

Section 1:

Understanding the
Tame Valley Wetlands
Landscape Partnership
Scheme Area



SECTION 1: Understanding the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme Area

The TVWLP scheme area has been determined by considering the physical characteristics of the landscape – both natural and anthropogenic – and the cultural characteristics, based on perceived barriers, the makeup of the local communities and where there lies a fundamental need for investment. This is described in more detail throughout this section.

1.1 The Landscape Character

Although covering a large area of 103.5 km² (10,350 ha) across three National Character Areas (NCA) and three county boundaries, the TVWLPS area has a distinctive feel, with the River Tame and its associated wetland features at its heart.

The River Tame and its series of wetlands form the spine running through this landscape. The main Trent Valley Washlands characteristics (NCA 69) of the area are large, slow flowing rivers within a flat broad valley with gentle slopes. There is a strong influence of urban development, mineral extraction and transport links, shaping the landscape we see today.

The North Warwickshire Character Assessment (Character Area 11, Tame Valley Wetlands, p.58) goes on to describe the landscape's key characteristics, describing how the River Tame winds unobtrusively through the extensive central network of restored former gravel workings with significant areas of wetland, scrub and woodland centred around Middleton Lakes, Kingsbury Water Park, Whitacre Heath SSSI and Ladywalk Nature Reserve. It is noted as a low lying landscape, visually contained by wetland vegetation and industry. The dominant Historic Landscape Character types for the scheme area have been analysed as Water, Industrial, Extractive, Settlement and Transport (Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Report).



The River Tame © 2013 Mandy Austin



Tame Aqueduct © 2013 Steven Cheshire

Thick deposits of compacted desert dust, muds from temporary lakes and river sand, more than 200 million years old, make up the Triassic clay lowlands that surround the Warwickshire coalfield. During glacial episodes over the past 500,000 years, ice has sometimes covered the whole area, moulding the landscape and leaving behind pockets of economically valuable sand and gravel. This unique geology has therefore shaped the development of the landscape, primarily through human exploitation of the rich resources available within the Tame Valley, including coal, clay and sand and gravel. These materials have shaped the buildings within the landscape and the jobs of many of the inhabitants. Extraction of clay just south of Tamworth continues today as does extraction of sand and gravel within the Tame Valley, but extraction of coal from Kingsbury, Piccadilly and Hurley has ceased.

Extraction has left derelict land and large extraction pits, some of which have been filled in with waste such as pulverised fuel ash from the power stations and old tyres. Despite this huge intrusion on the natural makeup of the land, many of these areas have now been returned to farmland, or

The Birmingham and Fazeley Canal is a key built and natural heritage feature of the landscape, de-marking the western edge of the scheme area and running parallel with the River Tame on its north-south route across the scheme area. Bridges, tunnels and other interesting structures along this canal, as well as the adjoining Coventry Canal, bring significant built heritage interest to the landscape, and are the main area of built heritage focus for the TVWLPS.

have even become valuable wildlife havens – such as Whitacre Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Many of the sand and gravel extraction pits have filled with water and have become regionally, if not nationally, important wetland sites for birds, other wildlife and for people. The Tame Valley Wetlands now form the largest series of interconnected wetlands in the region and provide a vital north-south migratory corridor and wildlife haven for many species. The landscape therefore has a variety of natural and anthropogenic elements that make it distinct, albeit degraded and in need of conservation and restoration.



Birch Coppice Colliery © 2013 John Ball



Lea Marston Lakes © 2013 Steven Cheshire

The River Tame flows east out of Birmingham and into the TVWLPS area through a highly modified course. The influence of the city of Birmingham on the River Tame is shown for one last unmistakable time, as the river flows past Severn Trent Water's Minworth Sewage Treatment Works. This is Europe's largest sewage works, treating the waste from the equivalent of 1.7 million people, which includes domestic and industrial discharges. Nevertheless, heritage can be found in even this setting.

Records show that a simple form of sewage treatment was carried out on the Minworth site as early as 1870. This consisted of running sewage over fields and farming the

land. As Birmingham expanded rapidly during the industrial revolution, sewers were laid to local sewage works across the area. Over time these local sites have been closed and the sewers connected, via the Black Country Trunk Sewer System, to deliver sewage to Minworth.

To cope with ever increasing flows and load, the site has gradually been adapted to provide more intensive sewage treatment. The site also provides large expanses of wet grassland and semi-improved grassland habitat, providing vital undisturbed areas for wildlife (Severn Trent Water Minworth Sewage Treatment Works information leaflet, 2005).

Birmingham's drinking water is supplied under gravity from the reservoirs in the Elan Valley in Mid Wales. This feat of engineering took place at the turn of the 20th Century and altered the hydrological cycles of the Humber and Severn river basins. Rainwater falling on the Elan Valley landscape no longer made its natural way south into the River Severn and out to the Bristol Channel, but instead, found itself diverted eastwards to Birmingham – eventually making its way (as urban runoff and sewage discharge from Minworth Sewage Treatment Works) into the River Tame, flowing north into the River Trent, and eventually out into the North Sea via the Humber Estuary. This additional discharge into the River Tame has changed the hydrology of the river. Small tidal-like processes can be observed on the river within the scheme area as rain falls on the conurbation of Birmingham, and as the population wakes up each morning and begins consuming water. The scheme has great potential to educate both local people within the scheme area and the people of

Birmingham about water usage and urban pollution...*the river begins at your front door!*

After Minworth Sewage Treatment Works, the River Tame flows through Water Orton and is joined by the River Blythe SSSI, having itself just been joined by the River Cole. The River Cole runs from Birmingham through Coleshill, and the River Blythe runs through the more rural landscape of Arden (NCA97) from the other side of Packington Park. There is a strong influence of riverine vegetation with lines of willow pollards and poplars defining the course of the rivers. The floodplain opens out where the three rivers meet near Hams Hall, with a large number of pools, mostly the result of former sand and gravel extraction. There are historic mill and water works buildings and modern small scale works and mineral extraction set against the open and heavily-urbanised backdrop of pylons and the E.ON-owned Hams Hall Distribution Park (North Warwickshire Character Assessment).



River Blythe at Duke End, Coleshill © 2013 NWBC

Hams Hall itself has an impressive heritage – the Hams Hall Estate was owned by the Adderley family for over 262 years. The name of the estate was derived from the fact that the land lay in a great hook (ham) of the River Tame (www.bgfl.org). A power station at Hams Hall was constructed and operated in the late 1920s, but by 1993 all three power stations had been closed and demolished. A 400 year old, timber-framed cottage still sits on the site, and is home to environmental education activities.



Hams Hall © 2013 Fred Hopkins

The Tame Valley has a long history of settlement with artefacts from the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages discovered in the area, together with Roman and Medieval remains. The industrial revolution saw great changes within the Tame Valley, with the expansion of the road network and improved turnpike roads, the building of the Coventry Canal and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, and the opening of the Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway, serving local industries such as the collieries and connecting them to the rest of Britain.

Some of the railways were closed following the closure of the collieries. Today the M42 and the M6 toll slice across the landscape, supplied by the huge modern distribution parks such as Hams Hall and Birch Coppice together with large industrial estates, for example at Coleshill. There is also a large oil depot at Kingsbury and a firing range nearby.



Wetland Habitat in the Tame Valley © 2013 John Ball

The River Tame flows north through Kingsbury and on to Tamworth, where it is joined by the River Anker from the east. This most north-easterly area has been characterised by Natural England as the Mease/Sence Lowlands National Character Area (NCA72) and covers only a small fraction of the TVWLPS area (3%) at 3.5 km² (349.5 ha). A summary based on Natural England's NCA Profile 72 can be found at the end of this section for completeness, although the character described is not consistent with the character of the TVWLPS area.

