

# PERFECT

*Planning for Environment and Resource eFiciency in European Cities and Towns*



## Project Action Plan

Cornwall Council



**This Action Plan was prepared as part of the second phase of PERFECT and sets out the main actions that Cornwall Council proposes to undertake to help meet the objectives of PERFECT to embed green infrastructure planning in Cornwall.**

**The action plan was endorsed by Tim Dwelly, Cabinet Member for Culture, Economy and Planning on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

## Part I - General Information

**Project:** PERFECT – Planning for Environment and Resource Efficiency in European Cities and Towns

**Partner organisation:** Cornwall Council, United Kingdom

**NUTS2 region:** South West England

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## Part II - Policy Context

### Summary of policy in Cornwall

European funding policy is contained in the ERDF – England Operational Programme for 2014 – 2020.

**Thematic Objective 6** (TO6) is intended to Preserve and protect the environment and promote resource efficiency and **Investment priority 6d** is concerned with protecting and restoring biodiversity/ecosystem services Natura 2000 and GI.

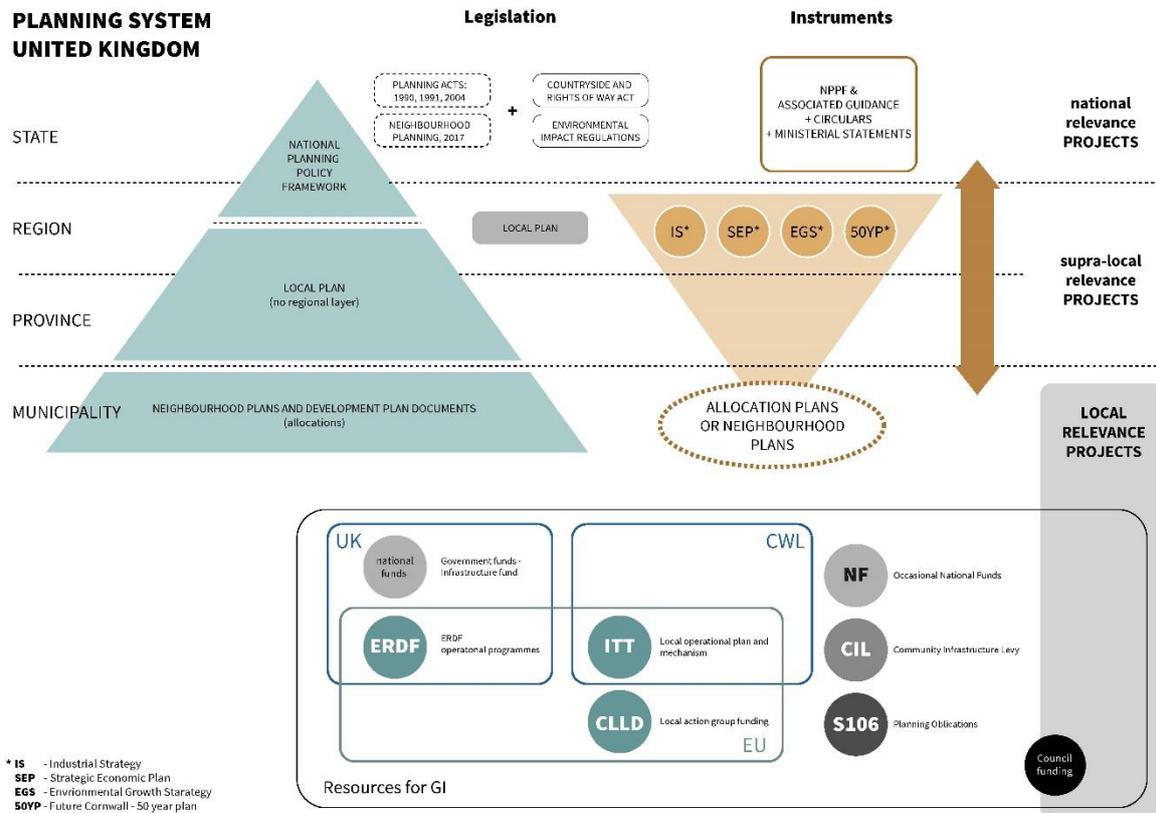
The **Managing Authority** (responsible for producing investment priority in the UK) is the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the **Intermediate Body** (responsible for implementation of the policy and priority) is Cornwall Council

The Action Plan aims to impact the **Cornwall Local Plan** which is a regional development policy instrument.

### Other Policy

Green infrastructure provision in Cornwall has its strategic policy basis in National Planning Policy (National Planning Policy Framework 'NPPF'), the Cornwall Local Plan at a sub-regional level and very locally in individual Neighbourhood Plans (NDP) created at Parish level. Whilst policies are in place, they are strategic and do not yet provide sufficient guidance on the creation of multi-functional GI. NDPs rarely have an overt GI focus, although most seek to protect the environment. The role of the environment in Cornwall in attracting economic investment is recognised, but the links between funding of new development and improvement of the environment and provision of new multi-functional GI is not yet sufficiently strong. The Council has adopted an ambitious Environmental Growth Strategy, but this needs to be translated into scheme design and planning decisions. GI needs to be more effectively integrated into all policy and guidance levels in Cornwall to achieve environmental growth and improvement.

**This diagram shows the various policy elements of the English Planning system and Operational Programme**



**Background to the ERDF – England Operational Programme 2014 – 2020 and investment priority**

The main objective of the ERDF Operational Programme for 2014 - 2020 (the 'OP') is to support sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, ensure environmental protection, active adaptation to climate change and promote an energy efficient, low-carbon economy.

The Policy Instrument aims to bring together environmental protection and economic growth objectives, ensuring they complement each other as an integrated approach. This involves investment in Green and Blue infrastructure supporting provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth and adding to the area's natural capital/ecosystem services and benefits from them. The Instrument also aims to improve the local environment to act as an economic growth catalyst by attracting investment, increased visitor spend, reducing costs of adverse environmental conditions, providing health benefits and generating employment. The intention at higher level is to provide baseline data for GI including development of a national habitat connectivity indicator for connectivity & multifunctional green space

## Why should it be improved?

In general the UK invests little directly into **the provision of green infrastructure and proposals must compete with investment with other 'more established' measures designed to enable economic growth**. It is often **difficult to persuade decision makers** of proposals where the main component is GI. This is often translated into classically 'grey' infrastructure projects with transport projects formed around roads prioritised and most obviously connected to growth. Whilst green infrastructure accompanies these projects, it is often broken into its constituent parts, delivering narrow functions and seen as a small element of the solution. Hence, major road building schemes will often be characterised by Sustainable Urban Drainage projects that sit fenced off and poorly linked into the landscape.

