

## Summary of Natural Woking's Delivery 2016 - 2023

The following table summarises the actions completed in full, and progress made on ongoing actions, to deliver the Council's Natural Woking biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy. It highlights the key steps taken by the Council, both directly and those in partnership with others, to meet the biodiversity duty on local authorities in the period 2016 to 2023.

Theme and Actions (abbreviated)	
Living spaces - Restore and expand habitats for priority species enhancing the links between these (reducing fragmentation).	
<p>1. Great Crested Newts (GCN) - develop methodology, set up and commence pilot, maintain improved habitat and corridors, monitor.</p>	<p><b>Woking Great Crested Newt DLL Scheme</b> This joint Natural England and Woking Borough Council (WBC) Great Crested Newt (GCN) project commenced in 2015. A national pilot to develop and trial a new district level licensing approach for GCN, which Natural England has since rolled out nationally. The project aims to achieve 'favourable conservation status' of this species more strategically across the borough rather than imposing piecemeal mitigation strategies at numerous localised sites. In this way the pilot helps conservation of GCN populations, whilst also reducing time delays and costs for developers.</p> <p>The project methodology, habitat improvement plan, and annual reports are available at <a href="http://www.woking.gov.uk/newts">www.woking.gov.uk/newts</a> Extensive habitat improvement works were completed in 2020 as planned. Westfield Common has a complete network of suitable Great Crested Newt (GCN) ponds joining up the whole Common, although given the fragmented nature of the Common due to residential houses and roads, habitat connectivity remains in places a limiting factor.</p> <p>Annual stakeholder meetings held during the first five years. Annual surveys conducted (with the exception of 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic) to give trend monitoring data of GCN presence and numbers, these are now more periodic. Joint working with Natural England to share best practice is ongoing and learning between the Woking pilot and the continuing national district level licensing roll out.</p> <p>In 2021 Natural England remodelled the GCN populations across the borough of Woking to create a Strategic Opportunities Areas plan, to aid the assessment of future potential of GCN habitat enhancement works across the borough.</p> <p>WBC officers contributed to a Defra and Natural England training event at Heather Farm in July 2018 in relation to the GCN Pilot. ADAS and WBC officers contributed to a Natural England-led GCN Licensing Expert Panel workshop on 28 January 2021, through which all organisations using the various forms of District Level Licencing (DLL) approach are working together to share learning, best practice and data. An article was published in national ecology journal 'In Practice' (September 2021) to promote the lessons learnt to date.</p>

	<p>The Council's strategic organisational licence from Natural England was renewed in March 2023.</p> <p>Thanks to all involved in informing, delivering, and maintaining the project methodology and on-site habitat improvements, to offer the ongoing district level licensing opportunity as an option for developers and continuing benefits for the Westfield Common GCN population. The initial phase has been completed, project commitment ongoing for at least the next 20 years. Scoping necessary to inform the Woking scheme's next steps.</p>
<p>2. Progress further favourable conservation status initiatives; develop methodology for a phase 2 project; set up and commence, maintain, monitor.</p>	<p>Early work, including stakeholder consultation, was undertaken <b>towards a local bat project</b>, with a view to this being a potential second phase joint Natural England-WBC Council project supporting the favourable conservation status of local species. Natural England's priorities changed in 2016, as a result of which this project was not progressed locally. A Natural Woking presentation on <b>bat conservation</b> by Surrey Bat Group was run free for local residents in May 2017.</p>
<p>3. Continued support to local community groups and organisations on environmental projects.</p>	<p>WBC has long supported local community groups and organisations to progress climate change, sustainability, and biodiversity related initiatives. A significant example is officer support and funding provided to <b>Woking Environment Action (WEAct)</b> since its establishment in 1994. Woking Local Agenda 21, as it was originally known, was set up in response to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, which called for partnerships of local government with local communities to set a sustainable agenda for the 21st century. WEAct continues to grow as a voluntary group of individuals taking action locally on issues relating to climate change and sustainability, and it is currently in the process of becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).</p> <p>WEAct offers a wide range of projects, including many proactively supporting wildlife species, such as owls and hedgehogs, as well as nature conservation to help manage habitats.</p> <p>WEAct's <b>Woking Biodiversity Group</b> organises regular conservation volunteering on various WBC greenspaces, including tackling invasive Cherry Laurel and Himalayan Balsam. WBC has supplied tools and personal protective equipment and liaised to plan ahead for management works. WBG also takes opportunities to raise awareness for how residents can act to help themselves (for example through creating advice leaflets on stag beetles and bird nest boxes and hosting stands at events). The Group's annual reports record the significant work undertaken; the latest reports a very productive year in 2022, the total volunteer days worked was 497 hours (71 days equivalent), a majority of this work taking place on St Johns Lye and White Rose Lane.</p> <p>As a part of <b>Operation Owl</b>, WEAct surveys and maintain at least 25 owl boxes which have been installed since 2016.</p> <p>The Council helped WEAct through the purchase and loan of three new wildlife cameras to support its new <b>Woking Hedgehogs</b> project, launched in May 2022. Hedgehogs are a much-loved native species, but they are struggling. Habitat loss and fragmentation are contributory factors to declining numbers. Woking Hedgehogs aims to increase</p>

hedgehog numbers in Woking, by raising awareness of hedgehog friendly gardens. Local people are encouraged to report hedgehog sightings. The cameras are being loaned out to help track and record hedgehog sightings.

Other relevant support has included:

- WEAct's **Climate Hub** operated from June 2022 to February 2023 in vacant WBC shop units in Mercia Walk, Woking town centre, offering information and advice on how residents can do their bit for the local environment.
- Assisting WEAct with organisation and promotion of **events**, including: Annual General Meetings (for example in 2018 in partnership with RHS experts on 'Gardening for a Changing Climate', and in 2019 the theme was 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'); eco-event organised by Woking People of Faith, Party in the Park, Woking Food and Drink Festival, and Wild About Woking;
- Assisting with recruitment of new volunteers to fill key roles within the steering group.
- Serco's help through collection of green waste following work parties and clearance of land for community gardening.

In 2021 WEAct wrote to many of the golf clubs within and adjoining Woking borough, recognising the clubs are custodians of a significant amount of open space in the Woking area, which could be actively managed with the environment in mind (if not already the case). Particular opportunities highlighted for wildflower growing and providing habitat for stag beetles.

WEAct's **wildflower project** included wildflower sowing in beds at the sewage treatment works, Carters Lane, Woking, as part of a five-year partnership project with Thames Water.

For more details about these and the group's other projects, see <https://wokingenvironmentaction.com/projects/>

WEAct and WBC officers will be meeting autumn/winter 2023 to discuss ongoing future partnership working.

The Council has also provided advice and where possible assistance to **many other groups working on its greenspaces and housing estate land**. These include:

- Westfield Common Volunteers, in partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust, undertaking practical conservation management work at Westfield Common
- West Byfleet Community Gardening Group (for a case study see [here](#))
- Maybury Oak Tree Community Garden
- The Growth Project of Employability/Surrey Choices, carrying out removal of non-native species, meadow management, and scrub clearance at White Rose Lane local nature reserve
- Natural Goldsworth Park and Goldsworth Park Angling Club at Goldsworth Park Recreation Ground and Lake
- Horsell Residents' Association/Pares Close volunteers

- Pyrford Common volunteers
- Sheerwater community garden volunteers (garden originally designed by and established with the help of the RHS).

The Covid 19 **lockdowns impacted conservation volunteering** however activities were resumed as soon as possible after restrictions were lifted, often with a renewed vigour and new volunteers and projects coming forward in a number of areas.

Local biodiversity projects such as Swifts in Woking, Wildflowers in Woking and promotion of the Blue Campaign (detailed elsewhere in this summary) have all **directly responded to nature-related feedback from local residents and groups**.

The Council's Neighbourhood Team has long-supported **community litter-picking and community clear-up** initiatives, loaning equipment (litter pickers, gloves and bags) and arranging disposal of collected materials, which assists in reducing hazards to wildlife and people. A number of new such groups formed during and after the pandemic. Participating groups have included Brownies, Scouts and Schools, Mayford Village Society, Sutton Green Association, Woking Litter Warriors, as well as individual families.

The Council supports the annual **Junior Citizen programme**, which sees various agencies engaging with Year 6 school children to teach them life skills, including not dropping litter and "looking after your neighbourhood" is one area of the skills being passed on.

Colleagues at **Volunteer Woking** have facilitated a wide range of positive environmental activities including **corporate volunteering** days in green spaces in and around Woking borough such as the Basingstoke Canal, at Brookwood Cemetery, schools, churches, Holme Farm and Mizens Railway. Also assistance to local groups through **advertising environmental volunteering opportunities**, including for WEAct, Woking Litter Warriors, Surrey Bird Club, and Surrey Green Social Prescribing.

The **Community Matters Partnership Project** was launched in 2018, is a network of socially responsible businesses that get together to help improve their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The project raises funds to support local community projects, encourages the workforce to volunteer and shares resources, skills, knowledge, and expertise with voluntary and public sector organisations.

