

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Contract & Asset Management

REPORT NUMBER: **H80**

TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 31 July 2008

HAVEN GATEWAY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek endorsement by Strategy Committee of the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy be endorsed as a framework for the delivery of Accessible Natural Greenspace within the Babergh District.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council as a result of endorsement of the Strategy.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 This assessment is relevant to Business Risk 3 – Strategic Partnerships. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
The inability on the part of stakeholders to provide accessible natural greenspace in the Babergh part of the Haven Gateway Growth Point for existing and new development.	Low.	Failure to provide appropriate levels of accessible natural greenspace would undermine the Government's drive to promote sustainable development throughout the UK, via the Sustainable Communities Plan. In addition to the lack of greenspace provision, other lost opportunities in providing landscape and biodiversity improvements as well as local community benefits may result.	The Strategy represents an important component in achieving sustainable development within the Haven Gateway Growth Point, through the provision of accessible natural greenspace. It reduces the risk of non-provision of accessible natural greenspace by acting as a framework for delivery for use not only by the Council but also a wide range of stakeholders.

5. **KEY INFORMATION**

- 5.1 The Strategy has been prepared on behalf of the Haven Gateway Partnership by a Steering Group representing local authorities, government agencies, wildlife trusts and the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Unit. It was recently launched by the Partnership and the Council is being asked by the Partnership to endorse the document.
- 5.2 The Partnership has the challenging task of delivering the growth targets in the East of England Plan within the Haven Gateway Growth Point in accordance with the objectives contained within the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. A key component of achieving sustainability will include the provision of green infrastructure.
- 5.3 Green infrastructure is a connected system of protected sites, nature reserves, greenspaces and greenway linkages. By providing for multi-functional uses, e.g. wildlife, recreation, and cultural experience, green infrastructure contributes to quality of life whilst also delivering landscape, historic and ecological benefits. Green infrastructure will be particularly important in settlements and surrounding areas proposed for regionally or sub-regionally significant development.
- 5.4 The Vision of the Strategy is:
- to establish a framework for the delivery of high quality green infrastructure over the next 20 years, complementing and supporting planned housing and development growth,
 - to contribute to quality of life by ensuring that everyone living and working in the Haven Gateway has access to a high quality natural and historic environment.
- 5.5 Accessible natural greenspace provides opportunities for informal recreation in a natural setting, which is seen as important for quality of life, healthy living and sense of place. Existing greenspace provision throughout the Haven Gateway area was investigated, for sites of 2.0 hectares and over. Future needs were identified, based on 4 accessible natural greenspace standards developed by Natural England, and adapted by the Town & Country Planning Association, as follows:
- 2.0 ha+ within 300m of home – the Neighbourhood level
 - 20.0 ha+ within 1.2km of home – the District level
 - 60.0 ha+ within 3.2km of home – the Sub-regional level
 - 500.0 ha+ within 10km of home – the Regional level
- 5.6 Opportunities were identified by involving a wide range of stakeholders in the process, which has resulted in a large number of schemes being put forward for consideration. These were measured against existing levels of provision and the adopted standards, and have been rolled out on an Opportunities Map, with further detailed maps for the larger settlements. A Concepts Map identifies key assets and links in with the Opportunities Map, showing how the identified schemes relate to the overall strategy. (Both maps will be on display at your meeting).

5.7 In the Babergh district the following proposals are of significance:

- Extending land around Alton Water to create a Regional facility
- Green corridor links from Alton Water and around the Shotley Peninsula
- Sub-regional provision at Belstead, Hadleigh, Capel St Mary, East Bergholt and Brantham to address deficiencies, including a Belstead Brook Park extension
- District provision at the former sugar beet factory site, Sproughton and at Wherstead (which are allocated in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2) and an extension of the Hadleigh Railway Walk east from Raydon.
- Green corridor improvements based mainly on river valleys.

5.8 The proposals have resulted from further detailed investigation and incorporate the aspirations of many stakeholders, including local authorities. They need to be seen in that context and do not have any statutory basis, ie. they are long term objectives dependent on other factors which may or may not see them realised. However, the Strategy is a useful indication as to where new green infrastructure provision could be made, and should be seen as a framework for delivery. Some sites are identified in the Babergh Local Plan, and the Strategy will also provide part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework. In addition, it will be useful in complementing the Open Space Strategy to be drawn up for the district, based on the requirements of PPG17 Open Space and Sport & Recreation.

5.9 There is an intention to appoint a project officer acting on behalf of the Haven Gateway Partnership to co-ordinate delivery of the projects, which will ensure that a meaningful start is made on bringing some schemes to fruition.

5.10 Implementation of the Strategy will rely on the efforts of stakeholders, and can also happen through the planning system, ie. the development control process. Funding is a major issue and a range of possible sources can include Section 106 contributions, grants, bids through the Haven Gateway Partnership and securing external finance on the strength of the Strategy being endorsed by stakeholders.

5.11 More work needs to be done on this aspect but it is anticipated that the Local Development Framework (LDF) will be a starting point in embedding the concepts of the Strategy at the district level. The Strategy will be important as LDF evidence, both in terms of broad objectives and in informing more detail at policy and allocation level. It will also provide the strategic context for the District wide PPG 17 work which will supply a comprehensive evidence base for all green infrastructure and for sport and recreation facilities. The Strategy only covers that part of the district within the Haven Gateway Growth Point whereas the PPG17 work will relate to the whole district. A similar exercise on accessible natural greenspace for the western part of Babergh is envisaged, and discussions are currently underway with other local authorities on the means of achieving this coverage.

5.12 The Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 is also well placed to secure some provision, but other factors may affect the delivery of schemes, such as the economic situation and landowner aspirations. The outcomes will also be dependent on detailed considerations that may arise when planning applications are considered by the Council. However, the Strategy will be a material consideration to be borne in mind by the Council in determining planning proposals that have some relevance.

5.13 A copy of the Strategy and maps are available for viewing in the Members Room, and can also be found on www.babergh.gov.uk>Environment and Health> Countryside > Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy.

6. **APPENDICES**

None

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy (April 2008)

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