Bidding for ERDF funds tends to be concentrated in the hands of a small number of organisations and partners that are acquainted with the bidding process. Knowledge and experience of how to bid tends to be specialist. **The bidding process is often off-putting to projects based on green infrastructure provision as it is more complex to demonstrate the outputs required to meet the calls**. Community Led Local Development provides for smaller investments and, being administered by Local Action groups across Cornwall, could be easier to relate GI projects at local level to the Thematic Objective, however **knowledge of GI at local level**, its multiple benefits and the ability to use the TO to invest in it hamper the effectiveness of this funding stream. The delivery of improved GI across all development types requires improved governance of the TO funding and improved knowledge of the economic opportunities of GI investment amongst potential applicants and decision makers at all levels.

## How the Action Plan proposes to influence policies:

TO6 of the OP foresaw 'Investments in Green and Blue infrastructure and actions that support the provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth'. This was the PI that Cornwall sought to influence through the project.

Changes are proposed through an Action Plan to identify opportunities for multifunctional improvements in natural heritage in devolved decisions, policy and practice in Cornwall to benefit business, health and well-being, cultural distinctiveness and resilience.

The original application for PERFECT from Cornwall sought to develop an approach to how OP calls are made and to raise awareness of investment possibilities. Changes since that time have reduced the ability of the Council to directly influence future iterations of the PI, however the PI has been used more extensively in its current form whilst the Council has been involved in PERFECT to fund environmental initiatives and projects that seek to make improvements to green spaces, predominately in deprived areas to maximise its contribution to the Jobs and Growth agenda. These projects are directly helping to explore at a practical level improvements that are needed in policy and practice in Cornwall.

Improvement of the approach to planning for and investing in GI require continued influencing of decision makers and the development of a more holistic approach to design,

specification and decision making to ensure that multi-functional GI is incorporated into development proposals across sectors in Cornwall and given sufficient weight alongside more 'grey' infrastructure solutions in investment decisions.

Better engagement with communities is needed to audit and plan for natural heritage and create more understanding of investment opportunities and priorities. Governance and understanding needs to be improved by learning through regional partnerships, leading to clearer understanding of best value investments in natural heritage through multi-functional GI to deliver the requirements of TO6.

This is particularly important to foster understanding of the multi-functional benefits and whole life saving opportunity from GI e.g. flood protection and improving health via recreation and nature conservation to promote equal footing for green and grey infrastructure investment; baseline state of natural capital needed to ensure consistent measurement of costs and benefits and opportunities for jobs and growth by preserving and exploiting natural heritage; understand linkages between state of natural heritage and investment decisions/potential for uplift; need catchment Action Plans for sustainable management and exploitation of the natural environment through ecosystem services; communities need to be engaged in audit and decision making

**Cornwall's Self-Defined Performance Indicator:**

The project application contains the following self-defined indicator:

*'20% increase in bids focused on Green Infrastructure applying for TO6 to benefit from the policy instrument, based on additional Green Infrastructure uses identified through the project.'*

Since being involved in PERFECT, the Council has appreciated the multi-functional possibilities of green infrastructure and has examined ways of encouraging bids that focus on GI provision. The development of calls has changed the criteria applied so as to make it possible to further understand the economic investment opportunities and benefits associated with investment in green infrastructure. This includes the resolution of issues associated with investment duplication with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and additional criteria to direct investment proposals towards mitigation of climate change and creating a more resilient environment and recognition of the interconnection of the environment to community and economic prosperity. These additional regional level priorities respond to issues and conditions that restricted the submission of suitable projects to earlier calls and provide the conditions for additional demonstration of the value of investment in green infrastructure. This call will allow for further understanding to be developed of the conditions for encouraging future investments in GI based on the number of responses to the call that are based on natural solutions or GI.

**Proposed additional self-defined performance indicator:**

Informed by the development of the project, a further self-defined indicator is proposed:

*'20% of new green spaces provided by development in Cornwall to be enhanced through improved policies in the Cornwall Local Plan and associated guidance to deliver additional GI uses beyond amenity grassland (for instance biodiverse habitat, sustainable drainage, food growing, natural play) based on good practice learnt through PERFECT.'*

This will require the establishment of a baseline of the existing situation through an audit of spaces being provided in fulfilment of the current local plan requirements. A baseline of requirements for the provision of new open space and the quality standards applied have already been established through a literature review carried out in the first part of the project.

**Justification for the additional self-defined performance indicator:**

Whilst progress has been made in addressing the existing Policy Instrument for Cornwall, it is recognised that the ability of the UK to make changes to further European Structural Funds are likely to be unsustainable during the life of the project. It is therefore proposed that Cornwall's project should also influence another policy instrument - the Cornwall Local Plan. Planning decisions made with the Local Plan will impact on funding decisions for economic growth and other development in Cornwall. The plan is currently subject to review and a range of workshops are being held, using the experience learned from the project partners to understand the nature of change required in the Local Plan. Experience gained from Austria and Amsterdam regarding mapping resources for GI and on participatory methods from Ferrara have helped to inform development of a GIS based system of engaging communities in mapping green infrastructure assets and opportunities in their area. This work has now commenced as a pilot project.

Significant progress has been made on influencing the policy instrument using the learning of the project from these specific activities of peer to peer working. This has involved better conceptualisation of the GI requirements of the Local Plan and embedding this in decision making. The development of mapping and design resources anticipated by this action plan will reinforce these concepts. The visit of Amsterdam and Graz partners to Cornwall and their explanation of the additional certainty created in their planning systems through zoning and effective enforcement had a persuasive impact on our stakeholders and decision makers and helped to justify new approaches to open space planning and opportunities for multi-functional GI. This has made the exchange of experience even more relevant and has had a greater impact in the new policy context, which would not have happened otherwise.

