

QUALITY OF LIFE DOCUMENTS

(Report by Head of Planning Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report gives an overview of 3 Quality of Life documents which were commissioned by Cambridgeshire Horizons to help shape and guide growth across the sub-region. It seeks to clarify the status that these documents should carry within the District Council.

1.2 Each document is summarised in the appendices. They are:

- **Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region**
- **A Major Sports Facilities Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region**
- **Cambridge Sub-Region Culture and Arts Strategy**

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Cambridgeshire Horizons is a non-profit making company set up by the Cambridgeshire Local Authorities to drive forward the development of new communities and infrastructure in the Cambridge Sub-region, in accordance with the approved Structure Plan.

2.2 Its job, working with this Council and partners, is not only to make growth happen, but to make it happen in a way that gives us the best urban environments, improved recreation opportunities, enhances the countryside, provides balanced communities with good schools, community and cultural facilities, delivers transport and utilities infrastructure, and provides homes that people can afford to rent or buy.

2.3 The green infrastructure is closely aligned to the policies in the recently submitted core strategy and therefore there should be no concern about adopting its findings.

2.4 Officers believe further work is needed to ensure we fully understand the implications to the Council in relation to the Major Sports Facilities Strategy and Culture and Arts Strategy before their status is confirmed. This relates to the need to clarify the relative importance which the Council gives to these 2 elements of growth (as opposed to all the other elements) which in turn will need to determine the amount of resources which the Council is prepared to allocate to help deliver the strategies.

3. THE DOCUMENTS AND CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The green infrastructure strategy is a robust and thorough document which is consistent with and supportive of the Council's policy and priorities.
- 3.2 The major sports facilities strategy is a relatively robust and thorough document. There is broad agreement between partners on the proposed range of new sub regional facilities. The district level analysis is relevant and will inform future decision-making.
- 3.3 However the report makes inadequate consideration of the revenue requirements and, therefore, there are potentially financial sustainability issues. Instead, too great a focus has been put on sustainability via sports development and maximisation of use.
- 3.4 The County Sport Partnership is an emerging agency and there is concern that a premature degree of emphasis is placed upon it. Formal consultation has not yet taken place and the CSP does not currently have a resource or remit to take on the role of delivering the Strategy. This issue will need to be addressed by Sport England and Cambridgeshire Horizons. Links to Cambridgeshire Horizons' other Quality of Life publications need to be developed, particularly around co-location of facilities.
- 3.5 However, there is an important issue concerning how the Council sees the relative importance of arts and culture compared with all the other factors which will help to make growth in the Cambridge Sub-region sustainable. The relative importance will need to dictate the resources (in terms of staff time and money) which the Council is prepared to commit to help deliver the strategy.
- 3.6 Therefore, officers are recommending that the status of these 2 latter strategies should be agreed at a later date when the issues and financial implications have been clarified.

4. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 4.1 That the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region be adopted as Technical Guidance to guide the preparation of any Open Space/Recreation/Leisure strategies and as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals.
- 4.2 That projects in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region in Huntingdonshire be considered for incorporation in the forthcoming Planning Obligations SPD.
- 4.3 Await further discussion with Cambridgeshire Horizons and adjoining Authorities on the provision and financing of strategic sports and culture and arts facilities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Quality of Life Documents

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Appendix A

Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region

Background

- A.1 The provision of Green Infrastructure has been identified as a key priority for the successful implementation of the growth agenda. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plans include policies for creating new Green Infrastructure and enhancing the existing landscape. In line with these, Cambridgeshire County Council carried out, through consultants, an audit of the Strategic Open Space (SOS, a major component of Green Infrastructure which focuses on public access and recreation) in the County. This proposed a standard of 5.1 hectares per 1,000 population (based on existing level of provision) for new SOS. This study stopped short of developing a strategy for future provision.
- A.2 Following on from this, in July 2005 Cambridgeshire Horizons commissioned the Landscape Partnership to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region. This was guided by a Steering Group which included representatives from the Cambridgeshire Local Authorities, English Nature, National Trust, The Forestry Commission, Countryside Agency, and Cambridge Preservation Society. This was completed in February 2006. The Green Infrastructure Forum (of which the Steering Group was a subgroup) has been reconvened to consider implementation of the Strategy. A Green Infrastructure Development Officer is currently being appointed.
- A.3 The objective of the study is to provide a bold and imaginative strategy for the provision of large-scale Green Infrastructure for the Cambridge Sub-Region over the next 20 years to complement and support the planned growth. It promotes a range of new creative initiatives and proposals currently being promoted by a variety of agencies across the Sub-Region. It identifies the lead organisation, mechanism for delivery and long term responsibility for each project.

Key Elements

- A.4 The 20 Year Vision is:

To create a comprehensive and sustainable network of green corridors and sites that:

- Enhance the diversity of landscape character
- Connect and enrich biodiversity habitats and
- Extend access and recreation opportunities for the benefit of the environment as well as current and future communities in the Cambridge Sub-Region.

- A.5 The Strategy makes 14 recommendations, which are grouped as follows:

R1-R5 are focused on the enhancement of the existing habitats of biodiversity interest, as reflected in the 50 Year Wildlife Vision

R6-R7 are concerned with the creation of new corridors of biodiversity to tackle the fragmented pattern

R8-R9 focus on providing major greenspaces to serve existing and new populations arising from growth in the Sub-Region

R10-R13 concentrates on the enhancement of the recreational access network

R14 underlines the importance of providing Landmark Projects as a catalyst for the delivery and public awareness of the Strategy through a variety of exciting projects

A6 The Spatial Strategy comprises of three aspects:

- Corridors – Green Grid Network.
- Sites – Major Green Infrastructure Sites
- Wider Area Initiatives.

