

GHP Project updates

The GHP has been working on a number of projects since March 2008. Of these projects, Stevenage Town Centre Gardens, Bushey Arches and Building Futures are in progress while Community Spaces and Elstree and Borehamwood Station and are currently in development and South Oxhey Library is now complete. These projects have the potential to raise the awareness of the partnership amongst regional stakeholders.

Live projects

Stevenage Town Centre Gardens - Stevenage Borough Council

The final Stage 1 works in the park have now been completed. GHP and HTA Landscape Design's Stage 2 tender for the detailed masterplanning stage of the project was successful. Through GHP, artist Simon Grennan has been appointed to engage the community throughout this new stage and in the development of Audience and Volunteer Plans. Simon will also provide creative support to the design team with a particular focus on New Town design heritage.

Stressing the important linkages between the Town Centre Gardens and the local community, GHP, HTA landscape Design and Stevenage BC attended a 'Stevenage Day' event on the 6th of June. This was an opportunity to present the future vision of the gardens to the community and provided a valuable platform to secure feedback and canvass support for potential project volunteers. In addition to the 'Stevenage Day' a community fun day event is being run as a tester community led event that will feed into ongoing plans for the area. The event will allow stakeholders to gauge the levels of enthusiasm for community engagement and ownership of the Town Centre Gardens and as such, is a crucial step in the development of the area.

Bushey Arches – Watford Borough Council

GHP is currently working with Clipston Construction Control and the rest of the construction team to deliver the project. Network Rail has agreed to the proposed plans and Herts Highways improvements have now been completed. These improvements include the laying of all electrical ducting required for the lighting works and a new vehicular access point for current and future maintenance activities. With planning permission recently approved, this will be followed by hard and soft landscaping on the roundabout and sculptural lighting under the archway to be completed by the end of 2008. In addition to these developments, Tony Stallard has created detailed designs and technical drawings for the Bushey Arches project in conjunction with lighting experts, Urbis.

Oxhey Library – Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

GHP appointed artists - Simon Grennan and Christopher Sperandio - have completed their community engagement exercises that examined the future services that could be delivered from the library. This groundbreaking engagement work called Perception AREA: *snapshot* worked with a wide variety of local residents and



successfully gathered their thoughts, views, visions and ambitions for the Oxhey library.

The outcome of this engagement has already been used by the HCC to support the continued development of the library's community engagement plan, recently submitted to the Big Lottery. This work has culminated in the publication of a book that presents all the material in an accessible way and was launched at an afternoon tea party at the library on 19 July. The book has been distributed to 800 households in the local community and is also available to loan from the library.

Building Futures

GHP is working with HCC to develop and market the Building Futures website. The aim is to transform the site into a dynamic and geographically specific urban toolkit that can encourage usage and ownership within the County, as well as supporting the development and management of County-wide targets. Building Futures is now a live project and the GHP are also discussing new partnership opportunities with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust about the forthcoming module of the Buildings Futures Guide which focuses on Landscape and Biodiversity.

The project team is now actively developing new case studies, updating the website and developing award scheme proposals. The initial work will culminate in a promotional event which is currently scheduled to be run in November 2008.

Developing projects

Hertsmere Community Spaces

The GHP is currently engaged with Hertsmere officers to develop two projects for the Borough, following a creative away day. The first project supports the implementation of the Hertsmere Play Strategy through the design and construction of three community spaces in the district. The Community Spaces project envisages innovative structures for use by young people and wider community as shelters. A substantial amount of community engagement has already taken place which will help the future commissioning of artists on this project. At present, a site on a park in Radlett has been identified where these visions could possibly be realised. However, the land is owned by the local Parish Council and approval is currently being sought for the pilot project to proceed.

Elstree and Borehamwood Station

In a bid to raise and improve the awareness of the local film heritage surrounding Elstree studios, the GHP has developed a proposal for community engagement in the enhancement of Elstree and Borehamwood Station and informing improvements to the main high street- Shenley Road. GHP –has drafted a statement of intent that outlines roles and plans for the project and outlines partner involvement. At this stage of project inception, the possibility of long term investment from a number of partners is being explored- including East of England Development Agency, Hertsmere BC, Hertfordshire County Council, Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council and First Capital Connect.

In addition to this work, Hertfordshire County Council is currently in discussions with First Capital Connect about producing a feasibility study to improve the frontage of the station. At present, these discussions are ongoing and the GHP are looking at the community engagement project to inform the design and improvements phase.



GHP website/knowledge Bank

The GHP website now features the 'Knowledge Bank' functionality. This data repository contains a wealth of information that the GHP has collected from its projects and assignments and is designed to inform and empower project partners with the knowledge that the GHP successfully employs in the development process. Regular e-bulletins will keep members informed about additions to the knowledge bank.

Local Area Agreement Indicators

20 Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators have been selected to monitor and evaluate the GHP between 2008 and 2010. These indicators have been selected because;

- They directly relate to the GHP approach, involving criteria such as volunteering and local people influencing local decisions).
- They are measurable, definable and can be used to monitor changes in local perceptions over a period of time.
- The indicators link into various national strategies related to civil participation, environmental improvements and local empowerment.

The purpose of these indicators is to establish how GHP projects have influenced local priority targets and establish a body of evidence that can be used as leverage for future projects. Of the 20 LAA indicators, the following three are of particular importance to the Green Heart Partnership during this phase of operations;

- The percentage of people from different backgrounds who get on well together in their local area is 81%.
- The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality is 29%.
- Participation in regular volunteering.

Case study: targeting LAA indicators in Stevenage

As LAA indicators cover a particular area, encompass a number of different and unrelated regeneration programmes and take a long time to change, it is difficult ascertain how the GHP directly influences the selected indicators. One of the ways to analyse GHP influence and circumvent this problem is to look at a particular GHP project and assess the selected indicators both before and after GHP involvement.

Stevenage Town Centre Gardens represents an ideal case study to examine GHP influence on LAA targets because there is a clear distinction between community consultation (and involvement) before and after the Green Heart Partnership became involved with the project.

Before the GHP became involved, Stevenage operated a limited community consultation mechanism in line with most other English Councils. When the community was consulted, council officers and representatives used standard methods. During the Town Centre Gardens developments, artists were brought in by the GHP to dynamically engage with the local community. The overriding idea was



to engage the community in ways not considered before and to give them ownership of their local regeneration agenda. Methods used included;

- Filming of local residents and their activities;
- Placing cultural activity in the heart of the TCG; and
- Local events run with residents.

These innovative methods are ongoing and a community fun day is scheduled to run on the 31st of August in the Gardens. Artists Simon Grennan is also recruiting a group of local people interested in being involved in the Gardens through volunteering and a 'Friends Group' who collectively will be responsible for organising and running the community fun day. Ultimately, this level of community support will be crucial to the success of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid which will enable the rest of the Masterplan to begin in April 2009.

Measuring change – understanding the counter factual

The target LAA indicators will be measured over the coming months by engaging with local residents through short paper-based surveys and (where possible) short telephone interviews. This will be done through interaction with the volunteers recruited by Simon Grennan. However, in order to understand the counter factual, we will also engage (using the same techniques) with community members who have had no – or little – connection to the GHP.

HACO e-survey

An electronic survey has recently been distributed to HACO members. The aim of the survey is to explore views surrounding the GHP and the arts, artists and regeneration in general. The findings of the survey will be summarised and distributed at the forthcoming HACO meeting.