

Meeting date: 11th April 2019
Report to: FULL CABINET



Subject/report title: SOLIHULL GREEN PROSPECTUS –PROGRESS REPORT
Report from: Director of Managed Growth & Communities
Report author/lead contact officer: Dave Biss dbiss@solihull.gov.uk

Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider progress of the Council's 18/19 Green Prospectus and seek approval of the Green Prospectus Progress Report.

2. Decision(s) recommended

To note progress of the Green Prospectus and approve the Progress Report.

3. What is the issue?

3.1 The refreshed 18/19 Green Prospectus was approved at the Cabinet Member for Managed Growth's Decision Making Session on the 19th June 2018.

3.2 To reflect the strategic focus being placed on sustainability and the cross-cutting nature of many of the issues, the Green Prospectus is now being considered by Full Cabinet.

3.3 As per agreed governance arrangements find attached at Appendix 1, the progress report detailing progress against agreed actions/targets.

3.4 In addition to each action having a RAG rating, we have continued to make use of symbols to demonstrate where grant funding has been utilised, where a project is of an innovative nature and when the activity has involved a high degree of partnership

working.

- 3.5 An overall RAG rating and summary has been produced for each of the 6 themes.
- 3.6 The progress report illustrates the wide variety of projects that are being delivered across all the sustainability themes. It is important that all themes are advanced in order to ensure overall sustainability is delivered and to avoid one sustainability theme being advanced at the expense of others.
- 3.7 **Building on good practice** - A number of projects build on previous good practice and effective partnerships that have been built up over a number of years. For example:-
- (a) The current Warm Homes funded project which secured up to £743k of external funding to support the installation of up to 250 first time gas central heating systems builds on other energy related projects delivered as part of the Home Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy.
 - (b) The Council has built up very effective partnerships with the business, community and school sectors over a number of years. This supports the delivery of successful engagement activities. In November 2018 the Love Solihull initiative was awarded gold in the Environmental Best Practice Local Authority category in an award run by the Green Organisation.
 - (c) Our excellent relationship with schools supports the delivery of successful initiatives such as the Model Climate Change Conference for secondary schools, Modeshift, the Greener Solihull Schools Awards and the Ashden 'Less CO₂' programme.
- 3.8 **Leading by example** – A number of projects demonstrate how the Council is demonstrating leadership. For example:-
- (a) Delivering year on year reductions in carbon emissions from council operations. Notably the implementation of the Street Lighting Strategy (2012-2022) has resulted in a 46% reduction in emissions (2017/18 emissions compared to a 2009/10 baseline), reducing energy cost by around £400k a year.

In recognition of our successful LED street lighting scheme it is being featured in a series of articles being produced by Friends of the Earth aimed at encouraging energy efficiency among councils.
 - (b) In September 2018 the Council signed up to the voluntary Emissions Reduction Pledge (ERP 2020) and adopted a 45% carbon emission reduction target by 2021 (based on 2009/10 emissions).
 - (c) The borough's Fairtrade Borough Status was successfully renewed in August 2018. In September we hosted the West Midlands Regional Fairtrade Supporters conference in partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation. In addition we recently co-ordinated a number of events with partners to celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight 2019 – including the Solihull 'Bake Off' and Fairtrade Art trail.
 - (d) The Council now has in place a Clean Air Strategy (2019-24) which identifies a number of areas the Council or its partners can make positive change. These

are:- education through the borough's schools; transport; planning, environment and procurement

3.9 **Being innovative, understanding opportunities and building business cases –**

Important studies are being undertaken to fully understand the opportunities for delivering, innovative low carbon energy in Solihull.

- (a) Solihull Town Centre Low Carbon Energy Network. Building on feasibility work which identified a technically and financially viable scheme, work is now progressing on undertaking detailed project development and outline business case involving drilling a test borehole to investigate what groundwater flows may be available in the water-bearing rock. In parallel, potential network customers have been successfully engaged during this phase, surveys have confirmed network viability for these buildings and connection designs have been prepared.
- (b) The UKC Infrastructure Package Phase 2 includes an element to resource work round developing an Energy Framework for the borough which will inform our approach to delivering low carbon energy – ensuring that local challenges and opportunities are understood and inward investment supported. Development of the Energy Framework will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing.

3.10 **Delivering on the ground –** It is evident that across a number of themes our strategic ambitions are beginning to be delivered via on the ground activity. Both the Wildlife Ways and the Solihull Habitat and Nature Improvement project are excellent examples of on the ground activity, at scale – turning aspirations around delivering more 'bigger better and joined Green Infrastructure' into reality.

- (a) Wildlife Ways – the three year externally funded project will improve green connections, wildlife sites and public open spaces across Solihull. It will open up and enhance existing routes and carry out verge/habitat improvements across the existing cycle network (69km) and new shared paths (23km), delivering 16 hectares of enhanced habitat. It will also deliver 23 individual enhancement schemes - ten woodlands, three wetlands and ten grassland projects within parks and open spaces, improving the habitat and value of a further 55 hectares of council-owned land.
- (b) The externally funded Habitat and Nature Improvement Project is delivering a programme of woodland, grassland, wetland and water quality improvements across publicly accessible green space within Solihull. A number of grassland improvement projects have been completed, 11 woodlands have received positive woodland management and 2 wetland/water quality improvement schemes have been delivered.
- (c) In addition - following a motion put to Full Council it has been resolved that the council will develop a strategy to make Solihull a single-use plastic free authority by the end of 2020 where feasible.

3.11 **Emerging Issues**

3.12 Given the pace, scale and complexity of current and planned development both locally and regionally it is more important than ever that we ensure infrastructure is

integrated, negative impacts minimised and opportunities to progress sustainable development maximised.

- 3.13 It remains important that we continue to exploit opportunities to deliver at scale and ensure we play our part in influencing the sustainability agenda at a regional level.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on previously approved actions using an approved format and governance framework, therefore no other options were considered.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 As above.

6. Implications and Considerations

- 6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the key themes in the Council Plan? *(select which themes apply and briefly state how the options / proposals in this report contribute to their delivery):*

- Improve Health and Wellbeing – health and wellbeing is intrinsically linked to a healthy, well-functioning, resilient environment, where opportunities exist to live more sustainable lifestyles.
- Managed Growth – the activity outlined in the Green Prospectus is aimed at supporting the delivery of managed, sustainable growth.
- Build Stronger Communities -
- Deliver Value – working towards greater efficiency in the use of resources and natural assets including enhancing productivity, reducing waste and energy consumption are key to delivering a competitive, clean, low carbon economy.

- 6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

- 6.2.1 A number of the activities outlined in the Green Prospectus are specifically aimed at supporting vulnerable groups. For example, the activity aimed at alleviating fuel poverty.

- 6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 6.3.1 NA

6.4 Financial implications:

6.4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6.5 Legal implications:

6.5.1 No legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.6 Risk implications:

6.6.1 No risk implications arising directly from this report.

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.7.1 The nature of the Green Prospectus is such that it serves as an umbrella document for a number of strategies. These individual strategies will, where appropriate, be subject to individual Fair Treatment Assessments.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix 1 - Green Prospectus Progress Report

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None