In 2023 the Surrey Heathland Partnership established a **volunteer programme on the Council's heathland sites** (more details available at <https://planetwoking.co.uk/get-involved/calling-all-heathland-habitat-helpers/>).

	<p>The Council's former partner <b>New Vision Homes (NVH)</b> has supported residents to act positively for the local environment, whilst also seeking to do so through its own day to day management and developments (covered under see action 5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2019 NVH established three new resident gardening groups on sheltered housing sites at Nightingale Court, Bridge Court and Vale House. Ongoing support through the supply of tools, equipment, soil, and specially selected pollinator friendly plants and flowers.</li> <li>• Supplied and installed water butts to several housing sites to encourage water conservation and to support local gardening efforts.</li> </ul> <p>The Council's environmental partner Serco worked with the help of Woking District Cub Scouts to create a <b>large insect hotel</b> with surrounding pollinator friendly planting in Woking Park, unveiled in October 2021.</p> <p><b>First Step Volunteering Pilot</b> - as part of the <b>Surrey Green Social Prescribing</b> Programme, Surrey County Council (SCC) is developing a First Step Volunteering 'Test and Learn' pilot to provide opportunities to introduce young people aged 16-25 years old to environmental volunteering. Objectives include increasing 'the number of volunteers to support local action in environment, climate change and biodiversity, waste reduction, energy, flood resilience, circular economy, micro volunteering' and making 'green volunteering across Surrey more joined up'.</p> <p>The <b>Thames Basin Heaths Partnership</b> also engages with users of local heathland sites designated as Special Protection Areas (detailed elsewhere in this summary). Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions collected from developers alongside SANG payments help fund this project work.</p>
<p>4. Design and assess development proposals in the context of national and local planning policy seeking protection of the nature environment, net gains for biodiversity, to maximise access to and improvement of the green infrastructure and wildlife corridor network and recreation provision.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing action for the Council through both its roles as a Local Planning Authority and, where relevant, also as a developer.</p> <p>In terms of <b>assessing planning applications</b>, these considerations are part of the assessment made by the Council's Planning Service of development proposals. The Core Strategy (2012), the Development Management Policies (2016) and the design documents include robust policies and/or guidance regarding development providing appropriate landscaping and green infrastructure, retaining trees of amenity and ecological value, and protecting natural assets and enhance biodiversity. For example, housing development is required to contribute towards the provision of <b>Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)</b> to help protect endangered bird species, open access to the countryside and encourage recreation. Progress is monitored and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The draft Town Centre Masterplan (2022) set out green and blue infrastructure objectives in relation to Woking Town Centre.</p> <p><b>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)</b> and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will be integral to expanding green infrastructure in the future, as introduced through the Environment Act 2021.</p>

BNG is an approach to development which leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before a development took place. Current up to date policies of the Woking Local Development Plan already require development to enhance biodiversity (including Policy CS7: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, Policy DM1: Green Infrastructure Opportunities and Policy DM2: Trees and Landscaping). Natural Woking provides further strategy and guidance on the twin topics of biodiversity and green infrastructure. Surrey Wildlife Trust is ecological consultee.

BNG will establish a requirement to demonstrate and provide at least a 10% biodiversity uplift. Developers will be expected to plan for BNG from the earliest design stage, factoring this requirement in in addition to all other relevant considerations. BNG will be additional to existing habitat and species protections and to associated contributions, such as those towards SANG and to participate in the Woking GCN DLL Scheme. BNG is intended to reinforce the ecological mitigation hierarchy - avoid harm; mitigate impacts; compensate, only as a last resort. It also aims to create new habitat as well as enhance existing habitats, ensuring the ecological connectivity they provide for wildlife is retained and improved.

Where development has evidenced being unable to provide BNG provision on-site, the Council will advocate for provision of BNG elsewhere within the borough (locally) to enable residents and local wildlife to benefit from local improvements to biodiversity.

WBC has provided initial local guidance for developers, see [Guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain - Woking 2027](#). A detailed technical advice note on the subject will be published shortly, to assist implementation of BNG for large sites from January 2024.

Relevant staff are receiving a series of training on this topic and the Council is a part of the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) BNG group.

WBC Green Infrastructure 2022 interview participation to assist a University of Surrey **PHD research study** investigating the possible effects of BNG on the UK built environment sector via the changes it will make to the planning system.

As the upper tier authority, SCC has responsibility to lead and has begun work on development of a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)** for Surrey, which will form part of a national Nature Recovery Network. See [www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lnrs) LNRS's are a new spatial strategy to identify locations to improve nature and provide other environmental benefits. Surrey's LNRS will agree priorities for nature's recovery, map the most valuable existing areas for nature, and map specific proposals for creating and improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. District and borough councils in Surrey are being kept informed and engaged in this work, along with other partner organisations. As a supporting authority WBC's contributions are through, for example, information-sharing.

	<p>The draft <a href="#">Woking Town Centre Masterplan</a>, subject of public consultation in 2022, features sections on green infrastructure and biodiversity, flood risk and surface water drainage, and active travel.</p> <p>Preparation in 2022 of the updated <b>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</b>, part of the Local Plan evidence base, included a Green Infrastructure section, see <a href="http://www.woking2027.info/ldfresearch/infrastructure">www.woking2027.info/ldfresearch/infrastructure</a></p> <p>The Council publishes natural environment information in relation to development each year as part of its Local Plan <b>Annual Monitoring Report</b> (AMR, see <a href="http://www.woking2027.info/developmentplan/corestrategy/annualmonitoringreport">www.woking2027.info/developmentplan/corestrategy/annualmonitoringreport</a>).</p>
<p>5. Identify and bring forward opportunities to adopt biodiversity supportive management practices for the Council's own land / buildings, managing in line with Natural Woking principles and best practice techniques to increase biodiversity (conservation, creation and connection, removal of non-native targeted species such as Himalayan balsam, removing barriers to wildlife movement, etc.).</p> <p>Specific action (agreed October 2017): Develop a new planting regime for Lockfield Drive and the A320 corridor, over a 3-5 year period, to increase habitat and food sources for biodiversity using perennials, annuals and grasses.</p>	<p>Since Natural Woking's adoption, many WBC corporate processes and projects have been working to implement these to realise benefits for nature and these objectives were also reflected in corporate plan/strategy priorities. In 2018 the Council declared a <b>climate and ecological emergency</b>. Key examples of actions to deliver these commitments are listed below.</p> <p><b>Woking GCN DLL Scheme</b> enabled proactive strategic habitat improvements to be carried out for this protected species at Westfield Common, which local residents working with Surrey Wildlife Trust help the Council to maintain (see action 1 for full details).</p> <p><b>Nature conservation volunteering</b> on WBC greenspaces (see action 3 for full details).</p> <p>WBC worked with the RHS Community team to run a successful training session in November 2019, a focused <b>training session</b> on wildflower meadows for officers, volunteers and Serco who are directly involved in wildflower provision and their maintenance.</p> <p><b>Wildflowers in Woking</b> WBC for many years identified locations for wildflower seeding, longer grass and/or planting of shrubs and perennials. Sites included roundabouts, highway and other greenspace verges (including many areas along Lockfield Drive), and spaces which could be managed as meadows. Carefully selected locations for wildflower seeding for annuals, perennials and bulb planting, and for longer grass management regimes, for the habitat benefit of all types of pollinators, were planned and implemented over a number of years, working with Serco and also relevant community groups.</p> <p>Whilst maintenance of highway verges and trees returned to landowner SCC from April 2023, Woking's residents still have the opportunity to participate in the <a href="#">Blue Campaign</a> to care for a verge near to their home. Meanwhile <a href="#">suitable greenspace land</a> within WBC's care continues to be managed with biodiversity in mind, including ongoing participation in the annual <b>No Mow May</b> campaign.</p> <p>The Council supported the <a href="#">Woking Peregrine Project</a> from installation of the nest box for this protected species on its office building, Export House, to assistance with annual maintenance and provision of cameras to facilitate live web</p>



streaming of the birds each year. Whilst the birds have experienced highs and lows, as is natural, the nest box and the diligent care of the project volunteers for the bird's welfare have supported many years of successful breeding since 2015.

WBC is a part of the [Surrey Heathland Partnership](#), through which it manages its heathland sites, undertaking specialist contractor, and more recently also, volunteer works to maintain these rare and precious semi-natural habitats. Steps taken have included grazing and removal of invasive scrub. An uplift in works was funded through the Council's Investment Programme in 2019/20.

A partnership with Worplesdon Golf Club, adjoining Brookwood Heath, supported mowing and turf stripping on Brookwood Heath, to provide heather turves and cuttings for heathland restoration and improvement works on their course whilst assisting management of heather on the Heath as per Natural England's guidance.

WBC's approach to heathland management on its own sites formed a part of a wider consideration of **countryside management** by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2019.

