



# Green Heart Partnership Business Plan

## 2007-2010

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## Introduction

This document presents the business plan for the next three years of the Green Heart Partnership. Following the successful first three years of the partnership, this business plan focuses on continuing the development of the partnership into a process which can be sustained by the local authority partners in the future.

## The vision

**GHP will facilitate the effective delivery of local and national policy and the broadening of the democratic process of community engagement, through an inter-disciplinary working approach driven by creativity.**

### Background

Green Heart is a Partnership initiative between Arts Council England, East and the eleven local authorities of Hertfordshire that aims to achieve growth and capacity between the arts and environment sectors. It looks to affect social change through policy development and realise creatively led capital development through informed joined-up decision making.

As one of the Arts Council England East's Arts Generate programmes, GHP works with Hertfordshire's local authorities using creativity to address government priorities beyond the arts sector and demonstrate the added value of working in partnership.

GHP engages Arts Development Officers and artists alongside Planners, Environmental Officers and others in a similar role in councils. It develops projects relating to public space, buildings and infrastructure that have a significant impact on the wider public environment. Its key focus is on involving creativity and artists in the early stages of developing such projects.

As a result it aims to:

- Develop much stronger inter-departmental and inter-agency working
- Involve communities in developing their environment
- Improve the design quality, environmental sustainability and quality of projects

GHP works with local authorities at all levels from policy and strategy development through to delivery. GHP also aims to demonstrate the value of the arts in wider public policy. This should lead to a wider recognition and use of the arts in pursuing environmental and other public policy goals.



The key objective for the next three years of GHP is:

**To support partnerships between the arts and local government non-arts sectors across policy, strategy and delivery of vibrant communities by:**

- Embedding the GHP approach within the county of Hertfordshire, and presenting it as a model for creatively driven partnership working in the region and beyond
- Employing creativity to help make communities and their environment more sustainable
- Increasing and highlighting arts' role and value in cross-departmental spend decisions
- Assisting with the effective delivery of local authority outputs through community engagement
- Developing quantitative and qualitative evidence of the wider impact of the GHP model

GHP has the potential to build upon its growing reputation and success. The external evaluation indicates that the positive brand recognition would help to further embed the GHP creative-led approach and raise the profile of Hertfordshire.

At a time when the Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreement targets encourage partnership-building and long-term community engagement, GHP offers a way forward with creative vision, support and mentoring for officers charged with delivery.

Through consultative, strategic and project-based work, GHP brings together the aspirations of the strategy with the practicalities of delivery to create vibrant communities.

### **The Work**

By using artists to instigate critical and creative thinking within inter-disciplinary teams of local authority officers, GHP has developed an innovative approach to developing vibrant communities.

GHP aims to address the inevitable knowledge gaps in the project teams by bringing on board additional partners or specialist services to provide expertise, personnel and creative solutions.

With all projects, GHP strives to develop a practice of creative collaboration that informs joined-up decision making and achieves sustainable solutions for the physical and social aspects of open space across the county. This process is often supported by placing artists at the heart of the community where they can capture the perceptions of local people in a way which can be fed back to the team to inform their decisions.

The Green Heart Partnership approach has been successful in assisting councils to secure additional funding for projects. The £1 million match funding target set for GHP projects over the first three years of the partnership (2004-2007) has already been well exceeded, achieving over £2 million to date.



## Opportunities

GHP has formal support from all eleven local authority partners, both in terms of committed and intended financial investment and in-kind support through Steering and Working Group membership. All eleven representatives of the Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers have signed an agreement committing subscriptions to GHP in 2007/08. Although as local authorities they cannot commit beyond the next financial year, they have also committed their intention for the following two years.

GHP projects across Hertfordshire to date have met with enthusiasm and encouragement from partners, many of them being used as regional and national case studies or nominated for awards beyond the county. In addition, the GHP approach has been instrumental in securing substantial amounts of external funding for some projects. This recognised success has led to the GHP approach having an influence on a number of additional projects in certain local authorities. As a result of this success, GHP has also been approached to work with new authority projects without the need for GHP seed funding. This is an excellent indication that the GHP model provides good value for money.

As well having an opportunity to seek higher profile, and regionally and nationally significant projects, GHP is also not restricted to developing projects with the public sector alone. GHP is also able to look for additional and more substantial funding to support some areas of both partnership and project development. This may come from public, voluntary or private sector investments.

