



## Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement (Professional category)



**Landscape Institute Awards 2022**  
**Entry Number: 640-P-BCE**

### **Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council**

**CLAUDE** Conservation of the Historic Environment - Landscape Architecture - Urban Design – Ecology.

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## Introduction

Wildlife Ways commenced in 2018 and completed in March 2022.

The project's aim was to improve the wildlife value and biodiversity of Solihull's parks, green spaces and highway verges, and connect these areas through green corridors by improving existing interconnecting routes and the creation of new shared surfaces, allowing wildlife to flourish and helping people to walk and cycle across the borough.

Delivering national policy at a local level – 'More, Bigger Better Connected' habitats - the principles of the 2010 DEFRA report on the environment "Making Space for Nature".

Greening the Grey was the application title to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in the original European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Priority Axis 6d application, 'Preserving and Protecting the Environment', but the programme has been re-marketed as Wildlife Ways by Solihull MBC.

The focus of this submission is on the Green Corridor works and habitat improvements to parks and public open spaces, to boost species recovery. It also encompasses improved cycling and walking access, and the construction of new shared footpath/cycleways, which form an intrinsic part of the original concept. (The delivery of the Small Habitats Grants Programme with its target 20 hectares, and additional project elements are outside the scope of this application).

**In total, over 73 hectares of improved wildlife habitat has been created for the benefit of wildlife and people.**



Fig. 1 Shared surface with seeded meadow and sedge planting

## Design: a commitment to high quality in terms of both functionality and aesthetics

### Highly functional and useable

The aim has been to improve the wildlife value and biodiversity of open spaces and highway verges and connect these areas together by improving over 24 hectares of wildlife habitats along 69km of existing cycle ways and 23km of new shared surfaces.

The highway verges act as green corridors for some fauna and flora to move and spread; without these, large open spaces can become isolated. These open spaces and parks support a variety of different habitats including:

- woodlands – of which 11 have had sustainable woodland management works carried out through Wildlife Ways);
- grassland sites – across 9 sites, with over 25 hectares enriched with wildflower seed; and
- 1 re-profiled watercourse –enabling an increase in natural river processes and reconnect the brook to its floodplain, diversify the morphology and reduce flood risk downstream. The work also included planting over 300 native riverside trees along the brook to provide habitat diversification and shading to sections of the watercourse to mitigate future increases in water temperatures due to climate change.

At least 56 hectares of parks and public open space have been enhanced.

Enhanced cycle routes have been created with new porous asphalt surfacing that would be water free and accessible all year round, allowing water to permeate through the surface and beyond. Landscape interventions include planting street trees, creating species rich meadows, low groundcover planting, bulb planting, hedgerows and groups of trees. All of these planting interventions will create a pleasurable experience, see Fig. 1.

The construction costs of the overall project are split equally between landscape/biodiversity enhancements and the cycleway works. This is integral to the concept of green corridors being of benefit to wildlife and people.

The green corridor project concept was promoted within Solihull Council from early 2018 and is illustrated in Fig.2. This was based on the landscape proposals being developed in close association with the 2.5m wide shared surfaces, and existing cycle routes.

A map showing these routes is given in Appx. 1.

Fig. 2 Original concept of Wildlife Ways (formerly Greening the Grey)

### Indicative Section



The planting itself offers some immediately apparent functions (in addition to the longer-term benefits listed under sustainability):

- The planting is well received offering strong seasonal visual displays of colour and texture, offering beauty and aesthetic appreciation
- Trees offer shade, a cooling effect in summer, purifying the air and even mitigating noise intrusion and rainfall capture.
- Orchard planting significantly fruited in the project's first year
- Wildflower planting is resilient, e.g. to trampling (occurring during the pandemic due to increased footfall and social distancing), and drought
- Visual increase in the number of pollinating insects
- Ivy planting is particularly good at absorbing pollutants
- Planting generally provides therapeutic benefits and areas of seasonal interest for enhanced health and well-being, helping relieve stress, reducing crime and illnesses

### Thoughtful and sensitive to its context and character

Solihull's character is well known for its affluence and strong economy both regionally and nationally, with attractive amenities, schools and leafy suburbs. The high disposable incomes generate traffic for even the shortest journeys, and therefore the opportunity of planting highway verges for biodiversity were felt justified to reinforce the Council's motto *Urbs in Rure* – Town in the Country. The use of the wildflower turf and bulb displays is considered to be in keeping with the borough's reputation for a high quality environment, and has been used at high profile locations such as Solihull Station (Fig. 3), key routes and 'gateways' to the borough or the town centre.



Fig. 3 Solihull Station Pictorial Meadows wildflower turf



The emphasis changes slightly with routes and areas to the north of the borough and Birmingham Airport, suggesting reminiscences of past meadows (Fig.4) – characteristic of the past landscape and the existing surrounding unbuilt countryside to the east, which this project helps to restore and connect.

Fig. 4 Native seed mix in it's second year



**Beautiful, appealing both visually and to other senses**

The strong seasonal visual displays of colour and texture are instantly alluring to the senses, and of added fascination as particular species take the limelight, the sward changing and adjusting over time. In particular, Pictorial Meadows have not had their scent bred out of them, attracting bees and butterflies and therefore also pleasing the human sense of smell! In addition, the many forms of foliage and flower and the frequent changes in colour and form, as Fig.5, provide a rich sensory experience. This is in contrast to previously mundane close mown grass verge or neglected central reservations.

Fig. 5 Photo showing change in species composition (taken end of June)



The five basic senses are engaged – the movement of the wind in grasses or leaves, the fragrance of Meadow Sweet or even feeling hands through meadow grasses; fruit from the mini orchards could be tasted in their first season after planting (see Fig. 6).

The wider definition of senses includes such things as mental and self-awareness, chemical senses, radiation senses affecting moods etc. Contact with nature, the planting and the fauna it attracts, may help collectively or specifically, to stimulate and release some of these other senses, helping to positively uplift the whole psyche.

The surfacing of the shared surfaces achieved a decorative, natural aggregate finish usually in buff, that is visually appealing to many.

Fig. 6 Trees fruiting 4 months after planting, Malvern Park



**Inclusively designed and accessible for all users**

Most of the landscape interventions are physically accessible on Council owned parks and public open space and woodlands.

The Green Corridors are also publicly accessible occupying Highway land, though roundabouts, central reservations and other detached highway elements would only tend to be accessible visually. The Council's open spaces are generally inclusive for all to enjoy and explore, however, certain safety factors have been routinely considered for all users:

- Motorists: In liaison with the Council's Highways team, wildflower areas have been kept back from road and path junctions, signage and other highway infrastructure, but where flower height is expected to be at or below standard heights (approx. 300mm), a low growing mix produced has been used, see Fig.7.
- Pedestrians and children: The concealment of litter, glass and dog mess in long grass is addressed by removal when weeding or carrying out cut and collect operations. With regard to problems experienced with trees such as root damage, slippery pavements, fruit and leaf fall, future maintenance etc, careful selection of species using the 'right tree right place' was made in consultation with the Council's Forestry team.
- Allergy sufferers: Hay fever presents minimal difference from the surrounding pollen count as it is usually the grasses that generate the pollen problem.



Fig. 7 Low growing wildflower turf mix used at a road junction



The final part of Wildlife Ways Project was the design and construction of the Armed Forces Community Garden, providing a space to meet the specific needs within the military community. The Garden is a place that provides a healing habitat, and an environment that helps and promotes the wellbeing of the Armed Forces Community through nature-based activities. Photos are shown in Appx 2.

Every injury and trauma has been considered. It is wheelchair accessible and plants are at a height where people who use wheelchairs can get involved in gardening. The space is open too which is really important for people with visual impairments and those suffering with PTSD who need the reassurance of a clear view. But most of all it's a beautiful space that everyone can come to and enjoy for its beauty, peace and tranquillity.

**Overcomes site challenges in an innovative and creative way**

The Project's long grass and wildflower areas were to some residents an issue of neglect and Council cost saving exercises. The Project needed to inform, engage with and educate the residents about the proposals and the benefits to biodiversity and the environment of the borough.

A Communications Plan was developed at an early stage and included the appointment of dedicated Engagement officer, Project website development with regular updates and Ward Member and Officer briefings. Weekly communications meetings managed publicity events and activities, newsletters and press releases, letter drops and group or individual residents' meetings and community planting events.

**Overcomes site challenges in an innovative and creative way**

The wide variety of species were selected for adaptation to physical constraints such as de-icing salts, steep slopes, shading from trees, water-logging etc. Various specific approaches were also adopted:

- Planting new nursery crops of conspicuous native daffodil to mitigate trampling or accidental mowing on delicate bulbs. Also, a blanket approach of late bulb mowing in the initial years to help adjustment to the new range of bulb mowing requirements.
- Mown wildflower borders and pathways. 'Framing' areas which could be perceived as untidy or wild. Miniature vinyl water-proof plan booklets were produced to assist with recognising all Wildlife Ways planting for maintenance teams on site in all conditions.
- Signage – lollipop type signs were used mainly, see Fig.8, clearly illustrating the logos and website link. This was to alert against a range of potential damage including from residents, schools and maintenance operatives.
- Photomontages, employed in one street to illustrate how the seeded areas would gradually develop.

Fig. 8 Widely distributed signage to inform and alert



The shared surfaces used 'Geocell' membranes where tree roots were prevalent to allow for a flexible pavement structure that would not impact the root systems. Any trees removed would be those where the shared surface could not be narrowed and where the tree itself was assessed to be problematic by the Forestry officers; the project had a replacement planting policy that any trees removed would be replaced with increased planting in other areas.

**Sustainability: a commitment to environmental sustainability**

**Demonstrable effort towards (net) carbon neutrality and mitigating climate change**

- a) Carbon sequestration & storage – the quantities given below combine to present a substantial increase in carbon sequestration and storage, together with evapo-transpiration and local climate amelioration:

**Table 1. Biodiversity Targets (hectares)**

Categories	Target	Actual
Green Corridor*	16	
Parks & POS trees*	6.8	24.25
Parks & POS Grassland	28.63	25.10
Parks & POS Woodland	20.66	23.2
Parks & POS Wetland	1.16	1.2
Totals	73.25	73.75

(\* idverde contract) combined

**Table 2. Breakdown of outputs (Green Corridor and Parks/ POS trees)**

	Landscape Intervention	
<b>idverde contract</b>		
1	Pictorial Meadow Turf (m <sup>2</sup> )	48,730
2	Wildflower native Meadow Turf (m <sup>2</sup> )	10,361
3	Wildflower Seeded areas (m <sup>2</sup> )	115,840
4	Tree planting (Nr)	854
5	Hedges (2,086 Lm): Nr	7628
6	Shrubs (1010m2) & ivy (182 Lm): Nr	7653
7	Bulbs & plugs (Nr)	3.5 Mill.

Note: Trees planted comprise 95% semi-mature size, that is 18-20 or 20-25cm girth. The remainder are 8-10cm g. feathers or containerised hollies. It is estimated that mortality approximates to 5%.



- b) General environmental benefits of planting additionally mitigate climate change through intercepting surface run-off, ameliorating local climate through canopy cover, absorbing pollutants, reducing soil erosion etc.
- c) The wildflower areas are all originally established by seeding, which is one of the most carbon neutral propagation methods possible, with possibly over 150 plants per metre square. This density of plant material discourages weeds and therefore reduces on-going maintenance resources. Although an annual cut and collect is required, the arisings can all be composted. Meadows have usually been kept free from trees and all wildflower areas aided from extended maintenance contracts.
- d) Solihull's woodlands are likely to play an ever-more important role in sheltering us from the effects of climate change (e.g. controlling flood run-off and reducing urban heat island effects). A lack of woodland management for decades has resulted in even aged structures, invasive species and a denuded ground flora. Active management of woodlands will ensure genetic diversity and age structure – essential elements to ensuring resilience. Selective thinning, which reduces moisture demand, will help retained trees grow larger and live longer; two factors recognised to increase the amount of carbon a tree can sequester. Thinning and the creation of glades and rides also increases light to the woodland floor with a higher diversity of species by natural regeneration.



Fig. 9 Woodland Management contract, with removal of laurel

- e) Both main project contractors reduced travel and thus the carbon footprint. Deliveries were received in bulk (1000m<sup>2</sup> wildflower turf a day). Balfour Beatty ensured that 98% of construction spend was within 40 miles of Solihull, supply chain partners were bought into carbon reduction targets and achieved over 95% of project waste diverted from landfill.