Working with WBC's environmental partner Serco, biodiversity objectives have been prioritised wherever possible when undertaking **day to day and specialist grounds maintenance works**. Examples in recent years include maintaining dead wood in suitable locations, works to build more habitat opportunities into certain woodland areas (veteranisation), and support to local environmental community volunteer groups. Looking to the future, Natural Woking's objectives are being fed into the specifications for the borough's next environmental grounds maintenance contract, the tender process for which has already commenced. Following a report in 2022 of many orchids growing near a WBC site, officers explored how an enhanced management approach for the next door land might encourage more wildflowers. Also working with Serco to develop proposals for potential improvements in Woking Park, to bring it up to standards in line with Green Flag criteria. For example through additional pollinator friendly planting.

All newly procured WBC Housing contracts include strict environmental conditions and reference to the Woking 2050 climate change strategy policy regarding sustainable **procurement**, recycling and delivering a carbon neutral service.

Habitat protection is a key consideration in **day-to-day green spaces management**. At times activity requests are resisted where these have potential for adverse environmental impacts. This was the case when WBC declined a request for night filming and associated kit on a local nature reserve. A less sensitive, daytime filming location was instead agreed.

The opportunity was taken when considering a new civic sign to celebrate Woking's town twinning, to also use this to provide wildlife habitat and raise public awareness. After the grant of planning permission in 2018, the **Woking Town Twinning Sign** was completed in August 2019, features swift nesting and bat roosting chambers and a bespoke



stonework base depicting the swifts' annual migration. Swift calls are played spring to summer to attract birds prospecting for next year's nest sites. Contributing partners for this project included the sign's designers 51 Architecture, international Swift Conservation expert Edward Mayer and wildlife artist Jonathan Pomroy (who designed the swifts engraved onto the sign's stonework base).

Delivery of this action by **New Vision Homes (NVH) and WBC Housing Services** has included:

- A meadow project at Stream Close, where one small section has been set aside for two years; this site was sown with a meadow mix of wildflower seed and grasses.
- Work with Serco to set aside areas of amenity grass to allow vegetation to grow naturally with fewer cuts.
- Installation of a fenced slowworm enclosure during the development of 31 Oak Tree Road. This development also featured swift nest boxes.
- Installation of hedgehog hotels and swift boxes in new works such as fencing and major refurbishments.
- Residents at Colliers Close in Horsell worked with Serco and New Vision Homes colleagues to create a community herb garden in 2021, providing a new amenity for local residents, and supporting local wildlife.
- Restocked amenity planted beds on its sites throughout the borough.
- Identified sites on its land across for tree planting. A small number of fruit trees were planted with residents at a WBC sheltered scheme, Nightingale Court, in St John.

In 2020 **ThamesWey** incorporated the following habitat improvements in its schemes: 18 small animal openings in approx. 900m fencing to properties; removal of 16 (approx. 500sqm.) plastic grass/hard standings and re-instatement with grass/vegetation; and 75m of hedge planting to boundaries of three properties.

In 2021 Brockhill extra care housing scheme started a **gardeners' club**, offering many activities for tenants. The club is growing its own produce and celebrate with a harvest feast.

At **Brookwood Cemetery**, a site owned and managed by WBC:

- The Brookwood Cemetery Masterplan was approved in June 2020. This was prepared in the context of the Conservation Management Framework for the site, objective 6 of which seeks to '*Deliver Ecological Conservation Improvements - deliver a sensitive scheme of ecological improvements to ensure that the historic landscape and funerary monuments operate harmoniously with the ecological needs of the site.*'
- Creation of a new wetland area with boardwalk.
- Significant tree planting, including new redwood trees planted along two main avenues, St Cyprian's and St Phillip's.
- The Cemetery has achieved and retained a Green Flag award, which is an international quality mark for parks and green spaces.
- A living roof features on the workshop.
- Forest Research undertook tree recording research on site.

WBC has a policy allowing employees two **volunteering days** each year. Green Infrastructure and other teams of the Council have utilised these to make a difference for some of Woking's local greenspaces sites and also help out elsewhere where needed (for example at local school's outdoor classroom, see [here](#)). Works include pond management, removal of invasive Himalayan Balsam, and scrub clearance.

At The **Vyne Centre** for the Community, a joint venture between staff and patrons of The Vyne and RHS Wisley's Community Outreach team to upcycle an outdoor space into a **new woodland garden**. The project aimed to create a new community hub for Knaphill, to encourage people to return to the centre after the pandemic. The garden aimed to create a space for wildlife, a space to relax, and a space to get together. The garden was constructed with local ecosystems in mind, featuring multiple bird boxes, bird feeders, and insect hotels.

An area of land at Goldsworth Park is to be considered by the Surrey Local Sites Partnership for **potential Site of Nature Importance (SNCI) designation**, following an application from a local volunteer.

In Spring 2021 a local resident requested permission to install a **Barn Owl Trust nest box** at Brookwood Farm greenspace, which the Council was pleased to support. The box is checked regularly, and an owl has been sighted by the box.

Additional tree and vegetation management works were undertaken in 2021/22 **alongside the Basingstoke Canal at Brookwood Country Park**, in partnership with Surrey Police as part of the Safer Streets funded project to improve safety along the canal. These works have opened up more enclosed sections of the footpath, allowing in more light, improving sight lines, and general visibility, to make the towpath safer and more inviting for visitors.

Thames Water's Biodiversity Officer, in consultation with local environmentalists at Natural Goldsworth Park, planned and implemented woodland management works on the company's land **adjacent to Goldsworth Park Lake**. Works included the targeted removal of cherry laurel to open up views into the woodland and widening of the ride with targeted felling between established trees.

Structured underground cells used for **new street tree planting**, to help the trees thrive. For example in Commercial Way and Dukes Court landscaping.

The **Swifts in Woking** project, run by **ThamesWey** and later **Surrey Bird Club**, enabled the installation of 170 swift boxes and bricks across the borough, exceeding the original target of 100 boxes.

- 105 swift boxes were installed on the homes of the 43 engaged residents.
- A video of a swift prospecting one of the residents boxes can be seen at <https://twitter.com/SwiftsInWoking/status/1146723903320076288>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 swift boxes were installed on ThamesWey owned properties and 20 swifts bricks were installed on ThamesWey developments.</li> <li>• ThamesWey continue to install swift bricks on suitable developments.</li> <li>• <b>Woking Shopping</b> also installed 8-10 swift boxes on the Blue car park in Woking.</li> </ul> <p>The Swifts in Woking project is presently paused whilst a new volunteer lead individual/group is sought.</p>
6. Design and bring forward the Hoe Valley Flood Alleviation and Enhancement Scheme	Following the original Hoe Valley Flood Alleviation Scheme, completed in 2011, significant preparatory work was undertaken towards a further <b>Hoe Valley Flood Alleviation and Enhancement Scheme</b> , including design work and public consultation. This scheme is currently paused, subject to suitable resourcing and external funding becoming available in the future.
7. Develop links with the Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre and relevant local groups to support a voluntary network of recorders and recording groups and local data collation.	WBC is a contributor to quarterly meetings of the Surrey Nature Partnership's Biodiversity Working Group, whose comprehensive representation of local groups includes Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre. WBC also presented on the subject of Woking's biodiversity efforts to the SNP Biodiversity and Planning Conference in February 2020.
8. Ensure sufficient provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) land to mitigate against the impact of new development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)	<p><b>Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)</b> is green infrastructure essential to underpinning the borough's growth whilst safeguarding its biodiversity. Work is ongoing to deliver additional SANG capacity on the ground, in consultation with Natural England. This will provide further green infrastructure to support both these protected species living on internationally important Special Protection Area (SPA) sites and housing local development needs. Key steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opening of Heather Farm SANG.</li> <li>• Ongoing participation on SANG/SPA regional partnership working through the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board and Officer Working Group.</li> <li>• Establishment and ongoing operation of a SANG WBC officer task group.</li> <li>• Natural England published updated SANG guidelines in 2021.</li> <li>• Allocation of a number of further SANG sites in the borough in the Site Allocations development plan document (adopted 2021).</li> <li>• Completion of a bespoke SANG serving the Brookwood Farm development, Knaphill.</li> <li>• Adoption of updated <a href="#">Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy</a> in February 2022.</li> </ul>

