



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Planning Policy Committee – 29 September 2014

Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Purpose of report

For the Committee to note the North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (GIDP) and endorse the projects to help deliver green infrastructure improvements across the district.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (GIDP) (June 2014)
Appendix 2: Habitat Regulations Assessment Appropriate Assessment Screening (May 2014)
Appendix 3: Natural England's comments on the Appropriate Assessment (May 2014)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Green infrastructure improves quality of life for residents and enhances biodiversity, habitat connectivity and ecosystem services. Northamptonshire's green infrastructure corridors were delineated in 2006 by the River Nene Regional Park. Since then green infrastructure's importance has been enshrined in policy at both the national (National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 99 and 114) and local levels (Policy 5 of the adopted North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy 2008).
- 1.2 Policy 5 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy aims to secure a net gain in green infrastructure, protect the integrity of existing networks and where possible promote improvements. One of the key mechanisms to deliver Policy 5 is: 'using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to [green infrastructure corridor] quality and robustness'.
- 1.3 One of the challenges to implementing Policy 5 has been in making the connection between the green infrastructure policy and project delivery on the ground. At present North Northamptonshire has no mechanism to link green infrastructure policy to green infrastructure delivery.
- 1.4 To address this, as well as concerns expressed by Natural England, a range of green infrastructure projects have been identified which if completed would help implement Policy 5 of the Core Spatial Strategy.

2.0 Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (GIDP)

- 2.1 The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (GIDP) supplies the evidence needed for planners to progress delivery on a range of green infrastructure projects. It has been written specifically for planning officers, and provides project details and evidence to inform discussions with developers. For each project the GIDP also specifies links to development, policy drivers, project aims, benefits, delivery timescales, contact information and costs.
- 2.2 Projects in the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan address a range of local needs. These needs are primarily a response to growth and development, and include increasing visitor capacity of existing sites, improving the visitor experience and addressing green space deficits. Many of the projects will also mitigate habitat and/or site deterioration that often results from recreational pressure.

2.3 Several projects relate to or are within the catchment of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA, therefore as instructed by Natural England, this has been addressed in the details for each project affected. An Appropriate Assessment (Appendix 2) has also been produced for the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a whole and approved by Natural England (Appendix 3).

2.4 The GIDP will be reviewed periodically, to accommodate new projects which come forward and remove projects that are completed. Many of the current projects have been in development for some time and are deliverable in the short to medium term. As the GIDP is reviewed there will be opportunities to examine local green infrastructure gaps in more detail and plan new projects to address these gaps.

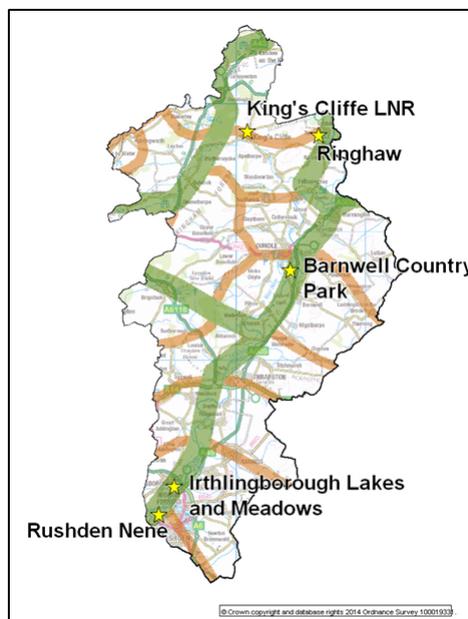
3.0 Green infrastructure in East Northamptonshire

3.1 Northamptonshire's sub-regional green infrastructure corridors broadly follow the main river valleys and tributaries. The sub-regional network is also complemented by local green infrastructure corridors. These cover a variety of land uses and provide opportunities for projects and investment at a smaller, more local scale.

3.2 East Northamptonshire's main settlements are located on the Nene sub-regional corridor. Local corridors extend through the surrounding countryside, providing valuable habitat and walking routes at a smaller scale. The district's green infrastructure network includes much of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, Rockingham Forest woodlands, Stanwick Lakes, Barnwell Country Park and various rights of way.

