

Panacea Green Infrastructure?

Multidimensional Contributions to Competitive
and Livable Metropolitan Regions in Europe

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Session 4: Governance Dimensions of Green Infrastructure

Changing the Nature of GI City Governance in Birmingham: A Policy and Practice Evaluation

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Research Aims

- To explore **GI governance at the city scale**
- To assess the **effectiveness of GI policies**
- To understand the **role of an ecosystem services approach in spatial planning**



Policy into Practice Challenges

- Turning GI policy into **actual GI practice**
- Tackling the dominance of **economic growth** narrative
- Facing a **constantly changing** policy / administrative context



Why Birmingham?

- **Political will**

Birmingham declared in 2013 its ambition to be a leading Green City in Europe

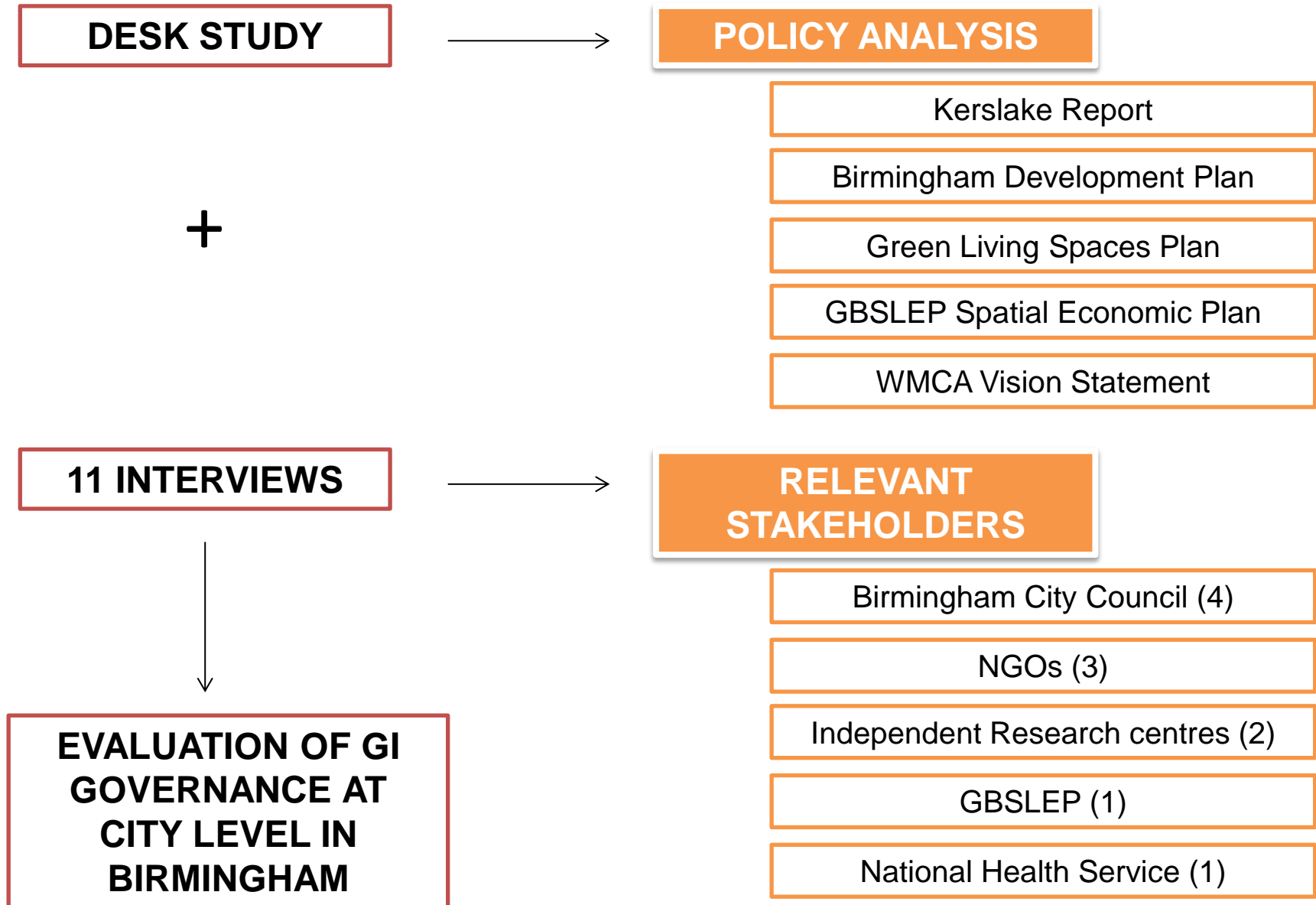
- **Policy evidence**

Birmingham was one of the first city in the UK and Europe-wide to map and assess its Ecosystem Services (ES) at the urban level