	<p>The locally based – at Heather Farm - <a href="#">Thames Basin Heaths Partnership</a> is a partnership of local councils, land managers and nature conservation bodies conserving the heathland of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Amongst many activities, it prepares a directory of SANG sites, '<a href="#">Greenspace on your doorstep</a>'.</p>
<p>9. Update guidance for developers, residents, businesses and the Council on lighting, to meet security and efficiency requirements whilst minimising light pollution and avoiding detriment to wildlife (such as bats).</p>	<p>An earlier <a href="#">draft Light Pollution SPD</a> was addressed through the Local Plan <b>Development Management Policies</b> development plan document (DPD), adopted in 2016, which includes a robust policy to minimise light pollution. This is considered in managing development across the borough. This DPD was reviewed in 2021, finding this to be up to date. Potential adverse effects from light pollution are also considered by Environmental Health during the consultation phase of assessing planning applications.</p> <p>A Natural Woking presentation on <b>bat conservation</b> by Surrey Bat Group was run free for local residents in May 2017.</p> <p><b>Bat-friendly lighting</b> was used in the design of the new Chobham Road bridge over the Canal.</p>
<p>10. Work to eradicate the non-native species, American mink, in the Borough.</p>	<p>This action sought to support the ambition to see water voles return to the borough's watercourses. There have been sightings of mink on a local nature reserve. A contractor would be needed to carry out the works. It has not yet been possible to achieve this objective.</p> <p>This remains a challenging nature conservation objective, as explained by Surrey Wildlife Trust <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Access - Build a publicly accessible, ecologically sensitive, strategic network of open spaces, green and waterways, especially to and from our urban centres.</b></p>	
<p>11. Improve the condition of existing open spaces and prioritise and connect any broken links, to create a high quality, comprehensive green infrastructure network for the Borough. Develop more detail on the routes that could form the strengthened local green infrastructure network (blueprint) and seek an integrated approach to green infrastructure across borough boundaries, engaging with relevant stakeholders, including the local community, on landscape and nature issues.</p>	<p><b>Map 24 of the <a href="#">Natural Woking Supporting Information document</a></b> identifies green infrastructure opportunity areas within Woking borough.</p> <p>Finer grain detail has been developed for some site-specific opportunities, for example the Hoe Stream (see action 6 above) and for new SANG sites allocated through the <b>Site Allocations</b> DPD (2021: see the 'key requirements' for each allocated site). The Surrey <b>Local Nature Recovery Strategy</b> will be the spatial strategy for nature in the future (as explained under action 4).</p> <p>Work has been undertaken year on year to <b>improve WBC's open spaces</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment of play areas including those at West Byfleet Play Area in Camphill Road (2019), Loop Road (a fully inclusive and accessible play space, 2022), and Horsell Moor and Oakfield (2023).</li> <li>• Completion of a play areas surfacing and other repairs programme across a number of other sites (2022/2023).</li> <li>• Skate park repairs as necessary.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual updates on play areas provided to the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee, the latest in 23 January 2023.</li> <li>• Executive committee supported a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) application in November 2023 for the installation of two tennis courts at the West Byfleet Recreation Ground, also supported by external funding from the Lawn Tennis Association.</li> </ul> <p>In 2022 the Council introduced the <a href="#">Woking Nature Walks</a>: free weekly walks are free led by a trained leader along the Basingstoke Canal in Sheerwater, to help improve health and well-being as well as connection to nature.</p> <p>Officer assistance given in 2019 to a student researching the links and opportunities between <b>remote sensing technologies and urban green infrastructure</b>.</p> <p>There is sometimes a sensitive <b>balance</b> that needs to be found between the ability to access nature and safeguarding of habitats and the wildlife that calls these home. During hot weather in 2022, in the interests of residents' health and safety, it was also necessary to discourage swimming in a lake in the borough.</p> <p>Tree and vegetation management works were undertaken in 2021/22 <b>alongside the Basingstoke Canal at Brookwood Country Park</b>, in partnership with Surrey Police (see action 5) for details).</p>
<p>12. Improve the condition of cycle paths footpaths and bridleways and, where appropriate, create new well-signed routes with ample cycle parking, where possible segregated from vehicular traffic, to encourage movement between green spaces by active and sustainable modes of travel.</p>	<p>Numerous steps have and continue to be taken to deliver this objective.</p> <p>The Woking for All corporate strategy supplementary and amended priorities in June 2022 notes stated as a priority 'work with partners to develop and incentivise greener travel choices, embed wider carbon reductions and greater biodiversity support in our operations'.</p> <p>This <a href="#">cycling and walking initiatives</a> webpage provides an overview. In collaboration with the Department for Transport and WBC, SCC prepared the Woking <a href="#">Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWCIP)</a> in 2020. As government funding becomes available, the LWCIP will help to identify which measures could be funded to enhance local cycling and walking provision in this area.</p> <p>Other notable <b>steps taken for cycling and walking</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and construction of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge and walkway over the Basingstoke Canal next to the Chobham Road Bridge (opened in October 2020). It unites the two sides of the canal towpath without the need for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the busy road, providing a further link in the strategic cycle network. The design features gabion walls, a non-slip surface, steel handrails with built-in bat-friendly lighting and associated landscaping.</li> </ul>

