

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS

Agenda Item No: 12a

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Review

To: **HORIZONS BOARD**

Date: **23rd March 2010**

From: **Director for Development**

Purpose: **The Board to consider:**

- **The key drivers to undertake a Review of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the aims and objectives of this Review.**
- **The forward management and governance of the review from now until the Strategy is completed.**
- **The key feedback from the consultation events and emerging key issues from the consultation responses**

Recommendation:

- **Horizons Board is asked to:**
 - i) Note that improvements will be made to ensure better Local Authority, Member and Board engagement with this project (see section 3 and appendices 2 and 3).**
 - ii) Approve taking forward the Review of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, bringing a second draft to the Board's next meeting for consideration, and a final draft to the Board's December meeting (see appendix 3).**

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1. BACKGROUND

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 During 2008, a range of initiatives identified the need to review the Strategy including:

- Extending the coverage of the Strategy to the whole of the County. This meant that some areas of the County with a greater deficit of Green Infrastructure and with greater socio-economic issues could be captured in a second edition.
- The increasingly important role of GI in the planning process. In 2008 a County-wide Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document was considered by Chief Planning Officers (CPOs). In summary, a review of the Green Infrastructure Strategy would be required to form an evidence base for any future SPD and to ensure a robust strategy.
- The importance of a robust evidence base is also driven by the results of the Northstowe Area Action Plan Inquiry where the Planning Inspector downgraded the importance of the current Green Infrastructure Strategy as it had not been publicly tested.
- The development of the Integrated Development Programme (IDP). One of the functions of the IDP is to provide an evidence base for CIL/Variable Tariff. To support this, a review of the Green Infrastructure Strategy was required to generate a robust evidence base for Strategic Green Infrastructure.
- Recognition of the widening role and functions that Green Infrastructure can deliver – particularly with regards to health and climate change adaptation and mitigation but also more broadly the role GI can play supporting the delivery of the Cambridgeshire Sustainable Communities Strategy adopted by Cambridgeshire Together.
- Providing a stronger focus on delivery and deliverability during the next few years when money will be short.

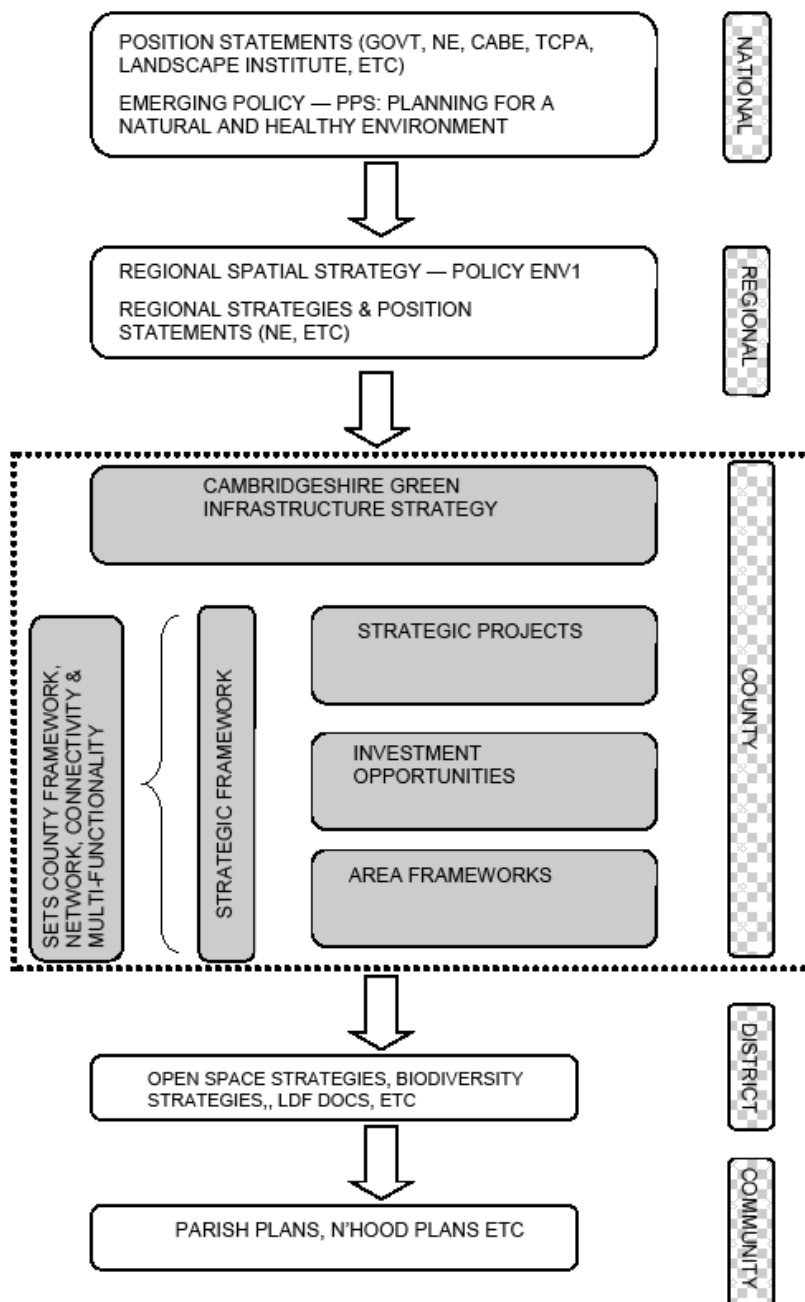
2 THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY REVIEW