The work undertaken during the project is influencing the creation of a new Climate Change Development Plan Document (an allocation plan as shown in the diagram on page 2) which will help to further reinforce policy requirements for green infrastructure in Cornwall. It will also help to influence future investment decisions by the Council and its partners due to an increasing understanding of the requirements of good, multi-functional green infrastructure.

## Part III - Details of the actions envisaged

### The vision - Where do we need to be in December 2021?

Investment decisions favour the development of multi-functional green infrastructure, including:

- Planning and investment decisions in Cornwall recognise the value of multi-functional green infrastructure;
- Planning policies accentuate the role and benefits of multi-functional GI at both regional (Local Plan) and local (Neighbourhood Plan) level;
- Knowledge and understanding of the role, potential and value of green infrastructure is commonplace in planning, economic development, health functions of the Council and in Neighbourhood Planning groups;
- Development routinely provides good quality multi-functional green infrastructure; and
- Information about the critical need and the best potential (and location) for green infrastructure is readily available to communities, decision makers, developers and investors;
- Funding calls are better aligned to decisions that encourage and favour schemes or projects that provide green infrastructure as an integral factor.

### What conditions are needed in order to achieve this situation?

- Consistent raising of GI solutions up the agenda across the directorates of Cornwall Council, including awareness raising with politicians and others making investment decisions through inclusion in standard training programmes for Councillors and staff;  
*Measure: Number of events and publications created to provide training on GI opportunities.*
- Dissemination of positive examples from PERFECT, the magic Matrix and Cornwall Council projects to demonstrate the practical benefits of GI interventions;  
*Measure: Cornwall Design Guide incorporating learning from PERFECT published by the Council.*
- Development and operationalisation of benchmarks of good practice for GI, including the promotion of benchmarking tools such as 'Building with Nature'.  
*Measure: inclusion of the benchmark in the Cornwall Design Guide, creation of a Chief Officer Note to encourage use by planning applicants and the endorsement of three Council masterplans using the technique.*

### Project Actions proposed throughout the plan period:

- **Dissemination of information, practice and learning** – both actions proposed rely on the dissemination of information and practice gained from peer to peer working (such as the experience of Austria relating to the use of the Stockholm Solution to utilise multi benefits of street trees to persuade highways decision makers) and experience of practice from PERFECT partners through continuous engagement with the stakeholder group, including Neighbourhood Plan Groups, Cornwall and local Councillors and developers. This will continue to utilise groups already established by the Council with developers, architects and planning agents as well as environmental interests. We will

also utilise the Planning Partnership (groups of Parish Councils) as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership, Local Nature Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board;

- **Contribute to the development and dissemination of the magic matrix** – The Council will continue to contribute to the development of matrix through submission of case studies and will share the resource with stakeholders internal and external to the Council. A link to the matrix will be provided for use by Directorate staff;
- **Engagement of key officers and the Cabinet Member** of the Economic Growth and Development Directorate in the ongoing work of the project and the Actions set out in this plan through an internal stakeholder group and participation in study visits and Partner meetings as appropriate;
- **Regular articles in staff newsletters and communications** – The Planning Service has now put in place video blogs from key officers to communicate work that is being undertaken and to create an interesting communication of new initiatives in the Service. Recent video blogs from the PERFECT project team have included the potential of the new Design Quality Guidance (proposed as an action in this Action Plan) as well as Biodiversity Net Gain and Building with Nature bench marking tools.

### **How will knowledge be sustained during and beyond the project?**

#### **Development of GI champions:**

- Continue to disseminate the work of the project and the knowledge gained through newsletters, blogs and regular meetings with stakeholders from across the directorate.
- Create advocates for GI in the 8 area planning teams for the planning service to disseminate good practice amongst colleagues and champion GI solutions.
- Create champions in Transport, Health and Economy
- Make the Magic Matrix available and promote through our networks.

#### **Member training:**

Work alongside the Environmental Growth Plan to ensure that Cornwall Councillors and Parish Councillors receive training on green infrastructure.

- Evolve Neighbourhood Planning Guidance to explain concepts, potential actions and disseminate good practice in plain English to parishes and communities.

#### **Guidance and benchmarking:**

- Create new Design Guide to embed green infrastructure as an integral part of the design process in Cornwall, mainstreaming the approaches being gathered in the project.
- Use benchmarking techniques such as 'Building with Nature' to provide a consistent approach to GI across the Directorate and external partners.

#### **Review of policies and practices:**

- Use regular reviews of the Cornwall Local Plan to establish whether policies need to be changed, improved or reviewed in light of learning and practice observed.

- Ensure new planning documents incorporate and integrate GI guidance and requirements into policy and practice.
- Develop biodiversity net gain requirement for Cornwall for all scales of development.

#### **Monitoring:**

- Include GI provision and biodiversity net gain in annual monitoring report for Cornwall;
- Monitor and celebrate developments that provide good multi-functional GI and/or have been accredited by Building with Nature.

#### **Good practices that have influenced the Cornwall Action Plan:**

- Green Net Graz and Regional Spatial Planning and the use of GIS to identify and communicate GI opportunities (Provincial Government of Styria);
- Plan Amsterdam (City of Amsterdam);
- Handbook on participatory planning and development of GI opportunities with communities (Municipality of Ferrara);
- Factsheets and Expert papers (Town and Country Planning Association and other partners);
- Use of the 'Stockholm Solution' and the Green Points system (provincial Government of Styria);
- Magic Matrix (Town and Country Planning Association).

#### **Principal Actions overview:**

The Action Plan aims to improve the policies referred to in section 2 as follows:

- Creating a consistent approach to planning guidance (and changes to policy as required) that focuses efforts to deliver greater levels of green infrastructure;
- Creating a comprehensive, locally led understanding of green infrastructure opportunities and ensuring that they are understood and used by decision makers.

