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Title of meeting: Cabinet

Subject: Greening Strategy Update Report

Date of meeting: 5 October 2021

Report by: Bethan Mose, Public Health Principal (Wider Determinants of Health)

Wards affected: All

1. Requested by Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Green Recovery

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide an update to Cabinet on:

- progress made since the Greening Strategy was adopted in March 2020;
- the Green & Healthy City work programme;
- next steps.

2.2 It is recognised that the greening agenda is very broad, with significant activities being undertaken across Council services and by partner organisations in the city that contribute to broader environmental aims. For the purposes of this paper, the focus is on progress against the four key areas as set out in the Greening Strategy. A further paper on wider 'green' activities that contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions will be brought to Cabinet at a later date.

3. Background

3.1 The Greening Portsmouth Strategy document was considered and adopted by [Cabinet in March 2020](#) and supports other programmes of work in the city, including the Climate Action Plan, Clean Air Zone, Air Quality Strategy, Local Transport Plan 4, emerging Local Plan and the Portsmouth Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

3.2 The Strategy outlines the approaches to deliver a greener city, whilst working towards the PCC objective to be carbon neutral by 2030. Emphasis is placed on increasing tree canopy cover whilst also recognising the importance of other forms of greening, advocating a mix of greening schemes appropriate to the urban environment.

3.3 PCC, through land ownership and statutory functions, holds the potential for significant greening opportunities across its estate, whilst also being able to influence across partnerships to create opportunities to enhance the greening of land in private ownership. The Strategy sets out four key areas, which provides the framework for the progress update and work programme over the next 12 months.

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- 3.4 Since its adoption, resource has been allocated to focus on the delivery of the Strategy through the Public Health Transformation Fund. The early part of 2021 saw the appointment of a new Green and Healthy City Co-ordinator; a fixed-term role to oversee delivery of specific projects, liaise between services delivering greening as part of their core functions, act as a point of contact for collaboration and lead bids for external funding.
- 3.5 The role sits in the Public Health team to ensure strong alignment with health and wellbeing priorities, particularly health inequalities. There is a wealth of good quality evidence (see Table 1) demonstrating the positive impact that greenspaces can have on physical and mental health, whilst also enabling people to build social capital:

Table 1: Health and Greenspace Evidence

<p>The Netherlands - every 10% increase in exposure to green space translated into a reduction of five years in age in terms of expected health problemsⁱ.</p> <p>Similar benefits found by studies in Canadaⁱⁱ and Japanⁱⁱⁱ.</p>	<p>Green space linked with reduced levels of obesity in children and young people in America^{iv}.</p> <p>Strong evidence that access to open spaces is associated with higher levels of physical activity^{vi} and reductions in a number of long-term conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and musculoskeletal conditions^{vii}.</p>	<p>Proportion of green and open space is linked to self-reported levels of health and mental health^{viii} for all ages and socio-economic groups^{ix}, through improving companionship, sense of identity and belonging^x and happiness^{xi}.</p>
<p>Living in areas with green spaces is associated with significantly less income-related health inequality^{xii}. In greener areas, all-cause mortality rates are only 43 per cent higher for deprived groups, compared to 93 per cent higher in less green areas.</p>		
<p>However, people from more deprived areas have less access; children in deprived areas are nine times less likely to have access to green space and places to play^{xiii}.</p>		

- 3.6 There is a strong business case for greening activities in urban areas from a health and wellbeing perspective:
- parks and public gardens are associated with health and wellbeing at the community level, including satisfaction with ‘place’, increased social cohesion and interaction^{xiv}, increases in volunteering, and opportunities for more creative ‘play’ among children, as well as better educational performance.
 - increasing access to parks and open spaces could reduce NHS costs of treating obesity by more than £2 billion^{xv}. Access to green space can reduce mental health admissions too, resulting in additional savings for the NHS^{xvi}.
- 3.7 PCC can significantly influence how people can use the city's greenspaces through the Greening Strategy, offering co-benefits for both health, the wider urban environment, biodiversity, climate change and air quality.

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4. Progress

4.1 The Greening Portsmouth Strategy sets a clear ambition to increase the amount of green infrastructure, canopy cover and planting opportunities. We need to accelerate the planting of trees in the city, as well as enhancing lower level planting (hedges and shrubbery) and creating green walls or green roofs. To double canopy coverage in the city, we need to add 360 new trees in parks and open spaces, and 120 new street trees (net of replacements) every year for the next 25 years.

