

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CABINET MEETING

19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TREE PLANTING AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME – GREEN STREETS WIRRAL WATERS 2012-2015</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>BIDSTON &amp; ST JAMES, BIRKENHEAD &amp; TRANMERE, SEACOMBE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>CLLR HARRY SMITH STREETSCENE &amp; TRANSPORT SERVICES CLLR PAT HACKETT REGENERATION &amp; PLANNING STRATEGY</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>YES</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the proposed Green Infrastructure scheme which will involve the planting of up to 600 trees on green spaces and approach roads to the proposed Wirral Waters developments around East and West Float Bidston Docks and environs e.g. on Hoylake Road, Ilchester Square, Duke Street, Tower Road etc. in conjunction with The Mersey Forest as part of the Green Streets Wirral Waters Project. See appendix plan (A1 'Target area for Green Streets Wirral Waters').
- 1.2 This report also seeks approval to undertake future adoption of trees planted on Wirral Council owned land once the scheme is completed and future maintenance responsibility after the expiry of the 5 year maintenance period.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Wirral Waters is a 30-40 year programme of targeted inward investment within the Wirral Council boundary.
- 2.2 Green Streets is a successful initiative of The Mersey Forest ([www.merseyforest.org.uk](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk)) that uses urban tree planting as a mechanism to improve the quality of life for people in towns and cities. Green Streets works at the heart of the community with residents and partner organisations to promote the value of greenery as a means of tackling a range of social, health and economic issues, producing sustainable tailor-made greening schemes to meet the very personal needs of each community.
- 2.3 The Green Streets programme in Wirral (April 2012 –March 2015) is a development of

the existing work of community greening initiatives in The Mersey Forest that supports urban tree planting and long term stewardship of Mersey Forest sites.

- 2.4 The streets and green spaces targeted by the scheme lead from and through residential areas and along key highway links and local infrastructure and border the Wirral Waters area. The proposed planting scheme would support proposed development activity related to Outline Planning Permission for the site and environs. In addition local transport infrastructure plans including improved cycling and walking and local transport routes and improvements would be enhanced.
- 2.5 Existing infrastructure within the planting areas would be unaffected by the planting of trees on the streets concerned. Through liaison with appropriate Council officers representing Council departments together with wider consultation of residents, responsible providers and private land owners the scheme will target the most appropriate locations for planting.
- 2.6 Currently Wirral Council is not part of The Mersey Forest Partnership but is a key partner in the Wirral Waters scheme. This project (Setting the Scene for Growth) forms the start of the physical implementation of: Setting The Scene For Wirral Waters - A Green Infrastructure Investment Framework intended to carry out specific tasks including: the adoption of a Green Infrastructure strategy for Wirral Waters, in advance of the borough wide strategy. This project aims to address some of the issues highlighted in this document. Examples of projects include greening key routes, creating a community based growing project, establishing a multi age useable & accessible park, establishing areas of intermediate and incidental woodlands and wildflower meadows.
- 2.7 Setting The Scene For Wirral Waters - A Green Infrastructure Investment Framework <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=20221> was discussed at Cabinet 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011.

### 3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 A summary of relevant risks is as follows:

Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Overall risk	Risk Owner	Mitigation
Key personnel leave the organisation	Med	Low	1-2	The Mersey Forest (TMF)	Training and involvement of other staff to ensure that knowledge is widespread in the organisation
Cost Overrun	Low	High	1-2	TMF	Constant tracking of expenditure against project timeline with reporting to steering group
Financial claw back	Low	Low	1	TMF	TMF good experience, regular claims
Vandalism	Med	High	2-3	TMF	Robust design and community engagement to create a sense of ownership

Vandalism (long term)	Med	High	2-3	Wirral Council	An intensive 5 year establishment programme along with community consultation to ensure that trees are well established and thriving, robustly designed and an important part of the communities local environment
Timescales - delays and slippage	Med	Low	1-2	TMF	Monthly updates to track project progress and adjust where necessary Programme schedule adopted to ensure delivery timescales met
Partnership fallout	Low	High	1-2	TMF	TMF as lead partner have experience of working in and managing partnerships

#### 4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The other options available are “do nothing” or an expansion of the programme to cover more of the areas of need. The resources that have been secured for the Green Streets programme at Wirral Waters cannot be used for non tree/woodland activity. There are currently no alternative resources available for this work.
- 4.2 “Do nothing” will not address the identified needs as agreed in the Green Infrastructure Investment Framework (referred to in section 2.6), will reduce any forthcoming opportunities to improve areas for local communities, and will not provide a setting for Wirral Waters. At present an expansion of the programme is not considered a viable option due to the lack of additional financial resources.
- 4.3 Doing nothing will result in missing out on a large sum of inward investment that releases the potential for further investment.

#### 5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 A series of consultation events is being undertaken prior to the delivery of the project and consultation and engagement during delivery will continue throughout.
- 5.2 This will entail the direct engagement and consultation with a broad group of partners, funders and residents as well as community groups within the target areas affected by change. Consultation is key to the delivery of the project.
- 5.3 Apart from Wirral Council departments other consultees include Wirral Partnership Homes, Riverside, Peel Holdings, Groundwork organisations’, Friends of Bidston Moss, The Mersey Forest, Friends of Birkenhead Park, Wirral Parks Forum, Merseyside Police and Merseytravel.
- 5.4 An evaluation, engagement and consultation plan has been established for this project.

#### 6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 The project delivery would result in a positive outcome for these groups both through delivery of an enhanced environment and from the perspective of opportunities for engagement, consultation and involvement in aspects of the project and allied projects.

6.2 These groups have the potential to benefit from direct inclusion in physical delivery of aspects of the schemes together with the associated health and wellbeing associated with exposure to a greened environment.