**Maximised adaption and resilience to future climate changes, increased temperatures and associated risks**

The enhanced habitat will collectively increase and strengthen the capacity of the natural environment to deliver ecosystem services across the region and provide resilience and mitigation against climate change. The variety of species used in planting provides genetic diversity helping mitigate vulnerability from desiccation, water logging etc.

- a) Numbers of species/ cultivars used (See Appx 3):
  - Tree planting, 40 tree species and cultivars; 9 hedge species
  - Shrubs 62 species and cultivars
  - Native wildflower seeding: Emorsgate EM3 bespoke mix using over 50 species of wildflower and 7 species of grass. Other seed mixes were also used from Emorsgate and Naturescape, and together with native meadow turf which includes orchids, aiming to increase species content to approx. 80.
  - Wildflower Pictorial Meadow turf species and cultivars: 80 - 100 many of which would be additional to those in seed mixes.
  - Bulbs and plugs: 18 species
- b) Types of species used
  - Ecological monitoring results show an increase in positive indicator species (and decrease in negative indicator species) post establishment, and are shown in Appx. 4.
  - A number of tree species used are particularly good at drought tolerance such as oak and maples, and some by their association with more southern latitudes, such as Sweet chestnut. Many are selected for being sympathetic to the site, such as alders and birches in damp conditions.
- c) Pictorial Meadows: This wide range of species provides considerable climate resilience. The plants themselves have originated from a wide geographical area and whilst many are UK natives, the inclusion of wildflowers from more extreme climatic conditions are extending meadow resilience to the increasing extremes we are experiencing. All have been tested for survival in the cold damp winters of Northern England and appear to be thriving too across Scotland and as far north as Finland. Without the need to irrigate we see the meadows thrive in dryer summers. Different species exhibit varied means of survival from very deep rooting to the ability to self-propagate through seed production. The breadth of species introduced within the PM turf means that in every conceivable micro habitat there will be a dynamic adaptation going on within the overall community that can flex with the changing climate.

**Sought to make a positive contribution towards healthy connected habitats for biodiverse species**

- 1) Positive management through Management Plans produced for Green Corridors: 11 woodlands (Forestry Commission approved plans, 9 grasslands and 1 wetland. Various maintenance schedules taken from the Green Corridor Management Plan are shown in Appx 5.
- 2) Nature Recovery: Connectivity between these habitats on a borough-wide scale. This delivers national policy objects at a local level. For example, the 2011 Natural Environment White paper, implementing Sir John Lawton's principles of making conservation sites bigger, better and more joined up. The healthy habitats developed through this project follow highway routes or natural features such as water courses, woods etc to help reinforce green corridors for animals to move along and plants to spread between otherwise fragmented parks and open spaces.

Fig. 10

Native daffodils, snowdrops and anemones along 1km of highway







**Mitigated other environmental harms and pollution wherever possible, in air and water pollution**

In addition to the Green Corridor works, the habitat works have all helped to mitigate environmental harms: 11 woodlands (thinning and coppicing to open up the canopy and increase light penetration), 9 grassland management sites (to re-create species rich grassland in parks and public open space and the use of 'green hay' taken from species-rich donor sites), and 1 Wetland project (comprising re-profiling of banks, treatment of bankside vegetation and laying of woody debris and gravel rifles), see Fig. 11. In addition to absorbing CO2 emissions, the network of landscape interventions helps achieve the following:

- Absorbs air pollution from congestion, fumes and particulates. Ivy is particularly good at this.
- Planting alongside existing highways and new shared surfaces to intercept surface run-off and control storm water quality through root systems, also stabilising/ aerating soil
- The increase in genetic diversity mitigates against disease, waterlogging, fires, accidental mowing, trampling, highway salts – as well as desiccation. The more resilient varieties can provide valuable protection for the less robust types.
- The density and the variety of species in wildflower meadows mitigates against invasive species taking over.
- Porous paving to maintain existing greenfield run-off rates, this helps control storm water quantity and water quality to mitigate flooding and the risk of pollution.

**Makes a positive contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals more broadly**

With reference to the list of UN Sustainable goals the project contributes locally to the following goal numbers (shown in brackets):

- Good health (3) - exercise through walking and cycling, improved access to green space, leisure and recreational space
- Education (4) – raising local awareness of biodiversity and climate change. Local school curriculum events and activities
- Clean energy (7) – cycling/ walking instead of driving, reduction in routine mowing, carbon, vehicle miles, contractors plant and equipment
- Economic Growth (8) – attractive places to live work in, and visit, commute through and gain access to and invest in
- Sustainability (11) – as 7 & 8. Use of materials – porous paving, peat free products locally sourced
- Climate action (13) – ditto, and reduction in absorption of emissions; carbon sequestration/ storage, enhance biodiversity, migration of species, adaptation and mitigation
- Life on land (15) – preserving and enhancing urban forests, semi natural ancient and plantation (and species rich grasslands), wetlands and rivers (ecosystem services)

Fig. 11 Wetland works at Kingshurst Brook



Contribution toward other goals could include improvement of the economic imbalance between the north and south of the borough through improved public access/spaces (10); and water quantity and quality - cleaner water (run-off filtered through tree roots/ grasslands).

**Value: a commitment to maximising value for the client and communities**

**Meets or exceeds its original brief**

This project had a total value of £17.6 million. The Council applied to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency for funding. The funding and cost profiles are below:

**Table 3 Funding Profile**

Funding Source	Amount £000s	Status
ERDF	7,191	SECURED
NPIF	4,470	SECURED
WMCA	2,474	SECURED
Other LA's Match	2,218	60% of small grants programme.
SMBC Core Staff Match	1,232	Staff time 'in kind'
Environment Agency	55	SECURED
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,640</b>	

**Table 4 Cost Profile**

Project Area	Amount £000s
'Grey' Elements	5,915
'Green' Elements	4,424
Small Grants Programme	3,697
Business Support (sustainable travel support to businesses)	318
Programme Development and Support Costs	3,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,640</b>

A key requirement is the ability to identify, apply for and secure available external funding sources. Unfortunately like most local authorities, SMBC did not have match funding to undertake habitat and biodiversity enhancement projects. What makes this project special is the innovative funding model which utilised £4.4m of funding from external funding sources including ERDF, NPIF (National Productivity Investment Fund) and the Environment Agency to provide the funding we required to deliver the targeted outcomes from the programme. Financial contributions were also received from the EA, as a strategic partner. In addition, all staff hours devoted to the delivery of the project were used as "in-kind" contributions.

Management plans for each of the sites has been produced which also detail the monitoring required and include before and after photographs.

**Table 5 Management Plan extract for monitoring a key route**

Moorend Avenue grassland condition monitoring analysis	2020	2021	2023	2025	2027
Total number of species present	40	42			
Total number of positive indicator species	17	27			
Frequency of positive indicator species**	80	158			
Total number of negative indicator species	6	4			
Frequency of negative indicator species**	18	8			
Herb to grass ratio	19:81	73:27			
Average sward height	30cm	80cm			
Sward range	20-40cm	50-110cm			
Presence of trees / scrub	0.1%	0%			

Eight different community organisations have contributed conservation volunteer work to the project, (excluding wider community planting projects etc given in Appx 7); Together with some adjacent project involvement this alone has contributed over 830 hours.

The ERDF biodiversity target hectares for each of the landscape categories, and final outputs, (see Table 1), show these exceeded the original target. The main project delivery was recognised by the Interim Summative Assessment produced in 2021:

*The delivery partnership should be highly commended for the vision and ambition of the project. This should also extend to its delivery and outcomes. The practicalities of delivering a project of this scale are challenging enough under normal circumstances, but to undertake it during a global pandemic adds a whole new level of obstacles and uncertainties.*





The Summative assessment also noted that:

- Considerable effort was put into survey work, planning and design prior to delivery ensuring the appropriateness of work done and minimised the need for further changes or supplementary work.
- Where additional works have been required due to changes in circumstances this has been delivered within budget.
- All works were subject to a robust competitive tender process.
- The work has been done to a high standard.
  - Compliance with other ERDF requirements, statutory obligations and internal obligations/ procedures were followed rigorously throughout the project under the oversight of the ERDF Monitoring team.
  - Social Value outcomes also exceeded initial expectations
  - Communications – a rigorous communications plan was developed and implemented to manage public expectations and project delivery.

#### **Makes the best and most efficient use of available resources and space**

The Project Financial Profile was contained well within original estimates, see Appx 6.

**Cost:** Wildflower seeding is particularly cost effective with the low capital cost, and the cost neutral single cut & collect operation, all whilst simultaneously multiplying species richness. Seeded areas invest a new seed bank for potential proliferation into adjacent areas, and these have been observed hundreds of metres away. The two methods used have been full spray and seed, which is more effective, and in more sensitive areas exposing 50% bare ground for seeding or the spreading of green hay harvested from species-rich meadows in the locality.

*Fig.13 Harvesting green hay from nearby Bow Meadow August 2019*



**Space.** Under-used spaces were utilised, such as grass verges between footways and carriageway, splitters, roundabouts, central reservations, small plots etc, but which collectively provide helpful habitat. The use of ivy along highway guardrails uses vertical space.

**Economies of scale.** The landscape team put all of the landscape works in one OJEU tender – benefiting the standard of works, timescales and cost. Initially, this has meant a later start date and delayed costs being defrayed, however, long term has been of benefit to the team and the project having one contractor throughout. It also ensured compliance and less risk at audit for procurement. The Highways team used their Framework contract to procure one main contractor.

All of the projects have been designed to avoid any increases to the Council's grounds maintenance budget. The project built in the added value of management plans, education opportunities and volunteer involvement.

#### **Considered impact on all users and evidence community involvement where appropriate**

Risk assessments in the early design stage identified categories of users and the potential impacts they might experience.

- A comprehensive communications plan was drawn up and agreed with the SMBC communications team. This was updated on a weekly basis and informs target audiences such as elected members, ward councillors, community groups and residents, of planned works etc.
- An ERDF funded engagement officer was appointed to lead on liaison with the public and local stakeholders.
- A summary of communications actions is provided in Appx 7 with examples of feedback. This included school planting events, businesses and community group planting, 'Friends' Groups, residents' meetings; Presentations (Various U3A groups, Solihull Pensioners Convention, Tree Wardens, Conservation Volunteers, Parish Councils); and general stakeholder engagement e.g. Birmingham International Airport.
- The project's value to site users was enhanced through the delivery of interpretation boards at 20 locations in 2021, strategically placed within the various habitats.
- Strategic Partners: Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and The Environment Agency.

- The Summative Assessment interim report noted their impression that many visitors are aware of the project work and is generally perceived positively. The works had been during a period that has seen increases in use of green space related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The changes implemented by the project seem to have made the sites much more appealing to visitors, having a positive impact on local communities by providing improved natural accessible greenspace for recreation and amenity, supporting healthy and active lifestyles and increasing appreciation, awareness and understanding of the local environment.

#### **Maximises its impact on human health and well-being, and other social outcomes**

Wildlife Ways provides a network for recreation and travel, increasing people's ability to access green space more sustainably and efficiently.

These routes run alongside the new landscape interventions in varying degrees of proximity, providing greater 'contact with nature' and sense of wellbeing. Works in 11 woodlands have also made them more accessible and welcoming to the public, improving access, intervisibility along footpaths and having a beneficial impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Social outcomes include a sense of local pride and ownership; increase in air quality, amenity value and physical activity; improved health quality, wellbeing and life expectancy; residents more able to access strategic centres; a reduction in the number of personal injury collisions; educational benefits eg project interpretation see Fig. 14.

*Fig.14 Interpretation board, one of 20 located to various habitats*



An infographic captures some of these and other benefits, see Appx 8.





