

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting24th April 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Green Infrastructure Strategies for Tees Valley and Stockton

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a report relating to Green Infrastructure Strategies for the Tees Valley and Stockton.

It was explained that Green infrastructure was the network of open spaces, countryside, rivers, lakes and street trees within and between our towns and villages. It included both public and private assets.

A number of key regional strategies highlighted the multiple benefits provided by green infrastructure and the important role it could play in the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the North East and its city-regions.

The Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy set out a vision for a strategic green infrastructure network across the sub-region.

Members noted some of the benefits of Green Infrastructure

- Provide a high quality environment which encourages businesses to remain in the area and helps to generate inward investment.
- Enhance landscape and townscape, and provide an attractive setting for new development.
- Improve environmental sustainability, contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation. For example, greenspaces can provide water storage capacity and 'natural' flood defences; tree cover contributes to cooler urban microclimates and improved air quality.
- Promote health and well-being, for example, by providing opportunities for passive and active recreation, sport and children's play.
- Provide safe spaces for people to socialise and a focus for

community-based projects and events, helping to create a sense of local pride and promoting community cohesion.

- Contribute to the area's tourism 'offer', providing new and improved visitor destinations and enhanced connectivity.
- Promote sustainable transport through the provision of cycle and footpath networks and linkages to public transport.
- Enhance biodiversity and conserve local heritage.
- Provide opportunities for education and training.
- Contribute to local food production and provide opportunities for the production of renewable energy.

Members were informed that the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit had led on the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy on behalf of a wider partnership comprising all five Tees Valley Local Authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency, North East Community Forests and Cabe Space.

A copy of the final version of the Strategy was provided to Cabinet.

It was explained that the strategy's vision was to develop, by 2021, a network of green corridors and green spaces.

The Strategy outlined a network of 17 Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors across the Tees Valley, linking existing environmental resources with strategic priorities such as major redevelopment schemes, housing market renewal areas, and areas of new housing and business development. Details of the strategic green infrastructure network for Stockton were provided.

Cabinet noted that the Key priorities for each corridor would need to be reflected in Local Development Frameworks, other local strategic plans and regeneration schemes. An Implementation Plan for the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy was also being developed with input from all major partners. The Plan would:

- Summarise existing and planned strategic green infrastructure projects and initiatives.
- Identify gaps and new opportunities.
- Provide an indicative timetable for implementation.
- Identify potential funding sources (One NorthEast have initially allocated £500,000 in 2008/09 through the Tees Valley City Region Investment

Plan, but a variety of other funding and delivery mechanisms will need to be employed).

- Set out arrangements for monitoring progress and reviewing priorities.

The strategic framework included an Infrastructure Strategy specific to Stockton. The Strategy would focus on the development and sustainable management of green infrastructure and include a spatial planning element identifying key assets and opportunities. The long-term aim would be to develop networks of 'multifunctional' and connected green and 'blue' space across the Borough.

Members noted the purpose and broad objectives of Stockton's strategy.

Cabinet were given details of the next steps and anticipated timescales which would see the final version of the Strategy and Action Plan published in April 2009.

It was proposed that a Strategy Working Group be established involving a number of external partners who could be invited to play an active role in the development of the Strategy, including:

- North East Community Forests
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Forestry Commission
- Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

In addition a number of sections of the Council should be represented on the Working Group.

It was agreed that it was important that the Strategy was underpinned by a robust evidence base. Existing information and planned new research included:

- A Borough-wide Recreation and Leisure Survey, completed in March 2008.
- Viewpoint Surveys and the Stockton-on-Tees Residents Survey.
- A review of the existing Open Space Audit data and other existing spatial data held by the Council and its partners. This will be supplemented by additional green infrastructure mapping as required.
- A review of the Borough's Local Wildlife Sites, to be completed by August 2008.
- A proposed Landscape/Townscape Character Assessment

RESOLVED that

1. the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy be endorsed and the development of an Implementation Plan to commence in 2008/09 be supported.

2. the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Stockton be supported and be developed through a partnership approach, with a target date for completion of April 2009.

3. Reasons for the Decision

There was a growing awareness nationally and regionally of the multiple benefits provided by green infrastructure. Furthermore key regional documents, such as the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, advocate the strategic planning of green infrastructure networks, especially in and around the region's towns and cities.

The Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a framework for the development of a sub-regional green infrastructure network, a significant proportion of which is within the Borough of Stockton on Tees. The associated Implementation Plan will identify the key projects to be delivered over the next few years, with Stockton Council likely to be a major delivery partner. In addition there is an opportunity to support the development of strategic green infrastructure through the Local Development Framework and other strategies and plans within the Borough.

The proposed Borough-wide Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify a local green infrastructure network, expanding upon the sub-regional network identified in the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy. It is proposed that the Stockton Green Infrastructure Strategy is developed and delivered through a partnership approach. This will ensure that the Borough's green infrastructure is planned and managed in a way which genuinely meets local needs and maximises the benefits for local communities and businesses.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Friday 2nd May 2008

Proper Officer
28 April 2008