



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



**Tame Valley Wetlands**  
*Landscape Partnership*

# Discover Tame Valley



**Landscape Conservation Action Plan**  
for the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme

A bright sun with rays shining down on a river floodplain. The sun is in the upper center of the frame, creating a strong lens flare effect. The sky is a clear, deep blue. Below the sun, a river flows through a lush green floodplain. The water reflects the sun's light, creating a shimmering path. The banks are covered in tall grass and some reeds. In the background, there are trees with some autumn-colored leaves and a few buildings, including a prominent red-brick house. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

“

*Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.*

John Muir.

River Tame Floodplain in Tamworth © 2013 Steven Cheshire

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people to thank for their involvement and hard work during the development phase prior to the second round submission to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) . I won't mention people individually as I am likely to forget someone (plus the list would end up creating another section similar to the size of Section 6).

Firstly, I would like to thank Warwickshire Wildlife Trust for their dedication, hard work and support during the development of the scheme. They have been integral to the development and production of this Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) and it is their vision that has brought the partnership to where they are today. They will continue to be a strong lead for the partnership, line managing the TVWLP Scheme Manager during delivery.

I would also like to thank all organisations on the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership (TVWLP) for their support – particularly the Environment Agency for leading on the River Restoration Study and for their financial support, and the RSPB and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust for their work during development, and their commitment to delivering projects and line managing TVWLP scheme staff during delivery.

The support of North Warwickshire Borough Council, Tamworth Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council has been extremely valuable, the latter two will also be providing significant levels of match funding during the scheme. Warwickshire County Council has provided a regular meeting space at Kingsbury Water Park during the development phase, for which I am grateful. Advice on built heritage from the Canal and River Trust has also been invaluable.

Consultants Barker Langham and ECUS Ltd. have played a vital role during the development phase, carrying out consultation and feasibility work – their professional approach and commitment has been commendable and it has been a pleasure to work with them.

A big thank you should also go to our HLF advisor Harriet Carty for her support and guidance during the development phase.

The final thank you must go to the local residents, volunteers and groups within the TVWLP scheme area – without their ideas, support and enthusiasm, the informed detail within this LCAP would not have been possible.

**Tim Haselden, TVWLP Development Officer.**

This Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) was first published in December 2013 by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, on behalf of the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership (TVWLP). The LCAP will be revised in light of any amendments required by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and updated with any additional information in a second publication upon commencement of the scheme.

