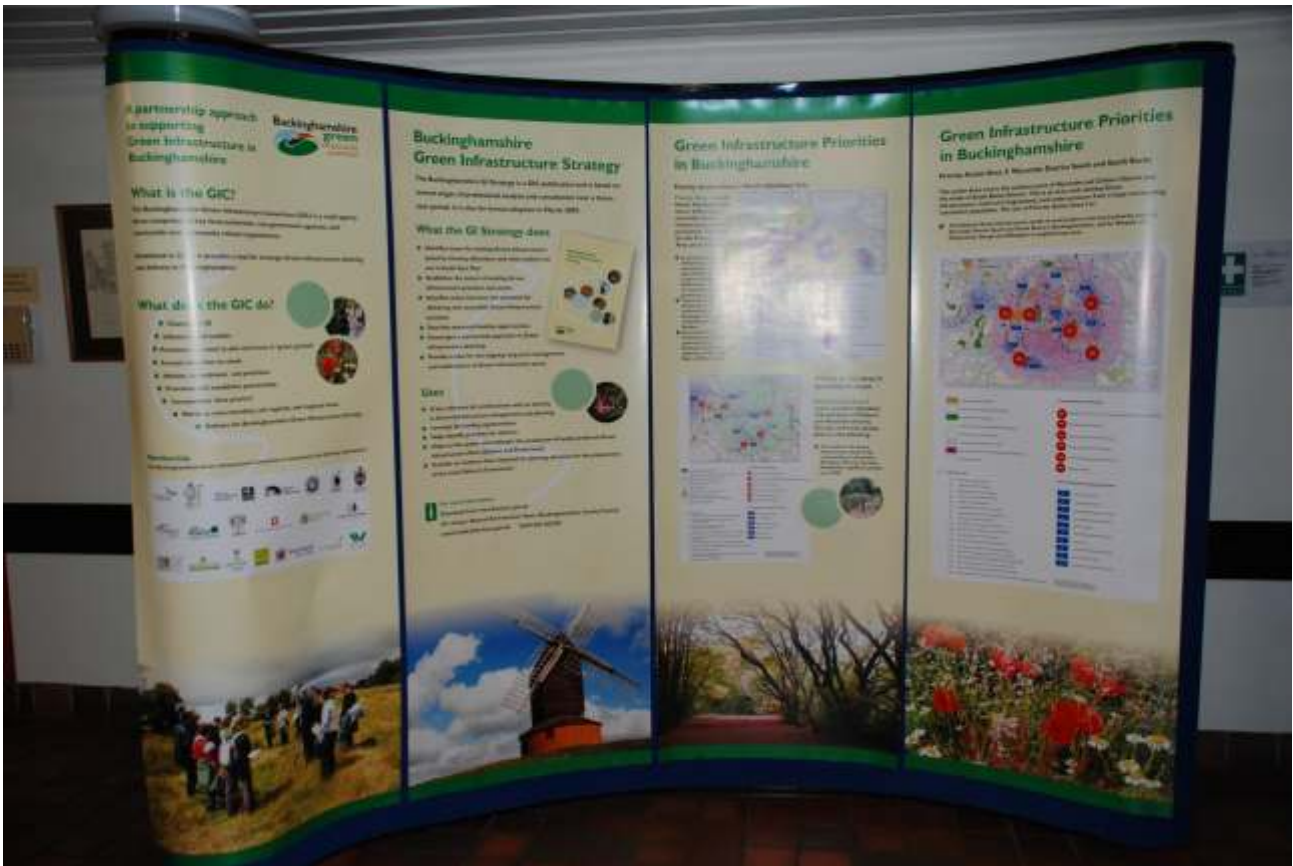


## Chapter 6

### Funding and Delivery



A key challenge over the twenty-year period of this Strategy is to co-ordinate project development, funding and delivery of Green Infrastructure at every level within Buckinghamshire.

The following section recommends:

- Establishing Green Infrastructure Partnerships
- Funding Mechanisms and Sources for GI delivery
- Prioritising Green Infrastructure Projects for Funding
- Developing Local Green Infrastructure Plans
- Integrating Green Infrastructure into Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)
- Implementing the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy

#### **Establishing Green Infrastructure Partnerships**

The delivery of a Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Buckinghamshire requires a coordinated approach through strong partnership working. The UK has a number of successful organisational models - ranging from County-wide Green Infrastructure consortia, non-executive boards and dedicated executive bodies, to Green Infrastructure partnerships set-up within specific growth locations.

