

Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan

DRAFT

Introduction

This Strategy and Delivery Plan is about how the City Region builds on its green and blue infrastructure strengths and ensures it is one of its defining characteristics.

The Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out the ambition to become a resilient, zero carbon energy economy underpinned by high quality green infrastructure.

Headline initiatives related to green and blue infrastructure set out in the SEP are:

- Make climate change adaptation and high quality green infrastructure integral to improving the City Region economy and its spatial priority areas.
- Develop an integrated flood risk reduction programme, incorporating flood defences, green infrastructure and resilient development.

Challenges & Strengths of GBI in LCR

Strengths

- Unique in England in having large urban areas in close proximity to a high quality natural environment.
- High number of natural designations ranging from the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Beauty to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites.
- Strong green infrastructure sector with interest ranging from large national organisations to small community groups.
- Excellent cycling and walking provision.

Challenges

- Over 63,000 residential properties and more than 27,000 non-residential properties have some degree of flood risk.
- 7,385 residential and 4,698 non-residential properties are at a high risk of flooding.
- Less than 17 percent of City Region's blanket bog peatlands are in good condition.
- Tree cover is lower than the national average of 10 percent (likely to be around 7 percent).
- Areas of deprivation with poor access to green space.
- Long-term uncertainty over maintenance of, and payment for, green infrastructure assets.
- Poor integration of green infrastructure into new developments.
- Significant issues related to physical and mental health.
- Extent of current green infrastructure provision in the City Region is unknown.
- Uncertainty over agricultural and environmental policy and support post Brexit and effect it will have on businesses across the City Region.
- Post 2020 support for peatland restoration once EU funding is withdrawn.
- Integration of green infrastructure considerations into business cases and conventional economic appraisals.
- Size of the green infrastructure sector in terms of GVA and people employed is unknown.

Benefits

Green and blue infrastructure is important because it has the ability to deliver the following benefits:

- Reduced flood risk across the City Region.
- Reduced carbon emissions and improved carbon storage potential.
- Reduced peak river flow rates and storm flows.
- Reduced economic damage of flooding.
- Increased productivity.
- Attracts inward investment through a green and pleasant environment.
- Retention of talent.
- Improved air quality.
- Reduced health inequalities.
- Increased physical activity leading to lower obesity levels and reductions in serious diseases.
- Improved mental health.
- Ability to bring communities together.
- Increased property values.

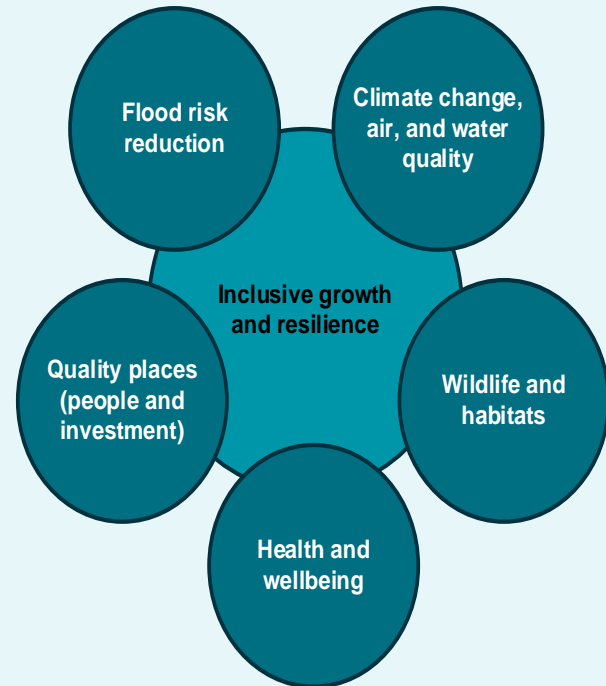
Aims & Rationale

This Strategy and Delivery Plan has the following vision and aims.

Vision

Everybody in the City Region is within easy reach of an outstanding and well used network of green and blue infrastructure that reduces flood risks and supports health, the economy, the environment and a superb quality of life.

Aims



Priorities

And will be delivered across the seven priorities outlined below.

Priorities

1. Effective water management and flood risk reduction
2. Build green and blue infrastructure into physical development and housing
3. Enhance green and blue corridors and networks
4. Heighten community access to / enjoyment of green and blue infrastructure
5. Plant and manage more trees and woodlands
6. Restore the uplands and manage them sustainably
7. Business growth, jobs, skills, and education

Delivery Plan Actions

The vision and priorities will be met through the following proposed actions

Project	Description
Leeds City Region Natural Flood Management Programme	Programme coordinating the identification and delivery of the future natural flood management pipeline in the City Region. Programme will also seek to collate data from existing natural flood management schemes with the view to building the evidence base to ultimately allow natural flood management measures to be used for Flood Grant in Aid funds.
Inclusive Growth Integration Programme	Programme to integrate inclusive growth principles e.g. green infrastructure, healthy streets, health and wellbeing, into project appraisal processes e.g. Combined Authority PAT process.
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. Programme will link into the ongoing work to develop Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plans.
Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Map	Production of a City Region green infrastructure map, linking into the Leeds City Region Infrastructure Map.
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).
White Rose Forest Plan	Setting out how the White Rose Forest will expand and deliver on its share of the Northern Forest commitments.
Leeds City Region Peatland Restoration Programme	Programme to link 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 lobbying of government and devolution.
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.
Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Skills Programme	Programme to develop opportunities for providing and developing skills within the green infrastructure sector in the Leeds City Region. Follows the outputs of the jobs, skills and GVA assessment.
Green infrastructure planning policy consistency	Exploration of how planning policies and guidance 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 e.g. areas of poor health and wellbeing, green infrastructure deficient areas.

Next Steps

The findings of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be built on over the coming months. Key activities include:

- Approval of the Strategy and Delivery Plan by the Combined Authority.
- Development of detailed work plans for the prioritised projects.
- Develop and gain commitment for a shared delivery resource .
- Commencement of action delivery.