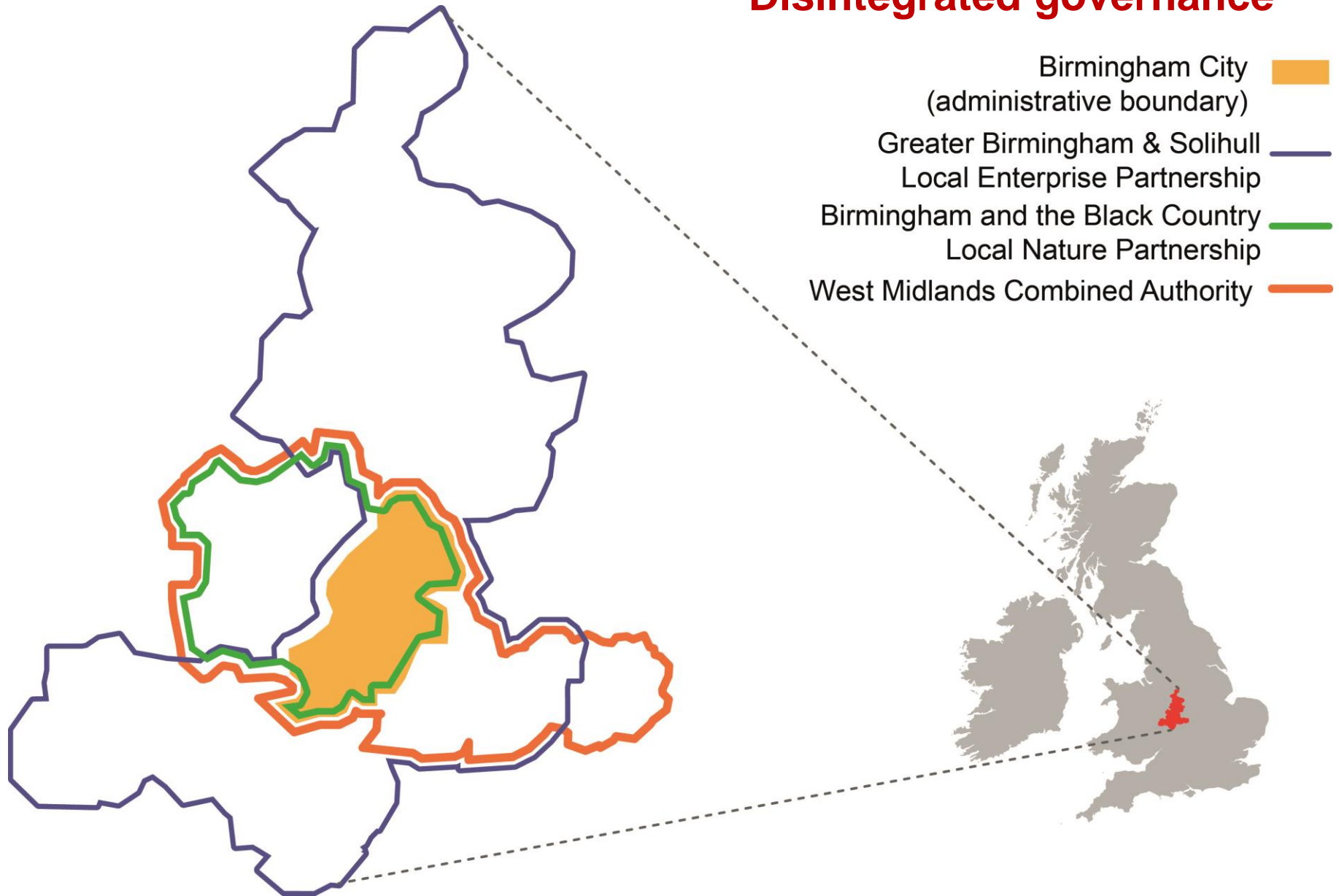
- **Cultural and scientific milieu**

Birmingham City Council in collaboration with citizen organisations and businesses have a long tradition in environmental management and the Universities are very engaged in research on urban environment