2.1 The vision for the revised Strategy is to provide a Strategic Green Infrastructure Framework/Strategy at a County level within which improvements to quality of life (health, wellbeing, economy, climate change) for new and existing communities in Cambridgeshire can be enhanced. The objectives of the Strategy include:

- A richer and better connected network of habitats and natural areas for wildlife, with an improved landscape.
- Opportunities for educational, volunteering and recreational activities, more spaces to relax and enjoy nature and better walking, cycling and riding routes for work, health and leisure.

- Mitigation and adaption to the impacts of climate change on communities and wildlife through expanded biodiversity habitats, flood alleviation and urban cooling.
- Economic investment in deprived areas supported through creating attractive places to live and work and through increasing tourism activity in the Fens and other areas related to Green Infrastructure.

2.2 Where does the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review fit spatially?



Green Infrastructure is important at all spatial levels. The focus of the GI Strategy¹ Review is on Strategic Green Infrastructure which fits best within a County level Strategy. At a local level, Planning Policy Guidance 17 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation) coordinates GI.

2.3 The Green Infrastructure Strategy recommends a spatial framework with three distinct components be developed – Strategic Projects, Investment Opportunities and Area Frameworks.

Strategic Projects: These are large-scale site-specific projects of strategic importance, such as a series of country parks or a landscape-scale habitat, that have significant benefits for people, wildlife and/or the environment more generally.

Investment Opportunities: These will identify countywide opportunities for Green Infrastructure to support the following themed programmes:

- Sustainable Movement
- Biodiversity Enhancement
- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
- Economic Investment

Area Frameworks: Area Frameworks are proposed to help to shape Green Infrastructure provision in areas of significant change including new housing and their surrounding neighbourhoods. The area frameworks identify existing Green Infrastructure and look to inform further planned Green Infrastructure for that area.

The GI Strategy first draft can be viewed on the Cambridgeshire Horizons website at:

http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/documents/green_infrastructure/revision_strategy/gi_strategy_final_draft_lowres.pdf

The first draft includes an Executive Summary, which is at Appendix 1.

