



PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION JOINT WORKSHOP

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHITE PAPER

DATE : 20th January 2012
TIME : 2 – 4 pm
LOCATION : Room 4.2 One First Street, Manchester

Format: A small number of short presentations will be followed by whole group discussions around shared interests for both Commissions and an examination of other, emerging issues within the White Paper.

Aims:

- To understand and share common work programme priorities and interests shared by both Commissions
- To scope the emerging issues for GM in the Natural Environment White Paper and understand how these issues fit within GMs strategic priorities
- To identify joint or shared 'next steps' in addressing these new issues for GM

		Lead by
1	Welcome, Introductions and Aims	Cllr Goddard
2	The Greater Manchester Overview A short summary of progress on the GM Strategy and key priorities for GM in current economic climate	Karen Tierney, GM Integrated Support Team Q&A
3	Work Programme Priorities Introducing the priorities from Environment Commission and Planning and Housing Commission Work Programmes	Mark Atherton (Environment lead) and Chris Findley (Planning Lead) Q&A
4	Current work on the Natural Environment agenda - Local Nature Partnership, - Green Infrastructure Framework. Group Discussion: is this correct approach? Are these correct priorities? Have we capacity to deliver?	Briefing Paper attached Led by Anne Selby (Wildlife Trusts)
5	Current work on Adaptation and Climate Change - Flooding and Water, - Eco Cities: Overview and Update. Group Discussion: is this correct approach? Are these correct priorities? Have we capacity to deliver?	Briefing Paper attached Led by Matt Ellis, Environment Agency
6	Emerging Issues: That GM has yet to integrate into the current work	Derek Richardson Phil Woods

	<p>programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity Offsetting, - Nature Improvement Areas, - Total Environment. 	Q&A
7	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Conclusions, next steps and close</p>	Cllr Derek Antrobus



**JOINT WORKSHOP - ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION – PLANNING AND
HOUSING COMMISSION
20 JANUARY 2011**

Topic Briefing Note: **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. Introduction

This note summarises current activity on the Greater Manchester natural environment agenda: establishing a Local Nature Partnership (as introduced in the recent White Paper), long-standing work to plan GMs Green Infrastructure and moving towards delivery through the Green Infrastructure Action Plan.

2. Local Nature Partnership

The Natural Environment White Paper, published on 7th June 2011, sets out Government intentions to:

- Facilitate greater local action to protect and improve nature;
- Create a green economy, in which economic growth and the health of natural resources sustain each other as markets, business and government better reflect the value of nature;
- Strengthen the connections between people and nature;
- Show leadership internationally to protect and enhance natural assets; and
- Reduce peat use to zero by 2030, which has specific local relevance in some areas of GM.

The White Paper is wide ranging. Amongst other measures, it proposes the formation of Local Nature Partnerships as an option for local areas to improve partnership action which “will work at a strategic scale to improve the range of benefits and services we get from a healthy natural environment.”

Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are proposed to strengthen joined up action across agencies and organisations to identify opportunities to protect and improve nature at a local level. It is envisaged that LNP’s will complement Local Enterprise Partnerships, as the potential contribution of LNP’s to the green economy is identified in the White Paper; strong links between the two are encouraged.

The vision for LNP’s is that they will:

- demonstrate local leadership and raise awareness;
- use knowledge and expertise to develop a vision and priorities;
- add value to local area development, contributing to local plans and local development frameworks;
- contribute to the Green Economy by, for example, providing relevant information for LEPs in the development of their plans;
- bring together a range of local stakeholders to align efforts and make best use of available resources;
- co-operate with other partnerships where this results in more efficient use of resources and better outcomes;

- work at a landscape level to improve the range of benefits and services attained from a healthy natural environment, aiming to improve the benefits received from good management of land through, for example, constituent members supporting Nature Improvement Areas, biodiversity offset pilots or similar schemes; and
- form at a level that can take a strategic approach to deliver integrated outcomes with a wide range of benefits.