Already, GHP is beginning to demonstrate to private developers that through better community engagement, they can develop more mutually beneficial joint-working practices with local authorities. There is a real opportunity to build upon these GHP successes to date to develop much stronger public/private/voluntary partnerships. This may also enable much stronger cross-county partnerships to develop.

GHP's points of difference provide opportunities for GHP to complement rather than compete with the work of other agencies working in the arts and environment sectors.

Currently, the GHP model is recognised and promoted by Arts Council England, East as a successful demonstration of how the arts can effectively deliver the local government agenda. It is also significant that the GHP is already delivering against two key aspects of the Arts Council England, East Agenda for the next few years: 'Taking Part' and 'Arts and Ecology'. GHP is therefore confident in maintaining Arts Council England, East support both in financial terms, and as an important advocate: an essential factor in sustaining the model over the next three years.

As an organic model, GHP is able to respond quickly to market forces and continue to provide value for money. The approach can be readily adapted to other areas of work, new trends and future opportunities e.g. further creative opportunities for community involvement.

Steering Group members will have a pro-active role as advocates for the partnership, helping to raise awareness of the model within the region and beyond. This recognition will further support the embedding of the approach within the county, and may also suggest further applications for GHP in related areas of work in addition to arts and environment.



## Project Plan

The GHP vision will be delivered through the following three strands of work<sup>1</sup>:

**CONNECT-** GHP will continue to develop close, practical, working relationships and projects through its inter-disciplinary model of working. Recognising the creatively-led multi-disciplinary approach GHP will facilitate an inter-disciplinary vehicle for project delivery. Working within the public, private and voluntary sectors in Hertfordshire, GHP will identify and link with regional and national contacts and initiatives. This strand covers the core administrative, management and delivery of the partnership.

**RESOURCE-** This strand provides professional training and capacity building through mentoring and networking for arts and environmental contacts and artists. Team development will be focused on those local authorities where there have been no GHP projects to date. Included within this strand are the following aspects of the work:

### Development Plan

GHP aims to build on its success to date and to deliver the Resource strand of work through a Development Plan which focuses on three key areas:

- **Capacity Building:** Embedding the inter-disciplinary approach in local authorities
  - Team Development: seminars and away days
  - Creative Project Development- Feasibility
  - Support with funding applications
- **Artist Development:** professional development of lead artists, emerging artists and students (undergraduates and post-graduates) through
  - Seminars
  - Publications
  - Mentoring
- **Evidence Base:** Creating a strong evidence base through
  - External Evaluation: developing qualitative and quantitative evidence to analyse the GHP model over the duration of the project
  - Advocacy: securing a regional and national profile to ensure support within the local authority sector and beyond
  - Communications: promoting the GHP brand

This Development Plan will be under constant review and where necessary and appropriate, additional funding may be sought to deliver or extend aspects of the plan.

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<sup>1</sup> See budget (Appendix 1)



**PROJECTS-** This strand covers creative development and project management of the GHP projects themselves.

All of this project work is informed through the GHP model of **creative engagement: Perception AREA**. Perception AREA uses creative practitioners to engage and capture the perceptions of a large number of local people from diverse backgrounds and age groups in relation to aspects of their open space.

GHP projects can be split into:

**Policy Development:** GHP works with its partners to creatively address the development of policy, strategy and guidance tools which can support the creation of high-quality public spaces.

**Capital Development:** Led by creative practitioners, GHP inter-disciplinary teams collaborate on capital development of innovative and sustainable public spaces.



## Financial Plan<sup>2</sup>

In line with the vision and Development Plan, the Financial Plan builds on the financial evidence over the past three years of GHP, to project the income/ expenditure over the next phase.

The Financial Plan reflects a phased approach to the RESOURCE strand, with strongest expenditure in the initial two years of the second phase of GHP. The investment is to help support the buy-in from the senior management teams of the local authorities; identify the additional professional development tools needed by the artists, ensure the authorities without projects in the first phase further mentoring and creative development and keep the profile high.

As the model embeds itself within the councils during this next phase, local authority in-kind support will guide the role of the core contract and costs for delivery. The Working and Steering Group will develop the future business plan and associate strands of work with the LANS team to ensure its exit strategy is forward-looking and developing alongside the delivery of Phase Two.

As much of the PROJECT work is dependant upon existing delivery targets, GHP will continue to reflect their match funding through cash, in-kind and capital expenditure effected by the GHP approach. By reflecting the complex multi-tier match funding, GHP's financial reporting will also inform the narrative of how the model of working has strong, positive impact upon the collective and ambitious joining-up of partner and project team resources.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1



## Organisational and Management Structure

GHP is governed through a legal agreement between East Herts Council (the Banker), all the other local authority partners, and LANS (the project manager). The governing body overseeing the partnership is the Steering Group, which directly reports to Hertfordshire Association of Cultural Officers.