In Buckinghamshire, the GIC has been established as a dedicated unit to co-ordinate Green Infrastructure delivery across the County. (See Terms of Reference, Appendix A)

The main work of the Consortium includes:

- Championing the importance, benefits and principles of Green Infrastructure to a wide audience – including the public, private and voluntary sectors and local Councils
- Influencing and enabling delivery of Green Infrastructure
- Marketing and promotion of Green Infrastructure
- Advising on the identification, selection and prioritisation of Green Infrastructure delivery projects
- Establishing partnerships which can fund, deliver, manage and take ownership of specific Green Infrastructure projects
- Identifying information on best practice approaches to delivery
- Liaising with partnerships to co-ordinate cross-boundary delivery of projects at the sub-regional scale.

In Buckinghamshire, the priorities are to further develop the Buckinghamshire GIC and focus resources on existing partnerships and project delivery within the three Priority Action Areas. This may require establishing Consortium based Sub-Groups to lead on specific projects or schemes with Theme leaders if appropriate.

Key partnerships have already been identified for the three Priority Action Areas, although there are many opportunities for developing other partnership approaches and mechanisms for delivery

### **Action Plan**

A Green Infrastructure Action Plan has been created by the Consortium (Appendix I). The Action Plan has an important role to play in providing a transparent framework and tool to aid project selection and delivery. It responds to the needs and opportunities arising from the analysis, and reflects suggestions from the GIC for actions to address perceived needs for enhanced Green Infrastructure provision in the County. To ensure that it is kept relevant and up-to-date it is intended that the Action Plan reviewed and updated annually.

### **Funding Mechanisms and Sources for Project Delivery**

The following section outlines various generic options for delivering and funding Green Infrastructure investment. Reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of Green Infrastructure,

and the potential for multiple social, economic and environmental benefits, there are a wide range of existing, emerging and potential future mechanisms for the delivery and funding of Green Infrastructure, including:

The provision and funding of Green Infrastructure can be delivered in a number of ways and this following section outlines various options for gaining funding for Green Infrastructure investment.

Reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of Green Infrastructure, and the potential for multiple social, economic and environmental benefits, there are a wide range of existing, emerging and potential future mechanisms for the delivery and funding of Green Infrastructure.

The following have been identified by stakeholders in Buckinghamshire:

**Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF):** The ALSF was introduced to reduce the environmental impact of aggregate extraction and promote a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way of mineral extraction and waste management. Availability is restricted to areas affected by aggregates extraction, but some funding is obtainable in conjunction with award partners such as Natural England.

**Area-specific Environmental Projects:** e.g. River Thame Project/Upper Thame Project, The Chilterns Chalk Streams Project.

**Charitable trusts:** Charitable trusts can be established to manage individual or a range of Green Infrastructure projects.

**Conservation trusts:** e.g. The National Trust and the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust.

**Co-operative ownership:** of allotment space/community orchards etc via 'gifts' from developers.

**Corporate Social Responsibility:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby organisations manage their core business to add social, environmental and economic value in order to produce a positive sustainable impact for both society and for the business itself.<sup>41</sup>

**District Council grants:** District Council grants may be available for Green Infrastructure creation and enhancement. Availability and amount of funding will vary between Districts.

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<sup>41</sup>Buckinghamshire County Council Corporate Social Responsibility Feasibility Study (2008)

**Endowments:** Endowments can provide provision of an income-generating fund that has running costs. The endowment costs could be used to facilitate the maintenance of the Green Infrastructure.

**Environmental Stewardship:** with focused and enhanced grant support that will deliver Green Infrastructure objectives.

**Established area-based delivery vehicles and partnerships:** such as Aylesbury Vale Advantage, The Chilterns Conservation Board, Colne Valley Park Partnership, and The River Thames Alliance.

**European Funding:** The European Union provides funding to member states for a wide range of issues. The two main mechanisms for funding are the Structural Funds and Community Initiatives both of which have a mainly economic and regeneration focus, although other more subject specific funding is also available. All funding has to be matched to some extent by the member state.

