



Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: 24 November 2009

Report of: Frank Campbell, Havant Borough Council

Subject: PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy

SUMMARY

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for South Hampshire has been in preparation since February 2009. The strategy is now in its final draft form and agreement is sought from the Joint Committee to undertaking a wide consultation exercise. This will involve partners who have taken part in a series of workshops to inform the development of the draft.

In addition to the consultation, agreement is sought to begin discussions with delivery partners on the preparation of an implementation plan.

RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Joint Committee:-

- a) APPROVES the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy and AGREES to the consultation on it with partners and other interested parties.
- b) AGREES to commencing the preparation of an implementation plan through preliminary meetings with key delivery partners.

INTRODUCTION

1. The preparation of a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy began in 2007 with the commissioning of a research report and advice to PUSH from consultants TEP. That was completed in 2008 following extensive involvement of partners and other interested parties. The next stage of the work, the writing of a strategy, was commissioned in early 2009 from UE Associates and a draft is now complete and is attached for consideration and approval by the Joint Committee.
2. The work has been overseen by a 'Commissioning Group' with representatives from some of the local authorities and from Natural England, with the assistance and support of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). A wider steering group of all the local authorities and the DEFRA Agencies has also been involved throughout the process and through this the comments of the individual local authorities have been received at various stages in the preparation of the Strategy.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

3. GI is a critical component of the non-transport infrastructure required to support sustainable economic growth in South Hampshire. The provision of areas of open space and links between them contributes to a wide range of themes important to the sub-region, including biodiversity, landscape and culture, recreation, health and well-being, and natural resources.
4. The strategy identifies the GI assets that exist in the sub-region and, through an analysis of the social, economic and environmental health of the area, presents a case for the enhancement of existing, and provision of new, GI. Central to this is the principle of multifunctionality, whereby each GI asset should be capable of delivering against a number of objectives such as biodiversity, access, economic growth and health and wellbeing, unless there is clear conflict between them.
5. GI has an important role to play in addressing the requirements of the Habitat Regulations, and the strategy sets out how GI can contribute to the obligations on individual local authorities for Habitat Regulations Assessment. The strategy also provides a framework for cross-boundary working between authorities, which will be critical to delivery. It recommends an organisational structure and potential funding sources to secure delivery.
6. It is envisaged that, following consultation, the final version of the strategy will be adopted by the Joint Committee as a framework policy and that it will be recognised in each individual local authority's Local Development Framework.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT STRATEGY

7. A vision for the GI Strategy is underpinned by four aims:
 - Identify sub-regional strategic initiatives and project proposals
 - Maximise the multifunctional use of open space and natural spaces
 - Promote connectivity of all types of greenspace at a range of scales.

- Provide a key element of the sub-region's mitigation strategy in relation to the Habitats Regulations.
8. A thorough review of the evidence from the earlier work and the analysis of new evidence has resulted in a GI Framework that is designed to work as a guide to green infrastructure development and provide the reasoning behind recommendations made in the Strategy. The framework is constructed around eight themes, underpinned with objectives for delivery of those themes, as follows:
- THEME I: Sustainable economic development, attractive workplaces and desirable tourist destinations.
 THEME II: Maximising biodiversity opportunities, adapting to change and protecting European sites
 THEME III: Landscape quality and diversity, distinctive features, cultural heritage and appreciation of sense of place
 THEME IV: Access to the countryside and green spaces, providing recreational opportunities and experiences
 THEME V: Providing high quality water resources, managing flood risk and increasing water retention
 THEME VI: Climate change adaptation and mitigation
 THEME VII: Food, fibre and fuel production
 THEME VIII: Well being and health
9. The proposals for GI are organised at a number of levels. Across the sub-region four geographical areas have been identified which are distinctive in terms of their characteristics and their GI needs. These are: (i) the Coastal Zone, (ii) the Forest of Bere, (iii) the Western Arc, and (iv) the Urban Realm and its Setting.
10. Across these areas five sub-regional 'GI initiatives' which will deliver the strategic objectives for GI are proposed. The initiatives are :
- **The Green Grid**, which establishes a GI network of rivers, roads, hedges and other corridors which provide connectivity between GI assets and perform a variety of functions;
 - **Coast for People, Wildlife and Improved Water**, which is driven by HRA requirements and in which sea level rise and associated habitat creation, and recreational issues at coastal locations are the main considerations;
 - **Forest of Bere Land Management Initiative** which would take a comprehensive and integrated approach to the creation and management of various GI assets in the area. This would yield multifunctional features to support sustainable food, fibre and fuel production, opportunities for open air recreation and biodiversity;
 - **Country Parks and Woodlands**, which comprise robust GI sites in the form of country parks and woodland sites that between them form the core of larger scale multifunctional GI assets;
 - **Greener Urban Design** which concentrates on local level GI assets in the built environment to support the communities that live there.

These initiatives are translated into over 40 projects of various scales across the sub-region, including quick wins.

11. Finally the Strategy recommends some structural and governance arrangements for the delivery of the Strategy for PUSH to consider.

CONSULTATION

12. It is intended to undertake a consultation with a wide range of partners and other interested parties, providing an opportunity to influence the potential outputs from the strategy. These consultees have previously been involved in the production of research, advice and the strategy itself.

DEVELOPING THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

13. Concurrently with the approval of the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy and the consultation process there is a need to begin a dialogue with those who will be central to its implementation. Some preliminary discussions have already taken place, for example with Groundwork Solent who are an enthusiastic potential partner in delivery. These discussions will begin to provide the basis for the preparation of an implementation plan, identifying lead organisations, partners, anticipated costs and timetables to enable the local planning of delivery.

CONCLUSION

14. This aspect of non-transport infrastructure is an important component of and contributor to economic growth in South Hampshire. The engagement of partners will be highly valuable in securing the delivery of an aspirational strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Joint Committee:-

- a) APPROVES the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy and AGREES to the consultation on it with partners and other interested parties.
- b) AGREES to commencing the preparation of an implementation plan through preliminary meetings with key delivery partners.

Background Papers:

Executive Summary
The Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy
[Appendix 1](#), Executive Summary

Reference Papers:

Enquiries:

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