2.4 The Green Infrastructure Strategy Review – the ambition

The ambition is that the resulting Green Infrastructure Strategy will:

- Be adopted as an evidence base to support Local Authority planning policies and documents where appropriate
- Endorsed by Local Authorities until a more formal opportunity to adopt as an evidence base arises
- Be a robust evidence base for a possible future Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure SPD
- Form an evidence base for Strategic Green Infrastructure investments as part of a future CIL/Variable Tariff
- A document to support funding bids for projects
- A long term delivery strategy for stakeholders/ land owners building on the 2006 Strategy

¹ Strategic refers to spatial scale, relative importance of habitats and strategic growth sites

3. PROJECT GOVERNANCE

3.1 A key issue for the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review is ensuring robust Governance arrangements are in place that reflect the profile and complexity of this work. To date, it is understood the Officer and external stakeholder mechanisms are in place but that member governance arrangements need to be improved.

Appendix 2 sets out the Project Governance proposals, which are designed to work efficiently for all partners to facilitate inputs and dialogue and an end product that all partners can sign up to.

Appendix 3 shows a revised timetable for the GI Strategy Review.

3.2 To support the governance arrangements the following will be put in place:

- Progress reports on the GI Strategy Review to be brought to Horizons Board via GPB
- An additional second draft of the GI Strategy Review will be developed incorporating key issues raised during the consultation, to be presented to Board
- The second draft GI Strategy will be taken through Local Authorities member processes.

4. EARLY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

4.1 The first draft of the revised Green Infrastructure Strategy underwent public and stakeholder consultation for six weeks between 25th January and 7th March 2010.

4.2 The Public Consultation consisted of sixteen staffed events with over 250 visitors. Consultation literature and information was also distributed to Parish and Town Councils, libraries and 'one stop shops', Local Authorities and other partners and stakeholders. Cambridge City Council also informed Cambridge Resident's Associations. There have been over 1,100 unique users via the 'Green Vision' consultation page on Cambridgeshire Horizons' website with peaks around the consultation events. Press coverage was good with several radio interviews.

4.3 Initial feedback from the Public Consultation events includes:

- Generally there was positive support for the need for a Strategy and for the strategic aims/objectives and ideas within the Strategy.
- Some attendees supported the overall need for a Strategy whilst disagreeing with specific projects or ideas, or they had issues regarding the specific management of an existing site.
- Broadly, attendees at the events understood the ideas and concepts within the Strategy – in particular the way the Spatial Framework was set out. This allowed for the 'layering' of different Green Infrastructure proposals to build up to the bigger picture or enabled attendees to just focus on one proposal that was of particular interest.
- In the majority of cases attendees could see how the recommendations were relevant to their locality, or how they could be applied at a local level.
- It is recognised that there were issues with some attendees understanding the Strategy. Section 4.4 (below) seeks to address these concerns.

4.4 Emerging key issues from the Public Consultation responses.

The overall concept is seen to be breaking new ground for Green Infrastructure Strategies. Whilst being innovative, it however poses challenges of complexity. Partners have expressed willingness to work together and understand the challenges and develop a second draft that is fit for purpose.

There are four key areas of feedback including:

- **Structure**

The structure of the document needs to be reviewed. A good suggestion is to include separate sections based on the different Local Authority areas and to work through a revised logic for the document. Stronger links to existing GI need to be made and the relationship to the 2006 Strategy needs also to be explained.

- **Evidence Base**

There is concern that the analysis used to identify the strategic sites and investment opportunities is not sufficiently explicit in the document. This means that more work is required to work develop the robustness of the evidence base to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

- **Accessibility**

However, legibility needs and key issues be brought to be improved, balancing the need for a robust evidence base and demonstration of analysis with a clear, concise description of the recommendations and outcomes.

The language and style of the Strategy needs to be targeted towards the right audience, at present it is felt to be too 'academic', an issue which is exacerbated by the current structure of the document. Conciseness and clear recommendations need further work.

- **Other**

There needs to be a greater recognition of the Cambridge fringe sites and other developments within Cambridge.

Inclusion of additional Strategic Projects and strengthening certain areas of the Strategy (in particular heritage and health and wellbeing) and revising some of the maps/diagrams to show 'local' projects and how the recommendations relate to existing Green Infrastructure.