v1.1



# CONTENTS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>5</b>   | List of Appendices                            |
| <b>7</b>   | Acronym Decoder                               |
| <b>8</b>   | Executive Summary                             |
| <b>12</b>  | Introduction                                  |
| <b>21</b>  | Section 1 - Understanding the TVWLPS Area     |
| 22         | 1.1 The Landscape Character                   |
| 34         | 1.2 Local Communities                         |
| 36         | 1.3 The Heritage and History of the Landscape |
| 40         | 1.4 A Green and Blue Lung                     |
| 42         | 1.5 Context                                   |
| 46         | 1.6 Strategies and Policies                   |
| <b>63</b>  | Section 2 - Statement of Significance         |
| 64         | 2.1 Introduction                              |
| 64         | 2.2 Landscape                                 |
| 69         | 2.3 Built Heritage                            |
| 72         | 2.4 Natural Heritage                          |
| 81         | 2.5 Historical Significance                   |
| 90         | 2.6 Cultural and Human Significance           |
| 92         | 2.7 Importance to Local Communities           |
| <b>99</b>  | Section 3 - Risks and Opportunities           |
| 100        | 3.1 Introduction                              |
| 101        | 3.2 Loss of Wetland Habitats, Species...      |
| 103        | 3.3 Climate Change                            |
| 105        | 3.4 Flooding                                  |
| 106        | 3.5 Development                               |
| 109        | 3.6 Recreational Pressure                     |
| 110        | 3.7 Lack of Understanding                     |
| 110        | 3.8 Forgetting the Past                       |
| 111        | 3.9 Changes in Land Management...             |
| 113        | 3.10 Anti-social Behaviour                    |
| 114        | 3.11 Lack of Resources                        |
| 116        | 3.12 Audience Barriers                        |
| 118        | 3.13 Partnership-based Risks                  |
| <b>121</b> | Section 4 - Aims and Objectives               |
| 122        | 4.1 The Vision                                |
| 122        | 4.2 Aims and Objectives                       |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>129</b> | Section 5 - Development of the Programmes  |
| 130        | 5.1 Programme A: Conserve and Restore      |
| 146        | 5.2 Programme B: Community Participation   |
| 161        | 5.3 Programme C: Access and Learning       |
| 170        | 5.4 Programme D: Training and Skills       |
| 180        | 5.5 Programme E                            |
| 182        | 5.6 Resolving Conflicts                    |
| 184        | 5.7 Environmental Responsibilities         |
| 186        | 5.8 Meeting Conservation Standards         |
| 187        | 5.9 Management and Maintenance             |
| 188        | 5.10 Volunteering Policies and Practices   |
| <b>191</b> | Section 6 - Scheme Plan and Costs          |
| 192        | 6.1 Introduction                           |
| 194        | 6.2 Cost Comparison                        |
| 196        | 6.3 Programme A: Conserve and Restore      |
| 264        | 6.4 Programme B: Community Participation   |
| 320        | 6.5 Programme C: Access and Learning       |
| 385        | 6.6 Programme D: Training and Skills       |
| 426        | 6.7 Programme E: Staff Costs and Overheads |
| <b>429</b> | Section 7 - Evaluation and Monitoring      |
| 430        | 7.1 Introduction                           |
| 431        | 7.2 Monitoring Progress                    |
| 431        | 7.3 Monitoring Outputs                     |
| 434        | 7.4 Evaluating Outcomes                    |
| 437        | 7.5 Sharing the Results of Evaluation      |
| <b>439</b> | Section 8 - Sustainability / Legacy        |
| 440        | 8.1 Introduction                           |
| 441        | 8.2 Planning for Sustainability and Legacy |
| 443        | 8.3 Delivering Sustainability and Legacy   |
| 443        | 8.4 Programme A: Conserve and Restore      |
| 444        | 8.5 Programme B: Community Participation   |
| 446        | 8.6 Programme C: Access and Learning       |
| 447        | 8.7 Programme D: Training and Skills       |
| 448        | 8.8 The Partnership                        |
| 449        | 8.9 Exit Strategy                          |
| <b>451</b> | Section 9 - Adoption and Review            |
| <b>455</b> | Section 10 - Bibliography                  |
| <b>461</b> | List of Supporting Documents               |

## LIST OF APPENDICES

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1a</b>  | TVWLP Key Heritage Assets Map                             |
| <b>1b</b>  | TVWLP Key Heritage Assets Map key                         |
| <b>2a</b>  | TVWLP Habitat Map   |
| <b>2b</b>  | TVWLP Key to Habitat Map (Warks)                          |
| <b>2c</b>  | TVWLP Key to Habitat Map (Staffs)                         |
| <b>3</b>   | WFD and Tame Valley by EA                                 |
| <b>4</b>   | TVWLP Scheme Boundary Revision                            |
| <b>5</b>   | TVWLP HER Listed Buildings                                |
| <b>6</b>   | TVWLP HER MON   |
| <b>7</b>   | TVWLP Natural Assets                                      |
| <b>8a</b>  | EA River restoration study                                |
| <b>8b</b>  | EA River restoration study appendix 1                     |
| <b>8c</b>  | EA River restoration study appendix 2                     |
| <b>8d</b>  | EA River restoration study appendix 3                     |
| <b>8e</b>  | EA River restoration study appendix 4                     |
| <b>9a</b>  | RSPB Middleton Lakes feasibility report                   |
| <b>9b</b>  | RSPB Middleton Lakes feasibility map                      |
| <b>9c</b>  | RSPB Middleton Lakes feasibility design                   |
| <b>10a</b> | ECUS feasibility report                                   |
| <b>10b</b> | ECUS feasibility report – appendices                      |
| <b>11</b>  | BL Tame Valley Audience Plan and Access Plan              |
| <b>12</b>  | BL Tame Valley Marketing and Branding Plan                |
| <b>13</b>  | Tame Way Review 2009                                      |
| <b>14</b>  | BL Tame Valley Branding Brief                             |
| <b>15</b>  | TVWLP Project map   |
| <b>16a</b> | Project A3 – Kingsbury plan 001a JPR                      |
| <b>16b</b> | Project A3 – Kingsbury cross section 002a JPR             |
| <b>17</b>  | TVWLP Linear Habitats Map (part of hedgerow project info) |
| <b>18</b>  | HoeCF community grants application form                   |
| <b>19</b>  | Walk Unlimited Tame Way Map with key                      |
| <b>20</b>  | Tame Valley Training programme                            |
| <b>21</b>  | Environmental Conservation Apprenticeship                 |
| <b>22</b>  | Tame Valley Community Consultation Report 2012            |
| <b>23</b>  | List of Designations                                      |