**Maximises the opportunity of local regeneration and economic development**

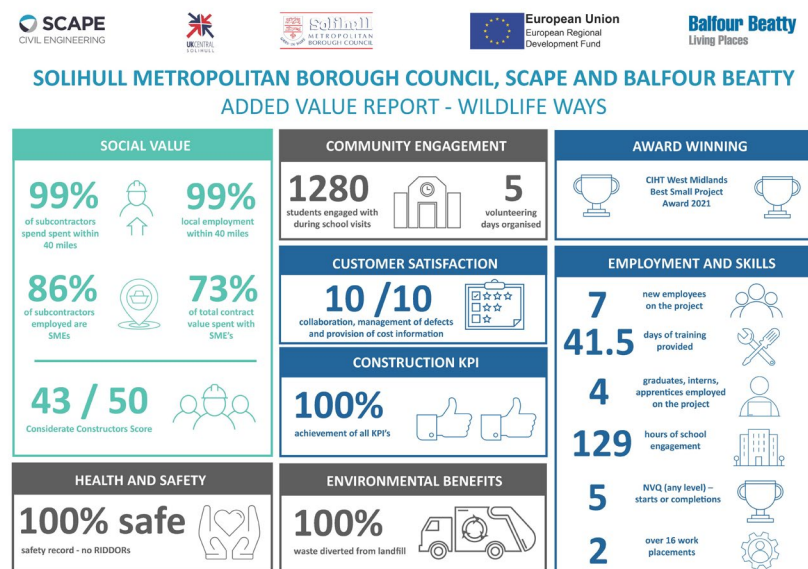
The project has no specific economic objectives, but appears to have clear economic benefits through it's very visible environmental improvements across the Borough, which helps contribute to positive perception of the area as a place to live and do business.

The Summative Assessment Interim Report notes that the investment in green infrastructure and increased natural capital provides benefits that are intangible and not easily measured, are likely to increase the attractiveness of the area for inward investment, supporting property values by improvement of the area's image and reduced healthcare costs by promoting and facilitating healthier and more active lifestyles.

An integral part of this project is creating greener urban centres and improving their appearance, enhancing investment opportunities by attracting people to live and visit the area.

Other benefits include improved connectivity of the people to businesses, jobs and markets; reduced absenteeism and increase productivity; change in modal share for commuter trips; reduced peak period congestion, journey times and delays; increased accessibility to business sites and property values; and a model for other boroughs, regionally and nationally. A Benefits profile table captures some of these, and other benefits, see Appx 9.

Fig. 15 Balfour Beatty Added Value Report illustrating positive influence on local economy



**Professionalism: meets the highest standard of quality expected of a landscape professional**

**Current UK best practice and standards**

- Officers within the Conservation of the Historic Environment, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Ecology (CLAUDE) team are professionally qualified and the Landscape Architects responsible for leading this project are CMLI qualified and accountable for professional services, undertaking regular training events to keep in line with changing legal requirements and current UK best practice guidance and standards. Solihull's Performance Development Review system and annual appraisal also vigorously reinforces the Council's strong emphasis on the conduct through expected behaviours.
- Strong design and contract administration skills were required in drawing up the Armed Forces Community Garden, where the difficult clay soils and critical deadlines called for exceptional input.
- The main landscape contractor, idverde, adopted a policy to opt for UK providence, where possible. Where the trees were within 10% of the budget then they bought from UK stock. In order to protect this further, they bought from three nurseries to ensure they could try their hardest to buy UK stock.
- New methods of working were developed to maintain the two-metre distancing when required, employing exclusion zones around delivery wagons with one-in-one-out policies.
- The Summative Assessment Interim report states: To have achieved the outcomes documented above is testament to the skills and qualities of the delivery team. Any points and observations raised are merely to serve as a 'snagging list' rather than any criticism of the project. The level of survey and monitoring is exemplary. Specific mention must be made of the way that the project has managed to keep on track despite the significant impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequent restrictions. These have required all partners and members of the project delivery team, including subcontractors to adopt new and unfamiliar precautions and ways of working. The achievement of keeping such a large and complex project on track through the pandemic is testament to the professionalism of all involved.

Fig. 16 The 2.5m wide porous shared surface, with bulb planting helping provide a source of pollen for early pollinators



**Relies upon thorough and robust analysis of impacts, risks and benefits**

This was achieved through the following:

- The funding application addressed many of the project impacts, risks and benefits. This was followed by internal risk assessments, and the more significant items were placed on an internal register (ref. JCAD Risk Register extract, see Appx 10). This was updated through prompts, specific meetings and general Steering Groups.
- ERDF monitoring and compliance throughout the project
- The Summative Assessment (Interim stage)
- Failure to achieve target outputs and non-compliance, posed a continual concern at the risk of losing funding. A number of habitat areas had to be relocated and replacements made, stretching to the end of the maintenance periods (caused by competing projects, residents' demands, site challenges and establishment failures).
- The Council's Public Realm team manage the on-going obligation to care for these assets, and although there have been some difficulties in negotiating new mowing regimes, they are becoming increasingly accepting of the new maintenance requirements.
- A Benefit Realization report was produced capturing the immediate and longer-term impacts and benefits of the project, as referred to in Appx 8 & 9, somewhat symbolised in the juxtaposition of new shared surfaces and landscape treatment, Fig.16.



- We used standardised methodologies to monitor ecological improvements. Baseline surveys were conducted at all sites and these are being repeated to a specified timescale depending on the habitat type and nature of the intervention. All monitoring data is compared to the baseline and previous year's data and is then added to the management plan so that any future amendments are centrally recorded.
- Condition monitoring assessments were developed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust for woodland and grassland sites. These methodologies have been specifically adapted for Warwickshire from Natural England's SSSI condition monitoring assessments.
- For wetland sites, we used a combination of geomorphology surveys (using the Modular River Survey Methodology devised by the Environment Agency), water quality measurements (including ammonia, phosphates and nitrates) and macroinvertebrate surveys to establish ecological enhancements. Updates to water quality and macroinvertebrate surveys have not been possible due to Covid-19, however updated geomorphology surveys have been undertaken.
- The one major risk experienced was the pandemic, coming at a critical stage in the phase 2 delivery of wildflower turf. The momentum of tendered processes had to slow down, affected by smaller contractors, public acceptability, and the difficulties of remote working (and accentuated by droughts etc).

**Described in clear authoritative terms with well-designed documentation**

- Solihull's Biodiversity Management Plan 2017, used as part of the ERDF funding application, set out the background, rationale, and structure for the Council's aspirations, building on the achievements from a previous successful project, see Appx 11. (A project summary is provided at the head of this document).
- A programme and statement from the original funding application are provided under Appx 12.
- The Summative Assessment Interim report (to June 2021) gives high regard to relevance and consistency, progress, delivery and management, impacts and value for money, see Appx 13.
- Internal reporting ensured that information was clear and authoritative, such as with Cabinet Reports, Procurement approvals, Steering Groups and UK Central Boards. The Communications Department took great care to ensure project publicity and marketing was clear, timely and communicated as a major success; an example is given in Fig. 17.

*Fig. 17 Public sign banner opposite Solihull Station*



**Maximised the potential of collaboration and multi-stakeholder working**

Overall, the management of the project was achieved well, particularly with regards to developing co-operation and co-ordination across such a geographically and practically wide-ranging set of activities.

A steering group met monthly and still continues, with representation from the Council's Highways, maintenance team, project Landscape Architects and Ecologists, finance, communications, project assurance team and project partners; and strategic partners, the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Environment Agency, bring in the benefits of regional thinking and the delivery of partner objectives where applicable (e.g. Water Framework Directive).

The Communications meeting has met weekly for the life of the Project and beyond, providing a key opportunity for internal dialogue with lead members across the Council. Creative thought and synergy is generally enabled through easy access to internal stakeholders and locally available external bodies; the original project steering group is shown in App 14, however, regular reporting was additionally made to a second steering group representing wider council projects and boards.

Contracts typically held monthly progress meetings. The main landscape contractor, idverde, was very co-operative, responsive and flexible in accommodating the requirements of the borough, given the delivery expectations. As an example, they provided a photomontage and mowed grass paths for a particular residential area. This value of this flexible approach cannot be under-estimated given the imposition of innumerable minor requests and alterations.

**Commits to quality across all stages of the landscape life-cycle, from design and plan to maintenance**

**Design & Plan:**

This stage identified the need for high impact and sustainable wildflower turf at the outset given the need at high profile locations and instant impact. Native wildflower seeding, although slow to establish became often as successful in the second year. Methodical specification included obtaining the highest quality wildflower turf available, careful cultivation techniques (adhering to recommended supplier best practice), generous tree size and planting design, and performance expectations generally; Appx 15 gives a sample from the Q30 specification). Inherent also is the expectation to strive to enhance biological diversity and sustainable products, techniques and resultant landscapes, using indigenous materials where able.

**Tender & Procurement:**

The landscape team put the main landscape Green Corridor works in one OJEU tender – benefiting the standard of works, timescales and cost with having one contractor throughout; it also ensured compliance and less risk at audit. Stringent ERDF and internal requirements were followed.

KPI/ biodiversity outputs were written into the tender requirements and the weighting on programme was given considerable emphasis as advised by Solihull Council Procurement team - 30%. Overall Quality weighting was 60% (compared to Price 40%). This subsequently procured Europe's leading provider of grounds maintenance services and landscape creation projects company with the capacity to manage the sheer volume of work, with the intricacy of innumerable requests and through the global pandemic. The more specialist woodland, 'Green Hay' and wetland works were tendered separately.

Highways used the ERDF compliant SCAPE framework for the appointment of Balfour Beatty.

**Site operations:**

This involved setting out for most of the planting works, engaging with supplier visits, managing contract grown native primroses and administering the huge bulb planting operations which were done all by hand. The pace of delivery was somewhat relentless, and the momentum in fact helped overcome various difficulties, such as obtaining quick decisions and making quickly useable new cycle connections. The positives of better routes with attractive planting boosted public morale during pandemic restrictions.





**Maintenance:**

The main landscape contract achieved Practical Completion for phases 1-3 in 2019, 2020 and 2021, however, all planting was maintained to April 2021, and which was then extended to March 2022. The grassland management contract was also extended, to cover cut and collect, and other operations, for a total of 3 seasons.

The grounds maintenance SEC framework contract was separately tendered, and procured idverde to give the benefit of using the same main contractor that implemented Wildlife Ways. Management plans were submitted for each of the 9 grasslands, 11 woodlands, 1 wetland and for Green Corridors. Close monitoring of weed control, edging and other maintenance activity continues. The contracted Maintenance stage benefited from Lessons Learnt actions, see Appx 16.

**Project completion**

The completion of Wildlife Ways was marked by the construction of the Armed Forces Community Garden, with Balfour Beatty and idverde delivering the hard and soft works respectively. This could be said to demonstrate the project’s commitment to quality.

The Council’s contractors Balfour Beatty Living Places – who worked on the project as part of their social value commitment, received the Judges’ Award at the Institution of Civil Engineers West Midlands Awards in 2021.

*Fig.18 Project Landscape Architects and military personnel at the opening ceremony of the Armed Forces Community Garden*



**Why this project should win an LI award (for Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement)**

- The project demonstrates Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement, delivering ‘More, Bigger Better Connected’ habitats
- The investment in the natural environment of Solihull ensures the project has a lasting positive impact and legacy for our communities, contributes to the quality of place and to people’s quality of life, health and well-being.
- The carefully designed the projects collectively increase and strengthen the capacity of the natural environment to deliver ecosystem services across the region, providing resilience and mitigation against climate change.
- This scheme has not only had a positive impact upon the natural capital of the region, which will contribute to the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Government’s 25-year Environment Plan objectives.
- It is also of value to others as an example of best practice that can be learnt from, and a model for the expansion of habitat creation and enhancement works at a landscape scale.
- The scale of this landscape project is large, unprecedented for the borough of Solihull and the West Midlands Combined Authority region. It has exceeded its original funding biodiversity targets, whilst simultaneously coming well under budget. The increase in species/m2 identified in the ecological surveys demonstrates the giant biodiversity leap delivered.

