

**Plymouth Green Infrastructure Project**  
**Briefing paper for the Local Access Forum – August 2011**

***The Plymouth Green Infrastructure Project***

The Plymouth Green Infrastructure (GI) project is a proactive response to Plymouth's growth agenda and provides a co-ordinated, cross-boundary approach to managing and enhancing the natural assets of Plymouth and its surrounding countryside. It provides an agreed understanding of the aspirations and priorities for a network of strategic green and blue space projects that build upon the significant opportunities that the area has as a result of its rich natural environment.

Plymouth's Green Infrastructure will consist of a network of high quality green and blue spaces that deliver the natural services required to allow the City and hinterland to grow sustainably, and provide a good quality of life for all.

The growth agenda will be utilised as a positive mechanism for enhancing the area's outstanding natural assets, and a co-ordinated approach to delivery will achieve a healthy, functional and robust natural environment that delivers significant environmental, social, and economic benefits for current and future generations.

Green Infrastructure differs from conventional approaches to green space planning because it is planned strategically, delivered in a co-ordinated manner, and considers multiple functions and benefits. It will work with the proposed growth of the City to ensure that the natural environment and the services it can provide are fully embedded in the development of the City and surrounding areas. It will be regarded as of equal importance to the grey infrastructure required to serve the City.

The project is funded by Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, Natural England, Forestry Commission and National Trust. To help facilitate delivery of the project an officer has been employed by Natural England and embedded within the Planning Services department of PCC.

***What does the project aim to achieve?***

The Green Infrastructure project identifies the strategic interventions that need to be delivered by 2021 to allow the City to grow sustainably, by creating new, enhancing existing, and successfully linking GI assets. The project has developed a Delivery Plan that provides details on key themes, individual projects, and network enhancements that have been identified by stakeholders as key to the delivery of a robust and effective GI network. Collectively and when delivered in a co-ordinated manner, these projects will deliver the natural services required by the City and surrounding area.

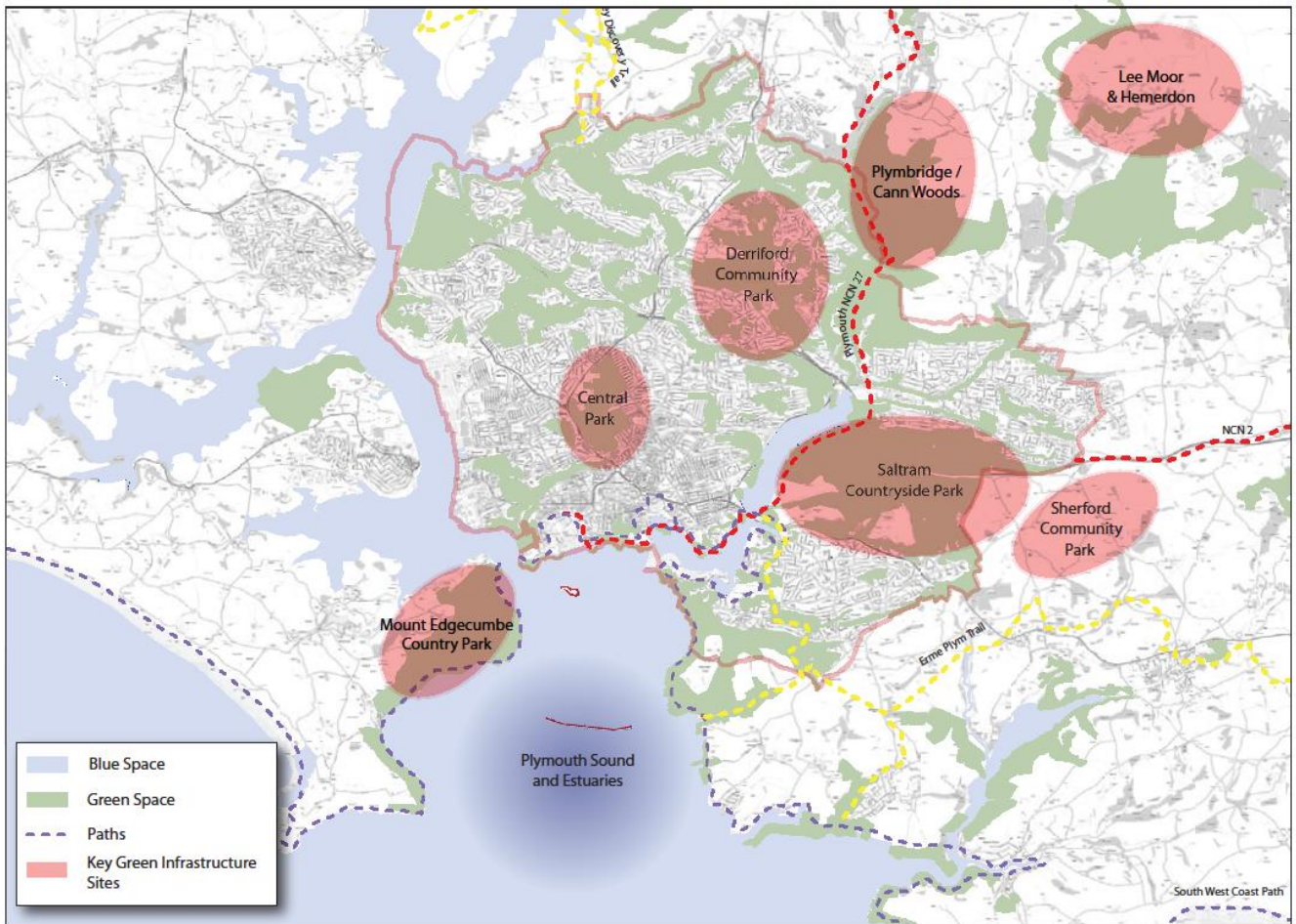
The benefits the project aims to deliver include:

- A high quality network of green and blue spaces that stretch from the City Centre to the rural hinterland and link the City with its marine environment;
- Residents and workers regularly utilising green and blue spaces as sustainable transport routes for walking, cycling and water transport;
- Community engagement with and ownership of the Green Infrastructure assets;
- A healthy and robust natural environment that benefits people and wildlife;
- Natural spaces people want to visit and enjoy because of the health and well-being benefits they deliver;
- A new appreciation of the important role the natural environment plays in the function and quality of the City;
- A mechanism to help the City adapt to and mitigate climate change.

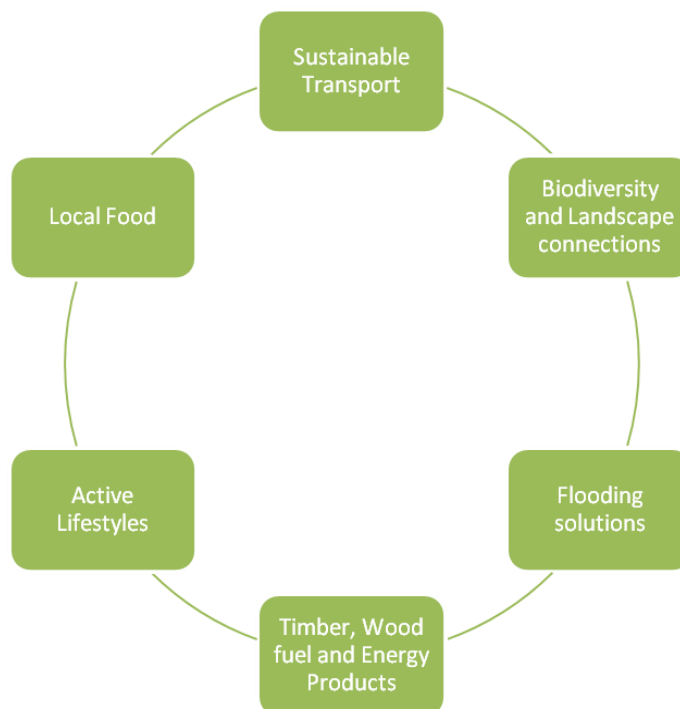
**How will the Project achieve these aims?**

The identification of agreed priorities for the natural environment in and around Plymouth enables a coordinated and proactive approach to delivery. There are 14 GI priorities, these include geographic and theme projects as detailed below.

