

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Review

To: **Horizons Board**

Date: **27th June 2011**

From: **Paul Mumford, Programme Manager**

FOR DECISION (FD)

Purpose: **The purpose of this Report is to update Board Members on:**

- **The completion and outcomes of the Green Infrastructure Strategy; and**
- **How the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategy will be overseen.**

Recommendation: **The Board agrees to sign off the final Green Infrastructure Strategy for publication.**

Contact:	Name:	Paul Mumford
	Job Title:	Programme Manager
	E-mail address:	<u>Paul.Mumford@cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk</u>
	Telephone No.	01223 714045

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region was developed in 2006 by The Landscape Partnership, on behalf of Cambridgeshire Horizons and partners. It was one of the first in the region and planned the delivery of Green Infrastructure for the next 20 years.
- 1.2 A review of the Strategy has now been completed. The Strategy was reviewed to:
 - give coverage to the whole of the County
 - be a stronger part of the evidence base for future policy decisions (including taking the Strategy through a comprehensive public consultation)
 - provide a robust evidence base for funding of Green Infrastructure through a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other sources of funding.
- 1.3 The revised Strategy includes a 'Strategic Network' of Green Infrastructure for Cambridgeshire which provides the context for the planning and delivery of local Green Infrastructure plans and strategic and local projects. It identifies benefits that can be achieved through coordinated planning and investment in Green Infrastructure at a community, local and sub-regional scale, and identifies Green Infrastructure investment opportunities that can provide benefits to a broader set of issues including health, biodiversity, climate change and economic development
- 1.4 The four objectives for the reviewed Green Infrastructure Strategy are to:
 - Reverse the Decline in Biodiversity in Cambridgeshire
 - Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change
 - Promote Sustainable Growth and Economic Development
 - Support Healthy Living and Wellbeing
- 1.5 The Strategy was prepared in partnership between Horizons, the local authorities, and other organisations with a key role to play in forming and delivering the Strategy (including the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and the Environment Agency).

2. Process for completing the Strategy review

- 2.1 During January – March 2010, a public consultation on the first draft of the revised Green Infrastructure Strategy was undertaken. Responses to the consultation supported the objectives of the Strategy, but made a range of points about how the Strategy might be improved. Since then, significant effort has been made to address all of the consultation responses and restructure the Strategy so that it places emphasis on the Strategic Network, the projects that form part of this, and how projects might be delivered.
- 2.2 A second round of public consultation on an updated draft took place in March 2011. Numbers of responses were lower than the first round, at least in part because the second draft had addressed comments made on the first draft.

The local authorities worked hard to ensure they were completely satisfied with the second draft before it went out to public consultation.

- 2.3 Since the consultation closed in early April, Horizons has coordinated the process of addressing responses and a number of further improvements have been made to the Strategy. All respondees to the consultation will be informed of how their comments have been addressed in the final Strategy.

3. The Final Strategy

- 3.1 The Green Infrastructure review has been a complex and major piece of work that has involved significant partnership working and input from a wide range of stakeholders. It has pushed the boundaries of Green Infrastructure Strategy development, particularly through the adoption of a robust evidence base suitable for use by local authorities, the testing of the Strategy through public consultation and the depth of the Strategic Network. It represents an example of how Cambridgeshire has taken the lead on developing and delivering Green Infrastructure.

- 3.2 The final Strategy includes an explanation of what Green Infrastructure is, and why it is important to Cambridgeshire – as a way of improving people’s health and wellbeing, of attracting inward investment and supporting sustainable growth, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, contributing to flood risk management and supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation. A clear methodology is presented to show how the ‘Strategic Network’ was developed – the Strategic Network highlights the areas in Cambridgeshire where, at a county-wide scale, Green Infrastructure can contribute most to people’s lives and to the natural environment. To aid delivery, the Network can be divided into different geographical areas.

- 3.3 The areas identified are:
- River Nene
 - Huntingdonshire Fens and Woods
 - Great Ouse
 - Eastern Fens and Towns
 - Chippenham Fen
 - Cambridge and Surrounding Areas

- 3.4 For each area, opportunities are identified for improving Green Infrastructure through a number of projects. Partnership working across Horizons, local authorities and 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 authority priorities for Green Infrastructure can be supported and influenced by the Strategy, and how the projects within the Strategy might be delivered.

- 3.5 The Strategy will be used as part of the evidence base for planning policy development and the CIL. It will also be used in identifying priority environmental projects, and to inform decision making about Green

Infrastructure and funding bids to support the delivery and management of Green Infrastructure.

- 3.6 To formalize the Strategy as part of the evidence base for future policy, each local authority proposes to use the appropriate member process to adopt or endorse the completed Strategy as part of its evidence base. Endorsement of the completed Strategy also comes from the Green Infrastructure Forum, which has coordinated the Strategy Review. The final Strategy will be published on the Horizons website.
- 3.7 The Strategy can be viewed on the Horizons website at:

http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/GISreview.aspx

4. Delivery of the Strategy

- 4.1 The Strategy needs to be delivered if Cambridgeshire is to benefit from the opportunities presented by Green Infrastructure. The responsibilities for delivering the Strategy will be spread across a number of organisations. Local authorities have a key role to play, both in securing new high quality Green Infrastructure through the development process and in managing existing and new Green Infrastructure, but also in supporting and facilitating other organisations and communities to deliver the Strategy.
- 4.2 The Green Infrastructure Forum has been the main operational partnership Group overseeing the development of the Strategy, chaired and supported by Horizons. Under a new Chairperson, the Green Infrastructure Forum will continue to operate post-September 2011. The Forum will act as a central hub to coordinate and lead work on Green Infrastructure across Cambridgeshire, focusing particularly on delivery of Green Infrastructure projects both included in the Strategy and arising independently. All of the organisations represented on the Forum have committed to this, recognising that in the current climate of reduced public sector funding, better outcomes for Green Infrastructure can be achieved through this type of partnership working.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Recommendations as per cover sheet.