**BIODIVERSITY Targets (hectares)**

Categories	Target	Actual
Green Corridor	16	
Pks & POS trees	6.8	24.25
Pks & POS Grassland	28.63	25.10
Pks & POS Woodland	20.66	23.2
Pks & POS Wetland	1.16	1.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73.25</b>	<b><u>73.75</u></b>

- Wildlife Ways main landscape contractor idverde won the prestigious Principal Award for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Enhancement at the 2021 BALI National Landscape Awards.
- It is also complex. The main landscape and Highways contracts spread through Solihull’s built-up areas, amongst an intricacy of road verges and islands, residential areas and open spaces. The implementation attracted considerable responses and demands, accentuated by delivering through the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions with seasonal drought and high rainfall events.
- The impact of ‘rewilding’ along traditionally mown streets and open spaces was popular, celebrated and in demand at many levels throughout the borough. Particularly of interest amongst Cabinet Members, with the lead member acting as Chair of the West Midlands Combined Authority Environment and Energy Board. In the WMCA Natural Capital Plan 2021-26, Wildlife Ways is actioned for rolling out across the region as an example of good practice building on the work in Solihull, see Appx 17.
- The West Midlands Combined Authority Commission on Wildlife Corridors seeks to maximise the connectivity for people and wildlife through green and blue corridors. This is important in the context of climate change because the West Midlands sits in the pathway of north-south migrations. *Appx. 18 shows a photo of this, and various additional images that help convey some of the project highlights.*

**List of Partners and Contractors**

The client and project team was Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, working with strategic partners, The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, and the Environment Agency also funding. NW Environmental Limited reported through the Interim Summative Assessment. The European Regional Development Fund, the National Productivity Investment Fund and the West Midlands Combined Authority provided funding. The contractors are as follows:

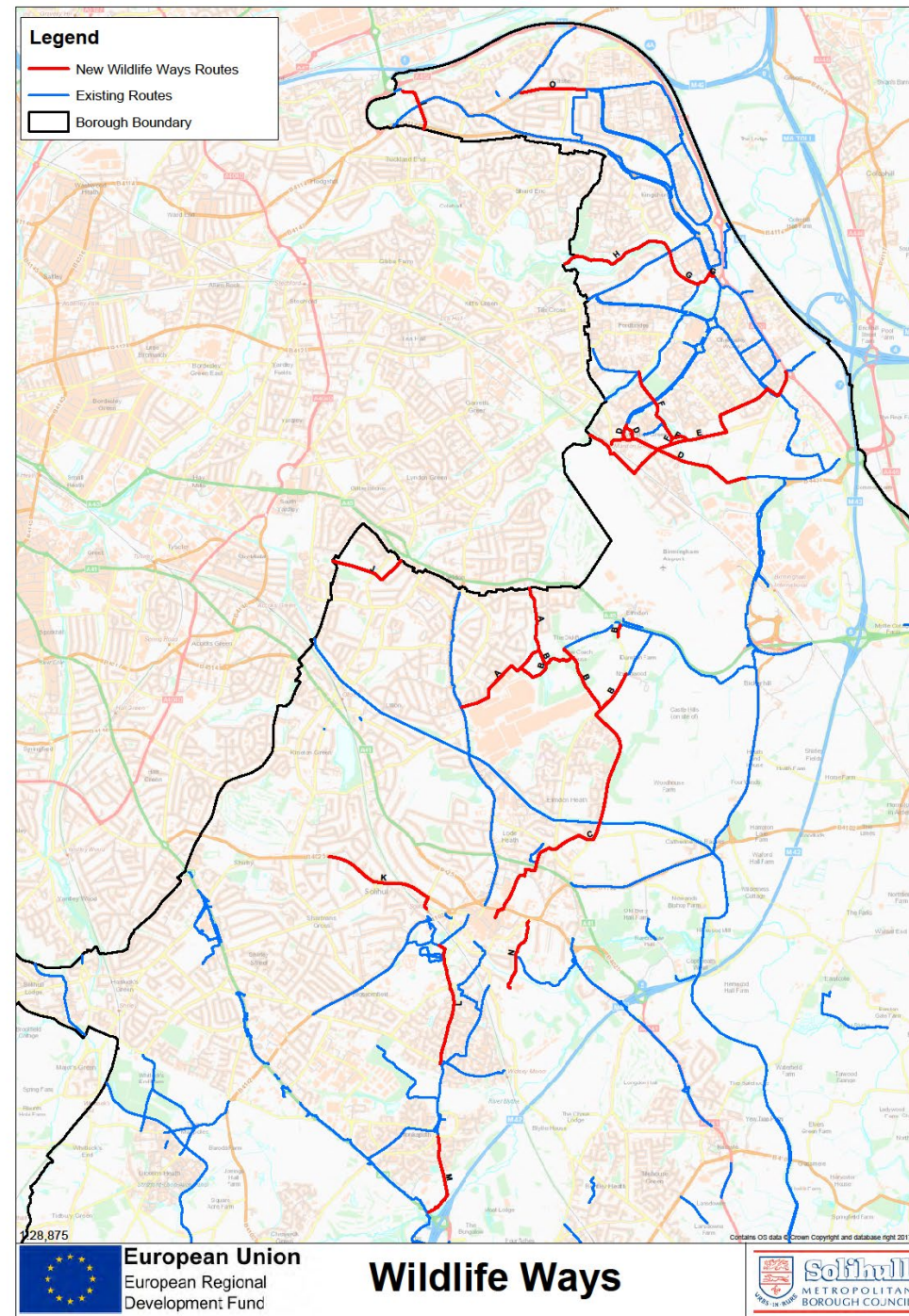
Idverde Ltd (main landscape contractor)  
Balfour Beatty Living Places (main hardworks contractor)

Ebsford Environmental Ltd (wetland contractor)  
Fairways Contracting Ltd (woodland contractor)  
Ventureserve Ltd (grassland management contractor)  
A E Neachell & Son Ltd (grassland management contractor)  
Shelley Signs Ltd (Interpretation signs)  
Paul Sinton Landscaping, Hedge-laying, Fencing and Tree surgery



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Wildlife Ways Map of cycle routes



### Appendix 2 The Armed Forces Community Garden, Hillfield Park







## APPENDICES

### Appendix 3 Selected Species Lists

<p><b>Trees</b>  <b>18-20 Extra Heavy Standard trees</b>  <i>Acer campestre</i>  <i>Acer campestre 'Streetwise'</i>  <i>Amerlanchier Canadensis</i>  <i>Amelanchier 'Robin Hill'</i>  <i>Amelanchier lamarkii</i>  <i>Betula albosinosis</i>  <i>Betula nigra</i>  <i>Betula jacquemontii</i>  <i>Betula pendula</i>  <i>Betula pendula 'Fastigiata'</i>  <i>Carpinus betulus</i>  <i>Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'</i>  <i>Castaea sativa</i>  <i>Crataegus monogyna 'Stricta'</i>  <i>Crataegus prunifolia</i>  <i>Malus sylvestris</i>  <i>Malus 'John Downie'</i>  <i>Prunus avium</i>  <i>Prunus cerasifera</i>  <i>Prunus subhirtella</i>  <i>Prunus 'Sunset Boulevard'</i>  <i>Prunus Yedoensis</i>  <i>Sorbus aria</i>  <i>Sorbus aria 'Majestica'</i>  <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>  <i>Sorbus x intermedia</i>  <i>Tilia cordata</i>  <i>Tilia 'Green Spire'</i>  <i>Quercus robur 'Fastigiata'</i>  <b>Fruit trees 18-20 EHS trees</b>  <i>Malus 'Discovery'</i>  <i>Malus 'Lord Lambourne'</i>  <i>Prunus 'Majorie's Seedling's'</i>  <i>Prunus 'Summer Sun'</i>  <i>Prunus 'Stella'</i>  <i>Pyrus conference</i>  <b>20-25 Semi mature trees</b>  <i>Acer campestre</i>  <i>Betula pendula</i>  <i>Carpinus betulus</i>  <i>Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'</i>  <i>Castaea sativa</i>  <i>Crataegus monogyna 'Stricta'</i>  <i>Malus 'John Downie'</i>  <i>Prunus avium</i>  <i>Prunus cerasifera</i>  <i>Prunus 'Sunset Boulevard'</i>  <i>Pyrus conference</i>  <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>  <i>Sorbus aucuparia 'Sheerwater seedling'</i>  <i>Sorbus intermedia</i>  <i>Tilia cordata</i>  <i>Tilia 'Green Spire'</i>  <i>Quercus robur</i></p>	<p><b>Bulbs</b>  <i>Allium 'Giganteum'</i>  <i>Allium 'Gladiator'</i>  <i>Allium 'Globemaster'</i>  <i>Allium karataviense</i>  <i>Anemone nemorosa</i>  <i>Colchicum autumnale</i>  <i>Crocus biflorus 'Blue Pearl'</i>  <i>Crocus chrysanthus 'Flavus'</i>  <i>Crocus crythansus 'Prins Claus'</i>  <i>Crocus chrysanthus 'Snow Bunting'</i>  <i>Crocus flavus</i>  <i>Crocus tommasinianus 'Whitewell Purple'</i>  <i>Galanthus nivalis size</i>  <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>  <i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>  <b>Plug plants</b>  <i>Primula vulgaris</i>  <i>Primula veris</i>  <i>Betonica officinalis</i>  <i>Malva sylvestris</i>  <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>    <b>Pictorial Meadows sample mix (Treasure Chest)</b>  <i>Achillea millefolium</i>  <i>Betonica officinalis</i>  <i>Bupthalmum salicifolium</i>  <i>Campanula persicifolia var. grandiflora</i>  <i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>  <i>Festuca longifolia</i>  <i>Galium verum</i>  <i>Geranium pratense</i>  <i>Geum chiloense 'Goldball'</i>  <i>Knautia arvensis</i>  <i>Knautia macedonica 'Red Knight'</i>  <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>  <i>Linaria vulgaris</i>  <i>Lynchis viscaria</i>  <i>Malva alcea var. fastigiata</i>  <i>Malva moschata</i>  <i>Origanum vulgare</i>  <i>Papaver orientale 'Brilliant'</i>  <i>Primula veris</i>  <i>Primula acaulis</i>  <i>Ranunculus acris</i>  <i>Salvia nemorosa</i>  <i>Sanguisorba menziensis</i>  <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>  <i>Scabiosa columbaria</i>  <i>Stachys lanata</i>  <i>Succisa pratensis</i>  <i>Valeriana officinalis</i></p>	<p><b>Wildflower seed:</b>  <b>Emorsgate EM3 bespoke mix (25% wildflowers 75% grasses).</b>  <i>Achillea millefolium</i>  <i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>  <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>  <i>Centaurea nigra</i>  <i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>  <i>Chrysanthemum vulgare</i>  <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>  <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsia</i>  <i>Daucus carota</i>  <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>  <i>Echium vulgare</i>  <i>Festuca rubra</i>  <i>Galium album</i>  <i>Galium verum</i>  <i>Geranium pratense</i>  <i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>  <i>Lentodon autumnale</i>  <i>Lentodon hispidus</i>  <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>  <i>Linaria vulgaris</i>  <i>Lotus corniculatus</i>  <i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>  <i>Malva moschata</i>  <i>Pastinaca sativa</i>  <i>Phleum bertolonii</i>  <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>  <i>Plantago media</i>  <i>Poa pratensis</i>  <i>Potentilla erecta</i>  <i>Potentilla reptans</i>  <i>Primula veris</i>  <i>Prunella vulgaris</i>  <i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>  <i>Reseda luteola</i>  <i>Rhinanthus minor</i>  <i>Rumex acetosella</i>  <i>Sanguisorba minor</i>  <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>  <i>Silaum silaus</i>  <i>Silene dioica</i>  <i>Silene latifolia</i>  <i>Stachys officinalis</i>  <i>Succisa pratensis</i>  <i>Odonitites vernus</i>  <i>Torilis japonica</i>  <i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>  <i>Trifolium pratense</i>  <i>Vicia sativa spp. Segetalis</i>  <b>Grasses</b>  <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>  <i>Briza media</i>  <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>  <i>Festuca ovina</i>  <i>Festuca rubra ssp. Littoralis</i></p>
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### Appendix 4 Ecological Condition Monitoring