## **Action 1 - Creating a consistent approach to planning guidance that focuses efforts to deliver greater levels of green infrastructure**

### **Background:**

- Green Infrastructure planning and investment is dependent on integrated and informed planning across sectors, organisations and departments.
- A lack of cross-departmental working, results in confusion and lack of priority for the investment in and implementation of green infrastructure;
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- Documentation aimed at securing green infrastructure interventions is rarely integrated and a piecemeal approach to securing benefit often results in diminution of the approach;
- Experience gained from partner visits has proven the benefit of incorporating green infrastructure thinking into all parts of the Council's business, including adoption and specification processes. These processes tend to be led by 'tried, tested and established' processes and specifications, generally at the expense of natural solutions.
- The approaches of the municipalities of Amsterdam and Graz, experienced through peer to peer working, create a more integrated and predictable approach to the planning of green infrastructure through early identification of opportunities and mapping to communicate them.
- Whilst the English Planning system is not based on the same zoning system as the Dutch and Austrian systems, there is transferability in setting expectations through specifications for provision and adoption of highway, drainage and open spaces in Cornwall. The techniques and approaches experienced by the project team and stakeholders have helped to influence new approaches.

### **Action Description: Development of a new approach to the built and natural environment guidance:**

The key action identified both through the initial literature review alongside discussions with internal and external stakeholders and experience gained through the project has identified the need for a collaborative development process that brings together departments and services across the Council to agree a single approach to embedding green infrastructure approaches in planning guidance designed to improve the quality of the built and natural environment in Cornwall.

The development of the approach consists of the development of the guidance to encourage the right behaviours and standard of development alongside the restructuring of the specification and adoption processes of the council. This is particularly relevant to the highway adoption process. The highway design guide and open spaces strategies will also be incorporated into the new approach to reduce future conflict in standards.

This guidance is being created in partnership with stakeholders for two target audiences: professional developers and agents designing schemes and submitting development

proposals; and Parishes and others proposing the allocation of green infrastructure and the creation of GI policies in Neighbourhood Plans and other locally created documents and action plans.

The influencing of the Local Plan as an additional indicator for the project has been chosen to ensure that the policy applied to all development in Cornwall and influencing the economic development strategy for Cornwall is based around the principles of mainstreaming GI. This is particularly important given current uncertainty around future structural funding or replacement mechanisms. The Council is currently preparing a long-term strategy that will influence the development of any amended Local Plan policy, influencing of that process through discussions with economic and environmental growth colleagues will help embed the learning from the project and GI principles into new and amended policy.

The importance of long-term stewardship has been raised through involvement of stakeholders in the project and through the literature review. The importance of stewardship and community involvement in developing this approach has been raised by the project partners in Amsterdam and Ferrara through peer to peer working and the publication of Ferrara's participation handbook. Engagement with the stakeholder group in Cornwall and engagement with officers across directorates of the Council has identified that stewardship is critical to the development of the Cornwall GI approach.

### **Step 1: Review of all relevant Cornwall guidance:**

- Identify all strategies relevant to green infrastructure and built environment;
- Review previous planning and investment decisions to understand where changes are required.
- Assemble multi-disciplinary team across directorates to examine working practice, specifications, adoption processes and guidance that impact GI decisions and identify good practice to use alongside good practices identified through PERFECT.
- Use group to identify outcomes required from new development and opportunities to streamline provision and specification of green infrastructure in Cornwall.

Timeframe: Semester 5, 2019

### **Step 2: Development of the Cornwall Design Guide**

Using learning from step 1 identify gaps in knowledge and gaps to be filled. Develop outline guidance framework to create a consistent approach to the new guidance.

Timeframe: Semester 6, 2019/20

### **Step 3: Training programme:**

- Establish training approach and programme of sessions to embed learning from the project, using experience gained from the partners.

- Normalise and embed the new approach through training of officers of the Council, Councillors and the development industry, agents and applicants.

Timeframe: Semesters 5 and 6, 2019/20 for initial training with follow up in semester 7 alongside launch of guidance and approach

**Step 4: Long-term stewardship approach:**

- Work with the New Communities Group in the UK and Ferrara and Amsterdam to understand better approaches taken in those municipalities to Long-term stewardship.
- Utilise knowledge developed by Ferrara in their Communities handbook to inform the process being considered in Cornwall.
- Explore potential for co-creation opportunities in new development to allow communities to have a key influence and role in the planning and maintenance of green infrastructure.

Timeframe: Semesters 5 and 6, 2019/20 scoping and development of approach, Semester 7, 2020 testing of approach and adoption

**Step 5: Develop assessment metric:**

- Develop, design, and test a decision aiding tool with communities to facilitate decision making/implement high quality GI.

Timeframe: Semester 6, 2019/20 – implementation Semester 7, 2020

**Step 6: Policy Review:**

Use development of guidance and learning from the project to inform the updating of the Cornwall Local Plan by:

- Identifying gaps in policy and approaches to amalgamate and strengthen the policy approach towards green infrastructure and its role in economic development, health and wellbeing and community building.
- Influence the development of a long-term strategy (including planning and Economic Development policy) through discussions with economic and environmental growth colleagues to embed the learning from the project;
- Ensure that any new settlement proposals being considered are firmly rooted in green infrastructure provision and developed using best practice guidance, including that developed by the TCPA.

Timeframe: Semesters 6 & 7, 2019/20 Initial conversations and scoping. Semesters 8 & 9 2020/21 development of new Local Plan or other planning policies as required.

**Step 7: Monitoring:**

- Undertake annual monitoring of planning decisions to establish the effectiveness of the new guidance, including interviews and other feedback from planning officers, developers and agents of the effectiveness of the guidance.

- Continue to review other guidance available from other Councils and Partners to establish whether benchmarks are effective or should be updated.

Timeframe: Semesters 7, 8, 9, 10 and beyond.

### Players involved:

The following players are engaged internally within the Council, but provide linkages to external organisations related to their subject matter. This includes valuable linkages and liaison to the Local Nature and Local Economic Partnerships. Both parties will be engaged in understanding current issues with delivery and understanding and conceptualising potential remedy to ensure that Green Infrastructure is delivered through the new approaches proposed.