## ACRONYM DECODER

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>AOD</b>                  | Above Ordnance Datum  |
| <b>B&amp;BCWT</b>           | Birmingham and the Black Country Wildlife Trust                                 |
| <b>BBS</b>                  | Breeding Bird Survey  |
| <b>CMP</b>                  | Catchment Management Plan   |
| <b>CPD</b>                  | Continual Professional Development  |
| <b>CRT</b>                  | Canal and River Trust   |
| <b>DAP</b>                  | Developing Audience Participation   |
| <b>DEFRA</b>                | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs                              |
| <b>EA</b>                   | Environment Agency  |
| <b>ha</b>                   | Hectare   |
| <b>HBA</b>                  | Habitat Biodiversity Audit  |
| <b>HER</b>                  | Historic Environment Record   |
| <b>HLF</b>                  | Heritage Lottery Fund   |
| <b>HoeCF</b>                | Heart of England Community Foundation   |
| <b>HS2</b>                  | High Speed Rail 2   |
| <b>LBAP</b>                 | Local Biodiversity Action Plan  |
| <b>LCAP</b>                 | Landscape Conservation Action Plan (this document)                              |
| <b>LEP</b>                  | Local Enterprise Partnership  |
| <b>LGS</b>                  | Local Geological Site   |
| <b>LiDAR</b>                | LiDAR is a remote-sensing technology (from combining the words light and radar) |
| <b>LNP</b>                  | Local Nature Partnership  |
| <b>LNR</b>                  | Local Nature Reserve  |
| <b>LWS</b><br><b>(pLWS)</b> | Local Wildlife Site<br>(potential Local Wildlife Site)                          |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>NCA</b>    | National Character Area                           |
| <b>NEET</b>   | Not in Employment, Education or Training          |
| <b>NIA</b>    | Nature Improvement Area                           |
| <b>NWBC</b>   | North Warwickshire Borough Council                |
| <b>OCN</b>    | Open College Network                              |
| <b>OS</b>     | Ordnance Survey                                   |
| <b>PPE</b>    | Personal Protective Equipment                     |
| <b>RoW</b>    | Right of Way                                      |
| <b>RSPB</b>   | The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds     |
| <b>SCC</b>    | Staffordshire County Council                      |
| <b>SSSI</b>   | Site of Special Scientific Interest               |
| <b>STW</b>    | Severn Trent Water                                |
| <b>SWT</b>    | Staffordshire Wildlife Trust                      |
| <b>TBC</b>    | Tamworth Borough Council                          |
| <b>tbc</b>    | to be confirmed                                   |
| <b>TVWLP</b>  | Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership        |
| <b>TVWLPS</b> | Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme |
| <b>WAT</b>    | Wild about Tamworth                               |
| <b>WBRC</b>   | Warwickshire Biological Records Centre            |
| <b>WCC</b>    | Warwickshire County Council                       |
| <b>WeBS</b>   | The Wetland Bird Survey                           |
| <b>WFD</b>    | Water Framework Directive                         |
| <b>WMBC</b>   | West Midland Bird Club                            |
| <b>WWT</b>    | Warwickshire Wildlife Trust                       |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The River Tame is the largest tributary of the River Trent and the main river in the West Midlands, approximately 100 km in length from its source at Oldbury, to its confluence with the Trent near Alrewas. The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme focuses on a 104 km<sup>2</sup> area of the landscape surrounding 29 km of the River Tame, between Castle Vale in Birmingham (to the south-west) and Hopwas in Tamworth (to the north-west), in North Warwickshire and south-east Staffordshire.