Wildlife Ways	Habitat	Site	Woodland condition monitoring - Positive indicator species (herbs) difference pre/post works	Woodland condition monitoring - Negative indicator species difference pre/post works	Woodland condition monitoring - Positive indicator species (trees and shrubs) difference pre/post works	Total number of species present difference pre/post works	Grassland condition monitoring - Positive indicator species present difference pre/post works	Grassland condition monitoring - Negative indicator species present difference pre/post works	
Woodlands		Elmdon Park	0	0	4	8			
		Damson Parkway	2	0	-1	2			
		Knightsbridge Road	-4	1	-3	-8			
		Malvern/Brueton Park	3	0	4	13			
		Coleshill Heath Road	0	1	1	-2			
		Olton Jubilee Woodland	4	0	2	0			
		Chelmsley Wood	1	0	5	9			
		Babbs Mill	1	0	2	10			
		Cole Bank Park	2	0	2	3			
		Kingshurst Brook	-1	0	-5	-5			
	Marston Green Park	1	0	2	2				
		<b>average</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>2.91</b>			
Grasslands		Cole Bank LNR				32	8	0	
		Hillfield Park				11	0	-1	
		Marston Green Park				41	9	0	
		Elmdon Park				7	1	0	
		Streetsbrook POS				11	4	2	
		Babbs Mill				16	8	0	
		Brueton Park				8	0	0	
		Kingshurst Brook				44	9	3	
		Low Brook				23	8	0	
			<b>average</b>			<b>21.44</b>	<b>5.22</b>	<b>0.44</b>	
Verges		Hobbs Moat Road				1	1	0	
		Water Orton Road				11	10	0	
		Moorend Avenue				2	10	2	
		<b>average</b>			<b>4.67</b>	<b>7.00</b>	<b>0.67</b>		
Wetland		Kingshurst Brook	For wetland sites, we used a combination of geomorphology surveys (using the Modular River Survey Methodology devised by the EA), water quality measurements (including ammonia, phosphates and nitrates) and macroinvertebrate surveys to establish ecological enhancements. Updates to water quality and macroinvertebrate surveys have not been possible due to Covid-19, however updated geomorphology surveys have been undertaken.						
		Low Brook (Marston Green Park)							

#### Example Indicator species

Grassland indicator species	
Positive Indicator Sp.	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>
	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>
	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>
	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	
Negative Indicator Sp.	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
	<i>Juncus effusus</i>

#### Condition monitoring analysis for Wildlife Ways projects

It is not only the percentage increase in species/m<sup>2</sup> (diversity) before and after habitat management which is important, but also the number and frequency of species are indicator species for the target habitat or community. For example, the overall total number of species may be lower after habitat management – however if the species that are present after habitat management are all positive indicator species then this shows the habitat is in a favourable or good condition (and the project has been of benefit to biodiversity). Likewise if the frequency or abundance of those positive indicator species across survey plots is higher after habitat management then this again shows the benefits of positive habitat management. Some indicator species colonise better than others and many can take several years to colonise hence the lag in number of positive indicator species recorded on completion of habitat management works – the key is that ongoing positive management is being carried out by grounds maintenance contractors and/or volunteers and biannual monitoring will capture any changes in habitat condition over time.





## APPENDICES

### Appendix 5 Maintenance Schedules (Green Corridor Management Plan)

Summary Maintenance i dverde 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 (26 March 2021)						
Landscape Intervention	Wildfls. m <sup>2</sup>	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )/ Nr.			Operations	Frequency/ period
		Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3		
	Tree, hedge, shrub Nr	PC 24 May 2019	PC 9 June 2020	PC 31 March 2021		
	Ext. beyond 24 mos	10 mos 7 days	2 mos 9 days	Minus 1 year		
Pictorial Meadow Turf (m <sup>2</sup> )	48,730	8,252	127,796	38,883	Cut & Collect	Twice: w/c 26 July (meadows) and later for Pict. M (from mid Aug.)
Wildflower Meadow (Reader) Turf (m <sup>2</sup> )	10,361					
Wildflower Seeded areas (m <sup>2</sup> )	115,840					
<b>TOTALS</b>	174,931					
Provisional Sum for emergency cutting		Prov. Item			Cut & Collect	Once: w/c 4 Oct. 22
Bulb planting (3 Mill)		Prov. Item	430m <sup>2</sup> Alliums	260m <sup>2</sup> Alliums	Cut & collect alliums	July
		Prov. Item			Cut & Collect	Summer
Primroses			51,430	132,660	Irrigation	Summer
Other plugs				2,856	Irrigation	Summer
Tree planting: Nr	854	366	307	181	Mulch, straighten, check/ replace ties, pruning	Winter
Hedges (2,086 Lm): Nr	7628	340		7,288	Mulch, irrigation, weeding	As required
Shrubs (1010m2) & ivy (182 Lm): Nr	7653	2851	295	4507	Mulch, irrigation, weeding	As required
200 signs with posts					Installation	By end of March, and assess periodically; remove Nov.

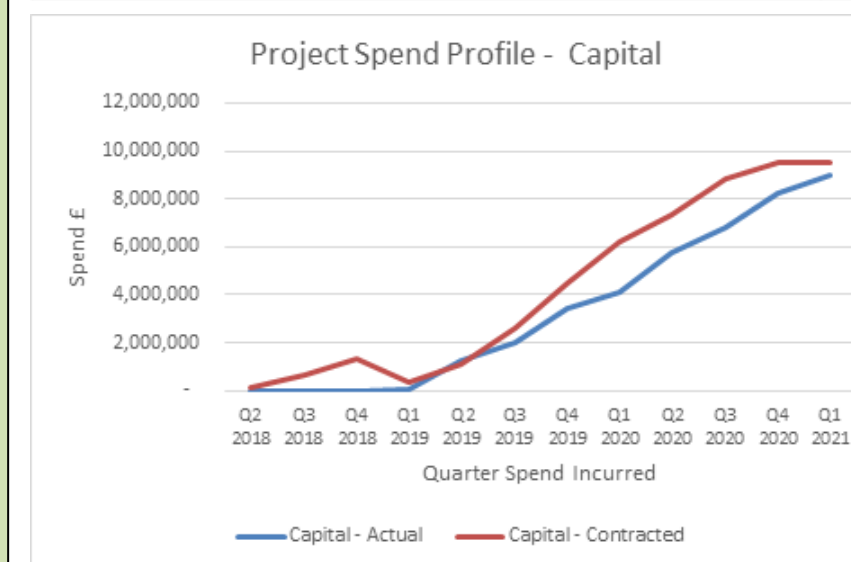
### Appendix 5 Management Responsibilities (Green Corridor Management Plan)

Job description	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Responsibility
<b>Wildflowers:</b> Cut, bale and remove hay (August)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	ERDF Contractor SMBC
Spot spray negative indicator species			X	X	X	X	X	ERDF Contractor SMBC
<b>Trees and hedges:</b> Mulching and watering	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	ERDF Contractor SMBC
Watering				X	X	X	X	SMBC
Replacement of dead, diseased or damaged trees & plants, guards and ties	X	X	X					ERDF Contractor
Annual inspection				X	X	X	X	SMBC
Initial crown lift (certain trees only)							X	SMBC
<b>Shrubs and ivy:</b> Mulching and watering, replacements	X	X	X					ERDF Contractor
Watering	X	X	X			X	X	SMBC
<b>Bulbs and Primroses</b>				X	X	X	X	SMBC

### Appendix 6 Wildlife Ways Project Financial Profile

Funding Source	Amount £000s	Status
ERDF	7,191	SECURED
NPIF	4,470	SECURED
WMCA	2,474	SECURED
Other LA's Match	2,218	60% of small grants programme.
SMBC Core Staff Match	1,232	Staff time 'in kind'
Environment Agency	55	SECURED
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,640</b>	

Project Area	Amount £000s
'Grey' Elements	5,915
'Green' Elements	4,424
Small Grants Programme	3,697
Business Support (sustainable travel support to businesses)	318
Programme Development and Support Costs	3,286
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,640</b>







## APPENDICES

### Appendix 7 Communications Summary

**Engagement Officer:** An ERDF funded engagement officer was appointed to lead on liaison with the public and local stakeholders.

**Communications Plan:** A comprehensive communications plan was drawn up and agreed with the SMBC communications team. This was updated on a weekly basis and informed target audiences such as councillors and residents of planned works etc.

- Elected members were briefed via their weekly email update before works were due to start in their wards
- For each route, prior to works starting, residents and interested local stakeholders were contacted by letter or email and encouraged to sign up to the Council's "Stay Connected" digital communication format to provide regular updates

The Council's Connect service was provided with a 'script' to enable their staff to field routine enquiries concerning Wildlife Ways. The following table summarising communications actions:

Task	Action
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agreement with designers and hosts Diva signed October 2018</li> <li>▪ Hosted for three years – December 2018-December 2022</li> <li>▪ 30 hours maintenance time included – split as 10 hours over three years, requests made to Diva to do detailed back end work and time taken deducted accordingly and estimated in advance; an online tracker shows what is left, what has been used and why</li> <li>▪ Site content covers project descriptions, aims and objectives; latest news; plans and resources (maps, traffic diversions and newsletters); area-by-area (based on Solihull MBC electoral wards) descriptions of what is happening when including videos, images and plans; frequently asked questions; partners and contact forms</li> <li>▪ Site and contract managed by Engagement Officer; Communications Officer and Programme Co-ordinator also have access</li> <li>▪ Following the end of the contract in December 2022, the site is now closed and some of its content transferred to the Solihull MBC website. A historic copy of the site will be retained for reference purposes</li> <li>▪ Traffic has been monitored through Google Analytics – trends through 2020 attached</li> </ul>
Communications Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An overall Communications Plan for Wildlife Ways was produced in November 2018 by the Communications Officer</li> <li>▪ This was supplemented by a series of individual Communications Plans for each route</li> <li>▪ Plans were also produced for specific complex or sensitive activities where required, e.g. removals of trees on routes</li> </ul>
Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A monthly newsletter was produced under the Solihull MBC 'Stay Connected' banner since February 2019 (with the exception of March and April 2020, due to Covid)</li> <li>▪ The content was usually updates on works on various routes or news items, such as interviews with project managers</li> <li>▪ By February 2021 the newsletter had 1,032 subscribers</li> </ul>

Task	Action
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A dedicated email inbox, <a href="mailto:wildlifeways@solihull.gov.uk">wildlifeways@solihull.gov.uk</a> was set up to channel comments, complaints and questions</li> <li>▪ This was managed by the Engagement Officer with the Programme Co-ordinator, Communications Officer and Head of Highways Infrastructure also having access</li> <li>▪ People could send in messages to this address via the Wildlife Ways website</li> <li>▪ Messages regarding the project were also forwarded via Solihull Connect, the highways and landscape teams</li> <li>▪ The process followed was that any emails would be forwarded to the appropriate department / officer to reply to either direct (usually if a councillor or MP was asking) or via the WW email. This would be done in a five day turnaround timeframe with an auto-reply to each person who emails to say so</li> <li>▪ This address was being wound down from March 2021 with enquiries channelled via Solihull Connect</li> </ul>
Collateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Series of banners produced installed at publicly visible sites on each route during works; this was mostly restricted to footpath resurfacing and widening areas</li> <li>▪ Poster template produced by Communications' graphic designer allows smaller laminated posters to be installed where specialist landscape works (e.g. woodland management or tree removals) are taking place</li> <li>▪ The 'Story so Far' was an infographic poster produced by Communications featuring project milestone statistics (e.g. sqm of wildflower turf laid to date). This was installed in the council house and been made available online. It was updated three times to date</li> <li>▪ Pull-up banners used at exhibitions and events</li> </ul>
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rather than have a dedicated WW social media presence it was decided to use existing council channels. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the content.</li> <li>▪ Examples of social media replies have been attached.</li> </ul>
Political Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We had regular email and phone contact with ward councillors and established some key relationships, especially around Elmdon Park and Chelmsley Wood</li> <li>▪ Cabinet and ward councillors received email briefings with plans of works included, copies of residents' letters and offers of on-site briefings</li> <li>▪ We offered in these emails site meetings to the cabinet and ward councillors that took place before start of works. These would see the members walked along the routes to be developed with highways, landscape and programme managers informing them of the scope of works, answering questions and noting specific local issues and requests</li> <li>▪ MPs occasionally emailed us with issues raised by constituents which we would formally reply to</li> <li>▪ Councillors were also offered the opportunity to take part in photocalls.</li> <li>▪ Two full council marketplace events took place (see Events)</li> </ul>





## APPENDICES

### Appendix 7 Communications Summary (continued)

Task	Action
Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WW email inbox was the key line of enquiry for members of the public</li> <li>Queries also came in via Solihull Connect, highways and landscape teams, Neighbourhood Officers (emails and phone calls)</li> <li>Letter drops were made to all properties in the immediate vicinity of the works. Following a review of resources and capacity the mailing was outsourced to a specialist company who sent the letters from a list of addresses and postcodes provided</li> <li>Events to engage with the public were also held (see 'Events' entry)</li> <li>Where there were disputes (Water Orton Road, Elmdon Park) meetings between officers and community representatives took place to find common ground or to resolve</li> </ul>
General Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A log has been kept of interactions between myself and the public, politicians, community groups and businesses (I cannot share this for GDPR reasons)</li> <li>There were approx. 280 public queries between February 2019-21</li> <li>There were also some 120 political queries</li> </ul>
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I attended parish council meetings (Marston Green, Hampton in Arden, Kingshurst) and met in person other local groups such as Balsall Common Residents' Association, Cars Area Action Group (Smiths Wood), B37 (Chelmsley Wood) and Elmdon Park Support Group</li> <li>I kept regular conversations going after lockdown, via email, phone and online</li> </ul>
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We attended two events in 2019 – Fun in the Park (September) and Oaks and Shires (October)</li> <li>Scheduled events for 2020 were cancelled</li> <li>We attended full council marketplace with a stand in October and December 2019</li> <li>We ran a series of bulb planting events with local schools in autumn 2019. These were publicised on social media. We also joined a community organiser for bulb planting in December 2019</li> </ul>

### Publicity

Publicity activity has included:

- Member's briefings to councillors in the run up to the works commencing
- Briefings to ward councillors for each of the specific wards affected by the works
- Letter drops to local residents around the work sites to inform them of the up-coming work
- Parish councils and local resident/"friends of" groups informed where relevant
- Temporary closure notices and signs displayed on fencing around the sites to inform visitors of the works.
- Temporary Wildlife Ways 'lollipop signs' during works.
- Interpretive signage across all sites, being rolled out at the time of this report.