However when put in a social and cultural context, the part of NCA72 included in the scheme area is in character with the rest of the area – it is the heavily-urbanised reaches of the River Anker flowing through Tamworth.

After its confluence with the Anker, the River Tame continues its journey north-west out of the scheme area and further north towards the River Trent. This section of the Tame is rich in military heritage, with a number of pill boxes lining its course – remnants from World War II.



Pill Box in Broad Meadow © 2013 Steven Cheshire

National Character Area 69 – Trent Valley Washlands

The Trent Valley Washlands' National Character Area (NCA69) covers 36.9 km² (3,698 ha) of the TVWLP scheme area (36%). Although this NCA does not form the largest part of the scheme area, it does form its core – hence this NCA profile, as summarised below by Natural England, provides the best description of the feel and character of the scheme area.

The Trent Valley Washlands National Character Area (NCA69) comprises the river floodplain corridors of the middle reaches of the River Trent's catchment in the heart of England. It is a distinctly narrow, linear and low-lying landscape, often clearly delineated at its edges by higher ground, and it is largely comprised of the flat floodplains and gravel terraces of the rivers.

A washland is described as an area of floodplain that is allowed to flood or is deliberately flooded for flood management purposes. Thus the Trent Valley Washlands are strongly defined by the riverine environment and periodic inundation. The key ecosystem services provided are related to water, its availability and regulation of flow. Thick superficial deposits of alluvium

and river terrace gravels dominate the Washlands' geology. Variations in these, the resultant soils and the differences in elevation above and below flood levels have determined both settlement pattern and agricultural land use. Arable crops are by and large located on the freely draining soils of the river terraces and on the higher ground where fields are big and hedgerows are small with few trees. Pastoral farming generally takes place on the river flood plains, where soils are subject to frequent flooding or are naturally wet. Here fields are usually smaller and the hedgerows fuller with more tree cover. Overall woodland cover in the Washlands is very limited, although riparian trees, especially willows, provide an important component of the landscape.

The broad rivers, their riparian vegetation and the semi-natural parts of the floodplain form the main habitats of the Washlands, with flooded former gravel extraction sites introducing new wetland habitat into the area. Characteristic species are those associated with these wetlands such as grey heron, lapwing and kingfisher.



Kingfisher © 2013 John Sheppard

The rivers have attracted humans from the earliest times, especially the gravel terraces and crossing points. Traditional buildings are typically made of red brick with clay plain tile roofs with the occasional survival of some earlier timber-framed structures, while grander dwellings and churches are often built from sandstone.

The rural parts of the Tame Valley around Middleton and Curdworth to the west of the TVWLPS area (referred to as 'Tame Valley farmland' in the North Warwickshire Character Assessment, p.61), provide a predominantly open arable landscape with large fields divided by low, tightly trimmed hedges.



Farmland at Hurley © 2013 Steven Cheshire

To the eastern edge of the scheme area, there are longer and more panoramic views from the elevated open slopes of Hurley. Rural areas to the south-east of the scheme area are more typical of the Arden landscape character profile. These areas include agricultural fields, as well as unimproved land including scrub formation on former extraction land and some remaining common and heath, as indicated by some of the place names, for example, Whitacre Heath. The Enclosure Act of the 18th Century established the pattern of blackthorn and hawthorn hedges that we see today, enclosing commons, wasteland and open fields, replacing the spacious open fields in which many cultivators had their strips. Today, however, many of these old field boundaries are degraded and in need of restoration and replanting.

Some small areas of woodland remain, and Kingsbury Wood SSSI falls within the scheme area. However, previously this would have been more extensive, for example, around Middleton Hall. There is also evidence of older, medieval Deer parks that once covered large areas, at Packington Park, Middleton Park, Hams Hall Park, Coleshill Deer Park and Bentley Park (Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Report – North Warwickshire District).

The Arden National Character Area (NCA97) covers 61% (the largest expanse) of the TVWLPS scheme area at 62.9 km² (6,299 ha). A summary based on Natural England's NCA Profile 97 can be found overleaf.

National Character Area 97 – Arden

Arden comprises farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham, including part of the West Midlands conurbation. Traditionally regarded as the land lying between the River Tame and the River Avon in Warwickshire, the Arden landscape also extends into north Worcestershire to abut the Severn and Avon Vales. To the north and north-east it drops down to the open landscape of the Mease/Sence Lowlands. The eastern part of the NCA abuts and surrounds Coventry, with the fringes of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon to the south.



Park Hall Nature Reserve © 2013 Kate Sugden



Small Tortoiseshell butterfly © 2013 Mandy Austin

This NCA has higher ground to the west, the Clent and Lickey Hills and to the east, the Nuneaton ridge. The landscape of the lower lying central area is gently rolling with small fragmented semi natural and ancient woodlands. Mature oaks set in hedgerows, distinctive field boundaries, historic parklands and narrow river corridors are key features, all on the doorstep of a heavily urbanised area. Land use throughout the area is mainly residential, agricultural and industrial including coal mining which is still active in the north east of the NCA.

Numerous transport corridors; road, rail, air and canal run through the area. There is likely to be increased development and greater pressure upon the existing infrastructure, particularly around Birmingham, Coventry and the main towns. This pressure could lead to the creation of a new Green Infrastructure linking the urban areas out into the more rural areas.

This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape's character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets and strong cultural links with William Shakespeare and his 'Forest of Arden'.

National Character Area 72 – Mease/Sence Lowlands

The Mease/Sence Lowlands are a gently rolling agricultural landscape centred around the rivers Mease, Sence and Anker. The area extends across: Derbyshire in the north, Warwickshire in the south, Leicestershire in the east and Staffordshire in the west. With its towns lying on the fringes of the National Character Area (NCA), only a very small percentage of it is urban. These lowlands retain a rural, remote character, with small villages, red brick farmsteads and occasional historic parkland and country houses. The National Forest extends into the area north of the River Mease.

The NCA contains one Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – the River Mease, which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – and has 139 ha of nationally designated SSSI, including the Ashby Canal SSSI. Important habitats include neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, wet woodlands, rivers and streams, all of which support characteristic and rare species of international importance, including the white-clawed crayfish, the spined loach and the bullhead fish.

The historic character of this area is important, in particular its ancient woodlands, veteran trees, landscaped parklands and areas of archaeological interest, including ridge and furrow.

With 30% Grade 2 agricultural land, this is a rich and productive agricultural area. Most of the land is in agricultural use, primarily for wheat. There is much potential for an increase in appropriate woodland planting as part of the National Forest initiative, which is increasing recreation opportunities, woodland cover and biomass potential for the future.

Future challenges for this NCA include working to mitigate the pressures of any future developments and managing the area with the aim of making it resilient to issues such as climate change, tree diseases and non-native invasive plants.



Tameside LNR © 2013 Mandy Austin

1.2 Local Communities

The River Tame flows past nearly 2 million people on its journey from source to the confluence with the River Trent. Within the TVWLPS area, the River Tame and its tributaries is a familiar backdrop for at least nine distinct settlements. Castle Vale is the most south-westerly settlement, with an approximate population of 10,000 people, and has a distinctly modern residential character stemming from its history as a post-war overspill estate from Birmingham.

Leaving east Birmingham, the population of Water Orton, the town of Coleshill (on the River Cole) and the villages of Whitacre Heath and Kingsbury, all have a different feel – due to their more rural location in North Warwickshire, the history of mining and their differing population indices.