**Map 3 – Site Specific Green Infrastructure Projects (for illustrative purposes only)**



**Theme projects**



### ***Delivery of the GI Network***

The delivery of the GI projects will happen in parallel with the growth of the City. It is expected that it will take at least 10 years to begin delivery on all aspects of the Plan dependant on the growth rate of the City. A number of mechanisms will be used to deliver the strategic priorities including, direct delivery of new GI assets (i.e. this will happen at Sherford), developer contributions towards the delivery of GI assets, partnership approaches to resourcing delivery of new Parks, such as at Saltram and community delivery of projects.

Resources to fund this work will also come from a number of sources including developers, agri-environment and woodland grants, lottery funding, and funding from partner organisations. It is also expected that to ensure these assets are managed to a high quality in the future they will need to generate revenue through commissions from the health and education sector and the development of revenue generating assets such as education centres and cafes.

### ***Plymouth GI Project – Current Position***

The Plymouth Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan that identifies the key priorities is now complete and has been adopted by Plymouth City Council and South Hams District Council and has been endorsed by 17 other organisations involved in the management or use of natural spaces. The project and its partners are now concentrating on delivering the strategic priorities. Not all the projects can begin at once so in the next year the following projects will provide the focus:

#### Saltram Countryside Park

The Masterplan for the Countryside Park is now complete after a 9 month consultation and development period. You can find the final Masterplan on the website at: [www.plymouth.gov.uk/saltrammasterplan](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/saltrammasterplan) . The Masterplan identified specific actions across the Park to deliver the aspirations for a high quality natural space that enhances the exceptional wildlife, landscape and historic assets of the site, provides a key recreational resource and maintains the viability of farming in the area.

The project is now in the process of securing funding to take forward the projects identified within the Masterplan. This includes the development of a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid that will help deliver aspects of the Masterplan as well as improvements in the wider Plym Valley.

#### Central Park

The Masterplan for Central Park is now also complete after an extensive consultation period; the Masterplan can be found at [www.plymouth.gov.uk/centralparkmasterplan](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/centralparkmasterplan). Plymouth City Council is the lead for this project and is currently developing a delivery plan that provides details on how the enhancements are to be funded and delivered.

#### Plym Bridge Woods and Cann Woods

The National Trust is leading work to develop a new adventurous cycling hub within Plymbridge Woods. This project has received funding from the Rural Development Programme for England as part of project that covers the South West. The planning application for the cycle hub has been submitted.

The Forestry Commission are also starting to develop a new forest plan for Cann Woods after large areas had to be cleared because of the outbreak of Phytophthora (fungus like disease that kills trees) in the Larch trees.

Both these areas will form part of the HLF bid mentioned above.

### Derriford and Sherford Community Parks

The delivery of both of these Parks is linked to the adjacent developments and the GI project will be working closely with the planning officers and developers to ensure the delivery of both Parks are secured.

### Community Engagement – Stepping Stones to Nature

Stepping Stones to Nature has now been running two years and was established to help remove the physical and perceptual barriers to accessing natural spaces to ensure everyone had the opportunity to enjoy the health and well being benefits associated with accessing the outdoors. It forms part of the Green Infrastructure project to ensure that communities are fully engaged with natural space improvements and can be involved with the design and delivery of projects. In the next year the project will focus on key GI network sites including Ham Woods and Kinterbury Creek. More detail on the project can be found at [www.plymouth.gov.uk/steppingstones](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/steppingstones)

### ***Local Access Forum Involvement in the GI Project***

The GI project aims to encourage the increased use and appreciation of natural spaces and access to these sites is key to achieving this aim. There should therefore be close links between the GI project and the LAF particular as projects move into the delivery phase. The LAF has commented on the Saltram Countryside Park Masterplan and has been invited to become part of the stakeholder forum for the Park. As other projects progress it is hoped similar links can be established. If the LAF has other ideas on how to develop better links with the GI project we would be very interested in hearing them.

**Kathryn Deeney**

**Plymouth Green Infrastructure Officer**

[Kathryn.deeney@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Kathryn.deeney@naturalengland.org.uk)