- Other opportunities to improve and fund cycle movements in the Town Centre also explored through the [Woking Integrated Transport Project](#).
- Additional disabled bays provided at Woking Park
- Rural tracks repairs in Prey Heath and Sheets Heath
- Repaired potholes and other works at various greenspaces car parks.
- In 2019 NVH installed over 20 new cycle racks on Housing land to enable safe storage of bicycles and encourage their use.
- The Government announced in July 2019 that Woking would receive £95 million for infrastructure under the Housing Infrastructure Fund, part of the Government's drive to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s. Amongst other opportunities, the funding would enable widening of the Victoria Arch Bridge and other road improvements, however the project was recommended for closure for financial reasons in September 2023.
- The Loop Road car park was resurfaced, making it safer and accessible for all users to access the play area and recreation ground. In doing so, new cycle stands were implemented, encouraging cycling as a means to travel to the site.
- Cycling and walking became all the more important and popular during the pandemic lockdowns. 'A greener life after lockdown' was the theme of an article published in the Woking Magazine.
- In 2020/2021 repairs were made to sections of the Hoe Valley footpath.
- In May 2022, Planet Woking delivered a sustainable transport webinar, which explored how positive changes to the sustainability of the borough can be made by adopting greener modes of transport. A recording of the event is available [here](#).
- Woking Nature Walks (2022, see action 11).
- Following a successful bid to British Cycling, match funding from WBC and public consultation in early 2022 which informed the final design, the improved BMX cycle track at Goldsworth Park opened in May 2022. The hybrid facility – previously formed of various dirt tracks over mounds - now includes a fully asphalted pump track, a circuit of small mounds to help cyclists generate momentum, an all-weather mountain bike circuit and a grass circuit. This is a free to all facility.
- Improvements made to the footpath linking through the Bonsey Lane section of Westfield Common, in consultation with Surrey Wildlife Trust.
- Work with Horsell Common Preservation Society (HCPS) in 2023 to deliver bank erosion and footpath enhancement works at Heather Farm SANG.
- Bid made to the government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) for the delivery of the Woking - West Byfleet cycle corridor. Whilst unsuccessful, Active Travel England has encouraged SCC to develop the scheme design further with a view to later resubmission.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further to a successful application to South-Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, consultation took place in autumn 2023 on options for additional secure cycle storage close to Woking Railway Station, to be delivered by April 2024.</li> </ul> <p>The Basingstoke Canal Authority published a 'Towpath Code' titled 'Share the Space, Drop the Pace', available at <a href="http://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/basingstokecanal/onthetowpath/sharethespace">www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/basingstokecanal/onthetowpath/sharethespace</a></p>
<p>13. Provide green infrastructure advice to Neighbourhood Forums preparing Neighbourhood Plans and in relation to local priorities for spending Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.</p>	<p>Planning Policy and Green Infrastructure officers provide advice as relevant to inform the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Woking borough has <b>three adopted Neighbourhood Plans</b> (West Byfleet, Hook Heath and Pyrford). All include measures to protect/enhance green infrastructure/open space. For more details see <a href="http://www.woking2027.info/neighbourhoodplanning">www.woking2027.info/neighbourhoodplanning</a></p> <p>Advice and <a href="#">online guidance</a> provided on how to access Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funds to deliver local community projects. Examples include installation of picnic benches, additional play equipment and bins.</p>
<p>14. Take a balanced approach when assessing planning applications involving green/open spaces, to protect existing green and open spaces except where justified or outweighed by other clear benefits to the Borough. Also provide additional green and open spaces to support new development, including to address deficiencies against identified needs and give ready access to wildlife and nature for all.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing action for the Council through its role as <b>Local Planning Authority</b>.</p> <p>New green/open spaces are provided through <b>large new development sites</b>. For example, relevant completed phases of the Sheerwater development (for more information see <a href="http://www.thamesweygroup.co.uk/sheerwater/sheerwaterstorymap">www.thamesweygroup.co.uk/sheerwater/sheerwaterstorymap</a>).</p> <p>New information open space is also established through <b>SANG</b> provision (see action 8).</p>
<p>15. Explore opportunities with the Basingstoke Canal Authority and Society, Surrey Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Environment Agency, Surrey County Council Rights of Way and relevant water authorities to make improvements to promote greater use of the main waterway corridors and other water assets (lakes, ponds) as wildlife habitat and recreational assets (blue corridors).</p>	<p>The Council has worked with a wide range of partner organisations to progress delivery of Natural Woking's objectives, as set out throughout this summary. With specific regard to blue infrastructure, examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBC is part of the Wey Landscape Partnership Group - other partners include Surrey Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, Thames Water and Affinity Water. A group working to ensure Wey catchment water bodies meet good ecological and chemical status.</li> <li>• WBC is a part of the Basingstoke Canal Authority Working Group, a joint advisory group that meets every quarter. For many years the Council was also a funding contributor to this partnership.</li> <li>• Support to the Basingstoke Canal Society, for example helping to promote initiatives.</li> <li>• In May 2019 an event took place to celebrate the completion of the Canal's new Woking Wharf, adjacent to the Bedser Bridge and WWF Living Planet Centre. A new notice board was also unveiled.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS) operates a canal boat, 'Kitty', offering trips along the Woking stretch of the Canal. The BCS has recently (2023) secured funding for a new replacement electric boat.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Life - Adapt and increase biodiversity and green space in our urban centres and surrounds (as well as in villages and the countryside).</b>	
<p>16. Update the Playing Pitch Strategy, which sets out the strategic approach to playing pitch provision in Woking Borough and identifies principles to inform how future resource should be targeted.</p>	<p>The <b>Playing Pitch Strategy</b> was adopted in 2017. In 2023, in light of the Council's financial challenges, <b>public consultation</b> took place regarding a range of WBC managed sports facilities.</p>
<p>17. Retain existing and maximise opportunities for new, green landscape features on land within Woking Borough Council's management in and around urban areas and villages.</p>	<p>Opportunities taken include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 75m long green ivy wall was installed alongside the railway station wall in the High Street in 2019.</li> <li>Plans for a new landscape design for the Victoria Way central reservation and Brookhouse Common roundabout prepared in 2019.</li> <li>NVH re-landscaped many housing sites and has increased the amount of green space, with benches, open to residents. Also worked with local residents at a number of sites to ensure that all future works plans include a commitment to plant new flowers/trees, reseed green spaces and remove disused hard standing to create small community gardens.</li> <li>Wildflower seed sowing for pollinators – see Wildflowers in Woking (action 5).</li> <li>Green living walls and a green roof were an integral part of the 2020 Dukes Court building refurbishment. See case study <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>ThamesWey incorporated a 700 sqm. green roof and 300 sqm. green living wall planters in its Middle Walk scheme (2019/20).</li> <li>ThamesWey's conversion of the Cornerstone office building (also known as Elizabeth House) to provide apartments also featured a large sedum green roof system.</li> <li>NVH converted disused areas in Lakeview into gardens with raised planters.</li> <li>The Victoria Square development in Woking Town Centre, opened in March 2022. The new Red Shoppers' Car Park incorporates a green roof and an extensive green wall facing Victoria Way. See case study <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>WBC officers have attended training sessions/events run by ANS Global, which grows, installs, and maintains green living walls.</li> </ul> <p>In 2020, the Woking Peregrine Project celebrated five years since installation of the nest box by publishing a book documenting this journey, capturing the Peregrines through every stage of their development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various habitat bricks/boxes installed, and trees and wildflowers planted (detailed elsewhere in this summary).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WBC Green Infrastructure Manager presented to the Surrey Nature Partnership's Biodiversity &amp; Planning Conference in February 2020, promoting Woking's support for urban biodiversity.</li> <li>• The draft <a href="#">Town Centre Masterplan</a> (2022) set out green and blue infrastructure objectives that support biodiversity in Woking Town Centre.</li> </ul>
<p>18. Prepare a Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies for Woking Borough.</p>	<p>Woking's <a href="#">Tree Strategy and Tree Management Policies</a> documents were prepared and adopted in October 2018. A launch event – a tree giveaway in Woking Town Centre – was run in November 2018 to coincide with National Tree Week.</p> <p>In June 2019 a <b>training session</b> was run for WBC and partner organisations' officers directly involved in designing and planting trees in urban environments. The session was led by consultancy GreenBlue Urban.</p>
<p>19. Increase new tree planting in the Borough, to offset removal of dead and dangerous trees and other losses. Including through seeking financial contributions from relevant development schemes towards additional tree planting on or off-site.</p>	<p>Delivered through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For many years WBC ran an annual tree planting campaign, delivered through its environmental partner Serco, to contribute to delivery of this Natural Woking objective and assist the achievement of SCC's target for the planting of <a href="#">1.2 million new trees</a> (one for every resident) by 2030. An average of 200-300 trees were planted a year.</li> <li>• In autumn 2018, a donation of tree saplings were received and planted as part of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy initiative, and five, six-foot tall trees were planted at Byfleet Primary School in November 2019 a joint WBC and Surrey County Council event.</li> <li>• The Council received 12 Japanese Cherry trees, planted as an avenue in West Byfleet Recreation Ground. These were generously donated by the <a href="#">Sakura Cherry Tree Planting</a> project, which celebrates UK-Japan friendship and cooperation, run by the Japan Society UK. These were planted along the path between Parvis Road and the Sports Pavilion, to create a colourful avenue of cherry blossom.</li> <li>• Many new trees planted in Woking Town Centre within the landscaping schemes accompanying public realm and redevelopments, including in Jubilee Square, Victoria Square, Gloucester Walk and Square. In December 2021 one of the trees in Victoria Square was dedicated to the 2021 centenary of the Soroptimist International, which has an active Woking &amp; district branch. In spring 2023 two new blossoming cherry trees were added in Gloucester Square.</li> <li>• NVH planted apple and plum fruit trees at Bridge Court, Vale House and Alpha Road.</li> <li>• Six non-fruiting pear trees were planted in Rosemount Parade, West Byfleet, in February 2020. These were part of a scheme which also involved the removal of two existing Ash trees, likely to be affected by the Ash dieback disease rapidly spreading across the country.</li> <li>• SCC held a Surrey Tree Week 1-8 March 2020; WBC planted seven trees on SCC highway land adjacent to Horsell Lodge.</li> <li>• Significant tree planting undertaken at Brookwood Cemetery. Two new avenues at Brookwood Cemetery one with Sequoias (Wellingtonia) the other Metasequoia (Dawn Redwood) completed in 2021.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Woking Community Memorial Trees project was agreed in November 2021.</li> <li>• HMP Send received fruit trees purchased by the Education, Employment and Industries Group (EEIG) of HMPPS to support tree and hedge planting. Some of the trees received were used within HMP Send to develop two new orchards and to increase biodiversity within the estate. A proportion of the trees were also made available to projects external to the prison to supporting local community projects. 500 fruit trees were allocated for distribution to qualifying community projects, charity organisations and schools within the Woking area. These comprised a mix of apple, pear, cherry and plum, approximately 1-1.2m tall in 10 litre pots.</li> <li>• The range of potential tree planting locations for WBC has now reduced significantly with the return of highway verges to back to SCC in 2023, however SCC continues this ambition through its own verge tree planting scheme offering local residents and organisations the chance to apply for trees to be planted outside their own property or on local areas of large highway verge (for more details see <a href="http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/planting-trees">www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/planting-trees</a>). WBC continues to take opportunities to plant trees in suitable locations, in parks and on other WBC owned land, when funding permits, and encourages private landowners to do the same.</li> </ul>
<p>20. Provide additional opportunities for biodiversity within our town/district/local centres, including through public realm works and new development.</p>	<p>Many recent (re)developments and public realm improvements in the borough’s urban areas incorporate <b>green features</b> for biodiversity support and aesthetic appeal. For instance, in Woking town centre, green walls on the Red car park and along the High Street, and green roofs on the Red car park, Elizabeth House, and Middle Walk (see action 17 for full details).</p> <p>Other projects - such as the Dukes Court redevelopment, Chertsey Road improvements, the Sheerwater purple and red development phases - now incorporate <b>raingardens</b>; surface water drainage features which help to attenuate highway runoff to reduce the risk of flooding whilst, improving water quality. The raingardens are being planted with pollinator plants enhancing the habitat for bees, butterflies, and other invertebrates.</p> <p>The draft <a href="#">Town Centre Masterplan</a> (2022) set out green and blue infrastructure objectives that support biodiversity in Woking Town Centre.</p> <p>Planet Woking’s <a href="#">Urban Life webinar</a> in May 2021 featured a presentation by ANS Global who talked about Woking’s urban greening projects.</p>
<p>21. Provide new public open spaces in urban centres, particularly Woking Town Centre. For example as a part of the Victoria Square development, seeking opportunities for new pocket parks.</p>	<p>Two <b>new public plazas</b> – Victoria Square and Henry Plaza – were completed in spring 2022 as a part of the Victoria Square development.</p> <p>The current (2023) redevelopment of the Sheer House site in West Byfleet district centre, now named Botanical House, will place greater emphasis on public amenity and will centre around a <b>landscaped public square</b>.</p>