Methodology

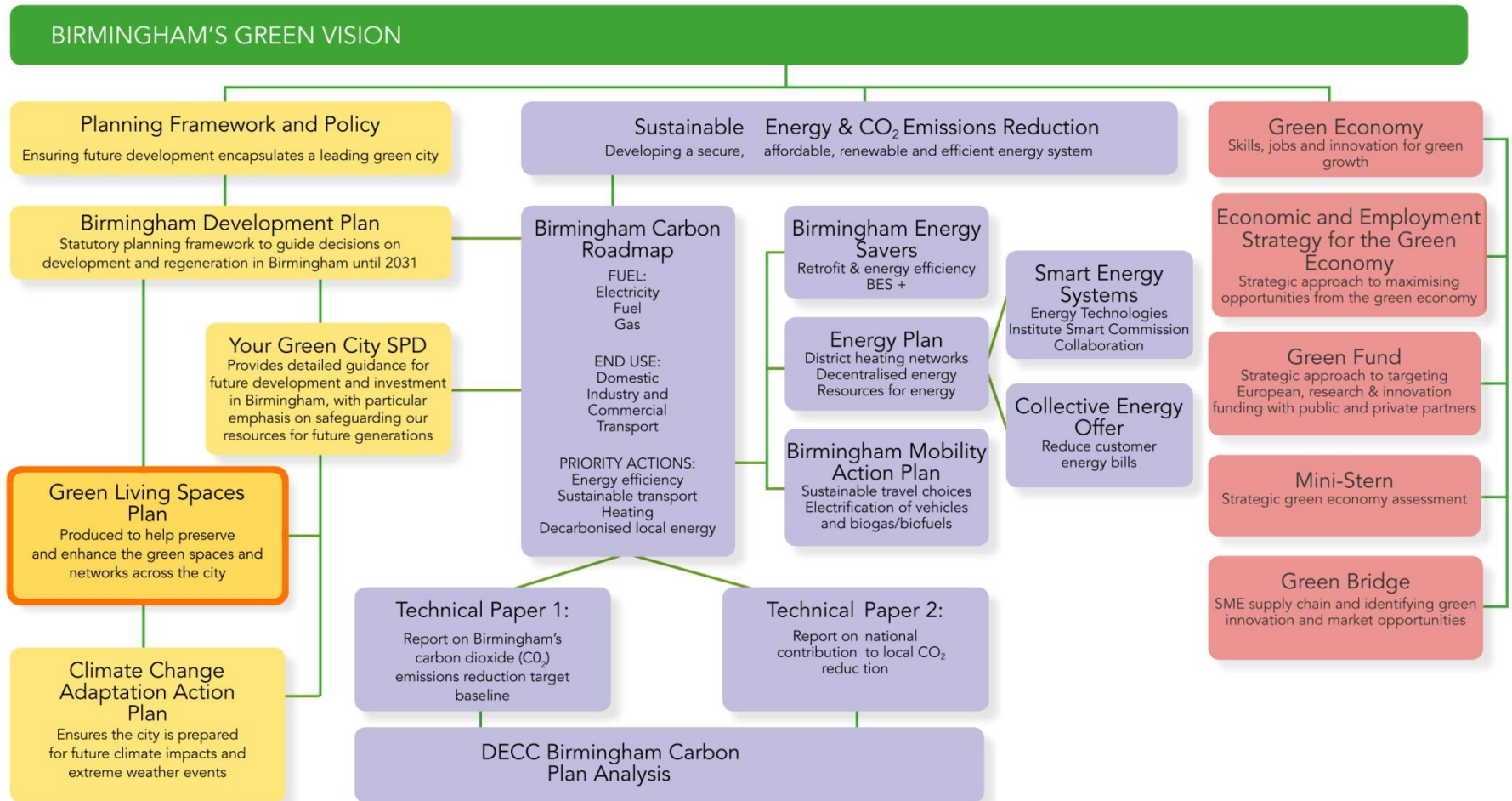


Disintegrated governance



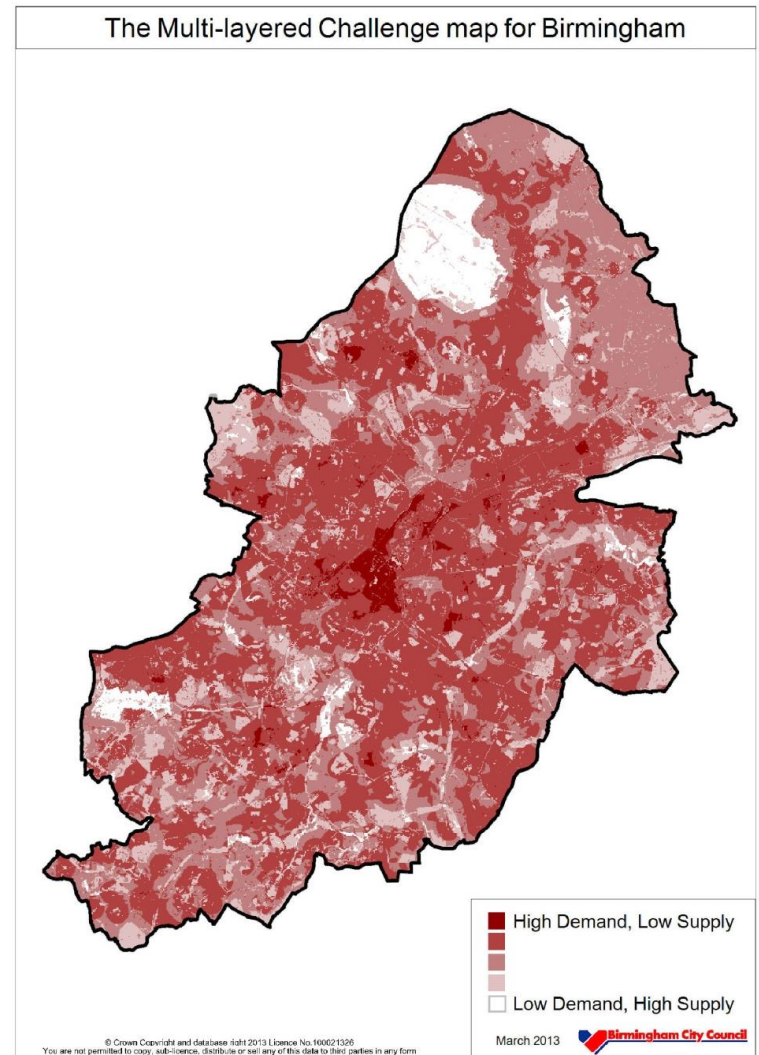
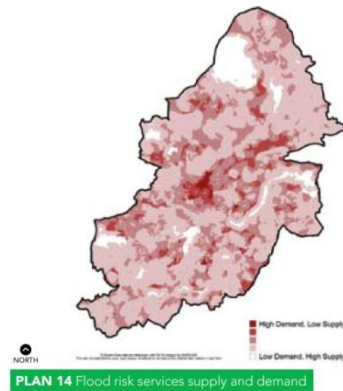
