

Appendix 4 to Issue 6 (SH3)

Green Infrastructure
Statement of Intent

North Whiteley Consortium
October 2012

Statement of Intent North Whiteley Consortium

Introduction

The North Whiteley Consortium (NW Consortium) has prepared and agreed this Statement of Intent (SoI) to assist the Inspector in his consideration of Policy SH3 of Winchester City Council's Deposit Draft Core Strategy. The SoI is intended to provide the Inspector with confidence that the NW Consortium will work with key third party organisations to bring forward on and off-site green infrastructure (GI) as part of a comprehensive GI Strategy to enable the development of North Whiteley. It sets out the commitment of the NW Consortium to this process ahead of the detail that will come forward as part of a planning application in due course.

Off-site GI

Whiteley Pastures is a mixed woodland with some ancient woodland extending to 201ha in total and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It lies immediately to the east of the North Whiteley development site, and is owned and managed by Forest Enterprise.

Whiteley Pastures is the subject of a Forest Design Plan (FDP), a strategic document used by Forest Enterprise (FE) to demonstrate sustainable forest management in the long-term (30 years plus) and to define a 10-year programme of work that is carried out under statutory approval. Forest Design Plans set out objectives for woodlands with the aim of finding a balance between social, economic and environmental interests (Forestry Commission, 2008¹). The Whiteley Pastures Forest Design Plan includes provision for developing new partnerships associated with the provision of green infrastructure in and around new development. This is underpinned by FE's ongoing task of managing and developing the public forest estate to deliver quality recreational opportunities (Forestry Commission, 2008).

As FE acknowledge Whiteley Pastures provides considerable opportunity for the people who live and work in Whiteley to explore the surrounding landscape, appreciate its wildlife and lead an active lifestyle. At present, visitors use the woodland for dog-walking and running. However, they tend to stay on the forest road and wider tracks because many of the trails have become overgrown and wet underfoot. Huge potential therefore exists to improve access within the woodland and to promote this resource within the wider community (Forestry Commission, 2008).

Whiteley Pastures offers the potential to provide future residents of North Whiteley with a comprehensive recreational and open space facility, which will substantially contribute to a package of measures needed to mitigate the wider environmental impacts of the development. Natural England has agreed to the principle of the appropriate use of Whiteley Pastures for mitigation of potentially adverse effects on nearby European nature conservation sites.

¹ Forestry Commission, 2008. Whiteley Pastures Forest Design Plan. 2008-2038.

On-site GI

The site identified by Policy SH3 comprises an existing and substantial GI framework that will be retained and utilised as an important structural element of the master plan that comes forward as part of a planning application in due course. This existing framework includes grasslands designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), woodland SINCs, tree belts, hedgerows and established water bodies. The framework represents the basis of an on-site GI provision that will link to the off-site GI to provide and to support a coherent, substantial and functional recreational resource available for future residents of North Whiteley and existing residents of Whiteley alike. Taken as a whole, it is expected that the on and off-site GI provision will provide sufficient opportunity to mitigate the impacts of the North Whiteley proposals on the nearby European nature conservation sites, when considered alone. The GI Strategy will also include and describe attenuation areas, SUDS, landscape plantings, allotments and other informal open areas designed and managed to provide long-term biodiversity gains.

On-going negotiation

The North Whiteley Consortium will continue an established programme of positive and constructive negotiations with Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, Natural England and Forest Enterprise to prepare a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy as part of a planning application submission for North Whiteley. This will set out the detailed proposals for both on-site and off-site GI as well as the funding and management structures needed to demonstrate delivery. The contributions and obligations required for the delivery of the strategy will be secured through a S106 Agreement.

Key Principles

- **Enablement**

The NW Consortium will work with all key stakeholders to bring forward a GI strategy necessary to support and deliver a high quality community in line with the provisions of Policy SH3 and to address the tests of development set out in the Habitats Regulations 2010². The GI Strategy will be structured to include the following information for all on and off-site GI:

- baseline information for all areas forming part of the GI
- detailed proposals for recreational provision including pedestrian and cycle routes, capital works to off-site tracks to provide all weather surfaces, signage and way marking, interpretation boards and information, litter and dog bin management

² The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

- detailed proposals for ecological management to maintain and enhance biodiversity interests across the site, with particular regard to the SINC status of some of the on-site GI and the SSSI status of Whiteley Pastures
 - details of personnel employed to implement capital works, manage the recreational and biodiversity resource in the long-term and work with new and existing residents in the wider Whitely community to encourage community ownership and responsible on-going use of the GI.
 - costings for the works and details of the funding mechanisms needed for third parties to implement all capital works and to manage the process of renewal and replacement, as well as the on-going management of the GI resource for the long-term future.
- **Agreement with consultees**

The NW Consortium will ensure that the GI Strategy supports and is consistent with FE's obligations to restore the Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copses Copse SSSI (of which Whiteley Pastures comprises part) to favourable condition and will ensure that it remains robust to increased recreational pressure. The NW Consortium will consult and work closely with Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, FE and Natural England in delivering the GI Strategy both as a document, and on the ground.
 - **Capital and revenue costs**

The NW Consortium will agree a funding model for delivery of the GI Strategy with Winchester City Council. This will cover capital costs and long-term year on year costs associated with employment, renewal, replacement and on-going management costs. Details of the agreement will be included in the GI Strategy.