Moving northwards, Dosthill and Fazeley provide a transition from the rural North Warwickshire landscape into the more urban environment of a busy town – these settlements maintain an individual feel, whilst also merging into the Saxon town of Tamworth. The 77,000 strong population of Tamworth then play host to the River Tame and its confluence with the River Anker, as it provides an impressive setting for the Grade I listed Norman Tamworth Castle and the nature reserve of Broad Meadow as a backdrop.



Dosthill Park © 2013 Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The River Tame has been a vital asset for the local communities along its course over many centuries and these populations have grown up using and relying on the water from the Tame. Today, the River Tame and its floodplain is still vital for people – for agriculture, for flood water storage, for purification of the air and water and for our wellbeing, as a place to relax, learn and be inspired.



Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) are fully supporting the proposal to develop the Tame Valley Scheme. As well as the environmental impact the project will have, we believe that the scheme will provide an ideal platform to engage with communities surrounding the Tame Valley area and create numerous opportunities for local people to get involved and develop skills. As WCAVA we will continue to promote the opportunities to groups in North Warwickshire and encourage them to get involved in addition to promoting opportunities to their community members. WCAVA North Warwickshire can help to support any new groups that emerge from the scheme to enable the project to have a long lasting effect.

The scheme is a very positive initiative for North Warwickshire in relation to training and skills. One of the priorities for North Warwickshire is to address the low levels of aspirations and attainment and this project will provide a different approach to training which combines practical skills with accredited courses. Any approach that encourages individuals to develop skills for work is particularly welcome in North Warwickshire, especially in some of the ex-mining villages that surround the Tame Valley area that have particularly low levels of education and skills. WCAVA is also aware that a significant amount of volunteering opportunities will be created by the scheme which will be an ideal way for people to develop transferable skills for the workplace and to enable people to progress into further training opportunities. It is evident that the opportunities created will appeal particularly for young people and this initiative will help to address the high levels of NEET young people in the area.

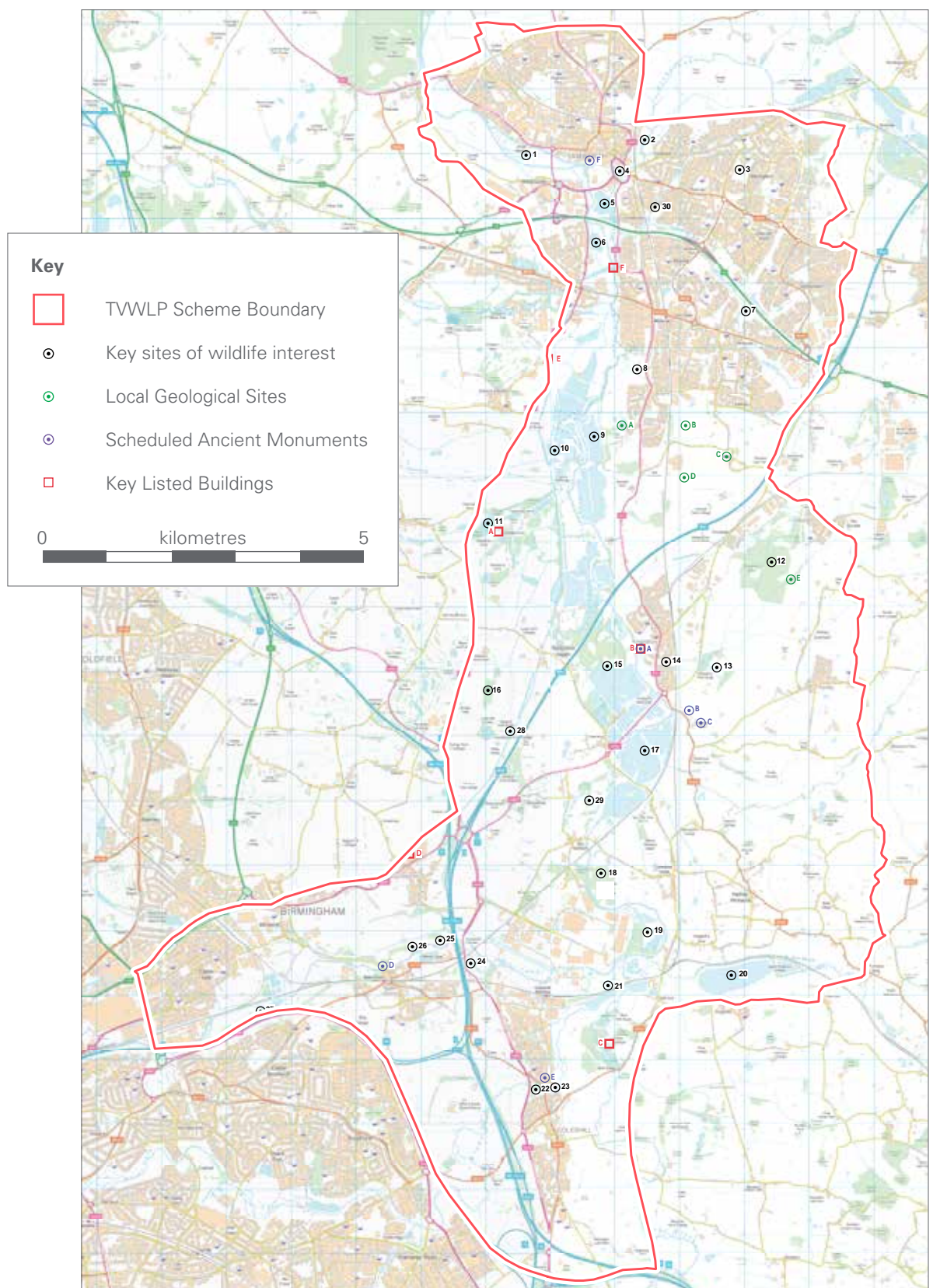
David White, Community Development Officer, Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action.

1.3 The Heritage and History of the Landscape

The TWWLP scheme area has a wealth of interesting heritage. The map opposite illustrates the locations of some of these key features. This map can also be found in Appendix 1a, with a key found in Appendix 1b. A habitat map can be found in Appendix 2a, with relevant keys in Appendix 2b and 2c.

Geology

Thick deposits of compacted desert dust, muds from temporary lakes and river sand, more than 200 million years old, make up the Triassic clay lowlands that surround the Warwickshire coalfield, running from Warwick up to Tamworth. During glacial episodes over the past 500,000 years, ice has sometimes covered the whole area, moulding the landscape and leaving behind pockets of economically valuable sand and gravel. Quarries and mines were dug to extract coal for fuel, clay for pottery and brick making and sand and gravel for aggregate. Some rocks have been used for building. Many of these quarries and mines are now abandoned, giving us the opportunity to see the underlying geology.



Map showing Key Heritage Assets.

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Archaeology

The Tame Valley has a long history of settlement with archaeological finds dating back to prehistoric flints. Much work has been done by local history societies and this is explored in more detail in Section 2. The partnership has spoken to many of these local history societies and has received letters of support for the scheme from Coleshill Civic Society and Kingsbury History Society as well as the North Warwickshire Heritage Forum, which includes Coleshill Civic Society, The Polesworth Society, Atherstone Civic Society, Friends of Atherstone History, Kingsbury History Society, Baxterley Heritage Group and Middleton Hall Trust.



Coleshill Medieval Bridge at Cole End Park LNR © 2013 NWBC
(see page 71 for a similar view taken in circa 1900)

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Our Society fully supports the application as it is in line with our own aims....Encouragement in the preservation of our listed buildings, some of which are in imminent danger, will be a great asset and help us to generate even more local interest in planning to preserve the best of the past whilst sensibly developing for the future.

