

Full Business Case (FBC)			
1. General Information			
Directorate	Place / Economy	Portfolio/Committee	TBC
Project Title	Natural Rivers and Green Corridors	Project Code	<i>To follow</i>
Project Description	<p>Project background</p> <p>The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country (WTBBC) has been delivering landscape-scale enhancements through the Nature Improvement Area (NIA) project since 2012. Over this time, Birmingham City Council (BCC) and the Environment Agency (EA) have been project partners, amongst many others; BCC's involvement has been through the work of the City Ecologists (part of the Economy Directorate's City Design Team) and the Place Directorate's Parks and Nature Conservation section. Initially the NIA was funded through a DEFRA grant that covered the first three years implementation. At the end of this funding, WTBBC was successful in obtaining additional non-governmental grant funding to continue this work, however this was much reduced. Projects implemented as part of the NIA have included work with the EA for stream channel re-profiling, removing weirs and the introduction of native bankside vegetation to improve habitat connectivity, eg for fish and water vole. Other projects include work with BCC to improve the diversity of derelict woodland plantation. This involved the selective removal of trees, understorey planting and the addition of native woodland flora.</p> <p>All of these habitat enhancements have been welcomed by the project partners and citizens of Birmingham alike. However, the reductions in the availability of funding for NIA work have meant that these successful, wider landscape-scale projects have had to be scaled back.</p> <p>It is against this background that BCC has secured European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding to deliver the Natural Rivers and Green Corridors project. The funding was secured in response to a call under ERDF Priority Axis 6: Preserving and Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency (investment priorities 6d and 6f). Projects applying for funding under this call must demonstrate how their proposed activities achieve the investment priorities' specific objective, in this case, investment priority 6d:</p> <p><i>"Investments in Green and Blue infrastructure and actions that support the provision of ecosystem services on which businesses and communities depend to increase local natural capital and support sustainable economic growth".</i></p> <p>The project</p> <p>Natural Rivers and Green Corridors will deliver the first phase of a large, landscape-scale approach to green and blue infrastructure improvements at strategic locations across Birmingham. It involves</p>		

	<p>activities to restore and enhance habitats and improve ecological connectivity within public open space corridors of the upper River Rea catchment in south-west Birmingham and along the River Tame corridor at Hilltop / Manwoods (Sandwell Valley) in west Birmingham. The project will support the delivery of strategic green and blue infrastructure objectives set out in Birmingham's Green Living Spaces Plan, the Environment Agency's Humber River Basin Management Plan and Birmingham and Black Country (B&BC) NIA's ecological strategy.</p> <p>The project will support the establishment of a high quality ecological network, to enable around 150 hectares of land (POS and watercourses) to attain better conservation status, as well as delivering socio-economic benefits. The project complements the EA's programme of flood risk alleviation works in these catchments. The three year programme of activity will include works to improve channel morphology (resulting in reduced flood risk and contributing to Water Framework Directive requirements), as well as habitat enhancements to improve habitat quality and connectivity within public open space corridors along the River Rea and its tributaries (Stonehouse Brook, Bourn Brook, Merritts Brook/Griffins Brook/The Bourn and Callow Brook) and along the River Tame corridor at Hilltop / Manwoods (Sandwell Valley).</p> <p>Project activities – upper River Rea catchment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing woodland plantations and restoring ancient semi-natural woodlands: thinning and coppicing dense tree cover, removing non-native tree species, and seeding and planting native wild flowers and shrubs. • Managing bankside trees and woodland: re-establishing willow pollards, crown lifting mature bankside trees and thinning and coppicing smaller trees and shrubs. • Enhancing bankside vegetation: planting native marginal aquatic plants. • Controlling invasive species: herbicide spraying to control Giant Hogweed along watercourse corridors, allowing native flora to re-colonise and improving public safety and accessibility. • River restoration: removing / by-passing man-made structures and features such as weirs and bank protection which create obstructions, prevent natural processes and inhibit the movement of fish and other aquatic wildlife. <p>Project activities – River Tame corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring the River Tame: removing redundant flood banks and re-naturalising the river channel • Creating new woodland and wetland habitats. • Enhancing existing habitats: managing woodlands to improve habitat structure, de-silting ponds to restore open water, restoring hedgerows, removing scrub from grasslands to improve habitat structure and species diversity. <p>These enhancements will not only improve the habitat quality for wildlife but will enhance the value of the public open spaces for leisure</p>
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and recreation.