## **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 7.1 The full scheme costs are to be finalised subject to tendering but in total may amount close to £1M, fully funded through the Setting The Scene For Growth Programme operated through The Forestry Commission via the Department of Business Innovations and Sustainability (BIS). Further detail will be reported to Members for approval once the scheme is finalised, prior to commencement of works.
- 7.2 There are only minor budget implications for Wirral Council as both the scheme and the initial establishment of trees for the first five years will be subject to full funding. These factors can be managed within existing resources.
- 7.3 An anticipated strong level of community 'buy in' and robust design and implementation will mitigate against any issues related to any minor costs in cleansing and streetscene maintenance implications.
- 7.4 The scheme represents a minimum capital inward investment of £1M in the local environment and the communities of the Seacombe, Bidston & St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere wards.
- 7.5 The trees shall be watered, mulched and pruned under contract for a 5 year establishment period, as part of the initial contract, by the appointed contractor with The Mersey Forest. This contract specifically excludes vandalism or accidental damage to the trees pits and guards, but risk of damage is minimised through good design and community engagement in the Green Streets programme.
- 7.6 Any initial vandalism or reasonably manageable damage to trees would be picked up within contingency funding within the lifetime of the project– with 5% of the capital cost of the trees plus re planting costs set aside for re-planting any lossages as a guide figure. A sum of £18,000 will be set aside in trust to cover this work for 5 yrs after the last planting in the scheme.
- 7.7 The planting represents an inward investment of £1M and the anticipated future maintenance implications for Wirral Council are no greater than £10K per annum from completion of the 5 year contractual maintenance period.
- 7.8 On completion of the initial planting contract the Technical Services Department will be responsible for the trees and related infrastructure in terms of maintaining the highway infrastructure and public safety subject to obligations of the maintenance/establishment contract referred to in the previous section 7.5. Wirral Council will take on full responsibility for the trees on completion of the 5 year maintenance period for each and subsequent planting over the lifetime of the project.
- 7.9 The design, procurement and implementation of the scheme will be commissioned by The Mersey Forest Team working as a strategic partner in the Newlands land reclamation programme funded through the Forestry Commission by BIS.
- 7.10 Prior to the commencement of work The Mersey Forest and the Technical Services Department together with key partners will agree project details in relation to approved

designs and implementation procedures in order to minimise future maintenance implications.

7.11 There are no staffing implications for the Council arising from this report.

7.12 The implementation of the scheme will result in a net increase in assets adding value.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no legal implications. All assets will remain the property of Wirral Council.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 All residents in the area will have the opportunity to be involved with events around the Project and will have the opportunity to take an active part in the Green Streets process. The design of the scheme will be DDA compliant and consultation will be inclusive.

9.2 Green Streets programme aims to encourage active citizenship by engaging local people in the development and implementation of projects.

*Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?*

(a) Yes and impact review is attached - <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/technical-services-0>

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are positive carbon reduction implications. The planting of trees creates the opportunity to increase the functionality of these proposed Council assets in terms of increasing carbon sequestration and storage and benefits residents through the actions of shading and cooling effects associated with climate change adaptation.

10.2 Increased greenery has a net positive effect on the health and wellbeing of residents.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no planning implications arising from this report.

11.2 Engagement with future planning strategies as well as the intended housing, transport and recreational needs of the Council the project aims to increase the sustainability of strategic development.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

12.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Approve the implementation of a tree planting scheme for the Wirral Waters approaches as defined in the map (Appendix A);
- (ii) Approve the outline master plan set out in the Green Infrastructure Investment Framework document (see reference material);

- (iii) Approve the proposal to undertake future adoption of trees planted on Wirral Council owned land once the scheme is completed;
- (iv) Approve the proposal to undertake future maintenance of trees planted on Wirral Council owned land after the expiry of the 5 year maintenance period from within existing budgets.

### **13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 13.1 The intended planting represents a real benefit to Wirral Council and assists in setting the scene for further Wirral Waters Investment.
- 13.2 The intended Green Infrastructure is both sustainable, of real benefit to the communities and is important in terms of the security of inward investment in The Wirral.
- 13.3 Additional investment is intended by The Mersey Forest subject to successful existing bidding for funding.

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### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Wirral Waters Green Streets & Green Infrastructure Map  
Area of Delivery and Area of Influence

### **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Detailed drawings are on display in the Members Room and will be placed in the committee room on the night of the meeting.

Green Infrastructure Investment Framework

[Setting The Scene For Wirral Waters - A Green Infrastructure Investment Framework](#)

Green Infrastructure Strategy for Wirral Waters

[www.merseyforest.org.uk/files/Setting\\_the\\_scene\\_for\\_Wirral\\_Waters\\_GI\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/files/Setting_the_scene_for_Wirral_Waters_GI_Strategy.pdf)

A case study of the Green Streets Project can be viewed here:

[http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk/resources/green\\_streets\\_ellesmere\\_port.pdf](http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk/resources/green_streets_ellesmere_port.pdf)

The Green Streets projects aims and principals of community engagement are outlined in this document.

<http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/library/plans/communities/?q=green+streets> Green Streets  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

[www.wirralwatersgreenstreets.blogspot.com](http://www.wirralwatersgreenstreets.blogspot.com)

[www.merseyforest.org.uk/greenstreets](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/greenstreets)

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet Report: Setting The Scene For Wirral Waters – A Green Infrastructure Investment Framework <a href="http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=20220">http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=20220</a>	1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2011
Planning Committee Approval: Wirral Waters Outline Planning Permission (Section 4.4 Public Realm, Landscaping and Open Space) <a href="http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s14653/Wirral%20Waters%20Planning%20Application.pdf">http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s14653/Wirral%20Waters%20Planning%20Application.pdf</a>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Aug 2010