Peter Rafferty, Chairman, Coleshill and District Civic Society.

Biodiversity

The principle habitat across the Tame Valley is of wetland, composed of river, pools and canals. Poplars and willows line the riverine environment, and some of the typical wetland bird species include grey heron, kingfisher and water birds, such as teal and tufted duck.

However, the River Tame and all of its tributaries within the TVWLPS area are failing water bodies under the Water Framework Directive, with the majority classed as having poor water quality (see Appendix 3 for more information). Sections of the river have been engineered with brick walls and concrete as it passes through urban areas. In addition, channelling of the River Tame, creation of the settlement lakes at Lea Marston through which the River Tame flows, and construction of engineered banks together with artificial concrete weirs have altered the natural flow of the river, reducing the natural shingle banks, impacting on fish refuges, and in some cases causing erosion of the banks due to the change in flow. In some places the river has been disconnected from its natural floodplain, with attendant change in water levels in the surrounding areas.

The River Tame is also affected by water abstraction, altering levels of flow, as well as diffuse pollution from a variety of sources.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan has identified the need to create and restore wetland habitats, thus benefiting the wildlife that relies on these habitats, including bittern, snipe, otters, water voles and bats. This is highlighted locally by the West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy and Warwickshire County Council's Biodiversity Strategy and implemented locally by the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Partnership and the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Partnership. Work is also required to address the England Biodiversity Strategy Adapting to Climate Change.



Snipe © 2013 J. Milne



Bittern © 2013 Tim Stenton

1.4 A Green and Blue Lung



Green spaces in an urban landscape © 2013 John Ball

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The project proposed within this bid will deliver the Government's strategy for wildlife and ecosystem services in England: Biodiversity 2020. The area currently delivers several key ecosystem services including important biodiversity, a sense of place and history and a good recreational resource. If successful, the projects within this application will not only conserve but significantly enhance those ecosystem services. The project also has an emphasis on raising public awareness and promoting people involvement through participation, training and education. This reflects the commitments in Biodiversity 2020 under Outcome 4 (People).

Glenys Tucker, Natural England Area Manager for Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

An ecosystem service describes a way that human wellbeing is influenced by the natural environment. Wetland ecosystems provide a diverse range of regulating (flood, nutrient, water quality, carbon sequestration), provisioning (water, food, fuel, materials, biodiversity) and cultural services (health, wellbeing, recreation). These are both direct and indirect benefits (usually free) to people and businesses living and operating locally to a site but also further afield. Efforts are now being made to calculate the economic benefits of wetland ecosystem services to people, business and the wider economy. The functionality/condition of a wetland (how well it works) coupled with its size will help give an approximation of the economic value it offers:

However a site's specific value is based on its condition, size, location and beneficiary population. For the TVWLPS, improvements to access, quality and size of wetland habitat will lead to an increase in its overall value and help demonstrate the valuable role wetlands play in the provision of regulatory, provisioning and cultural services for all. The role of ecosystem services will be investigated further during the delivery phase.



In the absence of information about the type or services provided, the default estimates of annual benefits are £303/ha/year for inland wetlands and £1,856/ha for coastal wetlands. Where wetlands provide the regulatory services of flood control and storm buffering and water quality improvements and the cultural value of amenity and biodiversity, benefits are considerably higher. Services known to be typical of the type of wetlands found in the UK generated average benefits in excess of £2,000/ha.

Morris and Camino (2008). Working Paper, Economic Assessment of Freshwater, Wetland and Floodplain (FWF) Ecosystem Services, UK National Ecosystem Assessment.

1.5 Context

The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme area was chosen because of its national and regional significance as a wetland habitat for a range of species, set against a fascinating background of human exploitation of the rich mineral resources along the river corridor and the consequent industrial and built heritage.

The scheme area has increased slightly from that of the stage 1 application - see map opposite (this map can also be found in Appendix 4).

Due to the consultation that took place in the development phase, it was decided that the scheme boundary should be amended. The whole scheme boundary has been mapped more precisely and has been extended along the eastern edge to follow the M42 rather than a political boundary to the north, and to include the villages of Hurley and Nether Whitacre further south. These communities are very much part of the landscape, and local people would benefit from activities linked to the scheme. This change in scheme boundary has meant that the total TWWLPS area is now just under 104 km² (103.5 km²), rather than 95 km² as proposed in Round 1.

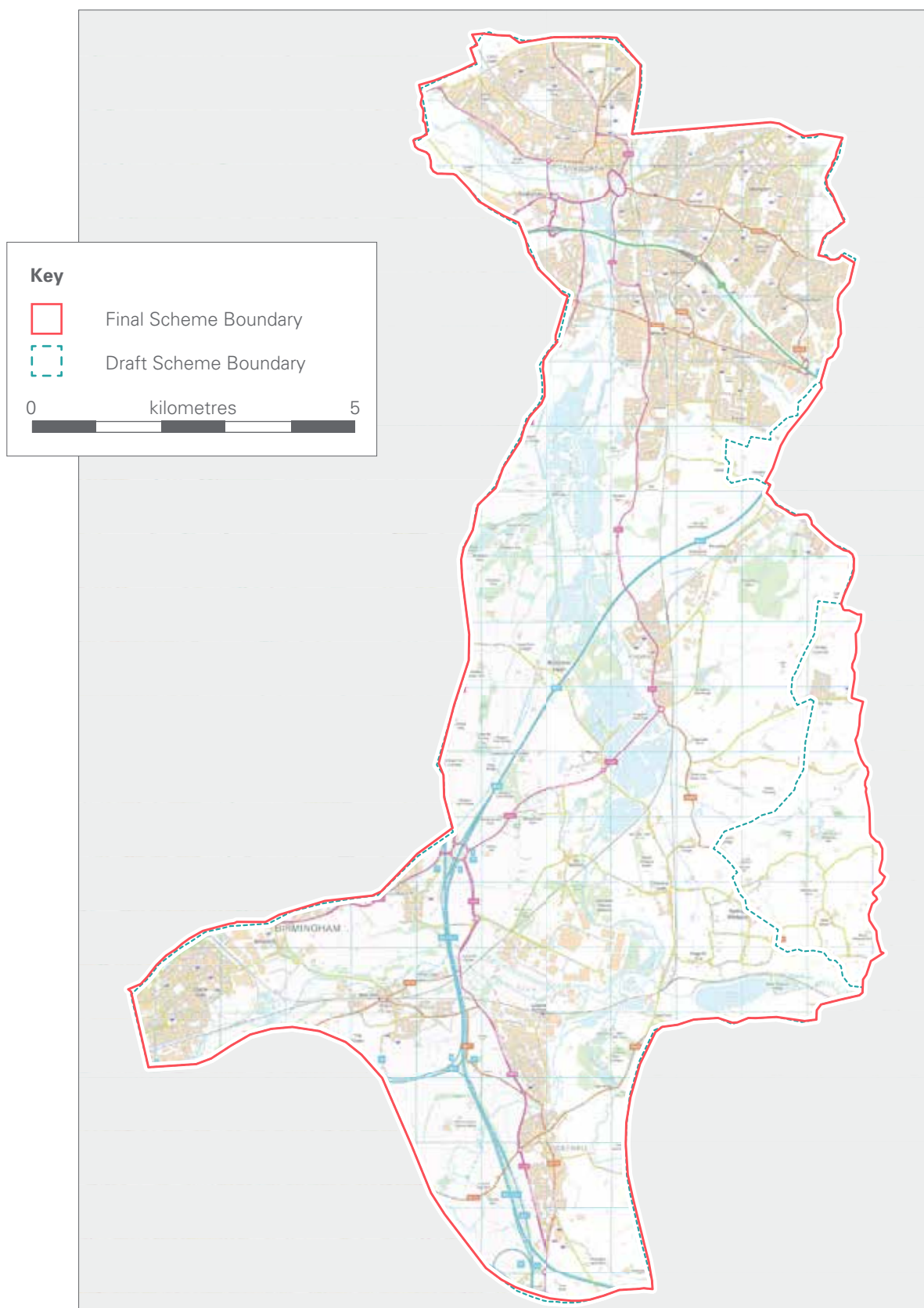
A map showing the final scheme area is provided as a supporting document (21).

