

**Report of Parks & Countryside**

**Report to South Leeds (Inner) Area Committee**

**Date: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

**Subject: South Leeds Green Infrastructure Update**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Beeston & Holbeck, City & Hunslet, Middleton Park
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. This report provides an update on the Green Infrastructure project, which covers Inner South Leeds, in development by Parks & Countryside.

**Recommendations**

2. That South Inner Area Committee note and comment on the contents of this report.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Members to an important scheme to effect the important greenspaces in Inner South.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 This report and associated presentation describes the planned enhancement of Green Infrastructure (GI) in south Leeds, following an existing green corridor, from Lingwell Nook, northwards through East Ardsely Fall, Thorpe and south Middleton, to link with Rothwell Country Park and the Lower Aire Valley plus Leeds City Centre.
- 2.2 This GI enhancement will focus upon linking and connecting existing P&C land holdings, such as woodland, natural grassland and wetland and improving quality and biodiversity. Enhancement and promotion of alternative transport opportunities through the GI corridor (e.g. Public Rights of Way; Leeds Core Cycle Network Routes; new and established permissive ways) will facilitate and encourage car free journeys in which people can walk or cycle to and from school/work or simply for pleasure.
- 2.3 There are a number of individually important areas of natural environment within this GI corridor, such as Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW) and extensive young plantations, as well as areas of meadow, wetland and water courses, each requiring a specific style of management. However, rather than treating each area in isolation, the intention is to take a broader 'landscape scale' approach which maximises the multiple benefits of a large, well connected and diverse natural landscape.
- 2.4 Looked at holistically, not only can this facilitate the free movement of wildlife and people, benefiting biodiversity and encouraging improved health and wellbeing, it can also help to create a strong 'sense of place', by improving the aesthetic quality of the landscape. This, in turn, can provide stronger economic benefits, such as increasing property values and attracting businesses.
- 2.5 Well designed and well managed GI also provides substantial benefits in terms of helping the City to adapt to the effects of Climate Change. By contributing to stormwater management, air pollution (trees act as efficient filters) and local temperature control (evidence shows that increasing the area of GI can help to significantly lower urban summer temperatures as well as provide shelter from cold, winter winds. Last, but not least, large areas of quality, easily accessed green space offer an escape from the constant background noises of the modern built environment, proving opportunities for peaceful, quiet reflection.
- 2.6 All Leeds City Council owned woodlands are certified under the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), confirming that management is compliant with national and international guidelines. Existing woodland within the corridor will be managed to facilitate connectivity, improve public access, enhance woodland habitats and to secure opportunities to provide sustainable supplies of carbon lean woodfuel. Forestry Commission support will be sought at all stages of work with a view to drawing down funding through the English Woodland Grant Scheme (eWGS).

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The attached briefing paper and presentation (**Appendix 1 & 2**) outline the scheme and its impact on the area.

### **4 Corporate Considerations**

#### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 Projects are developed to address priorities in the Area Committee Business Plan. The production of this plan is informed by Local Councillors and local residents. All projects developed are in consultation with Elected Members and local communities. Approval for any contribution from the Wellbeing budget is secured at Area Committee.

#### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 Community groups submitting a project proposal requesting funding from the Wellbeing budget have an equal opportunities policy and as part of the application process, complete a section outlining which equality groups the project will work with and how equality and cohesion issues have been considered.
- 4.2.2 Internal and statutory partners are committed to equality and cohesion and all projects they are involved with will have considered these issues.
- 4.2.3 A light touch Equality Impact Assessments is carried out for all projects.

#### **4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:
- Vision For Leeds
  - Children and Young Peoples Plan
  - Health and Wellbeing City Priority Plan
  - Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
  - Regeneration City Priority Plan

#### **4.4 Resources and Value for Money**

- 4.4.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.

4.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.

4.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 This report provides an update on work in the Inner South and therefore no risks are identifiable. Any projects funded through Wellbeing budget complete a section identifying risks and solutions as part of the application process.

#### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The report provides up to date information on key work areas of the Area Committee.

#### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Area Committee is asked to:

- a) note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate.

#### **Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

There are no background papers associated with this report

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.