



Subject:	Strategic Plan for Greenways in Northern Ireland
Date:	10 May 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Claire Sullivan, Policy and Development Manager Rose Crozier, Assistant Director

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the development of a Strategic Plan for Greenways and to seek Members' approval of the Council's draft response.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider the draft response attached at Appendix 1 and approve its submission, subject to any comments or amendment provided, with the proviso that the response is subject to full Council approval at its meeting in June 2016.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The Department for Regional Development (DRD) recently published 'Northern Ireland Changing Gear: a Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015)'. This strategy emphasises the attractiveness of greenways (off road and traffic free routes) and it is DRD's intention to support local authorities in the development of greenways throughout NI. They are therefore drawing up a Strategic Plan for Greenways with the aim of developing an integrated system of greenways for the benefit of future generations.
3.2	The Plan will identify the initial routes that should be explored to develop a primary greenway network from which a secondary greenway network could progressively extend

	<p>across Northern Ireland taking account of cross border linkages. The strategic plan will also provide an agreed framework within which local authorities may draw up their own projects and seek funding (including European funding).</p>
3.3	<p>DRD has appointed AECOM in association within Sustrans to undertake the development of the plan. To assist them in this process they are seeking the views of local authorities on the potential for greenways in their local area.</p>
3.4	<p>A draft response outlining the Council's views is attached at Appendix 1. As the closing date for responses is prior to the June Council meeting it is proposed that the response, subject to any comments or amendments from Members, be submitted with the caveat that it is still subject to ratification at the full Council meeting.</p>
3.5	<p>In summary the draft response proposes that the Council would support the creation of greenways across the city. The reasoning behind this proposal is that it helps us achieve some of our objectives in relation to active living and health and wellbeing as outlined in key strategic documents including the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 16-17 and the Belfast Active Travel Action Plan.</p>
3.6	<p>The current Open Spaces Strategy and Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan both outline the benefits of greenways and list potential greenways across the city (see Appendix 2). The Open Spaces Strategy developed in 2005 and community greenway policies and designations will both be reviewed under the new local development plan process.</p>
3.7	<p>The response also outlines some activities that the Council has undertaken in relation to the development of greenways including the work around the Connswater Community Greenway.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>There are currently no financial or resource implications associated with this report. As the Strategic Plan for Greenways is developed this may change and any proposals will be reviewed accordingly.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>There are currently no equality or good relation implications associated with this report. As the Strategic Plan for Greenways is developed this may change and any proposals will be reviewed accordingly.</p>

4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 - Draft Response Appendix 2 – List of potential greenways as outlined in the Open Spaces Strategy 2005