A.7 A full list of indicatives and projects has been produced made up of:

- 40 corridors which develop a robust green grid and access network,
- over 20 major green infrastructure sites, which are either new facilities or build on existing sites, and
- wider area initiatives designed to enhance local landscape character and biodiversity interest.

A.8 The key projects in Huntingdonshire are:

- the Great Fen Project
- Grafham Water ancient and semi natural woodland linkage
- Great Ouse waterway and wetland project
- Needingworth Wet Fen
- Ouse valley wet woodlands and wet meadows
- St Neots town centre initiative – green corridor project

Appendix B

A Major Sports Facilities Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region

Background

- B.1 PMP Consultants were commissioned by Cambridgeshire Horizons in August 2005 to develop a strategy for the provision of major sports facilities in the Cambridge Sub-Region over the next twenty years to 2026. PMP evaluated existing facility provision within the region and identified the increase in demand anticipated through the significant population growth planned over the next twenty years.

Key Elements

- B.2 The vision for the Strategy is:

To create a network of high quality community and specialist sports facilities within the Cambridge Sub-Region that will enhance the quality of life of existing and new communities

- B.3 The Strategy identifies both major sub regional sports facilities requirements and specialist sports facility provision required by National Governing Bodies in the run up to 2012. In short, these are:

Major sub regional requirements:

- Community Football Stadium (Cambridge East)
- Ice Rink (Cambridge urban fringe)
- Multi Lane Rowing Facility (to be decided)
- 50m Swimming Pool (Cambridge University)

Specialist provision linked to National Governing Body (NGB) and 2012 requirements:

- 8 court sports halls
- Indoor bowls (to serve Northstowe)
- Indoor cricket (to serve Huntingdon)
- Martial arts
- Gymnastics
- Indoor tennis (not in Cambridge)
- Equestrian Centre
- Water sports (develop Grafham Water)

- B4 The Strategy seeks agreement from all partner agencies to the following:

- For all agencies to agree to the priorities above and provide a united front for funding bodies.
- Resources to be targeted to increase capacity of the County Sport Partnership (CSP) to drive forward the strategy.
- For clear leadership to be demonstrated by the CSP to drive the key infrastructure priorities forward
- To seek to develop a funding pool through a tariff system to enable the CSP to pro-actively deliver the sub-regional infrastructure requirements

- The development of working groups to lead the development of particular initiatives
- The need to agree priorities between partners so energies and resources can be targeted effectively
- For agencies to commit individual funding to a central post to help pump-prime developments.

B.5 In addition the Strategy does consider current and future needs at a district and community level. It recommends that we review our approach to sports facilities and events in fringe developments in terms of management and revenue issues and that District and City Councils agree to:

- A strategic review with the aim of rationalisation at a local level
- Work in partnership to address cross-boundary impacts of growth area initiatives
- A structured commitment to use the growth area agenda to work together and provide local coordination to deliver local needs.

B.6 The Strategy highlights a number of possible delivery options for sports facilities:

- S106 Agreements
- Co-location of facilities
- Tariff systems
- Planning Gain supplement
- Private sector
- Land disposal
- Sport & Leisure Fund
- Procurement competition
- Joint venture

Appendix C

Cambridge Sub-Region Culture and Arts Strategy

Background

- C.1 Partners believed that it was important to produce a Culture and Arts strategy that not only built on the area's existing cultural offer, but also placed culture and the arts firmly at the heart of the new planned community growth. David Powell Associates were commissioned by Cambridgeshire Horizons to produce the strategy.
- C.2 The Strategy includes a review of current provision and of the regional context, an analysis of gaps and opportunities, including opportunities for the encouragement of creative businesses, an assessment of partnership and leadership issues, and proposals for funding mechanisms to respond to growth. It sets out the challenges for the sub-region as a whole, and proposes viable future steps to ensure that culture and the arts make valuable contributions to all of its communities, now and in years to come.

Key Elements

- C.3 The key elements of the strategy are:
- Long-term planning decisions affecting culture and the arts should take account of demographic, environmental, social and technological change factors. Arts partners should jointly commission a programme of support activities to enable cultural and arts bodies in Cambridgeshire to plan for the long-term.
 - More accurate data is required to accurately map the current and future arts provision in the Cambridge sub-region.
 - In the two biggest developments in Cambridgeshire – Northstowe and East Cambridge – a cultural partnership is required to ensure culture and the arts are at the heart of all new built infrastructure.
 - Cambridgeshire Horizons and partners should work to develop a coherent, sub-regional approach to capacity building, which will involve strengthening local authority public art policies and working with local and regional arts practitioners and specialists agencies. When building capacity, key partners should also ensure that young people's voices are taken on board through youth consultancy projects.
 - The Cox Review's planned "centre of creativity and innovation" will be a key instrument in meeting plans for sub-regional future growth.
 - To maximise the response to the growth agenda, a sub-regional Cultural Partnership can provide high profile leadership and advocacy for culture and the arts. Funding for other than local projects should be pooled into a Cultural Fund for the Cambridge sub region, encompassing a range of partners.

- Cambridgeshire Horizons and its partners need to devise a segmented set of wide-ranging, long-term strategies, which bridge the gap between the Government's spending on cultural infrastructure and the investment needs of the planned growth within culture and the arts.
- The report notes the lack of a purpose-built concert hall in the sub-region and proposes the investigation of the feasibility of this as a major project.
- The report also notes that there may also be opportunities for either or both a commercial arena for large scale outdoor events and a conference and convention centre
- Cambridge has the potential to become a City of Museums although there are no specific direct implications for the City Council itself in this respect.
- The report explores the possibility of a levy for arts and cultural facilities from all new housing developments in the sub-region, which will form part of a Sub-Regional Planning Obligations Strategy.