- **Cornwall Council Economic Growth Service** – The service will be involved in establishing the actions required to embed approaches in economic policy for Cornwall and replacement funding and enable this to be effected.
- **Cornwall Council Environment Team** – the service will be involved in understanding the actions required to address issues raised by the project and by practical experience assisting the development of the joint approach and embedding approaches through the development of delivery plans for the Council's Environmental Growth Strategy.
- **Green Infrastructure for Growth team (Cornwall Council)** – an ERDF funding project aimed at improving the biodiversity of local green spaces in 5 areas of Cornwall. Lessons learned from the project in respect of the potential for creating biodiverse green spaces has helped shape the approach to new GI provision in development.
- **Cornwall Public Health Team** – this statutory service is helping to develop an integrated approach to public health improvements driven by green infrastructure provision. This follows identification of key health challenges of inactivity, poor diet and social isolation/loneliness and the ability of GI to help address them as part of a coordinated approach to service provision.

In addition, the Council is engaged in regular events to understand how planning techniques, policy and guidance can be shaped to enable the effective delivery of development and to reflect local priorities effectively in the delivery of green infrastructure. The Agent and Development Forums and Parish Councils provide direct access to developers and communities, helping to develop and test approaches to new GI guidance and provision. Parishes and elected Councillors provide a valuable link to communities in understanding priorities for green infrastructure provision and the development of projects.

- **Cornwall Agent and Developer Forums** – bring together developers and agents creating new development schemes in Cornwall. A method of collaborative developing and disseminating new guidance and practice for GI in Cornwall.
- **Building Research Establishment and Royal Institute of British Architects** are important links to designers and architects in the creation and testing of the new approaches to design guidance and policy.

- **Parish councillors** – locally elected politicians making key decisions and recommendations on development and developing Neighbourhood Plans and associated guidance and action plans for green infrastructure.
- Cornwall Council elected Councillors – locally elected politicians making key decisions on development proposals, policy, strategy, procurement and procedures.

**Natural England and the Environment Agency** – the national agencies of Government for Environment, Wildlife and drainage. Both provide vital links at local and national level to transfer knowledge from the PERFECT and to assist in the development of effective and sound policy approaches to planning GI.

**Eden Project** – environmental charity based in Cornwall, contributing research and practice and helping disseminate good practice locally and nationally.

### **Timeframes:**

The timescales per element of the Action are outlined above, but are in summary:

The development of the new planning guidance is already in development alongside the PERFECT project. A first draft of the design guide setting out the Council's objectives for new development and green space provision is anticipated in April 2019. Adoption of the design guide is programmed for Winter 2019.

Development of new technical standards and adoption procedures (including long-term stewardship approaches) will include a consultation in Winter 2019 and adoption in Spring 2020.

The long term vision for Cornwall is currently under scope and will be reported to Council in winter 2019. The assessment of policy changes required for the Local plan is scheduled for Spring 2020 with work on policy changes commencing in Spring 2020.

### **Costs**

Staffing time for the development of the new guidance approach; costs of production and printing of copies; costs of workshops and dissemination events; development of new technical content for specifications and standards and adoption processes. Local Plan review process and additional evidence collection in relation to GI related content.

### **Funding sources**

Development and dissemination of the new guidance approach being undertaken in Phase 1 are being met from the staffing budget and meeting/dissemination event budgets. Phase 2 activity (other than monitoring) will be met from departmental budget and funding bids.

Budgets to be identified for technical assistance with development of new specifications and standards and long-term stewardship research and approach. Budgets to be identified for Local Plan review and evidence collection as scale of challenge identified.

## **Action 2 - Creating a comprehensive, locally led understanding of green infrastructure opportunities and ensuring that they are understood and used by decision makers.**

### **Background:**

- The project has identified a lack of tangible and consistent evidence to drive the development of green infrastructure networks and to ensure the provision of functional networks of green.
- Green infrastructure planning is often absent in neighbourhood plans in Cornwall and there is a lack of priority given to the creation of multi-functional green space. There is often a lack of knowledge of the opportunities to achieve enhanced GI networks through local planning initiatives.
- A lack of knowledge of local opportunities and agreed priorities is in turn hampering the ability of decision makers to achieve the right GI in the right places.
- The project and experience of the approaches of the municipalities of Amsterdam, Graz and Ferrara has shown the benefits of a mapped and zoned approach to the planning of green infrastructure.
- The importance of a long-term vision that identifies the best opportunities for GI provision have been identified in the Waterproof City initiatives explored in Amsterdam and the Zonal maps in Graz. The engagement of communities in Ferrara in the development of a green infrastructure plan has also shown approaches to engagement that have provided ideas for application to Cornwall.
- Whilst the English Planning system is not based on the same zoning system, the development of mapped resources at a local level to clearly convey the need for functional linked GI networks and improvement of multi-functionality of existing and proposed spaces can provide a powerful tool for planning and creating additional certainty in the planning and provision of GI.
- It is desirable to involve communities directly in the process of assessing existing GI and exploring ways of improving and bolstering networks and the preparation of local action plans for GI improvements.

### **Action Description: Development of a Green GIS spatial opportunities resource for Cornwall**

This action draws on the experience of partners in Graz and Amsterdam using spatial mapping to set out requirements for GI provision. Stakeholders and the project team learned how the development of mapped resources has helped to identify priorities and clear actions and importantly a shared understanding of opportunities for the development of GI in both locations. It also provides much needed clarity and certainty to the process of planning for networks of green infrastructure. It is recognised that the planning systems do not operate in

exactly the same way, but clarity of actions required and spatial representation is relevant to create an environment of certainty of action required for specific sites and locations. The main action is to create a mapped resource showing the provision, gaps and opportunities for green infrastructure networks. This has been identified as a significant deficiency by the initial literature review and surveys alongside discussions with internal and external stakeholders. There is significant interest from Neighbourhood Planning Groups in creating mapping resources as both a prompt for decision makers and an opportunity to seek and allocate funding for GI initiatives in their parishes and plan areas.

The learning from the pilot will result in the development of guidance and a handbook of advice for Parishes and others proposing the allocation of green infrastructure and the creation of GI policies in Neighbourhood Plans and other locally created documents and action plans.