Diversity

Ninety five per cent of people in Tamworth and 96% of people in North Warwickshire describe themselves as white british, compared to 53% in nearby Birmingham. Results from a Barker Langham survey reveal that the majority of current Tame Valley users come from within the less diverse Tame Valley, but high quality events and activities may attract a more diverse audience from Birmingham.

Age

Age ranges for Tamworth and North Warwickshire are in line with national figures, with the largest percentage under 16. The population of the Tame Valley is projected to increase, with a trend towards an ageing population living longer. This will increase issues of access to services and transport, as well as the need for both social and health care. For those in rural areas without cars, public transport is limited. Some communities within the rural part of the Tame Valley are within the top 10-30% most deprived areas for access to services. (Staffordshire Observatory; Warwickshire Observatory).



Map showing the TVWLP Final and Draft Scheme Boundary.

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Local economy

The economy and business base have largely been shaped by the historical and geographical characteristics of the Tame Valley, with extraction and usage of the raw materials within the valley such as coal, sand, gravel and clay, as well as agriculture. Today the coal mines are closed although extraction of sand, gravel and clay still continues, albeit highly mechanised. Less than 2% of people work within the agricultural economy today. Manufacturing has also reduced within the area, although Tamworth has seen growth in the banking, finance and insurance sector as well as in the number of self-employed people. However such sectors require higher levels of skills and educational achievements than manual work.

Leisure attractions such as Drayton Manor Family Theme Park and the Snow Dome, Europe's first indoor ski and snowboarding centre with real snow, provide employment for local people. Local distribution centres and business parks have also provided employment outside of the urban areas. Logistics and engineering firms also provide employment within Tamworth. However, many of these new employment opportunities have been filled by people from outside of the area with people from Birmingham to the west, and Staffordshire to the north. While this has helped increase overall economic output, the residents of North Warwickshire have not necessarily benefited, and the broad competitiveness of the area remains fairly low.

There are areas of deprivation within the Tame Valley for employment and income,

exacerbated by the low achievement in skills and training. Tamworth and North Warwickshire have higher numbers of people with no qualifications than the national average, so the qualifications that this scheme may offer, in the form of City and Guilds and Open College Network certificates, is a positive contribution towards addressing this.

Figures released by the Warwickshire Observatory in October 2013, show 2% of the working age population are unemployed and claiming Jobseekers' Allowance, whilst 11.4% were claiming out of work benefits, such as Jobseekers' allowance, employment and support allowance, lone parent allowance. Figures for Tamworth from the Staffordshire Observatory also show 2% of the working age population are unemployed and claiming Jobseekers' Allowance in October 2013.

Youth unemployment has historically been an issue in the area. Although the numbers



A5 over Tameside LNR © 2013 Steven Cheshire

of claimants are reducing, the proportion of young people in long-term unemployment is increasing. As a proportion of all unemployed 18 to 24 year old residents in Warwickshire, long-term unemployment (those claiming JSA for over 12 months) now makes up 17% of all unemployment. Tamworth also has higher than national average rates of youth unemployment.

Economic assessments highlight that the highest rates of unemployment are generally found in the neighbourhoods and communities that were based around, or strongly linked to, the mining and large scale manufacturing industries of the past. This shows the key role that places can play in creating and sustaining unemployment and worklessness. In particular, the mechanics of the housing market – both in terms of the provision and availability of social housing (which are far higher in these areas than the average) and the generally lower cost of housing in these neighbourhoods – helps concentrate unemployed, low skilled and

low paid individuals into certain areas, which can accentuate the issues and problems of deprivation.

In North Warwickshire, the main deprivation issues lie in the barriers to housing and services, education and skills. Hurley is in the top 20-30% most deprived areas nationally for indoor Living environment ie poor housing, whereas Coleshill South Hospital and Southfields come in the top 10-20% most deprived outdoor Living environment nationally. Marston and Water Park (Curdworth) are classed as being within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally for geographical barriers ie road distance to key services, whilst Hurley and Water Orton East are within the top 10-20% most deprived areas, and Piccadilly and Wood End and Coleshill North Grimstock Hill are within the top 20-30% most deprived areas for this measure. This is probably a reflection of the rural nature of part of this locality and the impact this has on accessing key local services.

With respect to education, skills and training, Hurley is within the top 10-20% most deprived areas nationally for children and young people, whilst Piccadilly and Wood End are also within the top 20-30% for this measure. Hurley is also within the top 10-20% most deprived areas nationally for skills, whilst Piccadilly and Wood End are within the top 20-30% for this measure, as is Kingsbury South.

(The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2010), Tamworth, Staffordshire Observatory; The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2010), Warwickshire Observatory).



1.6 Strategies and Policies

The following section highlights the key strategies and policies related to the TVWLPS. More information can be found in supporting document 19.

The Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) establishes common environmental objectives for all surface waters and groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters with the European Community. These include:

- to protect and improve water ecology and prevent the deterioration of aquatic ecosystems;
- to achieve at least good status for all waters by 2015 (where this is not possible, good status should be achieved by 2021 or 2027);
- to conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water; to reduce or phase out the release of individual pollutants or groups of pollutants that significantly threaten the aquatic environment;
- to reduce groundwater pollution and prevent or limit pollutants; and to help reduce the effects of floods and droughts.

More information can be found in Appendix 3.

Catchment Management Plans

On World Wetland Day, 22nd March 2011, Richard Benyon (Minister for the Natural Environment) announced the launch of the Government's Catchment Based Approach through the Environment Agency. Setting up Catchment Pilots is one of the initiatives identified in the Natural Environment White Paper enabling local collaboration and partnership.

As part of this process a Catchment Management Plan for the Tame Anker Mease Catchment Pilot (part of the Humber River Basin District) was completed in August 2013 with direct involvement from partners of the TVWLP. This plan highlights the extent and complexity of the catchment with a system of interlinked and interdependent rivers, canals, wetlands and water bodies.

In November 2013 the Tame Anker Mease Catchment Strategic Partnership Steering Group was formed to coordinate and monitor progress of agreed activities within the catchment plan. The Scheme area of the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership forms a significant part of this catchment and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust sits on the Steering Group as a direct link to the TVWLP.

The Humber River Basin Management Plan

The River Tame is located in the Humber River Basin District. The Humber River Basin Management Plan sets out what needs to be done to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive between now and 2015/2027. It is expected that the measures will be implemented through collaboration with the public, private and voluntary sectors. The River Tame and all tributaries within the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership boundary are failing water bodies under the WFD and appropriate measures are required to rectify this if the UK is to avoid infraction from Europe.