How the project will operate

The project will be delivered through a partnership between BCC, the EA and WTBBC. Habitat enhancement works will be delivered by staff from BCC (Grounds Maintenance team, Birmingham Parks and Nurseries; costs funded through ERDF) and WTBBC, as well as contractors procured by BCC and the EA. Local community groups, schools and other volunteers will also be involved in project delivery wherever possible, for example in seed collection and propagation, planting and seeding to enhance plantation woodlands' ground flora and understorey layers, and habitat and species monitoring.

Contracts will be let by BCC and EA to procure works, supplies and services to deliver elements of the project. Woodland management works will be delivered through BCC's tree works framework contractor, idverde; the anticipated value of these works is £36,300. The anticipated value of additional, individual contracts to be let by BCC for goods and services associated with project delivery (for example purchase tools / equipment, saplings, seeds and plants required for habitat enhancement works) is between £2,500 and £31,000 (based on quotations / costs associated with delivery of previous, similar projects). These contracts will be tendered through Find it in Birmingham; bidders will be provided with relevant documentation to enable them to demonstrate their proposals are compliant with BCC's procurement governance arrangements and ERDF grant conditions imposed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

BCC will act as Accountable Body. Project management will be co-ordinated by officers from the Place Directorate (Conservation and Woodland Manager, Parks and Nature Conservation) and the Economy Directorate (Principal Ecology Officer, City Design Team; ESIF Monitoring Officer, European Affairs Team). Salary costs associated with the input by the Conservation and Woodland Manager and Principal Ecology Officer will contribute towards the required match funding. Input by the ESIF Monitoring Officer (0.4 FTE) will be funded through ERDF. Arrangements with EA and WTBBC (as delivery partners) will be managed via Conditions of Grant Aid (COGAs) with BCC.

The EA have funding in place to commence work on the flood alleviation scheme included in the project – phase 2 of Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS). This funding will form the majority of the 50% match funding required by ERDF. BCC and WTBBC will contribute further match funding through officer time.

The following project outcomes will be delivered by the project partners:

BCC (Parks and Nature Conservation)

- Bankside woodland and tree management
- Ancient semi-natural woodland restoration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland plantation thinning and coppicing • Control of invasive species <p>EA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat enhancements associated with flood risk management scheme • River restoration, including weir removals and naturalisation of watercourse channels <p>WTBBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland plantation enhancement, including involving volunteers and local communities in growing and planting native wild flowers and shrubs • Bankside vegetation enhancement, involving planting and seeding of native aquatic and marginal plants • Habitat and species monitoring, including community engagement in freshwater invertebrate surveys <p>The project activities will be undertaken in a phased approach, beginning in April 2018 and completed by the end of March 2021.</p>		
<p>Links to Corporate and Service Outcomes</p>	<p>The project supports the delivery of the following priorities set out in the Council Business Plan and Budget 2018+ and the Council's Vision and Forward Plan 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Jobs and Skills <p>The project will also contribute to achieving cross-cutting measures relating to improved cleanliness and reductions in health inequality.</p> <p>The project aligns with strategic objectives in the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving health and well-being • conserving the natural environment • securing infrastructure to support future growth and prosperity <p>In particular, the project will contribute to the implementation of BDP policies GA9, TP2, TP6, TP7 and TP8.</p> <p>The project is consistent with Birmingham's approach to supporting ecosystem services and improving natural capital set out in the Council's Green Living Spaces Plan.</p>		
<p>Project Definition Document Approved by</p>	Cabinet	<p>Date of Approval</p>	20 th September 2016
<p>Benefits Quantification- Impact on Outcomes</p>	<p>Measure</p>		<p>Impact</p>
	<p>150 hectares of public open space enhanced to achieve a better [nature] conservation status</p>		<p>The project activities will deliver a range of biodiversity benefits, which would not be achievable within the context of BCC's existing Parks / grounds maintenance budgets.</p> <p>1. Improved habitat structure and floral diversity of plantation</p>

		<p>woodlands and semi-natural ancient woodlands, enabling these woodlands to support an increased range of fauna, in particular birds and invertebrates by increasing the variety of habitat opportunities available.</p> <p>2. Improved habitat structural diversity and increased diversity of marginal and aquatic plant species along watercourses, reducing shade, creating new wetlands and improving habitat suitability for water vole, dragonflies and damselflies, pollinating insects.</p> <p>3. Improved habitat quality, naturalness and connectivity for aquatic species such as fish and aquatic invertebrates by removing man-made obstructions and modifications from locations along Bourn Brook, River Rea and River Tame.</p> <p>4. Improved habitat connectivity for terrestrial species by increasing the extent and quality of semi-natural habitat (woodland, grassland, hedgerows) through new planting and management to improve habitat diversity and value.</p> <p>5. Reduction in the extent of invasive species (Giant Hogweed) along the River Rea, improving habitat diversity by creating space for the native flora to re-colonise.</p>
		<p>The project will also will make an overall positive contribution to a number of ecosystem services, including improved access to natural greenspace, improvements to water quality and reduced flood risk.</p> <p>A particular emphasis will be on improving accessibility to natural</p>