The Environment Commission has responsibility for Natural Environment and it was tasked to oversee the management and creation of an LNP, in close cooperation with the Planning and Housing Commission, under the direction of a lead Commissioner for the Natural Environment.

DEFRA made available limited funding, on a competitive basis, for capacity building to create an LNP. GM won £35,000 in the first round of bids in the late autumn. The funding is being deployed to enable a co-ordinator and other colleagues to: undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise; develop a membership structure; suggest governance; prepare terms of reference; and develop a business plan with associated marketing, engagement, communications and funding strategies.

Today's workshop forms part of the consultation process. Consultation events are also planned for early February, based around the following themes:

- Economy/Green Economy including tourism and landowners;
- Natural environment core activities and partners;
- Health and well being; and
- Education & academia

Several of the themes will include skills in their discussions.

Questions for LNP discussion

1. What would we expect an LNP to have achieved in 3-5 years and what does that mean for years 1 & 2
2. How can an LNP be resourced in the short, medium and long terms?
3. How do we ensure active participation and engagement for businesses, landowners, tourism interests and health?

3. Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework

Green Infrastructure (GI) is central to Greater Manchester's strategic aims around economic growth and creating quality places as well as plans for climate change and adaptation. The GI Project has been underway since 2008 and has produced a wealth of evidence to support the role of GI and the development of a GI Framework at the GM scale.

Work to date has reviewed the available evidence and identified a number of strategic GI themes in the light of the Greater Manchester Strategy's strategic priorities, with the Planning and Housing Commission approving the GI framework in late 2011. The Framework summarises GI priorities (in terms of assets, needs and opportunities) at a

strategic level, with a focus on spatial and investment priorities (see plan attached). The four Priority Investment Opportunities set out in the Framework are:

1. The Strategic Green Infrastructure Network: multifunctional areas of open land and water, the city's green lungs providing health, access, amenity, biodiversity and tourism as well as sustaining jobs in the visitor and natural economies.
2. Economic Centres and Growth Points: city and town centres, housing growth points, major investment sites and key transport corridors and gateways where the quality of public realm is vital to economic success and image.
3. Regeneration Priority Areas: housing market renewal areas, areas of multiple deprivation, major brownfield regeneration sites, DUN land, blighted transport corridors, often characterised by pollution and low environmental quality. GI can help remediate and create a better setting for new development, building investor confidence.
4. An Active Travel Network: footpaths, cycleways, canal towpaths and bridleways which link GI assets to each other and to residential and employment areas provide a means of encouraging sustainable transport, healthier lifestyles, greener commuting and general enjoyment of open spaces.

Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework Green Infrastructure Assets



- Green Infrastructure Assets*
- Areas where gardens are important biodiversity resources
- Principal Waterways
- Urban Areas

* Includes:
Canals, Rivers, Conservation Areas,
SSSIs, SBIs, LNRs, Moat Natural Areas,
Wildlife Corridors, Opportunities to Link and Buffer,
Habitat Mosaics, Non-Urban Land in Flood Zone 2,
Formal Open Space, Informal Open Space

DRAFT for CONSULTATION (2010)
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4. Moving to Delivery

The GI Framework does not identify delivery mechanisms or actions to deliver priority investment opportunities; this is the key objective of the **GI Action Plan**. It is essential that the Action Plan is a useful tool at a strategic level. However GI needs to be delivered at a range of scales and so the Action plan must also provide a resource for GM Local Authorities and their partners.

A draft structure for the Action Plan has been developed with assistance from Red Rose Forest and draft actions / interventions (high level) to be included in the Action Plan have been prepared (drawing heavily on existing strategic and local priorities to ensure fit with local strategy). The final plan will include detailed actions/interventions by theme and will identify priority projects (ie sub-regional priorities) selected using a series of thresholds / criteria and put forward by district officers. Individual districts are engaged throughout this work and will be consulted on the final draft.

