



<b>Subject:</b>	Draft Belfast Green & Blue Infrastructure Plan - Update
<b>Date:</b>	2 July 2019
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Keith Sutherland, Development Plans and Policy Manager ext 3578
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report and Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on progress with the new Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) and to note its publication in draft form for public consultation.
1.2	The Council agreed the draft GBIP for consultation in June 2018. The GBIP is a high level plan that recognises the many functions, including for health, biodiversity and environmental resilience, of our green areas and water features. It represents an overarching strategy that will guide more detailed strategies and action plans over time. These include the new Open Spaces Strategy (OSS), which was prepared in tandem with it. A draft OSS was agreed for public consultation by the Council in April 2019.
1.3	Having regard to the many synergies between the GBIP and the OSS, both draft documents were published together for consultation purposes for a 12 week period from 17 June 2019. A copy of the draft GBIP is attached at Appendix 1.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>notes the publication of the draft GBIP alongside the draft OSS for public consultation.</li> </ul>
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<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Belfast City Council appointed AECOM to help prepare a Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP) in tandem with the preparation of a new Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) for the city. The concept of a GBIP was included in the Council’s Local Development Plan (LDP) Preferred Options Paper (POP) and there was wide support for such an approach. This concept has also been incorporated in to the LDP Draft Plan Strategy, which is intended to be submitted for Independent Examination shortly. The data collected and used to develop the GBIP and OSS forms part of the evidence base for the LDP.
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, including through greater permeability, accessibility and the potential for improved community relations
3.3	The draft GBIP was agreed by the Council for public consultation purposes in June 2018. The draft OSS was agreed by the Council in April 2019. In view of the synergies between the GBIP and the OSS, both draft documents are being consulted on together in a joint approach by Planning Service and City and Neighbourhood Services Department. This timeframe also avoids any overlap with the substantial public consultation phase on the LDP Draft Plan Strategy, which lasted from August 2018 to April 2019.
3.4	The 12 week public consultation period for both documents commenced on 17 June 2019 and will run until 6 September. There was a public launch by the Lord Mayor in Grove Bowling Pavilion on 18 June, which was also attended by key stakeholders involved in the preparation of the documents. We will be running a series of public consultation engagement sessions at various events in venues across the city throughout July and August to further promote the draft documents and encourage comments and responses. Any comments received during the consultation period will be taken into account in finalising the GBIP and BOSS through the relevant Council committees.
	<p><b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b> There are no resource implications associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> The draft GBIP has been screened out for equality impact assessment purposes. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the draft GBIP. Both assessments have been published alongside the draft GBIP for consultation purposes.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	1. Draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (as issued for public consultation)