

Subject:	Brighton ChaMP (Chalk Management Partnership) for Water 2020 onwards		
Date of Meeting:	21st January 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 To update members about the Brighton Chalk Management Partnership (ChaMP) project, the collaborative groundwater partnership of which BHCC is a key member; to provide information to members about proposed rainscape projects (Sustainable Drainage System or SuDS) in the city; and to inform members about the Partnership's next phase (ChaMP 2: 2020-25)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the information about ChaMP, its proposed projects and its plans for the next five years.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**ChaMP background**

- 3.1 Brighton ChaMP for Water was established to protect and improve the quality of groundwater in the Brighton Chalk Block (aquifer) as a valuable natural resource for public water supply. 100% of Brighton & Hove residents' drinking water comes from this aquifer.
- 3.2 The project is a collaboration between the South Downs National Park Authority, the Environment Agency, Southern Water, the University of Brighton and Brighton & Hove City Council, working together with Natural England and the Brighton and Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere (The Living Coast) to protect the aquifer.
- 3.3 The main focus for the project is:
- Promoting best practice in sustainable land management to protect the aquifer, providing good advice to landowners and managers, informed by sound science

- Rural: testing new approaches to reducing chemical inputs and improving soil health, while maintaining environmental and economic sustainability for land managers.
 - Urban: promoting better delivery of solutions to protect groundwater, including rainscapes (Sustainable Drainage or SuDS), and encouraging best practice in amenity land and industrial site management.
 - Raising awareness, building understanding and stimulating improvement of groundwater protection in the rural and urban environment.
 - Contributing to, and undertaking robust research; drawing on recognised sources to inform our work in promoting groundwater protection, and increasing knowledge and skills.
- 3.4 Since 2015, ChaMP has delivered focused interventions in the rural and urban environment supported by a proactive communication programme to raise awareness and influence behaviour change; and a programme of research to inform and learn from academic and sector knowledge and expertise.
- 3.5 Rural interventions include specialist advice visits to farmers and landowners; incentives to reduce chemical application rates and the amount of pollutants lost through soil into groundwater; and events and activities to promote shared learning and improved land management practice.
- 3.6 On the urban side, ChaMP is bringing forward exemplar rainscape (Sustainable Drainage Systems or SuDS) projects, with sites selected against criteria for pollution prevention, flood risk, biodiversity and amenity value opportunity, as well as awareness impact and other benefits. A programme of workshops, visits and communication is in place to build awareness, engagement and capability to take projects forward.
- 3.7 Rainscapes are designed to capture water from roofs, roads and car parks, slowing and holding it to reduce the risk of flooding. They help to remove pollutants from road and car park run-off through natural processes including time, sunlight, microbes in the soil and vegetation.
- 3.8 Over the next three years, ChaMP is developing two rainscape projects in Wild Park, Brighton and Nevill Road, Lewes, as well as three ChaMP ‘SuDS in Schools’ projects. These projects complement the EU funded SCAPE¹ project led by Brighton & Hove City Council,

Wild Park Rainscape Project

- 3.9 Brighton and Hove City Council is acting as lead partner on behalf of ChaMP to deliver the Wild Park Rainscape Project, which will create a rainscape in Wild Park

¹ Shaping Climate Change Adaptive Places (SCAPE) is a project partly funded through the EU Interreg 2 Seas Programme. It aims to use landscape led design to retro-fit sustainable drainage, which aims to mimic natural drainage to allow surface water to infiltrate into the ground rather than to rely on the traditional road drains/ gullies into sewer/ soakaway.

to manage polluted road run-off water originating on the A27. This rainscape will receive water from the highway, slowing it down and reducing flood risk.

- 3.10 BHCC is currently leading the detailed feasibility study for the Wild Park Rainscape on behalf of the ChaMP Wild Park Working Group. This will test feasibility of concept designs produced for the project in June 2018 – see ‘SuDS Feasibility Report for Wild Park Brighton’ and ‘Wild Park Brighton SuDS Concepts’ included in the appendix of this report.

SuDS in Schools Projects

- 3.11 At the same time, ChaMP is undertaking three ‘SuDS in Schools’ projects: two in Brighton and one in Lewes. Each of the schools is adjacent to a planned rainscape, bringing multiple, cumulative benefits. Benefits are enhanced through linking the schemes, for example with plans to link Wild Park and Moulsecoomb Primary through innovative artistic interpretation and planting schemes.
- 3.12 SuDS in Schools projects can be highly informative, innovative and an attractive addition to the school, and pupils can be involved throughout the design, planning and implementation of the rainscape. The work complements the curriculum and Brighton & Hove Environmental Education programme (BHee): illustrating the water cycle; building understanding of practical environmental solutions with a focus on science, maths (measuring and recording), nature, biodiversity and climate change. Additional benefits to the school include improving playgrounds spaces with new and interesting features.
- 3.13 ChaMP plans are designed to help build climate change resilience into the city, promoting rainscapes in new developments, opportunistic schemes (e.g. integrated into planned road works) and retrofits, while building up capability, skills and confidence in rainscape implementation.

