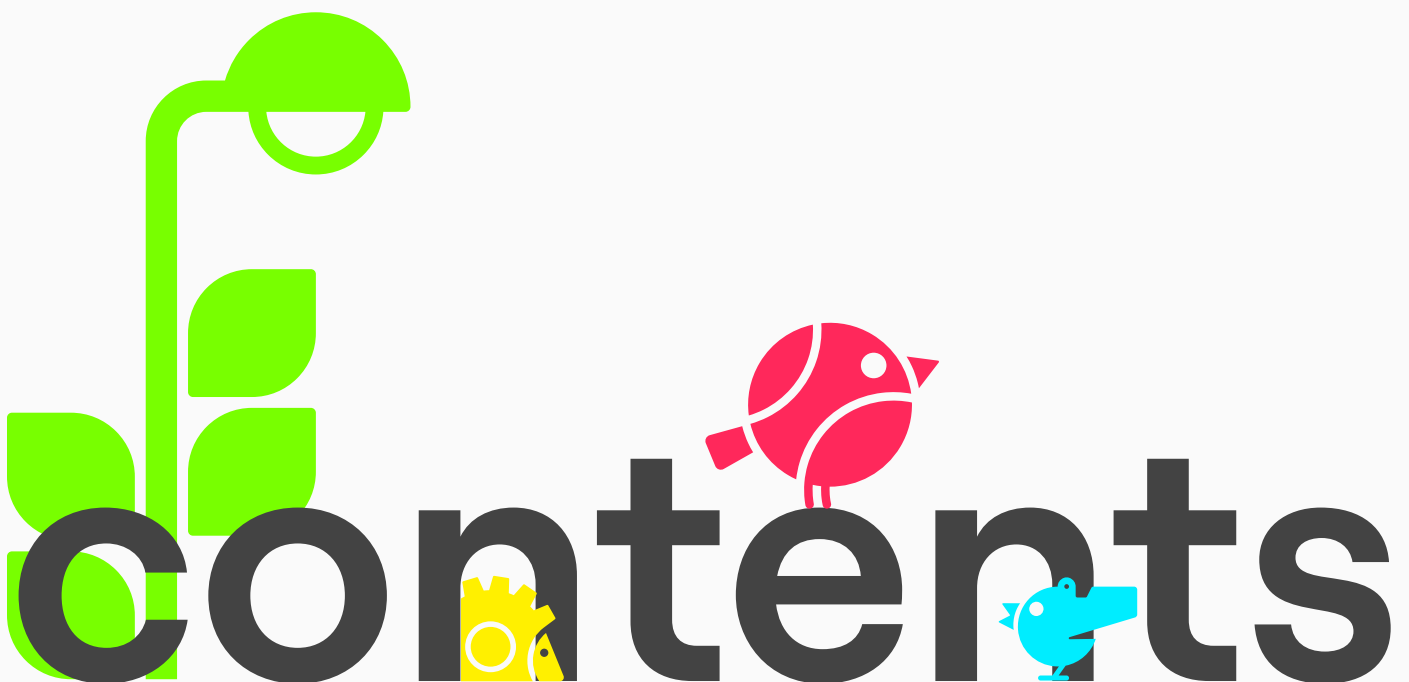
# Nature Towns and Cities



# Accreditation criteria



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# Introduction

The Nature Towns and Cities accreditation scheme recognises and rewards towns and cities putting nature at the heart of their plans. It provides a useful framework through which places can progress. It also demonstrates to the public, partners and future funders and investors a place's commitment to transforming green infrastructure, to benefit people, place and nature.

At the end of level one (Foundation), you will have the right foundations in place: strong partnerships working towards a shared vision and a strategy and improvement plan to deliver your long-term ambitions.

Achieving level one accreditation will help to build your place's overall capacity and resilience to deliver on its aspirations.

At the end of level two (Advanced), you will have moved your vision into deliverable, funding or investment-ready project plans.

You will have a robust and comprehensive business case for overall funding/investment and a target operating and blended finance model, taking a sustainable and long-term approach.

You will also have potential funders and investors in mind, be ready to receive funding and to start delivering your pipeline of prioritised projects.