As well as local authorities, there are a number of **delivery agencies and partnerships** that will be important to delivering an improved natural environment. Key organisations include:

- **Red Rose Forest:** a partnership across six GM districts, RRF is one of 12 Community Forests in the country and covers central and western parts of GM. It is implementing an agreed 40 year forest plan, with a vision for large scale environmental regeneration in urban and rural areas. To date it has invested £53 million in projects to improve access and management of woodland and non-woodland habitats.
- **Pennine Edge Forest:** is the woodland and environmental initiative for the east of Greater Manchester conurbation and includes the boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside. It is a strategic initiative working to bring the benefits and opportunities of community forestry to local communities and create a high quality gateway to GM
- **Pennine Prospects:** a partnership between local authorities, Natural England, water companies and the voluntary/community sector to protect the natural, built and cultural heritage of the south Pennines.
- **GM Ecology Unit:** provides specialist planning advice to (and on behalf of) the ten GM districts. It prepared and helps to implement a GM Bio-diversity Plan, comments on the ecological impact of development proposals, provides training and has been successful in winning funding bids to extend these roles.
- **The third sector:** a variety of expert organisations and grass roots groups who play a unique role in being able to manage sites, engage the public, campaign for change, monitor trends and initiate new projects. In GM, these include the Wildlife Trust and Groundwork.

5. Discussion and questions

With the development of the GI Action Plan, we are developing evidence of where further opportunities lie or where investment is most needed. The focus now needs to be on **delivery and implementation**. In particular, with the establishment of the LNP, planners, environmentalists and policy makers need to understand what all this evidence means for decision making and where resources can be found to act on priorities.

Questions for GI discussion

1. Public and private investment –

- how do we ensure better integration and coordination between natural environment policies or GI priorities and the core economic strategy for GM
- Can the GI Action Plan reflect and complement economic investment programmes?

2. Local authorities and other GM delivery agencies or partnerships –

- How do we maximise the use of all our organisations most efficiently?
- What role can commissions and the new LNP play to ensure delivery at strategic level?
- Is there scope to organise practical delivery agencies more effectively, to help deliver the LNP agenda and the GI Action Plan on the ground?



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Topic Briefing Note: **ADAPTATION**

1. Introduction

Globally, there is a threat of average surface temperatures rising 4°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, and even as soon as the 2070s. For Greater Manchester, work undertaken within the EcoCities programme indicates that by the 2050s, the annual mean temperature could have increased by up to 3.6°C, our winters could be up to 36% wetter and our summers 36% drier; there will also be a greater seasonal variations in the weather, and more extreme events such as storms or flooding. The research has also demonstrated that the impacts of a changing climate are already visible, for example through the contribution to increases in surface water flooding incidents. Adaptation therefore concerns reducing the impacts of current and potential future climate risks

The highly dense population, housing and building areas of Greater Manchester already tend to experience higher temperatures (known as the urban heat island effect) and night time temperatures in central Manchester have been recorded to be between 5 to 10 degrees centigrade higher than surrounding areas. Expected average and extreme temperature increases from climate change will exacerbate this which could see:

- Up to 90 overheating days in non domestic buildings (under the 2080s high scenario)
- 3 days of lost production/per employee for days exceeding 26 degrees centigrade
- Parallel effects for residents at home or in care
- Effects on the natural environment

(a) Effects on business. Whilst not as high a fluvial flood risk as some other parts of the North West, the concentration of people and businesses as well as the high concentration of development means that flooding, especially localised surface and sewer flooding, may become even more of an issue for Greater Manchester as a result of increased trends for heavy winter and spring rainfall. Increased monetary loss as a result of increased interruption to business from flooding could therefore be significant, especially where it affects wider business continuity through damage and impact on supporting infrastructure (transport, utilities). The south of Manchester can be particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events impacting on commuter journeys, effectiveness of the movement of goods services around and the infrastructure to support.

