

Report of the Executive Director

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN FUTURES PROGRAMME STRAND UPDATE1. Purpose of report

To provide members with an update on the progress of the following strands in the Climate Change and Green Futures programme:

- Water courses
- Meadow planting/wildflower corridors
- Tree planting.

2. Background

Following the adoption of the Climate Change and Green Futures programme in September 2020, this is the second in a series of update reports coming to the Environment and Climate Change Committee. The update reports will expand on the progress of key strategic actions within the relevant strands. In this report each of the aforementioned strands is covered in the appendices.

Appendix 1 Water Courses

Appendix 2 Meadow Planting/Wildflower Corridors

Appendix 3 Tree Planting.

3. Financial implications

There are no additional financial implications relating to these 3 strands at this stage. Further reports will be brought to committee in due course, should the financial position change.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the 2020/21 achievements and RESOLVE that the 2021/22 proposal across the 3 strands be approved.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1Strand Updates

This section of the report expands on some of the key achievements over the last 12 months, together with proposals for the year ahead.

1. Water Courses Strand

The responsibility for the various water pathways, be it rivers, streams, channels, drainage ditches, rests with a range of different organisations and individuals in the Borough. Maintaining, improving and enhancing these pathways involves a partnership approach involving Nottinghamshire County Council as the lead local flood authority, the Environment Agency, the Canal and River Trust, riparian owners, together with the Borough Council. The various watercourses and their differing micro-habitats are very important for wildlife with changing water levels, marginal vegetation, together with areas of standing water and ponds.

2020/21 Achievements

- A detailed assessment was made of all the brooks in the Borough with a report to this committee on 23 November 2020.
- Following this assessment, a letter was sent to all land owners with property adjacent to the brooks reminding them of their riparian responsibilities. These are maintenance of the bank, including any trees and shrubs growing on the bank, clearance of any debris and checking that any culverts are kept clear and operating efficiently.
- Site visits to all of the six brooks with the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee, the Executive Director and officers from the Parks and Green Spaces team took place on Wednesday 24 February 2021. This proved very useful providing a direct assessment of the various issues relating to each brook.
- Meetings held on site with Nottinghamshire County Council as the lead local flood authority to assess site specific issues identified as part of the detailed site assessments.
- Dialogue established with the Environment Agency to understand respective roles and responsibilities at key locations.
- Significant clearance work undertaken on sections of the brook adjacent to Moorbridge Lane to help with water flow. This included cutting back vegetation, removal of obstructions and litter clearance.

- Working with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and volunteer groups to undertake further wildlife assessments at various sites. Key findings include:
 - Hall Park - Kingfisher and Native White Clawed Crayfish
 - Brinsley Headstocks – Grass snake, Willow Tit, Spotted Orchid
 - Toton Fields Local Nature Reserve - Kingfisher, Great White Egret, Bee Orchid
 - Nottingham Canal – Water Vole, Grass Snake
- Management of the Brinsley Brook ponds at Brinsley Headstocks, to create a wetland refuge for wildlife during drier weather.

2021/22 Proposals

- Follow up review of the 6 brooks during the summer months to check on the issues identified during late 2020 and to make sure that riparian owners are undertaking the necessary maintenance works.
- Further meetings with Nottinghamshire County Council, Environment Agency and the Canal and River Trust.
- Continuation of clearance works to section of brooks owned by the Borough Council as identified in the site assessments.
- Liaise with the Environment Agency on the issue of water quality in the brooks and identify if there is any proactive partnership work that can be undertaken to increase landowner awareness of this key issue.
- Work with the Environment Agency to progress the Trent Gateway Project, which is looking to develop environmental and accessibility issues on the section of the River Trent within Broxtowe.
- Continue to be a key partner in the Erewash Riverside Project, which looks to bring forward, as part of the HS2 proposal, a 4-mile long green corridor from the A52 down to the River Trent, with a network of multi-user routes, biodiversity enhancements, creation of areas for water storage and increased opportunities for recreation.
- Continue with the programme of works to pollard willow trees on the banks of the Nottingham Canal and the removal of weak growth from the canal to create a more diverse and environmentally friendly habitat for fish, amphibians and insect life.
- Meet with Friends of Cromford Canal to discuss leak prevention and repairs on the Nottingham Canal. The Friends have professional experience dealing with leak issues on their canal.

APPENDIX 2

2. Meadow Planting/Wildlife Corridors Strand

Creating and enhancing the meadows and wildlife corridors has many environmental benefits, providing wildlife with important connection networks and habitats. The linking of the networks through green infrastructure also creates both economic and social benefits for the wider community to enjoy.