4.2 A summary of key achievements over the last year is set out below. The progress made has been the result of collective efforts across PCC services, mainly business as usual, however moving forwards PCC has made capital funding available, adding to existing budgets so that we can start greening the city. In the first phase of delivery (next two years), we will seek to implement (in addition to business as usual activity):

- o Significant additional planting in our parks and open spaces
- o Development of wild areas across the city
- o Improved and enhanced planting on PCC housing land
- o More street trees in priority areas.
- o Supporting our Community to de pave gardens and green their outside space.

Table 2: Progress 2020-2021

<p>'Re-wilding' areas - areas left to naturalise being trialled for 2021:</p>	<p>Long Curtain banks Pembroke Gardens Pier Road Duisburg Way Clarence Parade Car Park East Bastion The Pyramids</p>	<p>Bransbury Park Kingston Rec Ground Kingsley Road Stamshaw Park Alexandra Park sports field Langstone Gardens</p>	<p>Portsmouth Hill Extended areas of managed countryside taken out of regular amenity mowing (approx 2 additional hectares)</p>	
<p>Urban meadows - annual wildflower / meadow areas sown 2021 (incl.those in previous 3 yrs): College Park, Althorpe Drive (Anchorage Park), Copnor Bridge, Prison Corner, Milton Park, Queen St (Portsea), Hempsted Green, Tamworth Park, Portsmouth Rd (Cosham), Bransbury Park, Zetland Field, Bransbury Gardens, Clarendon Gardens, Mills Road, Western Parade (Southsea), Pembroke Triangle, Southsea Rock Garden, Southsea Castle Moat, Ladies Mile, Canoe Lake, St James' Green, Lake Road.</p>	<p>788 new trees planted during 2020/2021</p>	<p>31 new wild meadow sites - 7 sites @ 7,668 m² on housing land</p>	<p>150,300 new plant between 2019/2021 - mixture of plants, shrubs and native hedging planted across housing land in the HNBS directorate.</p>	<p>17 new sites of re-wilding and natural grassland</p>
<p>Examples fo other managed sites and management regimes: Fort Cumberland west - contains remnants of coastal heathland with grassland and scrub control, an ecologically important habitat; Milton Common - manage variety of rough and species-rich grassland interspersed with scrub and wetlands - management aims to improve ecological diversity; Hilsea Lines - a mosaic of habitats from wildflower meadow to wetland, managed for both wildlife and open space; Farlington Triangle - known for its wetlands and reed beds, the area contains one of the few natural populations of water voles in Hampshire.</p>			<p>Green Asset Register developed listing all greening by type and location, planted since 2020</p>	
<p>Virtual Green Team - The Greening Strategy is supported by a "virtual team" of officers working across the city to ensure that there is a joined up approach to land that is the responsibility of the city. The virtual team includes: Estate Services, Parks and Open spaces, Arboriculture Officers , Air Quality Lead – Transport Colas, Landscape architects, Tree Wardens</p>				

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5. Future Work Programme

- 5.1 Officers are working proactively across Council services to identify opportunities for planting through existing delivery pathways - a good example being through the Green and Clean team in Estate Services, which has the dual benefit of providing greening in areas of the City that experience higher levels of health inequalities and poor health outcomes. Where external planting and maintenance contracts exist we are working together with partners to find creative ways to increase greening opportunities.
- 5.2 We continue to pursue funding opportunities, with a number of bids submitted that are awaiting a decision. Through a successful funding bid to 'Forgotten Places' through Trees for Cities in the summer, we were awarded £35,950. This will provide for the 2021/2022 planting season: 160 standard trees, 4200 whips, 20 fruit trees.
- 5.3 We are working to establish a clear process for grassroots community engagement, aiming to provide a clear pathway for communities to undertake local re-wilding projects and how to access potential CIL funding to support this.
- 5.4 It is important to recognise that many sites are already actively managed to protect and enhance biodiversity, with specific management plans and designation of areas subject to differing maintenance regimes. At sites that are largely laid out as amenity grass, we have trialled and will continue to expand areas that will be left to naturalise or where regular mowing is relaxed. This is subject to assessment on a site-by-site basis, as well as responding to public suggestions.
- 5.5 Whenever open spaces are being re-designed as part of new or restoration projects, such as Victoria Park or the extensive coastal defence works around the city, the landscaping is designed to provide a more diverse habitat and is maintained in accordance with the maintenance and management plan.
- 5.6 In terms of enhancing biodiversity, it should be recognised that established grassland management already takes place at many natural and semi-natural sites in the city and particularly those actively managed by our Countryside Officers. Their management approach has a significant impact on biodiversity.
- 5.7 A communications plan is under development to tie in with seasonal planting regimes and generate public interest in greening and wilding areas of the City. The Green and Healthy City Coordinator is closely working with other public facing projects that deliver both health and environmental benefits, including the Portsmouth [Superzone](#) project and supporting the Council's climate change [Crowdfunder](#) initiative.
- 5.8 A detailed work programme for the next 6-12 months is included in Appendix A. This includes developing a broader understanding and evidence base for greening to tackle health inequalities and improve health outcomes.