Identify some emerging area framework options including for example Cambridge Green Wheel, St. Neots and the Northstowe area.

4.5 The consultation results are currently being collated and analysed during the next 4-6 weeks. Discussions will take place with key stakeholders to understand their concerns. This process will then inform the way forward for the project alongside the emerging governance structures for the project.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

As cover sheet.

Source Documents	Location
Growth Partnership Board 3 rd March 2010 Agenda item 11.	Cambridgeshire Horizons, Endurance House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge
Growth Partnership Board Minutes 3 rd March 2010.	Location to be confirmed once minutes available.
Growth Partnership Board 2nd September 2009 Agenda item 8c.	Cambridgeshire Horizons, Endurance House, Vision Park, Histon, Cambridge
Growth Partnership Board Minutes 2nd September 2009.	http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/documents/boardminutes/sep_2009/240909_item6_gpb_minutes_020909.pdf
Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. Draft for Public and Stakeholder Consultation.	http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/documents/green_infrastructure/revise_strategy/gi_strategy_final_draft_lowres.pdf
Green Infrastructure Strategy Review Consultation web page.	www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/greenvision

Appendix 1: Executive Summary

Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Second Edition Green Infrastructure Strategy: Draft for Public and Stakeholder Consultation January 2010

Executive Summary

What is Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure includes:

- Green corridors, such as hedgerows, ditches, rivers and watercourses
- Commons, village greens, churchyards and cemeteries
- Natural and semi-natural habitats for wildlife
- Country parks and playing fields
- Woodland
- Historic parks, landscapes and gardens
- Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Wetlands
- Ancient Monuments
- Allotments
- Public rights of way, cycle ways and other recreational routes

A Green Vision for Cambridgeshire

Green Infrastructure is a life support system for communities and the environment consisting of semi natural and managed green spaces in both urban and rural areas. With appropriate management and investment it can make a significant contribution to the community and can help to tackle major challenges that Cambridgeshire will face in the future.

In 2006, Cambridgeshire Horizons worked in partnership with the six local authorities of the County, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, the National Trust, Forestry Commission England, Natural England, Cambridge Preservation Society, the Wildlife Trust and other organisations to produce a strategic plan for the development of the green spaces in the County.

This plan was launched as the Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region and named The Cambridgeshire Green Vision. This is a 20 year master plan for enhancing the natural environment for both residents and wildlife in the county.

Why do we need a Green Infrastructure Strategy?

To create sustainable new communities in Cambridgeshire every aspect of the local environment must be considered. GI is vital to the quality of life for both new and existing residents of the country, which is why Cambridgeshire Horizons has helped to create a Green Vision for the County.

Over the next 20 years, the population of Cambridgeshire is expected to grow by 130,000 people. As well as homes and jobs, these new people will need places to enjoy the outdoors and relax in shared spaces which bring the local community together.

The revised Strategy sets out to show what can be achieved over the next thirty years if an appropriate and coordinated approach is taken. It is a bold vision which emphasises the strong reasons for funding Green Infrastructure and committing to this investment in the county's future.

It also provides guidance on what actions will be necessary to tackle some of the challenges facing Cambridgeshire in the coming decades and gives recommendations on how these can be executed, reviewed and managed.

Time for a Review

The initial Strategy has helped to raise awareness of GI throughout Cambridgeshire.

As a result, this has secured further funding to boost the profile of the Strategy.

Regular reviews of the GI Strategy will be necessary to take into account new opportunities and agendas as circumstances change. It is now necessary for Cambridgeshire Horizons and its partners to review and refresh this original strategy for 2010 so that it will extend to 2031 and cover the whole of Cambridgeshire as the original strategy only covered the Cambridge Sub region.

By creating the second edition of the GI Strategy, Cambridgeshire Horizons and its partners are demonstrating their ongoing commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment and creating new assets for the benefit of both wildlife and new and existing communities throughout Cambridgeshire.

The new version of the plan will also recognise the benefit of investing in GI for other agendas, such as the effect it can have on sustainable economic growth and dealing with climate change.