### Compliments from Residents 07 June 2021 - 10 June 2021

- Message: Loving the wild flowers everywhere
- Message: I love the wild flowers and most importantly they are saving the bees 🐝. Keep up the good work
- Message: The flowers are so beautiful so much more natural and help save the environment! Excellent cause.
- Message: Congratulations on the wildflowers in the borough. In an area such as Chelmsley Wood where there is such little green space, where many people don't have a garden and an area that's more concrete than anything else, these flower areas are vital and a credit to all involved
- Hiya I just want to say that I think the wild flowers look beautiful, I suffer from depression and I can honestly say that I genuinely feel happier and smile when I see them, I love been outdoors and so do my children, we love them that much we have planted them in our garden and they are starting to grow now, I personally would love to see alot more planted too on as much green space as possible, the amount of bees your helping is phenomenal!)
- Message: No great ideas just loving the amazing displays of wild flowers by the Farthings Pub and water Orton Road makes it a pleasure to go outside and walk
- Message: I personally love all the wild flowers, they look beautiful
- Message: Love the wildflowers in Solihull, both north and south. Looks amazingly beautiful and so necessary. Keep up the good work, hope to see more and more in the coming years.

Message: So lovely to see all the wildflowers. It's inspired me to make an area in my garden to grow more flowers to attract wildlife.

Message: I think they are beautiful. I've tried different brands with no success would like to know which seeds you use, also can they be put on the embankment on Yorkminster drive please

Message: Please can I just take time to compliment you for making Castle Bromwich so beautiful and picturesque. Having recently moved from Bham City Council I am so thrilled to see such efforts made for our community to enjoy. I think the fact it varies from road to road is so unique and special in its own way. I think this is nature at its best and would love to see some coverage in our local gazette to help the community understand the importance.

Message: I just wanted to say how beautiful all the wild flowers look and to keep up the good work. It's making the area look very pleasant and welcoming.

Message: Love all the wild plantings, there's something different to see everytime. Have changed planting in my own garden specifically to attract bees.

Message: Love all the wild flowers growing everywhere, keep them coming 🐝🐝🐝

Message: I have seen some negative comments about the wildlife ways and just want to say that the majority of the community love these, they brighten up the area and make it look more cared for, they bring more bugs and nature back to what can be seen as concrete city, chelmsley wood doesn't have a lot of green spaces left so when nature is brought to us in places that it should have always been it's amazing. This project was an amazing idea and you should all be extremely proud of yourselves. Myself and the community love the wildlife ways and only wish we could see more, please keep up the good work and thank you for improving our area

Message: I think the wild flower grass verges look lovely. They are pretty to look at and help the bees and other insects so well done and continue to spread the wild seeds everywhere possible!

Message: I think the project is a fantastic idea. It not only helps the environment but helps teach the younger generations about how important our wildlife is and about pollination. I feel we need to continue this project and spread it even more.

Message: I love how the wildlife ways project has developed over the last few years. The flower that are in bloom around Chelmsley Wood are stunning! I live on Lyndon Croft in Marston Green and we have a big beautiful roundabout that we would love to have wildflowers on and even a few more trees. How would I go about putting an official request for this?

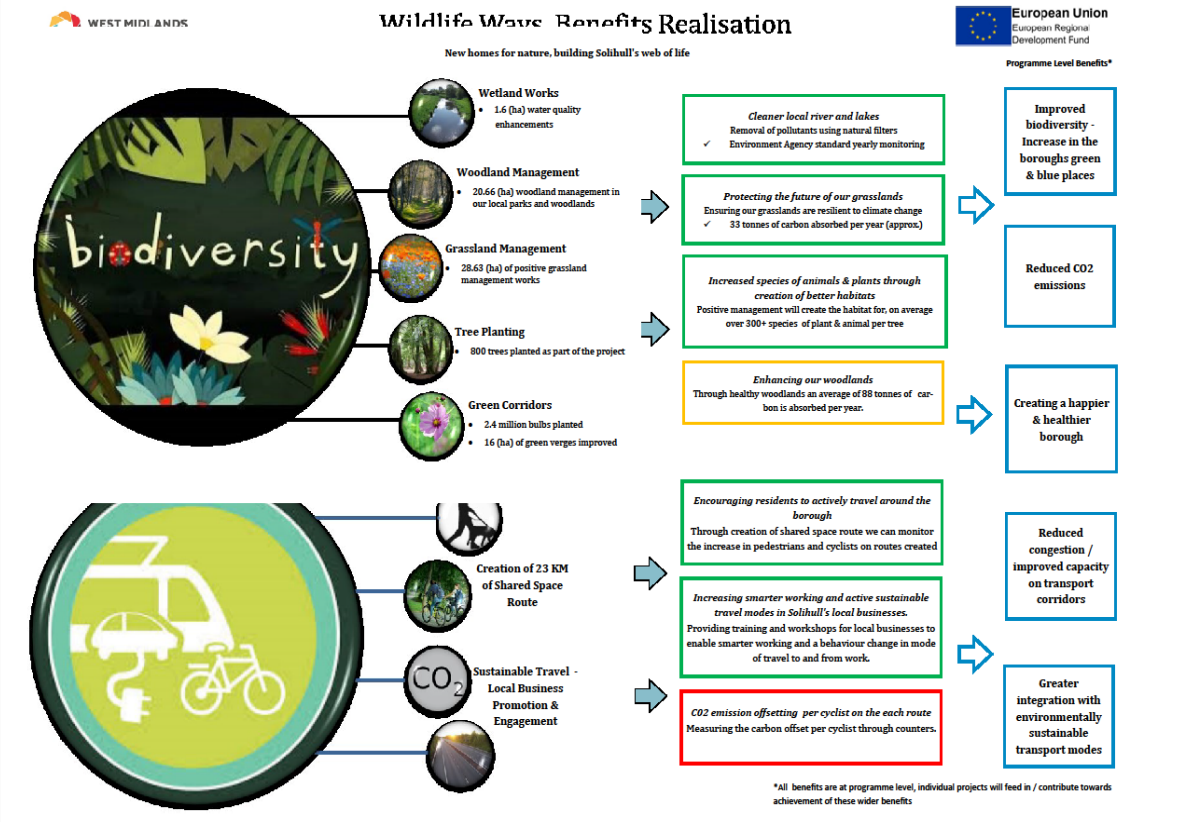






# APPENDICES

## Appendix 8 Benefits Map Biodiversity



## Appendix 9 Benefits Profile Table

Project: Wildlife Ways  
Date: 27/03/15

Benefit ID	Benefit	Contracted Outputs	Benefit Category	Benefit Description	Measure	Data Source	Measurement Frequency	Baseline	Target	Expected Realisation Date	Benefit Potential	Which priority of the Solihull Local Plan does the benefit align with?	Which priority of the Solihull Local Plan does the benefit align with?	Which priority of the Solihull Local Plan does the benefit align with?
WB-01-01	Improved biodiversity - an increase in the borough natural green space	1.6 (ha) water quality enhancements 20.66 (ha) woodland management in our local parks and woodlands 28.63 (ha) of positive grassland management works 800 trees planted as part of the project	Environment	Protection and conservation of the borough green spaces to improve and enhance biodiversity in Solihull.	How would this be measured?	Environment Agency SMBC wildlife data SMBC wildlife data SMBC data SMBC & private data	Before, during & after on an ongoing basis Before, during & after on an ongoing basis Before, during & after on an ongoing basis During the project Ongoing	TBC TBC TBC 0 0	1 year & on-going 1/10 years 1/10 years 2015 2021	TBC	High	Planning & Delivery for Solihull's Low Carbon Future	Sustainability, Health & Wellbeing	Place
WB-01-02	Greater integration with environmentally sustainable transport modes	23KM of shared space route 48 businesses engaged in sustainable travel	Transport	Encourage residents/local businesses to move from car to more sustainable transport alternatives.	How would this be measured?	SMBC survey data SMBC Travel Address / TSM	Before, during & after the project - monthly/annually Annually / Bi-annually	2015 2015	2015 2015	2 years 5 years	Low	Planning & Delivery for Solihull's Low Carbon Future	Health & Wellbeing, Sustainability, Improved Life Chances	People / Place
WB-01-03	Reduced congestion / improved capacity on transport corridors	23KM shared space route	Transport	To alleviate local congestion by introducing safer routes to use in the borough.	Data comparison improvement data (by year)	Solihull Place Survey	TBC	TBC	TBC	5 years	TBC	Planning & Delivery for Solihull's Low Carbon Future	Health & Wellbeing, Sustainability, Improved Life Chances	People / Place
WB-01-04	Reduced CO2 Emissions	23KM of shared space route	Environment	To reduce the borough carbon emissions through usage of the 23km of shared space route and behavioural change programme	CO2 per capita for Solihull (WVCA method)	ONS - Government Data	Yearly recorded on an on-going basis	0.2 per capita	TBC	5 years	TBC	Planning & Delivery for Solihull's Low Carbon Future	Health & Wellbeing, Sustainability, Improved Life Chances	People / Place
WB-01-05	Reduction in the borough waste	Absent of raw household waste cleared from landfill	Environment	To reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.	Tonnes of waste taken to landfill and tonnes of waste cleared from landfill (%)	SCAPE	Monthly	0	100%	5 years	TBC	Planning & Delivery for Solihull's Low Carbon Future	Sustainability	Place
WB-01-06	Increased opportunities to access new / existing employment opportunities	Employment opportunities created	Business	Employment opportunities created as a result of the project - Green G.	Social Value TSM - (S1) Number of people employed on the project - Green G	Social Value Portal	Monthly/Quarterly	0	TBC	5 years	TBC	Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth	Business & Productivity, Employment & Skills	Business / People
WB-01-07	Increased investment in employment and skills	Up skilling of staff at SMBC	Business	Number of training events held on staff on the project have been carried on and attended.	Social Value TSM (S1) No of training opportunities created	Social Value Portal	Monthly/Quarterly	0	TBC	5 years	TBC	Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth	Business & Productivity, Employment and Skills	People / Business
WB-01-08	Increased community engagement - involving local places and communities	Number of community groups/local places engaged with	Business	Encouraging community engagement - involving local places and communities through social value.	Social Value TSM - (S1...)	Social Value Portal	Monthly/Quarterly	0	TBC	5 years	TBC	Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth	Health & Wellbeing, Improved Life Chances	People / Place
WB-01-09	Increased participation of local SMEs in the supply chain	Use of local small & medium enterprises	Business	Encouraging local spend to be in the borough where possible supporting local businesses to thrive.	Social Value TSM	Social Value Portal	Monthly/Quarterly	0	TBC	5 years	TBC	Supporting Inclusive Economic Growth	Business & Productivity	Business

- Environment
- Sustainable Travel
- Community
- Air Quality / Carbon reduction
- Economic Growth
- Community

