



Subject:	Draft Belfast Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan
Date:	17 April 2018
Reporting Officer:	Keith Sutherland, Development Plans and Policy Manager
Contact Officer:	Mark Whittaker, Senior Planning Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report and Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update the Members on progress with the new Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) and to note and agree the publication of a draft GBIP document for public consultation.
1.2	Belfast City Council appointed AECOM to help prepare a new Open Space Strategy (OSS) and this work is underway. In tandem with this work, it was agreed to also prepare a City-wide plan for green and blue infrastructure, of which open space forms a significant part.
1.3	The draft GBIP is a high level plan that recognises the many functions and benefits of green and blue infrastructure, including health & wellbeing, biodiversity and environmental resilience. The draft GBIP sets a strategic vision, framework and key principles for the delivery and enhancement of a network of green and blue assets. It represents an overarching strategy that will guide more detailed strategies and action plans over time.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• notes the preparation of the draft GBIP attached to this report.• agrees to publish the draft GBIP for public consultation.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Belfast City Council appointed AECOM to help prepare a new Open Space Strategy (OSS) for the Council Area and this work is underway. The new Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) also requires an updated OSS as part of its evidence base. The concept of a Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) was included in the Council's LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP) and there was wide support for such an approach.
3.2	The GBIP acknowledges the benefits and multi-functionality of green and blue infrastructure assets across the City. Green assets include parks, playing fields, amenity open space, trees, gardens and countryside. Blue assets include rivers, water bodies and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The overall network of these assets brings a wide range of benefits, including for health & wellbeing, biodiversity and environmental resilience. In this respect, the GBIP will also help to secure many of the objectives in the Belfast Agenda.
3.3	The draft GBIP is a high level plan that sets a strategic vision, framework and key principles for the delivery and enhancement of a network of green and blue assets. It represents an over-arching strategy that will guide more detailed strategies and action plans over time, such as the OSS and Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The GBIP is not spatially-detailed or site-specific, but it does set out examples and potential opportunities for future actions across a range of green and blue typologies. It considers the green and blue network in a more holistic approach and it provides examples of best practice, including for SuDS measures. It also considers the setting of the city and the function of the hills and countryside around the city and seeks to create and improve linkages from and through the urban area to the rural surrounds. In this regard, it can also be used to aid decision-making for development management, as well as for investment decisions, including potential Section 76 contributions associated with development proposals.
3.4	A copy of the working draft GBIP is attached to this Report. It is intended to use this as the basis for public consultation. Any comments received during the consultation period will be taken into account in finalising the GBIP. <u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> There are no resource implications associated with this report. <u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None noted. <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are no relevant equality or good relations implications attached to this report.
4.0	Appendices
	Draft Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan