

# REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	July 2011
<b>Subject:</b>	Harrow Green Grid
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes [Effect on communities living or working in 2 or more wards]
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director Place Shaping
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	Yes
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1: Harrow Green Grid Appendix 2: Schedule of Green Grid Projects for 2011/2012

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report seeks approval for use of the Harrow Green Grid for the purpose of supporting the co-ordinated management of green infrastructure across the borough.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Approve the use of the Harrow Green Grid for the purpose of supporting

the co-ordinated management of green infrastructure across the borough.  
(2) Note the proposed programme of works for 2011/2012 set out in Appendix 2

**Reason:** To enable the Council to realise the opportunities of a Borough wide green grid and to support its continued development to enable the more effective delivery of green infrastructure across the borough.

## Section 2 – Report

### Introduction

At its meeting in January 2011, Cabinet approved consultation on a draft Harrow “Green Grid” for the borough, comprising a spatial map of green infrastructure assets alongside an outline programme of area and topic specific projects aimed at better exploiting the value of these assets to residents and business across the borough.

The subsequent consultation exercise involved targeted engagement with key stakeholders, including statutory agencies, active groups and individuals from the voluntary sector and Council departments. Alongside this targeted engagement, consultation using the Planning Department’s “Limehouse” consultation software was carried out.

In all 568 letters were sent out and 105 individuals and groups were engaged. Included were the following:

- 21 representatives from local organisations e.g. Greener Harrow, Harrow Heritage Trust, Harrow in Leaf, Kenton Adventure Park Action Group and Harrow Weald Common Conservators;
- 35 representatives across other local authorities including: Brent, Barnet, Ealing and Hillingdon, Design for London, GLA and local authorities in Hertfordshire;
- 10 representatives of ‘other’ groups e.g. London Wildlife Trust, Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust Green Arc, Sustrans and Walk London;
- 8 representatives from statutory Agencies i.e. Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission

## **Consultation responses**

The number of formal responses to this exercise was limited (just 39 responses).

Of these five can be identified as originating from Statutory Authorities, three from local organisations. There is no commitment for those commenting via Limehouse to identify themselves but most of the 24 responses gained this way are believed to be from local individuals or groups.

Most comments were informative and positive, suggesting support for projects such as The Belmont Trail and its potential to link the north and the south of the Borough as a walking and cycling route or were suggesting other 'green' links or generally supported street tree planting. There were several concerns over financial resources, the maintenance of the Green Belt and attracting the urban fox.

These responses, whilst suggesting that the concept of a Green Grid was not as widely understood as it could be, welcomed the more strategic approach to managing green infrastructure (GI) assets across the borough, with several groups strongly supporting the implementation of the strategy as a useful tool for bringing together a range of ideas for GI in the context of the current planning framework. The responses also suggested that the Green Grid 'should be adopted.'

## **2011 Green Grid**

The feedback from the consultation exercise has encouraged officers to press on with the development of a programme of works for this financial year to be determined by officers from across the Council and with external agencies. The programme is nevertheless closely based upon the draft consultation version of the green grid.

The spatial plan (Appendix 1), detailing the green grid will be a live document which it is expected, will evolve and develop as awareness, new development and new opportunities are identified and emerge over time. It is also expected that the outline schedule of "opportunities/projects" identified will also evolve as the borough and its residents and business develop and change over time. Officers would however expect this to result in the ongoing refinement of the existing spatial plan, as opposed to wholesale changes.

## **Relationship with other strategies**

The celebration and promotion of Harrow's Green Infrastructure is an important part of the long term spatial vision for the borough set out in the emerging core strategy. Following the completion of the sports and open spaces audit (required in association with the LDF process), the Community and Environment Department, is currently preparing a sport and opens spaces strategy. The Harrow Green Grid is intended to dovetail with both these statutory and non statutory strategies. Officers in Community and

Environment and Place Shaping are currently sharing responsibility for the delivery of the Green Grid, in line with emergent and existing corporate priorities and programmes.

The proposed development of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure across the borough as part of its future growth, is expected to include provisions for contributions to the Green Grid, replacing S106 agreements as the primary tool for the collection of such contributions. In the meantime, the Green Grid (and emergent programmes), will be used to support the collection, in appropriate cases, of S106 contributions and the delivery of complementary on site green infrastructure.

## **2011 Green Grid Projects**

A schedule of the proposed projects for 2011, which were considered through the consultation process is attached (Appendix 2). Funding and delivery of the projects has been identified from S106 contributions, the Capital programme and in specific cases, private sector partners. Some Projects, subject as the review of rights of way are funded by within existing revenue budgets, whilst others are covered by specific Capital allocations. Officers from the Place Shaping and Community and Environment Directorates have been identified as project leads. The Council's recently configured project management system (Verto) will be used to track delivery of the project outcomes over the remainder of the year.