ChaMP 2

- 3.14 ChaMP was set up to operate until March 2019, and extended to 2020. Following a period of consultation, partners agreed to continue and develop the partnership for five years to March 2025.
- 3.15 Significant learning and experience has been accumulated among partners from ChaMP to date, which will contribute to the development of ChaMP 2, with raised levels of ambition and impact, building on foundations and groundwork of Phase 1.
- 3.16 There will be four main funding partners (Brighton & Hove City Council, South Downs National Park Authority, the Environment Agency and Southern Water). Governance is streamlined and project delivery will be achieved through specialist working groups, extending targeted engagement by identifying experts and interested parties with common goals.
- 3.17 Opportunities will be developed to continue and create the synergies between ChaMP and BHCC plans and policies, including links with the Biosphere, SCAPE projects, the City Plan and SuDS Supplementary Planning Document, the Whole Estate Plan (City Downland Plan), the Greater Brighton Water Plan, the Hollingbury

and Waterhall golf courses and the Climate Emergency Declaration, as well as the city's climate resilience planning and blue-green infrastructure plans.

3.18 Brighton and Hove City Council has been involved in ChaMP since its inception and is committed to its collaborative approach in delivering common objectives to reduce pollution risk to the aquifer.

3.19 ChaMP 2 will be launched in March 2020, with links to World Water Day.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The alternative to the Wild Park rainscape project is to continue with the current road drainage arrangement and existing amenities in the park. At present the area of Wild Park considered for the rainscape is short grass with very little amenity and biodiversity value and does not provide a welcoming gateway to the park or attract many visitors.

4.2 The existing arrangement involves run-off from the A27 draining into a pond at The Keep, from where it is piped to a series of soakaways in Wild Park. These soakaways are lined chambers bored down into the chalk which allow a pathway for pollutants originating on the road (heavy metals, fuel and oils) to reach the aquifer.

4.3 The existing arrangement exacerbates flooding of the A270 adjacent to Wild Park in extreme rainfall due to soakaways overflowing. Extreme rainfall scenarios are likely to increase due to climate change.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 Communities and groups will be informed, consulted and involved throughout the process of detailed designing and creation of all rainscapes. There will be opportunities to collaborate with communities on creative projects to interpret the rainscape and run events associated with it.

5.2 Community engagement for Wild Park will commence following a positive outcome from the feasibility study. A Communication and Consultation Plan has been drawn up by the Wild Park Working Group. It adheres to the Community Engagement Framework and Standards.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The collaborative approach adopted by ChaMP helps to achieve more together than each organisation would be able to achieve individually by pooling expertise, and avoiding gaps and duplication of effort, and plans for ChaMP 2 will be designed to achieve greater ambition, focus and impact in delivering quality projects and interventions.

6.2 The Wild Park rainscape project is a key sustainability project for the council which represents opportunities to bring multiple benefits to a park and community in a deprived ward. The project team would like this to be noted by the committee and for members to support the project.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 ChaMP funding partners have agreed to contribute £25,000 per year each for five years, to be spent on a programme of work agreed by the ChaMP board to deliver agreed outcomes, broken down by rural and urban interventions, communication and research. The council's contribution in year one will be funded from existing revenue budgets within the City Development and Regeneration service. Funding of future year contributions will met from service revenue budgets identified as part of the budget setting process.
- 7.2 The total value of the Wild Park Rainscape Project is anticipated to be £1.35 million which is to be funded through Highways England's Environment Designated Fund (EDF) subject to a feasibility study. A £50,000 grant has been secured for the detailed feasibility study which is currently underway. Existing council officer time will be required to support the councils role as lead partner on behalf of ChaMP
- 7.3 SuDS in Schools projects are funded by the ChaMP partnership budget, supplemented by the Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF), a S106 contribution, an additional contribution from the South Downs National Park Authority and an award from the Adur and Ouse Catchment Partnership.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford

Date: 16/12/2019

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland

Date: 18/12/2019

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 The urban projects will all involve an equalities impact assessment, as is standard for all urban engineering and highways projects.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.6 ChaMP seeks to improve the quality of groundwater through sustainable interventions in rural and urban areas. The interventions aim to reduce pollutants in our groundwater and help protect our chalk aquifer which provides 100% of the city's drinking water. Sustainable urban drainage projects can also support natural habitat creation and biodiversity, and play an important role in reducing the impacts of surface water flooding in vulnerable areas helping the city adapt to the impacts of climate change and severe weather events.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.7 Other case studies of rainscape creation in a park shows that improving amenity value of park will increase visitor numbers (See [Firs Farm Wetlands](#) case study)

- 7.8 Increasing visitor numbers improves actual and perceived safety in a park due to passive supervision
- 7.9 The rainscape will be visible from the road
- 7.10 The rainscape will be designed to ensure that sightlines across the park are maintained and crime/anti-social behaviour is designed out
- 7.11 Neighbourhood Policing Teams will be consulted during design process and engaged throughout the project

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.12 An active risk and opportunity register is maintained for ChaMP, which is regularly reviewed and updated by the Project Board. Discrete ChaMP projects and activities are risk assessed on an individual basis.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.13 This project will improve amenity (both recreation and education) and opportunities for a community in a deprived ward through engagement in the project and creation of the rainscape itself.
- 7.14 Access to nature is widely recognised to improve mental and physical health outcomes
- 7.15 The provision of natural play opportunities in the rainscape design will encourage children and families to be active outdoors

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.16 ChaMP supports the council's Climate Emergency commitment and ambition to make the city resilient to impacts of climate change.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. SuDS Feasibility Report for Wild Park Brighton, authored by Robert Bray Associates, 08.06.18
2. Wild Park Brighton SuDS Concepts, authored by Robert Bray Associates

Background Documents

None