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| London Councils’ Transport & Environment Committee | | | | | | | |
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| Mayor’s Green Infrastructure Taskforce | | | | | | Item no: | 07 |
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| **Summary:** | The Green Infrastructure Taskforce, established by the Mayor, has produced its report. Two of its recommendations are for boroughs and one is for TEC. This report outlines the background to the Taskforce, the recommendations it has made, and options for discussion at TEC. |
| **Recommendations:** | The Committee is asked to:   * Note and discuss the report, in particular paragraphs 12-17, ‘considering the recommendations’ |

**The Green Infrastructure Taskforce**

1. The Green Infrastructure Taskforce was established by the Mayor of London in December 2014 to identify how a longer-term and strategic approach could be taken to investing in green infrastructure in London.
2. Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, as well as features such as street trees and green roofs, that are planned, designed and managed to deliver a range of benefits. Benefits include healthy living, mitigating flooding, improved air and water quality, cooling the urban environment, encouraging walking and cycling, and enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience.
3. The taskforce’s vision is that, by 2050:
   * Existing parks and green spaces will become part of an integrated green infrastructure network that is planned, designed and managed to deliver strategic functions as well as local needs. It will link seamlessly with a green infrastructure beyond the London boundary.
   * All regeneration areas and major new developments will include green infrastructure (such as green roofs and walls) that is designed, among other things, to keep the city cool, to manage stormwater and to promote health.
   * Many streets, including high streets, will be transformed into greener areas of public realm where walking and cycling will have priority.
   * More of London’s hidden rivers will have been removed from pipes or concrete channels to manage flooding, improve water quality and enhance river ecology.
   * All Londoners will have accessible, good quality green infrastructure nearby that they can take pride in.
   * London will be making green infrastructure decisions based on natural capital valuation.
4. The success of this vision will be determined by a series of goals the Taskforce has agreed should be achieved by 2050:

* London should maintain its status as one of the world’s greenest capital cities – 50 per cent of the administrative area should be green infrastructure. This would require an increase in green cover of approximately 9,000ha – three times the area of the London Borough of Haringey.
* London should maintain its “urban forest” by increasing tree cover from 20 per cent to 30 per cent of London’s area – continuing to have one tree for every Londoner as the population grows.
* 80 per cent of Londoners (nine million people) will be walking, jogging or cycling at least two miles per day.
* Surface water flows into the sewer network will be reduced by at least 25 per cent.
* EU standards on water quality will be met for all of London’s rivers.
* At least 20 per cent of London’s area will be designated of high wildlife value.

1. The Green Infrastructure Taskforce’s report *Natural Capital: Investing in a Green Infrastructure for a Future City* has four sections.
2. The first, “Rethink Purpose: Redefining Green Infrastructure” focused on expanding an understanding of green infrastructure. The current understanding that it contributes to greening or flood mitigation is inadequate and green infrastructure also contributes to improved mental and physical health; helps cities like London adapt to climate change; improve and support biodiversity; and increases access to green space by residents.
3. The second, “Reframe Value: The Benefits of Green Infrastructure” focuses on assigning green infrastructure an economic value to make a compelling business case for investment. It uses the concept of natural capital accounting, which, at its simplest, involves measuring the value that the natural asset provides to the organisation that manages/owns it and to society in general; as well as measuring the costs of maintaining it. In this way, an assessment of London’s ‘urban forest’ shows that the cost to replace it would equate to £6.12 billion due to the scale of benefits it provides.
4. The third chapter, “Restructure Governance: Managing Green Infrastructure”, looks at the complexity of management of green infrastructure at present, noting the multiplicity of public, private and voluntary owners. The report explores four possible governance models; neighbourhood level, borough level, sub-regional partnerships, and London-wide level.
5. The fourth chapter, “Release Funding: New Sources of Finance”, acknowledges that reconfiguring green infrastructure will require funding. It considers a series of funding options, including Mayoral initiatives, levies on environmentally detrimental behaviour, and philanthropic fundraising, for example as the National Park City campaign champions.

**Specific recommendations for boroughs and London Councils**

1. Two of the Taskforce’s 25 recommendations are for the boroughs.

#15 London boroughs should ensure that the concept of green infrastructure is central to a placemaking agenda and properly represented within their placemaking teams.

#17 Boroughs should support sub-regional green infrastructure partnerships. These partnerships should be funded by the Greater London Authority matched by an allocation from the boroughs, for example, from savings generated through the reduction in the levy achieved by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority over the past five years.

1. There are also two recommendations for London Councils.

#16 The Greater London Authority, London Councils and the Environment Agency should review existing relevant partnerships to identify opportunities for better collaboration and co-ordination of green infrastructure.

#19 London Councils’ Transport and Environment Committee should take a stronger role in promoting, co-ordinating and supporting green infrastructure.

**Considering the recommendations**

1. Recommendation 15 is one we welcome and we note that some boroughs are making great strides in ‘greening’ developments in their borough, and ensuring that adequate green space and drainage provision is considered. With pressures on savings to be made, it will remain challenging for planning teams to be adequately resourced to negotiate with developers, and for flooding teams to respond to the development proposals and insist on changes where appropriate.
2. Recommendations 17 links to Recommendation 16 as flooding sub-regional partnerships already exist and we would assume that strengthening these partnerships would be a better focus rather than creating brand-new green infrastructure partnerships.
3. London Councils officers could undertake a review of the flooding sub-regional partnerships together with the Environment Agency, and bring the results to TEC. This would be a voluntary review, as TEC does not have any statutory powers in the area of flooding in boroughs.
4. London Councils officers, using existing networks, could survey borough officers about whether green infrastructure is integrated in placemaking teams and bring the results to TEC, but again, TEC has no statutory powers in the area of planning and placemaking in boroughs.
5. TEC could request an annual report from the GLA about the uptake of green infrastructure in planning applications and the creation of new green space, for example if an equivalent scheme to the current Mayor’s Pocket Parks initiative continues. However, this is not likely to give a particularly strategic overview of green infrastructure as it will be limited to interventions that the Mayor is involved in, and will miss initiatives created or supported by Business Improvement Districts, boroughs themselves and voluntary or community organisations.
6. London Councils officers could organise annual events for Members and/or officers on green infrastructure to help share knowledge, expertise and get latest updates on the issues.

**Recommendations**

1. The Committee is asked to:

* Note and discuss the report, in particular paragraphs 12-17 ‘considering the recommendations’.

**Financial Implications**

1. There are no financial implications to London Councils arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**

1. There are no legal implications to London Councils arising from this report.

**Equalities Implications**

1. There are no equalities implications to London Councils arising from this report.