Spanning across three county boundaries and three National Character Areas, the landscape of this scheme – the Tame Valley Wetlands – has its own, unique feel. Wildlife and humans alike have been drawn to the life-giving properties of the valley for centuries; the plentiful resources of fresh water, fertile soils and rich mineral deposits have all played a role in shaping the landscape we see today – one heavily influenced by human activity.

The transport routes that dominate the landscape, whether the busy roads, rail links or canals; the historic structures and remnant World War II pill boxes that still stand defiantly; and the farmed countryside and old gravel extraction pits, have all transformed this area of the Tame Valley. Whilst some of these anthropogenic activities have helped enhance the landscape – the now tranquil canals and the wetlands formed from old extraction sites – many activities have, and still are, creating a degraded and fragmented landscape both for people and wildlife. Yet despite all this activity, the Tame Valley is often forgotten and neglected – it is a hidden landscape.

With this in mind, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust set up the Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership in 2005 with the vision of creating a wetland landscape, rich in wildlife and accessible to all.



The partnership has gone from strength to strength, bringing us up to the present day, and the creation of this Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP). This document has been inspired and moulded by local communities and organisations; it is the partnership's narrative and mandate for the landscape, which will be achieved through this Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme (TVWLPS). The TVWLPS will work towards the partnership's overarching vision – working together to deliver a wide range of programmes and projects. Built and natural heritage will be conserved and restored, both physical and intellectual access will be improved, and local people will have the opportunity to learn new skills and explore new paths in life and in the landscape. Local people will be enthused and inspired, and the landscape will no longer be hidden.

The TVWLPS will work with national, regional and local strategies in mind, and work closely with local people and local and national organisations, in order to deliver real outcomes that will make a positive and lasting difference to the lives of local people and the landscape and its heritage.

The landscape of the Tame Valley has seen many changes over time and its story is full of interest and inspiration – we are about to start the next chapter of this exciting story...

[...discover the Tame Valley.](#)









*The River Tame* © 2013 Mandy Austin



## INTRODUCTION

This Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) focuses on an area of approximately 104 km<sup>2</sup> in North Warwickshire and south-east Staffordshire, between Castle Vale to the west, Coleshill to the south and Tamworth to the north. The River Tame forms the spine flowing from south to north through the middle of this area, whilst the west boundary is marked by the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal. This landscape – the Tame Valley Wetlands – has a unique character and a hidden story to tell and this is discussed in Sections 1 – 3.

### Background and Vision

The Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership was set up by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in 2005 to help deliver landscape-scale conservation and restoration throughout this large area. In 2011, the partnership became the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership (TVWLP). The TVWLP was broadened, providing expertise on a wide cross-section of disciplines, including environmental, local planning and development issues, and both natural and built heritage. The partnership therefore includes representatives from local, regional and national bodies, covering a wide range of expertise including community development, regeneration, public access, wildlife and conservation.