Developing the GI Strategy

An important first stage was to clarify and establish the role of Green Infrastructure in Cambridgeshire.

How could it help Cambridgeshire achieve the vision of being "...a county of strong, growing, prosperous and inclusive communities supported by excellent services where people can fulfil their full potential; live longer, healthier lifestyles; and influence decision making"?

The Cambridgeshire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) – a three year delivery plan for the Cambridgeshire Vision - was analysed to find out what the priority areas were that GI could support and deliver. Special attention was also given to identify the key reasons (or "strategic drivers") for delivering GI in the County.

The four key objectives are as follows:

- 1) Reverse the decline in biodiversity
- 2) Mitigate and adapt to climate change
- 3) Promote sustainable growth and economic development
- 4) Support healthy living and wellbeing

Once these objectives were identified, a wide range of information sources, such as maps and written reports, were analysed to understand the political, social, environmental and economic characteristics of the county.

The findings were documented in the 'Baseline Review', which was presented as a Technical Appendix to the main Strategy report. This Review captures relevant information about Cambridgeshire and highlights the areas where GI provision is successfully addressing the four objectives listed above and where additional focus and investment would be of benefit.

A wide range of people contributed to this analysis, largely through a series of one-to-one interviews and a workshop involving a variety of stakeholders and interested parties.

Following this, several Case Studies were analysed to identify how GI has been successfully planned, funded and delivered in the recent past in Cambridgeshire.

Examination of the Case Studies highlighted that several factors, such as project planning, selection, design and aftercare were critical to their success. In turn, these findings were used as a basis for making recommendations on how the Strategy could be executed in the future for the best results.

The Spatial Framework

Having established how and why GI is important, the next step was to develop a plan of how delivery should be targeted and where in the county this would be best directed.

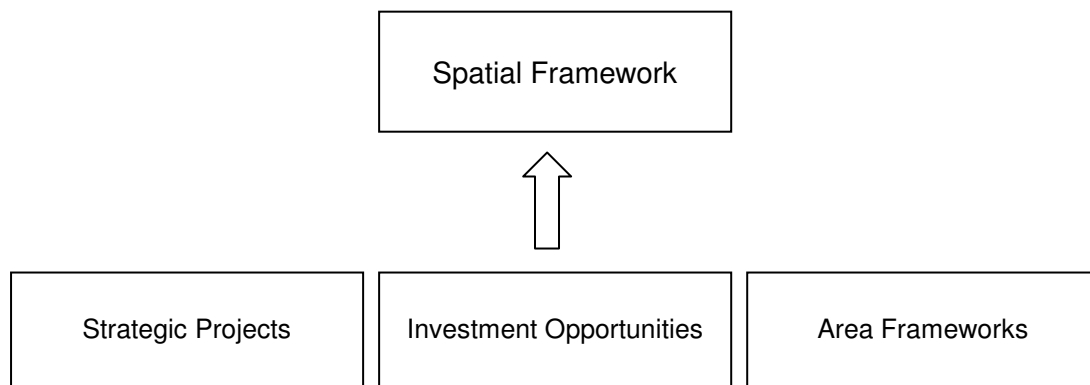
This was achieved by developing a county-wide Spatial Framework with three distinct components - Strategic Projects, Investment Opportunities and Area Frameworks.

Several of the Strategic Projects listed in the first GI Strategy have come forward and others have been identified during the review process. They are included to highlight their strategic importance because they have an important role in addressing the needs of people, wildlife and the wider environment. Strategic

Projects provide tangible examples of how projects can be specified, costed and delivered - which provides people with confidence.

Investment Opportunities are a series of generic programmes. The exact location, scale and scope of these will be developed in due course as the opportunities arise, through a wide range of delivery mechanisms.

Strategic Projects Investment Opportunities Area Frameworks



Investment Opportunities have been developed to recognise the dynamic nature of market conditions, the development sector and trends in land use and agriculture, as well as in social attitudes.