The development of the mapping resource will allow for the development of projects alongside the parishes and assistance in preparing local GI priorities for CIL top-slice spend. Mapping of strategic GI networks and improvement potential is being undertaken through a separate project in partnership with Exeter University called 'SWEEP' (South West Partnership for Environmental and Economic Prosperity). Overlaps between projects will be subject to additional assistance with communities to understand opportunities.

The mapping resources from parishes will be digitised by the Council and made available on an interactive GIS database provided to parishes and via the Council's public facing systems to the wider community. The opportunities mapping will be accessible to decision makers within the Council to guide planning and economic development decisions.

The project will be further supported through the development of the first action related to improved guidance on GI for Neighbourhood Planning Groups. We are also helping to develop an education package on GI benefits and approaches for dissemination to young people in schools. This will help to draw younger people into the consideration and planning of GI networks and mapping alongside more established members of the community. Identify all strategies relevant to green infrastructure and built environment and review through back cast of previous planning and investment decisions to understand where changes are required. Assemble multi-disciplinary team across directorates to examine working practice, specifications, adoption processes and guidance that impact GI decisions and identify good practice to use alongside good practices identified through PERFECT. Use group to identify the outcomes required from new development and opportunities to streamline provision and specification of green infrastructure in Cornwall.

#### **Step 1: Identify pilot opportunity for method and testing location:**

- Undertake presentations to introduce the concepts of GI and the opportunities afforded by mapping GI networks and opportunities with Parishes.
- Identify a group of parishes (to include areas of deprivation and investment of structural funding) willing to explore the development of a pilot mapping project alongside local people to inform the development of local GI and Investment Plans.

Timeframe: Semester 5, 2019

**Step 2: Develop draft methodology for project:**

- Work with selected parishes group and Natural England and other internal stakeholders and Cornwall Councillors to develop a method to map resources across the parish areas, ground truth information currently held and assess the quality, functioning and connectivity of GI in each place. Use this to inform the development of an approach to be rolled out across all 213 parishes in Cornwall.
- Work with the University of Exeter to create an adapted framework for guided conversations related to the development of a study being undertaken with residents in social housing in the area to explore living conditions and community aspirations relating to facilities. Use the method for piloting alongside the development of the GI mapping to help identify community actions for improvement.
- Understand techniques used by PERFECT partners, particularly in Amsterdam on Rainproof /Plan Amsterdam and Ferrara Community Participation handbook to inform and iterate the methodology.

Timeframe: Semesters 5 and 6 for development and initial piloting of method with follow up in semesters 6 and 7 to engage communities

**Step 3: Publish mapping pilot and iterate local Action Plans:**

- Work with the University of Exeter to publish strategic green infrastructure information being collected under the SWEEP project to establish a consistent mapping resource across Cornwall to which local information can be added incrementally by this mapping project.
- Use draft method to work intensively with Parishes, publish pilot mapping and work with decision makers to understand the usefulness of the resource.
- Digitise mapping and make available on an interactive GIS database provided to parishes and via the Council's public facing systems to the wider community.
- Work with Parishes to identify actions and potential investment sources that could help deliver GI changes anticipated.
- Use emerging action plans and method to inform the development of guidance for use by other areas.

Timeframe: Semesters 6 and 7 for publication of mapping and development of draft action plan methodology

**Step 4: Develop and publish guidance for method:**

- Use learning from the pilot to develop guidance and a handbook of advice for Parishes and others proposing the allocation of green infrastructure and the creation of GI policies in Neighbourhood Plans and other locally created documents and action plans.
- Help to develop an education package on GI benefits and approaches for dissemination to young people in schools to draw younger people into the consideration and planning of GI networks and mapping alongside more established members of the community.

Timeframe: Semesters 6 and 7 2019/2020

**Step 5: Monitoring:**

- Undertake monitoring of Neighbourhood Plans published and submitted to the Council to establish the effectiveness of the new guidance, including interviews and other feedback from Neighbourhood Planning Groups of the effectiveness of the guidance.
- Continue to review practice being developed to establish whether the technique and method is effective or should be updated/amended.

Timeframe: Semesters 7, 8, 9, 10 and beyond.

## Players involved

The Council is engaged in regular events to understand how planning techniques, policy and guidance can be shaped to enable the effective delivery of development and to reflect local priorities effectively in the delivery of green infrastructure. Parish Councils and elected Councillors provide direct access to developers and communities, helping to develop and test approaches to new GI guidance and provision. Parishes and elected Councillors provide a valuable link to communities in understanding priorities for green infrastructure provision and the development of projects.

- **Parish councillors** – locally elected politicians making key decisions and recommendations on development and developing Neighbourhood Plans and associated guidance and action plans for green infrastructure. Parishes form the qualifying bodies for Neighbourhood Planning and NDP groups are generally wholly or majority parish members. Parishes will be directly involved in the development and application of the method.
- **Cornwall Council elected Councillors** – locally elected politicians making key decisions on development proposals, policy, strategy, procurement and procedures.

The following players are engaged internally within the Council, but provide linkages to external organisations related to their subject matter. This includes valuable linkages and liaison to the Local Nature and Local Economic Partnerships. Both parties will be engaged in understanding current issues and ways of delivering GI proactively, including potential sources of funding and information for the development of practical assistance for GI policy making, priorities mapping and funding opportunities.

- **Cornwall Council Economic Growth Service** – assistance in development of guidance on local GI action plans and potential funding sources. This will also allow the exploration of potential future funding and match funding sources as replacement funding and delivery mechanisms are identified.
- **Cornwall Council Environment Team** – assisting the development of the GIS mapping method and providing advice on green spaces, funding opportunities and embedding approaches through the development of delivery plans for the Council's Environmental Growth Strategy.
- **Cornwall Public Health Team** – this statutory service is helping to develop an integrated approach to public health improvements driven by green infrastructure provision. This follows identification of key health challenges of inactivity, poor diet and social isolation/loneliness and the ability of GI to help address them as part of a coordinated approach to service provision.