By working with organisations, landowners and local communities, the partnership's vision is to create a wetland landscape, rich in wildlife and accessible to all. This will be achieved by taking a landscape-scale approach to restoring, conserving and reconnecting the physical and cultural landscape of the Tame Valley. By re-engaging local communities with the landscape and its rich heritage, a sense of ownership, understanding and pride will be nurtured to ensure a lasting legacy of restoration and conservation. This is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

The Tame Valley is promoted as one of the Wildlife Trust's 'Living Landscapes' and part of the RSPB's 'Futurescapes' – recognition that society needs to 'think big' if we are to protect wildlife and conserve the landscape and its heritage. The TVWLP links with partnerships and initiatives adjoining the scheme area, such as the Central Rivers Initiative and Nature Improvement Areas (NIA) – this provides a wider context and a means to pro-actively work with an even bigger picture and a wider landscape in mind.

## Structure and Development

In 2012, the TVWLP received a first round pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under their Landscape Partnerships funding programme. Along with £20,500 of funding from organisations on the partnership, the TVWLP was also awarded £86,500 from HLF to develop their Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The development phase of the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme (TVWLPS) took place during 2013. This development, culminating in the production of this LCAP, has been overseen by the TVWLP Development Officer, Lead Partner Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and the newly formed TVWLP Board, whose members include:



The Board will sanction decisions relating to the scheme and will help source funding and ensure appropriate stewardship of funds awarded, in parallel with normal audit and accountancy functions led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

Day to day management will be delegated to the TVWLP Scheme Manager, line managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's Head of Living Landscapes (Projects), with the Board retaining an overview of the scheme. The RSPB and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust will play an important role by line managing the TVWLPS Community and Events Officer and the TVWLPS Youth Engagement Officer respectively. All other members of staff will be employed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and line managed by the Scheme Manager. All staff will be based together and work as a closely-knit team, at the Environment Agency's Lea Marston Lakes depot, in the heart of the scheme area.



The TVWLP Board will make decisions based on consultation with the local community and the wider Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership (TVWLP). At the time of writing this document, the organisations that are part of the wider TVWLP include:



The wider partnership is open to any organisation with an interest in the scheme area, subject to signing the TVWLP Memorandum of Understanding.

## Consultation and Engagement

As illustrated above, a wide range of organisations and individuals have participated in, and been consulted about, the development of the scheme. Regular Board and wider partnership meetings have taken place throughout the development phase. In addition, key officers, individuals and community and special interest groups have been consulted to understand their priorities for the heritage of the scheme area.

The partnership has met its contribution of £28,455 towards the development phase, and volunteer time totalling £13,350 has also been reached. It is estimated that approximately £18,000 of ineligible in-kind support has also been given to the scheme during development by Environment Agency, Natural England and Borough and County Council staff (including the supply of free HER, ecological and LiDAR data).

Barker Langham were appointed to assist with community engagement during the Round 2 development phase to build on the work already undertaken by the partnership prior to the Round 1 application. Round 1 engagement resulted in 197 questionnaire responses. Work in the development phase has built on this, with a further 235 questionnaire responses, and a number of qualitative consultations, including three focus groups (34 participants), three themed workshops on access, training and farming (40 participants), 40 youth responses and over 65 interviews and consultations with schools, community groups, and local businesses.

“ *I am very pleased that action is being taken to develop the landscape for future generations.* ”



Farmers visiting Southfields Farm, Colehill © 2013 Tim Haselden

Target audiences identified through Round 1 and Round 2 engagement include:

- Young people.
- Local residents.
- Families (including working families and parents with children under 5 years).
- Hard to reach audiences, in particular: NEETS (people not in education, employment or training), people with disabilities, people with mental health challenges and travellers.
- Farmers and landowners.