The Central Rivers Initiative Plan

The Central Rivers Initiative Plan outlines a strategy for partnership working towards enhancing and restoring the habitats and landscape of the Trent Valley, Tame Valley and related tributaries in Staffordshire. This includes the River Tame in Tamworth, which is also part of the Tame Valley Wetland Landscape Partnership area. Their vision is to create and connect beautiful places where people can explore and enjoy water, landscape and wildlife, and to ensure that careful extraction and restoration by the area's many sand and gravel quarries will leave a sustainable network of wildlife habitats, public amenities and agricultural land. They also want to inspire and encourage landowners, communities and individuals to get involved in shaping their local landscape.

Making Space for Water

The aims of the Government's Making Space for Water is to increase flood storage and biodiversity through wetland rehabilitation schemes. Ancillary benefits include increased farm incomes through agri-environment schemes, groundwater recharge, tackling diffuse pollution, green tourism, increased access and enjoyment of wetlands and celebrating our historic environment.

Trent Rivers Trust

The Trent Rivers Trust merged with the OnTrent Partnership in April 2013. Both organisations have been working alongside each other across the Trent catchment for several years now. The long term objectives of 'sustainable rivers and wetlands enjoyed by all' is shared by both organisations.

The Trent Rivers Trust strengths have been around 'on the ground' delivery, getting their feet wet with a range of different projects. The OnTrent partnership has been working with a range of different partner organisations delivering projects and raising awareness, at a slightly more strategic level.

The result of the merger is a stronger and more effective organisation capable of delivering a wide range of projects both locally and strategically across the Trent catchment. The Trust is part of the national network of Rivers Trusts. The name of the Trust will remain 'The Trent Rivers Trust' and now has a new logo and identity.

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

The aim of the Government's Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

Within a regional context, the scheme will support several objectives of the 'Putting the historic environment to work: a Strategy for the West Midlands 2010-2015'.

These include:

- supporting the rich cultural diversity of the region by ensuring that all people and communities can enjoy the historic environment, physically and intellectually, reducing barriers to access;
- fostering an increase in community engagement with, and enjoyment of, the historic environment of the region, particularly in those areas where take-up of historic environment related activities appears to be low;
- and using the historic environment to address the skills gap in young people and adults, including safeguarding, and developing, traditional building skills in the region.

The scheme will also:

- continue to develop a deep understanding of the historic environment and how it contributes to the sense of place and distinctiveness of the region;
- ensure that historic character is respected and historic buildings, landscapes and archaeological remains are conserved and enhanced when development or change is planned; and
- demonstrate how a well-used and managed historic environment can contribute to sustainable development, carbon reduction and climate change adaptation.

England Biodiversity Strategy Adapting to Climate Change

The scheme will also address Government policy on adapting to climate change, for example, England Biodiversity Strategy Adapting to Climate Change, which outlines five principles.

These include:

- take practical action now
- maintain and increase ecological resilience
- accommodate change
- integrate action across all sectors
- and develop knowledge and plan strategically.

The scheme will work to undertake aspects of the England Biodiversity Strategy which aims to:

- protect the best wildlife sites; promoting the recovery of declining species and habitats
- embed biodiversity in all sectors of policy and decision making
- enthuse people
- develop the evidence base.

The Natural Environment White Paper, the Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature – Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Natural Environment White Paper was published in 2011 and sets out the Government's vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. The plans within the White Paper link to the National Ecosystem Assessment and it also acts on the recommendations of the Making Space for Nature report which was an independent review of England's wildlife sites, led by Professor John Lawton (see below).

Two of the White Paper's main ambitions link directly to the work of the TVWLPS:

- protecting and improving our natural environment
- reconnecting people with nature.

Making Space For Nature: a Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network – Professor John Lawton *et al* for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Lawton review was launched in 2009 as an independent review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network. The words 'more, bigger, better and joined' summarise what needs to be done to enhance resilience and coherence of England's ecological network.

The review highlighted five key approaches to achieving this:

1. Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management
2. Increase the size of current wildlife sites
3. Enhance connections between or join up sites, either through physical corridors or through 'stepping stones'
4. Create new sites
5. Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

England Biodiversity Strategy: Biodiversity 2020 - Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

This strategy builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and sets out a series of challenging commitments and a clear direction for conservation action. The strategy has the following mission for 2020: To halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.

Four of the outcomes are directly relevant to the delivery of the TVWLPS:

- better wildlife habitats with 90% of priority habitats in favourable or recovering condition and securing 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition, while maintaining at least 95% in favourable or
- recovering condition
- more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats by at least 200,000 ha
- by 2020, significantly more people will be engaged in biodiversity issues, aware of its value and taking positive action.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

In addition, the scheme will also help to meet the actions outlined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan by creating and restoring wetland habitats, thus benefiting the wildlife that relies on these habitats, including bittern, snipe, otters, water voles and bats. This is implemented locally by the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Partnership and the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Partnership, both of which have many active partners taking action to deliver biodiversity enhancements. Both action plans include targets and actions for several species and habitats that will benefit from plans included in the TVWLPS.

National Character Areas (NCA)

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, the profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas have been revised. These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The Statements of Environmental Opportunity offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

Nature Improvement Areas (NIA)

The Birmingham and Black Country Nature Improvement Area is one of the first twelve Nature Improvement Areas in England. The vision of the partnership is to achieve long-term environmental gains for the wildlife and people of Birmingham & the Black Country by delivering targeted, on the ground, biodiversity projects at a landscape scale.

There is a partnership of over 50 organisations that have come together to deliver significant improvements to the natural environment of Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The Nature Improvement Area is the culmination of decades of working towards our vision of an urban landscape permeated by a network of high quality green space which is rich in wildlife and enjoyed by the people who live and work here. It represents a step-change away from site-focused nature conservation to a joined-up landscape-scale approach.

The Wildlife Trust, as lead partner, is looking to help involve more groups in the work of the Nature Improvement Area. Groups and organisations can apply for support for projects. There is £600,000 from Natural England to develop projects that will boost nature locally.

The partnership has identified 6 main areas of focus for the funded projects. These have been informed by the partnership's knowledge of the Birmingham and Black Country landscape and its ecology, and by an understanding of what types of joined-up projects will achieve the biggest gains for wildlife. Two of the themes are of particular relevance to this scheme.

- Corridors: Improving the ecological quality of the area's vital wildlife corridors is fundamental to the health of the whole of Birmingham & the Black Country. We will be working with partners to improve our rivers, streams and canals for wildlife and people.
- Community Engagement: Over 2 million people live in Birmingham & the Black Country and there are well over 200 groups devoted to their local green space.

Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull partnership has also received £110,000 over three years from Natural England towards landscape scale conservation. Six geographic target areas have been selected, including Tame Valley Wetlands. These have been identified through consultation with a range of partners and using the detailed habitat survey data produced by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit partnership for the sub region. The resource is to support landowner liaison and education work, and small scale capital projects in the area.

Local Nature Partnerships (LNP)

New partnerships have been developed for both Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull and for Staffordshire, bringing a range of sectors together to address key needs for the environment and to pro-actively work together to tackle barriers and find win-win solutions that bring multiple benefits across sectors. Sectors include Health and Wellbeing, Education, Community, Business, Environment, Landowners/farming, and public authorities. LNP Boards were established in 2013 and an Implementation Group is in place in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull LNP.

Children and young people

The TVWLPS also contributes to a number of national strategies for children and young people. The scheme will contribute to the aims of the Every Child Matters strategy, through activities which encourage physical activity, achievement, volunteering and learning and through improvements to green spaces which will make them better places for children to enjoy, and be active in.

The Children's Plan 2007 is a ten-year strategy to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. It sets out a series of ambitions for all areas of children's lives including educational attainment and health.

Aiming High for Young People 2007 considers how the Government can help all young people, particularly those in deprived areas, to take part in enjoyable and purposeful activities in their free time which can help them develop new skills and raise their aspirations.