- **Green Infrastructure for Growth team (Cornwall Council)** – an ERDF funding project aimed at improving the biodiversity of local green spaces in 5 areas of Cornwall. Lessons learned from the project in respect of the potential for creating biodiverse green spaces will help to provide examples of GI improvement at parish and local level and the possibilities for change in management regimes/introduction of multi-national networks and spaces.
- **Natural England and the Environment Agency** – the national agencies of Government for Environment, Wildlife and drainage. Both provide vital links at local and national level to transfer knowledge from the PERFECT and to assist in the development of effective and sound policy approaches to planning GI. Natural England is assisting in the development of the mapping method.
- **Eden Project** – environmental charity, contributing research and practice and helping disseminate good practice locally and nationally.

### **Timeframe:**

The timescales per element of the Action are outlined above, but are in summary:

The pilot study (please note that this is not an Interreg Pilot) with the Camborne, Pool and Redruth Network Area Councils has already been started. The data collection phase is expected to be complete in August/September 2019.

Guidance relating to the development of the mapping is being developed concurrently and will be completed in late summer 2019. Uploading of the first mapping will also be undertaken in late summer 2019.

Once the pilot has been completed, guidance will be published and the method launched with the remainder of the parishes in Autumn/Winter 2019.

Due to the voluntary nature of Neighbourhood plans, the method cannot be mandated for all parishes, but the Council will identify areas that would be of strategic benefit (e.g. subject to significant growth or have established issues relating to poor provision of GI) for assistance and publicise the approach that has been developed. This will be undertaken alongside the development of the project, but with a notional date for agreeing priorities in Winter 2019.

### **Costs:**

The development of the mapping resource by parishes will require time by volunteers and in larger settlements by grounds people and other practitioners to capture information.

Digitisation and uploading, completion of attributes tables will be undertaken by the Council and costs will need to be established to understand whether additional funding needs to be identified.

The development of guidance for parishes is covered through the staff resourcing funding via departmental budgets.

### **Funding sources:**

The development of the mapping resource can be covered in many instances by funding made available for Neighbourhood Planning, but the exact resource required, alongside staff resource for digitisation and uploading of maps/creation of attributes will only be known through the completion of the Cornwall pilot.

### **Action 3 - Green schools for the future pilot: Creating a green infrastructure approach for use by schools to plan and construct pupil-led green infrastructure projects.**

#### **Background:**

- It is desirable to involve communities directly in the process of assessing existing GI and exploring ways of improving and bolstering networks and the preparation of local action plans for GI improvements.
- Cornwall Council is keen to develop a pilot project based on the experience of the 'Amsterdam Impulse School playgrounds' programme, which seeks to increase access to greenspace and enhance resilience through reducing the area covered by hard surfaces in urban playgrounds.
- The pilot will provide several Practical Demonstrations of new or improved green spaces within or adjacent to schools that will develop improved green spaces and develop metrics to determine the associated value to the local community. The focus of these demonstrations will be to understand the benefits of increased multi-functionality of green spaces, with an emphasis on:
  - Engagement with the schools and community through co-creation and design;
  - Developing an educational resource to raise awareness of the value of multi-functional green spaces;
  - Incorporating and improving natural green/blue infrastructure for flood resilience; and
  - Increasing natural features and habitat to improve diversity and eco-resilience.
- Cornwall is a predominantly rural area, but many of our urban schools are critically short of green infrastructure and many are in areas where there are surface water drainage issues. There is often little accessible, multi-functional greenspace where children can experience nature and understand the contribution that GI can make to our climate and wellbeing. This is frequently also the case in rural schools. Existing schools often send all rainwater to the combined sewers, creating additional problems for drainage and flooding.

#### **Action Description: Development of a Green GIS spatial opportunities resource for Cornwall**

This pilot action is based on the experience of Amsterdam City Council's 'Amsterdam Impulse School playgrounds' programme, which seeks to increase access to greenspace and enhance resilience through reducing the area covered by hard surfaces in urban playgrounds. It involves the designing and implementation of a programme that links young people and surrounding communities in understanding the opportunities unlocked by GI provision in schools and the public realm. The project is designed to link schools and communities where children and communities around schools can be involved in developing GI projects, particularly related to the water environment.

The Amsterdam programme is necessarily focussed around urban schools and the particular issues of the city in terms of access to green space and flooding reduction. Cornwall has similar challenges to those of Amsterdam in many of its urban schools as noted in A1, but in addition there are a number of rural schools that have more extensive grounds, but are underutilising GI opportunities. This could be a valuable expansion of the scheme to embed GI practice into more rural schools and provide a wider methodology to influence other areas and funding streams.

The pilot study aims to build on the approach developed by Amsterdam, but to increase the educational element related to the challenges of climate change and adaptation, which is increasingly important to embed in planning across the UK and Europe and to identify practical actions at school that can show the positive opportunities for adaptation and changes.

A critical difference between the Amsterdam and Cornwall approach at this time is a difference in funding mechanisms for such interventions. This requires an amended methodology to that used in Amsterdam to enable opportunities to engage with public and private sectors to identify funding and partnership working opportunities. The way that schools are managed and maintained in the UK and considerations of out of hours access to school grounds as a result of this also needs to be considered in the methodology, potentially helping to expand the benefits of the interventions outside of the confines of the school grounds.

Therefore whilst the basic methodology used by Amsterdam will heavily influence the development of the pilot project there will need to be operational changes to the programme. This includes the approaches to designing the scheme with the school and an educational approach to be incorporated into lessons. It will also use the basis of the design competition to engage young people directly in the final design and appearance of the scheme. This is very much left to schools in the Amsterdam scheme, but further support for the education element and support for the schools would be required in any UK adaptation of the scheme. This would involve the use of a local partner and the education department as well as planners, hydrologists and members of the Council's carbon neutral team. This would allow for a package of support and education to be developed that could then be rolled out as applicable to the local area.

The methodology will be adapted further to encourage partnerships between primary and secondary schools to engage at both a younger and older set of children. The scheme will also encourage the development of volunteering opportunities and the use of local companies and partners to help deliver the project rather than a direct award of funding. This works better with UK finance structures and encourages further longevity to the schemes. The development of these amendments will help the method to adapt to a UK context, but also provide ideas as to how the project could be adapted by other European partners as a response to climate emergencies and the need to engage young people directly in adaptation and designing for the future.

