

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **5th April 2011**

From: **Acting Executive Director: Environment Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To consider the County Council's response to the Green Infrastructure Consultation**

Recommendation: **That Cabinet:**

- a) agrees the draft response set out in this report and delegates to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Environment in consultation with the Acting Executive Director: Environment Services the authority to amend the response for submission to Cambridgeshire Horizons**

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contact:</i>	
Name:	Sandy Shattock	Name:	Councillor Tony Orgee
Post:	Head of Environment Management & Climate Change	Portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment
Email:	Sandy.Shattock@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Tony.orgee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 727972	Tel:	01223 699173

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The second round of public consultation on a revised Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cambridgeshire is underway. The review has been led by Cambridgeshire Horizons working in partnership with the Cambridgeshire local authorities and statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations, who sit on Cambridgeshire's Green Infrastructure Forum.
- 1.2 The first Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region was produced in 2006 by Cambridgeshire Horizons and partners, including the County Council, and was endorsed by Cabinet on 26th September 2006. It has been particularly beneficial in helping to secure Growth Area Funding, and focusing funding into the delivery of its projects and initiatives. In addition, it raised the profile of Green Infrastructure and its role in contributing to the delivery of successful sustainable communities.
- 1.3 The draft revised Strategy builds on the success of the 2006 document and strengthens the supporting evidence base to ensure it can play a greater role in the planning process. It now covers the entire county including those areas with a greater deficit of Green Infrastructure and socio-economic issues.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Public consultation on a new draft Green Infrastructure Strategy was carried out in early 2010 and a report on the County Council's response to this was considered by Growth and Environment Policy Development Group (PDG) on January 21st 2010.
- 2.2 Based on the feedback to this consultation, Cambridgeshire Horizons together with their partners on the Green Infrastructure Forum agreed that significant changes needed to be made and that the partners would work together to achieve them. It was also agreed that a second round of public consultation would be required on the revised strategy.
- 2.3 The second round of public consultation commenced on 3rd March 2011 and runs until 3rd April 2011. The new Strategy with supporting appendices is being made available on Cambridgeshire Horizons and on various partners' websites together with an online survey:
<http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/greenvision/default.aspx>

In addition, one consultation event will be run in each district. Prior to the consultation beginning, the Growth and Environment PDG considered the progress made with the review and the Strategic Network which had resulted at its meeting on 2nd November 2010.

3. OVERVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY REVIEW CONSULTATION DRAFT

- 3.1 The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Review consultation document addresses the concerns raised at the first round of public consultation by:

- Providing a clearer main document with a robust and comprehensive evidence base together with supporting information in appendices;
 - Consideration of a fuller range of Green Infrastructure themes;
 - Adopting a more robust and appropriate methodology and a stronger rationale and evidence trail leading to development of the Strategic Network and its constituent elements;
 - Reporting on progress in relation to the projects identified in the 2006 strategy.
- 3.2 The first round of public consultation supported the four objectives of the Strategy and these therefore remain the same:-
- (a) Reverse the Decline in Biodiversity
 - (b) Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change
 - (c) Promote Sustainable Growth and Economic Development
 - (d) Support Healthy Living and Wellbeing.
- 3.3 The Strategic Network provides a county-wide framework upon which to provide or enhance Green Infrastructure in Cambridgeshire up to and beyond 2031. The Strategic Network for Cambridgeshire has been developed as a result of analysis of a number of related Green Infrastructure themes (Biodiversity, Climate Change, Green Infrastructure Gateways, Heritage, Landscape, Publicly Accessible Open Space and Sustainable Movement) and additional factors including planning and sustainable growth, economic development, health, and land and water management. This has resulted in a multi-functional network connecting areas of existing Green Infrastructure with those where new infrastructure is desirable. It responds to the needs and opportunities provided by major new developments and to where there is economic and social deprivation.
- 3.4 The Strategic Network is separated into six distinct geographical areas:
- River Nene
 - Huntingdon Fens and Woods,
 - Great Ouse
 - Eastern Fens and Towns
 - Chippenham Fen
 - Cambridge and Surrounding Areas.
- 3.5 These are based around landscapes and the connections within them. Within each Strategic Area, smaller target areas have been identified. This is where concentrations of Green Infrastructure themes and other issues, such as major housing growth, have been identified through spatial analysis. Within each Target Area projects can come forward. These can range in size from the larger scale, e.g. Great Fen, Wicken Vision, to smaller projects such as Chatteris Country Park.
- 3.6 The consultation document provides information e.g. background, context and analysis, for each Strategic Area and Target Area highlighting their key aspects and opportunities that exist. The methodology adopted ensures that each area has the potential to contribute towards delivering the Strategy's objectives. In addition to these geographic descriptions of each area, the local planning authorities have also identified the key issues and Green Infrastructure priorities for their administrative areas.

- 3.7 Delivering the Strategic Network will be key to its success. The three main mechanisms identified include planning (Local Development Documents), funding (Community Infrastructure Levy, Habitat Banking, Agri-environment schemes) and skills/partnership working (e.g. through the Green Infrastructure Forum).

4. PROPOSED COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSE

- 4.1 An on-line survey provides the main means to respond to the consultation. The County Council is supportive of the strategy and our response states that we:

- Agree the updated definition of Green Infrastructure as follows: “Green Infrastructure is a strategic, multifunctional network of public green spaces and routes, landscapes, biodiversity and heritage. It includes a wide range of elements such as country parks, wildlife habitats, rights of way, commons and greens, nature reserves, waterways and bodies of water, and historic landscapes and monuments. The network comprises rural and urban Green Infrastructure of different sizes and character, and the links between them. It is part of (and contributes to) the wider environment.”
- Agree that the methodology for developing the Strategic Network and the evidence base to support it described in Chapter 3 is clear and logical.
- Suggest that in addition to the issues, opportunities and constraints relating to the seven Green Infrastructure themes and other influencing factors described in Chapter 3, a link is made to the emerging Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Cambridgeshire.
- Understand that the Strategic Network is a framework that guides Green Infrastructure projects at a range of levels e.g. neighbourhood level, district level and countywide.
- Support the Strategic Network as described in Chapter 4 and do not believe that there are any significant changes to the Strategic Network that would be beneficial.
- Have nothing to add to the key issues identified by Local Authorities.
- Have nothing to add to the “delivery mechanisms” that can help to make Green Infrastructure projects happen as listed in Chapter 6.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

- i) **Supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most**
- ii) **Helping people to live healthy and independent lives in their communities**
- iii) **Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- 5.1 Whist there are no significant implications the delivery of the aims of the Strategy, as set out in paragraph 3.2, will generate economic opportunities and provide opportunities for people to lead more active lives.

- iv) **Ways of working**

- 5.2 A framework is provided to support local projects and engender partnership working.

6 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

Resources and Performance Implications

- 6.1 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- 6.2 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within this category.

Engagement and consultation

- 6.4 The report sets out in paragraph 3.1 the results of the first round of public consultation. Discussion on the revised Strategy has taken place as set out in paragraph 1.1. and also internally across directorates.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Following Cabinet a final response will be prepared by the Cabinet Member for Economy and the Environment in consultation with the Acting Executive Director, Environment Services for submission to Cambridgeshire Horizons. Colleagues at Cambridgeshire Horizons have confirmed that they will accept a response from the County Council after the closing date.

Source Documents	Location
Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region. Cambridgeshire Horizons. May 2006.	'A' wing, third floor, Castle Court, Cambridge
Cabinet Minutes 26 th September 2006.	
Report to Growth and Development PDG January 21 st 2010	
Green Vision Consultation - www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/greenvision/default.aspx	