

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 7</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>20 APRIL 2023</b>	<b>CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>SEAN MCBURNEY HEAD OF CULTURAL &amp; COMMUNITY SERVICES <a href="mailto:Sean.mcburney@southderbyshire.gov.uk">Sean.mcburney@southderbyshire.gov.uk</a></b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DERBYSHIRE ROAD VERGES PROJECT</b>	
<b>WARD (S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL WARDS</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the Committee acknowledges the scope of this project and supports the Councils involvement in this trial.
- 1.2 That the Committee approves the proposed project plan and the areas of road verge to be included in this scheme.

## **2.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 2.1 To give background and details on this project.
- 2.2 To present the proposed project plan for approval (table 1).

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

- 3.1 Following the County Road Verge Conference, Derbyshire County Council announced that the Council would be looking at how it commissions road verge maintenance work so that we can have healthier and more biodiverse grassland verges throughout the County.
- 3.2 Road verge maintenance is mainly undertaken by District and Borough Councils on behalf of the County Council under the specifications set out in Agency Agreements. It is important every opportunity is taken to make sure maintenance work is done in the right way, at the right time, for the right money and fulfils the Council's legal duties, including the duty to biodiversity.

- 3.3 The Environment Act 2021 has extended existing 'biodiversity duties' which apply to local planning authorities. All public authorities must review how their activities can affect or improve biodiversity, and to plan for how they can conserve and enhance biodiversity as they carry out their work.
- 3.4 The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The NRN will help deal with 3 big challenges: biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing.
- 3.5 Derbyshire County Council are looking to work with two District Councils in the trial project to test how changing specifications of road verge management impacts on work programmes, efficiencies, and cost.
- 3.6 Also grass cut later in the growing season, less frequently and removing the cuttings creates greater diversity of species, better structure and provides resources to pollinating insects.
- 3.7 South Derbyshire District Council has been approached to be a trial area due to our involvement in Biodiversity work and our Action Plan for Nature. As well as our noted success of 'No Mo May' last year.

#### **4.0 Detail**

The project requires SDDC to put 100km of grass verges (50km of road is verges on both sides) into conservation management this summer. These to be verges we manage on behalf of DCC in the District but would ideally include a range of conditions, for example 'rural', suburban, urban, high visibility, low visibility.

- 3.8 These areas have been identified and have been selected by Ground Maintenance Supervisor and team with consultation from our outgoing Bio Diversity Officer. These areas are ones that have been assessed from a Health & Safety point of view and from an ecological aspect. Where we are able to create wildlife corridors to link some of these verges with areas that will be involved in No Mo May or wildflower meadows.
- 3.9 There is a lead project officer from DCC who will be liaising with us throughout the project. They will lead on Public and stakeholder reaction. We will be channelling comments, and correspondence to them so they can respond and collate.
- 3.10 There will be a communication plan to notify residents in the areas as well as signage on selected verges to explain the project.
- 3.11 The initial first cut of the season will be planned as normal as an opportunity to litter pick and clear the verges prior to the start of the project.

3.12 The list of areas is as follows.

Table 1

Village/Parish	Verge Number	Street Name
ASTON ON TRENT	1	SHARDLOW ROAD
BARROW ON TRENT	2	CHURCH LANE,
	3	SWARKESTONE ROAD,
	4	TWYFORD ROAD,
CALDWELL	5	MAIN STREET,
	6	SANDY LANE,
CASTLE GRESLEY	7	BURTON ROAD,
	8	CASTLE ROAD,
	9	MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD,
	10	SWADLINCOTE LANE,
CHURCH GRESLEY	11	BRUNEL WAY,
	12	CASTLE ROAD,
	13	GRESLEY WOOD ROAD,
	14	OLD HALL GARDENS,
	15	SWADLINCOTE LANE,
ETWALL	16	ASHVIEW CLOSE,
	17	BELFIELD ROAD,
	18	CHESTNUT GROVE,
	19	CHURCH HILL,
	20	EGGINTON ROAD,
	21	GERARD GROVE,
	21	HILTON ROAD,
	23	LAWN AVENUE,
	24	MAIN STREET,
	25	SANDYPITS LANE,
	26	SPRINGFIELD ROAD,
	27	SUTTON LANE,
	28	THE BANCROFT,
	29	WILLINGTON ROAD,
	30	WINDMILL ROAD,
FINDERN	31	DOLES LANE,
	32	HEATH LANE,
	33	WILLINGTON ROAD,
HARTSHORNE	34	WOODVILLE ROAD,
HATTON	35	DERBY ROAD,
	36	FIELD AVENUE,
HILTON	37	BACK LANE,

	38	DERBY ROAD,
	38	EGGINTON ROAD,
	39	MAIN STREET,
	40	PEACROFT LANE, HILTON
	41	THE MEASE, HILTON
LINTON	42	CALDWELL ROAD,
	43	CEDAR GROVE,
	44	COTON PARK,
	45	HIGH STREET,
	46	PRINCESS AVENUE,
	47	SEAL VIEW,
	48	THE CLOSE,
	49	THE CREST,
	50	WARREN DRIVE,
	51	WINCHESTER DRIVE,
	52	WINDSOR ROAD,
MIDWAY	53	BURTON ROAD,
	54	DUNSMORE WAY,
MILTON	55	MAIN STREET,

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

**5.1** There are no financial implications directly arising from being part of this project. However, we will be collating data and information. To help generate a per km cost to amenity cut a grass verge (current situation) and to conservation cut. Also to help determine the costs (reasonable estimate) of running a dual system where some verges need to remain in amenity cut management and others are conservation managed. Also determining If there are savings to be made through conservation cutting, how could they be reinvested, for example into the rural network, purchase of machinery etc.

## **6.0 Corporate Implications**

### **Employment Implications**

6.1 There are no employment implications arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

6.2 This project and the Action Plan for Nature (APN) Work Programme provides a measurable opportunity to adhere to its legal 'Biodiversity Duty' under the Environment Act 2021 to 'conserve' and 'enhance' biodiversity.

### **Corporate Plan Implications**

- 6.3 This project and Work Programme contributes to the Corporate Plan Priorities and Key Aims including:

Our Environment

- a. Improve the environment of the district
  - i. Enhance biodiversity across the district
- b. Tackle Climate Change
  - i. Strive to make South Derbyshire District Council carbon neutral by 2030
- c. Enhance the attractiveness of South Derbyshire
  - i. Improve public spaces to create an environment for people to enjoy

**7.0 Risk Impact**

- 7.1 The Action Plan for Nature and this project provides a measurable and accountable strategy of The Council's legal 'Biodiversity Duty' under the Environment Act 2021 and therefore reduces the risk of not complying with this legislation.

**8.0 Community Impact**

- 8.1 An output of this project will be encouraging local communities to connect with nature through environmental projects and education appreciate bio diversity.

**9.0 Equality and Diversity Impact**

- 9.1 None known.

**10.0 Social Value Impact**

- 10.1 The APN and this project promote 'investment in nature' which can create opportunities for nature-based solutions such as climate adaptation and resilience, flood alleviation, the improvement and expansion of green spaces, and connection to nature. Nature-based solutions therefore have the potential for significant positive impacts to society.

**11.0 Environmental Sustainability**

- 11.1 This project and Work Programme promotes Environmental Sustainability at its core. Investing in nature is critical to sustaining a healthy environment for generations to come.

Appendix 1 – project overview

**END**