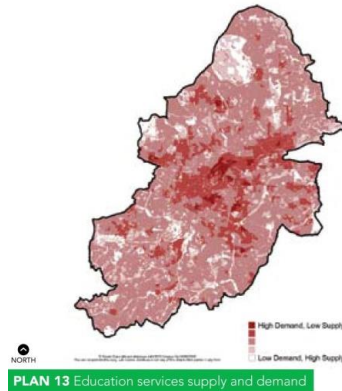
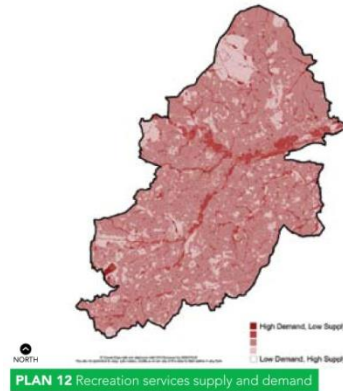
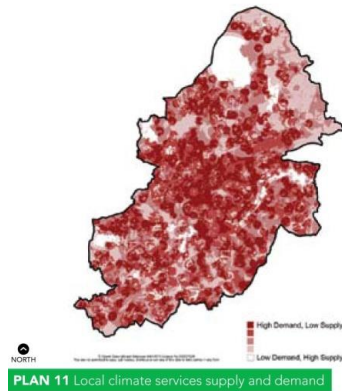
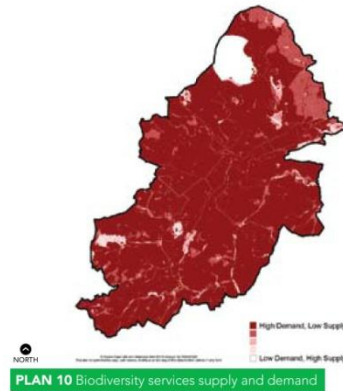