Area Frameworks are designed to complement Strategic Projects and Investment Opportunities by identifying where an area of intense change is planned, such as locations earmarked for major new housing or development. It is essential that GI investment is secured for these locations and carried out effectively for the Strategy to be delivered successfully across Cambridgeshire as a whole. At this stage, it has not been possible to identify the location of these Area Frameworks but these will be considered further during the consultation period.

Making it Happen

No matter how robust the GI Strategy is, it is unlikely to succeed if its implementation has not been properly thought through. Crucially, this means identifying leadership for the Strategy and working out who will take responsibility for its management on a day-to-day basis.

Various recommendations are made in the GI Strategy, with issues of governance, management, investment, marketing and planning covered. A toolkit comprising a

GI Strategy Map and Scorecard are also provided for further consideration.

Next Steps

The first draft of the revised Green Infrastructure Strategy is now available for public and stakeholder consultation.

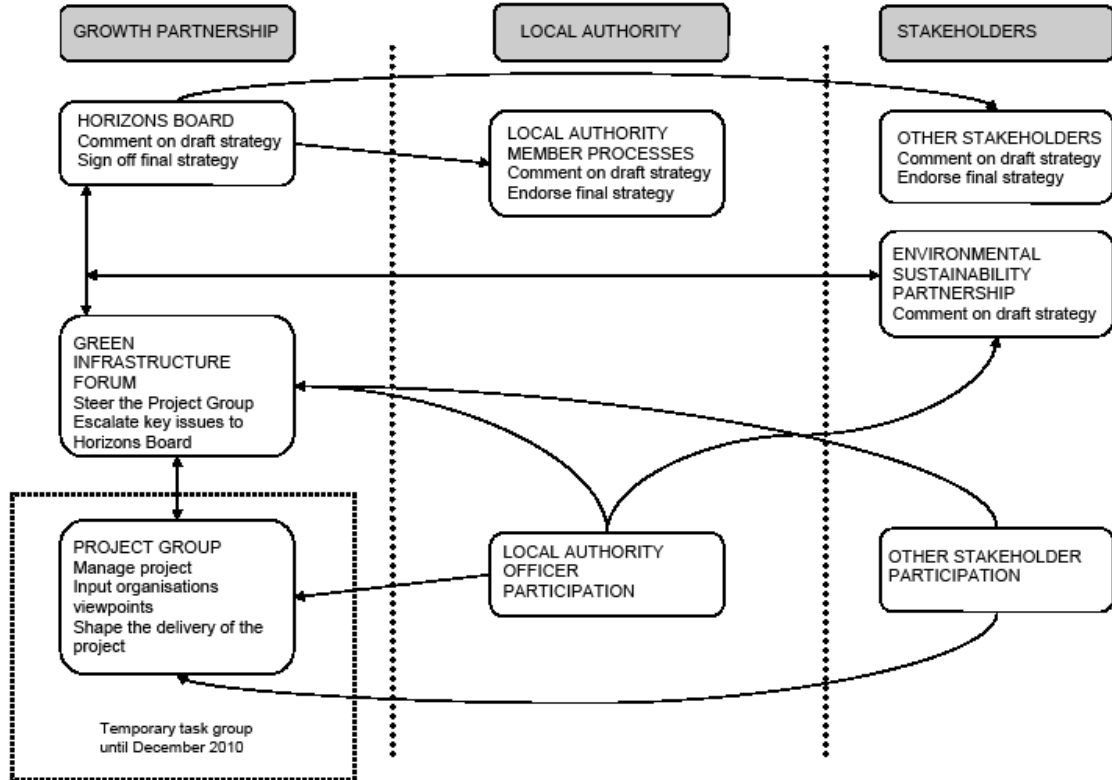
Cambridgeshire Horizons is keen to engage with as many people as possible to discuss its findings so far and find out how the plan can be improved, enhanced or amended.