The Learning Outside the Classroom manifesto 2006 links with the Every Child Matters outcomes, in particular enjoying and achieving, staying safe and being healthy.

Health and Wellbeing

The scheme will benefit several national and regional strategies related to health and wellbeing including West Midlands Health and Wellbeing Strategy Communities and Local Government, (2008); Choosing Health: Making Healthy Choices Easier (Department of Health, 2004); Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives (Department of Health, 2008); and Be Active, Be Healthy (Department of Health, 2009).

National health strategies are now recognising that there is much evidence to show that being active outdoors can significantly improve physical and mental wellbeing. Good quality green spaces provide opportunities for activity such as walking, cycling and jogging as well as for socialising and relaxing. Many of the health problems of concern are in part down to low levels of physical activity. The strategies highlight the need for people to incorporate higher levels of physical activity into their everyday lifestyles and for those working to improve health to make it easier for people to be active.

It is worth noting in particular that the West Midlands Health and Wellbeing Strategy states that the region shows the worst physical activity levels in England and that walking and cycling rates have fallen in the last 25 years. The IUCN UK Committee report 'Nature – what's in it for you?' (2010) noted that people who live within 500m of accessible green space are 24% more likely to meet recommended activity levels. Reducing the sedentary population by 1% is valued at saving the NHS £1.4 billion/year.

Marmot review 'Fair Society Healthy Lives'

By engaging people to take part in activities, the scheme will also work to implement recommendations in the Marmot review 'Fair Society Healthy Lives' February 2010. The Marmot Review recommends that policies and interventions are prioritised that both reduce health inequalities and mitigate climate change by improving active travel and Improving good quality open and green spaces; there is a social gradient in health - those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods die earlier and spend more time in ill health than those living in the least deprived neighbourhoods. Such health inequalities are determined by social inequalities, including environmental inequalities; there is a gradient in the distribution of environmental disadvantages: those living in the most deprived neighbourhood are more exposed to environmental conditions, which negatively affect health.

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy was revoked in May 2013. The evidence and data are still available to be used in planning. Within the West Midlands, there are a number of aspects of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (2005) that relate to the scheme. The Regional Spatial Strategy highlights how environment plays a big part in social and economic regeneration (policy QE1). It also provides physical links between places, such as along canals and rivers and between town and country. With these linkages in mind, there are specific policies on creating a high-quality built environment (policy QE3), landscapes (policies QE1 & QE6), the historic environment (policy QE5), restoring degraded land (policy QE2), and areas for increasing biodiversity (policy QE7). The Tame Valley receives recognition within the Regional Spatial Strategy as a strategic river corridor and represents the most important wetland wildlife large area in Warwickshire and an important migratory bird route. Although this strategy is now defunct, it highlights key issues within the Tame Valley.

West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy

The scheme will address the aims of the West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy (2005):

- maintaining and improving the condition of habitats, species and ecosystems
- developing an area based approach to restoring wildlife
- monitoring the condition of habitats, species and ecosystems
- reconnecting and integrating action for biodiversity with other environmental, social and economic activity
- coping with the impacts of climate change.

The Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership is listed in the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership Regional Delivery Plan as an important Landscape scale scheme to deliver regional Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership covers the majority of the Tame Valley Wetland Landscape Partnership area. Addressing skills issues, identifying gaps and creating a demand-led skills programme training programme are a priority for the Local Enterprise Partnership. A new, long-term Spatial Plan for Recovery and Growth (known previously as the Strategic Spatial Framework Plan) has been drafted by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership in parallel with the new Strategy for Growth. This forms a key component of the work under the 'Place' pillar of the Strategy for Growth.

The spatial plan will look at the level and distribution of growth across the Local Enterprise Partnership over the next 20 years and provide a framework for the statutory development planning taking place in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership's nine local authority areas. The plan is currently out for consultation, October – December 2013.

The defining characteristic of the new plan is that it will be prepared informally by the nine local authorities in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership co-operating with each other and collaborating with business and other partners to produce a high-level plan. This plan will help deliver the aspirations for growth as well as leading to improving quality of life for everyone who lives in the Local Enterprise Partnership area.

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

This partnership covers part of the Tame Valley area. Focusing on removing the barriers to growth, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership secures and facilitates the distribution of Government funding and helps develop the skills and create the jobs that will fuel the region's future prosperity. The Strategic Economic Plan is initially being developed using a theme approach, based around the key drivers of growth.

The work of these themes will provide the building blocks for the final strategy, which is likely to be based around key issues and priority intervention areas rather than discrete themes to ensure we have a coherent and integrated package of activity.

The Local Enterprise Partnership is currently consulting on its Skills strategy (November 2013) The strategy has identified three priorities for Coventry and Warwickshire – using skills to drive growth and create jobs, developing skills to tackle unemployment and ensuring a better fit between education and employment.

Warwickshire County Council Biodiversity Strategy and Sustainable Communities Strategy

Within Warwickshire, the Warwickshire County Council Biodiversity Strategy's (2008) overarching aim is "to work with partners to protect and enhance existing and future wildlife populations and habitats in Warwickshire, within a resilient landscape. We will achieve this by increasing the amount of land and buildings positively managed for biodiversity, averting local extinction of species and reducing the number of species on the danger list."

In addition, Warwickshire County Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy 2009 - 2026 states, *"By 2026, Warwickshire will be a cleaner place, where green spaces are preserved and actions taken to preserve and enhance the environment for current and future generations. The quality of the built environment will be enhanced in a manner that celebrates our local heritage and fosters a sense of place."*

Staffordshire County Council

Within Staffordshire, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan was revoked in May 2013. More reliance is now placed on national Planning Policy Statements to help determine planning applications until such time as replacement Development Plan Documents are adopted. 'Planning for Landscape Change' Supplementary Planning Guidance is in place, aimed primarily at planning officers within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Development Plan, and at developers and others who need to be informed about policy and practice for the conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the rural landscapes of the Plan area. The Guidance was prepared to support the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, and although this has been revoked, the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Waste Local Plan (2010 – 2026) (adopted March 2013) requires that regard is given to Planning for Landscape Change or its successor document which will remain a material consideration.

The Staffordshire Waste Local Plan was adopted in March 2013 and work has recommenced on the preparing a new Minerals Local Plan.

Minerals Plan – Warwickshire

Warwickshire County Council's Minerals Plan is currently being revised (November 2013). The new plan will identify where new minerals sites should be located, and set out the policies to assess new minerals development proposals over the next 15 years.

A number of sites in the Tame Valley were put forward for consideration in the previous version for the Minerals Core Strategy including Lower Farm, Bodymoor Heath; Hams Lane, Lea Marston; and Kingsbury Brickworks, Dosthill. As there may not be enough sites currently available to sustain the county's economic growth, the County Council will be contacting operators and land owners for further sites for consideration for sand and gravel extraction, as well confirmation that previously submitted sites are still to be considered. It is intended that the next Minerals Plan consultation document will only include sand and gravel sites as Preferred Options so there will not be site allocations for any other minerals. Previous sites were assessed prior to the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework and there is now a need to reassess the policies and proposals in light of the latest Government policy and guidance.

With regard to the developing unconventional hydrocarbons such as shale gas 'fracking' and underground coal gasification there will need to be policies in the minerals plan to deal with these development types. The policies are yet to be drafted. A 'Preferred Option and Policies' consultation document for unconventional hydrocarbons is due for consultation in 2014.

North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy

The North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026 (3 December 2009) sets out three key priorities for improving the overall quality of life in North Warwickshire from 2009 to 2026, namely:

- raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- developing healthier communities
- improving access to services.