# Level one: Foundation

## Setting your vision

**Applications will be assessed on whether the place has:**

1. Written a clear and ambitious vision for transformation in the town or city.
2. Thought holistically about the change their vision could bring, considering the big challenges the place needs to address, the opportunities for transformation, and the rationale for it.
3. Identified and secured the support of key sponsors within their organisations and other key bodies who will champion and lead for the change e.g. leaders, mayors, directors.
4. Co-developed the vision with relevant people and groups from the community, businesses and organisations.
5. Involved the wider public to understand their priorities and interests, being inclusive and reaching new audiences.
6. Asked children and young people what they want for the future of green infrastructure.
7. Shared the vision and secured long-term cross-party support.
8. A plan for reviewing and evaluating the vision.

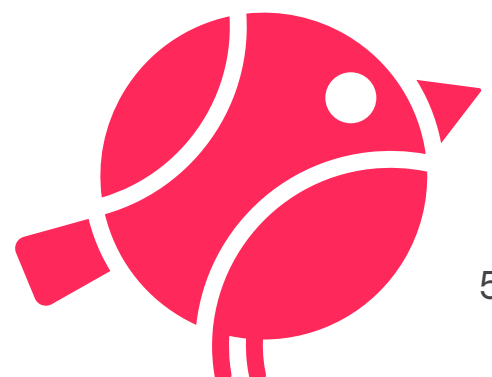
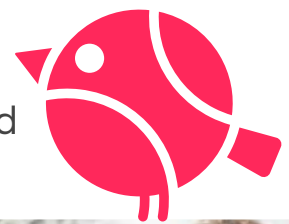


# Level one: Foundation

## Building strong partnerships

**Applications will be assessed on whether the place has:**

1. Considered the scale at which they will work, regionally and locally.
2. Identified current and potential partners to co-develop and bring the vision to life.
3. Co-designed a framework for partnership working, considering the capability, capacity and leadership needed across the place.
4. Co-designed a framework for partnership decision-making.
5. Considered how key place-based stakeholders benefit from nature.
6. Identified how partners are directly investing and can continue to invest in nature themselves.
7. Considered formalising the bigger, more strategic partnerships with agreements, defining roles and responsibilities e.g. memorandum of understanding, adopted partnership agreement, terms of reference.
8. Considered their approach to working with communities, including co-stewardship models.
9. Demonstrated a plan for the ongoing review of the partnership as it evolves.



# Level one: Foundation

## Writing a green infrastructure strategy and improvement plan

**Applications will be assessed on whether the place has:**

1. Used Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework to guide the development of a green infrastructure (GI) strategy and improvement plan. E.g. analysed data, set objectives and targets, considered developing local design guides.
2. Reviewed existing relevant strategies and policies within which to frame this overarching GI strategy and improvement plan.
3. Considered the distinct challenges and opportunities of the place and how the GI strategy will respond to these.
4. Written an action plan to move the GI strategy into implementation.
5. Taken a partnership approach and co-designed the GI strategy and improvement plan, thinking about potential strategic and delivery partners as well as broader public engagement.
6. Considered other components that may guide the work e.g. funding, governance and workforce development.
7. A plan for monitoring and evaluating the GI strategy.





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**Key developments**

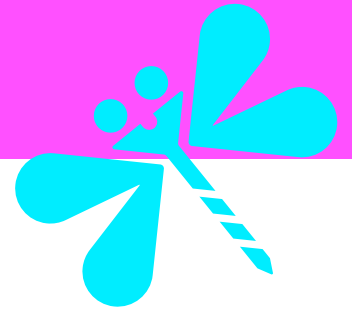
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- 1903 Railings and gat
- 1906 The public open
- 1913 Drainage and sea and planted.
- 1923 A local governme creation of the bo
- 1934 The caretaker's lo constructed.

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# Level two: Advanced

## Developing your projects



**Applications will be assessed on whether the place has:**

1. Demonstrated a good understanding of current project delivery, prioritising ambitious projects to deliver the green infrastructure goals for the town or city.

2. Worked with partners to design these projects, ensuring they demonstrate best practice.



3. Engaged with wider stakeholders and the public to align with their expectations and ensure long-term community involvement.