Your comments are welcomed and details of how to respond are available on the Cambridgeshire Horizons website

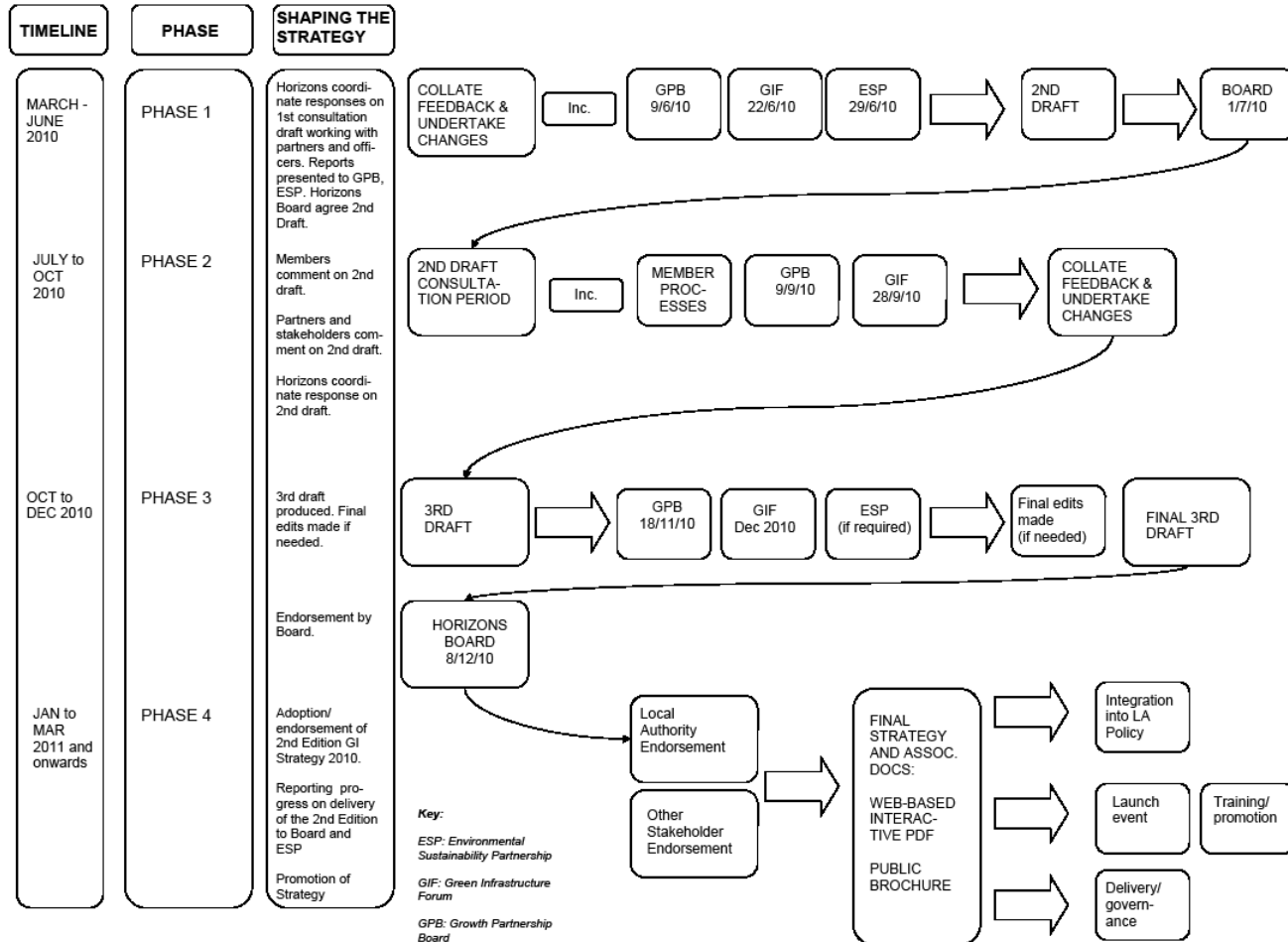
(www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/greenvision). The deadline for comments is 7th March 2010.

