

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **25<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

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

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable**

*Key Decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To inform Members of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and seek Cabinet endorsement of the strategy.**

*Recommendation:* ***Cabinet is recommended to endorse the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Council's continued representation on the Green Infrastructure Forum.***

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire Horizons has developed a new Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County in partnership with all the key delivery bodies. “Green Infrastructure” is a catch-all phrase referring to open spaces, water courses and the routes and links between them. The vision of the strategy is for high quality green spaces that enhance the quality of new and existing communities, provide health and leisure benefits for residents and improve the Cambridgeshire ‘offer’ to attract businesses and individuals considering locating here and help retain them within the area.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 The first Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region was developed in 2006 by Cambridgeshire Horizons and partners, including the County Council. It was one of the first in the region and was particularly beneficial in helping to secure Growth Area funding and delivery of the projects it identified has contributed to the acceptability of growth to residents across the county.
- 1.3 The reviewed Strategy has been developed by Cambridgeshire Horizons working with all the Cambridgeshire Local Authorities and statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations. The new Strategy:
- gives coverage to the whole of the County;
  - provides a strong evidence base for future policy and funding decisions, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy; and
  - ensures that high quality and sustainable Green Infrastructure is delivered to 2031 and beyond.
- 1.4 The reviewed strategy has gone through comprehensive public consultation. On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 Cabinet agreed a response to Cambridgeshire Horizons which offered general support of the Strategy and made some recommendations for alterations which Horizons took on board. Cambridgeshire Horizons board signed it off for publication on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2011.
- 1.5 The Green Infrastructure Strategy can be viewed on the Horizons website at: [http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our\\_challenge/GISreview.aspx](http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/GISreview.aspx)  
A paper copy of the main report is available to view in the Members’ Room and CD copies of the Strategy have been circulated to Cabinet Members.
- 1.6 The Strategy establishes a ‘Strategic Network’ where green infrastructure can provide the greatest benefit to:
- enhance quality of life by providing an attractive living, working and recreational environment
  - attract and retain high value businesses
  - offer economic opportunities for rural industries and land management
  - encourage exercise and activities to improve health and well-being
  - play a major role in tourism by creating visitor attractions, preserving attractive landscapes and conserving biodiversity.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 12 of the Strategy details the economic value of green spaces, drawing on the work of Forest Research, Natural England and others to show how environmental improvements can help improve inward investment and job creation, increase land and property values and help stimulate local economic regeneration.

- 1.7 The Strategic Network is divided into different geographical areas:
- River Nene
  - Huntingdonshire Fens and Woods
  - Great Ouse
  - Eastern Fens and Towns
  - Chippenham Fen
  - Cambridge and Surrounding Areas.
- 1.8 For each of these areas, opportunities are identified for improving Green Infrastructure through projects. Partnership working across Horizons, local authorities and the other stakeholders has allowed a comprehensive and robust set of projects to be brought together. The final sections of the Strategy show how existing local planning authority priorities for Green Infrastructure can be supported and influenced by the Strategy, and how the projects within the Strategy might be delivered.

## **2. DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The Strategy allows Green Infrastructure to be delivered flexibly in a variety of ways, at different scales and by a number of organisations as and when resources and opportunities permit. The districts and city council and major environmental organisations will be the main delivery bodies. There are no resource implications for the County Council beyond existing activity on county farms, rights of way and minerals and waste planning applications.
- 2.2 The Local Planning Authorities will have a key role to play through the development process. The Strategy will be used as part of the evidence base for planning policy development and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.3 Local communities will also have an important role in achieving the vision set out in the Strategy and ensuring its long-term success. With proposed changes to the planning system being brought in through the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local communities will have the opportunity to designate important green areas as 'Local Green Spaces'. These spaces will be given increased protection from development, particularly where they are close to a centre of population or have special value to a town or village. The Strategy will form an important piece of evidence that could be used to help local communities identify Local Green Spaces and protect them from harmful development.
- 2.4 The Strategy also highlights the importance of considering long-term management and maintenance of routes and spaces from the beginning. A range of options are explored, including the involvement of voluntary organisations, 'friends' groups, Charitable Management Trusts, Community Development Trusts and co-operatives and partnerships, and case studies

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<sup>2</sup> This is an amount payable per square metre of development floorspace and the funds raised through it will be used to help pay for a wide range of community infrastructure required to support growth.

are set out in the document.

- 2.5 The Strategy is supported by the Green Infrastructure Forum, members of which are adopting or endorsing the Strategy through their appropriate cabinets and/or management boards. With the demise of Cambridgeshire Horizons the Forum will continue to act as a central hub to work on Green Infrastructure across the county. It is recognized that in the current climate of reduced public sector funding delivery will need to be achieved through partnership working. There are no funding implications for the County Council.

### 3. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

#### 3.1 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives in their communities

Green Infrastructure provides opportunities for people to lead more active and healthy lives through volunteering and recreational activities, having more spaces to relax and enjoy nature, and the provision of better walking, cycling and riding routes.

#### 3.3 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

The report above sets out the implications for the local economy in paragraph 1.6.

#### 3.4 Ways of working

The report above sets out the implications for **Working Together** in paragraph 2.3.

### 4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no significant implications for any of the prompt questions within
- Resource and Performance Implications
  - Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications
  - Equality and Diversity Implications
  - Engagement and Consultation

Source Documents	Location
<i>Cabinet Minutes 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006.</i>	<a href="http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/reptrack2009.nsf/e0c624b01b2e9ade80256b14004eb73b/e1b893988a4cd81d802571ed003cc704?OpenDocument">http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/reptrack2009.nsf/e0c624b01b2e9ade80256b14004eb73b/e1b893988a4cd81d802571ed003cc704?OpenDocument</a>
<i>Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region. Cambridgeshire Horizons. May 2006.</i>	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/documents/publications/horizons/green_infrastructure_strategy.pdf">http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/documents/publications/horizons/green_infrastructure_strategy.pdf</a> <a href="http://cccs086/db/council2.nsf/e0c624b01b2e9ade80256b14004eb73b/41eadb">http://cccs086/db/council2.nsf/e0c624b01b2e9ade80256b14004eb73b/41eadb</a>

<p><i>Cabinet 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011</i></p> <p><i>Response letter to Cambridgeshire Horizons</i> <i>7<sup>th</sup> April 2011</i></p>	<p><a href="#">cab0b63a4d8025785e004e7add?OpenDocument</a></p> <p>Environment Management &amp; Climate Change 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Castle Court</p>
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