### LANS Role

For the past three years, the LANS team has been project managing the Green Heart Partnership, directed by the Steering Group and supported by the Working Group. This role has been recognised as instrumental in the success of GHP.

According to the Interim Evaluation Report<sup>3</sup>, there are five specific features of LANS and its approach that are particularly important:

- *The complementary and high level of skills in the team*
- *An insistence on working cross-departmentally*
- *Its approach to consultation*
- *Presentation and sales skills*
- *A range of technical skills, including managing artists*

Within these, the following aspects were considered most important:

- *Strong management and organisation abilities*
- *A high level of creative insight and skill*
- *A strong understanding of and the skills to work with the political and management processes within the public sector*

*The LANS team has insisted on the creatively-driven cross-departmental working approach and acted as catalyst and facilitator to ensure that it takes place... The multi-departmental disciplinary teams brought together for each of the GHP projects are generally recognised to be a significant factor in their success.*

Based upon the success of the previous years, it is critical that LANS performs the role of consultants, whereby a portion of the projects delivery can adjust with the demand, and is always advised and supported by a Steering Group. In order to work towards sustainability, the Steering Group's function will continue to provide strategic vision; advocate and champion the work; and advise of future opportunities for GHP. Embedding the process into the local authorities will require active and engaged Working and Steering Groups who can provide an internal perspective of developing policy, regional strategy and political environment of the districts and the county.

GHP is a partnership of the local authorities in Hertfordshire and LANS role is to facilitate the management and creative development. As core funding for the CONNECT strand is reduced in this second phase of the partnership, LANS' involvement will be sustained through project-based work at the agreed discounted consultancy rates on a project by project basis.

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<sup>3</sup> Interim Evaluation Report, Hall Aitken



### **Steering Group Role**

As the Interim Evaluation Report recognises, the GHP Steering Group is already a strong and committed group which has contributed considerably to the success of GHP to date.

*A core group of three officers from Arts Council England East, Hertfordshire County Council and East Hertfordshire Council were responsible for much of the initial drive behind and early work on the project and have remained involved throughout.<sup>4</sup>*

The key role of the Steering Group is to provide strategic insight into developing the future of GHP and its relevance to its major stakeholders. They should be advocates on behalf of GHP, identify joined-up partnership opportunities, inform about new funding initiatives, advice about the current political and social climates. Originally, the Steering Group met bi-monthly to assist strategic delivery of the vision into a viable business plan and to help shape the funding policies.

Over the next three years, it is essential that the Steering Group remains dynamic and committed in providing advice and expertise to support the strategic development of GHP. Now that there is confidence in the Partnership from internal and external partners, the role of the group needs to shift towards the longer term vision, and the delivery aspects can become a more active role for the Working Group. As a result, their vision will be celebrated on regional and national platforms through stronger partnership working. This will continue to provide advocacy opportunities for the Steering Group members to present their progressive governance amongst national colleagues.

The Steering Group structure will move to a quarterly meeting, with strong themes and invited guests. These meetings will facilitate the Steering Group to engage in active discussion with advisors of developing policies and strategies, and collectively advise LANS team on opportunities. This methodology will encourage key stakeholders, often with many commitments, to participate.

### **Working Group Role**

The current Working Group has also been a very dedicated group. By taking on an extended role in the delivery of GHP, it can help to further support its success over the next three years.

The main role of the Working Group was to oversee operational and delivery decisions for GHP and met monthly to review financial accounts and discuss issues that should be raised to the Steering Group. Now that there is a clear operations model and precedent set for developing proposals, the Working Group's profile will shift towards Officers and Junior Managers who will provide the insight into delivery targets, challenges and opportunities.

The profile should reflect different areas of expertise, modelling the CONNECT project teams; inclusive of arts, environment, regeneration, community development.

The Working Group will continue to play an active role in supporting the direction of resources and seeking internal and external financial support for the future. They will meet every 6 weeks between and on the day of the Steering Group meetings. Working Group will report to Steering Group through emails between Steering Group meetings and as an agenda item on the meeting days.

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<sup>4</sup> Interim Evaluation Report, Hall Aitken



**Green Heart Partnership**

## **Appendices:**

- 1. An income/ expenditure projection for the three years**
- 2. Key strategic partnerships**