		<p>greenspace for local communities. Evidence shows that access to nature through improved green and blue infrastructure contributes to a wide range of societal issues including health and wellbeing, reduced anti-social behaviour, and improved social cohesion. Research on the benefits of being outdoors demonstrates that good quality urban green spaces are major contributors to the quality of the environment and human health in inner city and suburban areas and also that physical activity in the natural environment not only aids an increased life span, greater wellbeing, fewer symptoms of depression, lower rates of smoking and substance abuse but also an increased ability to function better at work and home.</p>
<p>Project Deliverables</p>	<p>The project's key objective (which reflect outputs required to meet the ERDF call objectives) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable 150 hectares (ha) of public open space to attain a better conservation status by March 2021. <p>A further project objective (which reflects the EA's requirements) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver mitigation measures identified in Humber River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) to work towards Good Ecological Potential for Water Framework Directive compliance. <p>Project deliverables to be achieved by March 2021 (upper River Rea catchment):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin / coppice 45 ha of plantation woodland • Re-introduce beneficial management practices into 8 ha of semi-natural ancient woodland • Improve floristic diversity of 45 ha of plantation woodlands • Remove / bypass five weirs • Re-establish crack willow pollards crown lift mature trees along 8000m of watercourse corridor • Install pre-planted coir rolls along 1000m of watercourse corridor • Control Giant Hogweed along 5000m of watercourse corridor • Undertake 200 hours of Freshwater Invertebrate Network (FIN) monitoring surveys <p>Project deliverables to be achieved by March 2021 (River Tame</p>	

	<p>corridor):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create / improve 6 ha of woodland • Create / improve 21 ha of grassland • Create 1.6 ha of wetland habitat and 500m of linear habitat • Plant / restore 1500m of hedgerow • Remove 500m of bank protection
Scope	<p>Natural Rivers and Green Corridors will focus on two strategic locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper River Rea catchment in south-west Birmingham. This includes the River Rea and its tributaries – Bourn Brook, Stonehouse Brook, Bartley Brook, Merritt’s Brook, Griffin’s Brook, The Bourn and Callow Brook and the public open space corridors associated with these watercourses, including Woodgate Valley Country Park, Senneleys Park, Valley Parkway, Bournville Park, Rubery Great Park, Kings Norton Park, Kings Norton Playing Fields, Lifford Reservoir and Cannon Hill Park. • River Tame corridor in west Birmingham. The project area encompasses the public open spaces of Hilltop and Manwoods in Handsworth Wood as part of a wider package of habitat enhancement works at Forge Mill / Sandwell Valley Country Park to be delivered as phase 2 of the Perry Barr and Witton FRMS. <p>The project area covers the following wards: Allens Cross, Bartley Green, Bournbrook & Selly Park, Bournville & Cotteridge, Brandwood & Kings Heath, Edgbaston, Frankley Great Park, Handsworth Wood, Harborne, Kings Norton North, Longbridge & West Heath, Moseley, Northfield, Quinton, Rubery & Rednal, Stirchley and Weoley & Selly Oak.</p>
Scope exclusions	<p>The scope of works is defined by the Natural Rivers and Green Corridors Project Area, as described above. No work outside of these defined areas will be authorised or funded through this project. This will be controlled through the Project Board.</p>
Dependencies on other projects or activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Rivers and Green Corridors complements planned flood alleviation work being undertaken by the EA within the River Rea and River Tame catchments, as well as other NIA projects undertaken by WTBBC. Without ERDF funding, the project partners’ work will continue, but will have a more limited impact. The EA’s funds for phase 2 of Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme are being used to provide the majority of the match funding required by ERDF; should this opportunity be lost, it is doubtful that a project on this scale will be viable for some time. • The project will need to comply with EU funding rules and regulations for ERDF. • Appointment of contractors and placing of orders. • Receipt of signed COGAs with delivery partners. • Completion of a funding agreement between BCC and MHCLG.
Achievability	<p>The project is an ambitious one, but has been informed by officers’</p>