## Appendix 10 JCAD Risk Register (first sheet of 10)

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
12 September 2015



### Risk Register Summary Report

Risk Register - Greening the Grey		Net Risk Level Summary		Total 21		0 0 0	
Editor: James Maguire		Net Risk Level Changes		Green 0		Amber 11	
Risk Ref: 10062015		Risk Owner: Paul Price		Action Progress: 93% complete		Last Review date: 10/06/2015	
Next Review Date: 12/09/2015		Risk Title: PROGRAMME - Failure to achieve programme		Next Review Date: 12/09/2015		Risk Level: 5	
Potentially Covered by	Potentially Leading to	Grows Risk Level	Mitigating Actions	Action Status	Target Date	Action Progress	Net Risk
- Lack of detailed planning, regular updates	- Delay in planning, delivery and outcomes realisation and increased costs and reputation issues	Amber 5	- Produce detailed programme and deliver through gateway process, escalating issues where required - Manage the scope - Regular reviews of programme	Planned In progress In Place	24/06/2015 31/07/2015	80 100 100	Amber 5 Medium Likelihood Medium Impact
<b>Review Comments</b> - Continuing to work with Bidder to produce programme to ensure resources available to achieve outputs. 10/06/2015							
Risk Title: PROGRAMME (GREY) - Address Weather affecting construction works		Risk Ref: 10062015	Risk Owner: Paul Price	Action Progress: 87% complete	Last Review date: 10/06/2015	Next Review Date: 12/09/2015	Risk Level: 5
Potentially Covered by	Potentially Leading to	Grows Risk Level	Mitigating Actions	Action Status	Target Date	Action Progress	Net Risk
- Excesses of time / weather	- Project not being delivered on time	Amber 5	- Integrate green / grey programme plan - Try and phase works in Summer / Autumn months - Contingency within overall programme	In progress In progress In Place	23/06/2015 23/06/2015	80 80 100	Amber 5 Medium Likelihood Medium Impact
<b>Review Comments</b> - Liaising with Contractor in programme works within project to avoid working in weather susceptible areas. 10/06/2015							
Risk Title:		Risk Ref:	Risk Owner:	Action Progress:	Last Review date:	Next Review Date:	Risk Level:

Report produced by JCAD CORE @ 2015-2016 JC Applications Development  
Report Definition Criteria - 12/06/2015 including changes since 14/08/2015



# APPENDICES

## Appendix 11 Solihull Biodiversity Management Plan 2017 Landscape Interventions

September 2017

X365 Greening the Grey

### Proposed Habitat Interventions

1. Hedgerow with wildflowers

2. Street tree planting on surfaces

3. Hedgerow with trees & wildflowers

4. Trees in species rich grassland

5. Low-growing species rich grassland

6. Street trees on hard surfacing

Conservation & Historic Environment, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Ecology Team

4

September 2017

X365 Greening the Grey

7. Woodland management

8. Grassland management

9. Wetland management

10. Wildflowers in urban areas

11. Historic ornamental planting in urban areas

Conservation & Historic Environment, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design and Ecology Team

5

## Appendix 12 Programme from Funding Application

4.0 Project timetable		
Milestone	Start date	Completion
<b>Parks &amp; POS Woodland Management</b>		
Management Plan procurement	April 2018	June 2018
Baseline NVC surveys and management plan production	April 2018	June 2018
Woodland management operations procurement	July 2018	August 2018
Woodland management (felling & thinning)	Oct. 2018	Feb. 2021
Woodland management (planting)	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2021
Post-project monitoring	Jan. 2020	March 2020
Interpretation boards and signage	Jan. 2020	March 2020
<b>Parks &amp; POS Grassland Management</b>		
Baseline botanical surveys	April 2018	June 2018
Detailed design	April 2018	June 2018
Procurement	July 2018	Sep. 2018
Grassland management dependent on seasonal requirements	April 2018	Sep. 2020
Post-project monitoring (botanical)	July 2020	March 2021
<b>Parks &amp; POS Wetlands</b>		
Baseline morphology & macro invertebrate surveys	April 2018	June 2018
Detailed design	April 2018	June 2018
EA & SMBC consents obtained	July 2018	Sep. 2018
Procurement	July 2018	Sep. 2018
Riparian vegetation management	Oct. 2018	Feb. 2020
Earthworks	Oct. 2018	Feb. 2020
Installation of large woody debris	Jan. 2019	March 2020
Post-project monitoring	July 2020	March 2021
<b>Existing corridors – to be enhanced</b>		
Baseline botanical surveys	April 2018	Sep. 2018
Detailed design	April 2018	Sep. 2018
Procurement	April 2018	Sep. 2018
Grassland and wildflower habitat creation	April 2019	March 2021
Woodland and scrub management	Oct. 2018	Feb. 2021
Tree and hedgerow planting	Oct. 2018	Feb. 2020
Post-project monitoring	Jan. 2020	March 2021
<b>New green corridors</b>		
Baseline botanical surveys	July 2018	Sept. 2018
Detailed design (habitat works and construction)	July 2018	Sept. 2018
Procurement (habitat works and construction)	Sept. 2018	Nov. 2018
Grassland and wildflower habitat creation	April 2019	March 2021
Construction works	Nov 2018	Dec 2020
Tree and hedgerow planting	Dec. 2018	Feb. 2021
Post-project monitoring	Jan 2020	March 2021
<b>Work Completed</b>		
<b>GREEN CORRIDORS &amp; GREEN URBAN CENTRES</b>		
Parks & POS woodland works - 5ha achieved		Feb. 2019
Parks & POS woodland works - 10ha achieved		Feb. 2020
Parks & POS woodland works - 20.66ha achieved		Feb. 2021
Parks & POS tree planting works - 6.8ha achieved		Feb 2021
Parks & POS grassland works - 5ha achieved		Sept. 2018
Parks & POS grassland works - 10ha achieved		Sept. 2019
Parks & POS grassland works - 28.63ha achieved		Feb.2021
Parks & POS wetland works complete – 0.5ha achieved		March 2019
Parks & POS wetland works complete – 1.16ha achieved		March 2020
Green corridor works complete - 5ha achieved		Sep. 2019
Green corridor works complete - 10ha achieved		Sep 2020
Green corridor works complete - 16ha achieved		March 2021

The milestones for the habitat improvement works are based on seasonality of works.  
The milestones for works to the Green Urban Centres are based on a wider programme (not funded through this application) of works to Kingshurst Village Centre and Solihull Town Centre and are timetabled accordingly.





## APPENDICES

### Appendix 12 (continued) Statement from ERDF Funding Application

This project will create a network of high quality green spaces woven into the fabric of the borough of Solihull. The network of green spaces will not only improve **93 hectares** of land to attain better conservation status but also create and/or enhance green access corridors that support sustainable transport solutions across the borough – enabling access to green spaces through green spaces – which will also have the benefit of helping to reduce energy consumption and air pollution.

### Appendix 13 Summative Assessment Interim Report 2021: Extracts

**Relevancy and Consistency:** The context of the project and the market failure which it addresses, as set out in the Logic Model have not changed. If anything, the urgency and importance concerted action to address climate change and biodiversity loss at international, national and local levels has increased. There can be no doubt that the project remains aligned with local and national policy for the addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation. In particular, the project remains consistent with and supports the ambitions set out in Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services.

**Progress Against ERDF Objectives:** The project is required to deliver the following specific ERDF outputs by project end: To improve the biodiversity and attain a better conservation status of 93 hectares of land throughout the Solihull borough and GBSLEP area. This is measured and reported as: C23 Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (ha) i.e. Improvements to a defined area of existing habitat(s) that have in place a management plan which can demonstrate how the proposed activity being undertaken will improve the biodiversity of the site. Public access to the site will be required to demonstrate the economic benefit to an area. Activity can be associated with one species or include wider habitat improvements and include associated access improvements where this is non statutory Rights of Way.

Following a project change request approved in Q1 2021, the project outputs were increased. Initially delivery was slow due to delays related to the open tender process. This resulted in a reprofiling of outputs and this new profile has been used in the graph above. Delivery has thereafter remained close to or above the reforecast projection.

**Delivery - Grassland Restoration:** The original approach to grassland restoration was to use the spreading of green hay from appropriate donor sites. Due largely to the drought conditions in summer 2019 the yield of seed from meadow sites was poor and as a result it became apparent that as a result this approach would not have the expected impact. The response was to overseed each site with a seed mix appropriate to the local conditions. Choice of seed mix was facilitated by the investigations carried out in the preparation of each management plan. Our visits to the sites treated in this way suggest that this second approach has been largely successful.

We note that establishment of species in a mix has not been consistent between or even across larger individual sites. This seems to have disappointed the council who had hoped for a wider range of species straight away. There may always be species that do not take on a particular site due to small differences in local conditions or even the weather patterns following sowing. Our experience suggests that it can take several seasons for some species to become apparent due to delayed germination or simply because they have only established in very small numbers. This applies to both seed mixes and seeds from green hay so we would expect the grasslands to increase in diversity over the next few years of management.

Because of the urban situation of these sites it is likely that few, if any, will be managed with aftermath grazing. This is not critical, and the most important issue will be to secure regular annual cut and bale of each site at an appropriate time of year. Ideally the timing can be influenced by weather and the state of the sward rather than the calendar. Overall, the grassland restoration work appears to be having a significant positive impact and we look forward to seeing how it develops over the coming years.

**Woodland Management:** The main focus of woodland management has been on selective thinning; lack of such management is major issue for urban woodlands for several reasons – cost, the fact that decline due to lack of management is slow, and in some cases negative public perceptions. Across the sites the degree of thinning work has varied considerably, with the most impactful work involving the removal of considerable amounts of timber. On a few sites we felt that the thinning could usefully have been more aggressive, however we are aware that there is a fine line to be walked with respect to community perception. If local sentiments are ignored this can create conflict that prevents further valuable work being done in the future.

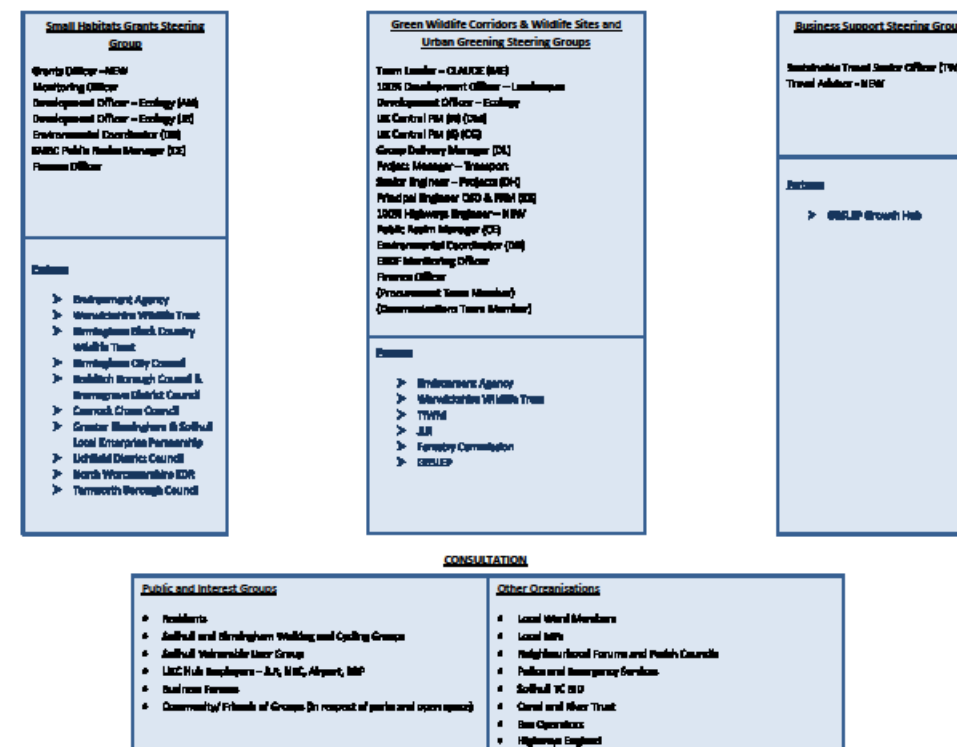
It is important to record that all of the thinning work done has been worthwhile and appears to have significantly improved the structure of the woodlands managed, regardless of the scale of the works. Work has included the removal of dense bramble and holly. The benefits of this will generally be fairly short term but should help the woods in progressing towards a more diversely structure. The other significant element has been the removal of invasive species at a proportion of sites.

