

Agenda item:

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Subject:** Greening Portsmouth Strategy

**Report From:** Chief Executive

**Report by:** Kelly Nash, Corporate Performance Manager

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To set out a Greening Portsmouth Strategy for the city.

**2 Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Greening Portsmouth Strategy, as set out at appendix A to this report.

**3. Background**

3.1 Significant actions have already been taken in support of a greener city including:

- Planting 50,000 trees at Horsea Island to create a new country park
- Planting more trees on Southsea Common
- Creating wild areas of the city where flowers and grasses can grow.

3.2 In 2019, Cabinet received reports on the development of Green Infrastructure for the city. At the same time, discussions around the response to the climate emergency were developing; and the city was considering the responses to challenges around air quality in the city.

3.3 It was therefore agreed that it would be sensible to develop a single approach to increasing the quantum of greenery in the city; and maximising the impact of greenery across a number of dimensions.

#### **4. Greening Portsmouth Strategy**

- 4.1 The Greening Portsmouth (attached at **Appendix A** to this report) outlines the approach that will be taken to making Portsmouth a greener city. PCC will take to work towards its objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- 4.2 The document highlights a number of the issues that are supported by greenery in the urban environment, notably:
- Mental wellbeing
  - Physical activity for recreation and active travel
  - Climate impact (through carbon capture and mitigating the impacts of a warmer environment)
  - Air quality
  - Biodiversity
  - Visual impact
- 4.3 The document celebrates the role of trees in the urban environment, but also notes that there are important functions performed by other forms of greenery, such as grasses, shrubs and hedges. So the approach advocated is a mix of planting appropriate to the wider objectives and in support of the green network. The document also recognises that whilst there is lots of land and greenery that is the responsibility of the local authority, a large proportion of land (and therefore a large number of the opportunities for enhancement) is in private ownership. Therefore, there is consideration of how engagement is used to mobilise activity and participation, and what policy levers are in place to support this.
- 4.4 This means there are four branches to the strategy:
- Branch 1 - Public space (focusing on land in PCC ownership and control)
  - Branch 2 - Private land
  - Branch 3 - Engagement and participation
  - Branch 4 - Policy levers
- 4.5 There are a number of actions suggested including:
- Reinvigorating a "Tree Charter" for the city, enshrining key principles around tree planting, maintenance, removal and replacement
  - A planting programme to enhance greenery in the city over the next two-three years (aligned to planting seasons)
  - A programme of public engagement
  - The establishment of a working group to move this strategic programme forward.
  - A process for reporting back on an annual basis.
- 4.6 The strategy identifies the importance of balance across the city, in terms of access to greenery and the types of planting that are being used - it is important

that there is recognition that the right type of planting needs to be used for the right environment to ensure that the plant thrives and is sympathetic to the surroundings.

- 4.7 A clear role for partner organisations exists in the strategy in terms of mobilisation and widening participation in the agenda across the city.

## **5. Reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1 The Cabinet has signalled commitment to increasing green infrastructure in the city. This document provides a clear framework in which this can happen.
- 5.2 The proposals recognise that much is already happening to support this area of work, but that this would benefit from more co-ordination and promotion to ensure that the impact is optimised.

## **6. Integrated impact assessment (IIA)**

- 6.1 An integrated impact assessment is attached at Appendix B.

## **7. City Solicitor comments**

- 7.1 Any implementation of a scheme of planting would need to be subject to the usual relevant risk assessments applicable in the context of: users to an area, insurance risk to PCC and adjoining land owners, type of tree, longevity of life, statutory nuisance etc the aim being to move the policy forward whilst managing the risk profile.
- 7.2 With respect to private land any encouragement to plant would be in the context of the individual land owner assuming the risk as opposed to PCC. The Authority should be careful not to encourage homeowners or land owners to plant without consideration as to their own liability and insurance cover. Individual land owners should be aware of their own personal liability with respect to claims based upon nuisance and or caused by the trees of themselves (such things as branch failure, leaf build up slipping risks etc).

## **8. Head of finance's comments**

- 8.1 The plan was developed using existing Cash Limited resources.
- 8.2 The City Council approved a Capital Budget of £100,000 at Full Council in February 2020. This strategy seeks to provide the delivery plan for the allocation of this fund.
- 8.3 Following the implementation of the plan there may be revenue implications for the ongoing management of planting. These will need to be appraised on a scheme by scheme basis and a source of funding identified as when they arise.

- 8.4 The resource for management of the strategy will be met from existing cash limited resources. There may be external sources of funding available to support the objectives of the strategy and these will be explored as implementation is progressed.

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Signed by:

#### **Appendices:**

**Appendix A - Greening Portsmouth Strategy**

**Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment**

#### **Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: Name and Title