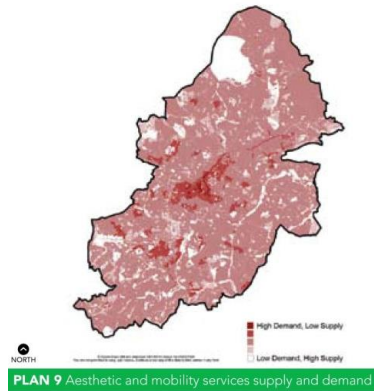
CASE PRESENTATION

Green Commission and Green Vision



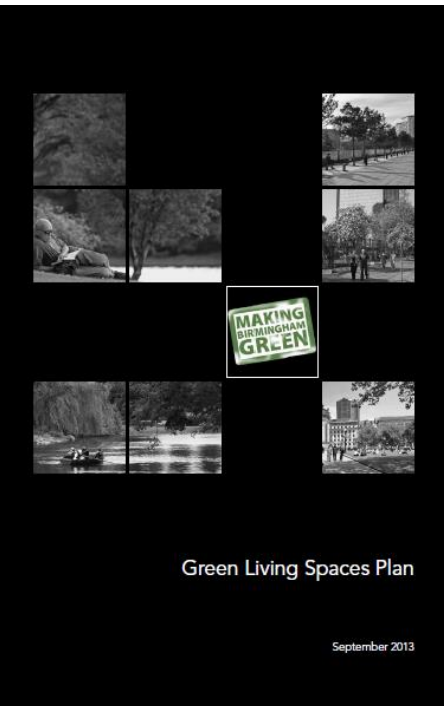
Source: Green Commission, 2013: 17-18.

