

Greater Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership: A Statement of Cooperation between the Greater Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership and the applicable local planning authorities – April 2013

Introduction

The 2011 Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice' strongly supported the role of a healthy natural environment in delivering multiple benefits. There is good evidence that it is a cost-effective tool that can help local authorities to:

- support economic and social regeneration
- improve public health
- improve educational outcomes
- reduce crime and antisocial behaviour
- help communities adapt to climate change and
- improve the quality of life across a wide area.³

To help deliver this broad agenda, the White Paper recommended the establishment of Local Nature Partnerships (LNP). Over 50 have now been granted LNP status across England including the Greater Cambridgeshire LNP. This LNP embraces all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and abuts similar partnerships in adjoining counties.

The main purposes of the LNPs are to:

- embed the value of the natural environment into local decision making
- promote sustainable land use and management
- promote the greening of economic growth
- advise on strategic planning matters
- enhance the quality of life, health and well-being of citizens.

The Greater Cambridgeshire LNP

The Greater Cambridgeshire LNP was granted LNP status in Autumn 2012. Its emerging vision is:

The Greater Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership will work to achieve a high quality natural environment in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that will benefit business, communities and individuals.

³ HM Government 'The Natural Choice. What the Natural Environment White paper means for local authorities.'

The first meeting of the board was in January 2013. Councillor Mike Rouse (East Cambs DC) was elected chair of the board, with the Wildlife Trust as vice chair. Other board members represent a cross section of interests including local authorities, environmental interests (Wildlife Trust and RSPB), Cambridgeshire ACRE, Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum, NFU, CLA, Public Health and the LEP. Defra is represented through Natural England/Environment Agency.

The work of the LNP is still in its infancy, though it will continue to embrace the long-standing and effective green infrastructure partnerships that have previously existed in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is anticipated that the LNP will bring added value for the natural environment as a:

- Single strong voice championing the natural environment
- Mechanism for joined up working between sectors
- Way of achieving greater efficiencies through proactive partnership working and better use of resources
- Strategic leader of local delivery: agreed vision and action plan taken into account in local decision-making
- Channel for community engagement in nature, sharing best practice so adding value at a local level
- Co-ordinator of funding bids, including cross-sector

Strategic planning context

All of Cambridgeshire's district councils are currently well progressed in preparing a refreshed Local Plan for their area. Peterborough City Council is likely to commence a refresh within the next few years, whilst Cambridgeshire County Council has recently adopted a suite of Minerals and Waste planning policy documents. When undertaking a refresh of their Local Plans, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a 'Duty to Cooperate' with a number of bodies. This means LPAs must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in relation to planning of sustainable development with a number of prescribed bodies, with one such body being the LNP for its area.

Statement of Cooperation between the LNP and the LPAs

The Greater Cambridgeshire LNP and the LPAs within its area recognise the long standing cooperation on green infrastructure issues which has taken place in the area (including the Green Infrastructure Strategy of 2011). Moving forward, the LNP and the LPAs look forward to continued cooperation for mutual benefit.

The LPAs support the emerging broader vision of the LNP and are committed to ensuring their Local Plans make appropriate policy support for the provision and protection of green infrastructure to achieve wider social and economic benefits, and the LPAs will work with the LNP to ensure the evidence base for green infrastructure is kept up to date. As and

when the priorities and action plans of the LNP are finalised or updated, the LPAs will, as part of preparing their next available Local Plan, work with the LNP and take account of such priorities.

The LNP acknowledges that LPAs are currently well progressed in the preparation of new Local Plans, and has welcomed the LPAs' support of the LNP. At this early stage in the preparation of LNP priorities and action planning, the LNP is satisfied that LPAs are, in principle and at a strategic level, appropriately addressing green infrastructure issues in their respective Local Plans. However, the LNP reserves the right to make individual representations to each Local Plan as and when such a plan is issued for consultation. The LNP acknowledges the careful judgements which LPAs have to take in balancing the various aspects which leads to sustainable development.

The LNP and the LPAs look forward to a future of continued cooperation and mutual support.