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6. Next Steps

- 6.1 We will continue to look for external funding opportunities and there are a number outlined in Appendix A.
- 6.2 Focus for the next few months is to strengthen the communications plan and commence publicity, timed to coincide with planting regimes and seasonal maintenance.
- 6.3 Specific pieces of work planned for the next 6-12 months include:
- Developing Guiding Principles for greening the City
 - Develop a step-by-step guide for community groups to use when seeking approval and funding to undertake greening on PCC-owned land.
 - Update Tree Charter and work towards [Tree Cities of the World](#)
 - Mapping of all new green infrastructure 2019 onwards and explore development of an interactive online asset map,
 - Explore project to create green walking trails and nature corridors around the City
 - Develop Healthy Streets assessment
 - Explore links with PCC's Leisure and Physical Activity Strategy for outdoor opportunities.
 - Explore option to bring back the Portsmouth in Bloom competition.
- 6.4 Longer term, a more strategic approach will be taken towards grassroots community engagement, working with landowners and influencing strategic development. We are beginning to explore this via the Virtual Green Team and will update on progress in due course.

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Signed by Helen Atkinson, Director of Public Health

Appendices:

Appendix A: Green and Healthy City Workplan

Appendix B: References

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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:

Title of document	Location
Clean Air Zone	Home - Cleaner Air Portsmouth
Air Quality Strategy	Air quality in Portsmouth - Portsmouth City Council
Local Transport Plan 4	Cleaner, greener and safer - our transport vision for Portsmouth - Portsmouth City Council
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Portsmouth City Council
New Local Plan	New local plan evidence - Portsmouth City Council
Climate Action Plan	Climate action - Portsmouth City Council

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APPENDIX A: WORK PROGRAMME

Greening Portsmouth Strategy Theme				
Greening the Public Realm	Greening Private Space	Grassroots Engagement	Policy Approach	Comms Plan & Funding Opportunities
<p>Partnership working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilder Portsmouth through HIOW Wildlife Trust • Supporting HIOW Wildlife Trust and UoP application for built environment research fellowship funding for creative greening in the city centre. • Woodland Trust providing advice and support; particular interest in working with planning on National Model Design Code pilot. • Tree Council - Community Orchards, Pocket Parks and community engagement for tree planting • Climate Action Board, supporting community interest through wasted space campaign and signposting for project development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Architects setting up meeting with Head of major tree planting projects to link with Network Rail £1million tree fund for 2022 	<p>Urban Tree Challenge Fund - this is a capital bid for £83,000 to plant trees near schools and healthcare centres and in areas with fewer trees and higher social deprivation. Outcome due September 2021; if successful, will support areas to improve health and wellbeing and help connect people to the outdoors.</p>	<p>Greening and Health Literature Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to support emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and - to provide stronger business case for future projects and funding bids <p>Greening and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (TBC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informed by above and previous work undertaken by planning - supports objectives of emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy - supports objectives and provides evidence base for Local Plan 	<p>Develop robust Comms Plan and online presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further House Talk article planned - aimed at PCC employees to share their greening and gardening at home. - #GreeningPortsmouth - Next In The Know - promote tips webpage and share some of the photographs of people's gardens (and then encourage more) <p>PCC social media focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rewilding, biodiversity and pollination - Sharing projects and successes - Providing advice and support from Wilder Portsmouth campaign

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Greening the Public Realm	Greening Portsmouth Strategy Theme			Comms Plan & Funding Opportunities
	Greening Private Space	Grassroots Engagement	Policy Approach	
South East Hampshire Rapid Transit - working with Transport to identify greening opportunities within the 9 SEHRT schemes across the city.	QA Hospital Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity and Greening Strategy and associated projects - PCC support led by Landscape Architects 	Develop a step-by-step guide for community groups to use when seeking approval and funding to undertake greening on PCC-owned land.	Local Plan Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing to link into the emerging Local Plan and relevant policy making - Linking to PCC's Local Design Code as part of the national pilot programme. 	Other funding opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) - DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) - Forestry Commission - Network rail tree fund - Trees for Cities – (National Lottery and DEFRA) - Local Authority treescape fund
Church Street& Southampton Road	Proposals for St James's hospital site - 100 trees and wilding areas - support to Solent NHS with advice and design for green infrastructure of their site. Links to wider development proposals for St James's which also have a strong focus on greening.		Regen, Development, Housing, Estate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tipner/Lennox Point design and masterplanning - Horatia and Leamington design and masterplanning - Buckland Environmental Improvements 	Explore a return to the Portsmouth in Bloom competition.