(b) Effects on residents. In addition to direct impacts on homes, experiencing flooding and natural disasters that cause damage to property, relocation and loss of possessions can have a detrimental effect upon physical and mental health, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Heat-waves may also increase risk of mortality and psychological problems among people with mental health problems. These impacts can disproportionately affect people with higher levels of deprivation.

Using the natural environment as a climate adaptation ecosystem to reduce urban temperatures (evaporative cooling, shade) and store water to reduce flood risk could address some of these resilience issues. However, whilst we are likely to see too much water in the winter, river flows in the late summer and early autumn could reduce by as much as 80% in some rivers. This, coupled with a forecast 13% increase in NW population by 2034/35, may pose a risk to the functioning and maintenance of any green infrastructure at times of water resource restrictions, particularly during periods of drought.

2. Flooding

Although Greater Manchester (GM) has not yet experienced a flooding incident of a scale seen in Leeds or South Yorkshire in 2007, flood risk is a significant issue which has affected many towns and communities. Modelling work, part of AGMA's Surface Water Management Plan project, has created a strategic risk map for the whole of GM and identifies over 500 potential priority flood risk hotspots containing 6,000 businesses, 14,000 homes, 33,000 people and 2,300 critical or vulnerable receptors (including police station, hospitals, electricity sub stations etc) at significant risk of surface water flooding.

The Flood and Water Management Act (2010) makes each of GM's ten districts a 'Lead Local Flood Authority' (LLFA) responsible for leading on the coordination of flood risk management in their areas. To facilitate co-operation a GM Flood Risk Management board is being established. This Board is required to provide strategic direction on flood and water management issues across the conurbation. It will be led by the GM Planning Officer's Group (POG) and include partners from across AGMA to create a strategic, GM wide body. The objectives are to ensure that AGMA has appropriate governance arrangements in place to set GM-wide priorities, set the strategic direction and attract investment through the newly constituted North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC). It will do this by delivering a number of outputs:

- a GM Flood and Water Management Board;
- strategic capacity to manage FWM issues at GM scale;
- improved drainage engineering capacity at district levels; and
- ongoing support for collaboration between districts on technical FWM work

3. Ecocities

EcoCities is a joint initiative led by the University of Manchester's School of Environment and Development and funded by property company Bruntwood. The project looks at the impacts of climate change and how we can adapt our cities to the challenges and opportunities that this presents.

Central to the work of EcoCities is the concept of building adaptive capacity. This concerns helping cities to develop the skills, knowledge and expertise necessary to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The core aim of EcoCities has been to undertake research to support the process of planning for a changing climate in Greater Manchester. It is hoped that the emerging outputs will have wider relevance for other urban areas engaged in responding to the challenges and potential opportunities linked to climate change.

Research has been organised across five main themes:

- Climate change recent trends and future projections.
- Impacts of weather and climate.

- Vulnerability to climate change impacts.
- Adaptation responses.
- Scenarios and futures perspectives.

Priority areas for action include:

- Safeguarding future prosperity – building in resilience with technical solutions and stimulating job creation around adaptation
- Protecting the most vulnerable communities from climate change impacts – establish and map the key areas of vulnerability
- Enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure networks – transport, utilities, data, public services and green space.

The Greater Manchester Strategy, and supporting documents including the Greater Manchester Climate Change Strategy and the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial framework, acknowledges that adaptation responses will be needed to maintain economic viability and improve the quality of life of residents. It is hoped that the outputs of the EcoCities project can contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Further information on the project, including reports on adaptation in Greater Manchester, is available at www.manchester.ac.uk/ecocities

Questions for Adaptation discussion

1. Are we making best use of our natural environment resources and opportunities to support the economy and community in adaptation
2. What can we prioritise for delivery given limited resources
3. How can we take advantage of investment opportunities to support adaptation