Comparison between Round 1 and Round 2 questionnaire responses:

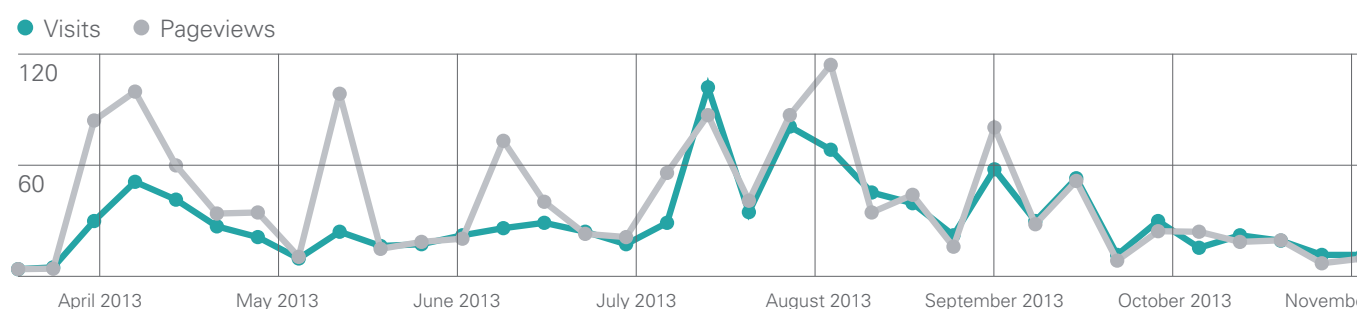
- There was a higher number of people (16% more) requesting more information about what to do in the Tame Valley during Round 2.
- Transport issues are very similar with most people accessing the Tame Valley via car or walking.
- There appears to have been a surge in interest for the natural environment in 2013 (landscape, wildlife, conservation) that was not so evident in the 2012 consultation.

An Access Audit and study, carried out by Walk Unlimited involved desk research, identifying existing promoted routes, consultation with key stakeholders and users to determine plans, attitudes, and current access issues, and site visits throughout the scheme area. This has helped develop the scheme's access projects.

Wetland and riverine feasibility studies and stakeholder consultation have also been carried out by ECUS Ltd and by the Environment Agency, in order to prioritise and develop natural heritage restoration projects to be undertaken through the scheme.

The partnership's website [www.discovertamevalley.com](http://www.discovertamevalley.com) and Twitter feed [@thetamevalley](https://twitter.com/thetamevalley) - set up during the development phase - have been a vital tool for engagement. Over 1,000 visits have been made to the website (610 unique visitors) over an 8 month period, with over 4,500 page views. Regular updates have taken place online throughout the year, including blogs, details of events and downloadable information sheets (both visual and audio). The scheme also has 136 followers on Twitter, who have been kept up-to-date with live news and pictures from the Tame Valley as the scheme has developed (based on latest data from 7th December 2013).

The graph below shows the level of interest from people over the year. Interestingly, the stats clearly reflect the most intense period of on-the-ground engagement, around July/August 2013:



*Web Site Statistics - 18 March to 07 December 2013*

All of the above engagement and development activities have been influential in shaping the scheme and have informed the content of this LCAP. This development is discussed further in Section 5 and the resulting scheme projects can be found in Section 6.