	<p>Whilst a decision was awaited on its development proposal for a site in Goldsworth Road Woking, owner EcoWorld implemented a new pocket park to make use of the space in the interim. Nature-themed mural hoardings were also added.</p> <p>Additional works have been undertaken where necessary on WBC greenspaces to minimise the risk of access for the purposes of unauthorised encampments.</p>
<p><b>Responsive - Protect natural resources, proactively adapt to the direct and indirect changes in climate and population, ensure appropriate estate management and support new development.</b></p>	
<p>22. Reduce flood risk to people and properties in Sutton Green through design and bringing forward a Sutton Green flood alleviation project.</p>	<p>The <b>Sutton Green flood alleviation scheme</b> was delivered in two phases: Sutton Green Road and New Lane. Works included widening existing ditches and opening a piped section of watercourse to help attenuate the excess flood water, direct flood water away from properties, but also helped improve ecology and biodiversity and water quality from the area. The scheme was completed in 2021.</p>
<p>23. Reduce flood risk to people and properties in Byfleet by supporting the Environment Agency's Byfleet flood alleviation project.</p>	<p>WBC is a part of ongoing work with the Environment Agency (project lead), SCC and other relevant partners to prepare and develop flood interventions across the borough. A particular focus is the <b>Byfleet-Sanway Road flood alleviation scheme</b> which seeks to improve the local environment and access to green space in addition to protecting 150 homes from flooding. This scheme seeks to improve the local environment and access to green space in addition to protecting 150 homes from flooding. Meetings, workshops and other public consultation has taken place which have involved all partners, organisations and local residents to determine what the scheme should and can provide alongside the flood alleviation aspect.</p>
<p>24. Assess development proposals in the context of national and local planning policy to protect natural resources, proactively adapt to the direct and indirect changes in climate and population (including ensuring development avoids areas of greatest flood risk), ensure appropriate land management and support new development.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing action for the Council through its role as <b>Local Planning Authority</b>.</p> <p>WBC/SCC officers review and comment on planning applications in relation to their impact on flood risk to confirm suitable mitigation measures are incorporated to ensure risk is not increased and where possible the risk is reduced.</p> <p>Many redevelopments in the borough's urban areas, such as the Dukes Court redevelopment, Chertsey Road improvements, the Sheerwater purple and red phases, now incorporate <b>raingardens</b>; surface water drainage features which help to attenuate highway runoff to reduce the risk of flooding whilst, improving water quality. The raingardens are being planted with pollinator plants enhancing the habitat for bees, butterflies, and other invertebrates.</p> <p>Officer responses to relevant <b>government planning consultations</b> - for example to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, part of which concerned protecting the environment and tackling climate change, including delivering biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery.</p>

	<p>Woking's <a href="#">Climate Change supplementary planning document</a> (SPD) was reviewed, updated, in consultation with the public and other stakeholders (summer 2023), and adopted (November 2023). The updated SPD consolidates changes to building practice and sets out how policies within the Local Plan apply to planning applications, in particular Policies CS22 Sustainable Construction and CS23 Renewable and low carbon energy generation. Public consultation took place alongside that of the draft new climate change strategy, Woking Net Zero. Both documents reference sustainability in development, including support for local biodiversity.</p> <p>With the approval of the Secretary of State, WBC established new <a href="#">Land Drainage Byelaws</a>.</p>
<p>25. Work with water authorities to support relevant local actions to manage water as a finite natural resource.</p>	<p>Water is an infrastructure requirement considered as part of the <b>Local Plan</b> process, in consultation with local water authorities.</p> <p>WBC initiated and maintains the <a href="#">Refill Woking</a> project through which it works with Woking Town and West Byfleet District Centre partners to recruit a network of local cafés, restaurants, shops and retail outlets which offer a water bottle refill service free of charge.</p> <p>Surrey Environment Partnership funding also assisted the install of a bottle filling station in Woking Park. Other Town Centre installations also progressed.</p> <p>NVH has supplied and installed water butts to several housing sites to encourage water conservation and to support local gardening efforts.</p>
<p>26. Work with the Environment Agency and key others to support relevant local actions to improve water quality and ecology of the main water channels and their tributaries.</p>	<p>Officers have worked with the Environment Agency, Surrey Wildlife Trust, and other partners where appropriate on these matters. WBC is part of the <b>Wey Landscape Partnership</b>, where local actions and improvements are discussed. Where possible WBC has supported <b>Rivers Week</b>, for example by running a river clearance event along the Hoe Stream.</p> <p>The Council has a duty to monitor all private water supplies in its area, which includes sampling and risk assessment, to ensure the water is wholesome and does not present a potential risk to human health. WBC's Environmental Health team lead this work.</p> <p>A recent pollution incident in Woking Town Centre, impacting the Canal, was remediated by a partnership including the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Thames Water gave a presentation to the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee in January 2023 regarding its work, including in relation to water quality.</p>

<p>27. Explore with the Environment Agency, and relevant others, local opportunities to protect and, where possible, improve soils, including for food production.</p>	<p>Colleagues in Environmental Health provide ongoing advice in relation to <b>contaminated land</b> matters. See <a href="#">Contaminated land   Woking Borough Council</a></p> <p>WBC Green Infrastructure officers engage regularly with the <b>Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)</b> Community Outreach team, towards this and other mutual objectives, from which a number of joint pieces of work have followed (see elsewhere in this summary).</p> <p>NVH took a minibus of residents to the RHS for an educational session covering techniques useful for their gardens.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure officers took part in a workshop in January 2022, organised by Surrey Wildlife Trust with Pesticide Action Network UK (PANUK), to discuss pesticides and their use throughout the county, to learn more and discuss how management practice affect and can support biodiversity.</p> <p>RHS, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Woking Environment Action contributed feedback to the draft <b>Planet Woking Wildlife Gardening Guide</b>. Together with comments received through public consultation, these informed updating of the draft, now published (see <a href="#">here</a>). The guide (2023) features advice on ‘grow your own’ and soils and was prepared following a resident’s request during a Planet Woking event discussion.</p>
<p>28. Continue to monitor and review local air quality in line with Government based health standards.</p>	<p>The Council monitors and reviews local air quality by taking measurements of <b>nitrogen dioxide (NO2)</b> through its diffusion tube programme. It now monitors at 38 locations across the borough. The Council publishes an annual <b>Air Quality Annual Status Report</b>. This is in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management, as amended by the Environment Act 2021. These are available at <a href="http://www.woking.gov.uk/airquality">www.woking.gov.uk/airquality</a> The latest 2023 report shows the monitoring results for 2022 and the projects being delivered locally and those in partnership with Surrey Air Alliance.</p> <p>Areas not expected to meet the government's standards are declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). Once an AQMA has been declared, the Council produces a plan to outline what steps it could take to get pollution down to within the government standard. An AQMA for Anchor Hill in Knaphill was revoked in April 2023, the borough now has only one AQMA, along a section of Guildford Road, Woking (declared in 2017).</p> <p>RHS has been working with Hoe Valley School on a project to ‘green-up’ urban schools by planting hedges to observe the impact on air quality, noise reduction and flood risk (2023).</p> <p><b>Domestic burning</b> (i.e. stoves and open fires) is a large contributor to emissions, which is something WBC is tackling locally through work with Trading Standards on the sale of domestic solid fuels. Information regarding the effects of domestic wood burning has been added to the council website <a href="#">here</a>.</p>



	<p>The Council has also worked with the <b>Surrey Air Alliance</b> to tackle air quality issues including through electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, tackling anti-idling and promoting active travel and schools' projects. The development of the <a href="#">Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</a> for Woking, also assists in this respect.</p> <p>In 2020 WBC contributed funding to SCC, along with six other Surrey local authorities, to run a successful <b>Surrey Schools Air Quality Programme</b>. The scheme organised a theatre production company to visit volunteering schools within the county (with pupils of primary school age) and an air quality related performance, also an anti-idling campaign to educate parents parking up around schools.</p> <p>The ivy wall installed in the High Street, Woking, in May 2019 assists mitigation of airborne pollutants from the adjacent road and railway lines, as do other green walls and roofs in the Town Centre.</p>
<p>29. Prepare Site Allocations development plan document (DPD) in the context of national and local planning policy supporting sustainable development of some Green Belt countryside and encourage a range of Green Belt uses - including for visual amenity, biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation, in accordance with the Core Strategy (and other Local Development Documents).</p>	<p>The Council adopted the <a href="#">Site Allocations</a> development plan document (DPD) in October 2021. The DPD now forms part of the development plan for the borough and is used to assess planning applications. The Site Allocations DPD supports the delivery of the Core Strategy, and allocates land for housing, employment and infrastructure uses as illustrated on the <a href="#">Proposals Map</a>. The Site Allocations DPD also safeguards land to meet future development needs beyond the present Local Plan period. Section B of the document sets out the development and infrastructure sites to be taken out of the Green Belt or washed over by the Green Belt, which include open space and a number of additional SANG site allocations.</p> <p>Together with the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies development plan document (DPD), the borough's Site Allocations DPD, provide local planning policy designed to support sustainable development and encourage a range of benefits to be derived from the borough's countryside, including visual amenity, biodiversity, outdoor sports, and recreation.</p>
<p>30. Identify and implement local steps to encourage the incorporation of well-designed and maintained sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), the use of porous materials and other water management solutions into new and existing developments, designing these to maximise their ecological value by incorporating a variety of habitats.</p>	<p>WBC/SCC officers review and comment on planning applications in relation to their impact on flood risk to confirm suitable mitigation measures are incorporated to ensure risk is not increased and where possible the risk is reduced. The use of SuDS on minor developments is encouraged where possible. Where appropriate elsewhere SuDS are also utilised to improve flood risk in local areas.</p> <p>In January 2023, the government confirmed plans to ensure new SuDS are adopted under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The Defra review of sustainable drainage systems detailed how it intends to develop new rules that will come into effect from 2024. Schedule sets out a framework for the rollout of drainage systems, a sustainable drainage system approving body, and national standards on design, construction, operation, and</p>