As part of the delivery of this strategy, the community plan aims to "maintain the natural and historic environment of the area and maximise opportunities to enhance its biodiversity, natural beauty and character". In addition, the plan states *"The Tame Valley has been selected as the first major landscape-scale conservation area within Warwickshire, which aims to increase the biodiversity of the Borough and create a robust wildlife corridor in the light of potential impacts of global climate change"*.

North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy

The North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy is a ten year plan which aims to improve the management and maximise the benefits of green spaces, coordinate action and partnership working, promote green space investment as a policy priority, and to help create sustainable communities. This scheme will help to meet two objectives, namely: support the promotion of access to rights of way across the area; and support the RSPB in the continuing development of recreation and community activity opportunities at Middleton Lakes.

Some of the most important green spaces highlighted within the strategy include:

- the country park at Kingsbury
- accessible natural green space and green corridors (including Rights of Way linking towns to adjacent countryside, various off road cycle paths, canal tow path)
- the Tame Valley River Corridor.

Similarly the North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy's Service priorities for Leisure and Communities Service include:

- improve existing green spaces, especially their maintenance, cleanliness and accessibility
- ensure that facilities are accessible to people in rural areas
- improve partnership working between the Borough Council and other providers of green space; increase provision of, and access to, bridleways and cycleways
- encourage greater community engagement with local green spaces
- increase awareness of the availability of recreation facilities by improving publicity and promotion.

These are all reflected by the aims and objectives of the scheme. The key priorities for Biodiversity and Climate Change include:

- seek opportunities to enhance and conserve biodiversity through habitat creation and management when developing individual site management plans and grounds maintenance schedules
- support partners to enhance and conserve biodiversity on publicly accessible sites
- work with partners to increase opportunities for community engagement in habitat creation and management projects.

Again these are all reflected within the landscape partnership scheme.

North Warwickshire Local Plan

The Local Plan for North Warwickshire is made up of a number of documents, all forming part of the Development Plan. The plan has been produced and consulted on, and is due for examination in January 2014. In the interim, the majority of policies of the North Warwickshire Local Plan 2006 are saved indefinitely and still apply.

The Core Strategy forms a key part of the Local Plan (formerly the Local Development Framework (LDF) for North Warwickshire. It contains a vision and strategic objectives for the Borough, as well as Core Policies that will set the basis for directing development for the next 15 to 20 years.

The North Warwickshire Core Strategy was submitted for Examination in Public (EiP) on 28th February 2013. The Strategy sets out plans for the development of up to 3800 dwellings and 68.5ha of employment in the borough by 2028 and details policies which will guide how and where development will proceed in order to achieve these targets. If the strategy is found to be 'sound' the Local Authority will aim to adopt the strategy in 2014.

Warwickshire Coventry and Solihull Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy

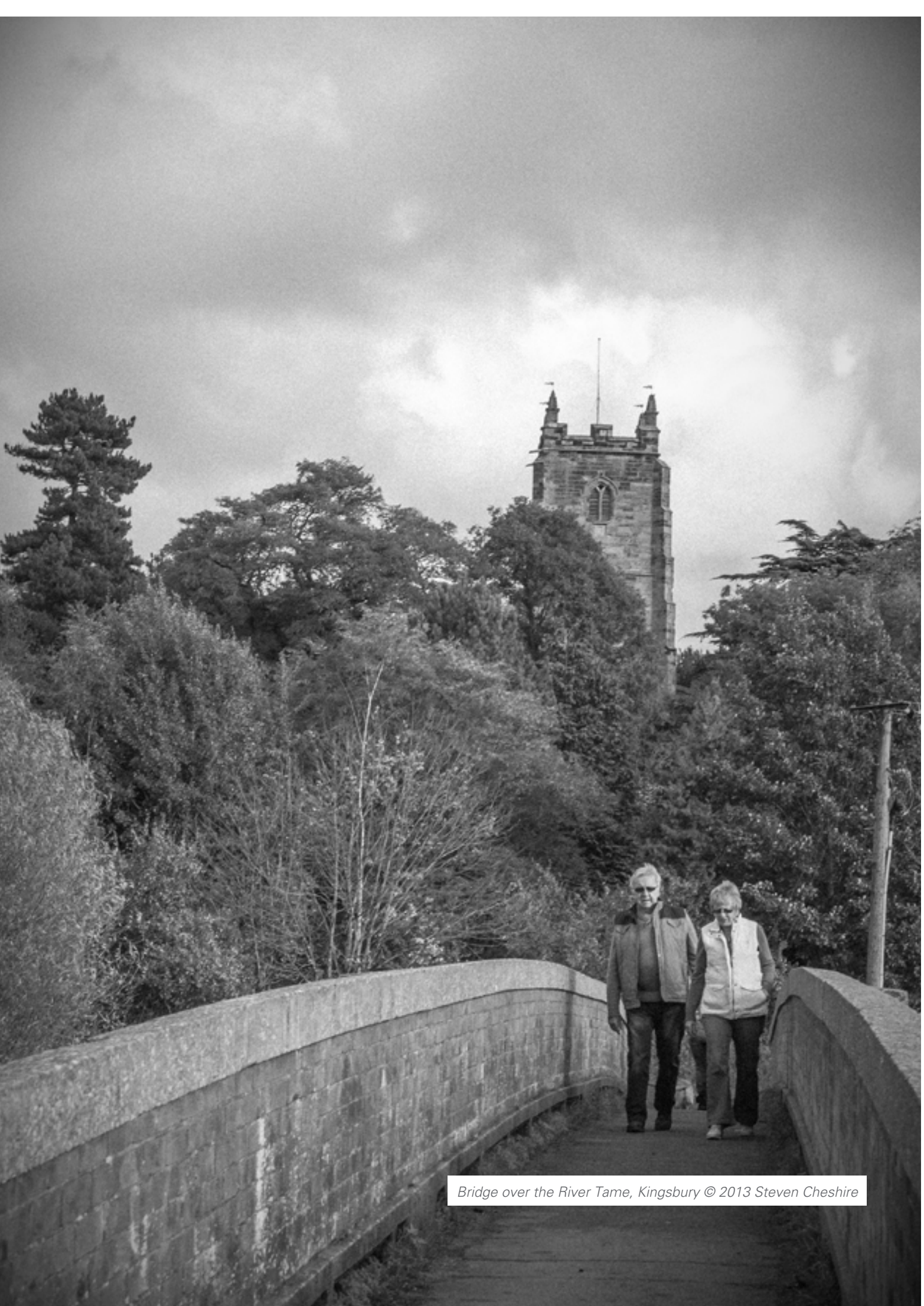
A draft of the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy was submitted for consultation in April 2013. The strategy aims to provide evidence about sub-regional GI assets which can be used by relevant local planning authorities to inform their local development plans. The strategy will include a mechanism for local authorities to secure GI enhancement and developer contributions to meet national, sub-regional and local GI needs. The draft strategy is due for publication and adoption by all local planning authorities in the sub-region in early 2014.

Tamworth

Within Tamworth, there are a number of policies that are relevant to the Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The Wild About Tamworth Delivery Plan provides a framework for the Wild About Tamworth partnership between Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Tamworth Borough Council to deliver its work. The plan includes actions around the establishment of new Local Nature Reserves and community engagement in the natural environment.

Tamworth Borough Council is working on a new Local Plan which will outline what type of development is required to meet local community and business needs, its scale and location as well as policies to ensure that development is sustainable. It will also include policies to promote the delivery of infrastructure and to protect and enhance the area's built and natural environment.



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Warwickshire

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