4. Described the expected social, environmental, placemaking and economic outcomes of each project and how they contribute to the overall ambition.

5. Considered grouping projects based on outcomes and aligned with funders or funding streams.

6. Developed a phased timeline and begun to cost the projects.

7. Effectively planned the resources required to deliver the projects.



8. Considered how the priority projects will be delivered, including long-term management and maintenance.

9. Plans to regularly monitor, evaluate and report on progress towards local targets.





# Level two: Advanced

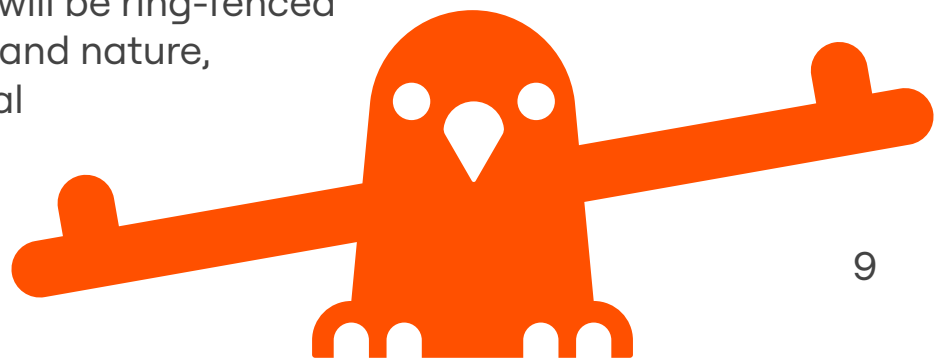
## Creating a business case for funding and investment

**Applications will be assessed on whether the place has:**

1. Considered the economic value of their current assets.
2. Considered the economic value of the proposed changes and the potential return on investment.
3. Articulated the potential environmental and social value from the proposed changes.
4. Assessed the long-term resource needed to sustain the ambitious change and projects.



5. Written a clear business case for overall funding/investment in the place, including the strategic rationale, expected benefits and return on investment, risks and mitigating actions and financial justification for the proposed changes.
6. Explored funding opportunities with potential funders (of outcomes or ecosystem services) and made specific cases for investment aligned to their interests and objectives.
7. Considered how surpluses will be ring-fenced to deliver benefits for people and nature, perhaps setting up a new legal entity if appropriate and working with partners.

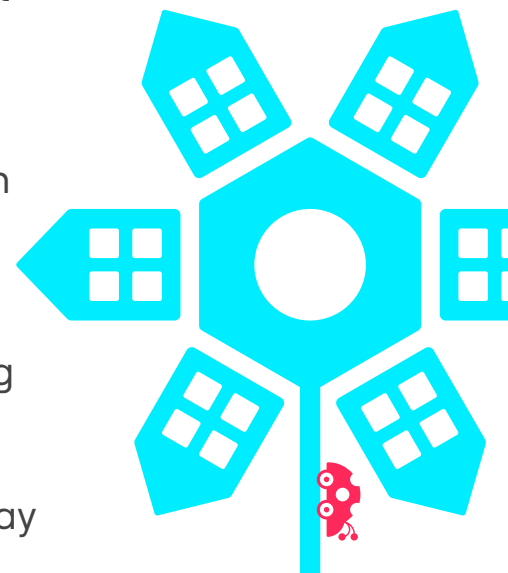


# Level two: Advanced

## Developing your operating and financial models

**Applications will be assessed on whether the place has:**

1. Created a plan for skills development across the partnership e.g. investing in the creation of expertise, jobs, apprenticeships or training.
2. Set up a legal and governance structure for project delivery across the partnership, defining roles and responsibilities and how decisions will be made.
3. Developed a high-level five to 10-year financial plan including plans to pilot and test progress towards the long-term business model.
4. Developed a three-year cash flow forecast, thinking about capital and operational costs.
5. Developed a partnership plan including how this may evolve over time.
6. Developed an empowerment plan for community capacity building.
7. Established a plan for risk management.
8. Set up mechanisms for continual review and adaptation of the proposed operating and financial models.





If you require an alternative format, or if you have questions for the team behind this guide, please email us on [info@naturetownsandcities.org.uk](mailto:info@naturetownsandcities.org.uk)



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