	<p>maintenance. It also makes the right to connect surface water runoff to public sewers conditional upon a drainage system being approved before any construction work can start.</p> <p>WBC has for some years operated a <b>rain gardens</b> programme, in partnership with Surry County Council. Planted rain gardens provide a biodiversity friendly natural means of slowing surface water run-off, helping to reduce the risk of flooding during and immediately after high intensity rain events. The aim has been to develop a programme of retrofitting raingardens within the highway across the Rive Catchment.</p> <p>The pilot rainwater garden at Blackdown Close was completed in February 2019 and is now well established. A further rain garden was constructed at Alpha Road in 2019. Other potential locations have been identified for which designs could be developed. Rain gardens have been incorporated into public realm improvements along Chertsey Road and outside Dukes Court, Woking.</p> <p>The Council published a <a href="#">Rainwater Garden Guide</a> October 2018 and Planet Woking's <a href="#">Urban Life webinar</a> in May 2021 featured a presentation by WBC Drainage and Flood Risk regarding raingardens and flood alleviation schemes.</p>
<p>31. Encourage and support opportunities to incorporate responsible environmental practices in development, such as sustainable construction and recycling soil during construction projects, and encourage habitat creation during and post development (e.g. hibernacula, ponds, corridors/pathways, swift bricks, etc.)</p>	<p>Developers continue to be encouraged to incorporate sustainable construction measures to meet the energy and water efficiency requirements of the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Climate Change supplementary planning document</a> (SPD) was updated, in consultation with the public and other stakeholders, and adopted in November 2023. The updated SPD consolidates changes to building practice and sets out how policies within the Local Plan apply to planning applications, in particular Policies CS22 Sustainable Construction and CS23 Renewable and low carbon energy generation. Public consultation took place in summer 2023 on the SPD alongside a new Climate Change Strategy, Woking Net Zero. Both documents reference sustainability in development, including support for local biodiversity.</p> <p>Other key steps supporting delivery of this action include <b>advice and encouragement</b> provided through the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Woking supporting information document (2016)</li> <li>• Green and blue infrastructure chapters of the draft Town Centre Masterplan (2022)</li> <li>• Planet Woking Wildlife Gardening Guide (2023)</li> <li>• Consultation responses to the Local Planning Authority (ongoing)</li> <li>• Contributions to discussions of the Woking Chamber of Commerce Environment Committee (ongoing)</li> <li>• Through Planet Woking communications channels – website, social media, e-newsletter (ongoing)</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Planet Woking hub</a> on the Woking Community Forum provides a focal point for resident engagement on environmental and biodiversity related topics</li> <li>• Events – Planet Woking webinars, Wild About Woking weekend event (May 2022)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading by example – for example incorporation of biodiversity design in the Council's developments (see action 5).</li> </ul> <p>The forthcoming mandatory requirement for <b>Biodiversity Net Gain</b> (BNG) will be a significant catalyst for additional delivery against this target in the future (see action 4).</p> <p>The Council's partner organisations including NVH, ThamesWey and Woking Shopping all continue to work to support this objective through various means. Action 5 summarises the improvements the Council and its partners have implemented.</p>
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**Productive places - Make the most of our buildings, streets, watercourses, and landscapes, taking opportunities for multifunctional use and capitalising on all funding sources.**

<p>32. Encourage full use of existing allotments and seek to increase capacity if there is significant unsatisfied high demand within the Borough.</p>	<p>The borough has ten <a href="#">allotment sites</a> across the borough, each of which is managed by an Allotment Society. Greenspaces officers meet regularly with representatives of the Allotment Societies, in its capacity as landowner and to provide advice and support.</p> <p>Demand for allotments is monitored. As of November 2023 a majority of sites are at full capacity with most plots filled. Winter is usually when there is the highest turnover in plot tenancies, so where sites had vacant plots, it is reported that these had only recently been vacated and were expected to be filled ahead of the next growing season. Total waiting list numbers stand at 341, however it should be noted that often one person may be on the waiting list at several sites so this figure can misrepresent actual demand for allotment plots. That said the increase from in waiting list figure from the last update (then 324 on waiting lists) does indicate some potential growth in the demand for plots in some areas of the borough, whilst there is more stable turnover in others. One site has recently noted a particular increase in applications from residents living in new town centre developments, this new trend will be monitored.</p> <p>For many years the Council previously ran an allotments competition, as a part of Woking in Bloom. This also featured another award, the WEAct 'Best Wildlife Garden'. Whilst Woking in Bloom has now paused, a number of sites hold their own internal competitions.</p>
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<p>33. Provide support towards edible landscapes such as community food growing, including orchards, incorporating fruit trees in landscaping schemes.</p>	<p>Woking Environment Action's <b>Incredible Edible</b> community food growing project utilises ThamesWey and private land in Old Woking and Knaphill. WEAct also organises and encourages the <b>sale of surplus local allotment produce</b> in aid of charity.</p> <p>NVH has planted fruit trees and set up gardening groups at Bridge Court, Vale House and Alpha Road. NVH residents in Lakeview created their own preserves to assist each other with food supplies during lockdown and donate to the local foodbank.</p>
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	<p>A '<b>Men in Sheds</b>' group was set up at West Hall care home in West Byfleet. Raised growing beds at the site are being used. Sessions are open to members of the public as well as residents.</p> <p>See action 3 for more details of support to community growers in Woking borough.</p> <p>In June 2021, RHS opened its new <b>RHS Hilltop building</b>, the organisation's home of gardening science. This learning facility on Woking's doorstep features three new gardens: a Wellbeing Garden, a World Food Garden, and a Wildlife Garden.</p>
<p>34. Define our ambition for each greenspace/open space in terms of its function(s) - for example, in terms of leisure, biodiversity, connectivity, health benefits, screening, treescape, landscape - to inform future management and enhanced functionality (e.g. through site-based management, master, or operation plans).</p>	<p>Early work has commenced towards this objective.</p>
<p><b>Wild about Woking - Promote knowledge of the value and beauty of all faces of Woking Borough's natural environment (town and countryside) and the benefits of getting involved, as a responsible individual, a community group, or a business (green economy).</b></p>	
<p>35. Develop biodiversity and green infrastructure information on the Council's website, to share and signpost to knowledge of the open spaces, countryside, wildlife trees and plants around us and how people can get actively involved in their care.</p>	<p>Note actions 35 and 38 are closely linked.</p> <p>Continuous efforts to support resident, workers and visitors' understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment. Those <b>delivered online</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Woking supporting information document (2016)</li> <li>• Green and blue infrastructure chapters of the draft Town Centre Masterplan (2022)</li> <li>• Planet Woking Wildlife Gardening Guide (2023)</li> <li>• Natural Woking (e-newsletters) and Planet Woking (website news and case studies, social media, videos, e-newsletters) communications</li> <li>• Planet Woking events – for example the 'Urban life' webinar in May 2021</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Planet Woking hub</a> on the Woking Community Forum provides a focal point for resident engagement on environmental and biodiversity related topics</li> <li>• Interactive information on <a href="#">play areas</a> and <a href="#">open spaces</a> in Woking borough</li> <li>• <a href="#">Greenspaces map</a> (note large file size) prepared, also used in large vinyl form for events over many years</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive town centre nature trail maps; available as a <a href="#">pdf</a> and as an <a href="#">online interactive map</a></li> <li>• Information about <a href="#">walking in Woking borough</a></li> <li>• Consultation on draft Woking Net Zero climate change strategy and updated climate change SPD, summer 2023</li> <li>• Consultation on local animal welfare guide</li> <li>• Short videos created and shared through WBC social media e.g. ivy wall, tree veteranisation.</li> </ul> <p>The <a href="#">Thames Basin Heaths Partnership</a> has prepared a directory of SANG sites, titled '<a href="#">Greenspace on your doorstep</a>'.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Woking Peregrine Project</a> webstreams live video from the Peregrine Falcon nest box on Export House, Woking.</p> <p>Freedom of Information (FOI) assistance on biodiversity and green infrastructure topics is provided upon receipt of requests. For example, an FOI regarding Natura 2000 sites received by local authorities informed a set of collated results later reported on the BBC's Countryfile programme.</p>
<p>36. Identify local and national events through which the principles of Natural Woking can be supported, working in conjunction with relevant partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for local and national events, through promotion and where appropriate direct involvement.</li> <li>• Local</li> <li>• Woking Great Big Green Week (run annually by WEAct)</li> <li>• Heath Week (run by the Thames Basin Heaths Partnership); a series of events and activities to celebrate the importance of this protected habitat</li> <li>• Annual CREST awards Surrey, recognising sustainability by enterprises and organisations. These include a 'Restoring Nature' award</li> <li>• Natural Woking stand at Party in the Park 2016</li> <li>• WBC organised bat and swift talks 2016/2017</li> <li>• Tree planting events 2018 and 2019</li> <li>• Woking Town Twinning Sign opening August 2019</li> <li>• Living Well annual events</li> <li>• Woking Chamber of Commerce's Environment Committee</li> <li>• Surrey Nature Partnership Biodiversity Working Group</li> <li>• Presentations about local green infrastructure given to the Soroptimist International (Woking &amp; District branch) October 2018, the Woking Joint Committee in November 2018, and Woking Town Twinning Association (WTTA) AGM in March 2019</li> <li>• PowerPoint of Woking's green infrastructure for WTTA's display at an event in twin town of Le Plessis-Robinson in 2018 and 2019</li> <li>• Eco-event run by Woking People of Faith, February 2019</li> </ul>