Green Living Spaces Plan_ES assessment



ES demand & supply mapping

Green Living Spaces Plan_Seven Principles



Principle	Outcomes
An Adapted City	Retain City's top ranking for adaption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all future growth is 'adapted'. • Trees for cooling and thermal insulation. • Green roofs, walls and street canyon research.
The City's Blue Network	Adopt water sensitive urban design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated SuDS, flood and water management solutions. • 'Blueprint' for enhanced walking and cycling network. • Blue Corridor/network policy with Canal River Trust.
A Healthy City	Adopt Natural Health Improvement Zones (NHIZ) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate the delivery of health and green living spaces. • Continue to extend the Be-active offer. • Public health as key partners in planning.
The City's Productive Landscapes	Embrace urban forestry and urban food growing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote allotments. • Facilitate community food growing and orchards. • Promote the multiple benefits of urban forestry.
The City's Greenways	Change gear - to a walking and cycling City <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create walkable/cyclable neighbourhoods. • Citywide signed routes linked to public transport.. • Link healthcare activities and prevention programmes.
The City's Ecosystems	Birmingham as a biophillic City <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City to adopt an ecosystem services approach. • Partners to lead on District NIA continuation plans. • Birmingham to join global Biophillic Cities network.
The City's Green Living Spaces	Birmingham an international City of Green Living Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the 7 principles across Planning Framework. • Green Infrastructure and Adaption Delivery Group. • Work with business partners on green economy.

Source: Birmingham City Council, 2013: 10.