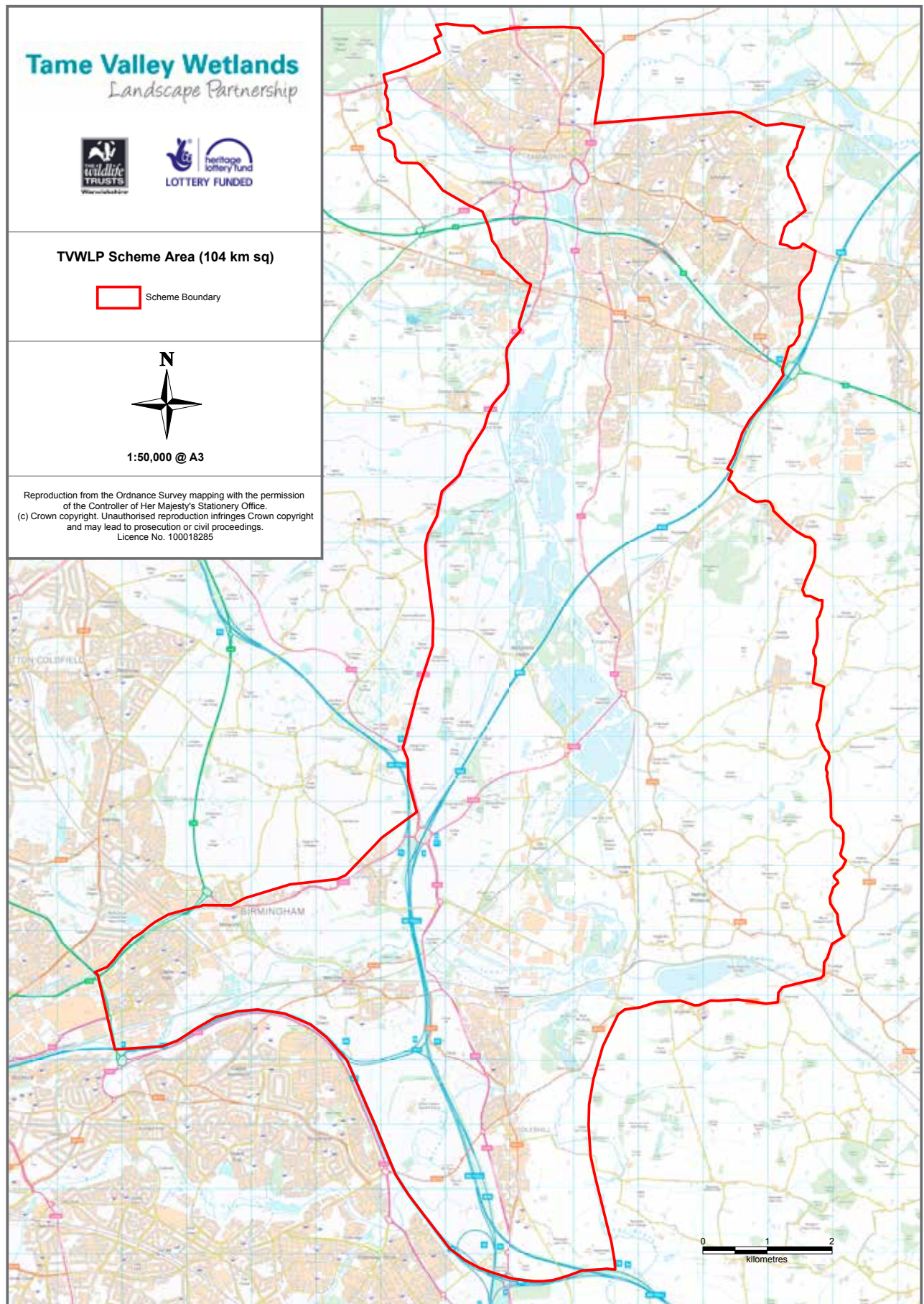
Sections 7-9 state how the partnership will ensure this work will be monitored and evaluated effectively, and how the TVWLPS will stand the test of time and provide a legacy for future generations.

## Gaps and Limitations

The process of producing the LCAP has allowed the TVWLP to focus on the key needs of the landscape and its communities through this Landscape Partnership Scheme. A significant amount of consultation has been carried out as part of the development stage and a good picture of the needs and values of local communities has evolved.

However, readers should note that this LCAP only covers part of the story and heritage of the landscape and it should not be seen as the definitive list of all landscape and heritage issues and activities that have been, and that are currently, taking place within the scheme area. Inevitably, there will be gaps; increasing the TVWLP's understanding of the different values people place on heritage is one of the key aims of the scheme, and further projects and priorities are likely to emerge during the delivery phase.









*The River Tame at Hams Hall © 2013 Steven Cheshire*

[www.discovertamevalley.com](http://www.discovertamevalley.com)

 @thetamevalley



**Warwickshire**

**Produced by Lead Partner Warwickshire Wildlife Trust  
on behalf of the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership.**

024 7630 2912

[enquiries@wkwt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wkwt.org.uk)

[www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

Design by Steven Cheshire (Warwickshire Wildlife Trust)