An example of European Funding is the LEADER Programme. The LEADER Programme is a source of funding for farmers, foresters, rural businesses and community organisations. The funding is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) with money coming from Europe via the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). There are two main areas that are covered by the LEADER Programme in Buckinghamshire; these are Aylesbury Vale and Rural Milton Keynes Area and Chiltern Hills and Chalk Arc LEADER Area.

**Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG):** provision of conservation advice, and legislative support, and development of Farm Plans, for land managers and landowners.

**Forestry Commission English Woodland Grant Schemes:** the woodland creation grant is currently targeted to the Growth Areas such as Aylesbury Vale, and in future could target other parts of the scheme (e.g. biodiversity and access grants) through a challenge fund.

**Government Agencies:** can provide advice and support on delivery issues key agencies are: Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency, and Sport England.

**Government Departments:** can provide funding for service delivery, e.g. the department for Communities and Local Government allocates Growth Area Funding (GAF) For example, is used to support the delivery of components of Green Infrastructure. The three main components of GAF that can be used to support Green Infrastructure are:<sup>42</sup>

- Improving the interface between rural and urban environments

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<sup>42</sup><http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/growthareas/growthareasandtheenvironment/>  
Based on information from above website.

- Creating and restoring new areas of the countryside to improve greenspace provision
- Providing rare and sensitive habitats with increased protection through buffering and habitat enhancement works

**Groundwork Thames Valley:** and other environmental bodies.

**Landfill Communities Fund:** is set-up the distribution of funds generated from landfill tax in the UK. The Landfill Communities Fund is designed to help mitigate the effects of landfill upon local communities. The scheme applies only to projects within a set radius of an active landfill site. Grants are distributed by local Environmental Bodies (EBs), and in Buckinghamshire these include Sita Trust, Veolia in the south of the County and WREN in the north.

**Major public sector owners of accessible Green Infrastructure land:** e.g. Buckinghamshire County Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust etc.

#### **National Lottery Funds:**

- *Big Lottery Fund:* The aim of the fund is to provide money to good causes. The fund provides money to health, education and environment related projects. The remit covers several Green Infrastructure areas.
- *Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF):* The HLF purpose is to be used to conserve and enhance heritage assets including nature reserves and parkland.
- *Sport England:* The aim of Sport England is to increase participation in sport participation.

**Private sector funding:** through property and financial endowments.

**Renewable energy grant schemes:** for example the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

**Planning Obligations:** These are legal agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as Amended), usually in association with planning permissions for new development. Such obligations can restrict the use of land, require specific works to be carried out on land or require a sum or sums to be paid to the local planning authority.

Key to development is the need for Green Infrastructure provision that is able to support new residential development needs and to improve green space linkages. BCC is working in partnership with the Local Delivery Vehicle (Aylesbury Vale Advantage) and AVDC to quantify and cost infrastructure requirements in Aylesbury Vale District for the period to 2026 and on a proposed tariff approach to securing developer contributions for new and

improved infrastructure (including Green Infrastructure projects) that are required to help facilitate and deliver the proposed growth.

Significant changes to the current planning obligations system are proposed in the Government's Planning Bill, which contains provisions for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). If enabling powers are introduced this would be a charge levied on development to ensure that the development of an area can be funded wholly or partly by owners or developers of land the value of which increases due to permission for development. Like the Milton Keynes roof tax the proposed CIL would establish standard charges through the Local Development Framework process and would be based on a costed "Infrastructure Delivery Plan".

**Roof Tax:** Roof Tax is a charge on new dwellings that can be used to pay for essential liveability requirements of new communities, often within a defined development area. In some designated growth areas (e.g. Milton Keynes) the conventional "negotiated approach" towards securing planning obligations and developer contributions has been replaced with a so called "Roof Tax". This is essentially a standard charge for new dwellings that can be used to pay for a range of infrastructure requirements to support new communities.

**Small scale community-based funding:** may be able to provide small grants to help local residents to establish and run community-based environmental projects.

## **Conclusion**

The contribution of sources of funding should be considered as part of the development and delivery of future Action Plans by the Consortium and other County-based partnerships. In particular, partnerships should play a key role in identifying opportunities and facilitating relationships for working with the private sector to deliver Green Infrastructure, including promoting the funding and delivery of Green Infrastructure through developer contributions associated with development opportunities.

## **Prioritising Green Infrastructure Projects for Delivery and Funding**

It is recommended that the Action Plan (Appendix I) should provide the framework for guiding partnerships in identifying priorities for Strategic Green Infrastructure delivery and funding. These Action Plan priorities are not to be confused with other green space provisions that may be required at a local level to meet planning policy requirements on new developments.