As a result of the positive feedback received, and reflecting the broad objective within the green grid to ensure more structured planning and investment in green space across the Council and other agencies, officers have prepared a programme of 12 projects for 2011. The projects focus on the strategic opportunities outlined in the consultation draft of the green grid and are summarised in the appended schedule.

The projects encompass a range of activities which seek to combine the activities across the Council, to exploit where possible, opportunities for private sector participation and to engage with the community and voluntary sector to secure cost effective and locally supported improvements to spaces and corridors across the borough. This includes expanding existing working arrangements with British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and to act as a stimulus to local schools and youth organisations where appropriate.

## **Staffing/workforce**

The Green Grid has been developed in the Place Shaping Directorate with the support of the LDA/Design for London. The specific projects have been incorporated into the existing work programme of staff in Community and Environment (Public Realm) and Place Shaping. It is expected that delivery of the projects will make use of capacity within existing partners (such as BTCV) who will be part of the delivery arrangements – building upon existing engagement on S106 projects - alongside resources from Government programmes (such as Community Payback). It is also proposed to use the Green Grid to try and stimulate participation by school and community

organisations who manage opens spaces across the borough with a view to developing this role more fully in the next years programme.

## **Community safety**

The more effective management and promotion of green infrastructure, and its wider use, is considered to have potentially positive impacts upon community safety. Some of the specific projects detailed will have direct benefits, in terms of improving perceived and actual safety in some of the green spaces/corridors and are aimed specifically at tackling issues associated with improving safety for users of spaces.

## **Financial Implications**

The funding for the programme has been approved by the capital forum and each capital project within the Green Grid has an allocated cost and funding source (Appendix 2). The Capital programme allocates £200K to the projects in the appended schedule, with some £28K of complementary funding from S106. The funding required to deliver the 2011/12 projects will be managed through the Council's new programme management procedures (incorporating the Verto software package).

Future growth in the borough identified within the core strategy has the potential to further increase resources applied to green grid projects directly, through CIL, and indirectly through new, complementary on site green infrastructure. Separate but related funding streams including the proposed bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, for Headstone Manor, The Mayors Outer London Fund and other capital investment streams, could further increase the scale of investment in the green grid over the medium term.

## **Performance Issues**

The more effective management of investment into green infrastructure is consistent with the overarching objectives of the better deal for residents programme. There are no current performance indicators directly associated with the Harrow Green Grid but suitable measurements of the outcomes that a Green Grid will enable will be developed.

## **Environmental Impact**

There is no specific requirement for the preparation of a Green Grid under environmental legislation. The acknowledgement of and strengthening of existing and potential networks encompassing natural habitats is nevertheless promoted by and consistent with Planning Policy Statement 9. More effective management of the improvement and use of green infrastructure to support mode shift, healthy lifestyles and the improved use of green infrastructure to manage the effects of climate change should support the Council's commitment set out in the Nottingham Declaration and enable better use of the environmental resources available to the community.

The Green Grid is not an explicit proposal covered by the Environmental Assessment regulations. The project is consistent with and captures the Council's obligations for management of biodiversity in accordance with NI 197 where 10 management plans for Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), which are important hubs within Harrow's Green Grid, have already been prepared in order to achieve positive conservation management (and improve public access).

## **Risk Management Implications**

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No – each project will have associated risk register embedded within the Project management documentation held by the PM system.

The principal risks associated with the project arise from the willingness of partners within and outside of the Council to embrace the concept of a green grid for the borough. Harrow's green grid plays a supporting role as part of the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy. Failure to deliver the project, at the present time, poses limited financial risk to the authority.

## **Equalities implications**

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

The creation of a Borough Wide Green Grid is not considered to have any material equalities implications in its own right. Existing programmes being undertaken in the spaces identified within the draft green grid may be affected (either positively or negatively) by proposed projects or changes arising from a re-appraisal of the contribution and role of that specific programme or activity. This impact will however need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The objective behind a borough-wide green grid, in promoting access to and enjoyment of the borough's spaces is consistent with reducing inequality of access between different groups in the borough.

## **Corporate Priorities**

The development of a borough-wide green grid supports two of the four associated Council priorities; "Keeping neighborhoods clean, green and safe" and "Ensuring united and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads"

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Julie Alderson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 21 June 2011		
Name: Abiodun Kolawole	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 20 June 2011		

### **Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance**

Name: Alex Dewsnap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 12 July 2011		

### **Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance**

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 20 June 2011		

### **Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Stephen Kelly Divisional Director of Planning 020 8736 6149

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet report January 2011

**Call-In Waived by the  
Chairman of Overview  
and Scrutiny  
Committee**

**NOT APPLICABLE**

*[Call-in applies]*