2020/21 Achievements

- Improvements to the existing meadow grasslands at Archers Field Recreation Ground, Stapleford, by over-seeding with a dedicated wildflower mix.
- Introduction of strategic areas of annual wildflower planting at prominent locations on highway verges and within parks and open spaces.
- Review of management regime for acid grassland at King George V Park, Bramcote.
- Introduction of grass cutting and collection regime at Colliers Wood and Brinsley Headstocks with hay bales created and stored on site. These provide a potential habitat for snakes and reptiles.
- The benefits of composting garden waste was promoted in the 2021 Allotment Newsletter and a new composting ambassador has been created at Grove Avenue Allotments.
- 40,000 bulbs were planted on green spaces, highway verges and in woodlands. In addition to their aesthetic value, these bulbs with their large drifts create different habitat areas as the grass is left uncut whilst the bulbs die back.

2021/22 Proposals

- Creation of additional strategic areas of annual wildflower plantings. This year new beds have been created at Long Lane, Attenborough, St John's Church, Beeston, Queens Road West, Chilwell, Main Road, Nuthall, Hickings Lane, Stapleford and Stapleford Road, Trowell.
- Work with the County Biodiversity Officer and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to assess sites for species rich grassland that with a change of management, could become more favourable for diversity. Sites being considered include section of the Nottingham Canal and areas of Bramcote Hills Park acid grassland.

- Develop potential for linear corridors along site boundaries to improve habitat connectivity. Leyton Crescent Recreation Ground, Beeston and Inham Nook Recreation Ground Chilwell identified as possibilities
- Continue to explore opportunities for grass cutting and collection to build on the work done last summer at Brinsley Headstocks and Colliers Wood.
- Plant an additional 40,000 bulbs on green spaces and highway verges and woodlands.
- Work with the friends of Bennerley Viaduct on their Access to Nature Project. Funding has been secured by the Friends from the Severn Trent Community Fund with an award of £23,949. The project is taking place between May 2021 and April 2022 and includes:
 - Opening up a new permissive path under the viaduct, sowing of species rich grassland to attract insects and butterflies, planting 400 metres of mixed species hedgerows, planting disease resistant elm and fruit trees, installing bat boxes and bug hotels; installing an otter holt; installing a boardwalk to protect areas of wet grassland. The work will be carried out through the Friends volunteer programme, with an offer from the Borough Council to assist with sourcing plant material and other landscaping items to make use of the Councils purchasing potential and the ability to store the items at the Kimberley Depot. The extent of The Councils involvement is still being developed but this project links very positively across all 3 strands in this report.

APPENDIX 3

3. Tree Planting

Trees play an important role in absorbing carbon dioxide and storing carbon, whilst releasing oxygen into the air. They also enhance the environment through both economic, social and environmental benefits.

2020/21 Achievements

- The strategic approach to tree planting has continued with 3114 new trees planted during the winter period.
- The second tree giveaway event took place with 500 small ornamental trees delivered to residents in January.
- A new pocket orchard was created at Grove Avenue Allotments, working with plot holders on the site.
- Various new lengths of hedge were planted at Colliers Wood to provide a long term replacement for the post and wire fences around the copse areas.
- New signs were erected at strategic locations in summer 2020 explaining changes to maintenance regimes. A new interpretation board was installed at Brinsley Headstocks.
- The woodland at Hall Om Wong was enhanced with additional planting to improve age structure and diversity.
- A new woodland copse was created at Cator Lane Recreation Ground, Chilwell to compensate for the felling of 3 large Ash trees that were found to be potentially unsafe.
- 30 striking Silver Birch trees were planted in a copse at Bramcote Hills Park. The trees were planted 2 metres apart to reflect the significance this distance had on everybody's lives during the Covid-19 pandemic. This project has been very well received.

2021/22 Projects

- Continue with the strategic approach to tree planting with a target of an additional 2000 trees during 2021/22.
- In line with easing of Covid-19 restrictions look to once again engage with community groups to plant trees at various sites throughout the Borough. A project is currently being developed where young trees that have been grown by the community from acorns, will be planted in Bramcote Hills Park woodland.

- A tree giveaway event will be organised for January 2022 with a further 500 trees allocated to Broxtowe residents.
- Options for another pocket orchard are being considered, working with a local community food growing group.
- An area at Ghost Lane is being considered as a pocket park. A review of the hedge line on Ghost Lane will take place over the summer months and consultation will take place with local residents to see if a section can be improved to increase its environmental benefits. Bulbs will be planted in strategic locations.
- New signage will be installed at strategic locations to explain how sites are being managed and, where appropriate, reference to the sites history and development.
- Additional planting will be undertaken to enhance existing woodland within Bramcote Hills Park programmed for this coming winter.
- Work with Town and Parish Councils to explore the possibility of creating a community allotment on their sites.
- Following the success of the woodland Copses at Cator Lane Recreation Ground, Chilwell and Mansfield Road Recreation Ground, Eastwood a new site will be created this winter.
- A rainbow tree planting project, using flowering Cherry trees will be implemented to reflect the lives lost to Covid-19. The site proposed for this memorial planting is Mansfield Road Recreation Ground, Eastwood.