
Report to: Place Panel

Date: 24 October 2018

Subject: **Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan**

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To provide the Place Panel with a report on the development of the Leeds City Region Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan and to gain feedback on its contents.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1. This report presents the draft version of the Leeds City Region (City Region) Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan (GBISDP) for approval and endorsement by the Panel.
- 2.2. The LEP Board provided a mandate in January 2016 to refresh the City Region approach to green infrastructure in light of the 2015 Boxing Day floods, acknowledging the beneficial effect it can have in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of flooding.
- 2.3. The LEP Board also recognised the additional wide ranging additional benefits that green infrastructure can provide e.g. improved health and wellbeing, mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change, increased land values.
- 2.4. The GBISDP is a named delivery plan of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and is aligned with current thinking on the emerging Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy (LIIS) and policy framework for the City Region (**Appendix 1**).
- 2.5. The GBISDP was split into two elements; the strategy and the delivery plan.

Strategy

- 2.6. The Strategy element of the GBISDP established a vision, five interconnected aims and seven priorities (**Appendix 2**).
- 2.7. Over 50 organisations from across the City Region with an interest or influence over the delivery of green infrastructure measures contributed to the development of the vision, aims and priorities.
- 2.8. The LEP Board approved the Strategy in March 2017.

Delivery Plan

- 2.9. The development of the Delivery Plan was led by a convening partner for each priority whose role was to bring together relevant partners, collate current and planned actions, and identify future interventions.
- 2.10. Convening partners identified a long list of over 160 actions across the seven priorities ranging from those which are currently being developed to brand new interventions.
- 2.11. Prioritisation of the 160 plus actions was undertaken according to local and national strategic fit, deliverability and impact. From this process a shortlist of 12 actions have been identified for delivery as part of the Delivery Plan over the next five years:
 - **Natural flood management programme:** Coordination of the identification and delivery of the future natural flood management pipeline in the City Region.
 - **Inclusive growth integration programme:** Integration of inclusive growth principles, including Green Streets, Healthy Streets, into project appraisal processes across the Combined Authority and local authorities.
 - **Network of off-road / safe cycling and walking routes:** Programme to increase the number of off-road and / or largely safe cycling and walking routes in the City Region.
 - **Leeds City Region green infrastructure map:** Production of a City Region green infrastructure map, linking into the Leeds City Region Infrastructure Map, and helping to embed green infrastructure into new developments and infrastructure projects.
 - **Green infrastructure revenue identification and liability reduction:** Development of an approach to identify new revenue funding for the ongoing maintenance of green infrastructure (seen as a key barrier to the implementation of green infrastructure) at a local authority level.
 - **White Rose Forest plan:** Setting out how the White Rose Forest will expand and deliver on its share of the Northern Forest commitments.

- **Peatland restoration programme:** Links partners and initiatives across the City Region to map, plan, prioritise and secure funding for post-2020 peatland restoration.
- **Post-Brexit agricultural and environmental policy and support:** Agree preferred options for policy / mechanisms to provide agricultural and environmental benefits in the City Region post-Brexit, including potential devolution funding and in line with the recently published Agriculture Bill 2018.
- **Green infrastructure jobs, skills and GVA assessment:** Production of the evidence base relating to jobs, skills (including shortages) and GVA of the green infrastructure sector in the City Region. Will also identify future potential opportunities relating to green infrastructure.
- **Green infrastructure skills programme:** Development of opportunities for providing and developing skills within the green infrastructure sector in the City Region.
- **Green infrastructure planning policy consistency:** Exploration of how planning policies and guidance on green infrastructure could be more consistent across the City Region.
- **Green infrastructure resource targeting:** Development of mechanisms that allow resources for green infrastructure improvements to be focussed on areas of greatest need.

Project development, coordination and delivery

- 2.12. During consultation with partners on the shortlist of actions it became obvious that there is a lack of resource within partner organisation to fully commit to their delivery.
- 2.13. Despite some achievements by partners a similar issue was experienced in attempting to deliver the previous Green Infrastructure Strategy (produced in 2010) in the City Region.
- 2.14. To mitigate the lack of resources to deliver within partner organisations a proposal to secure a shared resource is being explored.
- 2.15. Monitoring of progress will be through the Green Economy Panel via its major projects update provided on a quarterly basis. A more detailed review of progress will be undertaken after two years.

Next steps

- 2.16. The following table highlights the next steps for the GBISDP.

| Action | Timescale |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Approval of the GBISDP from the GEP, LEP and Combined Authority | October – End of December 2018 |
| Develop and gain commitment for a shared delivery resource | End of December 2018 |
| Commence work on the Delivery Plan's 12 prioritised projects | April 2019 |

3. Financial implications

- 3.1. There will be financial implications for the Combined Authority of both contributing to a shared resource and delivering the projects identified. Further work will be undertaken to understand the scale of the financial ask.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1. No legal and compliance implications have been identified.

5. Staffing implications

- 5.1. There could be potential staffing implications which emerge out of the exploration of a shared resource. Further work will be undertaken to understand what staffing implications could arise.

6. External consultees

- 6.1. Over 50 organisations have been involved in the development of the GISDP, including Yorkshire Water, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Natural England and local authorities.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. That the contents of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan be noted and feedback provided.

8. Background documents

- 8.1. None.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Contribution to achieving the key challenges of the LIIS

Appendix 2 – Green and blue infrastructure vision, aims and priorities