

## **Cambridgeshire Green infrastructure Strategy Appendix 3 First round consultation summary**

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### **Introduction**

The Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region, developed in 2006, was reviewed for the following reasons:

- Extending the coverage of the strategy to encompass the whole of the county.
- To take into account the increasing importance of the Green Infrastructure in the planning process.
- To form a robust publicly tested evidence base in light of the Northstowe Area Action Plan Inquiry.
- Recognition of the widening role and function that Green Infrastructure can deliver.
- To provide a stronger focus on delivery and deliverability during the next few years when money will be short.

Cambridgeshire Horizons commissioned LDA Design to undertake this review with the support and guidance from the Green Infrastructure Project Group, which was made up of representatives of Green Infrastructure Forum organisations.

## **Preparation for 1st round public consultation**

A workshop and series of Project Group Interviews were held late 2009. Project group members were invited individually, or in small groups to capture their extensive experience and local knowledge. Telephone interviews were also conducted for those that could not attend.

A set of four questions were posed for these sessions providing the following main findings for:

### **Drivers and priorities**

- Meet existing deficiencies in open space
- An opportunity for a 'joined up' approach to Strategic Environmental Planning
- Engage with partners on Heritage Management Issues
- Deal Positively with the third sector
- Green Infrastructure thinking and baseline should present a robust evidence base and defend existing open spaces and help achieve sustainability goals.
- Healthy people, prosperous economy and well connected places
- Important distinction between PPG17 and Green Infrastructure
- Establish a link between people and open space assets
- Important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including addressing it through habitat protection and enhancement.
- Decline in habitat areas and quality that has been evident over several centuries
- Issues of isolated, fragmented and declining species
- Maintaining and enhancing existing historic and natural environment and ensuring sustainability and quality of place of new development
- Engaging and supporting people, groups and initiatives to help deliver Green Infrastructure

### **What success looks like?**

- Street Pride – gives volunteers the opportunity to clean up their streets and local parks to make them more attractive. Is this really GI?
- Northstowe rights of way project and the way it heritage and wildlife were included in the interpretation.
- Ely County Park – increasing local open space provision and providing a transition between town and country.
- The Ouse Valley – Interconnected accessible green spaces for people and nature. Success rooted in the establishment of the Ouse Valley Way. Long-term (20 year) approach to acquisition of land and development of assets. LPA led from the front, acquiring sites such as Paxton Pit and worked with other parties to achieve success (e.g. RSPB and Wildlife Trust). Opportunistic action albeit with a clear vision from outset to achieve 'buy-in' and support. Benefitted from people 'on the ground' and operating in political circles.
- Great Fen/Wicken Fen – landscape scale change, recreating traditional fenland, with new opportunities for wildlife, recreation, education and business.

- Nene Park in Peterborough – rental income from supermarket to ensure long-term maintenance.
- Devils Dyke - project to restore this historic site, funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and in partnership with Natural England, English Heritage and Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust.
- Cambridge Southern Fringe – Green Infrastructure assets provided the framework for a well considered master plan. Wildlife Trust helped to shape the ideas, supported by a clear vision for the development established by Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire County Councils, with a focus on high quality development. Developers were looking at the longer term which may have had an impact on why the development was deemed to be so successful.
- Local Nature Reserves – common theme/brand. Success also contributed to support from local residents and range of organisations, such as WT, BTCV and Cambridge Natural History Society.

### **Project Ideas**

- New projects in Fenland potentially constrained by intensive agricultural use - Strategy should therefore also make better use of existing assets in and around urban areas.
- Develop heritage themes for area of the county – Roman, Saxon, Medieval, Georgian etc. based on remaining assets or strong associations.
- Woodland planting/ grassland creation to address surface water runoff along and in close proximity to watercourses.
- Carbon capture in fenland areas through fen restoration.
- New bridleways linking into Norfolk, perhaps building on the Soham Commons.
- Improving permissive access along the River Cam, strengthening links between Cambridge and Ely.
- Establish habitat networks plan, based on existing habitat resources. Consider sub regional clustering to establish rationale for reservoirs.
- Blue Gym project, which has been piloted by NE in the South West - initiative to promote the benefits of taking exercise along waterways.
- South Cambridgeshire – improve connectivity between fragmented chalkland habitats.
- Cambridge Commons – opportunity to change management to enhance biodiversity and make commons more ‘multi-functional’.
- Train lines – use to link Green Infrastructure ‘hubs’ outside of the city.

### **Funding and Delivery**

- Community involvement key to the delivery of Green Infrastructure – increases awareness and provides alternative funding streams.
- Neighbourhood Forums potentially provide vehicle for delivery – panels have budgets for local projects.
- Potential funding from wind farm developments – sum of money set aside for Green Infrastructure improvements.
- Housing Growth Fund.

- English Heritage Grants (limited).
- Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 'Bottom up' community scale funds, perhaps to commission bespoke research projects.
- GAF contributions and S106 monies
- Transport Regional Funding Allocations (RFA)
- Ensure that funding is not time restricted but is ring fenced for its allotted purpose.
- Environmental Stewardship also mechanism for Green Infrastructure delivery - existing and 2nd Edition Green Infrastructure Strategy could be used to inform HLS applications.
- Need to give publicity across the region – regional network/news letter to share best practice information and case studies.
- Environmental stewardship
- 'Habitat banking' – as landowner, potential to make available land for enhancement whilst generating income.
- Role of renewable energy and Green Infrastructure; developer contributions from wind farms or grants for energy crops could contribute to the delivery of Green Infrastructure.
- Funding from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Partnership across disciplines is key – establish and exploit links with health, transport, education and climate change agendas.
- Link to Cambridge's status as 'cycle demonstration town' - funding and promotion opportunities.
- Need to 'sell' Green Infrastructure vision to improve profile
- Need to ensure proposals in Green Infrastructure Strategy are robust – therefore more credible and will increase profile of Green Infrastructure.