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Greening the Public Realm	Greening Portsmouth Strategy Theme			Comms Plan & Funding Opportunities
	Greening Private Space	Grassroots Engagement	Policy Approach	
<p>Parks & Open Spaces and Estate Services supporting biodiversity and rewilding initiatives by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protecting and enhancing biodiversity - specific management plans - designation of areas subject to differing maintenance regimes <p>Trialling areas that will be left to naturalise or where regular mowing is relaxed.</p>			<p>Update Tree Charter and work towards Tree Cities of the World: About - Tree Cities of the World</p>	
<p>Superzone pilot - place based approach to tackle the environmental drivers of obesity, bringing together work across PCC services into four multidisciplinary workstreams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active places - Healthy food environment - Cleaner air - Community safety <p>Greening options being explored as part of cleaner air and community safety workstreams.</p>			<p>Explore links with PCC's Leisure and Physical Activity Strategy for outdoor opportunities.</p>	

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APPENDIX B: REFERENCES

- ⁱ Groenewegen PP, de Vries S, Verheij RA, Spreeuenberg P (2003). 'Natural environments – healthy environments? An exploratory analysis of the relationship between greenspace and health'. *Environment and Planning A*, vol 35, no 10, pp 1717–31.
- ⁱⁱ Villeneuve PJ, Jerrett M, Su JG, Burnett R, Chen H, Wheeler AJ, Goldberg MS (2012). 'A cohort study relating urban green space with mortality in Ontario, Canada'. *Environmental Research*, vol 115, pp 51–8.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Takano T, Nakamura K, Wantanabe M (2002). 'Urban residential environments and senior citizens' longevity in megacity areas: the importance of walkable green spaces'. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, vol 56, no 12, pp 913–18.
- ^{iv} Liu GC, Wilson JS, Qi R, Ying J, (2007). 'Green neighborhoods, food retail and childhood overweight: differences by population density'. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, vol 12, no 4, pp 317–25.
- ^v Coombes E, Jones AP, Hillsdon M (2010). 'The relationship of physical activity and overweight to objectively measured green space accessibility and use'. *Social Science & Medicine*, vol 70, no 6, pp 816–22.
- ^{vi} Lee ACK, Maheswaran R (2010). 'The health benefits of urban green spaces: a review of the evidence'. *Journal of Public Health*, doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdq068
- ^{vii} Department of Health (2012). 'Resources for commissioning Let's Get Moving interventions'. Department of Health website. Available at: [Resources for commissioning Let's Get Moving interventions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- ^{viii} Barton J, Pretty J (2010). 'What is the best dose of nature and green exercise for improving mental health? A multi-study analysis'. *Environmental Science & Technology*, , vol 4, no 10, pp 3947–55. doi:10.1021/es903183r
- ^{ix} Maas J, Verheij RA, Groenewegen PP, de Vries S, Spreeuenberg P (2006). 'Green space, urbanity, and health: how strong is the relation?' *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, vol 60, no7, pp 587–92.
- ^x Pinder R, Kessel A, Green J, Grundy C (2009). 'Exploring perceptions of health and the environment: a qualitative study of Thames Chase Community Forest'. *Health & Place*, vol 15, no 1, pp 49–56.
- ^{xi} White MP (2013). 'Would you be happier living in a greener urban area? A fixed-effects analysis of panel data'. *Psychological Science*, vol 24, no 6, pp 920–8.
- ^{xii} Mitchell R, Popham F (2008). 'Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study'. *The Lancet*, vol 372, no 9650, pp 1655–60.
- ^{xiii} National Children's Bureau (2013). *Greater Expectations: Raising aspirations for our children*. London: National Children's Bureau. Available at: [Greater Expectations \(ncb.org.uk\)](http://www.ncb.org.uk)
- ^{xiv} Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2006). *Paying for Parks: Eight models for funding urban green spaces*. London: Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. Available at: [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] Paying for parks: eight models for funding green space | Publications | CABE \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)
- ^{xv} Groundwork (2021) [Out-of-Bounds-equity-in-access-to-urban-nature.pdf \(groundwork.org.uk\)](http://www.groundwork.org.uk)
- ^{xvi} Wheeler CP, Potts E, Shaw E, Perkin C, Smith S, Casstles H, Cook P, Bellis MA (2007a). [Returning Urban Parks to their Public Health Roots](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk). Liverpool: Centre for Public Health.

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