

Policy Development and Review Committee

Meeting Date	Wednesday 28 September 2016
Report Title	Swale Green Grid Partnership – Swale Green Grid Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson
Lead Officer	Lyn Newton
Recommendations	1. To provide feedback and input into the draft Swale Green Grid Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan as part of the consultation

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides details regarding a Swale Green Grid Strategy (Appendix I) and Biodiversity Action Plan (Appendix II).
- 1.2 The Council, on behalf of the Swale Green Grid Partnership, wishes to consult residents, businesses and local organisations that may have an interest before seeking approval to adopt.

2 Background

- 1.3 The current strategies, prepared in 2007, have been used as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and continue to support planning and external funding applications made by local organisations. The Swale Green Grid Partnership managed by the Council and comprising statutory environment agencies, has now refreshed the Swale Green Grid Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan to reflect the current environment framework including legislative changes.
- 1.4 The Swale Green Grid Strategy provides a vision for planning, designing and managing green spaces as an interconnected network rather than isolated sites; the strategy is a framework for partner agencies, organisations and individuals involved in the management of the environment in Swale. The Biodiversity Action Plan provides a framework for protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geology and soils and co-ordinated working to secure coherent ecological networks and a reversal in declines in the quality and diversity of the environment and provides a platform for partner agencies, communities and individuals to work together to conserve the Borough's wildlife.
- 1.5 The Swale Green Grid Partnership is keen to undertake a broad consultation before adopting the strategies.

3 Proposal

1.6 The report invites the Committee to consider the draft Swale Green Grid Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan.

1.7 Feedback from the Committee is specifically sought on the following issues

- Do the strategies provide a framework for partnership working in Swale? (Please provide any additional comments)
- Do the strategies support delivery of green infrastructure in Swale? (Please provide any additional comments)
- Do the strategies take account of current policy? If not, what else could be reflected?
- Are the priorities and themes relevant? If not, what else could be included?
- Are there any potential unintended negative consequences to groups with protected characteristics from implementing these strategies?
- Are there any general comments?

4 Alternative Options

1.8 Do nothing – this is not recommended as the Council along with its environmental partners are keen to encourage environmental stewardship through its local community actions.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

1.9 Planning Policy Officers from the Council and the statutory environmental agencies from the Swale Green Grid Partnership have contributed to the drafting of the Swale Green Grid Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. .

1.10 An 8 week consultation will be undertaken with residents, businesses and local organisations; internal service areas will also be included (e.g. greenspaces, leisure and technical services)

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	A Borough To Be Proud Of – priority theme focuses on actions which promote Swale as a physical place A Community To Be Proud Of – priority theme focuses on the

	Council's aspirations for the people of Swale
Financial, Resource and Property	The Council has a working budget of £1,000 used to support quarterly meetings, site visits and partners' funding applications; partner agencies bring resources (financial and human) for project delivery in Swale.
Legal and Statutory	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage
Sustainability	High quality, distinct urban and rural landscapes, accessible diverse open spaces and contact with wildlife are increasingly recognised as key components of sustainable communities contributing to people's quality of life and supporting economic and social programmes
Health and Wellbeing	The Green Grid in particular will promote health and wellbeing by encouraging active exercise and opportunities for contact with nature; enhance recreation and amenity with more opportunities for high quality formal and information recreation; strengthen and make connections between new and existing communities and their local environment, by building on Swale's distinctive environment, the Green Grid will inspire people to be proud of where they live, work and to enjoy being active and having more contact with nature; produce and promote local food through local food markets and direct marketing initiatives
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	Both strategies seek to promote positive community engagement but an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the wider consultation and final strategies

7 Appendices

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- Appendix I: Swale Green Grid Strategy
- Appendix II: Biodiversity Action Plan

8 Background Papers

None