## **1<sup>st</sup> round consultation**

The first draft of the revised strategy underwent public and stakeholder consultation for 6 weeks between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

The public consultation consisted of 16 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.

A questionnaire was included on the “Green Vision” consultation page on Cambridgeshire Horizons website. There were over 1,100 unique users with peaks around consultation events. Press coverage was good with several radio interviews.

## **Results of 1<sup>st</sup> round consultation**

Generally there was positive support for the need for a Strategy and for the strategic aims/objectives and ideas within the Strategy.

Some respondents 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.

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. Some respondents suggested the inclusion of separate sections based on the different Local Authority areas and the need to work through a revised logic for the document. Stronger links to existing Green Infrastructure 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 develop the robustness of the evidence base to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

### ***Accessibility***

Legibility needs 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 audiences, 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 are needed.

### ***Other***

- There needs to be a greater recognition of the Cambridge fringe sites and other developments within Cambridge.
- Additional Strategic Projects should be included, certain areas of the Strategy (in particular heritage and health and wellbeing) should be strengthened, and some of the maps/diagrams revised to show 'local' projects and how the recommendations relate to existing Green Infrastructure.
- Emerging area framework options need to be identified including for example Cambridge Green Wheel, St. Neots and the Northstowe area.

In total 1054 individual comments were received from 87 representatives. Those comments were from a range of representatives including: Local Authorities, voluntary groups, members of the public etc.

Responses were collated via an online questionnaire and also received as written representations.

All comments were assessed and categorised. Those comments were then worked through by project groups who used them to shape the revision of the Strategy.

## Results from the Green Infrastructure website Consultation

In total there were 106 respondents who completed the online questionnaire as part of the consultation.

Whilst evaluating the comments and answers submitted online we noted some common questions/comments/themes.

Those are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 key comments from the online survey**

<b>Key Website comments:</b>	<b>Our actions:</b>
We were asked to ensure that the Green Infrastructure definition was clear and included all types of green infrastructure.	For the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft we have used a clearer definition, based on Natural England's definition that includes different types of Green Infrastructure.
You suggested a few additions to the Strategic Drivers.	We are presenting the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft as a number of 'themes' which help us think about Green Infrastructure and see how Green Infrastructure can help meet the four main objectives of the Strategy. These themes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure Gateways</li> <li>• Heritage</li> <li>• Landscape Character</li> <li>• Publicly Accessible Open Space</li> <li>• Sustainable Movement</li> </ul>
We received a number of comments about our maps stating that they were confusing and required some more explanation.	We have revised our maps to be more easily understood by the use of keys, colour coding and written explanations on all maps. <b><i>(Note: the maps in this Working Draft version are to be presented more clearly and legibly in the consultation version)</i></b>
You felt there was a fair bit of "management speak" in the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 1 <sup>st</sup> draft.	We are making sure that, as far as possible, the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review will be written in a simple way, and we will be including a glossary to explain any technical wording or terms.
You were asked to prioritise the four objectives for the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft. To remind you those objectives were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 1 - Reverse the decline in</li> </ul>	The responses we received resulted in the following priorities: Most important - Support healthy living and wellbeing. 2 <sup>nd</sup> most important - Mitigate and adapt to

<p>biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective 2 - Mitigate and adapt to climate change</li> <li>• Objective 3 - Promote sustainable growth and economic development.</li> <li>• Objective 4 - Support healthy living and wellbeing.</li> </ul>	<p>climate change.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> most important - Reverse the decline in biodiversity.</p> <p>Least important - Promote sustainable growth and economic development.</p> <p>We have taken into account your emerging priorities in preparing the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2<sup>nd</sup> draft and reflected these where appropriate. However, sustainable growth and economic development are key part of the development strategy for the Cambridge area that the Green Infrastructure Strategy is responding to and therefore this is recognised in the Strategy. Growth is also important in providing an opportunity to fund and provide new green infrastructure that will serve both the needs of the development but will also to available to the wider population.</p>
<p>You wanted more local projects to be included in the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2<sup>nd</sup> draft.</p>	<p>We have included a selection of local Green Infrastructure projects both as part of the 'Strategic Network' and in the chapter on Local Authorities' priorities, so that you can see what is planned for your area.</p>
<p>You requested an update on the Green Infrastructure projects that were mentioned in the Green Infrastructure Strategy 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2006.</p>	<p>One of the appendices includes an update on the projects mentioned in the Green Infrastructure Strategy 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2006.</p>
<p>You commented on confusion over 'strategic' and 'local' projects for Green Infrastructure.</p>	<p>During the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review we have identified a 'Strategic Network' which is mapped and explained. We have also indicated local projects within the Strategic Network. These show current aspirations across Cambridgeshire for Green Infrastructure from now until 2031.</p>
<p>Comments received suggested that the purpose of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review was unclear.</p>	<p>We have explained the purpose of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2<sup>nd</sup> draft.</p>
<p>You commented that the Strategy was hard to follow.</p>	<p>We have revised the structure of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Review 2<sup>nd</sup> draft to make it clearer to follow.</p>