Following the period of consultation, all of the comments will be reviewed with the aim of publishing the Final 2nd Edition GI Strategy in the summer of 2010.

Appendix 2: Project Governance Arrangements



Appendix 3 (i): Revised Timetable for delivery of the Strategy Review.



Appendix 3 (ii): Revised Timetable for delivery of the Strategy Review: Further Information.

Phase 1: March – July 2010

Developing 2nd draft with Officers

- Collation of consultation responses and drafting of proposed amendments
- Joint Project Group and individual partner work to address key issues
- Amendments to consultants to produce second draft
- Reports on emerging second draft presented to GPB, Green Infrastructure Forum and Environmental Sustainability Partnership and others if required (e.g. Chief Planning Officers)
- Second draft produced
- Approved for consultation by Main Board 1st July

Revising the consultation draft:

After the end of the consultation process the public and stakeholder responses will be collated and a response and action to each comment drafted – if appropriate in direct discussion with the respondent either on a one-to-one basis or through the Project Group. The amendments will also be sent to respondents to the consultation (where requested) or where the respondent is not represented on the Green Infrastructure Forum.

Phase 2: July – October 2010

Second draft goes through Member process and partners for comment

- Second draft will be distributed for comment to all partner organisations and other respondents
- Local Authorities have the opportunity to consider second draft – particularly through Member processes
- Second draft presented to GPB and Green Infrastructure Forum in September for consideration
- Responses to the second draft collated. Joint Project Group and individual partner work to address any outstanding issues
- Third draft produced and copy edited

Second draft: A second draft of the Green Infrastructure Strategy will then be produced. This second draft will be distributed for comment to all partner organisations and other respondents. In particular it is important that the Local Authorities have the opportunity to consider this second draft – including through Member processes.

This second draft will also be taken to Growth Partnership Board and the Green Infrastructure Forum in September for consideration.

Responses to the second draft will be collated and a response and action to each comment drafted – if appropriate in direct discussion with the respondent either on a one-to-one basis or through the Project Group. The amendments will also be sent to respondents, where requested, or where the respondent is not represented on the Green Infrastructure Forum.

Phase 3: November – December 2010

Third draft Strategy to go to Main Board

- Third draft circulated to Partner organisations and other respondents

- Third draft presented to GPB and the Green Infrastructure Forum (and Environmental Sustainability Partnership if required) for consideration – final edits made if necessary
- Third draft presented to Main Board for endorsement in December

Third Draft: A 3rd draft of the Green Infrastructure Strategy will be circulated to Partner organisations and other respondees.

This 3rd draft will be taken to Growth Partnership Board in November and to the Green Infrastructure Forum in December for consideration. Minor editing and other issues will be addressed.

The 3rd draft will then be presented for endorsement by Horizons Board in December 2010.

Phase 4: Post-December 2010

Stakeholder endorsement of Strategy and Final Strategy published

Following the endorsement of the Strategy at the December 2010 Main Board meeting, the ambition is that Local Authorities will endorse/adopt the Green Infrastructure Strategy as appropriate and depending on local circumstances. The resulting Final Green Infrastructure Strategy will then be:

- An evidence base to support Local Authority planning policies and documents
- An evidence base for a possible future Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure SPD
- An evidence base for Strategic Green Infrastructure investments as part of a future CIL/Variable Tariff
- A document to support funding bids for projects
- A long term delivery strategy for stakeholders

It is intended that other stakeholders and partners (including the Green Infrastructure Forum) will endorse/adopt the Strategy as appropriate.

Final Strategy: The Final Green Infrastructure Strategy will be distributed online to partner organisations and interested parties and work will begin on implementing the delivery and governance of the Strategy.

It is intended that a brief summary brochure be produced for the public and an interactive web-based pdf of the Strategy be available to aid understanding, use and delivery of the Strategy.

Other work will involve a launch event for the Strategy, the development and delivery of a training programme on Green Infrastructure and the strategy as part of the Quality Charter Training Programme managed by Cambridgeshire Horizons.