- WBC declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019
- ThamesWey ran a children's' competition in autumn 2019 to build a home for a wild animal in their garden
- Surrey County Council's ran an Eco-Summit for schools in March 2022 in Woking
- The Lightbox hosted a garden event, Garden in The Box Festival, in April 2022
- WEAct has run Foraging Walks
- Regular reports to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the Council's climate, biodiversity and greenspaces service delivery
- WBC's Green Infrastructure team and Natural Woking nominated for the Association of Local Government Ecologist (ALGE) Local Government Biodiversity Project Award last autumn (2019).
- Training sessions with GreenBlue Urban and RHS
- WBC health and safety training run for conservation volunteers
- WBC Green Infrastructure presentation to SNP Biodiversity & Planning Conference, February 2020
- Presentation to the national GCN licencing expert panel in April 2020, also to a Surrey Planning Officers' Association meeting in March 2020
- Extinction Rebellion (XR Woking) hosted a 'Seeds of Change' event in June 2021, an opportunity for local people to meet the group and take home a small plant or seedling
- Surrey Wildlife Trust 'Wild Surrey' art and photography competitions
- Surrey Wildlife Trust's 'Next door Nature' project included Action for Nature webinars and direct delivery with communities including in Sheerwater and Maybury in Woking
- Wild about Woking weekend event run by WBC and Surrey Wildlife Trust May 2022 to help raise awareness of how the public can help care for the environment through local biodiversity and greenspace projects. The two-day programme included a variety of engaging activities such as a pop-up wildlife garden, a town centre nature trail and wildlife themed crafts, plus other related events took place around the borough throughout May.

**National**

- COP climate change and biodiversity conferences
- National Tree Week
- Big Garden Birdwatch
- 30 Days Wild
- Big Butterfly Count
- No Mow May and Every Flower Counts
- Hedgehog Awareness Week
- National Allotments Week

<p>37. Continue to develop links and opportunities with the local green infrastructure network and healthcare activities and illness prevention programmes, working with relevant partners.</p>	<p>Links made between existing health and climate and natural environment related partnership working networking in Surrey.</p> <p>Woking borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy was adopted in July 2021. This recognises that the environment is a key factor which influences the health and wellbeing of local populations: <i>'For example, green infrastructure can improve health through providing opportunities for physical exercise and boosting mental health by being in nature (termed 'biophilia') and the design of neighbourhoods can influence patterns of travel and social connectivity'</i> (extract from p54 of the strategy).</p> <p>In 2022 the Council introduced the <a href="#">Woking Nature Walks</a>: free weekly walks are free led by a trained leader along the Basingstoke Canal in Sheerwater, to help improve health and well-being as well as connection to nature. Woking MIND earlier organised a series of Woking Health Walks as part of a winter walks programme.</p> <p>The two-year green social prescribing <b>Surrey Heartlands</b> project is working to connect residents to the health benefits of nature and green spaces to improve mental health. For more details see <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Work undertaken with partners to, subject to funding, build a range of new community facilities and upgrade others to create a new and innovative health and community campus, to help residents access locally a wide range of health and other related services.</p> <p>Residents warned each year of the health risks associated with contact with <b>Oak Processionary Moth</b> caterpillars or their nests For more information, see <a href="http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/trees-and-hedges/pests-and-diseases">www.woking.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/trees-and-hedges/pests-and-diseases</a>.</p>
<p>38. Continue to support existing, and identify new, opportunities to promote residents' understanding of the importance of biodiversity and active involvement to positively benefit biodiversity. For example through wildlife and climate change responsible gardening, greening front gardens, animal hotels, hedgehog holes in fences, etc.</p>	<p>Note actions 35 and 38 are closely linked. Continuous efforts to support resident, workers and visitors' understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment, including getting involved through volunteering, and caring for private land (gardens, yards). This has taken many forms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Woking supporting information document (2016)</li> <li>• Green and blue infrastructure chapters of the draft Town Centre Masterplan (2022)</li> <li>• Planet Woking Wildlife Gardening Guide (2023)</li> <li>• Contributions to discussions of the Woking Chamber of Commerce Environment Committee (ongoing)</li> <li>• Ongoing use of Planet Woking communications channels, WBC and other relevant partner websites and social media to promote biodiversity, ongoing support to environmental volunteering initiatives, which can help residents encourage neighbours to also get involved.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Planet Woking hub</a> on the Woking Community Forum provides a focal point for resident engagement on environmental and biodiversity related topics</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events – Planet Woking webinars, Wild About Woking weekend event (May 2022), nature related marketing campaigns by Victoria Place (e.g. Secret Garden and Woodland Wonderland campaigns, 2021 and 2023).</li> <li>• Projects including community outreach and involvement, such as Swifts in Woking, WEAct's projects, Surrey Heathland Partnership</li> <li>• Interactive town centre nature trail map</li> <li>• Continued support to community gardening initiatives, which can help residents encourage neighbours to also get involved (see action 3 for full details)</li> <li>• Local community group Wild Pyrford has created a series of environmental films in 2021, documenting local environmental themes, including one concerning trees.</li> <li>• When an initiative to increase biodiversity is completed at a block, NVH notified all residents about this and the science behind it, along with information on how residents can be involved. For example, hedgehog highways cut in fence panels and leaflets shared on how to keep hedgehogs safe.</li> <li>• Natural Woking related articles featured in WBC staff magazine</li> <li>• WEAct stag beetle and bird nest box advice leaflets</li> <li>• WBC Green Infrastructure has provided work experience or placement opportunities for school, undergraduate students and graduate trainees each year, to give an insight into the team's work including Natural Woking.</li> </ul>
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**Legacy - Protect and strengthen the resilience of the green infrastructure network and biodiversity, now and for future generations to enjoy.**

<p>39. Engage with natural environment conversations at the national level, where appropriate, to assist innovations that will deliver better outcomes for wildlife and residents in Woking Borough.</p>	<p>In addition to national events and campaigns (see actions 36 and 38), WBC officers have also maintained a watching brief, contributed to, and prepared for national changes around biodiversity and green infrastructure. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparations for introduction of the Environment Act 2021, including BNG and the strengthened biodiversity duty</li> <li>• National pilot and ongoing information sharing around the Woking GCN DLL Scheme (action 1), the habitat improvements for which are to be maintained long-term</li> <li>• Provided feedback to assist Defra officers in 2018 considering the Habitat Regulations in relation to the then proposed European Union exit and its possible impact on local authorities.</li> <li>• Responses to relevant national consultations, such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)</li> <li>• Work with DEFRA on proposed changes to Sustainable Drainage Technical Standards</li> <li>• Natural England-led GCN Licensing Expert Panel workshop in January 2021</li> <li>• Proposal submitted in August 2020 to Natural England's call for habitat provision projects, linked to BNG</li> <li>• Contributed to updating of Natural England's standing advice on ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees.</li> </ul>
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<p>40. Explore external funding opportunities for specific projects to deliver short to medium-term improvements and ensure their long-term management and maintenance.</p>	<p>External funding sources explored include those through SCC, the Environment Agency, Thames Water, where these may assist delivery of current or future projects. Various successful bids made enabling local delivery, as detailed throughout this summary.</p>
<p>41. Assess development proposals in the context of national and local planning policy, seeking to protect and value the best landscape and townscape character, including conserving and enhancing the locally distinctive character of historic built environment, trees in the street scene, protecting ancient woodlands and veteran trees, and ensuring well-designed development that sits comfortably in its context.</p>	<p>This action is ongoing, integral to the planning and tree application assessment processes of the <b>Local Planning Authority</b>.</p> <p>WBC Arboriculture services creates Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) each year and enforce tree protection and policies as necessary, the latter in some instances leading to tree enforcement related prosecutions and court considerations.</p>

Summary considered by the Greener Woking Working Group, December 2023.