RESULTS

Policy Analysis

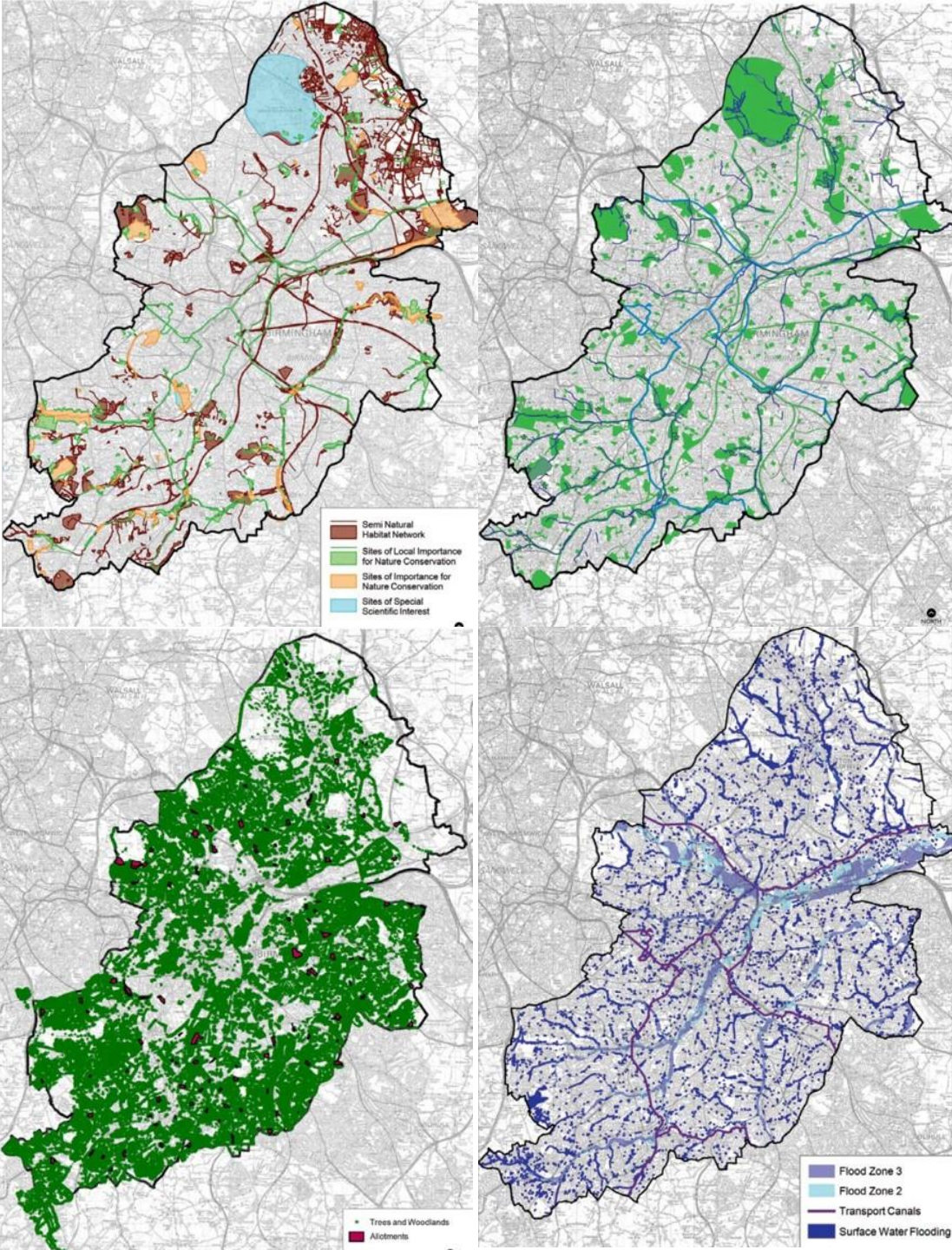
Key Themes / Concepts

- Ecosystem services
- Green Infrastructure
- Natural Capital
- GLSP reference

Interviews

Key Themes

- Deliverability
- Governance
- Partnerships
- Ecosystem services / value of nature





GLSP influence

on the **Birmingham Development Plan (BDP)**

- only partial reference to GLSP specific content
- no references to ecosystem services or natural capital; however, contains dedicated GI policies
- no reference to the GLSP's 7 principles

on the **GBSLEP** and **WMCA**

- no explicit reference to the GLSP or its 7 principles

Natural capital and GI

- no reference to natural capital and GI in the GBSLEP and WMCA planning documents / statements



1. Strategy / Delivery / Governance

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ISSUES:

- Significant disconnect between aspirations and delivery of GLSP
- Dominance of a silo-based culture within Birmingham City Council
- Work is often led by individuals, not shared/advanced collectively

INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT ISSUES:

- Limited attention to some new policy priorities and instruments which might be key in the mainstreaming of GI policy (e.g. *Duty to Cooperate* in the UK)
- Difficulty/complexity of GI planning with multi-disciplinary and inter-scalar approach

2. Power / Agency

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ISSUES:

- Power imbalance between some NGOs and private partners
- Participation perceived by some partners as a 'tick-box' exercise

INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT ISSUES:

- Conflict / trade-offs between the long-term goals of GI planning and short-term goals of political mandates
- Policies without power: GI / holistic planning being agreed but not implemented

3. Cross-cutting themes for GI and ES

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC ISSUES:

- Lack of statutory requirements for GI at city, LEP and Combined Authority levels

INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT ISSUES:

- Predominance of economic growth narrative leads to considering 'nature' and 'business' separately
(this contrast is evident in the distinction between Local Nature Partnership and Local Enterprise Partnership in the UK)
- Inherent risk of the ES approach of reducing the value of nature solely to its proxy monetary value

Lessons Learnt - Future**How to enhance GI governance at the urban level**

- Translate new ways of holistic and more integrated thinking into existing policy priorities at multiple scales set within locally established inclusive and deliberative processes
- Foster communication between different administrative levels and disciplines in order to find appropriate space and place for GI policy in a rapidly changing governance framework
- Understand the multiple values and benefits of nature as an asset to reframe the economic growth narrative and promote a more comprehensive use of the ES paradigm within a wider Ecosystem Approach