

Green and Blue Infrastructure: Scrutiny Input into Strategy Development

The three Scrutiny Committees considered the draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and agreed to establish a task and finish group to study the draft strategy and action plan in more detail in order to feed into its development.

Members were very supportive of the Strategy and recognised the importance of introducing more green spaces within Blackpool, noting that the town was one of the most urban towns in the country. The benefits in relation to health and wellbeing were also considered in detail.

Councillors Galley, Humphries, Hutton, O'Hara and Mrs Scott attended the meeting of the task and finish group, which was supported by John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services, Judith Mills, Consultant in Public Health, Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager and John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser.

The following key points were raised by the Committees and the task and finish group and Members requested that the Director of Community and Environmental Services and Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities) consider incorporating them within the final strategy. The Cabinet Secretary and Director have provided a response to each of the suggestions made as follows:

Scrutiny Recommendation	Cabinet Member/Director Response
The green and blue implications of all decisions taken must be considered and clearly set out in reports in order to place green and blue at the heart of decision making.	Included in action plan.
That the Council must ensure that other policies are not contravened in the bid to create an attractive setting e.g. tree skirts must not be sponsored by premises selling alcohol.	Agreed as this would break our ethical policy.
Children as young as nursery age should be included in the strategy in order to embed the importance of a green environment.	Included within the Better Start actions in the plan.
Ensuring that developers building new large scale developments including the Central Leisure Quarter are aware of the Strategy and take account of it when designing developments, including those that are currently ongoing such as the Conference Centre.	Included in action plan.

<p>The importance of ensuring the road and rail gateways to the town such as Train Stations have green areas in them and establishing the necessary links to Network Rail to do so.</p>	<p>Included in action plan.</p>
<p>To consider the potential to allow paid leave for employees to volunteer on green and blue projects in order to lead from the front as a Council and inspire businesses.</p>	<p>Included in the action plan for consideration and exploration.</p>
<p>Targeting socially isolated people to engage them in activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider how to provide street drinkers with opportunity to be involved and play a part in the green agenda. • To set up a scheme to allow disabled and less physically abled residents to contribute, such as a growing plants in their own garden which could then be passed to businesses or other residents to plant around the town. 	<p>Included in action plan.</p>
<p>The importance of fostering a 'can do' attitude amongst Parks staff. It was considered that saying 'no' to ideas too often was often seen as a lack of support amongst volunteers.</p>	<p>Consideration of joining Leisure and Parks Development together to form a new unit and team which is focussed on making things happen in relation to leisure, sport and parks development.</p>
<p>To consider installing green, living bus shelters.</p>	<p>This requires greater thought and understanding in terms of how this could be developed.</p>
<p>That the Strategy include an action to issue guidance to residents of the importance of having a garden and how to look after their own green space.</p>	<p>Included in action plan and linked to Blackpool in Bloom.</p>
<p>To consider if it would be possible to ensure that roofs were south facing to allow installation of solar panels, if economically viable.</p>	<p>Flagged as an option to the strategic planning team.</p>
<p>To consider entering Britain in Bloom's small neighbourhood award scheme to give direction and opportunity.</p>	<p>Included in action plan and linked to Blackpool in Bloom.</p>

To request that consideration be given to establishing an Urban Community Group to lead on supporting green space across the town centre.	To be discussed with Blackpool's existing Open Spaces Network.
To continue to make improvements to Stanley Park, whilst not neglecting any other green space in the town.	Highlighted in action plan.
To amend the wording in the action plan around hedgerows noting that they can often be an area prone to anti-social behaviour and a barrier to linking a green space to a community.	Hedgerows replaced by shrubs in the action plan.
To engage with the Chamber of Commerce in order to obtain the backing of more businesses.	The implementation of the plan would include engagement with business including the Chamber of Commerce.