The criteria for selecting projects to go forward for Green Infrastructure funding should be based on:

- 1) The level of potential multi-functional public and environmental benefits that could be provided by a scheme

- 2) Location - located within, or directly linked to, the Green Infrastructure Priority Action Areas.
- 3 The projects should have high local priority and also strategic value
- 4) Deliverability – reviewing costs, potential funding opportunity, landownership and timescales
- 5) Long term sustainability – management and maintenance arrangements for the short, medium and long term.

The Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas referred to in Chapter 5 provide a starting point for consideration and appraisal by the Partnerships. This should not exclude other projects and schemes which can contribute to Green Infrastructure delivery.

### **Developing Local Level/Community Green Infrastructure Plans**

This document sets out a County-level strategy for Green Infrastructure. However the delivery of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire will also need to happen at a district and local level. Districts are currently creating their own greenspace strategies addressing future greenspace provision in their areas (see Chapter 2).

Informed by the evidence and proposals developed in this Strategy, it is recommended that Local Green Infrastructure Plans be developed within identified Priority Action Areas to suit local circumstances. These Plans should be used as a basis for co-ordinating local Green Infrastructure delivery, and provide technical evidence to inform LDFs and other relevant delivery plans at a more local level (e.g. Parish) there is a need for strong community input into identifying priorities/opportunities.

### **Community Green Infrastructure Planning in Buckinghamshire (Living Networks)**

Buckinghamshire GIC agreed to a methodology and format for the undertaking of local level community based Green Infrastructure Planning in Buckinghamshire called Living Networks. This approach forms the basis of local Green Infrastructure working within the County and allows the standardisation of a cross-boundary/County approach to local Green Infrastructure planning. The main aim of Living Networks is to identify the key existing natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets, accessible greenspaces and Rights of Way; and to plan new features that will provide a network of Green Infrastructure for the benefit of present and future generations.

A pilot community Green Infrastructure project called Whaddon Chase Living Networks forms a pilot approach to undertaking Living Networks in Buckinghamshire. The area of Whaddon Chase has been selected by Buckinghamshire GIC due to its high environmental and landscape importance and its proximity to the urban fringe of the growth city of Milton Keynes. It is hoped that the Living Networks methodology can be rolled-out across other priority growth areas in Buckinghamshire and be used by local communities as the basis for securing funding and partnerships for local delivery.

It is envisaged that this Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy will act as an overarching document that will help inform and guide district level and local Green Infrastructure plans. The Buckinghamshire GIC will act as a key role to the planning and delivery of Green Infrastructure due to its broad base, representation and expertise in the field.

### **District Level Green Infrastructure Planning**

Firstly the Local Planning Authority needs to identify how Green Infrastructure will be addressed in the LDF this may be through an Area Action plan or a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The local need for Green Infrastructure must be established identifying deficiencies in existing Green Infrastructure and identifying new opportunities. An environmental characterisation of the area will need to be identified along with high level local Green Infrastructure initiatives and future delivery partners.

The Core Strategy of a LDF needs to include key principles and objectives for Green Infrastructure. It should also identify broad spatial priorities and areas of Green Infrastructure deficiency. Long term management of Green Infrastructure will need to be defined. The Local Green Infrastructure Plans should also be used as a tool to assist planners and developers in implementing Green Infrastructure principles.

This Green Infrastructure Strategy will inform the LDF process as supporting evidence based document. It is strongly recommended that the plan preparation process should involve local communities in the identification of projects to be put forward for Green Infrastructure funding as part of the Action Plans prepared by the Green Infrastructure Partnerships.

### **Implementing the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy**

- The Buckinghamshire GIC should take the leading role in supporting and taking forward the initiatives and projects identified in the Action Plan (Appendix I)
- The Action Plan (Appendix I) will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis
- Engagement with local community and interest groups should be undertaken in the development and implementation of projects that have been identified within the Action Plan
- Partnerships with adjacent authorities and organisations should be informed where cross boundary working and projects would be mutually beneficial
- When preparing LDFs existing standards for open space and strategic Green Infrastructure should be subject to ongoing review
- Buckinghamshire GIC will continue to meet and focus on site-specific planning and design of Strategic Green Infrastructure projects identified in the Action Plan