3.3 As the towns grow, the planned growth in population will put additional pressure on existing assets. This is particularly the case around Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough, where increasing visitor pressure is having an impact on the SPA. Therefore projects have been identified that will support the current network and make valuable improvements over the next 10 years, in order to meet the needs of the growing population.

3.4 The map below illustrates the green infrastructure network within East Northamptonshire and the locations of key green infrastructure projects included in the GIDP. (Sub-regional corridors are in green and local ones in brown). Most of these projects are located within the sub-regional corridor however a range of aspirational projects in the smaller settlements will be located in both the sub-regional and local corridors.



- 3.5 The table below summarises the key green infrastructure projects planned or underway in East Northamptonshire. Those in italics are presented in detail in Appendix 3 to the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Project	Description	Start date	Duration to completion	Initial cost
<i>Barnwell Country Park</i>	Expansion of country park by 20 ha, provision of cafe	TBD	3 years	£619,750
<i>Ditchford Lakes and Meadows</i>	Access and infrastructure improvements to existing nature reserve	TBD	3 years	£200,000
<i>Irthlingborough Lakes and Meadows</i>	Expansion and linkage of existing nature reserves	2012	9 years	£297,000 (remaining)
<i>King's Cliffe LNR (Expansion)</i>	Expansion of existing nature reserve to accommodate more visitor pressure	TBD		£150,000
<i>Ringhaw</i>	Access and infrastructure improvements to existing nature reserves	TBD		£100,000
<i>River Nene Backchannels</i>	Habitat improvements for water quality and recreation	TBD		£1000,000
<i>Rushden Nene</i>	Expansion and linkage of existing nature reserves	2012	Ongoing	£1,000,000
<i>Thrapston Carr expansion</i>	Expansion of existing nature reserve to accommodate more visitor pressure	2021	10 years	£150,000
<i>Leftover Spaces: Greener Places</i>	Development of community-led greenspaces in major settlements	2012	3 years	£279,000
<i>North Northamptonshire Greenway (phases 4-6)</i>	New cycling and pedestrian routes linking Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irchester and Wellingborough	Phased delivery		£1,050,516
<i>Rockingham Forest for Life</i>	Tree planting for carbon sequestration, wood fuel supply and public access	TBD	Ongoing	£3,371
<i>Upper Nene Valley access infrastructure</i>	Access infrastructure improvements to improve visitor experience and protect the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA	2016	15 years	£2,000,000
<i>Woodland linkages</i>	Carbon sequestration and provision of quality greenspace	TBD		£2,500,000

- 3.6 The appended Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan will prioritise relevant S106 (or CIL if adopted) contributions to these projects to deliver green infrastructure benefits. It will also provide officers with the evidence needed to inform discussions with developers to help to deliver the green infrastructure policy.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the proposals.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.0 Risk Management

- 6.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

- 7.1 The projects outlined in the table in paragraph 3.5 shows projects totalling £14.1m projected for the East Northamptonshire area over the next decade or so. Although work has started on some of the identified projects (for example, delivery of phases of the Greenway), only £1.6m of total funding has been secured to date. This includes some S106 contributions. Where appropriate, this council will work with partners to

secure the remaining £12.5m to deliver these projects. However it should be noted that endorsement of the inclusion of the identified East Northamptonshire projects should not be taken as an indication of financial support from this council. Where this is requested outside of existing S106 or grant aid streams (or possible future CIL arrangements) a separate report will be presented to the relevant committee.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

8.1 The proposal would not require an amendment to the Council's Constitution.

9.0 Corporate Outcomes

9.1 The Relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Good Quality of Life – the proposal will improve access to wildlife and the environment
- Effective Partnership Working –the document has been produced at a strategic North Northamptonshire level, including three other Councils and covers green infrastructure corridors that span across the county
- High Quality Service Delivery – If CIL is adopted then endorsement of the plan will enable the council to decide to contribute future CIL funds to projects that improve wider green infrastructure corridors if it wishes.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan and endorses the inclusion of the projects within East Northamptonshire in the plan.

(Reason - so it can be used by the Council to help deliver green infrastructure improvements across the district)

Legal	Power: Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 767)				
	Other considerations: None				
Background Papers: North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (2008)					
Person Originating Report: Jennie Johnson Planning Policy Officer ☎ 01832 74(2337) ✉ jjohnson@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 12 th September 2014					
CFO		MO		CX	