

## **Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework.**

### **Developing a step approach to producing the sub regional GI framework for delivering the Greater Manchester Strategic Plan.**

#### **Background.**

An outline framework for green infrastructure in Greater Manchester has been developed by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and Natural England. At a recent sub regional conference in October 2008, AGMA districts, the Housing and Planning and Environment Commissions and strategic partners confirmed their support for a strategic, multi sectoral approach to GI planning which delivers Greater Manchester's core economic, social and environmental objectives for sustainable growth and regeneration.

The outline framework produced for AGMA and Natural England by TEP (The Environment Partnership) represents the second phase of work aimed at developing a more detailed sub-regional green infrastructure framework (Phase 1 consisted of a review of existing data sets and evidence relevant to strategic GI planning). It;

- provides an initial overview of GI in GM i.e. its strategic functions and spatial distribution;
- provides clear comparison and synergies with the agenda of other key English growth and regeneration areas and that of 'world cities' with similar agendas e.g. New York;
- highlights strong GM case studies of strategic GI planning such as East Central Rochdale HMR
- suggests how the GI may be taken forward in GM in terms of further development of the spatial framework, governance structures and targeting appropriate spatial planning and investment mechanisms which can deliver and help manage effective GI assets and functions
- provides the basis for developing a 'key diagram' to support the GM growth agenda as included in strategic documents such as those listed below
- helps to illustrate a key message that GI has a strategic value to the GM growth agenda which is most effectively planned at both a GM and local level in order to maximise the benefits of GI between and within districts and for the regional centre and key growth areas.

The outline framework has been considered by the AGMA Planning Officers Group who have recommended;

- Using Figure 9.5 of the GMGI report, to examine how this could be developed and refined to provide a 'key diagram' and growth support framework for GM;
- Developing a strategic action plan which further defines, evidences and supports this role in priority GI Planning areas (see below);
- Building in SFRA/SFRA L2 into the strategic GI planning framework;

- Building in the developing Ecological Framework priority areas into the strategic GI Planning framework;
- Proposing and providing guidance and evidence for key spatial planning actions at a district and GM level to support and deliver GI Planning objectives through development and regeneration programmes.
- Providing a clear GI focus in developing growth and investment plans to enable effective targeting of resources and GI delivery.

It is also important to recognise that the process for producing the RS2010 Single Regional Strategy is now underway. It is necessary to ensure that the strategic role of GI in GM is appropriately recognised and supported in this document to enable robust spatial planning and increased GI investment opportunities to be delivered.

To achieve these proposals it is necessary to further examine and interpret, refine and focus the work to date to identify and propose clear steps for producing a strategic GI framework and developing a robust way forward for phase three of the work, informed by a growing body of specific functional evidence and within which the major delivery tools for GI delivery can be properly positioned and relationships between them strengthened.

### **Objectives and key questions**

There are **four key questions** which should be answered through this exercise which will provide a strong foundation for more detailed work to follow. As a city region, Greater Manchester has set clear objectives for economic growth underpinned by a resilient low carbon economy and requires that economic growth and sustainable communities together achieve a strong sense of place and high quality of life in the city region. The GMGI project needs to ensure that its key economic, social and environmental importance is clearly highlighted and a pathway for producing a robust and well positioned strategy and delivery plan set out which also highlights the potential economic and environmental consequences of not delivering appropriate GI investments.

- Taking the outline 'key diagram' (Fig 9.5) in the GMGI study as a starting point, how should the work in developing the GMGI framework be aligned with the emerging Ecological Framework, SFRA work and local GI studies and assessments so that they are mutually supportive and form a more cohesive body of evidence and guidance?
- How would the resultant merged GI process and product including the emerging strategic GI diagram underpin strategic economic, spatial planning and environmental priorities it needs to inform and support (at various spatial scales) and can it be refined and clearly focused and targeted to do this? Key strategic priorities include the RSS and emerging Single Regional Strategy (RS2010), GM Spatial Plan, New Housing Growth Point, Local Development Frameworks and economic and area based regeneration priorities.

- How is support from GM districts and other key stakeholders achieved and utilised?
- Based on the above, how should the GMGI framework highlight and embed its key economic, social and environmental functions and what should it have as its key focus and priorities in a suggested way forward (as a process and outline project) for Phase 4 of the GMGI project including reference to other tasks which should be taken account of or influenced through it?