**Management:** This is a very large and complex project, with dozens of sub-projects that would require significant management and planning input as standalone initiatives. Considerable benefit has accrued to the overall programme by the retention of skilled staff dedicated to certain aspects of the project, or in some cases the use of specialists consultants where recruitment of suitable individuals was not practical or possible. Examples of how this has worked well include:

### Appendix 14 Original Project Steering Groups



#### Greening the Grey Project Steering Groups



### Appendix 15 Landscape Q30 Specification extract

#### WILDFLOWER TURFING

400A PICTOIAL MEADOWS WILDFLOWER TURF OR APPROVED EQUIVALENT As drawings Type: A flower rich meadow soil less mat, based on normal fertility soils, with various carefully designed mixes of wildlife friendly 100% flowering perennial meadow species. These will offer an exuberant flower display, for at least 2 of the mixes, from March to October. Content to contain at least 50% native species, with other compatible meadow plants that extend the flowering season for increased pollinator value. Product to have been produced by well tested research, trial processes, control procedures and a very successful track record over at least 10 years. The products must evidence long-term sustainability to guarantee that the composition of the meadow mix remains substantially intact with high floral content for at least 5 years. The supplier must provide as much specialist support that the project requires to select the most appropriate plant communities for the project, growing to order as advisable, and to establish and help maintain the turf system for a long-term managed appearance. The PM turf soil less mat system products, or equivalent, that have been deemed suitable to meet the biodiversity targets for this project.





## APPENDICES

### Appendix 16 The top 9 Lessons Learnt

1. There must be a clear brief prior to seeking funding; this must be understood and agreed to by all parties prior to detailed design and through implementation. The brief should also be clear how the project fits in with policy and other projects. Shortly after funding was secured, the project structure and organisation changed which led to a number of reporting clarifications. A project organogram was prepared which clarified the team's roles and responsibilities, it is important that this is created at the start of each UKC project.
2. The quick appointment of BBLP through the Scape contract was beneficial, allowing works to start early. It is important to ensure that there is sufficient knowledge of the contract being used (SCAPE), within the project team and by the Contractors. This caused some delays during the procurement process, however, it was still the fastest route to market.
3. The use of a Quantity Surveyor (QS) during the design phase would ensure that costs were better accounted for and that the designs were appropriate. There were some items that were missed off the original bill of quantities and which may have been identified by a QS.
4. Early engagement is required for the majority of interventions, even those deemed as beneficial have been contentious and need to be effectively communicated. The approach to communications developed as the programme evolved. A clear communications strategy was established which has effectively mitigated against complaints. Weekly meetings also ensure that all upcoming works were appropriately communicated. This is a clear example where the project has evolved and incorporated the lessons learned into the delivery of the project.
5. At times there has been a lack of information sharing between teams. A central resource location was established to allow the project team access to key documentation, reducing email requests for information and the wrong information being used.
6. Due to the resequencing of the programme, there have been times where the ecological improvements have been delivered before the highways improvements. This should be avoided where possible as it is difficult for the highways contractors and can lead to damage to the ecological enhancements. Despite this, the highways contractors have been informed of the landscape improvements and have often been able to complete their works with minimal damage to the ecological improvements.
7. It is important that dependencies outside the project are reviewed in advance. The project team identified a number of dependencies during the delivery of the project which allowed the plans to be updated before works were undertaken. This action saved potential mitigating works at additional costs and reputational damage.
8. A procurement irregularity was not identified on the request for quotation document for funding from MHCLG. This has resulted in a 5% clawback on all idverde invoices. Internal processes have been updated to increase the number of checks in place so that there is no repeat. It is important that procurement, internal audit/monitoring and the project office all review and sign off the documents to reduce the chances of the repetition of issues.
9. Due to a 1 in 10 weather event (extreme rains followed by droughts) and Covid, BBLP re-profiled some of the programme to allow them to work with minimal disruptions. The flexibility in the programme and good relationships with the contractors provided the opportunity to mitigate against the potential delay. Regular reviews of project timelines should take place to ensure opportunities are optimised.

### Appendix 17 West Midlands Natural Capital Plan 2021-2026: Delivery Plan extract

#### Theme 3: Wildlife Corridors

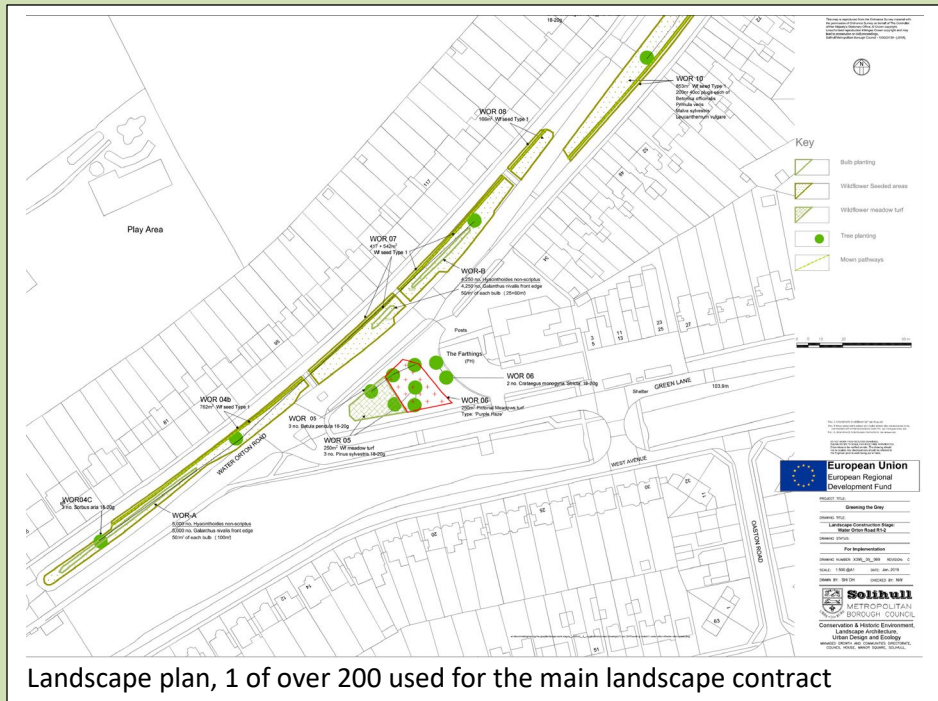
Action	Aim	Y1 focus	Success by 2026	WMCA role (lead/enable/oversee)	Stakeholders include	Investment secured
Wildlife Corridors Commission	Establish a Wildlife Corridors Commission to maximise the connectivity, for both people and wildlife, between green spaces and along blue corridors.	Build Commission Advisory Group and launch tender for work. Establish priority corridors for investment through mapping.	To have a Local Nature Recovery Strategy in place delivering biodiversity net gain through improved wildlife corridors. Activity taking place on the 6 priority corridors identified in the plan.	Lead	Local authorities, Environmental NGOs, TWML, Private sector partners.	The Commission will be run within the budget of the WMCA natural capital programme. Additional resource will need to be identified for projects.
A regional 'Wildlife Ways' programme	Roll out regional good practice, for example explore potential of a regional Wildlife Ways programme, building on the work in Solihull. Projects would include tree, hedgerow and wildflower planting, small habitat grants for local conservation projects and improved cycling and walking access.	Explore the potential with partners across the region and develop a business case.	Support delivery if funding secured.	Enable	Local authorities, TWML, Private sector partners, Environmental and conservation NGOs.	This will require identification of external funding in order to invest in a region-wide programme. We will explore all opportunities identified in Section 4.1 of this Plan.
Species recovery	Identify links to specific species recovery such as swift, willow tit and dipper that are already within the WMCA area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders to identify priority species for recovery</li> <li>Include in habitat mapping</li> </ul>	Evidence of further species recovery through natural capital interventions as part of the annual State of the Region's Nature report.	Enable	RSPB, Natural England, Wildlife Trusts, Local authorities.	To be included as part of other funded work. The action will mainly be to partner with other organisations.
Spatially defining the region's natural capital through maps	Complete a habitat map, building on the work already being undertaken by regional stakeholders, to indicate priority areas for nature recovery. Build this into a more comprehensive interactive map to provide up-to-date information on natural capital across the WMCA area.	Scope out the requirements needed for the mapping and identify where there are gaps in data/ data requirements. We will work with regional stakeholders to identify what these are.	Up-to-date and relevant maps that guide the region's investment into natural capital. Additional layers will also enable an understanding of potential links with nature-based solutions for climate adaptation and air quality improvements, for example.	Lead	Local authorities, Wildlife Trusts, Other environmental NGOs, Defra.	Investment to be secured.



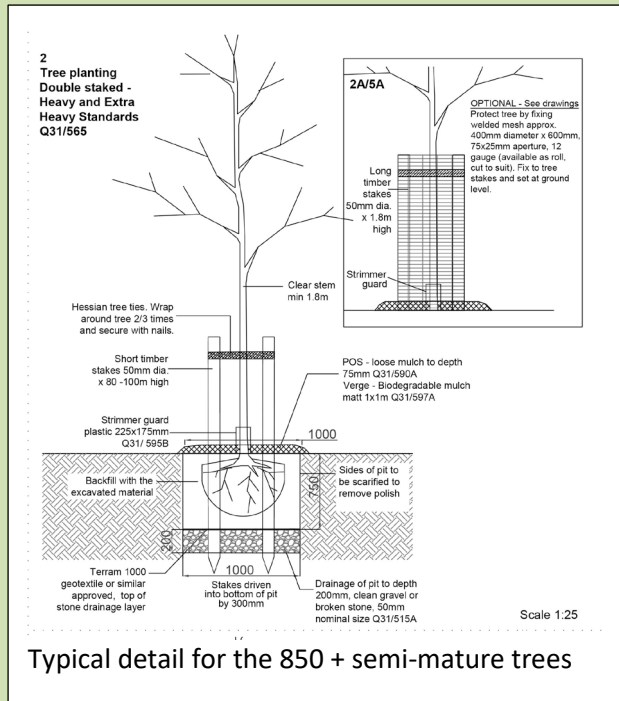


# APPENDICES

## Appendix 18 Various Images



Landscape plan, 1 of over 200 used for the main landscape contract



Typical detail for the 850 + semi-mature trees



Communications Officers at the borough's Oaks & Shires 2020



20 Interpretation panels for Wildlife Ways



Idverde's tree planting commences February 2019



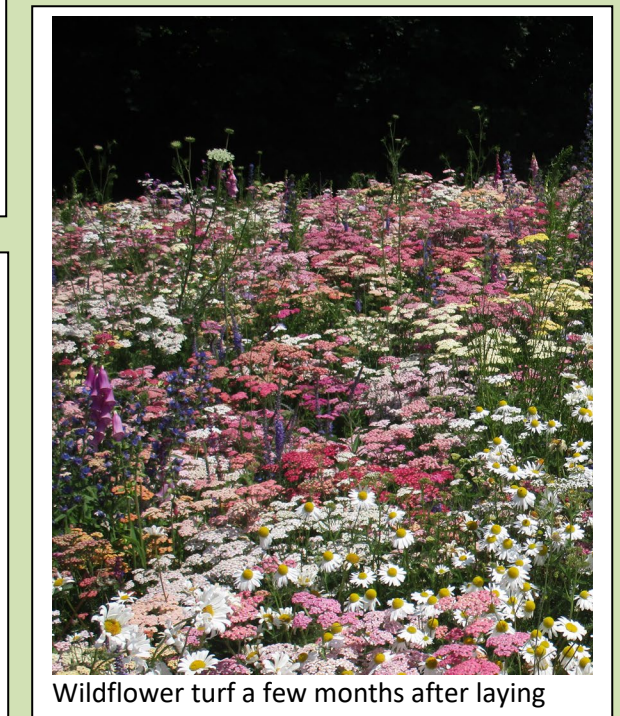
Wildflower seeding grass verges and splitters



Green Hay harvesting at donor site



Woodland contract, Knightsbridge Wood



Wildflower turf a few months after laying



Bed of sharp sand prior to laying wildflower turf



First trial seeding contract in the first season



Cut and collect operation in progress



Hedge-laying 275 Lm along a key N-S route



Wetland works at Kingshurst Brook