	<p>previous experience of delivering habitat enhancement projects (eg programmes of habitat works funded through Higher Level Stewardship and Woodland Grant Scheme) and managing and delivering European projects. Officers therefore have a good understanding of designing and delivering habitat works to meet strict budgets and of working within the stringent requirements that need to be observed in order to claim EU funding.</p> <p>Our external project partners both have an established track record of delivering landscape-scale nature conservation projects. The local EA team would be able to draw on the expertise of their national team, who have experience of delivering ERDF projects in other parts of the country. WTBBC are experienced in managing and delivering large-scale projects, for example, acting as lead partner and accountable body for the DEFRA-funded first phase of the NIA programme.</p> <p>Our internal delivery partner (Parks and Nature Conservation Division) currently manages all BCC greenspace and non-highway trees. Using the existing grounds maintenance and tree service contracts will allow us to match the demands of the project to workforce availability.</p>	
Project Manager	<p>Simon Needle - Woodland and Conservation Manager, Parks and Nature Conservation, Place Directorate, and Principal Ecology Officer, City Design and Conservation Team, Economy Directorate</p> <p>Nicola Farrin – Principal Ecology Officer, City Design and Conservation Team, Economy Directorate</p> <p>simon.needle@birmingham.gov.uk / nicola.farrin@birmingham.gov.uk</p>	
Budget Holder	tbc	
Sponsor	<p>Steve Hollingworth Assistant Director, Sports, Events, Open Spaces and Wellbeing</p>	
Project Accountant	tbc	
Project Board Members	The project board will be constituted from the Natural Rivers and Green Corridors project partnership members.	
Head of City Finance (HoCF)	Guy Olivant	Date of HoCF Approval:
		14 June 2018

2. Budget Summary						
	<i>Voyager Code</i>	<i>Financial Year 2018-19</i>	<i>Financial Year 2019-20</i>	<i>Financial Year 2020-21</i>	<i>Financial Year 2021-22</i>	<i>Totals</i>
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Costs						
Expenditure:						
Habitat enhancement works		70.2	628.9	317.1		1070.2
Totals		70.2	628.9	371.1		1070.2
Revenue Costs						
Expenditure:						
BCC staff costs		110.4	112.6	43.8		266.8
EA staff costs		17.7	18.2	18.6		54.5
WTBBC staff costs		44.6	53.6	15.6		113.8
Consultants' fees				20		20
Other revenue costs (project publicity and promotion, office overheads)		29.9	31.6	15.7		77.2
Totals		202.6	216	113.7		532.3
Total Expenditure		272.8	844.9	484.8		1602.5
Funded by:						
Capital						
ERDF		35.1	314.45	185.55		535.1
EA & WTBBC Match Funding		35.1	314.45	185.55		535.1
Totals		70.2	628.9	371.1		1070.2
Revenue						
ERDF		101.3	108	56.8		266.1
BCC Staff Match Funding		21.2	21.6	21.8		64.6
EA & WTBBC Match Funding		80.1	86.4	35.1		201.6
Totals		202.6	216	113.7		532.3
Total Funding		272.8	844.9	484.8		1602.5
Planned Start date for delivery of the project	April 2018		Planned Date of Technical completion		March 2021	

3. Checklist of Documents Supporting the FBC		
Item	Mandatory attachment	Number attached
Financial Case and Plan		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed workings in support of the above Budget Summary (as necessary) 	Mandatory	Background Paper available if required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of required resource (people, equipment, accommodation) – append a spreadsheet or other document 	Mandatory	See FBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole Lifecycle Costing analysis (as necessary) 	n/a	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestone Dates/ Project Critical Path (set up in Voyager or attached in a spreadsheet) 	Mandatory	Annex 3 – project GANTT chart
Project Development products		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Populated Issues and Risks register 	Mandatory	Annex 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Analysis 	Mandatory	Annex 2

Annex 1 – Risk and Issues Assessment

Please identify any significant risks and their impact on the project. Assess the probability of their occurrence and describe possible remedial actions.

Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Partners leaving the project resulting in loss of match funding	Low	Medium / Significant	Delivery partners' Conditions of Grant Aid (COGAs) will set out partners' commitments to the project, including obligations in terms of match funding.
Deliverables not achieved	Low	Medium	Project elements have been planned to meet the specified level of outputs. As lead partner and accountable body, BCC will monitor milestones and achievement of outputs and deliverables as part of claim preparation and will flag up issues of delivery. Quarterly steering group meetings will monitor delivery and recommend remedial action if slippage is occurring. Delivery partners' COGAs will clearly set out their responsibilities in terms of project delivery and the consequences if these requirements are not met.
Clawback of funding for either non-compliance with funding conditions or ineligible spend for both BCC or delivery partners	Low	Medium	Delivery partners' COGAs will clearly set out their responsibilities to the project. Quarterly project steering group meetings will review expenditure to ensure it relates to planned activities and is within budget, is actual and eligible. BCC project management team (in particular ESIF Monitoring Officer) will check evidence from delivery partners to ensure compliance with eligibility rules before claims are submitted. BCC project management team will have regular review meetings with delivery partners to ensure compliance with COGA.
Cost control and meeting funding deadlines	Low	Medium / Significant	BCC project management team will ensure all expenditure is spent on time and within prescribed funding parameters.
Change of personnel over project period	Medium	Low / Medium	Over the three year project period it is possible that there will be some changes of personnel. It is expected that other BCC and partners' support staff would be assigned to temporarily assist with duties until vacancies can be filled or the project concludes.
Delay in delivery due to adverse weather conditions	Low	Low	There is flexibility in the delivery programme to respond to seasonal constraints if these occur. Affected works would be programmed to be delivered in the next suitable time period, in agreement with MHCLG.
Failure to procure required level of good / services (eg plants and seeds for habitat	Medium	Low	Procurement requirements have already been scoped out as part of project development. The required goods and services will be procured in a timely way

enhancement activities) to enable project delivery			to ensure availability of the required resources.
Failure to secure necessary permission / approvals	Low	Medium	No planning approvals are required (planning permission for Phase 2 of Perry Barr and Witton FRMS granted in Sept 2017). Other approvals, eg requirements for EA / LLFA consent for works to in-channel features (Bourn Brook), will be highlighted during project planning for individual project activities and, where appropriate, specified as part of the procurement process.

Risks assessed as follows:

MEASURES OF LIKELIHOOD	
Description	Example Detail Description
High	Almost certain, is expected to occur in most circumstances. Greater than 80% chance.
Significant	Likely, will probably occur in most circumstances. 50% - 80% chance.
Medium	Possible, might occur at some time. 20% - 50% chance.
Low	Unlikely, but could occur at some time. Less than 20% chance.

MEASURES OF IMPACT	
Description	Example Detail Description
High	Critical impact on the achievement of objectives and overall performance. Critical opportunity to innovate/improve performance missed/wasted. Huge impact on costs and/or reputation. Very difficult to recover from and possibly requiring a long term recovery period.
Significant	Major impact on costs and objectives. Substantial opportunity to innovate/improve performance missed/wasted. Serious impact on output and/or quality and reputation. Medium to long term effect and expensive to recover from.
Medium	Waste of time and resources. Good opportunity to innovate/improve performance missed/wasted. Moderate impact on operational efficiency, output and quality. Medium term effect which may be expensive to recover from.
Low	Minor loss, delay, inconvenience or interruption. Opportunity to innovate/make minor improvements to performance missed/wasted. Short to medium term effect.

Annex 2 – Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder	Stakeholder's Interest	Influence Impact	What does the project board expect from the stakeholder	Perceived attitudes and/or risks	Stakeholder management strategy	Responsible
Cabinet Member for TBC (portfolio owner)	Sponsors the project	High	Political support	Supportive	Consult during development and provide progress reports during delivery as required	Project Delivery Officers
BCC Councillors	Scrutinise delivery of project at ward level	High	Political support	Supportive	Consult during development and provide progress reports as required	Project Delivery Officers
MHCLG	Managing Authority for ERDF	High	MHCLG have a responsibility for oversight of the project and supporting the dissemination of lessons learnt and best practice resulting from project delivery	Supportive	Regular progress and final reports	Project Delivery Officers
European Commission	Interested in project's contribution to EU objectives and targets for biodiversity	Medium	General Support, communication and dissemination of project outcomes	Supportive	Regular progress and final reports	Project Delivery Officers
BCC services	Managers of Birmingham's public open space, Parks and Nature Conservation	High	Delivery of programme in collaboration with partners. Assessing the project's success in enhancing the environmental and community value of greenspace. Drainage and Resilience (as Lead Local Flood Authority) will be interested in	Supportive	Day to day progress on project delivery	Project Delivery Officers

			the project's effectiveness as an approach to managing flood risk.			
Birmingham residents, the public	Recipients of the proposed project work	High	The project provides opportunities for residents, community groups and other stakeholders to get involved in improving the quality of their local public open spaces and engage in using those spaces in a positive way.	Supportive	Public awareness of the project will be raised through a variety of means, including press articles, social media and on-site publicity material.	Project Delivery Officers
GBS LEP	Responsible body for Strategic co-ordination and delivery across the GBS LEP	High	General support, Endorsement of the Programme	Supportive	Final report of outcomes and outputs.	Project Delivery Officers