In addressing the above questions the project will execute the following tasks (informed by an awareness of current GI guidance and good practice such as recently published NE guidance and supported by stakeholder meetings and workshops as required):

- **Task 1** - review and provide a more detailed interpretation of GMGI work to date including related workstreams such as SFRA and Ecological Frameworks, strategic district GI activity highlighting priority GI areas and key spatial planning and investment relationships;
- **Task 2** - identify key 'Forces for Change' through a broad review of specific current and developing/proposed regional and sub regionally significant growth and regeneration plans, strategies and investment programmes (thematic, area based and strategic sites) and compare against the emerging GMGI strategic framework in spatial and functional terms;
- **Task 3** - identify key "test areas" that may be required, to enable the framework to be tested in areas of core multi-functionality and / or strategic significance (these areas will be reviewed in the workshop event and amended or extended where required). Test areas will be chosen to represent a series of key GI typologies in Greater Manchester including river valley, city/major urban centre, mosslands, moorland, strategic gaps/deficiencies and will consider in broad terms the potential costs to economic performance and resilience and the social and environmental costs of not investing in appropriate GI assets and functions.
- **Task 4** - engage GM districts and selected key sub regional and regional stakeholders to ensure that the GMGI framework incorporates appropriate recognition of strategic planning, economic, social and environmental objectives at a sub regional and district level and that future GI work is effectively embedded, managed and signposted as required in emerging governance, spatial planning and investment processes for the GM Strategic Plan, NGP and Local Development Frameworks. This will involve a workshop event to ground truth, test and inform proposals and recommendations and to test the relationships between city regional and local actions i.e. how robust and effective the chain is.
- **Task 5** - develop a detailed project brief for Phase four of the Greater Manchester Green Infrastructure Framework aligned to the delivery of the GMSP, NGP and Local Development Frameworks setting out a proposed step approach to identifying, investigating, planning and

delivering strategic GI requirements within a robust and more detailed GI framework.

- **Task 6** – a final presentation to senior stakeholders drawn from each of the key Greater Manchester Commissions, lead AGMA officers and other strategic sub regional stakeholders.

The project will further define and refine the GI planning framework requirements to support key priorities within the GM growth agenda with particular reference to the Greater Manchester Strategic Plan, New Housing Growth Point, Local Development Frameworks and the spatial planning and GI investment needed to support delivery and meet GI requirements in Regional Spatial Strategy (and the emerging RS2010) and the New Housing Growth Point conditions effectively.

### **Key Activities and Milestones**

In delivering the above tasks, the following activities will be carried out. Detailed timings for specific milestones will be agreed at the Inception Meeting:

1. Inception meeting and agreement about the specific components of key consultation, review and workshop activities;
2. Selected interviews/'brainstorm' meetings with key stakeholders;
3. 1-2 workshop events to support delivery of tasks 3 and 4 above (invitations and format of sessions to be agreed);
4. Final report including key recommendations and supporting evidence, an initial project plan and key steps diagram;
5. Presentation to invited audience (see task 6)

### **Project Management**

The contract (GMGI Phase 3) is proposed as an extension of the GMGI Phase 2 contract with The Environment Partnership (TEP) and will be procured through Rochdale MBC on behalf of AGMA.

The project steering group (PSG) will include representatives of AGMA, The Environment Agency and Natural England as a core with opportunity to co-opt others as required.

The PSG will assemble and provide an initial baseline of updated information re: Tasks 1 and 2 above assisted by a questionnaire to be completed by all AGMA districts. The PSG will also assist with other tasks re: the setting up of workshop sessions, interviews and meetings and act as a sounding board/brainstorming panel where required.

### **Timescales.**

Project initiation – June 2009.

Project delivery deadline – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009.

### **Costs.**

Estimated costs - £10,000 of which £5,000 or 50% is sought from Natural England. The balance will be provided through AGMA.

### **Heywood Green Infrastructure Plan – Phase 2**

### **Proposal**

Phase 1 of the Rochdale MBC Green Infrastructure Strategy is continuing and will be completed in financial year 2009/10. A draft Heywood Green Infrastructure Plan for Heywood Township has been completed which will be taken forward to adoption in Summer 2009. This Plan will set out a key diagram for GI at a devolved Township level with a specific local action plan that also identifies how Heywood's GI is part of the wider Rochdale borough and Greater Manchester GI functional network.

In order to ensure that Heywood's key existing and potential contributions to the strategic Rochdale, GM and regional agenda are fully recognised and aligned to spatial planning and investment programmes, it is proposed to do further analysis and visioning work to add value to the Heywood GI Plan and provide further good practice for Rochdale, Greater Manchester and regional partners to utilise. Visioning will include work with key Township stakeholders including youth interests and will also include work with external partners and stakeholders including Red Rose Forest, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and Bury MBC.

Works will consist of:

- Visioning workshop – Heywood Township
- Visioning workshop – External Partners
- Opportunities mapping and a report for incorporation into the Heywood GI Plan

Work will be commissioned in May 2009 and completed by August 2009.

Total costs are £5,000 of which 50% is sought from Natural England i.e. £2500. Match funding is provided by Rochdale MBC.