We would like to continue to work with the Amsterdam partners to develop the approach that has been taken and adapt it to the UK situation, exploring funding mechanisms and benefits being established through the monitoring process for the project and feeds into the Amsterdam Action plan for PERFECT. The monitoring phase of the PERFECT project allows this work to be observed and for the partners to have a direct working relationship.

A short list has been compiled of schools that could participate in the project and provide a good cross section of types of site and environmental drivers and we're keen to work with local providers to establish a local and replicable model to allow further schools to be involved. A local partner as well as relevant professional staff from the Council will help to develop a programme alongside schools for education and to help design solutions that work with the challenges experienced in the area and school involved. Experience will be sought from the Amsterdam programme to help develop a locally relevant governance structure and approach to funding, including from bodies such as the water company as part of reducing water discharge to the public sewer.

The learning from the pilot will result in the development of guidance, lesson plans and other materials to embed the process as well as the identification of on-going funding opportunities to extend the scheme.

#### **Step 1: Identify pilot opportunity and establish materials and approach:**

- Education approach (consisting of the education pack designed alongside the schools through involvement of planners, hydrologists, ecologists and education), drawn on Amsterdam approach, including materials for lessons;
- Selection of the 3 pilot schools and undertaking of the baseline survey;
- Agree a small number of initial sessions with the school for pupils to meet the team, learn about GI, carry out a survey of the school grounds and immediate surroundings and start to think about the issues that their area has or creates;
- Pupils challenged to explore opportunities and design interventions for their school, accompanied by a design competition.

Timeframe: Semester 7, 2020

#### **Step 2: Development of schemes and construction:**

- Following the design competition, schemes will be designed up to full specification in partnership with our external partner and additional engineering support as required shared between the external contractor and staff from the Council depending on the complexity of the works and presented back in the form of plans, visualisations and options to the schools (and communities where applicable) through a specially organised workshop arranged and staffed by Council staff and our external partner to demonstrate what can be achieved and to seek feedback.
- An additional cycle will be added to allow for redesign or amendment of plans following feedback. Construction activities are likely to be limited to smaller scale interventions due to space available in most playgrounds and may typically include rain gardens, small green roofed shelters, natural play opportunities, tree planting and removal of paved areas for planting. Help in the construction of the schemes will be sought from contractors and community members and parents in the locality and funding matches from water

companies and others explored to ensure that communities are engaged and best value for money is achieved.

Timeframe: Semester 8

### **Step 3: Learning feedback, monitoring and future funding identification:**

- Following completion of construction, learning reports will be assembled to show how the scheme can be applied out to a wider cohort of schools. The survey from semester 1 will be undertaken again to understand how pupils and parents appreciate the GI interventions made. Scientific measures will be made by children to show how much water has been saved from direct drainage and how biodiversity has improved across sites. Feedback will be sought from the schools and partners involved in the project to understand how improvements can be made. Following completion of the survey and construction phase the programme will be re-evaluated by Council staff and the external partner and learning passed to the economy, carbon neutral, planning and education teams to identify funding for subsequent phases. If the scheme has been successful or is considered to be replicable at scale, applications will be prepared to extend or replicate the pilot action in other schools exploring the availability of funds in the Community Locally Led Development programme, the Carbon Reduction Programme, planning contributions from the Cornwall Local Plan and other sources. The majority of this work will be undertaken by Council staff, a total of around 40 days for two staff (this allows for interactions with other staff and stakeholders).

Timeframe: Semester 9

### **Players involved**

Whilst the basic methodology used by Amsterdam will heavily influence the development of the pilot project further support for the education element and support for the schools will be required in any UK adaptation of the scheme. This would involve the use of a local partner and the education department as well as planners, hydrologists and members of the Council's carbon neutral team. This would allow for a package of support and education to be developed that could then be rolled out as applicable to the local area. Partnerships will be encouraged between primary and secondary schools to engage at both a younger and older set of children.

- **Cornwall Council elected Councillors** – locally elected politicians making key decisions on development proposals, policy, strategy, procurement and procedures.

The following players are engaged internally within the Council, but provide linkages to external organisations related to their subject matter. This includes valuable linkages and liaison to the Local Nature and Local Economic Partnerships. Both parties will be engaged in understanding current issues and ways of delivering GI proactively, including potential sources of funding and information for the development of practical assistance for GI policy making, priorities mapping and funding opportunities.

- **Cornwall Council Economic Growth Service** – assistance in identification of potential funding sources. This will also allow the exploration of potential future funding and match funding sources as replacement funding and delivery mechanisms are identified.
- **Cornwall Council Environment Team** – assisting the development of the technical content of the programme – including biodiversity, drainage and delivery of the Council’s Environmental Growth Strategy.
- **Cornwall Council Education**– the Council’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) coordinator will be actively involved in the development of the approach. This will help to coordinate the education offer and be the main linkage to schools.
- **Green Infrastructure for Growth team (Cornwall Council)** – an ERDF funding project aimed at improving the biodiversity of local green spaces in 5 areas of Cornwall. Lessons learned from the project in respect of the potential for creating biodiverse green spaces will help to provide examples of GI improvement of small spaces.
- **Natural England and the Environment Agency** – the national agencies of Government for Environment, Wildlife and drainage. Both provide vital links at local and national level to transfer knowledge from the PERFECT and to assist in the development of effective and sound policy approaches to planning GI. Natural England is assisting in the development of the mapping method.
- **Eden Project** – environmental charity, contributing research and practice and helping disseminate good practice locally and nationally.

### **Timeframe:**

The timescales per element of the Pilot Action are outlined above, but are in summary:

The selection of the schools and development of the education resources package will be developed in Semester 7 2020.

The projects will be developed and constructed during semester 8.

The projects and use of the education package will be assessed and final guidance and funding opportunities will be assessed during semester 9. Once the pilot has been completed, guidance will be published and the method launched at the end of Semester 9.

### **Costs and Funding Sources:**

The development of the education package, design and construction of the projects will be funded by Interreg Europe as a pilot project.

The development of further guidance required will be covered through staff resourcing funding via departmental budgets.

During the project, funding sources for future rounds will be explored across the Council and its partners.

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